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Printing Maps on Large Size Paper: The Hajji Ahmed Heart-Shaped World Map, Venice 1795 and the Paper Mills in the Toscolano District

In 1795 Giovanni Antonio Pinelli, from the dynasty of Venetian printers acting as official Ducal printers of the Republic of Venice, was granted the honour to print 24 copies of a heart-shaped World Map from six ancient wooden blocks discovered in the Republic Archives in the same year. The blocks had been made in Venice in 1559-1560, and then had disappeared for more than two centuries. They depicted the world in the Turkish language by the so-called Hajji Ahmed, but it was actually a project designed in Renaissance Venice and intended for the Ottoman market.

Pinelli used six sheets of large size paper, and their union gave a square of c.115 x 112 cm. The watermark was that of Gaudenzio Fossati papermill in Toscolano on lake Garda, a district with tens of mills producing paper for Venice and abroad since the 15th-16th century.

Two copies of the World Map are kept in the Marciana National Library in Venice.

While the paper production of the Toscolano district and its watermarks in the first centuries have been investigated, little is known about the end of the 18th century. This research aims to study the paper issued by Gaudenzio Fossati papermill in the period close to the Republic fall from a double point of view.

On one side the material production: the paper quality, different formats and watermarks - through the physical examination of the documents kept in the Toscolano City Archives, written on local paper - and the economic management of the mill emerging from notary documents. On the other side the use and spread of Toscolano papers in the Venice printing market with special attention to large size papers – through other cartographic works, such as those by Antonio Zatta, and the prolific production of the Pinelli publishing house itself.

Keywords: Hajji Ahmed heart-shaped World Map, Toscolano, Gaudenzio Fossati, Giovanni Antonio Pinelli, Large size paper