

Paulina D. Dominik (Ed.)

The Istanbul Memories in Salomea
 Pilsztynowa's Diary »Echo of the Journey
 and Adventures of My Life« (1760)

With an introduction by Stanisław Roszak

MEMORIA. FONTES MINORES AD HISTORIAM IMPERII OTTOMANICI PERTINENTES

Edited by Richard Wittmann

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Volume 2

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Photos on the title page and in the volume are from Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa's memoir »Echo of the Journey and Adventures of My Life« (*Echo na świat podane procederu podróży i życia mego awantur*), compiled in 1760,
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Editor's Preface

From the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to Istanbul: A female doctor in the eighteenth-century Ottoman capital

Diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth go back to the first quarter of the fifteenth century. While the mutual contacts were characterized by exchange and cooperation interrupted by periods of war, particularly in the seventeenth century, the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) marked a new stage in the history of Ottoman-Polish relations. In the light of the common Russian danger Poland made efforts to gain Ottoman political support to secure its integrity. The leading Polish Orientalist Jan Reychman (1910-1975) in his seminal work *The Polish Life in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* («*Życie polskie w Stambule w XVIII wieku*», 1959) argues that the eighteenth century brought to life a Polish community in the Ottoman capital. Pages of his book constitute a gallery of various groups of Poles who drifted into Istanbul and became part of its European population: the courtly envoys and diplomats; the dragomans and Polish *jeunes de langues*; the travellers and artists; the traders and mercantilists as well as the repatriates, turcophiles and émigrés.¹ The Ottoman Empire also became a safe refuge for the first waves of Polish political emigration – a phenomenon that was to gain momentum after the final partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 and result in Istanbul becoming one of the leading centres for the Polish political activities aimed at the national independence throughout the nineteenth century.²

Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa (1718 – after 1763) found herself among Poles of different walks of life in the eighteenth-century Ottoman capital.³ While the eighteenth century Istanbul had been growing increasingly popular as a destination for visitors from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Salomea's life and residence within the Ottoman borders were certainly exceptional. According to the information she herself gives us in her diary she was born in 1718 in the Nowogródek voivodeship (today part of Belarus).⁴

* We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Erald Pauw (Istanbul) whose generous support helped make this publication possible.

1 Jan Reychman, *Życie polskie w Stambule w XVIII wieku*. Warsaw: Polski Instytut Wydawniczy, 1957.

2 The importance that the Ottoman Empire held for the Polish national activities of the 19th century was stressed by such emblematic events as the foundation of the Agency of the Polish Eastern Mission (*Agencja Główna Misji Wschodniej*) in Istanbul in 1841, the establishment in 1842 of the Polish village called Adampol/Polonezköy, (today part of the Istanbul district of Beykoz), as well as the organization of the Sultanlic Cossacks' Division, commanded by Polish officers during the Crimean War (1853–56).

3 Salomea Regina de Pilsztynowa is the name written on the manuscript of the diary and hence, most probably the one she preferred to use. It refers to her second husband Józef Fortunat Pichelstein from the noble family of Cappus de Pichelstein who had fallen captive during the Austro-Turkish War of 1737–1739 and whom she purchased as a slave hoping for financial profit. After her first husband Jacob Halpir she was called Halpirowa yet she does not use this name in the diary except for one mention in the first chapter. Although she does not mention it explicitly in the text, she signed her dedication to Ludwika Mniszek Potocka as »Regina Salomea Makowska« which suggests that she married for a third time.

4 Barbara Grosfeld, »Pichelsteinowa (Pilsztynowa) z Rusieckich Salomea Regina« in: B. Piątkiewicz, S. Pigoń (eds.),

Her father was Joachim Rusiecki who belonged to the impoverished Polish-Lithuanian nobility.⁵ She was Roman Catholic, which she stresses on each occasion in her diary, and does not hide her strong antipathy towards Jews. However, the author of Pilsztynowa's biographical note in the *Polish Biographic Dictionary* («Polski Słownik Biograficzny») Barbara Grosfeld, similarly to Reychman, leans towards the thesis of her Jewish origins either directly or through being born into a family of Jewish converts.⁶ She was married off at the age of 14 to a Lutheran medical doctor, Jacob Halpir.⁷ Not long after, around the year 1735, the couple moved to Istanbul where she helped her husband in his medical practice and with time gained practical knowledge in the field of medicine, particularly in the treatment of eye problems.⁸ Pilsztynowa's residence in Istanbul coincided with the reign of Sultan Mahmud I (r.1730–1754). She portrays Istanbul as a lively and cosmopolitan city rich in professional opportunities. Already during her first sojourn in the Ottoman capital, when her husband abandoned her, she found a niche for herself in a male-dominated profession, serving as doctor for the Ottoman dignitaries' harems. While the Ottoman ladies could afford professional medical help, examination by a male doctor went against social norms. At the same time Pilsztynowa's account provides us with insights into the world of medical practitioners in eighteenth-century Istanbul and the competition by which their relations were characterized. Despite this she succeeded professionally in the mid-eighteenth-century Istanbul medical establishment that was dominated by Muslim and Jewish physicians. Eventually, being both Christian and a woman accounted for, as argued by Władysław Roczniak, Pilsztynowa's »power in powerlessness« and turned out to work to her advantage.⁹

Pilsztynowa's account takes the reader on an unprecedented journey stretching from St. Petersburg in the North, to Kiev in the East, to Istanbul and Sofia in the South and to Wrocław and Vienna in the West. Following her first stay in Istanbul, Pilsztynowa left for Edirne and then Sofia where she worked as a doctor in the harem of the governor of Rumelia, Köprülü Pasha, descendant of the famous family that gave the Ottoman Empire a couple of vezirs throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁰ The Ottoman victory against the Habsburgs at Craiova in 1737 allowed Pilsztynowa to try her hand at being a slave owner, providing her an additional source of income. Her second husband, a young Austrian officer, Józef Fortunat de Pichelstein was initially her slave when his family did not come up with the ransom money to free him. Their son, Stanisław Pilsztyn (Pichelstein, 1742 – after 1820), was an important dragoman of the last Polish King

Polski Słownik Biograficzny, vol. 26 (1981), 30-32; Roman Pollak, Marian Petczyński (eds.), *Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa, Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 37, 239 (further on will be referred to as: *Proceder podróży*).

5 Grosfeld, 30–32, *Proceder podróży*, 37.

6 Grosfeld, 30–32; Reychman, 161.

7 *Proceder podróży*, 37.

8 Reychman, 154.

9 Władysław Roczniak, »Power in Powerlessness: the strange journey and career of Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa«, *The Polish Review*, vol. 53, No: 1 (2008), 25–51.

10 *Proceder podróży*, 62.

Stanislaw August Poniatowski (r. 1764 – 1795) and at some point the actual head of the semi-official Polish diplomatic agency to the Sublime Porte.¹¹ Reychman depicts Pilsztyn as »a tireless advocate of Polish trade and slaves' repatriation politics in Turkey.«¹² He was one of the graduates of the Oriental Languages' School in Istanbul founded in 1766 by King Stanislaw August and, thanks to his and other graduates' services, the Commonwealth was supposed to become independent from the Levantine interpreters of Pera.¹³ During her stay in the Ottoman Empire Pilsztynowa attracted new patients and improved her skills as a doctor but she also had to cope with adversity. Her first husband died in Bosnia, and in Vidin she fell pray to the intrigues of Prince Joseph Rákóczy (1700 – 1738) who fell in love with her. Given that his feelings were unrequited he accused Pilsztynowa of being a spy, and she was detained and almost executed.¹⁴

Due to bad experiences during her stay in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Pilsztynowa resolved to return to Istanbul in 1759 during the reign of Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1757 – 1773). She was responsible for the recovery of Sultan's sister, Ayşe Sultana (1715 – 1775) and was afterwards promoted to the post of court physician to the Sultan's harem.¹⁵ Thanks to the account of this second residence in Istanbul we become further acquainted with medical practices, gain insights into the functioning of the court as well as catch a glimpse of the social dynamics of the mid-eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire. In their article on Pilsztynowa's practice as medical practitioner, Janina Konczacki and Kurt Aterman wondered whether she was really a doctor or a quack.¹⁶ They depict her as a travelling ophthalmologist specialising in the treatment of cataracts. They argued that her practice resembled that of other medical practitioners in Europe in the early modern period. The main difference was the fact that she was a woman who was endorsed by women, whose practice was centred on them although her patients were not limited to women.¹⁷ Pilsztynowa made efforts to further her medical knowledge. She first gained her medical training by assisting her first husband Jacob Halpir. Then she broadened her knowledge by taking classes from a Turkish oculist from Baghdad and eventually, received training from an Italian during her stay in Sofia who was in Ottoman captivity and taught her how to write prescriptions in Latin.¹⁸ Konczacki and Aterman came to the conclusion that even though Pilsztynowa's approach to medicine was not lacking in popular and religious superstitions, »she was not a quack but acting in the same role as a barber-surgeon«.¹⁹

11 Reychman, 67; Jerzy S. Łątka, *Słownik Polaków w Imperium Osmańskim i Turcji*. Krakow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2005. 247 – 248.

12 Reychman, 154

13 Ibid. 68.

14 *Proceder podróży*, 70 – 78.

15 *Proceder podróży*, 222 – 223, 229.

16 Janina Konczacki & Kurt Aterman, »Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa, Ophthalmologist in 18th century Poland«, *Survey of Ophthalmology*, vol. 47, no. 2 (March-April 2002), 189 – 95.

17 Ibid.

18 Lynn Lubamersky, »Unique and Incomparable: The Exceptional Life of the First Female Doctor in Poland, Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa«, *The Polish Review*, vol. 59, no.1 (2014), 97.

19 Konczacki & Aterman, 194.

Pilsztynowa composed her diary in 1760 in Istanbul, following a journey to Egypt and Jerusalem.²⁰ Until recently it was the main source of our knowledge on her life and hence, we did not have any information concerning her fortunes after that date. The recent article by Dariusz Kołodziejczyk provides new important findings.²¹ During his research in the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire in Moscow he found a transcript of an exchange between the Russian consul to Bakhchysarai, Alexander Nikoforov, with Pilsztynowa that took place in November 1763.²² Thanks to the document we learn that at the time she worked as a doctor in a harem of the Crimean Khans as well as served as an informant to the Russian consul.²³ Kołodziejczyk's findings are vital as they add three years to Pilsztynowa's biography. Moreover, they verify that she really worked as medical practitioner in the harems of Muslim dignitaries and reveal that she felt at ease among the Middle Eastern political elites.

Pilsztynowa was not the first woman to speak of the eighteenth-century Ottoman medical practices. She was preceded by an English aristocrat Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) as wife to the British ambassador to Istanbul. In her *Turkish Embassy Letters* from travels to the Ottoman Empire in 1716–1718, she described the practice of the Ottoman practitioners (often women), who scraped the skin and gave people mild smallpox as a form of vaccination. Thanks to the letters, the practice of the Ottoman smallpox inoculation spread in Western Europe.²⁴ While similarly to Pilsztynowa, Lady Montagu was fascinated by places reserved to women like the harem or the Turkish bath, she did not get fully immersed in the culture because of the short time she spent there. Pilsztynowa, on the other hand, learned to speak Turkish²⁵ and lived in Istanbul and in the Balkans on her own for years. She managed to support herself and be independent through her medical practice there. She realized that many customs typical of the Ottoman lands suited her and even allowed her to move around more freely than if she had been a woman on her own in Poland. Importantly, Pilsztynowa was not the only Polish woman visiting Istanbul in the eighteenth century. One can even say that she paved the way for an extraordinary event – an escapade of twelve Polish ladies who visited the Ottoman capital in 1787. Among them was another adventuress, a Greek born in Bursa, Zofia *primo voto* Witte, later married to Count Stanisław Szczęsny Potocki (1751–1805).²⁶

20 *Proceder podróży*, 240.

21 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, »Na tropach Salomei Reginy Pilsztynowej: glosa do życiorysu« in: Urszula Kosińska, Dorota Dukwicz, Adam Danilczyk (eds.), *W cieniu wojen I rozbiorów. Studia z dziejów Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII i początków XIX wieku*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2014. 215–229.

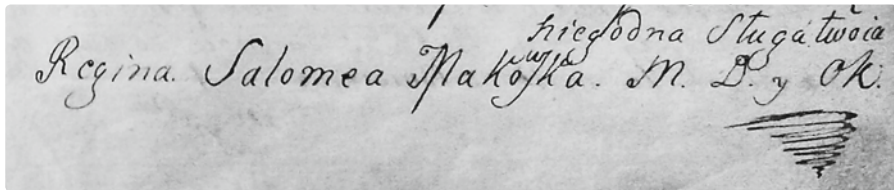
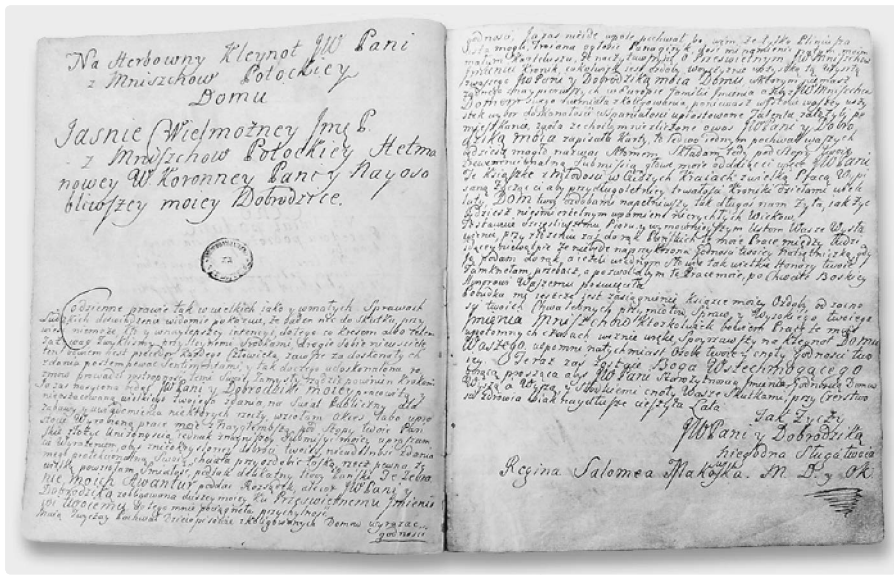
22 Kołodziejczyk, 225–228.

23 *Ibid.* 227.

24 Lubamersky, 97.

25 Roman Pollak, »Wstęp« [Introduction], in: Roman Pollak, Marian Pęcznyiński (eds.), *Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa, Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 20; *Proceder podróży*, 47.

26 Reychman, 115; to learn more on Zofia Potocka and her adventurous life see: Jerzy Łojek, *Dzieje pięknej Bitynki. Historia życia Zofii Potockiej: 1760–1822*. Szczecin: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1982.



Signed dedication to Ludwika Mniszek Potocka, wife of Great Hetman of the Crown, Joseph Potocki

The manuscript of Pilsztynowa’s diary consisting of 368 pages, some of them beautifully ornamented, can be found in the Czartoryski Library in Krakow. The cover made of Moroccan leather suggests that it was compiled in Istanbul, testifying in favour of the circumstances of creation that Pilsztynowa points out in the text.²⁷ The diary’s first page bears a dedication to Ludwika Potocka, wife of the Great Hetman of the Crown Joseph Potocki (1673–1751).

The manuscript was »discovered« by the Polish historian Ludwik Glatman in the Czartoryski Library in 1895.²⁸ In 1957 the journal was published in Krakow under the editorship of and with an introduction by the literary historian Roman Pollak.²⁹ Pilsztynowa’s

27 Kotodziejczyk, 215–216; *Proceder podróży*, 239.

28 Lubamersky, 88.

29 Roman Pollak, Marian Petczyński (eds.), *Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa, Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957.

diary awakened interest in Belarus where her birthplace is today located and was translated into Belarussian and published in Minsk in 1993.³⁰ Recently, Władysław Roczniak together with Lynn Lubamersky were planning to undertake the translation of the diary into English. It was supposed to appear as a part of the series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*. However, the project has been delayed.³¹ For this publication we have selected three chapters from Pilsztynowa's journal which are directly related to her stay in the Ottoman Empire. Chapters 1 and 4 focus on her two subsequent stays in Istanbul and provide numerous details concerning her daily life in the Ottoman Empire, medical practices, the functioning of the Ottoman court and various aspects of the empire's cosmopolitan society. The fifth chapter is an attempt by Pilsztynowa to explain to the reader some fundamentals of the Islamic faith. All the selected chapters provide a window on social, professional and gender interactions between Christians, Jews and Muslims in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire. We hope it will become a useful source on ethnographic, gender study and interfaith issues for historians of the early modern Middle East and Eastern Europe, historians of medicine as well as literary historians.

Paulina D. Dominik, Istanbul, February 2017

30 Full text can be found online: http://prajdzisvet.org/storehouse/authors/Pilsztynowa,%20Salameja/Pilsztynowa_avantury.pdf [accessed on: 27 February 2017].

31 Lubamersky, 99.

»Echo of the Journey and Adventures of My Life« by Salomea Pilsztynowa: a multi-faceted diary

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The diary by Salomea Pilsztynowa did not attract much interest from either historians or historians of literature for many years. The former considered it to be a collection of curiosities about the countries visited by the author – Russia, Turkey, the Habsburg Monarchy – which were a mixture of true information and invented stories. For the latter, it was just a »stepping stone« along the path towards the creation of the mature autobiographical literature of the nineteenth century due to its shortcomings, imperfect style and language. Nevertheless, the author of the introduction to the first printed edition of the *Diary*, Roman Pollak, indicated the good points of the work written by the Polish female traveller, medical doctor and oculist, comparing it to other works from the Enlightenment period:

In a big group of Old-Polish travel diaries, the diary written by the oculist and medical doctor in Istanbul about the year 1760 occupies an important place owing to its personal character, variety of subplots of the narrative and an extraordinarily diversified background of the story¹.

Still, he made a critical comment that the author could not equal other outstanding Polish diary writers, as was determined by her lack of education and writing practice. The author used the vernacular language rather than any literary tradition, writing in a rough, sometimes monotonous manner:

In general, this diary is a peculiar, vivid collection of romance and adventure subplots saturated by the contemporary ambiance. Not being influenced by the literary craft, it reflects the atmosphere of the period and outlines the pictures of contemporary people and the author in a primitive but direct manner².

Remarks about the content of the work and the criticism of its historical and literary value formulated in 1957 in the introduction to the first Polish edition of the *Diary of Pilsztynowa* were typical of how historical work was analysed during that period of time, when the criteria were the originality in relating political events and how the account was constructed. In Polish historiography such an attitude to autobiographical sources such as diaries and letters prevailed for a very long time. The interest of scholars was focused mainly on the sources left by great heroes of history, representatives of the political and artistic elites. An example of such a way of thinking may be the opinion of the publisher of the anthology of Polish diaries by Marian Kaczmarek, who underlined

1 Roman Pollak, »Introduction«, in: Roman Pollak, Marian Petczyński (eds.), *Regina Salomea z Rusieckich Pilsztynowa, Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 23.

2 Ibid. 23.

that only great leaders, politicians and artists had written diaries which could become important for the public³. Historians looked for a reflection of important events, paying much less attention to the authors themselves and their personal experiences. Historians interested in political history searched for information about military campaigns, diplomatic and political negotiations, whilst historians of literature looked for data about the artistic level of a given work. The author was not the centre of attention. It was the events described by the author that came to the fore.

At the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries there took place important changes in handling the private sources, everyday accounts and personal stories of historical heroes. The new research perspective rekindled an interest in old diaries, creating an opportunity to interpret them anew. The *Diary of Pilsztynowa* started to be read in an ethnographic and anthropological context, in terms of the analysis of identity and geopoetics. Undoubtedly, it is worth underlining that some older studies enabled such possibilities of interpretation, which meant that they maintained their value as a starting point for a new reading of the diary⁴. Salomea Pilsztynowa herself began to be presented in various roles – as a wife, mother, traveller, skillful eye doctor and as an independent, entrepreneurial woman able to tame the outside world. Before we look at new interpretations and attempts to read the diary, let us outline the background to the changes in research on private writing and how sources of an autobiographical type have been dealt with in recent years.

A new suggestion which appeared in the analysis of autobiographical writing may be treated as a kind of a catalyst for historiographic changes – moving from social history to cultural history and the history of mentality. The traditional approach to the text as a witness of history, as a source used to reveal facts, was replaced by the subjective approach. An autobiography or a diary began to be treated as a document with its own form and materiality, revealing the person or even the identity of the writer. Such terms as »personal document«, »ego-document«, »self-writing« replaced the traditional names used to refer to a diary, autobiography, and confession, all connected with the history of literature. The popularity of the term »ego-document« introduced in 1958 by Jacob Presser on the one hand resulted from the need to incorporate texts rejected for not conforming to traditional genres and conventions. On the other hand, historians wanted to raise the value of autobiographic sources⁵. The documentary character of the text (ego-document) was in particular valued since documents were associated with objectivity as opposed to the assigned subjectivity of a diary or autobiography. French, Dutch and German publishing series may serve as examples of the new

3 Marian Kaczmarek, »Introduction«, in: *Antologia pamiętników polskich XVI wieku*. Wrocław-Warsaw-Krakow: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1966. 7.

4 Jadwiga Rytel, »Dwa pamiętniki – w czasach króla Jana i później«, *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 1:1960. 163; Andrzej Cieński, *Pamiętnikarstwo polskie XVIII wieku*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1981. 153–156.

5 We find some broader reflections on the subject of ego-documents in: Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker, Michael Mascuch, »Egodocuments and History: A Short Account of the Longue Durée«, *The Historian*, 78: 2016. 11–56.

approach to ego-documentary sources. In France the works of the scholars involved in the programme »Les Écrits du for privé«⁶ provided a new look at this kind of source. In the Netherlands a series of publications dealing with so-called self-testimonies were created in the publishing house Brill – »Egodocuments and History Series« – while in Germany over twenty volumes appeared in the series »Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit« created by Alf Lüdtke, Hans Medick, Claudia Ulbrich, Kaspar von Greyerz and Dorothee Wierling.

Revealing private sources, historians started to pose new questions concerning the individuality and identity of the protagonist. Historians have embraced entirely new fields and sources that historians of literature have thus far only treated or regarded as marginal and obscure forms of autobiography. Studies have appeared concerning social groups and individuals who were not well known or who had been omitted – women, peasants, craftsmen⁷ – people for whom writing was a major challenge and difficulty. For example, Johann Peters published his anthology of peasants' diaries from the Early Modern period⁸. Eva Kormann conducted the analysis of autobiographic texts written by women in the seventeenth century, indicating the manner in which women described themselves in relation to the Other, to God, to the World⁹. Gabriele Jancke dealt with diaries of artists and craftsmen, reconstructing their accounts in the world of scholars, artists, between the principal (the ordering party) and the executor (the client)¹⁰. Lorenz Heiligensetzer analysed the personal accounts of clergymen¹¹, while Otto Ulbricht published three diaries of merchants describing their trade travels and business carried out at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries¹².

In a dimension which could be referred to as intensive, there appeared questions concerning juxtaposed statements: individualism-society, subjectivity-objectivity, private sphere-public sphere, exceptionality-typicality. Looking at a diary or letter as an ego-document gave rise to new perspectives. Firstly, there appeared questions as to how a

6 Jean-Pierre Bardet, François-Joseph Ruggiu (eds.), *Au plus près du secret des coeurs? Nouvelles lectures historiques des écrits du for privé*. Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005; Michel Cassan, Jean-Pierre Bardet, François-Joseph Ruggiu (eds.), *Les Écrits du for privé: objets matériels, objets édités*. Limoges: Presses universitaires de Limoges, 2007; Jean-Pierre Bardet, Elisabeth Arnoul, François-Joseph Ruggiu (eds.), *Les Écrits du for privé en Europe du Moyen Âge à l'époque contemporaine: enquêtes, analyses, publications*. Bordeaux: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 2010; Jean-Pierre Bardet, François-Joseph Ruggiu (eds.), *Les écrits du for privé en France de la fin du Moyen Âge à 1914*. Paris: Editions CTHS, 2014.

7 James S. Amelang, *The Flight of Icarus: Artisan Autobiography in Early Modern Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

8 Jan Peters, *Mit Pflug und Gänsekiel. Selbstzeugnisse schreibender Bauern. Eine Anthologie*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2003.

9 Eva Kormann, *Ich, Welt und Gott. Autobiographik im 17. Jahrhundert*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2004.

10 Gabriele Jancke, *Autobiographie als soziale Praxis. Beziehungskonzepte in Selbstzeugnissen des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts im deutschsprachigen Raum*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2002.

11 Lorenz Heiligensetzer, *Getreue Kirchendiener – gefährdete Pfarrherren. Deutschschweizer Prädikanten des 17. Jahrhunderts in ihren Lebensbeschreibungen*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2006.

12 Otto Ulbricht (ed.), *Schiffbruch! Drei Selbstzeugnisse von Kaufleuten des 17./18. Jahrhunderts*. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2013.

historian may localise the inner world of the author and discover their feelings. The second group of questions referred to the form of a diary written by an »ordinary« author, frequently inexperienced and with insufficient knowledge of the grammar and literary conventions of the time. Many such diaries had heterogeneous forms and content, where the narrative mixed with additional »foreign« texts incorporated into the work. Diarists added fragments of documents, letters written by themselves and other people, citations, poems to their own narratives. This resulted from the need to document their own accounts and to make them more credible. Underlining the materiality of the diary and its form, the manner in which those additional elements were arranged and their place in the text made historians realise that all those prefabricated components which constitute the text may be the evidence of the author's personality, identity, interests and sensitivity.

Now is the time to analyse the diary by Salomea Pilsztynowa from a new perspective. We are convinced that the *Diary of Salomea Pilsztynowa* should be read as a typical work of the epoch consisting of various literary conventions and »prefabricated components«. For the author it was much more important to consolidate memories than to exhibit stylistic and literary perfection, which required not only skill but also time-consuming work on the text. The form and style became secondary objectives, while the major aim was to save what she heard and saw from oblivion. Pilsztynowa did not collate her own archive; she did not have her own library to which she could refer to look up facts and accounts. That is why instead of a precise documentary account we will find in her narrative many genres, conventions and forms – stories, legends, travelling accounts, fragments of books she had read, dialogues, and utterances made by acquaintances and accidental interlocutors. The subject matter of the account is also diversified – from relevant and detailed accounts from journeys and meetings with patients and officials down to fantastical and anecdotic stories from the courtly life in Saint Petersburg, Istanbul and Vienna; from accounts concerning her medical doctor's practice to stories about magical practices and wizards, exhibiting a belief in sorcery and witchcraft.

The author's love for legends, romantic stories from the life in the royal courts, and witchcraft have surprised historians in the past. Nowadays, thanks to our knowledge of a great deal of similar works from the epoch, we find in the diary characteristic features resulting from the conventions of the epoch. For example, the descriptions of events in big European capital cities, the histories of rulers, the author's own love adventures resemble the style of romance popular in the eighteenth century, which presented courtly love scandals (let us recall that Pilsztynowa also entitled her diary »Echo of the Journey and the Adventures of My Life«)¹³. Such texts were formed by various literary conventions. Thus, the contemporary scholar rightly evaluates the work by Pilsztynowa by underlining its diversity of conventions and genres:

13 Iwona Maciejewska, »Specyfika relacji pamiętnikarskiej „Procederu podróży i życia mego awantur« Reginy Salomei z Rusieckich Pilsztynowej«, in: Krystyna Stasiewicz (ed.), *Pisarki polskie epok dawnych*. Olsztyn: Studia i Materiały – Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Olsztynie, 1998. 150.

The account is a colourful and multifaceted mosaic determined predominantly by two factors – firstly, the author’s biography, personality and ideas about the world; secondly, the aims she had in mind while recording the story of her life. Those conditions meant that the history of this extraordinary woman go beyond the pure formula of a diary (if there is one)¹⁴.

Keeping in mind the variety of form and content in the diary written by Pilsztynowa, the mixture of serious information with anecdotes, relevant accounts with fantastical and invented stories, it is worth paying attention to a popular literary form in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – »*silva rerum*« books. It was in »*silva rerum*« books written by the head of the family and transmitted from generation to generation that forms and genres were mixed. The Latin term »*silva rerum*« used not only by historians, but also by Old-Polish creators of codices, could be translated as »the forest of things«. The term assumes a variety in terms of both structure (a »forest« has different trees, bushes, layers, accessible and inaccessible sites) and content (»things« – things may be small and big, important and unimportant, one’s own and belonging to someone else). The constitutive elements of the »*silva rerum*« book were a variety of texts, content and form, and subject matters touched upon in the work – from minor issues to serious problems.

For a very long time, »*silva rerum*« books, like diaries, were ignored by historians of politics and literature. The former perceived some value in them if they described important political events, while the latter considered them valuable if their authors evinced some literary skills. However, the first and the second condition seldom coincided. Authors recorded mostly information about family life, their own actions and successes, neglecting form, convention, style and language. The content of the work constituted remarks about weddings, funerals, recipes, medical advice, copies of correspondence, poems, speeches, travel accounts, and notes from political events.

Salomea Pilsztynowa, like the authors of »*silva rerum*« books, did not give one homogeneous shape to her book. Her diary consists of seven different chapters which differ in their content and form. The first four chapters constitute a collection of travel accounts from Istanbul, Sofia, Saint Petersburg, Vienna, Kiev, Wrocław [Breslau] and many other smaller towns, where the author quickly adapts to new conditions and, thanks to her medical profession, wins the respect of her entourage. Her experience as an eye doctor opens many doors to aristocratic houses and allows her to reach royal courts. She spends about twelve years in Poland, where she attempts to sort out her family matters (she had a daughter and two sons) and property issues. She feels good everywhere, and thanks to her energy and abilities she is capable of earning her living and saving money. She learns languages, at least to a level which allows her to communicate well enough to exercise her profession. What evokes the worst memories is her stay in Po-

14 Ibid. 144.

land. Several times she mentions the deceit and intrigue which she experienced; the stay in her homeland starts to resemble captivity:

After my return, I found my husband in unfavourable circumstances, because he had broken the marital vow. Here in Polesie [the historical region now on the border between Poland, Belorussia and Ukraine] I do not experience any comfort, any entertainment and any benefits. God willing, here I have to stay sick and pregnant. In Saint Petersburg I observed fine things and lived well, while here I have come to abhor the world ... I wanted to break away from here like from captivity.¹⁵ [transl. by Agnieszka Chabros]

Paradoxically, foreign and distant Turkey and Istanbul become her asylum and safe abode. In her diary she records her joy at crossing the border: »I asked God for help and went to Khotyn (Chocim), to Turkey for my own benefit. Having successfully arrived in Khotyn, I was immediately well received by Mehmed Pasha.«¹⁶ [transl. A. C.]

She spends some time at the court of the sultan's sister as her doctor, where she is treated with honour. She mentions that they remembered about her duties as a Catholic:
During the days of the Good Friday and Holy Saturday, they cooked for me sophisticated dishes made from fish, sugar and jam. They expressed their compassion that I did not have anything to eat. I had such a comfortable bed, and an original and quiet room!¹⁷ [transl. A. C.]

Joanna Partyka, analysing the reasons for which Pilsztynowa returned to Turkey, her fascination with the country and the feeling of safety she experienced there, recapitulates: The female doctor of medicine and oculist, who in her own country felt lost and cheated, found her place in the Turkish world. In Poland she was not accepted, because she was different – too entrepreneurial, too eloquent, too good in her profession, too liberated and independent. She was unable to fulfill her role as a wife; she could not meet her obligations as a mother; she was incapable of creating a house for her children. She openly fought for her rights and won. She did not resemble the ideal of the Old-Polish woman. In Turkey she was different, she was a foreigner. The categories of the otherness do not undergo the same evaluation criteria. That is why it was easier to accept her as a foreign woman performing a male profession.¹⁸

We may reverse this way of thinking and say that for Pilsztynowa the world and Turkey were not foreign, but different. People are frightened by the foreign, but they attempt to understand the Other. The heroine quickly adapted to the demands of life in another world, learning the language and earning money. She quickly made friends and became

15 Roman Pollak, Marian Pełczyński (ed.), *Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 152.

16 Ibid. 217.

17 Ibid. 230.

18 Joanna Partyka, »Kobieta oswoja męską przestrzeń. Polska lekarka w osiemnastowiecznym Stambule«, in: *Krytyka Stasiewicz (ed.), Pisarki polskie epok dawnych*. Olsztyn: Studia i Materiały – Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Olsztynie, 1998. 162. Compare recently Joanna Partyka, »Overpassing State and Cultural Borders: A Polish Female Doctor in 18th-Century Constantinople« in: Amelia Sanz, Francesca Scott, Suzan van Dijk (eds.), *Women Telling Nations*. Rodopi: Amsterdam – New York, 2014.

accepted, which helped her to shed the trappings of otherness. Turkey stopped being foreign when she felt safe there. However, Turkish customs, religion and history remained different to what she had experienced in Poland. That is why the comparison of customs and ceremonies in Istanbul with the ones known from her homeland are so characteristic. The author provides examples from Polish culture and the Catholic faith to describe and explain such situations. In her diary she thoroughly depicts the sultan's court, customs, her own adventures and experiences. She tries to understand the new world comparing specific events in Istanbul with what she saw and came to know in Poland. For example, the Turkish mufti is compared with the pope in Rome. During her visit to the baths she admired the clothes of women comparing them with wedding outfits in Poland. Ceremonies given in honour of the birth of the sultan's daughter and decorations prepared in Istanbul bring back the memories of the Catholic holiday of Corpus Christi and processions to decorated altars. Life at the court of the sultan's sister is compared with life in the convent. The court guarantees life in purity like the convent. She describes the rendering of a young girl to the court of the sultan's sister and compares it with the event of sending a young girl to the convent. Events which are familiar to Pilsztynowa from her own culture allow her to understand and domesticate the other world to finally accept it.

The subsequent chapters of the diary have a distinct tone. The fifth chapter is an attempt to describe the Turkish religion and customs and to explain the Koran. The sixth chapter titled »The description of the journey to Jerusalem« contains Pilsztynowa's opinions about the relations between Jews and Christians along with her comments concerning the Jewish religion.

This religious discourse includes opinions about the Orthodox religion, Lutheranism and Calvinism. All this is maintained in the convention of a collection of curiosities and anecdotes. Chapter seven continues to address religious matters, where the author confronts the accounts of Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews concerning fasting and confession. All the chapters constitute a kind of report of the viewpoints of other people which the author heard or read rather than her own opinions. Pilsztynowa herself attempts to remain unbiased when she is not convinced about the reliability of a given viewpoint, as in the account concerning vampires: »I do not deny nor do I confirm what they say about vampires since I have visited many countries and in each country they tell different stories.«¹⁹ [transl. A. C.]

Perhaps it was her journeys that taught our author to maintain skepticism towards the credibility of the stories she heard.

The diary ends with a poem written by the author – a kind of prayer, which Pilsztynowa dedicates to the Mother of God, followed by a table of contents, where she meticulously lists all the issues addressed in the chapters of her diary. With the future reader in mind,

19 Roman Pollak, Marian Petczyński (eds.), *Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 292.

Pilsztynowa aims to facilitate browsing the diary and indicates extracts which could be of interest. In her diary she expresses her hope that the book will reach the reader – »the whole book is written for Divine Providence and the entertainment of people«²⁰. She prepared the list of contents to make it easier to read. The readers may decide themselves how to approach the diary – according to the itinerary of the author's journey, according to anecdotes from the courtly life or extracts concerning religious matters. The author leaves the choice to the reader, which was typical practice during the eighteenth century. The authors of *silva rerum* books behaved in a similar way. Their neglect of form, inconsistency in reporting events, mixing subplots are easy to explain. The author left it to the reader to decide in what order they should read the diary – they could choose the story recounting the life of the heroine, descriptions of cities, information about medical treatments, ceremonies at the courts and love affairs. Krzysztof Dmitruk explains such a practice in Old Poland referring to the example of reading *silva rerum* books:

A nobleman used the book in a free or even arbitrary way. He often divided the reading into fragments, extracts, citations, adages. He confounded the narrative order established by the author or the publisher. He neglected the sequence of information. The reader acquired the material from the book, which composed new and unconventional forms.²¹

Pilsztynowa creates her diary with an awareness of three Latin formulae which appeared on the front pages of manuscripts and diaries in the eighteenth century – *ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (for the greater glory of God), *ad posteritatem* (for posterity), *ad subsidium memoriae* (to strengthen the memory).

Firstly, the diary is a kind of tribute paid to God. On the front page of her diary Pilsztynowa explains that she wrote »Echo« to glorify God, the Mother of God and all the Saints. In the text she repeats this declaration several times. The collections of seven poems which close the diary – »Songs composed by me« – is a kind of prayer to God and the Mother of God asking them for protection and comfort.

Secondly, the diary was written for posterity, readers who were to find there anecdotes, curiosities from the life of courts, descriptions of towns and the colourful story of the life of the author herself. Rarely does Pilsztynowa mention her children; she only informs when and under whose guardianship she left them. The diary seems to be an account which the lonely woman and mother left to her children. Her loneliness is visible in the fragment when she complains about her son Stanisław's refusal to live with her in Istanbul. The abandoned mother writes: »I have come to understand that I will never again see my children and that I will live alone. Who knows, maybe they will want me to appear in their dreams.«²² [transl. A. C.]

20 Ibid. 40.

21 Quoted from: Krzysztof Dmitruk, »Galaktyki kultury«, in: Hanna Dziechcińska (ed.), *Kultura żywego słowa*. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1989. 17.

22 Roman Pollak, Marian Pęczyński (eds.), *Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 240.

Thirdly, the diary functioned as a collection of notes the aim of which was to consolidate the details from her travel, her own observations and conversations she held in various countries and cities. The author did not have access to a library or archive; that is why she recorded in the diary all the events she had experienced or heard about from her interlocutors. Recording the events in written form made the unusual adventures of the author more credible. The same information expressed in an oral way could be understood as fantasy or gossip, but the act of writing it down made the account more reliable. Although the book remained a manuscript, the author's intention was to popularise it. The evidence for this are the direct references to the reader (the introduction »To the Gracious Reader«) and the form of the diary – the division and detailed list of contents helping the reader cope with the rich content of the book.

Pilsztynowa's diary also provides incredible interpretative possibilities from another perspective – in the context of the research on the identity of the historical hero as an individual and member of the social group. Recently, the perspective has been outlined by a research team involved in the project conducted by Claudia Ulbrich, François-Joseph Ruggiu, and Giovanni Ciapelli – »*Les écrits à la première personne en Europe de la fin du XVe siècle au XIXe siècle. Une enquête au prisme de la recherche allemande, française et italienne, Villa Vigoni – Centro Italo-Tedesco per L'Eccellenza Europea*«. The starting point for the discussion was the introduction of the category »self-identification« and »external identification« taken from the work by the sociologist and historian Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper *Beyond identity* of 2000.²³ In the light of their findings, the identity results from the clash of objective conditions of the life of individuals (heroes), which are determined by the sex, family and social background, profession, the place of residence, with the system of their own ideas and personal choices. Such a clash, the tension between the objective and the subjective, provides the hero with a variety of options between the patterns imposed by traditional social divisions.

Salomea Pilsztynowa's account constitutes a magnificent piece of evidence on the changing identity of our heroine, of the dynamics of her spiritual changes and the process of casting aside the traditional roles assigned to a woman by eighteenth-century society. On the one hand, it provides the opportunity to look at the heroine in terms of an individual, family, religion, profession, society and geography. On the other hand, it allows us to perceive the dynamics of change. Identity cannot be treated as a collection of constant attributes permanently defining the position of an individual. It undergoes alterations, and its dynamics are determined by external events and internal changes.

Pilsztynowa is a mother and wife, but her whole life is far from the ideal of the wife promoted in Poland by moralising texts and guidebooks on leading a decent life. She is by no means an example of a typical wife accompanying her husband. Her first hus-

23 Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, »Beyond Identity«, *Theory and Society*, 29: 2000. 1–47; online: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/18_Beyond_Identity.pdf [accessed on: 27 February 2017].

band was a medical doctor, the Lutheran and burgher Jacob Halpir; her second husband was Józef Pilsztyn, a standard-bearer in the emperor's army, followed by her third husband – Józef Makowski. Dariusz Chemperek recently has established that the »*am-oratus*« mentioned in the diary is a nobleman from the area of Zhytomyr (Żytomierz) – Józef Makowski²⁴. Her marriages did not last long – in her diary Pilsztynowa is very critical of her husbands, and her financial independence allows her to remain single. Her impetuous nature must have worsened her situation, the evidence of which are the conflicts and quarrels she described in the diary. By no means was she an ideal mother for her daughter Konstancja and two sons Stanisław and Franciszek. She did not create a family home, instead giving priority to travel and professional obligations. The reasons for such loneliness and an unsuccessful family life may have been rooted in her own lack of a family home. The author never mentions her place of birth or her parents.

Lately Dariusz Chemperek has put forward an interesting analysis of the diary according to the rules of so-called geopoetics, which suggests interpreting the literary creation as an interaction between cultural practices and the geographical space²⁵. He comes to the conclusion that for Pilsztynowa the family home does not constitute a fundamental place of self-identification or that it remains a taboo topic. Her autobiographic location, the second motherland described as her own place, is the city where she settled for a longer period of time – first of all, Rusçuk (today Ruse) in Bulgaria and Istanbul, the capital city of the Ottoman Empire. It was particularly in the latter that she discovered new places, met new people and started to understand a foreign culture and religion:

Wishing to understand the place where she stays, with the help of teachers she studies the secular and religious tradition of Turkey, including the Quran, holding discussions and conversations, which gives her much pleasure. She is interested in various aspects of life in the Bosphorus region: the manner in which halva is made, the Turkish wedding traditions, stories about Muhammad²⁶.

Nevertheless, she describes her first stay in Istanbul in a much more gloomy manner: Because of this long illness and costs my husband bore for the treatment, I wanted to leave Istanbul for fear of Jewish witchcraft. But my husband was a Lutheran and it was hard for him to believe that one could die because of witchcraft. I had experienced that, so I believed it.«²⁷ [transl. A. C.]

Professionally, Pilsztynowa also went beyond the canons of her epoch. She was a doctor and oculist, which were typically male professions. Thanks to her first husband, in

24 See recently: Dariusz Chemperek, »Echo na świat podane procederu podróży i życia mego awantur Salomei Pilsztynowej w świetle geopoetyki. Miejsce autobiograficzne«, in: Piotr Borek, Dariusz Chemperek, Anna Nowicka-Struska (eds.), *Memuarystyka w dawnej Polsce*. Krakow: Collegium Columbinum, 2016. 188.

25 Ibid. 195 – 201.

26 Quoted from: Dariusz Chemperek, »Echo na świat podane ...«. 200.

27 Roman Pollak, Marian Pęcznyiński (eds.), *Proceder podróży i życia mego awantur*. Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957. 53.

no time at all she became acquainted with the secrets of medicine to an extent that allowed her to conduct her own independent medical practice. What is more, she became a fashionable doctor both for women and men, which brought her popularity and money. Her skills and medical knowledge meant that in every new place and every new country she quickly won acceptance and »grabbed some part of the space belonging to men«²⁸. Her professional career resembles the careers of merchants who travelled all over Europe in the eighteenth century and thanks to their universal skills – necessary in every town and country – they acquired money and respect. They created an elite of cosmopolitans who felt comfortable everywhere thanks to their skills and professional knowledge, while a universal value for the aristocracy was a knowledge of the French language and good manners. Tijl Vanneste defines such an ability of individuals to blend into society as real cosmopolitanism²⁹. Pilsztynowa entered the world of the professional elite – doctors.

Finally, the author should be viewed in terms of a traveller, who spent most of her life far from her motherland, visiting various countries – the Ottoman Empire, Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and settling for a longer time in Istanbul and in Rusçuk (now Ruse, Bulgaria), in Vienna and Saint Petersburg. Her travel accounts differ from the standards followed by travellers of this period. In Polish diaries of the time, descriptions of nature, architecture, fortifications and religious sites of worship prevail³⁰. Pilsztynowa is also fascinated with the architecture of the city (particularly Saint Petersburg and Istanbul), but the dominant feature in her diary are stories about people, princes and ordinary servants.

The diary written by Salomea Pilsztynowa is an unusual piece of evidence in the life of a woman in the eighteenth century. Despite the linguistic and stylistic imperfections, it helps the reader to become acquainted with the experiences of the author and observe the microcosm of the historical protagonist. Pilsztynowa was an unusual heroine, who was not only capable of adapting to the new world, but also of domesticating it. Despite family difficulties, financial problems, difficulties in understanding a foreign language and customs, Salomea Pilsztynowa was able to discern that a world that originally seems foreign over time becomes surprisingly friendly.

28 Joanna Partyka, »Kobieta oswaja męską przestrzeń. Polska lekarka w osiemnastowiecznym Stambule«, in: Krystyna Stasiewicz (ed.), *Pisarki polskie epok dawnych*. Olsztyn: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1998. 162.

29 Tijl Vanneste, »Entre le monde et les sociétés locales: la mentalité cosmopolite des marchands des diasporas au 18e siècle«, in: Liliane Crips, Nicole Gabriel, Marie-Louise Pelus-Kaplan (eds.), *Être Citoyen du Monde. Cosmopolitisme et Internationalisme: théories - pratiques - combats XV e-XXIe siècles, Actes du Séminaire doctoral du laboratoire ICT – EA 337*, n.1. Paris: Université Paris Diderot, 2014. 92.

30 Hanna Dziechcińska, *O staropolskich dziennikach podróży*. Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1991, passim. It was confirmed recently by Adam Kucharski, *Theatrum peregrinandi. Poznawcze aspekty staropolskich podróży w epoce późnego baroku*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013.

Regina Salomea Pilsztynowa

Excerpts from »Echo of the Journey and Adventures of My Life«

Chapter 1

First Travel to Istanbul

My father (Joachim Rusiecki) and mother married me off at a young age to a doctor named Jakub [Jacob] Halpir from the Nowogródek district in Lithuania. I went with him to Istanbul the very same year. Since my husband was a well-respected doctor and we were of good financial standing thanks to God's mercy, we received a warm welcome there. One of our first patients was a rich Turkish *çavuş*, who was totally blind and whose hands and legs had been disabled for seven years.¹ After long and hard bargaining, my husband agreed to treat his disabilities for the sum of five hundred Dutch thalers.² As soon as the Turkish *çavuş* paid my husband, they began treatment. My husband's methods were so successful that the patient was soon able to read, write and walk without a stick. When Sultan Mahmud learned about this, my husband's fame spread through the whole of Istanbul.³ For three months throughout his treatment, the Turk drank the herbal infusions and took the medicines prescribed to him. One day my husband gave him a medicine which was considered trustworthy, but the patient died. A bitter altercation followed immediately. Blaming my husband for the Turk's death, his wife and children wanted to have him strangled. They brought a complaint before the Grand Vizier. To our detriment Ismail Pasha was the Grand Vizier at the time, a man renowned for his zeal in strangling Turks and Christians alike.⁴ My husband was taken to prison at once and his execution was a matter of days.

At that time, I fell seriously ill, partly because of the climate, and partly because of witchcraft.⁵ One of my legs was paralyzed⁶ and shorter than the other by half an arm. The pain spreading over my body was unbearable. In this grievous situation, I requested to be carried in a litter to the prison where my husband was being held in order to speak with him about how to proceed. My husband advised me to visit the Grand Vizier to explain that he was innocent and to ask him to set him free. I proceeded accordingly. I had the request written in Turkish and submitted it to the Grand Vizier during the meeting of the *Divan* in the presence of a large number of people.⁷ I was told to come back at the time of the evening prayer to receive a response to my request. I was carried back there at the time of the evening prayer. However, when I got there, I was told

1 A *çavuş* is a sergeant or non-commissioned officer.

2 Dutch thalers were coins with the image of a lion on them. They were made in large quantities in the seventeenth and eighteenth century with purpose of exporting them to the Middle East.

3 Mahmud I (1696 - 1754) reigned as the twenty-fourth Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1730 to 1754.

4 Gürcü Ismail Pasha (d.1738) served as Ottoman Grand vizier from July 1735 to January 1736.

5 Pilsztynowa was a highly superstitious person. In her diary she often attributed her health problems to curses and magic spells cast upon her by her enemies.

6 In the original Old Polish the word used here for paralyzed is »dryk«, which could also refer to a »muscle weakness.« It seems that one of her legs was paralyzed and had stopped developing while the other leg continued to grow, resulting in unequal lengths.

7 The *Divan* was a Sultan's council presided over by the Grand Vizier. The council's meetings took place in the building located next to the second courtyard of Topkapı Palace.



Peragraph

I. Pierwszego Rozdziału

Pierwsza Podróż do Stambulu

w Młodym wieku moim urzadali mnie Rozzice rnie
Joachim Rusiecki za mąż z Litwy wojewodztwa No
wogrodzkiego za Doktora Jakuba Malpina, ktorym
to Doktorem tegoż Roku pascchalam do Stambulu
y zaraz wzięci my byli po między Goanemi Ludźmi
ponieważ że był cetrá dołym Theorczym Doktorem
y Pan Bóg nam pobłogosławio że smá przysięli do
Kawatka Fortiny, w tym raćie trafił się nam ieden
Turczyn Wielki Bogacz Cesarzki Czauz który był
Sędzią na Obyswie Oczy, y ułomny na Obyswie ręce y
nogi przez lat siedm, y z targowatę z mężem moim
za Piencet Lewow Złoty tegoż Roku wprawditi
y zaraz dat ten Turczyn Zauz te Piencetę Mężu
Miemu, a mąż moj wiot go wkurzon Swicie, y tak
dobrze y bez śliskie wykurował go że mógł sam cę
tać y pisać oczyma, y rękami Swoimi, y chodzić no

by one of the Grand Vizier's servants to come to the Vizier's palace an later hour. This [highly irregular request] confused me because the response to such pleas would be generally given before dusk. I asked to be taken again to my husband's prison and told him what had happened. My husband said to me: »I would rather die the cruellest death than have my wife's character blemished in any way.« Then the night fell and I asked to be taken home.

The following day I visited some Turkish dignitaries who were good friends of ours and asked them to help me make peace with the family of the deceased *çavuş*. We agreed eventually on the sum of five thousand Dutch thalers that is to say ten purses as there are five hundred Dutch thalers in each purse. I received a signed receipt at the court and my husband was set free. He was truly grateful to me for all my efforts and the expenses that I had incurred.

After several months of investigating the reason for the patient's death and the subsequent costs that we had to bear, I discovered that the last medicine that he had taken before his death had been made at a pharmacy in Istanbul according to a prescription written by my husband. A Jewish doctor named Fonseka [Fonseca] worked in that pharmacy; it was he who had added poison to the mixture which caused the *çavuş*'s death.⁸ I told my husband to lodge a complaint about the pharmacist at whose pharmacy the Jew had added the poison. My husband replied however: »Thank God that they did not execute me. We should be grateful that we only had to pay a sum of money as compensation.«

In my husband's absence, I had a letter secretly written in which I explained the circumstances of the *çavuş*'s death, the costs that we had to incur as a result, and that the real reason of his death was poison added to the medicine by the Jewish doctor who worked at Johan's pharmacy. Once the letter was ready, I was carried to the Vizier's court. To my luck, Ali Pasha, who was more merciful, had replaced Ismail Pasha as vizier.⁹ I handed him the letter and I was given the chance to explain why I had come before him. I told him that I was Polish and my stay in his country was only temporary. Next, I requested that the pharmacist Johan and the Jewish doctor Fonseka be put on trial at the imperial court in my presence. However, I insisted that they not be told the reason why they were being summoned to the presence of the Vizier so that they would not have time to come up with excuses against my charges. One and a half hour later they appeared at the imperial court in Paşa Kapısı.¹⁰ One of the Turkish dignitaries immediately started to chastise them. Because of their poison, I accused them of having

8 While Pilsztynowa cannot be referring to the famous imperial doctor Daniel de Fonseca (1672–1740) as he arrived in Istanbul in 1702 and left for Paris in 1730, she may be talking about one of his relatives.

9 She might be referring to Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha. However, he was a Grand Vizier before Ismail Pasha and returned to this function only in 1742.

10 Paşa Kapısı – a building constructed in the vicinity of the Topkapı Palace where the Grand Vizier fulfilled his duties since the mid-seventeenth century. It played a role of the court when the Divan meetings did not take place in the Topkapı Palace.

caused the suffering of three people: an innocent *çavuş* lost his life, I lost my money and my husband's reputation had become tarnished since the news spread that the *çavuş* had died due to the medicine he had prescribed him.

Doctor Fonseka was so overwhelmed by fear that he swore in everyone's presence that he would return all my money and begged me to put an end to the affair. We came to an agreement and he paid me the five thousand Dutch thalers that I had given the *çavuş*'s family. My husband, however, was oblivious to the whole incident because he was treating a Greek nobleman who lived six hours away from Istanbul. As soon as he received the news, he went to Bursa without any notice. I sent a messenger to him, ensuring him that he had nothing to fear. He came back to Istanbul relieved. (...) Doctor Fonseka, however, did not let go easily and did his best to spoil my happiness. He went before the *Hekimbaşı*, the Chief Imperial Physician, without whose permission even the best doctor was not allowed to practice. Pointing out that I, as a woman, had no idea about medicine, Fonseka convinced him to forbid me from practicing medicine upon the threat of punishment. The only patients I could treat were women suffering from eye problems. I had learned the art of healing eye conditions from my husband as well as a Turkish doctor from Babylon. Consequently, the *Hekimbaşı* summoned my husband and told him that under no circumstances was I allowed to treat men; my only patients from now on were to be women with eye complaints.

Nevertheless, I had a patient who was the wife of a coffee merchant. She was blind in both of her eyes and I managed to cure her. After her treatment she paid me for my services. In Istanbul it is customary to organize a reception according to one's means to celebrate one's recovery from an illness. My patient rented two carriages and, apart from myself, brought along her newly married daughter as well as her handsome young son, Fazıl. He carried a diamond watch and a knife with a handle decorated with diamonds, and wore a ring and fur. Her two slave girls and her small children were in the second carriage. They brought along food and *şerbet* to drink.¹¹ However, I asked my servant to bring along two small bottles of wine and to hide them in the carriage so that the coffee merchant's wife wouldn't see them. Leaving the carriages outside, we went to the reception in the garden. After the meal I planned to have one of the bottles of wine and leave the other one in the carriage.

Since it is forbidden to drink and sell wine in Istanbul, searches are quite frequent. When the guards searched our carriage, they found the one unopened bottle of wine and the empty bottle of the drunken wine. They asked who had drunk the wine. The carriage driver replied that he did not know. They then started inquiring who the women with the young gentleman were. The driver explained that the women only had rented the carriages from him. The guards did not realize that Fazıl was the coffee merchant's wife's son and took us for prostitutes. Without any warning they attacked him

11 *Şerbet* – a sweet drink prepared from fruits or flower petals. It is usually served chilled.

with sticks, took his watch, knife and fur and arrested him. Fazıl worked as a servant at the residence of the Head Janissary. I was lucky that I was dressed in the European way, and that I was a Christian and a doctor. They let me go free immediately. My patient – Fazıl's mother – started to cry and did not know what to do since her husband had warned her before: »Do not bring Fazıl along. He is already a young man and it is both dangerous and indecent for him to accompany women in the garden.« Meanwhile, my husband forbade me to go on picnics with Turkish women and bring along wine. He told me that if I were to have a meal with them, to only meet them at their house. Fazıl's mother had no idea what to do next. She could not go and help him while he was in custody, since it was a great shame to have a son who had drunken alcohol. However, we knew very well that Fazıl not only had never drunken wine, but that he did not even know what it looked like. I had no other choice but to help them.

I sent the mother with her daughter and slave servants in one carriage to their house. In the meanwhile, I got in the other carriage and rushed to the prison to help Fazıl. When I got there, I spoke to the Head Sergeant (the equivalent of a captain in Poland) and asked him to set Fazıl free. I explained that the women accompanying him to the garden were his mother, his sister, his mother's servants and myself. Since I was Polish and a Christian, I was allowed to talk to men. The Sergeant replied: »I understand you but as you should know, the Sultan prohibited wine consumption for Christians, even at home. It was clear that you drank wine in the company of Turks. There is no excuse since we found the bottle of wine in your carriage.«

Perplexed and afraid that he might arrest me too, I prayed to God to help me come up with a reasonable explanation. I said to him: »Sir, I am Polish and do not know all the orders of His Majesty, the Sultan, including the ban that also forbids wine to Christians, which I would not breach. But I do have a brain and I didn't bring along wine. Istanbulites know very well about the wine prohibition. When someone passing by with wine in his pockets saw the guards, he panicked and threw the bottles into my carriage to get rid of them and then ran away. The guards found the bottles in my carriage and thought that either I or the mother, or the sister or Fazıl drank the wine. Sir, please do not be misled.« The Sergeant believed me and set Fazıl free. All of his belongings were returned to him and he went home.

At the same time, the Sergeant asked me to visit his son-in-law who had recently fallen ill. I agreed to see him considering that he was nearby, in the same palace where the arrest had occurred. He was half-conscious and writhing in pain. I asked his servants what was wrong with him. They explained that for the past five days he had serious trouble urinating. Without hesitation I decided that I could not undertake treatment, partly because I wanted to go back home as soon as possible and partly because I was not skilled enough as a doctor. However, I told them: »Please send with me one of your servants. I will give you a good medicine.« I bid farewell to the Sergeant and his son-in-law and went home. The Sergeant's servant followed me home to pick up the medicine.

Nearby the palace I ran into my husband, Sir Halpir, who at once understood that I was either under arrest or in some kind of serious trouble. He rushed to help me and at the same time chided me. I calmed him down: »My dearest husband, do not worry about me. I have done no harm. I will explain everything at home.« My husband went on to see his patients and I continued home accompanied by the Sergeant's servant.

Once home, I began to consider which medicine to give the Sergeant's son-in-law. I decided to ask my husband for advice later. In the meantime, I opened the [medicinal] cabinet with jars and found an unlabelled bottle, which I believed to contain violet syrup. I poured some of it into a jar with the following directions: »As soon as you get back, have your Lord take one spoon of this medicine with coffee. At the time of the evening prayer give him another spoon. When he goes to bed, he should take one more spoon. Tomorrow morning have him send you back here.« The servant took the syrup and went back to the Sergeant's son-in-law's house. He divided the syrup into three equal portions and served it to him according to my instructions.

When my husband came home, I told him about my day's adventure with Fazıl and his liberation thanks to my intervention. I also told him about my new patient who was the son-in-law of the Sergeant at the Janissaries' palace. When he learned that I had given him the syrup, he got angry with me and shouted: »You incompetent woman! Did you forget that you were forbidden by the Chief Imperial Physician (hekimbaşı) to treat men? If this is not enough, you choose a man whom nobody has been able to help, including the Chief Imperial Physician and other celebrated doctors of Istanbul. They have prescribed him various medicines but none of them have worked. I also visited him but I did not want to prescribe him anything because I knew that his illness was incurable. Now if he dies because of his illness, our enemy – Doctor Fonseka – will go to the Chief Imperial Physician and tell him that Mrs. Halpir, who was banned from treating men, once again has caused the death of a patient.

I felt really bad about the whole situation since I had no idea that even the Chief Imperial Physician was not able to find a cure for his illness. But what was I supposed to do now? In tears I prayed to the Lord begging for His protection. Without supper, feeling miserable, I went to bed. I thought to myself: »God willing, I will run away tomorrow morning and will hide until everything calms down« and fell asleep. In the morning the Sergeant's carriage was waiting at my door. Three of his servants had come to pick me up so that I could continue with the treatment of his son-in-law. Good Lord, you cannot imagine how scared I was! I thought that they were going to take me to the palace and have me executed. I had no choice though. As soon as we got to the Chief Janissary's palace, they took me to the patient's room. I started to look around nervously searching for a coffin but instead the patient was waiting for me in bed. He welcomed me warmly, asked me to sit down and said to me: »Because of the pain and weakness yesterday I mistook you for a male doctor but now I realize that you are a woman. When I first took the medicine you sent, I felt a terrible burning, but when I took it for the second

and third time, I passed a big stone while urinating. I also bled quite a lot but now I feel much better. Please tell me what I should do next.«

I silently thanked God for his mercy and told my patient: »Your Excellency, with God's help, I can cure you but I was strictly forbidden by the Chief Imperial Physician from treating anyone so we will have to keep your treatment a secret.« The Sergeant responded: »Who can forbid someone from helping others? Even if my son-in-law, God forbid, were to die, dear doctor, please do not be afraid to treat him.« He swore to God that he would never reveal this secret to anyone.

I promised to continue with the treatment without paying attention to my husband's earlier warning. I prescribed him copaifera oil, baths and patches. The patient recovered fully having followed my treatment. Although the most renowned doctors had treated him, I am convinced that it was through God's intervention that my medicines had worked. Do you think that he could have recovered his health thanks to violet syrup? I assign his recovery to Providence. The day after the completion of his treatment, they sent their servants to take me to the Chief Janissary's palace. They apologised explaining that they were not very rich because my patient was merely a cloakroom keeper. They paid me forty golden coins and gave me a beautiful scarf. They told me that they had praised my services to the Chief Janissary. Right after they took me to the Chief Janissary who received me in the traditional way with coffee, tobacco, rosewater and aloe incense. He gave me a silver pipe-stem that was worth twenty-five Dutch thalers and a silver tray with twelve silver bowls and porcelain cups on it. He wrote a letter to the Chief Imperial Physician in which he praised my skills and requested him to give me permission to treat anyone in Istanbul including men. In that letter the Chief Janissary also nominated me as his court doctor. Together with his most loyal servant we went to the Chief Imperial Physician in order to deliver the letter. In addition to the letter, the servant also spoke very highly of me. The Chief Imperial Physician (who was originally French, but after having converted to Islam, he was appointed as the Sultan's head doctor) said to me: »The art of medicine takes many years, no matter whether you are a man or a woman. How did you learn to be such an excellent doctor?« I responded: »I learned with the help of God the Almighty.« I continued to speak: »I know how to treat blindness. Even if someone has been blind for the past twenty years, I know ways to help them.« He replied: »Perfect. The elderly wet-nurse of my son has been blind for the past seven years. If you manage to treat her, I will recommend you to all the pashas of Istanbul.« Then he took me to the room where the blind elderly lady was. With God's help I cured her in forty days.

Afterwards, I became the personal doctor of the Chief Imperial Physician's family. Once there was an imam who was incredibly handsome, intelligent and rich, and had a beautiful voice. He was always at the side of the Sultan who held him in high esteem. However, when pimples began to break out on his face, he could no longer be in close proximity to the Sultan. The Chief Imperial Physician requested that I find a cure for the

imam. When I managed to cure him with God's help and my husband's advice, I became the Chief Imperial Physician's favourite doctor. Moreover, as Turkish men did not like to have their wives and daughters examined by male doctors, all the well-off Turkish ladies called for me. One day the Chief Imperial Physician told me: »It is rather inconvenient for both you and me having you live so far away. Please find a flat and pharmacy in the close proximity to my residence.«

It turned out that the most respectable pharmacy and house closest to the Chief Imperial Physician's residence were owned by the Jew Fonseca, my great enemy. He had bought the pharmacy and residential home recently [from the Chief Imperial Physician] for ten purses of silver coins. The Chief Imperial Physician returned to him those ten purses [of silver coins] and made him vacate the house and pharmacy within three days. In case he refused to leave, the Chief Imperial Physician's servants were ordered to smash all the jars and bottles in his pharmacy. And so with God's help I moved into my new house. The Chief Imperial Physician equipped my new pharmacy since he owned the Imperial Pharmacy and could give away medicine. Doctor Fonseca could not bare the situation, especially since it was nearly impossible for a woman to even step outside her home and here I was, running my own pharmacy. This drove him absolutely mad.

A second unfortunate incident in Istanbul

I was very popular among the patients. Not only was I a successful doctor but I also approached patients with kindness. At the time I lived in Balat, near Fener.¹² My neighbours were friends of Fonseca, two other Jewish doctors – Samson and Ebeulu [Abaoğlu?] – who were jealous of my renown. Every day numerous carriages would stop by my door with affluent patients in need of help. Although I was still very young at the time – not older than seventeen – I was adorned with gold bracelets and necklaces and rings encrusted with diamonds, enriched by my patients.

Since Istanbul was a huge city, people of all sorts lived there. One day, two janissaries appeared dressed as women. They were veiled so one could only see their eyes. They came by carriage asking me to come and see their mother who was pregnant and very ill. They offered me three golden coins and explained: »We live very close, in Eyüp.«¹³ I told them that I could not come since I already had an appointment scheduled with an impoverished lady who was blind. They were not able to convince me to come with them. Ebeulu's wife saw them and shouted in jealousy that I was a terrible doctor and she was more knowledgeable and could better help them. I left to see my patient and

12 Balat is a quarter in the vicinity of the Golden Horn that at the time was inhabited mainly by the Jewish community. Fener, where the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate is located, was known for its Greek population.

13 A district in Istanbul located at the end of the Golden Horn known for the tomb of Ebu Eyyüb el-Ansari and the Eyüp Sultan Mosque where Ottoman sultans were girt with the Sword of Osman upon their accession to the throne.

[the wife of] the Jewish doctor went with them. As was customary, she wore a lot of jewellery and elegant clothes.

Once they had the Jewish doctor in their home, they killed her, stole all her jewels and buried her body in horse dung in their courtyard. The Jewish doctor's son, who served at the Sultan's court, requested permission to search for her all over Istanbul. He finally found her in the horse dung along with the body of a small Turkish child wearing a fez decorated with golden coins – he had been buried there for the past two years. They most probably buried that child because of the fez. Buried next to them was also a fifteen-year-old Greek boy, a handkerchief seller. The court's decision was obvious: they were to be executed and pieces of their bodies were to be scattered in their courtyard. I was fortunate enough to be under Jesus Christ's protection.

A third unfortunate incident in Istanbul, 1735

The other Jewish doctor who was my neighbour, a man called Samson, was also a great enemy. He cast a bad spell on me in order to ruin my health and tarnish my reputation. He had one of my slippers stolen to use for casting the spell. I fell seriously ill. I was unable to move my hands and nor could I walk, and I had lost my mind as well as – I thought that I was an infant and not an adult woman. Whenever I saw my hand or my leg, I would scream: »Cut them off, they are not mine!« I believed that my hands and my legs should be small like those of a baby. I was full of hatred towards my husband and my most loyal servants. I would order them to leave me, since I was convinced that they had axes in their hands and wanted to cut me into pieces and steal all my valuables. Whenever I looked out of the window, I would see a terrifying old man with a long beard.

I was so terrified that I did not sleep for nine whole months. I was very lucky to have come across a young man called Joseph. When I first laid eyes on him, I believed that there was no one braver, cleverer and more loyal than him. I explained to him that my husband and my servants wanted to kill me and steal all my valuables and I requested him to protect me. Without any hesitation Joseph vowed his loyalty to me. I ordered to have two pistols ready at all times. After three days Joseph managed to convince me to fall asleep assuring me that he was awake and on guard. I finally gave in to his assurances and slept a bit while he was guarding my six hundred golden coins that were hidden under my pillow. He was a truly virtuous man as he did not steal them and run away. Joseph would be on duty day and night with pistols ready to fire at any time. For nine months, I suffered terribly and was unable to eat and drink except for coffee and raw broad beans. Because I was lying inclined the whole time, my body became really frail.

Thanks to my luck and Divine Providence, a rich merchant from Egypt, who had knowledge of astronomy, lived in Istanbul. He knew how to calculate the best time to travel

by sea from Istanbul to Egypt. Due to his extraordinary skills, he also knew where I was from, where my house was located and that I was suffering from an illness. He visited me with his servants and told me: »I feel sorry for you that you came to Istanbul at such a young age and in good health and that those pagan Jews have made you ill and are planning to kill you.« I responded: »I cannot understand why anyone would do that. I have not done any harm to anyone and have never been jealous of anybody.« But the tradesman went on: »Please believe me, I am telling you the truth. They stole one of your slippers and buried it in the soil after having put a spell on it. As long as the slipper rots in the soil, you will get sicker and once it totally decays, you will die. I do not want anything from you – no reward. Please just give me the nightgown that you are wearing.« I felt truly ashamed since my gown was shabby. Being delusive, I had to have my hands and legs covered so that I did not start talking nonsense again. Suddenly, the merchant and Joseph put me on my feet. The merchant sprinkled incense on me. Then I thought that someone spilled one kilo of dried peas on my body. They made me lie down again, took off my gown and covered my whole body so that I could not see my hands and feet. I told the tradesman: »You really scared me. How did you know that I lost my slipper?« He responded: »With God's help, I will do my best to bring you back your slipper tomorrow.«

I told my husband about this occurrence; I had finally convinced myself that my husband and my servants were not trying to kill me. He responded: »If the tradesman is telling the truth, he is a highly esteemed man. But if he is lying, we will throw him down the stairs for stealing the gown.« The next day the tradesman came and brought me my slipper and a clay bowl with Turkish [i.e. Arabic] letters scribbled inside. He instructed me: »Whatever you drink, drink it from this bowl. You will feel better every day.« He was upset with my husband who did not at first trust him. From that day on he would visit me every couple of days in order to check whether all the letters [written in the bowl] were gone. I felt better and stronger every day. When there was not a single letter left, he sent my servant along with his own to check on that Jew, the doctor Samson. Samson's servants told them that a few days ago their master had fallen ill and had suddenly passed away.

When I learned of the news, I felt strange and guilty that I drank from that bowl but I had no idea that I was recovering my health at the expense of my enemy's life. My husband gave the Turkish tradesman five ells of prime quality broadcloth and twelve ells of Venetian satin as a way of expressing gratitude. However, he did not want to accept these gifts: »I did not do this for compensation. On one of my ships alone, I have three thousand purses of coins.« All he did was out of the love for God. I recovered fully except for limping and from that time on I had to walk with a stick. I felt that this illness was a message from God that I should leave Istanbul otherwise the jealous Jews would cast another spell on me. I started to do all that I could to leave Istanbul. This was, however, against my husband's will because he really liked it there.

A miracle granted upon me for having become a doctor

Because of my long illness and the bad spells cast on me and the great expense my husband bore for the treatment, I insisted that I did not want to live in Istanbul any longer because of my fear of further Jewish spells. However, since my husband was a Lutheran, it was difficult to convince him that a person could die because of witchcraft. But I experienced it and believed in it. He was so angry at me that he took all his valuables and hid them at his friends' house. He left me without money and valuable clothing during my stay in Istanbul, giving me only one golden coin a week. I announced that I was leaving for Poland as soon as possible.

As soon as some evil people had found out that I was going to leave, they had me detained, claiming that my husband owed them one hundred Dutch thalers. Fortunately, I had a friend who was a printer. He lent me one hundred Dutch thalers to pay back those non-existent debts. Shortly afterwards, I rented a carriage from Istanbul to Edirne for thirty Dutch thalers but I did not have money to pay for this journey. I asked my good friend, Mehmet Ağa, the head butcher at the Imperial Palace, for help. He had a Polish wife; she had been captured and sold on the slaves' market when she was already advanced in age. He gave me a ducat worth five golden coins, eight silver coins and a sheep pelt. He bestowed blessings upon me and wished me all the best. Although I had many other friends, many of who were Catholics and well off, none of them helped me. Relying on Divine Providence, I set off together with my little daughter, Konstancja Halpirówna, who was not yet two, and an old and crippled Tatar beggar, who knew a bit of Polish because he had worked as a tradesman and travelled to Poland a lot in his youth. He became my friend and promised to serve me whenever I found myself in need.

After a long journey we arrived in the beautiful city of Edirne. I prayed to God begging Him to help me to find enough money to pay thirty Dutch thalers for the carriage and for the house and other essential expenses. As soon as we got to the town square, people started to come up to us, offering us their houses to stay in. We went to a house where we were offered four rooms that were beautifully decorated and where a delicious meal was waiting for us on a copper table. We agreed on the rent of sixteen silver coins per month. We could eat food from the soup kitchen and pay for all we ate at the end of the month. The carriage driver unloaded all my stuff and left without saying a word. He returned only seven weeks later asking for thirty Dutch thalers for his services.

At the time I was still walking with the help of a walking stick. I had not yet recovered since my veins had dried out from lying in bed and one of my legs was shorter than the other. I had lost a lot of weight because of my illness, worries, the journey and misery in a foreign country. Three days after settling down in my new apartment, I requested Joseph the Tatar to rent a carriage so that I could go to the Turkish bath the following day because their baths were very good.

That same night I dreamed about a good friend who had died while giving birth to her first child. She brought me a jar of ointment and with smile on her face told me that it would help my leg. I promised to apply it to my leg while at the bath. Then I asked her: »Tell me what kind of ointment it is. I have used hundred times better ones and they did not work.« I did not take her seriously. However, when I woke up, I asked my servant to bring me that green ointment. Yet, when I saw the surprise on his face, I realized that it had been a dream. Since I remembered its consistence and colour, I made the same ointment. I went to the bath with my daughter and the landlord lady. I put the ointment on my leg and after a few minutes I was able to stand on both legs. However, afraid of a bad spell, I left the bath with my walking stick and sat down among beautiful and sumptuously dressed women. Since women spent most of their time at home, going to the bath was a special occasion for them to spend time together, eating, drinking, dancing and singing songs.

All these beautiful ladies started to praise me and invited me to their homes. One elderly lady, the mother of a shoemaker, asked me: »Dear doctor, please come to see my ill son. He has been suffering from dysentery for the past year. I will pay your debt for the carriage if you agree to come to see him.« I agreed happily and went with her. As soon as I entered the Greek shoemaker's house, he started to speak in Turkish: »I am sure that this doctor is going to give me excellent treatment, but you won't pay her since you are afraid that she will take the money without healing me. The doctor likewise is afraid that she will devote her time on me but that I will not pay her at the end of the treatment. It is because of your stinginess that I am in this state! The other doctors would have also cured me if only you had paid upfront.« The mother and wife of the patient replied: »Do whatever you wish to do.« He told them: »Give me my trunk. There, in a piece of cloth are hidden one hundred Dutch thalers and four hundred silver coins.« He was to give me all that money. I could understand what he was saying thanks to Joseph Krymil, my servant, who was my interpreter.¹⁴ I replied to the shoemaker: »Give me a hundred thalers for my services and if I manage to cure you, you will pay me a bit more.« Without thinking the shoemaker gave me the thalers, not even bothering to count them to see if there was exactly one hundred.«

I took the money and went home praying to God to help me to cure this patient: »If I manage to cure him, there will be no problem but if I do not and I have to give the money back, what will I do in this misery I am now in?« I started to work immediately trying to find a cure for the shoemaker's illness. I cannot reveal here what treatment I used. Fortunately, now that I am about to publish a book of my treatments, the treatment I used for his illness will be included as well. Thankfully, the patient recovered in forty days. He paid me as much extra money as a man with modest means could and my servant Joseph received more shoes and house shoes than he could ever need. Moreover, he praised me to everyone – this brought me a lot of new patients.

14 Earlier she mentions his Tatar origin. By describing him as »Krymil« (Tr. *Kırımlı*) she must be referring to his place of origin – Crimea.

About the blind people that divine providence sent to me

There was an old Turk in Edirne who had been blind for more than ten years. He offered 200 silver coins if I cured him enough so that he could walk and eat on his own. He manufactured walking sticks, which was a profession that required a lot of precision. They were very long and thin, available in multiple colours. The old man was so meticulous in his work that he lacquered them with the precision of a twenty-year-old. When I succeeded in curing him, I earned great esteem among the local blind people.

There was another man in Edirne known as Margaryt. He had earned the title of *hacı* since he had been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He had travelled with his daughter, Anastasia, who had been blind for decades. When on an Easter Sunday she had to leave the Jerusalem church because of the excessive crowd, she fell asleep in a corner while waiting for her father. In a dream she saw the Virgin Mary who was with a young woman and told her: »Go back to Edirne. The woman who you see here will move there soon and she will bring back your sight.« I arrived in Edirne five years after Anastasia had that auspicious dream. I came to an agreement with her and her father to cure her for the price of 2500 silver coins. She recovered fully and was even able to embroider with golden thread. As soon as she opened her eyes, they showed her a painting of the Virgin Mary. She kissed it, and then she looked at me and praised me in everyone's presence.

A Jewish tradesman in Edirne

There was a rich Jewish tradesman who lived in Belgrade and had a handsome and smart son whose name was Levi. When Levi was twenty-years old, his parents married him off to a Jewish girl and a few months after their wedding they sent him for his education at Vidin where he stayed for a year. In the meantime, his wife died of sorrow. Once Levi learned of his wife's death, he fell seriously ill. His parents brought him back from Vidin to Belgrade where he spent day and night by his wife's grave. They realized that their son was losing his mind because of this grave loss. They took him to Edirne where they forcefully married him off to another woman but he did not even want to touch her.

At the time I was already in Edirne and was requested to help Levi. He was suffering from excessive heartbeat, nausea, hand trembling and insomnia. In order to treat him I ordered medicines worth of one thousand Dutch thalers from Istanbul. Levi could see that I did all I could in order to help him and told me one day: »If I recover, I will convert to Christianity and will fund a church and a monastery with all the money that I have managed to save.« However, Levi was getting weaker and weaker every day. One day, he invited me and two respectable Turks [to his shop]. He handed me over five hundred Dutch thalers and cloth for two dresses from his shop and told me: »It does not seem that I am going to recover and I am afraid that my parents may not want to compensate all your efforts after my death.« (...) He died the next day. May his soul rest in peace.

After having earned some money I left Edirne for Yambol.¹⁵ Yambol is a place where the sons of the Tatar Khan live. I met there one of those Tatar Khan's sons whose name was Ali Giray and whose wife and son were ill. Ali Giray sent for me in a carriage along with ten Tatar servants who took me to Yambol. Once there, I cured both his wife and his son. Ali Giray paid me thousand Dutch thalers and gave me as a gift Circassian dresses, a carriage and horses and sent me off to Pazardzhik.¹⁶

In Pazardzhik I treated the wife of Ibrahim Efendi, the owner of a rice plantation with a kind of rice that only grows in Rumelia. He paid me well for my services and sent me to Plovdiv where Alexander the Great was born. The town is situated on the banks of the Maritsa River. The head of the town is a *nazır*, which makes it different from other towns administered by a *pasha*, *janissary*, *haseki*, *bostancı başı*, *müsellim* or *subaşı*. The *nazır* of Plovdiv had seven sons and one daughter. However, all his sons died in unexpected circumstances. One of them fell off a horse and broke his neck; the other one fell from a window, the third one fell aboard a boat when he was sailing, surrounded by thirty servants on the river Maritsa; the fourth one fell pray to dogs when he was still a baby; the sixth one died one day in his cradle, and the seventh one was shot by accident by his father. The daughter, the only one to have survived, was also very weak and it seemed that she was suffering from roundworm. The mother of the girl begged me for medicine for her daughter but her father did not allow her treatment. In the end, the mother insisted that I treat her despite her husband's opposition. I prescribed her essence of aloe, which has a terrible taste but is really effective in treating roundworm. I put a few drops of the essence into a cup of coffee and made the girl drink it. The girl died two hours after drinking the medicine. I got really scared when the *nazır* summoned me in his palace. I had to drink half a teaspoon of the medicine in his presence in order to convince him that it was not poisoned. The *nazır* was infuriated with his wife who had insisted on giving the medicine to their daughter and in his fury he wanted to kill his wife with a sword. I intervened and managed to calm him down.

The journey from Plovdiv to Sofia

The only way to go from Plovdiv to Sofia is by horse. Since traveling by carriage was out of the question, I got myself a horse for four hundred silver coins and some Turkish male clothes. I rented ten horses to carry my stuff and my servants and hired thirty horsemen to accompany us during the journey. While travelling through the Balkans, a rogue stopped us on the road. He caught my horse by the reins and said to me: »Lady Doctor, are you not afraid to travel on your own with your daughter and all your fortune?« I replied: »I am not a lady doctor but a man. I am in a hurry to take care of my lord's interests.« But he insisted: »I know very well that you are a female doctor« and asked why there were no Turks in my convoy. I realized that he was a hired bandit whose name was Sarı Hüseyin Ağa. I heard about him on numerous occasions. On his

15 Yambol – a city in south-eastern Bulgaria on the banks of the Tundzha river in the historical region of Thrace.

16 Pazardzhik – a city located along the banks of the Maritsa river in today's Southern Bulgaria.

own he was able to defeat up to a hundred men. I replied to him: »Sir, even if I had 500 horses in my convoy, it would not make much difference as I have heard about a man called Sarı Hüseyin Ağa. Apparently, no convoy has ever been able to resist him.« He started to laugh: »Yes, my name is Sarı Hüseyin Ağa. I would like you to accompany me to my house to meet my wife, my sons and my daughter. We live in Karlovo.«¹⁷ I asked him not to separate me from my fellow travellers but he promised not to do me any harm and only to introduce me to his family and friends.

Separating me from the rest of the convoy, he let me take along only my daughter and three servants: Leo Astanowicz, Łukasz Dobrowolski and one boy, as well as my belongings and ten horses. Immediately, another Turk, who turned out to be his son, appeared in front of us. Sarı Hüseyin Ağa told his son: »May God keep you in His protection. I entrust you this woman so that you take her in health and with all her belongings to our house and introduce her to your mother. Once you are there, please send her to the palace where she will be comfortable.«

I had no choice but to go with Sarı Hüseyin Ağa's son to his family's house in Karlovo. The journey took three days and three nights through mountains and forests. There was no proper road or path so we followed the Turk and his servants' instincts. He told us: »Please do not be afraid of us. God sent us to protect you. My father sent you to his hometown out of compassion. Otherwise, you would have been killed by other bandits in the forest like your twenty other fellow travellers.« It happened as he predicted. Once we got to Karlovo, we learned that they were all killed by Turkish, Greek and Armenian bandits in the forest.

Karlovo is a town located in central Bulgaria. Once we got to Sarı Hüseyin Ağa's house, his son said to his mother: »Dear Mother, my father asks that you take care of this lady doctor. Make sure she is not hungry or thirsty and feels at home.« I kissed Sarı Hüseyin Ağa's wife's hand and entrusted myself to her but in the meantime I begged for the end of this captivity. Nevertheless, we were very warmly received. They made sure that we were not hungry or thirsty. We were also really comfortable as we were given a separate mansion. I would go to the Turkish bath everyday, since Karlovo was famous for its healing waters. The waters would flow to the town directly from the mountains. At every mansion there was a mill and a bath.

After a few days Sarı Hüseyin Ağa visited me at my mansion. I wanted to take off his shoes with my own hands but he would not allow me. He sat down on the carpet and asked whether I was comfortable. I thanked him for his hospitality but begged him to allow me to go to Sofia. He promised me that he would send me to Sofia together with a trustworthy convoy but I had to wait since traveling at that time was very dangerous. Recently two convoys had been killed by bandits. He asked whether I could help his

17 Karlovo – a town today located in Bulgaria, to the east of Sofia.

son-in-law's father who also lived in Karlovo and had been unable to walk for the past six years. Secondly, Sarı Hüseyin Ağa's eyes were red all the time and he asked me about a cure for this annoyance. I promised to cure him within forty days. But he told me: »I cannot stay in one place for forty days because of my fear of the Sultan's jurisdiction. I have to be always ready to attack and rob.« Because I liked him, I gave him the following advice: »Dear Sir, I see that you are a decent person and you already have some fortune. Why do you still occupy yourself with robbing?« He replied: »I have to pay the salary of three hundred horsemen.« I responded: »Then let them go.« He continued: »But I am afraid of the Sultan.« I advised: »Swear allegiance to the Sultan.« He replied: »I have tried it before through a close friend at court. He talked with the Sultan, saying: 'Your Excellency, the bandit Sarı Hüseyin is a good friend of mine. I can correspond with him and convince him to come to Istanbul. I'll tell him that you are planning to make him a pasha. Then, after assigning him a function at court, I'll have him strangled. The Sultan heartily replied: 'Excellent. Have Sarı Hüseyin come here and promise him that I will make him a vizier. As soon as he arrives, I will have him executed.' In this way my good friend learned that the Sultan wanted me dead. Otherwise he would have said: 'If Hüseyin is a good man and stops robbing, I will forgive him and will nominate him as a pasha or a janissary.' But the Sultan wants me dead and I am lucky that my friend warned me. Consequently, I have not much choice but to live the life of a bandit with three hundred horsemen to protect me.« In the end I stayed in Karlovo for sixty days during which I cured Serdar, Sarı Hüseyin Ağa's son-in-law's father. Thanks to my treatment he was able to stand up and walk with the help of a walking stick. I earned six hundred Dutch thalers and Sarı Hüseyin Ağa sent me to Sofia in a convoy.

My arrival in Sofia

Köprülü Pasha was governor of the city of Sofia.¹⁸ At that time the Ottoman Empire was waging war on three different fronts: against the Iranians, the Russians and the Habsburg monarch, Charles.¹⁹ During the defence of Niš, part of the Habsburg army led by General Seckendorff drowned in the Nišava river.²⁰ Köprülü Pasha then took possession of the fortress [of Niš], garrisoning it with Turks together with their wives, personal belongings, weapons and cannons.²¹ During this time in Sofia, I was appointed the doctor of Köprülü Pasha's harem – the harem being the part of the pasha's residence where his wives and children lived. I was promised one thousand Dutch thalers per year and was assigned allowances of bread, wine, meat, rice, coffee, sugar, honey, candles and hay.

18 She is referring to a descendant of the famous Köprülü family that gave the Ottoman Empire a couple of vezirs throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

19 Charles VI (1685–1740) succeeded his elder brother, Joseph I, as Holy Roman Emperor, King of Bohemia (as Charles II), King of Hungary and Croatia (as Charles III) and King of Serbia, Arch Duke of Austria in 1711.

20 Niš – today the third largest city of Serbia, conquered by the Ottomans in the fifteenth century. In 1737, Niš was seized by the Austrian army. The Ottomans retreated and the Austrians reconstructed the Fortress. However, in the same year, the Ottomans advanced again and Niš fell to them without resistance.

21 Friedrich Heinrich von Seckendorff (1673–1763) – Austrian field marschal and diplomat. Because of his failures during the war against the Ottoman Empire he was temporarily imprisoned.

My husband, Doctor Halpir, who had abandoned me, leaving me alone and limping, and had deprived me of all my belongings, arrived in Sofia. He came not from Istanbul but from Bosnia. He had come to Sofia for its famous thermal waters. His legs and hands were wounded and bandaged up. He had tried to cure himself but finally he found an Italian doctor who used to be a doctor on a Maltese ship which had fallen prey to the Turks. Its entire crew was sold on the slaves' market in Istanbul. Unfortunately, they were not to be set free and were forced to live in Istanbul as slaves until the end of their lives. While in the day they were free to go about their duties, at night they slept with their legs chained up in a special prison. They were given bread to eat and paid one silver coin for a week's work. Slaves captured from ships are known for their talents, knowledge and good nature, and can even be appointed to high posts such as pasha and vizier, something I have witnessed myself. However, slaves who come to Istanbul originating from Maltese ships have a special name. While others are called *kule* [köle], they are known as *payzan*.

I have no idea how this *payzan* managed to escape slavery but he was a great doctor. My husband Jakup Halpir met him in Bosnia. Since my husband was seriously ill, they agreed that he should go to Sofia to make use of the thermal waters there. When he arrived in Sofia, he had no idea that I was there, working in Köprülü Pasha's harem. I was given my own mansion where I lived with my daughter, Konstancja Halpirówna, and my servants. Once he arrived at Sofia and learned about my presence there, he had some servants take him to my place. Once they brought him in front of me, he fell to my feet. At first I was annoyed, wondering of what kind of a lowlife patient had come to visit me. My husband cried repeatedly: »May God be with you, my Lady.« With difficulty I recognized him. He had a long beard and looked miserable. Once I realized that he was my husband, we both started crying. Once we calmed down a bit, we started to think about his treatment. He realized that despite the lack of his support, I was doing quite well. Thanks to God's help I had a house, servants, horses, clothes, many patients and great fame as a doctor. I said to him: »Dear husband, I forgive you for leaving me sick and poor and all alone in Istanbul. I am ready to help you now. Unfortunately, your illness exceeds my knowledge as a doctor. I hope that your doctor friend, the *payzan*, will be able to help you.«

My husband replied to me: »I do not want to use either my own or *payzan*'s knowledge to cure myself. I want you to treat me.« I had no idea how I should start the treatment of my own husband since it was the first time that I had come across such an illness. I prayed to the Holy Trinity and asked the Italian doctor to give me some lessons. Thanks to God's mercy, my husband recovered fully. After staying with me for a few weeks, he went back to his Pasha who lived in Bosnia since he had signed a contract with him and left half of his fortune there.

He set off to Bosnia and left the Italian doctor with me, who assisted me in developing my skills as a doctor as well as had me keep his medical books. The Italian doctor taught

me how to write prescriptions in Latin and taught me about herbs used in various medicines. Because he was a devout Catholic, he shared with me a number of medicine recipes for various illnesses. Eventually, he departed from Istanbul from where he went to Izmir and from there to Livorno in Italy.

In the meantime, my husband arrived in Bosnia from where he was supposed to go to Istanbul to pick up all his things and bring them to Sofia. However, God's will was different. Once in Bosnia, he fell ill again and died. I became a widow with a little daughter. It was not safe to travel to Bosnia at the time and I had no one to send there to bring my husband's belongings. Eventually, the pasha for whom my husband had worked died and I remained by Köprülü Pasha's side.

My old Pasha suffered from high fever for the entire year and decided not to eat anything else but barley bread. He would say that a sinner should not eat better than an animal and that is why he decided to eat only barley bread. Even when he was healthy, rather than indulge himself, he would have but one dish per day: either broth or a roast. He could have as many women as he wanted: four that he could marry officially as wives in addition to 99 slave women. However, Köprülü Pasha had only one wife and a few children with her. Most of them died young and only two daughters survived. Köprülü Pasha's wife was afraid that her husband might want to remarry to have more children. So she sent her envoy to Istanbul to buy two beautiful slave girls, paying a thousand Dutch thalers for each one. Together with the pasha's wife, we went to the bath to have these girls washed, dressed and adorned with expensive jewellery. When we got back home, she sent her black boy slave to bring her husband to her room. The Pasha, who was merciful, came to his wife's room immediately. She took his hand, kissed him and said: »My Lord, please accept from me these two slave girls. Let God allow you to have sons and daughters with them as I, the sinful being, has not had the good fortune to give you a son and prolong your lineage.« After her virtuous husband carefully listened to her he thanked her and said: »You will always be the lady of this house and my first wife.« Then he asked: »Where are my new brides?« She replied: »Here are they.« Once the Pasha saw them, he said: »How dare you wear jewellery and such dresses and smile at me without any shame? Your lady had to take this decision to send you to me with pain in her heart. You deserve to work in the kitchen and wash dishes, not to be my wives.« Then he said to his wife: »Do you want me to have children with monkeys? To what kind of sons and daughters can a larva give birth to? May God save me from these temptations! If God did not allow me to have sons with you, I do not want to have them from another wife. I prefer your pure old age and the youth that you gave me than the youth of these shameless larvae.« The girls undressed, put on aprons and went to the kitchen.

Around that same time, the Sultan sent an envoy from Istanbul with the order that the Pasha proceed to Niš with his army and take back the fortress that the Austrians under General Seckendorff had conquered. Seckendorff had come to agreements with the

Bulgarians and Serbs a few weeks earlier, telling them the following: »Do not be afraid of the Turks and support me. I have already taken Niš and soon I will also conquer Sofia and Vidin, and even Istanbul.« Those poor Christians believed the general and started a rebellion against the Turks. They killed a few thousand Turks. Meanwhile, the general took a bribe of 10,000 golden coins from one of the Pashas and silently left Niš with his army. He went back to Austria and sent back the keys to the Niš fortress to Köprülü Pasha. But my pasha was so ill at the time that they had to put the key to the fortress under his pillow.

The Sultan sent out a new order that those who had raised up against their sovereign should be executed. The order encompassed all males from 18 to 50. The rest – young boys and elderly men along with women and girls – were to be taken captive. The Turkish army continued slaughtering Christians for three days and three nights in the fields, in the forests and in the houses. Since the Sultan wanted to know exactly how many Christians were killed, Köprülü Pasha ordered his soldiers to bring the heads of the murdered Christians to Sofia. It was the first time that I witnessed God's punishment over poor Christians. They brought so many Christian heads that you could fill an inn with them. Since the Pasha was offering one golden coin for each Christian head, the Turks went through fields and forests hunting for the dead bodies of Christians to cut off their heads to bring them to Sofia. After this three-day slaughter elderly men and children were allowed to look for their fathers and sons among those heads. I cannot even describe how afraid I was to be in Sofia at that time. I was worried that something could happen to myself or my people.

At the time there was a Greek bishop in Sofia, who was executed by hanging in this commotion. I got incredibly angry with the Pasha for this execution order. I decided to leave Sofia and go to Vidin instead. I travelled to Vidin dressed as a Turkish janissary. I arrived at an inn and started enquiring about renting a mansion. However, it was impossible to find a mansion to rent even if you offered 100 golden coins per month. I was really disappointed as it was really difficult for a woman on her own to live in an inn. (...) ²²

While in Vidin I made friends with a Turkish colonel who left for war and allowed me to stay in his place. Everything was there including food, candles, wood as well as four servants. I lived a quiet life there and could receive patients. I got to know a decent Turkish man called Mehmed Ağa Kululu [Kuloğlu?]. He bought thirty Austrian soldiers on the slaves' market and advised me to do the same. I did not hesitate and purchased five people on the slave market: four men and one woman. Three of the men's names were: Karol Jarowina, Teodor Cotner, and Antoni Jermentiny and they were lieutenants. The fourth one was a standard-bearer called Józef Fortunatus de Pilsztyn [Pichelstein]. The woman was the wife of one of the lieutenants. I paid a total of 800 golden

22 In the omitted passage she is describing the process of searching for accommodation in Vidin.

coins for them. I gave them a comfortable place to stay and made sure that they did not lack food or anything to drink. My friend Kululu requested official permission from the administrator of Vidin, Ivaz Mehmed Pasha,²³ for his and my slaves to send letters to their families in Austria informing them that they were safe and sound but had fallen captive to the Turks and needed money to be freed. All of those Austrians were well off and had family on whom they could fall back. Mehmet Ağa Kululu made his own arrangements with his thirty officers and we agreed with my slaves that they were going to pay me the total of thousand five hundred golden coins to be set free. The messenger with letters was sent from Vidin to Vienna. After a short while, the money was sent to Kululu. I received 900 coins and some goods: cloth, three Paris pistols and many other precious things. I asked my slaves: »We agreed on 1200 golden coins. Why are you giving me 900?« It turned out that the officer Józef Fortunatus de Pilsztyn had lived in quite a distance from Vidin, and so the post had to pass through Graz, Styria, Lower Carniola, Upper Carniola²⁴ and then Ljubljana in order to reach his hometown Bilgiszteyn [Pichelstein] from which his family name comes.²⁵ The letters must not yet have reached his parents, so that to that day they had not paid the ransom. I told them: »Since the money is not yet here, please feel free to go but Mr Józef de Pilsztyn must continue to serve me. Do your best to assure that the money comes as soon as possible so that I can set him free.« Pilsztyn stayed with me in Vidin. He was a smart and well-educated gentleman. He had studied in Rome and Vienna. He proved to be a sober, quiet and religious man.

Prince Rákóczy

In the meantime, Prince Joseph Rákóczy arrived in Vidin.²⁶ He was the Prince of Hungary and Transylvania who had been for a long time a captive of King Charles VI. His father had been expelled from Hungary by the King and had taken refuge in the Ottoman Empire. He lived together with his wife in Tekirdağ on the Black Sea until the end of his life.²⁷ For years the Ottoman Sultan paid him, his brother Czaki [Csáky] and his court generous salaries.²⁸ His brother was a cardinal in Rome. Up until today many Hungarian exiles live in Tekirdağ and are maintained by Sultan Mustafa.²⁹

23 Ivaz Mehmed Pasha (d.1743) was an eighteenth-century Ottoman Grand Vizier and provincial governor. From 1735 on the governor of Vidin, one of the Ottoman military leaders in the Ottoman-Austrian war (1737–1739) and the Grand Vizier in the years 1739–1740.

24 Carniola was a former principality that belonged to the Habsburgs and today is located within Slovenian borders.

25 Today Zaprice in Slovenia.

26 Joseph Rákóczy (1700–1738) – the second son of Francis II Rákóczy and Charlotte Amalie von Hessen-Rheinfels-Wanfried. His father was a famous Hungarian rebel prince against the Habsburgs and died in exile in the Ottoman Empire. Joseph was put forward by the Ottomans as the candidate to the Hungarian throne.

27 Tekirdağ is a Turkish town on the Sea of Marmara (Pilsztynowa mistakenly writes that it is located on the Black Sea), known also by its Greek name Rodosto.

28 Most probably she is referring to Imre Csáky (1672–1732), who was a count (*graf*), cleric and writer.

29 Mustafa III (1717–1774) – the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1757 to 1774.

Prince Rákóczy arrived in Vidin from Vienna accompanied by only one servant. He had escaped captivity of the Austrian monarch. His brother Alexander Rákóczy lived in Paris at the time but Joseph decided to ask the Ottoman Sultan for refuge so that in the future he could get back his lands – Hungary and Transylvania.³⁰ When Prince Joseph Rákóczy had escaped Austria he was 29 years old. He was emaciated and suffered from coughing and spitting of blood. Ivaz Mehmet Pasha, administrator of Vidin at the time, took care of Prince Rákóczy. He called me up and offered me 400 silver coins to treat him. I went to see him and spoke to him through an interpreter. He turned out to be a pious Catholic. I managed to cure him within thirty days.

Once Prince Rákóczy recovered, Ivaz Mehmed Pasha sent a messenger to Istanbul who informed the Sultan that the Hungarian Prince ran away from his country and asked for asylum within the Ottoman borders. The Sultan immediately sent three thousand purses of coins to Prince Rákóczy. The garments Prince Rákóczy wore were made of silk in many colours: crimson, green, yellow, blue, bright red, violet, burgundy, navy blue and amaranthine. His pants were trimmed with golden thread and ornamented with diamond hooks. He had innumerable hats, sable furs to wear under coats, sable hats decorated with diamonds, stools coated with silk of various colours and with golden and silver tassels. He owned carriages and the most valuable horses. His twenty-four servants would wear ostrich feathers adorned with diamonds. Prince Rákóczy was in possession of other extravagant things: countless leather gadgets, watches, snuffboxes and books. He also had his own priest. All the Hungarians who resided in Tekirdağ – counts and his father's brother along with his father's servants – came to see him in Vidin. He was assigned a salary by the Ottoman Sultan. He was also granted one hundred thousand janissaries with whose help he was supposed to win back Hungary and Transylvania.

When all the problems were solved and Prince Rákóczy settled down to a quiet life, he started to flirt with me and make indecent proposals. In response to his courtship I said to him: »I am not an equal of Your Excellency. You are a monarch and I am just a humble female doctor. I know that you are not going to marry me. You just want to take advantage of my youth and innocence just to dishonour me and marry me off to one of your servants. I could never allow myself to do such a disgrace against God and the world. I am happy to live according to Christian rules. I have enough money to eat, to drink, to buy clothes and to travel. I am still young and am convinced that God is going to grant me a good husband given my modest and Christian lifestyle. I advise you to give up on your efforts, especially since you are living in a foreign land among people of a religion different than yours.« He threatened me that he was going to write to the Pasha requesting him to make me serve him on the basis that I was Hungarian and not Polish. I replied: »How dare you claim that I am Hungarian when I am Polish. I am not obliged to serve you since I am not one of your subjects.« He was invincible in his ob-

30 She is probably referring to George Rákóczy (1701–1756), second son of Francis II Rákóczy, who settled down in France.

stinacy: »His Excellency the Sultan has been so generous with me that he is not going to let me down because of one Polish woman.«

I realized that it was going to be difficult for me to withstand such an obstinate man. I decided to leave Vidin and get rid of this unwanted lover. I rented a small boat and followed the Danube to Rusçuk.³¹ I left so quietly that I did not even let the Pasha know and could not take from him my passport since I feared that Prince Rákóczy would impede me from going.

Another incident and travel to Rusçuk

While I was already on my way, travelling by boat on the Danube, Prince Rákóczy learned of my departure and sent his interpreter to Ivaz Mehmed Pasha claiming that I was a spy. At this time of many simultaneous wars, the Pasha would often execute people suspected of spying. Ivaz Mehmed Pasha ordered to have me found and brought back to Vidin to hand over to Prince Rákóczy. Two Turks tracked me down the river and finally caught up with the boat. I was asleep at the time. They asked my servants: »Is a female doctor traveling on this boat?« My servants, aware that I was sleeping, replied: »No, there is no doctor on this boat.« They continued to Rusçuk. As soon as I arrived at Rusçuk, there was a group of janissaries with batons waiting for me. They welcomed me with the following words: »Dear Doctor, you live in our country and are doing very well here. No one has ever done you any harm and you have never heard a bad word from anyone. You are respected by our Lords but it turns out that you are our enemy. We were told that you are a spy and because of you a lot of blood has been spilled.« Even though I was trying to explain my situation, it served nothing and I was arrested. The problem is that whoever gets arrested in Turkey is executed the next day. They took my daughter, Konstancja, away from me as well as my servant Józef Fortunat de Pilsztyn and the other servants along with my belongings.

I spent the night in detention at the house of a married Turk. For the whole night he and his wife tried to convince me to convert to Islam. But I preferred to die innocent than to become a Muslim. I replied: »I accept God's will. It is enough for me to know that God knows that I am innocent.« However, God did not abandon me in need. It turned out that an important Turkish nobleman from Istanbul was in Rusçuk at the time. He was the Sultan's treasurer. That night his twenty-two-year-old son went to bed in full health but at midnight woke up with a swollen face, eyes and tongue. He could not see, hear, speak or feel. There were three reputable doctors in the town and all three of them were summoned but none of them dared to undertake the treatment. Eventually, someone told his father, Mehmed Ağa, about me: »There is an excellent female doctor who came here from Vidin. However, she was arrested and is going to be executed tomorrow. Perhaps you could use your authority to set her free so that she can

31 Rusçuk, as it was known in Turkish, or Ruse in Bulgarian, was under Ottoman rule from 1393–1878 and served as the provincial centre of the *Tuna vilayeti*, or Danube province. It lies on the right bank of the Danube.

help your son.« He agreed and was impatient for the next day to come so that I could come and help his son. The next morning a carriage was sent to the house where I was being detained. When they knocked on the door, I got really scared. I was convinced that they had come to take me to the execution. I had no other choice but to exit the house. I asked the two men who had been sent to me: »Dear friends, where are you taking me?« They replied: »To the Sultan's treasurer.« I asked them why, but they told me that they did not know.

They took me to the palace early in the morning. I was welcomed by two servants who held me by both arms and took me inside. I stood perplexed in a large room. I looked around and saw an old Turkish man in a sable fur who was blind in one eye. He greeted me and asked me how I found myself in such an unfortunate situation. He made me swear to God and tell him the truth. He added: »If it is because of a debt, I will pay a thousand golden coins and will not allow anyone to harm a hair of your head. I can understand how difficult it must be to live in a foreign land but if you are really a spy, there is not much that I can do because it is an offence against the Sultan and the entire country.« I explained to him in tears: »Your Excellency, how could I be a spy at such a young age and besides, I am a woman. Please do not believe these rumours. The Kingdom of Poland signed a peace agreement with the Turks.³² Please listen to me and I will tell you the whole story. This calumny was spread by Prince Rákóczy because I did not want to sin against my God and rejected him as a lover.«

Mehmed Ağa believed me and promised to take me under his protection. Then I was taken to his ill son. When I saw him, I became frightened as I had never before seen a patient in such a condition and I was not sure which treatment to undertake. I was thinking to myself: »If I tell him that I can heal him and he dies, his father will become my enemy. But if I say that I cannot treat him, he will not protect me and will send me back into custody.« With God's help I agreed to treat the young gentleman but in the meantime, I was thinking of ways to escape and save my life. In my mind I had already given up on my daughter, my servants and my fortune. I asked Mehmed Ağa: »Sir, how shall I treat your son if I do not have my medicines and my books. They took everything I had.« He replied: »I will order my servants to bring all your belongings to my palace.«

He immediately sent his servants to the judge with an order to get back all my belongings and my daughter, my slave Józef Fortunat de Pilsztyn and my servants. Once I received my belongings, I started to treat my new patient. I applied a poultice on his face because he was unable to swallow anything because of the swelling. In the meantime, my protector summoned those two Turks who chased me from Vidin to Rusçuk and asked them to go back to Vidin and tell Ivaz Mehmed Pasha that I was innocent. They were glad to do this as they pitied me immensely. Mehmed Ağa saw them off, granting each fifty Dutch thalers.

32 She refers to the Treaty of Karlowitz of 1699.

In the meantime, Prince Rákóczy realized that he had made a mistake accusing me of being a spy and that it could have resulted in my death at Turkish hands. Consequently, he sent two messengers with orders – one of them travelled up the Danube and the other by land to reach me and help me in Rusçuk as soon as possible by testifying that a mistake had been made and that I was not a spy but a well-respected lady and an excellent doctor. The order also stated that I was Hungarian and hence, his subject and thus, that I should be sent back to Vidin. Fortunately, the whole incident ended well and Mehmed Ağa kept me in high esteem because of my skills.

On the third day of the treatment, Mehmed Ağa's son partially came to his senses and opened his eyes. He took my hand and since he could not speak, he asked me to sit down with hand gestures. His father was informed that his son was able to see a bit and that his human senses had returned. The worried father came up to me and in his happiness started to cry. The son again made some gestures as if he tried to tell his father not to cry and instead to have faith in God. The old man in his gratitude paid me for my services with golden coins. Thanks to God's help I managed to cure this patient entirely within the period of forty days. I shall include the treatment for this malady in my manual of medicine that I hope to publish soon. Given my success, I was celebrated as the best doctor in Rusçuk. Patients would come to see me from tens of kilometres away (...).³³

A funny occurrence in Rusçuk

Among my servants there were people who knew my late husband, Jakub Halpir. After his death, they were always by my side and hence, accompanied me to Rusçuk. There was a light-hearted boy called Józef, whom I had to take or otherwise he would have long before lost his life or have fallen into Turkish captivity. I was planning to take him to Poland so that he could live among Christians. We had a beautiful house in Rusçuk adjacent to the monastery. My rooms were near the entrance, and beyond them lived my maid and her family.

One night Józef entered my maid's room where she slept with her husband. When the husband woke up, he beat Józef up and had him sent to prison, where he was sentenced to death, accused of breaking into a room with the intention of burglary where someone else's wife, a Muslim, slept. He begged me to have the judge to listen to him so that he could prove his innocence. Everyone mocked me when I agreed to talk to the judge. The judge conceded to my plea and Józef was granted the right to defend himself. He started to speak: »My Lady, do you remember when your husband was still alive, he would often say that because Polish ladies have their hair cut short and comb it everyday so that their head does not smell. However, you, my Lady, would argue that even though Turkish ladies have long hair and plaited, their heads do not smell and their

33 In the omitted passage she continues to describe her medical practice in Rusçuk.

hair makes them beautiful. Hence, I wanted to learn who was right: my Lord or you, my Lady, because when I would stand next to you, I would smell your hair and at night I went to the Turkish maid's room not to rob or to harm her but to see whose head stinks and whose smells nicely.« When the judge heard his goofy excuse, he started to laugh along with all the others and eventually said: »This man is crazy. I cannot sentence a madman to death. The most I can do is to have him given 300 lashes to his feet so that he does not do it again.« He was thus given 300 lashes and was set free.

At the time the Turks were fighting wars against the Persians, the Prussians, and the Muscovites and a bloody battle was being fought at Azov³⁴, and so my good Turkish friends set off to fight against the Muscovites.³⁵ However, due to the power and strength of the Muscovites, tens of thousands of Turks were killed and another tens of thousands, including women and children, fell captive. So I lost contact with many of my dear friends without knowing whether they lost their lives or had become slaves of the Muscovites. All of my friends' families lamented not knowing what happened to their loved ones. I would try to console the wives of my friends and said to their male relatives: »My merciful friends, because you helped me when I came to your country and town, and gave me protection when I was in a difficult situation, I have decided to leave Rusçuk and travel via Poland to Saint Petersburg in order to ask the Empress [Catherine the Great], in all her mercy, to set your relatives free. I am obliged to do this especially since Mehmed Ağa's son, whom I treated as, to his father's despair, among those killed on the battlefield.« Leaving myself to God's protection, I bid farewell to all my Turkish friends and patients. They provided me with a convoy of forty horsemen and I travelled safely from Rusçuk to Poland in the company of my daughter and my slave, Józef Pilsztyn, and other servants. Having passed through Mohiyliw³⁶ I arrived happily in Bar.³⁷

34 Azov – an Ottoman town and fortress on the Don River, 16 kilometres away from the Sea of Azov. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century it fell interchangeably from Ottoman to Russian hands. Eventually, as a result of the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) it was conceded to Russia.

35 In the 1730s the Ottoman Empire fought wars on three fronts simultaneously. In the years 1724-1746, with breaks, they fought against the Persians; from 1735 to 1739 – against the Russians who occupied Hotin and went as far as the Danube; and also from 1737 to 1739 – against the Habsburgs. The last conflict constitutes the background for Pilsztynowa's life narrative.

36 Mohiyliw – town on the Dniester River located in Podolia.

37 Bar – town in the historic region of Podolia, today in Ukraine. In 1768 the Bar Confederation was founded by Polish magnates to defend the internal and external independence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against Russian influence and against King Stanisław II Augustus supported by the Russian army.

Pieśń
Mojej Kompozycji

364.

Ach mocny Boże Stworca Ziemi, uzałze mi się w tej dołi
Ktore pinopze y z dopustu twego, w tej mey mizerney dołi
Bo ile Krzyżow grzychi to sprawili
Ze te niewiasty namnie Obwalili
Ja zato miłe Dziećkuie
Roskazates cierpiec dowayże y mocny, mnie tak Slabemu Stworzeniu
Klym tym Sepicy Sposobna byta z mitym Jezusem Kaciępioniu
Ależ mnie ciężka pomoc mniemay, Panie
W tym Serażnieyżym opyżczonym stanie
Oto prosze ja ciłbie
Inożnieyże by mnie od Obcey Wiary, ybanzo dalekiy od Siebri
Nizli by takich obwiednym Oltaru, traktowates nad usiebri
Garmo ma Szczerze zaniecne Sądzeniu
Zaktore Cierpie codzien utwierdzeniu
Inacze to Wola jest twoia
Sam ze Tedy radziż mey mocny Boże jakonia Skonna ku pokoiu
Aprzeciwna Strona zuktley Swney Złwa, jak nieprzyiaiel ku boiu
Klymnie zorgungu y fortune traci
Klymnie Nawe y Uruga naci
Jak z dopustu od Boga
Uzałze mi się mey mity Panie nad meią Strapioną Głogą
Przy lepszym Szcześciu y Spokojnym Życiu, majż wżelżyge głogę
Nieprzemuszay mnie przez me ciężke zale
Ocean zalewac memi trami cale
Mam już radosyc za Jurai

36) Niech tam nieraz otuym miłosierdziu, że niechże z góry Sześciu
Niech poprawi życia, przestanie złości korona uśmiechu
Jercem Złote a Kocham ce Panu

Niechaj że natym już zadawie słone
Sprawiedliwośća twoiej

Niechaj niemuwią opaczne Ludzie te dobrze być tak za złości
Aia Innaczej kutobie moy Jezu Jle co Czynie z miłosi
Bła Duż Chreścian potrzeby Bliźniego
Niech odpensuje co jest tylko mego

Bądź podrozwiony moy Jezu.

Ia te Siedm Wierzad com ta wscy Pieśni zkomponowata
moin Błahem zdanim Offiarie Matce kł. Panny Maryi
Kaptela Świętego, na Pamiętkę Siedm Boleści Jezu
Pana Jezusa Chrystusa, a tym y ja przez ich nieuin
ne Boleści Józgie y Ciężkości miata wmerich
Krzywdach y Złobach, iak też na Pamiętkę Siedm
Radosi Matki Najświętszej, a tym przez Jezu
Pobożne Siedm Radosi była pociępo
na Weuszystkich Smutkach y kłó.
potach moich, y tely mnie Bóg mg
choc wostatku Dni moich Błó
gostawit Spokojnym y Pobo
żnym życiem Józg ja
naprad Wszytkim Ja.
Dziom Dobopulnie
Zycze a pobyty y
mnie Dny też
Bóte Wpced
mogły
m. n.

Rejestr Catey tej Książki

Paroż Pierusza do Stambulu na Kuracie St.	1.
Smiere Czauza " " " " " " " "	" " " "
Uwolnienie męża mego Turczyńca " " " "	" " " "
Przyżyna Smierci Czauza " " " "	" " " "
Długa Awantura w Stambule " " " "	" " " "
Tabela zdrowej Białogławy przez Janitaraw	5.
Obżarowanie mnie bez Żyda " " " "	" " " "
Brzywe uciezcie choroby magnacy " " " "	" " " "
Uzdrowienie choroby przez zdrowego Turczyńca	" " " "
Wydarzenie tychże czas od kogo były nastane	" " " "
Przyjazd do Stambulu " " " "	" " " "
Przrucenie męża mego w przyjazd z Stambulu	" " " "
Przyjazd do Adrianopolu przyjezie sukku mnie	" " " "
Sent Ludowy. Uzdrowienie nogi mojej " " " "	" " " "
Kuracja Turczyńca doskonale uzkusowana " " " "	" " " "
Druga Kuracja Turczyńca Skpeso " " " "	" " " "
Kuracja Peuney Greczynli z Cui Matki his. " " " "	" " " "
Kuracja Żyda Leidego w Adrianopolu " " " "	" " " "
Przyjazd do Jambatu " " " "	" " " "
Wskazo do Sofiji i napasi w Rozboynika Huscina.	" " " "
Prowadzenie mnie do Domu tegoż Rozboynika	" " " "
Opisanie miasta Kartasa " " " "	" " " "
Przybycie Huscin Agi do Kartasa " " " "	" " " "
Przyjazd mo. do Sofiji miasta Turckiego	" " " "
Przyjazd męża mego do tejże Sofiji " " " "	" " " "
Colnarie męża mego w Sofiji " " " "	" " " "
Uzdrowienie męża mego ludowne " " " "	" " " "
Dowiedzenie o Smierci męża mego " " " "	" " " "

Chapter 4³⁸

Second Travel to Istanbul

Once we arrived in Istanbul, we went to Yeni Bahçe to the house of the Head Keeper of the Royal Purse, Dudu Hasan Efendi, father of Ayşe Hanım, where I was very warmly welcomed.³⁹ I was supposed to cure her eyes. Her treatment took forty days and, with God's help, despite her old age she started to see again. Thanks to the successful treatment of Ayşe Hanım I attracted a number of new patients – Mustafa Ağa (Head Treasurer who lived in Tahtakale), Kadık Ağa and Hüseyin Ağa. Among my patients also was Şeyh Molla who was already an old man. Thanks to Divine Providence he recovered fully, and thus he was promoted to the function of *Kazasker* of Rumelia (the equivalent of our Pope). He paid me five hundred Dutch thalers and I gained much respect given his importance. Since then I had even more patients who paid me well and recommended me to others.

During my stay in Istanbul, Sultan Mustafa⁴⁰ had a daughter called Hibetullah.⁴¹ For the past forty years no child had been born in the Sultan's palace and in the same period of time the Empire lost four of its sultans. Hence, Hibetullah's birth was celebrated in the whole of Istanbul and Pera.⁴² All streets, houses, apartment buildings, shops and bazaars large and small, were decorated. It reminded me of the altars erected on the occasion of *Corpus Christi* in Poland. The whole of Istanbul was so abundantly adorned with green twigs of boxwood, laurel and other herbs placed into vases, that it was impossible to pass in a carriage. That is why I had to buy a decent horse with a saddle. I had two people accompany me on foot and would travel wherever I wanted in order to watch the celebrations of music and traditional dancing. This lasted forty days and took place without any arguments or spilt blood.

There was a Catholic tradesman in Istanbul called Musiani who made a banner out of eighty pearls and put it up in front of his shop. Since then he became known as *İncili Bayraktar*, that is to say »The Pearl Banner-bearer«. Every day, all the inhabitants of the city, Christians included, would walk to the Hippodrome along with members of their guilds carrying their banners. Hence, while the furriers' banner was made of sable fur, tailors hung scissors, measurers and expensive textiles on theirs. Fruit sellers' banners were made of oranges, lemons and apples.

There were such impressive firework shows organized along the waterfront that it is difficult to describe them with words. The jewellers' guild stood out: it consisted of four

38 Chapters 2 and 3 have been omitted as they describe episodes, which do not refer to the Ottoman Empire.

39 She seems to have made a mistake and to be referring to Yeni Şehir – part of today's Istanbul district of Beyoğlu.

40 Mustafa III (1717–1774) – Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1757 to 1774.

41 Hibetullah Sultana (1759–1762) – daughter of Sultan Mustafa III and Mihrişah Sultana, died at the age of three. Buried in Mustafa III's mausoleum in the Laleli Mosque in Istanbul.

42 Pera – a cosmopolitan quarter inhabited by a predominantly non-Muslim population and home to many European embassies and businesses; today's Beyoğlu district of Istanbul.

thousand people who wore brand new silk *kaftans*, robes made of Spanish cloth, with golden belts encrusted with diamonds and red fezzes on their heads. In one of their hands they carried golden incense burners with aloes and in the other golden or silver cups full of rose water. They congratulated the Sultan on the birth of his daughter Hibetullah and danced their traditional dances in her honour. The Sultan offered them two thousand golden coins in return. Next to come before the Sultan's Palace were the ploughmen, young and beautifully dressed men. They had a silver plough plated with gold along with six strong oxen whose horns and fur were plated with gold. Each of the ploughmen carried a wooden vessel filled with different kinds of seeds: wheat, barley, etc. One of them was ploughing with his plough and oxen while the rest were sowing crops and singing their traditional songs. The Sultan offered them two thousand golden coins in return.

The Sultan's daughter's cradle was made of pure gold and encrusted with diamonds. Before the Sultana was laid down in it, it had been sent to the Eyüp Mosque to be blessed; according to Christians living here, Prophet Job was buried there.⁴³ The cradle was placed in the mosque in the company of a number of religious dignitaries: The Great Mufti, the Kazaskers of Rumelia and of Anatolia, the Kadı of Istanbul and Şeyh Molla. Five hundred lambs were sacrificed and a generous amount of money was offered to the poor. The janissaries paraded from the Eyüp Mosque to the Hagia Sophia Mosque. The cradle was carried with the assistance of a large number of courtiers and state dignitaries. Each of the dignitaries offered the newly born Sultana one female slave. None was bought for less than ten purses of coins; each one was beautifully dressed and adorned with gems. Their task was to take care of and serve Hibetullah. There was a total of four hundred of these female slaves.

According to the local Christians, the Sultana's mother was the daughter of a Greek Orthodox priest.⁴⁴ When he died, his wife was left alone with five children. Since she was unable to feed all of them, in 1759 she offered one of her daughters to the Sultan's daughter and sister of the present Sultan Mustafa. She did it so that her daughter could keep her Christian faith since Muslims do not force others to convert. The widow wished for her daughter to live in purity, which was a tradition typical of the Sultan's daughters who, especially if they are still unmarried or widows, live in seclusion from men. They have eunuchs who serve them, do for them all the errands in the town as well as entertain them. This beautiful and pious girl lived a decent life and enjoyed a high esteem in the eyes of Aysel Sultana.⁴⁵ That is why she offered her to her brother

43 Eyüp Sultan Mosque (Tr. *Eyüp Sultan Camii*) – a mosque in the Eyüp district of Istanbul, outside the city walls near the Golden Horn. The mosque complex includes a mausoleum marking the spot where Ebu Eyyüb (Job) el-Ansari, the standard-bearer and friend of Prophet Muhammad, was supposedly buried. The mosque was the site for the coronation of the Ottoman Sultans, where the new sultan was girt with the sword of Osman.

44 She is referring to Mihrişah Sultan (1745–1805), the consort to Ottoman Sultan Mustafa III and the mother of Sultan Selim III (1761–1808); the author erred here as Mihrişah was the daughter not of a Greek, but of a Georgian Orthodox priest.

45 Aysel Sultana (1715–1775) – daughter of Sultan Ahmed III and Muslihe Kadın; Sultan Mustafa III's older sister.

Sultan Mustafa and eventually gave birth to Hibetullah, who had been awaited for forty years.

When the Sultana's mother was recovering from giving birth, the Sultan asked her: »What would you like me to do for you? I will do anything for you, my dearest wife.« She asked him to help her mother and her sisters. Without hesitation the Sultan ordered to send a large sum to Izmir where her mother and sisters lived. He also promised: »I shall exempt all the Christians from paying tribute and taxes for the whole year« (which made a total of thirteen thousand million purses).⁴⁶ However, this pious woman told him that since the tax amounts to only eleven silver coins per person yearly, she preferred him to grant permission for Orthodox and Catholic churches to be built. He listened to her and issued the permission. I myself witnessed these magnificent Orthodox churches, beautifully decorated with silver lambs, golden mirrors and candlesticks as well gold framed paintings ornamented with diamonds, pearls and other precious gems. It is impossible to express with words all the opulence that I witnessed during the Easter celebrations.

Three months later, Hibetullah's father, Sultan Mustafa, had her engaged to one of the dignitaries, the *Silahdar* who was responsible for the Sultan's swords. On this occasion, thirty-nine of the bravest, smartest and most handsome gentlemen were summoned to court. The fortieth among them was the Sultan himself, which made them known at court as the »forty gentlemen«. Then the little Sultana was taken from the arms of the ladies. She was dressed in swaddling but at the same time also beautifully adorned with expensive gems. She was carried to Sultan Mustafa's chambers where his father took her in his arms while thirty-nine gentlemen, her husband *Silahdar Efendi* included, kissed her feet. They congratulated her on her marriage. From that time on, her husband was supposed to dress her and meet all her needs together with her servants. Sultan Mustafa also married off his widow sisters – most of them to pashas and one of them to a vizier. They bestowed them with a large amount of money, jewels and had palaces built for them. During the reigns of previous sultans, they had been forgotten and it was only he who allowed them to visit him on regular basis. To his delight, they would visit the Sultan who was brought in by carriage with great fanfare and accompanied by a large number of courtiers.

There is a place in Istanbul called *Eski Saray* where the sultans' wives and female servants lived.⁴⁷ They are real slaves as they have to live there until their deaths. The palace is so big that four hundred eunuchs live there and each of them has two rooms at their disposition. At the same time, 2,300 women – both old and young – live here together

46 A purse (she uses the Turkish word *kese*) was the equivalent of approximately five hundred thalers.

47 *Eski Saray* – means Old Palace and refers to a palace constructed in 1458 located between the Süleymaniye and the Bayezid Mosques, in today's Beyazıt neighbourhood of the Fatih district in Istanbul. It was a palace where the grandmother of the sultan (*büyük valide sultan*) would move upon ascension of a new sultan to the throne.

with their little children, both boys and girls. Each of the women is well off due to a salary she receives, in addition to supplies of new dresses, food, drink and firewood. Since they have no living expenses, they spend their income on purchasing little boy slaves instead. When a slave girl grows up they marry her off but they keep the boys with them until the age of seven. Then they are sent off to male tutors who raise them according to the Turkish customs. The woman who purchases a boy slave becomes his mother and leaves her entire fortune to him. If he is smart enough, he has a chance to become a pasha or janissary. However, the women who live in the *Eski Saray* never see anyone and never go out. The current Sultan is very attentive and merciful and he frequently travels to the *Eski Saray* to spend time with them. He asks them whether they would like to get married. Those that openly express their willingness to marry are lavishly married off and provided with a generous dowry, while those who do not have such a wish say that it is enough for them to serve him and be honoured by his visits. These women live in great comfort and are regularly given gifts.

The tradition of the sultans of having 999 wives is said to stem from King Solomon who was known in the Judeo-Christian tradition for having had a thousand wives. The Sultan used to say: »Out of God's mercy I am the King of Jerusalem but since I am not David's son I cannot have a thousand wives but one less, hence I have 999 wives.« When any of his wives would have a son, the boy would be allowed to travel within Istanbul wherever he wished until he reached the age of thirteen. Once he turned thirteen, he would be sent off to a special isolated palace where he would be given servants and live in great comfort. The sultan's sons would eat and drink to their heart's content and dress very elegantly. They would have by their side their wet-nurse as well as a mature woman no longer able to give birth [to look after them]. When one of the sons becomes sultan and comes to possess 999 wives, his first wife who lived with him while he was prince in the isolated palace would move to the *Eski Saray* and live there until the end of her life. However, the current sultan, whom I am now serving as court doctor in 1760, did not want to send away his first wife. However, the Mufti (who is equivalent to the Pope in our culture) came to him with the Koran, the book given to them by Muhammad and which contains all the rules of their faith, forbade him to live with her; because of the affection he held for her, [it was feared] he would abstain from the other ladies who were potential mothers of the future heir to the Ottoman throne. Hence, to his regret the Sultan had to send away his first wife to the *Eski Saray*. However, he visited her frequently and continued to express the affection that he had for her since his youth. In the end, the Sultan went against tradition and took her to his Palace and named her first among his wives. However, she is a wise woman who does not meddle in state affairs or intrigues. That is why she is very much loved by the Sultan and the court. Sultan Mustafa has only two wives. Even though he is allowed other women every Friday, he is abstemious. As he explained it: »If God is to give me offspring, it will come from one of these wives.« To his great happiness, the first one is pregnant again.

During my presence at the Sultan's court, the Sultan's middle sister, Ayşe Sultana, came down with a serious illness. While pregnant, she had a very bad cough and continuously vomited, which made her miserable. Despite various attempts, none of the treatments that the doctors prescribed her had been successful. Eventually I was recommended on the suggestion that I was an excellent doctor. I was summoned to the palace. When I appeared before her, I was treated very kindly. She did not allow me to stand and told me to sit down immediately. She asked me for advice concerning her condition. I replied to her that there were wiser and more experienced doctors in Istanbul than myself. However, she told me that she was not afraid to entrust her health to me and believed in my clear conscience and skills. Asking God for help, I took some blood from her wrist and prescribed her cinnamon drops, cinnamon oil (*aqua cynamomi*), *balsam kopaiba*, the essence of potassium nitrate with sweet anise (fennel) oil (*spiritus nitri dulci anizati*), *urgentum comitis*,⁴⁸ nutmeg oil (*oleum de nucis muschati*), peppermint oil (*oleum mentha*) and other medicines to strengthen her and stop her coughing and fever. I stayed with her for three days and nights. You cannot imagine the fancy dishes of fish, sweets and jam they brought me during our fasting days (Good Friday and Holy Saturday). I was given a quiet and cosy room with a truly comfortable bed.

I have seen a lot of wealth in the palaces of Vienna, where I spent two years, and of Petersburg, where I visited the Monarch herself, but I must admit that the affluence of Ayşe Sultana's palace exceeded them all. The palace is situated on a hill from where one sees the whole of Istanbul and the Bosphorus. It is very large and consists of three storeys. The female servants and the eunuch live on the ground floor, Ayşe Sultana herself lives on the middle floor with her female court, and the top floor belongs to her fifteen-year-old daughter who is engaged to a state dignitary. The daughter has 400 servants for entertainment alone: eunuchs, singers, musicians, dwarves and [dancing] girls. Sultan Mustafa summoned his sister Ayşe Sultana along with her daughter, Efendi Hanım, so that she give her blessings for her to marry the Sultan's Chamberlain. I saw the gifts that the husband-to-be sent Efendi Hanım: an expensive diamond necklace, a tiara for her head, a diamond-plated belt, a watch on a chain, a mirror and twelve boxes made of pure gold and adorned with diamonds the size of chickpeas. There were even clogs, similar to those worn by the Bernardines. They were made of the *lignum aloes* tree, plated with gold and adorned with rubies. There were golden bowls, golden cages decorated with diamonds with parrots, canaries and nightingales inside. A parade also took place with eighty carriages. In each carriage there were four or six women. The janissary army with high-rank officers stood in their ranks, stretching from the Sultan's palace all the way to Ayşe Sultana's palace. They were assisted by the Sultan's and Ayşe Sultana's courtiers on horses and clad in dignified and elegant outfits. I had never seen anything more beautiful in my life.

48 The editor of the printed edition of Pilsztynowa's diary in Polish, Marian Pełczyński, suggests that *urgentum comitis* may be *ungentum commune*, an ointment made of lard, talc, yellow wax and lead.

After the wedding the young couple returned to their mother's palace. The rooms were abundantly spread with carpets of velvet, which were embroidered with expensive threads and adorned with pearls. The couple's room was decorated with green velvet. There were *lignum aloes* in gold incense burners so expensive that they cost one red golden coin each and candlesticks four cubits tall and ornamented with cut diamonds. Although gold was used to frame the mirror and the table was made of gold, the bowls were porcelain since they were not allowed to use gold crockery. The second room, which served as the bride's wardrobe, was adorned with crimson velvet fabrics embroidered with white threads. The third room, where the bride prayed, was decorated with blue velvet fabrics embroidered with lavish threads. The fourth room, where the newly weds were supposed to have their first meal together, was laid out with yellow velvet fabrics and adorned with colourful and beautifully cut silks. The fifth room, which served as a guestroom, was decorated with bright red crimson velvets with gold appliqué work and Spanish laces, reminiscent of canopies draped over Polish beds. Each of the rooms had twelve windows and three doors. The sixth room was laid out with velvets the colour of a violet which was almost navy blue and adorned with appliqués resembling silk flowers. That room was huge, like a salon. There were chairs upholstered with velvet and decorated with gold fringes and appliqués as well as silver-framed mirrors, candlesticks and chime clocks. It was used for dances, singing and all kinds of entertainment.

The bride was handed over to her husband with the blessings of her mother and stepfather Selihdar [Silahdar?] Pasha. The following day the Sultan sent her twelve large round silver trays, various beautiful flowers in golden jugs and all kinds of fruit: oranges, lemons, pomegranates, raisins, almonds, figs, apples and pears, all in separate golden vases. There were two hundred pearl chains for braiding her hair. Moreover, there were one thousand purses of coins. The Sultan promised his niece to cover her and her husband's expenses as well as those of her court. Her mother Ayşe Sultana's chambers has a bath of which the beauty and affluence is impossible to describe. While in other parts of the world people teach birds how to speak, here they teach nightingales, canaries and other clever birds how to play the flute. When God looks down at this place, He must realize that people here understand what paradise is and have created a paradise on earth.

I visited the Sultan's youngest sister, Esmâ Sultana, to treat her.⁴⁹ She was married to Muhsinzade Pasha⁵⁰ and they lived not far from Istanbul, in Arnautköy.⁵¹ They had a gorgeous palace lavishly equipped with 400 female servants, 40 eunuchs, a few dwarfs as well as a several gardeners and butlers. Esmâ Sultana was a person of exceptional beauty and a good heart. She was not at all arrogant, never hesitated to help anyone in

49 Esmâ Sultana (1726–1788) – daughter of Sultan Ahmed III and Zeynep Kadın, the younger sister of Sultan Mustafa III.

50 Muhsinzade Mehmed Pasha (d.1774) – served twice as Grand Vizier of Sultan Mustafa III in the years 1765–1768 and 1771–1774.

51 Arnautköy – Istanbul neighbourhood located on the European shore of the Bosphorus.

need and to stand up for them before the Sultan. Her behaviour was that of an angel. Every day she gave away a purse of money to the poor; she likewise had 500 sheep and ten oxen slaughtered to be distributed to the needy along with rice, butter, honey, sugar and poultry. She lived a quiet life similar to that of a widow because, despite being deeply in love with her husband, he was always far away. The Sultan sent him off with a large army to one of the provinces to put down a rebellion.⁵² She told me: »Dear doctor, I am half dead because of my great longing for my dear husband.«

In time I became employed as the court doctor for Sultan Mustafa's harem, and was doing very well in this position. In the meantime, I heard that a Polish envoy, Józef Podoski, the voivode of Płock, was coming to Istanbul.⁵³ I was very happy to have a chance to meet a noble from my homeland (...).⁵⁴ It was 1760. My lover, who had remained in Poland, took my young son⁵⁵ out of school [in Poland], dressed him exquisitely and sent him off to Turkey with His Excellency Podoski without giving him a penny for the journey.⁵⁶ I was worried that he had been discharged from school and thus was concerned for his Christian faith, and concerned that he had been sent off on such a journey at such a young age without my knowledge or permission. Eventually, I realized that it was better for him to stay with me in Istanbul as long as I lived here. Of course, I had no idea that my lover had taken all the money that I had left for my son, who was ashamed to admit what had happened. The envoy had a meeting with the Grand Vizier. I asked him to have my son assist him since, although he was Polish, he knew Turkish very well. The envoy introduced him as my son. Since I was held with great esteem at court, he was warmly greeted by each of my friends. Remembering my services to the Sultan and his respect for me, they granted him a kaftan.

I advised my son: »Since you are here now, I am getting you two teachers – a Frenchman and a Turk, a very well-educated *efendi* who tutors the children of the French dip-

52 Muhsinzade Mehmed Pasha was a governor of Bosnia at the time.

53 Józef Antoni Podoski (1710–1779) – while fulfilling the duty of the voivode of Płock (town on the Vistula river in central Poland), he was sent to Istanbul as an ambassador of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Ottoman Empire in the years 1759–1760. He tried to improve trade relations between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire. His visit confirmed the friendly relations between both states.

54 In the omitted fragment she is talking about being deceived by her lover – see footnote 55.

55 She is referring to Stanisław Pilsztyn (correctly Pichelstein, 1742 – after 1820) – in the following years he served as a messenger for the Polish diplomatic mission to Istanbul. King Stanisław Poniatowski sent him to Istanbul to learn Ottoman Turkish at the Polish School of Oriental Studies. In 1779 he was appointed the first dragoman of the Polish diplomatic mission. In 1786 he was nominated the border interpreter in Kamianets-Podilskyi. In 1792 he was promoted to nobility. After the third partition of Poland-Lithuania (1795) he passed to the Russian side.

56 The lover whom she speaks much about in the earlier chapters of the journal until recently had only been known by his initials J.M.-C.Z.. He was seven younger than her. He took advantage of Pilsztynowa by extorting money from her. At some point she entrusted her sons to him when she left for Lviv, but because of his recklessness the older one died. The case found its way to the court in Kamianets-Podilskyi. He, however, got Pilsztynowa to forgive him and drop the charges. In his article from 2016, Dariusz Chemperek explained that the initials refer to Józef Makowski – Cześnikowicz Żytomierski – born in 1725, he was most probably a son of the King's Cup-Bearer of Żytomierz. After separating from Salomea, he fulfilled some titular functions in the Czernichów voivodeship.

lomatic mission. My son started having classes with the Turkish tutor immediately. Although the teacher said that it was going to take three years to learn how to read and write in Turkish, my son mastered it in three months, which made me truly happy. Then, he also easily learned to write and read in French, Italian and Greek. Thanks to these skills and the good word of some influential nobles, he was appointed as an advisor on the Eastern relations to the Great Hetman.⁵⁷ I promised to give him a few hundred red golden coins for his expenses.

While in Istanbul I lived in the town of Eyüp, but I often spent time in Galata and Pera, where seven Catholic churches are located.⁵⁸ After mass, in order to entertain myself and make new acquaintances, I would visit the German envoy, and the Russian envoy, Mr Hübsch, who was appointed as advisor to the Polish envoy, in addition to the envoys' interpreters and important tradesmen. Given my connections, I gained His Excellency Podoski's esteem.

A Polish boy by the name of Dominik Garbuliński who had started hanging around me [while in Poland], followed me to Istanbul. He claimed to a Polish deputy that I owed him a three-year salary. The envoy requested that I pay him whatever I owed him. I explained that he was not my servant. However, despite this, one of the envoy's men sent after me took my golden watch and some other valuable things as compensation when he did not find me at home. Enraged by his disrespectful behaviour, I had the [Polish] boy caught and beaten up for his deceit. The envoy was infuriated that harm was done to a person under his protection and insisted that I pay the boy 300 złoty for each year of his service. I refused to do so and moved my quarters out of his palace. Instead, I moved into a mansion in Galata paying a rent of forty Dutch thalers a month. Afterwards, I visited the envoy asking him to return my belongings. However, I was not granted justice since all the courtiers supported the boy since he spoke Turkish and helped them in all their dealings.

Finally, asking God for help, I went to the Sultan's palace and put forth my grievances and complaints to the *kızlar ağası*, that is the head eunuch – the chief guardian of the Imperial Harem. The *kızlar ağası* sent his *bostancı* to the governor in Galata for the purpose of seizing the boy and punishing him with lashes on his feet, and then sending him to the galleys for his audacity of spreading lies which could cause me harm since I was a loyal servant at Sultan Mustafa's harem.⁵⁹ They managed to catch Dominik and give him lashings on his feet, for none of his excuses was of any use. At the same time, some of the envoy's assistants came to help Dominik and tried to frighten me without success. Dominik was imprisoned and I went to the Grand Vizier requesting him

57 Hetman was the highest-ranking position for a military officer, second to the King in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth. From the end of the sixteenth century onwards there were two Hetmans in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Field Hetmans) and two Hetmans in the Crown (Great Hetmans).

58 Galata – a mainly non-Muslim neighbourhood adjacent to Pera, located at the northern shore of the Golden Horn, which separates it from the old city centre of Istanbul.

59 *Bostancı* – one of the imperial guards of the Ottoman Empire.

to have my property returned. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Francis Giuliani, the dragoman for the Polish envoy.⁶⁰ He asked me to drop the case and promised that all my property would be delivered to my house. The next day, Mr. Giuliani arrived in my house along with a procession of Janissaries appointed by the Sultan to guard the envoy and a Turkish officer, and asked me to drop the case. However, it turned out that one of my golden bracelets had been lost. I learned later that Dominik was set free and returned to the envoy's place. His courtiers ripped off his cloak and chased him out of the palace.⁶¹

The last argument happened very close to the envoy's departure from Istanbul. My son Stanisław Pilsztyn was instigated against me by both my lover back in Poland and by the envoy's man, Sebastian Zawadzki, a rascal and drunkard. The envoy likewise urged him to leave Istanbul. I was upset and heartbroken. I went to the Imperial Harem but could not say a word because I was in tears. They asked me for the reason for my sadness and despair. I explained to them that my son was leaving Istanbul without even bidding farewell to me. The ladies hugged me in consolation and promised that they would talk to the Sultan to not allow my son to depart from Istanbul. The Sultan's second wife, who was as beautiful as an angel and hardly ever spoke, gave me two gorgeous scarves embroidered with gold. She told me: »Give them to your son and tell him that they are my gift. Perhaps he will decide against leaving you.« The ladies and dwarfs ran to the Sultan's room and told him that their doctor was crying and explained him the reason for my misery. The Sultan immediately appointed one of his courtiers to take me to the head *bostancı*. He received me warmly and promised to send one of his dignitaries on behalf of the Sultan to the envoy to request him to make my son stay in Istanbul. First, the dignitary went to see His Excellency Hübsch to make him convince the envoy not to take my son along to Poland. Next, he went to see Mr. Giuliani and eventually the envoy himself. My son was also summoned. The dignitary asked on behalf of the head *bostancı* not to separate the son from his mother since no one can be a greater support for a child than his own mother. However, my son replied: »I do not want to stay in Istanbul with my mother. I prefer going back to Poland with the envoy.« Eventually, the dignitary came to me with this unfortunate news. I was upset and embarrassed. I ended up giving one of those scarves that the Sultan's wife gave me to the dignitary. Otherwise, I would have had to give him ten golden red coins for his efforts. I had to give the second one to the *çorbacı* – a Turkish colonel, who was also trying to persuade my son to stay with me.⁶² In the end, my son left with the envoy without saying goodbye to me, his own mother. I do not want to go on saying how much he hurt me because of listening to reckless people.

60 Francis Giuliani – a Levantine dragoman who worked for the Polish diplomatic mission from 1736 onwards; in 1761 he was nominated the Polish King's official deputy in Istanbul.

61 With this rather abrupt ending to the story, the author points out that Dominik's protectors ended up realizing that he was an untrustworthy liar, and thus disposed of him.

62 *Çorbacı* – a military rank of the corps of Janissaries in the Ottoman Empire (literally: »soup cook«), used for the commander of a regiment. It approximately corresponded to the rank of colonel.

As I am now sharing with you my life experiences, I hope that every reader has by now realized that my life has often been in danger and I was alternately rich and poor according to my changing circumstances. They must have understood that I received little good from my husbands, my lover, my children and my servants. Does it make any sense for me to go back to Poland in 1760 at the age of forty-two? If I decided to go back, they would at most, God forbid, rip me off from what I have. Nevertheless, I knew that my son was going to come back to his senses and eventually, he would turn back from the road, perhaps convinced by the *kapıcıbaşı*⁶³, who was a great man and was sent to accompany the envoy from Istanbul to the Polish border in Hotin.⁶⁴ I awaited his return impatiently convinced that my son would turn back with him from Hotin. As soon as I learnt that the *kapıcıbaşı* came back, I ran to the Palace certain that my son was there. But there was not even a letter for me. I got really upset again and I promised myself that I was never going to go back to Poland. That same weekend I gave away part of my fortune to poor Christians and even to poor Muslims. I decided to go to Egypt by sea to distract myself and see new places as I realized that it was easier for me to continue my life in a foreign country rather than being harmed by my nearest and dearest. On my return from Egypt I also wanted to stop by Jerusalem.

I vowed to myself that I was never again going to be concerned with my children and I would only think about myself. Who knows, perhaps they will want me to come to see them at least in their dreams as my son hated me so much that he did not want to stay with me in Istanbul and receive a decent education. The *Reis Efendi* and the Sultan's sisters would tell me on numerous occasions that they would ask Sultan Mustafa or the Grand Vizier to write a letter to His Excellency, the Great Hetman, so that he keep an eye on my son.⁶⁵ I learned later that my lover had my son come to Kamianets-Podilskiyi where he cheat him again. One of my sons had died because of his negligence. Now he convinced him to leave school and stay with the envoy with the intention of using his money.⁶⁶

Having decided to stay in Istanbul and being comfortable financially thanks to the money I earned from the Sultan's Harem and from other patients, I rented a mansion where the Polish envoy had been staying. I was wondering why no one had been willing to rent it and thought that this might have been because it was already old and rotten. I

63 *Kapıcıbaşı* – literally »head gatekeeper«; master of ceremonies.

64 Hotin – a strategic river crossing with a renowned Hotin fortress between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, located on the right bank of the Dniester River, today within borders of Ukraine. From the seventeenth century the border town's history was dominated by wars between the expanding Christian powers (first Poland, then Russia) and the Ottoman Empire.

65 *Reis efendi* or *Reisül-küttab* – a senior post in the administration of the Ottoman Empire. It can be translated as »chief of the scribes« or »head clerk«. The holder of the post was originally the head of the chancery of the Imperial Council (Divan) and with time evolved into an analogue of a foreign minister.

66 Kamianets-Podilskiyi – located on the Smotrych River, today in western Ukraine. Since 1434 it functioned as the capital of the Podolian Voivodeship and the seat of local civil and military administration. The ancient castle was reconstructed and expanded by the Polish kings to defend the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the southwest against Ottoman and Tatar invasions, thus it was known as »the gateway to Poland«.

was happy to stay close to the Sultan's Palace but I was not allowed to enter the Harem unless I was requested to come. Whenever I came there, I would be asked at each door whether I had a permission to enter.

One day when I was not planning to go to the Palace, I went to the city centre to see my patients. However, it turned out that when I was not at home, they sent a *çuhadar* – a servant – to my house five times to take me immediately to the Sultan's palace.⁶⁷ It was dark by the time I got home and learned from my servants that the palace servant had been here five times and became very angry that I was not at home. He requested that I go to the palace as soon as I got home, even if it was midnight, and that I was to go by boat. Asking God for help, I decided to disobey the order, not willing to risk my life travelling to the palace by boat at night. I also knew that if I appeared at the Palace's doorstep at night, the doorkeepers would not let me in before dawn. So I ate my supper and went to bed. In the morning I left my mansion, taking two of my servants with me. We went to the pier where we found a boat with four people waiting for me. Once I got to the palace, I explained why I did not come on the previous day. I received a new patient and was immediately given ten red golden coins to buy medicines. When I got back home, all my neighbours came to congratulate me saying that God had saved me from a sudden death, for while I had been away, in fact, just after I had left, my entire house had collapsed.

I saw what happened to my house as soon as I approached it. I was worried about recovering my belongings and my small fortune of trunks, silvers, tins, copper etc. However, my neighbours told me not to worry and assured me that nothing was going to go missing in that neighbourhood. They brought over *hammals* – porters – asking them to clear away the rubble. Thanks to God's mercy I did not lose any of my belongings. I only lost one silver bowl, but it turned out that it had been stolen by one of my servants from Poland.

There was a ten-year-old boy who was blind on both eyes and who was undergoing treatment around the time when my mansion collapsed. It was fortunate that he was not there at the time since the pillar collapsed exactly in the spot where he used to sit. When the women in the harem learned about the mansion's collapse, they thanked God that I was safe and sound.

Once I was asked to treat the eye-sight of a Turkish gentleman called Hacı Süleyman Ağa Silahtar Ulu, who was blind on both eyes. He did not live in Istanbul but in the town of Tekirdağ to which one had to travel by boat for two days. I took some payment in advance and promised to treat the man. I asked my servant to rent the best and newest boat. However, since he had no idea about boats, he rented a dangerous and uncomfortable boat. I could even see water flow on board from the sides which were full of

67 *Çuhadar* – title given to an imperial servant responsible for the Sultan's and high dignitaries' wardrobe. *Çuhadars* were charged with the storage and carrying of the garments.

holes and only sealed with tar. Although I was made to believe that we would arrive at Tekirdağ in two days, in the end we sailed on the sea for eleven days. As soon as we arrived, I got out of the boat and went to see my good Hungarian friends, whom I got to know through my acquaintance with the late Prince Rákóczy. The following day wheat and barley were loaded on the boat and it set off with thirty passengers in the direction of Istanbul. As soon as it sailed away from the shores, the boat fell apart and all the passengers drowned except for one Greek boy called Pentelemon, who survived and became my servant. This is how God the Almighty saved me from sudden death. Praise be to Him, Amen.

Chapter 5

Since this memoir is written for both the glory of God and for the reader's entertainment, I would also like to share with you information about Turks and their religion that is based on my observations as well as the knowledge shared with me. Its source are not books to which I had access in Poland but comes directly from the Koran.⁶⁸ When the Prophet Muhammad's mother was carrying him, a babe in her arms, an angel captured him. He took him to a high mountain, ripped his stomach and took out his liver. He rinsed it to make sure that no Christian blood was left in it and sewed him up with green thread. For this reason, Ottoman emirs wear green turbans.

After he grew up and was already married to eight women, during the wedding with his ninth wife he got upset with people staring at her beauty. Disturbed by this, Muhammad prayed to God begging Him to forbid Turks [Muslims] to look at other men's wives.⁶⁹ An angel came to him and whispered into his ear: »Take a piece of cloth and cover your wife's eyes.« Muhammad listened to him and covered his wife's eyes. Guests started enquiring for the reasons behind covering his wife's face. He replied: »God ordered me to do so through His messenger – the angel. From now on you should also cover your wives' faces so that other men do not see their faces.« Since then, it became customary for Turkish wives to cover their faces.

A few years later when Muhammad was lying in bed with his favourite wife, the Angel Gabriel came to see him and put him in front of God's door. Muhammad started to knock on the door. God asked: »Who is that?« Gabriel replied: »I brought You Muhammad – Your favourite servant.« Once he was standing in front of God, He asked him: »What do you wish for, my loyal servant?« He replied: »I wanted to have a community converted to my faith who would pray everyday with their clean hearts and bodies to You, my Lord.« God replied to him: »Let there be what you are asking for.« He went down from the seventh level of Paradise to the sixth level where he found Christ whom he greet-

68 Pilsztynowa had the Koran read and explained to her by some Ottoman friends in Istanbul.

69 By saying »Turks«, she refers to the whole of the Muslim community.

ed cordially. He wondered what Muhammad had asked God for. He explained that God allowed him to have his faithful pray hundred times a day. Christ responded that it was impossible for a human to pray so frequently and advised to ask God to decrease the frequency of prayers. Muhammad spent the night walking back and forth from God's level to Christ's level and eventually it was decided that the Turks were to pray five times a day. Each time they prayed, they cleared their conscience after repeating three times »*Tövbe estağfurullah*« and washing their hands, head and feet. They also prayed on a clean carpet. Even if an enemy was to come and cut off his head, a man praying was not supposed to move from his prayer rug. Each prayer has a separate name: *sabah namazı* in the morning; *öğlen namazı* at noon; the third prayer in the afternoon is called *ikindi*, then there is *akşam* after sunset as well as *yatsı* which takes place at bedtime. Everyone who is a member of the Muslim community (*ümmet*), the Sultan and women included, are obliged to pray regularly. Only those who are severely ill are exempt from prayers.

When Gabriel took Muhammad back to earth, he put him down at the distance of 400 miles from his wife and granted him the Koran – the Holy Book. Muhammad would walk around the town and tell people: »I am Muhammad and tonight I was on the seventh level of paradise. I discussed with God a thousand and one words (*bin bir kelam*) as well as talked with Jesus Christ on the sixth level of paradise. Tonight God gave me this book – the Koran and told me to teach its contents to the people.« (...) ⁷⁰

Turks fast for thirty days a year. They do not eat, drink or smoke from sunrise to sunset. As soon as they see a star in the sky, they start to eat and drink. They can eat and drink as much as they want after dark. During the days of the fast they help those in need and invite them to their homes for a meal. It happens that a pasha sits on the same table with the poorest beggar. The fast is called *Ramazan* and is observed by everyone, from the Sultan to common people, by both children and the elderly. The only exemption are illness and travelling.

Turks also have a holiday called *Kurban Bayramı* – the Feast of the Sacrifice or *Eid*. During that time, they sacrifice lambs to God in order to have their sins forgiven. Rich people happen to sacrifice ten or even a hundred lambs each year. They give away the meat and pelts to the poor but if they wish to, they can also eat the meat themselves. It is believed that before the paradise there is a huge river, which can only be crossed via a very narrow bridge. When God allows someone to enter paradise, he would not, however, be allowed to cross the bridge on foot. Lambs appear to carry that person. The more lambs he sacrificed during his lifetime, the more of them help him in his afterlife to cross the river and reach paradise.

A Turkish man cannot get married unless he has equipped his house with bedding, kitchen utensils, bowls, a copper table, candlesticks and all other objects essential for a

70 The omitted passage continues with the dialogue between Archangel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad.

household. Once he has all of these, his female relatives begin to look for a future bride. The groom takes as his wife whom his female relatives choose for him. During the wedding party, the groom has to show everyone his possessions. In the meantime, the groom's family also gives presents to the bride and this lasts for eight days. After that, the bride along with all her wealth is taken in a carriage to the groom. The groom comes up to the carriage, takes the bride in his arms and leads her to his house along with the women accompanying her. The groom then leaves the women and together with the men they go to the mosque for the evening prayer. Then in the presence of the *imam* they go home to the room where the bride is waiting and the wedding ceremony takes place – through a door they give vows to each other and then the groom is allowed to enter. The bride is covered from head to toe with a red shawl. The groom lifts it, looks at the face of his wife for the first time and kisses her. The bride is supposed to kiss his hand and prepare him a pipe to smoke. She hands it over to him as a sign of obedience. Then the groom orders his male and female servants to kiss his wife's hand and then makes them serve food. After the meal they light up the aloes incense and fall on their knees to pray. The following day, they go to the Turkish bath.

The Koran forbids Turks to declare war on anybody. They should only fight if someone else attacks them. When one joins the army during wartime, he should take with him half of his fortune. If he dies, the one who finds the money on him should use it to give him a decent burial. If he is taken into captivity, he should use the money to pay his ransom. In turn, if a Turk takes anyone in captivity, he should make sure that he gives that person food, water, clothes and bedding. He should also set him free after seven years. Turks do not force anybody to profess their religion. They only should offer to their slaves or neighbours three chances to convert to Islam (...).⁷¹

If anyone decides to convert to Islam, they ask him: »Why do you want to become a Muslim?« And he replies: »Because I want to be a good person and want my soul to be saved.« He then repeats three times the following sentence: »I am leaving my old faith and accept the new, real one.« Then he repeats the *Shahada* – the Islamic profession of faith – three times. With these words he becomes a real Muslim. Within a couple of days, he or she [!] gets circumcised and is taught the *namaz* – that is to perform the prayers and rituals.

As far as Turkish burials are concerned, if a convert from Christianity is buried, they put him naked on the catafalque, beat him with thin rods on his back, stomach, etc., and say: »Let the Christian soul exit and the Turkish soul enter.« As for eating customs, even if the greatest lord were to give a banquet, those invited eat as soon as they can since they are served by angelic-like youths and, in order not to be a nuisance or commit a sin, they get up early from the table. Turks are not allowed to eat and drink unless they first feed the domestic animals: horses, chickens, cows, etc. They do it because

71 The omitted passage continues with Muslim war customs.

their Holy Book tells them: »Each soul praises the Lord.« The Turkish alphabet is the most difficult alphabet in the world because each letter [in the Arabic script] has several forms and there are twenty-five distinct writing styles. Every scribe must know all these styles. That is why Turkish children spend seven years just to learn how to read and write.

Turks believe that there is no Last Judgment. If someone has been designated to go to hell, he goes to hell; if someone has been designated to go to paradise, he goes to paradise. When he is in the grave, he can see what is outside through a little window. If he is to go to purgatory or hell, he sees what suffering awaits him at his final destination. Hence, he starts living his hell already in the grave. And if he is supposed to go to paradise, he is already in paradise by witnessing the eternal happiness that awaits him there. But this happens after the »Scary Judgment«. Throughout their whole lives Muslims pray, observe their fasts, give money to the poor and light candles in the mosques for the souls of the dead, all for the salvation of their souls.

Turkish gatherings happen in the following way. They usually meet in a *kahvehane* – a coffehouse where they drink coffee, sing, play the *saz* (a Turkish stringed instrument) and discuss current affairs. They take butter, honey and flour and cook it in a pot, and eat this sweet – *helva* – when it cools down.

As for the Virgin Mary, Turks believe that she was a virgin before, during and after Jesus' death (...).⁷² They regard Jesus as one of their greatest prophets (...).⁷³ During the »Scary Judgment«, the Muslim Last Judgment Day, they believe that each faith will have its prophet-spokesman. Jews will be represented by Moses, but Moses is going to reject them and say to God: »I gave them Your Ten Commandments, but they did not obey them. In turn, I did not give them the Talmud, they made these rules up.« Turks will be represented by Muhammad. Christians will be protected by a number of figures but God will not pay any attention to them. It will be Virgin Mary who will stand up for the Christians and beg God to have mercy upon them. However, God will tell her: »Dear Virgin Mary, do not defend the Christians only, but all of humanity. You have no sin, you have never let me down and you have never broken any of my laws.« Hence, the Virgin Mary will testify for the whole of humanity. Turks say that at the time of the Last Judgment, all people will be standing while Muhammad arrives on a horse wearing an expansive coat under which the Turks will be hidden. He will be accompanied by God's favourites: Jesus Christ and His Mother, the Virgin Mary (...).⁷⁴

Turks are officially not allowed to drink wine or vodka or listen to music (...).⁷⁵ Each righteous Turk expects to have in heaven seventy angel-like virgin wives, presided over

72 In the omitted short passage she talks about Virgin Mary's place in Islam.

73 In the omitted short passage she talks about Jesus Christ's place in Islam.

74 The omitted passage continues with narration about the Last Judgment Day.

75 She explains why the above-mentioned are forbidden in Islam.

by an older one – either a bachelorette or a widow – who is served by the rest and is the most beautiful among them. Every Muslim is to live with these virgins, just like people on earth live with their wives. However, even if they were 200 years old at their death-bed, in paradise they will be thirty-three (...).⁷⁶

Turks go on pilgrimage to Mecca, which they call the Kaaba. Those who complete the pilgrimage gain the title of *hajji*. The way leading to the Kaaba is very long and dangerous, especially since one has to travel through the desert. Beyond Egypt there is no grass, water or trees. The air is really dangerous there and sand storms occur frequently. The name of this deadly hot wind that can throw a man off a camel is *samum*. If the man dies, he is buried in the sand. With time he becomes a kind of mummy that is used by doctors to produce medicines. It is the most efficient remedy for the spitting of blood and urinating with blood. In order to prepare the medicine one needs two stones known in Latin as *lapis hematis* and *mastix*. One has to make powder out of all of them and take it three times a day. One should use it along with the oil of liquorice and deer horn.

On the way to the Kaaba there are many Arab thugs. They walk around naked. Only those with high political status cover their bodies with *kilims* and their women with white sheets.⁷⁷ Except for the rich they do not have houses but live in tents. They all basically drown in sand. They do not eat any fruit or bread and their staple food are dates and water. They do not suffer from any illnesses and live up to the age of 200. They are healthy and so fast that they can catch you even if you are riding a horse. They do not get married but live together like cattle – and according to the rule that the stronger one gets more. They willingly sell their children in exchange for rice, butter, honey and other food products. They sell their sons to Turks. They also bury them in sand under sun in order to test their perseverance. Only the strongest stay alive and those who die are buried in the sand.

The Arab boys who become eunuchs are taken by Turks to Istanbul. There they are beautifully dressed and taught how to read, write, sing, ride a horse and shoot. Then they are sold to the Sultan's palace where they serve ladies in the Harem. They have very good lives. As another option they are sold to pashas and other state dignitaries. Sometimes they remember their parents and bring them to Istanbul. The eunuchs are given lots of money and are transformed from being simple people to educated ones. I had many opportunities to visit them in their houses and talk to them. About those Arabs living along the route that Turks use to travel to the Kaaba, where they have to pay *haraç* to pass.⁷⁸ Once, in 1757, when a group of a few thousands *hajjis* with a pasha among them were travelling to the Kaaba, Arabs appeared out of nowhere. Most

76 She continues with narration concerning life after death in Islam.

77 *Kilim* – pileless floor covering handwoven by tapestry techniques in Anatolia, the Balkans and parts of Iran. The name is also given to a variety of brodaded, embroidered, warp-faced, and other flat-woven rugs and bags.

78 *Haraç* – tax, tribute, protection money.

of them were naked, only some of them were wearing *kilims* or white sheets. The men were carrying sticks in their hands while the women were empty handed. When they cut the way of the Turkish *hajjis*, they killed most of them and forced those who stayed alive to surrender. They stole their horses, money, clothes and weapons. Only a few dozens managed to escape without any harm. They continued their way with nothing left. When they finally reached Jerusalem, people gave them clothes to wear. Among those Turkish *hajjis* were also women who had been stripped by the Arab thugs and who had to walk naked in the company of men. Despite all these dangers *hajjis* do not get discouraged. They are not scared of either death, robbers or fatigue. If only we Christians were so eager to go on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

It is said that Muhammad's grave is made of iron and there is a magnet in each of its four corners. That is why the coffin levitates in the air. I asked more than a hundred Turks whether it is true but all of them told me that Muhammad's coffin is simply buried in the soil. Instead, it was in Jerusalem that the stones were falling from the sky in order to punish evil people. One of the stones did not fall to the ground and stayed levitating in the air thanks to God's power.

I shall write more about Jerusalem once I go there. Here I only write about what I know is true. Jesus Christ's grave in Jerusalem is so famous and extraordinary that during Easter on the Resurrection [Day] flames come out of it. In the presence of the Greek Patriarch, the Bernardines and the Armenian Patriarch, with dozens of thousands of Christians as well as the Turkish pasha with his court, the grave is inspected on Holy Saturday by the pasha in order to make sure that it is empty and that the priests are not trying to deceive the common people. Then the pasha orders to cover the grave with a stone and seals it in seven places. At midnight he orders all the lights around – there are a few thousands of them in the vicinity – to be extinguished. Once the flames come out of the grave, they light up the lights again. The Greek and Armenian Patriarchs have their hands tied with a stole in the shape of a cross. They have five candles in their hands which they light up from this holy flame. From those candles the priests light up their own candles and then common people follow and light up their own candles that they will take home. Then Christians are ordered to step back and the pasha orders to open the grave. It turns out that the grave is just as it was when they sealed it and that the flame came from God. Easter is the time where many handicapped, blind and mute people and lunatics beg for God's mercy upon them. Christians from many different countries come to Jerusalem for Easter: France, Spain, Sicily, Germany, Italy, Hungary, India, Russia. Only Poles are not present (...).⁷⁹

A Catholic priest told me that he had once read a book about a Christian group known as the Jacobites.⁸⁰ Just as we call ourselves Poles and others Germans or Muscovites,

79 The omitted passage narrates a story she heard concerning the closing down of a church and monastery in Jerusalem because of a theft incident and the death of the Arab female thief.

80 She is referring to the Syriac Orthodox Church.

they are called Jacobites. They have their origins in India. Saint Peter is regarded as the founder of the Jacobites' church. They follow some of the Jewish rules: circumcision, Shabbat, the Ten Commandments and the Torah except for the Talmud along with the New Testament, baptism, confession, communion as well as other sacraments. They fought many successful wars against Indian pagans. They are beautiful people and their masses are celebrated according to our rituals. In India there are many monasteries for both men and women. Since their country is safe, many people come from there on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (...).⁸¹

Also Abyssinians come on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Among Turks they are known as *Habeş* [Ethiopia]. Abyssinia is such a big and vastly populated country that the Sultan is afraid to declare war on it since it is a rich country and its people are born warriors. Still, Turks who live at the borderlands manage to take some Abyssinians captive as I saw some of their women and men work in Turkish houses in Istanbul. They are of mixed race, neither entirely black nor white but they have nice faces and eyes. Whenever I asked any of them about their faith, they would say that they are Christians. When they told me that they believe in the Holy Trinity, I assumed that they must be Catholics. However, when I asked them whether they recognized the Pope in Rome, they were not able to give me an answer since they were young and had limited knowledge of these subjects. Once I had an opportunity to speak to an Armenian Church bishop who turned out to be very knowledgeable about Abyssinians. He explained to me that they are real Catholics who only recognize the sovereignty of the Pope. There are also Kurds in Jerusalem. Their country is known as *Kurd*. In that country live Roman Catholics who are mixed with Turks. However, those Turks are different from those of Istanbul and they keep on fighting against the Turkish Sultan along with the Catholics. Once I treated the eye sight of a Turk called Abdullah. Along with twelve others he fell into Kurdish captivity. They tortured them mercilessly. They stripped them naked and gave them lashes. Then they tied them to the trees and left them without anything to eat or drink. Next, they cut little holes in their bodies and like coat pockets, stuck their hands in these wounds saying: »You Turks are an arrogant nation. You walk around in the bazaar with your hands in your pockets. Now, you can keep your arrogant airs while being tied to the tree and keep your hands in your pockets.« They kept them tied up until they died of exhaustion and threw their bodies into the river.

Abdullah managed to stay alive thanks to Divine Providence. There were many Christians mixed with Kurds who lived in that village. A Catholic girl would come to him every night and stick a few pieces of bread into his mouth and give him a few sips of milk. One night she brought him a horse, clothes and armour. She untied him and said to him: »I am a Catholic lady. A long time ago Turks took my father and my brother captive. However, they did not torture them and set them free after three years. They came home in good health. I am married to a Catholic man who fell into Turkish cap-

81 She continues with narration on the traditions of Jacobites, yet repeats herself in the text.

tivity. However, I have letters saying that he is alive and that the man whom he serves is merciful. I hope that he will be soon set free and will come here. Hence, I do not hate Turks. Because of my faith I would like to save your life. She gave him an ointment and a bandage so that his wounds healed quickly. This Turk was set free by a Kurdish lady. She even put a saddle on his horse and helped him to get on it. At the same time, dressed in the armour like a male warrior, she mounted another horse. She gave Abdullah food for the journey: bread, smoked meat and cheese as well as seven red golden coins. She kept him company until she led him to a safe road and explained to him which towns and villages he should pass by. In the end Abdullah managed to arrive safely in Istanbul. However, because of all the torture he suffered, he fell ill and lost his sight. Thanks to Divine Providence I managed to cure him. I heard him pray day and night for that Kurdish lady.

There are also Georgians who come on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They are real Catholics but they do not have any priests or churches. It is a pity because it would be fairly easy to send priests there. Now thousands of people die without confession and sacraments. They were eventually allowed to accept the Orthodox faith. I heard that they are called Georgians because Saint George was supposed to save the King's daughter from death by killing a dragon and owing to this miracle the whole country converted to Christianity (...).⁸²

I was told that when the Christian Emperor founded the church of the Hagia Sophia, it turned out that it was so expensive and big that he was afraid that he might not have enough money in the treasury to complete it.⁸³ He was worried that if he did not finish building it, his children may not be able to do so or that they may not be fond of their father's project. Troubled by all this, the Emperor was visited by a handsome youth of angelic beauty. Standing in front of him, he bowed and said: »Your Excellency, my lord would like to lend you as many red golden coins as ten camels can carry. We would be honoured if you agreed to visit my lord. I will take you to the palace.« The Emperor was very pleased by this. He immediately changed his clothes so that no one would recognize him. He took along ten of his loyal servants and they followed the youth as far as the neighbourhood surrounded by the seven-towered Yedikule Fortress.⁸⁴ They came to a palace where they were lavishly received. They also found ten camels loaded with red golden coins. The owner of the palace said: »I lend you this money, Your Excellency, so that you can spend it in the name of God's glory.« The Emperor thanked him for

82 She recalls the story of Jesus' birth as well as of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

83 She is referring to the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (ca. 482 – 565). Hagia Sophia's construction as a church lasted from 532 to 537.

84 Yedikule Fortress – located in the Fatih district of Istanbul. It became the Fortress of the Seven Towers only after Sultan Mehmed II conquered Constantinople in 1453 and built a new fort in 1458 by adding three larger towers to the four pre-existing ones on the inner Theodosian walls. She is most probably referring to the Golden Gate – the main ceremonial entrance to the capital, used for triumphal entries of an emperor on the occasion of military victories or coronations. It dates back to the second half of the fifth or first half of the sixth century.

his generous gesture and promised to remember his humanity. Having bid farewell, he returned to the Palace with his servants and was able to finish the construction of the Hagia Sophia.

After a few years, the Emperor thought of how to thank the man who had been so generous towards him and had lent him the money. He had ordered to put on the horse the saddle decorated with pearls and diamonds along with a lot of other expensive gifts. The Emperor himself went to Yedikule along with his friends and servants in order to thank his friend in person. However, once they got there, they were not able to find a palace that would even be similar to the one they had visited before. That is how they understood that it was through God's mercy that it was possible to finish the construction of the palace. When the church was constructed, it did not have a patron [saint] yet and the Emperor was consulting clergy and good friends on this matter. It turned out that one of the constructors forgot an important tool on top of the church. At that time the young man whose Lord gave money to the Emperor turned up and spoke to the constructor: »Do not go to the top of the church because I know very well that you are going to fall and die. I swear on the name of this church that Virgin Mary was called Hagia Sophia.« This situation made the Emperor very happy. Firstly, because the name was given to the church by Virgin Mary herself. Secondly, because he had a chance to see the servant of his friend. He wanted to welcome him warmly and told him that he was not able to thank his lord as he was not able to find his palace. The young man replied: »Your Excellency, my Lord will always be pleased to see you and you will have no trouble with finding his palace, but the time has not yet come.« As soon as he said it, the handsome young man disappeared in the presence of the entire court. There are tall stone columns at the cemetery in front of the church of Hagia Sophia (which the Turks converted into a mosque). I heard from many Christians that under these columns are to be found the bread baskets that Jesus Christ had multiplied for those in need.

Jerusalem is one of the holiest and most-respected sites in the entire world. It is also the most frequent place visited by Christian pilgrims. Even people from as far away as *Habeş* go there on pilgrimage even though the journey takes one year by sea. I have heard from some people who visited Jerusalem this year that they talked to three Abyssinians who had left as a group of eighty people but because of the dangers on the road seventy-seven of them lost their lives and only three of them remained alive. They decided not to make a return journey but to stay in Jerusalem. It is surprising that so many Frenchmen, Germans, Czechs and Muscovites come on pilgrimage to this holy place but it is impossible to meet any pilgrims from Poland.

This volume is a selective English translation of the Polish diary of Salomea Pilsztynowa (1718 – after 1763) entitled »Echo of the Journey and Adventures of My Life« written in 1760, covering the author's residence in Istanbul and her travels through the Ottoman Balkans. The diary reads like a picaresque novel full of drama, romance, danger, and intrigue, narrating the ups and downs of the heroine's encounters with various characters populating a cosmopolitan yet tumultuous Ottoman Empire. Salomea Pilsztynowa was indeed an exceptional woman. Born in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (in today's Belarus), in 1731 she arrived in Istanbul as a young bride accompanying her physician husband, Jakub Halpir, who sought his fortune as a foreign doctor among the Istanbul elite. Although not formally educated, Salomea learned the craft of medicine from her husband and others, and soon set up her own medical practice, specializing in ophthalmology and treating both men and women. Salomea maintained her extensive household through her successful medical practice, despite various setbacks and mishaps. At the height of her medical career, Salomea served as physician to the harem of Ottoman sultan Mustafa III in 1759.

Told from the perspective of a practicing female physician, this fascinating account provides a unique glimpse into the lives of both commoners and the elite in the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century. It also attests to the extraordinary resourcefulness of an independent woman successfully navigating a man's world in a foreign land.