Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso:

Her Passion For Music and Politics

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Abstract

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For centuries, famous musicians have been linked with prominent noblemen and patrons. This dissertation describes one such noble: Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso (1808–1871). Princess Cristina lived a technicolor life: she was a fairy tale princess, an unhappy child and wife, an Italian patriot who lived between France and Italy, one prosecuted by the Austrian authorities, and the hostess of a glamorous salon in Paris. She suffered confiscation and reclusion of her property. She led a semi- permanent exile as a young woman. Her travels took her to Greece, Jerusalem, Syria, Asia Minor, and the Ottoman Empire. Finally, she returned to Italy for her final illness and death.

Her accomplishments were many. Cristina devoted her life to politics, the arts, literature, Italian unification, and, last but not least, music. She organized a hospital even before Florence Nightingale. Her Paris salon became an important social platform. There, visitors discussed politics, literature, and the arts, including music. She had a very close relationship with Franz Liszt.

This dissertation reviews the life of Princess Cristina, with a focus on the *Hexameron* composition she conceived of, which involved the famous composers of her day: Franz Liszt, Frédéric Chopin, Sigismond Thalberg, Johann Peter Pixis, Henri Herz, and Carl Czerny. It also discusses the piano duel between Liszt and Thalberg. Both were part of fundraising efforts to aid her cause. Other chapters delve more deeply into other aspects of her life, including her efforts for Italian reunification, her Paris salon, and her five years in the Ottoman Empire.

Table of Contents

Page

List of Figures vii

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: The Life of Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso 4
- Early Life 5
- The Political Environment of the Time 9
- Marriage 12
- Efforts for Italian Reunification 16
- The Paris Salon 21
- A Daughter, a Return to Locate, and Research and Writing 24
- Hospital Organizer in Rome 33
- Sojourn to the East 36
- Final Years 41

Chapter 2: Cristina's Revolutionary Activities for the Independence and Unification of Italy 48

Chapter 3: The Paris Salon of Princess Cristina Belgiojoso 64

Chapter 4: The Charity Concert of March 31, 1837 76
- Composers 81
  - Franz Liszt (1811-1866) 81
  - Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) 81
  - Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871) 83
  - Johann Peter Pixis (1788-1874) 83
  - Henri Herz (1803-1888) 84
  - Carl Czerny (1791-1857) 84
- The Parts of *Hexameron* 85

1. Introduction: *Extrememement lent* (Liszt) 85
2. Tema: *Allegro marziale* (transcribed by Liszt) 86
3. Variation I: *Ben marcato* (Thalberg) 87
4. Variation II: *Moderato* (Liszt) 88
5. Variation III: *di bravura* (Pixis) - *Ritornello* (Liszt) 89
6. Variation IV: *Legato e grazioso* (Herz) 90
7. Variation V: *Vivo e brillante* (Czerny) - *Fuocoso molto energico; Lento quasi recitativo* (Liszt) 91
8. Variation VI: *Largo* (Chopin) - *Coda* (Liszt) 93
9. Finale: *Molto vivace quasi prestissimo* (Liszt) 96

Chapter 5: Piano Duel Between Liszt and Thalberg 97

Chapter 6: Princess Cristina's Five Years in the Ottoman Empire 110

Epilogue: Summary Thoughts 125

Bibliography 129

Vita 145

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

1.1. Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso 4
1.2. A Painting of Princess Cristina by Her Drawing Teacher, Ernesta Bisi 8
1.3. Prince Emilio di Belgiojoso 13
1.4. Alfred de Musset's Caricature of Cristina 22
1.5. Gaetano Stelzi 28
1.6. Cristina in 1868. 45
1.7. Cristina's Tomb at Locate 46
4.1. *Suoni la tromba e intrepido* in Act II of *I puritani* 78
4.2. Introduction by Liszt, Selection 1 85
4.3. Introduction by Liszt, Selection 2 86
4.4. Tema by Liszt 87
4.5. Variation 1 by Thalberg 88
4.6. Variation 2 by Liszt, Selection 1 88
4.7. Variation 2 by Liszt, Selection 2 89
4.8. Variation 3 by Pixis 89
4.9. Ritornello (Interlude I) by Liszt 90
4.10. Variation 4 by Herz 91
4.11. Variation 5 by Czerny and Beginning of Interlude II by Liszt 92
4.12. Interlude II by Liszt 93
4.13. Variation 6 by Chopin 94
4.14. Chopin Prelude Op. 28 No. 9 in E Major 94
4.15. Interlude III by Liszt 95
4.16. Finale by Liszt 96
5.1. Composers of the Period 98

5.2. Liszt and Thalberg 99
5.3. Beginning of Grand Fantasy on Pacini's “Niobe” by Liszt 103
5.4. Grand Fantasy on Pacini's “Niobe” by Liszt, Selection 2 104
5.5. Grand Fantasy on Pacini's “Niobe” by Liszt, Selection 3 104
5.6. “Reminiscences de Roberts le Diable” by Liszt 105
5.7. Beginning of Moses Fantasy by Thalberg 106
5.8. Moses Fantasy by Thalberg, Selection 2 107
5.9. Moses Fantasy by Thalberg, Selection 3 107
5.10. Liszt vs Thalberg: An Historical Re-enactment of Their Musical “Duel” of 1837, Performed by Steven Mayer, 1993 109

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INTRODUCTION

It all began as in a fairy tale. As a friend, Caroline Jaubert, commented, "Princess Cristina Trivulzio possessed all the gifts that one attributes to the child whose cradle was surrounded by good fairies."[1] Born into the ancient Lombardy family of Trivulzio, she was blessed with unusual beauty, a voice as rich in speech as in song, and sharp intelligence. Equally talented at the easel and the keyboard, naturally elegant, courageous, and idealistic, Princess Cristina, as her contemporaries agreed, had the rare gift of overwhelming charm. Her biting wit and stubborn integrity were mitigated by generosity, compassion, and the love of laughter. But, like the princess of the tale, she was also cursed by the wicked fairy. Chronic sickness and multiple misfortunes were eventually to deny her the happiness that her many gifts should have assured.

Even before she was twelve years old, Cristina Trivulzio was conscious of the vague but unsettling social unrest that surrounded her. Patriotic aspirations already haunted her young brain. The princess received an education which, in its variety of subject and thoroughness of detail, would compare favorably with the curriculum of the most noted women's colleges of our own day. She immersed herself in studying the periods of Classicism and Romanticism. Both eras found, in her temperamental peculiarities, a fertile soil. But her strong leaning towards the practical application of

[1] Caroline Jaubert, *Souvenirs* (Paris: Hetzel, 1881), 181.

politics was counterbalanced by her romantic conception of the purely ethical side of public affairs.

Thanks largely to her contacts in France, some of her idealism prevailed. Her French friends were kinder to her and held a more favorable view of her than did her Italian compatriots. She became an "adopted" daughter of France, writing in French and living her most dynamic years in Paris. Her salon of the 1830s is celebrated in most French studies of salon life under Louis-Philippe. Her beauty and her originality have been praised in numerous memoirs of the period.

Remarkably, Cristina crossed deserts and mountains on horseback during a year's journey to the Holy Land, and during the five years of her second exile period in Turkey she wrote voluminously. When she died in 1871, she was a serene grandmother and the proud citizen of the united Italy she had struggled and fought to create.

At the beginning, Princess Cristina puzzled her contemporaries. For example, she dressed in full mourning even though she was accompanied by her husband. This theatrical way of drawing attention to herself occurred many times during the first half of Cristina's life. Some people called her "a character full of contradictions, vagaries and extravagances."[2] She has been accused of having stolen Liszt from Marie d'Agoult and Alfred de Musset from George Sand. Therefore, her French and Italian contemporaries criticized her eccentricities and expressions but admired her ardent patriotism. Fortunately, some judged her by more enlightened criteria. Henry James referred to Princess Cristina when he said that "the great political or social agitator is most often a

[2] Charles Neilson Gattey, *A Bird of Curious Plumage* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1971), xiii.

bird of curious plumage, all of whose feathers, even the queerest, playing their part in his flight."[3]

There were probably only two men whom Cristina ever really loved: her husband, Prince Emilio, and her young secretary, Gaetano Stelzi. Amazingly, she stole Gaetano's body from its grave, embalmed it, and kept it in the closet of her villa. Its discovery, during one of her absences, sparked a scandal that, along with the political situation, forced her to leave Europe for Asia Minor.

Recently, the letters and documents in the Belgiojoso family archives have become accessible, and the scholars who have studied these primary sources have shown how they present a new light on various aspects of her life. Through archival views, Princess Cristina emerged as a remarkably modern woman, convinced of her rights, safe in her dignity, capable of utilizing her own talents, and fiercely independent in mind and body. Her beauty and captivating charm still excite our imagination.

This dissertation is organized into six chapters and an epilogue:

1. The Life of Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso
2. Cristina's Revolutionary Activities for the Independence and Unification of Italy
3. The Paris Salon of Princess Cristina Belgiojoso
4. The Charity Concert of March 31, 1837
5. Piano Duel Between Liszt and Thalberg
6. Princess Cristina's Five Years in the Ottoman Empire
7. Epilogue: Summary Thoughts

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[3] Henry James, *William Wetmore Story and His Friends: From Letters, Diaries and Recollections* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1903), 163.

Chapter 1:

THE LIFE OF PRINCESS CRISTINA TRIVULZIO DI BELGIOJOSO

Figure 1.1. Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso.

In Paris of the 1830s, the name Cristina Belgiojoso (Figure 1.1) made hearts quicken and tongues wag. An Italian noble by birth and an exile, her meteoric success in a city surfeited with shooting stars would have been unusual for a man; for a woman it was unique. Many startling figures swept across the romantic horizon. Most of them faded quickly. Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, though deliberately obscured in later years, was so exceptional, yet so representative of her time, that to recreate her is to recapture the extraordinary period in which she lived. For the men of her day and above all the leading artists who frequented her brilliant salon, such as Balzac, Heine, Musset, and Liszt, she was an obsession and a cult. They wrote about her as they wrote of no other woman. The winter starkness of her beauty, with gleaming black hair framing a

perfect oval of phantasmal whiteness, huge black eyes, and a willowy body as delicate as her long tapered finger, stunned everyone who saw her. Women, often as effusively as men, spoke of her captivating appearance, her dramatic taste for white gowns and jet beads, the strange eloquence of her silent dancer-like immobility when she listened to music. Marie d'Agoult, jealous of Liszt's interest in her and envious of her position, blamed her in letters and memoirs by speaking of her frequently and bitterly. One remark is significant: "Never did any woman equal Princess Cristina in her exercise of the art of *effect*."[4]

Early Life

Princess Cristina Trivulzio was born in Milan on June 28, 1808, in the palace of her patrician father. In the same year in Italy, Mazzini, Garibaldi, the Count of Cavour, and many other key players of the Italian revolution and unification movement, *Risorgimento* ("Rise, Again!"), were born. In that time, Milan was located in the Kingdom of Italy, but was under the control of the France of Napoleon. The Trivulzio family was noble and had lived in the center of the city since the twelfth century. She was christened in the Church of Sant'Alessandro by the name of Maria Cristina Beatrice Teresa Barbara Leopolda Clotilde Melchiora Camilla Giulia Margherita Laura—a mouthful of names, to say the least! The Trivulzio home is still visible today, with the family crest clearly visible above a big wooden gate.

Cristina was the daughter of Gerolamo Trivulzio and Vittoria Gherardini. Her father was very shy, but passionate about books and coins. Her grandfather and great-

[4] Marie d'Agoult, *Memoirs: Souvenirs et Journaux I/II*, Présentation et Notes de Charles F. Dupêchez (Paris: Mercure de France, 1990).

grandfather were obsessive collectors, and their books are now in the famous Library Trivulziana in the Sforzesco castle. Even her mother, Vittoria Gherardini, came from an ancient family. Today, around Milan, there are still their "country houses," now converted into government offices, universities, museums, and libraries.

Cristina's father died early and suddenly in 1812. Cristina was only four years old and the sole heir, with her mother as legal tutor until her age of maturity. Cristina's mother, who was a very attractive twenty-one-year-old widow, did not mourn her husband for long. Only a year later, she married the Marchese Alessandro Visconti d'Aragona, one of the leaders of the Liberal party in Lombardy. They gave birth to three girls and a boy, to whom Cristina remained attached for her entire life.

Little is known of Cristina's childhood, save for a letter she wrote in 1842. The letter contradicts assertions made by a phrenology practitioner—one who judges mental faculties and character traits based on the configurations of the skull— whom she had consulted at the time, as was the fashion then:

> You say that I must have been very gay and lively as a child, but that I am now subject to fits of depression.
>
> The contrary is true. I was a serious and quiet girl. I don't know from where the gay and equable nature which I now enjoy comes; what has happened in my life should have made me just the opposite. The more I consider the matter, the more grateful I am to God.
>
> You also say that I must have been full of ambition and have striven to attract attention.
>
> In fact I was so timid that I would often burst into tears in my mother's drawing-room when anybody tried to talk to me. According to you, I must have been very fond of admiring myself in the mirror. This is quite wrong. As a girl I decided that I was positively ugly and I still think so. Far from gaining any pleasure at regarding my reflection, I was often punished when young because I preferred old clothes to new ones and would put them on back to front rather than have to look in the mirror.
>
> I must have been completely unselfish. Immediately after the birth of my first

> half-brother, I was told to amuse him and my hours of recreation would be spent without a murmur of protest on my part pushing his small perambulator and playing with him. I never read any novels before my marriage except those of Miss Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849).
>
> As far back as I can remember, I have always detested anything to do with war and the shedding of blood. You say that from an early age I kept aloof from other children. But I never met any children apart from my half-brother.[5]

As appears by this letter, people were biased against Cristina because of her beauty, wealthy home environment, and high level of education. However, as Cristina herself wrote, she was a shy, quiet, and even unconfident girl. Interestingly, when she was young, she had an intense dislike of war and blood, yet she devoted her life to Italian unification and also spent time organizing hospitals for war victims.

Her education was probably not so different from that of any girl of her elite background, but the grim events of her early years gave her a sense of history and politics, even if her formal training in those areas was rudimentary. Her stepfather's scientific interests must have been communicated to her, for she became extremely knowledgeable in medicine, economics, and agronomy. Her mother's musicianship and the many soirées at home with Rossini and Bellini surely enhanced her training in piano and voice.

Thanks to her stepfather, as a child, Cristina studied languages, drawing, painting, embroidery, literature, and music. This was typical of all girls in high-society circles. Her teacher of drawing was Ernesta Bisi, a dear friend of her mother (Figure 1.2). Despite the age difference, their relationship became an emotionally close one.

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[5] Cristina Belgiojoso, February 14, 1842, the Belgiojoso Family Papers, written from Locate, now in the Belgiojoso family archives in Merate.

Figure 1.2. A painting of Princess Cristina by her drawing teacher, Ernesta Bisi.

Ernesta Bisi was an esteemed portraitist of an entire generation of Lombardy nobility and did much more than teach Cristina graphic arts. She was for a long time committed to the *Carbonari* ("Charcoal burners") movement in early nineteenth-century Italy, a secret society advocating liberal and patriotic ideas. The *Carbonari* originated in the Middle Ages as a mutual assistance society of German charcoal burners.[6] As a secret society that was often targeted for persecution, the *Carbonari* operated largely in secret, and hence much of the work that has been done on the origins of the *Carbonari* depends upon a very small selection of contemporary documents. These sources reveal that the fundamental teachings of the society were gradually communicated to the members, the so-called "good cousin," grade by grade. The initiation services for the first grade and the

[6] R. John Rath, "The *Carbonari*: Their Origins, Initiation Rites, and Aims," *American Historical Review* 29 (1964), 353.

other meetings of the apprentices were held in a meeting place called the *baracca*, or hut. The space surrounding it was referred to as the forest, and the interior of the lodge, the *vendita,* or shop in which the *Carbonari* labored.[7] It is obvious, therefore, that the *Carbonari* were not a tightly knit group with a single program. Although the little documentary evidence available is too contradictory to enable historians to make definitive judgments, it tends to support the conjecture that, apart from their strong nationalism, the *Carbonari* had varying political views ranging from those generally held by early nineteenth-century moderate liberals to those of the ultra radicals of the French Revolution.

Their influence prepared the way for the *Risorgimento* movement that resulted in Italian unification in 1861. Bisi may well have been Cristina's first political mentor. She was certainly Cristina's first and long-lasting confidante. Their correspondence provides an intimate view of Cristina's adolescence and marriage. In Bisi, Cristina found the special affection and understanding so often characteristic of teacher-pupil relationships. It may well have been this bond that formed Cristina's reverence for friendship throughout her life.

The Political Environment of the Time

In 1814, after the fall of Napoleon and the French Empire, the Austrians returned to the territory of Italy. Because of this, the phenomenon called *Carboneria* began, and the people struggled to achieve freedom and to unite Italy. In 1819, the first arrests were issued to many Italian people whose names remain famous even today: Silvio Pellico,

[7] Ibid.

Federico Confalonieri, and Piero Maroncelli, among others. Even Cristina's stepfather was arrested.

But the forces set free by the French Revolution could not be destroyed, and the opposition-driven underground led to the birth of secret societies. The most active of these was the *Federazione*. Its goal was to free Italy from all foreign domination and to form a confederation with an Italian prince as its titular head. The Marchesa d'Aragona became a leading member. An uprising to overthrow Habsburg rule was plotted, but the Austrian police had their spies and so swooped on the conspirators. Thanks to the presence of mind of the wife of Marchesa Visconti d'Aragona, who burned her husband's incriminating papers before the police could reach them, he was acquitted for lack of evidence at a trial that dragged on for two years. If he had been found guilty, the penalty would have been death.

Cristina's stepfather managed to avoid the death sentence and the infamous Austrian prison of the *Spielberg*. But the event marked a major change in his life and it likely affected the future attitude of the young Cristina.

These are the years when the United States of America was in war with England and the first steam-powered ships were sailing on the seas. In the land of cowboys and Indians, there were only eight million people, and they were almost all on the Atlantic coast. Europe was back on track after the French Revolution of 1789 and the Napoleonic period, which changed the entire European political scene for more than a decade.

The fall of Napoleon in 1815 re-established the royal families of twenty years earlier. People saw again the dominance of the Bourbons (France, Spain, and Southern Italy), the Savoy (the Italian region of Piedmont, Liguria, and Sardinia), and the

Hapsburgs (Austria and part of Germany). Prussia was under Frederick William III of Hohenzollern, Russia under Tsar Alexander, and England under the House of Hanover.

The Ottoman Empire was thriving with Mahmud II on the throne, but the decline of the mid-nineteenth century was near. Italy was still divided into many small kingdoms. The biggest were the kingdoms of Lombardy-Venetia under the Austrians, the kingdom of Sardinia under the Savoy, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany under the Habsburg-Lorraine, the Papal States under the pope, and the kingdom of the Two Sicilies under the Bourbons. The royal houses of Europe were blood-related because of marriages, but this, ironically, did not prevent them from regularly declaring war on each other.

At that time, Milan, where Cristina was born and lived, was not a large city. The aristocratic elite consisted of a few hundred people, and they all knew each other. The entertainment included theatres and cafés. The wardrobe was very different from that of today; then as now, fashion was always evolving.

Technology was evolving, too. In Paris, people saw the first bicycles as more of a game than as practical vehicles. The real transportation was horseback or carriage. A magic lantern, *Laterna magic*, was an early type of image projector developed in the seventeenth century. It was commonly used for educational and entertainment purposes, and it gave the first views of images in movement. But the cinema was still a far-off reality. There were early photographs, but the images vanished within a few seconds after being impressed.

The steam engine had a great success, and boats could finally travel without wind power. In 1821, a steamboat was able to cross the Atlantic Ocean, making America closer. Still, it took several weeks of travel to get there. People saw the first railroad. It

was possible to travel by train, but it was still thought a good idea to wish good luck to travelers because of various dangerous circumstances, including robbers. In short, each trip was an adventure in itself, full of the unknown.

In the countryside, ordinary people had a completely different life governed by work of the land and the daily rhythms of animals. The peasants were the majority of the workforce at that time. A peasant had just two changes of clothes: one for work and one for the holidays. The Italian language was virtually unknown, and everyone spoke their local dialect. Mostly, novels were read in French, so French often became one's first language. Cristina often said she preferred to write in French rather than in Italian. In addition to these two languages, she knew English, Latin, and Milanese, the local Italian dialect.

When Cristina's stepfather came home from prison, he was nervous and physically wrecked and alternated between fits of deep depression and violent irritability. Cristina deeply loved her stepfather, so this was a time of tension and anxiety for her. Cristina's mother began to tire of her husband. She was still beautiful and vivacious and did not have the temperament to be a nurse to an ailing spouse. Ultimately, she found consolation in an affair with a handsome but penniless Sicilian libertine of high birth, the Duke of Cannizzaro. Cristina intensely disliked this situation. Living in such an atmosphere of family discord, the young princess grew very unhappy.

Marriage

When Cristina was only fifteen, she fell in love with the exceptionally handsome Prince Emilio Barbiano di Belgiojoso d'Ests (Figure 1.3), eight years her senior. He was amiable and accomplished and possessed a glorious voice, which he used with

exceptional technique. He was the idol of Milanese salons' artistic circles, and Rossini himself had been his music master.

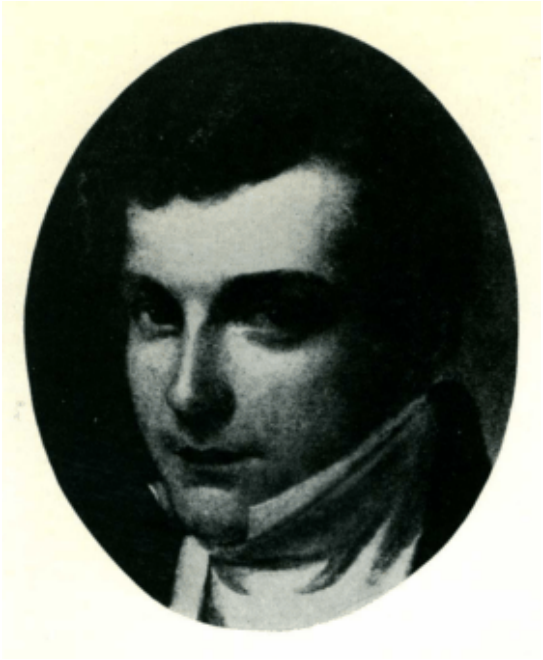

Figure 1.3. Prince Emilio di Belgiojoso.

Prince Emilio's contemporaries had recorded that he was tall, with fair, wavy hair and caressing eyes.[8] His total lack of vanity allowed him to appeal to women without arousing male jealousy. His great musical gift, which ranked him with the professional talent of Europe, as well as the charm and intellectuality of his conversation, the grace and elegance of his person, and perhaps his widespread reputation for "mischief" endeared him to a very large and cosmopolitan circle.

The prince attracted many young companions, imitators of his voice, artists, musicians, men about town, ballet dancers, and even women of easy virtue. His robust health endured, but his fortune disappeared. He had mortgaged all he could when he met

[8] Gattey, 4.

Cristina. Her adoration amused him, and he soon realized that marriage with this most sought-after young heiress would solve his financial difficulties.

Impulsive, Prince Belgiojoso rivaled even his wife in the liberal generosity he bestowed among Italian exiles, to the financial embarrassment of his friends. But, as might be inferred from his lifestyle, active participation in politics ceased when the more addictive routines of pleasure and debauchery held Don Emilio in its grasp.

There was much opposition from Cristina's relatives against the marriage. Despite the wishes of her aunt Beatrice Trivulzio, who wanted Cristina to marry her son Giorgio, she took no notice of their protests. At that time, marriage between cousins was still organized to protect the family name and money. Cristina was much distressed upon receiving a long and offensive poem denouncing Emilio as a dissipated spendthrift and listing his many amours. The poem was said to have been read to her on her wedding morning, on September, 24, 1824, in the form of this verse:

> Can it thus be true, lovely Cristina?
> A princely morsel is what you wanted:
> But how he debases you, oh bitter fate!
> For when he has taken his pleasure with you,
> He will go off wantonly with this woman and that,
> And in vain will we hear you cry for help . . .[9]

Despite many attempts to change her mind due to the libertine habits of her future husband, love triumphed and the marriage was celebrated. To marry, the prince had in fact given up his chief mistress, the Countess Guiccioli, with whom Lord Byron had once lived.

---

[9] Erica Ann Kuhlman, "Trivulzio, Cristina," in *A to Z of Women in World History* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2002).

Within a year of the release of her stepfather from prison, Cristina received a dowry of 400,000 Austrian *lire,* a coin unit of Italy until the Euro was adopted, and the couple spent their honeymoon in Emilio's ancestral home, the palazzo Belgiojoso in Merate. The honeymoon was not in an exotic location, but just a few miles away from home.

As predicted, the marriage did not fare well because of Emilio's dissolute life. Emilio neglected Cristina more and more and indulged in a succession of love affairs. They reconciled from time to time, when he needed her help to pay off his mounting debts.

In 1828 came a breach that lasted several years. Prince Emilio attempted to bring his new mistress, Signorina Ruga, to live under the same roof with them. Cristina wanted to apply for an annulment of the marriage, but Emilio begged her not to. Instead, they separated by mutual consent. Although Cristina had parted from Emilio, she never ceased to love him. When they separated, he presented her with a lot of his debts, which she very generously paid. But he kept her dowry, and even during her poverty in Paris, he never sent her the interest on it that was legally due to her. As much as she loved him, he could never return the love even with basic marital fidelity.

The combined effects of her marital and physical misfortunes flung Cristina into a variety of emotional outlets. Strengthened by her natural inclinations, she was drawn to a political authority that replaced a missing father and husband. These forces were a commitment to social progress and human justice and an exalted practice of collegial friendship to substitute for marital closeness.

Efforts for Italian Reunification

Cristina, alone but very rich, had reached the age of legal maturity. She now took possession of the inheritance left by her father. At this time, she began to travel all around Italy. In Genoa she got closer to the *Carbonari* movement and became a *Giardiniera* ("gardener"), the female counterpart of the male *Carbonari*.

This organization had strict rules and rituals. The "Gardens" were formed by nine women. The social class was very defined and so were the greetings by which they would recognize each other. Bianca Milesi, who led them, instructed the young princess by teaching her passwords, secret signs, and the art of disguise. Their goal was to drive the Austrians out of Lombardy and to unite the whole country under a king ruling democratically. But their organization was too poor, and the peasants saw no point in risking their lives to join a secret society that offered nothing to improve their living conditions. Spies sent by the Austrian government began to follow her. They were in truth cheaters seeking easy money and selling whatever information, often invented, to the best buyer. At that time it was easy to be arrested for any false story reported to the local police.

Cristina went around the slums of Milan, inciting the poor against Austria and urging them to prepare for the day when they might stage a mass revolt and eject the foreigners. Her conduct did not escape the notice of Count Hartig, the governor. He briefed two master spies to follow her everywhere. Their lengthy reports on her activities were preserved in the secret archives of the Lombardy-Venetian Government in Milan.

Cristina was conspicuous in her flagrant support of these ultra-democratic reformers. She shamelessly expressed approval of the revolution and indulged in bold

attacks in her conversations against the Austrian government. She did not limit her conduct to voicing her opinions, but also became a close friend of the head of the liberals, the lawyer Giacomo Luvini-Perseghini. There is reason to suspect from her long visits to him that she might have been engaged in subversive activities. Count Hartig, governor of Lombardy, wrote to Prince Metternich on October 22, 1830: "The Princess Belgiojoso who has been some time now in Lugano is constantly surrounded by the most important Swiss liberals and refugees."[10]

On October 18, 1830, she gave a gala ball to celebrate the new constitution, to which she invited those known for their radical views. On the same day an allegorical ballet was performed in the gala hall. The spectators applauded her strong support of their cause.

The Comte d'Alton-Shée, in his *Mémoires*, wrote that at one of the balls in Florence given by Prince Camillo Borghese, he noticed the following:

> Amidst a gathering of the most elegant and best looking women present a strange beauty appeared: her black and red gown was both simple and bizarre.
>
> She had fine black hair, naturally wavy, worn without any ornaments, a broad forehead like that of a young Faust, admirably drawn eyebrows, large widely separated eyes like those of some ancient statue, their mysterious look giving to the upper part of her face an air of ascetic spirituality; while the perfection of her nose, the delightful smile and the attractive dimple showed feminine grace in all its charm.
>
> Her complexion was pale and matted. She was hardly twenty years old and seemed to have come back to life for the second time. I asked her name: Princess Belgiojoso.[11]

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[10] Gattey, 10.
[11] Edmond d'Alton-Shée, *Mes Mémoires, 1826-1848* (Paris: A. Lacroix, 1869), 42.

Cristina had other remarkable qualities. She was alert, was capable of making quick decisions, and despite her periods of ill health and her slight build, she had an almost masculine strength. She was an excellent swordswoman, a crack shot with a rifle, and rode a horse astride. Formerly, Cristina was a shy and introspective girl. But through her unhappy home life and then her disastrous marriage, she had learned much about the ways of the world. Superficial observers were thus misled into believing that she was merely a beautiful shallow *poseuse* (a woman pretending to be something she is not or pretender). This convenient mask enabled her to work in secret for the great cause of her life, Italian independence and unification.

Around Princess Cristina were gathered many of the exiled supporters of Napoleon, visionaries who hoped to build a new world in the future, sovereigns without thrones, generals without armies, ministers without portfolios, and revolutionaries who had fled from their countries to escape the firing squads. Cristina met them one and all. Here, too, she made the acquaintance of Giuseppe Mazzini, the young Genoese patriot, and listened with sympathy even though she did not agree with his opinions. He had no use for the *Carbonari* and had instead started his "Young Italy" party. The party was so named because only people under the age of forty were allowed to join. Those above that age, he believed, were too set in their ways to want to eradicate the royal regime and aristocratic structure of society, replacing it with a daring, new egalitarian republic, as he proposed.

If Cristina was initiated into politics in Rome and apprenticed in Florence, it was in Geneva that she acquired her first *Weltanschauung* (a comprehensive conception of the

world especially from a specific standpoint).[12] In Geneva, it was said that one could feel the pulse of Europe as a whole. Geneva was the head of international politics at that time. Today, Geneva still hosts the highest number of international organizations in the world, including the headquarters of many of the agencies of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the Red Cross.

Cristina was threatened by the Austrian government because of her numerous revolutionary acts. She risked her passport and properties, letting her youth and brave idealism guide her actions. She left Genoa and went to France. In retaliation, all her properties in the Italian kingdom were confiscated and she was declared, virtually, *dead*. She was stranded alone in France without any money or support. This must have been a frightening time in her life. Most women would have been in despair. Nevertheless, she wrote to a friend: "If I could be even a little useful to our cause, I do not regret the difficult situations, the adventurous life."[13] Still in touch with several members of the *Carbonari* group, including the famous Italian Giuseppe Mazzini, she sold the jewels that she still had and promoted an insurrection for the Italian cause.

Unfortunately, Cristina could not return to Italian territory. She had to prepare herself for a long exile. Not knowing exactly what to do, she moved to Paris, thinking that she could still be able to do something useful for her beloved Italy, even away from the country.

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[12] Beth Archer Brombert, *Cristina: Portraits of a Princess* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 46.
[13] Sandro Fortunati, *The Life of Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso: An Italian Princess in the 19th Century Country Side* (Venice: Filippi Editore, 2010), 11.

The French government had just undergone a change. Only a few months earlier, in what remained in history as the glorious "Three days of July," Charles X was replaced by Louis-Philippe d'Orleans of the cadet branch. The new king was no longer "King of France" but "King of the French people."[14] This was indeed a reduction in regal power. Cristina contacted François Mignet of the French Foreign Affairs Ministry and worked with him to protect Italian nationalists captured by the Austrians in Ancona in Italy. François Mignet remained one of her greatest friends for the rest of her life.

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

> Of rich heritage, grew up in the Milanese aristocracy, I did not know anything about the necessities of life. Never having in the hands a single silver coin, I could not say the value of a piece of five francs. On the contrary, I didn't find any difficulties in classifying an ancient coin according to its importance and history. Unaware of the price and the commercial value of everyday objects, I knew at first glance the value of art objects. I could paint, sing, play the pianoforte, but I did not know how to make the rim of handkerchief, to cook an egg or to prepare a meal. Until that day, the managing of the house was a task of the butler.[15]

Her first home was a tiny apartment on the fifth floor of a building on the Place de la Madeleine. She lived there for a few months. She cooked her meals and survived by sewing laces and tricolored ribbons, by drawing a series of portraits of politicians, and by making translations from English to French for a newspaper. She lived a radically different life from the one to which she was accustomed. It would have been fairly easy

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[14] Jeroen Deploige and Gina Deneckere, eds., *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 182.
[15] Fortunati, 12.

to retrieve her money, remaining comfortable in her villas in Locate or Milan. But she decided to follow her heart and her goal to achieve freedom for her fellow citizens.

Thanks to François Mignet, who by then was a faithful friend, she met the so-called "Hero of Two Worlds," the Marquis de Lafayette. This great man of international fame also fought in the American Revolution together with George Washington. A few years later, he was present in the major European upheaval that was the French Revolution. The American Revolution and the French Revolution were two of the most important events in the history of the Western world. Lafayette encouraged French ministers, politicians, and ambassadors to aid Cristina for the Italian cause. But by then, Lafayette's image represented more of a historical icon than any real political power. The Marquis' doctor recalled Cristina at Lafayette's bedside:

> A lady equally remarkable for the beauty and the charm of her spirit than for the qualities of the heart. I often found this wonderful woman at his bedside: with her solid and wide education, the pleasure of her conversations mitigated his problems and made him forget for a moment his suffering. Lafayette often talked to me on the rare merits of this lady, the nobility of her character and the charity for her unhappy compatriots.[16]

The Paris Salon

Several years passed and with the money sent by her mother and that recovered by selling her possessions, Cristina found physical comfort again in her life. She organized a "salon" where she reunited Italian exiles, writers, philosophers, and musicians of the finest European upper class. In her salon, some guests just passed through once or twice, and some came much more often. Among these, the German poet

[16] Ibid., 13.

Heine, the Hungarian composer Liszt, and the French poet De Musset (Figure 1.4) were the most popular figures who visited her salon.

Figure 1.4. Alfred de Musset's caricature of Cristina.

The Parisian elite came to know her. In the rumors swirling around her, she practically divided men and women into two categories. The first loved her, and the second envied her. Even elsewhere in her *Souvenirs* Caroline Jaubert wrote that in Cristina's estimation men fell into three categories: 'He loves me, he loved me, or he will love me.'[17]

There were few exceptions. The only true female friend she had in Paris at that time was Madame Caroline Jaubert. Many men fell in love with Cristina. Caroline Jaubert presented Cristina to the famous French poet Alfred de Musset who, as expected, fell madly in love with Cristina. He certainly was not her kind of man. He was very

[17] Jaubert.

similar in character to her ex-husband, Emilio: too libertine and not trustworthy. She had already learned her lesson ten years earlier with Emilio.

On the other hand, malicious voices used to say that Cristina was so pale that she could well be a ghost. She seized advantage of this rumor, presenting herself in soft, light clothes in dark rooms. She learned quickly how to shock and amaze her guests, and she took some pleasure in this affectation, that she was *not* a human being!

Despite Emilio's continued love affairs and scandals, Cristina never ceased to be fond of her wayward husband. She allowed him to continue living in the apartment she had allotted and also to attend her receptions. Here, his devil-may-care charm and his delightful singing thawed the disapproval of those who criticized Cristina for being too forgiving of Emilio's indiscretions. Liszt once wrote to Cristina that Prince Emilio had the finest and most agreeable baritone he knew, and that he actually wished Prince Emilio would get so much into debt that he would have to embark on a professional singing career in order to survive!

It was in his wife's salon that the prince was to meet once more his former flame, the Countess Guiccioli. But they were no longer interested in each other. She had married the old and immensely rich Marquis de Boissy, who was extremely proud of his wife's connections with Byron. He even presented her to King Louis-Philippe as "the Marquise de Boissy, my wife, once for many years the mistress of Lord Byron."[18] This was a world of some eccentric social conventions!

In 1835-1836, some Parisian *bas bleus* (blue stockings) had formed the idea of founding an institute modeled on the Académie Française, but for women only. The Blue

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[18] Gattey, 76.

Stockings Society was an informal women's social and educational movement in England in the mid-eighteenth century. The society emphasized education and mutual cooperation rather than the individualism that marked the French version. By the late 1500s, the fashion had spread to Paris, where the term *bas bleus* emerged to describe women with literary aspirations. The society was founded in the early 1750s by Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Vesey, and others as a women's literary discussion group, a revolutionary step away from traditional, nonintellectual women's activities. In that period, wearing warm and woolly dark blue stockings was the equivalent of wearing jeans today rather than the black stockings of formal, citified fashion. The term came to refer to the informal quality of the gatherings and the emphasis on conversation over fashion. [19]

Both Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin (known by the pseudonym George Sand) and Madame de Girardin wanted to become its president, and there ensued a furious struggle between their rival supporters, who were equally divided. A compromise was reached by electing Princess Cristina, in spite of the fact that she was a foreigner. It must have required great diplomacy to achieve such a compromise, in light of the competitive struggle of forceful personalities that preceded it.

A Daughter, a Return to Locate, and Research and Writing

In 1838, Cristina's life took a major turn. On Prince Emilio's return from Milan, his wife gave him the news that she was expecting their first child. This made him act for a time more kindly towards her. She gave birth to their daughter, Maria Cristina, in Paris on December 23, 1838. Maria would be their only child. From this moment on, Cristina

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[19] Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, "Montagu, Elizabeth (1718-1800)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004).

left her halls, theatres, and receptions and engaged in a period of retreat. After the birth of Maria, she took a vacation in England with her brother and sisters. She visited Ireland and, after a short stay in Paris, returned to Italy and settled in the palace of Locate, just outside Milan. It was nearly ten years since she had left her beloved homeland.

After a year of apparent secrecy, there was not even a record of the child's birth in the municipal archives of Versailles where Maria was born. Cristina had made it known that she had had a daughter named Maria, who may have been generally accepted as the prince's daughter. Prince Emilio had lived under her Parisian roof often enough. So, such an assumption was not unlikely. However, as would be seen from Emilio's own testimony, such was not the case. Cristina hoped to establish Maria's legitimacy where it would matter most, in Lombardy, the site of her future inheritance. So, Cristina returned to Italy in July 1840, for the first time since her dramatic departure ten years before.

In Locate, she locked herself in her home, avoided the life of Milan, and welcomed the snowy winter, which prevented unwanted guests from coming to visit. There, surrounded by needy peasants, she created kindergartens and schools and turned her palace into the center of a community devoted to the less fortunate. A workroom was set up where women were taught how to make gloves. The money received from their sale was shared amongst them. Cristina's natural inclination for philanthropy made for huge improvements in the country life of these people.

Meanwhile, in neighboring locations, the teachers engaged by the princess in turn educated their children. The older ones were taught trades, according to their aptitudes, by qualified instructors. Cristina devoted several years to this work, spending from November until April in Locate. She also lived in Paris with her old friend, Augustin

Thierry, the historian, who, now completely blind, remained broken-hearted over the loss of his wife. Augustin Thierry's wife, Julie Thierry, had been very friendly with Cristina. Thus, near death, she asked Cristina to look after her poor husband.

Princess Cristina promised to do so, and had Augustin installed in a comfortably well-furnished apartment in the garden of 36, Rue de Courcelles. Here he was attended by a valet and a secretary. The sightless historian tried to forget his sorrow through his writing. Cristina's regular letters to Augustin Thierry, while at Locate, give vivid pictures of her life there. For example, she described how, on returning from Paris at the end of November 1844, she found her carriages full of her tenant farmers and employees, all waiting to escort her home. On the route home, peasants came out on their doorsteps, lamps in hand, to shout out a welcome. She had become a true heroine to this region and created a large heated public meeting room to shelter the population. She even created dowries to support new brides in the community.

In Locate, she developed an interest in early religion. Later, she used her knowledge to discuss the development of Christian thinking to people largely untrained in theology. Thanks to the political peace during that time in her country, she was able to publish a work entitled *Essai sur la Formation du Dogme Catholique* ("On the Training of Catholic Dogma"). This book turned into a vast undertaking of four volumes. The first volume appeared in August 1842; the second, eight months later. She wanted to modify certain religious teachings that she thought were not entirely accurate, but refrained because the time was not opportune. The church was very powerful, and she didn't want to offend such a dominant social force.

Despite her purposeful piety, that book was not accepted by the church. The list of prohibited books had been in effect since the inquisition period of the sixteenth century. Even at this time in Cristina's life, it was still necessary to be very careful when discussing religious matters. Her book was on the "black list" together with those of Alfieri, Balzac, Hugo, Heine, Kant, Rousseau, and Stendhal. At least she was in distinguished company!

Cristina's concern for improving social conditions on her estate was more than merely patriotic. She saw, in these neglected peasants, the future of Italy. A united Italy, responsible for itself, had to draw from its lower classes and unite them in the goals of national well-being. First of all, the peasants had to be educated. Unlike the French, they had never benefited from the Napoleonic Code, which standardized education and made it obligatory. By restoring human dignity to these people, traditionally kept as serfs, Cristina could imagine a time when civil dignity would be restored to a nation previously divided and oppressed by popes and conquerors.

At this time in 1844, Cristina was preparing to write a history of Lombardy and was seeking help with the research. On January 7, 1845, she was able to inform Augustin Thierry that she had someone engaged as her assistant:

> A young man as studious as any professor and with a remarkable knowledge of charters, statutes, ancient manuscripts, etc. It is rare to find someone so young with such enthusiasm for research into the past.
>
> There is only one disadvantage as far as I am concerned. He has a very handsome face. Still, I am approaching an age when such drawbacks should not affect me. A few more years and no one will suspect me any longer of gazing with pleasure at a good-looking man. But the contrary is true. The sight of the beautiful will always appeal to me, even if I reach a hundred. My scholarly young man is as

honest and unaffected as he is learned. Everybody congratulates me on having made such a find.[20]

Officially, Gaetano Stelzi (Figure 1.5) was there as a teacher for her daughter. The young Gaetano Stelzi also proved useful in another way. As he was unknown, he did not attract the attention of the police when he traveled to and from Genoa, Florence, Rome, Bologna, and Venice to collect material for the princess's projected history of Lombardy. At the same time, Gaetano was secretly arranging for the distribution of the *Gazzetta Italiana*, smuggled in from France.

GAETANO STELZI, CRISTINA'S SECRETARY
drawn by Ernesta Bisi in 1845

Figure 1.5. Gaetano Stelzi.

While Gaetano Stelzi was busy with all of this, Cristina continued to occupy herself with the welfare of the peasantry. In view of her past, the Austrian police in Milan

[20] Ibid., 85-86.

regarded her activities with great suspicion. But owing to her popularity, the Austrian authority Count Spaur decided not to take action against her.

Accompanied by Gaetano Stelzi, Cristina left Locate on April 3, 1845, for her yearly visit to Paris, which she reached on May 1. Augustin Thierry had obtained permission for her assistant to inspect all documents related to the history of Lombardy that were in the French Royal Archives. She had previously bought land in the Rue du Montparnasse, where two houses were now side by side, destined for the use of the blind historian and herself. Augustin Thierry was already eager to furnish his future home.

She encouraged Augustin, discussing where his furniture would go and visiting shops and bringing back samples of curtain material for him to feel, while she described their pattern and color to him. She read aloud to him, took him for carriage drives, and held parties to which she was careful to invite people with whom he would enjoy conversing.

Cristina and Gaetano now undertook the management, composition, publication, and administration of the *Coreno Ausonio*, a community in the Province of Frosinone in the Italian region of Lazio. She had already discovered from Gaetano's work on the *Gazzetta* how capable he was. Tireless and precise, he became indispensable to her. He alone did the work of an entire staff, supervising typography, selecting print, correcting proofs, editing copy, and attending to all correspondence.

Unfortunately, Gaetano was also prone to bouts of consumption (tuberculosis). This aroused her concern. She began to worry increasingly about him. Once, when Gaetano was traveling to Florence, she wrote:

> Your letter was a great relief to me when I learned that the wretched night spent in hard work, which upset me so much, did you no harm. Remember, dear friend, that you are necessary to me, and that your health always preoccupies me.[21]

Meanwhile, the princess had opened a salon in Milan and was busy promoting her ideas through both her persuasive personality and her pen. Not only did she contribute articles to the French press and write and distribute political pamphlets, but she also started and edited two new journals, *Il Crociato* (The Crusader) and *La Croce di Savoia* (The Cross of Savoy). In all these endeavors, she was devotedly supported by Gaetano.

In her columns, she stressed the fact that what was needed above all else was a trained army, capable of freeing Italy from the Austrians. Such an army only existed in Piedmont, which made it essential that Lombardy and Piedmont should be united. As the Piedmontese were ruled by a king and as the vast majority of them supported a monarchical form of government, Lombardy could only hope for union with Piedmont through abandoning its republican leanings. To Cristina's delight, she found more and more people supporting these views. Soon it was clear that they were in the majority.

Cristina began to financially support publications to help people better know the Italian territory and understand what exactly needed to be done to unite it. She wrote both in Italian and in French. She wanted the French people to better understand Italy, because the majority of the newspapers often distorted reality. She was obliged to publish in France or Switzerland because there was no freedom of the press in the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia.

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[21] Ibid., 89.

Sadly, after returning from Naples at the beginning of April 1848, Gaetano Stelzi had been deteriorating rapidly in health. This gave the princess increasing concern. On June 15, she wrote to Thierry:

> Yesterday towards four o'clock in the afternoon his coughing became almost incessant and I noticed with alarm that all colour had drained from his lips. The attack lasted for nearly two hours during which I gave him his various medicines. After this, he became calmer and his breathing more normal. Seeing him better and feeling myself exhausted, I told him I was going early to bed and that the doctor and Mrs Parker would spend the night in his room. He was to ask them to call me if he felt worse. But when I lay down I could not sleep. Three times I rose to enquire how he was and received reassuring replies. At last I closed my eyes and was about to fall asleep when I heard someone calling me. I jumped out of bed as the doctor hurried into the room looking very upset. "He's dying—he's dying!" he cried. In a few seconds I was at Gaetano's side. He died without regaining consciousness.[22]

Cristina wanted, obsessively, to preserve his body in a better final resting place. In a letter to Augustin Thierry she disclosed: "I have had him brought to a tomb in the precincts of my house, so that Miss Parker and I might have the sad satisfaction of surrounding him with flowers and of maintaining the place more like a room than a sepulcher."[23] It would seem that while awaiting the building of a permanent vault, the princess had arranged for Gaetano's body to be secretly transported from the mortuary chamber of the Locate cemetery into some outer room of her large villa. The vault's construction would have taken time because all able-bodied men were under the army. Again, the obsessiveness of this action points to the somewhat unbelievable "technicolor" personality of the princess.

Even after Gaetano's death, her political work never stopped. Through her articles, she tried to convince people that the only way to make a free Italian nation was

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[22] Ibid., 112-113.
[23] Ibid.

to support King Charles Albert of Piedmont. Her long-term objective was not monarchy itself, but a French-style republic. But at that time, the Savoy king was the only hope for unification.

The year 1848 found her in Naples promoting her publications. In Milan an insurrection broke out against Austria. Cristina gathered 160 volunteers and brought them by boat to Milan. Even if late for the battle, she arrived in Milan with a triumphal reception. There was an atmosphere of celebration as she appeared on the balcony of the Palace of Government in front of a joyful crowd. For a few months in Milan, there was an atmosphere of freedom. But despite her happiness, she didn't agree with the people currently in power. She wrote:

> A big personal satisfaction is not without a hint of uneasy patriotism. The republican spirit is strong in Lombardy and I fear that Charles Albert, with his slowness, has not played the best cards in the world. I am going to work for him, that is for the unity and strength of my country but I fear to be beaten and I will not venture too far, because I do not want at any cost lose the confidence of my country.[24]

Time would prove her fears to be realized.

A few months later, King Charles Albert was defeated and the Austrians returned, imposing very high taxes and removing all the freedoms that the previous government had promoted. Among these had been the freedom of the press. Now, all the newspapers unfortunately had a very short life. Cristina was fined 800,000 Lira (a couple of million of modern Euro), a huge amount of money. These fines were conceived to induce misery as well as punishment. Fortunately, she managed to save many of her possessions and her properties and, most important, her freedom.

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[24] Fortunati, 14-15.

A year later, in 1849, the city of Rome had a glorious moment. A gap in power (Power vacuum) developed after the assassination of Pellegrino Rossi, first minister of Pope Pius IX. This gave the "green light" to the establishment of an interim government, headed by a triumvirate formed by Mazzini, Saffi, and Armellini. Mazzini named Princess Cristina to be the organizer for all the hospitals in Rome.

Hospital Organizer in Rome

Like a chameleon, Cristina was easily able to transition to these new duties. She was asked by the Constituent Assembly in Rome to take over the organization and direction of the military hospitals. She appealed to all Italian women to help, thus creating the first voluntary corps of military nurses. This was, remarkably, four years before Florence Nightingale did the same thing in the Crimean War.

Twelve hospitals were fully organized within forty-eight hours, ready to receive the wounded. Despite lack of adequate help, Cristina managed to achieve the near impossible. She was ably assisted by the American Margaret Fuller and the Swiss Julia Modena. To raise funds, a committee was formed, which included the American sculptor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. William Story, who served with dedication.

In spite of many practical troubles, Cristina was able to manage nurses and doctors and organize the buildings necessary to deal with the many injured of the war. For the first time, she lived in a real battle zone, together with the suffering soldiers. She wrote to her friend Caroline Jaubert:

> Ah, my dear friend, no matter how big your imagination can be, you will never portray the painful reality of my life during the bombing of Rome while I stayed in my place among the wounded. They were all worthy. All of them were in search of the danger for pure patriotism: The love for their country and the love for freedom took to the highest level their powers and, if struck by a ball, they

> died like heroes. No, I did not see the show of an ordinary death. When, overcome by fatigue, I was looking for that condition where you can forget everything which is called sleep, could I sleep when I knew that when I would have awaken up, I would not had found all those who had wished me a quiet night with a weak voice? Could I predict how many hands shook mine for the last time, how many sheets upside down on the pillow would have announced, in the morning visit, a new martyr?[25]

The glowing tribute paid by her American friends was echoed by all those who came in contact with the princess during those eventful days. Raffaele Barbiera, who wrote his hugely successful biography of Cristina based on oral traditions and in the absence of documents, drew a graphic picture of the princess sitting at the bedside of some restless patients and eagerly reading aloud the works of Charles Dickens by the feeble flicker of a thin candle.[26]

Princess Cristina and Clara Maffei (1814-1886) were old friends. During the stirring times of 1848, the princess had been a frequent visitor in Clara's salon. Six years younger than the princess, the Countess Clara, on her marriage to the poet Maffei, had thrown her heart and soul into the political and literary life of Milan. For fifty-two consecutive years (1834-1886), her salon was the rendezvous not merely of her compatriots but of all the intellectuals in Europe.

The list of celebrities who thronged her modest drawing room rivaled that of Belgiojoso's Parisian salon and included many of the same immortal names: Daniel Stern, Balzac, Manzoni, Liszt, Verdi, and a score of others, all of international fame. The annals of Italian patriotism, *belles-lettres* (beautiful and fine writing), and art are abundant with the names of men and women who, at one time or another during that half-

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[25] Ibid., 15.
[26] Aldobrandino Malvezzi, *Cristina di Belgiojoso* (Milan: Treves, 1937).

century of continuous hospitality, sought guidance, inspiration, or intellectual entertainment among politicians, poets, musicians, and wits who congregated around the hostess.[27]

At this time, Princess Cristina rarely took part in the social festivities held in celebration of the banishing of the Austrians. Accompanied by her daughter, Maria, she occasionally spent an evening at the salon of the Countess Maffei. Victor Emmanuel was the eldest prince of Charles Albert, who was king of Sardinia. Victor Emmanuel was king of Piedmont and later became king of the United Italy. Victor Emmanuel and his palace officials suspected that Cristina was originally a republican and a kind of socialist so they did not invite Cristina to the court ceremonies and did not appoint her to any titles, even during Victor Emmanuel's sojourn in Milan. This hurt Cristina. On the other hand, Camillo Benso, Count di Cavour, an Italian statesman and a leading figure in the movement toward Italian unification, visited and dined with Cristina, compensating with his amiable presence for the humiliating neglect by the palace officials. Camillo Benso first met Cristina in Genoa in 1829. They maintained a very amicable and long close friendship from that moment. Camillo Benso visited Cristina many times, persuading her to write pieces that would enhance Victor Emmanuel's popularity throughout the Italian peninsula.

Unlike many advocates for women's rights of more recent times, Princess Cristina was content to leave men in the undisputed possession of most societal privileges, but she did suggest that women might advantageously study medicine. She clearly foresaw

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[27] W. R. Whitehouse, *A Revolutionary Princess, Christina Belgiojoso-Trivulzio, Her Life and Times, 1808-1871* (New York: Dutton, 1906), 278-279.

serious difficulties in the achievement of even the modest ends she had in mind, yet her firm optimism convinced her that Italy could solve gender-inequality problems because the country had solved so many complicated political and diplomatic challenges of the past.

Armand Marrast, who was president of the second constitutional assembly of the second republican regime in France (1848-1849), held a ball. On the occasion, the princess attired herself in costume, supposedly to represent Italy. Dressed in a startling robe composed of the national colors (red, white, and green), she was a conspicuous figure in the motley cosmopolitan assemblage of diplomats and government officials whose curiosity had brought them to the salon. Suddenly the ballroom was invaded by a jostling crowd of national guards, blacksmiths, shoemakers, masons, and house-painters—all political friends of Armand Marrast. It must have been a jolly and memorable evening!

Sojourn to the East

Although there were celebrations for some steps made in Italian unification, eventually Cristina became disillusioned by the lack of progress and began rethinking what to do with her life. Initially, she thought about going to England, but changed her mind. She wrote a letter to her close friend Caroline Jaubert:

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

> you can then transplant them. Later we grow the roots and from these we draw livelihood. Exile then becomes lethal.
>
> I have not yet reached that point, I have no strong habits and my feelings are not yet clinging to the ground. The air, the subtle and spiritual element of the thought, is enough for me. How long will I be like that? I do not know. But to choose a final residence in a fertile land in the centre of a lovely landscape (alas, still a memory of my country!), I will wait until the hour when my strengths will abandon me and I will not be able to go on looking. First, I want to travel.
>
> What would you say if I go to Constantinople?
>
> The entrance is not prohibited by any political position. I am looking right now the arrival of a steamboat to realize my plan.[28]

One night, thanks to a tip of a clergyman that she had previously aided, she managed to escape just before the Austrians came to capture her. She found herself together with many exiles on a ship headed for the isle of Malta. Her daughter Maria and her nurse Miss Mary Ann Parker were constants at her side. She stopped for a while in the capital La Valletta, but nothing drew her interest.

> I would give anything for the sight of a nice grove, a beautiful sheet of water that reminds my green gardens, my enchanting lakes of Lombardy! How I'd like for a moment to reflect myself in those pure crystal blue eyes, such as those painted from our masters of the Lombard school!
>
> Why cannot I hear some words spoken by one of those sweet and serious voices belonging to the women of my country! To endure the exile we should live in a country very close to what you didn't want to leave or being transported to a place whose originality grip your attention. Resemblance sweetens the regrets and diversity stuns them. But here all is pale and dull, in a word, nostalgic.[29]

She left Malta, making a stop in Greece. Her journey ended in Asia Minor, in the valley of Çakmakoğlu, in Karabuk province, 200 kilometers north of Ankara, Turkey. Here, alone with her daughter Maria, Nurse Parker, and a few other Italian exiles, she

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[28] Fortunati, 16.
[29] Ibid.

arrived again to a place with her pockets empty. Thanks to her noble lineage and powerful connections, she was able to secure a line of credit and buy a piece of land to start a farm.

The letters she wrote to her friend Caroline Jaubert became a periodical column in the French newspaper *National*, edited in Paris. Now, everyone in France, and likely in all of Europe, knew where she was and what she was doing. She was admired but also criticized. Life was not easy, and there were many difficulties. For example, although she was a princess, her estates and most of her properties had been seized by the Austrian government. Cristina still managed a farm by herself. However, both her ancient enemies and her former friends competed in despising her and her activities during the gloomy days of the Roman Republic. The Italian patriots did not agree with all of her political ideas. They preferred to blame her and her words. But since they believed she was still rich, they asked her for financial help again and again. She struggled to run the farm by herself.

As time passed, Cristina began to enjoy a quieter life in Turkey. Pastori, her lawyer, had brought curtains, chairs, and beds from Italy, so she was finally able to furnish her room in European fashion. The Turkish people had been coming from miles away to admire these wonders, and her reputation had risen considerably as a result. When the situation in the newly settled farm became more stable, Cristina wanted nothing more than to take a few horses and invite some male friends to ride to Jerusalem. She had always wanted to see the Holy Land. Once there, she had the satisfaction of seeing herself and her daughter in one of the most sacred places on Earth. Several articles were published in France about this trip. The insights on Middle Eastern life were for the

first time seen from the eyes of a woman. Since Cristina could enter a harem, these rooms could be described from the inside and not just from afar, the only possible view for men. These articles were later collected in several books: *Asia Minor and Syria, Souvenirs of a Journey,* and *Scenes of Turkish Life*. Remarkably, even in the far-off and still young United States of America, the book *Oriental Harems and Scenery* was published.

While in Çakmakoğlu, she wrote her personal testament regarding her wishes after her death:

> From my farm in Çakmakoğlu, in Asia Minor, Saffran Bolo, 1851.
>
> In good health and in perfect peace of spirit, but living in a country where human life is weakly protected and respected, knowing, moreover, that death as the life we are given could be removed at all hours of every day, I am determined to make my testamentary dispositions . . .[30]

Ironically, this testament almost proved necessary and fortuitous. Just a few days later, one of her servants tried to kill her. On June 30, 1853, the princess narrowly escaped being murdered by an Italian domestic. A suspect was Bernardo Lorenzoni from Bergano, Italy. Immediately everybody concluded that he was hired to kill her as a retaliation instigated by the Austrians. The truth was simpler: it was in fact a sentimental matter related to her nurse, Miss Parker. One day Bernardo struck her and broke her nose. For this reason, the nurse rejected him, but Bernardo thought Cristina was responsible for Miss Parker's change of heart. The suspect persuaded a young Armenian, a faithful servant of the princess, to drink a cup of poison, threatening to stab him if he refused. Bernardo wanted to deprive the princess of her bodyguard. The young boy survived, although he was ill for several hours. That evening, Cristina did not realize what had

[30] Ibid.

happened, even though Bernardo was at dinner with her. Bernardo followed Cristina to her bedroom and stabbed her. The Armenian boy had recovered enough to come and stop Bernardo, but Cristina had already received seven stab wounds. Remarkably, she was able to take care of her own injuries. After her experience with her own maladies, the illnesses of the poor people of her little town near Milan, and especially after her war experiences in Rome, she was well trained in the treatment of wounds. The next day, Bernardo was arrested by Ottoman authorities in the market of a nearby town. He was sent to the town jail in Safranbolu. While on his way to the jail, women and children came out of their houses and followed him, jeering and shouting:

> There goes the man who tried to murder our mistress! She fed him and nursed him when he was ill and he tried to kill her. Curse you for trying to kill our mother! You faithless one—you were treated too well. Your bed was too soft. Your coffee was too sweet, and the mistress too indulgent![31]

The Paris that Princess Belgiojoso revisited in 1854 presented a very different social scene than during the time of Louis-Philippe or even of the short-lived republic. Some of the salons had closed after owners passed away, while others timidly held their doors ajar, uncertain whether to welcome the new regime or to sulk and long for the past reign. There was as yet faint promise of that dazzling intellectual and material brilliancy that was to symbolize the reign of Napoleon and Empress Eugénie, years still in the future.

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[31] Gattey, 191.

Final Years

In 1855, Cristina left Çakmakoğlu and the Ottoman Empire. After paying a visit to her sister Teresa in southern France, she headed for Paris. There, she greeted all her French friends who had been lost to her after the French betrayal of 1849 in Rome. Tired, but reassured of Austrian permission to enter without any danger, she returned to Italy. She finally returned to her place in Locate, where she could keep track of other publications of her "Asian" books. She remained there quietly for a few welcome and peaceful years.

In 1856, several sad milestones made Cristina despondent. First, Heinrich Heine, one of her closest friends and a constant visitor of her salon, died after a long struggle with disease. In addition to this news, commenting on Emilio's disloyalty, Alfred de Musset told Caroline Jaubert: 'The Prince Emilio has only himself to blame. When one has his temperament, one should not remain tied to the same woman for so many years. It is a case of the devil turning into a hermit."[32] This comment must have been depressing for Cristina to contemplate. De Musset's sarcasm aside, it is clear that Cristina always had a place in her heart for Emilio. The label of "hermit" proved correct because Emilio, a melancholy wanderer without interests or pursuits, now led an aimless and drifting existence. Disease overtook him and he passed away on February 17, 1858, in the Palazzo di Belgiojoso, the palace of his ancestors.

Cristina's pursuits had one purpose: to gain support for the Italian cause. Prince Emilio's death made her decide to retire for a while from the social scene and address the

[32] Ibid., 197-198.

riddles of human existence. She must have craved solitude so that she could indulge in some self-examination about her own life and the decisions she had made.

In May of 1856, Cristina went to Paris intending to spend the summer with Augustin Thierry in a country villa at Port Marly. To her great sorrow, Thierry was struck down by a cerebral hemorrhage and passed away a few days later. In their letters to each other, over some twenty-five years, they had signed themselves "brother" and "sister." It was a mixture of pity and admiration that had first drawn Cristina to Augustin Thierry. His wife, recognizing this, had never objected to their friendship. Indeed, on her deathbed, she had asked the princess to look after her husband. It had been an association based not on occasional physical gratification but on abiding deep affection. For this reason, Cristina felt the loss much more intensely.

Thus, three men who had played significant roles in her life had died within a few months of each other. She was suffering, too, from the after-effects of the vindictive assault in Asia Minor. Her morale was very low that summer. Her friends invited her to stay with them in their country homes, but such visits failed to lighten her mood.

In September 1856, Cristina returned to Locate. Her two youngest half-sisters were married to Piedmontese noblemen and were residing in Turin. The youngest, the Marchese di Rorà, was already reigning over a brilliant salon, which Count Cavour often attended. Princess Cristina now accepted an invitation to pay the Marchessa a visit.

Fifty years old in 1858, the princess had aged. In a few years she would be so bent that when she walked, a person behind her could not see her head. With advancing years came also a reoccurrence of painful maladies such as neuralgia, palpitations, shortness of breath, and fever, which had bothered her all her life. But she could look back on a life

well spent. She had seen more of the world and done more things than most people of her time. She had surely been loved by many, but had she ever loved? Now, there was no husband or lover with whom to share the memories of a life gone by.

Nevertheless, her salon continued to attract not merely old friends, but also new and curious strangers, eager to meet a woman of whom the world had heard so much. At Milan and at Locate, the princess received a strange medley of company, from the illustrious and obscure to nameless foreigners and Italians boasting historic titles. Everyone was invited to dinner in the salon of every class and social station.

These meals gathered many elite-born people who received their invitations in accordance with the exigencies of strictest etiquette, always a week in advance. But also invited were music teachers, journalists, and exiles encountered during her various sojourns in Paris, Athens, and Constantinople.

Maria was now in possession of her long-disputed birthright and had an assured future with a man eminently pleasing to Cristina. Cristina's hopes for her child were finally fulfilled. In 1860, Princess Belgiojoso elected happily to give her daughter as wife to Marchese Ludovico Trotti Bentivoglio, who had been in the service of King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont since 1859. Victor made him a senator in 1891. Their wedding ceremony was held in Locate on January 24, 1861. Cristina's son-in-law was an honest, charming man and had an especially gentle character, loving and devoted to Maria, his bride. But their happiness had now to be paid for with Cristina's loneliness. In the past, her work had helped her through personal crises: hope for Italy's future had served her almost as a religion, and her own deep faith had set goals for her to attain. Now, nothing seemed to hold meaning. Her life, consistently deprived of personal happiness from her

childhood, seemed emptied of any reason to continue. How would she live out the days remaining to her without Maria to fill her heart, worry about, plan for, and laugh with? Everything she had worked for and suffered over had been accomplished. The problem was how to live now and enjoy the present.

The separation from her daughter was very painful, but fortunately, her son-in-law welcomed her often in his house, allowing her to continue her close relationship with Maria. For Cristina, here was a new role, as mother-in-law and, soon, grandmother. Maria gave birth first to Cristinetta and some years later to Antonietta and adopted three more daughters. Cristina finally left the political scene because, in the 1860s, Italy came under the geographical configuration of the Savoy monarchy. She had waited a long time for this to happen, and now everything seemed to allow for the best possible future. Her public life was over. Here was the end of money requests from all the poor and needy people, the end of spies following her every move, and the end of her exile. At last, she could live a life of relative calm and remain with friends and family (Figure 1.6). Cristina's five granddaughters contended for Cristina's affection, and her house was never empty.

Photograph of Cristina, 1868

Figure 1.6. Cristina in 1868.

Cristina still traveled, but mostly within Lombardy. She bought a villa on Lake Como to be closer to her daughter. She moved there with her faithful Bodoz, the Turkish assistant who had followed her for twenty years, and with Miss Parker, the English nurse who had lived with her and Maria since the trip in England of 1839. There, her life was hardly less full than in Milan. She was constantly surrounded by friends from the fashionable world and stars of the literary, artistic, and musical circles as well. For Verdi, she professed unbounded admiration. On more than one occasion she publicly defended the great composer against the ungenerous criticism of his Milanese fellow citizens. Her lifelong passion for the soothing delights of musical harmony was rivaled only by her undying enthusiasm for politics, and she welcomed many guests who were veterans of the wars or of the political independence struggle.

Inseparable from her *narghilé* (water pipe), Cristina died on July 5, 1871; and she was only 63 years old. Cristina was buried simply and quietly at Locate, just outside Milan, in Northern Italy (Figure 1.7). This little town wanted to honour and celebrate her life and her dedication to poor people. Even today, the village includes the name *Trivulzi* as part of its proper name. Cristina left her villa in Locate as a gift to the community. It was divided into apartments and occupied by some twenty to thirty families, a testament to her generosity and loyalty to her village. Her distinguished ancestor, Marshal Trivulzio, governor of Milan, dictated on his deathbed his own epitaph. It would be singularly appropriate for Cristina as well: *"A Trivulzio who never rested is now at rest. Silence."*[33]

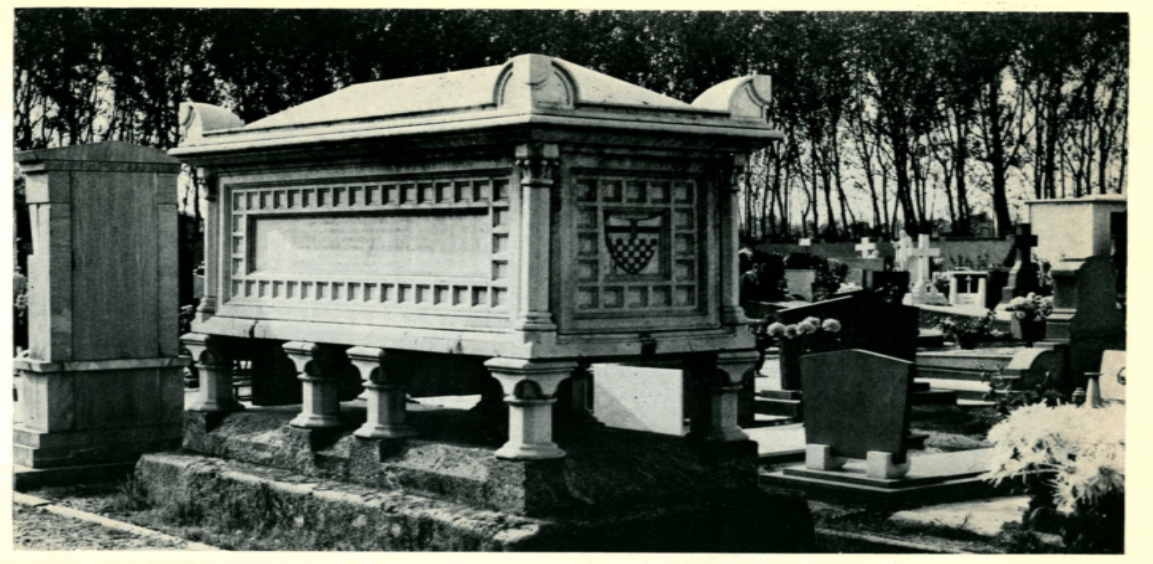

Figure 1.7. Cristina's tomb at Locate. Cristina's coffin is in a raised sarcophagus, indicating her wish not to be buried.

[33] Ibid., 216.

Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso had an adventurous life, filled with many famous and glamorous people. She lived through one of the most tumultuous and volatile periods in Italian history. Many people who spend their lives crusading for their causes die with their hopes unfulfilled. But Cristina lived to see many of her causes realized. The Italy on which she looked in the twilight of her days was one united country, with Rome, the imperial city of the Caesars, as its capital. Sometimes she was misunderstood, even vilified, because she was "a prophet ahead of her time." As a woman, she gave all that she could to remain an example of brave and bold feminism.

Chapter 2:

CRISTINA'S REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES

FOR THE INDEPENDENCE AND UNIFICATION OF ITALY

Between 1820 and 1848, Italy endured countless uprisings and attempted revolutions from various factions throughout the country. The *Conciliatore* (underground nationalist movement), *Carbonari* (secret societies), and *Federazione* (federation of the united Italian provinces) all tried in various ways to lobby for their unification. One united Italy was the goal. Time after time the revolutions were put down by various kings, viceroys, and even popes. It was a horribly violent time; patriots were martyred and citizens tried various means of civil disobedience. After the defeat of Napoleonic France and following the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Lombardy had been returned to Austria, and under the repressive hand of Prince Metternich, champion of absolutism, all change was forbidden. It was he who said contemptuously: "Italy is nothing but a geographical expression."[34] The Nationalist movement's *Conciliatore* (Peacemakers), a progressive biweekly scientific and literary journal, was outlawed. The introduction of machinery was discouraged. Count Hartig, the governor, even forbade gas to be used for lighting the streets of Milan or steamboats to be allowed on the Po River.

But the forces set free by the French Revolution could not be suppressed, and the opposition driven underground led to the birth of secret societies. The most active of

[34] A letter to Count Dietrichstein, August 2, 1847; reprinted in *Il Nazionale,* 1848.

these was the *Federazione*. Its object was to free Italy from all foreign domination and to form a confederation with an Italian prince as its titular head. Separated from her husband and unable to apply for an annulment, Cristina found consolation in politics and became a member of the *Giardiniere*, the women supporters of the *Carbonari,* and she was soon directly taking part in subversive activities on her own.

Disguising herself in rags, Cristina went around the slums of Milan, stirring up the poor people against the Austrians and inciting them to prepare for the day when they might stage a mass revolt and eject the foreigners. Her conduct did not escape the notice of Count Hartig, the governor, and he briefed two master spies to follow her everywhere. Their lengthy reports on her activities were preserved in the secret archives of the Lombard-Venetian Government in Milan.

By 1829, the temporarily quiescent revolutionary movements in the peninsula were beginning to ferment again. Lord Malmesbury, in his *Memoirs of an ex-Minister*, wrote that "conspiracies were universal." When Cristina arrived in Rome at the end of April, the liberals in the Papal States were being encouraged by the belief that the French government might at last put pressure on the sick and elderly Pope Leo XII to act less repressively towards them.

In Rome, Cristina was warmly received by Queen Hortense, daughter of Josephine Beauharnais and stepdaughter of Napoleon. She was busy plotting to restore Napoleon I's son to the French throne and her eldest son, Prince Napoleon Louis, to his father's kingdom of Holland. Meanwhile, his brother, Louis Napoleon, was to lead fragmented Italy to liberty and unite it under his kingship. This last plan really appealed to Cristina. Lord Malmesbury, who was in Rome at the time, wrote in his memoirs that

she was “the leader of the conspirators.” In a letter to Ernesta Bisi, Cristina cryptically referred to having been visited by nearly all the “best artists” in Rome. That city’s branch of the *Carbonari* was known as the Artists. Prince Louis Napoleon (the future Napoleon III) had joined them when he was only fifteen and had taken their solemn oath, pledging himself for life to the cause of Italian unity.

Cristina was at the height of her singular beauty, and Prince Louis Napoleon fell in love with her. If she had not already had a husband, they might have married; his sights then were on the throne of a united Italy, and an alliance with a descendant of one of the oldest families in Lombardy would have been immensely popular. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if his elder brother had not died, Cristina might have become his wife instead of Eugénie!

A few months later, Prince Louis Napoleon was banished from Rome, and it was reported that a large quantity of arms was smuggled ashore near Livorno in 1830 and hidden in the villa at Serravezza, with Cristina directing the operations. By then, Cristina was very much involved in the revolutionary movement. Under pretense of visiting doctors and obtaining treatment, she went, in early April, as an emissary of the conspirators of Florence to Geneva, which was rapidly becoming a great international center on account of its geographical position. Its enlightened progressive government allowed absolute freedom of political opinion.

However, things were not fated to go smoothly. At this time, there was an uprising of the liberals in the canton. The old government was overthrown and a new democratic constitution was brought into existence, much to the delight of the people and the political exiles. Cristina expressed approval of the revolution and indulged in negative

attacks against the Austrian government in her various conversations. She did not limit her conduct to voicing her opinions but became a close friend of the head of the liberals, the lawyer Luvini-Perseghini; there was reason to suspect from her long visits to him that she may have been engaged in subversive activities. These activities were noted with joy among the exiles in Marseilles. Cristina gave practical help to the revolutionary cause by contributing 35,000 Austrian lire for the arming and provisioning of those desiring to return and fight in Italy.

While visiting the home near Marseilles of a prominent French Calvinist, Princess Cristina had first met Augustin Thierry. Though still young, Thierry was losing his sight and was also in danger of becoming paralyzed. Throughout her life Cristina always went out of her way to help the less fortunate. Soon she was acting as his seeing guide. Born in 1795, Thierry had been the secretary and adopted son of the Comte de Saint-Simon, the founder of French socialism. In 1819, Thierry edited with him the periodical *L'Organisateur*, in which their views for the reform of society had been propounded. Through her association with Thierry, Cristina was to become increasingly sympathetic towards socialistic ideas.

After the revolution of 1830, Paris became the Mecca for all liberals. Here Cristina learned that a law had been issued in Milan: unless she returned within three months and surrendered herself to the police, she would be declared civilly "dead" and her property confiscated. In order to force Cristina to do this, sources of income under Austrian jurisdiction were blocked from reaching her. But these threats only succeeded in making her an active partisan of Giuseppe Mazzini, who was an Italian politician and activist for the unification of Italy. Cristina presented Augustin Thierry's letter of

introduction to François Mignet, who was in charge of the Foreign Ministry's archives in Paris and who had gained success as editor of the radical paper *Le National*. In this way, Cristina persuaded many of the most important men in French political life to support the cause of Italian liberation. Cristina wanted to meet all the officers she could, so as to try and win through friendship their sympathy for the Italian patriots. To this end, she deliberately set about making her attic studio intriguingly colorful and bizarrely romantic.

At that time, thanks to Lafayette's efforts, some of the Italian patriots freed from their Venetian prison were allowed to leave Toulon and come to Paris, having obtained permits to do so. None had any money, and all needed to earn their living. Cristina was tireless in her endeavors to help them. She was secretly no less determined than before to continue her fight for Italian independence. Her success in Paris with the politicians encouraged her in the belief that the best way she could serve that cause would be by using her restored riches for propaganda purposes.

Outwardly, Cristina played the part of an eccentric patroness of the arts, to confuse the Austrian spies who never ceased to watch her. Behind this unconventional pretext, her house became the nerve center of the Italian freedom movement in France. Here, the exiles were brought into contact with the leading French statesmen and received help when in need.

In Cristina's salon, the coming *Risorgimento* was discussed and planned and French support gained. Gabriel Hanotaux wrote:

> She was with more passion what Madame du Deffand had been in the eighteenth century with more wit and what twenty years earlier Madame Récamier had been

> with more majesty. She was a center of attraction. No one did more than she for the cause of a united Italy.[35]

Cristina was at the height of her social success.

At the time Cristina was working, in whatever way she could, for the unification of Italy, another exile, Count Cesare Balbo, published a book in 1844 entitled *Le Speranzà d'Italia.* Cristina was one of the first to appreciate the merits of its theme: that before a successful revolution could take place, people of the divided Italian states must be politically educated and made aware of the advantages of a united country. This appealed to her and suggested a way of bringing purpose to her existence. She decided to do all she could to achieve this end and so she founded a paper, the *Gazzetta Italiana*, which had to be printed in Paris.

Two months after the publication of Cristina's new journal in 1846, Pius IX was elected pope. As a cardinal he had shown himself to have liberal leanings, and the democrats of Italy waited hopefully to see how he would rule. Although he swiftly embarked on a policy of sweeping reforms, the more he granted, the more the populace wanted, and soon the people were taking new initiatives. Although he did not officially authorize freedom of the press, a rapidly increasing number of political papers started being published. This gave a tremendous impetus to the liberal movement throughout the Italian peninsula. There was only one possible candidate for the throne of a united country, and that was Charles Albert, ruler of Piedmont. Meanwhile, Count Camillo di Cavour was enacting some of the social improvements Cristina had suggested in the editorials of her papers.

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[35] Gattey, 38-39.

In 1847, an opportunity arose for King Charles Albert to show practical proof of his democratic leanings. The Canton of Tessin, which had bought salt from Austrian-ruled Venice, was allowed by the king in 1843 to import it through Piedmont from Marseilles or Geneva, without incurring any duty. This meant that Austria suffered a loss of revenue, so Metternich sent a strongly worded protest to Charles, claiming that his action was contrary to the terms of treaties between both countries. As the king refused to be intimidated, the Austrians in reprisal doubled the duties on wines entering their territories from Piedmont. Even then Charles Albert was not threatened and insisted that what he had done did not break any agreement. It was Austria that had committed a hostile act by increasing the wine duty.

Cristina felt that the time was approaching when Italians might once again attempt to rid themselves of foreign domination. Displaying remarkable political foresight, she also judged that Louis-Philippe's days as king in France were numbered and that a revolution was imminent, leading to succession by the Bonaparte leader who had once been a member of the *Carbonari* and had taken their oath to fight until Italy was united. In a war of independence, victory would be more certain if the insurrectionists had the support of a major power against Austria.

Believing that Bonaparte would soon be in power in France, Princess Cristina made plans to visit him and wrote telling of her intention. He replied from London:

> I thank you for the note you have sent me. Believe me that free or captive I regard your friendship as always dear to me. As soon as you arrive here, let me know, for in London it is difficult to trace a person when one does not know where they are

> staying. It will make me truly happy to see you again. Adieu, Madame, and receive the assurance of my sentiments of respectful and tender friendship.[36]

Cristina traveled to England and had a long and emotional interview with the prince. Not only Italy but France, too, was discussed. The nephew of the great Napoleon realized that Cristina's long stay in Paris and intimacy with prominent personalities in all political camps gave her assessment of the French political climate authority and value. He was stirred by her enthusiasm. When the time came for her to leave, he promised: "When I am in power in France, then I will help Italy."[37]

When autumn came, Cristina decided to take a more militant part in the liberation movement. For her the moment had come to try and make history, so she set out on a tour of Italy, with the intention of using her charms to excite people to rebellion. She visited Genoa and Florence in November. In August 1847, as an expression of Austrian disapproval, their soldiers, fully armed, occupied the whole town of Rome. This roused the populace to fury. Men seized arms and banded themselves together as civic guards. University students rioted. The pope, with difficulty, tried to quiet the agitators. Rome was still in ferment when Cristina reached the city.

At the beginning of 1848, in the Papal States, in Tuscany and Piedmont, the wave of liberalism was working in earnest at last. Reform followed reform and a Customs Union was planned. Meanwhile in Naples, Lombardy, Venetia, Modena, and Parma, the old order desired power and refused to yield an inch. Troubles first erupted in Sicily. Soon Naples itself was in revolt and Ferdinand II was forced to agree to far-reaching

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[36] Ibid., 93.
[37] Ibid.

constitutional reforms. A general amnesty permitted the return of exiles and Cristina went there to see what she could do to help the new democratic regime.

On February 13, 1848, a crowd of Neapolitans called to tell her that Charles Albert, too, had granted the Piedmontese a constitution, so that eleven million Italians were now enjoying democracy. In Rome, the common people and the middle classes had given her the greatest welcome, while the aristocracy stood aloof. In Naples all classes welcomed her. When she attended a banquet to celebrate the new constitution, everyone seemed to rush at her as she arrived, seizing and kissing her hands.

With so much enthusiasm about, she decided to publish the *Ausonio* in Naples in the future and to bring out both a daily paper, the *Nazionale,* which appeared on March 1, 1848, and a biweekly popular journal. Now that there was freedom of the press, she thought such papers would survive and thrive. Metternich in Vienna was not particularly worried by the success of the popular uprising in Naples. He gave strict instructions to the eighty-one-year-old veteran Marshal Radetzky that no concessions of any kinds were to be allowed in Lombardy and Venetia. An order was issued that should Cristina set foot in any Austrian territory, she was to be arrested and taken to Milan.

Metternich longed for a rebellion on a large scale so that he could exterminate the troublemakers. To show their indignation at the repressive measures taken, the men of Milan agreed among themselves to stop smoking and playing the lottery from New Year's Day, 1848. The Austrian government had a tobacco monopoly, and this move was designed to hit the regime through its pocketbook. This enraged Radetzky. His officers and soldiers were issued free supplies of cigars and instructed to blow the smoke into the faces of the townspeople they met in the streets. Disturbances broke out over this insult.

They reached their peak on the evening of January 3 when drunken soldiers insulting the citizens they encountered caused a riot and mounted troops brutally quelled it by attacking with lances and galloping over and trampling the fallen, killing some fifty-nine people. Other cities such as Brescia, Verona, and Bergamo had followed Milan's example and there, too, were ugly scenes.

On February 27, news of the revolution in Paris reached Cristina in Naples and she wrote on March 7 to Thierry that the fall of Louis-Philippe's government delighted her. She suggested that until things became settled in Paris, he should join her in Naples. If he did not want to do that and her presence could help him in any way, she would return to Paris until "the tempest had abated."[38]

For five days (March 18-22) in 1848, the fighting continued. Radetzky's superstitious Croatians, demoralized by the tumult of the bells tolling in all the cathedrals, committed unspeakable atrocities. The owners of the great palaces threw open their doors, so that the Milanese could enter there for food and rest. Marquis Pallavicino, Cristina's cousin, in his *Memoire*, wrote: "The people of Milan for five days behaved towards each other as if they were angels."[39]

Slowly but surely, the people of Milan drove the Austrian soldiers out of every street. From the highest spire of the cathedral flew the Italian tricolor flag. Radetzky asked for an armistice, but the provisional government that had been set up by the victorious citizens did not trust him and insisted on unconditional evacuation. Volunteers from Monza, Como, and Bergamo were now storming the gates, and the Austrians were

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[38] Ibid., 99.
[39] Giorgio Marquis Pallavicino, *Trivulzio. Memoire di G. Pallavicino-Trivulzio, Pubblicate per Cura della Moglie, Vol. 1-3* (Torino, 1882-95), 165.

in danger of being caught in a trap. By the morning of March 22nd, the Austrians held only the castle and the walls. The Milanese now attacked the gates from within, and towards evening, led by the young hero, Manara, they captured the Porta Tosa, thereby admitting the volunteers. As a final act of despair, the Austrians, in their last rallying point of the castle, bombarded the town during the night before withdrawing under the cover of darkness. The triumph of the Milanese ignited the whole of Italy. The Austrian garrison withdrew from Parma, and its new Bourbon Duke was forced to grant a constitution, while the Duke of Modena fled with the Austrians. In Florence the Duke declared war on Austria, and the Austrian embassy was sacked. Once the news of the famous five days rising reached Turin, crowds assembled before the royal palace, demanding war with Austria.

When the revolution erupted in Milan, Cristina was in Naples. Stimulated by the news, she decided to go to Milan as soon as possible and chartered a steamer to take her to Genoa. She let it be known that she would give free transport to any men of spirit who would care to accompany her. She could not formally invite them to do so because "King of Bomba" of Naples was at peace with Austria, and it would have been an unfriendly act to allow an armed expedition to set out from his territory. Those on board invited Cristina to become their commander. She agreed and then proceeded to appoint her officers; she had prepared commissions. These began: 'We, Princess Cristina di Belgiojoso, hereby name and appoint . . ."[40]

[40] Gattey, 104.

On April 7, 1848, Cristina wrote to Thierry to say that she had arrived at her home in Locate two days previously and had entered Milan the day before by the Roman Gate to cries of "Viva Cristina! Viva Italia!"[41]

While the Milanese themselves gained heart from the arrival of the princess's volunteers, the provisional government was far from enthusiastic, despite Count Casati's public welcome. Thus ran the count's cynical commentary on the affair. The provisional government had been secretly dismayed by the arrival of the Neapolitan volunteers, because they were all republicans, and the government, which had pledged to support King Charles Albert, did not want to offend him.

Aware that she might be suspected of having become a republican, Cristina decided to make her position clear by writing a letter to Charles Albert in which she hoped for a country united under his kingship. The fate of Italy depended on what the Lombardy themselves now would decide. If it was to unite with Piedmont, then within two years the whole country might be one under the House of Savoy. The king himself did not reply to her letter, but she received a message through an intermediary, thanking her for it and saying that he was not offended by its tone.

In the meantime, Princess Cristina had started holding a salon in Milan and was busy putting over her ideas through her persuasive personality and her pen. Not only did she contribute articles to the French press and write and distribute political pamphlets, but she also started and edited two new journals, *Il Crociato* (The Crusader) and *La Croce di Savoia* (The Cross of Savoy). In all this work she was ably assisted by Gaetano Stelzi.

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[41] Rafaello Barbiera, *Passione del Risorgimento* (Milan: Treves, 1903), 411.

In Cristina's columns, she emphasized that what was needed above all else was a trained army capable of freeing them from the Austrians. Such an army only existed in Piedmont, which made it essential for Piedmont and Lombard to unite. As the Piedmontese were ruled by a king and as the vast majority of them supported a monarchical form of government, Lombardy could only hope for union with Piedmont by abandoning republican leanings. To Cristina's delight, she found more and more people supporting these views until it became clear that they were in the majority.

On taking charge, the government had, without considering the consequences, abolished income tax and the state lottery as well as cutting the duty on salt. These measures, which would have been praiseworthy while there was peace, were foolish in time of war.

Cristina claimed that the lack of control exercised by the provisional government over its underlings hastened bankruptcy. When the Austrians left, many Milanese had taken over the jobs they fancied. Later, friends of noble families were given the most lucrative positions. Many civil servants formerly employed by the Austrians remained at their posts, pretending they were patriots but secretly counting on the return of the Austrians and doing all they could toward this end while they filled their pockets at the expense of the government, or rather, their fellow citizens.

According to Cristina, the war took on another character on the frontier defended by the disdained volunteers from Naples. She praised them, claiming that the only place through which the Austrians could force a way was the valley of the Tyrolean Alps. Cristina knew that the unexpectedly early arrival of the Austrians took people by surprise. That morning they had been told that the enemy was several miles away from Milan, a

short distance from the Piedmontese artillery park at Noverasco. The king and the main body of his army were encamped outside the Roman Gate nearest to Noverasco. Had the Austrians managed to advance as far as the Roman Gate without encountering any Piedmontese forces, without the Milanese being warned of the enemy's approach? As impossible as this might seem, this was what in fact happened. At dusk the National Guard returned. They had forced the Austrians to retreat some three miles and had captured five cannons and two hundred prisoners. This initial success excited and encouraged the population.

On March 22, 1848, King Charles Albert sent for the municipal council, saying that he wished to explain to them the reasons that had induced him to propose terms to the Austrian marshal for the safety of the city. Dismayed by this extraordinary news, the council members asked that three members of the Committee of Public Safety and Generals Zucchi and Clerici, the two commanders of the National Guard, and their staff might also be present. The capitulation was referred to by the Generals Bava and Olivieri as an accomplished fact, and since the king's conditions had been granted, there was nothing more to be said. General Zucchi of the National Guard admitted that Milan could not defend itself without the assistance of the army, but he objected that insufficient time was being allowed to citizens wishing to leave and said that the king should insist that Radetzky grant an extension.

Cristina continuously reported that she was unable adequately to describe the dismay and despondency with which the people of Milan learned the news. Then, indignation replaced despair. The engaged citizens surrounded the Greppi Palace. People swore they would stop the king from leaving, and that they would force him to denounce

the capitulation. On all sides was heard the cry, "Better die than see the Austrians again!"[42] Others smashed windows and tried to climb inside of the Greppi Palace, howling for the blood of "Citizen Charles Albert" and demanding that his son, the Duke of Genoa, be handed over to them as a hostage. Fusillade after fusillade of bullets broke through every window, rooms of the palace where the king might be taking cover.

The king ordered all tall houses by the walls near the Roman Gate to be destroyed, so as not to leave standing any buildings from whose roofs the inner city could be shelled. Property in the value of eighteen million Austrian lire was thus destroyed. The Milanese became convinced that the king now really intended to defend their city. Consequently, the menacing crowds around the Greppi Palace melted away. When night came, one of Charles Albert's aides slipped through a window into an alley, made his way to where two firing regiments were stationed, and brought them back to the palace. Midnight had just struck when, protected by these men and disguised as one of them, the king escaped mounted on a horse. The news of this desertion stunned the Milanese. The situation was desperate, and no one was left on whom they could vent their anger. The royal commissioners had followed the king. The Committee of Public Safety was already on its way to Lugano. The entire Piedmontese army including the Lombard battalions attached to it had also left, concealing the sound of their departure by muffling their feet. Both the Lombard and Piedmontese artillery had gone, taking with them all the munitions that had been assembled in the city and the four million lire that had been raised from private persons and the churches. Cristina wrote:

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[42] Gattey, 122-123.

> The sky was red over Milan, and columns of black smoke reached up to the very clouds. What caused this smoke? Did it still come from the houses that Charles Albert with his tongue in his cheek had ordered to be burned to help Milan's defense? Or were the Austrians already beginning to execute their vengeance? Or had some desperate citizens decided to leave the enemy only smoldering plunder? Many palaces were half destroyed by fire, while the army headquarters, the Customs House and the military hospital were completely gutted. How it was caused remains a mystery.[43]

Thus, the Austrians came back as conquerors to the city from which they had fled in haste just four months earlier. Twenty-five thousand soldiers had been taken without a blow being struck. The town was defended by forty-five thousand regulars outside it, and by more than forty thousand men in the National Guard within. Because the capitulation agreement had been torn up by Charles Albert, General d'Aspre felt justified in ordering the city to be pillaged.

After the collapse of Milan's short-lived independence, decrees confiscating the property and money of those who had rebelled against the Austrians proved hard to put into effect through lack of tribunals and officials to enforce them. So the Austrians resorted to a system of imposed levies, which exhausted the funds of all the banks. Disillusioned and exhausted by these drawn out political and revolutionary events, Princess Cristina had to go into exile to the Ottoman Empire. Her departure from Europe ends what can be called the heroic phase of Princess Christina's patriotic revolutionary life: a period, by reason of her very public political positions, open to varying and often hostile criticism.

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[43] Ibid., 124-125.

Chapter 3:

THE PARIS SALON OF PRINCESS CRISTINA BELGIOJOSO

Over the many decades she worked for Italian unification, Cristina had a period in which she fled to France. This occurred in 1828, after the breakup of her unhappy marriage and after the failure of the revolution in 1828 that brought her to the attention of the Austrian authorities. From 1835 to 1842, Cristina held sway over one of the most famous salons in Paris. At her soirées often as many as six hundred people were present at one time.

With only with a few hundred francs in her pocket, Cristina first arrived in Carqueiranne (a commune in Southeastern France) and soon moved to Paris. After a short period, she settled into a modest apartment on the fifth floor of number 7, rue Neuve-St. Honoré (now rue Vignon) on the Place de la Madeleine. Barely able to feed herself and lacking even one servant to help with simple house chores that were utterly unfamiliar to her, she found herself a very humble princess in these circumstances.

Whatever else she lacked, she was not lacking in company or invitations. Augustin Thierry's letter to François Mignet had helped to open many doors in Paris.[44] Marquis de Lafayette's interest provided her with daily attention. Only high society

[44] Jean Walch, *Les Maîtres de l'Histoire: 1815-1850: Augustin Thierry, Mignet, Guizot, Thiers, Michelet, Edgard Quinet* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1986).

people who lived in the *faubourg Saint-Germain* district looked with suspicion at this poor princess, even though her credentials were impeccable.

At the end of August 1832, Cristina's mother had agreed to give her an allowance. It was thought possible to obtain Austria's permission for this. Cristina knew Count Apponyi, a Hungarian politician, because of his closeness with Liszt. He described one of his visits to Cristina in his journal.

> I went recently to see her at home. I found her seated on a Renaissance-style sofa in a similarly furnished study. It was in the morning. She was wearing a white dressing-gown. I caught a glimpse of a sort of red velvet bodice which she had on beneath it. On her head was an immense turban which reminded me of that worn by Michael Angelo's Sibyl. M. Mignet was standing behind the sofa, leaning nonchalantly on its carved oak back; M. Liszt, the pianist, in an open-necked black velvet blouse, with his long sleek hair falling on his shoulders and a beret in his hand, was seated on a stool in front of the princess. I was so taken aback by this extraordinary scene that I had difficulty in starting up a conversation. The Princess, loving to surround herself both with young bohemians and the most distinguished savants, presents an odd mixture of tastes which inspires in turn admiration and pity.[45]

Thanks to Count Apponyi's cooperation, in April 1833 fifty thousand lire was paid to Cristina through the Austrian Embassy in Paris after she had renewed her promise to return to Milan as soon as health permitted. Cristina now gave up her fifth floor apartment and rented a much finer one in the house of the Duc de Plaisance, I, Place de la Madeleine. This consisted of a hall, a dining room with walls painted to resemble green marble, and another drawing room with two windows and mirror-paneled doors, the walls papered in red. There was also a bedroom with white satin walls and a bathroom—quite luxurious surroundings.

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[45] Albert Apponyi, *The Memoirs of Count Apponyi* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1935).

While Cristina was in Switzerland, some Italian patriots, freed from their Venetian prison, were allowed to leave Toulon and come to Paris. They likely obtained permits thanks to Lafayette's efforts. None of them had any money, and all of them needed to earn their living. Cristina was tireless in her endeavors to help them do this. In the case of Professor Orioli of Bologna, who moved to Paris in 1809 and then returned to Italy and later became a professor, she arranged for him to give a series of lectures in her home, for which he received payment. She saw to it that all the lectures were well attended. These highly popular lectures constituted the beginning of Cristina's famous Paris salon.

At that time, the most famous salon in Paris was that of Madame Récamier, then in her old age. It was not long before Cristina received an invitation to visit. Madame Récamier's residence left strong impressions. The drawing-room was always dimly lit, and the thick curtains were drawn to keep out the noises of Paris. The twelve chairs and six *bergères* (armchairs) that furnished the salon were reflected in a polished parquet floor, without rugs or carpet. Madame Récamier lived in this sanctuary and sat in a large *bergère* beside her fireplace. In semi-dark surroundings, she looked like a gentle white cloud from which came neither thunder nor lightning, but only a sweet voice.

However, Princess Belgiojoso grew bored at the meaningless trivial gossip flowing between Madame Récamier and such guest as Monsieur de Chateaubriand. About this, she wrote in her *Souvenirs*:

> I was never any good at feeding vain people with compliments. They are always fishing for praise and if you politely comply with a small compliment, they immediately protest their unworthiness to receive it, in the hope that will encourage you to pay them even greater compliments.

> Now Monsieur de Chateaubriand expected us to go on complimenting him despite his protests. I took him at his word and never again paid him a compliment and that made me somewhat unpopular with him. There was another way in which I disappointed the great man. Not once did I ever express a desire to be present when he read aloud from his *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe.*
>
> One day when we were alone together, Mme. Récamier in her charming way adroitly steered the conversation onto the subject of reading aloud. She had heard that I myself was fond of entertaining my friends in this manner. I realized that in her tactful way, she was throwing me a life-line, so that I might pull myself out of the cultureless swamp into which she believed I was fast sinking. She was opening a door so that I might escape from my dungeon and bask in the sunshine of Monsieur de Chateaubriand's brilliance. But I saw only danger ahead and the prospect of having to listen to reading after reading and being obliged to add my quota of compliments.
>
> So I hurriedly stammered that to tell the truth reading aloud bored me.

Cristina also wrote:

> Madame Récamier did not usually admit guests to her salon before four o'clock in the afternoon. For reasons of health, I spent every summer in the country outside Paris and my visits to the capital were governed by the railway timetable.
>
> As a result I could not call on Madame Récamier between four and five which was her receiving hour. So, kindly as she always was, she made an exception in my favour and admitted me into her sanctum during the hour reserved exclusively for Monsieur de Chateaubriand. I made many people envious when I disclosed that I was admitted to the Abbey between three and four.
>
> Many a time have I been asked in tones betraying an ill-disguised curiosity how that mysterious hour was spent. I would pretend not to hear the question, for I did not mind appearing to mortals. Who knows what wild flights of fancy indulged in the uninitiated as a result? If I insist on remaining silent, perhaps in a few years' time I shall read that Madame Récamier and Monsieur de Chateaubriand conspired for one hour a day during fifteen years in favour of the elder branch of the Bourbons, or that it was Madame Récamier who wrote Chateaubriand's books and that she spent the sacred hour telling him all what he was supposed to have written during the previous twenty-four hours. I want to tear aside the veil, and rout the romancers. What then did Madame Récamier and Monsieur de Chateaubriand do between three and four o'clock? They just drank tea!
>
> Place me for one hour every day for a month before a tea table in company of whoever you wish. The first day I shall behave and speak like Madame Récamier; the second day I shall offer tea to my companion with a gesture and without saying a word. At the end of the week we shall take our cups without a glance at

> each other; and at the end of the month, unless one of us is afflicted with a violent passion for the Chinese beverage, we might well through other distractions forget to meet.[46]

This quotation shows more of Cristina's character: she valued honesty and disliked pretense and the meaningless passing of time. She was a progressive woman, and these trivial exchanges would influence her to open up her own salon.

From Cristina's first entry into Parisian high society, possibly at one of Lafayette's receptions, Cristina captivated her audience. Every Tuesday evening at eight o'clock a motley crowd of generals, politicians, veterans, and refugees arrived on foot and climbed the stairs to Lafayette's apartment on the rue d'Anjou.

In her new fine apartment in the Place de la Madeleine, Cristina now opened her own salon. At first, the salon was the assembling point of all Italians of note in Paris. At the end of July 1833, Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835) arrived in Paris, and he was to owe much of his success to the patronage of the princess, whose mother had taken him up to please her own lover, the Duke of Cannizzaro, who was a singer.

Cristina's mother wrote to Cristina: The princess wrote to Cristina: "I highly recommend Bellini to you and shall be grateful for all the assistance you can give him. Possibly he will stay some time in Paris. Do what you can to make the critics favourably disposed towards him."[47] It is clear that Cristina had influence with journalists and the opinionated in society. A year later, in October 1834, the Marchesa informed her daughter: "Bellini is enchanted with you. He writes that you are the only person in whom he can confide."

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[46] Gattey, 30-32.
[47] Ibid.

The sensitive and idealistic Bellini had become closely attached to Cristina, confiding his innermost thoughts to her. Their close relationship could be one reason why Cristina later chose Bellini's opera tune as *Hexameron*'s main theme. She wrote of Bellini in her *Souvenirs dans l'Exil*:

> It needs a great deal of courage to attempt something new. There are people who enjoy breaking in a horse, sailing on a ship making its maiden voyage wearing new boots. As for me, I detest equally doing all those things and even more the role of the seducer. I want everyone to get at least half-way to gaining their heart's desire.
>
> I can still hear his youthful voice as he spoke. I can still see his fair, curly hair, his pink and white coloring, his gentle and gracious manner, his elegant appearance. His whole personality was in harmony with his tender and dreamy music. What a pity he died young.[48]

After Bellini's death, it was not surprising that Cristina should seek solace in the company of other men, principally Lafayette and François Mignet. They attended all her parties and rented a house for her in the country when she found the summer heat too trying in the city. Later, Cristina installed herself in a magnificent mansion in the Rue d'Anjou-Saint honoré. Her husband Emilio was lodged in a separate and comfortable apartment over the stable.

Her own salon later became one of the most popular in Paris because "original in her beauty, original in her tastes, the princess was a unique figure in the midst of Parisian society."[49] She was described as "an Italian patriot long exiled in France."[50] Her unusual beauty, her titles, her frozen assets, her heroic stance against husband and emperor, and her ongoing mission to liberate Italian prisoners held by Austria—all these aspects

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

titillated the imagination. By 1835, her salon was the center of Italian thought and art. Her apartment, furnished in the Italian style with Renaissance furniture and paintings, was an innovation in Paris where gilded bergères and pastel silks had reigned for decades.

By all contemporary reports, her salon was singularly attractive because it was not limited to any one group, nor did it suffer from the hypersnobbism of many aristocratic salons, which closed their doors to low-born artists and writers. Cristina received diplomats and poets, historians and novelists, musicians and conspirators without regard to wealth, rank, or even success. It is to her credit that she supported Liszt long before he became an idol and Heine before his works had been translated into French. She was also as devoted to Jules Mohl, then an obscure orientalist of German origin, and to Adolphe Thiers, a minister in Louis-Philippe's government. Her ideas were new, her tastes eclectic, and her curiosity limitless. Her style was considered bizarre if not completely scandalous. Until Lent, there were concerts on Saturday followed by improvised balls in the dining room, where the piano was moved for the occasion. Cristina loved to dance, particularly the waltz. Wednesdays were reserved for intimate gatherings with her own close friends.

At that time, even though Cristina had made her peace with the Austrians, she was secretly no less determined than before to continue her fight for Italian independence. Her success in Paris with the politicians encouraged her in the belief that the best way she could serve that cause would be by using her restored financial resources for propaganda purposes. One of her goals in creating a grand salon was to attract all the people whose help she needed: statesmen, diplomats, authors, journalists, poets, painters, and

musicians. Her success playing the part of *la princesse malheureuse* (unhappy princess) in her garret had taught her that it paid to appear startlingly different from anyone else. To be really popular, one must appeal to the romantic imagination that reigned in the 1830s. She could effect the melodrama with her natural pallor and thinness, suggesting that she had been racked by some great passion or sorrow that had drained the redness from her cheeks.

To confuse the Austrian spies who never ceased to watch her, outwardly she played the part of an eccentric patroness of the arts. Behind this unconventional pretext, her house became the nerve center, the core of the Italian freedom movement in France. Here, the exiles were brought into contact with leading French statesmen and also received help when in need. For example, on March 28, 1837, Cristina organized a charity bazaar in her house. She persuaded famous authors, actors, actresses, and politicians to let her have their autographs to auction. She coaxed the painters Delacroix, Scheffer, Grenet, and Delaroche to donate some of their pictures for her to sell. This event became the talk of Paris and was followed two days later by a concert under her patronage where Liszt, Chopin, Thalberg, and others entertained the company. All the money thus raised went to aid impoverished Italian *émigrés*.

Cristina wrote later that in her role of literature-loving hostess, she should have read all the books published in France of that period.

> I did more and worse than this. I knew the authors.
>
> How many tenth-rate imitators of Byron flocked to my salon because I was a woman and a woman only could understand them! I learned to tell from the very

> first line these would-be poets uttered, from the way they opened their mouths and contorted their lips, what was coming.[51]

She saw through their pretensions and intentions even before they spoke a word.

In 1836, Count Rodolphe Apponyi, cousin of the Austrian ambassador, Count Anton Apponyi, and his wife were invited to a dinner by Princess Cristina's mother, the Marchesa Visconti d'Aragona. He intensely disliked Cristina because of her political anti-Austrian activities. He always disparaged her whenever she was mentioned in his *memoirs*. About the dinner, he wrote the following:

> Marquises has come to Paris with the cicisbeo, the Duke of Cannizzaro, and her youngest daughter who is ugly but witty. The Marchesa is well-preserved for her years. She is well-groomed, too, and although she is a grandmother, all her gowns and hats are pink. Her skin is still very white and her face having grown plump appears unwrinkled. She hides her double chin by means of a wide ribbon adorned with bows artistically and coquettishly arranged.
>
> She has visited Paris to try and persuade her daughter to sell her possessions in Milan to the Duke of Cannizzaro. The Princess would then become independent and could remain permanently in Paris with all her young and old poets and novelists who wallow in sentiment whenever they write a line or open their mouths.
>
> It is not surprising that having surrounded herself with undisciplined young people, the Princess behaves like them and gives herself superior airs, ignoring the rules of polite society. The evening she, together with her mother, half-sister and the Duke, dined with us, there were present Mr. Hannage from the English Embassy, the Swiss chargé d'affaires, and the Comte d'Harcourt, all of whom the Princess had not met. The invitation was for 6 p.m. Everyone arrived punctually except her. We waited over an hour, then at last at a quarter past seven we ordered dinner to be served. We were eating the second course when she entered with her relations and friends. Do you think she would have apologized? Not a word. She just told us that she had lost the invitation card and had thought we dined at seven.[52]

This is a harsh portrait, indeed.

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Count Rodolphe Apponyi, *Vingt-Cing Ans à Paris* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1913).

The Duchesse de Dino (afterwards the Duchesse de Talleyrand) wrote in her *Journal* for March 1836 an equally nasty assessment:

> The Princess Belgiojoso is more striking than beautiful: she is extremely pale, her eyes are too far apart, her head too square, her mouth large and her teeth discoloured; but she has a good nose, and her figure would be pretty if it were somewhat fuller; her hair is jet black, and she wears startling dresses; she has intellect, but wants balance and is full of artistic whims and inconsistencies: her manner is intentionally and skillfully natural, sufficiently to hide her affectation, while her affectation seems to counterbalance a certain innate vulgarity which her flatterers style an untamed nature. Such is my impression of this personage, with whom I have but the slightest acquaintance.[53]

Cristina made a more favorable impression on the British ambassador's wife. Lady Granville wrote to her sister, Lady Carlisle: "Yesterday at Madame de Bourke's, I met Princess Belgiojoso—*distinguée*, pale, big eyes like saucepans, small hands, gracious manners, most intelligent and with a spirit like a demon."[54] Regarding the duchesse's criticism of the princess's teeth, Alfred de Musset in contrast wrote to Caroline Jaubert that he found Cristina irresistible when she smiled. 'Her teeth are like orange buds and her mouth is like a satin-skinned red fruit.'[55]

On Wednesdays, musicians and singers displayed their gifts in Cristina's salon. She was intensely fond of music. When she attended the Italian opera in Paris, she would be so emotionally stirred by the performance that friends would have to carry her to her carriage after the final curtain had fallen. If the prince did not accompany her, she would wear the garb of the order of nuns known as the Grey Sisters. Again, bizarre extremes of behavior!

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[53] Dorothée Dino, *Chronique de 1831 à 1862* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1909-1910), 29.
[54] Gattey, 1971.
[55] Ibid.

On Saturdays came the turn of literature, history, theology, and politics. The poets then repaid their hostess's hospitality with sonnets in praise of her. She would be stretched out on a sofa, smoking a hookah, wearing around her head a circle of her favorite flowers, fuchsias. Between each puff she would insert a pair of silver tongs into a silver-gilt cup, drawing out a thin slice of orange and placing it on her tongue to freshen her mouth.[56]

Here are some typical laudatory verses, unpublished and unsigned, found among her papers in the family archives:[57]

Sonnet d'un républican farouche á Madame la Princess de Belgiojoso, Mai 1835

Voyez Ces habitants de la molle Italie
Que de winterhaltêr nous traça le pinceau
Dans son Décameron: quell magique tableau!
Que la nature est la vaporeuse, embellie!

Entendre Rubini, Thalberg, Damoreau
Ou le cor de Gallery qui tour à tour s'allie
Aux chants d'amour, de guerre ou de mélancolie,
C'est connaître des arts ce qu'il sont de plus beau.

Mais il est une chose et plus douce et plus belle,
Et qui n'a point encore trouvé de Coeur rebelled,
Charme indéfinissable on te résiste en vain!
Cettetoute-puissance inconceivable, étrange,
Et qui sembleànosyeux faire apparaître un ange,
C'est de Belgiojoso le souriredivin!

(These people see the soft Italy
Winter halter that we drew the brush
In his Decameron: quell magic picture!
That nature is the vaporous, embellished!

Hear Rubini, Thalberg, Damoreau
Or horn Gallery which in turn combines

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.

To love, war or melancholy songs
It is knowing what the arts are more beautiful.

But One thing is softer and more beautiful
And who has not yet found a rebellious Heart,
Indefinable charm on you resist in vain
This Potency inconceivable, strange
And that seems to us to show an angel
This is the divine smile Belgiojoso!)

After listening to the verses and the music and tiring of conversing, Cristina and her guests would dance in the dining room, a long gallery decorated with sculptures in stucco and Pompeiian paintings. The princess would circulate among her guests and from time to time whirl past with one of them. Occasionally there was a mishap, as when Victor Cousin, the philosopher, waved his arm about stressing some point, and one of the princess's hounds bit it, mistaking it for the stick with which he and his mistress played.[58] One can only imagine what tales the walls of this salon could tell us today if they had "ears," as the expression goes.

[58] Ibid.

Chapter 4:

THE CHARITY CONCERT OF MARCH 31, 1837

On March 31, 1837, Princess Cristina held a significant charity event for the poor Italians who were exhausted mentally and physically by the war. Cristina organized the event to comfort and help them. She persuaded many famous artists to donate their works—paintings, music, and poems. The event was a huge success. Cristina prepared two main events for the day: *Hexameron* and the piano duel between Franz Liszt and Sigismond Thalberg.

Hexaméron, Morceau de concert, S.392, is a collaborative work for solo piano, consisting of six variations on a theme, along with an introduction, connecting interludes, and a finale. The theme is the "March of the Puritans" from Vincenzo Bellini's opera *I Puritani.* The piece was conceived in 1837 by the princess, who directed Franz Liszt to assemble a set of variations of the march with five of his pianist friends. Liszt composed the introduction and the second variation. The composer-performers of the day contributed with a variation each: Frédéric Chopin, Carl Czerny, Henri Herz, Johann Peter Pixis, and Sigismond Thalberg. The story of this work, whose first performance date has long been debated, begins with an article in *Le Journal des Débats* of March 21, 1837, announcing a unique charity event:

> Mme la princess de Belgiojoso, noble witness of the misfortunes of her compatriots detained among us through exile, poverty, or illness, who has already undertaken to console so many miseries, has decided to make an all-powerful appeal to the sympathy of France on behalf of all those unfortunate Italians. This

> time it is not a question of political pity, it is better than that; it is a matter of philanthropy and Christian charity. Never has an advocate pleaded a finer cause. Thus Mme la princess de Belgiojoso has encountered the most laudable enthusiasm. Everyone who bears an illustrious name in society or the arts has claimed the honor of participating in this generous enterprise. To accomplish the finest possible end, an auction and a concert have been prepared for the benefit of those unhappy Italians. The concert and auction will take place in Mme la princess de Belgiojoso's own house, rue d'Anjou-St. Honoré, no. 23. The auction will last three days and begin the twenty-eighth of this month. This auction would be remarkable even if it did not have the purpose of aiding such terrible miseries. All the great artists of today, Messieurs Delacroix, Schnetz, Delaroche, Granet, Lehmann, Scheffer . . . have sent beautiful works. M. de Sommariva, with rare generosity, has stripped his own museum of an admirable fresco by Luini, that worthy pupil of Leonardo da Vinci; this fresco was removed through a completely new process by means of which the plaster is totally separated from the painting. . . . Meyerbeer has promised an unpublished song, the energetic young sculptor Mercier has given up his beautiful medallions of Liszt and George Sand; Messieurs Liszt, Thalberg, Chopin, Pixis, Czerny, Herz, talents so different and so varied, have united to compose a series of variations on the great duet from *I Puritani*.[59]

Hexameron was commissioned for the benefit concert, but most of the composers missed the deadline, so the piece could not be played at the March concert. It was finished in December.

I Puritani (The Puritans) is an opera in three acts by Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835). The music was set to a libretto by Count Carlo Pepoli (1796–1881), an Italian politician and journalist. It is not coincidental that Cristina chose the theme of *I Puritani* as *Hexameron*'s theme. When Bellini arrived at Paris in 1833, he became a frequent visitor to Cristina's salon. Bellini and Cristina had already met in Milan. In Cristina's salon, Bellini had many chances to meet not only artists or musicians, but also Italian politicians and writers. Through their interaction, Bellini decided to compose his opera. Bellini struggled with the plot of the opera from the beginning, but after he decided that

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[59] Brombert, 336-337.

the subject of the opera would be Italian émigrés, he requested a libretto from Carlo Pepoli. Bellini had met him at Cristina's salon. The words of the theme of *Hexameron,* "*suoni la tromba intrepido"* (Sound the trumpet for liberty), had political significance for the patriotic, republican Belgiojoso, and the march motif in the second act duet for baritone and bass to those words was admirable battle hymn (Figure 4.1). Cristina thought that the energetic and positive atmosphere of text and musical context could express a confident spirit, so she asked Liszt to gather famous composers and create a unified patriotic piece.

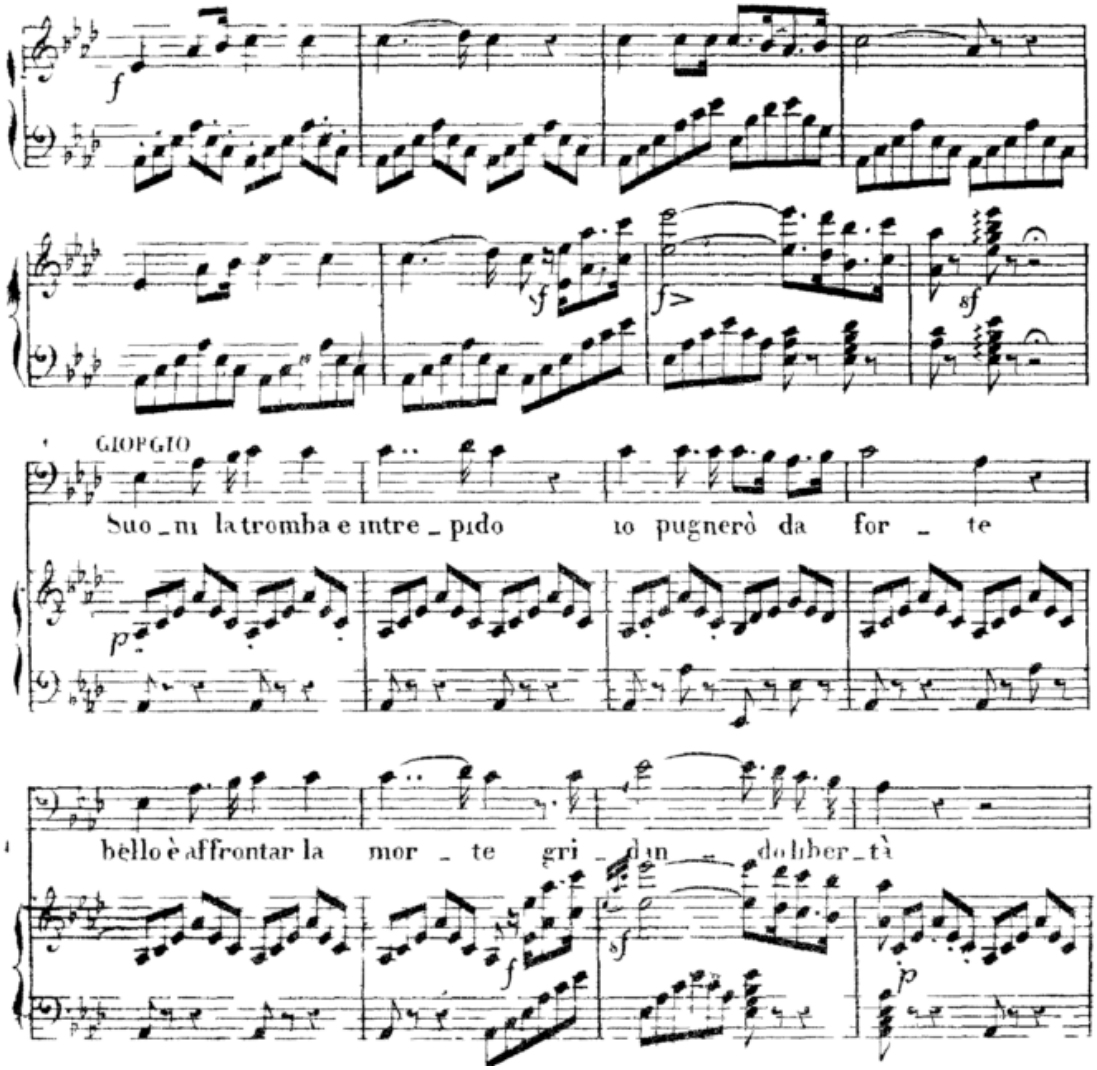

Figure 4.1. Suoni la tromba e intrepido in Act II of *I purtani.*

Raymond Lewenthal (1926-1988), a well-known American pianist, explained *Hexameron* and its categorization in the notes to his fine recording of the work:

> I am forced, as the attorney for the prosecution, regretfully to conclude that the evidence I have uncovered proves beyond most shadows of doubt that *Hexameron* did not, in fact, get performed by its six composers, *chez* Belgiojoso or *chez* anyone else. I say regretfully because it would have been quite a spectacle. The Princess thought so too when she conceived the capital idea of capping her already electrifying Liszt-Thalberg coup by having the four most famous *other* pianists then in Paris join her two lions in a super extravaganza finish to her bazaar concert. But even the best laid plans of great hostesses can and often do go awry. However and here we see her true mettle, the princess was not to be undone by her defecting artists. She hounded her quarry for months until she had extracted from each the manuscript of his allotted portion of the composition, and thus she turned failure into success.[60]

A letter from Cristina to Liszt dated June 4, 1837, two months after the bazaar, showed that the work was not yet completed. Her eagerness for him to finish had nothing to do with its performance—not scheduled for the bazaar in the first place—but with its publication before general interest subsided in the cause. The work was published by Haslinger in Vienna, in 1839, with a dedication to the Princess Belgiojoso. A perusal of Liszt's concert programs over the next few years shows that he played *Hexameron* all over Europe, sometimes as an encore piece, with great popular success. The first performance was given by Liszt in Italy at the end of December 1837, and it was also at that time that he gave "the monster work," as he dubbed it, its definitive title.[61]

In addition to the solo piano version, Liszt made arrangements for piano and orchestra (S.365b), and two arrangements for two pianos (S.654). Both pieces are shorter

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[60] Raymond Lewenthal, *Raymond Lewenthal Plays Alkan & Liszt* (Upper Marlboro, MD: Élan Recordings, 1996), 8.
[61] Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2013), 7.

than the solo and orchestral versions, and one has a completely rewritten ending. Liszt played the two-piano version in 1842 with Clara Schumann.

More recently, a solo piano work with the same name, based on the same Bellini theme, was created in 2009 by six New York–based composer-pianists: Matthew Cameron, Corbin Beisner, Simone Ferraresi, Quentin Kim, Greg Anderson, and Hwaen Chu'qi. It was given its premiere at the 2010 American Liszt Society Festival in Nebraska, USA.[62] It is similar in structure to the original *Hexameron*, consisting of an introduction, theme, six variations with connecting interludes, and a finale. Although composed in contemporary times, it is romantic and virtuosic in nature, looking back in style.

Hexameron is divided into nine parts:

1. Introduction: *Extrememement lent* (Liszt)
2. Tema: *Allegro marziale* (transcribed by Liszt)
3. Variation I: *Ben marcato* (Thalberg)
4. Variation II: *Moderato* (Liszt)
5. Variation III: *Di bravura* (Pixis) - *Ritornello* (Liszt)
6. Variation IV: *Legato e grazioso* (Herz)
7. Variation V: *Vivo e brillante* (Czerny) - *Fuocoso molto energico; Lento quasi recitativo* (Liszt)
8. Variation VI: *Largo* (Chopin) - *coda* (Liszt)
9. Finale: *Molto vivace quasi prestissimo* (Liszt)

[62] American Liszt Society, "Festivals 2010," http://www.americanlisztsociety.net/festivals.php.

The remainder of this chapter discusses each of the composers of the *Hexameron* and then reviews each of its parts.

Composers

Franz Liszt (1811-1866)

Liszt gained renown in Europe during the early nineteenth century for his virtuosic skill as a pianist. He was said by his contemporaries to have been the most technically advanced pianist of his age, and in the 1840s he was considered by some to be perhaps the greatest pianist of all time. Liszt was also a well-known and influential composer, piano teacher, and conductor. He was a benefactor to other composers, including Richard Wagner, Hector Berlioz, Camille Saint-Saëns, Edvard Grieg, and Alexander Borodin.

As a composer, Liszt was one of the most prominent representatives of the *Neudeutsche Schule* ("New German School"). He left behind an extensive and diverse body of work in which he influenced his forward-looking contemporaries and anticipated 20th-century ideas and trends. Some of his most notable contributions were inventing the symphonic poem, developing the concept of thematic transformation as part of his experiments in musical form, and making radical departures in traditional harmony. He also played an important role in popularizing a wide array of musical genres by transcribing them for piano.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

At the age of 21 Chopin settled in Paris. During the remaining 18 years of his life, he gave only about 30 public performances, preferring the more intimate atmosphere of

the salon; he supported himself by selling his compositions and working as a sought-after piano teacher, and he gained renown as a leading virtuoso of his generation. He formed a friendship with Franz Liszt and was admired by many of his musical contemporaries, including Robert Schumann. After a failed engagement with a Polish girl, from 1837 to 1847 he maintained an often turbulent relationship with the French writer Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin (known by the name George Sand). A brief and unhappy visit with Sand to Majorca in 1838–1839 was yet one of his most productive periods of composition. In his last years, he was financially supported by his admirer Jane Stirling, who also arranged for him to visit Scotland in 1848. Through most of his life, Chopin suffered from poor health; he died in Paris in 1849, probably of tuberculosis.

All of Chopin's compositions include the piano; most are for solo piano, although he also wrote two piano concertos, a few chamber pieces, and some songs to Polish lyrics. His keyboard style, which is highly individual, is often technically demanding; his own performances were noted for their nuance and sensitivity. Chopin invented the concept of instrumental ballade; his major piano works also include sonatas, mazurkas, waltzes, nocturnes, polonaises, études, impromptus, scherzos, and preludes, some published only after his death. Many contain elements of both Polish folk music and of the classical tradition of J. S. Bach, Mozart, and Schubert, whom he particularly admired. His innovations in style, musical form, and harmony, and his association of music with nationalism, were influential throughout and after the late Romantic period. Also, he compensated by using a pianissimo with infinite degrees of shading, and so delicate was his approach that when he came near a normal forte it sounded thunderous. Toward the end, though, his playing must have been wraithlike, with tiny tones dissolving faintly into

the air. Thalberg once came out of a Chopin recital and shouted all the way home. "I need some noise because I've heard nothing but pianissimo all evening."[63]

Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871)

Thalberg was a composer and one of the most distinguished virtuoso pianists of the nineteenth century. He and Liszt were considered rivals, so their duel at Cristina's salon was very famous. His splendid piano technique impressed many. In the late nineteenth century, Thalberg's fame had come to rest on his association with a single piano technique called the "three-hand effect." Carl Friedrich Weitzmann, in his *Geschichte des Klavierspiels* (1879), wrote about this:

> His bravura pieces, fantasies on melodies from Rossini's *Mosè* and *La donna del lago* (The Lady of the Lake), on motifs from Bellini's Norma and on Russian folk-songs, became extraordinarily popular through his own, brilliant execution; however, they treat their subjects always in one and the same way, . . . to let the tones of a melody be played in the medium octave of the keyboard now by the thumb of the right, now of the left hand, while the rest of the fingers are executing arpeggios filling the whole range of the keyboard.[64]

Johann Peter Pixis (1788-1874)

Pixis was a German pianist and composer. He was able to study with Albrechtsberger when his family moved to Vienna in 1806. While there, he met Beethoven, Meyerbeer, and Schubert. Pixis was famous as both a piano teacher and as a virtuoso performer. Compositions that he scored were primarily for the keyboard in a bright but derivative style. His music shows definite resources in Haydn, Mozart, and

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[63] Harold C. Schoenberg, *The Great Pianist* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 142.
[64] Carl Friedrich Weitzmann, *Geschichte des Klavierspiels* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1899), 138.

Beethoven, but unfortunately most of his works lacked depth. "*Les trois clochettes*" (the three bells) was Pixis' most performed work for piano. Unfortunately, Pixis is quite forgotten although he was a very important pianist, composer, and teacher. Not one of his many compositions has survived, but in his prime days few concerts were given in which the name of Pixis did not figure. In 1823, Pixis moved to Paris, where he met Cherubini, Heine, Moscheles, Liszt, Halevy, Berlioz, and Rossini. His popularity can be gauged by the fact that he was selected as one of *Hexameron*'s composers. The German musician Louis Sphor referred to Pixis's playing as "false, yet fiery."[65] In 1840, Pixis moved to Baden-Baden, where he remained for the rest of his life, giving instruction in piano.

Henri Herz (1803-1888)

Herz was a pianist and composer, Austrian by birth and French by domicile. He was also a music teacher at the Paris Conservatoire. Among his major works are eight piano concertos, sonatas, rondos, sonata for violin, nocturnes, waltzes, marches, and fantasias.

Carl Czerny (1791-1857)

Czerny was an Austrian composer, teacher, and pianist of Czech origin whose vast musical production (more than a thousand pieces, up to Opus 861) is being rediscovered.[66] Czerny's books of études for the piano are still widely used in pianistic pedagogy, particularly his volumes published as "School of Velocity Op.299", "The Art

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[65] Schoenberg, *The Great Pianist,* 97.
[66] Alice L. Mitchell, "Czerny, Carl" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 5, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan, 1980), 138.

of Finer Dexterity Op.740", " 30 Etudes de Mécanisme Op.849", "110 Progressive Excercises Op.453", and "Pianoforte-Schule Op.500".

The Parts of *Hexameron*

1. Introduction: *Extrememement lent* (Liszt)

The introduction consists of several sections of contrasting character, beginning with a motif that has nothing to do with the Bellini theme. The complete presentation of the main theme is followed by a long fortissimo cadenza in octaves (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

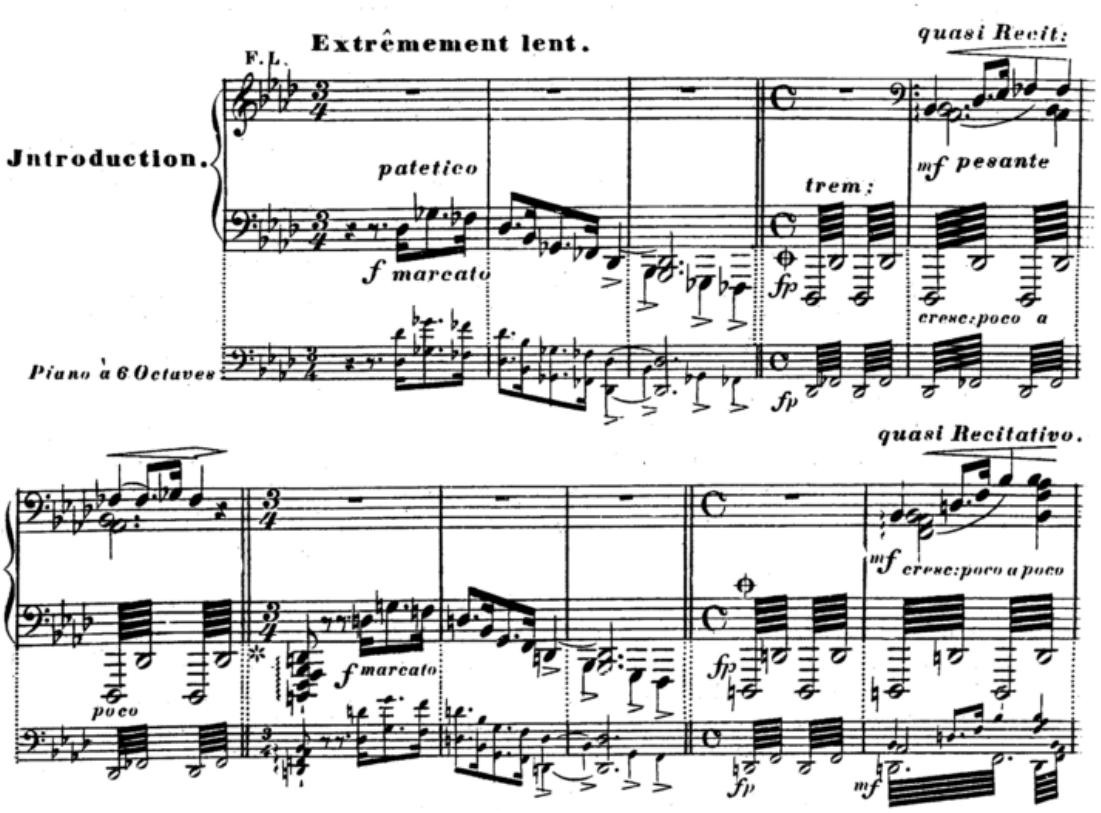

Figure 4.2. Introduction by Liszt, selection 1.

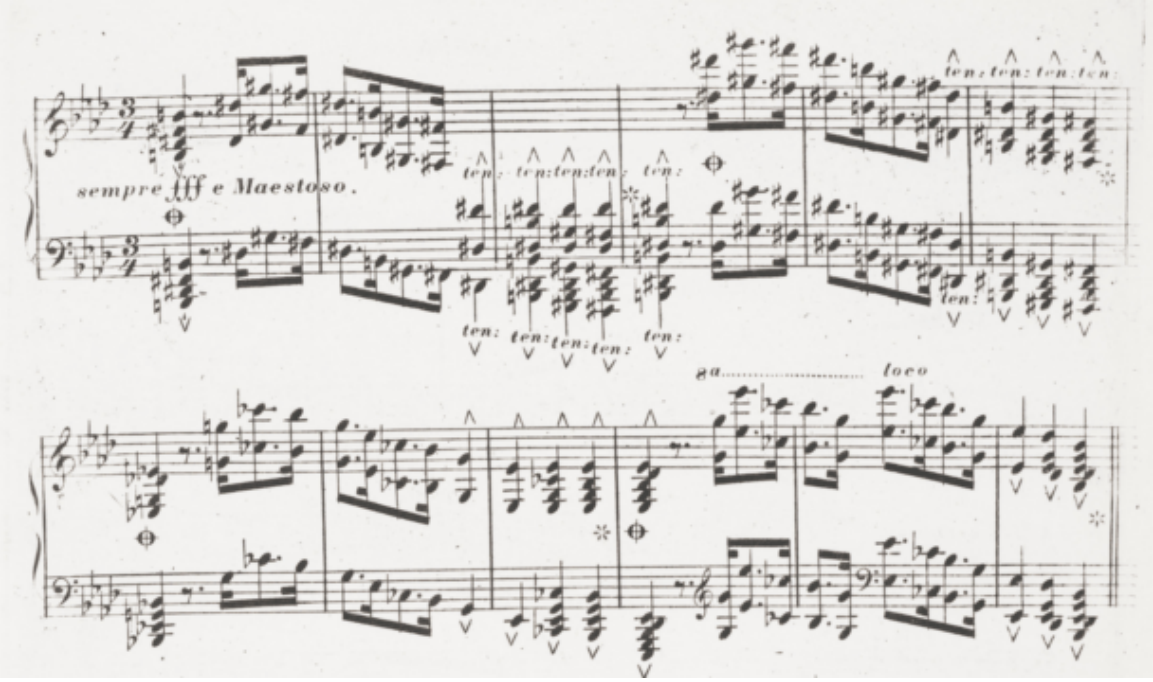

Figure 4.3. Introduction by Liszt, selection 2.

2. Tema: *Allegro marziale* (transcribed by Liszt)

Tema is from a duet for baritone and bass that forms the finale of the second act of the opera (Figure 4.4). The text is "Sound the trumpet for liberty." The melody is a simple, encouraging tune. The words match with Cristina's purpose perfectly: to bring financial aid to the Italian victims of oppression. This tune also became the anthem of the Sicilian independence movement after World War II.[67]

[67] Walker, 6.

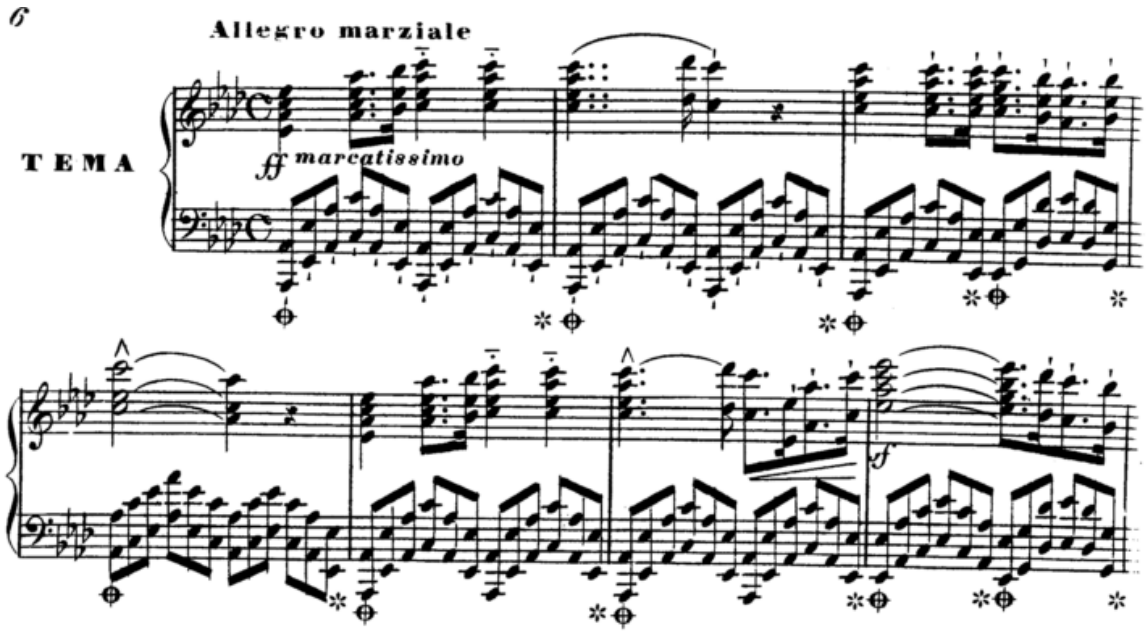

Figure 4.4. Tema by Liszt.

3. Variation I: *Ben marcato* (Thalberg)

Thalberg is the only pianist who could have been considered Liszt's rival. His name was said to have been fabricated by his mother, who wished him to be as profound as the valley (Thal) and as lofty as the mountain (Berg).[68] Thalberg's variation appears in Figure 4.5.

[68] Nicolas Slonimsky, *Writings on Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 270.

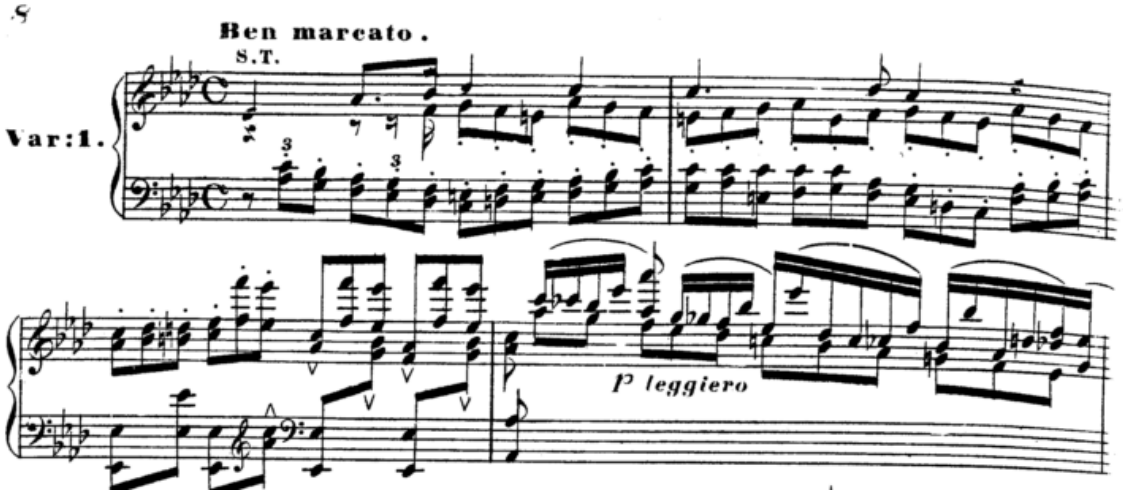

Figure 4.5. Variation 1 by Thalberg.

4. Variation II: *Moderato* (Liszt)

Liszt wrote a slow, serious variation, bringing all sorts of harmonic changes and modulations to the very simple tune rather than showing off his virtuosity right after his rival's variation. The middle section turns into minor key. It is an ingenious variation emblematic of Liszt's skill in thematic transformation (Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

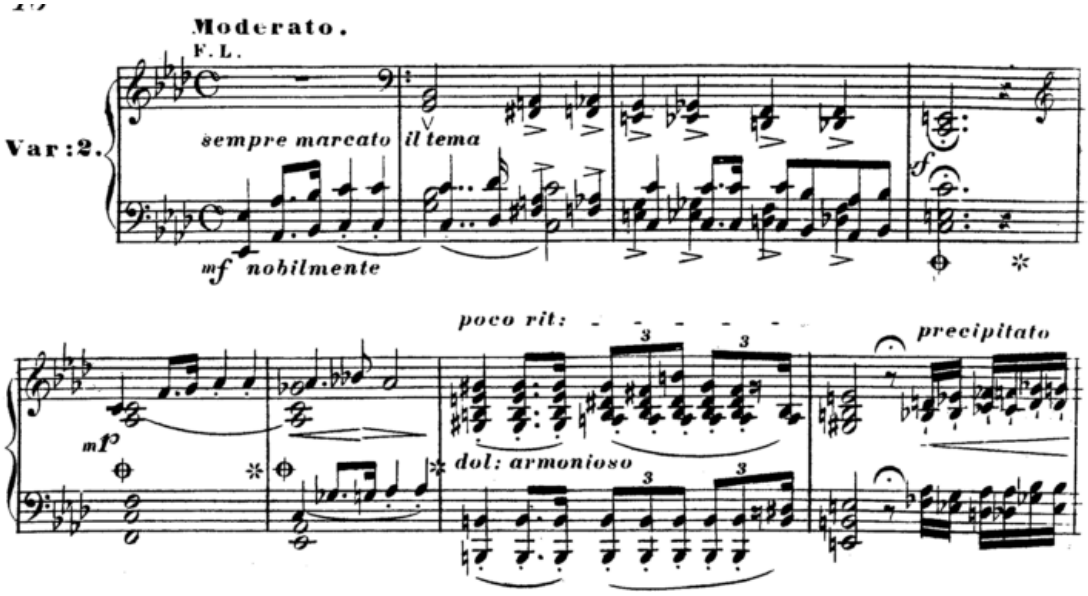

Figure 4.6. Variation 2 by Liszt, selection 1.

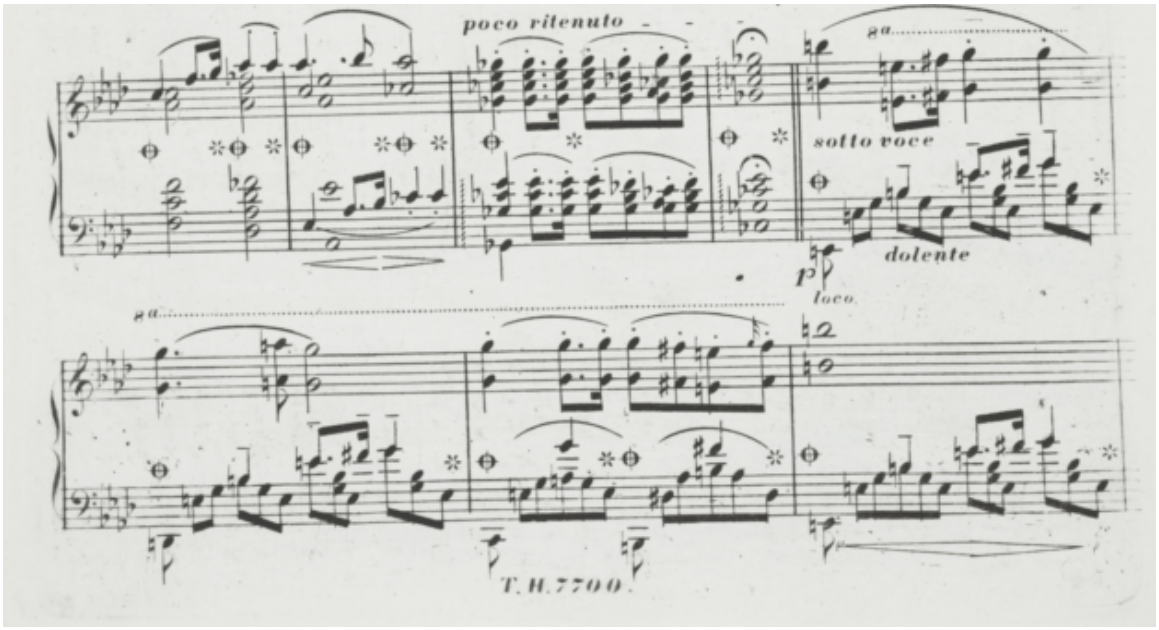

Figure 4.7. Variation 2 by Liszt, selection 2.

5. Variation III: *di bravura* (Pixis) - *Ritornello* (Liszt)

Pixis was very popular in Paris' musical life at the time. This variation is very difficult, but brilliant in its virtuosity and glittering use of the keyboard (Figure 4.8). Figure 4.9 shows the interlude from Liszt.

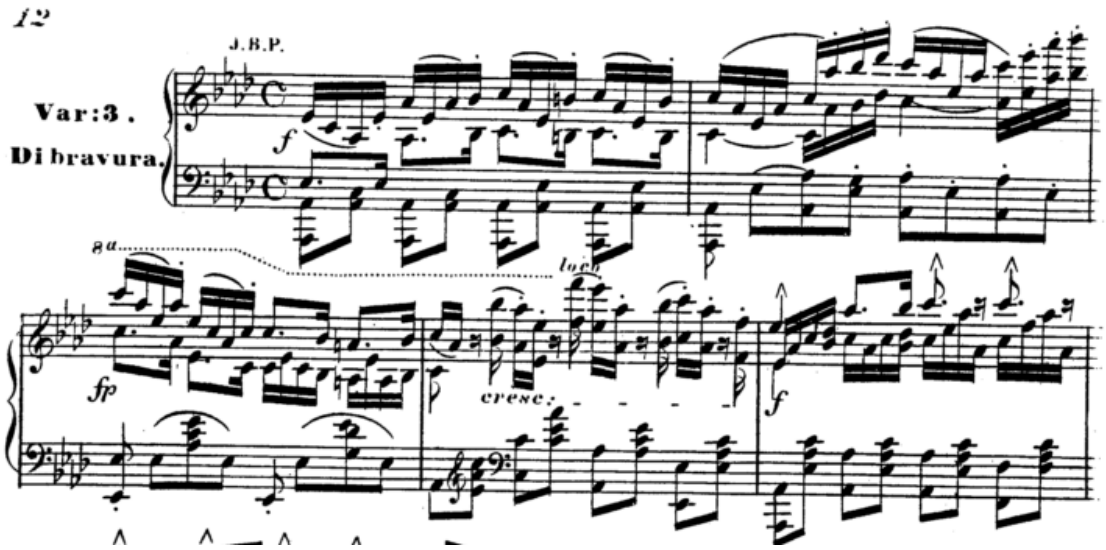

Figure 4.8. Variation 3 by Pixis.

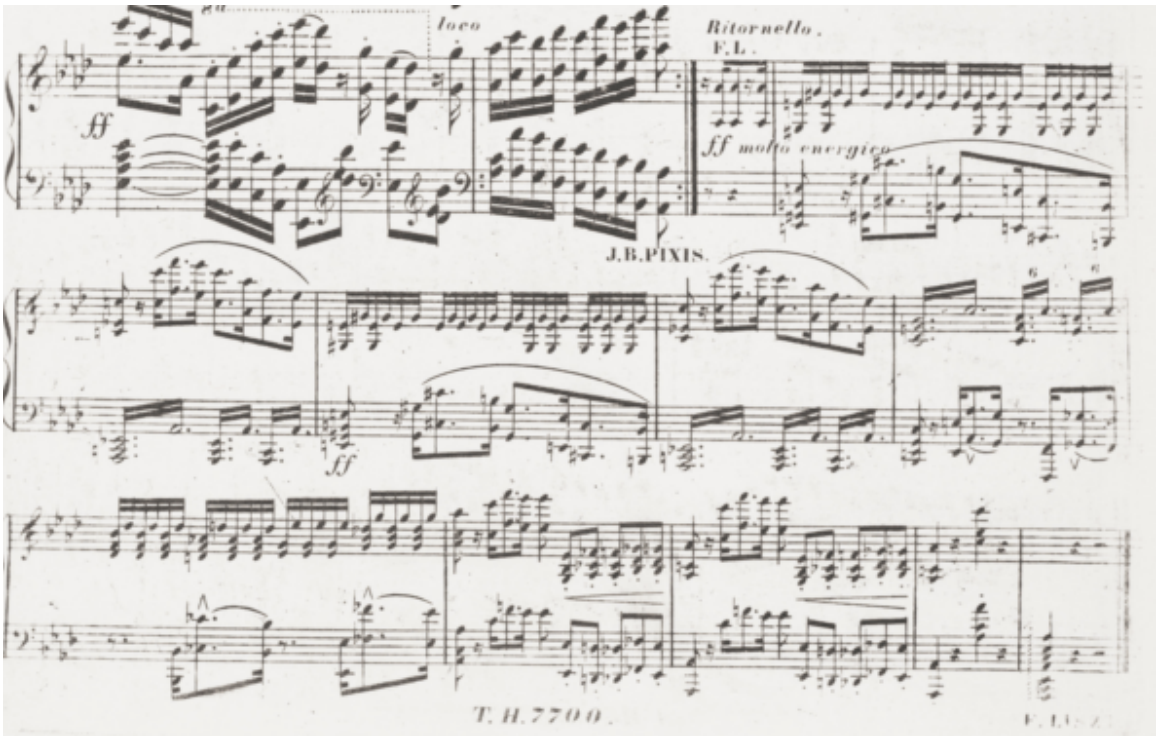

Figure 4.9. Ritornello (Interlude I) by Liszt.

6. Variation IV: *Legato e grazioso* (Herz)

An Austrian born pianist-composer, Herz was an enormously successful composer of pieces and one of the first pianists to tour the United States, Mexico, and the West Indies. His variation (Figure 4.10) shows one finger-wiggling technique that is found frequently in his other works.

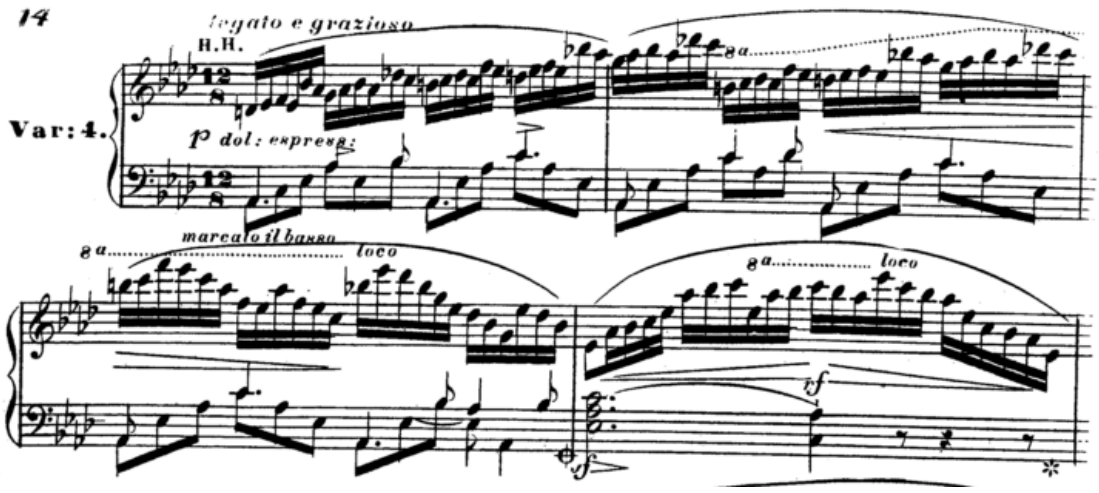

Figure 4.10. Variation 4 by Herz.

7. Variation V: *Vivo e brillante* (Czerny) - *Fuocoso molto energico; Lento quasi recitativo* (Liszt)

It is appropriate that Czerny was included as one of *Hexameron's* composers. He was the teacher of both Liszt and Thalberg, and he was a pupil of Beethoven. Since he was very introverted, his first and only visit at Paris is when Cristina Belgiojoso planned her extravaganza.[69] This variation (Figure 4.11) shows a sparkling, exuberant joy in the use of the entire keyboard.

[69] Lewenthal, 10.

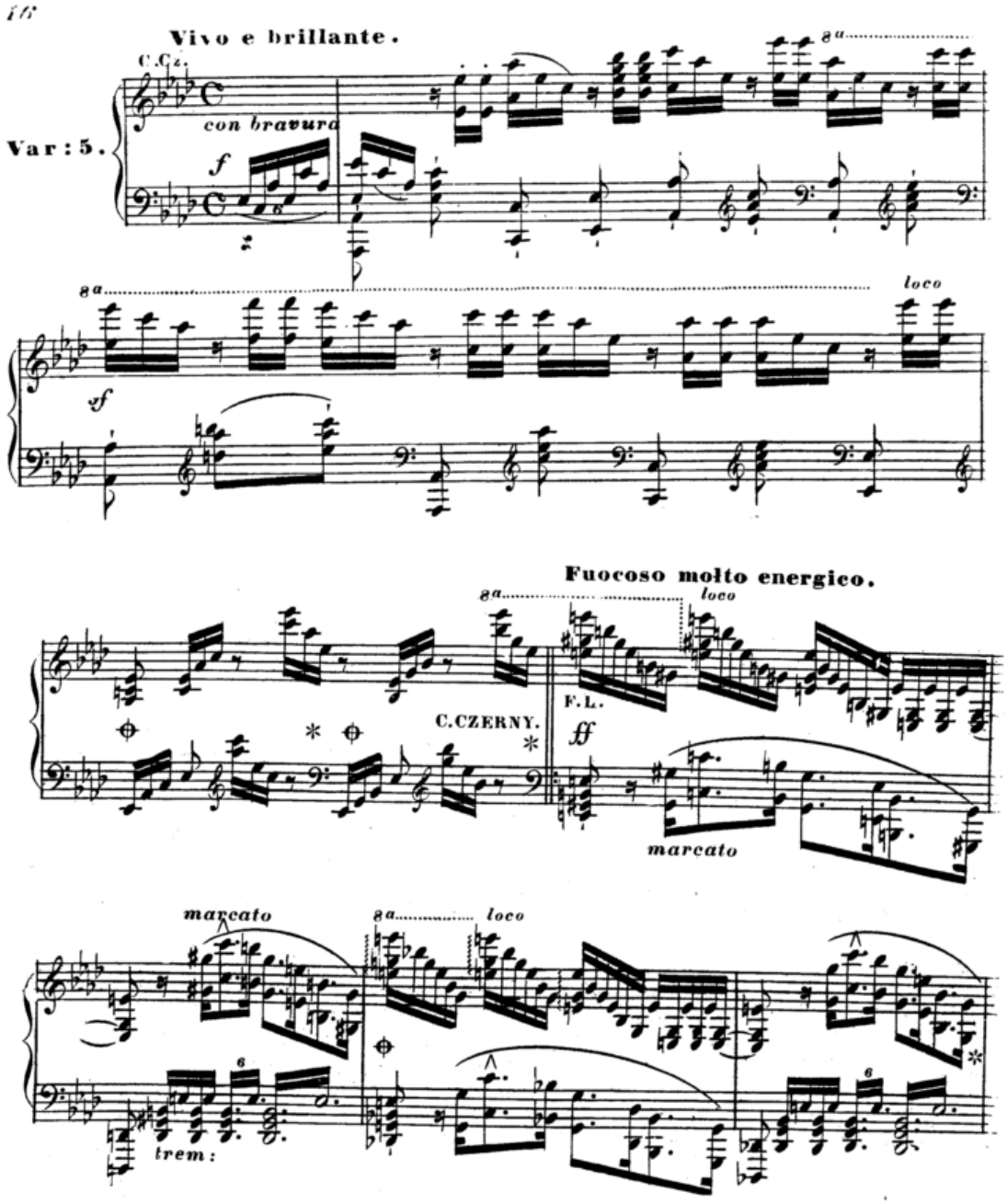

Figure 4.11. Variation 5 by Czerny and the beginning of Interlude II by Liszt.

The lengthy interlude (Figure 4.12) forms a bridge from Czerny to Chopin. Liszt used the material of the introduction: his own motif and fragments of Bellini's theme. It

reaches *fff* in a free fantasia and then gradually subsides to Chopin's beautiful nocturnal variation.

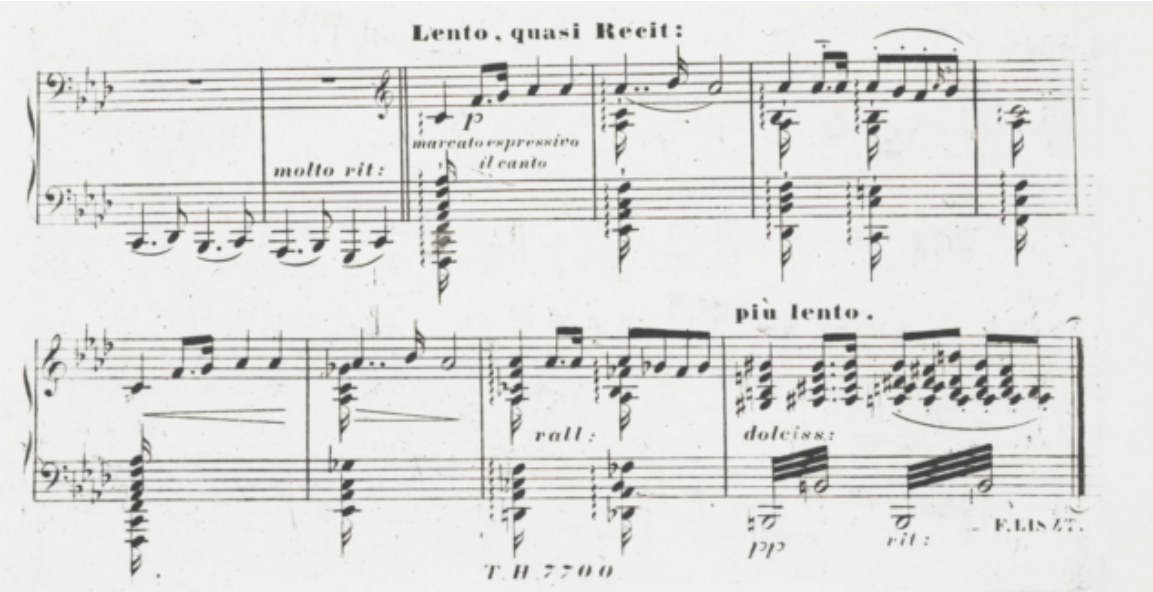

Figure 4.12. Interlude II by Liszt.

8. Variation VI: *Largo* (Chopin) - *Coda* (Liszt)

There is a long tradition wherein the penultimate variation among the variation sets is slow. Chopin followed this model (Figure 4.13). His beautiful lyricism gift and serene presentation are in welcome contrast to his more extrovert and "busy" variations that precede it. He composed the variation in E Major, although others are in A-Flat. This variation has an atmosphere and construction similar to those of Chopin's Op. 28 No. 9 in E Major prelude (Figure 4.14), written around the same time. Possibly the luminous tonality of the key appealed to Chopin, in contrast to the darker, denser A-Flat Major tonality.

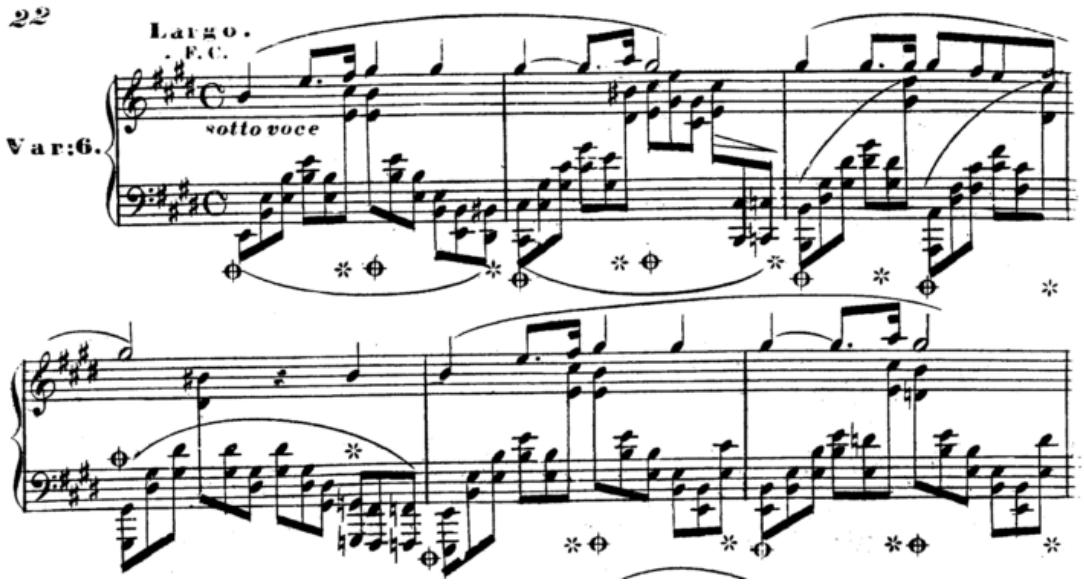

Figure 4.13. Variation 6 by Chopin.

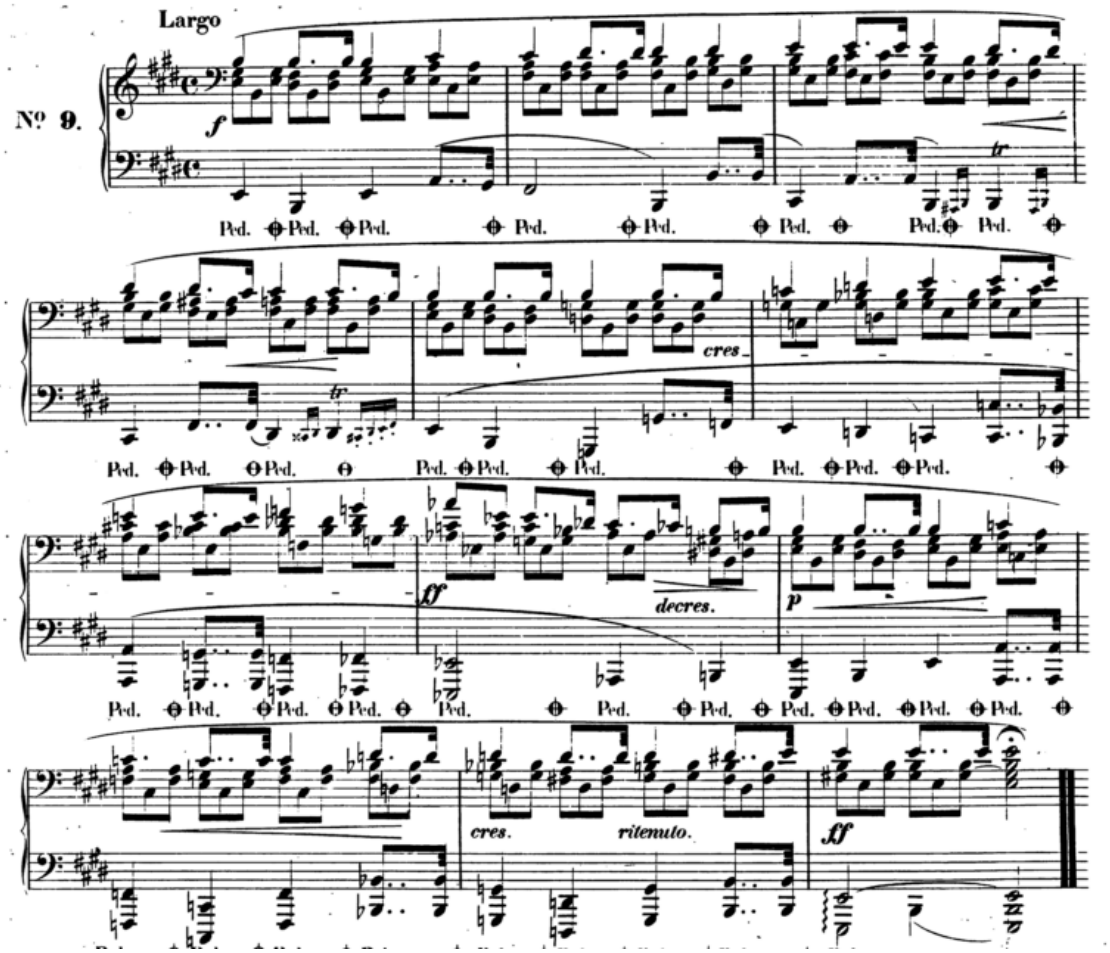

Figure 4.14. Chopin prelude Op. 28 No. 9 in E Major.

Liszt's postlude to Chopin's variation (Figure 4.15) quotes a phrase used in the introduction, thereby unifying the entire work.

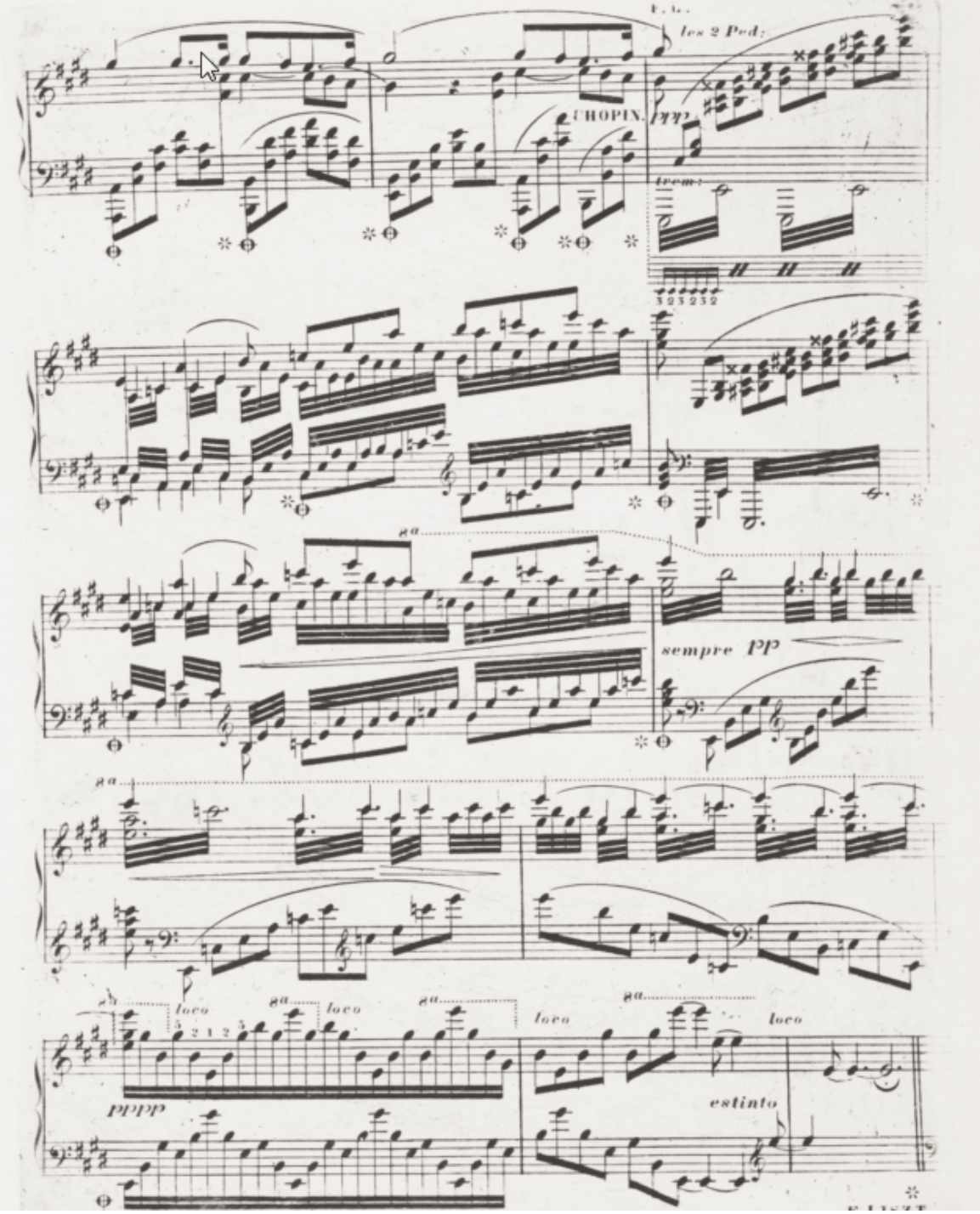

Figure 4.15. Interlude III by Liszt.

9. Finale: *Molto vivace quasi prestissimo* (Liszt)

In the finale, Liszt uses fragments of the introduction and of the variations by Thalberg, Herz, Pixis, and Chopin in a system of thematic transformation. Liszt introduces striking innovations into the variation form by utilizing in *Hexameron* a secondary motif as a unifying force in his introduction, interludes, and finale and by parodying the other composers' variations in a delightful finale (Figure 4.16).

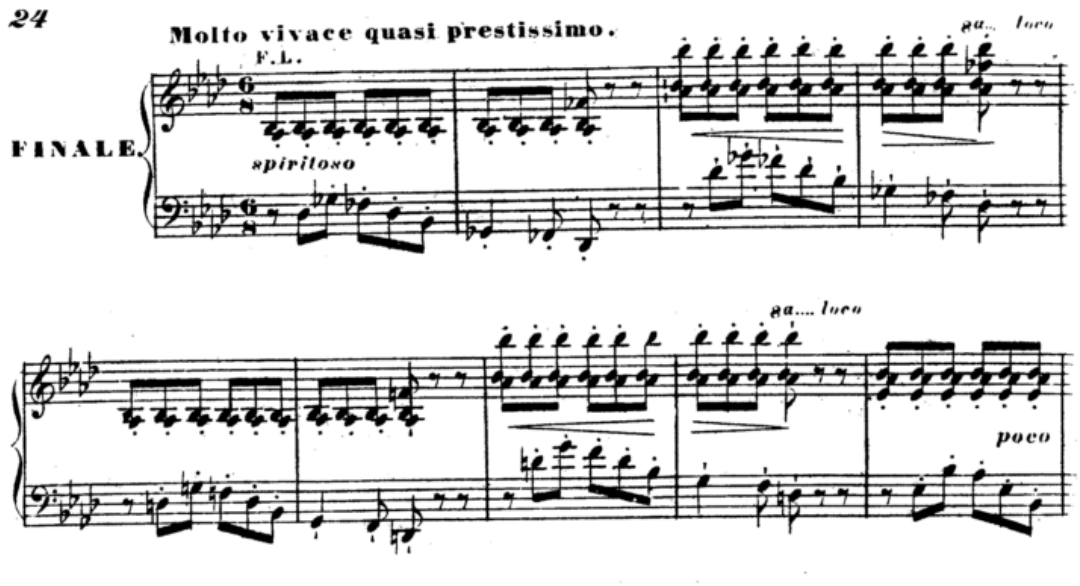

Figure 4.16. Finale by Liszt.

Chapter 5:

PIANO DUEL BETWEEN LISZT AND THALBERG

In the nineteenth century, live music performance—in private homes, as well as concert halls—was a primary form of entertainment (Figure 5.1). Many rivalries formed among pianists and composers. Listeners would debate the merits of each musician and choose their favorites. Memorable piano duels have taken place, such as those of Gelinek and Beethoven, Mozart and Clementi, and Steibelt and Beethoven.[70] In Steibelt and Beethoven's duel, they needed to sight-read a new piece written by the other performer. Steibelt went first, playing Beethoven's brand new Piano Sonata in B flat Major, Op. 22. No.11. Then Steinbelt tried to cause trouble by giving Beethoven a new cello sonata, for cello and piano. This did not comply with the rules, but Beethoven wasn't about to win on a technicality. He took the score, turned it upside down on the music stand, and sight-read it backwards, and then improvised on one of its themes for about 30 minutes. Steibelt was impressed and overwhelmed and didn't wait for Beethoven to finish. He left quietly and never met with Beethoven again. Among historical piano duels, the most anticipated and famous was held on March 31, 1837, in the salon of Princess Cristina Belgiojoso between Liszt and Thalberg.

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[70] Flamehorse, "7 Classical Piano Duels," *List Verse,* posted December 27, 2011. http://listverse.com/2011/12/27/7-classical-piano-duels/

Figure 5.1. Composers of the nineteenth century. Top row, left to right: J. Rosenhain, T. Döhler, F. Chopin, A. Dreyschock, S. Thalberg. Bottom row, left to right: P. E. Wolff, A. von Henselt, and F. Liszt.

Liszt (Figure 5.2) was born to Marie Anna Lager and Ádám Liszt on October 22, 1811, in the village of Doborján in Sopron County in the Kingdom of Hungary. Three months later, on January 8, 1812, Thalberg (Figure 5.2) was born in Switzerland, the illegitimate child of Prince Franz Joseph von Dietrichstein and Baroness Wetzler von Plankenstein, born as Mária Júlia Bydeskuty. Both studied piano in Berlin beginning at age 10, but it is not clear if they ever met. Throughout their teenage years, they performed in concert halls in Vienna and London and in the salons of Paris.

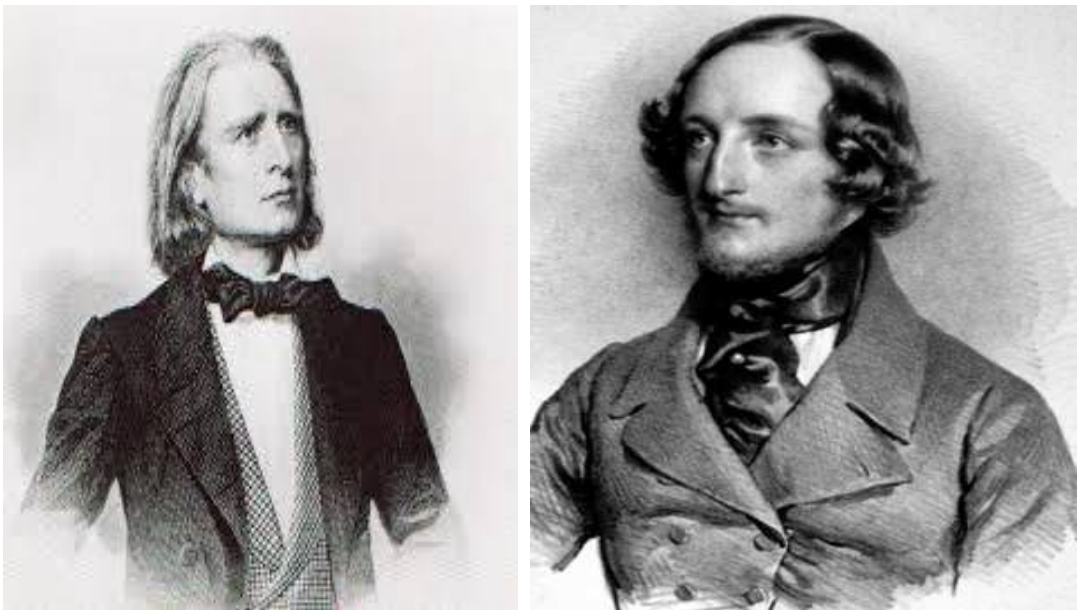

Figure 5.2. Liszt and Thalberg.

By the time they were 20, audiences throughout Europe—including both the general public and famous musicians—had begun to support or prefer one or the other. Thalberg has a large group of supporters. Entranced audiences would get up from their seats to see how Thalberg, nicknamed "Old Arpeggio," achieved his three-hand effects. After Thalberg's concert in Leipzig, Clara Schumann wrote:

> On Monday Thalberg visited us and played beautifully on my piano. An even more accomplished mechanism than his does not exist, and many of his piano effects must ravish the connoisseurs. He does not fail a single note, his passages can be compared to rows of pearls, and his octaves are the most beautiful ones I ever heard.[71]

Chopin also commented on Thalberg:

> Thalberg plays famously, but he is not my man. He is younger than I, popular with the ladies. Plays potpourris on themes from *Masaniello*, produces 'piano'

[71] Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 278.

> with pedal rather than the hand, takes tenths as easily as I take octaves, wears diamond shirt-studs.[72]

Furthermore, after Thalberg's debut at the Conservatoire concert on January 31, 1836, Hector Berlioz gave him an enthusiastic review:

> Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Chopin, Liszt and Herz are and will always be for me great artists, but Thalberg is the creator of a new art which I do not know how to compare to anything that existed before him. . . . Thalberg is not only the premier pianist of the world, he is also an extremely distinguished composer.[73]

Friedrich Wieck compared Thalberg with Liszt, noting, "Liszt played with inspired affectation, Thalberg with inspired vacuity."[74] Mendelssohn also compared Thalberg and Liszt in his letter, dated March 30, 1840:

> A Fantasia by Thalberg is an accumulation of the finest and most exquisite effects, a crescendo of difficulties and embellishments that is astonishing. Everything is so calculated and so polished, and shows such assurance, skill and superlative effects. At the same time the man his incredible powerful hands and such practiced, light fingers that he is unique.
>
> Liszt, on the other hand, possesses a certain suppleness and differentiation in his fingering, as well as a thoroughly musical feeling that cannot be equaled. In a word, I have known of no performer whose musical perceptions so extend to the very tips of his fingers and emanate directly from them as Liszt's do. With his directness, his stupendous technique and experience, he could far have surpassed the rest, were not a man's own thoughts in connection with all this the main thing. And these, so far, at least, seem to have been denied him by nature, so that in this respect most of the great virtuosi equal, or even excel him. But that he, together with Thalberg, *alone* represent the highest class of pianists of the present day, seems to me indisputable. [75]

At the same time, Liszt was determined to represent the pinnacle of pianistic activity; a large percentage of music critics, famous composers, and lusty young ladies

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[72] Harold C. Schoenberg, *The Lives of the Great Composers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 167.
[73] Ian Hominick, *The Piano Music of Sigismund Thalberg* (Bowling Green, OH: Titanic Recordings, 1993), 9.
[74] Schoenberg, *The Great Pianist,* 153.
[75] Ibid., 174.

believed he brilliantly succeeded in this goal. About Liszt's playing, the Russian critic Stassov admitted, "We had never heard anything like it before, never been confronted by such passionate, demonic genius!"[76]

While the rivalry was friendly, a few scathing remarks appeared in the press on occasion, most often by Liszt. The frequent meetings between the two were always cordial. Liszt even spent time as a guest in Thalberg's family home near Vienna in the spring of 1838.[77]

In the 1830s, when Liszt left Paris for Switzerland because of his marriage to Countess Marie d'Agoult, Thalberg arrived to secure his place as Paris' most celebrated pianist. Liszt was eager to maintain contact with his Paris friends and to determine how the affair with Marie would be viewed if they were to return to Paris. At one dinner party, his guests included Chopin, Delacroix, Gautier, Meyerbeer, Nourrit, the prominent Saint-Simonian Emile Barrault, and the philosopher Pierre Ballanche. Liszt, clearly still in favour, reported to his wife his encounter with Princess Belgiojoso: "She is always charming to me, comparing me to no one else at all and deriding the *Thalbourgeois*."[78]

In 1837, Liszt wrote a review of Thalberg's music in the January 8, 1837, issue of the *Gazette Musicale,* calling the compositions undistinguished, pretentious, monotonous, and boring.[79] In Liszt's letter to George Sand, he indicated that he was anxious to review Thalberg's complete works, which were all the rave, "so I shut myself in for a whole

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[76] David Dubal, *The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature, and Recordings* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 2004), 224.
[77] Op 111 Productions, "The battle between "Il Penseroso" and "The Old Arpeggio," *Pianostreet,* posted May 21, 2012. http://www.pianostreet.com/blog/articles/the-battle-between-il-penseroso-and-the-old-arpeggio-4945/
[78] Derek Watson, *Liszt* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 39.
[79] Schoenberg, *The Great Pianist,* 163.

afternoon to study them conscientiously."[80] When Paris demanded a joint performance, Thalberg retorted, "I do not like to play with accompaniment."[81]

The *Gazette Musicale* announced the duel on March 26. "The greatest interest will be without question the simultaneous appearance of two talents whose rivalry at this time agitates the musical world, and is like the indecisive balance between Rome and Carthage."[82]

Before the duel, Thalberg gave a concert at the Conservatoire, and Liszt performed immediately thereafter in the Parisian Opera House. The stage was set, and both Thalberg and Liszt provided an evening of superb pianistic pyrotechnics. Thalberg performed his "*Divertimento on favourite themes by Rossini*" Op. 18, and "*Les Soirées Musica*" Fantasia on "*God Save the Queen*" Op. 27. Liszt countered with his "*Grande fantaisie sur des motifs de Niobe"* S. 419 (Figures 5.3 to 5.5), his "*Transcription of the F-minor Konzertstück*" by Carl Maria von Weber, and the "*Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*" S 173 No. 3, "*Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude*." For the grand finale, both performed a work they had composed for the occasion. Liszt performed his "*Reminiscences de Roberts le Diable*" by Meyerbeer (Figure 5.6), and Thalberg countered with his "*Fantasy*" Op. 33, based on Rossini's "*Moses*" (Figures 5.7 to 5.9).

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[80] Ibid., 163.
[81] Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, "The Thalberg-Liszt dual—reloaded," 2011, http://www.eu2011.hu/news/thalberg-liszt-dual-reloaded.
[82] "Nouvelles," *Revue Gazette Musicale,* 4(13) (1837), 118.

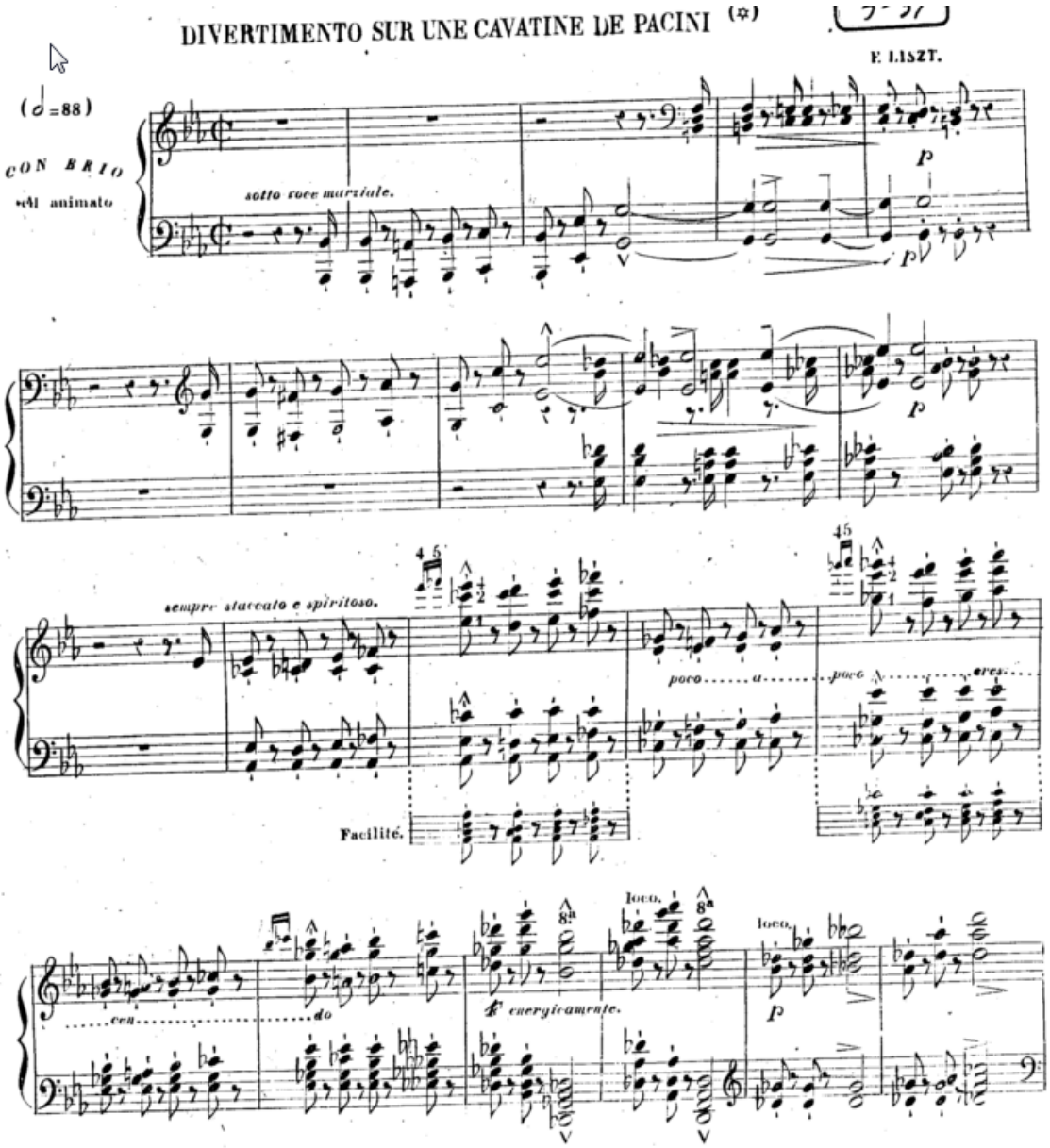

Figure 5.3. Beginning of *Grand Fantasy on Pacini's "Niobe"* by Liszt.

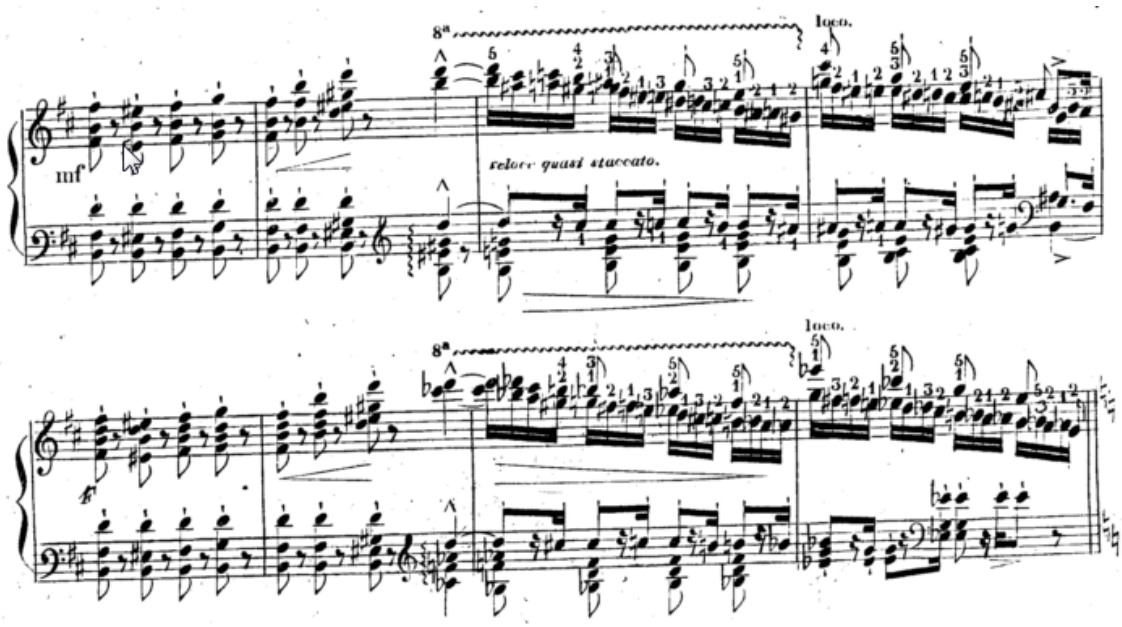

Figure 5.4. Grand Fantasy on Pacini's "Niobe" by Liszt, Selection 2.

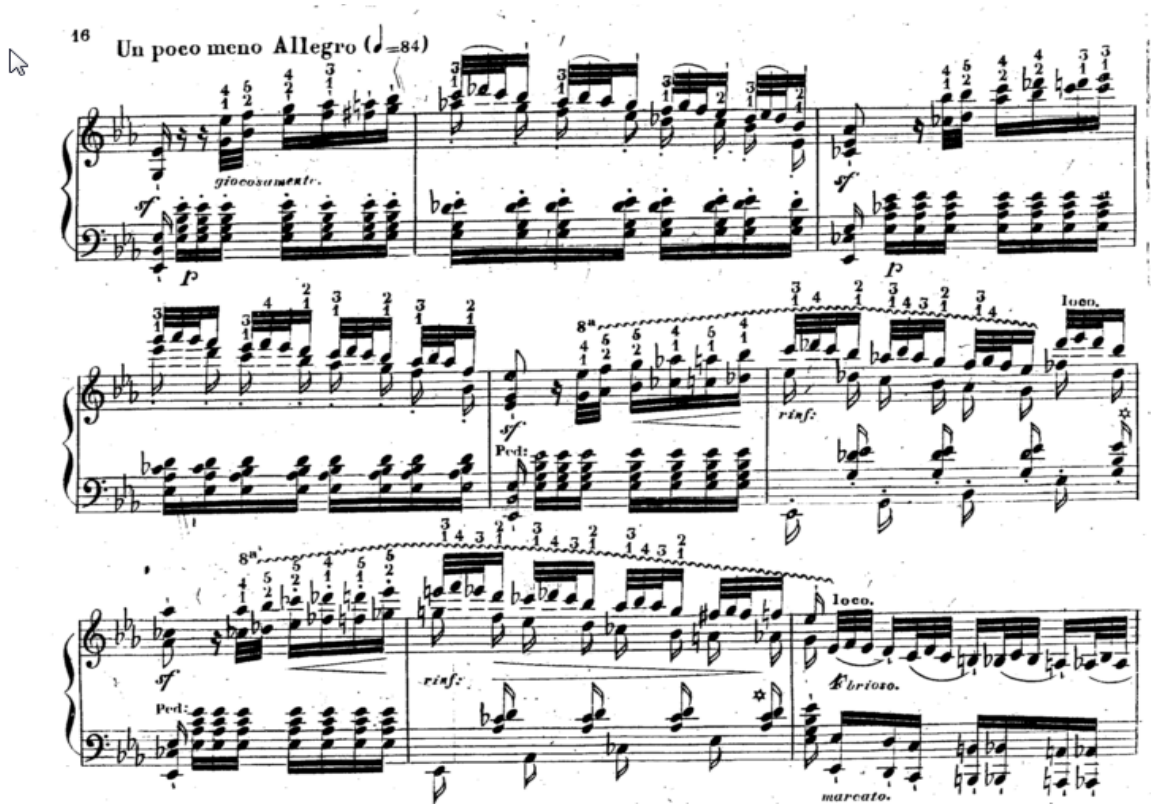

Figure 5.5. Grand Fantasy on Pacini's "Niobe" by Liszt, Selection 3.

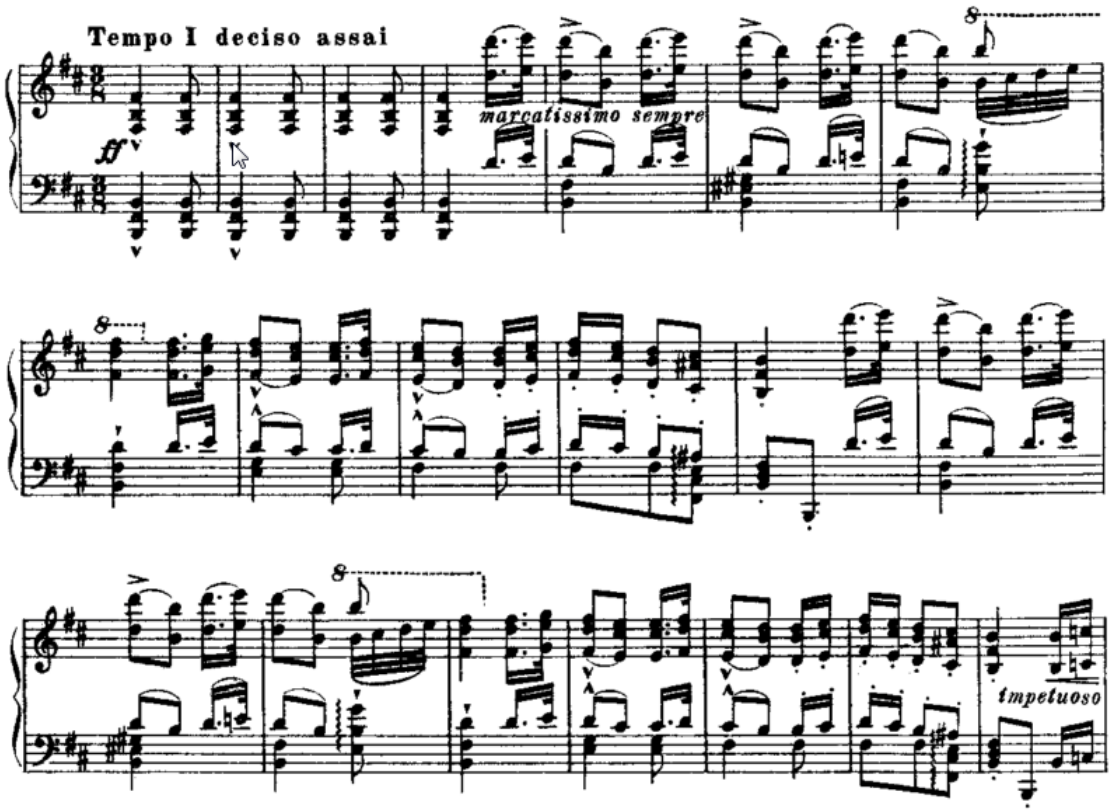

Figure 5.6. "Reminiscences de Roberts le Diable" by Liszt.

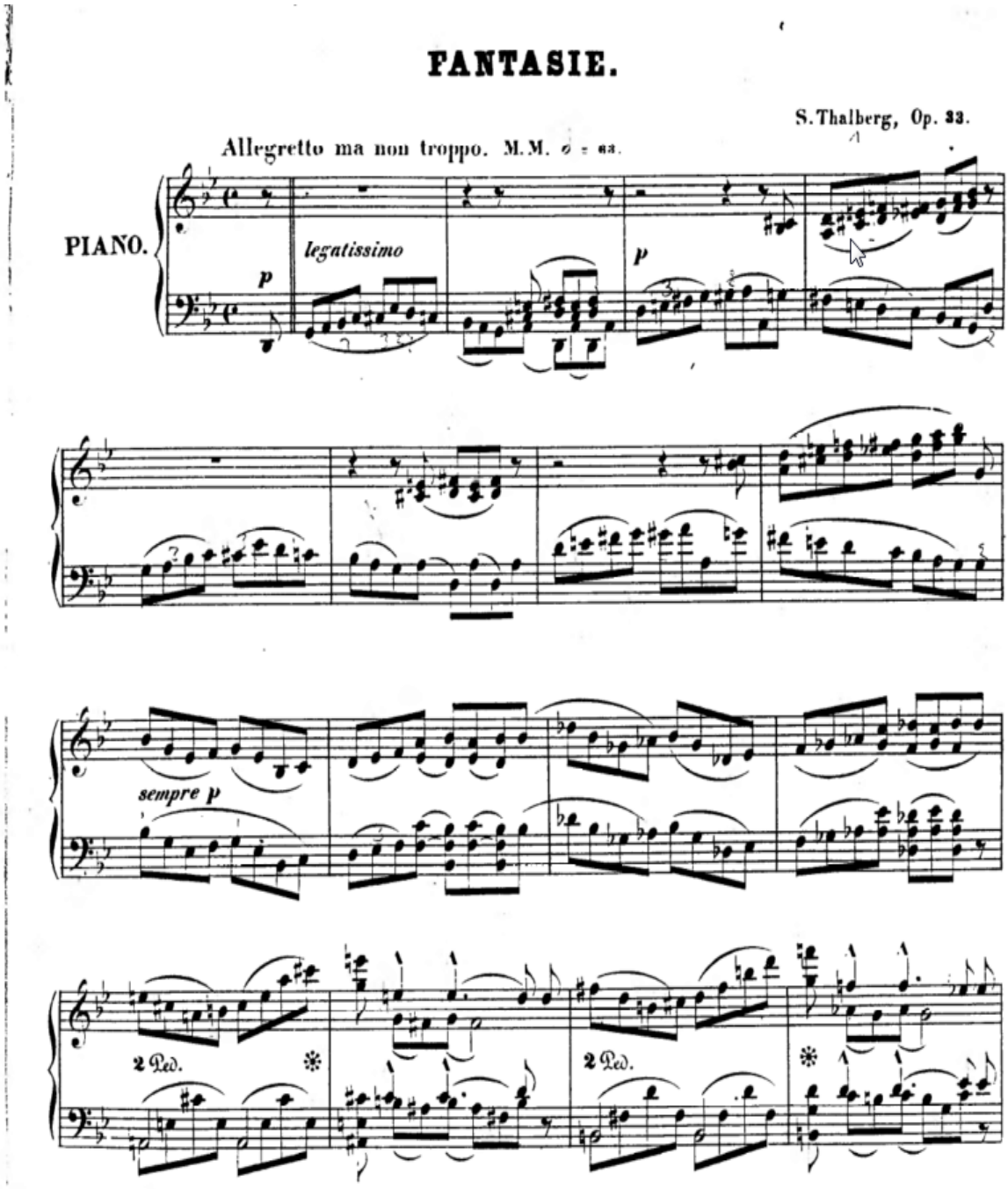

Figure 5.7. Beginning of *Moses Fantasy* by Thalberg.

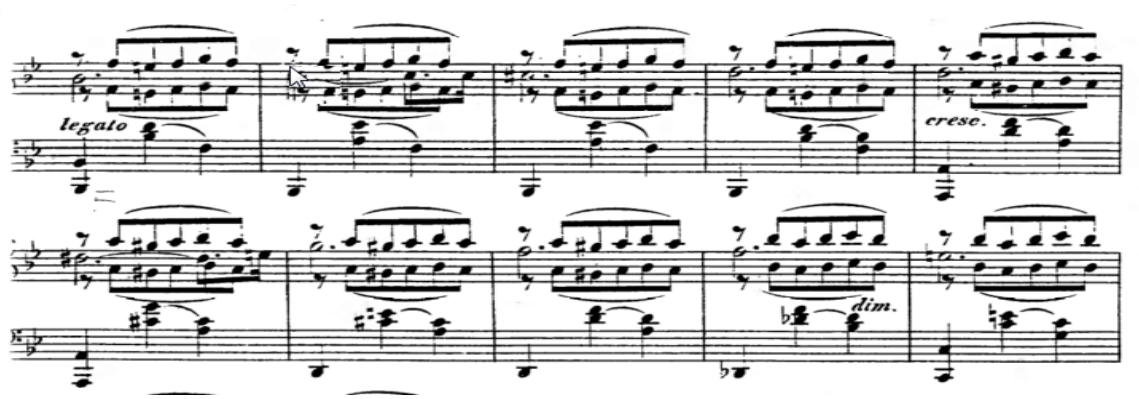

Figure 5.8. Moses Fantasy by Thalberg, Selection 2.

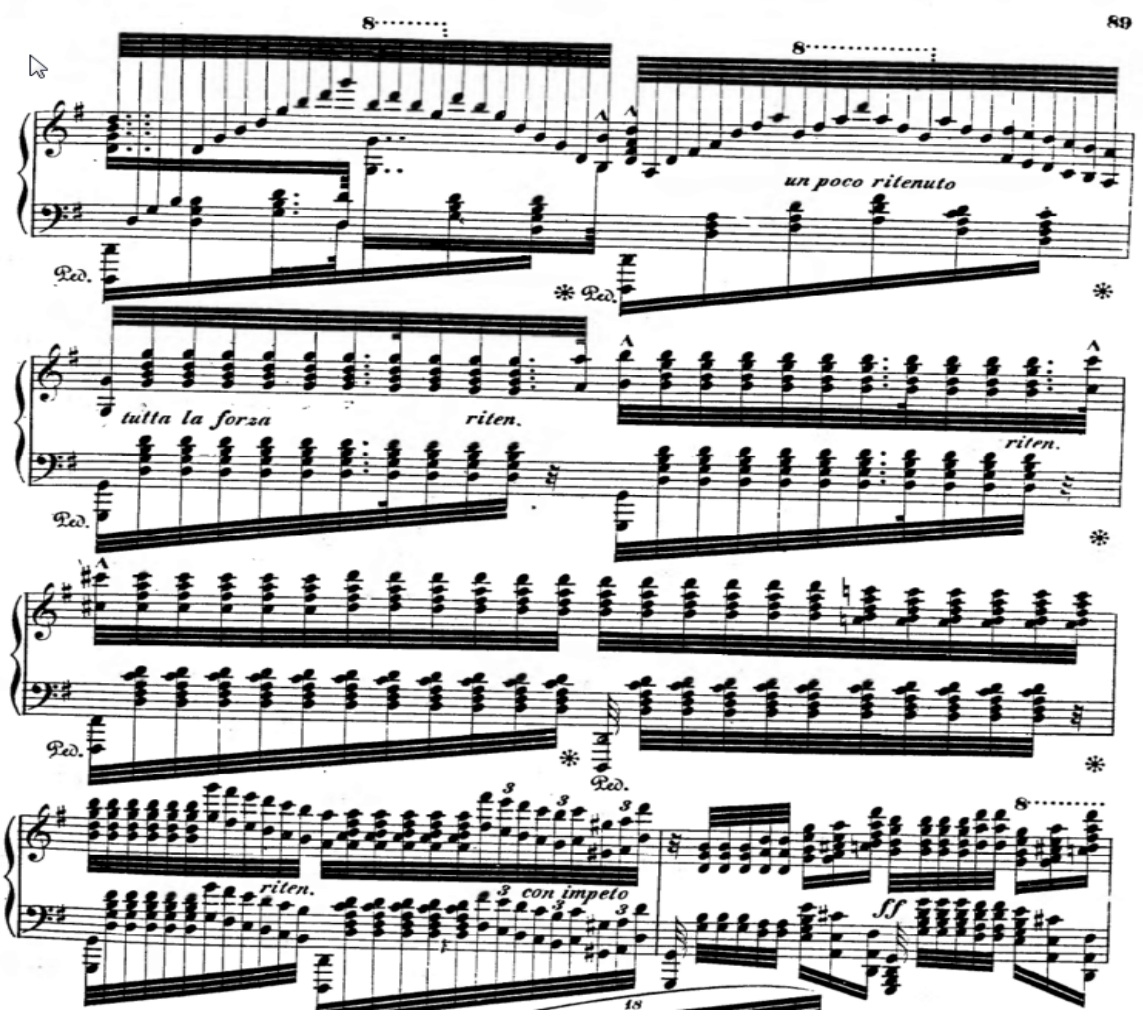

Figure 5.9. Moses Fantasy by Thalberg, Selection 3.

The evening came to a close with the Princess Belgiojoso pronouncing: "Thalberg is the best pianist in the world; Liszt is the only one."[83] In his press release the next day, Jules Janin interpreted these ambiguous words in the following way:

> Never was Liszt more controlled, more thoughtful, more energetic, more passionate; never has Thalberg played with greater verve and tenderness. Each of them prudently stayed within his harmonic domain, but each used every one of his resources. It was an admirable joust. The most profound silence fell over that noble arena. And finally Liszt and Thalberg were both proclaimed victors by this glittering and intelligent assembly. Thus two victors and no vanquished.[84]

Music history has not been particularly kind to Thalberg, but he became extremely rich playing concerts as far as North Africa and South America.[85] Liszt, on the other hand, eventually stopped his performance career, focused entirely on composition, and even became a Franciscan tertiary with minor orders.

Records show that in 1834 Liszt accompanied Princess Cristina Belgiojoso on a visit to the House of Erard to purchase a new piano.[86] The piano was a 240-centimeter Concert Grand piano made by Erard, being made in solid rosewood and carved in the princess's favorite style: gothic, delivered to the princess's salon in 1835. The register reveals the presence of Liszt during the purchase, as well as the name of the purchaser, "Madame Le Princess Belgiojoso," the instrument's serial number, and when it was made and dispatched.[87] For decades, the instrument's history was shrouded in mystery, as the House of Erard passed from one owner to another before closing. Amazingly, in 2001, this piano, used for the famous duel, was discovered in a private home. Jay Mallory, an

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[83] Gattey, 50.
[84] Janita R. Hall-Swadley, ed., *The Collected Writings of Franz Liszt: Essays and Letters of a Traveling Bachelor of Music* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 18.
[85] Predota.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

early piano expert, found the Erard-made instrument among items owned by one of his best friends, a collector of Romantic-period pianos, in her house in Miami, Florida, after she had passed away in 2001. Jay said, "This is one of the most famous and rare pianos in existence from this period because of its royal origin and its history."[88] Thus, we have a piece of historic archeology that can memorialize the famous *Hexameron* variations and piano duel. In addition, in 1993, the American pianist Steven Mayer released a CD entitled *Liszt vs. Thalberg: An Historical Re-enactment of Their Musical "Duel" of 1837* under the ASV label (Figure 5.10).

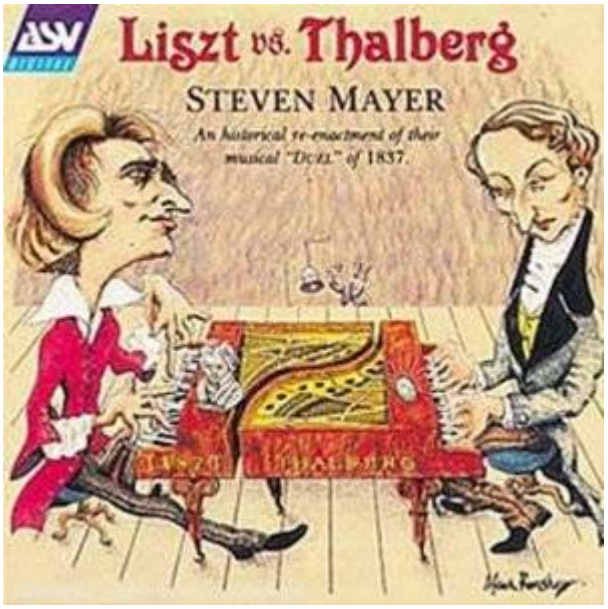

Figure 5.10. Liszt vs Thalberg: An Historical Re-enactment of Their Musical "Duel" of 1837, performed by Steven Mayer, 1993.

[88] Palace Pianos, "Liszt-Thalberg 'ivory Duel' piano discovered," posted on Feburary 19, 2009. http://www.palacepianos.com/portal/grand-pianoforte/19th-century-pianoforte/82-erard-grand-13317.html.

Chapter 6:

PRINCESS CRISTINA'S FIVE YEARS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

After the Italian patriotic riots in 1848 to 1849, many Italian, Hungarian, and Polish refugees from Austrian territories fled to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans welcomed the exiled patriots, although that action caused diplomatic tension between the Ottoman Empire and both the Austrian empire and Russian czar. To avoid problems, some refugees decided to acquire Ottoman citizenship and convert to Islam.

In the meantime, the patriarchate of Jerusalem increased international tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. In 1853, with no warning, a Russian armada attacked the Ottoman city of Sinop, and the sultan Abdülmecid I (1823-1861) declared war on the czar. Thus, the Crimean War began, and in the following years, the Ottomans associated with the British and the French (1854) and the Kingdom of Savoy (1855). Peace came only in 1856.

Princess Cristina arrived in the Ottoman Empire from Athens in 1850, at the same time as many other European refugees. She wanted to forget the past, the days spent in Rome taking care of wounded soldiers, as well as the period spent in Athens, where she had encountered criticism. Although she maintained her royal title, she still did not have most of her possessions, which had been taken by the Austrian government, and she was an exile who could only travel in distant lands. At the same time, she wanted a new life in close contact with nature. The Ottoman Empire offered her this new life, far from Europe

and her countrymen's criticism and envy. A new world, full of exotic fascination, attracted her.

Princess Cristina left Athens by way of the French steamer *Télémaque* with her daughter, Maria; English nursemaid, Mary Ann Parker; and some close friends. They arrived at the Ottoman city of Izmir. Cristina described Izmir as a town out of an exotic Arab novel, springing up from the sea, with minarets rising against the sky like strange water plants.[89] On the dark and dirty streets, Cristina saw harems and visited the Jewish quarter, where there was a school with only one teacher for one hundred pupils. When she came back on the boat, a delegation of Italian refugees, with musical instruments, sang an Italian war song for her.[90] Small boats full of Italians accompanied the *Télémaque.*

After some days the ship reached Constantinople. Here Cristina commented on a number of interesting sights: the grand bazaar, where Persian and Indian cashmere were mixed in with percale from Switzerland and France[91]; "Mevlevi" dances (whirling dervishes, with whirling seen as a form of dhikr, remembrance of God); and "Bektashi" songs, one of the last remaining *ashiq* (poet-musician) traditions outside of Azerbaijan. She met musicians, eunuchs, gypsies, and Turkish men smoking their pipes. She also met Giuseppe Donizetti, who taught music in Istanbul and prepared for her a concert

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[89] Maria Pia Pedani, "Cristina's days in Çakmakoğlu," in *Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso: An Italian Princess in the 19th century Turkish Countryside* (Luglio: Filippi Editore Venezia, 2010), 43.
[90] Cristina Belgiojoso, *Ricordi dell'esilio.* Luigi Severgnini, ed. (Milano: Paoline, 1978), 148-150.
[91] Pedani, 43.

performed by his Turkish students.[92] She was invited to meet a Turkish company of soldiers, and it is reported that she saluted them.[93]

At first, Cristina rented the house of an Armenian in a small village two miles from Constantinople while looking for a better situation. [94] Even when she was in Athens, she had begun thinking of creating a 'colony' for the Italian refugees who had left Italy for the Near East after the riots of 1848 to 1849. The Greeks who had promised money and help for this effort had vanished, but in Constantinople, the American ambassador and the Savoy diplomat, Baron Romualdo Tecco, encouraged her. Based on the recommendation of an Ottoman contact, she decided to buy a "little kingdom" in Anatolia rather than finding a place in Constantinople.[95] In July, she went to see the place, an estate near the towns of Cesarea and Viranşehir. Princess Cristina called it the "valley of Çakmakoğlu."[96] It was six hours away from Safranbolu, 16 hours from "Balca" on the Black Sea, and about 20 hours from Constantinople. "Çakmakoğlu" was a small estate, composed of a farm, some fields, and animals.

Çakmakoğlu was a çiftlik-like farm—a kind of fief, belonging to the Ottoman state, being rented for use. It was only with the Westernization of the Empire, in the middle of the nineteenth century, that many çiftliks were changed into private properties. This happened to Çakmakoğlu. Cristina settled there and its administration was given to her and her heirs in exchange for a fee from 1850 onward. She intended to live on the income of the farm. She even asked her friends in Constantinople to send her a book of

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Cristina Belgiojoso, *Ricordi dell'esilio,* 180.
[94] Ibid., 173.
[95] Cristina's letter to Thierry, July 1850, Constantinople.
[96] Fortunati, 16.

mineralogy to study, to see if she could undertake activities in this field. Cristina was always willing to try new ideas and seek new goals.

The citizens of the Turkish valley were kind to Cristina. Everyone liked her. In Rome, she had learned about medicine, and she became the physician of the region. After restoring health to a woman who had been paralyzed for six months, people arrived to her house daily to be cured. Ali Pasha, her patron in Constantinople, wrote to the governor about Cristina's taxes. The governor responded that it was not wise to ask her to pay tax because the inhabitants would have revolted against the government. They called her *bes-sadé* (the child of the lord). When she had no more money, she lived on credit. No one asked for the money back.[97]

In 1851, the *kaza*, an administrative division in the Ottoman Empire, issued a new law indicating that foreigners who weren't citizens of the empire could not become landowners. To gain ownership, Maria became an Ottoman citizen and was recognized by the central authorities as the real owner. She could lose the property if she asked to be recognized as a refugee.

Since her time in Greece, Cristina had been sending some of her letters to *Le National,* many of which were eventually published in a book titled *Souvenirs dans l'Exil*. These letters were full of lively humor about the Greeks and their police. The inhabitants of Athens did not approve, and the refugees who lived there thought it better to separate themselves from Cristina. Some passages of her private letters to her friend Madame Jaubert were published without her permission and misinterpreted. In Europe, Italian patriots seemed to be against the princess who had worked so hard to help them.

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[97] Pedani, 46.

Although *Le National* did not want to publish her papers any longer, Cristina maintained her writing and eventually published the works written in Çakmakoğlu in the *Revue des deux Mondes* between 1856 and 1858. In this period, Cristina also began to write a novel and some plays. Her literary works, as well as most of her letters, were written in French, the language of the Italian high class of that period. They were not masterpieces, but they offered deep insight into Ottoman society, without prejudice or bias. Cristina was able to learn more than about the Ottoman culture other European writers because she was a woman and could speak a little Turkish. She also began to frequently say *Inshallah* (God willing), which brought her closer to the Turkish people. The Ottoman Empire she described was real, not the usual nineteenth century orientalists' imaginary ideal.

Her writings stressed the differences between East and West, with comparisons of European and Syrian houses, beggars, or aspects of Western and Ottoman family life. Cristina called attention to gender issues. Being a woman gave her access to life in the harem and domestic life in general; she could communicate freely with the women living their secluded existence in the Ottoman Empire. In 1860, Cristina wrote an early feminist essay, *"Della presente condizione delle donne e del loro avvenire"* (Of the present status of women and their life).

Cristina's letters also showed her interest in material culture. She described the food, such as *yufka*, a type of flatbread; *ayran,* a cold yogurt beverage mixed with salt; and Turkish coffee. She also described the interiors of houses and the types of clothing worn. Cristina was attuned to fashion and made interesting remarks on the introduction of

Western dress in the Near East. These descriptions contributed to the lively character of her writings.

In April 1851, Cristina went to Safranbolu to spend Easter with the Christian community. As soon as the news of her arrival spread, hundreds of people came to see her and ask to be cured. All the dwellers of the town, both Christian and Muslim, competed in providing hospitality.

The çiftlik began to be self-sufficient, and she compared it favorably with the estates chosen by other Europeans in Turkey. Most of them, such as the famous philosopher Lamartine, had settled near Izmir and the sea, but the political atmosphere there was dangerous. On the contrary, Cristina's valley was in the mountains, and even the climate was better. Although others could only rent their estates, Cristina had succeeded in purchasing the land. Cristina was concerned about money, and the estate was an important commercial activity for her. In Italy, her estates had been blocked by the Austrian government. Now, she worked to improve her economic security and, above all, prepare a future for her daughter Maria.

The peace and quiet improved Princess Cristina's health, and she was happy in this period. Illness disappeared and she even put on weight. She imagined a previous life where she was a gypsy and enjoyed the open air, the silence of the desert, the adventures of travel, and life under a tent.

It was good that Cristina was pleased with her decision to live in the Ottoman Empire, because she did not feel she could leave. She explained the reasons in a letter to Madame Jaubert. The Austrian government was still her enemy. Even if she succeeded in reaching Paris, the best thing she could do would be to live an isolated life, which had no

appeal for her. Moreover, the Italian patriots did not support all her political ideas and were critical of her.

Eventually, the calm of a pleasant valley was not enough for Cristina. From the spring of 1851 to December 1952, she traveled to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, with the goal of providing Maria some religious inspiration. This was the longest absence from her "farm." Unfortunately, during her absence, she entrusted her estate to a man from Alsace. He was not a conscientious administrator, making some poor decisions and acquiring some debts.

Cristina described her long voyage in a journal, published under the title *La Vie Intime et la Vie Nomade en Orient* (The Inner Life and the Nomadic Life in the East) in 1856 and *Asie Mineure et Syrie: Souvenirs d'un Voyage* (Asia Minor and Syria: Memoires of a Trip) in 1858. The first city she described, which she considered representative of all Anatolian towns, was Tcherkess (now written Çerkeş), with its houses of "wood and mud falling to ruin"[98] and full of litter. Here, Cristina was hosted by a *mufti,* an Islamic scholar she had cured of a persistent fever some months before. Already ninety years old, he had many wives or concubines, the youngest of whom was barely thirty, and numerous children of all ages. He would not let Cristina stay in the not-so-clean harem, but let her stay in one of his own rooms.

The next major stop was Angora (now Ankara), reached after a difficult ride through the snow-clad mountains. Cristina remained here for two weeks. There she encountered a writing error in her passport that had to be corrected; the *kaymakam*

[98] Ibid., 38.

(district governor) charged $600 for this task. Cristina wrote him a check for the amount, shrewdly instructing her Istanbul banker not to honor it.[99]

The Angora *mufti* had a Tcherkess colleague, and Cristina was able to relieve his eye pain. She was rewarded with the man's friendship and introduced to a dervish convent in an Angora suburb. Cristina described most dervishes as idlers, impostors, and even highwaymen,[100] but those livings in convents were more respectable. She still considered their company rather boring, since they only spoke about the freshness of water and the purity of air. Cristina was invited to a ceremony of the so-called howling dervishes, who in a state of trance maimed themselves with long daggers in front of her. The wound was healed with a colleague's saliva. The *şeyh* claimed his experts could even cut off their own limbs and be cured without any consequence. Cristina was flabbergasted by all of this.

Cristina praised the Turks for treating animals well. They gave her an Angora cat, which delighted her. The white cat was praised for its beauty, character, and courage in attacking dogs. Turks would not strike a horse and would speak to animals in special idioms if they needed discipline. Buffaloes worked as long as it pleased them, and flocks followed their herdsmen.

Cristina then traveled on to Kirşehir in Cappadocia, curing the sick where she could and describing colorful people, such as an Algerian Arab who considered himself a Frenchman. The population in the region was unfriendly, but shortly before reaching

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[99] Raniero Speelman, "Cristina Belgiojoso's Jerusalem travel book," in *Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso: An Italian Princess in the 19th century Turkish Countryside* (Luglio: Filippi Editore Venezia, 2010), 53.
[100] Ibid.

Kayseri, the party confronted a group of townsmen who in the name of the local pasha invited her to make her solemn entry into the town on a richly arrayed horse. Cristina did not want to refuse. She was just in time to share the opulent celebration.

Cristina described meeting a group of mountaineers:

> The families of a group of mountaineers encamped with their flocks in a neighboring valley, their fathers and husbands being on a foray, came to present us their compliments. We made every sign of acknowledgement for their kindness, and after distributing a few piasters (a monetary unit) among the benevolent-looking old women, proceeded on our journey, to the great regret, it seems of one of this class, who cherished a hope of obtaining some pieces of old linen. It gave me considerable trouble to make this old woman understand that I had no time to stop and search my luggage for this coveted commodity; like a true orientalist, I thought that money supplied the place of, if not of every good the earth possesses, at least of every good that can be bought or sold. The worthy woman on whom I tried hard to impress this conviction, replied, that it was useless to give money to her that she should never be without enough to buy bread, but that she should always lack opportunities to satisfy her taste for old linen.[101]

Cristina's conception of the word "orientalist" was interesting, in that it seemed to connote the idea that money can solve every problem.

In a palace of a local lord named Mustuk Bey, who lived four hours away from Alexandretta (Iskenderun), Cristina resumed her study of the harem. She saw the irony that in the houses of the poor, women were not a prisoner of their own quarters. Their lives resembled more those of Christian women. Cristina preferred the Muslims to her fellow Christians, because the Muslim man tended to be true to his wife without being forced to by the law. Cristina saw the contrast with her own husband, with his numerous infidelities. Although both Muslim women and men tended to live to a venerable age, the Muslim man did not abandon his aging wife.[102] Cristina commented on these virtues:

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[101] Belgiojoso, *Harems and Oriental Scenery,* 101-102.
[102] Ibid., 111.

> Is it to education they owe this delicate reserve, these characteristics at once so simple and so noble? No, they are natural qualities. Nature has been generous to the Turkish people.[103]

She had a quite different judgment on the habits of wealthier Muslims, describing their harem as dirty, chaotic, promiscuous, and full of children, because they considered having the greatest number of children the most important thing in life. Their women were repellent, stupid, and heavily plastered with make-up. Rivalry was ferocious, especially if a woman could not bear children. What Cristina disliked most was that young boys, aged 7 or 10, had their own slaves and mimicked their father's behavior.

The city of Alexandretta was inhospitable for travelers, even if its bay was magnificent. Cristina left as soon as possible, crossing through the Syrian mountains to Antioch. Although Cristina liked Antioch very much, she left after one night to ensure a timely arrival in Jerusalem. The mountains were dangerous to pass, with local rebellions against conscription in the army occurring there. Cristina knew that accepting protection by the army would only enhance the risk of armed conflict, but she took some irregular *bashibozuks* (maverick soldiers of the Ottoman army) as an escort for the crossing. They encountered regular troops who insulted her party with every possible Turkish curse. On her way through Syria, Cristina wrote lyrical descriptions of the landscape.

In Syria, Cristina met an English clergyman and analyzed, with much irony, the practice of religious conversion that was rampant in this region:

> Syria is invaded, overrun in every sense by British and American missionaries, whose candor and good faith are incontestably more remarkable than their tact or intelligence. With the Orientals, conversion has become a kind of lucrative pursuit, and the convert who has played this part two or three times, gets to be a very

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[103] Ibid., 112.

> responsible man; he possesses capital, and putting himself into commerce, acquires a fortune.[104]

The system was based on new Christians receiving aid and a job through the missionaries. After some time, the missionaries moved to a different town and repeated the conversion process. So, sadly, money, business, and profit were entwined with religion.

After Beyrouth (Beirut), the most westernized town of Asia, Cristina entered into the final stage of her journey, in which she stayed among Christians, often in convents. Passing through Sidon and Sur (Tyrus), Cristina entered the arid mountains of Galilee. Along the way, the horses became ill and the party got lost. They had to spend the night in very primitive lodgings. By the following day, three horses had died and three others were in bad shape. Long after nightfall, they reached Nazareth and were welcomed by an Italian Franciscan monk. Upon arising, Cristina was disappointed to see few associations of the town with its biblical past. Her party then crossed the desert of Samaria and Judea, a "land of misfortune," avoiding contact with its inhabitants, who were considered violent and immoral.

In Nablous, Cristina was shown the ruins of the well where Christ would have spoken with the Samaritan woman. When the party was insulted by Arabs on the way to Jerusalem, Cristina commented that humor, rather than fear or anger, was the best way to face these situations. The travelers upset by verbal offense lack tact and good nature, she stated.[105]

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[104] Ibid., 184-185.
[105] Speelman, 59.

The monuments of Jerusalem drew much more attention from Cristina, but she had even more interest in the people she observed. She described a British colony living in tents in "Solomon's garden," the ladies showing off their houses; missionaries trying to show the Arabs the positive consequences of a healthy life and Bible study; and an excursion to the Dead Sea and the river Jordan, during which their group was attacked by a band of marauders. [106]

In Jerusalem, Maria made first communion. Cristina described the ceremony as "quite affecting,"[107] even though Catholics at the ceremony were criticized for improperly rebaptizing a German convert from Lutheranism. The Syrian Protestants had much sympathy for the Jews. Impressed by Jewish prayers at the Western Wall, Cristina was amazed by the numbers of Jewish émigrés from Germany, all wishing to be buried in holy soil. Cristina also encountered a leper colony and described the lepers as bizarre. She provided vivid descriptions of their features and way of living, culminating in a description of an old man with a twelve-year-old spouse, both terribly disfigured.

Having stayed a month in Jerusalem, Cristina left for Damascus, Aleppo, and Mount Lebanon. At this point in her description of her travels, she inserted a more theoretical chapter conceived well after her return home. Cristina wrote about the Enlightenment, Islam, the Quran, and the Turks. In defining the Ottoman state as a theocracy, she touched upon the political reforms that would be necessary. She tried to understand Islam within its historical context and military mission and added the feminist view that Islam "morally annihilated" the woman by making her into an object, an

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[106] Belgiojoso, *Harems and Oriental Scenery,* 217.
[107] Ibid., 224.

"instrument of vice," excluded from the joys of paradise. As a woman of the capitalist age, Cristina also criticized Islam for condemning wealth and forcing those who had it to conceal it.[108]

The return journey was made unpleasant by heat, flies, and lack of water. When Cristina was accidentally kicked by her horse, she was emotionally traumatized. It took her some time to recover, but she traveled on through Nazareth and Tiberias.

Damascus at first did not make a favorable impression. Once Cristina found seemingly good lodgings, she was attacked by vermin, and she had to rent, at an expensive price, the house of a translator. She indicated that on the outside, houses in Damascus look like ruins, but inside the courtyards have fountains and lavish vegetation. Rooms were very richly arranged. Her departure was delayed by Ramadan, but Cristina amused herself in the company of her new friends, organizing an Oriental dance performance that was attended by many people. Cristina described, with an enthusiastic sense of humor, the plump dancers trying to get more money for their show.

Cristina also wrote about the use of hashish, which was largely available in the international and local community. She tried it a few times, even eating and drinking it, but it failed to have any effect on her, although she witnessed strong reactions in others.

She left Damascus after her daughter recovered from a serious illness. Due to the unreliability of guides and locals, it took Cristina a long time to reach the cedars of Mount Lebanon, but the sight was inspiring and provoked comparisons with the Alps. Among the next places visited were Homs, Aleppo, Ereğli, and Konya. The journey was full of interesting meetings and details. Cristina wrote that after a long and very difficult

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[108] Speelman, 60.

journey, she was glad to eat bread from her own fields with memories to entrust to her future readers.

In 1853, she was back in Turkey. She immediately applied to the Ministry of Ottoman Foreign Affairs and to the president of the Council of the Ministries of the Austrian Emperor for her estates in the region of Lombardia. She also wrote to Chevalier de Bruck, asking him to write to the imperial cabinet in Vienna. She was seeking help to recoup her estates that had been held by Austria.

At the end of July 1853, her lawyer, Pastori, informed her that the Austrian government was ready to return to the patriots involved in the 1848 riots all the money and estates that had been seized. The binding condition, however, was that they had to come back to Italy. Cristina asked for an extension of time, noting that she had been the victim of a stabbing and was ill. She succeeded in remaining in Çakmakoğlu for another year. By February 1854, she had accepted the idea of leaving but wanted to remain to reap profits from the crops of wheat and opium and to be present at the birthing of horses, lambs, and chickens. In July, Pastori went to Paris to sell some properties to garner funds for the move. Cristina's last letter from Çakmakoğlu was written on October 9, 1854. She was happy to come back home. The idea of going to Milan made her *le vertige de plaisir* (dizzy with pleasure).

Through the five years in the Ottoman Empire, Maria's status had changed for the better. She was no longer only Maria, the illegitimate daughter of the princess. Cristina had succeeded in legitimizing her; now, according to official Ottoman documents, she was Maria Cristina di Belgiojoso.

Cristina was not afraid of the Austrian government, but she was concerned about what Italian radicals would say and write about her. Many of them lived in the Ottoman Empire and were well organized. She feared a public protest against her in the capital. Fortunately, when Cristina and Maria went to Italy in 1855, no incidents occurred and she was able to begin another chapter of her life.

This dissertation has examined different dimensions of Cristina's life: its adventures, the independence movements, gender history, music, art, literature, political and social activities, community organization, philanthropy, cultural literature, and commentary. Cristina did, indeed, lead a "technicolor" life, and our imagination is richer for the perspective gained in the study of this "bird of curious plumage."

EPILOGUE: SUMMARY THOUGHTS

The salon Cristina opened became a dazzling prism of Parisian cultural society. The concerts performed there entered musical history. People who gathered there made political and literary history. Her own passionate interests—a united Italy under a constitutional monarch, with a free press, education for women and the lower classes, and the right of nationals to travel freely, and a revitalization of the early spirit of the church—reflect and often reveal the terrible tensions of post-Waterloo Europe, a world reacting after the unrestrained quarter-century of Napoleon. Instantly identified with the Italian cause, she became the protectress of other exiles, subsidizing them, recommending them, and introducing them to French society.

As noteworthy as her representation of the spirit of national independence was her characterization of feminine independence. A changing world made room for emancipation, and women could write and publish, often under their own names. Educated salonnières were considered the intellectual equals to the men they received. Cristina was in a way more startling than Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin ("George Sand") in her determination to live as she pleased. Society was shocked by Sand's sexual candor, but her publicized love affairs were merely an extension of a known phenomenon: "Women had always had lovers."[109] To live with the lovers openly was no more than an affirmation of a woman's right to love, while at the same time a

[109] Brombert, 5.

confirmation of woman's traditional role of spouse or mistress. Sand's behavior was not abnormal. It was at worst a modification of established traditional customs, whereas Cristina, a beautiful woman who steadfastly rejected the most eligible suitors, assumed the greater independence of living without men. Because Cristina's behavior could not be explained by passion, because she made use of her fortune, and because her choice of friends and her pursuit of interests were not determined by husband or lover, she was a threat to masculine domination and an offense to masculine vanity.

Cristina's impact on those who admired her, and even on those who did not, has fortunately been recorded. For almost 30 years, her image was erased or distorted from the public memory. But abundant documents—some of which have been ignored or misread—reveal her celebrity among the most exciting devotees and show how her success as a journalist, social reformer, political activist, and historian irritated her enemies. Over the years, Cristina was a thorn in Metternich's diplomatic side. It was also rumored that Cristina and George Sand had been lovers and that Mignet destroyed all traces of their relationship. Certainly, there is something mysterious about the fact that not a scrap of firsthand evidence remains to prove that these two prominent women even knew each other, though they surely did.[110]

However, Cristina's recently discovered correspondence with Mignet reveals many other unknown facts of Cristina, as does a fresh reading of familiar texts, letters, poems, and novels by famous artists of her time. By hearing Balzac speak of Liszt, Liszt of Heine, Heine of Musset, all of them of *"la belle princesse,"* and she of herself, we can relive the chaos of her life and the turbulence of her time.

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[110] Ibid., 6.

Many people who spend their lives crusading for causes die with their hopes unfulfilled, but Cristina lived to see her causes realized. The Italy on which she looked in the twilight of her days was one united country with the imperial city of the Caesars as its capital. Cristina was a woman who wanted to love, and in her own way she did. Letters to her daughter, her brother, her sister-in-law, and her close friends are filled with the deep and hungry affection of one who has known deprivation. She would never take for granted the attention she received, nor accustom herself to its absence. Cristina certainly provided excellent material for the historical novels and fictional biographies that were written around her. Memoirs written almost fifty years after the events, rumors passed from generation to generation, with sensational details out of context—all of these created a figure so grotesque that even her descendants were afraid to examine the archives in their possession.[111]

Recently, many commentators have begun to look at Cristina's work as well as her extraordinary life. Her travel writings in 1850 have been of particular interest. Cristina's response to the Orient was complex, uncertain, and highly productive of texts, even by her remarkable standards. Travel writing, short stories, novels, and even plays emerged from her time in Turkey, together with her subsequent reflections on her experience. Much of her fictional writings from this period have received little or no critical attention, but her observations and critical comments on Turkish and Arabian societies, customs, and institutions have been seen as evidence of a colonialist, class mentality, an instance of orientalizing Western presumption, and different from the exotic and somewhat shocking tales written by other French and Italian travelers before her.

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[111] Ibid., 11.

Cristina lived longer in exile than in Italy, and she had a shrewd political, intellectual, and linguistic sense. Because Cristina dreamed of and schemed for a united Italy while she was in France, her early contact with Italian intellectual thought would become a lifelong contract. Her response to the Orient in both fiction and nonfiction was rooted in the years of political and intellectual activity that she engaged in prior to her extended stay in Turkey and her travels in the East. Her bitterly sarcastic views and reformist recommendations to the Turkish pashas and Oriental society can be traced back to her own reformist efforts inspired by early French socialism and in her readings of the philosophy of Giambattista Vico, rather than to prevailing Orientalizing attitudes.[112]

Cristina's experience as a semi-permanent exile gave her a keen eye for the picture of future Italy, while her pragmatism led her to urge her fellow Italians to see unification as a start rather than endpoint. Cristina's *bon sens* is emphasized once more as a requirement to participate in her vision, which is an organization of ethical, pragmatic, and honest men and women who will take advantage of Italy's new freedom to bring about social and economic development across the new country.

Princess Cristina Belgiojoso left no private or personal memoir despite her eventful life. Her very considerable literary output, dealing almost exclusively with political and sociological problems, affords only rare and fleeting glimpses of the princess's inner self. We would wish to know much more.

"A Trivulzio who never rested is now at rest. Silence".[113]

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[112] Sharon Wood, "Cristina di Belgiojoso: scholar in exile," *Italianist* 33 (2013), 51.
[113] Gattey, 216.

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VITA

Monica Chiyoung Yoon is a pianist who started playing the piano at age 4. During her days at Busan Arts High School in Korea, Monica made her official debut with the Busan Symphony Orchestra, performing Beethoven's First Piano Concerto. She then attended the Korean National University of Arts, the first art university established by the Korean government, with a full scholarship. After graduating from college summa cum laude, Monica went to New York University to obtain her master's degree in Piano Performance. There she studied with Eduardus Halim, who is the last pupil of world-famous pianist Vladimir Horowitz. Continuing her education in Piano Performance at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA, she received her Doctor of Musical Arts in 2014. At the University of Washington, she studies with Dr. Robin McCabe, one of the great pianists and mentors in her life.

An avid performer, Monica enjoys performing and has had the privilege of playing for renowned artists such as Garrick Ohlsson, Andre Watts, Miyoko Lotto, Nelita True, Jack Winerock, Dong il Han.