

ITAL. QUART. 24

Binding:

The binding was made from parchment and it is contemporary with the manuscript (247 × 197 mm). There is an inscription on the spine saying: *DISPUTE / IN / Ser[enissi]mo Mag[gio]^r / Consiglio*. Below there are marks of a scraped off label. Also on the spine – the current catalogue number: *Ms. ital. Quart. 24*.

History:

The manuscript was written in Venice (both the subject and language's characteristics indicate the above), probably still in the 18th century (perhaps in the 1780's). At the beginning of the 19th century the manuscript belonged to count Étienne Méjan (1766-1846), who lived in Italy from 1805-1813 as a secretary of viceroy Eugène de Beauharnais. He collected there many valuable manuscripts and incunabula as well as prints from the 16th century (in the period many interesting works appeared on the antiquarian market as a result of Napoleon's decrees of dissolution of religious orders). In 1819 P. Daru wrote about the manuscript in his „Histoire de la république de Venise”, tome sixième, p. 541: “Il existe un autre recueil sur le meme affaire dans la belle bibliothèque de M. le comte Mejean à Paris. Il est intitulé: *Dispute in ser^{mo} maggior consiglio nate dalli 5 decembre 1779 fino alli 12 maggio 1780, e successiva elezione de' cinque correttori e parti poste dà i medesimi con suoi fondamenti*.” After count Méjan's death the whole collection was acquired by king Frederick William IV who handed it over to the Königliche Bibliothek (1847).

Lemm, p. 79.

Content:

ff. 2r^o-315v^o DISPUTE IN SERENISSIMO CONSIGLIO (Discussions of the Highest Council). On the 5th of December 1779 Carlo Contarini gave a speech in which he criticised the internal situation of the Republic of Venice; a decline in trade, constant rise in prices, decrease in tax income, lack of ability to compete on international markets, depopulation of the capital city, political problems. The speech was an attempt at introduction of reforms supported by Contarini and Pisani. After the speech

followed stormy discussions between the members of the Council began, five proofreaders were appointed, including Contarini, who were to propose the reforms. However, no reforms were introduced and Contarini and Pisani were arrested. The text was not published. There are several other accounts of the same events, also unpublished, as well as texts of speeches published by M. Barbaro in 1797: M. Barbaro, "Istoria delle questioni promosse da un eccitamento del n.h.s. Carlo Contarini., con le arringhe tutte fatte nel Maggior Consiglio l'anno 1780", Venezia 1797.