

extensive quotations detailing the power of the stone to cure melancholy and misfortune.

“The Other Side of the World” chronicles the end of turquoise mania as the nineteenth century gold rush and global quest for precious metals upend the Eurasian turquoise trade. The Qajars strove to reactivate the turquoise mines of Nishapur in order to establish a monopoly, but by this point Mesoamerican turquoise deposits in the deserts of the American Southwest had been rediscovered. American turquoise rivaled the sky-blue color of the Persian stones and eventually won out. Thus turquoise lost its precious standing and was reclassified as a semi-precious stone.

Although a terrific topic, the history of turquoise has yet to be fully told. This book is a chronicle of sources and quotations with oft-repeated blanket statements and few sustained arguments. After a certain point, the repetitions, poor organization, and digressions impede the reader’s enjoyment of the subject. Khazeni has pointed the way through his excellent collection of sources. It remains for someone else to pick up the trail and make a truly engaging historical story out of it. ✂

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NAZAN MAKSUDYAN. *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014. xviii + 232 pages, figures and tables, acknowledgements, a note on transliteration, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$39.95. ISBN: 978-0815633181.

The historical agency of children in Turkey has been an understudied issue. Nazan Maksudyan, employing a historiographical approach that draws on labor, women’s, and postcolonial studies, sets out to discover the voices of a “lost” group, the orphans and destitute children of the late nineteenth-century in Ottoman/Turkish history. Based on analysis of documents from the Ottoman, German, French, and Protestant and Catholic missionary archives, as well as other primary sources such as periodicals and memoirs, the *Orphans and Destitute Children* achieves two aims. First, Maksudyan meticulously writes the history of Ottoman modernization from the viewpoint of the children, incorporating their experiences into that history. Second, she demonstrates the limitations of writing the history of childhood as either a concept or a part of the life cycle, which is usually the case in scholarship. Maksudyan’s work treats children “as individuals who

participated in and helped to shape the history of their time” (4). It provides a successful example of a “history from below” in Ottoman social history.

Orphans and Destitute Children is divided into four chapters covering the experiences of impoverished children in shelters, homes, vocational schools, and international orphanages. The chapters examine their experiences in relation to the development of these institutions in the context of political, economic, cultural, and diplomatic developments in the nineteenth century. The first chapter focuses on three interrelated issues: the practice of child abandonment by poor and/or unwed mothers, the political competition between the state and ethnoreligious communities over the future of the abandoned children, and the failure of modern regulations and institutions to improve the children’s conditions. As the extremely high mortality rates show, for the foundlings, “‘modern’ meant deprivation, mortality and suffering” (37). The author’s critique of Ottoman modernization through the politics related to abandoned children is an important contribution to the social history of the empire, because it vividly portrays the contradictions in that process.

The second chapter, an insightful examination of foster daughters (*besleme*), is probably the most interesting chapter of *Orphans and Destitute Children* because in this chapter Maksudyan introduces a new approach to the study of women’s agency in the late Ottoman Empire. She examines how societal attitudes toward foster daughters, who performed household chores and were de facto unregulated concubines, changed in the nineteenth century. The author argues that, with the advance of modern bourgeois discourse, the control on sex became stricter, and thus, the foster daughter “came to be noticed along with novel critical discourses on sexuality, decency, and morality” (53). The major contribution of the chapter is its emphasis on the agency of these girls, shown in case studies. Some foster daughters took their grievances against their masters to court, despite the slim chance of success due to the status difference between them and their masters. Others escaped from home or committed suicide as acts of resistance. Maksudyan powerfully demonstrates that the foster daughter phenomenon was widespread among all ethnic groups in the empire, and it was a historical institution that gained new meanings in the era. Maksudyan opposes the claims by other scholars that it was an institution developed after abolishment of slavery in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century.

The second half of the book examines the orphanages established by the state and by missionaries following the Armenian massacres of 1894

and 1896. In the third chapter, treating state orphanages as “laboratories of modernity,” a phrase borrowed from Kent Schull’s study of prisons in the same era, Maksudyan shows how contemporary ideas about civilization and discipline were manifested in these institutions. She traces how the process of labeling vagabond children as criminals and placing them in vocational orphanages was the result of two contemporaneous concerns of the state—progress and urban reform—derived from an ideal interpretation of Western civilization and the desire to revitalize the traditional economy, which was losing ground to European trade. Maksudyan’s emphasis on the economic aspects of these schools could not be more apt, as it balances the trend in the scholarship to treat these institutions primarily as elements of social control.

The last chapter focuses on the politics of orphan relief in the historical context of the Armenian massacres in the 1890s and problematizes international humanitarian relief. By examining the expansion of orphan care by Protestant missionaries and the competition over the future religious affiliation of the orphans between the Ottoman state, the Armenian Apostolic Community and the missionaries, the author shows how “the fight was not [over] orphans but their future” (125). Each party’s main goal was to turn these orphans into loyal members of their communities in the future.

Despite its major successes, *Orphans and Destitute Children* has a self-declared weak point. The author’s claim in the introduction that she attributes agency to children in the making of history is not completely fulfilled in the rest of the book, except in the extremely convincing chapter on foster daughters. The reason for this, as the author herself acknowledges in the conclusion, is that the source materials used in other chapters do not support a study in which children’s active participation is in the foreground. Instead, they reflect “the viewpoint of children regarding various phenomena that affected them” (165). Notwithstanding this slight disappointment, it can be confidently stated that *Orphans and Destitute Children* is a major contribution to the scholarship through its extensive research, deep analysis, and success in writing children’s experiences into the social history of the late Ottoman Empire. ✧

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