



Dress, Department, Room and Board: Female American Travelers in Nineteenth-Century Palestine

Kıyafet, Davranış, Oda ve Kurul: 19. Yüzyıl Filistin 'inde Amerikalı Kadın Seyyahlar

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“We live like princes.”—Emily Severance, 1867¹

Abstract

This essay examines how American women traveled through Palestine in the nineteenth century. Travel to the "Holy Land" was popular throughout the nineteenth century. As the century wore on, more and more women began traveling abroad. Some of those, when they returned home, wrote and published their travelogues. Travel narrative historiography is lacking the view of American women travelers to Palestine. This essay begins the process of filling in that void.

Keywords: *Palestine - Nineteenth century - Travel - American - Women - Arabs Muslims - Mosque of Omar Ramadan - Marion - Harland - Jaffa – Jerusalem*

Özet

Bu makale Ameriakan kadınlarının 19. yüzyılda Filistin'e nasıl seyahat ettiklerini incelemektedir. "Kutsal topraklar"a seyahat 19. yüzyılda yaygındı. Yüzyıl ilerledikçe daha ço k kadın yurtdışına çıkmaya başladı. Onlardan bazıları, yurda döndüğünde, seyahat notlarını kaleme alıp yayımlamışlardır. Seyahat notları tarihyazımı, Filistin'e giden Amerikan kadın seyyahlar konusunda eksiktir. Bu makale bu boşluğu doldurmak için bir başlangıçtır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Filistin, 19. Yüzyıl, Seyahat, Amerikan, Kadınlar, Arap Müslümanlar, Ömer Ramazan Camii, Marion, Harland, Yafa, Kudüs*

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¹ Emily A. Severance, *Journal Letters of Emily A. Severance*, “Quaker City,” 1867 (Cleveland: Gates Press, 1868), 158.

Throughout the nineteenth century, more and more Americans traveled abroad. One popular destination was Palestine. Fifty-two American women ventured to Palestine in the nineteenth century, wrote about their adventures and published their travelogues. Traveling was an adventure and at times a primitive experience. Nearly all of the women in this study wrote about how they dressed, how they lived, and how they ate while abroad, which suggests that dress, deportment, room and board were important topics for these travelers.

As these women traveled to unfamiliar areas, they sought to define their domestic spaces possibly as a way of feeling the routine or the conventional while traveling in the unknown and foreign. In addition, maintaining Victorian standards might have been a way to ensure a separation between the American women and native peoples. To “go native” or to dress in the more accustomed Victorian traditionalism of the day was a question that nearly all of these women probably did not consciously grapple with during their ventures abroad, nevertheless many of these travelers readily shared how they dressed, what they ate, and how they traveled, thus suggesting these were important to the women on my study. A few donned the costume of Arab women.

Judy Mabro notes that many British travelers “for various reasons . . . adopted a disguise on their journey, and played at being Arabs.”² Moreover, Dianne Sachko Macleod notes that many British women travelers “adopted the Turkish female style of dress” while traveling through the Middle East.³ Macleod argues, however, that British women tended to continue to wear some elements of the Turkish woman’s attire (such as the pants) upon returning to England and they did so as “a gesture of independence.” Did any of the women in this study who donned Arab costumes continue to wear them once they returned to the United States? This will be left for future examination.

Gayle Fischer notes that western travelers donned Arab outfits while in the Middle East in order to bring them closer to biblical times.⁴ Fischer’s argument tends to fit well with those espoused by Schriber, for example, who argues that travelers to the Middle East were most interested in experiencing the regions biblical past rather than the social, cultural, or political present.⁵ Thus, Fischer’s thesis makes sense if travelers did indeed want to experience Palestine’s biblical past. Also, many travelers believed that what Arabs wore in nineteenth-century Palestine was what people in Palestine wore in Jesus’s time. Thus, travelers would don Arab costumes in order to feel closer to those biblical times.

² Judy Mabro, *Veiled Half-Truths, Western Travelers Perceptions of Middle Eastern Women* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), 98.

³ Dianne Sachko Macleod. “Cross-cultural Cross-dressing: Class, Gender, and Modernist Sexual Identity,” in Julie F. Codell and Dianne Sachko Macleod (eds.), *Orientalism Transposed, the Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Hants, England: Ashgate, 1998), 64.

⁴Gayle V. Fischer, “‘Pantalets’ and ‘Turkish Trowsers’: Designing Freedom in Mid-Nineteenth-Century United States,” *Feminist Studies* 23:1 (Summer 1997), 123-124.

⁵ Mary Suzanne Schriber, *Writing Home. American Women Abroad, 1830-1920* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 67.

Did the American women in this study who donned the outfits of Arab women do so in order to “play Arab,” as Mabro suggests or were there other reasons, such as to “stretch the boundaries of gender and to distance themselves from the constricting norms” of nineteenth century society, as Macleod argues, or maybe it was to bring them closer to God, as Fischer argues?⁶ The writings of American women tend to support none of these explanations. Instead, it appears that American women dressed as Arabs in order to gain access to religious places that they otherwise would have been prohibited from seeing if they were dressed as and acted like Americans.

For those who decided to wear the Victorian outfit of the day, did they use their Western dress as a sort of symbol? As Schriber notes, once American women began traveling in greater numbers, various sub-industries developed around traveling. One such sub-industry was the publication of etiquette books “advising women on such matters as dress, packing, and behavior while abroad.”⁷ *Etiquette for Ladies: a Manual of the Most Approved Rules of Conduct in Polished Society, for Married and Unmarried Ladies, compiled from the Latest Authorities by a Lady of New York*, was published in 1843. The book notes that how a “lady” dressed was an indication of her position in society, her “respect” for society, and how she regarded herself. “Every lady is entitled to follow her own taste as to dress,” the book notes, “provided she dress suitably –that is, according to her age, circumstances, and station in society.”⁸ Similarly in 1848, an “American Lady” noted in *True Politeness: A Hand Book of Etiquette for Ladies* that “singularity of dress and ostentatious ornament are by no means characteristic of a lady, but their adoption proves a *prima facie* case against the wearer of being a *nouveau riche* striving after notoriety.”⁹

Etiquette books published later in the century would be more clear on specifically how a “lady” should dress and carry herself while abroad. For example in 1853, Eliza Leslie, in *The Behaviour Book: a Manual for Ladies*, noted the specific clothes that “proper” American women should bring with them when traveling abroad to include traveling dresses of merino or alpaca, white kid gloves, a large cape, and a shawl. Leslie even instructs her readers to “By all means wear a white collar.”¹⁰

In 1873, Florence Hartley wrote an etiquette book that not only embraced the ideas articulated by Leslie, but added the need for American women to wear veils while abroad. “The veil,” wrote Hartley, “will allow one half to fall over the face, while the other half falls back, covering the bonnet, and protecting it from dust.”¹¹ One reason why the “proper” dress was so important to these authors (and their readers) was that it was connected to honor and honor was public in nineteenth-century America. As Hartley suggests:

⁶ Macleod. “Cross-cultural Cross Dressing,” 64.

⁷ Schriber, *Writing Home*, 25.

⁸ *Etiquette for Ladies* (Philadelphia: J & J.L. Gihon, 1843), 30-31.

⁹ *True Politeness: a Hand-Book of Etiquette for Ladies* (Philadelphia: G.S. Appleton, 1848), 18.

¹⁰ Eliza Leslie, *The Behaviour Book: A Manual for Ladies* (Philadelphia: W.P. Hazard, 1853), 94-95.

¹¹ Florence Hartley, *The Ladies’ Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness: Complete Handbook for the Use of the Lady in Polite Society* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1873), 31.

She will be more respected with a single wardrobe, if it is known either that she is dependent upon her own exertions for support, or is saving a husband or father from unnecessary outlay, than if she wore the most costly fabrics, and by doing so incurred debt or burdened her relatives with heavy, unwarrantable expense.¹²

Certainly, there is also an element of economic frugality in Hartley's statement. She also told her reading audience that proper clothes could win them respect: "A quiet, unpretending dress and dignified demeanor, will insure for a lady respect."¹³ Near the end of the century, travel books such as *The Woman's Book* (1884) gave explicit lists to prospective women travelers on the types, colors, and construction of clothes to take for trips abroad.¹⁴ That etiquette book even suggested that women should not travel unescorted by a male chaperone, which the book calls "her natural protector:"

To the indolent, the timid, and the inexperienced among women there is something extremely terrifying in the thought of lonely wanderings, unaccompanied by some man to save trouble and bear the blame of mishaps; but there is, in reality, nothing to prevent a woman from seeing every civilized, and even semi-civilized, country in the world without other protection than her own modesty and good sense.¹⁵

In other words, if a woman had to travel without the protection and security of a male chaperone, she could successfully navigate through the world if she followed certain rules. Some of those rules for American women travelers seemed to revolve around "proper" attire. Not only were American etiquette authors interested in American women maintaining their social and gender roles while abroad, so too were the women travelers themselves. "Women travelers on the road," writes Birgitta Maria Ingemanson, "were far more concerned with maintaining a correctly feminine appearance, whatever the difficulties of doing so."¹⁶

How these women dressed and why they dressed the way they did is the first subject of this chapter. Secondly, did these travelers rely on local facilities and abilities regarding the preparation of their meals, in establishing a place to spend the night, or in acting as guides? Or, did they bring with them maids, butlers, chefs, and personal assistants from the United States and Europe? If they brought a large entourage with them, what does that say about conventional American society? Brigitte Georgi-Findlay notes that American women who traveled to the American West typically wrote about "accommodations, food, and fellow travelers."¹⁷ Birgitta

¹² Ibid., 22.

¹³ Ibid., 36.

¹⁴ *The Woman's Book* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1894), 374-375.

¹⁵ Ibid., 382.

¹⁶ Birgitta Maria Ingemanson, "Under Cover: The Paradox of Victorian Women's Travel Costume," in Bonnie Frederick and Susan H. McLeod (eds.), *Women and the Journey, the Female Travel Experience* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1993), 7.

¹⁷ Brigitte Georgi-Findlay, *The Frontiers of Women's Writing, Women's Narratives and the Rhetoric of Westward Expansion* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 177.

Maria Ingemanson notes that women tended to travel abroad in order to travel, not for any specific goal or purpose. Unlike men, women “tended rather to concentrate on the process of the thing: they traveled to travel, not merely to arrive.”¹⁸ If women were most interested in the travel experience itself, more so than the achievement of a goal, then it should not be surprising to find examples of women travelers writing extensively on how they traveled, what they wore, and what they ate. It is unclear if this preoccupation with how they traveled, what they wore, and what they ate was a result of etiquette books or if etiquette books reflected aspects of travel that interested or concerned nineteenth-century American women.

Of the fifty-one women in this study, only twelve addressed how they dressed while traveling through Palestine. Of those twelve, only three dabbled, in various respects, in donning a native costume. Elizabeth Cabot Kirkland was first in this study to maybe attempt to fit in by dressing like others around her. In 1832 she traveled around the world, stopping in Palestine with her husband who had recently retired from the presidency of Harvard University for health reasons. While she wore her “Frank dress,” she also wore a turban on her head and what she called “a white sheet” enveloped her body, covering “a considerable part of” her face, and which she fastened around her waist. She wore yellow “Turkish boots” and rode her horse astride –as opposed to sidesaddle.¹⁹

Kirkland’s choice of clothing and how she rode her horse were very unusual for several reasons. First, she did not completely slip past the bonds of the restrictive Victorian dress, she merely donned another layer to give the impression that she had “gone native,” all the while her Victorianism was firmly entrenched by the wearing of her Western dress underneath the Arab veneer.

Secondly, she did not ride sidesaddle. Kirkland was the only woman in this study to note that she did not ride her horse in the traditional, proper manner for a Victorian lady. It would have been difficult to ride astride while wearing a floor-length dress. Does this suggest that Kirkland was trying to show her independence or at least her willingness to try new things? A conclusion is difficult to make because of the scant records.

Five personal guards, three servants, and six soldiers escorted Kirkland and her husband through Palestine. In other words, while Kirkland may have appeared to look like every other Palestinian woman, the fact that she had such a large detachment at her beck and call would tend to suggest Kirkland’s unwillingness to completely leave her insulated, isolated Victorian world of propriety. In fact, Kirkland noted that because of the size and scope of their detachment, “a number of persons joined our train on the road.”²⁰

Finally, Kirkland noted that the color of her “Turkish boot” was yellow. She never said how or why she ended up wearing yellow boots. Dianne Sachko Macleod notes that some British travelers believed that yellow was an important color for women’s shoes: “Turkish women placed

¹⁸ Ingemanson, “Under Cover,” 16.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Kirkland. “Letters by Mrs. John T. Kirkland,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1905. Volume 19, December, 497.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

a pair of yellow slippers outside the entrance to the harem when they wanted to refuse sex.”²¹ Kirkland did not make any observations that she was aware of this bit of ethnography.

Some thought they could pass as Arabs. After forty days in the desert, traveling from Cairo to Jerusalem, Jane Eames noted that she was so tanned that “in an Egyptian dress I might pass for an Egyptian woman.”²² Yet, she never did attempt to dress like an Egyptian, or even a Palestinian, woman. On the other hand, Sarah Barclay Johnson not only donned the costume of Palestinian women, but this Protestant daughter of two Protestant missionaries attempted to pass as a Muslim woman. Johnson had wanted to visit the Mosque of Omar, but between 1851 and 1857 when she was in Palestine Turkish officials prohibited Westerners from entering the mosque.

In 1855, Jane Eames told her readers about the propensity of Muslim boys to throw stones at Christian travelers who wondered too close to the Mosque of Omar. One member of her party, “without knowing where he was” was walking towards the Mosque when “he was instantly assailed by boys who threw stones at him.” Eames believed that Muslims did not want Christians to enter the Mosque because the Muslims believed that whatever was prayed for in the Mosque would come true and Muslims were afraid that Christians would pray to God the rid the world of Muslims.²³

“I was much surprised as delighted today in receiving a polite invitation,” wrote Johnson, “from some of my Turkish friends, to assume their disguising mantle, and accompany them to the Mosque of Omar.”²⁴ Mary Russell discovered that it was not unusual for foreigners to help British women travelers witness their “secret” religious or cultural events.²⁵

Johnson donned “full silk trousers,” a long robe, an embroidered vest, “large yellow morocco boots, and over them slippers of the same material, turned up at the toes like a skate.” On her head she wore a red fez, wrapped in a turban with a fringe of gold balls. “Over my whole person a white sheet was thrown,” described Johnson, “which required quite as much attention as the slippers.” She also wore a veil that “though thick, was fortunately of such a texture that I could dimly see those around me, though my own features could not be distinguished,” she recalled.²⁶ She labeled the outfit both curious and unmanageable. Nevertheless, she was surprised at the transformation:

²¹ Macleod, “Cross-Cultural Cross-dressing,” 72.

²² Jane Anthony Eames, *Another Budget, or Things Which I Saw in the East*, Second edition (Boston: Ticknor and fields, 1855), 319.

²³ *Ibid.*, 323-324.

²⁴ Sarah Barclay Johnson, *Hadji in Syria, or, Three Years in Jerusalem* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 166. A reprint of the edition published by J. Challen, Philadelphia [nd].

²⁵ Mary Russell, *The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt, Women Travellers and their World* (London: Collins, 1986), 218.

²⁶ Johnson, *Hadji in Syria*, 167, 168.

Ten minutes before, in my simply American dress, and now rigged out so perfectly a la Turk, that my own mother would not have recognised me! My friends were greatly amused and delighted.²⁷

While Johnson looked like a Palestinian Muslim woman, she needed to learn a few things about acting like a Palestinian Muslim woman before her Turkish friends would take her to the Mosque of Omar. First, she had to learn to walk without losing her slippers or stepping on her robes. “The peculiar shuffling gait of oriental women must be learned . . . and great was the mirth I excited at every attempt to hobble across the room, which the enormous size of the slippers made it almost impossible to do,” wrote Johnson.²⁸ Next, her Turkish friends told Johnson not to utter a word for fear that the Turkish guards in and around the mosque would find them out. “To give the greater force to this injunction,” wrote Johnson, “they placed their forefingers on their mouths, and remained mute for some moments themselves, thus impressing it by example as well as precept.”²⁹

Johnson found it most difficult to walk up or down steps without losing her slippers, which resulted in the general amusement of her Turkish friends. Nevertheless, she made it by one group of guards and thought to herself “the lordly Turk was for once outwitted by the despised ‘Infidel!’”³⁰ In fact, Johnson seemed to be rather impressed with herself for being able to “trick” the second set of guards into letting her enter the mosque:

I congratulated myself that they too were quite unconscious of the concealment of the ‘infidel dog’ beneath the folds of one of those white sheets, else I had met with perhaps worse treatment than that awarded the English doctor a short time before.³¹

Johnson’s descriptions of what she saw inside of the Mosque of Omar as well as the al-Aqsa mosque was not only the first account by an American woman, but possibly the first depiction by any Westerner in the nineteenth century. Both mosques are located in an area known as Mount Moriah, or the Temple Mount. After descending a wide flight of stairs and passing through a “Saracenic portal,” she reached a marble-paved platform.

From the platform she gazed upon the Mosque of Omar. The fifty-six windows that reflected every color of the rainbow onto “variously colored porcelain . . . covered in intricate patterns,” and the cypress trees that swayed in the breeze seemed like a fairy land and she “was reminded at every step of the marvelous stories of the ‘Arabian Nights’ Entertainments.”³²

Upon preparing to enter the mosque, Johnson removed her slippers, and gave them “in charge to an attendant slave.” She told her readers how the removing of one’s shoes before

²⁷ Ibid., 166-167.

²⁸ Ibid., 167.

²⁹ Ibid., 168.

³⁰ Ibid., 169.

³¹ Ibid., 169-170. Here Johnson was referring to a story she heard about an English traveler mistakenly walking near the mosque that resulted in Muslim boys throwing stones at him.

³² Ibid., 171.

entering the chamber was a practice that preceded Islam. “Jewish priests” wrote Johnson, would remove their shoes prior to entering a temple because it was “a direct command from Jehovah.”³³ Johnson then heard footsteps behind her, she became scared, turned south, and headed towards the al-Aqsa mosque.

Unlike the multi-windowed, gold-lined dome of the Mosque of Omar, Johnson found the al-Aqsa mosque rather plain. “The exterior presents very much the appearance of a barn, with a dome at one end, and a row of pillars and arches at the other,” reported Johnson.³⁴ Inside the mosque, Johnson tried to remove her veil “to enjoy the luxury of fresh air” but her friends prevented her from doing so for fear of being discovered. Johnson described the inside of the mosque as “a jumbled composition of arabesque and gilding, windows of stained glass and wicker-work, and semicircular arches.” She noted that the floor was tiled in mosaics and in one corner sat an “elaborately carved” pulpit that she believed was made of bronze.³⁵

One of her more interesting observations, however, was not about the building’s architecture or decoration. “I noticed that the worshipping-place of the men was covered with carpeting,” observed Johnson, “while that of the women was spread with tattered matting!” Johnson attributed this disparity to the idea held by Muslim men that women were “no better than brutes.”³⁶ With that observation, Johnson left the mosque and headed to the “world-renowned” Dome of the Rock, which she called “a spot of still deeper interest” than visiting the al-Aqsa mosque or any other building in the Temple Mount area.³⁷

Before being allowed to enter the mosque, armed guards questioned Johnson and her Turkish lady friends because, according to Johnson, it was “an unusual thing for females to pollute with their presence so holy a place.”³⁸ The guards gave each lady a candle, which they lit, and then descended a flight of stairs into the mosque. At the bottom of the staircase was, according to Johnson, “a colossal tongue, sculptured in alto relievo on the rock” which all Muslims would kiss as they passed it. The floor of the mosque was tiled in marble, although if struck would produce an empty sound, indicating that it was hollow. Yet Johnson would not discuss the significance of this hollow place or other “relics” of the mosque because, as she put it, they were “so very puerile,” or childish.³⁹ However, Johnson may have held some respect or admiration for the mosque when she said that she decided to leave “the hallowed ground” as the mosque was filling up with the devout and faithful. Or, was she simply fearful of being discovered? Maybe both.

In another room, Johnson noted a spot marking the place where Solomon stood as he oversaw the erection of the Temple. She also noted the children playing on the floor in this room:

³³ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 174, 175.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 175, 176.

Frolicking upon its marble floor were scores of laughing children. Scattered around are many light and fantastic templets [sic], but none so beautiful as that appropriated by these children as their playhouse. What a contrast between this fairy scene and the dark filthy archways through which we now groped our way returning home!⁴⁰

Johnson walked home in her Arabic dress. When she arrived, with her Turkish lady friends, one of the servants greeted her in Arabic. "I was greatly amused," wrote Johnson, "and determined to enjoy the joke, and retain my incognito as long as possible." Within a few minutes of sipping coffee one of the servants recognized Johnson.⁴¹ This was not, however, the only time that Johnson dressed herself in Arabic garb to gain access to something that was previously denied to her due to her religion or nationality.

During Ramadan, one her Palestinian male friends who was either Jewish or Christian (as Johnson put it one "who rejoices in the name of the great Lawgiver of Israel" thus unclear if she was referring to Moses or Jesus) asked if she would like to enter the Tomb of David. She donned a new costume for this outing that included "a robe and trousers of the finest Damascus silk, a girdle of cashmere, and tunic of light blue, embroidered in silver flowers." She noted that her hands did not need to be dyed in henna as they still retained the orange-colored designs from when her hands were dyed before entering the Mosque of Omar and the Dome of the Rock. Next, she wrapped her body in a sheet, put on a pair of slippers and finally a veil.⁴² The lady who helped dress Johnson, named Turfendah, as well as her slave, accompanied Johnson.

Johnson noted that a small domed building with a minaret on top surmounted the tomb. Not just anyone, according to Johnson, could pass through the iron double doors, however. She noted that one "old Derwish" laid on the cold, marble floor and prayed to the Tomb, in front of the iron bars "for it is a rare thing that even a Mussulman ecclesiastic can gain admittance," Johnson wrote. She noted that she was allowed to gain entrance because Turfendah was friends with the family who held the keys to the tomb's door. "Our slave was dispatched for the key, which she had no difficulty in obtaining, on the plea that her mistress wished to pray on the holy spot," according to Johnson.⁴³

Johnson did not immediately enter the Tomb of David. Instead, when the slave returned with the keys, the women were asked to come upstairs to visit the harem of the wife of man who was the custodian of the tomb. Nervously, Johnson accepted. "The room is small in dimensions, but gorgeously furnished by the Sultan," reported Johnson, "who renews the tapestry every few years."⁴⁴ Later on, Johnson and her friends entered the Tomb of David. She described it as:

⁴⁰ Ibid., 176-177.

⁴¹ Ibid., 177.

⁴² Ibid., 179.

⁴³ Ibid., 181, 182.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 182.

an immense sarcophagus of stone, covered with greenish satin tapestry embroidered with gold. To this a piece of black velvet is attached, with inscriptions from the Koran. A satin canopy of red, green, blue, and yellow stripes hangs over the tomb, and tapestry of velvet richly embroidered in silver covers a door in one end of the room, leading to a cave immediately underneath. Silver candlesticks and golden vessels containing rose water stand in different parts of the room, and a lamp hangs in the window, which is kept constantly burning, and whose wick, though saturated with oil, and I dare say a most nauseous dose, my companion eagerly swallowed, muttering a prayer with the usual attitudes of great humility. After prostrating herself many times, she raised the covering of the tomb and rapturously kissed it. The ceiling is vaulted, the walls covered with blue porcelain in floral figures, while the floor is of highly polished marble of various colors.⁴⁵

After her visit in Arab costume to the Tomb of David, Johnson returned to her home, not only happy to have succeeded in fooling all of the Muslim guards and other people she came across into thinking she was indeed a Muslim herself, but even more happy to get out of her “awkward costume.”⁴⁶ Of course, it is interesting that she would dress like an Arab woman if either a Jewish or Christian person accompanied her. Maybe her Arab costume would have best concealed her nationality than if she dressed in traditional Jewish or Christian garb.

Of all of the fifty-one travelers, only these three dealt with—in various degrees—wearing Arab women’s clothing. Jane Eames thought she could have pulled it off, if she ever wanted to, due to her sun-baked complexion after forty days in the desert. Yet she never tried. Susan Kirkland wore a veil and other Palestinian accoutrements, yet she wore her “Frank” dress underneath her “Oriental” attire, maybe as a way to remain truly Western in her department. Maybe she did not want to appear to be too Western, nor did she want to go completely “native” in her dress, hence her hybrid dress of part Western and part “Oriental”? Kirkland never wrote about the reasons for why she wore what she did, nor do any of her actions while in Palestine suggest that she would have gained anything by dressing, in part, like a Muslim woman. The evidence is too sketchy for anything but conjecture.

Only Sarah Johnson Barclay, the daughter of two American Protestant missionaries, donned the garb of an Arab woman. She not only dressed in the costume of a Palestinian lady, but she did so in order to gain access into religious areas that were otherwise off limits to non-Muslims. Nevertheless, the actions or thoughts of these three women were the exception, not the norm. It should not be surprising that more Victorian women did not cross-culturally dress while in Palestine. According to Ingemanson, “To wear trousers, even in the jungle of Africa or the mountains of Tibet, was to identify oneself as an advocate of female emancipation . . . Yet for fear

⁴⁵ Ibid., 182-183.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 183.

of demeaning their social status Victorian women travelers were unwilling to neglect the strict dress code to which they were accustomed at home.”⁴⁷

The majority of American lady travelers did not tell their reading audience what they wore when traveling. In fact, only nine did so. Was there such a thing as the “proper” clothing to wear while traveling abroad? According to Marie Ballard Holyoke the answer was yes. “Start with everything new,” believed Holyoke, to include “a becoming traveling dress of good material, a handsome black silk or wool dress for dinners, the ship concert, and dress occasions.” She also believed the prepared lady-traveler would bring plenty of handkerchiefs, a jacket, a “traveling cloak or ulster,” a bonnet, a shawl, and two veils.⁴⁸ Holyoke herself wore a black, floor-length, neck-high dress with sleeves that came to her wrists. She wore a black bonnet secured to her head by a large, satin-looking bow tied under her chin, with an umbrella hanging from her right arm. Looking at the group portrait, the only way that the readers could determine that it was taken in Palestine was because the caption said so. It certainly was not because of the scenery or how the party members were dressed.⁴⁹ All of the women in her 1893 party dressed in a similar fashion. Likewise, the men donned suits with ties and sported hats. Some wore bowler hats, while a few wore pith helmets. Even the children were dressed as miniature adults.

Yet, this was how many of the American women travelers dressed while in Palestine. Harriet Livermore, for example, sought to dress in the “plainness and neatness of the Quakers.”⁵⁰ Marion Harland wore a black, floor-length, long-sleeved black dress and even observed tea time while in Palestine. Unlike her more unconventional colleague Mrs. Susan Kirkland, Harland rode side-saddle, and noted that she did so like a “proper” American lady.⁵¹

Similarly, Kate Kraft wore her traditional black dress with a starched, white collar and kept her hair wound tight in a bun on top of her head. Her sister dressed identically.⁵² Mrs. Henrietta, a German lady who joined the Kraft caravan through parts of Palestine was dressed a bit more colorfully than Kate Kraft or her sister. Henrietta wore “a tight-fitting velvet suit, a little hat trimmed with cherry, with a white turban wound around, and high-buttoned Louis XVth boots.”⁵³

In every case when the women in this study identified some of what they considered essential travel attire for an American woman, the item of clothing could be found on the list of proper attire offered by Maria Ballard Holyoke, thus suggesting that there may have been a common idea on what was considered proper attire for an American woman traveling abroad in

⁴⁷ Ingemanson, “Under Cover,” 7.

⁴⁸ Maria Ballard Holyoke, *Golden Memories of Old World Lands, or, What I Saw in Europe, Egypt, Palestine, and Greece* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1893), 24.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, see picture entitled “Part of our Palestine Party,” 489.

⁵⁰ S.T. Harriet, *Harriet Livermore, The ‘Pilgrim Stranger’* (Hartford, CT: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1884), 66.

⁵¹ Marion Harland, *Under the Flag of the Orient* (Philadelphia: Historical Publishing Company, 1897) see photographs entitled “Afternoon Tea,” 75, and “Ready for the March,” 78.

⁵² Kate Kraft, *The Nilometer and the Sacred Soil: a Diary of a Tour Through Egypt, Palestine, and Syria* (New York: Carleton, 1869), 219.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 195.

the nineteenth century. Jane Eames wore her bonnet to offer protection from the rains as well as the sun while traveling through Palestine.⁵⁴ Louise M. Griswold also wore her bonnet, but carried her umbrella and wore a veil to protect herself from the intense heat.⁵⁵ L.L. Adams agreed with Holyoke regarding the necessity to bring an umbrella, veils, and gloves for protection against the sun's rays in Palestine. Yet she also noted that she "rarely used the veil; generally carried the umbrella in the saddle by my side," and never mentioned wearing her white gloves.⁵⁶ On the other hand, Mary Ninde noted that the women in her party usually wore their hats "and ample veils" even though the weather was mild.⁵⁷

It is difficult to determine, with any great assurance, the reasons why these women wore the clothes that they wore. Certainly, in the case of Sarah Barclay Johnson, she donned a Palestinian costume in order to gain access into Muslim holy places—such as the al-Aqsa mosque and the Tomb of David—places that were otherwise officially off limits to non-Muslims. But why did Kirkland wear an Arab woman's costume over her Western attire? She was a rather elderly woman who grew up in nothing but propriety, properness, and Protestantism. Maybe this was her opportunity to break out of that artificial world. Maybe it was for the novelty. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions because she never wrote about the reasons why she decided to appear in Palestinian garb.

Conversely, why did the majority of these women wear traditional, black, Victorian outfits with white gloves, veils on their bonnets, and umbrellas? Was it because that was the proper thing for American women to do? Maybe. Was it because their clothes were a symbol of their status in American society? Possibly. Were the clothes more of a warning, or a shield, to keep the natives' length? Did the black Victorian dress symbolize a civilized, Christianized woman against the backdrop of a pagan, uneducated, backwards, sexually-restrictive society in the minds of these American travelers? Again, it is difficult to come to any firm conclusions based on the scant documentary evidence. However, it was certainly not out of the realm of possibility that the clothes these women chose to wear was indeed a symbol of their position in American society, a symbol of their educated, upper-class, Christianized background, as well as a shield to alert the natives that the women underneath those black, floor-length, long-sleeved, starched white collar Victorian dresses were not to be bothered, molested, or in any way contacted.

The size of the women's entourages might suggest that these women wanted as little contact with the locals as possible, and that their choice of dress did indeed act as a symbol of their affluence and Christian upbringing. Most American women did not travel alone. Harriet Livermore, for example, traveled to Palestine at least five times and she always traveled alone—never even relying on hiring a single guide. Sarah Smith traveled through Palestine with only her husband. Similarly, Cora Agnes Benneson traveled with an unidentified Massachusetts woman. Finally, Lilian Leland "traveled without escort or protection," as the editor of her travel book

⁵⁴ Eames, *Another Budget*, 313.

⁵⁵ Mrs. Stephen M. Griswold, *A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, or, Pleasant Days Being Notes of a Tour Through Europe and the East* (Hartford, CT: Published by the author, 1871), 233.

⁵⁶ L.L. Adams, *A Ride on Horseback Through the Holy Land Written for the Children* (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1874), 10.

⁵⁷ Mary L. Ninde, *We Two Alone in Europe* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Company, 1886), 284.

wrote. Yet she did hire a guide when she went to visit the Mosque of Omar. Otherwise, she did travel alone.⁵⁸ Other American women traveled to Palestine alone, or in the company of another person, yet these were the only four women who did not join or hire an immense entourage upon arriving in Palestine.

Nearly everyone else, however, hired guides and attendants, or “servants,” as the travelers tended called them. Elizabeth Kirkland noted that her “servant” tended the fire and prepared her meals.⁵⁹ Yet in nineteenth-century America, upper and middle class families traditionally hired servants, it was simply part of the American culture thus the fact these women referred to their hired guides as servants should not be terribly surprising. Instead, what is interesting is the extent of the servants hired, or servants brought with them to Palestine.

Jane Eames, for example, hired only local guides, including a personal servant she routinely referred to as “my Arab.”⁶⁰ Her Arab tended her horse while another Arab servant, named Ali, was her cook and baggage handler. Another unnamed Arab took care of the mules while an Arab named Hassan acted as Eames’s chief guide.⁶¹ Yet most Americans never told their reading audience the names of their servants such as Susan Brewer Thomas who only mentioned that her party consisted of an unnamed guide “and attendants, tents, and baggage, and twenty horses and mules.”⁶²

One of the more interesting entourages was the one put together by Sarah Haight who published under the *nome de plume* “A Lady of New York.” Unlike most of her colleagues, Haight brought servants with her from Europe and only hired a few Arabs to tend the pack animals. The most prominent member of Haight’s entourage, according to her, was an Italian man named Mr. Giovanni “who serves in the various capacities of dragoman, janizary, *chef de batallion*, bully, and scarecrow.” He spoke eleven languages and could, according to Haight, cook, wash, shave, dress hair, “smile, cringe, bully, or fight as circumstances may require.”⁶³

Haight also gave an account of his life, which in and of itself was unique. Giovanni was an Italian who was born in Austria and raised in Transylvania. He eventually moved to Russia where he became an officer in the czar’s cavalry. He fought against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans where, according to Haight, he “helped many a turbaned Turk into Paradise before his natural time.” Giovanni carried with him a four-foot “janizary cane” with which he amused himself by playing “‘carte and tierce’ at the heads of the lazy Arabs, in order to keep his military hand from

⁵⁸ Lilian Leland, *Traveling Alone a Woman’s Journey Around the World* (New York: Press of John Polhemus, 1890), 157.

⁵⁹ Kirkland, “Letters of Mrs. John T. Kirkland,” 499.

⁶⁰ Eames, *Another Budget*, 316.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 341.

⁶² Susan Brewer Thomas, *Travels in Europe, Egypt, and Palestine* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1860), 320.

⁶³ Sarah Rodgers Haight, *Letters from the Old World by a Lady of New York in Two Volumes* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1840) Volume II, 302.

losing its cunning,” reported Haight. Nevertheless, Giovanni had converted to Islam by the time Haight hired him.⁶⁴

In descending importance, as she articulated, Haight also brought along Mr. Francois, a chef she hired while traveling through France on her way to Palestine. “He was a long time chef to some French admirals,” Haight reported. While in Egypt, Francois frequently made chicken in brandy and roasted pigeon for Haight. He also invented two dishes especially for the trip: *Marmalade Alexandrine* and *Pyramides à la Memphis*. After all day of being in the saddle, Haight would always look forward to Francois’s hors d’oeuvres before dinner.⁶⁵

Next, Haight’s personal servant was named Selim. He was a thirteen-year-old Arab boy whom Haight hired while in Cairo. Selim not only held the stirrups for Haight to mount and dismount, but he was her page, and would run alongside her horse “to pick up my whip,” reported Haight, “a flower, or a plant.” He spoke French and Italian, in addition to Arabic, and during the travels through Palestine Haight taught Selim to speak English while Giovanni taught him to speak Greek. This was, as Haight called it, her first-tier of servants. She also hired an untold number of servants to assist her Italian guide, her French chef, and her Egyptian page as well as seven armed Arabs to act as her personal guard. She did not, however, have a maid. She did bring an English woman named Pauline as far as Egypt to act as her maid, but then fired her before reaching Palestine because, as Haight put it, “No European female servant is worth the trouble she causes.”⁶⁶

While Haight may have been able to survive without her English maid, her French chef, Francois, was indispensable. One day Haight and her armed guards left Acre and headed towards Nazareth. Giovanni and Francois stayed behind to shop for the evening meal and were to meet up with Haight, *et al.*, outside of Nazareth. When Haight reached the evening camp, neither Giovanni nor Francois was there. As night fell, some of the guards had to pitch Haight’s tent and fetch her water. Yet her chef had the keys to the locked kitchen stores. One of the guards finally managed to break open ten locked boxes and while they discovered fresh chickens, other fowls, and hams, they could not find any fuel source to cook them.

Her guards found only enough water to make tea for Haight and another started a fire out of some thorns and empty wooden food crates, yet the fire produced only enough heat to reheat a casserole. Nevertheless, after two hours of “hard work” to make dinner, Haight was too exhausted to read her usual passage from the Bible. Besides, she could not precisely determine her location and thus was unable to read any passages from the Bible about events or people that took place or traversed her present location.⁶⁷ Likewise, Marion Harland hired an unknown number of professional cooks to travel with her to Palestine, yet she preferred the meals served by Martha, a Palestinian Harland hired in Lebanon.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid., 302.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 304, 305.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 305, 306.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁸ Harland, *Under the Flag of the Orient*, 50.

Others had rather large entourages, but no one went into the detail as the makeup of their entourage as did Sarah Haight. Louise Griswold, for example, hired one dragoman, “fourteen servants,” one Arab cook, and twenty-six pack animals to carry the tents, supplies, and other necessary equipment.⁶⁹ The eighteen-year-old Lemanay Green hired an unnamed Arab guard, an unnamed dragoman, and an unknown number of “cooks and waiters” as well as “two or three” (she could not recall) Arabs as personal servants.⁷⁰ Her entourage was so large that she was not even aware of the total number of personal servants she hired. Mrs. D.L. Miller hired three servants, “Yousef, Mustaff, and an Abyssinian who was extremely black” just to fill the potholes in the roads.⁷¹ Certainly if someone could afford to hire three people just to make sure that the roads were level, they surely had enough money to travel in whatever style they wanted.

All of these women, except for one, rode horses through Palestine. The exception was Lucia A. Palmer and she did not ride a carriage through Palestine, nor did she walk. Instead, she hired six men to carry her in a litter. The reason why she chose not to ride a horse is unknown. She noted that in Jericho she fell off the palanquin (but like a “good traveler” she did not scream) and tried “walking for a way, but found it tiresome,” she wrote.⁷² Besides the obvious advantage of being carried, the palanquin also kept the rider “out of the mud and dust,” according to Palmer.⁷³ In addition, Palmer believed that American women were “bad riders and poor walkers. Accustomed to riding in carriages, they would do better to make use of them when possible; but when a wheeled conveyance is not available, a palanquin is the next best thing to be used.” Palmer believed that being carried around, however, did have its drawbacks, namely:

The most serious objection to a palanquin is that it has no steps, and when away from khans and hotels, an attendant has to stoop to let the travelers step on his back and climb in as best he can. Such service is humiliating to the attendant and embarrassing to the recipient. A little stool carried along would obviate all this; but *in Palestine Arabs are cheaper than wood*.⁷⁴

The first characteristic of these women’s entourages is that they tended to be large and they tended to hire specialized laborers, such as chefs, waiters, and guards. The second characteristic of these women’s travel plans was that some used official members of the British or American consuls as their travel agents, guides, or guards. In 1858 (prior to the establishment of a U.S. Consulate), Susan Brewer Thomas stayed at the residence of the English Consul. He also acted as Thomas’s guide. The unnamed Consul was an Arab who spoke fluent English. His wife

⁶⁹ Griswold, *A Woman’s Pilgrimage*, 226-227.

⁷⁰ Lemanay Green, *A Girl’s Journey Through Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land* (Nashville: M.E. Church, South, 1892), 130.

⁷¹ Mrs. D.L. Miller, *Letters to the Young from the Old World, Notes of Travel* (Mount Morris, IL: The Brethren’s Publishing Company, 1896), 194, 195.

⁷² Lucia A. Palmer, *Oriental Days* (New York: Baker and Taylor Company, 1897), 169.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 184-185. Emphasis mine.

was also an Arab whom Thomas called a “most amiable Arab woman, dressed in Oriental costumes, and loaded with jewelry.”⁷⁵

Ten years later, after the establishment of the first U.S. consul in Palestine, “Mr. Finkenstein,” the American Vice Consul, escorted Susan Hale through the streets, shops, and sites of Jerusalem.⁷⁶ Also in 1868, Ellen Clare Miller entered Palestine on land by traveling through Syria. In Damascus she hired Dr. Michael Mechaka, the American consul there as well as “one of the leading men in the Protestant community” to act as her guide.⁷⁷

In 1887, Mr. Gilman, the American Consul to Jerusalem, at numerous times offered “the protection of a guard” to the eighteen-year-old Lemanay Green.⁷⁸ The following year, the American Vice-Consul (probably Herbert C. Clark) met Clara Moyses Tadlock on the ship as it anchored off the shore of Jaffa. “I am a Tourist Agent—also American Vice-Consul, you need our protection,” he said to Tadlock. “I will take you ashore immediately, and arrange for your going on to Jerusalem.”⁷⁹ Unlike others in this study, Tadlock refused his services.

It should not come as a surprise that the Vice and Deputy Consuls would offer to arrange travel or protection for these travelers, because according to Ruth Kark in *American Consuls in the Holy Land, 1832-1914*, those consular positions were strictly unsalaried and functionary in nature. Thus, the evidence seems to suggest that the Vice and Deputy Consuls attempted to earn a living through offering their services and contacts to American travelers for a price.⁸⁰ In the case of Gillman, his appointment, at least according to Kark, was political thus it would be important for him to keep the wives of the voting electorate happy.⁸¹

What American women travelers ate and how they ate also seemed to be important, at least to some of the authors in this study. Not always did these American travelers share with their reading audience what they ate at any average meal. When they did, however, the meals were far from any fare that might be served at a local hotel, or in the home of any average Palestinian family, as their meals were typically Western. For example, breakfast for L.L. Adams—who had her meals cooked for her at her campsite—consisted of an omelet, beefsteak, and fried potatoes.⁸²

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Travels in Europe, Egypt, and Palestine*, 288.

⁷⁶ Atkinson, *Letters of Susan Hale*, 47. Interestingly enough Lucretia P. Hale, who accompanied her sister Susan to Palestine, never mentioned anything about being escorted around Jerusalem –or anywhere in Palestine- by a member of the U.S. mission in her account of the events published several years after returning to the U.S. in *Old and New*, April 1871, July 1871, June 1872, or, December 1872.

⁷⁷ Ellen Clare Miller, *Eastern Sketches: Notes of Scenery, Schools, and Tent Life in Syria and Palestine* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 85. A reprint of the 1871 edition published by W. Oliphant, Edinburgh Scotland. According to Ruth Kark, his name was Benjamin A. Finkelstein, not Finkenstein and he served as the Deputy-Consul in Jerusalem from 1865 to 1868. See Kark, *American Consuls in the Holy Land, 1832-1914* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1994), 344.

⁷⁸ Green, *A Girl's Journey*, 129. According to Kark, the full name of the American Consul to Jerusalem in 1887 was Henry Gillman who served from 1886 to 1891. See Kark, *American Consuls*, 344.

⁷⁹ Clara Moyses Tadlock, *Bohemian Days* (New York: John B. Alden, 1889), 337.

⁸⁰ Kark, *American Consuls*, 175.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 155, 161, 327.

⁸² Adams, *A Ride on Horseback*, 20.

“Our meals were usually very good,” reported Mrs. D.L. Miller. Her breakfast consisted of choices of “tea, coffee, bread, butter, eggs, and omelette, composed of eggs milk and salt.” There was so much food for breakfast that some was wasted at times.⁸³ Lunch tended to be served picnic style. One of L.L. Adams’s servants spread Turkish rugs on the ground and served cold chicken and mutton with hardboiled eggs, bread, jelly, oranges, “and other fruit.” While they ate *al fresco*, they did not give the impression of being uncivilized as long as they used cups, plates, and silverware.⁸⁴ Clearly, both breakfast and lunch tended to be simple, yet hardy, but far from any typical Middle Eastern fare.

Dinner, on the other hand, seemed to be the meal in which all flair, fancy, and feasting were at their climax. For L.L. Adams, her hired chef, Giurgius, produced dinners that equaled anything she had eaten in any “first class hotel.” He served soup, three courses of meat with vegetables, pastries, fresh and dried fruits, and coffee.⁸⁵

Lucy Bainbridge, who brought a chef and a waiter with her to Palestine, also enjoyed a sumptuous spread for dinner. Her seven-course evening meal, which was served to her each night, began with soup followed by chicken served with macaroni. “Next, mutton and sheep’s brains; then boiled rice with stewed apricots; fifth, cheese; sixth, oranges, figs, and nuts; seventh, coffee or tea.”⁸⁶ Likewise, Marion Harland enjoyed daily multi-course meals, prepared by the chef she brought with her from the United States and served by hired wait staff. “At six o’clock, a six course dinner, as well-cooked and as daintily garnished and served,” reported Harland, “as if furnished by Delmonico’s chef, is a fact stated upon the authority of all who have partaken of these magical repasts.” Her first course consisted of “excellent soup” followed by:

Two dishes of meat, always chickens or partridges, a ‘made dish’ or entrée, salad, pudding or tart or custard or blanc mange, fruits, nuts, raisins, and black coffee is the bill of fare that represents our every-day family dinner.⁸⁷

How did the food and flair of these American lady-travelers compare with the food and presentation served by Palestinian women in Palestinian households? Marion Harland was the only traveler to identify what the “lower classes” of Palestine consumed. Harland noted that the peasantry of Palestine was “inordinately” fond of fats thus a traditional meal for the “lower classes” of Palestine might consist of a stew of potatoes, “flavored with onion and unctuous fat.” Another favorite meal of the poor of Palestine, according to Harland, was a stew of cabbage, rice and onions, “shining with fat.”⁸⁸ American travelers tended to eat quite well while in Palestine. The meals described in their travel accounts were overwhelmingly served at the women’s campsites though, not in hotels.

⁸³ Miller, *Letters to the Young*, 184.

⁸⁴ Adams, *A Ride on Horseback*, 22.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁶ Lucy Seaman Bainbridge, *Round the World Letters* (Boston: D. Lothrop & Company, 1882), 352.

⁸⁷ Harland, *Under the Flag of the Orient*, 74.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

There were three ways in which travelers could spend the nights in Palestine. First, they could sleep in tents. Second, travelers might stay in monasteries. Third, these women might spend the night in a hotel. Most of these fifty-one women camped outside each night. A few stayed in monasteries and even fewer took rooms in hotels.

First, the tents used by these women were not simply unadorned pieces of canvas sewed together and they did not sleep in sleeping bags. Sarah Haight, in 1839, slept in a white canvas tent that had “scarlet trimmings” and a gilded crescent along the top.⁸⁹ Nearly forty years later, L.L. Adams slept in a tent that flew the U.S. flag and while large enough to sleep four people, she only shared it with one other lady, “so we had plenty of room,” Adams reported. Her tent was new and was “gaily decorated with odd-looking patterns of red, yellow, and white sewed on to the dark blue lining of the tent.” Inside the tent were two iron beds, “with comfortable mattresses, clean sheets and blankets” along with two stools, a table on which stood a pitcher and bowl, and “Turkey rugs spread on the ground.”⁹⁰ Likewise, Louise Griswold shared a tent with a fellow traveler. Their tent was domed, “giving it a lofty appearance.” Flowers and leaves cut from red, yellow, and green-colored cloths were sewn on the inside of the tent, “producing a finished and tasty effect.” The tent floor was covered in Persian rugs.⁹¹ Lizzie McMillan similarly noted that her private sleeping tent was furnished with a bed, white linen and scarlet blankets. Also, there was a table with a bowl, pitcher, “and toilet articles,” along with a silver candlestick, matches, and nearby “a comfortable chair.”⁹²

Marion Harland, in 1896, noted that her tent was so spacious that she could stand upright “in any part of it.” Its furnishings consisted of a dressing table with a mirror, a bed with feathered pillows, clean linen, and warm blankets, and two layers of Persian rugs covered the earthen floor. Coat hooks and rings dangled from the tent’s center pole for Harland’s clothes to hang and dry after a long day’s ride in the sun. Harland was possibly the most explicit about her tent’s decorations, accommodations, and comforts. Not only was she a professional writer, but in this instance she noted that her descriptions of her accommodations were explicit in order to dispel any worries her friends may have had regarding the supposed “hardships” of tent life in Palestine. For example, one of Harland’s friends wrote to her saying:

I cannot express my admiration of your courage in undertaking to dwell in tents for whole nights together. It is well enough for men, especially the young and healthy. For women, and those who are—well! To say the least, not as young as they once were—it is, to my way of thinking, imprudent and hazardous.⁹³

Not only were their tents richly decorated and comfortably outfitted, but their camp was something like a hotel in both appearance and in function. Lucy Bainbrige, for example, noted in 1880 that she rode her horse to her encampment. “Turning a sharp corner of the stony path on the

⁸⁹ Haight, *Letters from the Old World*, 34.

⁹⁰ Adams, *A Ride on Horseback*, 16.

⁹¹ Griswold, *A Woman’s Pilgrimage*, 231.

⁹² Lizzie McMillan, *Letters of Lizzie McMillan* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1902), 196

⁹³ Harland, *Under the Flag of the Orient*, 75.

outskirts of the little village Deir el Kamr, we came in sight of a group of gaily-trimmed tents, pitched near a little mountain stream,” she wrote. Her cook had his own tent that doubled as the kitchen. Upon entering the encampment her waiter, “in gay Turkish dress,” offered water and fresh towels to the travelers, then escorted Bainbridge and the rest in her party to their waiting dining tables.⁹⁴

Similarly, Marion Harland’s encampment was Western in appearance and size. There was a large tent that doubled as the kitchen when the cook, wait staff, and other hired servants were not sleeping in it. Next to the kitchen tent was the dining tent. Unlike Bainbridge who ate *al fresco*, Harland ate inside of a huge tent that was furnished with a table and chairs. There were also stools, steamer-chairs, and other lounge chairs for the “lazy and weary hours.”⁹⁵

Likewise, the encampment of Elizabeth McMillan, in 1893, consisted of a private sleeping tent for herself and a dining tent with tables covered in fresh, white linen, china, glassware, and silver utensils. “In fact,” noted McMillan, “we seemed to have every comfort one would expect in a private house.”⁹⁶ While the majority of the women in this study stayed in tents, and tents that were richly decorated, seemingly comfortable, and not uncharacteristically furnished for the tastes and expectations of most American women in the late nineteenth century, a few women, nonetheless, chose to spend their nights in monasteries.

Susan Brewer Thomas, in 1858, lodged with Franciscan monks in Ramlah. The monks had separate sleeping quarters for men and women. While men were allowed to sleep inside the convent’s walls, the women slept in rooms outside of the walls “as none are allowed to pass its threshold,” reported Thomas. Not surprisingly, the meals served at the Ramlah monastery were a bit more austere than those served by privately hired chefs. Thomas ate vegetables, bread, coffee and fruits.⁹⁷

Ten years later, Kate Kraft also stayed with monks. In Jaffa, Kraft visited “the Latin Convent, where we were received by the priests who overwhelmed us with kind attentions,” she wrote. Kraft enjoyed fresh fish along with bread, oranges, and potatoes for dinner.⁹⁸ The addition of fish at this monastery might have something to do with the fact that Jaffa is a coastal town. In the early 1870s, Dr. Sarah Furnas Wells spent the night at the same Ramlah monastery as did Thomas some fifteen years earlier. “The monks were pleased to find out that we could speak with them in French, Italian, and Spanish,” Wells noted. The meals seem to have gotten more involved over the years. While Thomas ate a vegetarian fare, Wells was served chicken with olives and figs “and many nice things.”⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Bainbridge, *Round the World Letters*, 352.

⁹⁵ Harland, *Under the Flag of the Orient*, 74, 75.

⁹⁶ McMillan, *Letters of Lizzie McMillan*, 196.

⁹⁷ Thomas, *Travels in Europe, Egypt, and Palestine*, 291.

⁹⁸ Kraft, *The Nilometer*, 190.

⁹⁹ Dr. Sarah Furnas Wells, *Ten Years’ Travel Around the World* (West Milton, OH: Morning Star Publishing Company, 1885), 117.

Why did these three women stay at monasteries? According to Dr. Wells it was not because they were particularly fond of the Catholic Church, rather the monasteries were the closest thing to hotels in Palestine “there being no hotels nor houses in which strangers may lodge,” she wrote in the early 1870s.¹⁰⁰

While it was unlikely that there were no hotels in Palestine in the 1870s, it is possible that the hotels available simply failed to meet the needs, wants, or expectations of these American women.¹⁰¹ For example, Lemanay Green noted that in Jaffa she spent the night at a hotel called The Jerusalem, in 1888. Green referred to the hotel as “primitive” and noted that the only reading material was a newspaper dated 1870 and a few other periodicals “about as ancient.”¹⁰² The only other American woman who noted staying in a Palestinian hotel was Mary Thorn Carpenter and that was in 1893. Carpenter noted that her Jerusalem hotel was:

Western in every detail. On the first floor the usual Continental *table d'hote* is served, with the ever-present *epergnes* of fruit, and sponge-cake pyramids, and the system of fragmentary allotments of fish and fowl prevails as in an Italian inn.¹⁰³

While the hotel may have been Western in every detail, the only detail Carpenter shared with her reading audience was the type, form, and amount of food offered thus implying that what she most considered Western was food.

In dress and deportment, these women tended to remain as proper and Victorian as possible. While a few did manage to don the costume of Palestinian women, only Sarah Barclay Johnson did so in order to experience something new and different. Even tent life in Palestine could not be interpreted as “roughing it” as these women tended to hire professional chefs, waiters, personal attendants, and guides and guards to ensure that they remained as far as possible from actually experiencing the reality of Palestine. It was as if they wanted to take a virtual tour of Palestine by visiting the holy places, the biblical sites, and the geologic records without being infected or contaminated by the reality of the Palestinian population, its cultures, and its lifestyles. As Ingemanson notes, “the female travelers’ clothing and domestic objects provided an official identity and façade beyond which the women could develop not only their publicly condoned female role, but also their innermost human dimensions.”¹⁰⁴

Clearly, these American women tended to want to bring as many of their comforts of Western life as possible with them while they traveled through Palestine. Their choice of dress tends to suggest that they wanted to stand out and they wanted to be acknowledged as elite members of Western society. The Victorian dress was an unwitting badge of honor and possibly

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 115.

¹⁰¹ One exception to this was the Winter Palace hotel. It was erected in Jericho in the 1850s and typically catered to European travelers, especially during winter when the dry air of Jericho was relatively warmer than in England or northern Europe.

¹⁰² Green, *A Girl's Journey*, 118.

¹⁰³ Mary Thorn Carpenter, *In Cairo and Jerusalem an Eastern Note-Book* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph and Company, 1894), 190.

¹⁰⁴ Ingemanson, “Under Cover,” 12.

was a way of separating themselves from the “rabble” they encountered. Their tendency to take or hire specialized servants tends to suggest that they believed that their travel experience was unique, or at least special and was not to be disturbed by local inconveniences. Of course, this may all boil down to propriety. As noted in the 1894 etiquette book *The Woman’s Book: Dealing practically with the Modern Conditions of Home-Life, Self-Support, Education, Opportunities, and Every-Day Problems*, “There is a right way and a wrong way of doing everything, and the difference between the right way and the wrong way in travel is the whole space which lies between pleasure and disappointment.”¹⁰⁵ It is not impossible that women dressed and acted in particular ways because they were conditioned that there were “proper” ways to dress and act. Certainly, as shown in the introductory parts of this essay, etiquette books noted that there were “proper” ways for women travelers to dress while abroad in order to emphasize both class as well as culture. Dress may have been central to the “proper” womanly experience, however, and most of these women tried to be “proper” women. “The garment of modest purity is as magic a defense to-day as when Una wore it, and the sight of a good woman who needs her aid wakens in even bad men some part of the spirit of a Bayard,” noted *The Woman’s Book* on the importance of being properly dressed, especially when traveling alone.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ *The Woman’s Book*, 371.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 383.

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