Revealing experiences hidden from history: Through the eyes of women travelers in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea regions in the 17th to early 20th centuries

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Women travelers of the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries

“...proper and safe for dynamic men only” (Agnes Smith, 1887).
© 252 women travelers of the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries: 6000 other women travelers referred to in their works (Kamberidou 2012; 2014, 2016).

Publication dates

Evans &Cheevers (1659-1663), 1719 (published)
Lady Montagu 1718
Lady Craven 1778
Maria Guthrie 1802,
Mme de la Ferté-Meun 1822
Louise Demont 1821
Julia Pardoe 1837
Elizabeth Grosvenor 1842
Celine 1848
Lady Londonderry 1842
Lady Egerton 1841
Emily Beaufort 1861
Ida Laura Pfeiffer 1852
Mme de la Princess de Belgiojoso, 1855
Catherine Tobin 1855
Mary Walker 1886
Emmeline Lott 1866
Fanny Janet Blunt 1878
Lucy Garnett 1891, 1895... and more...
EASTERN HOSPITALS
AND ENGLISH NURSES;
THE NARRATIVE OF
TWELVE MONTHS' EXPERIENCE
IN THE
HOSPITALS OF KOUFLA AND SCUTARI.

BY
A LADY VOLUNTEER.

"They are the patient sorrows that touch nearest."—Iza.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MAHLSHOUGH STREET.
1856.

NARRATIVE
OF PERSONAL
EXPERIENCES
& IMPRESSIONS
DURING A RESIDENCE ON THE
BOSPHORUS
THROUGHOUT
THE
CRIMEAN
WAR
BY
LADY ALICIA BLACKWOOD

LONDON
HATCHARD, PICCADILLY,
1856.
Travelled and imprisoned 1659-1663

Book published 1719
Women’s 17th century accounts: 1685, 1687, 1688

Bombardment of the Acropolis
by GM Verneda, 1687 (from Fanelli. 1707)

1. Miss Anna Akerhjelm (Anna Mansdotter Agriconia) and
2. Miss Catharina Charlotta de la Gardie: (later married the Field Marshal Count Otto Guillaume Koenigsmark)

- Siege of Athens in 1687, the destruction and looting of the Parthenon by the Venetians;
- the Siege of Negreponte (Chalkis) in 1688.
- …a detailed account of Francisco Morosini’s campaign in the Morea in 1685

Women in Conflict Areas:

*terms and phrases used in 18th and 19th century female accounts*

- Color segregation
- The reign of terror in Turkey
- *terrorisme* (fr.)
- Terror
- Privileged rape (18th century)
- Slavedom
- Mass massacres
- Armenian massacres (1896)
- Persecutions, subjugation
- Enslavement and slavery, etc.

Private collection: Professor Konstantinos Fotiades

by the artist Areti Kamperidis

20th Century narratives (Vaka 1914, Mills 1920, Norton 1922, Brown 1922, Neave 1933) spotlight describe: “the persecution of all elements not pure Moslem”; “the Kerasund horror”, “Pontic Genocide”, the ordeals/sufferings of the refugees etc.
TWENTY-SIX YEARS ON THE BOSPOROUS

BY

DORINA L. NEAVE

Photo of the author Dorina L. Neave
Twenty-six years on the Bosphorus" (1881-1907)

26 August 1896: her experiences concerning the “reign of terror in Turkey”, the “mass massacres”, “Armenian massacres” Constantinople in 1896, the “Exterminator” (the Sultan)...

GRAYSON & GRAYSON
GURZON STREET
MAYFAIR LONDON
GLIMPSES
OF
GREEK LIFE AND SCENERY.

BY
AGNES SMITH,
Author of "Eastern Pilgrims," &c., &c.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1884.
A SAIL TO SMYRNA:

OR,

AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S JOURNAL;

INCLUDING

IMPRESSIONS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, A VISIT TO A TURKISH HAREM, AND A RAILWAY JOURNEY TO EPHESUS.

ILLUSTRATED FROM ORIGINAL SKETCHES.

BY MRS. BAILLIE,

AUTHOR OF "THE PROTOPLAST."

"Constantinople is a City of Mosques and Palaces, of Barracks and of Novels."

London:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1873.
Mrs. Scott-Stevenson, Cyprus 1881
(wife of Captain Scott-Stevenson)
Caroline, the Princess of Wales during her travels (1814 - 1820) bought female slaves and liberated them...
Edith Payne and Isabel Armstrong in Katerini in 1892: the Vale of Tempe), Mount Olympus, Larissa, Meteora, Patra, Corinth, Sounio, Nafplio, Chalkis, et. (Isabel Armstrong 1893)
Fanny Janet Sandison Blunt (1878), 50 years residency in Ottoman territories, (1848-1899), informs us that Lady Stratford visited Mount Athos during the Crimean War, but not disguised as a man.
First Group: royalty, princesses, women of the aristocracy…

Princess Caroline (future Queen of Wales)  
*And her adopted daughter Celine from Chios  
*(Countess of Stephano)*

Emily A. Beaufort (later Viscountess Strangford)

Dora d’Istria
2nd Group: women of the middle class, authors, artists, governesses, feminists, explorers, permanent residents, adventuresses, and “superficial tourists” ...

English author Miss Julia Pardoe (1837)

English artist Mary Walker (1884)

From New York, Sarah Rogers Haight, 1836, 1840

English Governess Emmeline Lott (1866)
3d group thousands of women volunteers, nurses, missionaries, educators, philanthropists …

Florence Nightingale (1855), (left); American missionary Sarah Emily York (1853), formerly Miss S.E. Waldo (middle)

Mary Briscoe Baldwin, American missionary in Crete 1866

Mary Seacole, volunteer (not chosen by Nightingale) Crimean War

Frances M. Taylor, lady volunteer, Crimean War
WAR TOURISTS – WAR TOURISM

Wealthy travellers went to the Crimea (1853-1856) to observe the battles from a safe distance......

[The reality show of the time !!]

Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War (1853-1856) with lamp, in her routine rounds to the soldiers every night

Hailed as the founder of professional nursing
“I was associated with many of the poor creatures who, unhappily, as the most respectable and unburdened, were allowed to accompany the army to Turkey; and they were suffering, uncared for, and in some cases dissolute. Self-respect was lost; and the women were a burden, a disgrace to the army, instead of being as they should have been, useful items in their camp machinery” (Marianne Young, 1855: 60).
Military Wives:
the humiliating position of the English soldier’s wife (Marianne Young, 1855)

“I cannot help thinking that the English soldier’s wife is one of those miserable mistakes in our social system, by which we are apt to make people bad, and then severely punish them for being so, by measures only calculated to make them worse”

(Marianne Young, 1855: 126).
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1856.
Lady Alicia Blackwood (1857)
NARRATIVE
of personal
experiences &
impressions
during a residence
on the
Bosphorus
throughout
the
CRIMEAN
WAR
by
LADY ALICIA BLACKWOOD

LONDON
HATCHARD, PICCADILLY,
1881
EASTERN HOSPITALS

ENGLISH NURSES:

HOSPITALS OF KOUALLI AND SQUALI:

IN THE

TWELVE MONTHS' EXPERIENCE

OF

A LADY VOLUNTEER.

BY

MRS. YOUNG.

OUR CAMP IN TURKEY,

THE WAY TO IT

THE CRIMEAN WAR

During A Residence Throughout

Boosphorus

Lady Alice Blackwood

Metternich, 1856, Accidentally.

(25)
Soeurs de Charite (Sisters of Charity), “the only doctors for a large number of poor” in Turkey (Taylor, 1856 v.1: 320)

- Hospitals
- Pharmacies
- Ambulances
- Schools
- Orphan’s Dormitory-Orphanages
- Boarding school for girls
- School for the refugee children of the Kertch families

“They serve six or more MILITARY HOSPITALS in Constantinople... and when cholera broke out in Varna many were sent out” (Taylor, 1856 v.1: 322).
- Great Barrack Hospital 4,000 sick and wounded.
- General Hospital with 1,000 patients
- The stables building converted into a temporary hospital (no number provided)
- Two large hulks on the Bosphorus filled with patients (no number given here).
- Five miles away, at Kulalee hospital, there were 800 patients and preparations were being made to receive another 1,500 more soldiers.
- Palace Haida Pasha, converted into a hospital exclusively for the officers which had only orderlies for nurses, as “the officers were beyond Miss Nightingale’s range, whose special mission was to the common soldier” [no number given]
- Naval hospital in Therapia [no number given]

An estimate of some 8,000 soldiers or so sick and wounded in the hospitals...
- “Six thousand brave British soldiers were buried there after the war” (1881: 49).
“The men must be attended to before the women...”

"The destitute condition of women frightful to behold”

“The poor infants, for the most part, had died, and no wonder for when the parents could scarcely live, how could these tender little creatures survive?”

**Mass Grave with 6,000 soldiers in 1856**
Fanny M. Taylor (1856), a *lady volunteer* in British Hospitals of Koulali and Scutari

The Barrack Hospital, Scutari: 1,500 patients per 3 women (two lady volunteers and one nurse).

The General Hospital, Scutari: about a mile from the Barrack Hospital (*same hopelessness and suffering*)

“The immensity and apparent hopelessness was oppressive beyond description. *All that was done for relief seemed but a drop in the ocean.* Day succeeded day with little variation, and suffering and agony went on and on” (Taylor, 1856 v.1: 86).
The female accounts refer to the Significant battles in the Crimean War: In Scutari, “six thousand brave British soldiers were buried there after the war” (Alicia Blackwood, 1857).

- **Battle of the Alma** (20 September 1854), the first battle.
- **Siege of Sevastopol** (25 September 1854 to 8 September 1855),
- **Battle of Balaclava** (25 October 1854)
- **Battle of Inkerman** (5 Nov. 1854)
- **Battle of Eupatoria** (17 February 1855), a town in the Crimea occupied by the Turks.
- A few months later, from the **Sea of Azov**, during a six month period (25 May 1855 to 22 November 1855), British and French war ships attacked Russian ports, and repeatedly bombarded the towns.
- etc.
The English soldier’s wife and the “demoralizing barrack system”

“... our great camp of Scutari, if he had seen these poor creatures [soldiers’ wives] as I did;—if he had seen them, fevered under a burning sun at Constantinople, left at Gallipoli under promise of a speedy return to their native land, and remaining for months in Turkish houses, swarming with rats and vermin—if he had seen them as they fell with sickness at Varna, terror-stricken and helpless; ... the barrack-system must either wholly demoralize the purest-minded woman or crush her beneath a fearful sense of its shame and horror (Young, 1855:61-62)
“The French were infinitely our superiors”
(Young, 1855: 108),

- Engineers, Ambulances, Canteens and Cantinieres
- Artillery carts appeared to occupy every slope
- More **considerate to the needs of the soldier:**
- established a **free post-office** for soldiers
- and a **coffee mill** for all the French camps
- produced self-respect, “great nationality” (patriotism), along with unity - sympathy among soldiers and officers
- When they set up **camps**, immediately built **roads** to them, **dug wells**, and set up **sign-posts**
- Numerous **French hospitals**: fully staffed (Sisters of Charity) and clean with sufficient medical supplies

“Whenever French armies for the last 200 years have gone out to battle, they also take band of Soeurs de la Charite”.

(Taylor, 1856 v.1: 317)
French “Administration”

- They had “Attendants” for the sick, “a valuable class” carefully selected for the work, and regularly trained, well educated ...
- Tailors, carpenters, shoemakers, and artisans of all sorts.

What was the great secret? What made the French soldiers superior to the English? The answer EDUCATION:

“The much better materiel of which the army is composed, and the self-respect which is always supported by the character of discipline”

(Young, 1855: 151).
“To have been a soldier, or a soldier’s wife, is tacitly to introduce the idea, that an individual has contracted such a mass of disreputable habits, that to place him or her in positions where sobriety, honesty, or respectability is concerned, is quite out of the question. The English soldier fights, while in the army, with all the bravery of the Briton, but it is as a machine. He is governed by force, and in habits and feelings is often little better that a mere animal”
The wife of the French soldier socially elevated and respected

A French cantinière attached to a Zouave regiment during the Crimean War, 1855 - photo by Roger Fenton

Crimean War (French cantiniere, photo: Brown University)
“They become the care of the whole regiment; exposure and fatigue are spared them in every possible way, and their health and privacy thoroughly regarded.” (Young, 1855: 157)

Cantinières: women attached to military regiments (photo: during the Crimean War by Roger Fenton 1855)
British officers of the Light Division (photo taken during the Crimean War by Roger Fenton.)

French Cantinière
“Her husband must be a man in the same company, in which she takes rank as a corporal, and he becomes responsible for the conduct of his wife. Should she commit acts worthy of Algiers, the husband suffers with her. The soldier must accompany his wife to the scene of her punishment, and be identified with her. So that, on one hand, the man has an object in maintain a sense of duty and propriety of his wife; and the wife, on the other hand, may be withheld from evil, by the knowledge that its punishment will involve her husband”

(Young, 1855: 155-156).
Concluding remarks

- “... it is not the system to allow or encourage them to be useful in an hospital.” (Young, 1855)
- “Deep-rooted prejudices” (Blackwood, 1857; 1881)

   “The War Office” did not encourage women’s hospital participation as they had male orderlies ...

Young proposes the English follow the French system called “ADMINISTRATION ...
“If every regiment had taken this view, and judiciously acted on it, as soon as they left England, employing the women in hospitals, under the control of the medical officers, as in training-schools, till the Forces left Varna for the Crimea, and then storing them [the women], as it were, under proper superintendence, at Scutari, Gallipoli, Therapia, or the Dardanelles, until their services were again required, what immense good might have been done! What enormous sums saved! (Young, 1855: 219).
Women’s initiatives-contributions:

*Hospital Management* !!

The female accounts clearly reveal that women played key roles in social care and public health.

They showed *initiative* and *innovation* in managing and *resolving problems* created by the miserable conditions in the hospitals of the **British Army in Scutari, across from Constantinople, and in the Crimean warzone.**

Other than nursing the soldiers and the soldiers’ wives, infants, and widows they established:

- A Women’s Hospital, Scutari, “Ladies Wards”
- “a little school” and a “Sunday School” for the children
- Lending library, reading room with newspapers, night schools and lecture series for the soldiers so as to keep them busy, “out of trouble, and away from pubs and alcohol” !!
Women’s initiatives-contributions:

- Sterilization: disobeying military rules and regulations, setting up “ovens” in hospital wards and corridors to boil water for soldiers...
- Diet Kitchens in all military hospitals

Sisters of Charity, Missionaries, educators, philanthropists:

- Boarding schools for girls; schools for girls; schools for boys,
- Orphanages: hundreds of children form different nations
- Schools for orphans
THANK YOU

Marie Anne de Bovet, daughter of General de Bovet