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Usbek to his friend Ibben in Smyrna

We have reached Livorno in forty days of sailing. It is a new city ; it bears witness to the genius of the dukes of Tuscany, who have turned a swampy village into the most flourishing city in Italy. [1]

Wives here enjoy considerable liberty : they can see men through certain windows, which are called jalousies ; they can go out every day with some old women who accompany them [2] ; they have only one veil [3] ; their brothers-in-law, their uncles, their nephews can see them, and the husband almost never raises an objection.

It is a great spectacle for a Muhammadan to see a Christian city for the first time. I am not speaking of the things that at first strike everyone, like the difference of the buildings, the clothing, the principal customs ; even in the slightest trifles there is something singular which I feel but am unable to describe.

We shall leave tomorrow for Marseille ; our stay there will not be long. It is Rica's intention and mine to take ourselves directly to Paris, which is the seat of the European empire. Travellers always seek out the big cities, which are a sort of common home to all foreigners. Adieu ; be sure that I shall always love you.

Livorno this 12th day of the moon of Saphar 1712

[1] According to Moreri, Livorno had become, thanks to the Medici, a "new city and famous seaport [...], whereas formerly it was just an unhealthy town, because of the stagnant waters of the nearby swamps" (1732, art. "Ligourne").

[2] Duegnas. The word duègne (or duena) was rare in French in 1721 and was strongly associated with Spain.

[3] Persian women wear four [author's note]. In Italy the veil was prescribed specifically to allow married women to go about decently, and was indispensable for entering a church.