



FRIENDS of the AMERICAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE in TURKEY



LECTURE on ZOOM – on Mon., Dec. 21, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. Istanbul time.



Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs
An American Missionary Wife in the
Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire
by
Melisa Korkmaz
with an introduction by
Brian Johnson
on the
American Board in Turkey and its Archives

This presentation, which is the outcome of a thesis with the same title, aims to share the little known activities and writings of Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs, a missionary wife operating under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), during her active years from 1832 through 1887, initially spent in Greece, and then mostly in the Ottoman Empire. Drawing from her family archives and other primary sources, the presentation aims to demonstrate the significance of Riggs' contributions to the American Board and its network, and to question the boundaries between her roles as a qualified missionary, a mother and a wife from a historical perspective. It uncovers the rich content of her letters, the subjects of which are domestic matters such as family, well-being and the education of her children and missionary matters both woven together. Her detailed observations of her stays in several countries will also be highlighted for those wanting to better understand the events and changes in the world in the nineteenth century, especially in the Ottoman Empire. From a broader perspective, zooming out from the specific life of Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs, attention will be drawn to the need to reevaluate the impact of missionary wives and, eventually, women in the world of missionary, which remained underappreciated at a time when a gender-based hierarchy played a defining role, and is still uncelebrated today.

MELİSA KORKMAZ

A graduate of the Robert College, Melisa Korkmaz studied sociology at Middle East Technical University and holds a master's degree in European Studies from Boğaziçi University. Korkmaz started her professional career in arts&culture sector at The Mint Museum, North Carolina, USA and continued at SALT Beyoğlu and SALT Galata, Istanbul, where she supervised the institution's marketing campaigns for 5 years since its foundation. Since 2015, she has been working as Marketing Communications Manager at Istanbul Museum of Modern Art. In parallel with her professional life, Korkmaz took Ottoman Turkish classes and pursued her second master's degree in history at Boğaziçi University with a thesis submitted in 2019. Her thesis focuses on the archives of a missionary wife, Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs, who served on the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and its operations in Turkey with his husband Dr. Elias Riggs during the 19th century.

Register in advance for this meeting:

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