Update, October 2007,
*Crete: Women, History, Books and Places*
(HOLO Books 2005)
Nineteenth Century History (18 A4 pages)

**INTRODUCTION**

We went back to Crete for a week in April 2005. Although any additions from then would have to wait for a second edition or this 2007 update, I couldn't wait any longer to find the house in Chalepa of Baroness Schwartz, the larger than life character whom I had discovered too late fully to run to earth before original publication.

That visit not only enabled me to find Espérance's crumbling, romantic mansion but also to explore Chalepa and to gain a different impression of Chania (of which Chalepa is a suburb), a town whose full potential I failed to reveal in the book.

Based as we were in Chania, at the pleasant and well-placed Delfino Hotel (through Simpson's Travel), I was also able to visit three places that had earlier escaped us: **Rethymnon, Eleutherna, and the Arkadi Monastery**. **So as well as some historical additions, new material on Chania, and some other places, there will also be fuller accounts of them to add to the chapter 18 itinerary. But I have found so much new material on nineteenth century women that I am dividing the update into two. This is the first; itinerary additions, corrections, and an additional bibliography will be in the second.**

In the preface to the book, I invited readers to respond, particularly to help with such elusive characters as Mary Walker who, I claimed, was the only nineteenth century woman visitor to leave a travel account. Happily, the great grandson of Thomas Sandwith, British consul 1870-1885 (these are corrected dates) did so. He not only introduced me to another Crete account by Mary, a friend of Sandwith with whom she probably stayed, and provided me with a reason for her decades-long stay in Constantinople, but he assured me, too, that her sketches of Crete do exist; he owns some of them and some are reproduced in *Old Tracks and New Landscapes* (1897).

Stephen Boys Smith also introduced me to two other women, Amy Yule and Felicia Skene, the first of whom visited Crete, the other may, from Greece, only have been concerned. Both wrote about it. Then, in googling them, I came across Anna Vivanti and her travel account (1865) which predates Mary Walker and adds to the picture of 'Elizabeth of Crete' whom she met several times. And, in googling Ismail (Ismael) Pasha, Ottoman Governor of Crete, so courteous to Anna Vivanti, I came across Laura Stillman in the autobiography of her husband William, the American Consul at much the same time, and eventually formed a delightful picture of Leyla, the Pasha's daughter. In googling Chalepa to try and pinpoint the consulate area in Chalepa for the itinerary, I discovered Lucy Sarell Ongley, seventeen year resident in the British consulate. Felicia, Amy, Anna, Laura, Leyla and Lucy, and a Mary update, will find their place in what follows.

Then there have been new publications since May 2005: most useful are Karolyn Shindler's biography of palaeontologist Dorothea Bate, *Discovering Dorothea*, which

mentions the British consul-general's wife Isabella Howard (1903-6), to be included in the Chania update, and Victoria Hislop's intriguing novel *The Island* which makes it necessary also to include in the itinerary update the island of Spinalonga - a leper colony between 1904 and 1935, and earlier a Venetian and then Ottoman fortress in which families took refuge.

In my research for *Tasmania: Women, History, Books and Places*, which is to follow *Crete*, I have come across a visit to Crete as early as 1833 by Jane Franklin, a famous figure in the history of Tasmania where her husband was governor 1837-43. With a tip from the author of *Lady Franklin's Revenge*, I was able to comb Jane's difficult-to-read diary in the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. It is with Jane that I start this historical update.

**In what follows, I shall suggest where the new material should be inserted/read in the historical section of the book.**

WOMEN'S HISTORY

Insert p. 131 (end of 2nd paragraph) (this extended chronological historical material can be inserted in the same place and read together with pp. 131-139. Page numbers refer to my original text).

**Jane Franklin** (1792-1875) is, in 1833, a quite early example of those British women travellers who often intentionally brought thrills and spills upon themselves. Even travel through the Mediterranean and to Egypt could provide those, particularly if you were as single-minded and adventurous as 42 year-old Jane.

Five years earlier she had married John Franklin, a serving Royal Navy officer. His service in the Mediterranean encouraged her to meet him wherever possible, enabling her to continue the travels that were already part of her life.

What one forgets, though surely Jane cannot have done so, is that such travel often entailed endless delays in quarantine. She had spent nine days in the Lazaretto in Malta; now she had an even tougher time in Chania. Since her quarantine tent was attached to the Arsenali, the Venetian boat-building sheds, I shall discuss her physical stay more fully in the Chania itinerary update. It provides a nice excuse to visit a historic place without, apparently, other woman interest. Here I shall remind you of the politics of the time in order to add her impression of it.

The Cretan and Greek-wide revolt that started in 1821 and reached its climax in 1828 had ended with the Protocol of London, negotiated through the British and other European powers and securing independence from the Ottoman empire for Greece, but not for Crete which was handed to the Viceroy of Egypt - leading to continuing violence on the island.

That was the background to Jane's arrival in Crete in September 1833 on her way to Egypt, having been alerted to the death by fever of the British consul in Cyprus – another proposed port of call – and the death there by poisoning of the French consul. It was a place she should avoid. If she had planned in Chania to stay with the Dalmatian-born British consul Capogrosso and his family, she was thwarted by the quarantine regulations.

On 29 September Jane was called upon in her strange seclusion not only by Capogrosso but also a Frenchman from a French ship in Suda Bay with some connection to her husband; of the incident he described she noted that it was,

> *As a result of deputation sent to French and English admirals by the Greeks of this island who are now to the amount of several thousands collected from different parts of the island encamped outside of the town, demanding redress of their grievances, and tho unarmed, yet not much disposed to listen to reason. The French captain seemed surprised that I had already heard of this affair.*

On 1 October, the French consul called upon Jane to bring her up to date on the political situation; he, too, had met her husband. Then a 'Turk' called on behalf of the Pasha. The rest of her diary entries contain, apart from descriptions of her surroundings, social visits and gossip, information gleaned from the books of previous (male) travellers to Crete, and they come to an abrupt end, as seems often to have been the way with Jane, without letting us know how she left the island. But she eventually arrived in Alexandria, having missed John at the Greek island of Syra (Siros) – which was also not unusual.

**Felicia Skene** (1821-1899) is best known for her philanthropical activities in Oxford after 1849 – organising nurses during a local cholera epidemic, visiting prisoners in Oxford Gaol and looking after women on their release, and writing about her work, including prison reform; indeed, a blue plaque was unveiled to her in Oxford (34 St Michael's Street) in 2002. But between 1838 and 1849, having been born and partly raised in France, she lived with her parents in Athens.

The Protocol of London of 1830 was followed by the Treaty of London of 1841 under which Crete was returned to the suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan. In *The Isles of Greece and Other Poems* (1843), Felicia wrote 'The Island of Crete', of which these lines are part:

> *Oh, who could gaze unmoved, where now,*
> *Even at this hour, the fetter'd slave*
> *Hath vow'd to lay the oppressor low,*
> *And gain his freedom or a grave!*
> *Hark! distinct upon the sultry air,*
> *Comes the echo of the cannon's roar –*
> *Each blow ordains some heart's despair,*
> *Some perish'd hero to deplore!*
> *Yet is the sound to me most dear –*
> *'Tis the voice of liberty at last!*
> *The voice which tells from this low sphere*
> *All that is noble hath not past! ...*
> *Let Crete be free! Too fair a spot*
> *To be the abode of tyranny!*

(There is nothing about Crete in another of her publications *Wayfaring Sketches Among Greek and Turks, and on the Shore of the Danube by a seven years' resident in Greece* (1847)).

Felicia's attitude towards Crete and its struggle for freedom was probably inspired by the circles in which she moved as a young woman in the independence hotbed of Athens, and foreshadowed her later reforming work in Oxford.

**Lucy Sarell** (1824-1904) arrived in Crete in 1841. She was seventeen and had just married her cousin, Henry Sarell Ongley in Constantinople where both families were part of a wide network of British consuls and merchants in the region; Henry had been appointed consul to Crete four years earlier. They were to live in Chalepa – the consulate and airy suburb of Chania – for seventeen years and Lucy was to have nine children there, all but one of whom survived.

When Henry arrived in 1837, the Albanian-born Mustafa Nail Pasha sent from Egypt had been Ottoman governor for seven years, and was to remain so until 1851, and return in 1866 for a year – in that long process becoming known as Mustafa Kiritli (the Cretan). Henry established good relations with him, and the years from 1841 – post Treaty of London, pre-insurrection of 1866 – were to be relatively calm. But, in 1851, Mustafa Kiritli was recalled – perhaps as a result of tension between Cairo and Constantinople – and his son, Veli Pasha took temporary charge. He was followed by two other pashas (1851-2 and 1852-5) and in 1855 he returned and resumed the good relations with Henry Sarell Ongley that both he and his father had enjoyed.

To some, Veli Pasha, son of a Cretan Christian mother whose father was a priest, was seen as a liberal governor, but not to the Greek nationalists, nor the committed Muslims. Sources disagree about whether or not Veli Pasha was keen to implement the *Hatti Humayun*, forced upon the Sultan in 1856 which gave important rights to his Christian subjects. Certainly its clauses were to lead to both progress and upsets in Crete. The French Consul Dercherché sought to undermine Veli Pasha's position, not least because of the pasha's good relations with the British Consul. In 1858, demonstrations and, in particular, the murder of a Muslim by a Christian, brought matters to a head. The culprit, caught by the crowd, was taken to the governor's palace where they demanded his execution. This the Pasha refused and sought Henry Sarell Ongley's advice when he was recalled. The British Consul's continuing support led to the supposition that Britain supported PashaVeli; this was reinforced when he was given refuge in the Consulate.

The part played by Lucy Sarell Ongley, whose two-year-old daughter Lucy had recently died, whose daughter Minna had recently been born, and who was again pregnant, eludes all but my imagination, though some idea can be obtained from the experiences of Laura Stillman ten years later. On 23 July 1858, Lucy's husband, accused also of corruption, was replaced and the family left for Constantinople, his career in ruins. His name was eventually cleared and he was appointed to other consulates. They had four more children.

That there is no personal account of Lucy Sarell Ongley's seventeen years in Crete has to be accepted since all that I know is garnered from the family research of an elusive descendent posted on the internet. What a treasure trove her letters home, if they exist, might be.

There is a travel account that predates by probably as much as ten years that of Mary Walker. A**nna Vivanti** visited Crete briefly in 1865 and published *A Journey to Crete, Constantinople, Naples and Florence: Three Months Abroad* (1865).

Anna had married in 1855 but it was to be ten years before she and her husband – leaving their children behind – managed 'our first wedding trip'. She was ecstatic at the prospect: 'Yes, to Crete! Where nobody has ever been that I know of, since Theseus.'

It is likely that Anna Vivanti was born Anna Lindau, known later, and perhaps before her marriage, as a German writer, and that her husband was Anselmo Vivanti who sought political asylum in London after the 1851 uprisings in Mantua; I have to assume that their daughter is the better-documented writer Annie Vivanti for whose parents those are the details.

Anna writes of Crete, where they arrived on 3 April 1865 for two weeks, that there were no hotels, so they stayed with an Italian widower in Chania. The first building that caught Anna's eye as they came ashore was the 'Pasha's Seraglio' and she had pointed out to her the 'Harem', the windows of which were covered 'by thick lattice work.'

She describes all that she sees in some detail; out walking, for example, she notes,
Far apart, on a green slope, sat the Turkish women, with their children and black slaves. These women, wrapped in satin cloaks, their heads and faces covered by their white veils, the gaily dressed little children with their bright happy faces and dark sparkling eyes, the black female slaves in cotton dresses of the Turkish cut, and the most gorgeous colours and patterns, produced altogether a charming picture.

The day after their arrival, Anna's husband paid a courtesy visit to Ismael (also spelt elsewhere Ismail) Pasha, 'Governor-General of Crete', and a few days later Anna was invited to visit the Pasha's harem; there he introduced her to Mlle Elizabeth (whom we have already met (see pp. 131-2, 264-5) as Elizabeth of Crete or Elizabeth Kontaxaki (or Vasilakopoula)) – teacher of Greek and French to his daughter Leila (in other sources and, more commonly, Leyla).

Anna's first impression of Elizabeth was of 'a middle-aged lady, in plain European clothes, with a pale face, and two large piercing black eyes. Anna spoke English with Elizabeth and French with Leyla and she noted of Leyla,

> *I had often been told, and it is unfortunately to a great extent but too true, that Turkish women, even the wives and daughters of Pashas, can neither read nor write ... the Pasha, a most enlightened man, has given to his daughter an education, which under the difficulties with which he had to contend, is truly wonderful.*

Fifteen year old Leyla had not only been well educated by a scholar in Turkish, and spoke European languages, but also played the piano brought from Vienna; Anna wrote:

> *Leila sat down and played with a clear fine touch, a very good arrangement of 'God Save the Queen'. This was a pretty compliment. She had played but a few minutes*

*when her father came in. He told her to play a Turkish march, which she performed with perfect execution. She played also a Mazurka by Schulhoff, and one or two other pieces. At last her father desired her to sing some Greek songs. Words and music were both perfectly unintelligible to me, but sounded very melancholy; and that feeling so took possession of me, that I found it difficult to prevent it being observed. There sang the poor little bird who, though the bars of her cage were gilded, and her master gentle and kind, was a prisoner for life. She will of course, before long, change her master, and be married to a man, who let us hope will love her, but who will never bestow upon her more than a trifling part of his presence.*

*But at least she may hope to be his only wife, as Mdlle. Elizabeth told me that the Pasha will not give his precious little daughter but to a man who will marry only one woman. The Pasha himself has had but one wife*.

Leyla's mother was the daughter of Mustafa Kiritli and, therefore, half Cretan. Anna continued her excoriation of 'the abominable system of seclusion'. She visited Leyla several times and ended by 'thanking God that I was born a free woman in a Christian country.'

As for Elizabeth, she and Anna met often and Anna writes of how her friend contributed much to make her stay 'interesting and instructive.' Some of Anna's descriptions of places are included in the separate itinerary update. Anna got to know Elizabeth so well that she adds quite a bit of detail to the story that I have already gleaned from elsewhere.; she wrote that:

*She was born in Crete, but received her education in Athens, and lives in an Eastern Island* [ie Crete] *with the manners and habits of the West. She walks and travels about alone, protected only by the respect all have for her. Her learning and extensive knowledge would excite attention in any place in Europe; it is therefore natural that in an island, where few women can read or write, she is the wonder and astonishment of all the inhabitants, and occupies quite a distinguished and influential position. The rebellious Greek mountaineers, the terror of the Turkish Government, respect her, and have more than once consulted her, and listened to her advice, for they know that she is a warm patriot, while the Pasha seldom fails to ask her opinion on the measures of reform he wishes to introduce, as he knows how well she can judge of their importance and utility, and that she is not hostile to the Government of the Sultan. She has written more than once to the Grand Vizier in Constantinople, and her communications have always received the attention they deserve. She has a straightforward, fearless mode in stating her opinions, which contrasts singularly with the servile manner of her compatriots. She lives alone with her aged mother, and a female servant in a little house, in a narrow street, but her room, overlooking a little garden, is large and pleasant. Over her writing table hangs a pleasing portrait of our Queen, which was given to her by an English friend. Some interesting antiquities in marble and terra-cotta, found in Crete, are the only ornaments of the room.*

*Her large book-case is well filled with books in classic and modern languages. I, who am not at all learned, looked with awe and veneration at the long rows of Greek and Latin authors, which evidently stood there not for ornament, but had been often and*

*well used. To me she became a most interesting and valuable companion, and I shall always remember, with a feeling of interest and kindness, Mdlle. Elizabeth of Crete.*

If only Anna Vivanti had realised how important it was to have recorded the name of the street, or even the general area, in which Mlle Elizabeth lived!

Anna's Cretan account, read in conjunction with the autobiography of the American Consul William Stillman, makes an interesting contrast in more ways than one. They write of the same year, 1865, but her short stay must have taken place some months before his for, by the time he tried to get to the island to take up his appointment, cholera raged throughout the Levant – there were no vessels of any kind to Crete because of the quarantine that would have been necessary from any Ottoman port, including, of course, Crete.

Stillman managed to get there somehow and even managed, at the end of that year, to return to Italy where he had left his wife, Laura, their son, Russie, and their newborn daughter, Lisa. Somehow, too, he succeeded in getting his family to Crete where they set up home in Chalepa. Within weeks of their arrival, the insurgency of 1866-68 started, and the Stillmans were to become embroiled in it. By luck, Anna and Anselmo Vivanti missed both the cholera and the Cretan uprising that took such a toll on the Stillmans.

But contradictory, too, are Anna Vivanti and William Stillman's views of Pasha Ismail. Anna's account has already suggested a sympathetic character, and this she further confirmed:

*In Crete, where he has been for several years, he is respected and loved by all well disposed people. He encourages agriculture, makes roads, punishes crime, and judges justly. Under his mild and firm rule, the Greek inhabitants have almost become reconciled to the hated dominion of the Turks; and have petitioned the Sublime Porte to prolong his Pashalik.*

Stillman rubbed up against him immediately – apparently a recognised ploy of the Pasha. As Stillman put it, his intention towards a new consul was to 'either break him or buy him over.' And he added, 'Ismael was cruel and dishonourable; he violated his word and pledges without the slightest regard for his influence with the population ... Ismael Pasha had only one object – to do anything that would advance his promotion and wealth.' Stillman proceeds to substantiate all his claims.

Those opposing views of the Pasha are almost reconcilable. Anna and her husband were two week-visitors, ready to be pleased; Stillman was a consul with extraterritoriality – 'a hostile force in the way of his ambitions.' The historian Theocharis Detorakis, who mentions Ismael Pasha as governor of Crete from 1861, notes that after 'a short period of just and mild rule ... [he] changed tactics.' This change included 'a harsh tax policy' and interference in religious questions. That short period, however, could not have lasted from 1861, when he arrived, until 1865 when the Vivantis met him (that is a long period); I suspect, therefore, that the difference is partly between the private man and the public man, and partly that the Vivantis moved in Pasha-approving circles. As for Mlle Elizabeth's

position with the Pasha and, indeed, with the Ottoman overlord in Constantinople, she appears to have been something of a political animal with irons in several fires.

Regarding the person of Pasha Ismail, there is another ambiguity: the Vivanti and Stillman accounts create confusion with Rhea Galanaki's novel *Ismail Pasha Ferik* which I have previously suggested provides a good historical background for this period. In describing Ismael Pasha, Anna Vivanti gives details of his life (confirmed from other sources) - a kidnapping from a Greek island as a boy, sold in Constantinople – which are not dissimilar to those of Ismail Ferik Pasha (we should ignore the difference in spelling Ismael/Ismail, the latter is more modern, Ferik is just an official title and surnames were not then prevalent in the Ottoman Empire).

Stillman's detailed account of the three-year insurgency in which he, as a foreign consul, was closely involved, does not mention Galanki's Ismail Ferik Pasha, the Egyptian Minister for War returning to Crete from whence he had been kidnapped as a boy. Stillman's 'General in Chief of the Egyptian army' is Schahin Pasha; indeed, Stillman sees that man and Ismael Pasha, the Governor, in opposition to each other in their dealings with Crete. Galanaki has her character killed (perhaps murdered) at Kastelli; the historian Detorakis has an Ismael Pasha, as Governor of Crete, and an Egyptian 'Ismael' (Pasha), 'minister of the armed forces' and replacement for 'Sahin', killed fighting at Kastelli. He does not suggest, except implicity, that they are two different people. Stillman tells us that 'Ismael was dismissed in disgrace and ordered off to Constantinople not even being allowed to pack his furniture.'

I raise this confusion not to question Galanaki's fascinating novel, but to alert you to her own warning that a lot of myth surrounds the original of the character she creates and to minimise confusion in my own text above and p. 264. It seems certain that there were two Ismael/Ismail Pashas – one the governor of Crete, father of Leyla, enemy of Consul Stillman; the other Galanaki's Egyptian Minister for War, sent to put down the insurrection (exacerbated by the governor) and killed at Kastelli.

Leyla's father is known in other sources as Hekim (Doctor) Ismail Pasha – as distinct from Ismail Ferik Pasha. When Hekim Ismail Pasha was kidnapped from the Greek island of Chio, he was sold to a doctor in Constantinople who not only saw to his medical training but sent the young man abroad to further his education. So competent and respected a doctor did Hekim Ismail become that he was appointed surgeon general to the Ottoman Sultan and, later, appointed Pasha and Governor of Crete. More accessibly documented than his life is that of his daughter, Leyla, the only member of his family to accompany him to Crete (1861-66), drawing us back to Anna Vivanti's fears that the young woman's talents would be wasted. On the contrary, she became a renowned poet and composer (**Leyla Saz**, 1850-1936) a woman whose music can, apparently, still be heard on Turkish radio. (And I have managed to obtain a recording of one of her best-known pieces, *Neside-i zafer Marsi* – Victory March - in a collection of Turkish 'Miniatures' from <www.CDRoots.com>). But I am going to tell the rest of her story, together with what she herself wrote about her teacher Mlle Elizabeth and her friendship with Baroness Schwartz, in my rewriting of the Chania itinerary.

Here I think it best to continue the historical thread of the 1866-8 Cretan insurrection, especially as it affected **Laura Stillman** (daughter of David Mack of Cambridge, Massachusetts, a communitarian involved in the anti-slavery movement). And Laura's experience can be read together with that of Espérance Schwartz who, as I have already recorded (pp.134-6, 267-70), also became mixed up in the troubles.

In Chalepa during the insurrection, as well as Baroness Schwartz, there was a nest of consuls, some sympathetic to the Cretans, and the French and British supportive of the Governor Ismail Pasha or, more widely, of the Ottoman sultanate. Laura Stillman was not the only wife there: the Italian, Colucci, was married to an American which strengthened his alliance with Stillman. (I shall describe Laura Stillman's time in Chalepa here as fully as I have the material for because it is unclear where exactly in Chalepa they lived, but you should certainly think of her when you visit Chalepa using the Chania itinerary).

The windows of the Stillmans' house were barricaded with mattresses, with a rifle and box of cartridges at each window, and Stillman and Colucci organised a patrol of Cretans who had taken refuge with them. Rifle shots constantly whistled through the air. Stillman writes:

> *On one occasion, when my wife, with other ladies of the consular circle, was walking between Canea and Kalepa, some of the Mussulmans amused themselves by firing as near their heads as it was safe to do. I begged Laura to take the children and go to Syra until the troubles were over, but she refused, saying that the women gathered around the friendly consulates, seeing her yielding to panic, would lose all courage and fly to the mountains.*

The months of 1866 passed under this strain, and Stillman continues,

> *My children, for months, did not pass the threshold, though Laura insisted on showing her indifference to the danger by walking out; and one night when some mischievous Mussulmans started a cry of 'Death to the Christians', in the streets of Kalepa, and the entire Christian population in a few minutes were at our doors, beating to be admitted, the cavasses* [watchmen] *refusing to open without orders, she had flown to the door in her night-dress and thrown it open to the crowd, who passed the rest of the night sitting on the floor of the consulate.*

Some tension was lifted with the arrival in Suda Bay of a relay of European ships; Stillman recorded, 'Meanwhile the [British] *Wizard* gunboat had been relieved by the *Assurance* – a larger vessel – the commander of which (Pym) had an American wife, and perhaps had been influenced by her, and certainly shared her sympathy with the Cretans.' The British Consul, CH Dickson (whose wife may also have been with him), secured permission from the Ottoman Commander, Mustafa Pasha (the Mustafa Kiritli of the Sarell Ongley's stay), to enable the *Assurance* to take on board 315 women and children (and 25 wounded men) to convey them to Piraeus.

That was one of the many boatloads of refugees who managed to escape – and they will be elaborated on when I mention the involvement of Julia Ward Howe. But, after

mentioning the *Assurance* refugees, Stillman continued, 'At this moment came another act of the Turkish brutality, which carried me through. A Turkish man-of-war ran in to the [same] shore where Pym had [earlier] taken his refugees, flying the English flag, and, when the refugees poured out from their rocky shelter, opened its broadsides on them.'

Relations between Mustafa Kiritli and Stillman deteriorated; even so, with all these hiccups in relations, Stillman tried to maintain helpful links and did not overtly support the Cretan rebels. This is emphasised by remarks of Baroness Schwartz of which I will remind you; not only did she note (p. 135) how Pasha Ismail forbade her to leave the capital after one of her adventures, but she wrote of how she helped the American Consul distribute his non-attributable views on the insurrection to the outside world. Unfortunately for us, Stillman does not include Espérance in his accounts.

It was difficult, though, to be perceived as neutral and Stillman wrote of how it affected the family:

> *For months my children had not gone beyond the threshold, and I myself was openly threatened with assassination; the butchers in the market were forbidden to serve me with meat, and I got supplies only indirectly. Canea was so beleaguered by land by the insurgents that we had scanty provision of produce at the best, nothing being obtainable from the territory beyond the Turkish outposts. The Austrian steamer brought weekly a few vegetables, but the cattle within the lines were famished and diseased, and there was no good meat and little fish, the fishermen, who were Italians, all going home.*

He managed to send Laura and the children to the Greek island of Syra, but they were soon back.

The arrival of a new Ottoman commander, Omar Pasha, in April 1867 led Stillman to write:

> *The cruelties which, under Mustapha, were the occasional deeds of subordinate commanders or the consequence of partial defeats, became, under Omar, the rule by order to all the detachments, and Omar himself took his share of the booty and the pick of the captive girls for his own harem.*

I have described other cruelties in the main text (see pp.133-4). By November 1867, the Ottoman hospitals were full of dysentery patients; 'most of the houses around us at Kalepa', Stillman wrote, 'were occupied as hospitals, and the very air seemed infected by the number of sick. There were 3000 in and around Canea.' In the midst of all this, Laura gave birth to their third child, Bella. Stillman wrote,

> *Our physician – a kindly and excellent Pole, attached to one of the hospitals – ordered us all out of the island as soon as she was able to travel, for, to use his expression, 'he would not guarantee the life of one of us if we remained in the island two weeks longer.' We had been living for over two years a life of the deprivations and discomfort of a state siege. At one time I had been confined to the house for three months by a*

*scorbutic malady* [scurvy] *which prevented my walking, my children had been suffering from ophthalmia* [eye infection] *brought by the Egyptians, and Laura was in a state of extreme mental depression from her sympathy for the Cretans.*

They left for Athens in September 1868. Without money but, supported by a local Cretan committee, they settled in a 'tiny house'. And then, suddenly, the full horror of what the Stillmans had been through hits us as he writes:

*My troubles came to a crisis in the sudden death of my wife. The anxiety and mental distress of our Cretan life, and her passionate sympathy with the suffering Cretans, even more than our privations and personal danger, had long been producing their effect on her mind, and the weaning of the baby precipitated the change into a profound melancholy which became insanity accompanied by religious delusions from which she sought refuge in a voluntary death. She was given a public funeral, and the government sent a caisson to carry the coffin to the grave, but the Cretans claimed the right to take charge of it, and the coffin was carried to the cemetery on the shoulders of the oldest chiefs. The Cretan women looked on her as their best friend, and always spoke of her after her death as 'the Blessed' – their form of canonization, for even in Athens they had been her chief care. The quiet but indomitable courage with which she faced danger in Crete, lest they should be involved in the panic which prevailed all around us, was as remarkable as the poetic prepossession concerning the people she protected and worked for, but the dominant sense of duty carried her through all difficulties. She never gave a thought to personal danger, and though a fragile creature, not five feet high, she was capable of cowing the most brutal of the barbarians who were gathered around us at Khalepa, and, whether to keep the consulate for me while I was away, or to navigate the yacht to meet me on my return from my visits to Greece, nothing made her hesitate to do what she thought her duty. In the three years of almost breaking strain of our residence in the midst of the anarchy of the insurrection, she had only the few days' relief from anxiety of her stay in Syra ... but in all that time I never saw her make the least display of trepidation or anxiety, until the dispatch came from Secretary Washburn to tell us that the salary would be stopped.*

When the Stillmans had found refuge on the Greek mainland, as did as many as 50,000 Cretans, mostly Christians, they were looked after in various ways. Following Laura's suicide, the rest of the family was taken in by the British Consul to Crete who had also left, and Mrs Dickson took care of the children. In Stillman's 1901 and more personal *Autobiography of a Journalist* (as opposed to *The Cretan Insurrection of 1866-7-8* (1874), which he later described as a complete failure because of the time that had elapsed before publication), he described several instances of refugees, mostly women and children, getting away from Crete – some of them on the *Arcadi(Arkadi),* previously called *Dream*, 'a most successful contrabandist of the American war'. He mentioned, too, the financial help he received from the Cretan Committee in Boston. There is a connection between both the ship and the committee and Julia Ward Howe and her husband Samuel Gridley Howe.

**Julia Ward Howe** (1819-1910) is best known as a leader for suffrage, a reformer and author of 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' (1861; in support of the fight against slavery). What may be

less well known is that in 1867 she, her husband and two daughters travelled from Boston through Europe to Greece, resulting in *From the Oak to the Olive: A Plain Record of a Pleasant Journey* (1868). She dedicated the book to the man she had married in 1843 – 'The strenuous champion of Greek liberty and human rights'.

In the 1820s, following his medical training in the United States, Samuel Howe served as a surgeon in the Greek War of Independence. The main purpose of the visit to Greece in 1867 was to bear supplies for the Cretans in Crete and the refugees on other islands and the mainland.

Julia's book is delightfully written and not impossible to find at an affordable price and in a nice edition on the internet. She was both observant and erudite but held her pen lightly. Writing of her boat journey with one daughter from Venice to Syra, her description of an Ottoman pasha's family contrasts nicely with Anna Vivanti's of the 'civilised' harem of Pasha Ismail. But then their reactions coincide as Julia writes, '"Oh Christian marriage," I thought, as I looked on this miscellaneous and inorganic family, "let us not complain of thy burdens."' Leaving the boat, she remarks, 'I shook hands with the pacha, not unmindful of the miseries of Crete.'

Julia's remark about 'burdens' is telling: she was unhappily married. One of her biographers (Mary H Grant) summed up the attitude of her husband: 'It was ironic that he threw himself so completely into the defence of society's downtrodden while ignoring and even trampling on her needs.'

On Syra, mother and a daughter went to see the *Arkadi*, 'the smart little steamer given by the Greeks of London to the Cretan cause', before leaving for Athens where Samuel Howe and their elder daughter, having gone ahead, met them. He was already distributing clothing produced by the Cretan Committee of Boston to Cretan refugees who, 'in advanced stages of nakedness, congregate in Egina, Syra, Argos and other places, as well as Athens.' Julia now joined him in this endeavour – while not omitting plenty of sight-seeing – travelling to Argos. In a convent,

> *We were ushered into a well-sized room, in which lay heaps of cotton under-clothing, and of calico dresses, most of them in the shape of sacks and skirts. These were the contents of one or two boxes recently arrived from Boston. Some of them were recognized as having connection with a hive of busy bees who used to gather weekly in our New England parlor.*

And she described, slightly tongue in cheek, the sewing parties, but she could not resist adding: 'At the sight of these well-made garments a little swelling of the heart seized us, with the love and pride of remembrance so dear.' But it was now serious as the refugees came to claim their garments:

> *Here they come, the shapely maiden, the sturdy matron, the gray-haired grandmother, with little ones of all small sizes and ages. Many of the women carried infants at the breast; many were expectant of maternity. Not a few of them were followed by groups of boys and girls. Most of them were ill-clothed; many of them appeared extremely*

*destitute of attire. A strong, marked race of people, with powerful eyes, fine black hair, healthy complexions, and symmetrical figures. They bear traces of suffering. Some of the infants have pined; but most of them promise to do well. Each mother cherishes and shows her little beggar in the approved way. The children are usually robust, although showing in their appearance the very limited resources of their parents. Some of the women have tolerable gowns; to these we give only under-clothing. Others have but the rag of a gown – a few stripes of stuff over their coarse chemises. These we make haste to cover with the beneficent growth of New England factories. They are admitted in groups of three or four at a time. As many of us fly to the heaps of clothing, and hastily measure them by the length and breadth of the individual.*

Julia and her companions worked like this for a couple of hours and then had a break; they returned, and continued 'until all were provided.' Not all were satisfied, however: 'Only one old lady demurred at the gift bestowed. She wanted a gown, but there was none; so that she was forced to content herself, much against her will, with some under-clothing.'

On their return to Athens, they sweltered in the summer heat awaiting news from or about Crete, and in the evening went to the local cafe for discussions of 'Greek politics and Cretan prospects'. Julia continued,

*Within doors, besides our grave studies, we have visits. Many Greeks and Cretans wait upon the veteran [Samuel Howe], together with the American Consuls, and Cretan women bringing silks, laces, and stockings of their own manufacture, or petitioning for little special helps over and above the forty lepta per diem allowed to each of them by the committee. Some mysterious consultations are there, bent on merciful conspiracies and Heaven-approved stratagems. Omer Pacha and his army have surrounded the unhappy Island of Candia [Crete], and are tightening their folds like a huge serpent. The severity of the blockade is starving to death the women and children who are shut up in the towns, or hidden in caves and recesses of the mountains. England meanwhile feasts the sultan and pledges the bloody toast of non-interference....*

*Our war upon the Turks is a war of biscuit and of cotton cloth. We run every permissible risk to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, both of these terms being of literal application. Our agent lands his insufficient cargo, and before his errand is known, the moan and wail of the suffering ones break out from hill-side and cavern.* Psomi! psomi! *for God's sake, bread! And here comes the sad procession. The merciful man is ashamed to look at the women; their rags do not cover them. Hunted are they and starved like beasts. But the sultan feasts in England well.*

Samuel Howe was behind these deliveries to Crete. In her *Reminiscences 1819-1899* (1899), Julia tells us that her husband visited Crete in 1867, but does not do so in her more detailed account from which I quote; and her biographer suggests that when Julia was in Italy he invited her to 'join him in Crete'. I can find no evidence that she went. The thanks they receive for their distribution efforts, Julia writes, 'are painful'*;*

*They make us feel the agonized suffering to which our small largess gives a momentary relief. The Arkadi, our blockade-runner, after landing her cargo, took on board more*

*than three hundred women and children, fleeing from the last extremities of want and misery. This morning appears at the door of our hotel a little group of these unfortunates – a mother with four small children, the youngest a little nursing babe. Bread we give them, and a line to the committee. We ask the woman if she would not go back to Crete. 'O God! no,' she replies: 'The Turks would murder us.'*

Samuel Howe eventually set off for France and England to 'jog the easy conscience of diplomacy.' Did he go at the same time as Baroness Schwartz (see p.136)? Did they meet? How far did they determine any change in British policy?

Sight-seeing in Athens during her husband's absence, stopping in cafes, Julia often got into conversation about Crete, and drank to its freedom – '*Eleutheria tis Kritis!* And dear Julia is not without a touch of American hubris in all this: 'It is in the face of America that the new nations, Greece and Italy, must look for recognition and encouragement.' And, visiting the palace, it is down with kings, even the 'little' Greek; he could be diverting the Ottoman forces, which would give Crete 'a chance of rising above the bloody waters that drown her. ... The day of kings is over. Peoples now have their turn, and God wills it'. On her return to Boston from Europe Julia worked hard on a fund-raising bazaar for Crete – over $20,000 was raised.

The last of the new nineteenth century foreign women to be introduced in this historical section is **Amy Yule** (b.1852) – most obviously to be inserted half way down p.139, but flowing freely on from Julia Ward Howe, for one of Amy's Crete connections is her book *A Little Light on Cretan Insurrection* (1879). But her inspiration was not the uprising of 1866-68: it was the one of 1878, resolved that October by the Chalepa Agreement and the appointment of a Christian governor.

Amy Yule was the daughter of Sir Henry Yule, historical geographer, and Anna Maria White (d. 1875). Returning from service in India to marry in 1843, Yule took his new wife back with him, but her health soon forced her to return to England. Amy was born during three years leave her father took. Her early years were, therefore, fatherless; but, following Yule's retirement from service when Amy was ten, the family spent time in Switzerland, Tuscany and Savoy, finally settling in Sicily. This peripatetic background, for her father's research, does not altogether explain the Greek connection.

But her ties to Greece were obviously strong, for she also edited *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Greece* (5th edition, 1884) which includes Crete (not then part of Greece!). The opening remark of her preface is ambiguous: 'The present edition of this Handbook is the result of several years careful inquiry carried out during a long residence and much travel in various parts of the country.' Did that include Crete?

John Murray, a friend of her father, also published her Crete book and it is thanks to Stephen Boys Smith's delving in the publisher's archives in search of his ancestor Sandwith that at least one detail of Amy's Greek stay emerges. She first wrote to Murray from a hotel in Athens in July 1878 and the last letter from there appears to date from 1883, so she may have lived in Greece for as long as five years.

The first letter was about the *Handbook*, but much of the correspondence was about *A Little Light on Cretan Insurrection*, which both realised was not going to be profit-making; indeed, he probably accepted it against his better judgement, publishing 500 copies at a cost of £59 16s 7p. Of these Amy took 83 copies, and 78 were sold – 203 copies were pulped in 1900 (much to my chagrin!). At some stage, Amy sent John Murray half the payment of publication. She was paid £150 for the *Handbook*. But why did she go to Greece? And those letters do not say that she visited Crete.

At first I could not be sure that she had done so. She writes about its history from 1092 as background to insurrection as a scholar and polemicist. Although her opinions and conclusions are strongly expressed, they seem impersonal; nowhere does she explain her interest and involvement. But an English scholar of the Ottoman period in Crete, David Barchard, writing to me from Turkey, was certain that she had been there and, finally, I found just one sentence, easy to miss when you are skimming a book for research, that confirmed it.

She is writing about Ottoman expenditure in Crete, noting that there is a new governor's palace but that soldiers' pay is neglected, and she gives as evidence: 'In the autumn of 1877, having occasion to apply for an escort, the authorities naively sent me word that the men were entirely at my service, but begged I would not take them into the country on account of it wearing out their boots.' It is the only time she uses the personal pronoun.

Once she is established as having visited Crete at least once, other remarks become less ambiguous ' No one can prescribe for Cretan ills who does not possess, in some degree at least, accurate personal knowledge of the island, and the local causes that work there'. The book is published in her name (or, rather, the gender-concealing A.F.Yule), and with her backing, and it is obvious that she did extensive research, reading the available sources in English, including consular dispatches. But what prompted her? Who was her readership? What did she hope to achieve? Was she to some extent like Baroness Schwartz who conveyed the opinions of one or more consuls, helping disseminate the views of those who could not speak openly? Or was she giving a voice to those Cretans, on the island or refugees in Greece, who felt their views might be discounted? On the same page, she writes, 'This financial danger was distinctly pointed out to Consul Sandwith [in Crete 1870-85] by the Cretan delegates.' A page later, in her conclusion, she expounds views that require intricate knowledge, and that are intended to persuade:

> *Our future and optative duty concerns the ultimate disposal of Crete. There is ground to hope that if the pecuniary danger be allayed, the decision of this question may not be forced on us for some time; but when the time comes, as come it assuredly will, we must be prepared to deal with the question boldly, and be content if we can preserve Turkey's nominal sovereignty by securing Crete the frank concession of such measure of independence as shall make her invulnerable to Hellenic schemes of aggression. Annexation to Greece would, paradoxically enough, benefit the Mussulman minority alone. As to any idea of making Crete an English possession, the idea cannot, for the present at least, be entertained. So late as April, 1878, such a solution would have been*

*welcomed by the entire Cretan population but since then English heedlessness and Hellenic misrepresentation have combined to put our paper out of the market.*

And she ends the book:

*In these notes, my only object has been to bring before the public Cretan needs and Cretan difficulties as they are felt and expressed by the Cretans themselves in their private intercourse, when free from official restraint – whether Turkish or consular.*

The British consul Thomas Sandwith's long experience was obviously very valuable to Crete. Stillman wrote of him in his 1890 article in *The Contemporary Review*, 'The Cretan Question'*:*

*I believe that if the late English Consul in Canea (Sandwith) had been still there, there would have been no disturbance last summer [1889?], for he would have listened to their complaints and they to him; he knew them and they him and there was the mutual confidence between them which should exist between governor and governed.*

But Amy talks not just of freedom from Turkish official restraint but also consular; did that include Sandwith for, while she often quotes him, she does not always agree with him? Having studied his dispatch of 14 October 1878, she writes, 'It is difficult to comprehend what argument can have been sufficient to induce consul Sandwith to consent with so little hesitation to a financial arrangement which threatened to render all other provisions of the convention nugatory'. Nevertheless, she obviously relied on him: none of his consular reports after 17 January 1879 had reached Athens - 'what follows,' she wrote, 'is, therefore, from private information'. That must surely mean Sandwith.

As for William Stillman and his account of the 1866-8 insurrection, although she appreciates its general historical value, she writes on one occasion, 'This incident is somewhat incorrectly related by Mr Stillman'. And on another, 'Compare this with the highly-coloured American account'.

Amy Yule's edition of the John Murray *Handbook* is now mainly of historical interest, but it does prompt a question: was her initial reason for going to Crete her research for the *Handbook*? She may then have become politically involved through her contacts there, perhaps Sandwith, perhaps Cretan leaders. It is interesting that her travels were facilitated by the Ottoman authorities, as were those of the other women travellers of the period – Anna Vivanti and Mary Walker and, probably until she stepped out of line, Espérance Schwartz.

Amy's introduction to Canea (Chania) in the *Handbook* warns that there are no hotels but 'good accommodation easily procured on application to consulate, or, to Capuchin Convent' – and a footnote – 'This highly respected community, established at Canea nearly 300 years ago, is deserving of all praise'. Is that where she stayed in Crete? Mary Walker stayed in a previously unidentifiable convent (p.137); I suspect this may be it, then opposite the general shop Benizello (Mary mentions that she can see two shops from her window). From 1988-97, there was a court case which suggests that the Roman Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary, built in the thirteenth century, adjoins a former Capuchin convent. There is only

one such church in Chania – that called the Assumption, between the Cretan House Folklore Museum (see p.263) and the Archaeological Museum on the Chalidon, and almost opposite the Greek Orthodox Cathedral. I am assuming it is near there that Mary stayed.

It also seems likely that on one of her visits Mary stayed with Thomas Sandwith; his great grandson has a sketch by Mary of his house in Chalepa. From the back of her sketch comes an explanation for how Mary Walker came to live in Constantinople – and thus travel widely in the region for so many years: she was 'Mrs Walker, sister of Canon Curtis of Constantinople'. In Mary's second book including her travels in Crete, *Old Tracks and News Landmarks* (1897), there is also a sketch of Chania from Chalepa.

Mary mentions (p.138) that Thomas Sandwith was a collector of Cretan embroidery. I have now been to see some of his collection in London's Victoria and Albert Museum. I found six of his pieces – one pillow case, and five skirt borders - in the textile section, room 100, case R, study frames 74-79. These may or may not be on display should you visit. It is worth checking, indeed, that the gallery is open on www.vam.ac.uk or telephone 0207 942 2000. Those with a scholarly reason to see a particular item in Sandwith's larger collection (not on display) can, by stating their case to the Department of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion make an appointment.

I have to ask how big a part Sandwith's wife played in his collection. She must have been in Chania with him at least on and off for some years as she outlived him and as it is a daughter who wrote the inscription on the back of the sketch of their house.

Mary Walker's chapters on Crete include journeys out of Chania that are not in my original – that is, we did not visit those places: Akrotiri (except to the airport), and the monastery at Ghonia, further west from Maleme (p.281). From Mary's chapter on Ghonia we learn, almost with relief, that she was not travelling through Crete alone, but accompanied by Miss Y.

Mary Walker extols the virtues of Raouf Pasha (p.137). I had previously hoped to pinpoint the date of at least one of her visits by his governorship; I now discover from the internet that he ruled 1870-71 and 1873. But Mary says he was 'Vali' three times, and Amy Yule writes that, 'In January 1877 Raouf Pasha was called to the Ministry and was succeeded in Crete' – thus supporting Mary and apparently contradicting the internet. (The researcher has to ask herself, is this an example of the fallibility of the internet?) And Amy agrees with Mary about the pasha's virtues when she writes, 'In Raouf, the island lost the most able, humane, and successful governor it had had for twenty years at least, perhaps within the century.'

And Mary confirms that her knowledge of Raouf (Reouf/Re'uf) Pasha was not hearsay when she writes:

> *It seems but yesterday, although a few years have flown by since that bright time, that, during a visit to the wife of Reouf Pasha, then Vali of Crete, the plan of an excursion towards the western shores of the island was arranged for us by this courteous and*

*enlightened Governor, who promised an escort, a tent, and every possible facility for our little journey.*

Mary adds to the views put forward elsewhere on the political situation; she could be talking about the period before or after 1878 (since she probably visited Crete before and after):

*It is difficult to realize that this peaceful spot has been more than once the convenient landing place for men and arms, sent to keep alive the disastrous warfare and struggles for which Crete has an unfortunate notoriety.*

*The Cretans have peculiar notions of the fitness of things, and of the uses to which English courage and enterprise may be turned for the benefit of their island. I was present one day when a certain vehement and hot-headed patriot endeavoured to enlighten our English Consul as to the special mission of England in the East. 'Why cannot your country,' he said, 'act with us as with the Ionian Islands: take Crete, put its affairs thoroughly in order, make it rich and prosperous, and then – simply hand it over to Greece?'*

Following Thomas Sandwith as consul came the Cretan Democracy Era during which, in the early twentieth century, Esmé Howard was consul general. But I shall keep his time, and that of his wife Isabella, for the update of the Chania itinerary in the second web update that follows this. And to think that previously I knew only of Mary Walker's visits to Crete in the Nineteenth Century!

The nineteenth century involvement in Crete of foreign women is certainly rather more prevalent and lively than I had previously realised. Perhaps the most pleasing way to end this historical update is with Amy Yule's remark in the extensive Crete section (pp.601-635) of the Murray *Handbook*, 'It is necessary to add that there is little of archaeological or historic interest to attract the casual traveller'. What a difference a century or so makes!

**As this historical update ends, readers should click on the second Crete update – Itineraries, amendments and additional bibliography.**