

Ottoman Women from the Pen of Spanish Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes at the World Columbus Exhibition in 1893

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ABSTRACT

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The Ottoman Empire, one of the leading actors of the Eastern world, was

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an empire closely followed by the whole World. In addition to the political moves of the Empire, social and daily life was also wondered and legendary information was produced particularly about Ottoman women. By the modernization process of the Empire in the 19th century, its official and unofficial life was opened to the national and international public, and this opening caused the Ottoman women to be closely observed by the Europe. European travelers, craftsmen or foreign ambassador wives who came to the Ottoman lands frequently penned about Ottomen women. One of these names was Spanish Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes who lived in the Ottoman capital for a while. Writer, journalist and musician Mademoiselle Esmeralda, who was in Istanbul in the years coincided with the Abdulhamid II reign, was elected as a representative by the Madrid Fine Arts Society to participate in the World Columbus Exhibition, one of the international favorite meetings of the 19th century and held in Chicago in 1893. She wrote a report to make a presentation on the education of women in the Ottoman Empire at the Chicago Literature Congress of Women held within this exhibition. In the report, Mademoiselle gave information about Ottoman, Greek, British, German, Armenian and Jewish girls' schools, which were active in education in the 19th century Istanbul. The aim of the study is to give information about the situation of Islamic/Eastern women and Muslim and non-Muslim girls' school in Istanbul by adhering to the report of Mademoiselle Esmeralda.

Keywords: Inas (Girls) Schools, Istanbul, Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes, Ottoman Empire, World's Columbian Exposition.

ÖZ

KANAT, Vedat; ÖZÇELİK KANAT, Şeyda, **1893 Dünya Columbus Sergisi'nde İspanyol Matmazel Esmeralda Cervantes'in Kaleminden Osmanlı Kadınları**, CTAD, Yıl 19, Sayı 39 (Güz 2023), s. 1077-1100.

Doğu dünyasının başat aktörlerinden olan Osmanlı Devleti tüm dünya tarafından yakından takip edilen bir devlet olmuştur. Osmanlı'nın siyasi hamlelerinin yanında toplumsal ve gündelik yaşantısı da merak edilmiş, özellikle Osmanlı kadınları hakkında efsanevi bilgiler üretilmiştir. Devletin XIX. yüzyılda modernleşme sürecine girmesiyle birlikte resmî ve gayri resmî hayatı ulusal ve uluslararası kamuoyuna açılmış ve bu açılış özellikle merak edilen Osmanlı kadınlarının Avrupa tarafından yakından gözlemlenmesine sebep olmuştur. Osmanlı ülkesine gelen Avrupalı gezginler, sanatkârlar ya da yabancı elçi eşleri Osmanlı kadınları hakkında sıkça kalem oynatmışlardır. Bu isimlerden bir tanesi de Osmanlı başkentinde bir süre yaşamış olan İspanyol Matmazel Esmeralda Cervantes olmuştur. II.Abdülhamid Dönemi'ne denk gelen yıllarda İstanbul'da bulunan yazar, gazeteci ve müzisyen Matmazel

Esmeralda Madrid Güzel Sanatlar Cemiyeti tarafından XIX. yüzyılın uluslararası gözde toplantılarından biri olan ve 1893 yılında Chicago’da düzenlenen Dünya Columbus Sergisi’ne katılmak üzere temsilci seçilmiştir. Bu sergi bünyesinde düzenlenen Chicago Kadınlar Edebiyat Kongresi’nde Matmazel Esmeralda tarafından Osmanlı Devleti’nde kadınların eğitimi ile ilgili sunum yapmak üzere bir risale kaleme alınmıştır. Matmazel risalesinde; XIX. yüzyıl İstanbul’undaki Osmanlı, Rum, Fransız, İngiliz, Alman, Ermeni ve Musevi kız mektepleriyle ilgili bilgiler vermiştir. Çalışmanın amacı Matmazel Esmeralda’nın risalesine bağlı kalarak İslam/Doğu kadınlarının durumu ile İstanbul’daki Müslüman ve gayrimüslim kız okulları hakkında bilgi vermektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnas Okulları, İstanbul, Matmazel Esmeralda Cervantes, Osmanlı Devleti, Dünya Columbus Sergisi.

Introduction

World fairs (exhibitions) emerged in the 19th century, when industrialism, imperialism and orientalism were dominant, and became an important source of understanding the complexity of the century. Countries (such as England and France) that were the pioneers of international exhibitions, hosted exhibitions involving oriental culture, supported the participation of eastern countries, and thus built an oriental culture for the west.¹ Therefore, the uniform cultural representation of the whole world, which had dominated until then, left its place to many different and unique understandings of structure.²

The 19th century world fairs, which started with the London Great Exhibition in 1851, created platforms that were respected and watched with interest all over the world, where global capitalism had a direct impact on human life, and which rose with the Industrial Revolution in the 1830. An important feature of these exhibitions was that they brought different cultures from all over the world to the center of Europe at a time when travelling was not as easy and fast as it is today.³ For the Ottoman Empire, these exhibitions were a place to show the distance covered in the westernization efforts, which reached its climax with the Tanzimat Edict in 1839, and to show that it was still a developed western state even though it lost most of its territory. Thanks to

¹ Cafer Sankaya, “1893 Şikago Dünya Fuarında Osmanlı Yemekleri”, *Yemek ve Kültür*, Issue 32, 2013, pp. 113-114.

² Mehmet Emin Kahraman, İsmail Erim Gülaçtı, “Elbise-i Osmaniye: 1873 Viyana Uluslararası Sergisi’nde Bir Yaratıcı Endüstri Örneği”, *Beykoz Akademi Dergisi*, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2016, p. 38.

³ *Ibid*, p. 29-30.

these exhibitions, the Ottomans also sought to provide the political and economic support of the western states.⁴

One of the 19th century exhibitions was the “World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893” organized by the United States. As a country that brought the industrial revolution to an advanced stage with the discovery of electricity, the USA organized this fair for the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ arrival in the new continent in 1492. When the *1893 World’s Columbian Exposition* held, it was twenty-two years after the great Chicago fire in 1871, and twenty-eight years after the end of the American Civil War. During the reconstruction period, rapid industrial development, mass migrations, and class conflicts shook the American social structure considerably. The American political leaders and major capitalists of the period, worried that these class conflicts would turn into a sharp social disintegration, adopted a great world fair to be held as a cultural cement to bring these fragmented social structures together.⁵ In addition, it is understood that this exhibition was unmatched in terms of both participation and indoor and outdoor space compared to the events held in different cities of the World until that time. The USA planned to announce its progress in science and technology to the whole world through this exhibition. The fact that this exhibition coincided with the Paris Exhibition in 1889, and was more magnificent also revealed the international commercial competition between the USA and France, and the lack representation of France in the exhibition confirmed this competition.⁶ The Ottoman Empire had the opportunity to show its development to the whole world by providing its representation in this exhibition, and on the other hand, it showed that it wanted to make sincere its relations with the USA.⁷ The foresight and experiences of Abdulhamid II were quite influential in the participation of the empire at this exhibition.

European travels of Abdulhamid II with his uncle, Sultan Abdulaziz, and the impressions he gained during his principedom shaped his world view and his experiences guided him during his reign. His knowledge towards Europe and its development occurred during these travels and the term “civilization” gained

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 23.

⁵ Ahmet Şamil Gürler, “1893 Şikago Dünya Fuarında Osmanlı Hipodromu ve Şirket-i Hamidiye”, *Kıbrıs Üniversitesi Folklor/Edebiyat*, Volume 17, Issue 65, 2011/1, p. 8.

⁶ Gürsoy Şahin, “Sultan II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı- ABD İlişkilerine Farklı Bir Bakış: Amerika’nın Keşfinin 400’üncü Yıldönümü Etkinlikleri ve Osmanlı Devleti”, *Tarihin Peşinde*, Issue 18, 2017, p. 149.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 150.

great importance during the reign.⁸ The European trip became an education for Abdulhamid. Napoleon III, The Emperor of France, invited Abdulaziz among many rulers for the International Paris exhibition. A few aspects of the trip came to the fore for Abdulhamid. He followed and lived the western life, decency and protocol. He saw the most advanced techniques and inventions of the world in place. On the one hand, he comprehended diplomatic tricks.⁹ With these observations Abdulhamid II understood the importance of both the universal exhibitions, which were the showcase of the modern world, and the participation of the Ottoman Empire in these great rites of progress.¹⁰

The efforts of Abdulhamid II to leave a good mark in the memory of the international public had to wait for the great Chicago Exhibition held in 1893 to commemorate the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. Unlike the Europeans, non-participation of the USA in the division of the Ottoman Empire, and the fact that it was not a party to the Balkan issue or the struggle for control of the Indian road made Abdulhamid warm to the exhibition. While the Chicago Exhibition was an opportunity not to be missed for the Ottoman Empire, it also formed the stepping stone for the development of commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire for the USA.¹¹ The Empire participated in the fair with an official commission and a pavilion, and Ibrahim Hakkı Bey was the commissioner of the exhibition.¹² A complete Ottoman village was established here with the bazaar, mosque, and a life-size replica of the Blue Fountain at the entrance of Topkapı Palace, as well as the most beautiful of Ottoman industrial and artistic products (especially jewelry and ceramic masterpieces). A generous budget of more than 7500 liras was allocated for the exhibition as the price of creating a positive image about the empire.¹³ According to the Constantinopolis Chamber of Commerce, the purpose of the Chicago exhibition, which lasted for a few months, was to enable the industrialists in different countries of the world to see the goods manufactured outside of their homeland, and to inform them about the developments in the industry in the world. Moreover, industrialists were

⁸ François Georgeon, *Sultan Abdülhamid*, Translated by Ali Berktaş, Homer Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2006, s. 39.

⁹ Orhan Koloğlu, *Abdülhamid Gerçeği*, Gür Yayınları, İstanbul, 1987, pp. 64-64.

¹⁰ Georgeon, *ibid*, p. 40.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 319- 320.

¹² Cafer Sarıkaya, “1893 Şikago Dünya Fuarı’nda Diyarbakır ve Çevresinin Toplumsal ve Ekonomik Tarihine Bakış”, *Diyarbakır Tebliğleri (Diyarbakır ve Çevresi Toplumsal ve Ekonomik Tarihi Konferansı)*, Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, p. 113.

¹³ Georgeon, *ibid*, p. 319- 320.

informed about new inventions and technologies at the exhibition. Thanks to this exhibition, the Ottoman Empire would have the opportunity to exhibit and promote the goods and products produced in homeland.¹⁴ An important development in the exhibition process was that a Turkish newspaper was published for the first time in the USA. The concessionaire of this periodical, named Musavver Chicago Exhibition, was Suleiman El-Bustani, an Ottoman delegation who was in charge of the fair.¹⁵

Although these exhibitions, started in the 19th century, gave countries the opportunity to introduce and express themselves, in the 20th century, the “other”¹⁶ continued to be constructed by classifying the countries within themselves. In the Chicago Exhibition, which was evaluated as the biggest, the largest budget, the highest attendance of the 19th century, the theme at the center of the representations consisting of a total of 217 structures was the “Technology and Education”.¹⁷ A presentation was made by Spanish Mademoiselle Esmeralda¹⁸ on the situation of women and education of girls in the Ottoman Empire at the Chicago Women’s Literature Congress held in the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893.

Who was Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes?

According to documents obtained from the Presidential Archive of the Turkish Republic, Mademoiselle Esmeralda introduced herself as the musician of Greek and Portuguese kings on her business card printed on her behalf. Mademoiselle Esmeralda, originally from Spain, lived in Istanbul for a long time and made good relations with reputable families in some embassies in Beyoğlu. She also had a close conversation with Fatma Aliya, the daughter of Cevdet Pasha, one of the prominent Ottoman pashas.¹⁹

When Mademoiselle was in Istanbul, she was chosen as the representative of the World’s Columbian Exposition by the Madrid Fine Arts Society, that consisted of Madrid and Barcelona artists. She received a letter from a woman who was a member of the Madrid Fine Arts Society. In the letter, information was requested from Mademoiselle Esmeralda regarding the educational status

¹⁴ Bayram Nazır, “Dersaadet Ticaret Odası ve Uluslar Arası Sergiler”, *History Studies*, Volume 1/1, 2009, p. 195.

¹⁵ Bülent Varlık, “Musavver Şikago Sergisi (1893)”, *Kebikeç*, Issue 1, 1995, p. 35.

¹⁶ It refers to peoples except from westerners.

¹⁷ Başaran, *ibid*, p. 1.

¹⁸ In the documents obtained from the Presidential Archive of the Turkish Republic, the title Mademoiselle was used for Esmeralda.

¹⁹ *BOA*, Y. PRK. ZB. 11/45, 7 Shawwal 1310 [24 April 1893].

of oriental women.²⁰ For this reason, Esmeralda wanted to give a speech about the situation of oriental and Islamic women at the Chicago exhibition, and so she had a hodja to translate the Quran verses in Beyoglu. Being aware of this situation, the Ottoman Empire initiated an investigation about which hodja asked translation, and which respectable families encouraged her about this presentation, regarded as inconvenient firstly.²¹ During the investigation carried out, it was determined that the hodja, made the translation was Bagdatli Ahmet Efendi. Mademoiselle had Ahmet Hodja translated the parts of Islam and hadiths that concern Islamic women. Besides, Mademoiselle Esmeralda closely observed the education and decency of Muslim women by going and visiting the homes of some Islamic families. In her report, she gave detailed information about the Ottoman, Greek, French, British, German, Armenian and Jewish schools in Istanbul. Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities gladly provided information about their schools to Mademoiselle Esmeralda. However, since the getting information about Islamic women in the Ottoman Empire was forbidden, the Ministry of Education made it difficult to give information about Islamic schools for girls. The reporter of Times newspaper²², Monsieur Guaracino, was invited to Yıldız Palace, had a Friday greeting with Mademoiselle at the guest room of the palace and got information about the situation. Modemoiselle presented the report she wrote in French to Guaracino. In the report, due to the difficulties of the Minister of Education, Zuhdu Pasha, some parts of the informadion given about Islamic schools were incomplete and some inaccuracies were observed in some parts. As a result of informing center about the subject, giving information about educational institutions such as teacher schools for girls, Fine Arts School and girls' secondary schools, which were opened for the education of Islamic women in the Ottoman Empire, was deemed to be in the interest of the empire. It was allowed to be presented in Chicago on the condition that the missing and inaccuracies about the Islamic schools in her report were completed and corrected. Since Modemoiselle Esmeralda's presentation would refute the prediction of Islamic women to be inadequate and uneducated in the world public opinion, she was allowed to travel to Chicago, and also the Ministry of Education was asked not to cause any diffculties regarding this trip. In addition, it was ordered that Mademoiselle should be rewarded with badges and

²⁰ BOA, Y. PRK. TKM. 29/76, 6 Safar, 1311 [19 August 1893].

²¹ BOA, Y.PRK. ZB. 11/45, 7 Shawwal 1310 [24 April 1893].

²² Times published the presentation in Chicago of Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes' report giving information about the situation of Ottoman women. Times, one of the important magazines of the period, stated that with this presentation of Mademoiselle, the wrong ideas about the Ottoman Empire disappeared in Europe.

medals given to foreigners for this report to be presented for the benefit of the Ottoman Empire.²³

Thoughts on the Presentation of Mademoselle Esmeralda Cervantes

The demand of Mademoiselle Esmeralda to make a speech about the situation of eastern and Islamic women to present in the Chicago exhibition is stated in the previous title of the study. It is thought that there were some reasons for this demand. One of these reasons was the fact that Mademoiselle Esmeralda resided in Istanbul, and coincided with a period of renewal and transformation in many fields, including the educational field of the Ottoman Empire. The innovation and transformation started with the Tanzimat process and continued till the end of the century. Educational practices, which were the main theme of Mademoiselle's presentation, were determined by considering factors such as the national and international diplomacy of the Ottoman Empire, its multinationality, its traditional structure, and European modernization. The ideal of Ottomanism, which was acquired especially in order to keep the heterogeneous structure stable, formed the motto of the new education model of the empire.

In the Ottoman Empire, the reflection of the reform movements in the field of education, in which the western model change was taken as a sample, emerged in the form of the education policy to realize the the ideal of *Ottomanism*. Accordingly, regardless of religion and race, all citizens living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire would be raised with the aim of sharing the common ideal around the Ottomanism.²⁴ Thus, policy of regulating and conducting the work of educating generations was taken for granted as one of the main duties of the empire. Therefore, one of the important tools of the institutional modernization policy of the Tanzimat period was the establishment of public schools. The Tanzimat reformers designed a secularized civil education that was paid for by the state, but there was no question of turning existing schools (religious schools, ordinary schools, and madrasas) into modern education centers. For this reason, two different school networks, one of which was religion-based and "traditional" and the other was more secular and "modern", started to coexist since the Tanzimat period.²⁵ On the other hand, non-Muslim communities benefiting from cultural, education and training rights granted to them by the Reform (*Islahat*) Edict started large-scale

²³ BOA, Y.MTV. 77/145, 27 Shawwal 1310 [14 May 1893].

²⁴ Zeki Salih Zengin, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Yabancı ve Azınlık Mekteplerinin Faaliyetleri", *Belleten*, Volume LXXI, Issue 261, Ağustos 2007, p. 616.

²⁵ Georgeon, *ibid*, p. 290.

educational activities and started to establish national and religious schools all over the empire with the assistance of Europeans.²⁶ Therefore, since the Ottomanism did not abolish the differences in reality, the differentiation in the field of education continued, especially due to religious and partly cultural differences.²⁷ In addition, in the 19th century, when central and provincial administrations, foreign companies, banks, institutions such as *Duyun-ı Umumiye* or *Tütün Rejisi* began to demand more qualified personnel, Ottoman administrators and especially Abdulhamid II followed an educational policy that balanced the development of schools for non-Muslims.²⁸ Education was especially concentrated in Anatolia, where Turks were the majority, but minority and foreign schools were somewhat controlled.²⁹ Although the law of 1869 required foreign schools to be established with government permission, only 37% of foreign schools in the empire in 1894 were officially licensed. In addition, Muslim students were prohibited from being admitted to these foreign schools, and Abdulhamid made many attempts in this direction in the years between 1880-1890. But no significant success was achieved. Finally, it was decided that the most effective method would be to develop a network of public schools that could compete with these foreign institutions.³⁰ The presentation of Mademoiselle was an important program in terms of knowing content of non-Muslim schools in the Ottoman lands in terms of quality and quantity, and inspecting the applicability of the rights promised to non-Muslims in the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire.

Another problematic of the balance policy in education, in the period of modernization and especially in the Abdulhamid era, was the education of girls. The idea that public education should have been also extended to girls belonged to the Tanzimat Period.³¹ The provision in 114th article of the Kanun-ı Esasi, “*the first level of education is compulsory for the all Ottoman people*”, increased the importance of primary education for girls and boys in the socialization process of the children. Until 1858, girls and boys were taught together in primary schools, and the education level of girls did not exceed

²⁶ Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1991, p. 15.

²⁷ Zengin, *ibid*, p. 616.

²⁸ Georgeon, *ibid*, p. 290- 291.

²⁹ Yaşar Baytal, “Tanzimat ve II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Eğitim Politikaları”, *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, Issue 11, Facsimile 2001, p. 28.

³⁰ Georgeon, *ibid*, p. 276-277.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 290.

these schools. Girls could go to school until the age of twelve. Education in primary schools did not go beyond praying, reading the Qur'an, memorizing suras and prayers.³² In addition, primary schools were the only schools that girls attended without gender discrimination. By the age of puberty, the life of men and women began to be separated by the state, and due to religious necessity, two sexes were educated in separate schools after primary education.³³ By the 9th article of the Regulation of Education Ministry, the starting age for primary schools was determined as 6-10 for girls and 7-11 for boys, and education was made compulsory, and secondary schools for girls were established in appropriate places.³⁴ The opening of the secondary schools for girls was in 1858, and industrial schools for girls, which were in the aim of raising an educated population for urbanization/industrialization, were opened in 1870.³⁵ Therefore, the result of these reforms in education was reflected in presentation of Mademoiselle, and it was in favor of the Ottoman Empire that these changes could be would be watched by the world at the Columbus Exhibition.

Another reason for presentation of Mademoiselle was to prove that the Ottoman Empire, an oriental state, was not behind in the civilization race at the World Columbus Exhibition. Until the 19th century, especially Ottoman women were reflected to the world as illiterate, backward and only sexual objects through western travelers who came to visit Istanbul. In his memoirs, Abdulhamid II wrote that the Europeans were filled with false information about the Orient, and that there were fake news they received from the false sources.³⁶ The partial change in this understanding of Ottoman women started with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu³⁷, and reached its peak in the 19th century.

³² BOA, YPRK. MYD. 8/26, 18 Jamad Al-Thani 1306 [19 January 1889].

³³ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, Metis Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, p. 297.

³⁴ İlhan Tekeli, Selim İlkin, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Eğitim ve Bilgi Üretim Sisteminin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 1993, p. 67.

³⁵ Osman Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, Volume 1-2, Eser Matbaası, İstanbul, 1977, p. 457.

³⁶ Sultan Abdülhamit, *Siyasi Hatıratım*, Dergâh Yayınları, İstanbul, 1975, p. 212.

³⁷ For further see; Lady Montagu, *Doğu Mektupları*, Translated by Murat Aykaç Erinöz, Özgü Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2014. The letters of Lady Montagu, who stayed in Istanbul between 1717-1718, differ from those written by previous travelers. After her husband was appointed as an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Montagu went on a journey to the East with him. She wrote letters during this journey to her friends. She tried to correct the known mistakes, especially about the harem, with letters containing neutral and prejudice-breaking information about Ottoman women, and she emphasized that women were free and educated, contrary to what was thought. In social life, she defined Ottoman women as beautiful, well-groomed, well-mannered and active in daily life. For detailed information, see Songül Çolak, "Bir İngiliz Hanımefendisi'nin

Observations and works of western women travelers played an important role in this change.³⁸ At this point, the pen of Mademoiselle Esmeralda, who came from the western civilization, was very important in terms of transferring the Ottoman woman to the world at the Columbus Exhibition. With the presentation of Mademoiselle, the thought of some travelers that Ottoman women had more rights and law than European women was proved to some extent.³⁹

In addition, travelers did not include the education in the Ottoman Empire in their works till the 19th century. There were several reasons for that. One of these was that the Turks did not like to deal with learning in the 17th, 18th and even 19th centuries, which was the century of modernization and change.⁴⁰ At this point, what Mademoiselle wrote proved that the education level of Ottoman women was not as backward as it was thought. Madrid Fine Arts Society asked Mademoiselle to share her observations and experiences in this regard, as it was aware of her close relations. Particularly her close relations with some families residing in Beyoğlu, and with the daughter of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, one of the important intellectual of the period, prompted her to convey appropriate and accurate information about Ottoman and Islamic women.

Apart from all these reasons, the travel conditions in the century had an effect on conveying information of Mademoiselle from east to west and the world. In particular, at the end of the 19th century, travel conditions that became much easier compared to previous centuries, and the technological advances brought by the Industrial Revolution provided great opportunities for recognizing cultures and civilizations in different parts of the world.⁴¹ At this point, reading the eastern woman from the pen of a western woman became interesting and more credible in the eyes of the world. In addition, the presentation is a proof that the Ottoman Empire was closely observed and created the periodic table of the westernization process of the state. Each text

-Lady Montegu- Gözüyle Osmanlı Kadını”, *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Volume 7, Issue 13, 2010, pp. 386-403.

³⁸ Selçuk Düğer, “Batılı Kadın Seyyahlar İmgeleminde Osmanlı Kadını”, *Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, KOSBED, Issue 29, 2015, p. 72.

³⁹ Ülkü Yancı, “Batılıların Gözünde Osmanlı Kadının İmajı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme”, *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Year 4, Issue 23, Marc 2016, p. 383.

⁴⁰ Müzeyyen Altunbay, “16. ve 19. Yüzyılları Arasındaki Yabancı Seyahatnamelerde Osmanlı Devleti’ndeki Kadın Algısı”, *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Volume 8, Issue 41, 2015, p. 56.

⁴¹ Kahraman ve Gülsaçtı, *ibid*, p. 38.

line of Mademoiselle was an opportunity for the Ottomans to express and prove themselves before the West.

Presentation of Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes in Chicago

Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes made a presentation on July 22, 1893 at the General Education Congress in Chicago on the situation of Ottoman women.⁴² The presentation took place for the first time in the Women's Building, which was built for this exhibition, whose architect was a woman. In the Women's Building, apart from the main exhibition hall where works of women were exhibited, there were various departments such as library, kitchen and baby care. The architect of the building was Sophia Hayden, and the head of the board was Bertha Palmer. It was mentioned with appreciation of the building and the fact that the architect was a woman. Important events such as the international beauty contest and the Congress of Women were held in the Women's Building located in the east of Midway.⁴³ In issue 2 of *Musavver Chicago* newspaper (Jul 1893, pp. 19-21), there was information about the pavilion where products made by women were exhibited in the Women's Department part of the Chicago exhibition.⁴⁴

Mademoiselle Esmeralda made a speech about Ottoman women at the Women's Literature Congress held in Chicago within the scope of the World's Colombian Exposition. She started her speech by giving information about why and how she was chosen for Chicago. While in Istanbul, Mademoiselle was chosen by the Madrid Fine Arts Society as a representative for the Chicago exposition, and received a letter from the committee member to present some information on the education of oriental/eastern women in this exposition. Mademoiselle Esmeralda, who made searches for correct information about the education of eastern women, stated that there was no statistics for such information in the Ottoman Empire. She applied to Zuhdu Pasha, the Minister of Education of the time, but Pasha did not give information to Mademoiselle. Despite this, Mademoiselle did not fall into despair and headed for the European, Greek, Armenian and Jewish schools where she could get information more easily in Istanbul. According to Mademoiselle, book writers in the Ottoman Empire wrote incorrect statements about education, and made big mistakes mostly when talking about the education and advancement of women. Due to this incomplete and inaccurate information, the western peoples learned the eastern women as captives who were imprisoned in the

⁴² *BOA*, Y. PRK. TKM, 29/76, 6 Safar 1311 [19 August 1893].

⁴³ Başaran, *ibid*, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Varlık, *ibid*, p. 40.

harem and spent all their time in ignorance and laziness. Mademoiselle stated that with the encouragement of Abdulhamid II, the sultan of the period, Islamic women progressed considerably in the last fifteen years, said that Islam did not prevent women from advancing, and she was grateful to the sultan for this opportunity offered to women.⁴⁵

Mademoiselle Esmeralda, who was friends with many Ottoman women, stated that the educational status of eastern women was not different from those in the west. According to her, the idea that some European writers condemned the Quran to the ignorance of Muslim women was a mistake. Because the Quran commanded education equally to men and women. In the report, Mademoiselle benefited from Albin (Albert) de Biberstein Kazimirski's translation of the Quran named *Le Koran*, published in Paris in 1840. She, citing the translation of *Le Koran*, wrote that before Muhammad, pagan Arabs had a tradition of killing girls when they were poor. Mademoiselle stated that Muhammad forbade this brutal tradition based on the 152nd verse of the 6th sura in the Quran.⁴⁶ She said in the continuation of the presentation that Muhammad talked about four perfect women and listed these names as the wife of the pharaoh, Asiya; the mother of Jesus, Mary; his wife, Khadija; and his daughter, Fatimah.

The Ottoman *Inas* (Girls) Schools in Istanbul in 1893

According to the report of Mademoiselle Esmeralda, there were three Ottoman girls' school in Istanbul. Two of them were opened in 1883 by Suphi Pasha. These schools were well organized under the administration of Mademoiselle Kalavasi and Mademoiselle Hani (or Hanlı). There were about 100 boarding students in one school, and 114 non-boarding students in the other. The third school was in Uskudar under the administration Muhsine Hanım, the daughter of Halid Pasha. It had 150 students. These students were under the patronage of the sultan and their expenses were covered by him, and even some of the marriage expenses of the students were covered and they were married off. In these schools, Turkish, Ottoman history, geography, mathematics, painting and piano lessons were taught. In addition, traditional

⁴⁵ BOA, Y. PRK. TKM. 29/76, 6 Safar 1311 [19 August 1893]. See; *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Osmanlı'da Kadın*, Project Manager: Ugur Unal, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Müdürlüğü, İstanbul, 2015, p. 277-287.

⁴⁶ Mademoiselle Esmeralda's statement that Mohammed's forbidding the tradition of killing caused the Quran to be perceived as the words of prophet. In the translation of the Quran by both Kazimirsky and the Presidency of Religious Affairs, it is not Mohammed, but the Quran, that is, Allah. The attribution of the prohibition of killing to the prophet reflects the view of some Christians in that period towards the Quran and the prophet. *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Osmanlı'da Kadın*, p. 280.

skill courses of west and east (such as carpet weaving) were also taught. The efforts of Mademoiselle Kalavasi and Mademoiselle Hani were effective in schools.

Teacher School of Girls (Dar'ul-Muallimat), under the administration of Refika Hanim, was open for twenty-two years (since 1871), and had 190 non-boarding students and about twenty teachers. Even painting and piano were taught here. After four years of education in Turkish, students were given a document, and with this documents they were able to teach either in Ottoman homes for private tuition and schools in provinces. The manageress of the Teacher School of Girls was a highly intelligent woman who could speak French, German, English, Greek, Turkish and Armenian, play the piano, and paint well.⁴⁷

	Number	Daytime Students	Boarding Students	Number of Women Teachers
Teacher School of Girls	1	190		20
Girls' Industry School	1		100	18
Girls' Industry School	1	130		9
Industry School in Uskudar	1	120		9
Secondary Schools	14	958		56
Primary Schools	65	4385		130
Private Schools	14	762	220	36
	97	6545	320	178

Table I- A list of Inas (Girls) Schools

Greek Inas (Girls) Schools

Mademoiselle Esmeralda wrote in her report that there were Greek girls' schools in Istanbul. The program of the Greek girls' schools named Zapyon⁴⁸,

⁴⁷ BOA, Y. PRK. TKM, 29/76, 6 Safar 1311 [19 August 1893].

⁴⁸ After the Regulation of Education came into force, primary and secondary schools began to be opened for girls in the Greek community in the 1870s. The first of these was Palada Girls'

Pallas and Yuvakimyon was determined in accordance with the Athens University. The fees of the students were covered by wealthy Greeks and their donations. Western languages, geography, mathematics, history, industry, music and painting lessons were taught in these schools. The degree that students got from these schools, was accepted in universities of Greece, France, Switzerland and Germany. The teachers working in the Greek schools in the Ottoman Empire were educated in these schools. Also these schools were under the supervision of the Greek Patriarchate.⁴⁹

	Number	Classes	Students	Taechers
Zapyon	1	8	328	27
Pallas	1	9	147	27
Yuvakimyon	1	7	172	12
Ordinary Schools	3	21	1306	30
High Schools	11	32	869	23
Various Schools	17	58	575	34
Mediocre Schools	13	61	1240	52
Primary Schools	8	22	596	14
	55	218	5233	199

Table II- List of the Greek Inas (Girls) Schools

School, established in 1874, and the other was Zapyon Girls' School, established 1875. For detailed information, see Hüseyin Saraç, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Gayrimüslim Kızların Eğitimi ve Aksaray Rum İnas Mektebi", *TAD*, Volume 39, Issue 67, 2020, pp. 305- 327.

⁴⁹ *BOA*, Y. PRK. TKM, 29/76, 6 Safar 1311 [19 August 1893].

French Inas (Girls) Schools in Istanbul

French girls' schools in Istanbul were opened to educate teachers for students of Notre Dame de Sion. There were two French schools for girls; one in Beyoglu and the other in Kadikoy. The schools were under the administration of Madame Dov and Shafez, and the education programs were designed in accordance with the Notre Dame de Sion school program. In the staff of the Notre Dame de Sion school, there were teachers in different branches who teach science, mathematics, philosophy, western languages and industry. In French schools, the nuns taught embroidery to daughters from poor families. These girls were admitted to the schools free of charge, and had rights to have lunch.⁵⁰

	Classes	Students	Teachers
Pensioni de Notre Dame in Pangalti	12	284	30
Pensioni de Notre Dame Kadikoy	12	150	30
Saint Vincent de Paul School of Nuns	8	300	20
Agustin School of Nuns	9	250	22
Saint Joseph School of Nuns	6	280	18
School of Madame Dov and Shafes	11	250	16
	58	1514	136

Table III- List of the French Schools

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

British Inas (Girls) Schools in Istanbul

Mademoiselle Esmeralda mentioned two British girls' schools under the auspices of the British embassy in her report. One of these schools was opened by Madame Bordet Kotesi. The land of the school was given by the sultan. Since the building was not sufficient, there were not many boarding students. The other school was under the administration of Miss Grabo, and was under the auspices of a committee. The students of these two schools were prepared for the necessary exams in order to have the degree of the teachers' school in London.⁵¹ It was also reflected in the report of the Minister of Education, Zuhdu Pasha, that there were two schools for girls in Beyoglu, Istanbul.⁵²

German Inas (Girls) Schools in Istanbul

Some of expenses of these schools were covered by the aids of the Germany State, and some by the fees received from the students.

	Number	Students	Classes	Teachers
Secondary School	1	150	16	14
Primary School	1	200	6	9
	2	250⁵³	22	23

Table IV- List of the German Schools

Mademoiselle Esmeralda wrote that there was a beautiful American missionary school in Uskudar, and that secondary education were given to the girls in this school. In addition, she stated that Austria, Italy, Iran, Bulgaria and Russia also had schools in Istanbul and these schools were managed with the aids of these governments.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² In the report, Zuhdu Pasha wrote that one of these school was on Keklik Street in Buyukparmakpapi, on Kumbaraci slope, and under the auspices of the British Church (1889). The other was under the auspices of the British embassy (1870). Atilla Çetin, "Maarif Nazırı Ahmet Zühtü Paşa'nın Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Yabancı Okullar Hakkında Raporu", İstanbul Üniversitesi *Güney Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Volume 10-11, 1981-1982, p. 216.

⁵³ Mademoiselle wrote the total of the student as 250 in her report. However, the total number should be 350.

Armenian Schools

The Armenian Catholic and Protestant Schools were administered by the aid of these communities, and personalities.

	Classes	Students	Teachers
Schools of Communities	24	400	72
Secondary Schools	7	150	21
Schools of Districts	33	1030	60
Primary Schools	2	170	60
Secondary Schools	1	130	77
	67	1880	250⁵⁴

Table V- List of the Armenian Schools

Jewish Schools

Mademoiselle Esmeralda also mentioned Jewish girls' school. The Jewish schools were managed with the aid of the United General Israeli Association, and it even provided the books, paper and clothing need of the students. The students attending school mostly had free education. Within the scope of the education programs, history, geography, zoology and botanics (evolutionary), philosophy, calculus, chemistry, painting, song, sewing and handicraft lessons were given in French, Hebrew and German languages. The purpose of these schools was to educate and teach handicrafts to poor children.

Apart from these, there were even some private Jewish schools as primary.

In the continuation of the report, Mademoiselle Esmeralda wrote that Mizika-i Humayun (The Imperial Band) was created for the first time under the administration of Guiseppe Donizetti, the famous musician during the reign of Sultan Mahmud. During the reign of Abdulmecid, Guatelli Pasha was appointed to this band in 1844. Sultan Abdulaziz commissioned Guatelli Pasha to

⁵⁴ Mademoiselle wrote the total of the teachers as 250 in the report. However, the total number should be 290.

form an orchestra consisting of Circassian concubines. This orchestra, consisting of eighty concubines, sang songs to the sultan behind the scenes. Even Eugenie, the empress of France, was very surprised when she heard about the orchestra. Sultan Abdulhamid abolished this orchestra, consisting of women, and established the Imperial Band instead of. According to Mademoiselle, the money spent for this orchestra could open a conservatory and form a perfect orchestra as in Europe.

Mademoiselle mentioned the names of some women who played piano and eastern musical instruments in her speech. Emine Hanim, daughter of the former Egyptian governor Ismail Pasha, and the daughters of Halim Pasha, Dervis Pasha, Halim and Ferid Bey were examples of these names.

	Fee-paying Students	Teachers	Free Students
School of Balat	27	8	298
School of Daghamami	30	4	92
School of Galata	60	8	230
School of Haskoy	36	10	267
School of Ortakoy	44	6	60
	201⁵⁵	36	967⁵⁶

Table VI- The List of Jewish Schools

At the end of her speech, Mademoiselle Esmeralda emphasized that she did not doubt that eastern women could teach their children to love science and industry. According to her, the guides of the great people were their mothers, and she thanked Sultan Abdulhamid for allowing women to advance. Bogos translated the report on 7th August 1309 (19 August 1893).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Mademoiselle wrote the total of the fee-paying students as 201 in the report. However, it should be 197.

⁵⁶ Mademoiselle wrote the total of the free students as 967 in the report. However, it should be 947.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

International Reflections of the Report of Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes

The newspaper dated 24 August 1894 reported that Esmeralda Cervantes was about to go back to Istanbul (See Appendix-I). The news included the following information: This young woman, who made a conquest of the hearts of the whole world with her music, gained an important place among foreigners coming to Chicago. Before the congresses in the Culture Palace and the Women's Building, Mademoiselle Cervantes gave interesting information on Turkish literature and philanthropy. A telegram was sent by the women at the congress through Cervantes to Sultan Abdulhamid II, expressing gratitude for being kind to American women in his country. Besides the letters sent by Mrs. Bertha, Mrs. Ellen Henrotin, Mrs. May Wright Sewall and Mrs. Salasar with telegram, there was a forty-page text signed by well-known women. All of these were delivered to Hakki Bey, who was the envoy of sultan in the Ottoman Commission, by Cervantes in a white leather envelope with gold inside.⁵⁸

The reporter of Times newspaper reported that the wrong ideas about the Ottoman in Europe had completely disappeared after the speech Mademoiselle gave in Chicago about the situation of women in the Ottoman Empire. The reporter lamented that such a useful speech for the Ottoman Empire was not appreciated by the Ministry of Education at first, and expressed his support for Mademoiselle Esmeralda for this speech till the end. In her presentation, Mademoiselle made good words about the generosity, hospitality and compassion of Abdulhamid II, the sultan of the period, and her speech was often interrupted by applause. The Fine Arts Society in Spain (Madrid) decided to have the speech printed as soon as possible, and distribute five thousand copies in India and a thousand copies in America. In the newspaper article, it was stated that the congress committee gave a text of appreciation to be presented to the sultan because of the speech of Mademoiselle.⁵⁹ The article was first written in French and translated into English by Serahim Efendi, one of the officers in the Chicago exhibition. In addition, at the congress in Chicago, a woman named Teresa Viela from Paris gave a speech on the virtues of Islam.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The world fairs, started to be organized in the middle of the 19th century, became areas where cultures and civilizations had information about each

⁵⁸ *BOA*, Y.PRK. AZJ. 29/3, 29 Dhul Hijjah 1311 [3 July 1894].

⁵⁹ *BOA*, Y. PRK. BŞK. 32/30, 17 al-Muharram 1311 [31 July 1893].

⁶⁰ *BOA*, Y.A.HUS. 279/36, 8 Safar 1311 [21 August 1893].

other, education and technology were transferred, prejudices about “us” and “the other” were broken, and missing parts were missed. Therefore, being represented in such fairs gave the states the opportunity to express themselves more accurately and impartially, and the Ottoman Empire was able to take advantage of this opportunity before it was too late. One of these fairs was the “World’s Columbus Exhibition in 1893” organized by the United States. A Literature Congress was held in the Women’s Building section of the platform prepared for the exhibition, and Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes made a presentation on the situation of Ottoman women at this congress.

Mademoiselle Esmeralda Cervantes, a musician, journalist and writer in her country, Spain, visited Istanbul in the 19th century and lived here for a while. During her stay in Istanbul, she was sent as a representative to the Chicago Women’s Literature Congress organized by the Madrid Fine Artss Society in 1893 (1st May-31st October) within the World Colombian Exposition in the USA. Mademoiselle Esmeralda made a presentation on the situation of Eastern/Islamic women and girls’ education at the Chicago Women’s Literatura Congress held in the Women’s Building, which was among the thematic buildings of the Colombian Exposition, one of the international meetings of those years. Mademoiselle emphasized in her presentation that the Islamic/Eastern women were transmitted to the western world as slave, ignorant, lazy and imprisoned concubines in the harem and this information was unfounded. According to her, another mistake known by European writers was that the Quran condemned women to ignorance. Mademoiselle wrote in her report that the Quran ordered men and women to be educated regardless of gender, and stated that Islam was not an obstacle to the advancement of women. She had the episodes of the Quran, related to the education and status of women, translated to Bagdatli Ahmet Hodja in Beyoglu. She also had the opportunity to observe the educational status and lives of Muslim women by going and visiting their homes, by making close relationships with some families in Istanbul.

Mademoiselle Esmeralda gave information about Ottoman, Greek, French, British, German, Armenian and Jewish girls’ schools providing education in 1893. At this stage, the communities (Greek, Armenian and Jewish) acquainted about their schools to Mademoiselle in a short time without any problems. She asked the Ottoman Ministry of Education about Ottoman girls’ schools, she could not obtain reliable statistical information. The reason why she could not get information was that the Ottomans did not keep statistics and did not want to give clear information about the situation of Islamic women. The fact that the Chicago Women’s Literature Congress, where Mademoiselle would make a presentation, was an international platform and the concern that any

information to be given here would decipher the Ottoman women's life to the world, prepared the ground for the meticulous investigation of Mademoiselle. In addition, the possibility that the information about Ottoman women conveyed to the world and especially to the west was wrong, incomplete and subjective, worried the empire considerably. Following the deep investigation, the Ministry of Education was instructed from the centre to provide the information requested by Mademoiselle Esmeralda without causing any problems.

Mademoiselle pointed out in her report, written in 1893, that there were three Ottoman girls industrial school in Istanbul. In these schools, the girls studying in the field of general culture and general ability had a graduation certificate after their education. The program of the Greek girls' school in Istanbul, which were under the supervision of the Greek patriarchate, was determined in accordance with the university in Athens and the diplomas of the graduating students were accepted in universities in Greece, France, Switzerland and Germany. The aim of the two French girls' schools, whose education programs were designed in accordance with the Notre Dame de Sion school program, was to train teachers for this school. Mademoiselle Esmeralda mentioned two British girls' schools under the auspices of the British Embassy in her report, and stated that the students, graduated from these schools, had the diploma of the teachers' school in London. In addition, she wrote that Germany, Austria, Italy, Iran, Bulgaria and Russia also had schools in Istanbul, and these schools were managed with the aid of these governments. Thanks to this report, the schools opened by various nations and communities in Istanbul at the end of the 19th century to educate girls were conveyed to the world from the pen of a western journalist. With the presentation of Mademoiselle Esmeralda, it was told to the whole World in an international meeting that the situation of women and girls in the Ottoman Empire was almost the same as women in contemporary countries. The Fine Arts Society of Spain (Madrid) decided to print the speech of Mademoiselle, and distribute it in India and America. Moreover, Abdulhamid II ordered Mademoiselle Esmeralda to be rewarded with badges and medals given to foreigners for this report, she presented for the benefit of the Ottoman Empire.

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