



***Henrietta Liston's Travels: The Turkish Journals, 1812-1820*, eds., Patrick Hart, Valerie Kennedy and Dora Petherbridge, with F. Özden Mercan, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2020. pp. ix-246, illustrated. ISBN 9781474467353**

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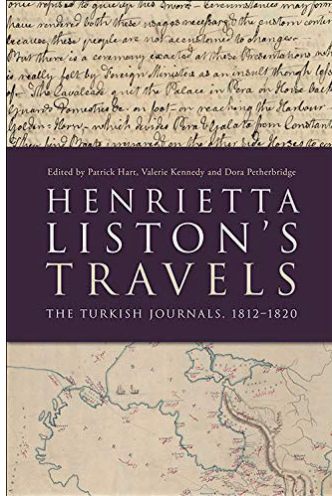
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The history of British diplomatic wives has a lot of ground to make up. As long ago as 1975, Hilary Callan wrote a seminal study, 'The Premise of Dedication: Notes Towards an Ethnography of Diplomat's Wives,'¹ but the topic remained a major gap. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, of course, generated a long tradition of scholarship, and Katie Hickman's popular survey, *Daughters of Britannia: The Lives and Times of Diplomatic Wives* (2000) was widely reviewed and sold well.² But the history of British women in foreign service continued to be ignored until the appearance of Helen McCarthy's *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (2014), her pioneering investigation of letters, memoirs, and government records detailing the lives and careers of British women serving officially and unofficially in overseas offices from the mid-nineteenth century until the present.³ It was also in 2014 that Ashley Cohen introduced historians to Maria, Lady Nugent, the American-born wife of Field Marshall Sir George Nugent, in her detailed critical edition of *Lady Nugent's East India Journal* covering the years 1811 to 1815.⁴ Now, with the appearance of Henrietta Liston's *Constantinople Journal, 1812-1814*, the field takes another leap forward.

Henrietta Liston's account of her journey to Constantinople and her time there captures readers from its opening sentence, as if it were a novel. This meticulously edited and contextualised edition publishes for the first time Liston's account of her husband Robert's ambassadorial posting to the Ottomans. Set during the Napoleonic wars and the early years of Mahmut II's reign that preceded the Tanzimat reforms, the journal and other writings provide a fascinating supplement to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters from the 'Turkish embassy' written one hundred years before. This highly readable print edition from Edinburgh University Press has been carefully annotated and introduced by a range of scholars familiar with all aspects of the period, the Ottoman context, and intercultural and imperial relations. The text has been thoughtfully modernized in spelling and punctuation. Readers concerned about fidelity to the original manuscripts will be gratified to learn that the print edition is accompanied by open online access to digital facsimiles of the original manuscripts and semi-diplomatic transcriptions by the National Library of Scotland where Henrietta Liston's papers are held. This unique combination of print and digital textuality should serve as an enabling precedent for bringing to light other manuscripts that have lain neglected in the archives. This splendid edition of Henrietta Liston's *Journal* makes a valuable and compelling addition both to the emergent canon of writings by British women who travelled to the Ottoman empire and to the serious study of diplomatic wives.

1 Hilary Callan, 'The Premise of Dedication: Notes Towards an Ethnography of Diplomat's Wives,' in Shirley Ardener, ed., *Perceiving Women*, Dent, London 1975, pp. 87-104. This study was followed by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener, eds., *The Incorporated Wife*, Croom Helm, London, 1984, a collection offering sociological studies of women married to colonial administrators, policemen, professors, and corporate executives.

2 Katie Hickman, *Daughters of Britannia: The Lives and Times of Diplomatic Wives*, Flamingo, London 2000.

3 Helen McCarthy, *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat*, Bloomsbury, London 2014.

4 Ashley L. Cohen, ed., *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014.