

a closer look into the transformation of the urban topography and rural landscape, would have provided just such a perspective and sense of depth. While the author's use of oral sources is to be commended, in the book the oral testimonies are generally used only to supplement the written evidence. These oral sources—perhaps owing to the particular nature of those used (i.e., collected from previously transcribed material and hence already transformed into written, rather than oral, evidence)—are not explored for the subjective life experiences of the witnesses to events. In the narration of events, just as important as what people actually say are the silences in the historical narrative, what and how things are remembered or forgotten, changes in tone, the rhythms of speech, and so on. Such elements are, after all, what make oral history distinct from other kinds of historical evidence.¹

Overall, the book is a valuable contribution to the increasingly diversified historical work on Anatolian towns and the Anatolian countryside, past and present. It can only be hoped, as the author also notes, that the proliferation of such contextualized work—town by town and village by village—will ultimately lead to a synthesis for the construction of a social history of Anatolia that is both informative and analytical.

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Lerna Ekmekçioğlu. *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016, xvi + 240 pages.

Any history is by definition a partial story. Thanks to the awareness of this partiality, history as a field of research is indefinitely growing. Historians are constantly introducing new source material, new research questions, new historical actors, new angles of observation, and new theoretical assumptions. Historians and students of history today are polyglot, devoted to multi-disciplinary approaches, and eager to write revisionist histories. The history of the early years of the Republic of Turkey has been subject to different waves of revisionism. The official, nationalist, and mythical state historiography, written by “the winners,” has been subject to different schools of criticism. The once

¹ See, for instance, Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

sacrosanct period of reforms (*inkılâplar*) has come to be criticized for its authoritarian practices, for its exclusionary approach toward non-Muslims and non-Turks, for its patriarchal gender regime, and for its notorious denials and distortions of history.

Lerna Ekmekçiöğlü's *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* is a new addition to the growing number of alternative histories of the early republic written from the point of view of "the losers." The book is an analysis of a generation of İstanbul Armenians—the Bolsahay, mostly elites and public figures—who experienced the Armenian Genocide as well as the later demise of the Ottoman Empire, the hopeful climate of the armistice years as well as the birth of the independent Republic of Armenia, and the formation of the new Republic of Turkey. The book focuses on the experiences and stances of post-genocide Armenians in Turkey, albeit to a large extent through the lens of feminist intellectuals, especially Hayganush Mark and her feminist fortnightly *Hay Gin*.

Hayganush Mark herself is definitely the main character of the book, what Ekmekçiöğlü calls the tiny core of a matryoshka doll. The author makes use of Armenian memoirs, institutional reports, correspondence among intellectuals, the Turkish state archives, and newspapers. Even so, it would not be wrong to say that the primary source material for the book is Mark's journal, *Hay Gin*, an Armenian-language periodical that continued publication from the armistice years through the first decade of republican Turkey. As such, one particular phrase that appears only once, in the middle of the book—"the history of Turkish Armenian feminism" (p. 77)—could well have actually served as the book's title insofar as the author traces the "recovery" or "revival" and subsequent introversion and domestication of the nation primarily through the discourse of feminists.

Despite the title, the book actually relates more than just the history of post-genocide Turkey. The very interesting first two chapters are about the historical limbo of what is usually referred to as "armistice İstanbul" or "the allied period," a time that cannot properly be considered either part of Ottoman or of republican history. In this era, which was full of hope despite the huge losses incurred by the community, Armenians were concentrated on the National Rebirth movement, aiming to prove to the world (and undoubtedly to the community itself as well) that the Armenians had survived the worst and were alive and ready for a better and brighter future. The rehabilitation of survivors and the reclamation of territory constituted the two main goals of this national revival. Ekmekçiöğlü discusses how this objective led to the development of several philanthropic institutions and other measures of aid meant to cope with the refugee crisis. Children, specifically orphans, were the community's first priority. The expansion of orphan relief through new and/or enlarged orphanages and other fostering mechanisms, as well as the *vorpahavak*

(gathering together of orphans and women) campaign intended to retrieve and reintegrate Armenian children and women from Muslim households, were the primary activities carried out as part of this attempt to revive the nation. While such goals were not in contradiction with the goals of *Hay Gin* or those of other feminist activists, trouble was created by their pronatalist and maternalist discourses and policies, particularly the condemnation, and prohibition, of abortion. Women who were pregnant at the time they were rescued refused to give birth to or mother “wrong” children. Despite this, hospitals not only denied their requests, but also imprisoned pregnant survivors. Another issue that put the Armenian national cause and feminism into conflict was the elevated importance accorded to marriage and domesticity. Although Armenian feminism had been critical of patriarchal social norms and marriage practices—e.g., husbands as masters, women as slaves—now, for the sake of the preservation of Armenianness and tradition, all women were asked to contribute to their community through marriage, including those unwillingly “rescued,” refugees, orphans, and those who had formerly been kidnapped. In this respect, Ekmekçioğlu rightly underlines the illiberal and indeed anti-feminist nature of revivalist discourses and practices. The Bolsahay elite and intellectual leadership prioritized nationalist goals over individual freedom and choice.

Chronologically structured, the book starts with the beginning of the new era marked by the victory of Turkish nationalist forces in Anatolia. Among non-Muslims, the tide of self-determination and liberation turned to fear and terror, and between September and December 1922, 50,000 Armenians and Greeks left İstanbul, including many of *Hay Gin*'s writers. In addition, 1,500 Greeks and 500 Armenians, along with their dependents, were expelled for collaborating with the British. Under the leadership of the new patriarchal *locum tenens* Kevork Aslanian, the community now stressed quiescence, domestication, and conservatism as the survival kit of Armenianness. As the hopes for a real motherland and nation vanished, imagery of home and family came to serve as domesticated substitutes for notions of a land and people: home was now not only the family home, but the home for the nation as well. As Armenians came to rely on gendered imagery and a familial social and political organization, the community became increasingly introvert, mute, and invisible. As Talin Suciyan emphasizes in her excellent book *The Armenians in Modern Turkey: Post-Genocide Society, Politics and History*,¹ with the establishment and reproduction of a denialist habitus, there was no way to exist in Turkey without being part of the denial. This was exactly the standpoint of Hayganush Mark when, in 1924, she wrote that “[l]ooking back to our past means looking back at a void. A void in

1 Talin Suciyan, *The Armenians in Modern Turkey: Post-Genocide Society, Politics and History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016).

our surroundings and everywhere. ... It is not a secret that this emptiness, which impacts us so much, is a result of voluntary migrations" (p. 89). She was not only remaining silent, speaking of a void in the past, but she was also distorting history by qualifying migrations as "voluntary."

Ekmekçiöğlü also delineates the new republican regime's perception and definition of Armenians *vis-à-vis* the new state. The theoretical formulations she puts forward in this regard in Chapter 4 are creative, interesting, and have the potential to cause a paradigm shift regarding the entire literature on non-Turkish communities in republican Turkey. The author argues that, in terms of citizenship, the constitution of 1924 established two different ideas of Turkness: real or authentic Turks on the one hand, and citizen-Turks on the other. Within this picture, neither people of non-Muslim faiths (or non-Hanafi Muslim sects) nor those speaking non-Turkish mother tongues were considered real Turks; instead, their status was one of "step-citizens" (*üvey vatandaşlar*) (p. 105). In order to capture the intricacies of the paradox of non-Muslim assimilability, Ekmekçiöğlü suggests the concept of "secular *dhimmitude*": secularism was the project of the state, while *dhimmi* referred to the so-called minorities (p. 108). The author claims that Armenians, for their part, had no trouble reenacting *dhimmitude*, because this had already been part of their repertoire of imperial subjecthood. Focusing on the activities of SETA (the Society for the Elevation of Turks and Armenians) and Berç Keresteciyan as the main representatives of "loyalism," she argues that the proclamation of loyalty was a necessary precursor to becoming publicly active as an Armenian. Given the denialist habitus mentioned above, this was without doubt the case for the majority. However, when we consider the example of the exceptionally outspoken 1940s Armenian newspaper *Nor Or* (New Day), which struggled for true equality for Armenians amidst the denialism, it might be interesting to look to the 1920s and 1930s for the roots of this (probably underground) non-compliant attitude. Moreover, we also need to take into account the fact that, within the Ottoman social structure, *dhimmi* status had granted relative autonomy to communities, whereas, in the first decades of the republic, institutional and legal eradication strategies resulted in the autonomous *millet*s of the *ancien régime* losing almost entirely their acquired rights.

Overall, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* is a well-written, engaging, and convincing account of survival within denial—on the one hand, the survival of Armenians despite the denial of genocide, and on the other hand the survival of Armenian feminists despite the denial of women's liberation beyond the realm of nation-making and tradition. It is not simply a history, but an artful text that combines different social science disciplines, among them historical sociology, collective psychology, and art criticism. In particular, Ekmekçiöğlü's use and interpretation of visual material is

fascinating and inspiring. She does not simply incorporate such material into the text as additional information silently accompanying the text: on the contrary, she gives it voice and makes it part of the narrative. In this manner, the author not only gives a voice to Armenians and particularly Armenian women, but she even makes a tombstone, a cartoon, a photograph speak.

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Özlem Köksal. *Aesthetics of Displacement: Turkey and its Minorities on Screen*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, xi + 219 pages.

This manuscript—developed from a dissertation that won the London School of Economics Best Dissertation Award in Turkish Studies—is a thoroughly researched, well-written, and timely work. Köksal's book is a study of cinematic representations of minorities in Turkey through the lens of the aesthetics of displacement. Her contribution to the literature on the cinema of Turkey, and more broadly to cinema studies and to Turkish studies, is (at least) fourfold. First, her book inquires into an immense number of films—such as *Hejar* (Handan İpekçi, 2001), *9* (Ümit Ünal, 2001), *Waiting for the Clouds* (Yeşim Ustaoglu, 2003), *My Marlon and Brando* (Hüseyin Karabey, 2008), and *My Father's Voice* (Orhan Eskiköy and Zeynel Doğan, 2012), among many others—that were produced in that period in the post-1990s when the “new Turkish cinema” began to flourish, films that have been underexplored before the publication of this book. Second, this study brings an insightful analysis of the political and social context of Turkey in the 1990s and 2000s together with cinema studies in its focus on the minority experience in Turkey, showing “how politics and art have shaped each other” (p. 131). Third, Köksal's work breaks the bounds of the national cinema framework by exploring the representation of Turkey's uneasy relationship with its minorities from a transnational perspective, by including inquiries into non-Turkish productions such as Canadian-Armenian director Atom Egoyan's *Ararat* (2002), Iraqi-Kurdish director Hiner Saleem's *The Valley of Tambourines* (2007), Greek director Tassos Boulmetis's *A Touch of Spice* (2003), and Fatih Akin's recent *The Cut* (2014). Fourth and finally, Köksal situates her already interdisciplinary discussion on cinema side by side with representations of minorities in other media, ranging from postcards and videos (such as Osman Köker's 2010 exhibition of Ottoman Armenian postcards and Kutluğ Ataman's 2014