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## Istanbul in the *Descrizione Topografica* by Cosimo Comidas De Carbognano\*

### Abstract

Cosimo Comidas De Carbognano, was born in Istanbul from an Armenian family converted to Catholicism. He was a dragoman for the Bourbon governments of the Two Sicilies and Spain in the Ottoman Empire. His curiosity about the history of Istanbul and his conviction that the various descriptions of the city, provided by foreign travellers, were incomplete as they lacked of 'some particularities' led him to write the *Descrizione Topografica dello stato presente di Costantinopoli* (Topographic Description of the Present State of Constantinople). The book, published in 1794, is dedicated to Ferdinand IV of The Two Sicilies and it has the merit of exposing a description of the various classical monuments, both Christian and Islamic, in the city and in its surroundings in a highly contextualized manner and enriched by twenty-one illustrations.

In this paper we propose some reflections on the image of Istanbul at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, based on the information provided by De Carbognano.

### The Author, his works and life experiences

Cosimo Comidas De Carbognano (1749-1814), was the author of the *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure* and he was born in Pera in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His family was Armenian and moved to Constantinople three generations earlier, and his last name was originally Keumurdjian<sup>1</sup>. His great grandfather, Martiros, who settled down in the Constantinopolitan district of Vlanga, came from the Aghin's city, a centre located on the right bank of the river Euphrates, on the border between the Greater Armenia and Lesser Armenia<sup>2</sup>. His grandfather, blessed and martyr, Komitas<sup>3</sup> (1656-1707),

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<sup>1</sup> VINCENZO RUGGIERI, *Introduzione alla 'Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure'*, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma 1992, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> FRANCESCO L. AGAGIANIAN, *Un Martire dell'unità Santa della Chiesa di Dio. Il Beato Gomidas Keumurgian o Cosma da Carboniano, Sacerdote e Parroco Armeno (Costantinopoli 1656-1707)*, Guerra & Mirri, Roma 1929; p. 17; LÉVON B. ZÉKIYAN, *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, vol. XXI, Paris 1985, 560-561.

<sup>3</sup> Younger brother of the most famous Eremya Çelebi Keumurdjian (1637-1695), one of the greatest Armenian intellectuals of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, author of several history books. See: KEVORK PAMURKCIYAN, *Eremya Çelebi Kömürçyan*, in «Tarih ve Toplum», 54, 1988, pp. 26-27.

was a priest of the Apostolic Armenian Church, around 1697, he decided to join the communion with Rome<sup>4</sup>. This choice triggered the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople's anger, who accused him of being a troublemaker, denouncing him to the *Gran Vizir*<sup>5</sup>; he was therefore, sentenced to death, a judgement that was executed – through beheading – on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1707<sup>6</sup>.

His grandfather's martyrdom, although it occurred several decades before he was born, influenced deeply Cosimo Comidas's thought. This dramatic event, despite indirectly, shall be indeed mentioned in the same *Descrizione Topografica*<sup>7</sup>; and in 1807, on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyr's death, Cosimo Comidas will write a biography entitled: *Ristretto della vita e martirio del servo di Dio D. Cosmo De Carbognano*<sup>8</sup>.

Cosimo's father, named John (1700 ca. -1763), married to a Catholic woman of Austrian origin, moved to the Latin quarter of Pera and Italianised his last name, changed it from Keumurdjian to De Carbognano. Over there he found a job as interpreter for the Sicily's Kingdom Embassy<sup>9</sup>.

Cosimo Comidas, therefore, since his childhood, through his father, managed to get in close touch with the Italian Circle of Merchants and Aristocrats living in Istanbul. After studying in Italy, he accomplished his education in Italian Studies in the Capuchins Monks' Monastery in Galata<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Within the Armenian Christian Community, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and thanks to the work of Latin missionaries, several small groups of Armenian Catholic Christians were created, so-called *uniati*, that is united with Rome. See: GARABED AMADOUNI, *L'église arménienne et la catholicité. Précis historique et œcuménique*, T.L.A., Venezia 1998.

<sup>5</sup> By the Institution, in 1461, of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, the only Armenian Church, recognised by the Ottomans was the Apostolic one, so-called also as Orthodox Church of Armenia. The Armenian Catholics, thus, for the system of *millet*, depended on the Catholic and Civil viewpoint by the Orthodox Armenians, being often subjected to intimidations and reprisals. See: DONAT VERNIER, *Histoire du Patriarcat arménien catholique*, Delhomme et Briguet Editeurs, Lyon-Paris 1891.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Beatificationis seu declarationis martyrii servi dei der Gomidas Keumurgian seu Cosmae De Carboniano sacerdotis et parochi armeni*, «Acta Apostolicae Sedis», VII, 1915, pp. 266-268. He was declared blessed by Pope Pius XI on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1929. See: *Venerabilis dei famulus dee, Gomidas Keumurgian seu Cosma de Carboniano, presbyter, et parochus armenus, beatus renuntiat*, «Acta Apostolicae Sedis», XXI, 1929, pp. 482-485.

<sup>7</sup> COSIMO COMIDAS DE CARBOGNANO, *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure*, Giuseppe Remondini & Figli, Bassano 1794, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> ID., *Ristretto della vita e martirio del servo di Dio D. Cosmo De Carbognano. Raccolta delli autentichi scritti della cancelleria vicariale di Costantinopoli per opera di Cosimo Cav. Comidas de Carbognano*, Francesco Bourlié, Roma 1807.

<sup>9</sup> KEVORK PAMURKCIYAN, *Kozmas Komitas Kōmürçiyān*, in *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı yayını, İstanbul 1994, vol. V, p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> NURDAN KÜÇÜKHASKÖYLÜ, *Yüzyıl sonunda İstanbul sana tortami ve Kozmas Komidas Kōmürçiyān*, «Asos Journal», 9, 2015, p. 305; EUGÈNE DALEGGIO D'ALESSIO, *Le chevalier Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano petit-fils du vénérable Der-Comidas Keumurdjian*, «Échos d'Orient», XXXII, 153, 1929, p. 43.

Initially, he worked as a painter-designer, following afterwards his father's footsteps, and in 1778, through the Earl William Mauritius Ludolf<sup>11</sup>'s recommendation, was able to get in the Diplomatic Bourbon Corps in the guise of dragoman of the Kingdom of Naples at the Sublime Porte<sup>12</sup>. Around 1785, always as an official translator, he served the more important Spanish Embassy, and in the same years, Pope Pius VI assigned him the precious honour of Knight of the Order of Golden Spurs<sup>13</sup>. From 1802 to 1817, under Antoine-Joseph Ducaurroy's guidance, he was therefore an Italian and Turkish teacher in the *École des jeunes de langues à Constantinople*<sup>14</sup>.

Cosimo Comidas, in addition to the *Descrizione Topografica* and to the biography dedicated to his grandfather's martyr, was also author of a Turkish Grammar: *Primi principi della gramatica turca ad uso dei Missionari Apostolici di Costantinopoli*<sup>15</sup> – among the first Western works where the Turkish language is taken into account in a systematic way and with a 'modern' methodology<sup>16</sup> – and of a political treaty entitled: *Dissertazione sopra i tre significati del termine nazione*<sup>17</sup>.

Furthermore, he wanted to write a sequel to his description of Istanbul, focusing this time on «Costumi, la Religione e l'esatto modo di vivere»<sup>18</sup> of its inhabitants, as he announced in the first pages of the *Descrizione Topografica*<sup>19</sup>, but this work will never be written.

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<sup>11</sup> At that time, he was the Head of Neapolitan Embassy in the Ottoman Empire. See MIRELLA V. MAFRICI, *Diplomazia e commerci tra il Regno di Napoli e la Sublime Porta: Guglielmo Maurizio Ludolf (1747-1789)*, in EAD. (edited by), *Rapporti diplomatici e scambi commerciali nel Mediterraneo moderno*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2004, pp. 151-172.

<sup>12</sup> KÜÇÜKHASKÖYLÜ, *Yüzyil sonunda İstanbul sana tortami ve Kozmas Komidas Kömürçiyân*, p. 305.

<sup>13</sup> The Abbot Toderini, active in the Ottoman Capital between 1781 and 1786, in his *Letteratura turchesca*, edited in Venice in 1787, it refers to him as a Knight and Interpreter of the Iberian Crown. See Giambattista Toderini, *Letteratura turchesca dell'abate Giambattista Toderini*, vol. II, Giacomo Storti, Venezia 1787, pp. 54; 133.

<sup>14</sup> FRÉDÉRIC HITZEL, *Enfants de langue et drogmans/Dil oganlari ve tercumanlar*, Yapi Kredi Yayinlari, Istanbul 1995, p. 105.

<sup>15</sup> COSIMO COMIDAS DE CARBOGNANO, *Primi principi della gramatica turca ad uso dei missionari apostolici di Costantinopoli composti da Cosimo Comidas de Carboognano costantinopolitano*, Stamperia della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide, Roma 1794.

<sup>16</sup> See MUSA DUMAN, *Türkiye Türkçesi'nin Tarihî Kaynaklarından Carboognano'nun Grameri ve İmlâ-Telaffuz İlişkisi Bakımından Önemi* in «İlmî Araştırmalar: Dil, Edebiyat, Tarih İncelemeleri», I, 1995, pp. 95-106.

<sup>17</sup> COSIMO COMIDAS DE CARBOGNANO, *Dissertazione sopra i tre significati del termine nazione composta da Cosmo Comidas de Carboognano costantinopolitano impiegato nel servizio di sua maestà il re delle Due Sicilie in qualità di suo giovine di lingua*, s.n., 1800 ca.

<sup>18</sup> Traditions, Religion and the Exact Way of Life.

<sup>19</sup> COSIMO COMIDAS DE CARBOGNANO, *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure*, p. V.

## **The *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure***

The *Descrizione Topografica* was sent to the press in 1794<sup>20</sup> in Bassano, a territory of the former Republic of Venice. Cosimo Comidas dedicated his masterpiece to «Ferdinando IV re delle Due Sicilie»<sup>21</sup>, ranks with honours among the best travel guidebooks of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, getting successfully into the strand of literature dedicated to the travellers. This was a literary field that, at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had a great success alongside the assertion of the idea of the journey considered not only as a commercial or military expedition, but also as a cultural or merely playful itinerary<sup>22</sup>.

The work, finished writing in 1786<sup>23</sup>, had a long development, as evidence, the statement that Domenico Sestini makes in one of his letters dated back to 5<sup>th</sup> September 1778. With regard to the Burgas Aqueduct, the Florentine Abbot writes: «bensì non passerà molto tempo, che avremo un'esatto (*sic*) disegno, ed una buona descrizione, dal sig. Cosimo Comidas Di Carbognano, giovine di lingua per il Re di Napoli, con tutte le antichità di Costantinopoli, e cose turche, che sarà da tutti applaudita, avendomi mostrati i disegni da lui fatti, e che devono decorare una tal sua opera»<sup>24</sup>.

The reason that leads Cosimo Comidas to draw up his work, appeared in the indications addressed to the reader at the beginning of the text. The author reports that: «Nel giorno d'oggi veggonsi molte descrizioni di Costantinopoli, le quali benché formate dai più accreditati viaggiatori sì antichi, che moderni, prive sono tuttavia di alcune particolarità che molto aumentano, o diminuiscono il pregio di quella tanto rinomata metropoli»<sup>25</sup>. De Carbognano's work, in fact, is not the first 'travel

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<sup>20</sup> The General Holy Congregation of Popularising Faith gave its approval to the dissemination of the work, through its decree, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1793. See RUGGIERI, *Introduzione alla 'Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure'*, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> The King of the Two Sicilies Ferdinando IV.

<sup>22</sup> FRANCO CAMBI, *Il viaggio come esperienza di formazione. Tra diacronia e sincronia*, in «Studi sulla formazione», XIV, 2, 2011, pp. 149-171.

<sup>23</sup> RUGGIERI, *Introduzione alla 'Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure'*, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Although it won't be a long time, that we shall have an exact design, and a good description, by Mr. Cosimo Comidas of Carbognano, a young man of language, serving the King of Naples, with all the antiquities of Constantinople, and Turkish things, that will be applauded by all. After having shown all the drawings he made and that they must decorate one of his works. D. SESTINI, *Lettera XV. All'Illustriss. Sig. Avvocato Lodovico Coltellini Socio dell'Accademia Colombaria*, in *Lettere del signor abate Domenico Sestini scritte dalla Sicilia e dalla Turchia a diversi suoi amici in Toscana*, vol. VII, Livorno 1784, p. 149.

<sup>25</sup> Nowadays you can see many descriptions of Constantinople, that even if they are made by the most ancient and modern travellers, they lack of some peculiarities which noticeably increase or decrease the virtue of that famous Metropolis. DE CARBOGNANO, *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure*, p. V.

guidebook' focused on the Ottoman Constantinople – previously in 1561 the Pietro Gylles's<sup>26</sup> *De Topografia de Constantinopoleos e De Bosphoro Thracio* appeared in Lyon – but this description, in the author's view, was different from those handwritten by the travellers passed through hastily from Instabul, and therefore easy to lend themselves to false beliefs. Since it was written by an authentic Constantinopolitan Citizen, this work arises as the first travel guideline faithful to the truth and complete of all the worthiest sights to be seen in the city. Cosimo Comidas, in his will to represent all and in the most realistic way possible, avoids all the exotic and picturesque things, elements that usually featured the contemporary travelling literary texts. Cosimo Comidas always employs an extremely balanced descriptive register, almost aseptic. In his exposition, he tends to focus merely almost on objective elements, leaving out too personal reflections and descriptions, and giving its opinion with a careful attention typical of a diplomatic. Cosimo's constant effort was to depict the history of monuments. He seems to be almost obsessive when he attempts to rebuild the etymology of the nouns of whatever he describes, often analysing the Latin and the Turkish denomination.

The Italian language used is gaunt and essential, a little bit old-fashioned for the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and lexically approximate, but always clear and effective.

The work as a whole is made up of a text of 81 pages, divided into 13 chapters. It is enriched with a system of 26 tables, composed of: a map in the area of Sea of Marmara, a topographical map of Istanbul, and 24 drawings made by De Carbognano (21 drawings of monuments, and three illustrations of panoramic views)<sup>27</sup>.

The author in the first chapter starts providing with a general geographic description of the location of the Ottoman capital:

La gran Città di Costantinopoli [...] gradi 41 e 4 minuti di latitudine settentrionale. È fabbricata sopra una lingua di terra, formata da sette colline, la quale si estende in Mare da Ponente a Levante, e rappresentata la figura d'un triangolo ineguale, i cui due lati, che riguardano il Mezzogiorno, e il Settentrione, sono bagnati dalle acque del Mare. Verso Greco ha lo Stretto del

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<sup>26</sup> After Gylles and before De Carbognano, the Istanbul's descriptions, included in the following works, gained a great success: J. LEUNCLAVIUS, *Historiae Musulmanae Turcorum, De Monumentis Ipsorum Exscriptae, Libri XVIII*, Frankfurt am Main 1591; E. ÇELEBI KOMURCIYAN, *Istanbul tarihi*; L.F. MARSILI, *Osservazioni intorno al Bosforo tracio o vero canale di Costantinopoli*, Roma 1681; D. SESTINI, *Lettere del signor abate Domenico Sestini scritte dalla Sicilia e dalla Turchia a diversi suoi amici in Toscana*, vol. VII, Livorno 1784, pp. 4-219; ID. *Descrizione del litorale del canale di Costantinopoli, e della coltura delle vigne lungo le coste del medesimo*, in *Opuscoli del signor abate Domenico Sestini*, Firenze 1785, pp. 3-27. See also ANDREA CASTAGNINO, *Attraverso la Sublime Porta. La Turchia nei resoconti dei viaggiatori italiani del Settecento*, Soldiershop Publishing, Zanica 2015.

<sup>27</sup> These tables, although they are not outstanding, they come as far as it is possible to the real, rejecting each shape of artistic embellishment, and coming out to be therefore faithful slides of Istanbul in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. See FREDERIC HITZEL, *Enfants de langue et drogmans/Dil oglanlari ve tercumanlar*, p. 105. And, in some circumstances these slides were useful even for the discovery of some monuments; see JEAN EBERSOLT, *Constantinople Byzantine Voyageurs du Levant*, Ernest Leroux, Paris 1919, pp. 206-207.

Bosforo, per cui comunica il Mar della Propontide col Ponto Eusino; a Levante l'imboccatura dello stesso Stretto, che la separa dall'Asia; a Mezzogiorno il mentovato Mare della Propontide, che dallo Stretto di Gallipoli porta le sue acque verso l'Arcipelago; a Settentrione il Porto, che la divide da Galata; e a Ponente la Tracia, o Romania, in cui essa è collocata. Ha tredici miglia incirca di circuito, e comprendendovi il Borgo di Ejub, ne ha quasi sedici. Ma quelli che la fanno molto maggiore, le uniscono Galata, Pera, Top-hané, Kasympascià, e Has-Kioj, formandone cinque borghi<sup>28</sup>.



**Image 1.** *Topographical Map of Constantinople and of the neighbouring places (Tab. II).*

He keeps on defining the climatic and environmental characteristics of the city of Istanbul: «L'aria di Costantinopoli è pura e salubre, ma nell'inverno, e nelle temperate stagioni è soggetta a umidità e vapori [...] (che) riempiono Costantinopoli e i suoi contorni di dense nebbie, le quali rendono l'aria suscettibile alle infezioni, e la città sottoposta alle pestilenze e malattie contagiose»<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> The great city of Constantinople [...] 41 degrees and 4 minutes of northern latitude. It is built on a spit of land, made up of seven hills, which overstretches across the Sea, from the West to the East, and it is represented by the figure of an unequal triangle, where two sides, that concerns the South, and the North, are bordered with the waters of the Sea. Towards the Ellenic side, it has the Strait of Bosphorus, whereby the Sea of Propontide with the Bridge Eusino, on the East the mouth of the Strait, which separates it from Asia. On the South the mentioned Sea of Propontide, that from the Strait of Gallipoli, it leads the waters towards the archipelago: on the North the Port, that separates it from Galata. On the West the Thracia, or Romania, where it is located. It expands for about thirteen miles, and comprising the borough of Ejub it has almost 16. However, those that make it greater, bring them together to Galata, Pera, Top-hané, Kasympascià, and Has-Kioj, putting together five boroughs. DE CARBOGNANO, *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure*, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> The air of Constantinople is clean and healthy, but in winter, and in the mild seasons it is subjected to humidity and fumes [...] that fill up Constantinople and the surroundings area of dense fogs. As a result, this makes the air liable to the infections, and the city subjected to the pestilences and contagious diseases. Ivi, p. 2.

The summer is particularly mild and it does not suffer the heat, since the heat is tempered by the Etesian Winds<sup>30</sup>. While in spring and in autumn the climate «è molto incostante, e la continua variazione de' venti, che in quelle stagioni vi si sperimenta, non solamente cagiona delle piogge, ma talvolta anche della neve»<sup>31</sup>. Sudden climatic changes that according to Cosimo Comidas would produce on the Constantinopolitan population lung diseases of different seriousness. Whereas, the winter «è di tal rigidezza che il fondo del porto resta agghiacciato per molti giorni da un lido all'altro»<sup>32</sup>.

Afterwards, De Carbognano defines the crops of agricultural land surrounding the city, where «orzo, biade, erbaggi, frutta e legumi d'ogni genere»<sup>33</sup> are produced, but it also tends even to highlight that many areas, especially on the northern part of the Golden Horn, were overgrown. The author explains it with the fact that the Turks considered the field work as an activity that was not suitable for them, and consequently, they used to leave the farm activities to the ethnic groups submitted to them.

Finally, Cosimo Comidas concludes the first chapter with the description of the port, that it is «un ramo del Bosforo che si estende tra la Città di Costantinopoli e Galata da Greco a Libeccio»<sup>34</sup>. It is about four miles long, and the ships land there «con tutta la sicurezza, e comodità, trovandosi in ogni parte fondo bastante per approdarvi, e scale per prenderne, o sbarcarvi le merci»<sup>35</sup>.

In the second chapter, De Carbognano retraces briefly in few pages the age-old history of Istanbul, from the founding of Byzantium in 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to the Turkish seizure of Constantinople, occurred in 1453 by Muhammad II the Conqueror. A chronological table of all Kings of the city, from the Roman Emperor Constantine Magnus to the Ottoman Sultan, who ruled at that time, Selim III, follows his report<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> Is very changeable, and the continuous change of the winds, that in those seasons occur, not only causes some rainfalls, but sometimes even some snow. *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> Is of such stiffness that the bottom of the port is being frozen for several days from one shore to another. *Ivi*, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Barley, oat, weeds, fruits and legumes of any kind.

<sup>34</sup> Branch of Bosphorus, extending between the City of Constantinople and Galata from Grecale to Libeccio (i.e. from north-east to south-west).

<sup>35</sup> With all the safety and comfort deriving from a sufficiently deep seabed to guarantee the landing at every point, and with stairs for the loading and unloading of goods. *Ivi*, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ivi*, pp. 4-11.

TAVOLA CRONOLOGICA		XIX		XIX		XX	
Degli Imperatori di Costantinopoli da Costantino Magno fin al presente.							
Anni di G. C.		685. Giustiniano II. soprannomato <i>Rinotmeto</i> .	1034. Michele IV. detto <i>il Pagliano</i> .	1373. Andronico IV. Paleologo.	1773. Andronico IV. Paleologo.	1777. Giovanni IV. di nuovo.	1391. Manuele II. Paleologo.
330. Costantino I. detto <i>il Grande</i> .	337. Costanzo.	695. Leone I.	1041. Michele V. soprannomato <i>Celestino</i> .	1377. Giovanni IV. di nuovo.	1391. Manuele II. Paleologo.	1419. Giovanni VI. Paleologo.	1448. Costantino XI. Paleologo, soprannomato <i>Dregor</i> .
361. Giuliano detto <i>l'Apotea</i> .	369. Giovanni.	698. Tiberio II. detto <i>l'Aspario</i> .	1042. Zoè, e Teodora.	1453. Maometto II. detto <i>il Conquistatore</i> .	1481. Bajazetto II., e Korkud.	1481. Bajazetto II. di nuovo.	1518. Selim I. soprannomato <i>il Fiero</i> .
364. Valentiniano.	364. Valente.	705. Giustiniano II. di nuovo.	1042. Costantino IX. soprannomato <i>Maniace</i> .	1520. Solimano I. detto <i>il Legislatore</i> .	1566. Selim II.	1575. Amurat III.	1595. Maometto III.
378. Graziano.	379. Teodosio I. detto <i>il Grande</i> .	711. Filippico detto <i>Bardane</i> .	1054. Teodora di nuovo.	1603. Ahmetto I.	1618. Mustafa I.	1618. Osman II.	1623. Mustafa I. di nuovo.
395. Arcadio.	408. Teodosio II. detto <i>il Giovane</i> .	713. Anassazio II.	1056. Michele VI. detto <i>Stravizio</i> .	1629. Ibrahim.	1649. Maometto IV. soprannomato <i>il Delicato</i> .	1688. Solimano II.	1691. Ahmetto II.
450. Marciano.	476. Leone I. detto <i>il Grande</i> .	717. Leone III. detto <i>l'Isaurico</i> .	1059. Isacco I. Comneno.	1695. Mustafa II.	1702. Ahmetto III.	1730. Mahmud.	1756. Osman III.
476. Leone II. detto <i>il Giovane</i> .	476. Zenone detto <i>l'Agno</i> .	741. Costantino V. soprannomato <i>Copronimo</i> .	1059. Costantino X. soprannomato <i>Duca</i> .	1758. Mustafa III.	1774. Abdul-hamid.	1774. Abdul-hamid.	1789. Selim III. felicemente regnante.
491. Anastasio I. detto <i>il Silenziario</i> .	518. Giustiniano I. detto <i>il Vecchio</i> .	775. Leone IV. chiamato <i>Chazaro</i> .	1067. Eudossia.				
527. Giustiniano I.	565. Giustiniano II. detto <i>il Giovane</i> .	780. Costantino VI. e Irene Imperatrice.	1068. Romano IV. detto <i>Diogene</i> .				
578. Tiberio I.	581. Maurizio.	790. Costantino VI.	1071. Michele VII. soprannomato <i>Porfirino</i> .				
602. Foca.	610. Eraclio.	797. Irene Imperatrice di nuovo.	1078. Niceforo III. soprannomato <i>Besaniata</i> .				
641. Costantino II.	641. Costantino III. chiamato <i>Ereclio</i> .	801. Niceforo I. detto <i>Laguzo</i> .	1081. Alessio I. Comneno.				
641. Costante.	668. Costantino IV. soprannomato <i>Pogonato</i> .	811. Michele I. soprannomato <i>Rusciole</i> .	1118. Giovanni II. Comneno, detto <i>il Buono</i> .				
		813. Leone V. detto <i>l'Armeno</i> .	1143. Manuele I. Comneno.				
		820. Michele II. detto <i>il Baldo</i> .	1180. Alessio II. Comneno soprannomato <i>il Porfirigeno</i> , e Maria Imperatrice.				
		829. Teofilo.	1183. Andronico I. Comneno.				
		842. Michele III. soprannomato <i>l'Ubrico</i> , e Teodora Imperatrice.	1185. Isacco II. detto <i>l'Angelo</i> .				
		867. Basilio I. detto <i>il Macedone</i> .	1185. Alessio III. detto <i>il Tiranno</i> .				
		886. Leone VI. detto <i>il Sario</i> .	1203. Alessio IV. detto <i>il Giovane</i> , e Isacco II.				
		911. Alessandro.	1204. Alessio V. Duca, soprannomato <i>Marzafio</i> .				
		912. Costantino VII. chiamato <i>Porfirigeno</i> , e Zoè Imperatrice.	1204. Baldovino I.				
		919. Romano I. detto <i>Lacapo</i> .	1206. Enrico.				
		944. Costantino VII. di nuovo.	1216. Pietro.				
		959. Romano II. detto <i>il Giovane</i> .	1218. Roberto.				
		963. Niceforo I. soprannomato <i>Foca</i> .	1219. Baldovino II., e Giovanni III.				
		969. Giovanni I. soprannomato <i>Zimisce</i> .	1261. Michele VIII. Paleologo.				
		975. Basilio II. detto <i>il Giovane</i> , e Costantino VIII.	1281. Andronico II. Paleologo, detto <i>il Vecchio</i> .				
		1025. Costantino VIII. di nuovo.	1328. Andronico III. Paleologo, detto <i>il Giovane</i> .				
		1028. Romano III. chiamato <i>Argirapolo</i> .	1341. Giovanni IV. Paleologo, detto <i>il Buono</i> .				
			1347. Giovanni V. Cantacuzeno.				
			1355. Giovanni VI. di nuovo.				

Image 2. Chronological table of the Emperors of Constantinople from Constantine Magnus to the current one.

Putting together in such a few steps the historical events of Istanbul, Cosimo Comidas makes some conspicuous mistakes, maybe due to a certain historiography of his time. For instance, Constantine I would leave Rome and he would decide to «trasportar altrove la sede dell'Impero»<sup>37</sup>, since he «incorso in Roma nell'odio dei Gentili»<sup>38</sup> because of his detachment from Politeism<sup>39</sup>. While dealing with the events that, in 1204, led to the making of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the author shows how he had the wrong conviction that the armies of the IV Crusade had fought in Holy Land and only after coming back from there, they overthrown Alessio V Ducas; when, actually, the Crusade Expedition did not even reach the Palestinian Coasts, stopping in Constantinople<sup>40</sup>. Another oversight is that to call Michael «Imperatore di Adrianopoli»<sup>41</sup> instead of Nicea<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, this time telling the Ottoman Conquest of Constantinople, Cosimo Comidas leaves out his traditional diplomatic care. He explains that the fall of the city into the Muslim hands, is a direct divine punishment to the Greeks «una Nazione, che colle sue irreligiosità, e tirannie

<sup>37</sup> Move elsewhere the headquarters of the Empire.

<sup>38</sup> Bumped in the Gentiles' hate in Rome.

<sup>39</sup> Ivi, p. 4.

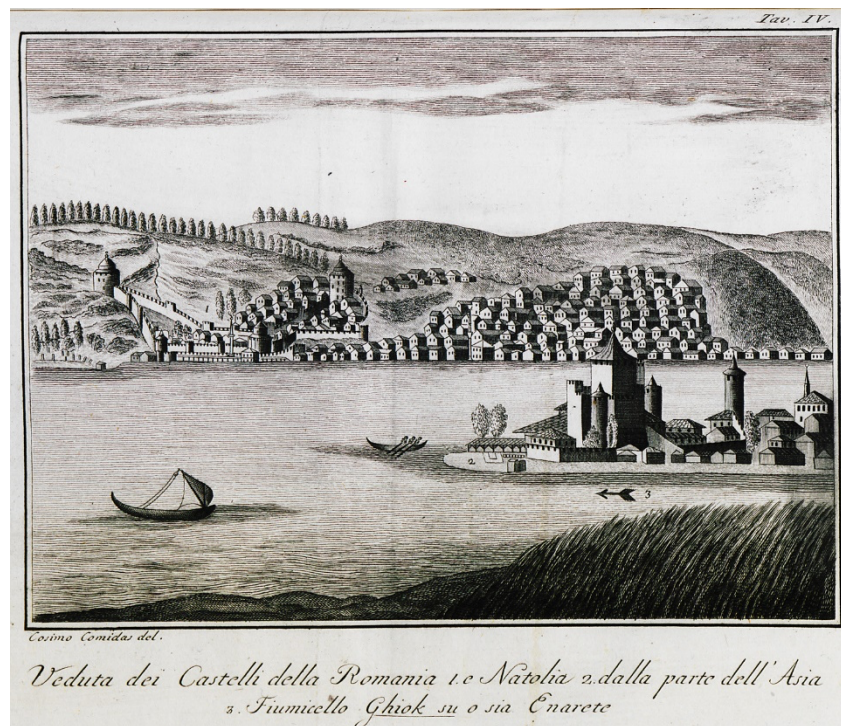
<sup>40</sup> Ivi, pp. 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> Emperor of Adrianopolis.

<sup>42</sup> Ivi, p. 6.

andava eccitando pel Mondo tante rivoluzioni»<sup>43</sup>. Hence revealing all his dislike towards the Orthodox Christians, a feeling caused by his grandfather's martyrdom.<sup>44</sup>

In the third chapter, Cosimo Comidas takes into account the city defensive system: its walls, its twenty doors, its castles and fortified places (the Castle of the Seven Towers, Seraglio Point, Leandro's Tower, Romania's Castle, Natolia's Castle, etc...). In particular, Cosimo Comidas is very careful in reporting the number and placement of the Mouths of Artillery, giving evidence of conveying to the reader even military information.<sup>45</sup>



**Image 3.** *Sight of the Romania and Natolia's Castle and on the Eastern side of Asia (Tab. IV).*

In the following chapter, Cosimo Comidas focuses on the so-called New Serail, that is the building where the Sultan lived. Regarding the Imperial Palace, after classifying the eight different doors that split up the almost four miles of walls surrounding it, describing an inscription above the front door,<sup>46</sup> known as the

<sup>43</sup> A Nation, that with its irreligion and tyrannies, stir up many revolutions all over the world. *Ibidem*.

<sup>44</sup> Cosimo Comidas associated the Orthodox Greeks with the Apostolic Armenians, as Eastern Christians that did not recognize the Pontifical Authority. It is not by chance that he charged the Greek population with the same accuse that had led Komitas Keumurdjian's death sentence.

<sup>45</sup> *Ivi*, pp. 12-18.

<sup>46</sup> De Carbognano gives his inscription at first in the original Arabic language:

هذه قلعة مباركة أسس بنيانها على تأييد من الله ورضوان، و رصص أركانها بتشييد من الأمن والأمان بأمر سلطان البرين وخاقان البحرين ظل الله في الثقلين عون الله بين الخافقين قهرمان الماء والطين فاتح قلعة قسطنطين أبو الفتح سلطان محمد خان بن سلطان مراد خان بن سلطان محمد خان خلد الله تعالى سلطانه وأعلى على فرق الفرقدين مكانه في تاريخ شهر رمضان المبارك سنة ثلاث وثمانين وثمانمائة.

And then he reports it translated into Italian: «Con ajuto di Dio, e con suo beneplacito pose i fondamenti di questo augusto castello, e unì solidamente le sue parti per sostegno della quiete e

Imperial Door; describing in details the different courtyards and areas of the sultanian's residence: the doorway, where there was the reception and the office of the Public Purse. In the first courtyard, where all people were allowed to, there were the ovens for the bakery, the Old Church of St. Irene turned into Armory, the Imperial Stables, the Camerlengo's rooms and other Government's officials. In the second courtyard where you could get in by the Health's Door, and just the Sultan could get in on horseback, there were the kitchens' places and the Divan's Great Hall. Then, beyond the Happiness Door, Cosimo Comidas depicts the interior places of Serail, where there was the accommodation of the members of the large Imperial Family, the Great Treasure, and the Chamber of Audience<sup>47</sup>. Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano concludes the chapter mentioning the Old Serail, i.e. the Sultan's residence before (that), in 1478, Mohammed II built the new Imperial Palace<sup>48</sup>.

The fifth is the richest chapter, in which Cosimo Comidas takes on the description of the Istanbul's old monuments. In a coherent respect with his feelings of a fervent catholic, he launches the discussion about the oldest Costantinopolinean vestigies, starting with the old buildings of Christian cult: St. Sophie, St. John the Evangelist, St. Irene, St. Bacchus and Sergius (a building known as the "Little Holy St. Sophie"), St. John the Baptist, St. Theodora, of the Pantocreator, St. Theodore, All Saints and St. Nicholas<sup>49</sup>. Cosimo Comidas dedicated a broad attention to these buildings for a long time, basing mainly on mostly a careful exhibition of their architectonic structures, from which it is clear a general negative thought for the Gothic style<sup>50</sup>.

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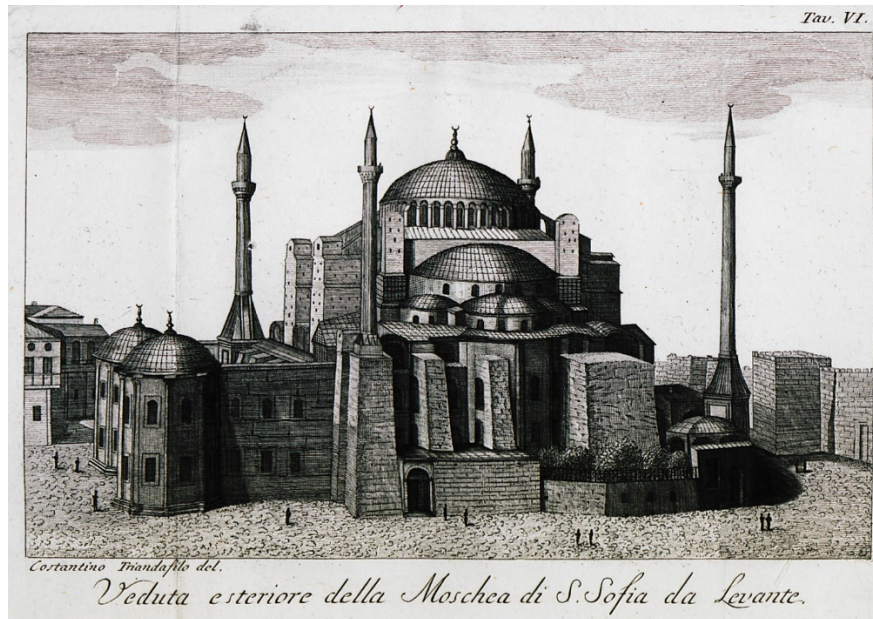
tranquillità nel mese sacro di Ramazan (sic) dell'anno 83. (1478) il Signore dei due Continenti e Mari: l'ombra di Dio presso gli uomini, e presso gli Spiriti: il favorito di Dio in mezzo all'Oriente e all'Occidente: il monarca dell'Orbe terracqueo: il conquistatore della città di Costantinopoli, cioè il vittorioso imperatore Maometto, figlio dell'imperatore Amurat, e nipote dell'imperatore Maometto; che l'Altissimo perpetui il di lui impero, e ne esalti la residenza sopra le lucide stelle del firmamento». *With God's help, and with his approval he lays the foundations of this Augustus castle, and he put together firmly for support of quiet and peacefulness, in the holy month of Ramadan in the year 83 (1478 A.D). The Lord of two continents and seas: God's shadow across men, and ghosts, God's favourite between the East and the West; the Earth's monarch, the conqueror of Constantinople's city, that is Mohammed, the triumphant, the son of the Emperor Amurat, and Emperor Mohammed's nephew. God, the Almighty may bless his empire, may glorify his residence above the bright stars of the firmament.* See. pp. 20-21.

<sup>47</sup> Ivi, pp. 19-25. The Chamber of Audience was the hall hosting the Ottoman Emperor's throne.

<sup>48</sup> Ivi, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup> Ivi, pp. 26-31. All Churches, that, with the Turkish conquest, were turned into mosques o engaged on secular uses.

<sup>50</sup> Ivi, p. 27.



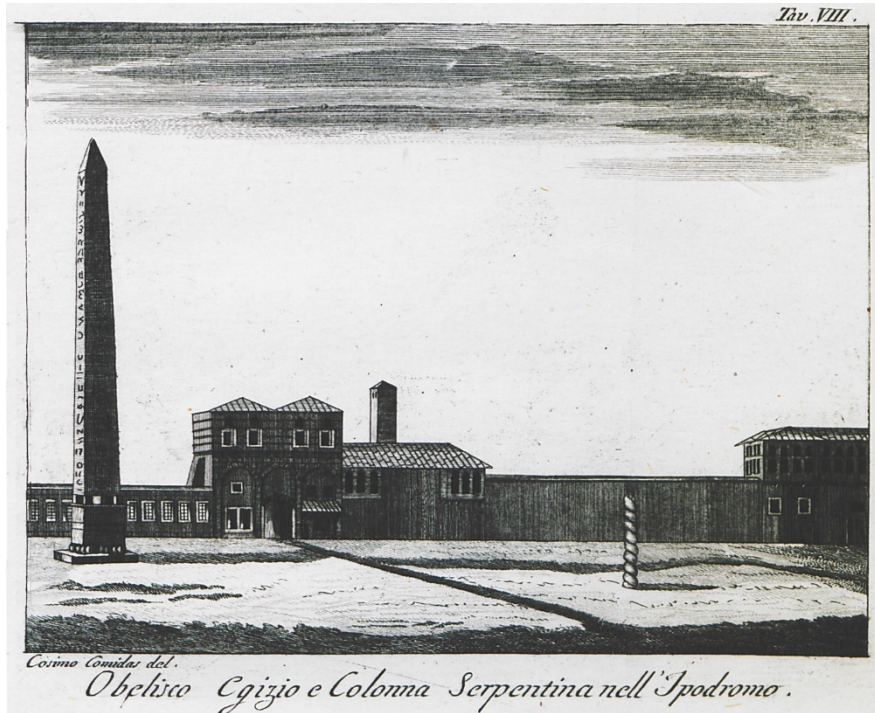
**Image 4.** External sight of the St. Sophia's Mosque (Tab. VI).

Later on, Cosimo Comidas analysed the so-called «monumenti profani»<sup>51</sup>: a pyramidal obelisk placed in the middle of the Hippodrome (racetrack), the near Serpentine's Column, an already crumbling pyramid, the remains of the Magnaura Palace, the Constantine and Marciano's monumental columns, the concrete foundation of Arcadio's Column and the Theodosius's Arc of Triumph. However, the author is interested even in the vestige of the Roman infrastructural buildings, in particular the hydraulic one. In fact, he focuses also on the Filosseno's Tank, the Basilica's tank (also known as 'Overwhelmed Building') and Valente's Acqueduct<sup>52</sup>.

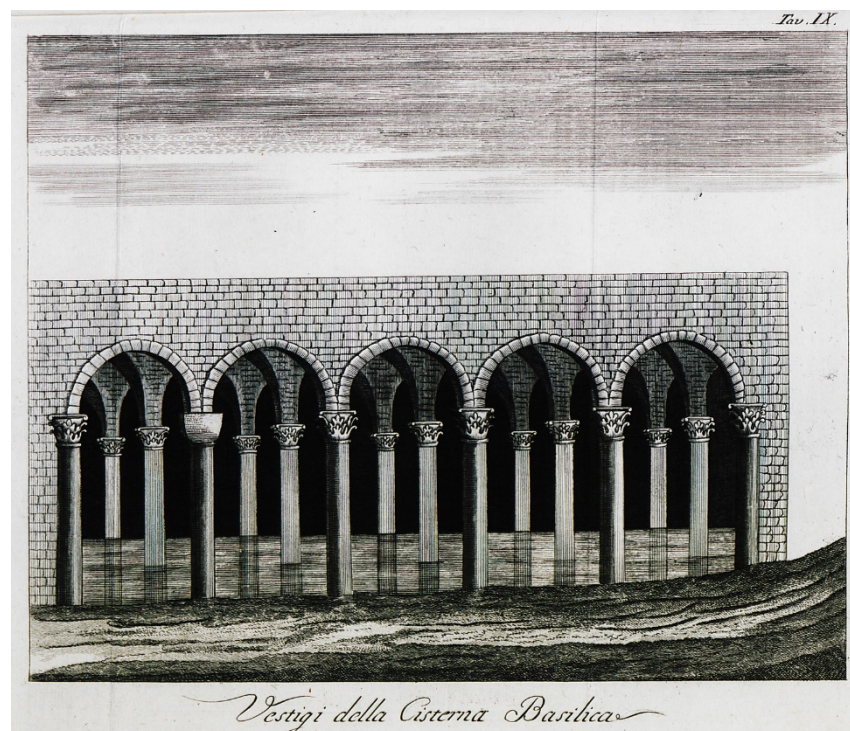
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<sup>51</sup> Secular monuments.

<sup>52</sup> Ivi, pp. 31-36.



**Image 5.** Egyptian Obelisk and Hippodrome's Serpentine Column (Tab. VIII).



**Image 6.** The vestige of the Basilica's Tank (Tab. IX).

In the description of these vestiges of the Roman world, De Carbognano loves including Greek and Latin inscriptions, but in their translation in Italian, he shows an imperfect knowledge of the two old languages. The dragoman, in fact, with regard to the two epigraphs put at the foot of the Hippodrome's obelisk, one written in Greek and the other one in Latin, both containing the same message, he translates the following: «ἡελιος ἐν τριάχοντα δύο», and the corresponding «terdenis sic victus, duobusque diebus», in «in capo a sessanta giorni»<sup>53</sup>, whereas, actually, the exact translation would be 'during thirty-two days'<sup>54</sup>. As well as in the sentence «ὁ ρωμάνου παίς», the Greek inscription put on the base of the half-ruined pyramid equally located in the area of the old Hippodrome, he reverses the meaning, that becomes «il di cui figlio è Romano», i.e. 'whose son is Roman', instead of 'Romano's son'<sup>55</sup>.

The sixth chapter is about the «Moschee principali di Costantinopoli»<sup>56</sup>, considered by Cosimo Comidas, at least among the modern buildings, those that «per la bellezza dell'architettura, e ricchezza dei marmi attraggono più d'ogni altra la curiosità de' forestieri»<sup>57</sup>. He, showing a great deference towards these holy buildings, describes, with an accuracy aimed at the figurative particular, a dozen of Islamic temples such as: Soliman's Mosque, the «Yeni Giamì», the Blue's Mosque, the «Fatih Giamì», Bayazid II's Mosque, and "Osman's light Mosque"<sup>58</sup>. The latter, is considered by the author, as the one that «che per bellezza e bizzarria dell'architettura»<sup>59</sup>, stands over any other 'modern' buildings of Muslim Cult being on the Ottoman capital<sup>60</sup>.

De Carbognano, therefore, tends to underline several times, as the nature of these places was not only connected to the religious practice, but also places did a welfare purpose. As these places had charitable associations nearby depending on them, as poorhouses and hospitals devoted to students, to the poor, to the elderly, to people suffering from mental illnesses.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Up to sixty days.

<sup>54</sup> Ivi p. 32.

<sup>55</sup> Ivi, p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> The main mosques of Constantinople.

<sup>57</sup> For the beauty of the architecture, and the richness of the marbles attract more than anything else the foreigners' curiosity. Ivi, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> Ivi, pp. 36-43.

<sup>59</sup> In its beauty and oddity of the architecture.

<sup>60</sup> Ivi, p. 42.

<sup>61</sup> Ivi, pp. 38-40.



**Image 7.** External sight of the Mosque 'Osman's light' from the North (Tab. XVII).

The following chapter is focused on the great Constantinopolitan trade. Cosimo Comidas, was well pleased and proud to tell how in Istanbul, ships from the Black and Aegean Sea, loaded with wares of any kind, docked in all seasons of the year.

Essa ritrae dal Mar Nero delle pellerie e tele di Moscovia, cristalli di Boemia, porcellane di Sassonia, orzo, frumento, caviale, burro, sale, mele, formaggio, morena, storione affumato, cera, sevo, lana, cuoj, legnami, carbone, legno di bosso, rame, ambra, schiavi della Circassia, ec., e dal Mediterraneo riceve dei datteri, pistacchi, fichi secchi, mandorle, melarancie, limoni, uva passa, riso, caffè, mastice, lino, pelo di cammello, olio, sapone, trementina, storace, gomma arabica, oppio, sena, origano, zafferano, vitriuolo romano, allume di rocca, zolfo, sal armonico, vallonea, galla, zedoaria, pepe, zucchero, indaco, nocemoscada, cinabro, minio, tartaro, ambragrigia, salsapariglia, manna, cannella, garofano, gengiovo, canfora, legno di palma, arsenico, solimato, argento vivo, verderame mirra, aloe, tamarindi, nocevomica, cocciniglia, legno di Brasile, verzino, turbiti, curcuma, belgivino, zibetto, muschio, azzurro per tingere, biacca, legno di regolizia, cassia, ermodattilo, madreperle, coralli, dente di balena, tartaruga, pece, catrame, resina, marmi, piombo, stagno, latta, ferro, acciaio, stuoje, panni, stoffe d'Aleppo, di Damasco, e di Scio, tabi d'oro, taffetà, rasi, damaschetto, tele di lino, e cotone, velluti, scialoni d'Inghilterra, e Francia, carta, aghi, specchi, lastre di vetro, piatti di majolica, orologj, oro e argento filato, lametta d'oro e d'argento, flanelle stampate per sofà e cuscini, lametta d'oro, e d'argento, carta dorata e argentata, orpello, fil di ferro e d'ottone, tela incerata, chincaglie d'Inghilterra, Francia e Venezia, fazzoletti bianchi e coloriti, zendali, tele stampate, galloni d'oro, e d'argento, forbici, schiavi di Mauritania, talleri imperiali, pezziduri di Spagna, ec. Dall'interiore dell'Asia si scaricano a Scutari con il concorso di carovane le mercatanzie di quelle regioni, consistenti in cotone, cera, seta, filo di capra d'angora, cordovani di Cesarea, mosseline d'India ec., e quindi sopra varj legni vengono spedite in Costantinopoli: e così parimente dalla parte opposta entra in città ogni sorte di bestiame, e tutto ciò, che quelle parti dell'Europa abbondantemente somministrano. In oltre

un gran numero di barche di diversa specie è impiegato a condurre giornalmente in Costantinopoli dal golfo di Nicomedia dei frutti, legumi, e altre provvisioni da bocca<sup>62</sup>.

Subsequently, Cosimo Comidas describes the Citizen Customs System based on two different Customs, the first is located in the Constantinopolitan peninsula, where the import duties were collected on the productions coming from the Imperial Provinces. The second one is located beyond the Golden Horn, in Galata, where the goods carried by the Europeans from the foreign countries to the city were checked<sup>63</sup>.

Then, the Bourbon dragoman shows us the main manufacturing factories of Istanbul, that made cotton and silk drapes, richly embroidered, weapons (sabres, bows, arrows and knives), pipes and clay pots<sup>64</sup>.

The local and foreign goods were sold in several dislocated markets in different parts of the city, carefully described by the author, who focuses on two places in particular. The first is «lesir-bazary», that is the slave market, where the individuals of both genders, mostly Christians, were exposed to the public and sold to the highest bidder. As regards this, Cosimo Comidas tells us that, on the Sultan Mustafà III's decision, by a few decades, for «alcuni inconvenienti»<sup>65</sup>, the western merchants were excluded from this market, so preventing the public redemption of Christian slaves<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> It imports from the Black Sea some leathers and canvasses from Muscovy, Bohemian crystals, Saxony chinaware, barley, wheat, caviar, butter, salt, apples, cheese, moraine, baked sturgeon, wax, tallow, wool, hides, timber, coal, boxwood, copper, amber and slaves from Cherkessia. From the Mediterranean they got dates, pistachios, dried figs, almonds, oranges, lemons, dried grapes, rice, coffee, mastic, linen, camel hair, oil, soap, turpentine, storax, Arabic gum, opium, *sena*, oregano, saffron, Roman vitriol, rock alum, sulphur, harmonic salt, Valonia, gall, turmeric *Zedoaria*, pepper, sugar, indigo, nutmeg, cinnabar, minium, tartar, ambergris, *Smilax aspera*, *manna* and cinnamon, carnation, ginger. In addition, camphor, palm wood, arsenic, *solimato*, quicksilver, Verdigris, myrrh, aloe, tamarind, *Nux Vomica*, cochineal, Brazil wood, *Verzino*, *turbiti*, turmeric, *Stirax Benzoin's* balm, civet and musk, blue for dyeing, white lead, Licorice wood, *Hèrmodactyl*, mother of pearls, corals, whale tooth, turtle, pitch and tar, resin, marbles, lead, tin, iron, steel, wipes, Aleppo's fabrics, Damask's fabrics, Chios' fabrics, Golden Tabi, taffeta, satins, damask, linen and cotton fabrics, velvets and profiles from England and France. Then paper, needles and mirrors, glass sheets, Majolica plates, watches, gold and silver wire, gold and silver blade, printed flannels for coaches and cushions, golden and silver blade, golden and silver paper, ornament, iron and brass wire, waxed canvas. English, Venitian and French peddlers, white and colourful napkins, sandalwood, printed canvas, golden and silver gallons, scissors, Mauritian slaves, Imperial thalers and Spanish hard metals. From the inner Asia the goods of those regions are unloaded in Scutari thanks to caravans. The goods consist of cotton, wax, silk, Angora's goat wire, Cesarea's cordovans, Indian mousselines, etc. Then, these are shipped to Constantinople upon different vessels: so, likewise, from the opposite side, any kind of cattle gets in the city, and anything those European areas can largely provide. Furthermore, a great amount of different ships is engaged in carrying daily to Constantinople from the Nicomedia's Gulf some fruits and legumes, and other foods. Ivi, pp. 44-45.

<sup>63</sup> Ivi, p. 45.

<sup>64</sup> Ivi, pp. 45-46.

<sup>65</sup> Some inconveniences.

<sup>66</sup> Ivi, pp. 46-47.

De Carbognano dwells on the other centre of trading that is the «Gran Bezesten», the largest market of the Empire: «gran sala di figura quadrata con alte e grosse mura, formate di solida pietra»<sup>67</sup>, and so strong to the fires that constantly threatened the ottoman capital. Inside there were thousands of shops and boutiques, where the trade was mainly based on «gioje, stoffe d'Indie, ed altre merci preziose»<sup>68</sup>. Besides, Cosimo Comidas points out that the trade within the «Gran Bezesten» was an activity monopolised by the Turks, and «i cristiani e gli ebrei non vi traggono altro profitto, che quello di senseria»<sup>69</sup>.

There were other places where the main protagonists were especially the Latin and Greek merchants, as in the so-called «Bezesten degli Sciotti», having this name because it is crowded by tradesmen coming from Chios' island<sup>70</sup>. Finally, the chapter ends with the list of the weights, Ottoman measures and coinage, with their respective equivalence ratios<sup>71</sup>.

In the eighth chapter, Cosimo Comidas bases his dissertation on the private housing, the streets and the Istanbul's baths. The houses, quantified in the number of 88.185, were largely wooden, and by law they could not overcome the height of 26 feet. The houses usually consisted of two floors, with the roof covered in tiles. According to the author «non hanno nell'esterno molta apparenza»<sup>72</sup>, but the inward was well-groomed, the ceiling was generally painted and embellished with arabesques, and the furniture was richly made up of «stuoje, tappeti, specchi, ed alcune panche, o piuttosto bassi canapè ricoperti di drappi, e cuscini di stoffa o di velluto [...]. Nelle case però dei cristiani, e particolarmente dei cattolici, oltre agli accennati mobili, si vedono anche delle sedie all'uso europeo»<sup>73</sup>.

On the other hand, the streets were not very well-groomed and they were defined as «scoscese [...], anguste, mal selciate, e impraticabili, perché piene di fango»<sup>74</sup> where if you want to walk you need to move along a step on the side of roads, serving as pavement<sup>75</sup>. Instead, the public baths were flawless. There were one-hundred and thirty well-distributed on the city, they were made of stone, painted outside with red colour and covered with one or more domes. Inside them

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<sup>67</sup> A great square-shaped hall with high and large walls, made up of strong stone.

<sup>68</sup> Jewels, Indian cloths and other precious goods.

<sup>69</sup> The Christians and the Jews did not draw any profit, except for brokerage. Ivi, p. 47.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>71</sup> Ivi, pp. 48-50.

<sup>72</sup> These did not have a good outward appearance.

<sup>73</sup> Mats, rugs, mirrors, and some benches, or rather low canopy covered with cloths, and cloth or velvet pillows [...]. While in the Christians' houses, and in particular, in the Catholic ones, besides the mentioned furniture some European style chairs might be seen.

<sup>74</sup> Steep [...], narrow, poorly cobbled, and impracticable, since they are heavily full of mud.

<sup>75</sup> Ivi, p. 51.

there was no shortage of paved and well-heated rooms and there were places where, after having a bath, you could drink a cup of coffee or smoke a pipe<sup>76</sup>.

The ninth chapter, is reserved to the description of city of Galata, that beyond the Golden Horn «giace sul pendio d'una collina a riscontro della città di Costantinopoli»<sup>77</sup>. «Questa città sotto gl'imperatori cristiani era il terzodecimo rione di Costantinopoli, ma nel 1261 i greci avendo discacciati i latini da quella metropoli, fu data in dono ai genovesi che collegati si erano con loro»<sup>78</sup>.

Galata is surrounded by city walls, about four miles long, interspersed with twelve doors, and different towers, including the so-called Christ's Tower, located on the highest point of Galata and from the top you can admire all Constantinople and its countryside<sup>79</sup>. Within Galata, De Carbognano considers worthy of description: the district of «negozianti francesi»<sup>80</sup>; the Old Church of St. George<sup>81</sup>; the Church of Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, containing a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that according to the tradition it would be portrayed by Luke, the Evangelist; the «Arab Giamì»; and the Church of St. Benedict<sup>82</sup>.

The Dragoman tells us that in Galata there are two churches of Greek-Orthodox ritual and one of the «armeni scismatici»<sup>83</sup>, but these are quickly mentioned as «meritare qualche particolare attenzione»<sup>84</sup>; a judgement perhaps influenced by his not too hidden intolerance towards the believers of such Christian Confessions, a feeling connected to his well-known family events<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>76</sup> Ivi, pp. 51-52.

<sup>77</sup> It lies on the slope of a hillside in front of the city of Constantinople.

<sup>78</sup> This city under the regime of the Christian Emperors was the thirteenth of the district of Constantinople, but in 1261, the Greeks chased away the Latins from that metropolis and Galata was given to the Genoese who were allied with them. Ivi, p. 51.

<sup>79</sup> Ivi, p. 52-54.

<sup>80</sup> French merchants.

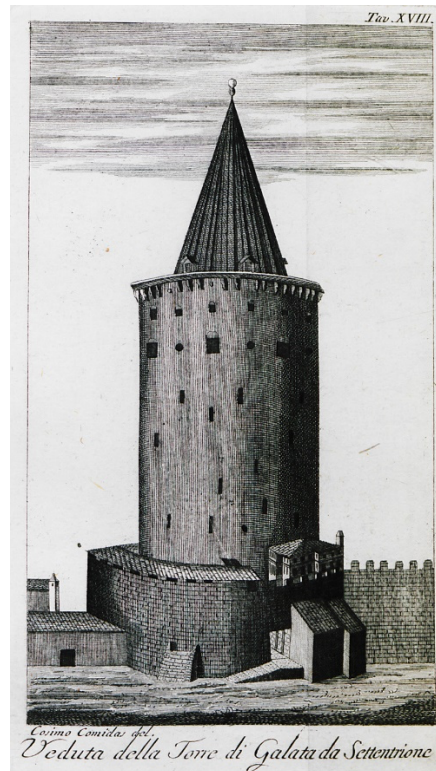
<sup>81</sup> At that time, it was the Apostolic Vicar of Constantinople's residence; concerning this the author, after describing the holy building, he focuses on the «Catalogo de' Vicarj di Costantinopli dal 1653 fin' al presente» (The Apostolic Vicars of Constantinople's Catalogue from 1653 until now). Ivi, pp. 57-58.

<sup>82</sup> Ivi, pp. 54-61.

<sup>83</sup> *Schismatic Armenians*. He uses this definition for the followers of the Apostolic Armenian Church, contrasting them with the *uniati* compatriots, that is the Armenians, who as well as him, had accepted the union with the Roman Catholicism. See note 4.

<sup>84</sup> Unworthy of any particular attention.

<sup>85</sup> Ivi, p. 62.



**Image 7.** Sight of the Galata's Tower from the North (Tab. XVIII).

The tenth chapter, describes the Village of Pera, whose name often overlaps with the Galata's one, pointing out the whole peninsula on the north of the Golden Horn, but that according to the author designates only the suburb that develops behind the city of Galata. Cosimo Comidas, states that from Pera you can see a beautiful panorama, including «le campagne di Scutari, il Gran Serraglio e la città di Costantinopoli»<sup>86</sup>, and among its streets you may find the Palaces of Representation «dei Ministri delle potenze cristiane»<sup>87</sup>. Besides, De Carbognano points out that in Pera there is the Church of St. Louis; the royal chapel of France, located near the French Ambassador's Palace; Church of St. Mary Draperis, situated not far from the Republic of Venice's Embassy; the Parochial Church, with its adjacent convent; the Church of St. Anthony of Padua; the Church of Trinitrian Descalced Fathers. In addition, the nearby Palaces of the Official Diplomats of England and Prussia; the «Galata Sarajy», a school where many young Turks were educated and assigned among the lines of the Ottoman Government Machine.<sup>88</sup> Finally, De Carbognano focuses on the «Campo de' morti»<sup>89</sup>, a Graveyard where the Christian bodies of any religious confession were buried, among these both «armeni acatolici»<sup>90</sup> and those in communion with Rome. The description of this field provides Cosimo Comidas

<sup>86</sup> Scutari's countryside, the Great Serail and the city of Constantinople.

<sup>87</sup> Of Ministers of the Christian powers. Ivi, pp. 62-63.

<sup>88</sup> Ivi, pp. 63-67.

<sup>89</sup> Field of the Deads.

<sup>90</sup> Non-Catholic Armenians.

with the chance to recall his grandfather's martyrdom, «servo di Dio D. Cosimo o sia Comidas De Carbognano, sacerdote di signoril famiglia e santa ed esemplare vita»<sup>91</sup>, he was buried over there. The dragoman of the Spanish Kingdom tells us how his grave – smartly designed with marble and embellished with a beautiful inscription in Armenian language – was «in ogni tempo»<sup>92</sup> object of the visit from «un gran numero di divoti»<sup>93</sup>.

In the following chapter, Cosimo Comidas, speaks about the small villages with a 'military' inclination of «Top-hane», where there was the «Quartiere degli artiglieri»<sup>94</sup> and the foundry of cannons, and of the «Kasym-pascia», nearby there were the «granaj pubblici»<sup>95</sup> and the Imperial Arsenal, where the ships of the fleet of the «Capitan Pascià»<sup>96</sup> were built up.



**Image 8.** Foundry of cannons (Tab. XX).

Finally, in the last two chapters (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>), De Carbognano's description focuses on the coast beyond the Bosphorus and islets of the Strait (Proti, Burgazada<sup>97</sup>, Chalki, Princes). The author outlines in these last pages a «vaghissimo e piacevole»<sup>98</sup> channel, rich «d'ogni specie di conchiglie, e pesci, massime di Glavi, palamidi, alici, sgombri, e di un'altra sorta di pesce chiamato nel linguaggio del paese

<sup>91</sup> Servant of God, D. Cosimo or Comidas de Carbognano, a priest of a noble family, and exemplary life.

<sup>92</sup> At any time.

<sup>93</sup> A large number of devotes.

<sup>94</sup> Military District of Artillery.

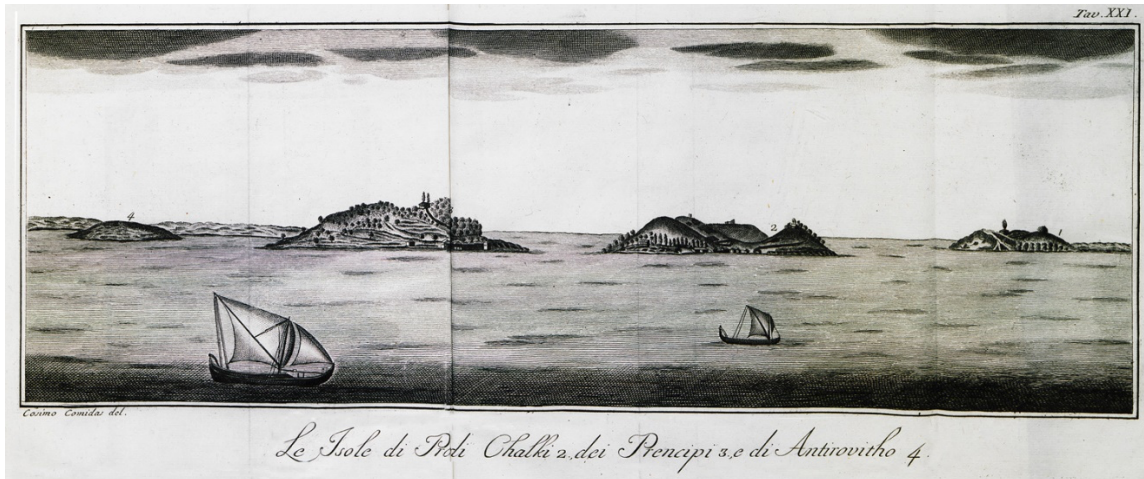
<sup>95</sup> Public Granaries.

<sup>96</sup> *Kapudan Pasha*, the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy.

<sup>97</sup> Called by the author with its Greek name: Antigoni.

<sup>98</sup> Vast and pleasant.

*ulufer*»<sup>99</sup>. While around Scutari, the landscape is characterised by «verdeggianti colline piantate di viti»<sup>100</sup> that surrounds the borough of Chalcedon – famous for the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council of the Christianity – and twenty-six small villages.



**Image 9.** The islands of Prodi, Chalki, Princes and Burgazada (Tab. XXI).

## The conclusions

In conclusion, we may assert that the *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Costantinopoli arricchita di figure* is a precious book, in which De Carbognano never overflows into personal excesses. Indeed, he remains within the borders of a travel guidebook, that does not aim at the literary entertainment, but at a concrete description of the urban, military and socio-economic Constantinopolitan reality. The result is a *fresco*, that with such a great balance and care for the details, draws a faithful and complete picture of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul.

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<sup>99</sup> In any kind of shells and fish: *massime di Glavi*, bonito (*sarda sarda*), anchovies; mackerels, and another kind of fish called, in the language of the country, *ulufer*.

<sup>100</sup> Green hills planted with vines.