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Daniele Salvoldi Dr.

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New documents on the life and death of Domenico Enegildo Frediani (1783-1823), traveller and poet in Egypt and the Sudan

Daniele Salvoldi

Domenico Enegildo Frediani (1783-1823) is that kind of forgotten travellers whose death is shrouded in the mystery of a foreign country, cursed with madness and destruction of his literary work. Even though the documentation amassed by Arturo Wolynski in 1891¹ is quite huge – a total of seventy-six pages – still much is unknown about this early Tuscan traveller. Since the publication of this first, and only, essay on his life, more documents that could shed new light on his African explorations and on his death have been uncovered.

As a first instance, Wolynski was not aware of three letters published in English translation and written by Frediani to Marquess Canova on 17 December 1818 from Palmyra, 8 May 1819 from Sinai, and 1 December 1820 from Cairo². A very short report on his journey to Siwa, published by the newspaper *Gazzetta di Milano* on 3 July 1820 was also unnoticed. Wolynski doesn't mention either the few words dedicated to Frediani by Giovanni Battista Belzoni³ and Henry Salt⁴ in their books and also warns that he was not able to check Waddington and Hanbury's book on their travel to Sennar⁵.

After 1891 more documents about this elusive traveller appeared. In 1930 Angelo Sammarco published few pages of Linant's travel diary to Sennar⁶, where Frediani is mentioned several times. The same diary was later more extensively published in a couple of articles by Jean Vercoutter⁷. Another version of the diary, preserved in Kingston Lacy House,

¹ WOLYNSKI A., *Il viaggiatore Enegildo Frediani, ricerche biografiche e geografiche con documenti inediti*, in «Bollettino Società Geografica Italiana» (1891), pp. 90-125, 295-324, 397-406. Besides Wolynski's article, Frediani earned a short mention in DAWSON W.R., BIERBRIER M.L., UPHILL E.P., *Who was who in Egyptology*, Egypt Exploration Society, London 1995, p. 157.

² *Letters of the Cavalier Enegildo Frediani, known among the Arabs by the name of Amiro, to the Marquis of Ischia*, in «The Quarterly Journal of Science, Literature, and the Arts» 10 (1821), pp. 364-378.

³ BELZONI G.B., *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia*, London 1820, pp. 267, 270-71, 274.

⁴ HALS J.J., *The Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt Esq. FRS*, Richard Bentley, vol. II, London 1834, p. 205.

⁵ WADDINGTON G., HANBURY B., *Journal of a visit to some parts of Ethiopia*, John Murray, London 1822.

⁶ Sammarco published the French version of the diary, housed now in the Bibliothèque Centrale des Musées Nationaux, Paris Ms. 264; SAMMARCO A., *Alessandro Ricci e il suo giornale dei viaggi. Vol. II. Documenti inediti o rari*, Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte, Il Cairo 1930, pp. 17-32.

⁷ VERCOUTTER J., *Journal d'un voyage en Basse Nubie de Linant de Bellefonds*, in BSFE 37-38 (1963), pp. 39-64; VERCOUTTER J., *Journal d'un voyage en Basse Nubie de Linant de Bellefonds (suite)*, in BSFE 41 (1964), pp. 23-32.

Dorset, was almost entirely published in 1958 by Margaret Shinnie⁸. The epistolary of Bernardino Drovetti, French Consul in Egypt, was partly published in 1940 by Giuseppe Marro⁹, and then more extensively in 1985 by Curto and Donatelli¹⁰: many letters mention Frediani and a couple are even by him. Michel Dewachter finally published a graffito (“*Frediani 1817*”) found in the temple of Amada¹¹.

During more recent research, other documents related to Frediani were found. Copy of three letters written by Frediani, addressed to the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinando III (1769-1824) and to the Tuscan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1818 and 1819, was found in the National Archives of Egypt, Cairo. The original documents in Florence National Archive are now lost, probably because of the Arno flooding which in 1966 destroyed some of the documents held there. In the recently re-discovered travel account of Alessandro Ricci¹², who in 1820 travelled with Frediani and Linant to the Oasis of Siwa, and later found him in Sennar, more information is provided. Finally, in the Dorset History Centre, Dorchester, Fond Bankes, few letters by Henry Salt, John Hyde and Linant de Bellefonds mention Frediani and add more information on his life. This article would like to present and discuss all these new sources.

The three letters sent to the Tuscan Court are interesting, as they reflect the relations or at least the desire of establishing a relation with the Government and the Crown¹³. In the first letter, addressed to Vittorio Fossombroni, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 3 March 1818, Frediani boasts about him being present at the opening of the pyramid of Khafra:

“Eccellenza, dal sommo della Gran Piramide, il 3 marzo 1818.

Stimo dovere di parteciparle il mio ritorno dall’ultime cateratte del Nilo e mi fo un pregio d’annunziarle che ieri il Sig. Belzoni, romano, inventore della famosa tomba di Tebe, à scoperto l’entrata e la via che mette nell’interno della seconda piramide. Io fui testimone e il primo che vi

⁸ SHINNIE M., *Linant de Bellefonds, Journal d’un Voyage à Meroe dans les années 1821-1822*, Antiquities Service Occasional Papers, N. 4, Khartoum 1958.

⁹ MARRO G., *Il corpo epistolare di Bernardino Drovetti ordinato ed illustrato*, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato per la Reale Società di Geografia d’Egitto, Roma 1940.

¹⁰ CURTO S., DONATELLI L. (eds.), *Bernardino Drovetti Epistolario*, Cisalpino Goliardica, Milano 1985.

¹¹ DEWACHTER M., *Graffiti des voyageurs du XIX siècle relevés dans le temple d’Amada en Basse Nubie*, in BIFAO 69 (1971), pp. 131-169.

¹² SALVOLDI D., *Alessandro Ricci’s Travel Account: Story and Content of his Journal Lost and Found*, in «Egitto e Vicino Oriente» 32 (2009), pp. 113-19; SALVOLDI D., “*Viaggi del dottore Alessandro Ricci di Siena fatti negli anni 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, 1822 in Nubia, al Tempio di Giove Ammone, al Monte Sinai, e al Sennar*”. *Edizione critica e commento*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Università di Pisa, Pisa 2011, forthcoming as an updated publication.

¹³ Frediani was a native of Serravezza, in the Republic (later Duchy) of Lucca; the Grand Duke of Tuscany then was not his sovereign.

penetrarai dopo di lui. Il già scoperto è tutto di puro granito, quindi questa mole supera la prima in pregio. Oggi si procurerà di penetrare negli appartamenti.

Gradisca Vostra Eccellenza l'atto del mio profondo rispetto e degnisi di rammentarmi all'animo di S.A.I.R.»¹⁴.

This letter bears the same date and almost the same content of another sent to the Duke Pio Bonelli-Crescenzi and already published by Wolynski¹⁵. A more detailed description of the enterprise appears in his long letter to Canova published in English and previously unnoticed:

“(...) I went down to the pyramids of Saccara, and by the plain of Memphis to those of Ghizeh, where I found Mr Belzoni anxious to penetrate into the second of those heaps, thought to be of Cephrenus; knowing his intelligence, I endeavoured only to animate him still more to the undertaking, and after bivouacking some days, we traversed a place inaccessible for many generations; and, I know not how to express my feelings at wandering amongst those shades.

A very long inclined gallery entirely of fine and massy granite; a passage at the end so narrow that a man bending horizontally can hardly enter: then a horizontal gallery which looks into the hall where is the tomb worn away; a perpendicular gallery somewhat inclined with a room on the left side of the passage; various collections of saline productions figured upon the walls; various inscriptions; and, finally, crosses designed upon these same walls: this is what we saw.

Emerging from this delirium to the light, I wished to ascend the highest pyramid, and arrived at the top, I appeared to touch the stars: I remained there the whole night, which was the best of my life. Forty centuries had been silent under my feet, whilst I was ponderating the cause and effects of the creation.

The following morning the rising sun illumined me, which shone around the horizon with a pomp never dreamt of, either by painter or by poet.

From this place I wrote to you, to Dionigi, Morghen¹⁶, Bartolomei, Pindemonte¹⁷, Morichini¹⁸, Ferroni, Vacea, Scarpellini¹⁹, Camellieri, Delfico²⁰, to the cardinal Consalvi²¹, to the chevalier Fossombroni, and to other lights and souls of my country”²².

¹⁴ Letter from D.E. Frediani to V. Fossombroni, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Giza, 3 March 1818; NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF EGYPT, Italian Fond, Folder 10, copy of ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI FIRENZE, Affari Esteri, filza 2558 (now allegedly destroyed after 1966 Arno flood).

¹⁵ WOLYNSKI, *Il viaggiatore Enegildo Frediani*, op. cit., pp. 302-03.

¹⁶ Possibly Raffaello Morghen (1758-1833), a Florentine engraver.

¹⁷ The Consul of Sardinia-Piedmont in Egypt, son-in-law of Drovetti through a step-daughter, and previously his secretary.

¹⁸ Domenico Lino Morichini (1776-1836), Italian physician and chemist.

¹⁹ Abbot Feliciano Scarpellini (1762-1840), Italian astronomer, and himself a friend of Morichini.

As remarked in the letter, that day Frediani wrote letters to more than a dozen people, and Count Fossombroni is mentioned among them. Belzoni's account of his encounter with Frediani right before the opening of the pyramid also survives: Frediani is presented as an interesting man, but even if he encourages Belzoni to continue his research, it seems that he doesn't believe in his success:

“A few days after the visit of the Abbé de Forbin I was surprised by the appearance of another European traveller. It was the Chevalier Frediani, who, on his return from the second cataract of the Nile, came to visit the great pyramids. I had known him at Thebes on his ascending the Nile, and was much pleased to see him, as I thought he might be an impartial spectator of the event of my operations, which in fact he was. He greatly approved of my undertaking, but after being two days with me was ready to take his departure. I suppose he had as much expectation that I should open the pyramid, as the Arabs who named me the magnoon²³. It happened, that on the very day he was to set off for Cairo, I perceived in the excavation a large block of granite, inclining downward at the same angle as the passage into the first pyramid, and pointing towards the centre. I requested the Chevalier to stay till the morrow, thinking perhaps he might have the pleasure of being one of the first who saw the entrance into the pyramid. He consented, and I was pleased to have a countryman of my own to be a witness of what passed on this important occasion”²⁴.

The second letter to Count Fossombroni actually accompanied the shipment of some antiquities Frediani wanted to offer the Grand Duke; among them “*due mummie trovate nel pian di Menfi dentro a vasi di terra*”²⁵. No reference to these antiquities has been found so far and it seems that there is no surviving documentation about them in Florence Egyptian Museum and in Florence Natural History Museum.

Alongside with Tuscan authorities, Frediani tried to strengthen his relations with people in Egypt, in particular Bernardino Drovetti, who was later to deal with him in several occasions. A first letter is recorded from Jaffa, 4 July 1818; Frediani is trying to make up for some unclear

²⁰ Maybe Orazio Delfico (1769-1835), naturalist, botanist and chemist, or his uncle Melchiorre Delfico (1744-1835), philosopher, economist, numismatic and politician.

²¹ Cardinal Ercole Consalvi (1757-1824), Secretary of State to Pius VII between 1814 and 1823.

²² *Letters of the Cavalier Eneildo Frediani*, op. cit., pp. 367-68.

²³ In Arabic مجنون, ‘madman’.

²⁴ BELZONI, *Narrative of the Operations*, op. cit., p. 268.

²⁵ *Letter from D.E. Frediani to V. Fossombroni, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany*, Cairo, 28 February 1819; NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF EGYPT, Italian Fond, Folder 10.

“misunderstandings” that occurred between him and the former Consul²⁶. In another letter, dated Cairo, 9 April 1819, he asked Drovetti to sponsor him in his request to dedicate his work (an account or a poem?) about his travels in Egypt and Syria to Mehmet ‘Ali, Viceroy of Egypt²⁷. We know nothing about this “*prodotto dell’ingegno di scrittori e Poeti*”, and so neither about Drovetti’s sponsorship and Mehmet ‘Ali approval.

One more letter was sent by Frediani to the Grand Duke of Tuscany himself, asking for protection and a note of recommendation for Mehmet ‘Ali, in order to allow him to undertake archaeological explorations. The tone is extremely confident and Frediani is again boasting about his travels, making a rather pedantic list of cities and regions visited: Palmyra, Aleppo, Idumea, Philistea, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Trachonitis, Lebanon, Coele-Syria, and Damascus.

“A Sua Altezza Imperiale e Reale Ferdinando III Granduca di Toscana, Firenze.

Altezza Imperiale e Reale: Eneildo Frediani, Amiro degli Arabi, che com’è noto ha scorso l’Egitto, la Nubia, le tribù d’Israele, la Siria, i principi di Mesopotamia e d’Arabia, desiderando al ritorno che farà in Egitto occuparsi negli scavi de’ monumenti d’antichità, e siccome per riuscire in ciò fa d’uopo della protezione del governo locale, così supplica V.A.I. e R. di volersi benignamente raccomandarlo per l’oggetto indicato al Pascià Vice-Re, tanto più ch’egli ha di già esternato il rispetto che nutre per V.A.I. e R. e la benevolenza per l’oratore”²⁸.

It is curious that Frediani does not mention among his explorations Sinai and in particular the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine, visited in May 1819. Scholars were actually not aware of his visit, as none of the papers published by Wolynski mentions this excursion. It was after his coming back from a long journey in Syria and Jerusalem that he decided to set off to Sinai. In his second letter to Marquess Canova, dated “*upon Mount Sinal*”, 8 May 1819, he gives some information about this journey; still he misses to point out his visit to the Monastery. Published in 1821, it is worth to publish it here again:

“SUBLIME GENIUS!

I write to you from the most memorable heights in the universe, but bear how I came here.

²⁶ CURTO, DONATELLI L, *Bernardino Drovetti Epistolario*, op. cit., pp. 103-4 (No. 78).

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 125-26 (No. 98).

²⁸ *Letter from D.E. Frediani to Ferdinand III, Grand Duke of Tuscany*, Cairo, 12 July 1819; NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF EGYPT, Italian Fond, Folder 10, copy of ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI FIRENZE, Affari Esteri, filza 2558 (now allegedly destroyed after 1966 Arno flood).

Having closed the letter, I directed to you from the ruins of Palmyra²⁹, I followed the silent contemplation of those remarkable remains, and under the protection of the hospitality of the modern Palmyrenes, who are the best Arabs I know of, I passed hours joyful and tranquil.

Their questions turned upon Boneborte (Bonaparte) and my Lady Stanhope³⁰; the former they remembered from his expedition into Soria, for the fame of him resounded greatly amongst them, and the latter for the prodigality displayed in the journey she undertook in the desert.

Their curiosity, and my own being satisfied, I continued my journey with my guide, and arrived at Damascus. Thence, through Cilicia, I ascended Libanus once more, which I was delighted to contemplate amidst the horrors of the winter, and, descending to the Beritus by Phoenicia, the pleasant Philistia, and the wearisome Etam, I returned to the Nile.

After one day's repose, I went to offer my personal tribute the Pyramids, and à propos of these heaps, whilst I was writing my name upon the third called Phrine, I perceived that Frediani was the anagram of Dia Frine.

I then returned to Cairo and as the pestilential scourge was beginning to mow down human victims, instead of remaining there I thought better to continue my journey, and three days of sand made me ejaculate Dulce videre Suez.

Having admired the progress and decrease of the waters, I put myself on board an India ship, commanded by the excellent Captain Laudale; and embarking afterwards in a small boat, I sailed as far as Der Essafran³¹, where it is believed that Israel passed over, and traversing almost in right line the famous sea, I approached Del el Hamman³².

Departing by the waters of Suez, I had ordered my Arabs to wait for me at a place indicated, and judge of my surprise upon my arrival to find no one there!

The solitude of the place, the inefficacy of the bark to continue as far as Tor, the wind contrary for my return to Suez, the want of provisions and water particularly, were the mournful thoughts that sat heavy at my heart.

But that immutable eternal Providence, ever present where he least appears so, but where most necessary, caused in an instant my guides to approach; whence by the path of the people elect, I

²⁹ Dated Palmyra, 17 December 1818; *Letters of the Cavalier Enegildo Frediani*, op. cit., pp. 364-75.

³⁰ An eccentric British traveller; Frediani wrote about her in his previous letter to Canova: "My Lady Esther Stanhope, who, for so many years, has attracted the attention of Asia and of Europe by the singular manner of life she has adopted, is encamped one hour's distance from Sidon, in a small habitation called Ceruba; and, in order to render herself still more remarkable, insists upon her will being obeyed, that no European shall approach her, even for a moment. To blame her for it, would it not be an act of intolerance?", *Ibidem*, p. 373.

³¹ Zafarana, on the western shore of the Red Sea, where two famous Coptic monasteries (*Deir*) are dedicated to St. Anthony the Great and St. Paul the Anchorite.

³² Hammam Phara'un, on the east shore of the Red Sea, where was believed Moses and the Israelites chased by Pharaoh trespassed the waters (Ex 14, 15-22).

trod upon Paran³³ and Sin, and sighing, arrived at the sides of these mountains, which are Sinai and Horeb.

The first idea I conceived when for the first time I heard of Mount Libanus, was that of an isolated mountain, and in such respect all the ideas of men are alike, whence I shall call it the Country of Libany instead of Mount Libanus; that country as large almost as our Abruzzo, and larger than our Tyrol, which comprises luxuriant valleys, fertile meadows, flowing rivers, beautiful hills, very high mountains, populous towns, ten bishoprics, seventy principalities, and which can produce 50,000 champions for the protection of its precious liberty³⁴.

A few more details about this itinerary are provided in the third letter to Canova, dated Cairo, 1 December 1820, where Frediani describes his journey back to Egypt and more explorations in the Delta region. In the close of the letter it seems that he has already been appointed tutor to Isma'il Pasha:

“When I write to Canova I think I am writing to my native country, for you are its first-born.

Leaving Horeb and Sinai, from the summits of which I gazed at lands which form lucid points in the blaze of human intellect, I descended into the country of Elim, where still are to be seen the wells and the palms that quenched the thirst of the Jews.

Having cooled myself in Tor, where I tried its waters, I returned by the road of Suez to Cairo, and going down to Alexandria, I turned towards the Lake Mareotis, thence to that of Madiar and Edeo, and making an excursion in merry company to the beautiful Rosetta, I traversed the branch Bolbitina, the Delta, and arrived at the ruins of Batis, and the mouth of Sebene upon the branch of Fammeticus in modern Damiatus. [...]

Now that, thanks to the magnanimous Viceroy of Egypt, the brave Mahomet Ali, and his faithful minister Burgoss Jusuff³⁵, I am furnished with ample and generous means of penetrating into spaces shut up by the seal of ages, I am preparing to approach the torrid zone, where I hope to show to Italy that I am not entirely unworthy of belonging to her³⁶.

³³ Wadi Feiran, on the way to Mount Sinai, mentioned right after.

³⁴ *Letters of the Cavalier Eneildo Frediani*, op. cit., pp. 375-77.

³⁵ Boghos Yusufian (1775-1844), also known as Boghos Bey, a member of the Armenian community of Smyrna, since 1823 he was First Secretary to Mehmet 'Ali, in 1826 was promoted Minister of Commerce. In the administrative reorganisation of 1837 he was appointed Minister of Commerce and Foreign Affairs; ADALIAN R., *The Armenian Colony of Egypt during the Reign of Muhammad Ali, 1805-1848*, in «Armenian Review» 33/2 (1980), pp. 115-144; HUNTER F.R., *Egypt under the Khedives, 1805-1879*, Pittsburgh 1984, p. 24.

³⁶ *Letters of the Cavalier Eneildo Frediani*, op. cit., pp. 377-78.

Nevertheless, of the visit Frediani made in the Monastery was aware the Rev. John Hyde, traveller and correspondent to William John Bankes, who visited Sinai not much after Frediani himself. In a letter sent to the English gentleman he highly criticises the behaviour of the Italian traveller, who probably had already grown a bad reputation. According to Hyde, Frediani was not alone:

“The last visitors who preceded us were three Italians (they passed themselves off as Englishmen) I learnt they spent a deal of their time in the library and that they map’d, measured, and took drawings, of nearly every part of the monastery. After inflicting themselves upon the poor monks for a week or ten days, they took their departure without leaving a Parât for the Convent, they even left the Convent the charge of paying the Arab guides who accompanied them to the neighbouring mountains. You probably will not be much surprised to find that one of these three worthies was the Chevalier! who travelled under the name of Amiro, which (since my return to Cairo) I have learnt is the name he tracks the Poetical effusions with which he occasionally favours the world”³⁷.

It seems that the insolvency of Frediani grew quite popular among the travellers as much as his literary ambition. In a letter to Pietro Laurella, Consul in Beirut for eight European nations, dated Damascus, 8 October 1820, Count Carlo Vidua wrote:

“Ad ogni modo, sarà sempre una buona cosa, se Lei può far scrivere subito, col ritorno del Muccaro, da Elia Mnessa a’ signori Francesco e Gibrail, che io porto forti lettere di credito, e che non viaggio alla Frediani”³⁸.

In spring 1820 Frediani was among the small group of European travellers who were allowed by Mehmet ‘Ali to follow Hassan Bey. The Governor of Damanhur was leading a military campaign against the Oasis of Siwa, which at the time enjoyed a fair independence. The group was composed primarily by former French Consul Bernardino Drovetti, and two men working for Henry Salt and William John Bankes: Maurice Adolphe Linant de Bellefonds and Alessandro Ricci. A letter about this expedition written by Frediani to Marquess Canova was already published by Wolynski, and later by Sammarco. Wolynski also published two

³⁷ Letter from J. Hyde to W.J. Bankes, Cairo, 7 October 1819; DORSET HISTORY CENTRE, D/BKL, HJ 1/103.

³⁸ WOLYNSKI, *Il viaggiatore Enegildo Frediani*, op. cit., p. 112.

letters by Carlo Vidua expressing again a harsh judgement on Frediani. In the first of them, written on 28 June 1820 to Marquess Doria di Ciriè, he wrote:

“Dernièrement un certain chevalier Frédiani doit avoir fait imprimer dans quelques journaux Italiens une relation de ce voyage, dans laquelle il attribue presque tout à lui: c’est un tissu de faussetés, le Pacha ne le connaît presque pas, il est allé à la suite, et a voyagé aux dépenses de Mr. Drovetti”³⁹.

A second letter by Vidua to Cesare Saluzzo, dated 15 July 1820, explains better the rightful hostility of Drovetti towards Frediani:

“Un certo cavaliere ...⁴⁰ condotto quasi per carità dal signor Drovetti, ha pubblicato in qualche giornale d’Italia una relazione di questo viaggio, nella quale egli fa la principal figura. Conviene esser veramente impudente, giacché qui ognuno sa che ... appena conosce il Bassà⁴¹, e che il sig. Drovetti n’è il confidente ed il più caro amico. E non ci voleva meno perchè arrivasse un caso sì incredibile, che un Turco metta un corpo d’armata agli ordini di un Cristiano, a solo fine di soddisfare la sua erudita curiosità. Penso che non si trovi nessun altro simile esempio negli annali di Turchia”⁴².

It was possible to find one of these articles: it is a very short record of Frediani’s travel that appeared on the *Gazzetta di Milano* on 3 July 1820; as noticed by Vidua and Drovetti, it is a very partial view on the complex expedition. In it, Frediani appears as the only hero:

“Il sig. Enealdo Frediani ha fatto scrivere che dopo 16 giorni di pene, di stenti, di sospiri e di rischi, attraversando i deserti della Marmarica e della Libia, giunse in fine ad osservare il tanto desiderato tempio di Giove Ammone, in compagnia di 2000 uomini di scorta. E per penetrare colà gli è convenuto adoprare la forza, coll’impossessarsi di Siria⁴³, che dopo debole resistenza dovette rendersi a buoni patti. Così egli poté penetrare fino al gran tempio, ove dopo

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 117; a better transcription though in BALBO C. (ed.), *Lettere del Conte Carlo Vidua*, Tome II, Giuseppe Pomba, Torino 1834, p. 195.

⁴⁰ Self-censorship: Frediani.

⁴¹ Pasha.

⁴² *Ibidem*, op. cit., p. 206.

⁴³ Siwa.

Alessandro il Grande, nessuno era più pervenuto. Adesso dirigesì egli al Fesano⁴⁴ paese de' Caramanti, lungi dal luogo ove si trova 22 sole giornate di deserto⁴⁵.

Even though he already had a quite large number of enemies both in the French and in the British party, Frediani was able to attach himself to the army led by Isma'il Pasha, son of Mehmet 'Ali. He was a sort of mentor and poet-historian for the young prince, who was marching towards Sennar to subjugate the African tribes beyond the Second Cataract. Surprisingly, according to Waddington and Hanbury he was proposed for this position by Drovetti, or possibly this was what Frediani told them or believed⁴⁶. At the moment there were many other European travellers following the army for different purposes. William John Bankes had already ordered Linant de Bellefonds to set off for Sennar in 1820 with the task of searching for the ruins of Meroe and was worried some other explorer could find and record the ruins before his *protégé*. Henry Salt, who was acting as agent to Bankes, wrote reassuring letters to the gentleman, describing the situation in Sennar; they are all unpublished. The first, dated Alexandria, 10 October 1821, states:

“The persons now up the Country, I mean beyond Wadi Halfa, are Calliaud [sic] who draws so indifferently, and a Mons. Constant, a young astronomer, but who is fit for nothing else, Mons. le Chevalier Frediani who is now employed as historiographer to the Pasha and who writes a farrago of nonsense that nobody can understand – and besides these, two Prussian Naturalists who are wise in simples and such like – but cannot draw⁴⁷”.

On the same day Salt wrote William Hamilton another letter, copy of which was later in the hands of Bankes:

“There is a certain Chevalier Frediani with the army, whose journal up to what he calls the second Meroe I have read recently in manuscript, it is for the most part a farrago of nonsense. The only points worth note: his description of the granite statues in the island of Sai, about 20 feet high, one with a sort of helmet and the other with Osiris's sceptre in the left hand, and his remarks on the miserable habitations of the mamlouks at Dongola, who appear to have lived in the most wretched state. His description of the first pyramids visited by Waddington and

⁴⁴ Fezzan.

⁴⁵ *Gazzetta di Milano*, 185 (3 July 1820), p. 943 [3].

⁴⁶ WADDINGTON, HANBURY, *Journal of a visit*, op. cit., p. 89.

⁴⁷ *Letter from H. Salt to W.J. Bankes*, Alexandria, 10 October 1821, DORSET HISTORY CENTRE, D/BKL, HJ 1/159.

Hanbury is not so bad: «They are all small, the largest not exceeding fifty two feet odd». They are not he says: «Sharp at the edges or angles like those at Memphis, but rounded off, some have small temples affixed on the Eastern side in which are represented images of Osiris, Isis etc. on the walls, near this a small island called Mereva». Hence he crossed to Gooz, but has not a single observation on the junction of the Asteboras. Of the second Pyramids (the true Meroe) he says: «Their dimensions are still small, not reaching 60 English feet diameter and not having above 50 ranges of steps – the ruins of the town around are chiefly of brick». This he terms the second Meroe, at which ends his journal. The same is interspaced with learned treatises on Greek and Egyptian antiquities unintelligible to the uninitiated. He ranks himself with Canova, and hints at the felicity of Italy in having in one age given birth to two such characters, and concludes with a presentiment, that Italy will not have his bones, but that she may console herself with having «all that is celestial» in his frame to be embodied in his great work! This gentleman travels at the expenses of the Pasha and is to be the historiographer of the expedition»⁴⁸.

The letter is important because it testifies the existence of a copy of the journal written by Frediani in Sennar already circulating in Cairo at that period. We know that Frediani destroyed all his papers in Sennar: if only Salt would have judged Frediani's work in a more favourable way, he would probably have purchased this copy. Salt was actually buying diaries from other travellers, among them Bethune English, whose account was later to be published with an (unwelcomed) dedication to Bankes⁴⁹.

Frediani, Cailliaud, Constant, Waddington, Hanbury, English, Hemprich and Ehrenberg (the two Prussian naturalists) were not the only European travellers in the Upper Nile region at the time: attached to the army there were many European physicians and pharmacists. Among them Scotto was following Ibrahim Pasha, Rossignoli, Brunetti and Gentili were serving the army of Isma'il. A long letter they wrote to Drovetti from Aswan on 6 September 1820 reveals many details about the tensions and rivalries between the Europeans; Frediani is depicted as a silly, ambitious, cruel man bound to a rather devilish Greek (or Armenian) intrigant, Demetrios Botzaris, Chief Physician to Isma'il Pasha⁵⁰. The primary writer of the letter, Rossignoli, so describes the previous weeks of journey:

⁴⁸ Extract of a letter from H. Salt to W. Hamilton by W.J. Bankes, 10 October 1821; DORSET HISTORY CENTRE, D/BKL, HJ 1/160.

⁴⁹ ENGLISH G.B., *A narrative of the expedition to Dongola and Sennaar, under the command of His Excellence Ismael Pasha, undertaken by orders of His Highness Mehemmed Ali Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt*, John Murray, London 1822.

⁵⁰ KEIMER L., *Glanures II: Les deux Botzaris*, in «Cahiers d'Histoire Egyptienne», VII/3 (September 1955), pp. 196-203.

“Monsieur Drovetti,

Vous ne sauriez croire, Monsieur, combien j'ai souffert et je souffre continuellement depuis mon départ du Caire. Jusqu'à Siout j'ai été obligé de m'embarquer dans le bateau de Monsieur Bozari, et j'en ai reçu non seulement beaucoup de mauvais traitements, mais ce qui plus est, j'ai manqué même du pain, et sans le secours du raiz j'ignore comment j'aurais pu faire.

Arrivé ici il ne m'a pas été possible de parler au Bachà, parceque Mr. Naldini et Mr. Cailliaud m'ont refusé leur dragoman craignant de déplaire à Mr. Bozari, et je n'en ai pas pu trouver d'autres, parceque notre dragoman qui est Grec et dévoué à Mr. Bozari, s'est refusé de même, et à l'occasion m'aurait mal servi.

Mr. Cailliaud doit certainement s'être bien repenti de m'avoir refusé cette faveur, puisque si j'avais pu parler à S.E.⁵¹ je lui aurais découvert plusieurs affaires que mon devoir m'obligeait absolument de reveler, et d'après ça S.E. n'aurait certainement plus ajouté fois aux impostures que Mr. Bozari et Mr. Frediani ont fabriqué pour empêcher le voyage de Mr. Cailliaud.

Vous devez savoir à cette heure que l'ont a fait croire à S.E. que Monsieur Cailliaud était d'accord probablement avec les mamelucs de Dongola, et que vous trempiez aussi dans cette affaire. J'ai su cela de la bouche même d'un cavaz de S.E. qui était present. Voyez comment les turcs sont credules, et se laissent tromper si facilement dans les choses même le plus improbables. Cela m'a fait la plus grande peine, mais je me console en ce que cette imposture est trop grossière, et elle doit nécessairement tomber sur l'imposteur. [...]

Nous avons en outre découvert un'autre cabale plus consequente. Un garçon tailleur Grec qui vient avec nous avec le seul titre de compagnon de voyage de Mr. Bozari, à laissé lui-même entrevoir qu'il avait trempé dans l'empoisonement de Mr. Ulivi, et hier dans un moment de colère il sortit de sa malle une petite bouteille remplie d'acide prussique, et j'ai reconnu la bouteille qui est une de notre pharmacie. Il a montrée cette bouteille en présence de 7 à 8 personnes en disant qu'il l'avait reçue pour faire des vengeances, sans cependant nômmer ni les victimes, ni la personne qui la lui avait remise. D'après ça comme aussi d'après ce que le susdit avait dit dans les jours anterieurs ce poison était destiné specialmente pour moi: et je suis dans le plus grand danger. Ce qui donne encore du poids à mes consequences, c'est que deux jours avant mon départ du Caire j'ai trouvé sur le lit de Mr. Bozari le traité des maladies des nerfs de Tissot, et l'ayant pris par hasard dans mes mains, j'ai trouvé qu'il avait une oreille, ou pour mieux dire un coin d'une page plié, dans la quelle il traite de l'acide prussique, ou de l'eau de Laurier Cerise qui est la meme chose. [...]

⁵¹ More correctly, “Son Altesse” referred to Isma’il Pasha. The same error in the following letter helps to identify the subject.

Nous avions déjà déterminé de nous en retourner, et avions même nolié un bateau, jusque le Cuisinier qui avance une somme considerable, aimait mieux perdre son argent que sa vie: mais après avoir mûrement réfléchi, nous nous sommes convaincus que Mess. Bozari et Frediani qui sont nos ennemis capitaux, feraient envisager notre départ ou pour mieux dire notre fuite, sous un autre point de vue, et le Bachà ignorant les vrais motifs de notre départ, aurait certainement conçu une mauvaise opinion des piemontais, et nous aimons mieux de nous sacrifier que le faire tort à nos patriotes; mais je vous supplie en même tems de faire en sorte s'il est possible que nous soyons remplacés. Le climat, les fatigues, la chaleur, les maladies, et les ennemis suffisaient déjà pour nous décourager, sans que nous eussions encore à craindre à tout moment la cabale, et le poison. [...]

Le Grec qui était chargé du poison, se voyant découvert, craint à present d'être accusé au Bachà, et va retourner au Caire aujourd'hui. Mr. Bozari était tellement sûr que je serais empoisonné, qu'il amène avec lui un'autre Medecin Grec très mauvais sujet, à ce qu'on dit, pour me remplacer à l'occasion⁵². [...]

Mr. le Chevalier Frediani ayant su que le Grec du poison allait retourner au Caire pour éviter une mauvaise affaire, vient de l'accepter sous sa «Protection» et l'a pris à son service, de sorte qu'il viendra de nouveau à l'armée⁵³.

A second letter written by the trio only three weeks after (30 September 1820) gives important updates on the dangerous situation and reveals more details about the unpleasant behaviour of Frediani:

*“Ill.mo Sig. Drovetti,
benché colla più grande premura le scriviamo queste poche linee per confermarle in tutto il suo contenuto la nostra lettera di 6 del corrente dettata da Siene, e con questa solamente le aggiungiamo, che la somma delle bricconate dei Sig.ri Frediani, e Bozari aumenta di giorno in giorno vieppiù – e siamo sempre in pericolo di esser'avvelenati: per nostra maggior disgrazia non abbiamo interprete veruno di cui possiamo fidarci; abbiamo però fatto noto a questo Divan Effendi di quanto si passa, se pare ci ha bene intesi, ed abbiamo avuto in risposta, che tosto passate le cattarate egli si sarebbe impegnato di stabilire li nostri affari a norma della giustizia, oppure ci darebbe un permesso di far ritorno al Cairo. Il Sig. Frediani avanti di partir da Siene ha incominciato ad incorrere in gran discapito del Cajabay colle sue sciocche, e ridicole pretese, e*

⁵² This part was evidently added later, as the following paragraph, where updates are given.

⁵³ CURTO, DONATELLI, *Bernardino Drovetti Epistolario*, op. cit., pp. 151-54 (No. 120).

qui lo (?) avrebbe (?) di già minacciato di ucciderlo per esser stato la cagione della morte sotto il bastone del primo cuoco di Sua Altezza, e ne viene poi il dispensiere, che sta per morire pella medesima causa, tutto questo perché li poveri disgraziati non furono puntuali a mandarli il pranzo come aveva ordinato S. Eccellenza. Iddio gliela mandi buona, ma si teme fortemente, che all'ora men pensata abbia a lasciar lo stame in questi deserti, e nulla li serviranno li suoi sonetti, e squarci d'eloquenza di cui egli fa si sovente pompa, egli continua ritenere sotto la sua protezione il sicario Greco del veleno; ma speriamo, che non ci potrà far gran male perché ci lusinghiamo di ritornare indietro a giorni sotto qual si voglia condizione – come di già le scrissimo nella nostra anteriore, il Sig. Bozari ha fatto sparire quel che c'era di più buono, degli articoli sia di medicina, che di chirurgia, e scarseggiano, o per meglio dire mancano tutte le cose più essenziali – onde se il Diavolo non ci mette la coda non so come anderà a finire. Dippiù li suddetti Frediani, e Bozari persuasissimi della loro incapacità hanno tanto brigato fino, che pervennero a far ritocedere il Sig. Cornero il di cui genio militare poteva certamente far umbra alle poesie del Sig. Frediani: ma la società dei malvaggi non sarà perdurevole; e verrà il giorno in cui Sua Altezza conoscerà da quali persone viene consiliata: Iddio faccia, che questo giorno venga un momento prima, altrimenti l'armata corre grandi pericoli”⁵⁴.

A very long passage of Waddington and Hanbury's book about their journey to Sennar reveals further details on the situation. “*Il sicario Greco del veleno*”, also named Demetrios, is here described too, but the position of Frediani is a bit different, being himself a victim of the thirst for power of Botzaris. As it is very interesting, it is reported here entirely. The episode narrated dates back to 7 December 1820:

“We approached the black mountain barrier of the Sheygy'a, and following the shore of the island, presently observed two men, who by their walk were instantly pronounced to be Franks, coming towards us. One of them proved to be Prince Amiro, a Milanese⁵⁵, who is well known to Syrian and Egyptian travellers by the title of the Cavaliere Frediani⁵⁶; the other was a Greek, named Demetrio, by trade a tailor, and very lately and suddenly promoted to the office of Assistant-Surgeon. We asked him some questions, to which his answers contained more lies than words; we contrived, however, to assure ourselves of the disagreeable news, that Abdin

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 154-55 (No. 121).

⁵⁵ As mentioned before, Frediani was born in Serravezza, in the Republic (later Duchy) of Lucca.

⁵⁶ Actually it is the contrary, he was the Cavaliere Frediani, and styled himself Amiro.

Casbeff was still at some distance in advance, with the Pasha. We drew up for the night on the island, where six thousand Shygy'a women were said to be confined.

The Cavaliere shared with us our uncertain repast. He seemed a man of from forty to forty-five years of age⁵⁷, and had been attached to Ismael Pasha, by his father, as a kind private tutor or Mentor; for this office he appears to have been selected by the late French Consul, Drovetti, and he accepted it with pleasure, as being extremely favourable to his designs as a traveller and explorer; he was now, as he had been for some time, in disgrace, owing partly to his own great, and probably intemperate, freedom of words and actions, and partly to the intrigues of a fellow Christian.

Ismael Pasha's first physician, or Protomedico (as he styled himself), was a Smyrniote Greek, and as he spoke Turkish perfectly, he acted also as his interpreter. This man, being personally and nationally jealous of Amiro's supposed influence with the Pasha, devised various little expedients to undermine it, some of them so very amusing, that I may be excused for mentioning one. The Protomedico one hot day, meeting the Cavaliere on foot, addresses him with great surprise and warmth: "How strange it seems, that you, the friend of the Pasha, placed in his confidence by his father, the eny of all the Turks about you, should have no horse! Shall I ask the Pasha to give you one?" Cavaliere, "There is justice in what you say; you will oblige me by so doing". Being thus the established medium of all conversation between the two parties, the physician represents the complaint to the Pasha as first proceeding from the Cavaliere, and makes the request. The horse is given. Presently comes the Protomedico in great indignation: "Do you see this horse the Pasha has given you? a very dog-horse, a Rozinante (ροζζο), a scarecrow; it is equally disgraceful for a Pasha to have given such a beast, and for a Cavaliere to accept it. Shall I ask him for a better for you?" Cav., "The horse is certainly not a fine one; pray do ask for another". The interpreter immediately hastens to the Pasha. "The Cavaliere desires me to say, that the horse your Highness has given him is a very-dog horse, etc. (repeating his own words), and requests you to change it for a better". The Pasha, highly offended with the impudence of Amiro, and yet unable to take back himself a present that he has once made, transfers the horse to the Doctor, without giving any substitute to his insatiable Mentor. And thus is the wily Greek represented to have overreached his competitor for substantial favours in money matters, as well as other affairs, and by his success, to have answered the double purpose of bringing Amiro into disgrace, and becoming master of the presents intended for him.

⁵⁷ Frediani was 37 at the time.

The Cavaliere had lately made an application to the Pasha, for leave to return, to which he received this singular answer: that such a permission would only be granted him, on the condition of his writing a letter to Mahommed Ali, expressive of his satisfaction at the treatment he had received from his son. In such awe does a Turkish Prince stand of his father, though at the head of an army at two thousand miles distance from him. The letter was refused; and thus the matter stood on our arrival”⁵⁸.

Sadly enough, the pharmacist Andrea Gentili, one of the signers of the two letters to Drovetti with Rossignoli and Brunetti, died, allegedly poisoned by Botzaris in Meroe⁵⁹.

Frediani appears in a record written by George Bethune English in his account under the date of 1 Ramadan 1236 AH, circa 2 June 1821:

“The same day that the camp marched from the Babar el Abiud, Mr. Caillaud and Mr. Frediani embarked in the boats to go to Sennaar, by the river, in order to have an opportunity of visiting the ruins of “Soba”, which lie on the east side of the Nile, not far above from its junction with the Babar el Abiud. When these gentlemen rejoined us at Sennaar, they informed me that almost the very ruins of this city have perished; they found however there some fragments of a temple (...)”⁶⁰.

This is the last record of Frediani being in a healthy mental condition; after this date, all the reports that survive are about his madness and sad end. The first record of Frediani illness dates back to approximately the end of August 1821, and it is from the hands of Caillaud:

“M. Frédiani, voyageur italien, fut atteint d’une violente fièvre, qui le priva presque aussitôt de la raison. Dans ses premiers accès de folie, il jeta au feu toutes les notes qu’il avait recueillies depuis dix-huit mois. Dès qu’il éprouvait des intervalles lucides, il se désespérait d’avoir perdu ses manuscrits, et le souvenir de les avoir détruits lui-même le faisait retomber de nouveau dans le délire. Le pacha, touché de l’état de ce voyageur, lui procura tous les secours que des médecins tels que les siens pouvaient donner; il mit de son côté tout en œuvre pour le rappeler à la raison. Comme il connaissait son caractère, il le combla d’honneurs et allait le voir souvent. Frédiani lui

⁵⁸ WADDINGTON, HANBURY, *Journal of a visit*, op. cit., pp. 88-90.

⁵⁹ Botzaris was captured after the assassination of Isma'il Pasha in 1823, his teeth pulled off to make a necklace and then brutally massacred. It seems that necklaces made out of physician's teeth were extremely popular among Sennar warriors, who wore them as amulets; KEIMER, *Glanures II*, op. cit., p. 202.

⁶⁰ ENGLISH, *A narrative of the expedition*, op. cit., p. 151.

*demanda des habits; le prince n'avait que quelques rechanges de ceux qu'il portait, et il lui en envoya. On vit alors cet infortuné, couvert des vêtemens du prince et se disant le pacha, s'enfuir dans la rue et y faire mainte folie. Le prince lui prodigua tous les secours qui étaient en son pouvoir; il lui envoyait des plats de sa table, des officiers, des kaouâs pour le servir chez lui, et de l'argent presque à discrétion. Frédiâni était poète, et avait eu déjà, dit-on, des absences d'esprit*⁶¹.

Another passage from Cailliaud gives more details about the condition Frediani was in:

*“Comme M. Frédiâni, il devint fou; et sa frénésie fut portée à un tel point, sur-tout la nuit, que je me vis obligé de le lier sur son lit: je craignais, et j'en avais eu de nombreux exemples, qu'il n'allât se précipiter dans le fleuve. Un calme perfide succéda à cet état d'irritation, et le malheureux succomba miné par la fièvre*⁶².

Alongside Cailliaud, there are two more witnesses of the illness of Frediani and his last days in Sennar. Linant, who has words of resentment and of forgiveness at the same time, attributes the madness of the Italian traveller to “bad company”. In his diary, under the date of 21 November 1821, he writes:

*“J'appris aussi que Monsieur Fredianni à Sennar était devenu fou et que le Bacha l'avait fait enchaîner car il était furieux. Il avait brûlé presque tous ses papiers et pour moi, je pense qu'il doit cette folie aux autres Européens qui sont à Sennar avec lui. Au surplus cela n'est pas facheux pour lui, et, puisqu'avant qu'il devint fou, ce qu'on pouvait dire le plus honorable pour lui était de dire pour cacher ses crimes et vices qu'il avait cette maladie. Sa folie maintenant répare pour ainsi dire son honneur*⁶³.

⁶¹ CAILLIAUD F., *Voyage à Méroé, au Fleuve Blanc, au-delà de Fâzoql dans le midi du royaume de Sennâr, à Syouah et dans cinq autres oasis: fait dans les années 1819, 1820, 1821 et 1822: Accompagné de Cartes géographiques, de Planches représentant les monumens de ces contrées, avec des détails relatifs à l'état moderne et à l'histoire naturelle*, vol. II, Paris 1826, pp. 310-11. Again Cailliaud on the same subject: “Il Frediani in un accesso di delirio ha bruciati quasi tutti i suoi fogli, lavoro di diciotto mesi; dopo è divenuto pazzo da catena, ed ora è attaccato da una malattia che fa disperare della sua vita”; *Lettera del signor Cailliaud scritta da Sennar nel novembre 1821*, in «Antologia» 8 (October-December 1822), p. 141.

⁶² CAILLIAUD, *Voyage à Méroé*, op. cit., p. 320. That Frediani had a nasty influence on Isma'il Pasha, especially regarding Cailliaud, is made clear by the French explorer himself: “Ce Prince [Isma'il Pasha], aussitôt la chute de Frédiâni, a eu pour moi beaucoup d'égards et m'a comblé de bienfaits”; CURTO, DONATELLI, Bernardino Drovetti, op. cit., p. 225 (No. 172).

⁶³ SHINNIE, *Linant de Bellefonds*, p. 80.

In a letter to Henry Salt, Linant writes again about Frediani, insisting on the cause of his madness as a work of the European entourage of the Turkish princes:

“J’ai vu le pauvre Frediani qui vraiment est dans un état à faire dresser les cheveux, je présume qu’il est devenu fou plutôt par misère, et par mauvais traitements, que par autre chose. An surplus c’est un homme rongé de remords et qui a fait de grands crimes, mais si une âme douce, pouvait par de consolant discours, et par une grande douceur, faire venir cet homme à sentir un peu d’amitié, je serais certain de sa guérison, et cela n’est pas impossible car habitué à être environné de gens maudit de Dieu, il ne serait pas difficile à un honnête homme de prendre assez d’empire sur Frediani, pour que l’esprit de celui-ci se laisse diriger par un autre”⁶⁴.

Linant probably misses the point, while nor the desperation nor the bad company were the causes of Frediani’s sickness. It is much probable that he was affected by a parasitic disease upsetting his brain: fever and dementia were the symptoms, death was almost inevitable. It was actually very frequent at that latitude, with those (scarce) hygienic conditions and the absolute unawareness, even amongst doctors, of how dangerous infected food and ultimately water could be. The symptoms were shared by many in the encampment in those days and this kind of brain disease was probably later to affect Alessandro Ricci too, as it probably earlier killed Antonio Scotto, the old Chief Physician of Ibrahim Pasha. Cailliaud more correctly notices:

“L’ouardab est une fièvre ardente, avec intermittence, et accompagnée d’aberration de sentiment qui va jusqu’à la frénésie. J’eus le triste spectacle de plusieurs personnes qui, frappées de cette cruelle maladie, perdirent aussitôt la raison. De ce nombre fut M. Frédiari, qui demeura trois mois dans cet état déplorable et finit par succomber. Mon interprète maltais eut le même sort”⁶⁵.

The mental condition Frediani was suffering probably led him to a moral re-consideration of his life, with an alternation of mystic furore, depression and total absence. More words of description are provided by Linant in his diary; on 12 December 1821, he wrote:

⁶⁴ Copy of a letter from A.M. Linant de Bellefonds to H. Salt, Sennar, 17 December 1821; DORSET HISTORY CENTRE, D/BKL, HJ 1/162.

⁶⁵ CAILLIAUD, *Voyage à Méroé*, op. cit., p. 267. To the fever refers also George Bethune English: “[Frediani] Since dead in Sennaar. This unfortunate man died a chained maniac in consequence of violent fever”, ENGLISH, *A narrative of the expedition*, op. cit., p. XIV, sub-footnote.

“Je trouvai un homme fixé et rongé de remords, un scélérat effrayé de ses crimes plutôt qu’un fou. Il me reconnut. Il était dans l’état le plus misérable, lié sur un lit du pays. Il me demanda pardon pour quelque mal qu’il m’avait fait, mais que je ne connaissais pas. Je cherchai à le consoler, mais il était si rongé de remords qu’il ne parlait que dans son bon sens, certainement je ne l’aurais pas vu, mais dans cet état il me fit pitié et je résolus de le voir tous les jours pour chercher à le ramener à la raison; car cela n’était pas impossible – il ne fallait que détourner les idées qui l’accablaient et lui faire voir que son repentir faisait disparaître en partie ses immenses fautes. Il n’était plus à mes yeux un homme méprisable, mais un malheureux qui avait besoin d’être secouru”⁶⁶.

A few days later (16 December) he added more lines about his encounters with Frediani:

“Je fus dans une maison que l’on m’avait donné. Elle était belle pour le pays. Elle était près de celle de Fredianni, et je peux alors le voir souvent et lui envoyer ce qui lui était nécessaire, car il était vraiment abandonné de tout le monde. Souvent il renvoyait ce que je lui faisais porter pour manger, disant qu’il y avait du poison”⁶⁷.

A new perspective on Frediani’s last months of life is provided by the newly re-discovered travel account of Alessandro Ricci. Around the end of November and first days of December Ricci joined the encampment of Ibrahim Pasha in Sennar (city). His description of Frediani’s condition helps to clarify some of the issues related to the death of the traveller, which in Wolynski’s article are treated in rather an imaginative way.

“Mentre m’incamminava per ritornare al campo, io incontrai un medico d’Ismail Pascià, dal quale fui informato che il Sig. Frediani, quello medesimo, col quale, in compagnia dei SS.ri Drovetti e Linant, avevo fatto il viaggio al tempio di Giove Ammone, era divenuto pazzo furioso, poco dopo di essere giunto in Sennar con l’armata egiziana: io volli vederlo, e lo trovai in una stanza terrena, incatenato, e guardato a vista, e debbo confessarlo, quello spettacolo mi commosse fino alle lagrime: egli era inginocchiato in mezzo alla stanza, con indosso una lunga camicia blu, cinta sui fianchi con un cordone di pelle; aveva al collo una corona, da cui pendeva una gran croce, e tenea le braccia raccolte sul petto, in atto di un uomo, che prega: pallido,

⁶⁶ SHINNIE, *Linant de Bellefonds*, p. 92.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 92.

estenuato, grondante di sudore, aveva gli occhi fissi ad una piccola finestra, per cui s'introduceva nella stanza la luce; lo chiamai per nome più volte, gli rammentai varie circostanze del nostro viaggio a Syouah, ma nulla lo scosse. Il suo custode mi assicurò che quell'infelice passava così i suoi giorni, e le notti, e che in alcuni momenti, in cui sembrava più quieto, rammentava un suo amico del Cairo, e quindi esclamando che era un gran peccatore ricadeva ben presto nelle sue smanie furiose. Disperando della di lui guarigione, Ismaïl Pascià, prima di avanzarsi verso il Fesugof⁶⁸, voleva farlo ricondurre in Cairo, ma io gli feci osservare, che nella situazione in cui si trovava, non avrebbe potuto sopportare i disagii di sì lungo tragitto, e sarebbe morto per strada: su di ciò il Pascià si determinò a lasciarlo in Sennar, ove finì qualche tempo dopo miseramente i suoi giorni⁶⁹.

Wolynski thought, apparently with no proof at all, that Cailliaud had stolen Frediani's papers and that for the incredible sorrow Frediani fell mentally ill. In his fanciful reconstruction he states that in Cairo Ricci was finally aware of Cailliaud's fraud, by the orders of Henry Salt set off for Sennar to rescue Frediani – who is described rather naively as “*stimato e amato da tutti*”⁷⁰ – and to bring him back to Cairo at the European Hospital, where he finally would have died in 1823. The proofs for this totally inaccurate reconstruction, according to Wolynski, were a group of letters, later destroyed, the content of which he was told around 1886 by the Superintendent of the Royal National Archive of Florence⁷¹.

Ricci was travelling to Sennar already in the summer 1820, and as stated in his travel account, he refused to transfer Frediani as Isma'il Pasha suggested. There is of course no reason for Salt to send a man, and pay for all his expenses, to rescue Frediani. As it was clear from the documents transcribed above, Salt had no esteem for Frediani at all; in his letter to William Hamilton, dated Alexandria, 11 September 1822, so comments on Frediani's death: “*Frediani, who was employed by the Pasha, went mad at Sennar, and destroyed all his papers – no great loss to the world*”⁷². Wolynski finds suspicious that Cailliaud is aware of how many months (eighteen) Frediani's papers cover; but there is no surprise, because they were actually travelling together.

Whether killed by poison, fever or madness, Frediani did not leave a good memory of himself; all the collected sources make it clear. The papers published by Wolynski give a

⁶⁸ Fazogli.

⁶⁹ SALVOLDI, *Viaggi del dottore Alessandro Ricci*, op. cit., p. 320 (cc. 245-46 of the typescript).

⁷⁰ WOLYNSKI, *Il viaggiatore Eneildo Frediani*, op. cit., p. 121.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, n. 4.

⁷² HALLS, *The Life and Correspondence*, op. cit., p. 205.

partial view on the life and behaviour of the Tuscan traveller, while there was almost unanimous consensus in reporting and condemning his manoeuvres for fame and his eccentricities. A last letter from Carlo Vidua to Drovetti (10 February 1823) seems an appropriate gloss to the life and end of the unfortunate Frediani:

*“Ho veduto il sig. Lebolo, il quale mi ha dato parte della morte di molti, come di M. Asselin, ecc. e della pazzia del sig. Frediani. Sa, che a forza di farsi mettere sulle gazette, costui s’era fatto un mezzo nome? e che parecchi mi chiesero, che n’era di quel famoso viaggiatore Frediani?”*⁷³.

⁷³ BALBO, *Lettere del Conte Carlo Vidua*, op. cit., p. 476; CURTO, DONATELLI, *Bernardino Drovetti*, op. cit., p. 244 (No. 188).