

CRISTINA TRIVULZIO DI BELGIOJOSO

An Italian Princess in the 19th c. Turkish Countryside

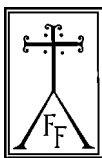


Filippi Editore Venezia

CRISTINA TRIVULZIO DI BELGIOJOSO

AN ITALIAN PRINCESS IN THE 19TH C.
TURKISH COUNTRYSIDE

edited by
Antonio Fabris



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Il volume è stato realizzato con il contributo
dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia – Dip. di Studi Storici

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Prima edizione Luglio 2010

Diritti di traduzioni, riproduzione e adattamento totale
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FOREWORD

Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso was a brilliant 19th c. Italian noblewoman. When she was young she was a very rich girl, who knew French and Italian, music and art. After an unlucky marriage she began to be involved in politics and took part in the Italian patriotic riots of 1848-49. Then she was an exile in Greece and in the Ottoman Empire and, in this period, she wrote novels and travel accounts. Her adventurous life had been studied under different aspects: literature, history of Italian independence movements, gender history, and so on, but one part of it remained in the shade: the years spent in Turkey between 1850 and 1855. Scholars even did not mind to learn how to write correctly the names of places Cristina saw and described in her works. Her estate of Çakmaköğlü is often misspelled in *Ciaq Maq Oğlon* (or *Ciaq Maq Oğlù* or *Ciak Mak Uğlù*), just as the princess herself wrote in her letters.

On 3 December 2009 a workshop was held in the University Ca' Foscari of Venice with the aim of throwing new light on Cristina's days in Turkey. It was organized by professor Maria Pia Pedani and by the Association of Historical Studies «Muda di Levante». It was sponsored by the Department of Historical Studies and had the support of the «Marco Polo System geie».

The workshop started with a general survey on the Italian 19th c. women, who were both writers and travellers, delivered by Anna Vanzan of the IULM of Milan, a scholar interested in women's literature and the East. Sandro Fortunati from Milan, an expert on Princess Belgiojoso who has also created a web site about her presented Cristina's biography, while Pietro Brunello, of the University Ca' Foscari of Venice, author of many essays about the princess and the Italian *Risorgimento* described Cristina as an Italian patriot. Mehmet Yavuz Erler, of the University Ondokuz Mayıs of Samsun, professor of Ottoman history, presented some just discovered Ottoman documents about the princess, and also identified the place where her estate of Çakmaköğlü was settled. The workshop was closed by Maria Pia Pedani, professor of Ottoman history in the University Ca' Foscari of Venice, who described Cristina's life in Turkey according to her letters.

This book contains the papers presented during the workshop (but that of Brunello) more another essay by Reiner Speelman, professor of

Italian in the University of Utrecht, about Cristina's travelogue from Çakmaköğlü to Jerusalem and back to Turkey. The workshop was held in English and the same language was chosen for this book. In this way we hope that it will help to make known Cristina di Belgiojoso to a wider public. Her life proves that in the 19th c. the Ottoman Empire was considered a refuge by many Italian patriots and that Italy and Turkey had much more peaceful relations than those people usually think about. Princess Cristina's biography deserves to be studied even more. We have only began to bring into the limelight the period she spent in Turkey, a country which she loved so much.

Antonio Fabris

THE LIFE OF CRISTINA TRIVULZIO DI BELGIOJOSO

Cristina Trivulzio was born in Milan on 28 June 1808.

Italy, 1808. Mazzini, Garibaldi, the Count of Cavour and many other key players of the Italian Risorgimento were born in these years.

Milan, hometown of our princess, was located in the Kingdom of Italy, under control of the French of Napoleon.

The Trivulzio family was noble and ancient and lived right in the centre of the city. Their building is still visible today, with the family crest clearly above the big wooden gate.

Cristina was the daughter of Gerolamo Trivulzio and Vittoria Gherardini. Her father was very shy but passionate about books and coins. The grandfather and great grandfather obsessively collected them and their books are now in the famous Library Trivulziana in the Sforzesco castle. He died early, in 1812, leaving Cristina as sole heir with her mother as legal tutor until her major age. Even her mother Vittoria Gherardini came from an ancient family. Around Milan there are still their “country houses” converted in municipalities, universities, museums or libraries. A few years after her husband death, Vittoria remarried with the nobleman Alessandro Visconti d’Aragona, and gave birth to three girls and a boy, whom Cristina remained attached for her entire life.

As a child, Cristina studied languages, drawing, embroidery and music like all the girls in the high society circle. Her teacher of drawing was Ernesta Bisi, dear friend of the mother. Despite the age difference, the more intimate confidences were reserved to her.

In 1814, after the fall of Napoleon and the French Empire, the Austrians returned easily in Italy. Because of this, the phenomenon called “carboneria” started, and people tried to gather to achieve freedom and unite Italy. Five years passed and the first arrests were issued to many Italian people whose names remained famous even today: Silvio Pellico, Federico Confalonieri, Piero Maroncelli, among others. In one of the arrests there was even the stepfather of Cristina. He managed to avoid death and the sadly famous Austrian prison of the Spielberg, but the event marked a major change in his life. It probably affected even the future attitude of the young Cristina.

These are the years when the United States were in war with the motherland England and the firsts steam powered ships were sailing on

the seas. In the land of cowboys and indians there were only eight million people, and they were almost all on the Atlantic coast. Europe was back on track after the French revolution of 1789 and the Napoleonic period that changed for more than a decade the entire European political asset. The fall of Napoleon in 1815 re-established the royal families of twenty years earlier. We could see again the Bourbons (France, Spain and Southern Italy), the Savoy (the actual Italian region of Piedmont, Liguria and Sardinia) and the Hapsburgs (Austria and part of the Germany). Prussia was under Frederick William III of Hohenzollern, Russia under Tsar Alexander and England was under the House of Hanover. The Ottoman Empire was still alive with Mahmud II on the throne, but the decline of the mid 18th century was near. Italy was still divided into many small kingdoms. The biggest were the kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia under the Austrians, the kingdom of Sardinia under the Savoy, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany under the Habsburg-Lorraine, the Papal States under the Pope and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under the Bourbons. The royal houses of Europe were always blood related because of marriages but this did not prevent them to declare war to each other.

Milan, the city where Cristina lived was not that big. The aristocratic elite was made up of a few hundreds people and they all knew each other. The entertainments were the theatres and the café's. The clothes were very different from today but like now, fashion was always in movement. In Paris we could see the firsts bicycles that were still more a game than a real vehicle. The real transportations were the horseback or the carriages. Magic lanterns gave the first ideas of images in movement, but the cinema was still far. There were the first photographs, but the images vanished within seconds after being impressed. Not so useful, unfortunately. On the contrary, the steam had a great success and boats could finally travel without wind. In 1821 a steamboat was able to cross the Atlantic, making America closer, even if it still took several weeks of travel to get there. We could see the firsts railroads. It was possible to travel by train but it was still a good idea to wish good luck to travellers. The suspensions were not great and the temperature was essentially the same as the external one. Moreover, there were many robbers. In short, each trip was an adventure. In the countryside the ordinary people had a completely different life, governed by the work of the lands and the daily rhythm of the animals. The peasants were the majority of the workforce. They had just a pair of clothes: one for work and one for the holidays. The Italian language was virtually unknown and everyone spoke the local dialect. Nobles learned French, which became often their first language.

Cristina herself often said to be able to write better in French than in Italian. In addition to these two languages, she was knew English, Latin, and Milanese, the local dialect.

She was 16th years old, an age when a good noble girl must start thinking to a husband. Despite the wishes of aunt Beatrice Trivulzio who wanted her to marry her son Giorgio, Cristina fell in love with the charming Emilio Barbiano di Belgiojoso. At that time marriages between cousins were still organized, to protect the family name and money. Despite the attempts to change her mind because the libertine habits of the future husband, love triumphed and the marriage was celebrated. Honeymoon was not in an exotic location but just a few miles away from home.

As predicted, the marriage did not last very long because of the dissolute life of the husband. They peacefully separated a few years later. Cristina, alone but very rich, had reached the age of majority and took possession of the whole inheritance left by her father. She began to travel around Italy. In Genoa she got closer to the Carbonari movement, and she became a “giardiniera”, the female counterpart of the male “Carbonari”. They obeyed to strict rules and rituals. The “gardens” were formed by nine women, the hierarchy was very precise and so were the greetings to recognize each other. Spies sent by the Austrian government started to follow her. They were not the kind of spies we are used to see in movies nowadays. They were only cheaters seeking easy money, selling whatever information, often invented, to the best buyer. At that time it was easy to be arrested just for a false story reported to the local police. Because of her common revolutionary acts, Cristina was threatened by the Austrian government. She risked her passport and properties but she let her youth and anger to guide her actions. She left Genoa and went to France. As an answer, all her properties in the kingdom were confiscated and she was declared virtually dead. She was stranded alone in France without any money. Nevertheless, she wrote to a friend:

If I could be even a little useful to our cause, I do not regret the difficult situations, the adventurous life, not very feminine.

Always in touch with several members of the Carbonari group, including the famous Italian Giuseppe Mazzini, she sold the jewels that she still had and promoted an insurrection for the Italian cause. Unfortunately, it failed. Unable to return in the Italian territory, she had to prepare herself for a long exile. Not knowing exactly what to do, she moved to Paris, where she thought she still could be able to do something useful for her

beloved Italy. The French government was just changed. Only a few months earlier, in what remained in history as the glorious “Three days of July”, Charles X was replaced by Louis Philippe d’Orleans, of the cadet branch. The new king was no longer “king of France” but “king of the French people”. This was indeed reducing his real power. Cristina contacted François Mignet of French Foreign Affairs Ministry and worked with him to protect Italian nationalist captured by the Austrians in Ancona, in Italy. François remained one of her greatest friend for the rest of her life.

In these years the princess lived a double life. During the day she acted as powerful princess talking to ministers and very powerful men but back home she had no money and for the first time in her life, she had to gain his life. She did not know exactly how to behave. She recalled of that period:

Of rich heritage, grew up in the Milanese aristocracy, I did not know anything about the necessities of life. Never having in the hands a single silver coin, I could not say the value of a piece of five francs. On the contrary, I didn't find any difficulties in classifying an ancient coin according to its importance and history. Unaware of the price and the commercial value of everyday objects, I knew at first glance the value of art objects. I could paint, sing, play the pianoforte, but I did not know how to make the rim of and handkerchief, to cook an egg or to prepare a meal. Until that day, the managing of the house was a task of the butler.

Her first home was a little apartment on the fifth floor of a building on the Place de la Madeleine. She lived like that for a few months. She cooked her meals and survived by sewing laces and tricoloured ribbons, by drawing a series of portraits of politicians and by making translations from English to French for a newspaper. A life different from the one she was accustomed to. It would have been easy to get back her money staying comfortable in her villas in Locate or Milan, but she decided to follow her heart and her willing to achieve the freedom of her fellow-citizens.

Thanks to Mignet, who by then was becoming a true friend, she met the so called “*Hero of Two Worlds*”, the Marquis de Lafayette. This great man of international glory fought in the American Revolution together with George Washington. A few years later, he was present in the major Europe turnover that was the French Revolution. They were two of the most important events in the western world history. Lafayette talked to French ministers, politicians and ambassadors to help her for the Italian cause, but by then, his image represented more of an historical icon than a real political power. For Cristina, Lafayette became like an uncle and she

remained to his bedside for the few years that he still had. The marquis's doctor recalled:

A lady equally remarkable for the beauty and the charm of her spirit than for the qualities of the heart. I often found this wonderful woman to his bedside: with her solid and wide education, the pleasure of her conversations mitigated his problems and made him forget for a moment his suffering. Lafayette often talked to me on the rare merits of this lady, the nobility of her character and the charity for her unhappy compatriots.

Several years passed, and with the money sent by her mother and those recovered from her possessions, she finally resumed comfort in her life. She gradually organized a “*salon*” where she reunited Italian exiles, writers, philosophers and musicians of the finest European upper class. In her salon someone just passed through and someone came more often. Among these, the German poet Heine, the Hungarian composer Liszt, the French poet De Musset. The Parisian *elite* began to know her. In the rumours around her, she practically divided men and women. The first loved her, the latter envied her. Few were the exceptions. The only true female friend she had in Paris was M.me Caroline Jaubert. Many men fell in love with her. She had black long hair and a very fair complexion. The malicious used to say that she was so pale she could be a ghost. She took advantage of this, presenting herself in soft light clothes and in dark rooms and learned fast how to shock and amaze her guests. Caroline Jaubert presented to Cristina the famous French poet Alfred de Musset, which, as expected, fell madly in love with her. He certainly was not her kind of man. He was too close to her ex husband: too libertine and so not trustworthy. She had already learned the lesson ten years earlier with Emilio. De Musset, hopeless, published an unkind poem against her in the *Revue des deux mondes*. She didn't even considered it.

In 1838 her life had a big turning point. She gave birth to her daughter Maria Cristina. From this moment on, she left her halls, theatres and receptions and started a period of retreat. Just after the birth of Maria she took a vacation in England with her brothers and sisters. She visited Ireland and then after a short stay in Paris, she went back to Italy, settling in the palace of Locate, just outside Milan. It was nearly ten years that she was far from her beloved homeland.

In Locate she locked herself home, avoiding the life of Milan and welcoming the snowy winter, which prevented unwanted people from coming to visit her. There, surrounded by poor peasants, she created kindergartens and schools, turning her palace in the centre of a community devoted to the less-fortunate. She created one big heated

public room to shelter the population and gave a dowry to the brides. She wanted to modify the religious teachings that she thought not entirely accurate, but stopped herself from doing it because the time wasn't right. The church was powerful and she didn't want to offend anybody. Thanks to the calm and the peace of her country, she was able to publish a work entitled *‘Essai sur la formation du Dogme Catholique’*. Book that, despite his piety, ended in the index of the church, the list of prohibited books still in effect since the inquisition period in 16th century. It was still necessary to be very careful when talking about religious matters. Her book was in the list together with those of Alfieri, Balzac, Hugo, Heine, Kant, Rousseau, Stendhal...

She enjoyed a few years in the quiet of her country, seeing very few people and living with her daughter Maria. In those years she employed a young man named Gaetano Stelzi, and assigned him different tasks. Officially he was there as a teacher for her daughter but the real job was to search documents for a book on the history of Italian municipalities and, more important, to promote and organize the publication of several subversive newspapers. She started in fact to support publications to help people to better know the Italian territory and to understand what exactly needed to be done to unite it. She wrote in Italian and in French. She wanted the French people to better understand Italy because reality was hidden by the majority of the newspapers. She was obliged to publish in France or Switzerland, since there wasn't freedom of print in the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia.

Her political works never stopped. Through her articles, she tried to convince the people that the only way to make a free Italian nation was to support the king Carlo Alberto of Piedmont. Her long distance objective was not the monarchy itself but a French-style republic, but at that time, the Savoy king where the only hope for the unification. In 1848 she was in Naples promoting her publications when in Milan broke out the insurrection against Austria. She gathered 160 volunteer and brought them by boat to Milan. Even if late for the battle, she arrived in Milan with a triumphal reception. There was an atmosphere of celebration and she appeared on the balcony of the Palace of Government, in front of a joyful crowd. For a few months in Milan there was an air of freedom, but despite her happiness, she didn't agree with those who had the power. She wrote:

A big personal satisfaction is not without a hint of unease patriotism. The republican spirit is strong in Lombardy and I fear that Carlo Alberto, with its slowness, has not played the best cards in the world. I am going to work for him, that is for the unity and

strength of my country but I fear to be beaten and I will not venture too far, because I do not want at any cost lose the confidence of my country.

The time proved she right. A few months later, Carlo Alberto was defeated and Austrians could come back, imposing very high taxes and removing all of the freedom that the previous government had promoted. Among these, the freedom of the press, and with it, all the newspapers which unfortunately had a very short life. She had a fine of 800,000 Lira (about a couple of millions of modern Euro), a huge amount of money. These fines were conceived to reduce to misery more than just punishments. Fortunately, she managed to save her possessions, her buildings and more important, her freedom.

A year later, the city of Rome had its glorious moment. A gap in power formed after the assassination of Pellegrino Rossi, first Minister of Pope Pio IX, gave the green light to the establishment of an interim government, headed by a triumvirate formed by Mazzini, Saffi, and Armellini. Mazzini called Cristina as organizer for the hospitals in Rome. The French were marching toward Rome to besiege it and put the Pope back to his original place. Despite many practical troubles Cristina was able to manage nurses, doctors and buildings necessary to deal with the many injured of the war. For the first time she lived in a real battle, together with suffering soldiers. She wrote to her friend Caroline Jaubert:

Ah, my dear friend, no matter how big your imagination can be, you will never portray the painful reality of my life during the bombing of Rome while I stayed in my place among the wounded. They were all worthy. All of them were in search of the danger for pure patriotism: The love for their country and the love for freedom took to the highest levels their powers and, if struck by a ball, they died like heroes. No, I did not see the show of an ordinary death. When, overcome by fatigue, I was looking for that condition where you can forget everything which is called sleep, could I sleep when I knew that when I would have waken up, I would not had found all those who had wished me a quiet night with a weak voice? Could I predict how many hands shook mine for the last time, how many sheets upside down on the pillow would have announced, in the morning visit, a new martyr?

She was present on the deathbed of many Italian heroes, like Goffredo Mameli, the author of the Italian hymn still in use today. Unfortunately, even this time, the freedom didn't last too long, and moreover because of the French that Cristina loved so much. One night, thanks to a tip of a clergyman that she had previously helped, she managed to escape just before the capture. She found herself together with many exiles on a ship directed to the isle of Malta. Her daughter Maria and her nurse Miss Mary

Ann Parker were always with her. She stopped for a while in the capital La Valletta, but she couldn't find anything interesting.

... I would give anything for the sight of a nice grove, a beautiful sheet of water that reminds my green gardens, my enchanting lakes of Lombardy! How I'd like for a moment to reflect myself in those pure crystal blue eyes, such as those painted from our masters of the Lombard school!

Why cannot I hear some words spoken by one of those sweet and serious voices belonging to the women of my country! To endure the exile we should live in a country very close to what you didn't want to leave or being transported to a place whose originality grip your attention. Resemblance sweetens the regrets, diversity stuns them. But here all is pale and dull, in a word, nostalgic.

Defeated and disillusioned by the political events, she must now think about what to do with her life. Initially she thought about going to England, but then she changed her mind.

I must change the course of my ideas and break with politics at the moment. But I can not subtract to my faculty its main food without replacing it with something, because living on regrets is repulsive to my nature. If I have to give up the realization of my wishes in Italy, I want to embrace a kind of life that provides me with sources of interest. It is necessary that the new life erase the memory of the old one, or at least of what it had of most stinging. I still have too much force, too much vitality, to apply this transformation. Until our youth lasts, our life is comparable to those plants that draw from the air their food and have no supports: you can then transplant them. Later we grow the roots, and from these we draw livelihood. Exile then becomes lethal.

I have not yet reached that point, I have no strong habits, my feelings are not yet clinging to the ground. The air, the subtle and spiritual element of the thought, is enough for me. How long will I be like that? I do not know. But to choose a final residence in a fertile land in the centre of a lovely landscape (alas, still a memory of my country!), I will wait until the hour when my strengths will abandon me and I will not be able to go on looking. First, I want to travel.

What would you say if I go to Constantinople?

The entrance is not prohibited by any political position. I am looking right now the arrival of a steamboat to realize my plan.

She left again making a stop in Greece. Her journey ended in Asia Minor, in the desolate valley of Çakmakoglu, in Karabuk province, 200 km north of Ankara, Turkey. Here, alone with his daughter Maria, the ever-present nurse Miss Parker and a few other Italian exiles, arrived again with empty pockets. Thanks to her noble lineage and to the powerful people that she knew, she was able to have credit and to buy a piece of land where to start a brand new farm.

The letters she wrote to her friend Caroline Jaubert became a periodical column on the French newspaper “National”, edited in Paris. Now everyone in France, therefore in Europe, knew where she was and what she was doing. She was admired but even criticized. Life was not easy and there were a lot of difficulties.

When things got better and the situation in the newly settled farm became stable, our restless Cristina didn't find anything better than to take a few horses and a couple of men and to ride to Jerusalem. She always wanted to see those places, and once arrived she had the satisfaction to baptize her daughter in the most sacred catholic place on Earth. Thanks to this trip, in France, several articles were published. In those lines, the insights of the Middle Eastern life were for the first time seen from the eyes of a woman, and places like the famous harems could be described from the inside and not from outside, the only possible view for men. These articles were later collected in the books: “Asia Minor and Syria, Souvenirs of a journey” and “Scenes of Turkish life”. Even in the far and still young United States of America the book “Oriental Harems and Scenery” was published. Back in Çakmakoglu, she wrote her testament:

*From my farm in Cıağ Mağ Oğlù, in Asia Minor, Saffran Bolo, 1851.
In good health and in perfect peace of spirit, but living in a country where human life is weakly protected and respected, knowing, moreover, that death as the life we are given could be removed at all hours of every day, I am determined to make my testamentary dispositions...*

It almost became useful immediately, because just a few days later, one of her domestics tried to kill her. He was an Italian man and immediately everybody thought about a retaliation of the Austrians. The truth was simpler. It was in fact a sentimental matter relating to its nurse. Matter of which she was involuntarily involved and that she paid with several knife wounds, that fortunately she was able to cure by herself. After all her experience with her sickness, the illness of all the poor people of her little town near Milan and especially after the war experience in Rome, she was well trained for wounds treatment.

We are in 1855. Cristina left Çakmakoglu and the Ottoman Empire. After paying a visit to her sister Teresa in southern France she went to Paris and to the comfort she wasn't used since many years. There, she greeted all her French friends who had lost, after the French betrayal of 1849 in Rome. Tired, after being reassured about the permission from the Austrian bureaucracy to enter without any danger in the Kingdom of

Lombardy-Venetia, she finally returned to her place in Locate where she could follow other publications of her “Asian” books and to remain quiet for a few years.

In 1860 he accepted willingly to give his daughter in wife to the good man Ludovico Trotti Bentivoglio. The separation from her daughter was very painful but fortunately, the son-in-law accepted her often in his house, allowing her to continue to have a close relationship with the daughter. For her, it began a different kind of life as mother-in-law and grandmother. Maria, not easily, gave birth to Cristinetta, and some years later to Antonietta. Cristina finally left the political scene, because in the decade of 1860 Italy took the actual geographical configuration, under the Savoy monarchy. She waited for a long time for this to happen and now everything seemed to get for the best. Her public life was over. End of money requests from all the poor and needy people, end of the spies following every move, end of the exile. She remained with friends and family.

She still travelled, but mostly in Lombardy. She bought a villa on Lake of Como to be close to her daughter and moved there with his faithful Bodoz, the Turkish assistant who followed her since twenty years before, and Miss Parker, the English nurse who had lived with her and daughter since the trip in England of 1839. On the lake the princess had often distinguished guests, but this time they were almost all veterans of the wars or of the political independence struggle. Inseparable from her narghilé, she died, still young. It was July 5, 1871 and she was only 63 years old.

Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso had a adventurous life and she had known famous people and lived through one of the most adventurous period of the recent Italian history. In fact, she lived just when the dream of a united nation came true. Sometimes she was not understood because she was too ahead of her time, but, as a woman, she gave all that she could, remaining an example to everybody even today. She is buried in Locate, just outside Milan, in Northern Italy. This little town wanted to honour her presence and her help to all the poor people adding the word “Triulzi” to its name.

Sandro Fortunati
Locate Triulzi, Milan

EUROPEAN WOMEN IN THE OTTOMAN MIDDLE EAST

The study of Western women's experience in the East is marked by two contrasting attitudes: According to one view, women acted as pillars of the West's imperialist projects, as their attitude toward local women was characterized by a strong sense of cultural and racial superiority. The opposite evaluation remarks how Western women reacted differently from their men, because they identified themselves with the oppressed Eastern women and tried to constitute a sort of bridge between East and West.

However, if we consider carefully the huge bulk of literature produced by Western women who had experienced life in non European countries, we cannot but remark how the majority of these ladies were part of the hegemonic discourse between East and West. Of course, this attitude was neither universal nor undiversified, depending on several factors, such as the personal attitudes of the single writer, her personal feelings, her background and the period of time in which she was living and writing.

Nevertheless, generally speaking European women's literature shows their scarce identification with the "Others" and lacks a sense of "gender solidarity": rather, these writers seem to be observing local women through male eyes. This is confirmed by the general Western women's approach to Ottoman ladies who constitute, by large, the main focus for the overall considerations about Muslim women.

The complicity Western women shared with their male counterparts results more striking if we consider that – starting from the first decades of the 19th century – European ladies had become the main source of reliability for information regarding two peculiar aspects of Ottoman (and, more generally, Muslim) society(s), namely the *harem* and the *hammam*. These two places, which by that time had already become two *topoi*, were of such interest to European readership that virtually every traveller to the Middle East felt obliged to mention his/her visit to one or both of these "h" locations. However, if it was logical to suppose that male travellers had invented their adventures in *harems* and *hammams* (as these institutions were exclusively reserved to women and hermetically closed to men) by the same token it would stand to reason to believe that

female travellers were talking of something they had actually seen. In other words, Western women had the gift of authenticity, as their declarations about the “h” *topoi* and the ladies who populated them were irrefutably taken for good by the readers; consequently, female authors had even more responsibility – compared to male travellers – in publicizing a correct image of their Eastern sisters.

The stories about the harem, especially, had become so coveted that female travellers’ travelogues had the highest chance to be published and widely read. Richard Bevis, in his *Bibliotheca Cisorientalia*¹ lists only four books on this subject written by European female travellers before 1821, and 245 published by 187 of them in the period between 1821 to 1914. Evidently, the *harem* had turned into a profitable market and Western women took advantage of their position as “trustworthy eyewitnesses”. The evocative word “*harem*” was more than often reported in their titles in order to attract the readers. Also, it had become fashionable for many women writers to underline the uniqueness of their experience and to add how most of the other accounts available on the *harems* were invented and/or unreliable.

It is the case, for example, of Annie Jane Harvey, a well-known British writer who also published some books related to her voyage experiences. In her *Turkish Harems and Circassian Homes*,² Harvey added another interesting remark, i.e., how in the second half of the 19th century it had become more and more difficult to find access to a *harem*, since many European women would ask for admittance in this coveted place.³ Harvey’s attitude toward Turkish women is quite interesting: while underlining their kindness, sweet temperament and good manners, she remarked that Turkish women’s principal happiness occurred in *the care of her children, in eating, in the gossip at the bath, and in the weekly drive to the Valley of the Sweet Waters*.⁴ Thus, while admitting some Turkish ladies’ qualities, her pro-Western observer’s patronizing and snobbish stance is quite clear.

By and large, women observers did not connote the *harem* with the strong erotic hints typically used by most of their male counterparts, though strokes about the “vices” commonly attributed to Turkish ladies,

¹ *Bibliotheca Cisorientalia: An Annotated Checklist of Early English Travel Books on the near and Middle East*, Boston: Holl&Co., 1973.

² London: Hurst&Blackett, 1871.

³ Reported in Reina Lewis and Nancy Micklewright (eds), *Gender, Modernity and Liberty. Middle Eastern and Western Women’s Writing: a critical Sourcebook*, London: Taurus, 2006, p. 103.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

such as smoking, abound in women's account too. Here's a comment by Emmeline Lott, who in the 1860s had been hired as a tutor of the Viceroy of Egypt's son. In her *The English Governess in Egypt. Harem's Life in Egypt and Costantinople*, she writes:

*I soon discovered that my Princess, like the generality of all honourable Turkes, was the slave to tobacco in the form of cigarettes. I cannot help but thinking that such constant use of the weed vitiates their character, and renders stagnant the small stock of stability with which the Almighty has endowed the Ottomans of both sexes.*⁵

Anyway, to most European female writers the harem was the degrading symbol of polygamy and segregation. Though their moral responses on these crucial subject matters were commonly articulated in a compassionate way as they represented *harem* women as victims of a system that enslaved both their bodies and minds, nevertheless Western women's common bias toward the institution of the *harem* resulted in a strong condemnation of Eastern women as passive instruments in their men's hands. As a consequence, female European literature on the topic at its best turned Eastern women's image as sexual objects into the stereotype of the oppressed and downtrodden Muslim women cliché that, unfortunately, does persist nowadays.

When we consider the second "h" *topos*, i.e., the *hammam*, things become even worst. One would expect women to be more sympathetic than men in dealing with a place they could really see and whose benefits they could enjoy, but, on the contrary, European women often showed more bias towards Oriental women than their male counterparts. It must be said that most Western women traveled (or, at least, published their memoirs) in the 19th century, an epoch marked by Puritanism and (apparent) sexophobia. If European men would target the East as the decadent kingdom of libidinousness and idleness (though, at the same time, many of them would indulge in prurient details in order to stimulate their readers' curiosity!), for women the situation was more complicated. While a visit to the *hammam* was almost mandatory to every European woman traveling in the Middle East, for her the contact with other women's nudity and with their washing – a practice that in the 19th century European mentality was confined to the private sphere – was nearly shocking. As a consequence, most women travelers avoided describing the *hammam*, while others expressed their uneasiness and disapprobation.

⁵ London: Peterson&Brothers, 1865, quoted in Lewis and Micklewright, *Gender...*, p. 96.

On entering the chamber a scene presented itself with beggars description. My companion had prepared me for seeing many persons undressed; but imagine my astonishment on finding at least thirty women of all ages and many young girls and children perfectly unclothed. You will scarcely think it possible that no one but ourselves had a vestige of clothing. Persons of all colors, from the black and glossy shade of the negro to the fairest possible hue of complexion, were formed in groups, conversing as though fully dressed, with perfect nonchalance.⁶

This horrified description is by Sofia Lane Pool, an English woman who visited Cairo in the years 1840s and who repeatedly labeled the *hammam* scene as “*disgusting*”. She was visibly offended by this exposure of flesh, by the mingling of women coming from different social classes and not racially segregated. For a Victorian lady used to seeing even table legs covered by a cloth, the impact with frank nudity handled with relaxing attitude by women must have been not only outrageous, but also a further proof of what her illustrious brother (i.e., Edward Lane) went on writing, i.e., Eastern women were promiscuous and uncontrollably licentious.⁷

European women’s discomfort in approaching the *hammam* and its implications such as nudity and, eventually, sexuality, was such that some of them even denied the physical advantages and the indubitable benefits of Turkish baths. Among them we can include Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, a cultivated and progressive Italian noble woman who spent some time in 19th century Turkey, and who defined the *hammam* and its massages as «a real torture».⁸ Analogously, Harriet Martineau, an English feminist who traveled in the Middle East in the same period, described her experience in a *hammam* as a descent to the hell:

Through the dense steam, I saw a reservoir in the middle of the apartment, where, as I need not to say, the water stands to cool for some time before it can be entered: several women were standing in it; and those who had come out were sitting on a high shelf in a row, to steam themselves thoroughly... The crowd and the steam were oppressive, that I wondered how they could stay: but the noise was not to be endured for a moment. Everyone seemed to be gabbling at the top of her voice, and we rushed out after a mere

⁶ Sophia Lane Poole, *The Englishwoman in Egypt: Letters from Cairo written during a Residence there in 1842, 3 and 4 with E.W. Lane by his Sister*, 2 voll., London: Charles Knight & Co., 1844, letter XXIX, vol. II, pp. 173-4.

⁷ Edward William Lane was the author of one of the most authoritative and famous descriptions of 19th century Egypt, namely *Manners and Custom of the Modern Egyptians*, London: Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 1836, repr. London: East-West Publication, 1978.

⁸ Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, *Emina*, Ferrara: Tufani, 1995-97, p. 86. (1st ed. Milano 1858).

*glance, stunned and breathless. To this moment, I find it difficult to think of these creatures as human beings and certainly I never saw anything, even in the lower slave district of the United States, which so impressed me with a sense of the impassable differences of race.*⁹

It is often said that the Orient was (and still is!) the place where many Westerners discovered themselves: this seems to be very true for Harriet Martineau, a well known abolitionist who, while visiting a *hammam* declared that it was the very proof of the insuperability of racial differences!

Western women seemed to be more shocked by the lack of racial segregation shown in the *hammam* than by its other features, though the whole ambiance was unattractive or even repulsive for them. They also insisted on the contraindication of the *hammam* for health and beauty and underlined how painful this experience had been for them:

In an instant I felt as a shrimp, if he feels at all, must feel in boiling water - I was boiled. I looked at my companion: her face was a gorgeous scarlet. In our best Turkish and in faint and imploring accents, we gasped 'Take us away!' All in vain. We had to be boiled and ribbed and boiled and rubbed we must be.

wrote Anne Jane Harvey, who also mentioned the *hammamci*, i.e., the *hammam* keepers, as the evident proof of the steam baths deleterious effects:

*[the hammamci] had been slowly boiling for so many years that they were shriveled and parted out of the semblance even of 'womanity', if such a word may be permitted. Strange to say they had but few wrinkles, but their skin seemed tightly drawn over their faces, as over the bones of a skull, and hung loosely in great folds under their chins and around their throats... [they] had grown so much accustomed to the beated and sulphurous atmosphere in which they pass the greater portion of their days, that a pure and fresher air is quite painful to them.*¹⁰

Western women's overall preoccupation with the unhealthy climate in the *hammam* was somehow based on general assumptions postulated by European scientists who associated people's character and behavior with climate and physical environment. According to these sweeping theories, Oriental and black people were characterized by hot blood, nourished by the sun heat which provoked their high sensuality and dangerous libido. Naturally, women were also included in this explanation, and therefore considered to be lustful creatures devoted to physical pleasure and

⁹ Harriet Martineau, *Eastern Life, Present and Past*, London: Edward Moxon, 1848, p. 544.

¹⁰ Annie Jane Harvey, *Turkish Harems and Circassian Homes*, London: Hurst & Blackett, 1871, p. 75.

prohibited pastimes. The fact that they would even seek to create artificial heat in the *hammam* was looked down upon by both male and female Westerners, and brought as an additional proof of Oriental women's uncontrollable sensual hunger.

However, in reality, it was not the vapor and the heat that bothered Western women, but rather the atmosphere of the *hammam*, which was of plentiful relax and wellbeing, but that they rather perceived as sensual and luxurious:

*The heavy, dense sulphurous vapor that filled the place and almost suffocated me – the subdued laughter and the whispered conversation of ... [the slaves' mistresses, murmuring along in an undercurrent of sound – the sight of nearly three hundred women, only partially dressed, and that in fine linen so perfectly saturated with vapor that it revealed the whole outline of the figure – the busy slaves passing and re-passing, naked from the waist upwards, and with their arms folded upon their bosoms, balancing on their heads piles of fringed or embroidered napkins – groups of lovely girls, laughing, chatting and refreshing themselves with sweetmeats, sherbet and lemonade – parties of playful children, apparently quite indifferent to the dense atmosphere which made me struggle for breath...all combined to form a picture like the illusory semblance of a phantasmagoria, almost leaving me in doubt whether that on which I looked were indeed reality, or the mere creation of a distempered brain.*¹¹

Julia Pardoe, the British historical novelist who wrote this paragraph, connected the *hammam* not only with physical but even with mental degeneration, as the “sulphureous vapor” she was talking about would cause deterioration of the brain. This opinion was supported by a consolidated Western naturalists' theory about Eastern people's inferiority due to the hot climate in which they lived and that was thought to provoke the nervous system deterioration. Besides, Julia Pardoe was scared by her feeling of estrangement experienced by finding herself so exposed to other women's gaze and by her being surrounded by the tangible nudity of usually covered bodies, included her own.

The *hammam* forced European women to confront sexuality and since they were so frightened by their own, they blamed Eastern ladies who instead enjoyed their bath as a customary and pleasant practice. It is not a mere coincidence that Julia Pardoe harshly criticized Lady Montagu's description of a *hammam* and labeled it as an “*unnecessary*” and

¹¹ Julia Pardoe, *Beauties of the Bosphorus*, London: George Virtue, 1840.

“*unwanton*” revelation.¹² In fact, in her celebrated accounts of her Turkish experience, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had written:

The first sofas were covered with cushion and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies; and on the second, their saves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in their state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was non the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian – and most of their skin shinningly white, or adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces... to see so many fine women naked, in different posture, some in conversation, some working, other drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty fancies. In short, it is the women’s coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented.¹³

This letter was written in 1717, more than hundred years before Pardoe’s evidence, but there are thousand years difference in sensibilities between the two descriptions. While Lady Montagu described her *hammam* experience with easiness and freedom, in accordance with the spirit of her age, the desexualized Victorian woman was scandalized by Montagu’s sensual representation of Ottoman ladies. Pardoe was even more distressed by encountering and experiencing the Turkish way of life in which taking care of one’s own body was so important.

In the 19th century Europeans’ minds *hammam* seemed thus to incarnate the place where Eastern people’s indolence and sexual deviance were put in practice and exhibited.

There were very few exceptions to this attitude, and one was represented by Amalia Sola Nizzoli, an Italian woman who spent several years in Egypt, where her relatives worked at court and her husband was occupied in archeological hunting. Invited to the *hammam* by a Turkish officer’s wife, Amalia devoted a great part of her account by describing the rich clothes with which women were dressed, as, she explained, the *hammam* was also a pretext to show off and to please the husband who, later, would lie with their bathed wives hoping that the treatment would

¹² Julia Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan and the Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836*, 2 vols., London: Henry Colburn, 1837, vol. 1, pp. 136-137.

¹³ Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters*, London, 1708-1820, rep. London: Hutchinson, 1988.

render them more fertile. In her account Amalia spoke more about clothes than about nudity, though she also described women's nakedness, the clamor of women's complaining about the excessive heat of the water, and their singing and dancing. However, she depicted a genuine atmosphere of a place whose main use was the *delicious pleasure of massage* and the deep cleanliness of the body. Moreover, instead of talking about illicit relations and sexual deviance, she added a detail that no other European mentioned, i.e., the fact that women after the bath routine, including smoking pipes and drinking sherbets and coffee, recited their prayers, an act that in Western travel literature is seldom described. Though Amalia confessed that on the whole it had been a boring experience, at least she did not indulge in the cliché of the *hammam* as the homoerotic place *par excellence*.¹⁴

Naturally, this brief comment on the general approach shown by Western women who wrote about their experiences in the Ottoman territories during the 19th century does not claim to be exhaustive and conclusive. Though the majority of European ladies perpetrated the cliché of the “poor Muslim women”, others tried to give a more complete portrait of the reality in which Eastern women lived, and even to report on the deep changes that were affecting their destiny. For instance, the feminist journalist Grace Ellison, who repeatedly visited Turkey in the first decades of the 20th century, would carefully inform the *Daily Telegraph* readers on the struggle for emancipation carried by Turkish ladies. She even interviewed and quoted Turkish suffragettes' champion, i.e., Halide Edib Adivar, and reported on Turkish feminist meetings.¹⁵

However, Ottoman feminists' battles were not enough covered by their European sisters. Only after several decades Western women began to reconsider their methodological and hermeneutical approach in order to better understand the “Others”.

¹⁴ Amalia Nizzoli, *Memorie sull'Egitto e specialmente sui costumi delle donne orientali e gli barem, scritte durante il mio soggiorno in quel paese*, 1819-1828, Milano: Perotta, 1841.

¹⁵ Her articles are gathered in the book *An Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem*, London: Methen, 1915. Evidently, the “h” word was still very alluring!

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AN ITALIAN PRINCESS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE 1850–1855

In the 19th c. the members of the Ottoman ruling class considered important to be in contact with Europe and Europeans had both a place and a task in the Imperial palace as well as in the government. Ottomans desired to develop their state in the same way as their Western contemporaries and this fact gave rise to good relations. Lots of European soldiers, bureaucrats, artisans and scientists arrived in the Ottoman Empire for many different reasons and were employed there. They helped to change the Empire and to create a modern state and a new society.¹ The Princess Cristina di Belgiojoso also arrived in the Ottoman Empire at the same time as many other European refugees, after the 1848 risings, and she settled there, in a *çiftlik*, i.e. an estate belonging to the Ottoman Empire, called Çakmakoglu (the son of the flintstone). It was in the district (*kaşa*) of Kızılbel (scarlet pass in a mountain ridge) in the sub-province (*sancak*) of Viranşehir, in the province (*vilayet*) of Kastamonu and its administration was given to Cristina and her descendants in exchange for a fee, from the year 1850 onwards. Some records were found about the period that Cristina spent in Çakmakoglu but, before concentrating on them, it is useful to mention the political events and the social developments that took place in that region as well as in the rest of the Empire from the year 1850 onwards.

In 1848-1849 lots of refugees reached the Ottoman Empire. They came primarily from Austrian lands which had rebelled against the Hapsburgs. They were Hungarian, Polish and Italian. The sultan's country appeared as a refuge, ready to host them. In the 1850s' Ottomans recognized that the Austrian Empire was the lawful owner of the largest part of Northern Italy.² All the same, they welcomed the exiled patriots

¹ Kolağası Mehmed Esad, *Mirât-ı Mekteb-i Harbiyye*, İstanbul: Artin Asaduryan Şirket-i Murettibiye Matabaası, 1310.

² Princess Belgiojoso called "Italian Princess" in the Ottoman texts issued in 1853. Ottoman Archive, Belonged to the Prime-ministry of the Republic of Turkey in İstanbul (hereafter, BOA.), *İrade Meclis-i Vâla*, Dosya No: 284, Gömlek No: 11213, 19 Z. 1269. "İtalyalı Prenses Belciyoza (Belgiojoso) Hristina (Christina) nam mefure bir nefer kızı ile geçen 66 senesi..." (An Italian Princess Belgiojoso and one daughter of hers came a few years before the year 1853, in 1850...).

and this behavior caused a diplomatic tension between the two empires. On the other hand, it pushed England and France to become closer to each other and to support the Ottomans as far as the disputed refugees were concerned. Moreover, the czar of Russia too did not agree that the sultan should give shelter to Polish refugees and he clearly expressed his dissatisfaction about it. International tension went on growing until 1850, since the sultan did not withdraw his protection to the refugees. However, to avoid problems, some of them decided to acquire Ottoman citizenship and also to convert to Islam.³ In the meantime the Patriarchate of Jerusalem increased the international tension between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. In 1853, without any warning, a Russian armada attacked the Ottoman city of Sinop, overwhelming the local garrison and inflicting great loss of life. Some British commercial ships that were in that harbor were also struck. Resulting from this sudden attack the sultan declared war on the czar. Thus, the Crimean war began and in the following years the Ottoman Empire allied with the British (1854), the French (1854) and the Kingdom of Savoy (1855).⁴ Peace was made only in 1856. Before the Crimean war, the Princess Cristina di Belgiojoso reached the Ottoman Empire. She remained there some years and came back to Italy only in 1855, entrusting her estate of Çakmaköğlü to her servant Boulanger.

In 1850, a *çiftlik* of Çakmaköğlü existed in the district (*kaza*) of Kızılbel (today Kadıköy, i.e. the village of a judge) that belonged to the sub-province (*sancak*) of Bolu-Viranşehir (today Eskipazar, i.e. old bazar). Bolu had been ruled by a *voyvoda* (Slavonic, a kind of mayor or governor) since 1692. After 1811-12, when Mahmut II (1808-1839) eliminated the administrative rank of *voyvoda*, Bolu-Viranşehir became an independent sub-province. In that period Viranşehir had fourteen districts and its capital was formed by the two lower-towns of Şehabettin and Viranşehir. Viranşehir was then ruled separately, although it was quoted together with Bolu in Ottoman administrative documents.⁵ In 1845, Viranşehir changed its name to Mecidiye, after the sultan Abdülmecit (1839-1861). The districts that belonged to the administrative unit of Bolu-Viranşehir were officially twelve and they were Safranbolu (Taraklı Borlu), Kızılbel, Eflani, Yörük, Amasra, Bartın, Zerzene, Yenice, Çarşamba, Perşembe, Aktaş and

³ BOA., *Hariciye Siyaseti*, Dosya Nr. (File Number) 1872, 1848-1849.

⁴ David Thomson, *Europe Since Napoleon*, London: Penguin, 1965, pp. 245-250.

⁵ BOA., *Cevdet Maliye* (hereafter *C.ML.*), Dosya No: 218, Gömlek No : 9002, 7.Ca. 1226.

Gölpazarı⁶ but the districts of Kurukavak and Ulus were added later.⁷ Therefore, in special cases, the districts were fourteen. In 1864 Bolu was united to the province (*vilayet*) of Kastamonu. According to some sources, Viranşehir was then changed into a sub-district and, after 1864, united to the district of Çerkeş / Çankırı.⁸

Kızılbel, that belonged to Bolu-Viranşehir, was a district (*kaşa*) at least until 1864. In the Middle Ages, when the Seljuks took that land away from the Bizantine Empire, 100.000 tents of Oğuz Turks (100.000 tents) lived in that zone. During the first period of the Ottoman Empire, that region played an important role in the conflict with the Candaroğulları sultanate. A short time later the Ottoman-İsfendiyar border was settled there. In the 19th c. the district of Kızılbel was divided into twelve administrative units (in Ottoman *divan*, larger than a village and smaller than a district): Divan-ı Burunsuz (formed by 2 villages), Divan-ı Kayı (3 villages), Divan-ı Gölviran (2 villages), Divan-ı Nefs-i Kızılbel (5 villages), Divan-ı Saidler (4 villages), Divan-ı Kara-ağaç (4 villages), Divan-ı Belek (4 villages), Divan-ı Gökviran (6 villages), Divan-ı Kethüdalar (3 villages), Divan-ı Ödemiş (9 villages) and Divan-ı Zora (6 villages). In particular, in 1840–1841, the five villages belonging to Divan-ı Nefs-i Kızılbel were the following: Yusuf Bey, Kadı, Şeyhler, Sundurlar and Bedirler.⁹ The *çiftlik* of Çakmakoğlu was probably close to the centre of the lower town of Kızılbel or belonged to one of those villages.

Before the Princess Belgiojoso's arrival the situation of Viranşehir was the following. Infantry men for the janissary corps were recruited in the region but these paid soldiers were termed 'mediocre'.¹⁰ An artillery unit also coming from the same zone was under the control of the janissary chief.¹¹ Moreover, there were lots of pious foundations (*vakıf*) attached to the Royal Chamber for the Pious Foundation (in Ottoman *Evkâf-ı Hûmayun*) administration in Viranşehir. Records of these

⁶ BOA., *Maliye Masarifat Defteri* (hereafter *MLMSF.d.*), Gömlek No: 4596.

⁷ BOA., *MLMSF.d.*, Gömlek No: 4099.

⁸ BOA., *Evkâf Defterleri* (hereafter *EV.d.*) Gömlek No: 24216.

⁹ BOA., *Maliye Varidat, Temettüat Defterleri* (hereafter *ML VRD. TMT. D.*), Gömlek No: 4242, 1256 (H.), s.41-57. All together 222 pages.

¹⁰ BOA., *Kamil Kepeci Defteri* (hereafter *KK.d.*), Gömlek No: 3254.

¹¹ BOA., *KK.d.*, Gömlek No: 6670.

foundations were kept regularly, especially after 1864.¹² The *Viranşehir vakıfları* were the following:¹³

FOUNDATIONS IN VİRANŞEHİR			
No	NAME OF FOUNDATION	PLACE	TOWN
1	Gazi Süleyman Paşa Vakfı	Safranbolu	Viranşehir
2	Aziz Paşa Evkafı		Viranşehir
3	Salih Paşa Evkafı		Viranşehir
4	Şeyh Arif Evkafı		Viranşehir
5	Koca Süleyman Paşa Evkafı		Viranşehir
6	Ahmet Dede Evkafı		Viranşehir
7	Sinan Paşa Evkafı		Viranşehir
8	Hacı Üçpınarı Evkafı	Viranşehir	Çerkeş Kazası
9	Eyüb Nebi Türbesi Evkafı	Viranşehir	
10	Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han Evkafı	Amasra	Viranşehir
11	Gevher Sultan Vakfı		Viranşehir
12	Hamide Hatun Vakfı		Viranşehir
13	İsa Bey Vakfı (For bridge)		Viranşehir
14	Akşemseddinzade Şeyh Ömer ve Şeyh Süleyman Vakfı		Viranşehir

Royal lands too, belonging to *Ayşe Sultan*, a relative of Abdülhamid I, existed in Bolu-Viranşehir since 1749.¹⁴ Documents testify that there was also a regular postal service in the zone in 1849, but it was not very reliable because of the bad condition of the horses used for carrying the

¹² BOA., *Evkaf Defterleri* (hereafter *EV.d.*), Gömlek No: 12222.

¹³ “Gazi Süleyman Paşa Vakfı” BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 14066; “Aziz Paşa Evkafı, Salih Paşa Evkafı, Şeyh Arif Evkafı, Koca Süleyman Paşa Evkafı, Ahmet Dede Evkafı etc.” BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 16070; “Sinan Paşa Evkafı”, BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 17339; “Hacı Üçpınarı Evkafı” BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 24216; “Eyüb Nebi Türbesi”, BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 242777; “Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han evkafı”, BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 17736; “Gevher Sultan, Hamide Hatun vakfı”, BOA., *EV.d.*, Gömlek No: 21053; “İsa Bey vakfı”, BOA., *C.NF.*, Dosya No: 21, Gömlek No: 1027, 29 M. 1179 (1765); “Akşemseddinzade Şeyh Ömer ve Şeyh Süleyman evkafı”, BOA., *C.EV.*, Dosya No: 60, Gömlek No: 2993, 6.L. 1204 (1789); “Fatih’in hocası Akşemseddin’in olu Şeyh Ömer ve evlatlarına Viranşehir’de Kapıcılar köyünde zaviyedarlık...” BOA., *C.EV.*, Dosa No: 184, Gömlek No: 9183, 8 S. 1184 (1770).

¹⁴ BOA., *C.SM.*, Dosya No: 61, Gömlek No: 3067, 24.Ca. 1163.

mail.¹⁵ In the same year there was also an increase in crimes, primarily the kidnapping of young girls.¹⁶ Ahmet Muhtar was the governor (*kaım-i makam=kaymakam*) of Viranşehir in 1849-1850¹⁷ but in 1850 his place was taken by Hüseyin Hüsni. This governor undertook the task of preparing the boom and column bracket necessary for the Ottoman navy.¹⁸ At that time Mustafa Efendi was the chief governor (*mutasarıf*) of the region.¹⁹ In 1851 Serbian Mihail got the permission to build a merchant ship in Filyos, near the beach.²⁰ In 1852, in Viranşehir Greeks were allowed to ring the bell for religious ceremonies held in their church.²¹ In the same year Hristaki, a citizen of the Greek Kingdom, bought lumber for building a ship.²² In 1853, Hüseyin Hüsni became again governor of Viranşehir²³ but he was soon forced to leave his position because he was appointed *kapıcıbaşı* (chief porter) of the Imperial Palace. Thus, Rıza Bey took his place.²⁴ In 1836, in Viranşehir, 30,000 gun-holders (magazine-holders) were produced using hornbeam and they were sent to the imperial armory in Istanbul.²⁵ In 1838 Bartın provided wood for the palace which was built by Atiye Sultan, the daughter of Mahmut II, in Kuru Çeşme.²⁶ Between 1847-1848, also marble was found in Viranşehir and sent to Istanbul.²⁷ In 1851, people in Ulus district were allowed to produce gun powder.²⁸ In the same year the bridge in the Kızılbel district was repaired.²⁹ In 1852 Viranşehir was flooded, resulting from hail and rain, which caused great damage in the region.³⁰ In 1860 too there was heavy

¹⁵ BOA., *Sadaret Evrakı Umum Mektubi Evrakı* (hereafter *A.MKT.UM.*), Dosya No: 11, Gömlek No: 38, 6.Ca.1266.

¹⁶ BOA., *A.MKT.UM.*, Dosya No: 13, Gömlek No: 18, 8.Ca. 1266.

¹⁷ BOA., *A.MKT.UM.*, Dosya No: 25, Gömlek No: 29, 7.L.1266.

¹⁸ BOA., *C.BH.*, Dosya No: 225, Gömlek No: 10461, 29 B. 1267.

¹⁹ BOA., *A.MKT.NZD.*, Dosya No: 32, Gömlek No: 88, 21 C. 1267.

²⁰ BOA., *Hariciye Mektubi* (hereafter *HR.MKT.*), Dosya No: 45, Gömlek No: 72, 28 C. 1268.

²¹ BOA., *ADVN.MHM.*, Dosya No: 10, Gömlek No: 45, 20 Ş. 1269.

²² BOA., *İ.MVL.*, Dosya No: 281, Gömlek No: 11024, 15 Za. 1269.

²³ BOA., *A.TŞF.*, Dosya No: 18, Gömlek No: 118, 17 L. 1270.

²⁴ BOA., *A.MKT.UM.*, Dosya No: 182, Gömlek No: 6, 24 Ca. 1271.

²⁵ BOA., *C.AŞ.*, Dosya No: 673, Gömlek No: 28253, 24 B. 1252.

²⁶ BOA., *C.SM.*, Dosya No: 40, Gömlek No: 2025, 24 M. 1254.

²⁷ BOA., *A.MKT.*, Dosya No: 146, Gömlek No: 57, 8 L. 1264.

²⁸ BOA., *A.MKT.MVL.*, Dosya No: 52, Gömlek No: 82, 14 B. 1268.

²⁹ BOA., *İ.MVL.*, Dosya No: 245, Gömlek No: 8894, 20 Za. 1268.

³⁰ BOA., *A.MKT.NZD.*, Dosya No: 61, Gömlek No: 91, 8 M. 1269.

rain and a flood in Viranşehir which destroyed a shop belonging to fur dresser Samuel,³¹ later re-built with two storeys.³²

In the 1850s' also high-class people lived in Kızılbel district, in the Viranşehir region. In particular there were the Kahveci-zade (Tahmiscioğulları, i.e. the sons of the coffee seller), one of the most wealthy families since 1790³³ and the Hazinedaroğulları (the sons of the treasure-holder) which was the other most important family in the region.³⁴ They lived in the Kayı village and were related to the Hazinedaroğulları who ruled Samsun. They reached this high rank because they were once responsible for the Treasury (*Hazine-i Amire*) of the Imperial Palace, as their name reminds. Another well known family in Kızılbel was that of the governor Mehmet Ağa. Its founder was another person with the same name, who became very rich and died in 1810.³⁵ Another governor, relative of Mehmet Ağa, was Hüseyin Ağa. Since 1832 he had fought, together with his son, against a bandit belonging to the well-known Tahmiscioğulları (Kahveci-zade) family. The Tahmiscioğulları were then helping Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Paşa (rebel governor of Ottoman Egypt) in his struggle against the westernization of the Empire carried out by the sultan Mahmut II. An Ottoman governor said that this happened because both belonged to the Egyptian *mamluk* class. In Kızılbel and in Kastamonu there was a rebellion. In 1832 both Hüseyin Ağa and his son Musa Ağa warned the other rulers and the wealthy families of the region against the Tahmiscioğulları.³⁶

At the same time Hüseyin Ağa, the real ruler of Viranşehir and Çankırı, decided to fight against the Tahmiscioğulları with the help of his son Musa Ağa. This latter wrote that he had killed forty people during a skirmish that took place in Araç, in the region of Kastamonu.³⁷ The Tahmiscioğulları succeeded in gathering lots of armed men by random and they terrorized those who were loyal to Mahmut II. Their attitude towards the sultan and the Ottoman government reminded the inhabitants of the region of the legend of Köroğlu (a kind of Anatolian Robin-Hood). Therefore, people supported the Tahmiscioğulları against Hüseyin Ağa, the governor of Viranşehir-Kızılbel, and his son Musa Ağa. Near

³¹ BOA., *AMKT.UM.*, Dosya No: 454, Gömlek No: 71, 2.Ş.1277.

³² BOA., *AMKT.DV.*, Dosya No: 197, Gömlek No: 99, 29 M. 1278.

³³ BOA., *C.ZB.*, Dosya No: 47, Gömlek No: 2324, 11 N. 1205.

³⁴ BOA., *AMKT.UM.*, Dosya No: 16, Gömlek No: 35, 14 B. 1266.

³⁵ BOA., *C.ADL.*, Dosya No: 23, Gömlek No: 1404, 9 C. 1225.

³⁶ BOA., *HAT.*, Dosya No: 689, Gömlek No: 3380/D, 20 N. 1248.

³⁷ BOA., *HAT.*, Dosya No: 1233, Gömlek No: 48017/A, 20 N. 1248.

Kastamonu the supporters of the Tahmiscioğulları suffered heavy losses.³⁸ After the first actions against them, Musa Ağa moved with his troops among which there were about 1000 armed knights.³⁹ The leader of the Tahmiscioğulları, who was in Kastamonu, was ambushed with his approximately 1,100 armed men while striving to meet Musa Ağa. During the conflict about 700-800 bandits were enslaved, 300 were killed and one of their leaders, Cin Alioğlu Mehmet, was arrested and sent to Istanbul for capital punishment.⁴⁰ After the conflict, Musa Ağa set out to catch the Tahmiscioğulları leaders but they had left Kastamonu and he couldn't reach them.⁴¹

Once the riots ended, Musa Ağa and Hüseyin Ağa began to compete for the post of governor. In the meantime, people began to write petitions to the Sublime Porte against them and their cruelty.⁴² This 'campaign of complaints' was organized by the Tahmiscioğulları; it was intense and in 1833 it had success: Hüseyin and Musa were forced to leave their charges.⁴³ As there was no longer a governor in Viranşehir in 1834, Dede Mustafa Ağa, the governor of Kastamonu, assumed the task of ruling also Viranşehir for some time.⁴⁴ Musa Ağa had asked to be heard in Istanbul in order to talk about the injustice his family was suffering,⁴⁵ but soon the governor of Kastamonu succeeded in taking his place: Musa's petition was given to the Porte together with another letter where Dede Mustafa Ağa's behavior in Viranşehir was praised. This last belonged to the highest and wealthy class of the region and, within a short time, he was appointed as governor. He also assumed the task of collecting people's complaints against Hüseyin and Musa's unlawful and cruel behavior.⁴⁶ Dede Mustafa Ağa sent a report to Istanbul in 1834-35 where he said that they both had oppressed the inhabitants of the place. Moreover, he suggested that they were changing their houses (*konak*) into fortified castles and, in this way, he aroused a great anxiety in Istanbul.⁴⁷ The governor of Kastamonu achieved his aim and in 1834-35 Hüseyin

³⁸ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 1233, Gömlek No: 48018/C, 22 N. 1248.

³⁹ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 1233, Gömlek No: 48018/A, 29 Z. 1248.

⁴⁰ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 689, Gömlek No: 33380/E, 29 Z. 1248.

⁴¹ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 482, Gömlek No: 23638, 29 Z. 1248.

⁴² BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 698, Gömlek No: 33702/M, 29 Z. 1249.

⁴³ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 1324, Gömlek No: 51669/C, 15 C. 1250.

⁴⁴ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 690, Gömlek No: 33405, 29 Z. 1250.

⁴⁵ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 690, Gömlek No: 33405/B, 1 Z 1250.

⁴⁶ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 690, Gömlek No: 33405, 29 Z. 1250.

⁴⁷ BOA., *HAT*, Dosya No: 1324, Gömlek No: 51669/A, 29 Z. 1250.

and Musa were convicted and imprisoned.⁴⁸ While they were in prison, their debts were paid.⁴⁹ Musa Ağa's son, a descendant of Kara Mehmet Ağa, managed a big farm (*çiftlik*) in the district (*kaşa*) of Ulus, belonging to the sub-province (*sancak*) of Viranşehir and, when he died, his son inherited the estate.⁵⁰

The descendants of Kara Mehmet, Hüseyin Ağa and Musa Ağa were called Kara Mehmetoğulları. One of them was Osman bin Osman, a medium-height, dark-bearded fellow, who lived with his brothers in lower-Kızılbil.⁵¹ In 1835 Hüseyin and Musa were set free, after the payment of their debts. There is no other record about Hüseyin Ağa, therefore it is probable that he died either in the prison or immediately after his release. After Musa Ağa was set free, he began to work in the *İstabl-ı Amire* (the Royal Stable) in the Topkapı.⁵² He died in Istanbul before 1866.

In 1850 Cristina di Belgiojoso hired the *çiftlik* of Çakmaköğlü. A *çiftlik* was a kind of fief; it belonged to the Ottoman state but its use could be sold and bought. It was only with the westernization of the Empire, which had place at the middle of the 19th c., that *çiftliks* were changed into private properties, and this happened to Çakmaköğlü too, while the Italian princess was there.

At the beginning of her travel book *La vie intime et la vie nomade en Orient* Cristina briefly tells the story of the owners of this estate. She describes the siege of Viranşehir and the destruction of the city, but she considers Musa 'son of Osman' (and not of Hüseyin) and tells that he was beheaded after three days of prison in Istanbul according to the sultan's order and that his elder brother married his first widow. Cristina also says that she bought the estate from Musa's brothers and that one of them accompanied her in the first part of her journey to Jerusalem in 1851.⁵³

On the contrary, it seems that Musa Ağa sold the estate to Hasan Çavuşoğulları (i.e. the sons of the messenger) in exchange of his debts. A record shows that the *çiftlik* belonged to İsmail and his brothers, sons of Hasan Çavuşoğlü. According to this document Cristina arrived in

⁴⁸ BOA., *HAT.*, Dosya No: 1324, Gömlek No: 51669, 29 Z. 1250.

⁴⁹ BOA., *HAT.*, Dosya No: 1321, Gömlek No: 51586, 29 Z. 1251.

⁵⁰ BOA., *A.MKT.DV.*, Dosya No: 195, Gömlek No: 70, 12 M. 1278.

⁵¹ BOA., *Malîye Varidat, Temettüat Defterleri* (hereafter *ML. VRD. TMT. D.*), Gömlek No: 4242, 1256 (H.), s. 41-43.

⁵² BOA., *A.MKT.MHM.*, Dosya No: 762, Gömlek No: 52, 25 Ra. 1283.

⁵³ Cristina di Belgiojoso, *Vita intima e vita nomade in Oriente*, Giorgio Cusattelli (ed), Como: Ibis, 1993, pp. 23-29.

Çakmakoğlu along with a company formed by nine persons, including her fourteen-year-old daughter Maria. Letters exchanged between the Imperial Manager (*Hariciye Nazırı*) for Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye Nezareti*) and the governor of Kızılbel district tell that Cristina had hired the *çiftlik* for ten years, in order to buy it. Therefore, at that time, she and her companions were only guests in the Ottoman Empire. In 1850 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs gave her the permission to live at Çakmakoğlu.⁵⁴ When the princess was in Istanbul, the owner of the estate, Besime Hatun, assented that her husband Hasan Çavuşoğlu İsmail was considered responsible for her farm and *konak*. Thus, on 10 March 1850, Hasan Çavuşoğlu İsmail was invited by the Porte to reach Istanbul to settle the matter.⁵⁵ Hasan Çavuşoğlu İsmail probably got the *konak* and big farm registered on his and his brothers' names while dealing with the matter in İstanbul with the approval of his wife, Besime Hatun. One might suppose that he divorced her later on. In fact, archival papers indicate that İsmail, Hasan Çavuşoğlu's descendant whose farm Cristina bought, divorced his wife and was sentenced to pay his debts to his new wife Ayşe Hanım in 1854–55.⁵⁶ Thus, starting from this evidence one may think that he divorced Besime Hatun, married Ayşe Hanım and then divorced again. A plausible explanation of this mystery might come from Cristina's travel book. She claims that Musa Ağa's widow (who might have been Besime Hatun) married his (step-)brother (who might have been Hasan Çavuşoğlu İsmail).

The Princess Belgiojoso gave 6,000 piasters to İsmail for the estate but she registered it under the names of both her daughter Maria and the *zimmîye* (Ottoman Female Christian citizen) Ocean, resident in Yenişehir, village of Karabük. She bought also other shares of the big estate of Çakmakoğlu from İsmail's brothers, Hasan, Halil and Musa Ağa, descendant of Hasan Çavuşoğlu, and she gave 5,000 piaster to each of

⁵⁴ BOA, *Hariciye Mektubi*, Dosya No: 38, Gömlek No: 9, 9 C. 1267.

⁵⁵ BOA., *A.MKT.UM.*, Dosya No: 10, Vesika No: 49, 1266.04.25 (H.)- 10 March 1850. "Besime Hatunun zevci Safranbolu'da Hasan Çavuşzade İsmail Beyden mukdem vaki olan muharefetleri cihetiyle kaza-yı mezburede vaki nisf konak ve çiftlik ve zarar davalarına mezbure tarafından vekil tayin olunup Divan Çavuşlarından Hasan Çavuş İsmail bin Ali mübaşir tain olunarak mahalline gönderilmiş ise de henüz mesneviyesi mümkün olunamadığından mir-i mumailiyyin la-ecl-ülizafı mübaşir-i merkume terfiken Dersaadete ihzarı hususunu mezbure ba arzuhal istida eylemiş olmağla mir-i mumileyy Dersadete ihzar olunmak için keyfiyetin işarı hususuna mübaderet eylemeniz şiyakında şukka."

⁵⁶ BOA., *A.MKT.DV.*, Dosya No: 80, Gömlek No: 22, 6 N. 1271.

them. Cristina bought all the shares, but that of İsmail himself,⁵⁷ and registered them all under the name of Ocean and Maria. However, these sales were not registered as a whole, but each party had a deed of their own.

In this period the Ottoman Empire was striving on the way of westernization and a series of administrative innovations had been introduced since 1841. First of all, Western laws were issued in some provinces to prove them. One of these laws allowed Ottoman citizens to become the real owners of state properties of which, till that moment, had been only tenants.⁵⁸ The documents concerning the Italian princess testify that Kızılbel too was one of the zones where the new laws became immediately effective. In 1851 the administration of this *kaşa* applied the new cadastre rules. Cristina was lucky and she got Çakmakoğlu just one year before them. In this way in 1851 she, or better her daughter Maria, could become the real owner of the estate, hired the previous year. However, according to a law issued on 15 May 1851, foreigners who weren't citizen of the Empire could not become owners of land properties. Thus, Maria, to continue to manage the estate, had to ask her mother's permission and to become Ottoman citizen. To settle the matter an assembly was gathered. Halil, Hasan and Musa, as heirs of Hasan Çavuşoğlu, confirmed that they had sold their shares for 15,000 piaster; their brother İsmail, who had received 6,000 piaster, was in Istanbul and could not be present in the court of Kızılbel. The assembly confirmed the sale and Maria was recognized by the central authorities as the real owner as long as she kept the status of Ottoman citizen. However, she was liable to lose the property, if she asked to be recognized as a refugee, fleeing from the Austrian Empire.⁵⁹

In spring 1851 the princess decided to go to Jerusalem. She left Çakmakoğlu in the care of her administrator who could not take his salary (3,000 piasters) until she had returned. The journey began with a visit to Ankara, where Cristina stopped for a fortnight. In her travel book she

⁵⁷ İsmail, descendant of the Hasan Çavuşoğlu from whom Cristina bought the farm, divorced his wife Ayşe Hanım and was sentenced to pay his debts to her in 1854-55. BOA., *A.MKT.DV.*, Dosya No: 80, Gömlek No: 22, 6 N. 1271.

⁵⁸ This regulation widely applied within the Empire in 1858. Stanford J. Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye*, İstanbul: E. Yayınları, 1983, pp. 120-122.

⁵⁹ BOA., *İrade Meclis-i Vela*, Dosya No: 284, Gömlek No: 11213, 19 Z. 1269

describes the city and the pious foundation of Rufai's.⁶⁰ In 1853 she came back and she immediately applied to the ministry of Ottoman Foreign Affairs and to the president of the Council of the Ministeries of the Austrian Emperor for her estates in the region of Lombardia, part of the Austrian Empire. The administrator not only had made a debt of 16,000 piasters but he also asked the 3,000 of his salary to the French ambassador in Istanbul. The explanation for this strange request to a person who was neither an Italian nor an Austrian subject and the positive answer of the French official was that they both came from the same region, the Alsace. She wrote also to «Şualir de Bron» ('Chevalier de Bruck', i.e. the Austrian ambassador in Istanbul, the knight Charles de Bruck) asking him to write to the Imperial cabinet in Vienna. She was looking for help to get back her estates which had been blocked by Austria, otherwise she could not keep her promises and pay her debts.⁶¹

The first of July 1853 was a tragic day for the princess and the inhabitants of Çakmakoglu. One of the Italian servants stabbed her. In the Ottoman documents he is called «Balkimor Bernardo», while in the Italian sources he was Bernardo Lorenzoni from Bergamo. He was a veteran of Austrian army and had served the princess for two years as warehouse-keeper. Ottoman authorities kept him on 24 February 1853. According to the Ottoman records he was imprisoned on 24 February 1853, but this date does not tie in with Cristina's own letters which report the first of July as the day of the crime. On 25 October 1853 he was judged by an Ottoman court of justice. He was convicted. While in prison he got sick and was sent to Italy to recover. Then he was brought back to serve in prison the rest of his penalty.⁶²

In 1854 the «Sardunya» government (the government of the kingdom of Sardinia)⁶³ charged a doctor to examine people who lived in the districts of Viranşehir.⁶⁴ Probably this information makes reference to the Princess Belgiojoso herself. In those months the Austrian government asked her to come back to Italy to get her estates, otherwise everything would have been seized by the state, but she had been wounded and was

⁶⁰ Semavi Eyice, *Ankara'nın Eski Bir Resmi*, Ankara: Vekam, 1972, p. 83; Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Asie Mineure et Syrie. Souvenirs d'un voyage*, Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1858, pp. 38-43.

⁶¹ BOA., *HR.TO.*, Dosya No: 418, Gömlek No: 149, 10.08.1853.

⁶² BOA., *HR.MKT.*, Dosya No: 65, Gömlek No: 52, 22 M. 1270.

⁶³ The dukes of Savoy and Piemonte became kings of Sardinia in 1720 and of Italy in 1861.

⁶⁴ BOA., *A.MKT.NZD.*, Dosya No: 148, Gömlek No: 90, 28 Ş. 1271.

not yet well. For this reason she asked for a European doctor to certificate her health and the reasons of her delay in fulfilling the imperial order.⁶⁵

In 1855 Cristina and her daughter Maria came back to Italy. They trusted their Ottoman estate to a new administrator, Boulanger, who lived close to Safranbolu, in Yenişehir. In the following period a new administrative division established that Çakmakoglu was now part of Yenişehir. In the meantime also Maria's status had changed. She was no longer only Maria, the illegitimate daughter of the princess. Her mother had succeeded in legitimizing her and now, also in the Ottoman documents, she was Maria Cristina di Belgiojoso.

On 15 February 1864 Boulanger wrote a letter to the Porte asking for justice. In December 1863 the owner, Maria Cristina, had given the permission to let her estate for a period of eight years for 2,000 piastre. The new tenants were İsmail Ağa, manager in Ottoman *müdür* of Kirebli and his secretary (*katip*) Mehmet Efendi. A few days after the agreement, Mehmet Efendi lost his position and soon after he was convicted for unlawful actions, while İsmail Ağa too feared to loose his position. At this point they declared they wanted to cancel the agreement. In the meanwhile Boulanger had gone to Istanbul, leaving behind his wife and his son Constantine («Kostanti») who kept the original lease contract. The administrator had gone away for forty days when his son too left the farm together with his mother and his servants İbrahim, Osman and Ali. On his way to Istanbul he was arrested by Molla Mustafa and by the ruler of the village, the *muhtar* Mehmet Ali, under İsmail Ağa's orders, even if he had the *müür tezkeresi* (i.e. the Ottoman official travel permission paper) which was seized together with other documents. Costantine's mother protested against her son's arrest and he was set free but the documents were not given back to him. Among them there was also the original lease contract.

Boulanger made an official complaint against the two officials who had taken the deed from his son. İsmail Ağa threatened Boulanger and his family and said that he would set fire to the house (*konak*) in the Çakmakoglu estate. He also sent his shepherds there to cut the branches of the fruit trees to feed their animals. Moreover, he invited the neighbors to create a new fence and a new road which divided the estate into two parts.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Cfr. Cristina's letter to Thierry, dated 2 August 1853, the transcription of which was kindly given to me by Sandro Fortunati.

⁶⁶ BOA., HR.TO., Dosya No: 446, Gömlek No: 2, 15.02.1864.

In conclusion, Ottoman records give some new information about the Princess of Belgiojoso's life in the Ottoman Empire. The *çiftlik* she bought, Çakmaköglü, was a big estate with fields, fruit trees and a *konak*. Till now scholars were not sure of where this place really settled was but now it is possible to identify it more clearly. It was in the *kaşa* of Kızılbel (now Kadıköy), in the *sancak* of Viranşehir (now Eskipazar), in the *vilayet* of Kastamonu. It probably was near the lower-town of Kızılbel. Cristina paid 21,000 piasters for it and she registered it under the name of her daughter Maria (then called Maria Cristina, «Maria Kristino»). According to Ottoman laws, in order to hold the estate, Maria asked and obtained Ottoman citizenship, another piece of information that Italian scholars were unaware of. When the two women came back to Italy they left as administrator one of their servants, Boulanger, who took care of it, together with his son Constantine, in the years 1855-1863.

RESIDENTS OF KIZILBEL DISTRICT (LOWER-TOWN) - 1840			
1	Kara Mehmetoğlu Osman bin Osman (a man of middle height, dark bearded)	1366 piaster estates (31 square meters of field, 2 square meters vine-yard)	225 piaster His animals
2	Ömer Beyoğlu Ahmed bin Ahmed (a man of middle height, lack of beard)	1122 piaster estates (27 square meters of field, 1 square meters vine-yard)	1090 piaster His animals
3	Kara Mehmetoğlu Hüseyin bin Ahmet (a man of middle height, lack of beard)	1488 piaster estates (33 square meters of field, 1 square meters vine-yard)	1021 piaster His animals
4	Kara Mehmedoğlu Süleyman bin Süleyman (a man of middle height, ...)	942 piaster estates (22 square meters of field, 1 square meters vine-yard)	324 piaster His animals
5	Katırcıoğlu Ahmet bin Veli (a man of middle height, white-bearded)	1624 piaster estates (34 square meters of field, 2 square meters vine-yard)	460 piaster His animals

DOCUMENT

BOA, *İMVL*, Dosya No: 284, Gömlek No: 11213, 19.Z.1269 (H.), “Viranşehir sancağında Mariya'nın almış olduğu çiftlik madenine dair.”, 2.

Atufetlu, Efendim, Hazretleri.

Meclis-i Vala'dan kaleme alınıp evrak-ı müteferriyasıyla beraber menzur-u ali-i hazret-i padişahi buyurulmak için arz ve takdim kılınan mazbata mealinden müstefad olduğu vechile İtalya'lu Prenses Belciyoza

(Belgiojoso) Cristina nam müstemine kızı Marya ile Viranşehir Sancağına tabi Kızıl Bel Kazası'nda kain Çakmak Çiftliği'nde ikamet ederek muaharen çiftlik-i mezkuru temlik etmesi üzerine bunun memnuiyeti ifade olundukta mersun Marya anasının rızasıyla tabiyet-i devlet-i aliye-yi kabul ile sened dahi vermiş olduğuna ve ihrac ettirilen mukteza-yı derkenarına nazaran kendisi bu sıfatta bulundukça emlak ve arazi almasında beis olmayacağından ileride müstemelik iddiasında bulunur ise fesh olunmak şartıyla aldığı mahallerin uhdesinde ibkasıyla beraber teba-yı ecnebiyyenin emlak ve arazi temlik eylemeleri hakkında müessis olan memnuiyetin devamına itina olunması hususunun Kastamonu Valisi Devletlü Paşa hazretlerine işarı tezkir olunmuş ise de ol babda her ne vechile irade-i seniyye-i cenab-ı şehinşahi mütealik ve şerefsüdur buyurulur ise, ana göre hareket olunacağı beyanıyla tezkire-i senaveri terkim kılındı efendim. 19 Cemaziyelevvel [12]69.

To the Dear Exalted Master, (To the Governor of the Kastamonu).

It is so far understood from the text, prepared in the Ottoman chamber of the Assembly and submitted to the Sultan for approval, that the Italian Princess Belgiozoza (Belgiojoso) Cristina and her daughter Maria settled down in the big farm, named Çakmak (flint-stone) which is in the district of Kızılbel, in the sub-province of Viranşehir. They hired the big farm, intending to own the estate later on. Maria is therefore accepted as an Ottoman subject with her mother's approval and wish. According to the verdict of the Assembly and the Sultan, Maria can have the right of using the estate, bought by her mother, as long as she remains Ottoman. Besides this condition, if she demands and declares herself a refugee in the Ottoman State, she will loose the ownership of the estate. Maria has also obtained the right of owning and buying any estate within the Ottoman State. Nevertheless the governor of Kastamonu priory warned to apply the regulation, which does not allow foreign citizens to own and buy any estate within the Ottoman State. (Maria has been exempted from the regulation since she became Ottoman subject). However this regulation could be changed according to the Sultan's command and his command should have to be applied even if against the regular application. This order is therefore issued by the Sultan's will. 28 February 1853.

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CRISTINA'S DAYS IN ÇAKMAKOĞLU

In the spring of 1850 Princess Cristina di Belgiojoso left Athens for the Ottoman Empire. She wanted to forget the past, the days spent in Rome taking care of wounded soldiers during the siege of the city as well as the period spent in Athens when both her ancient enemies and her old friends competed in despising her and her activities during the gloomy days of the Roman Republic. She was still a princess but her estates and almost all her money had been seized by the Austrian government. She was an exile who could only go travelling in far off countries but, at the same time, she desired a new life in close contact with nature. The Levant, the East, the Ottoman Empire meant for her this new life, far from Europe and her countrymen's meanness and envy. A new world, full of fascination, stood in front of her.

Princess Cristina, with her twelve-year-old daughter Maria, the English nursemaid Mrs. Mary Ann Parker and some close friends, left Athens by the French steamer *Télémaque*. The first Ottoman city they reached was Izmir. It appeared to them as the town of an exotic Arab novel, springing up from the sea, with the minarets rising against the sky like strange water plants. The streets were dark and dirty but the women, who opened their houses for the princess, were as beautiful as Ariosto's heroines. She saw harems, she visited the Jewish quarter where there was a school with only one teacher and about one hundred pupils. When she came back onboard a delegation of Italian refugees, with musical instruments, sang an Italian war song for her. Small boats, full of Italians accompanied the *Télémaque* for a while as it was a cortege.¹

After some days the ship reached Constantinople. Here a dark forest of houses which sprang up from the bowels of the earth greeted foreign visitors. In the grand bazar Persian and Indian *cachemire* fabrics were mixed up with *percalles* coming from Switzerland and France. In the

¹ Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, *Ricordi dell'esilio*, Luigi Severgnini (ed), Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni Paoline, 1978, pp. 148-150. (*Souvenirs dans l'exile*, «Le National», Paris, 5 Sep.-12 Oct. 1850!; Milano: Istituto Editoriale Italiano, 1946²); Alberta Fabris-Grube, *Una principessa italiana in Turchia: Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso*, in *La conoscenza dell'Asia e dell'Africa in Italia nei secoli 18 e 19*, a cura di U. Marazzi, vol. I/2, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1984, pp. 768-784.

shops pieces of green soap, Peking fans, Nanking ink-pots were together with sweet perfumes. Cristina compared Mevlevi dances and Bektashi songs to some European performances: perspiration was the same but the dervishes wanted to gain religious ecstasy while the others desired only a moment of pleasure. She saw also the cemetery: a cool and sweet place, full of people, where horrible wild dogs used to play havoc with bones and corpses. She took a walk at the Sweet Waters of Europe where Ottoman high class beautiful girls went for a walk with no veil at all on their faces. She met musicians, eunuchs, gypsies and Turkish men smoking their pipes. Among her acquaintances there was also Giuseppe Donizzetti, the brother of the most famous Gaetano, who taught music in Istanbul and prepared for her a concert performed by his Turkish students. She was also invited to inspect a Turkish company of soldiers and she saluted them.²

That summer the Italian princess rented the house of an Armenian, in a small village two miles far from Constantinople, probably at Ortaköy: it was near the Bosphorus, between one of the sultan's palaces and the valide's house.³ In those days the Ottoman Empire was a safe refuge for European exiles and the sultan Abdul Mecid I (1823-1861) was friendly with them. In the meanwhile she was looking for a better solution. Her idea was to create a «colony» for Italian refugees. Many persons had left Italy for the Near East after the riots of the years 1848-1849. Some of them stopped in Greece which had become an independent state in 1830, but many had reached Constantinople and other Ottoman places. Cristina had begun to think of gathering together her fellow countrymen when she was in Athens but the Greeks who had promised money and help for this enterprise had disappeared at a certain moment leaving her alone with her hopes and desires. In Constantinople the American ambassador and the Savoy diplomat, the *barone* Romualdo Tecco, encouraged her in this enterprise. First of all she decided to find a place in the capital itself but an important Ottoman person suggested her to buy a "little kingdom" in Anatolia. In July she went there to see the place and then came back to the capital to buy it.⁴

² Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, *Ricordi*, pp. 160-172, 180.

³ Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, *Ricordi*, p. 173: a letter from «Orta Ku» is edited, it may be a misspelling for Ortaköy. The sultan's palace of Bolmahbaçe, not very far from there, was built just in that period, between 1843 and 1856.

⁴ July 1850, Constantinople, Cristina's letter to Thierry. Many thanks to Sandro Fortunati who collected the princess's letters and gave me the transcriptions of the letters exchanged between Cristina and Thierry.

The estate, called in Turkish *çiftlik*, was near the towns of Cesarea and Viranşehir. Princess Cristina called it the “valley of Çakmakoglu”. It was at six hours from Safranbolu, 16 hours from Balca on the Black Sea and about 20 hours from Constantinople.⁵ In one of her letters⁶ she describes the place in this way:

Depuis plus d'en moins, je vie dans une vallée, séquestrée du monde civilisé et goûtant le repos moral le plus parfait. Je voudrais vous donner une idée de ces lieux, mais il sont si différents de ceux auxquels vous êtes accoutumé, que je trouve la tâche difficile. Avant d'arriver dans ma vallée, en venant d'Occident, on marche quelques heures sur la pente de montagnes stériles, couvertes de ruines qui appartenaient jadis à la ville de Césarée en Cappadoce, à ses faubourgs et aux villages environnants. L'on descend ensuite au fond d'un ravin et l'on marche quelque peu à côté d'un fleuve ou d'un torrent qui descend vers nord. Tout à coup, au tournant d'un coteau, on aperçoit une scène toute nouvelle. Les montagnes se dédoublent, c'est-à-dire que devant elles, une rangée de collines bien boisées les relie à la plaine. Au pied de ces collines, des champs d'une assez grande étendue descendent par une pente douce jusqu'au bord du fleuve, tandis que d'autres pénètrent dans les sinuosités des montagnes et forment des vallons délicieux. Des sources jaillissent à chaque pas. Enfin la vallée se termine du côté du nord, en se resserrant dans une gorge étroite et boisée, au fond de laquelle le fleuve roule avec fracas. Juste au milieu de la vallée, entre le sud et le nord, la façade tournée à l'est, sur la lisière qui sépare le terrain végétal des coteaux et de la plaine d'avec les terrains d'alluvions qui entourent le fleuve, s'élève ma cabane, car c'est une maison si petite et si humble qu'elle ne mérite guère d'autre nom.

Çakmakoglu was a small estate, which was comprised of a farm, some fields, animals. Some Italians accompanied the princess. One of them was a carpenter and he began immediately to put the house in order. At some point Giuseppe Pastori, the lawyer who administrated the princess's estates in Italy, arrived with Italian objects for the house: chairs, tables, beds, curtains, doors. In this way the princess's own room was completely furnished according to the Italian style, and this fact caused rumours in the village. For about a fortnight the inhabitants of the place went there to see that incredible room. Chickens, turkeys, one cow, four buffalos and four horses were also bought.

The princess spent her time reading and writing. She intended to live with the income of the farm. Çakmakoglu meant «the son of the flintstone» and she asked her friends in Constantinople to send her a book of mineralogy to study if it was possible to begin some enterprise also in this field. The valley was a place full of the silence of nature, where the

⁵ Without date (about June-September 1851), Çakmakoglu, Cristina's letter to Torre.

⁶ 15 November 1850, Çakmakoglu, Cristina's letter to Thierry.

external world did not exist. Only her friends' letters and the journals brought news from Europe. Italian refugees in Athens began to complain about her behaviour in Rome. The famous Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini also unfairly expressed his harsh opinion about her in writing to his mother. Vincenzo Gioberti behaved in the same way but he expressed his ideas in public, in his book *Rinnovamento morale e civile degli italiani* (1851). Gioberti had paid frequent visits to the princess's house in Paris and had travelled with her in Italy in 1848, but then he began to consider her words against his political ideas as personal attacks and he got even more angry when he knew that she had described, in a comic way, an episode of his life, when he could not speak because he had a nasty cold. Other articles and letters, published in journals, caused Cristina more pain than Mazzini's secret judgements. The Italians who wrote them had been helped by the princess while she was in Athens, but now she was far away. In autumn 1850 Cristina had sent some of her letters to *Le National*, a journal where they had been published under the title *Souvenirs dans l'exile*. These papers were full of lively humour about Greeks and their police but the inhabitants of Athens did not like them and the refugees who lived there thought it better to disown her and her writings. Moreover, some passages of her private letters to her friend Mme Jaubert were published without her permission and misinterpreted. In Europe the whole world of Italian patriots seemed to be against the princess.⁷

On the contrary, the inhabitants of the valley were good and kind with Cristina di Belgiojoso. Everybody liked her. In Rome she had learned a little of medicine and now she became the physician of the country. She succeeded in restoring to health a woman who had been paralysed for six months and, from this moment on, people arrived to her house to be cured. Ali pasha, her patron in Constantinople, wrote to the governor of the province to avoid asking her taxes for three years and the governor answered that it was not possible to ask her to pay because the inhabitants of the place would have set themselves against it. They called her «bes-sadé» (*bey-zade*, the son of the lord) and when she had no money she lived on credit and nobody asked for the money back.⁸

In this period she began to write a novel and some plays. Since *Le National* did not want to publish her papers any longer, the works written

⁷ 22 January 1851, Paris, Thierry's letter to Cristina; 27 March 1851, Paris, Thierry's letter to Cristina; Aldobrandino Malvezzi, *Cristina di Belgiojoso*, 3 voll. Milano: Treves, 1937, vol. 3, *Pensiero ed azione*, pp. 304-311, 316-317.

⁸ 1 January 1851, Çakmakoglu, Cristina's letter to Thierry.

in Çakmakoglu were published in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, just when Cristina came back to Europe, between 1856 and 1858. They were *Emina*, *Un prince kurde*, *Les deux femmes d'Ismail bey*, *Les pachas de l'ancien régime*, *Un paysan turc* and *Zobeideh*.⁹ In one of her letters the princess complained that certain journals, such as *La Democratie pacifique*, did not pay their writers while she needed money and wrote to gain it. Her literary works, as well as most of her letters, were written in French, the language of the Italian high class of that period. They were not masterpieces, but they gave a deep insight into the Ottoman society, without any prejudice. If there was something to despise, it was said and, if there was something to praise, all the same, it was commended. They all were stories of women. The focus was on Ottoman society. Cristina had the possibility of knowing much more than other European writers in this field, just because she was a woman and she could manage a little with Turkish. She also began to repeat often *inşallah* as the inhabitants of her valley did. The Ottoman Empire she described was the real one, not the imaginary world of most 19th c. Orientalists.

In April 1851 Cristina went to Safranbolu to spend there the Easter, together with the Christian community. She had become a renowned physician in the country and, as soon as the news of her arrival spread, hundreds of persons arrived to see her and to ask to be cured. All the inhabitants of the town, both Christian and Muslim, vied in giving her hospitality and paying her every attention.

In the same period, in her valley, she bought other fields to produce also rice, rented a mill, a sawmill, bought buffalos, cows, asses, horses, two hundred Angora sheep and built a new part of the house and a stables. Most of the craftsmen were hired on the place but two masons were European and they had come from Constantinople. In her letters Cristina compares how much money she spent for all this, and how more she would have spent if she had been in France or Italy. She was very attentive about money and the estate was a kind of commercial enterprise for her. In Italy her estates had been blocked by the Austrian government

⁹ Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Emina*, «Revue des deux mondes», t. 1 (1856/1), pp. 465-504, 726-767; Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Un prince kurde*, «Revue des deux mondes», t. 2 (1856/2), pp. 241-268, 508-543; Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Les deux femmes d'Ismail bey*, «Revue des deux mondes», t. 4 (1856/4), pp. 150-180, 284-312; Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Les pachas de l'ancien régime*, «Revue des deux mondes», t. 5 (1856/5), pp. 401-431; Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Un paysan turc*, «Revue des deux mondes», t. 12 (1857/2), pp. 68-93, 241-272, 506-531; Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Zobeideh*. «Revue des deux mondes», t. 14 (1858/3), pp. 559-594, 878-925.

and, in this way, she tried to improve her economic situation and, above all, to prepare a future for her daughter Maria. Quietness, silence and a sweet and easy life improved Princess Cristina's health. She began to feel better. Every illness disappeared and she also put on weight. She imagined a previous life where she was a gypsy and knew the open air, the silence of deserts, the difficulties of travels and the living under a tent. She thought to have known that country in a very far off time. In the meantime, a friend who lived in Constantinople, Jacques Alleon, sent her letters and books, among which was the treaty of mineralogy she desired so much. She was happy of her enterprise. The *çiftlik* began to be self-sufficient and she compared it with the estates chosen by other Europeans in Turkey. Most of them, such as the famous philosopher Lamartine, had settled near Izmir and the sea, but there the climate was dangerous. On the contrary her valley was in the mountains and the climate was far better. Moreover they could only rent those estates while she had succeeded in buying the land¹⁰. As Cristina herself explained in one of her letters to Mme Jaubert, who invited her to come back to France, many were the reasons why she could not leave Turkey: the Austrian government was still her enemy; moreover, if she had even succeeded in reaching Paris, the best thing to do for her would have been to lead a secluded life without seeing the friend of her past. This behaviour was impossible for her. Moreover, the Italian patriots too, who did not share all her political ideas, certainly preferred to blame her and her words and, at the same time, since they probably believed her still to be very rich, they would have asked her for money again and again. For all these reasons it was better for her to remain in the Ottoman Empire.¹¹

However, the calm of such a desirable valley was not enough for the Italian princess and she decided to leave it for a while to go to Jerusalem. It was a long voyage which she described in a kind of diary, published under the title *La vie intime et la vie nomade en Orient* in 1855 and then, in 1858 as *Asie Mineure et Syrie. Souvenirs d'un voyage*.¹² She left Çakmakoglu in spring 1851 and came back more than one year later, in December 1852. The estate was entrusted to a man from Alsace, who lived there with his wife. He was not a very good administrator and made some debts. The last part of the travel was troubled by her daughter

¹⁰ 24 April 1851, Çakmakoglu, Cristina to Thierry.

¹¹ 3 December 1851, Cristina to Mme Jaubert, quoted in Malvezzi, *Cristina*, pp. 312-316.

¹² Princesse de Belgiojoso, *Asie Mineure et Syrie. Souvenirs d'un voyage*, Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1858.

Maria's illness. When she returned, the previous life began again. Letters were written in order to publish the diary as well as some novels which were later accepted by the *Revue des deux mondes* and also by the *New York Daily Tribune*.¹³

On the first of July 1853 everything changed. An Italian, Bernardo Lorenzoni from Bergamo, tried to kill the princess. He had been admitted in her household two years before. At that time he was ill, he was cured and employed as a warehouse-keeper. Then he had fallen in love with Maria's nurse, Mrs Parker. He was a kind of madman. One day he even gave the nurse a good thrashing and broke her nose. For this reason the nurse left him and he began to consider the princess responsible for her refusal and his failure. He decided to leave the place but also to murder somebody. First of all he persuaded a young Armenian, a faithful servant of the princess, to drink a cup of poison, threatening to stab him. In this way he thought to have deprived the princess of her body-guard. However, the boy survived even if he was very ill for some hours. That evening the Italian was at dinner with the princess who did not know what had happened. Then he accompanied her to the upper floor with a lamp, but when they arrived in her room he began to accuse her. The Armenian, who had recovered a little, arrived immediately but, all of a sudden, Lorenzoni took a dagger and stabbed the princess. In the confusion of the moment a glass was broken and the noise advised people below that something was happening. The servants came and stopped the killer but, in the meantime, the princess had received seven stabs.¹⁴

Cristina succeeded in curing herself but the recovery was very hard. Despite losing a lot of blood, the wounds were not dangerous.

Je vous dirai seulement que c'est aujourd'hui le quatrième jour depuis l'attentat, qu'aucune des blessures ne doit avoir pénétré au delà des chairs, puisque je n'ai ni fièvre, ni enflure, ni douleurs intérieures, ni palpitations, ni irrégularité de pouls, ni oppression, ni quoi que ce soit au monde, si ce n'est le côté gauche de la poitrine légèrement endolorie. Dieu m'a sauvée si miraculeusement, que son intervention ne peut être révoquée en doute par aucun de ceux qui m'ont vue cette affreuse soirée et qui me voient maintenant. J'ai cru, tout le monde a cru, que j'allais expirer à l'instant même; je suis à peu près aussi bien que si je n'avais pas été blessée, car je compte pour rien le picotement des entrailles extérieures. Le coup visé au bas-ventre a rencontré l'extrémité de l'os de la hanche et s'est arrêté; celui dirigé au cœur a rencontré le sein, et comme le coup était porté de bas en haut, au lieu de trouver la résistance et de s'enfoncer dans le cœur, il a enlevé le sein, qui est

¹³ 7 June 1853, Paris, Thierry to Cristina.

¹⁴ 5 July 1853, Çakmakoglu, Cristina to M.me Jaubert, quoted in Malvezzi, *Cristina*, pp. 322-333.

monté au bout du poignard, et le poignard est ressorti à quelques lignes de distance du point où il était entré. Celui qui a été porté au travers de la moelle épinière a rencontré les plis de ma robe et n'a fait qu'effleurer les chairs dans une longueur d'environ deux pouce et demi. J'ai perdu énormément de sang, non seulement par mes blessures, mais par la saignée et les sangsues, car je craignais les épanchements intérieurs. J'ai bon appétit, je suis levée, quoique je ne puisse marcher à cause de ma cuisse et de ma hanche; enfin je suis à peu près aussi bien qu'avant l'accident, et j'ai, de plus, une si vive reconnaissance pour la protection éclatante que Dieu m'a accordée, que mon cœur est en prosternation perpétuelle devant lui. Hier encore, je me demandais à moi-même si tout cela n'était pas un rêve; j'ouvre au hasard ma Bible et je tombe sur ce paragraphe: «Je vous dis ceci: quand vous demandez quelque chose, si vous le demandez en priant, avec la certitude de l'avoir, vous l'obtiendrez.» Voilà qui rend raison de ce que se fait à d'étrange, car nous étions deux qui priions avec confiance ce soir-là: Marie et moi.¹⁵

The next day the killer was arrested by Ottoman authorities in the market of a near town. When he realized that he had failed he began to curse. In the meantime a Polish servant of the princess went to Safranbolu to advise the governor of what had happened. He immediately asked if the killer was a Turk and when they told him that he was an Italian he was very happy because, he said, if it had been a Turk he would have lost his office. He immediately sent his guards to take the killer and put him in jail in Safranbolu. A Greek servant of the princess accompanied them. During the journey the women and the children of Cristina's *çiftlik* shouted: "Here is his mistress's murderer. She gave him bread and he killed her. Damned soul. Cursed be the murderer of our mother." and they threw stones at him and the men said: "Dog, infidel. You had enough to be treated well. Your bed was too sweet, your bread too white, your coffee had too much sugar and your mistress was too indulgent. You will change all this with the stones of our dungeons. Damned soul." As Cristina wrote to Mme Jaubert:

Toute la population me témoigne le plus vif intérêt. Mes paysans ne sont pas trop étonnés de me voir sur pied. Nous savions bien que tu ne mourrais pas - me disent ils tous - les pauvres vivraient ils si tu n'étais pas là?¹⁶

At the end of July 1853 important news came from Italy. Pastori informed her that the Austrian government was ready to return to the patriots involved in 1848 riots all the money and the estates which had been seized but they had to come back to Milan. It was the only condition, otherwise the estates would have been seized for ever by the government. Cristina

¹⁵ 3 July 1853, Çakmakoglu, Cristina to Thierry.

¹⁶ 5 July 1853, Cristina to M.me Jaubert, quoted in Malvezzi, *Cristina*, pp. 322-333.

did not want to leave Turkey and, moreover, she was still too feeble to make so long a journey. She wrote to the Austrian ambassador saying that she had been stabbed and was ill.¹⁷

She succeeded in remaining in Çakmakoğlu for another year. In February 1854 she had already accepted the idea of leaving but she wanted to remain in order to reap the crop of wheat and opium, to be present at the birth of horses, lambs and chickens. In July, Pastori went to Paris to sell some properties in order to find the money for the princess to come back. The months passed. Her last letter from Çakmakoğlu was written on 9 October 1854. She was happy to come back home. The idea to go to Milan gave her "le vertige de plaisir". She was not afraid of the Austrian government but only of what Italian radicals would have said and written about her. Many of them lived in the Ottoman Empire and were well organized. She feared some public protest against her in the capital. At last she left her valley and went to Constantinople. In July 1855 she was in Pera. Luckily nothing happened and she could come back quietly. Another part of her life was beginning.¹⁸

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¹⁷ 2 August 1853, Çakmakoğlu, Cristina to Thierry.

¹⁸ 27 February 1854, Çakmakoğlu, Cristina to Thierry. 22 July 1854, Paris, Thierry to Cristina. 9 October 1854, Çakmakoğlu, Cristina to Thierry. 2 July 1855, Pera, Cristina to Thierry.

CRISTINA BELGIOJOSO'S JERUSALEM TRAVEL BOOK

Cristina Trivulzio Barbiano di Belgiojoso's journey to the Holy Land, where she traveled to in order to have her daughter confirmed in the Catholic faith, would by far be the longest absence from her Çakmakçoğlu 'farm', that would bring her to many places of Anatolia and Syria. She left her place in January 1852. In her *Souvenirs de voyage* (1858) she gives extensive descriptions of the regions she visited. An American translation appeared as early as 1862 (New York, Carleton), with the title *Harems and Oriental Scenery*, the text of which has been made available on Google books and to which we refer. For the contemporary reader, the fact that the author was a woman may have added to its spell. But the work appeared in a period when Western interest in the Ottoman Empire was very much alive, as a travel destination as well as for economic and other reasons. Cristina's book was not the first to appear in French: we have among others Lamartine's *Voyage en Orient* and the accounts of Nerval and Gauthier (with whom she had been acquainted and who had written about her). But Cristina ventured in regions where few others had passed, and was "seeking for something more than sites and monuments".

The book stresses, of course, the strong contrasts and differences between East and West, the scarcity of accounts and the originality of the subject matter. Cristina claims attention for the gender factor: that she was a woman gave her access to the world of femininity that was so important for Muslim society, that is to say, the life in the Harem and domestic life in general. This has been always closed for male travelers, and Cristina's sex permitted her to communicate freely with the women living their secluded existence there. This she shared with the British traveler Julia Pardoe, who also tried to write from a typical feminine viewpoint and gave much attention to the harem. Her book *The City of the Sultan* had appeared in 1836 and might have served as an example. Cristina would later write an earliest feminist essay, *Della presente condizione delle donne e del loro avvenire* (1860). Another aspect of Cristina's letters is her interest in material culture. She gives detailed information on food, such as *yufka*-bread, *ayran* and Turkish coffee, as well as on interiors of houses, clothing etc. The writer is very sensitive to fashion, and makes interesting remarks on the introduction of Western dress in the Near East. Not unexpectedly,

Belgiojoso make large and effective use of the juxtaposition of Western and Ottoman society, contrasting for instance European and Syrian houses, beggars, swallows, or Western and Ottoman family life. This contributes to the lively character of her account.

It is not always easy to follow Cristina's journey, since roads and toponyms have often changed in more than 150 years and the book doesn't contain maps. The places she describes, though, are representative for many Ottoman towns of the period. The first described in some detail and considered as representative for all Anatolian towns is Tcherkess (now written Çerkeş, ancient Antonopolis), with its houses of "wood and mud falling to ruin" and full of litter, where she is hosted by a mufti she had cured of a persistent fever some months before. As a *misafir*, a sacred guest, she enjoys hospitality the concept of which she analyzes without falling into the traps set by myths: of course, the guest is welcome, but expected to generously recompense for what he has received. The Mufti belongs to the few exceptions to this rule. Already ninety years old, he has many wives or concubines, the youngest of whom is barely thirty, and numerous children of all ages. He doesn't want to let his guest stay in the not all too clean harem, and gives her his own rooms to live in.

"I may perhaps have to destroy some illusions," Cristina warns. In fact, it is much of the Romantic myth of the Harem as an erotic *topos* that she demolishes in her journal. The delightful bower familiar to readers of *Thousand and One Night* in reality is a shabby, dirty place where there is a lacking of window panes and mirrors and the women are unable to take proper care of their appearance, and, being rivals, don't help each other to become more beautiful. They make large use of paint and the result is horrible, as Cristina describes with much sense of humour. Daylight mostly comes in through the large chimney, not through the windows, that are generally covered with paper. The women do not complain about the lack of ventilation. The mufti doesn't know how many children he has, nor has he any knowledge about the life of his daughters he gave away to be married. Once in a while, younger people claiming to be his sons come to stay for some days as his guests, only to leave soon because they have nothing to do and their mothers are dead.

Next major stop is Angora (present-day Ankara), that is reached after a difficult ride through the snow-clad mountains. Cristina stays here for two weeks. One of the problems she faces is of a bureaucratic nature: a writing error in her passport has to be corrected and the *kaymakam* (district governor) asks 600 \$ for this little operation. Cristina writes him a cheque for the amount, instructing her Istanbul banker not to honour it.

The Angora mufti is a friend of his Tcherkess colleague and Cristina can give him some relief for his eye pains. She is rewarded with the man's friendship and introduced to a dervishes' convent in an Angora suburb. Here Cristina strips another topos of its mythical fringes. Most dervishes are idlers, impostors and if the occasion present itself, highwaymen, she concludes. Those living in convents, though, are more respectable. Their company is rather boring, since they only speak about the freshness of water and the purity of air. Much more delighted she is with an Angora cat she is given. The white cat is praised for its beauty, character and the courage with which they attack dogs. Of course, the famous wool producing Angora goat is mentioned as well. A few leagues outside the city, both cats and goats become ugly again. Attention for animals is extended to horses, oxen, buffaloes and dogs, and Cristina prefers them to their European counterparts. The mountains are haunted by jackals, panthers and leopards, long since extinct, but then rather inoffensive. Turks are praised for treating the animals well: no one would strike a horse, and animals are spoken to in special idioms if they need correction. Buffaloes work as long as it pleases them and flocks just follow their herdsmen. The author gives detailed information on animals and human-animal relations. A horse recognizing a childhood friend from a long distance, a dog volunteering to protect a horse's cadaver, and many other touching episodes are provided throughout the journal. Belgiojoso is invited to a ceremony of the so-called howling dervishes, who in a state of trance maim themselves with long daggers. It is a ceremony dear to Western writer-travellers. The wound is healed with a colleague's saliva. The *seyh* claims his adepts can even cut off their own limbs and be cured without any consequence, and Belgiojoso remains flabbergasted.

Cristina then travels on to Kirşehir in Cappadocia ("a town even the name of which is not to be found on any of the maps"), curing the sick where she can and describing colourful people, such as an Algerian Arab who considers himself a Frenchman. The population in the region is unfriendly, but shortly before reaching Kayseri, the party encounters a group of townsmen who in the name of the local pasha invite Belgiojoso to make her solemn entry into the town on a richly arrayed horse – and our princess doesn't want to refuse. She is just in time to share the celebrations that the numerous and well-off Armenian community holds at the end of carnival. In Incesu, it is the Greeks who get ample attention. Among her visits here, she describes that to the local school run by a priest, so well-built and clean that she compares it to Switzerland. In her honour, a French poem is recited, but "the pupils would not have lost

nothing had the French lesson been discarded from their educational programme”.

After this episode, the Taurus is crossed in five days' time, and they arrive at Adana, where they enjoy for about a week the amenities of the European community. Then they enter into the mountains of “Cavurdağda”, inhabited both by Greeks and Turks. Comparing the villages of both, Cristina prefers the latter, that from afar charm and attract, whereas the former make a sad impression – upon entering, the difference vanishes. The authority of the Sublime Porte doesn't count here, but the starry skies and the locals remind the romantic traveller of the Old Testament. Among the population many ‘fellahs’ are found, partly black Egyptians, and the others of different, Syrian origin, who wear a white turban and are associated with fire-worship. The pasha of Adana's palace is described as a point where all kind of ethnic groups flock together. The princess is of course soon received, and is afraid she may have trodden on the feet of people waiting for an audience on the palace's floor. The dignitary speaks French and talks international politics. He forces his guest to accept an escort of twenty soldiers to pass the dangerous mountains.

When upon meeting a group of mountaineers Cristina gives them some money, she adds the consideration that “as a true orientalist, I thought that money supplied the place of [...] every good that can be bought or sold.” The use of the noun “orientalist” is interesting, and would merit further study.

We shall only briefly mention the next important person that wants to meet Cristina and make her journey as safe as possible: Mustuk Bey, the local lord, who resides in a place called Bacaz, at four hours travel from Alexandretta (Iskenderun) and whose house is almost photographically described. Our princess here resumes her study of the harem. She is not blind to the fact that in the houses of the poor, the woman (rarely a poor man has more than one) is not a prisoner of her own quarters, and her life more resembles that of Christian women – again Cristina prefers the Moslem to her own fellow-Christians, because he tends to be true to his wife without being forced to it by law. (Cristina probably remembers her own unhappy life as a married woman, when she had to face her husband's infidelity.) Though women get old rather soon and men can happily and healthily live to a venerable age, he doesn't abandon his wife, thanks to his “precious reserve of goodness”. And she adds: “nature has been prodigal to the Turkish people.” Quite different is the judgment on the wealthier Moslems. Their harem is described as dirty, chaotic,

promiscuous and full of children, because having the greatest number of them is the most important thing in life for them. Their women are repellent, stupid, and heavily plastered with make-up. Among each others, rivalry is ferocious, especially if a woman cannot get children. The most in demand are of Georgian or Circassian origin, but neither are to be trusted. What Belgiojoso dislikes most is that young boys aged 7 or 10 have their own slaves and ape their father's behaviour. In Istanbul, the veil gives major liberty of movement to women, as once upon a time the mask to Venetian women: "it is a domino which resembles all other dominos".

Alexandretta is inhospitable for travellers, even if the bay is magnificent. Cristina leaves as soon as possible, crossing through the Syrian mountains to Antioch (Antayka), passing by the now vanished lake. Belgiojoso likes Antioch very much, but fearing for a late arrival in Jerusalem leaves after one night, but not without appreciating the waters of Daphne (present-day Harbiye).

Since the mountains are dangerous to pass, being the scene of local bands' rebellion against conscription in the army, Cristina thinks that accepting protection by the army will only enhance the risk of armed conflict, but takes some irregular "bashibozuks" as an escort for the crossing. However regular troops insult her party with all possible Turkish maledictions. On her way through Syria, Cristina sometimes gives very lyrical descriptions of the landscape, according to Romantic nature writing:

"What delicious retreat I observed beneath the tufted bowers formed by the climbing vines. How pure the water that gushed from these shady nooks, flowing away with a gentle murmur, and bearing life to these fields and flowers! How harmonious were the mountain lines (...)".

Not far from Latakia, Cristina sees the population of a village leaving their houses for the mountains, packed with food and mattresses. They have mistaken Cristina's party for the vanguard of the Ottoman army.

In many places after Adana, Belgiojoso's party is hosted by foreign consuls, prevalently British. For the most, they are locals with a good knowledge of some foreign languages.

Latakia, Gublettah, Tortosa, Banyas are briefly touched upon, with their principal Antique, Crusader or Muslim monuments. Cristina's hurry to reach the Holy Land makes that she doesn't give herself any rest, as she had done in Anatolia. On her way to Tripoli, she wants to ask for some milk from Arab women living in tents, but fierce dogs appear and the indigo-clad and tattooed women are equally unfriendly. Nor is she better

received by the Austrian consul in Tripoli, the brother-in-law of the hospitable British consul in Latakia, whose bad temper is due to a simple misunderstanding, and fortunately made up for.

In Syria our princess meets an English clergyman and analyzes, not without much irony, the business of conversion which is rampant in this region:

“Syria is invaded, overrun in every sense by British and American missionaries, whose candor and good faith are incontestably more remarkable than their tact or intelligence. With the Orientals, conversion has become a kind of lucrative pursuit, and the convert who has played this part two or three times, gets to be a very responsible man; he possesses capital, and putting himself into commerce, acquires a fortune.”

The system is based on new Christians receiving aid and a job through the missionaries. After some time, they move to a distant, different town and repeat the conversion unnoticed.

After Beyrouth, the least Asiatic and most European of the towns of Asia, Belgiojoso enters in the final stage of the journey, in which she will mostly stay among Christians, prevalently in convents. Passing through Sidon and Sur (Tyus), they leave the coast and enter the arid mountains of Galilee. During a halt in an oasis the horses fall ill, and after dark the party loses its way, and is eventually forced to spend the night in very primitive lodgings. The following day three horses have died and three others are in poor shape. By now they are in the valleys of Galilee, full of myrtles and laurels and covered with green grass. Long after nightfall Nazareth is reached and they are welcomed by an Italian Franciscan monk. Here, Cristina gets sentimental: there is nothing like the Catholic faith, writes the princess who opposed the Pope. Though she has nothing “against the God of the Mussulman”, she knows how hypocrite many believers are. But the following morning, the view of the town disappoints her: she finds no associations with the biblical past. Still, life in Nazareth is pretty much as it must have been several centuries ago, also because some people still live in caves. Cristina knows that many legends referring to biblical traditions have been created by the friars once they had come to the Holy Land. The pilgrims now cross the desert of Samaria and Judea, a “land of misfortune”, avoiding contacts with its inhabitants, who are somehow considered violent and immoral. In Nablous, Cristina is shown the ruins of the well where Christ would have spoken with the Samaritan woman. Another group of pilgrims is shown a similar well at quite another place.

On the way to Jerusalem, the party is insulted by Arabs. Humour rather than fear or anger is the best way of facing these situations. The travellers who are bothered by verbal offence lack tact and good nature, she states. Shortly after these reflections, Cristina sees her guides standing with uncovered heads. The sight she beholds soon after is this:

“What my guides had just discovered, were the crenellated walls of Jerusalem, crowning a hill opposite to the mound we stood on. Beyond these walls a bluish line mingling with the horizon indicated the sea of Galilee. I remained for a few moments in contemplation of this grand spectacle. A strange tumult filled my breast; I felt my hearth throb and my eyes fill with tears, as if I were restored to a beloved country.”

Of course, in what follows much attention is given to the monuments of Jerusalem. Comparison with Italian buildings is used in the description. Hundred years after Cristina, the famous Roman writer Alberto Moravia would also draw upon the Italian cultural landscape when describing the Holy City in a series of reportages for an Italian magazine. Cristina in the chapter on the monuments of Jerusalem doesn't add much to what we know about the nineteenth century outlook of the city. We shouldn't forget that we have not only travel accounts, but paintings and etchings by artists such as David Roberts, a contemporary of the princess, invariably showing these places. More interesting are the people Cristina observes. A British colony is living in tents in “Salomon's garden”, the ladies showing off their morning toilets, as if they were somewhere in Britain. Again, these are missionaries trying to show the Arabs the consequences of healthy life and Bible study. Cristina is sceptical as to the results of their “sterile” efforts.

An excursion to the Dead Sea and the river Jordan is made, not without incidents. While Cristina spends a couple of hours meditating on the beautiful river shores, a band of marauders attacks but is repelled by the armed escort.

The following chapter is dedicated to the people living in the Holy City, in the first place the Catholic clergy. Marie di Belgiojoso had been taken to Jerusalem for her first communion and the ceremony is described as “quite affecting”, even if the Catholics are criticised for improperly re-baptizing a German convert from Lutheranism (a practise not uncommon even today). The ‘Syrian’ protestants have much attention and sympathy for the Jews, who Cristina calls a “strange race” that is, however, “surrounded by a certain poetic halo”. Not without being impressed by Jewish prayers at the Western Wall, Cristina is amazed by the Jewish immigration from Germany, all people wanting to be buried in holy soil.

Nothing is said about the Jewish culture and religion. The Protestants have a well-equipped hospital open only to Jews, whereas the Catholic counterpart is shabby and poor, but open to all.

On the same level as the Jews – as queer specimens of mankind – are described the lepers. No details are spared to give a lively description of their looks and way of living, culminating in a horrendous portrait of a couple: an old man with a twelve year old girl-spouse, both terribly disfigured. As the last group are treated the Armenians, who are much preferred to the Greeks for various reasons, the most important being their beautiful and comfortable houses.

Having stayed a month in Jerusalem Cristina leaves the city for Damascus, Aleppo and Mount Lebanon. At this point, a more theoretical chapter is inserted that was conceived well after Belgiojoso's return home. The princess here writes, from what she calls a Christian view-point but what owes just as much or maybe more to the Enlightenment, on Islam, the Quran and the Turkish people (that she seems to see as such when few Ottomans did so, and praises as one of rather few travellers for its excellent qualities). In not incorrectly defining the Ottoman state as a theocracy, she touches upon the question which reforms would be necessary. Islam is analyzed within a tradition trying to understand the religion out of its historical context and its military mission or ambition, and that attempts to show some appreciation for it if compared with surrounding smaller and often sectarian religions. To the analysis is added the feminist view that Islam "morally annihilated" woman by making her into an object, an "instrument of vice", excluded – as is sometimes stated – from the joys of paradise. And as a woman of the capitalist age, Belgiojoso criticizes Islam for condemning wealth and forcing it into concealment for fear of jealousy.

Europe's task at the time of the Crimean war is that of preserving Turkish independence. Agriculture and natural resources, that are so abundantly available, should be developed with the aid of modern science. And the Islamic religion should be reformed, just like the Christian faith in the Renaissance, by lowering itself to the people and speak their language.

The return journey is made unpleasant by heat, fly bites and lack of water. When Cristina is accidentally kicked by her horse, she loses conscience. It takes her some time to get better. By way of Nazareth, Tiberias (mostly inhabited by immigrant Jews, who live in nearly European-style houses), Lake Tiberias, then a melancholy place with little vegetation, and Safed, a town holy to the Jews and stricken by an

earthquake not long ago, they travel on. War is said to have begun between Ottomans and local Arabs. Problems arise with the Arab dragoman, but Cristina is not to be intimidated and enters in unknown territory where for weeks nobody has dared to tread. Fortunately, no armed conflicts materialise. The landscape offers an alternation of desert and lush vegetation around the villages.

Damascus at first doesn't make a favourable impression. Large bands of savage dogs have divided the city among them and assail every stranger. Once the princess has found seemingly good lodgings, she is attacked by vermin, and she finally accepts at an exorbitant price the house of a dragoman. Houses in Damascus from the outside look like ruins, but once inside, the courtyard is appreciated for its fountain and lavish vegetation. The adjacent rooms are very richly arrayed. This is the typical city house. Since one of her maids is pregnant, Belgiojoso stays here for a couple of weeks and makes some acquaintances, among whom General Guyon, a British subject living an Oriental life as an exile without having forsaken his original religion, and other political refugees, not a few of them Italians. The departure is further delayed by the advent of Ramazan, but Cristina amuses herself in the company of her new friends, organizing even an Oriental dance performance that is attended by many people, who take possession of the house. Cristina describes with keen sense of humour the fat danseuses who try to get more money for their show, the music performed and the effect upon the male part of the public, the same as can be observed nowadays at belly dance shows.

During a visit to the rich Jewish houses of the city, Belgiojoso is told, and sorry to say, believes that the "sect of the Talmudists" murdered a Christian priest and his servant there. It is strange similar anti-Semitic stories find a willing ear in our princess, who on other occasions reveals a very critical attitude. Needless to say, in Judaism no special sect of Talmudists exists, the Talmud being studied by all men of learning.

Cristina writes as well on the use of hashish, which was largely diffused in the international and local community. She tries it a couple of times, in all manners possible, even eating and drinking it, but it fails to have any effect on her, though she witnesses strong reactions of others.

Finally she leaves Damascus when her daughter has recovered from a serious illness, passing through the anti-Libanon and thence to Baalbek by litter. Due to the unreliability of guides and locals, it takes Cristina a lot of time to reach the cedars of Mount Lebanon, though the sight is gratifying and provokes comparisons with the Alps. Homs and Aleppo, Ereğli and Konya are amongst the next places visited. Of course, the

chapters dedicated to this stage of the journey are full of interesting meeting and details we are forced to leave unmentioned. Cristina would return to her estate eleven months after her departure, glad – she states – to eat bread gathered from her own fields. And happy to have memories to entrust to her readers.

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Finito di stampare
da Grafiche Battivelli – Conegliano (TV)
per conto dell'editore Filippi Venezia
nel mese di luglio 2010