

The Cultural Sustainability: Merzifon Anatolia College, Turkey

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Abstract

The article proposes an analysis of the role of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) during the late Ottoman and the early nationalist (Republican) Turkey and focusses especially on the ABCFM organization and the role of Protestant missionaries, which they succeeded in establishing autonomous schools, hospitals, clinics, orphanages, lodgings and ateliers not only in the capitals, but also in provinces.

The American Board began evangelism among Armenians, and the education and the social services became part of the Protestant movement in the Near East. Following efforts to Christianize the nations through evangelism, in the mid of 19th century, Merzifon (Marsovan) province was chosen due to its location in the middle of Anatolia and Merzifon Anatolia College was designed as an important 'station' in order to support the American missionary movements. Then, between the years 1886 and 1938, ABCFM built strong connections with Anatolia College in Merzifon to gain a very important strategic position.

In the context of the First World War, the function of the Anatolia College buildings has changed for different aims; the military used these buildings as the Artillery Regiment. After the war the ABCFM's network broke down but its strong contribution to present education in Turkey is inevitable. The site as a heritage is still an active part of the city's cultural life with some existing buildings of ABCFM supporting culture and education. For instance Merzifon Anatolia College Hospital is used by Merzifon High School for Science, Merzifon Anatolia College Library and Museum Building are used by Amasya University as Vocational School Administration Building. The other College buildings have been used by the Ministry of National Defense for many years. The North College, for instance, served as Non-commissioned Officer School during the First World War.

In this study, cultural sustainability of the Merzifon Anatolia College buildings each constructed with different aims and various stories has been investigated. As a method, the historical background of the site and the buildings has been revealed through archive documents and interviews have been held with historians. A detailed field search has been carried out to document the current status and usages of the buildings.

Protecting aura with the function of the building thus its authenticity is an opinion that is supported by many theorists but when the function is no longer valid, sustainability of aura is in danger. In this sense, the present usage of the Anatolia College buildings for educational purposes might be the indication that the aura of the past is still culturally sustained.

Keywords: *Collective Memory, Cultural Sustainability, American Missionary Movement, Merzifon, Anatolia College.*

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1. Introduction

The American Board and other Protestant organizations in the United States agreed in establishing of some form of Christianity in every region of the world. Since Jerusalem was off limits to permanent residents and Smyrna unsafe because of the Greek war for independence, Beirut became the center for the American mission (Grabill, 1971). As Hans-Lukas Kieser mentions (Kieser, 2002) the missionaries, notably those belonging to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) seem for the first time to have become seriously concerned with the functioning of society as a whole, including the Sunni Muslim majority. The first educational activities of the Americans within the borders of the Ottoman Empire targeted to the Armenian community called as the “*Anglo Saxons of the East*” by Cyrus Hamlin (Bayram, 2006). The goals became oriented toward non-Muslim and non-Jewish minorities and missionaries turned to extending American culture to the interior. At first the missionaries were mainly occupied in the study of the languages of the country, making the acquaintance of the people and establishing schools as opportunity offered and teachers could be secured (Asiatic Turkey, 1910). The missionaries of the American Board did not hesitate to spend money to convert the Armenian people into the Protestant sect. They carried out their work in a programmatic way. However, the Gregorian and Catholic Armenian Churches opposed this and tried to keep their communities away from Protestants’ propaganda. Dr. George Edward White (White, 1861) interpreted the act as a conflict with the Armenian hierarchy but found the establishment of the Protestant Churches logical.

Permanent efforts made by Protestants when a chaplain of the British East India Company, Henry Martyn, appeared in the Near East in 1810. He soon died, and Protestants in England and America made him a symbol for missionary opportunity. In 1820, the initial two American missionaries, Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, landed at Smyrna (İzmir) representing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM, 1910) (Grabill, 1971). At that time the population of Turkish Empire was nearly twenty-four millions and of these about sixteen millions was Mohammedan in their religion (mostly in the northern part of the Empire); a large proportion of the remaining millions were Christian in various forms. The Christian population is made up largely of Armenians and of Greeks (ABCFM, 1910).

A large blow for missionaries came as Russo-Turkish warfare forced evacuation from Beirut to Malta, where they stayed from 1828 to 1830. Eli Smith and Harrison Gary Otis Dwight were sent to make survey in Anatolia and Persia in 1830 [9]. The creation of separate Protestant millet ³ in 1847 was an inevitable development, but not a long-

3 In the first decades very often we see leaders of the millets and, less frequently, the state of the Tanzimat opposing the missionaries. This changed considerably after Sultan Abdulhamid’s ascent to the throne in 1876 (Kieser, 2002).

term project devised by the ABCFM (Kieser, 2002).⁴ In the first period between 1831 to 1846 five *stations* were formed: Constantinople (İstanbul), 1831⁵; Smyrna (İzmir) 1833; Brousa (Bursa), 1834; Trebizond (Trabzon), 1836 and Erzurum (Erzurum), 1839 (ABCFM, 1910). Concentration for several years was on language study, Bible translation, the printing of scriptural and other religious materials (Grabill, 1971). A second period in the history of the missionary work covering twenty years, from 1846 to 1866 was a period of growth and organization. The *stations* occupied by missionaries increased number from five to twenty-four. Some of these are; Aintab (Gaziantep), 1849; Tocat (Tokat), 1854; Marash (Maraş), Sivas and Harpoot (Harput), 1855; Oorfa (Urfa), 1856; Diarbekir (Diyarbakır) and Merzifon (Merzifon), 1857; Mardin and Bitlis 1858, and Adana 1863 (ABCFM, 1910) (Fig. 1).⁶

All the *stations* held annually a meeting of delegates from each station, for the consideration of all plans and estimates for the coming year. But at length the expense of time and money involved in attendance upon these annual meetings became so difficult for delegates coming from remote places. The missionaries were divided into three zones that is in 1856 Mission to Central Turkey was constituted, in 1860 Mission to Eastern Turkey and finally Mission to Western Turkey (includes Merzifon) (ABCFM, 1910). During the prosecution of the spiritual life in the Turkish Empire wise attention has been given all along to the education of the young. Early in the history of the station at Constantinople, a seminary was established there for the education of young men preparing for the ministry, such as gave promise for that work (ABCFM, 1910). The general publication work of the three missions was done principally at Constantinople on account of facilities found there, and is about equally divided between publication of Christian literature and textbooks for schools (ABCFM, 1910).

Each of these missions has its centers of work and each center or *stations* its outstations. As Grabill mentions (Grabill, 1971) during the period from 1878 to 1903, seven colleges were opened by ABCFM: Euphrates College at Harput and American College at Van in eastern Anatolia; Central Turkey College with campuses for men and women

4 The constitution of this new community was important as a modern model of redefining collective social relations. Unlike the Catholic millet (created 1831) and the traditional millets, all headed by patriarchs, it separated millet membership and church affiliation. The representative of the millet was not an ecclesiastic. He was elected by an assembly of deputies representing the local Protestant communities (Kieser, 2002).

5 The first missionary to Constantinople, William Goodell, illustrated Protestant purposefulness (Grabill, 1971).

6 By 1904 the American Board had developed in Turkey a field larger than anywhere else in the world, having divided this field into four administrative areas: European, Western, Central, and Eastern Turkey (Fig. 1). These areas included over twenty stations, one hundred fifty personnel (clergymen, physicians, wives, and unmarried women), a thousand national workers, and fifteen thousand members in one hundred thirty evangelical Armenian churches. As Grabill (Grabill, 1971) about 75 per cent of all the Western Protestant enterprises in Asia Minor and European Turkey were under American Board control.

at Aintab and Marash, respectively; St. Paul College at Tarsus in the south and Anatolia College at Merzifon in the north; and International College at Smyrna (White, 1861). In this article, permanent efforts made by the ABCFM organization at Anatolia College at Merzifon are discussed specifically.

2. Merzifon Anatolia College

During the period when American Board missionaries were in Anatolia, Merzifon locating in the central Black Sea region was a district of the Amasya Province, 32 km far from Sivas, which was under the administrative organization of the Ottoman Empire. The city located on the slopes of Mount Taşan was a large settlement in the 19th century. It has an important geographical location, with the capacity to connect the Black Sea coast to the inner regions of Anatolia. The American Board Missionaries started their studies by evaluating the geographical position of Merzifon from other angles. For them, Merzifon was an important center located between the Armenian capital of Erzurum and the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Merzifon city had been frequently visited and temporarily occupied by pioneer missionaries and in 1860, Rev. and Mrs. J.Y. Leonard got the permission from the Western Turkey Mission to settle. In Merzifon and its surroundings, the Armenian houses were determined and Protestant preaching was given to housewives, elderly and children (Tuzcu, 1993). During that time the whole number of persons under Protestant instructions in Merzifon (Merzifon) was about 150, including the pupils in the Missionary schools (ABCFM, 1882).⁷ Different methods have been applied to convince people for Christianity. A visiting committee was selected, who labored from house to house, and in the markets. In another mode of activity was the teaching of individuals in private houses by volunteer laborers. Another method of work was to visit the khans on Sunday morning to ascertain who there may be willing to attend the Evangelical service. In this way strangers have been found and made welcome at the Protestant church (ABCFM, 1882).

In 1840 Cyrus Hamlin, the pioneer American educator in Turkey, founded a seminary in Bebek, a suburb of Constantinople. In time the institution bifurcated; Dr. Hamlin remained at the capital and established Robert College. It was decided to locate the Theological Seminary and the Girls' Boarding School of the Mission at some point in the interior, and in 1862, Merzifon was selected as the correct place (White, 1861). Accordingly, Mr. and Mrs. Dodd were transferred from Smyrna (İzmir), and Rev. and Mrs. J.F. Smith and Miss Eliza Fritcher, new recruits from America, were designated to Merzifon in 1863. Mr. Leonard, Mr. Dodd and Mr. Smith organized Merzifon Station, and elected their chairman, secretary, and treasurer (White, 1861).

⁷ Student enrollment by 1895 had gone over one hundred fifty and by 1903 to nearly five hundred (Grabill, 1971).

Mr. Charles Chapin Tracy and Mrs. Tracy reached Merzifon in 1867⁸ and that time Merzifon was hardly more than an overgrown Turkish and Armenian village, with some 15,000 inhabitants (White, 1861). Tracy worked at the Station until he retired in 1913. In 1879 the Station decided to scatter forces somewhat, as an experiment, and the Tracy family spent two winters in Amasia (Amasya). Important out-stations were developing in cities such as Samsoun (Samsun) and Amasia (Amasya) (White, 1861). When the Tracy family reached Merzifon in 1867, the mission site had not been bought. The Station, however, was wise in making choice of its permanent location. As White describes; the 40-acre settlement is on the northern edge of the town, located on the Hıdırlık Hill where two feet higher than any other in the city (White, 1861). Because of their concern to protect themselves against any attack, it was assumed that the missionaries settled on this highest hill of the region. Even though the town has a flat topography, St. Barbara Church was also in a hilly area of Merzifon. According to Bayram, this Greek Church, which was located in the acropolis of the city, was an important point of contact for missionaries from which the school had connection with the city via St. Barbara Church (Bayram, 2006) (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. St. Barbara Church (1) ve Site Plan for Anatolia College (2), Merzifon 1950-1960 (the archive of Sadi Bayram, archaeologist-historian)

3. Merzifon Anatolia College Building

The first building material of Anatolia College was sun-dried mud brick, white plastered on the surface, the adobe of the Hittites. The next step was the use of kiln-burned brick to fill interstices between the timbers of a wooden framework, and most of the American houses and several school buildings were constructed in this way. In the last years, however Dr. Charles Chapin Tracy pushed on to a third type of building which was truly modern, and made use of stone, brick, cement, lime, and iron girders. An

⁸ According to Rev. Y. K. Rushdouny, Anatolia College, 1905: Dr. Tracy was known from Constantinople and Smyrna to Van and Ararat. I know personally that many wanted to send their children to Anatolia College because of Dr. Tracy. I know ministers of the gospel wanted to go to Marsovan and see personally Dr. Tracy about whom they had heard so many good things from those who knew him (White, 1861).

English architect was of great assistance in this latter work and in planning for the future buildings (White, 1861).⁹

A visitor once expressed amusement at the Merzifon way of getting buildings. “*First you build a woodshed, then you enlarge it, next you put on a second story, you add an ell, then you repair the whole and behold, you have a useful school building,*” This method was Mr. Tracy's way of meeting two difficulties at once, the financial and the political. In this way "the old College building" developed, growing out of what was first put up for theological instruction alone, and a happy throng of students and a good and growing educational work were housed there for years.

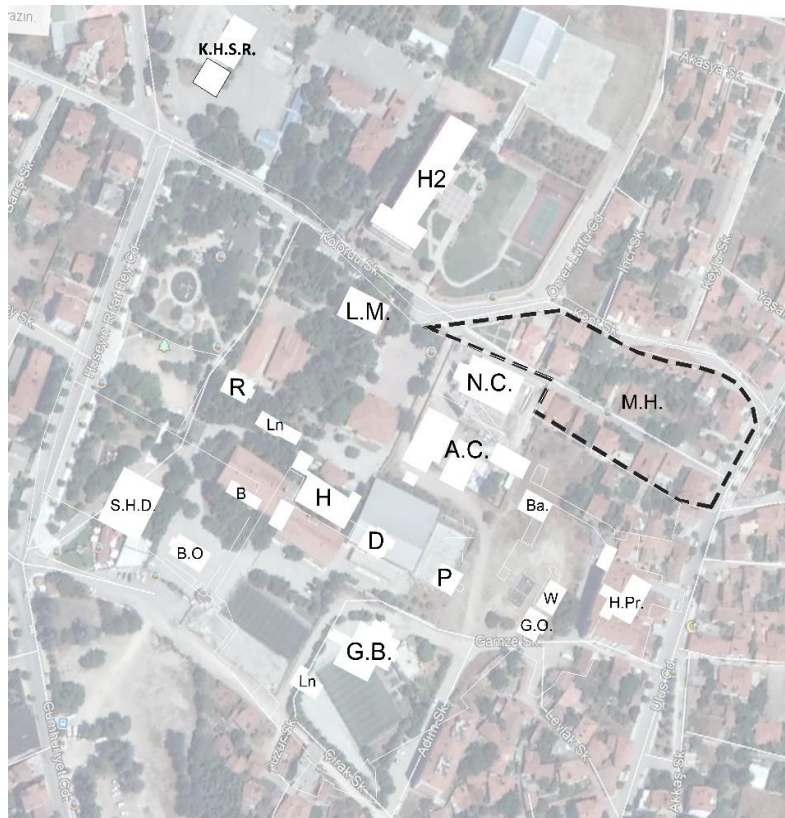
Some of the buildings of Merzifon Anatolia College that were built until 1915 are: Boys' College Boarding School (previous Theological Seminary), Girls' Boarding School, North College, Library- Museum, Kennedy Home and the Superintendent's house, Union Hall, Self Help Shops, White Hall, Boys' Orphanage, Hospital, 11 Armenian Houses, Bath, etc. (Fig. 3.)

According to the Report of Merzifon Station, in September 1882, the school opened with four pupils and increased to 40 in a very short time (White, 1861). Anatolia College¹⁰ had its humble beginning in the early days of the College in the 1880s (SALT Research, 2019) (Fig. 4). Built in 1883, in order to attract the attention of Christians, the Merzifon Theological Seminary (for the girls only) was the first qualified building (Fig. 5).¹¹ In 1886, the high school at Merzifon became Anatolia College, and served primarily youth of Armenian Protestant adults in the vicinity of Merzifon. Five languages were in use at the institution, though English was the main language (Tracy, 1904).

9 One of the most interesting achievements of the builder was the location by a workman under his direction of a stone quarry about a mile away in the foothills, which was leased from the government, and from which quantities of stone were drawn to the premises for the newest buildings, said to be of essentially the same composition as the stone used in the Cologne Cathedral (White, 1861).

10 Anatolia College was incorporated under the laws of the State of Massachusetts March 14, 1894, with the Prudential Committee of the American Board as its Trustees (White, 1861).

11 Though the station was very small at the beginning, it grew and reached to a region of eighty thousand square miles (Tracy, 1904).



Buildings not existing:

A.C. Buildings, Anatolia College

Ba. Bakery, Anatolia College

H.Pr. Home for Younger Preparatories

G.B. Girls' Boarding School

H. First College Hospital, 1890s

D. Dr. Carrington's House

P. President's House

S.H.D. Self Help Shops

R. Dr. Riggs' House

Ln. Laundries

B. Bath

B.O. Boys' Orphanage

G.O. Girls' Orphanage

W. Mr. White's House

K.H.S.R. Kennedy Home for boys and Superintendent's Residence

Existing buildings:

H2. Anatolia College Hospital

L.M. Library and Museum

N.C. The North College

M.H. Missionary Houses

Figure 3. Anatolia College Merzifon Campus Plan, 1907¹² applied on to the Google maps, 2019 with later additions.

¹² <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/45871>

Mr. Tracy as its principal graduated its first and only class in 1886 and was merged into Anatolia College. One third of its pupils were Greeks and one sixth of its graduates have become preachers of the gospel (ABCFM, 1910). George E. White graduated from Grinnel College in the United States in 1882 and the Chicago Theological School in 1887 came to Merzifon with his wife on November 15, 1890, and started to work in Merzifon College Campus, staying there for 30 years. White started learning Turkish as soon as he settled in the town. He visited mosques often saying that as warm as his own home and learned Quran with meaning, which could gave him chance to pray.

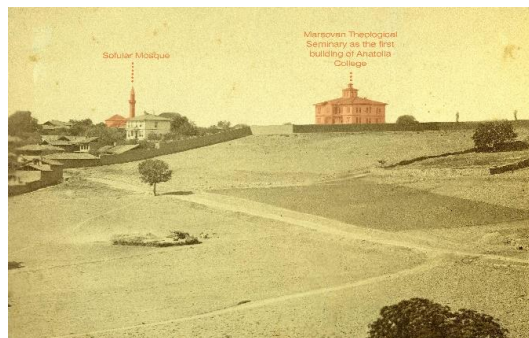


Figure 4. Hıdırlık Hill: Sofular Mosque and Merzifon Theological Seminary as the first building of Anatolia College, 1880s from the south east (Muammer Ay archive).

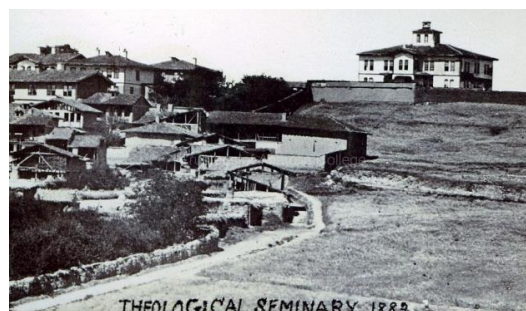


Figure 5. Merzifon Theological Seminary (for the girls only) 1883, the first building of Anatolia College, from the south (Muammer Ay archive).



Figure 6. Theological Seminary converted into Boys' College Boarding School.¹³

¹³ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/44806>

In 1901, Theological Seminary was functioned as the Boys' College Boarding School after the upper floor and roof typology was changed and the bell tower was enlarged (Fig. 6). According to the Annual Report for Merzifon Station (ABCFM, 1910), the increased number of students coming from southern Russia was a big surprise for the missionary. They were bright and manly and polite, and were also tractable and serious-minded, and reverent toward religion.

Boys' College Boarding School does not exist today but The North College Building next to it, is still stands, even in ruins (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8, Fig. 9). The clock tower of the building constructed in 1902 and the four clocks attached to the tower at Christmas time are donations from the Swiss State.¹⁴

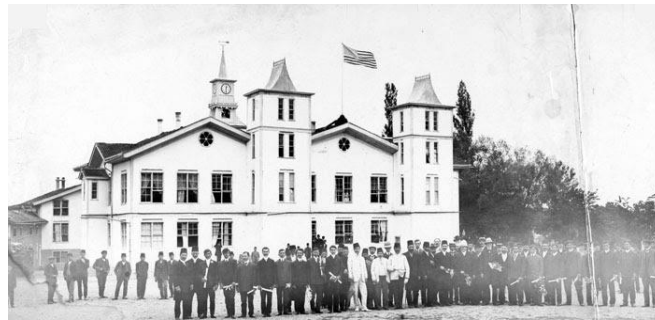


Figure 7. Boys' College Boarding School, 1901, from the west.¹⁵



Figure 8. The North College, 1890s, from the south-east.¹⁶

¹⁴<https://danyalasik.wordpress.com/2017/05/21/merzifon-anadolu-koleji-anatolia-college/>

¹⁵ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/43889>

¹⁶ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/42909>

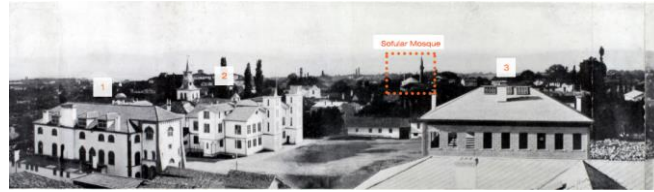


Figure 9. 1. The North College, 2. Boys' College Boarding School (used to be Merzifon Theological Seminary) 3. Library- Museum , taken from the north, early 1900s. ¹⁷

The Merzifon Anatolia College buildings were used by the Ministry of National Defense for many years. The North College, for instance, served as Non-commissioned Officer School during First World War. (Fig. 10). During the Republican period, The North College, which was used as non-commissioned Officer School, continued its educational activities as Merzifon Girls' School due to the necessity of teaching minority schools in Turkish native language (Fig. 12). An arched built in 1955 on to the Corps (Kolordu) Street connects Non-commissioned Officer School to the other part of the campus (Fig. 11). When it was in the hands of the military, the clock tower is adapted to be used as a small mosque. Today the building, known as Girls' School is under restoration (Fig. 13).

The Merzifon Anatolia College buildings used as the headquarters of the War of Independence were removed after a short period of active usage in the Republican period and many of the buildings were collapsed later on. Built in 1894, Anatolia College Girls' Boarding School next to Boys' College Boarding School (used to be Merzifon Theological Seminary) was one of them (Fig. 14). ¹⁸ The school was opened under the direction of Eliza Fritcher (Greene, 1916). She stayed at the Station for 30 years, until her dead. The Girls' Boarding School was made of two buildings; the first building was Frithcher Hall and the next was the main building (Fig. 15 and Fig. 16). In the 1900s Kennedy Home was planned and has since been built, as the house of the superintendent, and this has been connected with the main campus by a tunnel under the street (White, 1861). Both Kennedy Home for boys and Superintendent's Residence in Anatolia College were used as Artillery Regiment in the 1920s (Fig. 17 and Fig. 18). From the pictures it is understood that they is almost no alterations after the conversion. Today, they are still in the boundary of the military (Fig. 19) but neither of them could reach to the present.

¹⁷ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/45833>

¹⁸ According to Report of Marsovan Girls' Boarding School, May 1910 (p. 9); the year 1908-09 closed with the graduation of a class of nine of whom seven are now teaching and one is taking the nurses' training course in Anatolia Hospital. Of those teaching one is in the Primary Greek Department of this school, two are in the American school at Erzurum, two in Protestant church schools, and two in community schools of the old churches.



Figure 10. The North College: Non-commissioned Officer School, 1950's, from the south-west (Aydınlı et al., 2011).



Figure 11. An arch connecting the two parts of the college, (Aydınlı et al., 2011).



Figure 12. North College, taken from the south-west, before restoration.¹⁹

¹⁹ <http://informadik.blogspot.com/2014/06/>



Figure 13. The North College, taken from the north in 2019, (Gizem Özerol archive).

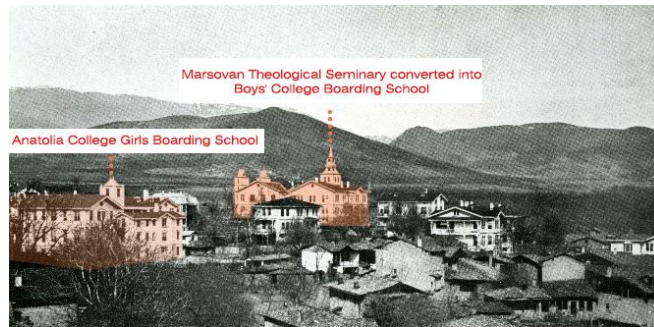


Figure 14. Merzifon , Anatolia College Girls Boarding School, 1894 and Boys' College Boarding School, 1880s, taken from the South (Tracy, 1904).



Figure 15. The new Anatolia College Girls Boarding School opening²⁰

²⁰ <http://ozhanozturk.com/2018/01/07/merzifon-amerikan-koleji-pontusculuk/>



Figure 16. Anatolia College Girls Boarding School, 1894, taken from the east. ²¹



Figure 17. Anatolia College, Kennedy Home for boys and Superintendent's Residence, 1900s. ²²



Figure 18. Merzifon Artillery Regiment, 1920s (Archive of Ahmet Yüksel) (Maksudyan, 2013).

²¹ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/45809>

²² <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/46761>

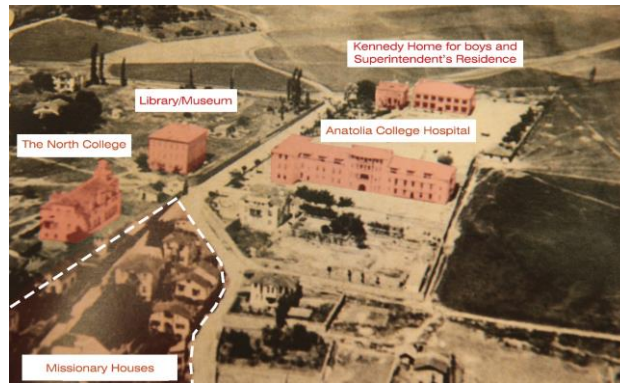


Figure 19. Anatolia College Merzifon Campus from the east, 1920-1940 (Aydınlı, 2011).

The foundation of Anatolia College's three-storey library/museum building was started in 1910, and completed in 1912 with students and volunteer employees (Fig. 20). During the war, the military used this building as the Artillery Regiment, by removing the third floor (Fig. 21). Today, it is the Vocational High School of Amasya University (Fig. 22).



Figure 20. Anatolia College, Library and Museum, 1912, taken from the west. ²³



Figure 21. Anatolia College, Library and Museum: Administrative building of the Vocational High School, taken from the north in 1955 (Aydınlı, 2011).

²³ <https://danyalasik.wordpress.com/2017/05/21/merzifon-anadolu-koleji-anatolia-college/>



Figure 22. Anatolia College, Library and Museum: Amasya University Vocational High School, taken from the North in 2019 (Gizem Özerol archive).

The hospital began its career in a rebuilt shed, and actually did its work there for fifteen years (White, 1861). (Fig. 23 and Fig. 24). In 1894 the country was visited by the scourge of cholera (as again in 1911), and many people in the city and region died. Mrs. Tracy led all the members of the Station in preparing and distributing the Hamlin remedies and using other measures by which numbers of lives were saved, probably not less than 500, and the dread disease never invaded the college compound (Millard, 2011) (White, 1861). Grabill describes this tragedy as “*The missionaries attempted to feed about eight thousands of the villagers in the hospital; they treated both Armenians and Turks as a typhus epidemic got out of control.*” (Grabill, 1971). According to the Annual Report for Merzifon Station, (ABCFMa, 1910) even the afternoons have been devoted to the examination of new patients, work in the city. A great deal of free work has been done. A great deal of medicine has been dispensed free, and milk, food, and clothing provided for many destitute cases.

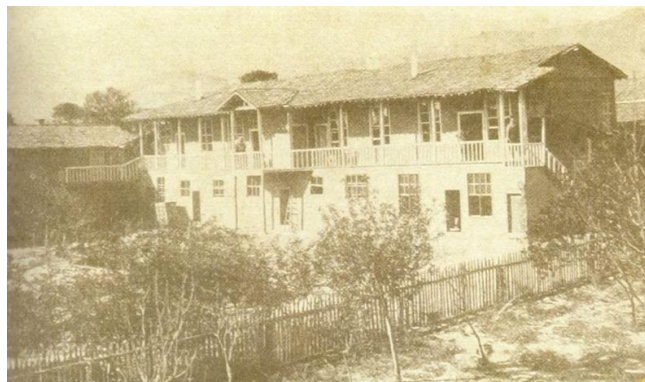


Figure 23. First College Hospital, 1890s, from the south ²⁴

²⁴ <https://danyalasilik.wordpress.com/2017/05/21/merzifon-anadolu-koleji-anatolia-college/>



Figure 24. First College Hospital, 1890s, from the south ²⁵

As mentioned in the Annual Report for Merzifon Station, (ABCFMa, 1910), a beautiful tract of land has been purchased for a new Hospital site, the present quarters of the Hospital (The First College Hospital) is in immediate proximity to the College, and utterly unsuited to the increasing work of the Hospital. The Anatolia College Hospital buildings (today Merzifon High School for Science) were completed in 1914 (Fig. 25). Additions were made from time to time to the grounds, buildings and equipments, and then resources were slowly accumulated for the new grounds and buildings across the street, occupied by a regiment of Turkish soldiers in 1914. The Hospital in a sense grew out of the College and Mrs. Tracy's work for the sick poor (White, 1861). It was the first building having heating system and elevator in the city.²⁶

The building requisitioned twice by Turks and the missionary were forced out in February, 1921 (ABCFM, 1922). The Turkish army marched to the front, the building was evacuated, and over 500 soldiers were treated there by Dr. Marden under Red Cross auspices before all the American grounds and premises were commandeered by the Turks, May 10, 1916 (White, 1861). The hospital served as a 1600-bed military hospital during First World War.

According to the archaeologist-historian Sadi Bayram (Bayram, 2006)²⁷ the hospital building was used chronologically by the 9th Corps Command, then the MSB Artillery Regiment (1954) and the former Non-commissioned Officer School (1956) (Fig. 26). It was restored and reopened in 2010 (Fig. 27 and Fig. 28). Since then it serves as Merzifon High School for Science.

²⁵ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/46747>

²⁶ <https://danyalasik.wordpress.com/2017/05/21/merzifon-anadolu-koleji-anatolia-college/>

²⁷ Interview with Sadi Bayram by the authors of this article, 20.01.2019.



Figure 25. Anatolia College Hospital, 1900s, taken from the east. ²⁸



Figure 26. Anatolia College Hospital used as Artillery Regiment, in 1954, taken from the east. ²⁹



Figure 27. Anatolia College Hospital before the repair, taken from the east in 2005 (Sadi Bayram archive)

²⁸ <https://danyalasik.wordpress.com/2017/05/21/merzifon-anadolu-koleji-anatolia-college/>

²⁹ <https://www.bitmezat.com/urun/1010300/merzifon-muhabere-kis>



Figure 28. Anatolia College Hospital used as Merzifon High School for Science, taken from the east in 2019 (Gizem Özerol archive).

The self-help industrial department was a right arm of the college in the prosecution of its mission. The idea was as simple as it sounds; help people to help themselves, especially the young, in course of education. The youth was offered the opportunity to work his way through a course of education. Departments such as joiner's house, bindery, shoemaker, tailor atelier, trial farm were established in order to provide requirements of poor students and earn money. These departments also provided the students a professional job. The president of college ever stressed the principle of self-help, and welcomed students who were compelled largely to work their own way (White, 1861) (Fig. 29 and Fig. 30). The system had advantages; each student acquired complete or considerable knowledge of a trade, and the products of labor were sold, so that most of the money spent in students' wages was recovered and used again in the same way.

A pioneer college not only had to educate its students, but it is an institution rendering various public services. In 1919, the first two newspapers ever published in the city of Merzifon were enterprises of student clubs with the assistance of the teachers whom they invited as collaborators.

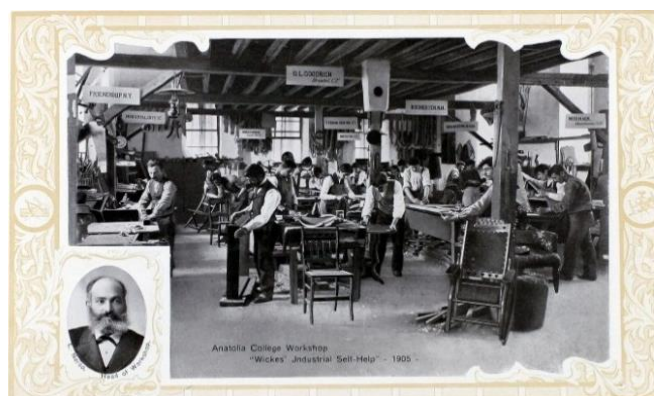


Figure 29. Self Help Shops, 1905 ³⁰

³⁰ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/46714>



Figure 30. Wickes Industrial with Mill, 1911 – 1912, Anatolia College, Merzifon, Self Help Shops. ³¹

The first political club founded in Merzifon about the same time was directed by a committee of twelve men (White, 1861). Apart from for the college and hospital buildings, 11 comfortable houses were built for the missionary members. One of them was restored by the Municipality of Merzifon and used for culture activities (Kolektif, 2015) (Fig. 31 and Fig. 32). The rest of the houses are still in use by relatives of Armenian owners (Fig. 33 and Fig. 34).

We can state that the first structures were similar to the traditional Armenian Houses and traditional Turkish House architecture. The buildings that were completed in the 1900s were built in the style of British architecture. The most important examples of these are the Library / Museum, Anatolian College Hospital and Clock Tower and the Bell, which have survived to this day. Since the preserved missionary houses protect the Armenian housing culture, these three structures provide the cultural continuity of the period.

4. Conclusion

In July, 1908, the New Regime was proclaimed with a revolution which introduced constitutional and parliamentary government and soon removed the Sultan, Abdul Hamid, from the throne. In the year 1908 the Annual Meeting of the Western Turkey Mission was held in Merzifon (White, 1861) (Fig. 35). The motto of the Party of Union and Progress was, "Liberty, Equality, Justice and Fraternity." As White mentions (White, 1861) the Turks attributed a large share in the movement for reform to the Armenians and for a time the atmosphere was like the calm of a summer dawn. In 1909, Nurettin Pehlivanzade entered the college as the first Turkish student and graduated in 1914 (Bayram, 2006).

³¹ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/46752>

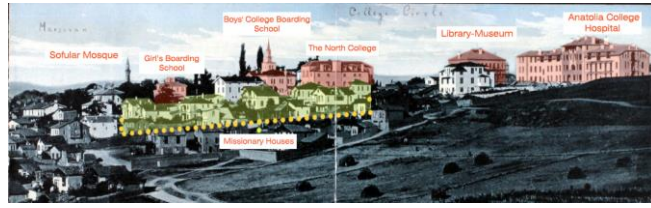


Figure 31. Anatolia College Merzifon Campus from the north-east.³²



Figure 32. Some of the houses built for the missionary members, picture taken from the east in 1906.³³



Figure 33. Some of the missionary houses, taken from the north in 2019 (Gizem Özerol archive).

³² <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/44843>

³³ <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/42849>



Figure 34. Missionary houses, taken from Kolordu street in 2019 (Gizem Özerol archive).



Figure 35. Procession in Celebration of the Opening of the Parliament, 1908. ³⁴

³⁴ <https://danyalask.wordpress.com/2017/05/21/merzifon-anadolu-koleji-anatolia-college/>

During the wars, from the Balkan wars to First World War and the ‘National War’ (1912–22), the honeymoon between American Protestants and Young Turks turned into deep distrust, mutual accusations and bitter hatred (Kieser, 2002).³⁵ Early in the year 1915, Turkish officials, aided and assisted by the Germans, determined to eliminate the Armenian question from the area they controlled. At that time Merzifon had a population of at least 12.000 Armenians. The College continued in session until May, 1916, with Greek, Russian and Turkish students in attendance. As mentioned above on the 10th of May, 1916, all the grounds and buildings were occupied by the Turkish officials for the purposes of a military hospital, and the Americans on the ground, ten adults and four children, under the compulsion of armed and mounted police, were put on the road for Constantinople (White, 1861). Many were exiled but the protracted negotiations (Miss Willard and Miss Gage volunteered to do so) resulted in permission for 48 exiles could be brought back to Merzifon. For thirty-four years Miss Charlotte R. Willard has been connected with Merzifon Station as missionary teacher, principal, or general worker. As principal of Anatolia Girls’ School, she endeared herself to pupils and teachers and won their deepest respect and admiration. During the war years, she kept the school open till 1919 (ARIT, 2019).³⁶

Merzifon was occupied by the British in March 1919. As Bayram mentions (Bayram, 2006) the influence of the American College has increased automatically. In June 1919, George White who was opposed the decision to withdraw 80 British troops from Merzifon went to Istanbul and managed to cancel the withdrawal decision. At Merzifon the Kemalists ordered all but two Americans to leave. Anatolia College had an orphanage in mid-1919; the college functioned under George White's ³⁷ leadership both as a school and relief center since autumn 1919 (Grabill, 1971).³⁸

35 Grabill said (Grabill, 1971) intervention in the First World War by the United States led many of its citizens to believe that their nation needed a new road away from non-involvement in disorders of the Old World. Of some strength in the attempted move were Presbyterian and Congregational leaders of mission churches and schools in the Ottoman Empire and Persia. These administrators sought mandates by the United States over part or all of Turkey.

36 Those were critical years, but she bore up remarkably courageously under the difficulties and limitations, till the Near East Relief came in, and she went home for a needed furlough. However in 1922 she was back and helped in sending the orphans out of the country. When school opened, she was accepted as the Director of the Station. She had to leave the Station on the February 1930 (ABCFM, 1930)

37 George White's missionary career had begun at Marsovan in 1890, after graduating from both Congregational Grinnell College in Iowa and Chicago Theological Seminary and pastoring a Congregational church for three years (Grabill, 1971).

38 Wilson to relief official John B. Lamer, March 1, 1921, Wilson MSS; James L. Barton, Survey of the Fields: 1920-1921 (Boston: Congregational House, 1921); minutes of the Near East Relief committee in Armenia, enclosed in a letter of Moser to the State Department, December 29, 1920, Decimal File 860J.48/77, State Department Archives; White, Adventuring with Anatolia College, 95-109; Riggs Diary, March 24, 1921.

In 1927, nearly a century had passed since the American Board began evangelism among Armenians. During these decades education and social service became part of the Protestant movement in the Near East. The situation of 1927 brought from Board leaders their traditional hope that the future would provide new opportunities. Board officials were not ready to surrender to adversity after massive setbacks during the First World War and its aftermath (Grabill, 1971).

During and after the First World War, the missionaries' human networks and social visions tragically broke down; the religionists lost much after Kemalism had swept over Anatolia. In a statement issued by the Great Leader Atatürk on 29 October 1923 to the French journalist Maurice Perrot, he said: *Sometimes we have seen that foreign schools pass the task limits, they quit their roles, they follow the aims of informal propaganda and they rely on non-Turkish elements. ... As we do not have any hostile feelings against foreigners, we are willing to engage with them intimately. .. Foreigners can come to our country, they will be accepted here on condition that they do not interfere in our freedom. .. We have always walked from the east to the west ... if our bodies are in the east, our ideas are directed towards the west.*³⁹

As Kieser (Kieser, 2002) mentions mission in Turkey is a delicate topic for several reasons, not only because of its real or supposed link with Western hegemony, but especially because mission was concerned with minorities and had a vision of integrating them into a new form of society which was in some ways diametrically opposed to the ideas of the ruling groups. Instead of homogenizing society and strengthening its Turco-Muslim unity, missions were differentiating society in religious, ethnic and social terms. According to Kieser (Kieser, 2002), Protestant missions supported religious minorities such as the Armenians and they were not only a modernizing factor outside the big centers through their schools and hospitals, but also clear promoters of federalist solutions regarding the future of the crisis-ridden Kurdo-Armenian eastern provinces of the Empire.

Despite everything, American Board's strong contribution to modern education in Turkey is inevitable. The existing few buildings of the missionary still in the service of the culture and education of the country are the '*collective material realities*' which hosts the collective memories of American Protestants, Armenians and Turks in late 1890s and early 1900s. Halbwachs (Halbwachs, 1992) has argued that a historical site as a heritage can be considered as a '*material reality*' in order to resonate a social or collective memory in the architectural representation of a city.⁴⁰ Relating with the

39 Last June, in Ankara, Ragıp Nurettin Bey said: "We need practical schools in Anatolia. Let us see what you can do in Talas and Merzifon. If you develop these schools in a way that is a real help to Turkey, you may open other schools in the Interior." (ABCFM, 1930).

40 Architectural theorist, Aldo Rossi (Rossi, 1982) has anthropomorphized the city, in a sense that the city has a memory that remembers through its buildings. Therefore, for Rossi the preservation of heritage sites and buildings is parallel with the preservation of memories in the human mind and can serve as a preservation of a nation's urban identity.

memories of the nation, Nora (Pierre, 1992) has discussed how certain sites, by provoking emotional effects, may embody some memories of the nation and argued that the self-reflexivity of memorial sites may be necessary to embody certain memories because the real memory had withered away in modern society. As sometimes the place of a certain memory changes through time and the nation no longer live in the environments of memory. For that reason to save and sustain the collective memory of any society, the *collective material realities* in hand need to be preserved with care. To conclude, as collective material realities, the few mission buildings in Merzifon are not only the witnesses of a period, but they are the collective memories of the city that help not losing the city's consciousness.

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