

MARTHA JANE DALZEL RIGGS: AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY WIFE  
IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Melisa Korkmaz, certify that

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## ABSTRACT

### Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs: An American Missionary Wife in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire

This thesis explores 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 thesis 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. Mission work for females, taking its cue from the nineteenth-century American domestic discourse, of which Riggs is a leading example, connected education at home to the character of a nation. Correspondingly, the thesis 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. The thesis also highlights her detailed observations of her stays in several countries for historians 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 lives of Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs and other female missionaries, the thesis suggests the need to reevaluate the impact of missionary wives and, eventually, women in the world of missionary work, which remained underappreciated at a time when a gender-based hierarchy played a defining role, and is still uncelebrated today.

## ÖZET

Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs: On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Amerikalı Bir Misyoner Eşi

Bu tez, 1832 – 1887 yılları arasında American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions'a (ABCFM) bağlı olarak önce Yunanistan'da sonrasında çoğunlukla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda çalışan misyoner eşi Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs'in az bilinen faaliyetlerini ve yazılarını incelemektedir. Riggs ailesinin arşivlerinden ve birincil kaynaklardan yola çıkarak, Riggs'in American Board ve çevresine yaptığı katkıların önemini göstermeyi; aynı zamanda Riggs'in üstlendiği misyoner, anne ve eş görevleri arasındaki sınırları tarihsel açıdan sorgulamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Kadınlar için misyonerlik, Riggs'in de önemli bir örnek oluşturduğu 19. yüzyıl Amerikan aile içi söyleminden (domestic discourse) yola çıkarak evde verilen eğitim ile bir ülkenin karakterini ilişkilendirir. Buradan hareketle tez; aile, çocukların sağlığı ve eğitimi gibi eve yönelik konularla misyonerlik konularının iç içe geçtiği mektupların zengin içeriğini ortaya çıkarır. Aynı zamanda tez, 19. yüzyılda dünyadaki ve özellikle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki gelişmeleri ve değişimleri daha iyi anlamak isteyen tarihçiler için yine Riggs'in mektuplarında yer alan çeşitli ülkelerdeki detaylı gözlemlerine dikkat çekmektedir. Daha geniş açıdan bakıldığında ise, Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs'in ve diğer kadın misyonerlerin yaşamlarından hareketle, cinsiyet temelli hiyerarşinin kilit rol oynadığı dönemlerde yeteri kadar değer görmeyen ve günümüzde hala fark edilmeyen misyoner eşleri ve misyonerlik faaliyetlerinde kadınların etkisini yeniden değerlendirmeyi önermektedir.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the activities, writings, and impact of an influential American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) missionary wife, Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs. It focuses on her active years as a Board worker from 1832 to 1887. Although her work has received little recognition to this day, the rich descriptions and observations in her personal correspondence contribute, not only to the history of the American Board, but also to that of Ottoman society in the nineteenth century.

Throughout her 55 years spent in missionary work, neither Martha herself nor her deeds were featured in newspapers in any comparable way to those of her husband, Elias Riggs.<sup>1</sup> Obscured by the fame of the widely celebrated missionary and scholar Elias Riggs, Martha never received such recognition or coverage throughout or after her life. A researcher needs to dig into the Riggs family's archives to get to know Martha and to understand the details of her life in the struggling Ottoman Empire, as well as her possible contributions to the Board itself. This thesis aims to shed light on Martha Riggs as a significant contributor to the Board and its network and to question the boundaries between a qualified missionary, a mother and a wife. While doing so, the thesis aims to uncover significant details provided by Martha in her accounts concerning the events and changes in the world and in the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century. From a broader perspective, taking Martha and her contemporaries as examples, the

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Republican* (n.d.), *Christian Herald* (XLIX/36) & *Leslie's Weekly* (1899, June 8). In SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 7(a).

thesis looks at the position and impact of missionary wives in the world of missionary work, in which a gender-based hierarchy played a determining role.

There are several reasons why I have chosen this topic. First, while most of the American Board Archives consist of official documents and administrative records, the Riggs family archive yields a unique collection of private correspondence, including Martha's personal letters to her family, with rich details regarding missionary circles and their activities, relations with non-Muslim communities, life in Istanbul, epidemics, disasters and numerous other details. In this respect, Martha's extraordinarily detailed personal letters and her correspondence, especially with Elias Riggs, provide an alternative reading of mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman social history. Second, her letters also help the researcher question the boundaries between a woman's multiple identities as a missionary, a mother and a wife. Martha's industrious work at home and in missionary circles offers an example of a nineteenth-century woman whose family and work responsibilities are intermingled. Third, due to the nature of their missionary work, Martha and Elias travelled both within the country and abroad, sometimes together and often separately. It is in these times of separation that Martha provides us with the richest details concerning not only local matters but also more global ones. This is particularly evident with respect to her trips to London and to the United States. The former becomes the occasion for her to observe and comment on Crystal Palace in London, the great exhibition set up by Prince Albert, a landmark of cultural and art history; the latter allows her to mention the 1868 presidential election, when the Republican Ulysses Grant defeated the Democratic candidate. At a local level, she expresses her disappointment to Elias about a crisis at the Yenikapı chapel in which the American missionaries and a group of Armenian pastors fell into strong

disagreement about the leadership and management of the church.<sup>2</sup> Finally, although she calls the Ottoman Armenian and Greeks “natives,” her lengthy residence in Turkey and her adaptation to her surroundings make one wonder who the real natives were, the foreigners or the locals, as Martha’s family blends into the multicultural texture of the Ottoman Empire.

I have found this topic significant because it offers a complementary reading of nineteenth-century social history in both Ottoman territories and abroad. In addition to local reporters and to the memoirs of expatriates or travelers, the accounts of the American Board missionaries offer detailed descriptions of various peoples within a settlement and provide numerous details concerning daily life. Since they had come on a “mission,” they were sharp observers who had to adjust to their environment very quickly. They were thus able to give a thorough analysis of events and the current status of their environment. From Martha’s accounts, one can get a full picture of how daily life flowed in an ordinary Istanbul household, what kind of epidemics and illnesses they were dealing with and what kind of medication they were treated with, what kind of servants, neighbors and landlords they were interacting with, how they could adapt themselves to seasonal habits of the native residents (for instance, they started going to summer residences called *sayfiye*), how often they sent letters to each other and how often ships would leave Istanbul, what kinds of goods could be purchased in Pera, how many houses were burned in a specific fire, etc. Moreover, her personal reflections on family matters, on the education of her children, her affectionate care of her husband and, most of all, her instant switch from a health problem to a missionary visit in her letters illustrate a

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<sup>2</sup> SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D013.

profile of a nineteenth-century woman of Western culture and origin and of a nineteenth-century missionary wife whose work and family life are closely woven.

This topic also helps us understand the dominating American Protestant view of the era, domesticism, which underlines the significant role that women play in proselytizing foreign lands. At the end of the seventeenth century, “writers and preachers began to idealize mothers as the ‘chief transmitters of religious and moral values.’”<sup>3</sup> This awareness eventually strengthens the arguments “in favor of improving education for girls and young women.”<sup>4</sup> The American domesticity discourse had risen with the view that “progress in any given society was associated with the status and education of women.”<sup>5</sup> Evangelical Americans considered themselves to be the champions of progress “as a Protestant Republic” in which educated Protestant Christian women bear the responsibility of building the character of both the home and the nation as they raise future generations.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the Anglo-American mission was “to domesticate and Christianize non-Protestant, non-European communities across the United States and around the globe.”<sup>7</sup>

On a larger scale, this documentation shows how the missionary works developed through yearly efforts from the first decades of the American Board’s settlement in Izmir to its booming ventures throughout the vast Ottoman lands. By 1860, the organization had already reached a total of 23 stations, 81 outstations, and 109 schools with over 3,300 students.<sup>8</sup> The ABCFM would thus become the most

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<sup>3</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies: American Protestant Women and the Orient in the Nineteenth Century*, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 92.

<sup>5</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity: Women, Mission, and Nation Building in Ottoman Europe, 1832-1872.” 270.

<sup>6</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 270.

<sup>7</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 270.

<sup>8</sup> Digital Library for International Research website, “A Legacy Transformed: Historical American Missionary Institutions in Turkey.”

significant contemporary American presence in the area by the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, the Board's growth had not been a smooth one. The Riggs family as Protestant missionaries had been forced to leave Greece due to the ecclesiastical and political measures taken by the government in the late 1830's. Meanwhile, according to their fellow missionary Cyrus Hamlin's account,<sup>9</sup> they were also almost deported from the Ottoman lands towards the end of Sultan Mahmud II's reign during the late 1830's. Even by the late 1860's, when they had already been through much turmoil and had been granted *millet* status by the government, they still had to deal with internal difficulties such as the conflict at the Yenikapı church or the adjustment of the Bulgarian station. Martha's letters provide a precious close-up view into the transition of a small-scale initiative into a major organization, which would influence Turkey for almost one and a half centuries.

My research relies mainly on the Riggs family archives kept in the American Board archive collection, held at SALT Research. The family archive consists of five diaries and over 2,000 documents consisting mostly of personal notes and of letters grouped in 12 stacks. The diaries belong to her deceased daughters and some of the letter stacks consist of Elias' sermon notes or condolence letters received from friends and the missionary circle. Yet, a great number of these stacks also include Martha's correspondence, mostly with Elias, but also with Cyrus Hamlin and others. Few exceptions aside, the letter stacks are grouped neither chronologically nor thematically. A dozen of chronologically ordered letters of a specific year may be interrupted by another dozen of letters from a very different period. Some of them

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<sup>9</sup> Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, 34-36. Also in his letter to Martha Riggs, 1860. SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004005.

were classified following a reverse chronology. This makes it hard for a researcher to stay in the flow and follow the course of events.

The method I followed was to read each letter and take notes, including the document's code, date and location, and all significant details, especially those highlighting Martha's life as a missionary, as a wife and as a mother. After I finished reading the letters, I sorted my notes in chronological order and eliminated those that were irrelevant to the topic (for instance, Elias Riggs's sermon notes, or a diary kept by a daughter). When I started to write my thesis, these sorted notes helped me save time, since it would have been impossible to go through the entire archive. I have also found other sources from ARIT and the Ottoman State Archives some of which are indirectly relevant to my topic. Books published by contemporary missionaries (such as William Goodell and Cyrus Hamlin), Elias Riggs' unpublished memoirs, as well as the Board's periodical, *The Missionary Herald*, have helped shed light on the period.

As for the state of the field, there are studies, books, and a few theses on the American Board; yet, these focus mostly on the foundation of the American Board institutions or on their later action at the turn of the twentieth century. Biographical highlights have generally concentrated on Elias Riggs,<sup>10</sup> Cyrus Hamlin,<sup>11</sup> Mary Mills Patrick<sup>12</sup> and similar veterans or founders of educational establishments. Aside from Barbara Reeves-Ellington's essay<sup>13</sup> on the American discourse of domesticity in nation-building in the Ottoman Empire, where she highlights Martha's role as an

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<sup>10</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and "Nominal Christians": Elias Riggs (1810-1901) and American Missionary Activities in the Ottoman Empire."

<sup>11</sup> See Stevens and Stevens, *Against the Devil's Current: The Life and Times of Cyrus Hamlin*. Also see Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 63-83.

<sup>12</sup> See Goffman, "From Religious to American Proselytism: Mary Mills Patrick and the 'Sanctification of the Intellect'," 84-121.

<sup>13</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 269-292.

influential example in Bulgarian nation-building, there has been no comprehensive academic work on Martha and her lifetime cause. In this respect, the present study is the first of its kind. Mehmet Ali Doğan's comprehensive Ph.D. dissertation on Elias Riggs has been a useful source to track the family's and the Board's timeline. Barbara Reeves-Ellington's work<sup>14</sup> on Mary Mills Patrick, a woman missionary and founder of the American College for girls in Istanbul, also broadly studied by Carolyn Goffman,<sup>15</sup> offered me a contemporary example of Martha Riggs. Other secondary sources such as Dana L. Robert's examples of missionary wives in the early phase of the American Board's mission to the Ottoman Empire, Lisa Joy Pruitt's highlight on activities of the missionary wives, Cemal Yetkiner's and Ellen Fleischmann's studies on missionary wives Ann Bird and Abigail Goodell, Fleischmann's further account on female education in Ottoman Syria, and P.E. Shaw's account of American missionaries in Greece in the 1830's have all provided me with much insight regarding Martha's position as a nineteenth-century American missionary wife and helped me question how much Martha's life was comparable to that of her contemporaries.

So far, I have observed that Martha's correspondence covers seven major themes: family, health, weather, missionary traffic, personal reflections on what it takes to be a missionary, missionary matters, and details concerning her environment. I integrated these themes around the three issues of Martha as a missionary, as a wife and as a mother. Accordingly, I organized the thesis in five chapters: Introduction, Martha Riggs as a missionary, Martha Riggs as a wife and a mother, Martha Riggs as a witness to her time, and Conclusion. The first chapter begins with three brief narratives; the history of the American Board, an overview of

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<sup>14</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College," 53-71.

<sup>15</sup> Goffman, "From Religious to American Proselytism," 84-121.

the position of women in the American Board, and the life story of Martha Riggs, respectively. These introductory sections are meant to enable the reader to situate women within the general context of the mission and Martha as a missionary wife in particular. The second chapter focuses on Martha's work in the mission. The challenges that Martha encountered as a missionary, her work, to what extent she exemplifies her contemporaries, her accounts of missionary matters and her central position in the midst of a flow of missionary traffic in the Ottoman Empire are analyzed in detail within the chapter. The third chapter starts with Martha's personal reflections on what it takes to be a missionary and focuses on Martha's life as a wife and mother. Devotion to her family emerges from her letters, especially those written to her husband Elias Riggs largely during their times of separation. While Martha recounts her travels, her encounters with various people, her health, domestic matters, and occasionally muses about their life together as a family, she also fulfills all of her obligations as a missionary. The chapter discusses whether, in Martha's case, it is possible to separate her missionary identity and duties from her family life and habits. The fourth chapter highlights her observations in her travel accounts, especially to England in 1859-60 and to the United States in 1868-69. Her minute recounting of daily life in Istanbul, London and the United States also provide rich clues with respect to nineteenth-century social history. The fifth chapter is the conclusion section, where I review Martha's life and deeds as a missionary, a wife, and a mother, with each of these roles and responsibilities apparently intermingled. It also considers how Martha and her rich accounts contribute to nineteenth-century social history within the American Board network, in the Ottoman Empire, and in parts of the Western world. Along with examples of missionary wives, it discusses

the significant role of missionary wives in the rigidly hierarchical and gendered world of missionary work and action.

### 1.1 A Brief history of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and its operations in the Ottoman Empire

The history of the American Board would take a couple of volumes to cover its 200-year lifespan and its vast number of missionaries sent to various locations. For the sake of staying within the scope of this thesis, a brief summary of the Board and its operations in the Ottoman Empire will be given, instead, in order to understand how the Board was founded, what it set out to do and what it has done.<sup>16</sup>

What makes the American Board distinct is that it “was the first foreign mission board founded in the United States, as well as being the largest in the nineteenth century.”<sup>17</sup> Originally an organization of Massachusetts and Connecticut Congregationalists, the Board avoided “the term *Congregationalist* in its title and recruited Presbyterian and Dutch reformed members until they established their own foreign mission boards” and eventually functioned as “an interdenominational foreign mission society for Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and for some Reformed churches.”<sup>18</sup>

The foundations of the American Board lie in the formation of a society, “The Brethren”, by a dozen young college students led by Samuel J. Mills in Williamstown, whose objective was “to effect in the persons of its members a

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed history of the Board, see Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*.

<sup>17</sup> Doğan, “From New England into New Lands: The Beginning of a Long History,” 8.

<sup>18</sup> Doğan, “From New England into New Lands,” 8.

mission or missions to the heathen.”<sup>19</sup> The Brethren became a powerful force for missions in Williams College and later at Andover Seminary “as with the coming of some of its founders to that institution in 1810 it found there its natural home and seat of influence.”<sup>20</sup> It was the period of religious revival following the Revolutionary War, after which “the tides of religious life had reached a low ebb”.<sup>21</sup> Then came the religious revival at the turn of the century, which “cleared away the fogs of infidelity, revived Christianity, founded Andover Seminary, and built Park Street Church, Boston, came also this first foreign missionary society of America.”<sup>22</sup> “The religious revival” in William E. Strong’s narrative refers to the Second Great Awakening, which is a “succession from an earlier revival moment, namely the First Great Awakening”, that emerged in the 1730’s and “influenced political and social thought, and transformed the religious and social life of the colonies before the American Revolution”.<sup>23</sup> The Second Great Awakening was rather a religious movement, which grew as a reaction to deism of the Enlightenment and the decline of interest in religion during the American War of Independence. It was also the main influence on its citizens for embracing religion, boosting church attendance, and founding several new denominations and missionary societies.<sup>24</sup> It was in the middle of this Second Great Awakening movement that initiations of four Andover Seminary students, Adoniram Judson, Jr., Samuel Nott, Jr., Samuel J. Mills and Samuel Newell, founded the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign

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<sup>19</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Doğan, “From New England into New Lands,” 4.

<sup>24</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 19-20.

Missions.<sup>25</sup> On September 5, 1810, The American Board held its first meeting at Farmington, Connecticut, where they “elected officers and an executive or Prudential Committee, adopted rules of action, and issued a stately appeal to the Christian public.”<sup>26</sup> After Adoniram Judson’s visit to London, whose purpose was to join forces with London Missionary Society but was never able to do so, the second annual meeting of the Board at Worcester on September 18, 1811, officially appointed Judson, Nott, Newell and Hall as the missionaries of the Board and meanwhile raised funds from various parts of the country.<sup>27</sup> The ordination ceremony at Tabernacle Church in Salem was of a mesmerizing kind, as William E. Strong narrates, with not only representative people of Salem present, but visitors came from far and near, and among these young missionaries were two young ladies, Ann Haseltine Judson and Harriet Atwood Newell, both of whom “were of well-reputed families, fully educated according to the standards of the time, and socially prominent in the region” and who attracted further attention and deepened the excitement of the ordination day.<sup>28</sup> Soon after the ordination, the missionaries set sail from the United States to India. Unexpected events in this first excursion would make wives of Judson and Newell heroines in the missionary circle as will be seen in Chapter 2, and the mission itself a failure. Yet the American Board would strive to promote its foreign missions,<sup>29</sup> of which the Ottoman Empire would be a major part.

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<sup>25</sup> Doğan, “From New England into New Lands,” 7. Also in Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 7-10.

<sup>26</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 11-13.

<sup>28</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 14-15.

<sup>29</sup> Doğan (2013) informs that by 1819, the American Board had 23 missionaries and many assistants under its direction in Bombay, Ceylon, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and among American Indian tribes (Cherokees and Choctaws). Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 31.

Since its early years, The American Board felt strong motivation to enter the Ottoman territories as the missionaries thought the Ottoman Christianity “lacked true Christian virtue and represented a deteriorated form of the religion.”<sup>30</sup> Even in 1819, the Prudential Committee wrote in its report how “in a state of deplorable ignorance and degradation” Jews and Christians are in Palestine, Syria, the Provinces of Asia Minor, Georgia and Persia.<sup>31</sup> The Board had already assigned Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk as missionaries to Jerusalem who visited Malta and Izmir, gathered information, “survey the new field in the Ottoman Empire, and keep in communication with Boston.”<sup>32</sup> Early deaths of Parsons in Alexandria and Fisk in Beirut led many others to follow these two American missionary pioneers with Jonas King replacing Levi Parsons and Daniel Temple being sent to Malta to establish a printing press in 1822. The Istanbul veteran William Goodell and Isaac Bird, with their wives, would soon also go to Malta, where the mission press printed a total of some 350.000 copies of books and tracts.<sup>33</sup> In 1833, the Board would transfer the mission press to Beirut for Arabic and Izmir for Armenian, Greek and Turkish as two separate presses.<sup>34</sup> This transfer would rejuvenate the Izmir station which was initially founded in 1826.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile missionaries King, Fisk, Bird and Goodell would be sent to eastern Mediterranean and established a mission station in Beirut where the Board founded its first school in the city in 1824.<sup>36</sup> Among these missionaries, Jonas King, who

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<sup>30</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 34.

<sup>31</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 34.

<sup>32</sup> Doğan, “From New England into New Lands,” 13.

<sup>33</sup> Doğan, “From New England into New Lands,” 15-16.

<sup>34</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 43.

<sup>35</sup> Doğan, “The Missionary Activities of Elias Riggs in İzmir,” 24.

<sup>36</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 44.

arrived at Istanbul in June 1826, would be “the first American missionary in the capital of the Ottoman Empire.” Yet it would be William Goodell who would establish a mission station of the American Board in Istanbul in 1831.<sup>37</sup> Before the Riggs’s arrival to the Ottoman and Mediterranean field in the early 1830’s, the missionaries in the field were “Isaac Bird, George B. Whiting and their wives in Beirut, William Goodell, H.G.O. Dwight and their wives among the Greeks and Armenians in Istanbul, William G. Schaufler among the Jews in Istanbul, Jonas King in Greece.”<sup>38</sup> In the 1840s, the Board put an end to its Greek department in the Ottoman Empire and shifted its focus primarily on Armenians instead, which eventually led to formation of “Mission to the Armenians” with its five stations in Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Trabzon and Erzurum.<sup>39</sup> By 1850, the press, once operated from Izmir, was moved to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, along with Elias Riggs and Nathan Benjamin. The grounds of this transfer lay not only in the aim of the Board to benefit the strategic position of the capital city but also in the recognition of the Protestant *millet* by an imperial edict issued by Sultan Abdülmecid in 1850.<sup>40</sup> The edict eased the way for the Board to establish schools and churches, and by 1852, the Board’s operations reached several missions in the Empire, “including *Mission to Greece* (Athens), *the Mission to the Jews* (Salonica and Istanbul), *the Mission to the Armenians* (Istanbul, Izmir, Merzifon, Trabzon, Erzurum and Antep), *the Syrian Mission* (Beirut, Abeih, Tripoli, Aleppo, Hasbeiya and Sidon), *the Assyrian Mission* (Musul and Diyarbakır), and *the Mission to the*

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<sup>37</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 51.

<sup>38</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 65.

<sup>39</sup> Doğan, “The Missionary Activities of Elias Riggs in İzmir,” 37.

<sup>40</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 112-115.

*Nestorians* (Urmiya, Seir and Gawar).”<sup>41</sup> In 1859, the mission to the Bulgarians was initiated and by 1871 the Board organized it as a separate mission “The European Turkey Mission” with four stations, Istanbul, Stara Zagora (Eski Zağra), Plovdiv and Samokov.<sup>42</sup> By 1860, the American Board had gained extensive experience regarding the field, as they printed scriptures in the vernaculars and raised locals as pastors to be placed in their *out-stations*, which was vital for their evangelical purposes. Also, the impact of women on the locals had been observed by the Board authorities which would yield to the organization of Woman's Boards of Missions in association with the ABCFM in 1868 to promote work with women in the mission field.<sup>43</sup> Beside kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, the 1860s and 1870s saw the establishment of many advanced colleges: Robert College (1863), the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut (1866), the American College for Girls in Istanbul (1871), Central Turkey College in Antep (1876), Euphrates College in Harput (1878), followed by Central Turkey Girls’ College in Maraş (1880), Anatolia College in Merzifon (1886) and International College in Izmir (1898) in the later decades.<sup>44</sup> Operations of the American Board reached such an extensive level that it decided to transfer its Syrian mission to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in 1870.<sup>45</sup> The Board eventually grouped its work into four missions for organizational purposes. “After separation into northern and southern Armenia in 1857 ... a further and threefold division into Eastern, Western, and Central Turkey was effected.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 117.

<sup>42</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 121-122.

<sup>43</sup> Harvard University Library website, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961: Guide.”

<sup>44</sup> Doğan, “Missionary Schools” in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, 387.

<sup>45</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 136.

<sup>46</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 200.

The fourth mission, European Turkey Mission was formally organized in a meeting in 1871 with Elias Riggs presenting the first bound of volume of the Bulgarian Bible.<sup>47</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, The American Board had 177 missionaries, 867 local laborers, 125 churches, 12,428 members, 449 schools and 20,604 students in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>48</sup> Until the First World War, almost one-third of the Board's operations worldwide were centered in the Ottoman Empire, "and the ABCFM was undoubtedly the most significant contemporary American presence in the area."<sup>49</sup> The First World War had the American Board enterprises downsized and the following decades saw its ongoing shrinkage until its closure in 2010.

One of the many noteworthy aspects of the American Board is that it acted not only as a mission to found schools and hospitals to spread Protestantism but also as a large-scale corporation with benefits to its employees, resembling those of today. Correspondences between Martha and Elias reveal that the Board was covering educational expenses of the children of its missionaries as Martha's letter to Elias in 1868 addresses the annual payment of \$100 for each missionary children for their education until they are 18 years old.<sup>50</sup> Compared to today's corporations with health and family care policies for their employees, the Board's management could be considered as quite sophisticated for a mid-nineteenth-century organization. The next section reviews the position of women during the nineteenth century in this large-scale corporation.

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<sup>47</sup> Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 214.

<sup>48</sup> The numbers belong to the year 1895. To see the growth of the American Board from 1850 to 1904 in 5-year intervals, see Table 1 in Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 167.

<sup>49</sup> Digital Library for International Research website, "American Board Archives, Guide."

<sup>50</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Bible House, New York, August 4, 1868. SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B038.

## 1.2. Position of women in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

Since the subject of this thesis is a woman, it is vital to look at the early stages of American women in mission, American Board's perception of and approach to women as well as how the scholars see women missionaries. The first time that women were named for ministerial roles was February 15, 1812, when Reverend Jonathan Allen preached a sermon to send two females to India, designating these missionary wives as "assistant missionaries" to serve as role models for women in the ministry in the early nineteenth century.<sup>51</sup> The women in mission were expected to help their husbands in spreading the Gospel and to evangelize the local women, "enlightening their minds, raising their characters, and challenging their social customs," But the American Board's decision to send these women off to foreign lands also meant that "child bearing, child rearing, and household management in a hostile foreign culture were implicitly included in their list of responsibilities."<sup>52</sup> There was an initial difficulty in constructing a clear gendered women mission theory; as Dana L. Robert addresses, the early nineteenth-century women "seldom wrote theologies of mission" unlike their male counterparts. Instead, "they wrote letters and kept journals that reveal a rich thought world and set of assumptions about women's roles in the missionary task. The activities of missionary wives were not random: they were part of a mission strategy that gave women a particular role" in spreading the Gospel.<sup>53</sup> Eventually these letters and journals have become major sources to revise general theories on mission history.

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<sup>51</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 1.

Lisa Joy Pruitt draws attention to the voluminous letters that missionary wives wrote. These letters mentioned “the ‘plight’ of ‘degraded Oriental women’ in images and stories designed to cause American women both to reflect on their privileged social position and to desire to use that position to impart comparable privileges to their ‘Eastern sisters’.”<sup>54</sup> As these letters maintained correspondence with the mission supporters, Pruitt addresses to their significance for they made it to missionary magazines.<sup>55</sup>

In their compilation “Competing Kingdoms”, Barbara Reeves-Ellington et.al. encourage scholars to consider women missionaries as “people who reinvented the meanings of American nationalism and imperialism as they negotiated competing nationalisms and imperialisms in varying colonial settings” instead of a “homogeneous group of cultural imperialists”.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Protestant women missionaries shaped fundamental aspects of the nineteenth-century American mission story as they dealt with the construction of their gendered identity, with their missionary agendas and “with the spirit of their own nationalism as it fostered and competed with local nationalisms”; this eventually led to the creation of a distinctively “American form of empire...that was based on cultural institutions rather than on military and economic might.”<sup>57</sup>

Education was thought to be the best way to evangelize locals; thus, the missionary women were to be educated participants.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it is no coincidence that many early missionary wives were “the daughters of evangelical clergymen”

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<sup>54</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 85.

<sup>55</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 85.

<sup>56</sup> Reeves-Ellington, Sklar and Shemo, *Competing Kingdoms*, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Reeves-Ellington, Sklar and Shemo, *Competing Kingdoms*, 13.

<sup>58</sup> For further information on understanding developments in women’s education in the nineteenth century, see Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 91-92.

with “their high degree of education relative to other women of the time.”<sup>59</sup> The American domesticity discourse was the key element in the Protestant evangelical understanding which gave women the primary responsibility to educate their children, and thus, shape the character of future generations, starting in their homes. As Jane H. Hunter points out, mainstream women in the midcentury and beyond “drew their strength and their identity from an ideal of Christian womanhood that gained its highest glory from its ability to exercise power indirectly through suasion and influence.”<sup>60</sup> Yet, American women themselves were not fully sure whether they were exceptional in practice, as Ian Tyrrell points out, due to gender subordination that they shared with less advanced people; however, American women reformers considered that only in the United States was evangelical Protestantism fully developed.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly they created a hierarchy where evangelical Christianity occupied the summit above other Protestants, Orthodox and Catholic Christians descending towards Islam and other kinds of faith, with the outcome of giving them the feeling that they have a right to proselytize, and American women could aid this purpose by strengthening the home, and thus, American morality.<sup>62</sup>

The American Board, too, was a supporter of the American domesticity discourse as they planned Protestant reformation in the Eastern Christian sects of the Ottoman Empire where the female element was key to serving the purpose.<sup>63</sup> For women, “the opportunity to carry the good news abroad offered them extra benefits that addressed their gendered location in American society” such as a respectable

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<sup>59</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 8 and 15.

<sup>60</sup> Hunter, “Women’s Mission in Historical Perspective: American Identity and Christian Internationalism,” 25.

<sup>61</sup> Tyrrell, “Women, Missions, and Empire,” 48.

<sup>62</sup> Tyrrell, “Women, Missions, and Empire,” 48.

<sup>63</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Women, Mission, and Nation Building,” 273.

work and an alternative path away from some of the gender constraints of their own culture.<sup>64</sup>

Excluded from the work of preaching, which was with rare exceptions a male preserve, women missionaries engaged in the kinds of work most subject to accusations of cultural imperialism. Education, moral reform, social work, and medical work aimed to transform the cultures of host countries around the world where American women lived and worked. Across denominations women missionaries engaged in projects to “save” women and children.<sup>65</sup>

The distinction between male missionaries and missionary wives was apparent in the American Board publications as well. The publications “positioned male missionary correspondence within a public realm, presenting it as official reportage from commissioned agents to the organization” whereas the correspondences of women, as Mary Kupiec Cayton argues, “took the form of letters to family and friends” as they expose the reader to an “intimate exchange.”<sup>66</sup> For Cayton, “while men reported on the logistics of the mission and the formal progress of the party, the women focused mainly on feelings about departure for a strange land and longings for home and family.”<sup>67</sup> Cayton is correct in her analysis that reflections and feelings on various lands and family, as can be seen in Martha’s correspondences, play a significant part. Yet, as Martha’s correspondences do prove, women missionaries’ records also include particulars of a strange land, unique details about its people, lifestyle, cultural environment, epidemics and treatments, new inventions of the time, missionary meetings, latest news and responses to any missionary matter that contribute significantly to historiography of both the mission itself and the strange land in question. As the following chapters of this thesis will

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<sup>64</sup> Reeves-Ellington, Sklar and Shemo, *Competing Kingdoms*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Reeves-Ellington, Sklar and Shemo, *Competing Kingdoms*, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Cayton “Canonizing Harriet Newell,” 81-82.

<sup>67</sup> Cayton “Canonizing Harriet Newell,” 82.

show, Martha's account on such particulars sheds light on many details of cultural history of both the American Board and the status of local empires of the time, namely the Ottoman Empire, the United States and England. Furthermore, since Martha is a leading example of American domestic discourse, the content of her letters is made up of domestic matters – such as family, well-being and the education of her children – and missionary matters both woven together. As she, in the same letter, skips from a health issue of a family member to particulars of a missionary meeting that she attended in London where they discuss strategies of mission on an open map, she proves that her records count much more than simply feelings about departure for a strange land or longings for home and family.

Therefore, the position of women in the American Board structure is complicated; they have an eminent role in reaching out the locals, specifically women and children and even their households, where male missionaries are unable to enter. Yet, women rank lower in the male-dominant missionary hierarchy. The progress from missionary wives to single missionary ladies throughout the nineteenth century could not help to break the gender-biased structure. What this structure left to us are few women missionaries who could have enjoyed a limited amount of public recognition compared to their male counterparts for whom many publications and studies were prepared.

### 1.3. A Brief life story of Martha Riggs

Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs served the American Board for 55 years of her 77 years of life span. She was born in 1810 in New Jersey and raised as a devoted Christian, having enrolled in a female seminary. As a young lady trained under such influences, she directed her thoughts to the foreign missionary work and wanted to engage

personally in it. In early 1832, she was invited to marry Rev. Elias Riggs to become his companion as a missionary to Greece and she accepted it.<sup>68</sup> In the last quarter of the same year, Elias was ordained as a missionary of the Board and the newlyweds embarked on their lifetime service to the Mediterranean in 1832 starting from Athens and Argos in Greece and later being transferred to Izmir and Istanbul respectively.

Back in the early phases of the Board, women were not ordained as missionaries but were married to the missionaries as their lifelong companions to assist them in their duties in both missionary work and family responsibilities.<sup>69</sup> Although this gives Martha a secondary role in the missionary hierarchy, her deeds and accounts, written richly in her personal letters, proves that she worked as hard as any male missionary. While she was engaged in missionary visits both in Turkey and abroad, she fulfilled her family duties raising and educating four surviving children out of eight. On their first mission in Athens, she acquired a thorough grammatical knowledge of Greek and moved to Argos where she lived for four years and managed a school for girls. In 1838, an urgent call came to them from Izmir. At the same time new restrictions from the Greek Government made it impossible to keep the school open in Argos. She worked with the Greeks for six years in Izmir; she also started to learn Armenian when her husband took up work for Armenians. While still keeping up Sunday School work and literary work in Greek, her *The Mother's Manual* in Greek was published and her series of letters to mothers was translated into both Bulgarian and Armenian later on. It was much appreciated by the women of those communities. Due to the transfer of the Mission's publication work from Izmir

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<sup>68</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 36-38. Also see Mehmet Ali Doğan, *Elias Riggs and the Missionary Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Greece (1832-1838)*, 9.

<sup>69</sup> About women as assistant missionaries, the position of missionary wives and the unmarried women missionaries, see Ann White, *Counting the Cost of Faith: America's Early Female Missionaries*, 19-30.

to Istanbul, the Riggs family moved to Istanbul in 1853 where she was a powerful influence for over thirty years. In the meantime, she travelled to America twice, once from 1856 to 1858 with her husband, and again from 1868 to 1869 with her two young sons to place them in school. During the latter trip she, as a caring mother, dedicated herself to the education and well-being of her sons, and never hesitated to carry on her missionary engagements, such as visiting friends in other states and even attending Board meetings in New York. After spending her years in Hasköy and Üsküdar, and because of her failing health, she spent her last years in Antep with her daughter Margaret, who became a missionary wife as well and was appointed to Antep, and passed away there (see Appendix A).<sup>70</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section, the American domesticity discourse was the key element of the Protestant evangelical understanding which put women in the key role to educate their children, and thus, shape the character of future generations starting in their homes. Therefore, her children had an eminent role in Martha's daily life, as her major responsibility was the quality time and teaching that she dedicated to them according to the Protestant understanding. The role of her children was also major in the development of Martha's character. The mother of eight children, she saw only four of them survive to their adulthood (see Appendix B). The deceased ones are occasionally remembered, and helped Martha strive to make life better for her surviving ones, as could be traced from her letters to Elias. Her firstborn Joseph (b. June 22, 1833, Athens, d. November 1834, Argos) died when he was an infant. Her second child, Samuel (b. August 31, 1836, Argos, d. December 24, 1844, Izmir) fell from the terrace of a house on the seashore in Izmir,

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<sup>70</sup> Martha Riggs' life story taken from Riggs Memorials in American Research Institute of Turkey archives and from the "Appendix" in Elias Riggs' unpublished book *Reminiscences for My Children*. To read the entire "Appendix", see Appendix A.

and his head had struck upon the pavement leaving his skull broken. He died tragically as Elias Riggs defines it “a stunning blow” to the family in his *Reminiscences for My Children*. Martha would refer to the tragic event as “that fatal fall” and commemorate his soul in her later letters. In Izmir five of their children were born; Elizabeth (March 11, 1839), Margaret (October 14, 1841), Edward (June 30, 1844), Emma Louisa (March 25, 1847) and James Forsyth (October 4, 1852). The Riggs family’s last child, Charles “Charlie” was born in Istanbul (January 16, 1855). On their family trip back from the United States, Jamie was brought to Istanbul ill, having been attacked by scarlet fever. Except Margaret, all the children contracted the disease which left Elizabeth dead and Charlie blind. Elizabeth was twenty years of age and would enter upon missionary work as a teacher in the Female Boarding School in Hasköy, Istanbul.<sup>71</sup> She was buried on November 30, 1859, the day after her death, to Feriköy Protestant Cemetery’s American section where hers was the first burial (see Appendix C). Sadly, her sister Emma would be buried near her grave just four years later due to her long-lasting health problems. During these trying times, Martha did not let herself nor her family fall apart. On the contrary, she tried every possible way to seek medical treatment or proper school for her children, as will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 3. Her consecutive trips to Izmir, Liverpool and London for Charlie’s blindness and her two-year trip to the United States with James and Charlie for their schooling are among many examples that prove her dedication to family and children. Eventually, she succeeded in raising four children, three of whom entered missionary work. In 1869, right after he married his childhood friend and the daughter of another ABCFM missionary Sarah H. Dwight, Edward was ordained as a missionary of the ABCFM and embarked for

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<sup>71</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 6-35.

his appointed station in Sivas. Charlie completed his studies at Princeton and was appointed by the Board as a regular missionary to instruct in Central Turkey College where he served for 14 years. Margaret married Rev. Tillman C. Trowbridge in 1861, also an ABCFM missionary, and they served in Maraş and Antep, where Martha spent her last days and was buried in the little cemetery at the southwest corner of the Central Turkey College enclosure.<sup>72</sup>

The Riggs family was one of the five veteran families in the Ottoman Empire to establish and develop the works of the Board. While Elias spent his years translating the Bible into Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian and Turkish, Martha as his companion helped his mission and at the same time raised four children, three of whom become missionaries who would raise their own children as missionaries, both in the same area and elsewhere. Martha was the one of the pillars of the family name which “is one of the most prominent in the annals of the American Board. Testifying to their exceptional role, the Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions states that ‘the family accounted for more than a thousand years of missionary service through five generations.’”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 6-35.

<sup>73</sup> Digital Library for International Research website, “The Riggs Papers.”

## CHAPTER 2

### MARTHA RIGGS AS A MISSIONARY

#### 2.1. Challenges

Like their American missionary fellows, Martha and the entire Riggs family had encountered many challenges in their designated work areas. Both in Greece and the Ottoman Empire respectively, they had to negotiate with locals and governments as Americans, Protestants and missionaries, all of these identities being either new or unusual in these lands.

The Riggs' experience in Greece was twofold: they were both welcomed and unwanted in this territory in transition. The American mission's presence was established by Dr. Jonas King, the American Board missionary who had been in Athens a year and a half before Riggs' arrival. Missionaries of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S. were also present.<sup>74</sup> In the meantime, The Ottomans, who had been in control of Athens during Riggs' arrival in 1833, withdrew when Otto, Prince of Bavaria and the designated King of Greece by the Great Powers (Britain, France and Russia), took possession of the city within the same year.<sup>75</sup> King Otto, who was under eighteen years old then, was accompanied by a commission of Regency to administer the government until he would complete his eighteenth year. One of three Regents was a Protestant and, with the American missionaries' easy access to the government, the policy toward reaching the locals, preaching and modern education was initially feasible.<sup>76</sup> As Elias Riggs records in his *Reminiscences*, "a very kindly feeling prevailed in Greece generally toward America

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<sup>74</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 7.

<sup>75</sup> Doğan, *Elias Riggs*, 11.

<sup>76</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 9.

and Americans" partly due to distribution of food and clothing to the sufferers of war that resulted from the separation of Greece from the Ottoman Empire and partly due to the establishment of schools for popular education.<sup>77</sup>

This favorable situation changed when King Otto turned eighteen, and took over the government, markedly changing the government's policy toward the foreigners and foreign influence over its inhabitants. Having his ministers yield to the demands of bishops to control education, what Otto specifically did was to issue an order "requiring all the higher schools, public and private, to employ an ecclesiastic to teach the Catechism of the Greek church, and to have an ecclesiastical picture put up in every schoolroom, to be before the eyes of the pupils when they said their prayers."<sup>78</sup> This of course became the major obstacle against the Protestant way of education and missionary work.<sup>79</sup> In parallel to the strict policy of the Greek government, the diminishing evangelical work in Greece and the emerging one in the Ottoman Empire, the American Board's Prudential Committee instructed Riggs to move to Izmir.<sup>80</sup>

While the Riggs had confronted challenges in Greece against their missionary work, the state reaction towards Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire proved not to be different from that in Greece. As early as 1824, following the advice of the Maronite and Greek Orthodox leaders, the Sublime Porte took action against the Protestant missionaries and their Bibles in circulation through a decree which forbids the distribution of Bibles and tracts printed in Europe for they thought that

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<sup>77</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for My Children*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> For Riggs' missionary activities in Greece and the Greek reaction against the missionary educational enterprise, see Mehmet Ali Doğan, *Elias Riggs and the Missionary Activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Greece (1832-1838)*, 11-16.

<sup>80</sup> For further details about the mission in Greece and the American Board's transfer of its missionaries to Izmir, see Dimitra Giannuli, "Errand of Mercy": *American Women Missionaries and Philanthropists in the Near East, 1820-1930*, 230.

“their circulation agitated relations between the various religious communities in the empire.”<sup>81</sup> By the late 1830’s, reports informed the Sultan regarding the influence of American Protestant missionaries on the Armenians and their attempts for proselytizing. Two consecutive reports in 1839 give details about the situation and the follow-up action taken respectively. The first report<sup>82</sup> outlines the situation informing that the school founded two years ago [1837] by the Americans in the Beyoğlu area for educating children free of charge had been attended by Armenian, Catholic and Jewish students, but was later shut down because both the books and the language taught in the school were considered as factors that would change the students’ minds and convert them to the British religion. In addition, it is reported that some of the Armenian students from this school published and distributed such books for conversion of the Armenian citizens to the British religion, against which the Ottoman officials ask for banning this “inappropriateness” and warn the Armenian patriarch as they find it dangerous and “contagious”. A few weeks later, we learn from the second report<sup>83</sup> that the Armenian Patriarch was brought to the Grand Vizier and notified of the Sultan’s decree. The patriarch verified the current situation and was reminded that whoever “dares” to be involved in such “inappropriateness” would be removed from Istanbul, and that he should be cautious for avoiding any prospect situations. The concluding remarks of the report informs the agreement and collaboration of the Patriarch, who appears to be negatively affected from the same situation for the possibility of losing his own Armenian community to the Protestants. It would also be necessary here to note the relationship between the “British religion” and its instruction in the schools founded by the

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<sup>81</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 46

<sup>82</sup> Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives. HAT 794 / 36842. 3 Z[ilhicce] 1254 [February 17, 1839].

<sup>83</sup> Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives. HAT 512 / 25086. 18 Z[ilhicce] 1254 [March 4, 1839].

American missionaries. Prior to arrival of the American Missionaries at the Ottoman lands, Protestant mission was majorly undertaken by the British missionaries who “provided intelligence, support, and advice for the new coming American missionaries”<sup>84</sup> while the British Embassy in Istanbul itself “was the principal defender of Protestant interests in the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>85</sup> In turn, “the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul considered all English speaking Protestants to have the same identity and did not make any distinction between American and British missionaries during the 1820s.”<sup>86</sup> For Americans, it was a considerable relief to join forces with the British presence and know-how, yet they were not welcomed by the local Christians as well as the Ottoman authorities as reflected in the two reports above.

Reactions against the American missionaries reached a peak in 1839 when they were almost expelled from the entire Ottoman territories. Cyrus Hamlin, a missionary who founded Robert College, recalls the situation in one of his letters to Martha Riggs:

Many great changes have me seen in Turkey in that time. Sultan Mahmoud tried to send us all out of the country in 1839 & that year the whole combination that tried to affect the object was swept away. God has done great things for us & will do greater still.<sup>87</sup>

and further expresses the tension in his later published memoir.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 12.

<sup>85</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 49.

<sup>86</sup> Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 49.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, 1860. SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004005. (Hereafter the date of the letter followed by Letters Packet number and document code only).

<sup>88</sup> Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, 34-36.

The critical moment for the Protestants was alleviated in 1839 as reflected in Hamlin's account; nevertheless, pressure upon the American missionaries from both local Christians and the Ottoman authorities continued throughout the nineteenth century. Even by the late 1880's, when the American mission reached the culmination of its operations in the Ottoman Empire, missionaries were still under attack by the local Christians or close supervision by the authorities. An official report from the Aydın governor to the Foreign Ministry<sup>89</sup> informing of the attack by Greeks and the damage by Greek children on the American consul-general's car demonstrates local Christians' disapproval of the American missionary work.

Another example can be traced to Bafra and Samsun where Edward Riggs, the eldest surviving son of Martha and Elias Riggs, was exposed to disgraceful treatment by Greeks due to hostility of Greek clergy community (*Rum cemaat-i ruhbanisi*) toward the American Protestant community.<sup>90</sup> Despite several decades passed and American missionary work had been established, resistance and reactions against the American mission prevailed in different parts of Ottoman lands throughout the nineteenth century.

The presence and growing number of missionaries, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, were the eminent trigger – if not the sole reason – behind the Ottoman rush to the rapid transformation of its subjects and institutions. Selim Deringil addresses to the struggle between the missionaries and the Ottoman government as an “ideological war” that challenged the basis of Ottoman legitimacy among its Christian and Muslim subjects.<sup>91</sup> Within the scope of this ideological war, the Ottoman government took all the precautions against foreign education

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<sup>89</sup> Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives. HR. TH. 78/55. 26 Cemaziyelevvel 1305 [February 9, 1888].

<sup>90</sup> Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives. DH. MKT. 1595/24. February 16, 1889.

<sup>91</sup> Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 115.

institutions usually in the form of close inspections of their activities and employees; yet, it was unable to fulfill the requirements needed for its own educational system in the empire, thus, inevitably let the missionaries fulfill them instead.<sup>92</sup> The quality of education in the missionary schools<sup>93</sup> would soon attract the Muslim population, among whom the children of notables and government officials were going to be enrolled.<sup>94</sup> Eventually, the Ottoman government decided to compete “with them on their own ground, that is to say, by improving the quality of Muslim schools”,<sup>95</sup> hence the growing number of schools initiated by the Ottoman government and their transforming image of the institutions and students that could be traced in photography albums of Sultan Abdülhamid II.

It is in this challenging environment that Martha and her family were trying to settle their lives and carry out their missionary work. There was a constant competition between the missionary circle and the Ottoman wing, therefore the main challenge for Martha was twofold: to survive as a missionary enterprise in a foreign empire and to survive as a missionary wife in a male dominant circle.

## 2.2 Martha Riggs’ book “The Mother’s Manual” and her influence on the locals in changing minds and faith

The American domesticity discourse had risen with the view that “progress in any given society was associated with the status and education of women.”<sup>96</sup> Evangelical

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<sup>92</sup> Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 123.

<sup>93</sup> For details about the American missionary education, its attraction to the Ottoman Christian bourgeoisie and its introduction of new public roles for local women, see Giannuli, “*Errand of Mercy*,” 233-236.

<sup>94</sup> Somel, *Osmanlı’da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi (1839-1908)*, 256.

<sup>95</sup> Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 131. See also Somel, *Osmanlı’da Eğitimin Modernleşmesi (1839-1908)*, 254-256.

<sup>96</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 270.

Americans considered themselves to be the champions of progress “as a Protestant Republic” in which educated Protestant Christian women bear the responsibility of building the character of both the home and the nation as they raise future generations.<sup>97</sup> Accordingly, the Anglo-American mission was “to domesticate and Christianize non-Protestant, non-European communities across the United States and around the globe. Evangelical Americans’ discourse of difference became a colonizing tool.”<sup>98</sup> This was the environment in which Martha was trained and charged as a missionary wife.

Martha was a highly capable woman whose accomplishments stand out in a missionary circle where only males were ordained as missionaries and the females were simply companions. Although females merited only second place in the hierarchy of official missionaries, Martha never stepped back from being industrious, learning the vernacular languages and even publishing her own books for the locals. After all, the American Board was planning “nothing less than a Protestant reformation of the Greek Orthodox Church”, one strategy of which was female education, and “women were vital to the plan.”<sup>99</sup> Her early mission years in Athens, Greece, enabled her to gain a thoroughly grammatical knowledge of the Greek language “contrary to the advice and practice of some valued friends . . . , who insisted that all the knowledge which a missionary lady would need could be picked up in practice from the mouths of people.”<sup>100</sup> The years spent in Argos, Greece, with no assistants or qualified female teachers meant that Martha and Elias were busy with establishing a girls school and instructing the girls with “untiring devotion”. The

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<sup>97</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 270.

<sup>98</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 270.

<sup>99</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 273.

<sup>100</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 37.

experience gave Martha the opportunity to excel both in the Greek language and in teaching.<sup>101</sup> Martha's growing family and additional responsibilities, "resulting from a residence in a seaport town [Izmir], through which passed in those days all the American missionaries going to or returning from stations in Greece, Turkey, Syria and Persia", meant that she had to cut back on her teaching work. However, she continued with Sabbath-school instruction in either Greek or English.<sup>102</sup>

Martha's marked influence on the locals would be, however, her writings. She prepared a series of "Letters to Mothers on the Training and Instruction of their Children" published under the title of *The Mother's Manual* (see Appendix D), a work which, as Elias describes, "found so much favor in Greece that it was adopted by a society in Athens, and issued as one of their publications."<sup>103</sup> As Reeves-Ellington (2010) informs, Martha's library included several popular American mothers' manuals which "celebrated the power of maternal influence within the home and society [that] shaped the format and content of Martha Jane Riggs's writings". The Riggs couple eventually took advantage of the press "to advocate for female education and advance the ideal of maternal influence."<sup>104</sup> Elias arranged to publish Martha's writings in five hundred copies in 1842, all of which would be sold out within the same year.<sup>105</sup> After the removal of the Riggs family to Istanbul in 1853 following the removal of the publication work to the same city, she added a second series of letters to mothers,

. . . and the whole were issued in a Bulgarian translation – first in the periodical, the *Zornitza (Dayspring)*, and then in a volume.

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<sup>101</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 36-37.

<sup>102</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 37-38.

<sup>103</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 274. The author lists some of the manuals in Martha's library: Thomas Gallaudet's *The Child's Book on the Soul* and *The Mother's Primer, to Teach Her Child Its Letters and How to Read*, John Abbot's *The Mother at Home*, and Lydia Sigourney's *Letters to Mothers*.

<sup>105</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 274.

They were translated also into Armenian and Turkish, and published by our mission [the American Board], and a part of them also by a native Armenian editor, who issued them as a series in his paper.<sup>106</sup>

The content of her manual relied on Christian motherhood for Orthodox mothers through which she introduced American Protestant views on child rearing with an emphasis on three themes: the contribution of educated Christian women to the progress and prosperity of nations by shaping the character of future generations, the awareness of the Christian women of their responsibility for the physical well-being and nurture of their infants, the role of Christian women in shaping the intellectual, moral and religious development of their children.<sup>107</sup> As Reeves-Ellington regards Martha's writings as underscoring "the malleability of domestic discourse in a context of extensive social transformation",<sup>108</sup> these manuals were the key elements for American missionaries who saw a national movement based on educational and religious reform "as an opportunity to promote Protestant teachings."<sup>109</sup> As for *Zornitza*, "the first Bulgarian-language magazine to be illustrated, the first to target the family as a reading unit, and the first to publish articles for women and children", Martha's manuals would appear in its first issue and appeal to Bulgarian women in a period of deepening Bulgarian nationalism.<sup>110</sup> In giving women's domestic responsibilities national significance, Martha's argument was simple: "women owed their elevated status in American society to Protestant Christianity, which had raised women from the degradation of ignorance, superstition, and heathenism" therefore she argued that "Christian nations prospered because women were educated and

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<sup>106</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 38.

<sup>107</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 275-276.

<sup>108</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 271.

<sup>109</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 275.

<sup>110</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 275-276.

respected; non-Christian nations failed to prosper because women were degraded and benighted.”<sup>111</sup> Refraining from any direct references to Ottoman Muslim women, Martha used examples from other non-Christian women of the world for promotion of the Protestant way of female education, such as those in India and China who reportedly take tragic actions against their infants. She encouraged her readers to gather in meetings to discuss and educate each other which resulted in the founding of an association of Turnovo women in 1869.<sup>112</sup>

The Bulgarian case did not end up in a success story in terms of making the whole community a Protestant one, since the women embraced the idea of emancipation of women through education yet were distant to converting to Protestantism.<sup>113</sup> What they did was to take the Protestant method of education to serve Orthodox womanhood and defend their national and ethnic cause. Nevertheless, it was a case of influence in which Martha played the major role. Through her writings, the Bulgarian women had such an influence that, by 1869, the American domestic discourse that Martha promoted in Bulgarian women’s minds grew into an opposition to the Ottoman Public Education law and its empire-wide centralized model of education.<sup>114</sup> In a way, through her emphasis on female education, Martha took the Bulgarian nationalist cause into a new dimension.

Martha’s *The Mother’s Manual* was an embodiment of the American domestic discourse that directly influenced a local aspect of the empire. It is also possible to assert its indirect influences specifically on the mission itself. The American Board was aware of the significance of missionary wives when the Riggs

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<sup>111</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 277.

<sup>112</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 278.

<sup>113</sup> About the Bulgarians’ approach to American missionaries, see Mehmet Ali Doğan, “Misyonerlerin Osmanlı Bulgarları Hakkındaki Yazılarından Örnekler,” 279-287.

<sup>114</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 286.

left for Greece, as Senior Secretary Rufus Anderson once stated: “Nowhere can the wives of missionaries, if they are properly qualified, be more useful than they may now be in Greece, through this medium.”<sup>115</sup> Throughout the following decades, the missionary wives, as Martha exemplified with her influential manual for Greek and later Bulgarian audiences, proved to be needed in the stations in the expanding network of the American mission. Yet it would be almost 30 years after the Riggs stepped on the Ottoman lands that the possibility of hiring single ladies as missionaries would be considered by the Board management circle. In a letter from Elias to Martha on May 8 1868, Elias informs her about Mr. Washburn’s report on female missionaries which was “approved in the main, not endorsed in all aspects & is to be sent to the Miss.[ionary] Home, and the mission asks for several single ladies to come to the various stations.”<sup>116</sup> Later in early June of the same year, Elias would inform Martha on the vote of the mission in favor of “unmarried females coming to join several stations, 3 each for Cons’ple and Broosa, 1 each for Marsovan & Cesarea, and one each for Phil. and E. Zagra if those stations should desire it.”<sup>117</sup> Since women had been expected to marry to embark on mission overseas, this decision could be considered revolutionary.

### 2.3. How well does Martha Riggs exemplify her contemporaries?

Later studies and secondary sources help to assess how well Martha exemplifies her contemporaries as a nineteenth-century American missionary woman. These limited sources also demonstrate the inadequacy of this line of enquiry on missionary wives and their contributions to an enterprise that lasted more than a century.

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<sup>115</sup> Rufus Anderson quoted in Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 273.

<sup>116</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, May 8, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D071.

<sup>117</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, June 5, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D076.

Dana L. Robert describes one of the earliest efforts made on behalf of women who wanted to serve in foreign lands. In 1812, Harriet Atwood Newell and Ann Hasseltine Judson were designated as “assistant missionaries” for their husbands’ missions to India. They were the first American foreign missionaries and “served as role models for women in ministry during the early nineteenth century.”<sup>118</sup> Both were educated at Bradford Academy and set sail with their husbands to foreign lands intending to fulfill their missionary duties. However, Harriet’s sudden death on the way to mission created a public opinion of Harriet as “the first American martyr to foreign missions”. She became “the symbol of the American Missionary enterprise” due to “her virtues, humility, and self-sacrifice”.<sup>119</sup> Ann, on the other hand, made it to Burma and assisted her husband Adoniram in his translation of religious texts into Burmese. She then became the first Protestant “to translate the Scriptures into Siamese”.<sup>120</sup> Her translation work combined with draining efforts to save her husband who had become imprisoned in Burma, made the life of Ann Judson into “a stock item of female hagiography” inspiring and motivating evangelical women in New England by mid-nineteenth century.<sup>121</sup> Robert reinforces the significance of the role of women in missionary work with additional profiles: Elizabeth Baker Dwight, wife of the Rev. Harrison Gray Otis Dwight, Mary R. Reynolds Schaffler, Abigail Goodell and other missionary wives in Istanbul in the 1830s who “founded a maternal association based on the constitution printed in the *Mother’s Magazine*, an American publication dedicated to the nurture and conversion of one’s own children.”<sup>122</sup> Until her death, Mrs. Dwight would defend the idea that a missionary

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<sup>118</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 1.

<sup>119</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 40-42.

<sup>120</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 45.

<sup>121</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 46.

<sup>122</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 71.

wife “who devoted herself to her family was just as important as an ordained minister” and undertook every possible action she could, from writing to *Mother’s Magazine* to founding an association to spread the word.<sup>123</sup>

Lisa Joy Pruitt mentions the early missionary wives’ activities with examples from different regions. They established Sunday schools like Ann Judson and Sarah Boardman did in Burma, Sarah Lanman Smith in Syria, Judith Grant in Persia and Mary Van Lennep in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>124</sup> Missionary wives also visited homes and organized prayer meetings similar to those which they had attended in the United States.<sup>125</sup> Ann Judson is given as an example for running this activity as she held “regular meetings with fifteen Burman women, some of whom had indicated that they might soon convert.”<sup>126</sup> Writing letters was also eminent in the lives of missionary wives for promoting their status and activities to their supporters. Pruitt mentions the volume of these letters with Sarah Lanman Smith, a missionary woman in Syria, who “received as many as fifteen or twenty letters per delivery (it is not clear how frequently the mail was delivered), all of them requiring a reply.”<sup>127</sup>

Cemal Yetkiner also provides an account of the early American Board's missionary enterprises in the Ottoman Empire. Emphasizing the objective of the Board in this territory to establish "indigenous, self-governing, and self-supporting establishments aimed at preparing native preachers and helpers" with the Board's inadequacy in supplying American preachers and teachers for the growing missionary activities, Yetkiner traces the educational policy and initiatives of the Board starting from the early 1830s towards 1860.<sup>128</sup> He starts the story with the first

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<sup>123</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 72.

<sup>124</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 84.

<sup>125</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 84.

<sup>126</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 85.

<sup>127</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 85.

<sup>128</sup> Yetkiner, “At the Center of the Debate,” 71-72.

American Board establishments, highlighting missionaries Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons whose initial explorations led to foundation of Beirut station that would be managed by William Goodell and Isaac Bird beginning in 1823. He also mentions the presence of the missionary wives Abigail Goodell and Ann Bird.<sup>129</sup> Yetkiner describes the opening of the first home school in the Ottoman Empire with instruction by Abigail Goodell and Ann Bird under the supervision of a Christian Arab teacher and, in spite of its short duration, emphasizes its twofold importance in that it was for girls and it "signaled the beginning of home or regular schools for girls in the region operated by missionaries."<sup>130</sup>

Due to security reasons in Beirut, the Goodells had to leave the region and ultimately ended up in Istanbul where Yetkiner provides further account of William Goodell's activities in the early 1830s along with the missionaries Harrison G. O. Dwight and William G. Schaffler. The account of Goodell's initial projects to open training schools, especially for the Armenian community in Istanbul, relates to that of Cyrus Hamlin who, sharing the same vision with Goodell, opened Bebek Seminary where young men were trained for the Christian ministry.<sup>131</sup> When Hamlin joined the mission in Istanbul, the city had three missionaries: Goodell, Dwight and Schaffler and with their wives "who also served the mission in various capacities."<sup>132</sup> Yetkiner defines the missionary wives as those who were not formally labelled as missionaries but were expected to "assist their husbands by running model homes, teaching at home schools, and carrying the Bible to homes; thus, they were often called 'Bible women.'"<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 68-69.

<sup>130</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 69.

<sup>131</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 73.

<sup>132</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 73.

<sup>133</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 73.

Similar to Cemal Yetkiner's account, Ellen Fleischmann provides an account of the evolution of the Beirut Female Seminary which was started as the first mission school for girls and consisted of "Mrs. Ann P. Bird and Mrs. Abigail P. Goodell, wives of two missionaries, Isaac Bird and William Goodell, teaching young girls sewing and reading in their homes."<sup>134</sup> In addition to Mrs. Bird and Mrs. Goodell, Fleischmann highlights other missionary women. She explains that the home-based work was carried on by additional missionary wives until 1834 when Sarah Lanman Smith, the wife of Eli Smith, established an actual school described as "the first edifice ever built in the Turkish Empire for the education of girls."<sup>135</sup> In 1835, Mrs. Smith hired American Rebecca Williams, "the first single woman and the first teacher sent to the Mission" to aid her in the institution, then called the Female School, which lasted only a few years. Nevertheless, Fleischmann stresses the significance of its role in promoting female education in mission chronicles. Fleischmann's study on female education in Ottoman Syria provides rich information on: its evolution from a seminary to a college; its struggle between being a religious and secular institution that led to a breakup from the ABCFM; and its strong belief in the education of females for raising future preachers and missionaries. This ideology, of course, was shared by other missions and its founding 'mothers', as I would call it, who were in the region due their missionary husbands.

P.E. Shaw's early account of Greece and American missionaries in the 1830s<sup>136</sup> emphasizes the training of girls by the Protestant missionaries. Following the Greek Revolution of 1821, the Protestants felt the need to reconstruct the post-war country as the government lacked funds and teachers to carry out an educational

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<sup>134</sup> Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 265.

<sup>135</sup> Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 266.

<sup>136</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches, 1820-1870*.

program leaving room for educational work to be undertaken by the missionary societies. Moreover, there was no initiation for female education and the government had scarcely realized its importance.<sup>137</sup> In this regard, Shaw's account highlights a school initiated by Rev. John. H. Hill, the missionary of the Episcopal Church, in the basement of his house, which would eventually turn into a larger organization, where females were trained. As the mission was the pioneer in the training of women, "[t]he plan was to take a few of the more promising girls to live with the Hills" for the purpose of religious training.<sup>138</sup> The government already gave consent to the plan by sending there twelve girls to be trained by Hill at the government expense. "Thus came into being what was practically the first normal school for women in Greece, and when the government normal school was begun in 1836, its faculty consisted largely of teachers trained under Hill's supervision."<sup>139</sup> Upon the Encyclical of 1836 by the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory VI, tension against the Protestant missionaries rose, and Hill had to adapt his school and comply with the demands of the Greek Orthodox Church. Throughout all these consecutive events, the name of a missionary wife, Mrs. Hill, was mentioned twice: once regarding her letter written to an American newspaper about reassurance of American Episcopalians to the evangelical nature of the work in Greece, the outcome of which led to a violent outbreak in Athens in 1842,<sup>140</sup> and once in a footnote introducing her husband John H. Hill in which we get to know very briefly that "Mrs. Hill's missionary enthusiasm was shared by her sisters...who in 1832 and 1834 respectively joined the staff of Hill's school."<sup>141</sup> Mostly focused on the Board's sole representative Jonas King, the story

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<sup>137</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 21.

<sup>138</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 22.

<sup>139</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 22

<sup>140</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 29.

<sup>141</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 18. See note no.13.

of the Greek mission was narrated with only a brief reference to Elias Riggs who is introduced as one of the missionaries who joined Jonas King for a short period and spent six years in Argos for educational work.<sup>142</sup>

Mehmet Ali Doğan's account of Elias Riggs, one of the best sources for discovering Martha's accomplishments in the mission, understandably focuses solely on Elias Riggs' mission work within the course of ABCFM's history. It also touches upon Martha Riggs' activities such as her *The Mother's Manual* book among the printed materials in Izmir in 1844 and *Letters to Mothers* among those printed in Istanbul in 1882 for Bulgarians.<sup>143</sup> As for the female missionaries, there is a brief account of their activities in the mission including the seminary for the education of female teachers in Bulgarian mission under the charge of Mary E. Reynolds,<sup>144</sup> publication of *Zornitza* and its wide circulation,<sup>145</sup> but most importantly the impact of women missionaries on the natives in the introduction of the Protestant teachings among the people in the Bulgarian field.<sup>146</sup>

Even though the accounts on missionary wives or female missionaries are limited in number and coverage compared to those on male missionaries, other studies highlighting the activities of women can enable us both to compare Martha and to understand the deficiency of studies on women missionaries in the field. These studies focus on either those who were the first missionaries to arrive at a specific location or those who were founders of prominent institutions such as Mary Mills Patrick, the founder of the American College for Girls in Istanbul.

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<sup>142</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 72. Also see note no. 9.

<sup>143</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 96, 144, 157-158.

<sup>144</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 122.

<sup>145</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 145-146.

<sup>146</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 150-153.

Nevertheless, they are useful references for the era in which Martha was molded both mentally and spiritually. As stated in the previous sections, women had an important role in the men-led missionary activities of the ABCFM. While the male students were raised to be the pastors of the future, the girls would be their companions and the trainers of future generations. This would soon require the establishment of girls schools, whose original purpose was;

...the training of women for work and for becoming appropriate wives for pastors. Religious exercises and Biblical instruction were a major part of education, and special emphasis was laid on the students' strict personal discipline, and exercise of rigid economy.<sup>147</sup>

Throughout the changing political moods of the Ottoman Empire towards the 1900s, a more secular education replaced the sole aim for religious conversion. Mary Mills Patrick, appointed as an ABCFM missionary, founded the American College for Girls as a “non-sectarian institution” while the later female missionaries, “like other American missionary educators, both promoted the Protestant worldview and . . . turned the proselytizing mission into one that sought . . . a ‘sanctification’ of the intellect that would subsume, but not deny, the spirit.”<sup>148</sup> An influential ABCFM missionary who “believed that secular American educational practices would transform individuals who in turn would contribute to American-style nationalism in the Ottoman Empire”<sup>149</sup> Patrick founded a college for girls which survived not only as an educational institution but also as a magnet for progressive Ottoman elites whose support helped the institution survive. As the college “accommodated the

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<sup>147</sup> Bozkurt, “The Making of young women at an American Missionary School in early republican Turkey,” 37.

<sup>148</sup> Goffman, “From Religious to American Proselytism,” 86-87.

<sup>149</sup> Goffman, “From Religious to American Proselytism,” 95.

nationalist and feminist agendas of progressive Ottoman thought”, its impact was felt in every political reformist movement from that of the Young Turks to those involved in foundation of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>150</sup>

In her account of Constantinople Woman’s College,<sup>151</sup> Reeves-Ellington points out how Mary Mills Patrick, along with the college trustee Caroline Borden, influenced the education policies and the identity of American culture in the second half of the nineteenth century Turkey through their work on behalf of women’s mission. In their long journey from founding “a mission school through a mission-supported college to an independent college”, both Patrick and Borden seem to share common characteristics of their time. Dana L. Robert points out that a “number of the antebellum missionary wives were the daughters of evangelical clergymen”,<sup>152</sup> and the same was true for the later women missionaries. Mary Mills Patrick was born into a family with strong religious roots whose grandfather was a Congregationalist minister in Canterbury, New Hampshire<sup>153</sup> and Caroline Borden was born to Richard Borden and Abby Durfee Borden who were directly connected with the American Board and Central Congregational Church in Massachusetts.<sup>154</sup> Martha Riggs, although she never saw her father who died around the time she was born, was daughter of a devoted Christian mother who attended on the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Finley, the pastor of the Presbyterian church of Baskingridge.<sup>155</sup> Despite the generation gap between Mary, Caroline and the elder Martha, they shared similar attributes and approaches to education. They were trained with the same type of instruction and considered the key role of education in reaching their target groups.

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<sup>150</sup> Goffman, “From Religious to American Proselytism,” 87.

<sup>151</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Constantinople Woman’s College,” 53-71.

<sup>152</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 8.

<sup>153</sup> Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Blewett, *Constant Turmoil*, 34.

<sup>155</sup> Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 36.

Martha's *The Mother's Manual* and her letters to mothers, and Patrick's establishment of a women's college seem to share the same motive: they both strive for education of children -in Patrick's case particularly females- and used their strength to pursue their aims. Yet, as their careers progress, their course diverges: Martha Riggs served as a missionary wife whose aim was to assist her husband in evangelizing from the very beginning to the end of her mission life. On the contrary, Mary Patrick served as a missionary of the Women's Board and at some point felt the urge to resign from the Board for she promoted a form of education that is consciously female, adorned with Christian culture where women enjoy freedom of religion, "sharpen intellectual ambitions" and contribute "to the intellectual and moral development of the Ottoman Empire and the post-Ottoman nations of the Balkans" while "the concept of religious conversion was entirely absent."<sup>156</sup> It could be debated whether it is the entrepreneurial side of Mary Mills Patrick that led her to be highlighted in academic papers and celebrated widely but left Martha and her like behind the scenes. But what is certain is that Patrick exemplifies a later generation of nineteenth-century missionary women whose circumstances enabled her to take more liberated actions than could an earlier generation of missionary wives whose autonomy was rather limited. It is, therefore, worthy of examination to unravel what these earlier missionary wives achieved despite the limited scope for women of their times.

A noteworthy study on women missionaries was conducted by Reeves-Ellington in her book *Domestic Frontiers*, a section of which she devotes to the Constantinople Home. Her focus on the Constantinople Home deserves special attention for it represents "a powerful projection of American Protestant ideas about

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<sup>156</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College," 53-71.

women” and testifies that the American evangelical mission was “to transform the religious and cultural life of the Ottoman Empire through its women”.<sup>157</sup> Located on the hills of Üsküdar district, the Home sought a cultural conversion rather than a religious one since its subjects were already Christians,<sup>158</sup> thus casting women missionaries as the main actors and local women as the main audiences for the project. The story of the Constantinople Home, after a thorough narration of its foundation and philosophy, focuses on Mary Mills Patrick as the prominent figure among her peers and discusses the Home’s impact on both local women and the missionary enterprise resulting in a multinational community of educated women. Another section in the book analyzes Martha Riggs’ impact on Bulgarian women through her *Letters to Mothers*, mirroring her approach to women through promoting Protestant views and criticizing Bulgarian folklore “with its many superstitions and tales”.<sup>159</sup> Patrick and Riggs appear multiple times in Reeves-Ellington’s studies as mentioned earlier in this study. What the author offers differently in this book is the case of Elizabeth Bevan and Lydia Giles, two American missionary women in Bulgaria whose marriages to local Bulgarian converts brought controversy among the missionary enterprise and challenged the notion of supposedly egalitarian Protestant view. Bevan and Giles’s case brings an interesting insight to gender, culture and Christianity discussions among the missionaries, although they seem not to draw clear parallels with Martha’s case.

As demonstrated in various studies above, Martha strongly complies with her contemporaries as an American Protestant missionary wife. Molded in the ideology of domesticism, Martha’s accomplishments in vernacular languages, her widely

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<sup>157</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 2.

<sup>158</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 1-3.

<sup>159</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 88

celebrated and influential writings, her approach to local women, her diligence in housework demonstrate the same motivation that made Abigail Goodell and Ann Bird, as missionary wives, teach local girls and Mary Mills Patrick, as a missionary woman, develop the Constantinople Home and turn it into American College for Girls as an independent institution. Unfortunately, studies on these women are still very limited in number due to the fact that, as Reeves-Ellington fairly puts it, the American Board archives “contain great silences” leaving the voices of women rare and those of converts and other actors almost absent.<sup>160</sup> This positions Martha to a point where she is both an example of her peers and a rare voice to emerge out of gendered bureaucratic documents in the archives. Building upon her uniquely well documented thoughts, the next section describes how much her accounts and her voice could fill the gaps in this area.

#### 2.4. Martha Riggs’ account of missionary matters and missionary traffic

Martha’s account relies mainly on missionary matters, news from friends and family, health issues, and descriptions of cities and people observed on her trips. Her style is neat and descriptive; thus, her letters are longer than any average letter (see Appendix E). Her tone is more like conversation with the receiver of the letter (mostly Elias), always including questions or acknowledgements of the addressed questions. Martha openly defines herself as she is not writing answers but responses.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 7.

<sup>161</sup> “I observe with pleasure that our letters are rather responses than answers.” Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Centreville, Wayne Co., Indianapolis, August 24, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B035.

I deem this self-definition important because she puts a boundary between being passive and being involved, and clearly positions herself to the latter. Instead of writing answers, or passively reporting a situation or a scene from an observing eye, she opts to include her insights, opinions and advice, thus, she gets involved in any situation upon which she has been reflecting. This consciousness seems to play major part in how Martha could be as active, involved and committed as her husband's male missionary counterparts.

Writing letters was the only means of communication and -although not specified in a guide book- could be considered as one of her duties along with making visits and taking care of her family. Yet it was quite time-consuming and hard work to record the minutiae of everyday matters and Martha did not hide how hard it was for her to "keep accounts, write in a journal or even to write letters" to the extent that a few leaves were always enough to make her "sick of it" in keeping a journal.<sup>162</sup> Nonetheless, she comes to terms with this part of her duties as she feels privileged to keep up intercourse with friends and, most of all, with her own scattered family. In spite of her struggle with writing letters, Martha as a committed missionary never ceased keeping detailed accounts and responses in regard to missionary matters and her environment, thus, providing a main source for a researcher to extract rich information on a female missionary agenda.

As much as the American domesticism discourse of the nineteenth century required Martha to be attentive to her domestic responsibilities, it also required her to be aware of the mission's latest matters and traffic. She maintained her household both as a family home and as a trustworthy harbor to the Board missionaries who are new to the city or just passing onto new stations, thus, positioning herself as a bridge

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<sup>162</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, January 25, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C026.

between her domestic family and the grand missionary family of the Board. She was so engaged in her hosting duty that at one point when the Riggs couple was discussing about living with a family in the same house in Istanbul, Martha expressed her unwillingness for she wanted to host travelling missionary friends and there would be no room for such guests should they permanently share a house with another family.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, Martha strategically analyzes ongoing missionary traffic and expresses her ideas to Elias on how relocations or transfers of the missionaries should be managed. As she, for instance, comments on the missionary traffic in Hasköy, she recalls the Protestant church in this district, which she describes as “the only decent church building the native Protestants have any claim to” in Istanbul, and expresses the need for two missionaries in Hasköy “to use to some good purpose that neat church.”<sup>164</sup> Her intelligence is not restricted to Istanbul; the missionary traffic in other stations in Turkey is also part of Martha’s knowledge. For Smyrna, which she considers as a trying position for anyone for a time at least, she puts forward her personal advice such as having the veteran Mr. E. E. Bliss “prepare the way for a new missionary and then either return to C.[Constantinople] or remain with the new man” in one letter to Elias, noting that although Elias had already written about these missionary matters she cannot help thinking about them, and as a most natural consequence she speaks of them to Elias.<sup>165</sup>

Martha’s account on missionary matters and traffic gives valuable information as to their private lives and practices aside from their missionary duties, such as accommodation, marriage and the like. Such as, through Martha’s letters a

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<sup>163</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, February 8, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C024.

<sup>164</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, February 8, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C024.

<sup>165</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, February 8, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C024.

reader can find out that missionaries start to marry the local converts as the years pass by and once students at the American Protestant institutions have become individuals with a specific profession. In 1872, for instance, Martha informs Elias of Miss Wadsworth's engagement to Carabed, "a doctor who recently at Bilejik [Bilecik] - formerly from Marsovan Seminary"<sup>166</sup> having noted that Carabed studied medicine in America and Miss Wadsworth spent some time last summer at Bilecik. Still remaining in a familiar circle, the female missionaries seem to expand the missionary circle by including the local converts within the boundaries. Marriages among missionaries from different stations were also common. In a letter to Elias in 1873, Martha shares the latest news spoken in their Yenikapı circle about the wedding proposal of Mr. Bond of Bulgarian mission to Ellen Richardson of Istanbul missionary circle, which happened after Mr. Bond stopped with the Riggs during his stay in Istanbul nearly a fortnight and got himself well acquainted in the circle.<sup>167</sup> Another interesting fact regarding missionary life relates to housing arrangements within the mission. Recalling the previous discussion between Martha and Elias on sharing a house with another missionary family while Martha was in the United States, keeping a house within in a part of another missionary's house was a common practice in the missionary circle. For example, in her letter to Elias in 1872, Martha mentions a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Easton, with their little son, keeping a house in a part of Mr. Hitchcock's house while another missionary, Mr. Scribner, starts to live in his new home at Mrs. Sarah Frances Goodyear Pratt's who had recently lost her

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<sup>166</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, December 18, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B024.

<sup>167</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 6, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B028.

missionary husband Dr. Andrew Tully Pratt and now would have Mr. Scribner as company.<sup>168</sup>

Such housing practices lead us to think about how Martha acts as a host to all the incoming and outgoing missionaries to other stations. Workload of hosting duty depends on the scale and crowd of a specific mission and the American Board mission in Turkey was doubtlessly a large and crowded one. The condolence letters in the Riggs family archive, both for Samuel's and Emma's deaths in 1844 and 1863,<sup>169</sup> prove the existence of a wide missionary network in the Ottoman Empire. Especially those related to Samuel's death came from a wide range of regions including Izmir, Pera – Istanbul, Beirut and Trabzon. This network, which could be traced from correspondences, exemplifies how large and connected the missionary web was, and how established and settled the American missionary enterprise has become by the mid 1840s, an early stage in the American missionary timeline.

Whether or not she is hosting a missionary, Martha is fully aware of the missionary traffic in the city and reports frequently to Elias of its flow. In a letter thread in 1872 when Elias is on his trip to Beirut, Martha informs him about the arrival of the missionaries for Bulgaria who are unable to go to Eski Zagra for organizational reasons so will remain in Istanbul.<sup>170</sup> As could be seen in her later letters to Elias, she gives particulars about those who stayed with them or came with the Bulgarian reinforcement and attended "The Home", the predecessor of American College for Girls.<sup>171</sup> The Eski Zagra party would leave Constantinople towards the

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<sup>168</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, December 23, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B026.

<sup>169</sup> SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packets 5 and 6.

<sup>170</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, November 12, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B019.

<sup>171</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, November 19, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B020.

end of November 1872 and within this populated traffic of missionaries, Martha gives the latest news from both the transitioning missionaries, the local ones including the death of Mrs. Mary A. Bliss Dwight and the sickness of Dr. Andrew Tully Pratt, and the Home and the College [Robert College] as precisely as she could,<sup>172</sup> making it possible for the reader to understand the intensity of the mission work in the second half of the nineteenth century in Istanbul.

Correspondences between the Riggs couple reveal that missionary houses could be used for various reasons beside hosting missionaries. Constant travelers that they are, the Riggs couple apparently grew into the habit of collecting objects, artifacts and antiquities from the places they had been to, and felt no restriction in displaying them for both educational purposes and amusement. In early 1873, Martha writes Elias about a Miss R.'s school visit to the Riggs house for which Martha "got out the most interesting things from the Cabinet and arranged them on three or four tables according to their character - (shells, minerals, Egyptian antiquities etc.) - had them all ready beforehand" assuming that the students all enjoyed "examining the little collection".<sup>173</sup> Having Margaret and Ellen Richardson, who appear to be working at the school, explain to the girls various things, where they came from etc. in regard to the small exhibition, Martha believes that the girls had useful impressions even if not all of them appreciated what they saw. Each detail in this visit such as having a missionary family acquire an Egyptian antiquity collection and having a girls school organizing excursions to a home for educational purposes and cultural interaction sounds quite extraordinary for its time, yet it shows a tremendous

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<sup>172</sup> See the letters ABARPC007B018, ABARPC007B019, ABARPC007B020 by Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs all written in November 1872.

<sup>173</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 6, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B028.

example of how a well-established missionary family house could be used and utilized for various purposes other than accommodation.

The Riggs correspondences give valuable information on missionary matters as much as on missionary traffic in various stations. Martha's instant acknowledgement of the trouble that is disturbing the American circle at Samokov in Bulgaria, which she heard from the correspondence between two missionaries Mr. William Edwin Locke and Dr. George Warren Wood,<sup>174</sup> for instance, stands out among many that she shares with Elias, who has direct involvement with the Bulgarian work. In a further letter, Martha would comment on the status of their friends in Bulgaria, specifically on their hard trials to pass through that winter and "this last development" which Martha describes as a "severely a heavy stroke."<sup>175</sup> The particulars of the "last development" were not mentioned, yet its context could be understood from Cyrus Hamlin's letter to Martha in 1876 in which he criticizes Turks about Bulgaria as he also mentions Russia regarding the conflict.<sup>176</sup> Such references in the correspondences between Martha, Elias and Cyrus Hamlin from 1873 to 1876 strongly suggest the early phase of Bulgarian liberation uprisings resulting in the 1876 April Uprising which would lead to Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878.

Similarly, Elias' acknowledgement of his general observation of the Egypt mission during his visit in 1873, about which he describes the work as advancing more at suburbs and villages than in big cities like Alexandria and Cairo "thus their

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<sup>174</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 22, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B029.

<sup>175</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, February 11, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B032.

<sup>176</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, New Haven, August 6, 1876. Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004011.

experience” as “similar to that of the missions among the Armenians”,<sup>177</sup> is remarkable for it gives the reader the opportunity to see a comparison through a veteran missionary’s eyes who has spent decades observing each local group in the Ottoman Empire and the course of mission work among them.

Among such instant information sharing, the Yenikapı church matter offers another dimension to the dynamics between the mission and the local Christians as will be discussed in detail below.

#### 2.4.1. The Yenikapı Church matter

Should there be any assumption about the relationship between American Board’s mission and the local Christian communities being a smooth one, the personal records in the Board archives prove it quite wrong. The transition of the local Christians to the American Protestant doctrine witnessed upheavals and conflicts, usually requiring that disappointed missionaries take actions or change their policies. Their initial plans could divert to different ends, as Reeves-Ellington puts it:

. . . members of local communities embraced new ideas, recrafted them to further their own ends, and in some cases used them to promote radical causes. By bringing new ideas to Ottoman Christians in their local languages, missionaries supported the use of those languages as vehicles for the introduction of new ideas. They could not, however, control the ways in which Ottoman Christians might use new ideas to advance their own objectives.<sup>178</sup>

Such was the case in Yenikapı matter that left the Riggs couple with a bitter taste.

Frequent correspondences between Martha and Elias from February to June in 1869 report and discuss a major disagreement about the leadership and management within

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<sup>177</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, February 20, 1873. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D057.

<sup>178</sup> Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 271.

the mission at Vlanga, Yenikapı. It all started, as Elias reports, with the local community complaining that the American missionaries “trample on the right of a church to choose its own pastor.”<sup>179</sup> The Americans replied that if the Armenians are determined to have a preacher whom the Americans disapprove of then “they must provide a chapel for themselves” for the chapel is the Board’s property. Consequently, the complaints of the Armenians culminated in assertions that the Americans are “governing by the money power”<sup>180</sup> (for the full story see Appendix F). The actors involved in the incident are Mr. Minasian, Pastor Sdepan, Akhtarian, deacon Kapriel, and Peshtimaljian, the latter two arguing that the chapel was bought for their benefit and therefore it belongs to them. Two days after the crisis, Elias and Mr. Herrick from the Board went to church to meet them and Sdepan, interrupting Mr. Herrick during his speech, claimed the right to act as a chairman and silenced all those who protested his seizure. The protests and the whole confusion lasted for another two hours after which the American missionaries withdrew and were followed by the half of the church members.

Elias’ next letter to Martha reports about B. Hagop Matteosyan (the book binder), the Head of Protestant Community, who tried to persuade Sdepan not to enter into the chapel without permission and contrary to the American’s wishes. The letter reveals that Mr. Matteosyan took the matter to his “mejlis” (council) who proposed a “compromise” having two Armenian members do the morning and evening preaching, and the American Board accepted the proposal “provided Sdepan would stay away

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<sup>179</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, February 24, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D013.

<sup>180</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, February 24, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D013.

from the chapel.”<sup>181</sup> In spite of all the efforts to have Sdepan do so, he managed to enter the chapel and preached, leaving the matter unfinished.

By mid-March, the upheaval appeared to be calmed down as the Sdepan supporters seemed to have “given up the contest” since Sdepan did not come to the chapel, yet this current silence was not at all enough to convince Elias that the matter was over as he writes Martha that “they may renew the struggle in some other way.”<sup>182</sup> As correspondences between Elias in Istanbul and Martha in Mendham, New Jersey takes around a month to arrive, Martha’s first response to the incidents could be traced to late March, almost a month after Elias’s report on the incident. Pained at the “recurrence” of such scenes in Yenikapı church, she feels not surprised in Minasian’s and the deacon’s course for she thinks that “for some time that they have both in their different ways been preparing their minds for just such a winding-up of matters.”<sup>183</sup> The term “recurrence” here appears to be of importance referring to the fact that similar disputes between two communities have existed and that the latest incident was not the first of its kind.

The stormy times with the “false brethren”, in Elias’ terms, blew up in early April when Sdepan allied with Akhtarian, and ignored an appointed American missionary Mr. Ira Fayette Pettibone to take the floor, and do the preaching himself. The chapel’s doors were shut and locked, and after Sdepans’s resistance and the brethren’s departure, the opponents broke the doors of the chapel. The incident was brought to the prefect of police and after a week within which Sdepan was reckless at the police station, the prefect and the head of Protestant Community Hagop Efendi

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<sup>181</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, March 4, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D014.

<sup>182</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, March 18, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D016.

<sup>183</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, March 30, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C012.

decided to withdraw the right to preach from Sdepan. As Elias thinks that Minasian was the instigator, he expresses his deep disappointment for “the gospel has got so little hold of these people” as those whom the American missionaries “educated and trusted lift up their heels” against the missionaries.<sup>184</sup> By mid-April there was no solution of the matters yet the opponent party was reported to have called a council without the missionaries’ knowledge which would gather Rodosto [Tekirdağ] and Ada Bazar [Adapazarı] pastor, Dr. Van Lennep, Pastor Simon as chairman and Nicomedia [İzmit] preacher Garabet as secretary.<sup>185</sup> The council would listen to Sdepan’s statements and, without listening to any reply from other’s side, declare that Sdepan is chosen properly as Pastor even though they knew that the majority of the male church members have protested this. While they would spare Sdepan, the council would charge the missionaries with “using unfair means to induce the members to sign this protest” in general and Elias with despotism and falsehood in particular. Meanwhile Martha responds in support of Elias and expresses her gladness about the natives “bringing out their true character” and that “they have acted a double part long enough.”<sup>186</sup> She takes the matter to a point where she thinks that the mission could start anew in Istanbul on the same principles that churches are organized in other places. Her statement “Better no church than a false one” implies a sharp rejection of the other Christian sects adopted by not only the Riggs family but also by the American mission.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, April 8, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D019.

<sup>185</sup> See letters from Elias to Martha on April 15, 1869 ABARPC007D020 and April 22, 1869 ABARPC007D022.

<sup>186</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, April 22, 1869. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B002.

<sup>187</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, April 22, 1869. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B002.

The matter was then in the hand of Government. Meanwhile the opponents intended to get possession of all the property held by the Board in Turkey<sup>188</sup> and another native woman Miriam, whose brother was one of those who broke open the chapel, was talking bitterly against the missionaries.<sup>189</sup> Pastor Simon undertook to defend before the court the cause of those who broke the chapel, while he and Mr. Minasian (with Mr. Van Lennep) drove the missionaries into the dilemma of demonstrating that either the missionaries or the natives are guilty of falsehood and usurpation. For all of this, Elias mourns with the fellow missionaries that “such men should range themselves on the side of fraud and violence”<sup>190</sup> and consequently Martha’s fury breaks the chains of her regular tone. For the first time and the last, she expresses her strong resentment about “how shameful, how wicked those people are acting about the Y.K. Chapel & everything else” as she hopes that “they are brought to shame and confusion of face” and trusts that “a new order of things will grow out of this.”<sup>191</sup> Martha further defines the annual meeting in May 1869 that Elias attended as a “sad and humiliating meeting” for the behavior and the spirit exposed in the churches while she regards some of the missionaries being “instigators of evil thoughts” as the saddest part of all, having mentioned above that missionary Van Lennep and such Board fellows took the side of the opponents. Martha’s resentment and disappointment reflected in her letters mean more than simply personal feelings of a female missionary. Rather, it gives the reader the implications of a fundamental

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<sup>188</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, April 24, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D023A09.

<sup>189</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, May 7, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D025.

<sup>190</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, May 7, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D025.

<sup>191</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, New York, May 15, 1869. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B005.

problem within the mission that the cracks in the Protestant community in Turkey are not limited to missionaries and natives but exist among the missionaries themselves.

Moreover, a later account by Martha reflects the Ottoman government's stance on Protestants and missionaries. Upon her advice to Elias on how not to mix himself up any further with the church matters and to fairly withdraw in a letter on June 15, she gives an insight into the government's approach for she thinks that "the Government are moving slowly because they are more than willing to help on the diversion among the Protestants in the hope that they may be exterminated."<sup>192</sup> As Martha points out in this rare reflection on the relationship between the government and foreign mission, the Ottoman government's putting off the matter seems not as a natural course due to long bureaucratic procedures but rather as an intentional action.

Martha's reflection on the government's approach marks the last correspondence on this matter between her and Elias. Throughout a busy letter traffic between February and June 1869, a fundamental problem is uncovered corresponding to the supposedly established Protestant structure in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. As described earlier in this thesis, Ottoman government was hesitant about the Protestant missionaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In spite of their given "millet" status and acceptance in the Ottoman rayah in later decades, Martha's account reveals that there was still a resistance against the Protestant mission in the country during the second half of the century to the degree that such internal disputes became an opportunity to disempower the Protestants on a bureaucratic level. Also, unlike the general assumption that the converted local Christians adapted themselves to the new doctrine and community of Protestant Americans, Martha's account demonstrates that some of the locals were determined

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<sup>192</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, New York, June 15, 1869. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B009.

about sustaining their own rights and character in so much as they did not hesitate to revolt the moment they felt their rights and local character are at stake. It also shows that such unrests could pose polarization among the American missionaries themselves which would potentially harm the American Protestant mission structure.

#### 2.4.2 Elias Riggs' letters to Martha Riggs

Elias' letters to Martha are as important as Martha's own account in order to understand the extent that Martha was involved in missionary matters. In this respect, a researcher can observe that Elias keeps Martha up to date and gives precise information on every occasion that related to the mission and their surroundings. For instance, in a letter from Istanbul on December 8, 1868, Elias informs Martha about a conflict between Turkey and Greece about which he not only reports but also gives a response to the situation:

The newspapers will tell you of the threatened . . . : Between Greece and Turkey and probably before this reaches you, you will know by tel. whether the storm has blown one. The position of Greece professing neutrality, and yet pouring supplies & volunteers into Crete is an absurd one. And yet it would be almost equally disastrous for Turkey & Greece to go into an open war.<sup>193</sup>

A letter written three months later to Martha announces the death of Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Fuad Pasha, which was also circulated in the newspapers, whom Elias defines as “ablest and most liberal man in the government” and as a man whose loss would be felt in case there would arise a trouble between Greece and Turkey over Crete in the next spring as mentioned

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<sup>193</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, December 8, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C048.

above.<sup>194</sup> Elias questions if Greece would be content as long as Crete, Epirus and Thessaly were under Turkish rule and further comments on the New York demonstration of sympathy in the cause of the Cretans.

Similarly, Elias reports frequently about the status of the Bulgarian mission, Edward's designation to a specific region, Yeni Kapı crisis and the like, all of which confirms that Elias considers Martha as a work companion in the mission cause as much as a wife. Not all the news comes from her husband, Elias, but she receives reports from other members of the family who act as official missionaries of the Board. In a letter from Elias, she is notified of her son-in-law Tillman's report of the advance of the work in Marash during 1868, which Elias finds very interesting, and that she would get it from him directly,<sup>195</sup> thus revealing the fact that Martha is involved in the missionary work as much as Elias is.<sup>196</sup>

Elias' letters to Martha are also significant sources for understanding the ongoing policies and intentions of the mission just as Martha's letters are. Among the letter thread on the Yenikapı case, Elias once mentions the result of the Annual Meeting of 1869 at which their son Edward was designated to Sivas "with special ref. to labors for Mohammedans", as he provides the general resolution adopted the previous year that "there should be one missionary at each of the interior stations who shall direct special attention to labors for the Mohammedans."<sup>197</sup> Alongside the intensive work among the Christian subjects of the Ottomans, namely Armenians,

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<sup>194</sup>Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, February 15, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D012.

<sup>195</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, January 29, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D009.

<sup>196</sup> Elias would report in a later letter in February 12, 1869, that 20 more added to the church in Marash in January as 80 having been added during 1868 according to Tillman and Margaret's letter. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D011

<sup>197</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, May 27, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D028.

Bulgarians, and Greeks, for conversion to Protestantism, the mission's determination to convert Muslims – in spite of the challenges they had gone through in the late 1830s – surprisingly continues as late as 1869. A “pretentious Turk” is mentioned in one of Elias' letters to Martha regarding Bible translations in Bulgarian, Armenian and Turkish,<sup>198</sup> making the case more interesting and available for a future research topic. Owing to Martha's and Elias' accounts, we find unexpected details about the mission's policies and the status of the community which would otherwise be unrecorded.

Additionally, significant statistical and regional information can be found in the Riggs correspondences. Elias, a man of common sense, lists various statistics for Martha and Charlie, who are on their way to Athens, in case they might need the information when they arrive. The statistics were gathered for a statement that Elias was preparing about the West Turkey Mission for the Herald [Missionary Herald] and Presbyterian (see Appendix G). It gives striking figures as to the latest status of the mission in 1876 and 1877 ranging from the number of American laborers, native helpers, churches, church members, Sabbath congregations and average attendance, which goes up to 7059, to the financial contributions for support of preachers and schools, copies of scriptures issued from the Bible House, the student population in Marsovan schools, number of The Home School's boarders and that of whom on full pay (35 liras).<sup>199</sup> What makes Elias' list in this letter unique lies in his additional note that he did not send the last items to the Herald and Presbyterian, thereby making the letters supplementary sources to official reports to complement such records.

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<sup>198</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, February 3, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D010.

<sup>199</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, May 11, 1877. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D067A1. Also available in Appendix G.

### 2.4.3. The missionaries with whom Martha Riggs is in touch

Dana L. Robert argues that marriage to a missionary meant that a woman could work as a missionary and that it would open for the wife a realm of public service, despite its being limited to work among women and children.<sup>200</sup> In the early decades of the nineteenth century, a wife seemed desirable for the missionary men to prevent loneliness and to assign household work so that “they would not be distracted from their ‘true’ mission work of preaching the gospel.”<sup>201</sup> As for the missionary wives, having a husband gave a means to enable them to engage in the work in the first place. Regardless of how strong her motivation for the mission work, “the reality of the necessity of marriage to fulfill her goals meant that the early missionary wife was highly committed to her role as a ‘helpmate’.”<sup>202</sup> It would take decades for the missionary wives to be appointed by the American Board to “be designated ‘missionaries’ in their own right.”<sup>203</sup> Martha was technically fitting to Robert’s description regarding the early nineteenth-century women except that her relation to her husband exemplifies more than the model of a necessity as their trust and affection will be demonstrated in the next chapter. She was indeed a ‘helpmate’ both in the household and outside. But in her relations to fellow missionaries and in her meetings that she undertook in various stations and abroad she was more than a helpmate, rather, she was a “partner” who shared on the weight of mission responsibilities with her husband Elias. She reported the latest mission news to her husband and friends, and occasionally she represented the mission during her visits to London and New York. She was exceptionally active in the circle of male-

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<sup>200</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 18.

<sup>201</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 31.

<sup>202</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 32.

<sup>203</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 32.

dominant missionaries and was surrounded by co-workers, both male and female, who treated her no differently than an ordained missionary.

Cyrus Hamlin, one of the Istanbul veteran missionaries, was in the close circle of American missionaries that Martha with whom was in touch. Their correspondences between the years 1859 and 1876<sup>204</sup> demonstrates their constant exchange of information both as missionaries and as friends. In one of his letters, Hamlin openly expressed his trust in Martha as he referred to his sister Rebecca with whom he was close, and considered Martha as a sister in the same way.<sup>205</sup> Aside from sharing health issues and family news, Hamlin updated Martha about the latest missionary news. In the same letter stating that he regarded Martha as a sister, he informed Martha that “No postman came up laterday & I do not know whether our letter from the interior came or not” and assured her that he “shall not fail to inform you of any news that way come.”<sup>206</sup> Correspondingly, Hamlin notified Martha on the latest updates in missionary work in the Ottoman Empire as his later letter in 1876 demonstrates: Following a warm recall of Riggs house in Smyrna and how they welcomed so many “laborers” and loved ones, and the times he visited the Riggs house in Bebek and Hasköy neighborhood of Istanbul, Hamlin informed Martha about telegrams that he followed regularly. These telegrams cover all aspects of news from “Murad’s [Murad V] abdication and Hamid’s [Abdul Hamid II] succession [to the Ottoman throne]” to “manufactured” things that were received as true, such as “sheikhs of Mecca sent 200.000 Zeibecks for the war” who “murdered all the

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<sup>204</sup> SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 4.

<sup>205</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, (no date indicated). Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004008.

<sup>206</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, (no date indicated). Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004008.

Christians in the streets of Smyrna.”<sup>207</sup> Having Martha updated on missionary matters makes Hamlin correspondences different than Martha’s correspondences with Goodells or others, in which Martha seems to instead to share daily life details and well-being of family members. Hamlin correspondences prove that officially ordained missionaries consider Martha as one of their colleagues rather than just a housewife.

On her trips to London in 1859 and to the United States in 1868-1869, which were mainly for family matters such as seeking treatment for Charlie in the former and placing Jamie and Charlie into school in the latter, Martha was regularly involved in the missionary circle, making visits, attending meetings and making new contacts for the work. During her London visit, she wrote Elias about Miss Marston and Miss Haworth, two English ladies who “live quite by themselves –in elegant style- keep a carriage & footman & devote much of their time & wealth in doing good.”<sup>208</sup> These wealthy English ladies, especially Miss Marston, would several times invite friends to tea, after which she gets out her map and “invites them all to trace out the missionary stations in Asia Minor & European Turkey”.<sup>209</sup> Martha described her as “well-informed on all missionary topics that she knows how to ask questions” and mentioned her interest in the Bulgarians.<sup>210</sup> They had gone over and over the subject of missions and particularly their own branch. It is here where Martha felt an urge to respond to Miss Marston’s comprehensive knowledge and network that, firstly, she asked Elias, who was then occupied with the Bulgarian

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<sup>207</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, New Haven, August 6, 1876. Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004011.

<sup>208</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, South of Portugal, Tuesday, December 20, 1859. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A007.

<sup>209</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A004.

<sup>210</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A004.

work, to gather all he can that is worth noting regarding the Bulgarian Mission so that she might have some good and encouraging message to send to Miss Marston.<sup>211</sup> Secondly, she expressed her intention to correspond with ladies in Philippopolis [Plovdiv] to write to Miss Marston, who had made a generous donation to Bebek Seminary.<sup>212</sup> Beside Miss Marston, Martha also mentioned other ladies, a Lady Palmer and an American lady called Mrs. Hankey, who were interested in missionary work in Turkey and met Martha at the institution where she was staying.<sup>213</sup> As for the global web structure of the mission, Martha's description of such meetings hints at the worldwide reach of the missionary network: while having another *tea* session at Dr. Yates' house, she met Miss Welch who was working as secretary of the Society for promoting Christianity in the East Africa, India, China, and in constant communication with all that are sent out by the Society, including Turkey.<sup>214</sup> Situated in the center of a missionary traffic, Martha shows she is in touch with a worldwide network of missionaries.

How Martha positions herself as a representative of both an organization and a region in this sophisticated missionary network is also reflected clearly in her reports. On a note from Thursday 16th, 1860,<sup>215</sup> Martha described an evening meeting where a member of Parliament, Mr. Moody, and friends came to *tea*. She precisely told of Miss Marston's gentle and deeply interested way which kept the conversation turned upon missionary topics with her own map open to trace and

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<sup>211</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 16, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A003.

<sup>212</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A004.

<sup>213</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, January 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A005.

<sup>214</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

<sup>215</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

“have others mark the extent to which Bible has been spread over the East.” Yet in doing so, Martha reflected her uncertainty as she felt burdened and distressed that she was not more fully informed in their own work while she was anxious if she did “in some way give a wrong impression or make some wrong statement.”<sup>216</sup> Martha’s detailed description of the meeting and her personal reflections on this event reveal two striking points: The web of the American mission comprised a greater network than it appears to be; that is, the mission is not only located around the American axis, but also aligned with the English support and interest. The second significant point is to notice the hierarchy between a male missionary and a female one in the mid-1860s. Martha, an active worker for the mission, feels the absence of adequate know-how and the fear of doing wrong. Regardless of the quantity of work that she puts in, which seems to be as much as a male missionary does, women in the missionary circle seem to have less access to information than men do.

Martha’s letters reveal that support for mission work in the Ottoman Empire comes not only from the European side, but also from the Middle Eastern. Egypt’s support can be clearly understood in one of Martha’s letters in which she mentioned a new home of the American missionaries as the gift of the Pasha.<sup>217</sup> While she precisely described the details of the building as convenient and comfortable with large rooms, the reader also finds out about the presence of a chapel and an American crowd in the city.

Martha never ceased her correspondences with the missionary circle until the last years of her life. Her last two letters from the Riggs family archive at SALT Research were written in 1885 to another missionary wife Mrs. Bliss mainly on

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<sup>216</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

<sup>217</sup> The “Pasha” mentioned here is the governor of Egypt, Mehmed Said Pasha. Letter from Martha Riggs to Mrs. Bliss, Cairo, January 17, 1863. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C008.

mission updates during her stay in Aintab, where she would pass away two years later. Over the age of 70 with almost two thirds of her life spent in the mission, she never gave up on her work and responsibilities and her lifetime commitment was clearly illustrated even in her late letters, for instance, as she tells Mrs. Bliss about the dedication of a new church building in Severeke [Siverek]<sup>218</sup> or about “many comers and goers”; sometimes “a traveler, sometimes new missionaries for this or some other station.”<sup>219</sup> Among these last lines of hers in the records, Martha’s strong dedication to American Protestant domesticism can be felt when she mentioned a missionary wife Mrs. Sanders visiting Urfa with her baby girl about whom Martha described as “beautiful specimen, of what a baby ought to be, will make a sweet missionary by her [Mrs. Sanders’] example.”<sup>220</sup> Martha’s vision to see infants as the potential missionaries should not come as surprise as she was trained to do so and fulfilled her task by raising three missionaries out of her four surviving children. Given these points, her close contact with other missionaries serves as the partial fulfillment of her missionary responsibilities while it proves readers a great map of the network both within the American Board stations in Turkey and other missionary initiatives abroad.

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<sup>218</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Mrs.Bliss, Aintab, October 26, 1885. Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004002.

<sup>219</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Mrs.Bliss, Aintab, December 1, 1885. Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004003.

<sup>220</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Mrs.Bliss, Aintab, October 26, 1885. Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004002.

## CHAPTER 3

### MARTHA RIGGS AS A WIFE AND A MOTHER

#### 3.1 Martha Riggs' personal reflections on what it takes to be a missionary

The nature of missionary work requires long travels and consequently long separations. Both Martha and Elias needed to leave their families behind due to their travels, sometimes for months, and it is during these separations that their longing for a united family is most apparent. Martha's personal reflections on what it takes to be a missionary appears several times in her letters from different years and locations. Her letter to Elias from Liverpool in 1860, for instance, includes her reflection on separation and missionary work: "These wanderings to & fro are not what I wd [would] choose. But I hope I have not come here with but some gain, tho' the great object for wh. [what] I set out is not accomplished."<sup>221</sup> During Elias' trip to the Eastern cities, Diyarbakır, Harput and Arapkir in 1863, Martha writes from Istanbul describes a scene with the whole family and a neighbor in the garden and asks him rhetorically "Now this is a family picture. Can you not see us?"<sup>222</sup> as an expression of her longing to be together again. Another sentimental reflection comes on a Thanksgiving eve when she writes from the United States to Elias in Istanbul: "I hope we can be thankful though we are so scattered as a family."<sup>223</sup>

Spending most of her adulthood in Turkey, Martha treats Izmir and mostly Istanbul as home. These cities felt more like a hometown to her than did any other city she had experienced. Consequently, she does not refrain from expressing her

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<sup>221</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

<sup>222</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, June 6, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0018.

<sup>223</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, November 25, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C032.

thoughts on being away from Turkey as a traveling missionary. In her letters written after their return from the Southern countries (Egypt and Beirut) in 1863, she wrote to Elias, from her daughter Margaret's house in Yenikapı, that she felt so relieved of anxiety, care and responsibility and that she had been saying constantly ever since she came back, "How good it is to be here"<sup>224</sup> thus, reflecting her happiness to be there and to *belong* to there.

Martha manages to overcome these separations by comforting herself with the missionary work that the separations made possible. Her longing for family and her commitment to the missionary work are always in harmony as her letters to Elias demonstrate. Within his reply to Martha, Elias reported significant missionary news that Martha sought to receive.<sup>225</sup> Among his news are: the status of *Constantinople High School*, about which the mission intended to aid in its start but looked to having it under native management and self-supporting; *female missionaries*, in favor of which the mission voted so that additional unmarried females would join several stations; *missionary work in Istanbul*, which was then put in charge of missionaries Harrick, Schauffler and Baldwin as a joint committee instead of the separate committees appointed the previous year for Turkish & Armenian Work; and *missionary activities among the Muslims*, about which the mission voted in favor of a missionary being stationed at each of their larger stations expressly for this work. For the latter he added: "At the same time they recommend labors in the Arm[enian] and Bulg[arian] departments to labor as they have opportunity for the Mohammedans, and those in Turkish department to labor also for Arm[enian] and Bulg[arian] &c."<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, May 12, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0020.

<sup>225</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, June 5, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D076.

<sup>226</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, June 5, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D076.

As the example demonstrates, even one single correspondence between Martha and Elias, and Martha's personal reflections, shed light on many details regarding the mission. Recalling Cayton, who describes women missionaries as being "focused mainly on feelings about departure for a strange land and longings for home and family"<sup>227</sup> Martha's instant switching between her feelings and her work enquiries make an addition to this argument since such reflections of feelings were followed by significant details about the Ottoman social structure and the strategies of the mission on different groups within the Empire.

Martha seems to owe her success as a missionary to her sharp eyes and the mind of an observer. She not only recorded particulars in her environment but also comprehended the changing tendencies around her towards belief systems over time. Upon a question from people around her in the United States about if they have not worked long enough "out there" to come back and finish days over there, she seemed to be critical of the "general coldness in the churches everywhere" and thought that the "spirit of prayer and devotion seem to have departed,"<sup>228</sup> for she saw the lack of encouragement and enthusiasm in people for the cause of missionaries. In a way, although in a disapproving way and with quite a personal tone, she made a general analysis of social behavior, which she found to be degenerating compared to earlier times. In the same way, she was critical of the general status of the children and their bringing up in the United States, which she illustrated in her comparison with her own children: "My dear we have three good boys. You would realize this if you saw some of the children here. Girls especially are growing up in a bad way in

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<sup>227</sup> Cayton "Canonizing Harriet Newell," 82.

<sup>228</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Greensburg, the United States, September 12, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C042.

Am.[America]”<sup>229</sup> To a certain degree, Martha enables us to see the social change from a religiously conservative society to a less-attached one in the mid-nineteenth-century United States. Her observation of the participants in Edward’s ordination during her last days in the United States exemplifies such change in the general attitude towards religion and missionary work. As she saw the audience as being comparatively small and the ambiance lacking “the deep feeling” that they used to see on such occasions, she came to the conclusion that “it ought not to be expected that missionary interest should continue to be of the same deep & thrilling kind as formerly” for it has become “an everyday experience and missionary fields have come to be regarded as in some respects inviable.”<sup>230</sup> Even Edward himself, though he would become a lifelong missionary, sounds more liberal when it comes to religious rituals. In a letter to his mother, Martha, he reflected on a baptism at a Baptist Church in New York and considered it “a grievously oppressive superstition.”<sup>231</sup> As a member of a younger generation, Edward exemplifies the changing attitudes toward religion-related matters over years and thus, Martha’s observation on how religion and missionary work are conceived and how they gradually changed over time appears not to be groundless.

From time to time, we find Martha reflecting upon the passage of time and the ever-changing circumstances of life, all of which usually result in some sort of self-evaluation. Birthdays, weddings, departure or arrival anniversaries become occasions to think upon her deeds, accomplishments, failures and memories which she reflected with a realistic stance. Her noting of their 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Elias, for instance,

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<sup>229</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Greensburg, the United States, September 12, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C042.

<sup>230</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, New York, June 15, 1869. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B009.

<sup>231</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, New York, June 1, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C003.

gave her the opportunity to express her amazement at how the passage of time had made and will bring tremendous changes:

How far in the future would 1868 have appeared to us in '32! And 36 years more will bring our young married friends into the next century! Will there be great changes in that time to come, then there have been in 36 years just passed? In the religious world I trust there will be even greater changes than anything we have seen, but in regard to inventions & discoveries it seems to be nothing can exceed this present age.<sup>232</sup>

Here, Martha's reflection on time and "great changes" in its course also embodies the zeitgeist of the nineteenth century which supports the popular idea that everything that can be invented has been invented. Rapid progress in technology and medicine within a couple of decades must have shaped Martha's admiration to the general course of the century, yet she seems not satisfied when their personal progress is in question. Although they had come this far in mission on a vast foreign land and institutionalized a once small American missionary initiative into a corporate structure, she looked back "with a very unsatisfied feeling" that some of their "fondest hopes have been disappointed and every thing - every duty, every pleasure - every effort have been marked by imperfection and failure" so far as she had concerned.<sup>233</sup> Her feelings toward their efforts were the opposite of those towards the advancement of the general era, yet her disappointment reveals the fact that their goals at the beginning of their venture were more ambitious and more comprehensive than their current vast spread. Consequently her reflection feels more like a self-criticism than a general blame, for she commented that, "...if I had known how to start 36 years ago I might have had more to look back upon with satisfaction"

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<sup>232</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills near Cincinnati, September 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C041.

<sup>233</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills near Cincinnati, September 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C041.

and added that she was trying every day to see what duty was and to do it as she looked forward to "the quiet & leisure of winter to accomplish some things in the way of work or study or influence or all of these together."<sup>234</sup> Martha's reflection is doubtlessly a personal and emotional one, yet it reveals both the spirit of the time and the mental outcomes of what it takes to be a missionary dealing with such challenges varying from intermittent separations to exhaustive travels, health problems and making a foreign land home.

In her missionary work, Martha viewed her employer, the American Board, from an objective stance. As much as she appreciated all its benefits and its cause, she also did not hesitate to express her criticism against its representations. She shared an important criticism with Elias about a report in *Herald*, the Board's periodical, regarding the missionary children. She thought that the report

"does not give full view of the discussion . . . nor a fair view of the results in regard to the success of miss.children. Most of their success is attributable not to what the Board has done for them but to the pious principles in which they were trained by their parents before the Board ever aided them or knew anything about them."<sup>235</sup>

In this sharp criticism, Martha defended the role of parents in raising children, and rejected the Board's claim on that role. Although rare, such criticisms exemplify Martha's twofold nature as a missionary and a mother.

Despite all the technological and medical advances in the second half of the nineteenth century, living a missionary life certainly had a price to pay and Martha seemed to be fully aware of it. As will be addressed in the third section of this chapter (see Chapter 3.3) epidemics ranked among the major threats to human life in

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<sup>234</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills near Cincinnati, September 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C041.

<sup>235</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, November 11, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C034.

the nineteenth century. From Istanbul to Egypt<sup>236</sup> epidemics such as cholera, scarlet fever and influenza were mentioned frequently in the missionary correspondences. As painfully recorded in Martha's letters, such epidemics took the lives of friends and family frequently. Traveling long distances, accommodation conditions in less advanced towns, climate, and all the possible factors that a mobile missionary was exposed to made it a trial to survive. It was upon Dr. Andrew Tully Pratt's death and some other consecutive deaths in the missionary circle that Martha summarized the inescapable condition of a missionary as she remarked, "The recent deaths that have occurred here tell us very plainly that it is not for missionaries more than others to look forward to long life."<sup>237</sup> Martha's statement tells us how hard it was for missionaries to adapt themselves to different conditions and circumstances and yet the human body might easily fail to adapt itself, thus death is always nearer than the expectation of a long life for a missionary. Martha's calmness and wisdom in her observations is also remarkable considering her challenging road of preparation leading up to this stage of her life where she has spent more than half of her life abroad with half of her children along with many dear friends already gone.

Martha's account also shows us how changeable the notion of "home" could be. As referred earlier in this section, Martha gradually made a once a foreign land "home" where she has lived for long years and expressed her confidence in belonging there, challenging the popular notion of homeland being where one is born and raised. As one of her letters reveals, such behavior seems not to be restricted to Martha alone, but applies to other missionary wives as well. After losing Dr. Andrew

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<sup>236</sup> Elias mentions a cholera quarantine in the upper Nile in his letter from Ramleh, Egypt to Martha in Istanbul on December 6, 1872. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D044.

<sup>237</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, December 18, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B024.

Tully Pratt in 1872, Mrs. Sarah Frances Goodyear Pratt was reported to be “at a loss what cause to take - whether to stay here and move into the new house or go to America, where she has no friends to go to or look to.”<sup>238</sup> Such personal dilemma underlines the fact that being a missionary outside the missionary’s native land acts as a means to construct a social circle, a state of belonging, a household. Stations become homes where the missionaries build up their physical and social environments, where they get married, raise their children, extend their families further, and even die and get buried to their designated cemeteries. So that after some time what they once knew as homeland feels like a foreign land where there could be no friends found. Such a tendency can be considered as one of the major outcomes of what it takes to be a missionary based on Martha’s account.

### 3.2 Martha Riggs’ views on being a wife and a mother

Martha lost four of her eight children, two in their infancy and two in their youth. Although her losses were difficult to bear, Martha never gave up on her well-being for the good of her surviving children. As Dana L. Robert puts it, a missionary wife’s “devotion to the home was not a selfish thing, but the very essence of how she witnessed to Christ.”<sup>239</sup> This spiritual motivation was the force that helped Martha sustain her utmost care for herself and her family. From her correspondences she appears to be a strong woman who can put up with such mental pain, and as a missionary wife she seems to accept her duties for her family and her work responsibilities for the missionary circle. Yet, as a compassionate mother, she

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<sup>238</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 13, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B030.

<sup>239</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 72.

remembers her deceased children, and, although rarely, reflects her emotions on their loss. In an 1859 letter from Malta to Elias,<sup>240</sup> Martha remarked on how emotional and sad it was to look at temple and monument on the battlement of Valletta which they so often spoke of with dear “Lizzie”, Elizabeth, who passed away in November 1858 due to scarlet fever epidemic a couple of months after their trip from the United States and Malta. Similarly, she expressed her grief in her memo notebook<sup>241</sup> at the loss of her “precious departed boy” Samuel who died in 1844 in Izmir, followed by a similar entry as “Oh that fatal fall!...Is he safe and at rest in heaven?” on December 24, 1845, the anniversary of Samuel’s death. Except these few special moments of grief, Martha appears to hold on her surviving children in the rest of her precisely written long letters and did as much as it took to take care of them. Her missionary work also played a significant part in her recovery for she never left being involved in and up-to-date about the latest happenings in the mission. For instance, in a letter to Elias in 1859 written from South of Portugal on her way to London, a week after her remarks on the late Elizabeth, she commemorated the past days and realized the changes occurred in the mission ever since, reflecting the “lukewarm state of the Protestant churches” in Istanbul:

It did not occur me while in Malta the other day that it is just twenty-seven years since we stopped there on our way to Greece & spent the month of Dec.there. What a change in our mission since then! There is much to be thankful for, but I often think with pain of the lukewarm state of the Protestant churches in Cons’ple. On that we were all more deeply impressed with a sense of the worth of the immortal soul! I wish I might hear good tidings from the churches & schools.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Malta, December 13, 1859. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A009.

<sup>241</sup> Martha Riggs Memo Notebook. SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Diaries, Diary 2. ABARPDR002.

<sup>242</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, South of Portugal, Tuesday, December 20, 1859. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A007.

Yet, four days after this letter was written, on the 15th anniversary of Samuel's death, she commemorated their departed boy "transplanted to the heavenly garden" and shared with Elias "[h]ow, as our years increase, do our solemn days multiply! Days that memory loves to cherish."<sup>243</sup>

Although Martha managed to overcome grief by shifting her focus to her industrious mission work and well-being of her family, her losses seem to affect her responses to changing circumstances in her private life; that is, she took instant actions and never hesitated to go miles for any possibility to make a case better. Such is the case when she took her youngest son, Charles Riggs also known as "Charlie" in the family, to Izmir to consult their family physician for his fading sight and, following his advice, she promptly took a steamer to London to find an oculist and Dr. Toynbee, the inventor of the artificial ear drum, for Charlie's treatment in 1859. Another case is her decision to take a trip to the south for her daughter Emma's failing health in 1863. In a letter to Mrs. Bliss, another missionary wife, from Cairo in January 1863, Martha mentioned Emma as sick, yet she had more strength since they came to Cairo.<sup>244</sup>

Martha would soon lose Emma after their "salvation" trip to Cairo and Beirut, yet she would not lose her mental strength in coping with the pain of losing someone dear to her. In one of her letters, in the aftermath of Emma's death, she wrote about how she is handling the situation and the absence. She trusted that Emma was in a blessed home, so she had no sadness in thinking of Emma. Martha recalled a moment when they sang several Hymns in Emma's room and Emma expressed her delight in

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<sup>243</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Saturday, December 24, 1859. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0030.

<sup>244</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Mrs. Bliss, Cairo, January 17, 1863. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C008.

them, saying that reading them always made her feel near heaven.<sup>245</sup> Martha extracted her strength from faith, it is therefore comprehensible that she committed herself in working for spreading the faith she wholeheartedly believed in. Consequently, being a missionary became a lifestyle for Martha in which her family role and missionary role were intermingled.

Her dedication to her faith undoubtedly fueled her dedication to her children. Taking a year off for traveling to the U.S. in the nineteenth century to place her boys in school and her decision to extend her stay “to remain on Charlie’s account”, to see how well his study in school with Jamie would work, and to have Charlie, Jamie and Edward spend their winter holidays with her,<sup>246</sup> demonstrate both her dedication to her children and the significance that Martha attributes to the notion of family itself. From her hometown Mendham, right after she settled Jamie and Charlie in an academy in Lakesville, Martha wrote to Elias about their status, accommodation, nutrition and the scenery for which she quotes Edward that it would “do them good in mind & heart as well as tend to promote health and vigor”<sup>247</sup> as she clearly put their well-being before their coursework in her decision for schools. Still she showed quite an interest in their coursework, put every effort to send her sons to reputable schools, did networking for it and enquired as today’s mothers do for their children. Once in a Sabbath that she spent in Brooklyn she met Professor Cameron of Princeton University after his preaching and enquired whether they would receive a student for a partial course and remarked: “He said oh yes he was quite sure they

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<sup>245</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs. No place nor date indicated. SALT Research, Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C001.

<sup>246</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, August 17, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B036.

<sup>247</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, October 21, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007B038.

would. I have written this to the boys to encourage them. Perhaps I mentioned this before and also the prospect getting a satisfactory state for arithmetic and algebra.”<sup>248</sup> As for Charlie she added: “I hope too the system of writing which Mr. Wait, the superintendent of the N.Y. Inst. is trying to bring to perfection will be a success and that Charlie will be able to get familiar with it this year so as to use it in Col. [College]”<sup>249</sup>

Martha’s motherhood and diligent work on the education of her children shed light on the new techniques and systems introduced in the era. As a dedicated mother, she never hesitated to take her blind son Charlie to the renowned doctors both in England and the United States. It is from one of these doctor visits in Indianapolis that Martha heard of the *Braille* system for the first time and shared her curiosity with Elias:

Mr. C. says Charlie will need to acquire the means of taking notes for himself and recommends for this purpose the Braille system of writing & printing which enables the writer to read what he has written. I will see when I go to New York what system is used there and learn all I can before deciding any.<sup>250</sup>

Martha’s efforts to have her disabled child get the same education and standards as her other children always triggered her to find the best and the latest solutions for Charlie’s disabilities. Owing to that, we get the opportunity to find out both the introduction of the Braille system as an alternative for educational purposes in the mid nineteenth century and the fact that even in 1868, almost 40 years after it was first published in 1829,<sup>251</sup> it was still then not commonly used nor known to public.

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<sup>248</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, October 21, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007B038.

<sup>249</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, October 21, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007B038.

<sup>250</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Indianapolis, United States, September 5, 1868 Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C043.

<sup>251</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica website, “Braille Writing System.” To learn about Elias Riggs’ works on the blind, see Doğan, “American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and ‘Nominal Christians’,” 164.

Almost three months after she had mentioned the Braille system to Elias, Martha received Charlie's writing apparatus. Although it is not clear whether this apparatus is related by any means to the Braille system or not, Martha's precise description of this alternative method enables us to understand the education of the blind during the nineteenth century:

The key consists of the letters in various combinations – such as a few short words and easy sentences, including a few abbreviations. The form is like Charlie's small books & Hymn books. The frame for writing consists of wood faced with a grooved brass plate & a guide of brass like the paper form enclosed. It is a moveable and secured by a pin at each end inserted in the wooden frame. The cost is five dollars. This which I have is the first that has been finished since the alphabet has been finally arranged.<sup>252</sup>

Another moment of Martha's responsible motherhood and consensus-oriented character can be witnessed when she discussed if Jamie should go to school or to college.<sup>253</sup> Disagreeing with Jamie, who thought college education would be more appropriate after a trial in the school, Martha thought he needed supplementary courses such as arithmetic and composition. Yet instead of forcing him to do so, she waited for her elder son Edward to share his views and at the same time asked Elias' opinion via letter, thus, demonstrated her willing to be a prudent and a sensitive mother instead of an authoritative one who valued the opinions of the family members and never hesitated to ask for them.

Her letters to Elias prove Martha's collaborative character as a wife. In every step she took, she sought the consent of her husband, and if necessary, her elder children. With the clear recognition of sharing a life together, Martha constructed the children's academic life, took important decisions on health and also managed family

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<sup>252</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, New York, United States, December 14, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C021.

<sup>253</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, United States, June 30, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B040.

budget with Elias even when they were miles apart from each other. Right before she took off to the United States, for instance, she shared the list of all the expenditures with Elias and asked for his consultancy and correction. In doing so, she also provided an invaluable list which sheds light on consumption habits of the era. Among them were accessories like neck tie for Jamie, hooped skirt, parasol, a Victorian jewelry type “gutta percha buckle”, pincushions, cocoa nuts and beans.

As much a collaborative wife as she was, Martha did not hesitate to express her affection to her husband in her letters. On board the Russia steamer from England to the United States, she wrote: “How often and often my dear husband you were in my thoughts while we were in Liverpool and London! It seemed to me to be such a useless thing for me to be there without you – whatever I attempted seemed only half accomplished” and added a word about Charlie in return for Elias’ wish to get advice on his case for which she promised to make this matter her first duty after seeing their friends a little.<sup>254</sup> Her affection in turn did not remain unanswered; Elias, who considered Martha as both family and work companion, draws a husband profile who remembers their anniversaries and makes Martha feel that he is with her “in spirit though widely separated in body.”<sup>255</sup> Upon the matter of having a grant from the Board for the boys, a topic which Martha was bringing up frequently in her letters for schooling of Jamie and Charlie, Elias left the matter entirely in Martha’s hands. The sequence of this correspondence testifies that Martha and Elias were in a relationship where Martha was free to take the complete charge on herself whereas she never did so without Elias’ consultation and did seek his consent. In turn, Elias reflected his trust and appreciation to Martha regarding family decisions clearly in his letters,

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<sup>254</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, On board the “Russia”, June 19, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B045.

<sup>255</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Khalki/Heybeliada, Istanbul, July 3, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D080.

emphasizing once that more than a third of a century they had been in the habit of deciding together and that they “have generally decided so harmoniously and with so true sympathy” as he further remarked; “I believe that very few husbands in the world can take as thorough satisfaction in the entire influence of their wives over their children as I can and do” adding his confidence in believing that Martha could reciprocate the feeling.<sup>256</sup> Doubtlessly no other statement could surpass Elias’ open remarks on the strength and firmness of their relationship. The Riggs couple alone cannot be seen as the standard domestic relationship in the nineteenth century but it surely was an ideal one for the American domesticism discourse, hence Martha’s courage and support to take charge of her family’s well-being and the missionary work harmoniously.

Martha’s modesty, domesticity and simplicity could be observed in almost every letter, whether she was commenting on a missionary matter, reviewing a new city or deciding a place to live in. Her adaptation to Turkey surely speaks to her missionary capabilities, but her domestic nature also plays a role in making it a home rather than a mission station. She embraced the habits, the order and the life that they established in Turkey so much that at a point when she discussed whether to live in Istanbul or in New York, she expressed her disfavor of being trapped in the “formalities of society” in New York, and added her “salaams to the ‘Hanums’” to the female acquaintances in Istanbul, implying her familiarity and closeness to the culture.<sup>257</sup> It is possible to observe Martha’s modest and conservative character for she stayed away from society events and sought a simple life, instead. It is for this very reason that she looked at her daughter Margaret’s simple life among simple

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<sup>256</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, March 10, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D015.

<sup>257</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, March 3, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C017.

people in Turkey with admiration, and expressed her dislike of festivals, fairs, fancy Christmas trees in churches, fancy events and “sociables” that end with dance and party. Accordingly, she reflected her sadness about the condition of the churches in her hometown and country which were “so thinly attended and especially prayer meetings.”<sup>258</sup> To emphasize the pretentious behavior of the Christian community she further noted that people did not seem to feel that they were under any obligation to go to hear the preacher “unless a preacher is something ‘special’”, a situation which “is felt and mourned over by many who have long walked in the ‘old paths’.”<sup>259</sup>

Martha’s impression about her eldest son Edward’s wife, whom she was pleased with due to the latter’s “plain, active and sensitive” character and their “economical style” in their plainly decorated house,<sup>260</sup> also reveals her own character as a plain woman who did not approve any manifestation of luxury and extravagance. Her dedication to domesticity highlights her responsibilities towards her family such as the well-being and education of her children rather than the decorations of her household or such formalities of society.

Her one-year trip to the United States for the sake of education of her two sons, Jamie and Charlie, and all the efforts she shows to place them in a competent school at the cost of staying separated from her husband and away from her home prove this sort of commitment. Raising and educating her children were at the summit of Martha’s priorities, and she never hid her soft spot for Charlie, who needed extra attention and care for his special physical condition. In spite of her

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<sup>258</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, March 10, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C016.

<sup>259</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, March 10, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C016.

<sup>260</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Strawberry Hill, Michigan, August 10, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B037.

accomplishment in placing the boys, she was never without a motherly worry as she reflected in one of her letters to Elias,

It brings a sad feeling to my heart to think of the great deep ocean that rolls between us now & that in a few months it will (probably) separate Jamie and Charlie from all the rest of us. If it were only Jamie it would not be so hard, but how can I leave Charlie?"<sup>261</sup>

Meanwhile Martha was not happy with the boys' condition at the "uncongenial" boarding house that, after making enquiries to the boys and asking what they thought about it, she eventually decided to take Charlie back from the school and keep him with her at Mendham. After 5 months of separation, she would have Charlie practice his writing skills every day, take algebra and piano lessons while Jamie would stay at school to finish the semester as the two boys had already finished the six books of Euclid and would review with the tutor before being examined for college.<sup>262</sup> Such details that Martha precisely reported show us how much care and attention Martha was paying to her children's education and intellectual development, and fulfilled the ultimate expectations of American Protestant domesticism discourse in the nineteenth century.

On the whole, Martha was a considerate woman. For her, family came first above all. Her choices always favored the well-being of the family even if missionary work was at stake. She made her choices through reasoning which was clearly illustrated when she struggled between rushing to Egypt to take care of sickened Elias and staying home to maintain the daily household order in her letters.<sup>263</sup> As can be seen in the same letter thread, instead of making spontaneous

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<sup>261</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, January 14, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C027.

<sup>262</sup> See Martha's letters to Elias on February 2, February 8 and February 22, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C025, ABARPC007C024 and ABARPC007C018 respectively.

<sup>263</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, February 11, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B032.

decisions, she waited for a word from Elias and decided to stay when she learned that Elias was feeling better. The major reason for her decision to stay was due to her unwillingness to burden Margaret with taking on all the household responsibility while she was already occupied with the school work, nevertheless Martha was always ready to take off in case Elias' health got any worse. Exhibiting common sense in judgement and being a cautious multitasking woman, Martha did not focus on a single member of the family but considered each one's well-being. Given these points, it can be asserted that Martha managed to fulfill her duties as a mother and a wife.

### 3.3 Martha Riggs' accounts concerning health, epidemics and treatments

Many surprising details emerge in Martha's letters ranging from mission work to domestic occupations. Within this wide range, what truly stands out is her detailed account on epidemics, medicines and treatment methods. Health itself was a lifetime challenge for Martha to cope with, both for herself and for her children, as epidemics caused the blindness of her son and the death of two daughters. In this respect, she paid close attention to health matters in her records, from which a researcher can trace how far she went to seek treatment for her children, how much interest she had in new medical inventions and how precise she could be about the names and usage of pills. Her description of each illness and of the way doctors prescribed and applied solutions contributes to medical history and offers a first-hand experience of the nineteenth-century medical methods. Martha's account also sheds light on the history of epidemics in different parts of the world, namely Istanbul and New York. Lastly, it helps to advance an understanding of how health issues may color women's role in

the nineteenth-century American domestic discourse. Below are several examples of such rich details selected from Martha's correspondence.

During their trip to the South, Martha's letter from Beirut to Elias, who was in Aleppo then, stands out from the travel accounts of the restless missionary couple in the way that it precisely describes a method of treatment for her sick daughter Emma. In the letter, she reported that Emma was treated with "sulphate of iron" that the doctor gave her eight powders. Another doctor recommended "Croton Oil" to produce counter irritation over her affected lung, the upper part of the right side. Martha was cautious in adopting any new treatment and asks Elias's help in deciding what is best.<sup>264</sup> Yet in the following letter, she observed the iron treatment and judged that it had not done any good for Emma, who reportedly looked paler.<sup>265</sup> Emma would pass away within the same year upon the family's return to Constantinople due to measles which worsened her ongoing sickness. Being the last child lost until Martha's death, Emma's case, as well as Charlie's, made Martha look for all the possible options of treatment, hence the rich details of medical methods that no contemporary resource would outline so precisely.

In one of the letters to Martha from Elias, we learn about the use of "Ayer's pills" against fever.<sup>266</sup> In another, we learn that "a powder with the main ingredient 'bismuth'" was prescribed for Emma, who had been suffering both diarrhea and a disease in the right side of her lung with tubercles formed.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Beyroot, April 16, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0014.

<sup>265</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Smyrna, April 25, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0019.

<sup>266</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Diyarbakır, May 21, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0010.

<sup>267</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, June 9, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0025.

For her regular shortness of breath attacks sometimes with fever and headache at nights during her stay in Mendham, United States, a doctor (Dr. Thompson) prescribed Martha various types of herbs such as “Bella Donna”, “Camphor” which is a large evergreen tree used as a cough suppressant, and “labdanum”, yet Martha soon would stop using these medicines for they made her feel worse.<sup>268</sup> Martha also mentioned “a box of Jayne’s pills” out of which she “took 4 with benefit” for her cold.<sup>269</sup> From a doctor that she visited in Indianapolis, she was instructed to “use of a sponge bath every morning with salt in the water and friction with a coane towel” for her asthmatic coughs.<sup>270</sup> By 1872, Elias would mention a new medicine “chlorodyne”, the widely popular medicine of the late nineteenth century, to Martha as a relief to pains in the region of the diaphragm.<sup>271</sup>

Beside epidemics, the exhaustive pace of being a missionary also affects physical being. Martha's exhaustive travels seem to affect her health in that she shared her "unpleasant symptoms" with Elias that she had been suffering. "One of these is a furred tongue which become every night parched and dry. The homeopathic doctor in Indianapolis, said it indicated considerable degree of congestion of the bronchial tubes" and she wrote Elias about its main cause that all these changes from place to place expose her to take cold & to get fatigued, and the doctor said that she must rest if she hoped to get well.<sup>272</sup> Resting seemed not on Martha's agenda as a hardworking missionary and a dedicated mother, yet she sought

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<sup>268</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, July 23, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B039.

<sup>269</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, August 17, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B036.

<sup>270</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Indianapolis, September 1, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C044.

<sup>271</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Beirut, November 11, 1872. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D039.

<sup>272</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Wallnut Hills near Cincinnati, September 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C041.

treatment by "taking homeopathic medicine still" and taking "a sponge bath of salt water every morning."<sup>273</sup> Within 10 days she visited another doctor in Saratoga who, after a careful check of her chest, diagnosed "irritation of the mucous membrane of the smaller bronchial tubes - advised the used of cod liver oil - a teaspoonful before each meal with a teaspoonful of whisky."<sup>274</sup>

As for the medical operations of the time, the letters reveal that there was already an operation conducted "for opening an artificial pupil" in the eyes, which was thought for one of Charlie's eyes but found not applicable as his doctor did not see any encouragement for such an operation for Charlie.<sup>275</sup> For his ear check Martha reported particulars of the ear operation that a Dr. Agnus performed:

He said the drum was collapsed or fallen inward. He made Charlie take a mouth full of water and then at the Dr's word to swallow it, the doctor at the same instant forcing through the nostril a jet of air inflating the drum of the ear. this he repeated two or three times, observing the effect on the hearing.<sup>276</sup>

As the description above justifies, Martha's long and detailed records of each instance shed light on the medical operations of the contemporary doctors as well as on the illnesses and treatments.

Martha's records can help to document the history of epidemics in different parts of the world. While there was cholera outbreak in Istanbul in 1865,<sup>277</sup> Martha recorded a kind of summer cold in New York in 1868 from which many people were suffering. "Some call it hay fever - some peach cold & others rose cold, according to

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<sup>273</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills near Cincinnati, September 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C041.

<sup>274</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Saratoga, United States, September 25, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C040.

<sup>275</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Khalki/Heybeliada, Istanbul, August 2, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D085.

<sup>276</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, August 17, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B036.

<sup>277</sup> Letter from Emma Goodell to Martha Riggs, Hartford, September 20, 1865. Letters Packet 3. ABARPC003003A1.

the time when it commences” Martha reported to Elias about the obscure epidemic and added that he would “see in the papers sad accounts of suffering and deaths in N. York from the heat.”<sup>278</sup> In 1868, there was a disease going on in Istanbul that some missionary children were affected, leaving fellow Dr. Andrew Tully Pratt’s daughter, Helen, ill and his other children dead previously. It was probably an infection of bowels as Martha states: “Perhaps they don’t certainly know what the trouble was. I have had an idea that the symptoms of consumption of the bowels were very marked and very distressing.”<sup>279</sup>

“Cancer” was also uttered once in her letters when she mentioned a Mrs. Bullard, the mother of Mrs. Rankin where Jamie was at school, that she had a cancer on her nose which gave her a great deal of pain.<sup>280</sup> Whether it is a tumor or the cancer that we know, Martha recorded variety of diseases and their perception in people’s minds neatly in her letters. “Dysentery” was also recorded in the Riggs letters when one of the members of Schauffler family was infected with the disease.<sup>281</sup>

Martha not only provided vast information of epidemics and treatments but also gives such rare details of an ordinary doctor visit charges. Through her letter to Elias about Charlie’s ear check in the United States she reported \$10 a visit as high.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, July 23, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B039.

<sup>279</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, November 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C033.

<sup>280</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, October 28, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C036.

<sup>281</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, December 1, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C047.

<sup>282</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, July 23, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B039.

An extraordinary letter from Martha enables a reader to find several special health cases observed during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is remarkable to see three different cases (two physical and one mental) narrated so well and thoroughly in a missionary letter as the reader can also find out how these cases could be treated. The letter in question was written by Martha from their Yenikapı house to Elias in Beirut in December 1872 and begins with more particulars of Dr. Andrew Tully Pratt's case than she had known before. Having Dr. Albert Long of Robert College treated him, Dr. Pratt, who was among the veteran missionaries in Istanbul, had been suffering a disease. As Martha described, his limbs were "considerably swollen and the water in the region of the heart, occasions spasmodic sufferings. But the water, the Dr. says is being absorbed and if he has vitality enough to struggle on for while he may recover."<sup>283</sup> Dr. [Cyrus] Hamlin would relieve Dr. Long for a couple of days for the latter was quite worn out, and Dr. Pratt would pass away three days later after this letter was written. Nevertheless, she provided the reader with such useful details about the specificity of diagnosis and medical knowledge and addressed to such a cooperation among missionary circle in health cases. The second health issue was related to Elias' reportedly coughing turns and wakeful hours at night for which Martha recommended the use of "ale" to aid him sleep as she further noted "a glass or half a glass just before going to bed has that effect on some persons."<sup>284</sup> Treatment with alcohol was a common practice in the nineteenth century, by the end of which "brandy and whisky were advertised in medical and nursing journals, the same journals discussed their merits."<sup>285</sup> While

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<sup>283</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, December 2, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B017.

<sup>284</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, December 2, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B017.

<sup>285</sup> Guly, "Medicinal brandy," 951-954.

brandy and whiskey were praised as the most effective ones among other forms of alcohol in terms of treatment, the physicians in the United States believed that beer was also “a necessary therapeutic agent” by the early 1930s. All in all, alcohol was used as a stimulant, as a sedative and in fevers, especially illnesses like pneumonia and typhoid, in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>286</sup>

Martha’s offer to Elias to use ale before going to bed against coughing turns and wakeful hours precisely exemplifies the usage of alcohol as a sedative. The third case in Martha’s letter relates to the mental health question rather than a physical one.

Mentioning Mrs. Johnston, a wife of a missionary, as “deranged”, she described her distance towards Martha and anybody, being not sociable or communicative.

According to what Mrs. Johnston’s husband told them, Martha defined her as “her mind was not sound” and yet mentioned “her admirable training of her children” thus added that “the wonder was to all how she could be so happy and successful in that work while her relations to her husband and the mission & the Board seemed to be so little governed by reason.”<sup>287</sup> The mental case here is not followed by any medical treatments unlike the two physical cases mentioned above, yet it unravels other concerns felt by a close community in the nineteenth century. Martha’s question on how she could be happy and successful in raising children while failing in relations has many implications: First, it implies the women’s prior role in raising children as the nineteenth-century American domesticity imposes and addresses to her other responsibilities towards both her husband and the community. Second, it shows us that regardless of how unacceptable a mental case could be, a success in women’s major responsibility, that is raising children, could balance her other failures thus

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<sup>286</sup> Guly, “Medicinal brandy,” 951-954.

<sup>287</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, December 2, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B017

could make her acceptable to some extent in the community. The third implication is of course the perception of *raising children* as a sort of work or assignment whose aim is to generate future generations for Protestant Americans. An organic motherhood is replaced by a systematic and rationalized motherhood where success in this task is expected to run parallel with success in every kind of social tasks, otherwise of which causes confusion among the community.

3.4 Is it possible to separate Martha Riggs' missionary role from her role as a wife and a mother?

As explained in Chapter 3.2 Martha never hesitated to take prompt actions when a family matter or a health problem is at stake. Her journey to London in 1859 was a result of Charlie's health condition. She was seeking doctors for Charlie, who had whooping cough, irritated skin, festering blisters around his ears, as well as a losing sight, yet at the same time, she was always present in Miss Marston's house where they constantly discuss upon missionary topics with a large network of organization members. In her London letters to Elias,<sup>288</sup> she described their comings and goings and meetings with others and focuses on particularly Charlie's health.

Likewise, Martha embarked on another journey a few years later for her sick daughter Emma and travelled to Egypt and Beirut for she thought warm weather might have treated the whole family better. Upon their return to Istanbul in the 1863 spring, there was no progress in Emma's health and Martha was taking care of her in her elder daughter Margaret's house. She appeared to dedicate herself to Emma's well-being, yet she was all aware and well informed of the happenings and meetings in the missionary circle. In a letter to Elias on May 26 from Yenikapı, she reported

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<sup>288</sup> Mostly in Letters Packet 8(a).

that the meetings would finish its sessions within the week, but they were to meet at Bebek once again probably on Friday to be feast on strawberries, then added: “To-day were held in Pera the Evangelical Alliance meeting & The Bible Soc. meeting. I did not go from Margaret. I do not like to leave Emma these long days.”<sup>289</sup> She clearly set her children as her first priority, nevertheless, it is striking to notice that no matter how busy she was with the family matters she kept herself up-to-date and informed about missionary matters.

As a missionary who spent most of her time away from home, she longed for the idea of a united family and reflected her sentiments and ideas when a family matter was discussed. During her long stay in the United States from 1868 through 1869, Martha frequently discussed a matter of keeping their house or sharing it with another missionary family. Accordingly, she expressed her concern over keeping the house for the sake of “returning to be a family once more.”<sup>290</sup> A reader can promptly feel Martha’s uneasiness in her letters though she expressed her commitment and love for missionary work. Deep inside, she felt rather incompetent both as a family mother and a missionary worker; she wanted to keep her family in unity and to be involved more in the work. It is for this reason that she repeatedly expressed her concerns over these matters in her letter threads.

Martha's trip to Maraş in June 1871 to visit missionaries in Maraş while Elias was in Eski Zagra (today's Stara Zagora, Bulgaria), another typical missionary case where the couple was away from home and away from each other, exemplifies the blend of Martha’s missionary and domestic character. The letter thread covers her trip from Istanbul to Maraş where she stopped at Iskenderun to meet his son-in-law

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<sup>289</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, May 26, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0022.

<sup>290</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, April 22, 1869. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B002.

Trowbridge and then the two go to Kershan, Maraş where Margaret and Trowbridge resided as missionaries. Martha's domesticity here comes forward when she discussed with Elias about taking Margaret and her sick son back to Istanbul. Among the reasons were the health conditions of both Margaret and the child; Kershan's lack of civilization and most of all Martha's desire to "help her in teaching the children" when Trowbridge will be at England and America during the winter.<sup>291</sup> Recalling the American domesticity discourse that dominated the nineteenth-century foreign mission policy, education of the children was considered as the first priority for raising future generations of the American Protestant order. Martha therefore was willing to help the course in raising not only her own children but also her grandchildren. Such motivation is where her missionary character and her mother character are inseparable.

The inseparable nature of Martha's missionary character and her mother character is not only demonstrated by her deeds but also reflected on her letters. A reader can easily notice Martha's instant switches from daily household details to church or community details and missionary news in even one single letter. In one of them for instance she writes precise details regarding a church service in Greek, providing its unfortunate timing at 9.30 and its overlap by the coming in of the Armenians for their usual service at 10 o'clock, and commenting on many details such as fewness of the Greeks' number yet their attentive manner. As the letter continues, the reader encounters her particulars on her grandson Eddie's photograph when they went to *Artist's* to get Eddie's and her picture taken (they call it "likeness"), in the next paragraph she jumped to talking about Tillman, her son-in-law who was also a Board missionary, particularly about his business in making

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<sup>291</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Kershan, July 10, 1871. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B015.

addresses, attending drawing room meetings etc., and she finishes with hoping that he received the package of letters sent by Dr. Campfield in which she thought one or two letters from Tillman were included.<sup>292</sup>

As this example demonstrates above, Martha's daily life and missionary work are intertwined both in her letters and in her life. Such harmony projected in Martha's life is in fact an outcome of the typical nineteenth-century American missionary domesticism discourse. As Dana L. Robert suggests, the spiritual needs of the non-Christian people might have attracted these missionary wives, at the same time, "their roles as women, once in the field, erased the distinctions among physical, social, moral and spiritual work".<sup>293</sup> In a way, the domesticism theory which is embodied in the notion of a Christian home "eliminated any dissonance they may have felt between their original expectations and the realities of their situation."<sup>294</sup> In this respect Martha Riggs serves an outstanding example of such an elimination.

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<sup>292</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, February 3, 1872. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B033.

<sup>293</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 70.

<sup>294</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 70.

## CHAPTER 4

### MARTHA RIGGS AS A WITNESS OF HER TIME

#### 4.1 Martha Riggs' travel accounts

Martha's occasional visits to London, New York, and many other cities provide insights not only into mission-related history but also into the nineteenth-century cultural environment including many museums, galleries, monuments and churches. "United Service Museum" is one where Charlie enjoyed the Armor of the Knights of St. John<sup>295</sup> during their trip to London in 1859-1860. In that same trip Martha recorded her visits to Westminster Abbey, about which she narrated all the particulars in awe; Exeter Hall, where she listened to a sermon; and Kensington Museum, details of which she promised to tell as "Evening Entertainment at Home"<sup>296</sup> upon her return. A striking detail of "Ragged Schools" and the gathering of 2,000 disadvantaged people who listened to a Sabbath sermon at the Victoria Theatre in February 1860<sup>297</sup> contributes information on British history.

Orientalism was trending in Europe during the nineteenth century, and one inevitably came across examples at art fairs, exhibitions and scenes in London where the representations of 'the East' in every form, from clothing to decoration, were presented for public entertainment and curiosity. Through Martha's eyes, we witness a first-hand experience of such an exhibition, Wyld's Great Globe that was on view in London's Leicester Square between 1851 and 1862:

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<sup>295</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, January 27, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0028.

<sup>296</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 4, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A001.

<sup>297</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs. London, February 4, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A001.

. . . this afternoon I rode to . . . Leicester Square to enquire for an embossed globe. The place at which I enquired is called Wilde's Globe. The main building is circular, and the Geography of the Earth is represented on the inner surface – here lectures are given daily on Geography and other sciences, but this portion of the building I did not see. On being admitted to an exterior part I found myself surrounded by wax figures in all the various costumes of the East. I was almost startled as I glanced around the apartment, so striking were the features and so exact the representations of the various nations, tribes and people wh. we daily see in Smyrna and Constantinople that for the moment was lost and I could hardly think where I really was. In regard to my errand I was quite unsuccessful.<sup>298</sup>

In the same letter, but four days later, Martha described her visit to Crystal Palace at Sydenham. Originally built in Hyde Park, London to house the Great Exhibition of 1851, the palace was removed to southeast London to be reconstructed on Sydenham Hill. Both locations were inaugurated by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the latter being the patron of the first project. Although destroyed completely by a fire in 1936, the Crystal Palace still is given prominence in London's museum history and art history in general. Martha's awe at this giant construction shows how successful this demonstration of England's industrial power was for people of that era:

This famous fairy like place is not to be described in a few words. . . the building itself, that is about the most wonderful of all – such an immense structure and all of glass and iron! The situation is beautiful, and the gardens very finely laid out. And then the towers of glass and the long passageways and dining saloons outside the main building, and the great Californian tree (or rather the back) inside – and the great monster deities of Egypt & Assyria (models of course) 30 or 40 feet high – and trees and flowers and birds and groups of wild animals and all varieties of Indian races of men and women in their native costume (not living men and women but wax).<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

<sup>299</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

Rich and precise in her reflections, Martha enables the reader to grasp both the cultural agenda of a large nineteenth-century European city and the response of an ordinary nineteenth-century viewer who encounters representations of another culture. In a way, Martha gathered these magnificent cultural sights and events and then, through her writings, recreates them for the reader who can then experience the cultural and art history of those places she visited.

In her letters, Martha expressed her thoughts about not only monuments and museums but also peoples and their attitudes or behaviors. On her consecutive trips to England and United States, Martha commented on English passengers on the Steamer *Agia Sophia* as “very zealous people in their way - very benevolent etc., but seem to know very little about the wants & woes of the world outside of England - but whatever they lack in knowledge is quite made up by national pride.”<sup>300</sup> Martha’s straightforward comments about English passengers also reflect her general thought about the country itself. England was doubtlessly championing technological and industrial progress in the second half of the nineteenth century, and Martha, through her observation of its two representatives on the steamer, was quite judgmental about this superpower for its superiority, pride and indifference toward other countries of the world. Her reflection on English attitude is a valuable source in terms of both observing a nineteenth-century English profile and understanding the attitude of non-English West towards England.

Regardless of its pride and attitude of superiority, England was somewhat justified in touting its industrial advancement, evidence of which found a place in Martha’s following letters. The railway and train system, as a sign of that advancement, impressed Martha so much that she recorded its speed as a wonder

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<sup>300</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Steamer *Aghia Sophia*, off the coast of Africa near Algiers, May 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B049.

never-seen-before: “I never rode so fast for so long a time. We timed it by the mileboards and our watches at several different parts of the way & at one point it was a mile in a minute & the average must have been 45 or 50 miles the hour.”<sup>301</sup> It was surely England’s, especially London’s high point in terms of technology, industry and culture. Like many advanced and populated cities, however, London was then an expensive city for accommodations, so much that “[i]t seems to cost more to sleep in London than it does to eat” as Martha wrote.<sup>302</sup> In spite of its high costs and sometimes being over proud as Martha described, England, especially the urban life in London, nevertheless fascinated Martha as can be seen in her description of a scene where the carriages and people were collected in a park one evening:

It was the London “world” - the nobility and fashion of that grand metropolis. I do not exaggerate when I say that there were thousands of the most beautiful equipages with servants in lining and everything else in keeping. For a half mile at least - perhaps a mile - there were three carriages ...- the centre line going in one direction and the two outer ones in the opposite. Sometimes it was quite a jam and we had to stop, perhaps ten times, to wait for those preceding us to move forward. Among this grand assemblage were the Prince of Wales<sup>303</sup> & his suite, & one of the most noticeable things was the presence of Police officers on horseback mingling everywhere in the crowd. This reminds me to say that I have a very great regard for these officials. They are uniformly polite, and kind & I always feel quite safe to trust myself to their judgement or guidance.<sup>304</sup>

Martha’s rich accounts of London capture its golden days from the perspective of a foreigner.

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<sup>301</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, Wednesday, June 3, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B050.

<sup>302</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, Wednesday, June 3, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B050.

<sup>303</sup> Later King Edward VII.

<sup>304</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, on board the “Russia”, June 19, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B045.

Further striking social-historical facts can be gleaned from Martha's account of her trips. She mentioned two ship companies (Cunard Line and Inman Line) and explained her decision for choosing one over the other, a detail which might seem like an insignificant personal record at the first glance. Yet upon learning her reasons for her choice, an historical insight regarding the immigration flow to the United States in 1868 becomes clear. As Martha wrote "...there is a rush of Emigrants just now" in her letter, she stated that other ships take a crowd of 800-1000 immigrants on board, hence her decision to take a less crowded steamer, *The Russia* of Cunard Line.<sup>305</sup> Thus, Martha's letter documents the high emigrant traffic from England to the United States during the late 1860's.

Another striking record in Riggs correspondence relates to the American history in late October and November 1868 when they discussed the American presidential elections between Republican Ulysses S. Grant and Democrat Horatio Seymour. In one of her replies to Elias' letter of October 29, 1868, the day he supposed was the presidential election, Martha told Elias about the course of events in a small American town, Mendham, during the elections:

I suppose you watch the papers for the results of the elections. Yesterday was a great day here and in all N.J. and N.Y. and I don't know how many more states Mendham went Democrat! But this state Republican and New York too. This word came from Morris Town at 3 this morning and there were bonfires & \_?\_ down at the corner enough to wake the whole village, but we did not hear it. Aunt Ann & Annie went down to the corner last evening to hear the result in this place. The democrats were then in the ascendant, but their glory waned before the day dawned.<sup>306</sup>

The elections would result in the Republican's victory, the result that the Riggs family had been wishing for. Martha and Elias shared with each other such rare

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<sup>305</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Steamer Aghia Sophia, off the coast of Africa near Algiers, May 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B049.

<sup>306</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, November 4, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C035.

details as how elections used to be received in small towns and how well the news was circulated in the press around the world during the mid-nineteenth century. Yet, even in the United States the news could have been inaccurate, as Martha needed to correct herself in one of her later letters and added the weakening state of the Democrats: “I mentioned in one of my letters that N. Jersey went Republican, but it was a mistake. That was the rumor next morning after election, but the Democrats had a much smaller majority than formerly.”<sup>307</sup> President Grant’s inauguration would take place in the next spring, April 1869, and Edward would attend the event just as his father attended that of President Buchanan and the last leave of his predecessor President Pierce 12 years earlier.

It is also possible to learn from Martha’s letters about the books and literary works that circulated both in the missionary environment and in academic curricula of American universities. Those preferred to be read in the missionary circle are either related to religion or to city histories. Among these are *Constantinople Ancient and Modern*<sup>308</sup> that Martha mentioned twice in her letters and found it “full of inaccuracies in spelling and might be much better arranged than it is”<sup>309</sup> yet with good deal of information for which she was glad. Another one seems more of a religious content, *Pathway of Promise* by John Ross Macduff for which Martha thanked Elias and Mr. J. G. Bliss.<sup>310</sup> Her close supervision for the education of her younger boys, Jamie and Charlie, enables us to hear about what kind of books were

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<sup>307</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, November 25, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C032.

<sup>308</sup> The full title is *Constantinople Ancient and Modern: With Excursions to the Shores and Islands of Archipelago and to the Troad*. It is a 415-page book by James Dallaway published in 1797. The book is mentioned in two of Martha’s letters: First on May 8, 1868 ABARPC007B046 and second on May 18, 1868 ABARPC007B049.

<sup>309</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Steamer Aghia Sophia, off the coast of Africa near Algiers, May 18, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B049.

<sup>310</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, Wednesday, June 3, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B050.

recommended or instructed in reputable American universities. During their long stay in the United States for placing the boys to school in 1868, Martha told about Jamie's visit to Princeton to get him examined. She reported his success in Latin and Mathematics and deficiency in Greek grammar, for which the Professor told him to get a *Kühner's grammar*.<sup>311</sup> In another letter, she mentions the Scythian-Greek philosopher Anacharsis' book, which Edward was willing to send to Elias.<sup>312</sup> For algebra studies, Martha mentions Charlie's study on *Quadratics in Robinson's University Algebra* and Jamie's on *Hackby's*.<sup>313</sup>

Her rich description of the social and cultural structure of cities is not restricted to London and those in the United States. Martha also provided striking details on Istanbul through minutiae of daily life in the city which are reviewed in the next section.

#### 4.2 Daily life in Constantinople

Personal accounts and letters of missionaries are not restricted to mission work. On the contrary, they offer rich information about the cities of residence and share unique experiences that the missionaries had within the city. In a similar fashion, Martha's letters cover a wide spectrum of information from missionary news to climate, market prices, commercial locations and the like in Istanbul. As Istanbul has been the subject of many travelers and foreign residents in their memoirs for centuries, it should come as no surprise to see its particulars in Martha's detailed

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<sup>311</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, June 3 (no year indicated). Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B044.

<sup>312</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Strawberry Hill, Michigan, August 10, 1868. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B037

<sup>313</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, April 6, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C013.

records and her correspondences with fellow missionaries where we can read and imagine trends, disasters and daily life of a nineteenth-century metropolis.

The nineteenth-century “Constantinople” had many sides and scenes to reflect on its residents. Missionaries came across striking scenes that they could directly relate to their course of work; these scenes were mostly related to the Muslim and Christian sects of the public, and missionary accounts are exceptionally precise in describing how any incident happened and was handled by the Ottoman government. A letter from Elias to Martha in 1843 depicted such a scene in Istanbul that implies vulnerable boundaries between Islam and Christianity, and how serious consequences could be when such boundaries were felt to be crossed:

On Tuesday last I witnessed . . . the body of a man put to death for renouncing the Mohammedan religion. His body lay exposed to public view for three days, in a public street of the city, and posted up near it was a Turkish notice, stating that the man was originally an Armenian, a shoe maker by the name of Joachim, that he had embraced the Mohammedan religion, taking the name of Mehemet; that he had now renounced the true faith and that consequently his death became necessary according to the Holy Law, that a judicial sentence had accordingly been pronounced against him, but that still the alternative was offered him of again embracing of the faith of Islam, that refusing to do so his death became necessary, an order was issued, and that accordingly the man had been put to death and sent to perdition. The man’s body was dressed in Frank clothes, and his cap placed on his back. This latter circumstance is said to be contrary to former usage and would seem intended for effect – as much as to say to the Turks that if a man deserts the Mohammedan religion even foreign influence shall not save him. We hear that two of the Ambassadors (Eng & Rus) sent in urgent letters to the Porte requesting that the man might not be put to death, but in vain. Now turn to another, but not less dark, part of the picture. You know that the Christians of this country consider such a man a martyr & consequently a saint. Some of the Armenians have already begun to pray to this poor fellow & implore his intercession! - He is said to have been a low-lived vicious man, and it is easy to conceive of motives strong enough, in the reproaches of an evil conscience and in the firm persuasion that by suffering martyrdom he should become a saint, to induce him to have the terrors of decapitation without a particle of that true love without which Paul says that if he should give his body to be burned it would profit him

nothing. How such things should lead us to pity & pray for both Turks & Christians.<sup>314</sup>

Recorded also in Cyrus Hamlin's *Among the Turks* and William Goodell's *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire*, the incident<sup>315</sup> seems to have had repercussions in the Istanbul missionary circle. Elias' approach to local Christians revealed itself in this letter that they, as much as the Muslims did, needed to be enlightened and helped by Protestant missionaries who would bring them the true faith and knowledge.

The religious strictness observed by the American missionaries in the city during the first half of the century, however, would yield to a milder and open attitude towards Christians by the 1870s. Cyrus Hamlin observed openness for conversation on religious subjects and shared his anecdote set in a steamer on the Bosphorus where he overheard "some Turks discussing this point; and. . . they attributed the change to the influence of American missions, wholly unaware that an American was sitting behind them."<sup>316</sup> Hamlin related this change of attitude to the missions' influence, "a very wide and extended one," via their books, schools, newspapers, translations of the Scriptures into all languages.<sup>317</sup> Beside the missions' deeds, Hamlin paid tribute to the general progress of civilization, that is, "the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph, the expansion of commerce, the increase of travel" which all have changed profile of the Istanbulite.

Beside unusual incidents such as those above, routine daily life details in the city, ranging from goods and prices to seasons and weather, can be traced in missionary accounts. Sharp observer that she was, Martha provided rich details about

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<sup>314</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, Bebek, Monday, August 28, 1843. Letters Packet 8(b). ABARPC008B013.

<sup>315</sup> For more details on this incident, see Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire*, 69-75.

<sup>316</sup> Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, 274.

<sup>317</sup> Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, 274.

mid-nineteenth-century Istanbul. In one of her letters, for instance, Martha shared an interesting detail on climate change in Istanbul and its effect on the inflation in the market. In a relatively cold May season in 1863 in Istanbul, she reported that the weather was rapidly heated yet there were no strawberries in the market. Those few existed were sold at a price as low as 10 piastre, yet this price still was too high for missionaries to purchase.<sup>318</sup> In another letter to Elias, she addresses to Galata as one of the main commercial centers in the city as she discussed about a pair of spectacles for Elias and advised him to check “that instrument shop in Galata.”<sup>319</sup>

Lamentable fires in Istanbul also have a place in the correspondences of the Riggs couple. In a letter to Martha dated June 1868, Elias shared details on a Monday, June 22 fire in the neighborhood in which “some 200” houses were destroyed, but the Riggs home was spared. Even more interesting is a map (see Appendix H), drawn by Elias himself, which outlines the neighborhood and points out the damaged area.<sup>320</sup> Although its location was not specified, such a rare map of the neighborhood damage, representative of many such frequent disasters in Istanbul, is valuable for the city’s history. Another fire was recorded in one of his letters to Martha on August 2, 1868, in Pera the previous night where “some 80 houses burned and among them the house directly opposite Mr. H. Schaffler’s”<sup>321</sup> demonstrating the high frequency of fires (twice in just 20 days) in Istanbul. By the end of the same year, Elias informed Martha about a larger-scale fire that took in the new palace of

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<sup>318</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Yenikapı Istanbul, May 26, 1863. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A0022.

<sup>319</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Mendham, January 14, 1869. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C027.

<sup>320</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, June 20, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D077.

<sup>321</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Khalki/Heybeliada, Istanbul, August 2, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D085.

Fuad Pasha by Seraskeriat and gave further details on the purpose of the building and urban history:

Last Friday night at ½ past 10 we were startled by the cry of fire and saw that it was near and that the sparks were blown directly toward our neighborhood. Indeed, many fell on our premises, but we were preserved unharmed. The new palace of Fuad Pasha, by the Seraskeriat was completely burned and only the walls now standing. We do not know anything of the cause of the fire. The building was just about finished and very finely finished too. It seems to have been all along intended as a palace although the L. Herald said it was to be finished as an office for the Ministry of Police. But even in noticing this fire, and designating the building as Fuad Pasha's palace, they did not condescend to correct this former statement. F. Pasha is himself away in Italy seeking health.<sup>322</sup>

Almost five years later than Elias' report on the fire in Seraskeriat, another fire was recorded in Martha's letter to Elias. She reported to Elias, who was then in Egypt, of "a pretty large fire" in the evening of January 30, 1873 "in the neighborhood of the mosque of Achmat, on the way from Balat to here [Yenikapı]" adding that they have had two or three alarms lately but nothing serious.<sup>323</sup>

Another Istanbul lifestyle classic is the habit of having summer places, which the Ottomans used to call *sayfiye*. The Ottoman locals tended to leave their regular houses for *sayfiye* for 6 months from May to October (inclusive) as one of Elias' letter to Martha confirmed when discussing about moving to next door and the landlord's terms and charges while they would be gone in the country for the aforementioned duration.<sup>324</sup> The Riggs correspondences reveal that missionary residents of Istanbul started to get into the habit of going to summer locations to

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<sup>322</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, December 22, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D001.

<sup>323</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 17, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B031.

<sup>324</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, July 21, 1871. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D032.

spend the summer season in rented houses as their local neighbors did. A reader can catch a glimpse of current situation in the summer place market, its prices and preferred locations from Elias letter Martha in 1868<sup>325</sup> where he told of his first attempt to rent a place in “Bouyoukdere” [Büyükdere], but failed to do so due to its high prices, even higher than their annual pay for Pera. Instead, he opted for “Khalki” [Heybeliada], and got involved in the local summer tradition. On July 27 he wrote to Martha that their “coming to Khalki appears to have set the fashion. Besides those whom I have mentioned before, Missn.[missionaries] Tomoy & Hamlin are coming”,<sup>326</sup> thereby confirmed that the old *sayfiye* tradition became a new trend among the missionary community of Istanbul.

A researcher can also catch a glimpse of history of photography from the Riggs correspondences. The renowned photographers, Abdullah Freres, who served as the official photographers of the Ottoman court, had set up a studio in Pera, the Beyoğlu district of today’s Istanbul, and were visited often by Riggs as well as by many royals, bureaucrats, local residents and international visitors of the city. They appear to have equipped their studio with advanced technology, and were able print multiple copies of a single shot. For instance, in her letter to Elias in 1868, because she was unable to find enough single photographs of Jamie and Charlie, Martha asked Elias if she should try to have some taken in the United States or if he would “have some taken from the last ones at Abdullah’s”.<sup>327</sup> Being a well-known brand in the city, photographic references to the Abdullah brothers come up a couple of times more in the letters of the Riggs couple. One winter, Elias reported to Martha about

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<sup>325</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Khalki/Heybeliada, Istanbul, July 3, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D080.

<sup>326</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, July 24, 1868. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D084.

<sup>327</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Indianapolis, September 1, 1868. Letters Packet 7(c). ABARPC007C044.

his earlier enquiry to find the negative and the promise that he got in turn, but the reply he got was that “the weather had been so severe that they were doing nothing.”<sup>328</sup> Elias commented further on the severe winter in Istanbul in his next letter to Martha,<sup>329</sup> yet again with no response to Elias’ enquiry for negatives.

Innovation in the city was not restricted to technological devices used in photography or communication but covered means of transportation as well. Martha mentioned the existence of a tramway in her letter to Elias in 1873 that “the walkers made the circuit of the city on Friday taking the advantage of the tramway in both directions.”<sup>330</sup> The term *tramway* as we understand today may sound surprising, yet what Martha calls *tramway* actually refers to “horse-drawn trams” or omnibuses, a network of which “stretched from Yedikule in the west of the city to Pera in the north” from 1872 onwards.<sup>331</sup>

Throughout their years in Istanbul, the Riggs couple resided in various neighborhoods including Hasköy, Bebek, Üsküdar and Yenikapı. Their correspondences are rich in description, yet they fail to include the exact location making it impossible to trace where precisely the couple (or any missionary family) could have lived. The only exception to this is when Elias took off with Austrian steamer *Minerva* from Istanbul and passed by Yenikapı, wondering, as he writes to Martha, whether any of the sharp eyes at No.6. School Street were watching after the steamer.<sup>332</sup> Today, there still exists a street with the same name in Turkish *Okul*

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<sup>328</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, January 29, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D008.

<sup>329</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, January 29, 1869. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D009.

<sup>330</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 17, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B031.

<sup>331</sup> Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453-1924*, 262.

<sup>332</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Austrian Steamer *Minerva*, February 16, 1872. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D0060.

*Sokak* in Yenikapı district. Although it is not certain whether it is the same street or not, the chances are high as the current street is close enough to Yenikapı shore to be able to catch a glimpse of passing ships then.<sup>333</sup> Such details provided in the correspondences contribute to the memory of the city in terms of its residents and diversity paving way to compare once a missionary-populated neighborhood with today's neighborhood filled with entirely different residents and functions.

As for the mission locations, the Riggs correspondences give hints about the newly founded schools and institutions in various parts of Istanbul. One them is the “The Home”, as Riggs would call it in their letters, which is the predecessor of American College for Girls, founded in Gedikpaşa neighborhood of Fatih district Istanbul in 1871.<sup>334</sup> Riggs family, residing in Yenikapı in the early 1870s, were living close to The Home School, thus the school made it to Martha's correspondences several times. Whether it was Jamie who went to The Home to dine and spend the evening with tutors from Robert College<sup>335</sup> or Margaret who brought a group of students from The Home to the Riggs house as a class outdoor activity and discussed with them over their little collection of objects and Egyptian antiquities,<sup>336</sup> The Home is highlighted between the lines as it pins a certain location in Istanbul's urban memory. This small-scale initiative for girls would outgrow its initial boundaries, first moving to Üsküdar district in 1874 and later to a large campus in Arnavutköy, where Robert College still functions today as a co-ed high school.

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<sup>333</sup> Today the street is surrounded with apartments in bad condition making it impossible to get a sea view. The current street is located between Sokullu Mehmed Paşa Mosque and Kadirga Park, the second street behind the Kadirga Limanı Avenue. The screenshots and the location of the street are available on Google Maps.

<sup>334</sup> Social Networks and Archival Context website, “American College for Girls (Istanbul, Turkey).”

<sup>335</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, February 15, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B034.

<sup>336</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 6, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B028.

Wars and crisis in distant territories of the Ottoman Empire had direct impact on daily life in Istanbul. During the Ottoman Russian War in 1877, Elias reflected his observations upon the loss of Ardahan, about which he wrote that the Turks are much depressed, for it stood as “an important fort 30- or 40-miles N.W. from Kars.”<sup>337</sup> Having Kars then besieged, Elias informed Martha that martial law was proclaimed in Istanbul, yet did not think it would affect them.

As the examples above demonstrate, missionary accounts provide rich details and unique experiences about Istanbul daily life. Their long-term residency among the locals and their close familiarity with the Istanbulite habits are what distinguish missionary accounts from those of travelers. From religious community dynamics in everyday Istanbul to climate change and its impact on market prices, fires, the habit of summer places, technology and technological devices found in the city, neighborhood details and mission locations, the impact of wars and crisis on daily life, the wide range of information could be extracted from missionary correspondences, and specifically from those of Martha’s. Presence of such rich information proves that missionaries, whether men or women, make great sources for urban history as well as for mission history.

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<sup>337</sup> Letter from Elias Riggs to Martha Riggs, Istanbul, May 25, 1877. Letters Packet 7(d). ABARPC007D0070.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

As previously mentioned in this thesis, the American Board archives seldom include the voices of women, while those of converts and other actors have not even made it to the archives.<sup>338</sup> Such circumstances make Martha Riggs both an example of her peers and the desirable rare voice out of archival documents. The chapters in this thesis describe Martha's roles as a missionary, a wife and a mother, thus showing how much her account and her voice was able to fill the knowledge gaps in this area.

To understand Martha Riggs is to understand the American missionary ideology of the nineteenth century. "Domesticism," the dominating American Protestant view of the era, underlines the significant role that women play in proselytizing foreign lands. Specifically, women bear the responsibility of building the character of both home and the nation as they raise future generations.<sup>339</sup> While the father of the family preaches outside the household, the mother starts the mission of evangelizing at home as she raises her own children with Protestant codes and paves the way for potential evangelizers or preachers. Moreover, women are not restricted to their own household in instruction, but they reach out to other mothers and daughters in local households with their notions of motherhood and education. Such practices have been demonstrated in previous chapters, especially in the examples of Abigail Goodell and Ann Bird (see Chapter 2) and were fully supported by the Board itself as Senior Secretary Rufus Anderson once stated: "Nowhere can

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<sup>338</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 7.

<sup>339</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 270.

the wives of missionaries, if they are properly qualified, be more useful...through this medium.”<sup>340</sup>

Founded in 1810 and reaching 23 stations, 81 outstations, and 109 schools with over 3,300 students by 1860<sup>341</sup> the American Board became a significant presence in the Ottoman Empire, and its power should not be underestimated. Cyrus Hamlin, William Goodell and other Board veterans, who established and ran the Istanbul branch, celebrated their success in their books and were studied many times by researchers. The success, however, does not belong solely to men. Missionary wives and single women missionaries in the following decades were the significant actors, yet they were overshadowed by the male missionary presence. It is clear that gender and hierarchy are the main two features in this story, accompanied by modest women actors who could have never had their own autonomous space or received any credit. The main question is who these invisible members of the missionary army are. Unfortunately, there is still a need for resources with enough depth and coverage on women missionaries in general and missionary wives in particular.

As explained in Chapter 2, Martha’s accomplishments in vernacular languages, her widely celebrated and influential writings, her approach to local women, and her diligence in housework bear the same motivation that made Abigail Goodell and Ann Bird as missionary wives teach local girls, and Mary Mills Patrick as a missionary woman develop The Constantinople Home and eventually turn it into American College for Girls as an independent institution. Yet, studies on these women are still very limited in number. Few studies that highlight missionary wives and women help to relate and compare Martha with her contemporaries. Dana L.

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<sup>340</sup> Rufus Anderson quoted in Reeves-Ellington, “Embracing Domesticity,” 273.

<sup>341</sup> Digital Library for International Research website, “A Legacy Transformed: Historical American Missionary Institutions in Turkey” (Timeline).

Robert's study is one of them which studies one of the earliest initiations made on behalf of women to serve in foreign lands. These women, Harriet Atwood Newell and Ann Hasseltine Judson, were designated as "assistant missionaries" in 1812 as the wives of the first American foreign missionaries who "served as role models for women in ministry during the early nineteenth century"<sup>342</sup> and became heroic characters in the years followed. Robert supports such early profiles with additional women in her book; Elizabeth Baker Dwight, wife of the Rev. H.G.O. Dwight, along with Mrs. Mary R. Reynolds Schaffler, Mrs. Abigail Goodell and other missionary wives in Istanbul in the 1830s who "founded a maternal association based on the constitution printed in the *Mother's Magazine*, an American publication dedicated to the nurture and conversion of one's own children."<sup>343</sup> Lisa Joy Pruitt draws attention to the early missionary wives' activities with examples from different regions. Ann Judson and Sarah Boardman established schools in Burma, Sarah Lanman Smith in Syria, Judith Grant in Persia and Mary Van Lennep in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>344</sup> Visiting homes and organizing prayer meetings were also included in their activities.<sup>345</sup> Ann Judson is given as an example for running such activities as she held "regular meetings with fifteen Burman women, some of whom had indicated that they might soon convert."<sup>346</sup> Writing letters was also eminent in the lives of missionary wives for promoting their status and activities to their supporters. Sarah Lanman Smith's volume of incoming letters, which was "as many as fifteen or twenty letters per delivery"<sup>347</sup> explains the extensiveness of their correspondence.

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<sup>342</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 1.

<sup>343</sup> Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 71.

<sup>344</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 84.

<sup>345</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 84.

<sup>346</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 85.

<sup>347</sup> Pruitt, *A Looking-Glass for Ladies*, 85.

Cemal Yetkiner mentions the presence of the missionary wives Abigail Goodell and Ann Bird<sup>348</sup> as he informs the reader about the opening of the first home school in the Ottoman Empire with the instruction of these two women under the supervision of a Christian Arab teacher and, in spite of its short duration, emphasizes its twofold importance for it was for girls and it "signaled the beginning of home or regular schools for girls in the region operated by missionaries."<sup>349</sup> Yetkiner defines the missionary wives as those who were not formally labelled as missionaries but were expected to "assist their husbands by running model homes, teaching at home schools, and carrying the Bible to homes; thus they were often called 'Bible women.'"<sup>350</sup> Like Yetkiner, Ellen Fleischmann offers a study on the evolution of the Beirut Female Seminary which was started as the first mission school for girls and consisted of Mrs. Ann P. Bird and Mrs. Abigail P. Goodell.<sup>351</sup> Apart from Mrs. Bird and Mrs. Goodell, Fleischmann highlights other missionary wives who carried on the work until 1834 when Sarah Lanman Smith, the wife of Eli Smith, established an actual school, called the Female School, which was defined as "the first edifice ever built in the Turkish Empire for the education of girls"<sup>352</sup> but did not last more than several years. Nevertheless, Fleischmann stresses the significance of its role in promoting female education in mission chronicles. Fleischmann's study on female education in Ottoman Syria provides rich information on its evolution from a seminary to a college, its struggle between being a religious or secular institution which paved its way to a breakup from the ABCFM, its strong belief in education of females for raising future preachers and missionaries. In P.E. Shaw's study on

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<sup>348</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 68-69.

<sup>349</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 69.

<sup>350</sup> Yetkiner, "At the Center of the Debate," 69.

<sup>351</sup> Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 265.

<sup>352</sup> Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 266.

Greece and American missionaries in the 1830s,<sup>353</sup> an emphasis was given to training girls by Protestant missionaries. In such an enterprise where Mrs. Hill was actively working with her husband, and her name was mentioned twice: once regarding her letter written to an American newspaper about reassuring American Episcopalians on the evangelical nature of the work in Greece, the outcome of which led to a violent outbreak in Athens in 1842,<sup>354</sup> and once in a footnote which informs that she was joined by her two sisters.<sup>355</sup> Mostly focused on the Board's sole representative Jonas King, the story of the Greek mission was narrated with only a brief reference to Elias Riggs who is introduced as one of the missionaries who joined Jonas King for a short period and spent 6 years in Argos for educational work.<sup>356</sup> Mehmet Ali Doğan's account of Elias Riggs, one of the closest sources to find out Martha's accomplishments in the mission, touches upon Martha Riggs' activities such as her *Mother's Manual* book among the printed materials in Izmir in 1844 and *Letters to Mothers* among those printed in Istanbul in 1882 for Bulgarians.<sup>357</sup> As to female missionaries, there is a brief account of their course in the mission including a seminary for the education of female teachers in Bulgarian mission<sup>358</sup>, the publication of *Zornitza* and its wide circulation,<sup>359</sup> and their impact on the natives in the introduction of the Protestant teachings in Bulgaria.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches, 1820-1870*.

<sup>354</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 29.

<sup>355</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 18. See note no. 13.

<sup>356</sup> Shaw, *American Contacts with the Eastern Churches*, 72. Also see note no. 9.

<sup>357</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 96, 144, 157-158.

<sup>358</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 122.

<sup>359</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 145-146.

<sup>360</sup> Doğan, "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and 'Nominal Christians'," 150-153.

There are also studies especially focusing on the activities of women that could make a comparison with Martha possible. These studies highlight either those who were the first missionaries to arrive at a specific location or those who were founders of prominent institutions such as Mary Mills Patrick, the founder of the American College for Girls in Istanbul. Nevertheless, they are useful references for the era in which Martha was molded both mentally and spiritually. In her account of Constantinople Woman's College,<sup>361</sup> Reeves-Ellington points out how Mary Mills Patrick, along with the college trustee Caroline Borden, influenced the education policies and the identity of American culture in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century through their work on behalf of women's missions. In their long journey from founding "a mission school through a mission-supported college to an independent college", both Patrick and Borden seem to share common characteristics of their time. Both missionary women portray a later generation of nineteenth-century missionary women whose circumstances enabled them to take freer action, compared to an earlier generation missionary wife whose autonomy was rather limited. Reeves-Ellington refers to Patrick in a section of her other book *Domestic Frontiers* where she focuses on the Constantinople Home, a prominent center for women missionaries in Istanbul. The story of the Constantinople Home, after a thorough narration of its foundation and philosophy, focuses on Mary Mills Patrick as the prominent figure among her peers and discusses the Home's impact on both local women and the missionary enterprise. What makes The Home stand out is that it was striving for a cultural conversion rather than a religious one since its subjects were already Christians,<sup>362</sup> thus making women missionaries the main actors and local women the main target of the project. Another section in the book analyzes

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<sup>361</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College," 53-71.

<sup>362</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 1-3.

Martha Riggs's impact on Bulgarian women through her *Letters to Mothers*, mirroring her approach to women through promoting Protestant views and criticizing Bulgarian folklore "with its many superstitions and tales".<sup>363</sup> While Patrick and Riggs appear multiple times in Reeves-Ellington's studies, the author introduces two other female missionaries in her book, Elizabeth Bevan and Lydia Giles, whose marriages to local Bulgarian converts brought controversy among the missionary enterprise and challenged the notion of supposedly egalitarian Protestant views. Even though Bevan and Giles's case brings an interesting insight into gender, culture and Christianity discussions among the missionaries, they seem not near to draw clear parallels with Martha's case.

All the studies reviewed above position Martha to a point where she is both an example of her peers and a rare voice out of gendered bureaucratic documents in the archives. Within the framework of these limited studies, Martha Riggs' correspondence with family members and missionary circle holds major significance in order to fully understand missionary women, their motivation, thoughts and deeds. Martha, who was born in the same year that the ABCFM was founded, was raised in the Protestant tradition and, complying with the principles of domesticism, was sent abroad with her husband as a missionary wife, just as her contemporaries Abigail Goodell or Ann Bird who had followed the same tradition. If there had been no records of Martha's own account or Elias' review on Martha, we would automatically think of her as a modest helper of a Protestant preacher with domestic responsibilities ranging from raising children with Protestant doctrine and ethics, hosting missionary circles and taking care of everyday housework. Yet primary sources on Martha reveal that she was as active and industrious as a male missionary

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<sup>363</sup> Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 88.

outside her house territory. Contrary to general expectations from a missionary wife, she studied vernacular languages and learned Greek well enough to write a book for mothers which was received with great interest both in Greece and Izmir. Moreover, her *Letters to Mothers* would impact Bulgarian women so much that it would generate an opposition against the Ottoman public education law and contribute to the development of Bulgarian nationalism.<sup>364</sup>

As much an influential character as she was, Martha never ceased to abandon her active role in the mission although, as Elias mentioned in his reminiscences, all her children demanded her time and care. Moreover, she attended Sabbath school instruction in both Greek and English in her early years in Turkey. In later years, she would dedicate her time to visits and communication with the missionary circles both in Istanbul and abroad. Her rich descriptions of meetings and happenings regarding the mission fill many gaps that many primary or secondary sources do not cover adequately or simply bypass. It is through Martha's busy letter traffic with Elias between February and June 1869 that a researcher can uncover a fundamental problem regarding the Protestant structure in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. Called the "Yenikapı Church matter" in this thesis, Martha's account on the affair reveals that there was still a resistance against the Protestant presence in the country during the second half of the century both from the local Christians and the government. The matter was contrary to the general assumption that converted local Christians adapted themselves to the new doctrine and community of Protestant Americans. Martha's account demonstrates that some of the locals were determined about sustaining their own rights and character in so much that they did not hesitate to revolt the moment they felt their rights and local character were at stake. It also

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<sup>364</sup> Reeves-Ellington, "Embracing Domesticity," 286.

shows that such unrests could cause polarization among the American missionaries themselves which would potentially harm the American Protestant mission structure.

Martha's frequent letters enable us to observe how closely interconnected the missionary network beyond territories was in the midst of the nineteenth century. Her travel accounts, especially of England and the United States, show that the mission was not restricted to a circle of the American Board, but was a flexible structure that allowed its missionaries to exchange ideas and strategies with members of fellow mission societies or independent philanthropists who were interested in mission work. During her London visit, as explained in detail in Chapter 2, she wrote to Elias about two wealthy English ladies who would several times invite friends to tea and discuss missionary stations in Asia Minor and European Turkey.<sup>365</sup> Martha's enquiry from Elias for intensive information on Bulgarian Mission<sup>366</sup> and her intention to connect some ladies in Philippopolis with these English ladies<sup>367</sup> are among noteworthy efforts that she was making regarding the mission work. In the same visit, Martha also mentioned several details from various meetings that she attended, ranging from American ladies who were interested in missionary work in Turkey and met Martha at the institution where she was staying<sup>368</sup> to another lady who worked as secretary of the Society for promoting Christianity in the East that sent teachers to Africa, India, China and Turkey.<sup>369</sup> Falling in the center of a missionary traffic, Martha's reports picture the large network of missionary world that she was in touch

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<sup>365</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A004.

<sup>366</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 16, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A003.

<sup>367</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, February 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A004.

<sup>368</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, London, January 21, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A005.

<sup>369</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Liverpool, February 24, 1860. Letters Packet 8(a). ABARPC008A002.

with. Martha's description of such meetings and her personal reflections emphasize two points: First, the American mission web was a greater network than it appeared to be; that is, the mission was operated not only around the American axis, but also aligned with the English support and interest. Second, the hierarchy between a male missionary and a female one in the mid-1860s prevailed as could be felt in Martha's reflections whether as inadequacy or fear of wrongdoing. Regardless of the quantity of work that she put in, which seems as much as a male missionary did, women in the missionary circle seem to have had less access to information than the men did. Yet such circumstances of the mid-nineteenth-century mission structure did not change Martha's pivotal position in the missionary traffic and correspondences. While in Izmir and Istanbul, she kept her household both as a family home and a trustworthy harbor for the Board missionaries who were new to the city or just passing onto new stations, thus, positioned herself as a bridge between her domestic family and the grand missionary family of the Board. The volume of letters exchanged upon Samuel's and Emma's deaths could give the researcher an idea on how widespread and busy the American missionary network was. Not only did she welcome her guests but, as her letters clearly show, she strategically analyzed ongoing missionary traffic and expressed her ideas to Elias on how the relocations or transfers of the missionaries should be managed. As much as such details enable us to learn about the housing practices and private lives of the missionaries, they also provide key information on missionary matters in various stations. Martha's instant acknowledgement of the trouble that was disturbing the American circle at Samokov in Bulgaria,<sup>370</sup> for instance, stands out among many that she shares with Elias, who

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<sup>370</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, January 22, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B029.

had direct involvement with the Bulgarian work. In a later letter, Martha would comment on the difficult status of their friends in Bulgaria,<sup>371</sup> particulars of which were not mentioned yet its context could be understood from Cyrus Hamlin's criticism of Turks and mention of Russia in a letter to Martha in 1876.<sup>372</sup> Such references in the correspondences between Martha, Elias and Cyrus Hamlin from 1873 to 1876 strongly suggest the early phase of Bulgarian liberation uprisings resulting in the 1876 April Uprising which would lead to Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78. Speaking of Hamlin, one of the Istanbul veteran missionaries, his correspondences with Martha between the years 1859 and 1876<sup>373</sup> are noteworthy for they prove that officially ordained missionaries considered Martha as one of their colleagues rather than an ordinary missionary wife.

In sum, this thesis presents three outcomes from focusing on a singular, well documented life story of a missionary wife: The first is the widely accepted nineteenth-century missionary wife/woman concept which is assumed to be the medium for wider Protestant influence on local communities. The second is the notion of missionary work as a lifestyle for nineteenth-century women whose domestic responsibilities become inseparable from their work responsibilities, the outcome of which domesticism was born and gave a further dimension to the mission's ideological and social context. The third is the fact that missionary wives dedicated their lifetime to their mission work as much as their missionary husbands did, and left respectable impact on locals via education and communication; yet, their accomplishments went unnoticed because their works rarely made it into official

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<sup>371</sup> Letter from Martha Riggs to Elias Riggs, Istanbul, February 11, 1873. Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B032.

<sup>372</sup> Letter from Cyrus Hamlin to Martha Riggs, New Haven, August 6, 1876. Letters Packet 4. ABARPC004011.

<sup>373</sup> SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 4.

reports or later academic studies. Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs is an accurate representation of what these outcomes stand for. She dedicated her lifetime to serve the Protestant mission, reached out to the locals as well as other missionaries wherever she traveled, domestic or abroad. Even when her travels were due to child care or schooling, she never ceased meeting representatives of other missions to exchange ideas and represent her own mission. Without her precise account as well as her correspondence with Elias and fellow missionaries, we would not know of her influence on Bulgarian women that would contribute to the Bulgarian nationalist movement. Nor would we be aware of the conflicts between a portion of Armenian community and American missionaries on their rights and terms over their agreement which turned into a major crisis to be solved by the Ottoman officials. Martha's account reveals not only significant incidents in mission history but also striking details regarding technological and medical inventions, the social and cultural environment of the cities she visited. Medical treatments, names of medicines, the invention of the artificial ear drum and the introduction of the Braille alphabet on the market, museums and galleries, the election of a new U.S. president, daily life in Istanbul are only samples of the rich information in her accounts which could be of interest to medical and social historians. Martha, as a missionary wife who raised three missionaries out of her four children and thus became a prominent character in the American Board history, definitely deserves to be brought out of the archives and recognized for her life as a mission worker and for her records about her surroundings. As this thesis unravels many hidden details regarding social and mission history in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, I hope that it inspires further research on other missionary wives whose voices and records await to be revealed.

## APPENDIX A

### MARTHA RIGGS' LIFE STORY IN ELIAS RIGGS'

#### *REMINISCENCES FOR MY CHILDREN*

### APPENDIX.

(Reprinted from the Missionary Herald for Feb. 1888.)

#### *A MISSIONARY FOR FIFTY-FIVE YEARS.*

BY REV. ELIAS RIGGS, D. D.

[A long and useful missionary life closed in November last, in Aintab, Turkey, in the death of Mrs. Dr. Elias Riggs. We are glad to be able to present the accompanying interesting sketch of her life from the pen of her husband.]

MARTHA JANE [DALZEL] RIGGS was born of Scotch-Irish parents at New Vernon, New Jersey, July 3, 1810, a few days after the organization of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, whose missionary she was to be.

Her parents emigrated to the United States about the beginning of the present century, being then quite young, and were married at Albany, N. Y., but soon removed to New Jersey, where Mrs. Dalzel's father and brothers established themselves as farmers. Mr. D. however visited Kentucky with reference to a plan for emigrating thither, but did not live to return. He was drowned while bathing in the Delaware river near Easton, Pa., so that the subject of this sketch never saw her father.

Several weeks passed before the news of this sad event reached Mrs. D., and I do not think she ever knew whether it occurred before or after the birth of her daughter.

Mrs. Dalzel was a devoted Christian, and trained up her daughter in the fear of God. Her family attended on the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Finley, pastor of the Presbyterian church of Baskingridge.

The daughter showed an unusual fondness for books and made strenuous efforts to secure a better education than the village school could furnish. In childhood she committed to memory not only the Shorter, but also the whole of the Longer Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, and retained them in memory through life as highly esteemed outlines of Christian truth.

The family was related to Mrs. Magie, of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, and this circumstance led to the daughter's going to that place to attend a female seminary established there, and to her becoming for some years an inmate of the family of the Rev. David Magie, D.D., for forty years the devoted and beloved pastor of the Second Presbyterian church in that place, and an early and steadfast friend, and for twenty-seven years a Corporate Member, of the American Board.

Trained under such influences, her thoughts were early directed to the foreign missionary work, and she cherished the desire, if providence should open the way, to engage personally in it, and when invited in the early part of 1832 to become my companion and helpmeet as a missionary to Greece, she was prepared to give a cheerful assent and to consecrate her life to this service. Her widowed mother also cheerfully and trustingly parted from her only child, that she might engage in the work of promoting the gospel.

We were married September 18, 1832, and in a little more than a month from that time, in company with the Rev. William M. Thomson and Dr. Asa Dodge and their wives,—destined to the Palestine Mission,—were on our way across the ocean in a little brig of 180 tons.

We reached Athens, Greece, in January, 1833, and remained there a year and a half as associates with the Rev. Jonas King, D. D. During this time Mrs. Riggs gave herself diligently to the acquisition

of a thoroughly grammatical knowledge of the modern Greek language, contrary to the advice and practice of some valued friends connected with another society, who insisted that all the knowledge which a missionary lady would need could be picked up in practice from the mouths of the people. The wisdom of her course became apparent when, in accordance with our instructions, we afterward gave our chief strength to educational work; not, however, to the neglect of stated preaching in the native language.

Our next station was Argos, in the Peloponnesus, where we resided from 1834 to 1838. The occupation of this station was part of a plan adopted by the Prudential Committee for extending and organizing the Greek Mission, a third station being occupied by Messrs. Houston and Leyburn and their wives at Areopolis, in southern Greece. We were all to give special attention to educational work. To this there was an urgent call from the people themselves, who welcomed us everywhere as educators, and our publications as aids in this work. The new government of liberated Greece had established Lanessterian schools for children of both sexes, and grammar schools for boys; but for the higher education of girls almost nothing had been done by the government or people, on account of the lack of qualified female teachers. A beginning in training such teachers had been made by the mission of the Church Missionary Society in Syra and by the American Episcopal Mission at Athens, and the first female teachers employed by the government were prepared in these mission schools. To this urgent need our attention was at once given, and a female school opened, which before we left contained more than a hundred pupils. The lack of native assistant teachers, until we could ourselves train them, required both Mrs. Riggs and myself to engage personally at first in teaching, and to this work, notwithstanding the care of her household, she gave herself with untiring devotion and with marked success.

We were joined two years later by the Rev. Nathan Benjamin and wife, whose son, the Hon. Samuel G. W. Benjamin, lately United States Minister to Persia, was born in our house in Argos.

When in 1838, owing to the more urgent call for labor at other stations, we were instructed to remove to Smyrna, I need not say with what mutual regrets we parted from our pupils. Many years later it gave us great pleasure to find some of them occupying stations of marked usefulness in their own country.

At Smyrna six years more were devoted to labors for the Greeks. In 1844, by instructions from the Prudential Committee, represented by a delegation consisting of Drs. Anderson and Hawes, who visited our mission, we were transferred to the Armenian department. Mrs. Riggs and I then gave ourselves to the study of the Armenian language—a language entirely new to us both, and not cognate with any language which we knew; but the care of a growing family and the multifarious duties resulting from a residence in a seaport town, through which passed in those days all the American missionaries going to or returning from stations in Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Persia, prevented Mrs. Riggs from acquiring such a familiarity with that language as was necessary to a free use of it for missionary work.

At the same time the instruction of our own children demanded her time and care. There were no schools near us at that time where they could be instructed through the use of their own language, which we deemed it essential to cultivate, and as my more public duties demanded the most of my time, the principal part of their in-

struction devolved upon their mother. Those of them who are still living can witness with what diligence and devotion she discharged this primal duty of a mother in such circumstances. This, however, did not hinder her from engaging in Sabbath-school instruction in the use of either Greek or English.

Her pen was also used, as well as her voice, for the benefit of her Greek sisters. She prepared a series of "Letters to Mothers on the Training and Instruction of their Children," published under the title of "The Mother's Manual," a work which found so much favor in Greece that it was adopted by a society in Athens, and issued as one of their publications.

After our removal to Constantinople in 1853, in connection with the removal of the publication work of our mission to that city, she added a second series of the letters to mothers, and the whole were issued in a Bulgarian translation—first in the periodical the *Zoraitza* (*Dayspring*), and then in a volume. They were translated also into Armenian and Turkish, and published by our mission, and a part of them also by a native Armenian editor, who issued them as a series in his paper.

It would not become me to speak of the esteem in which her influence was held by her associates in the missionary work, of her own age or younger, during her long residence at Smyrna and Constantinople. Letters from many of them, received during the past year, and from not a few natives of the country, bear witness to the tender affection entertained for her by them and by many around them.

Thus have we been permitted to walk together as workers in the Lord's vineyard for fifty-five years, three or four times what, when we entered upon it, was considered the average time of missionary service.

Three years ago Mrs. Riggs suffered from a slight attack of paralysis, and with alternations of partially restored health, has been failing ever since. For the last nine months she had not been able to walk or stand alone. Many mercies have been mingled with our trials, for which I desire to render thanks to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, especially that we have been permitted for more than two years to share the home and tender care of our loving and beloved daughter, Mrs. Trowbridge.

The last six months of Mrs. Riggs's life were clouded by disease affecting her brain, and she passed away from earth on the morning of November 15, 1887, after passing the night in a lethargic sleep without a return to consciousness or the possibility of saying a farewell word to any of us. But it does not become us to be overanxious about last words. Her record is in our hearts and on high. The great Healer has now said to her: "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity," and I cannot doubt that he has also kindly and graciously said of her: "She hath done what she could." Her children are her witnesses. I rejoice to believe that they have not forsaken the law (instruction\*) of their mother, but are all of them heartily engaged in work for Christ and his blessed cause.

"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!"

\*It is an interesting fact that the original word for law in the Old Testament primarily signifies instruction, so that God's Law is his instruction to men. It is doubtless in this primary sense that the word is used in the injunction (Proverbs 1:8 and 4:10) "Forsake not the law of thy mother."

## APPENDIX B

### MARTHA RIGGS AND HER FAMILY



Martha Riggs with her husband, children and grandchildren.

- Top row from left to right: Charlie T. Riggs (grandson), James F. Riggs (son), Edward Riggs (son), Charles W. Riggs (son), William Trowbridge (grandson), Elizabeth Trowbridge (granddaughter).
- Middle row from left to right: Arthur S. Riggs (grandson), Belle Brittin Riggs (daughter-in-law), Sarah Dwight Riggs (daughter-in-law) with Theodore D. Riggs (left) and Ernest W. Riggs (right) (grandsons), Elias Riggs (husband), Martha Jane Dalzel Riggs, Margaret Riggs Trowbridge (daughter) with Stephen V. R. Trowbridge (grandson), Isabel Trowbridge (granddaughter), Tillman C. Trowbridge (son-in-law).
- Bottom row from left to right: Mary West Riggs (granddaughter), Henry Harrison Riggs (grandson), Susie(?) D. Riggs (granddaughter), Edward Trowbridge (grandson).

(American Research Institute in Turkey, Istanbul Center Library, American Board Collection: Riggs' Family Portrait, PRT\_187).

APPENDIX C

THE RIGGS FAMILY GRAVES AT FERİKÖY CEMETERY

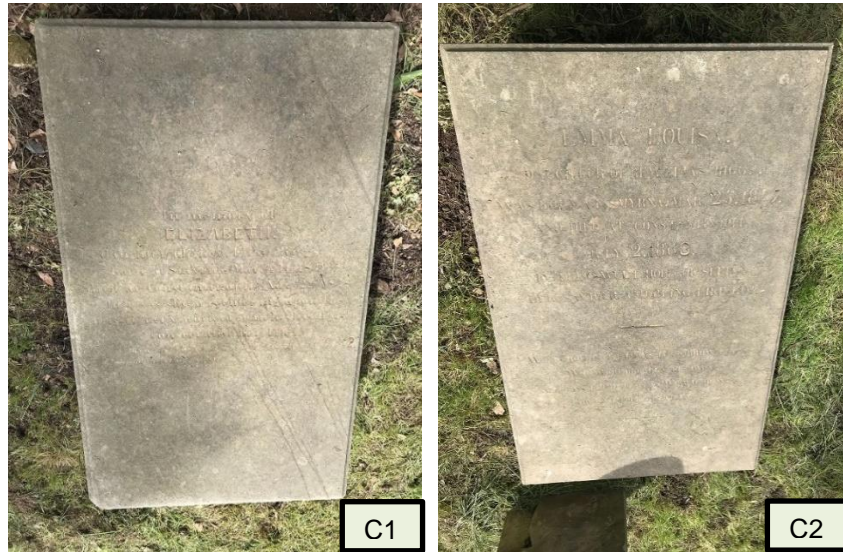


Figure C1. Grave of Elizabeth Riggs, daughter of Martha and Elias Riggs. Elizabeth Riggs died on November 29 and was buried on November 30, 1859. Hers was the first burial in the American division of the cemetery. Photo: Author.

Figure C2. Grave of Emma Louise Riggs, daughter of Martha and Elias Riggs, died on July 2, 1863. Her grave is near that of her sister Elizabeth. Photo: Author.

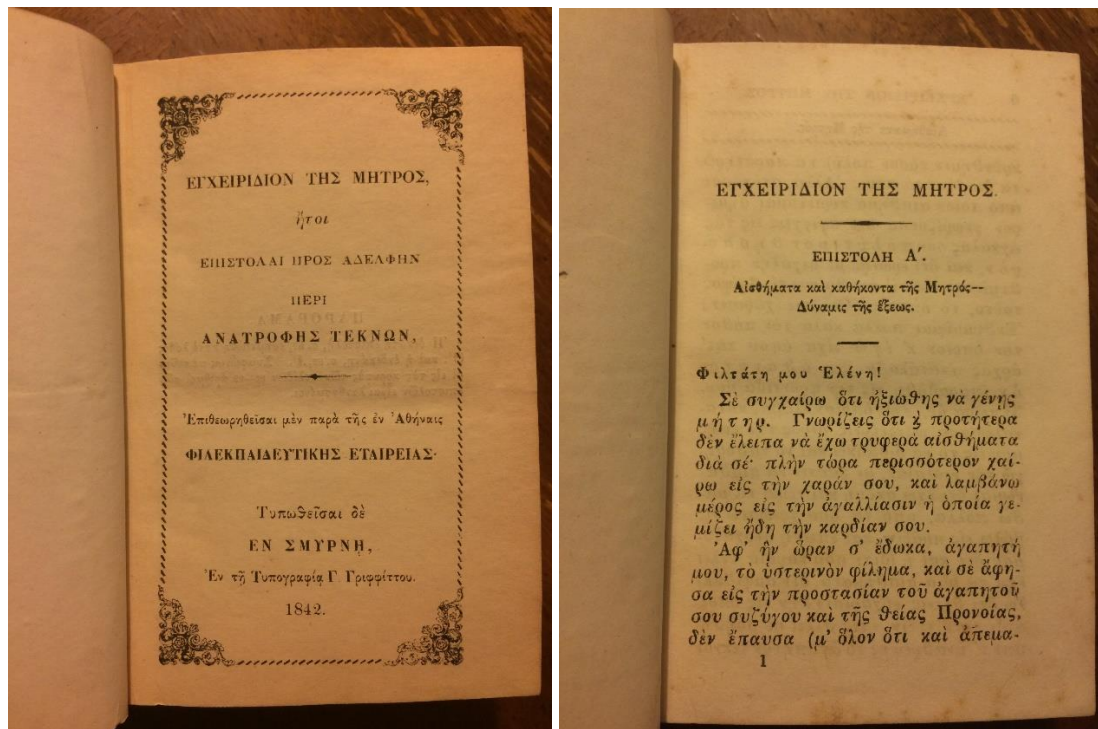


Figure C3. Grave of Edward Riggs, son of Martha and Elias Riggs, died on February 16, 1913. Photo: Author.

Figure C4. Grave of Elias Riggs, in the middle of those of Elizabeth on the left and Edward on the right. Photo: Author.

APPENDIX D

MARTHA RIGGS' BOOK *THE MOTHER'S MANUAL*



*The Mother's Manual* by Martha Riggs, printed in Izmir in 1842. (American Research Institute in Turkey, Istanbul Center Library, American Board Collection).

APPENDIX E

SAMPLES FROM MARTHA RIGGS' LETTERS

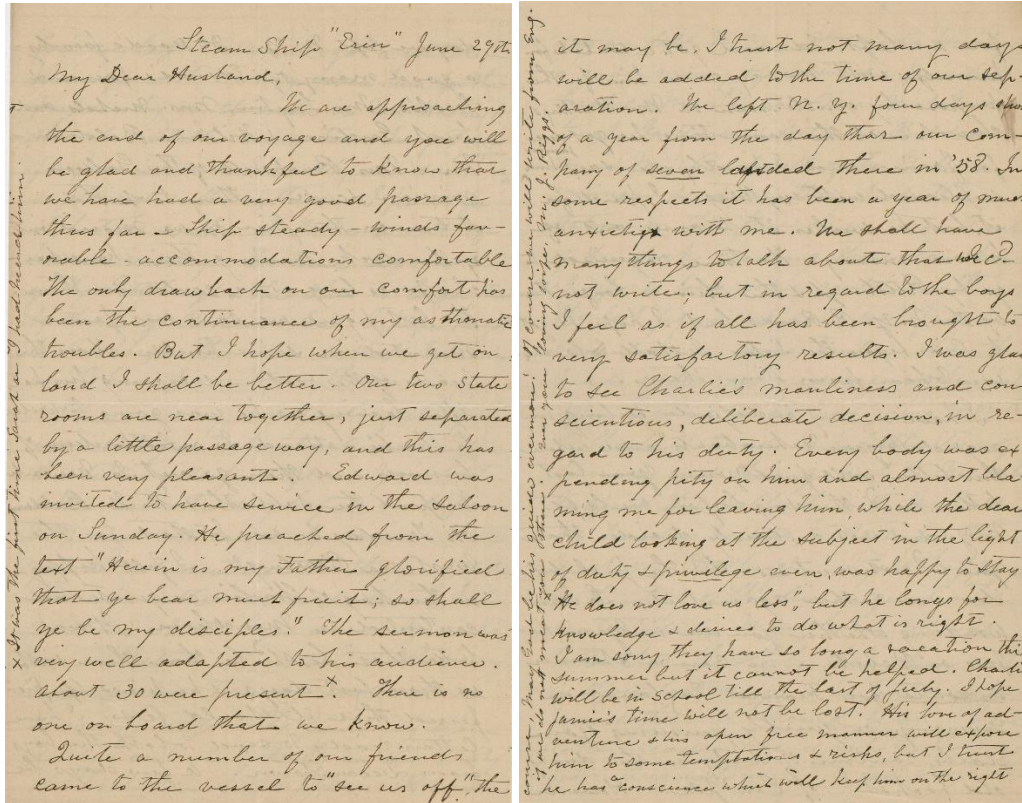


Figure E1. First and last page of Martha Riggs' letter to her husband Elias Riggs on the steam ship "Erin" on her way back from the U.S. to Turkey. June 29, 1869. (SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B010).

Mendham April 22. 1869.

My Dear Husband,

My letter of last week went for Wed. mail and I meant that this should too, but I had a sick-head ache on Monday and could not write. I suppose it is as you say that my letters have been delayed in N.Y. But I have only just now found out that they put up their mail for Wed. I shall send this to Edw. to be mailed, perhaps I do not do right to send Charlie's heavy letters. I am not discouraged about his writing though I am almost afraid you will be, by seeing so little improvement. I send this letter just as he wrote it, without any erasure or change. I think the best place for Charlie this summer will be with Mrs. Dodd - attending the school half a day and giving the other half day to music. At school he will have algebra spelling, writing and Eng. Grammar. If you have anything to suggest, please write - only think, I may not get answers to any letters later than this before reaching England. In about three weeks your meetings will commence. The 12th or 13th of May I expect to go to N.Y. I don't know what to say about Lizzie Potter's coming with us. They seem to have made up their minds, or nearly so to have her go. I had a letter from Phoebe and Liz last week saying as much, and I have

I will write again on Monday next. How are your letters of March 18th and 26th. This line is with my right hand. Mr. Loring wife Mr. J.R.

Figure E2. Letter to Elias Riggs from Mendham, U.S. on April 22, 1869, featuring shaky handwriting, a result of Martha's attempt to write with her left hand after an injury to her right arm (SALT Research, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Collection, Riggs Papers, Correspondences, Letters Packet 7(b). ABARPC007B001).

APPENDIX F

LETTERS ON THE YENİKAPI CHURCH MATTER

other plan in view besides con-  
 tinuing to rent it at the price  
 which we pay.  
 We are having a trying time  
 here with the Vlanga church.  
 Last Thursday evening they had  
 a meeting got up by Akhtarism  
 and those who are willing to  
 follow such a leader, at which  
 they voted that they did not wish  
 the missionaries, any longer to have  
 charge of the pulpit, and that  
 Pastor Sapan be invited to preach  
 on the following Sabbath! On  
 Friday P. M. a committee called  
 on Mr. Herrick and informed him  
 of the resolution adopted by the  
 church, and when he expostulated  
 against their attempting to put  
 the thing through in such hot  
 haste, declared that they could  
 do nothing but carry out the  
 decision of the church. On Sat.  
 Mr. H. with B. Sapan stating the

case, informing him that we cannot consent to be browbeaten in this way, and advising him not to come. He did come however, and claimed the pulpit, which of course we refused to resign. Mr. Pattibone preached in the morning and I at his request made as he took the pulpit a brief statement of our position. The chapel is the property of the Board, but such reasoners as the leaders of this movement (among whom I am sorry to say the deacon Hapriel is one) say the chapel was bought for our benefit, and of course it belongs to us. — There was no interruption to the service. At two o'clock B. S. DePan got up & said that he had come to do honor to the invitation of the church, but that as other provision had been made for the supply of the pulpit he should go to Hastings and should not be here in the afternoon.

(2)

As soon as he got through Akh-  
tarian rose and proposed to hold a  
meeting of the church and that  
P. Sdepan sh<sup>d</sup>. be present at it.

The Deacon seconded it and so  
they held a meeting. When we  
went to the V. School Antreanig  
agha Peshimaljan came to me  
as a committee on the part of  
the church to beg that Sdepan  
might preach in the P. M. now  
that he was here. I told him

that in the circumstances it was  
utterly inadmissible. He (and  
another man) went also to Mr.  
Herrick and importuned him to  
yield the pulpit to P. Sdepan.  
Even after he was in the pulpit  
Antreanig went to him and teased  
him; but Mr. H. was firm, and  
went forward and preached.

They are backed in this thing  
by Mr. Minasian, who has of-

(5)  
send to support S. Depan.  
Of course they break out into  
complaints that we trample  
on the right of a church to  
choose its own pastor. We  
reply that if they are determined  
to have a preacher whom we  
disapprove they must provide  
a chapel for themselves; that  
we cannot concede the use  
of the chapel for such a  
purpose. Then they cry out  
that we are governing by the  
money power. — I am clear  
that our duty is to maintain  
our control over the chapel.  
Mr. Minasian complains that  
we do not nurture the people  
enough. He says they are foolish  
and childish but that we should  
deal with them as children.  
He acknowledged today that he  
advised S. Depan to go to the chapel

on Sunday. To night Mr. Herrick  
is going to try his hand at a  
conference with the church,  
and has requested me to be present.

26. I could not refuse to go  
so as to strengthen the hands of  
the younger brethren. But such  
a display of "madness and folly" I  
hope I never shall have to see  
again in a church meeting.

Edgar came and after Mr.  
Herrick had begun to make a  
statement of the cause for which  
they had come together, he (S.)  
interrupted him saying "you  
have talked long enough". He  
claimed the right to preside as  
pastor of the church, inter-  
rupted or silenced those who  
protested against his usurpation  
and against the legality of the  
former vote and utterly refused

I must not sit up late tonight. So I will not take another sheet unless I sh. have something to do in the morning. Your loving husband E. Riggs

to permit a vote to be taken as to that point or even as to who sh. be chairman. No vote was taken, and after enduring the confusion for two hours protesting against S.'s proceeding we withdrew and were immediately followed by half the members of the church, though S. shouted and tried his best to detain them. In the course of his talk S. said that he should appeal to the Am. Board, to the Am. Bible Society, to the Br. & F. Bible Soc. and to the Evangelical Alliance! — I lay awake the greater part of the night thinking what can be done for men who are so mad? May the Lord graciously direct us.

Mr. Ball and fam. & Miss Reynolds arrived last evening. Mr. B. is very feeble.

The Yenikapı Church matter was written in detail in Elias Riggs' letter to Martha Riggs on February 24, 1869. ABARPC007D013. For further letters, see ABARPC007D014, ABARPC007D016, ABARPC007C012, ABARPC007D019, ABARPC007D020, ABARPC007B002, ABARPC007D022, ABARPC007D023, ABARPC007D024, ABARPC007D025, ABARPC007B005, ABARPC007B007, and ABARPC007B009.

APPENDIX G

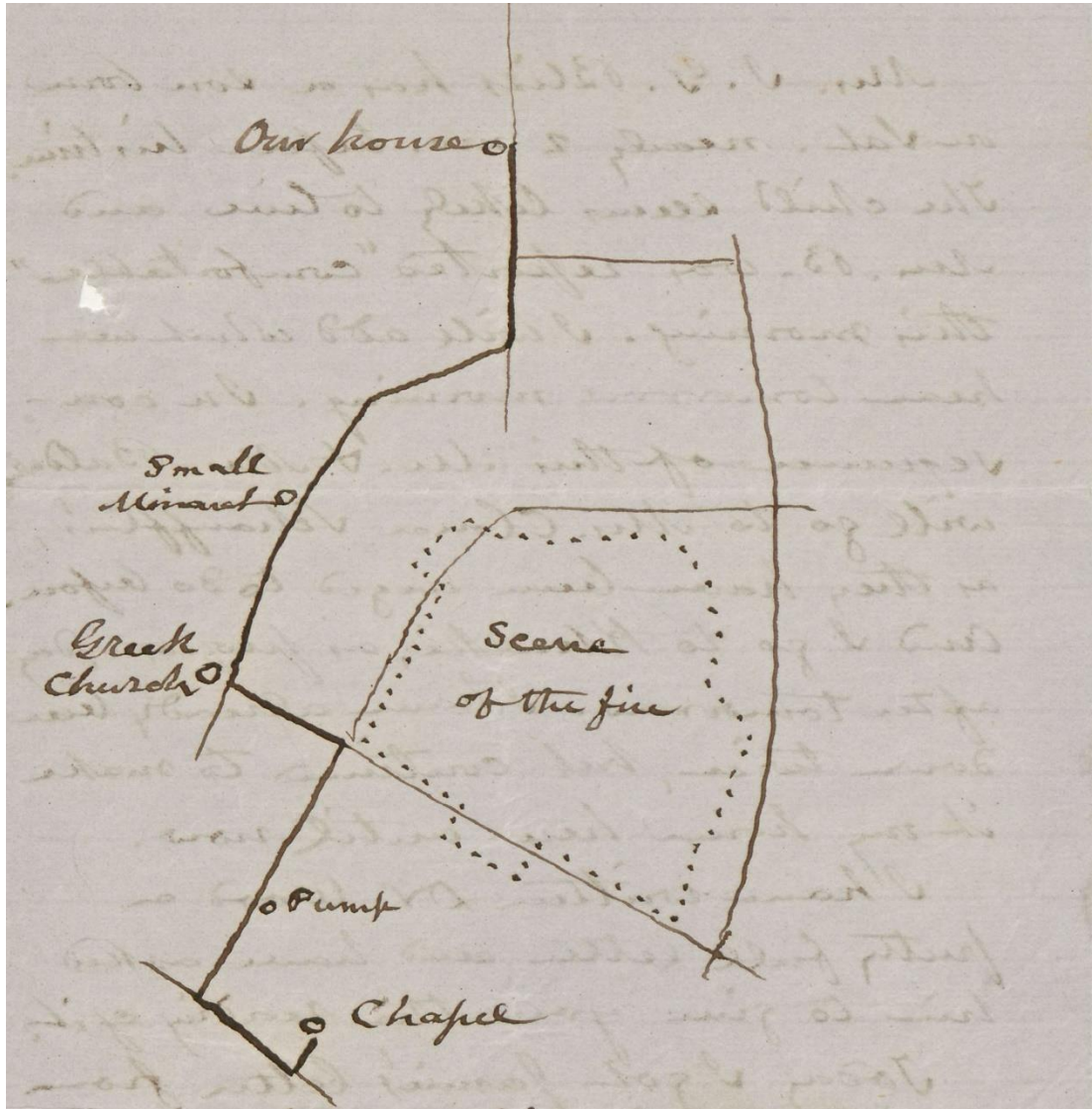
ELIAS RIGGS' STATISTICS ON WEST TURKEY MISSION

American laborers, male & female	54
Native helpers	213
Churches 31 Members	1429
Added in 1876 on profession	199
Sab. <sup>congregations</sup> <del>schools</del> 101 Average attendance	7059
" schools 78 " "	4851
Day schools 105 " "	4395
Enrolled Protestants within the bounds of the mission	7727
Contributions for support of preachers, schools & gen. ben.	\$8,500.
Copies of scriptures and portions of scripture issued from the B. House in 1876	ab. 40,000
Of which in Arabo-Turkish	4,564
Mansoran Theol. School, class fin- ishing its course next fall	11
Do. class finishing 2 years later	9
Mansoran Fem. B. School, boarders	16
" " " " Day scholars	3
Home School Cripple, boarders	24
Of whom on full pay (35 kiras)	7

In his letter to Martha Riggs on May 11, 1877, Elias shared a list of numbers with respect to West Turkey Mission. ABARPC007D067A1.

APPENDIX H

THE FIRE SCENE IN RIGGS' NEIGHBORHOOD



Detail from Elias Riggs' letter to Martha Riggs on June 20, 1868.  
ABARPC007D077A2

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