

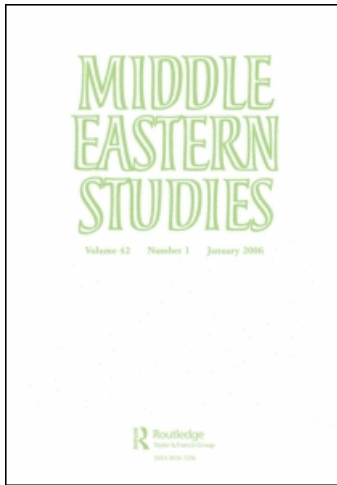
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Defining the Nation: Kurdish Historiography in Turkey in the 1990s

KONRAD HIRSCHLER

The subject of this article is Kurdish historiography in Turkey in the 1990s and especially the ways in which it constructs, defines and reworks Kurdish national identity.¹ Although a number of studies exist regarding the relationship between historiography and national identity in the presence of a central state, the Kurdish national movement has not yet been the subject of such inquiry.² The sources used are articles from the only Kurdish daily newspaper published in Turkey and partly in Germany (*Özgür Gündem* [Free Agenda] and its successors), which has hitherto not been a subject of research. Using these sources I will show that Kurdish national history has been a topic of great debate among Kurdish intellectuals. On the basis of analysis of this debate I will put forth the following arguments: (i) the discursive space of this historiography has been mainly determined by the Turkish national discourse in its popular version, and (ii) identity in the Kurdish society has been constructed mainly around the core layer of ethnicity, whereas it was based on religion or class in preceding periods.

The limited focus of this article on only one Kurdish region is due to the recognition that the Kurdish national identity is highly fragmented. It is characterized by the political and cultural diversity of the Other (Turk, Persian or Arab) in each respective nation-state.³ Consequently, the starting-point for any study of Kurdish national identity must be a localized understanding of its relationship to the respective hegemonic national identity. This article, therefore, seeks to understand the ways in which the national history of the Kurds is written by Kurdish authors in Turkey in the 1990s and why it is written in specific ways. Furthermore, it attempts to locate the main contested fields within the group and with other groups. It is important to mention that I will not focus on the question of whether the texts represent the past correctly or incorrectly. Thereby, I shall adopt the approach of Geertz who stresses the importance of understanding the societal function of ideology and science equally, regardless of the truth or falseness they represent. Geertz defines ideology predominantly as a cultural symbolic system, 'maps of problematic social reality and matrixes

for the creation of collective consciousness'.⁴ It produces sense especially in periods of quick historical change. In this way it fulfils the same function as religion, philosophy or science, in the sense that it is concerned with a problematic situation and offers orientation when a lack of it is perceived. The difference between science and ideology is here mainly on a stylistic level. Science is characterized by disinterestedness and a restrained, spare and resolutely analytical style. Ideology, on the contrary, is characterized by commitment and an ornate, vivid and deliberately suggestive style. Geertz's approach, therefore, enables us to study any text on the level of its societal function, without necessarily discussing to which degree it is 'true' or 'false'.

For the Kurdish issue few studies dealing with nationalism engage with the recent theoretical debate⁵ on nationalism.⁶ The literature on Kurdish nationalism is rather characterized by a mixture of modernist and perennial approaches.⁷ Kurdish nationalism in Turkey has experienced four broad phases since the early twentieth century.⁸ The 1920s and 30s experienced a number of uprisings (the Shaikh Said revolt of 1925, the Ararat revolt of 1928 and the Dersim (Tunceli) revolt of 1937/38). It is necessary to stress that religion often played a salient role in these so-called nationalist revolts and participation was to a large degree determined by tribal patterns. The second phase of non-activity during the 1940s–50s was broken by the third phase in the 1960s–70s, which marked an increase in Kurdish nationalist activities. This third phase was characterized by a high number of political organizations, which became increasingly radical during the 1970s. Since the coup d'état of 1980 the Kurdish national movement has been dominated by the PKK (Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan–Workers Party of Kurdistan). This fourth phase has witnessed the longest armed Kurdish rebellion in the history of the Turkish Republic, led by the PKK. With the arrest of its leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, however, these activities have almost entirely ceased.

The PKK has gained strong support since the inception of the armed struggle in 1984. It developed broad organizational structures and displayed an enormous capacity to mobilize Kurds both within and without Turkey, especially in Europe. The rise of Kurdish nationalism since the 1980s is also a consequence of the extremely severe policy adopted after the coup d'état towards the expression of minority identities. Contrary to former decades any implicit recognition of Kurdishness as socio-cultural reality was entirely excluded, which accelerated the process of Kurdish identity formation.⁹ The general trend of identity in Kurdish society has thereby been a move from one with strong religious components in the 1920s–30s, to one with strong class components in the 1960s–70s, to one with ethnicity as the core layer in the 1990s.¹⁰

Nevertheless, this spread of national Kurdish identity within Kurdish society was (particularly in the 1980s) accompanied by the formation of particular identities, such as identities formed on the basis of religion (Alevi) or language (Zaza speakers).¹¹ The factors attributed to this development are similar to those for the former trend: aspects such as urbanization and increased levels of education, of which modernization theory adherents had hoped would foster the integration of populations, had in reality the inverse effects.¹² This process led to friction among existing or newly emerging lines with according geographical definitions, as for example 'Zazaistan'¹³ or new perceptions of historical events, such as the 1925 and the 1937–38 rebellions, which are partly described as Zaza rebellions.¹⁴

The Turkish Republic with its strong centralized state tradition had from its foundation the means to disseminate a unified identity. On the historiographical level this has been expressed by the Turkish Historical Thesis (*Türk Tarih Tezi*) and the Sun Language Theory (*Güneş Dil Teorisi*), which became hegemonic in the 1930s.¹⁵ Both were developed in the framework of official historiographical institutions by writers of various backgrounds: members of parliament, directors of museums, the Secretary of State for education and historians. The principal argument of the *Türk Tarih Tezi* was that:

from ancient times, droughts and economic seasons forced migrations from Central Asia to the East, West and South. These migrants were Turkish speaking [...] people. They brought to the regions they settled developed civilizations. It was they, who founded civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, China, Crete, India, the Aegean regions and Rome. They were Turks. These Turkish speaking people had the major role in founding and developing civilizations and in spreading them to the world.¹⁶

The *Güneş Dil Teorisi*, published in 1936, is the logical complement to the *Türk Tarih Tezi* in arguing that the Turkish language is the source for all existing languages in the world. But the two theories should not be seen as a homogeneous whole, which determined the writing of history over decades. This is already visible in the 1940s, when the historian Mehmed Fuad Köprülü criticized the whole new approach as romantic and unscientific, although he considered it to be a necessary stage in the development of nationalism. Today this heterogeneity is visible in the difference between academic and popular discourses. In the former, remnants of the theories are hardly visible.¹⁷ On the popular level the

influence of it has been noticeable until today, especially in school textbooks.¹⁸ Towards the Kurds the Turkish national discourse has taken the stance of denial by defining them as Turks. The Kurdish question, if referred to at all, was mentioned 'in terms of reactionary politics, tribal resistance or regional backwardness, but never as an ethno-political question'.¹⁹ Of all the states, with Kurdish populations Turkey has been the most active in denying their existence. Turkish national discourse has thereby never refused to accept Kurds as Turkish citizens. Nevertheless, this acceptance was accompanied by the voluntary or involuntary inclusion of Kurds into the community of Turks.

The last years of the presidency of Turgut Özal in the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a gradual liberation of cultural fields. The effect of state policies, such as the withdrawal of the law on publications in other languages than Turkish in 1991, was that identities below the level of Turkish identity and above the level of family could be expressed more openly. Van Bruinessen describes one of the results of this policy as a 'veritable boom in Kurdish publishing' within Turkey.²⁰ Nevertheless, this approach did not, at least concerning the Kurds, lead to a fundamental change, and until today the very acknowledgment of any Kurdish identity is seen as endangering the union of citizens who are by definition Turkish. Even on the academic level the study published by Kirişçi and Winrow²¹ is described as 'perhaps the first attempt to bring about a comprehensive description and analysis of Turkey's Kurdish problem by prominent scholars who are themselves based in Turkish society.'²²

This article is based on texts published in the daily Kurdish newspaper *Özgür Gündem* and its successors in the years 1994–1997 (*Özgür Gündem*, *Özgür Ülke*, *Yeni Politika* and *Özgür Politika*). This choice is determined mainly by the absence of 'official' Kurdish historiographical institutions and linked publications. For a national movement not in possession of state structures such a newspaper is important as it reaches a relatively broad public. At the same time, this newspaper is a relatively independent forum, where authors of different political orientations write and historiographical issues are openly discussed.

Özgür Gündem and its successors, taken as a whole, have had the longest publication of any daily Kurdish newspaper in Turkey. In the 1960s, and especially the late 1970s, a number of Kurdish journals and newspapers had been published in Turkey.²³ These were continuously subject to external pressure and did not survive for any length of time. *Özgür Gündem* was published in Istanbul from 1992 until April 1994, at which point it was closed down. Since then it attempted several times to start anew under

different names owing to state repression and terror, not least the murder or incarceration of a large number of the newspaper's staff.²⁴ From April 1994 until its closure in February 1995 it was published under the name *Özgür Ülke* (Free Country), from April 1995 until the closing down in August 1995 under the name *Yeni Politika* (New Politics), followed by *Demokrasi* (Democracy), *Ülkede Gündem* (Agenda in the Country) and *Özgür Bakış* (Free View) which closed down in April 2001. The first three versions were distributed both in Turkey and in Europe. After the closure of *Yeni Politika* the European publication took the name *Özgür Politika* (Free Politics) under which it is still published in Neu-Isenburg (Germany). The co-operation between the two newspapers after the formal split has been visible in the high number of articles taken over by *Özgür Politika* from *Demokrasi* and its successors. The circulation of *Özgür Gündem* has been estimated at around 50,000.²⁵ The circulation of *Özgür Politika* in 1999 was, according to the newspaper's own data, 16,723 (8,610 in Germany, 6,120 in other countries and 1,993 subscribers).²⁶ It is generally considered to be close to the PKK, but is not a direct party publication. In contrast to the many direct publications of the PKK and linked organizations, for example *Serxwebûn* (Independence), it is characterized by high stylistic diversity.

Özgür Gündem and its successors are published in Turkish. This is partly a consequence of the proscription of Kurdish within Turkey for public and, in some periods, private use, whose result was that the language has not been developed in accordance to newly arising needs. At the same time, Kurdish is characterized by a high degree of regional variation, which is typical for 'non-national languages'.²⁷ The use of Turkish as a *lingua franca* in *Özgür Politika* and its successors is therefore also a deliberate choice. The actors within the Kurdish national movement, and especially the PKK, are highly sensitive to differences within the Kurdish community, especially regarding dialects (Kurmanci, Zaza, Sorani). The use of Turkish can be seen as an attempt to avoid possible rifts along linguistic lines. The choice of the Turkish language also shows that this newspaper is directed at a public largely educated within Turkey, or at least aware of the Turkish national discourse.

None of the main authors²⁸ writing on historical subjects in the newspapers under scrutiny is a university-trained historian. Most of them can rather be broadly characterized as intellectuals. M. Sıraç Bilgin graduated from the medical faculty in Diyarbakır. Cemşid Bender completed a PhD in law in France. Gürdal Aksoy graduated from Ankara University also in law. Selahaddin Mihutuli graduated from Ankara university in French philology and Torî can best be described as a linguist. Nevertheless, some of the authors writing in the newspaper, for example Selahaddin Mihutuli,²⁹ Cemşid Bender³⁰ and Gürdal Aksoy,³¹ have published

monographs on historical subjects. Some of them have also published literary works; for example, M. Sıraç Bilgin published a novel³² and Torî short stories,³³ or works on other fields such as Torî's Kurdish-Turkish dictionary.³⁴

The second aspect characteristic of these authors is that they are subject to pressure due to their writings. Of the eight main authors only four actually live in Turkey (Cemşid Bender, Selahaddin Mihutuli, Torî, and M. Can Yüce who is imprisoned). The four others live in exile in Europe (M. Sıraç Bilgin, Şerefhan Cizirî, S. İzzet Güven and Gürdal Aksoy). An additional group of authors in the newspaper write anonymously and use collective names linked to the respective pages where historical articles are generally published: *Araştırma Servisi* (Research Service) or *Toplum Yaşam Servisi* (Society and Life Service). These names represent either authors external to the newspaper or collective articles from authors working within the newspaper.

Özgür Gündem and its successors have been a forum for debates on a wide variety of historiographical issues. These include the necessity of writing scientific history (*tarih*) in delimitation to story (*söylence*),³⁵ the question of priorities in terms of periodization,³⁶ the need to replace Eurocentric studies,³⁷ the demand to shift the focus from Great Men to the masses³⁸ and the usefulness of Ibn Khaldūn's historical analysis for the present.³⁹

The most long-lasting debate concentrates in temporal terms on one of the main areas of Kurdish historiography in Turkey: the pre-Islamic periods. In content it has turned around the question of whether one group of Kurdish historians is writing an excessively nationalistic history, which denies the existence of other peoples. In the following, I will term this group the Monopolists, as the group which monopolizes the history of the region in a Kurdish narrative. Their critics, the Inter-Activists, on the contrary tend to include other peoples of the region into their narratives, at least on an abstract level. This latter group, compared with historiographical debates in general, assumes the role of 'revisionists'. The debate has not been limited to *Özgür Gündem* and its successors, but has found expression also in journals⁴⁰ or in the form of monographs.⁴¹ However, in the sources used for this article the debate intensified around the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1995. Later historiographical articles have continued the debate initiated in this earlier period.⁴²

The Monopolists are attacked on the basis that they claim every aspect of the region to be Kurdish.⁴³ The Inter-Activists argue that they construct a romantic and nationalistic view of history, which forms an inverted copy of the *Türk Tarih Tezi* without using sources or documents.⁴⁴ The Inter-Activists fear that in this process a critical and scientific approach to history

will be marginalized in the future by the imposition of an official Kurdish history.⁴⁵ Among the main proponents of the Monopolist group are Cemşid Bender, Torî, Selahaddin Mihutuli, Sıraç Bilgin and S. İzzet Güven. The anonymous collective authors, *Araştırma Servisi* and *Toplum Yaşam Servisi*, also adapt stances that could be generally described as Monopolist.

The Inter-Activists agree on the existence of a Kurdish historical entity, which has existed for thousands of years. However, they stress the existence of other peoples in the region and their interaction with the Kurds, implying aspects of a multi-ethnic society.⁴⁶ They sometimes refute the idea of links of descent between Kurds and early peoples, for example the Medes.⁴⁷ The Monopolists claim that their contributions are mere reactions to the valuable studies of researchers such as Cemşid Bender, whose level of exactness, for instance, they do not reach.⁴⁸ They argue, it is continued, with baseless assertions intended to ridicule 'proved opinions'. A frequent implicit argument is that they endanger the nationalist project, because '[t]o rip a people from its history means to direct it to other histories'.⁴⁹ The Inter-Activists include writers such as Gürdal Aksoy, M. Can Yüce and Şerefhan Cizirî.

Differences between the two groups are also visible in the use of sources and the writing style. As a general rule, the more clearly an author adopts Monopolist stances, the more he tends to use an ornate writing style and the less he tends to cite sources. This classification should not be considered a simple dichotomy between moderation and extremism. An Inter-Activist writer such as Gürdal Aksoy, for instance, can write extensively on the onomastic history of the Turks, concentrating on names linked to dogs, oxen and similar animals.⁵⁰ Neither should the classification be understood as rigid. A Monopolist author such as Torî, for instance, has adopted a rather Inter-Activist stance when writing within his 'own' field of linguistics.⁵¹

If the nation is understood to be a product of 'invention' or 'imagination', we are confronted with the question of how a national community is actually constructed by historicization. I will describe the elements involved in the Kurdish case of 'matrixes for the creation of collective consciousness'⁵² using the concept of myth. Myth is understood here in its original Greek meaning, as a narrative that is neither necessarily true nor necessarily false. It neither requires nor includes a verification from outside itself. Thus the importance of a myth is not defined by its truth-value, but by the meaning it signifies for author and audience. The functional importance lies in the role myths play in defining collectivities. They are a decisive element for the process of exclusion from and inclusion into national communities. G. Smith *et al.* define a number of myths, as for

example those of ethnogenesis, homeland, Golden Age or national character.⁵³ The authors stress that the myths which are relevant vary for each case. The myths actually included may overlap, sustain one another or contradict each other. In this article I will include the myths which are the most salient in the sources under scrutiny: myths of ethnogenesis, homeland, resistance and national character.

The myth of ethnogenesis seeks to identify an ethnic link between the modern nation and an ancient people in order to show an independent 'own' development. This is of crucial importance for the Kurds in Turkey, whose separate existence has been denied by the national discourse for many decades. This myth plays a salient role in the Kurdish historiography, whereby the line between ethnicity defined on a biological basis and defined on a cultural basis is generally very fluid. The current Monoplist version establishes a link with the Aryans. In this narrative the Aryans are the indigenous inhabitants of the Kurdish regions, with a history that some authors describe as stretching as far back as 60,000 years. The modern-day Kurds are closest to the original Aryans and are therefore considered their grandchildren.⁵⁴ One of the basic elements of this narrative is to demonstrate an ethnic purity, which has not been strongly influenced by other peoples. The town of Maraş thus 'guarded all along history its pure Aryan character' against foreign attacks (for example, by Assyrians, Romans, Arabs or Turcomans).⁵⁵ This Aryan version of ethnogenesis is aimed directly at the *Türk Tarih Tezi*, which argues that the Turks were an Aryan race from Central Asia. Describing the Kurds as the real descendants of the Aryans not only defines their own ethnogenesis, but also refutes the Turkish version.

A moderate revisionist approach is advanced by Aksoy who links the Kurds, on an ethnic basis, to Indo-Europeans. Nevertheless, he stresses the influences of Caucasian, Armenian and Turkish elements, thereby challenging the purity narrative. Yüce is the only author who explicitly refutes all attempts to establish links of biological descent over time as being ideological and racist. Agreeing on the existence of the Kurds as a valid unit of historical analysis, he defines this unit mainly on a cultural basis.⁵⁶

Generally, there has been a tendency to expand the possible ancestral peoples of the Kurds, since Minorsky proposed, at the beginning of this century, the Medes.⁵⁷ Bender, for example, includes the Guti, Hurrians, the Kassites (Kashshu), Urartians and Medes in a single ethnic line.⁵⁸ This led Aksoy to comment that some contemporary Kurdish historians produce a 'peoples' soup' by adding arbitrarily more and more ancestral peoples to the already included Medes.⁵⁹

While the myth of ethnogenesis establishes a link between the modern and an ancient people, the homeland myth seeks to establish a stable

geographical existence throughout history. The Anatolian regions are the main territories that historiographical articles published in *Özgür Gündem* and its successors focus on. Turkish national discourse has argued that owing to repeated migrations, Anatolia has become the homeland of the Turks. It is therefore necessary for a Kurdish national narrative to prove that these territories are in fact originally Kurdish. The centre of the Kurdish regions is in this narrative the Eastern Taurus and the Zağros mountains, while the exact frontiers of this homeland are not drawn. From a series of articles on Kurdish towns at the end of 1994 we see that the towns of Maraş, Erzincan, Erzurum and Kars define the Western and Northern frontiers of the area in Anatolia. Significantly, this series refers exclusively to towns within the borders of modern-day Turkey. The Eastern and Southern borders are consequently not defined in this framework.⁶⁰ Torî describes the original territories of the Kurdish Hurrians (approximately 1,400 BC) to be delimited by a triangle formed by the Khabor river in the Southwest, the Diyala river in the Southeast and Lake Van in the North. This territory is roughly equivalent to the present day border region between Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey. The narrative continues, nevertheless, to define the stable frontiers of the Hurrian political entity to be the Mediterranean to the West and the Tigris to the East.

The homeland narrative stresses two essential points. First, the region is described as the 'fatherland of the Aryans' (whose descendants are the Kurds),⁶¹ which is 'our country'.⁶² The ancestors of the Kurds governed regions with clear natural and cultural borders.⁶³ Secondly, the Kurds are described as the oldest people in the region. This is contrasted to 'outside' peoples, who arrived later.⁶⁴ These 'outside' peoples (such as Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs or Turks) are depicted as invaders or occupiers of the Kurdish regions. The definition of those considered 'insiders' is varied. While it is often narrowed down to the Kurds exclusively, at times it includes other groups or peoples, such as the Armenians and Syrian-Orthodox.⁶⁵ It is interesting that, in general, the legitimate existence of other peoples or ethnic minorities is acknowledged on an abstract level. Similarly the positive aspects of this multi-cultural and multi-national mosaic are stressed. Nevertheless, these peoples or minorities are rarely found in the concrete historical description. This description is limited to the Kurds, except for some occasional examples.⁶⁶ Other peoples, such as Armenians⁶⁷ or Circassians,⁶⁸ appear mainly as victims of massacres or forced transfers in the late Ottoman Empire.

The myth of resistance seeks to establish a narrative of eternal opposition to foreign rule. The struggle for national liberation and the future establishment of a nation-state is thereby represented as the result of a teleological historical development. This means that the periods of foreign

rule lose any lasting influence and the survival of the national characteristics can be shown. Owing to the situation of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey in the 1990s this myth is of special importance in the representation and formation of national identity. As described above, regarding the myth of homeland, Kurdish historians draw a clear differentiation between insiders and outsiders. In this narrative Kurdistan has been constantly attacked and occupied. Despite policies of coercion, assimilation and annihilation applied by these occupiers (mainly Arabs, Persians and Turks) over thousands of years, the Kurds have not given up their traditions.⁶⁹ This ability to keep their characteristics is mainly linked to the long-lasting resistance of the Kurds to these policies.⁷⁰

The *Newroz* celebrations serve as the corner-stone of the Kurdish myth of resistance. *Newroz* has an intense symbolic meaning for the Kurdish national movement. During the 1980s and 1990s, it has become an occasion for large scale celebrations in Europe and in the Kurdish regions in Turkey, being regularly severely suppressed in the latter by the Turkish military forces. *Newroz* is also a highly contested discursive field since the Turkish state tries to introduce its own interpretation of the symbolic content, similar to the Iranian state. In 1995 *Newroz* was declared to be a Turkish holiday celebrating the day the Turks left their Central Asian homeland, Ergenekon. *Newroz* was now referred to in its Turkified version as *Nevruz*. At the same time, *Newroz* has often been represented as a mere spring celebration.

The mythological Kurdish version is that the blacksmith Kawa liberated the Kurds from a tyrant who ate every day the brains of two youngsters. After Kawa killed the tyrant fires were lit on the mountains of Kurdistan on 21 March in order to celebrate the liberation. On a historiographical level this event has been dated to the victory of the Medes over the Assyrians in 612 BC, which signified the end of the Assyrian polity. This event is considered crucial by Monopolists, as the Medes 'united all Aryan peoples under one flag and saved thereby the region from the occupying and destroying Scythians'.⁷¹ This victory is also perceived as signifying the end of centuries of coercion by the Semites over the Kurds. The Kurds have since then celebrated the occasion every year with *Newroz*, which is also the first day of the Kurdish calendar.⁷² In this narrative 'Kawa becomes the desire for liberation, the desire to rise up against oppression.'⁷³

Varol, on the contrary, argues that Kawa and *Newroz* were only linked recently. In the whole Kurdish literature and historical writings, for example in the late sixteen century Şerefxan's *Şerefname*,⁷⁴ the name Kawa is not mentioned. He suggests that Kawa has taken the place of the hero of the Persian *Mihrican* myth, in which he had originally been a second-class hero. The *Mihrican* myth is in its meaning similar to the contemporary *Newroz*. In the following Kawa was placed from this myth into the already existing

Newroz framework, which at this point did not have the actual meaning of resistance.⁷⁵

I have already referred several times to the insider/outsider perception in the description of historical events. This opposition of the two groups is in the case under scrutiny mainly aimed at Turks. The myth of national character fills the existing framework with attributes in order to describe a separate past clearly distinct from that of the Other. Thereby we have throughout history a bundle of dichotomistic characteristics.

Together with the myth of resistance, the myth of national character plays a salient role for showing not only origins, but also continuity. This is achieved by constructing the narrative around the idea of the civilized insider and the barbaric outsider. The myth of civilization versus barbarism is a recurring theme in the sources. Monopolist authors like Bender, Torî and Mihutuli use it as a central concept in their analysis of history.⁷⁶ Mihutuli states in this regard that the importance of peoples in history is not bound to the fame they gained, but bound to the 'services in the field of civilization, the remaining cultural elements and the consolidation of history's richness'.⁷⁷ Bender enumerates the achievements of the Kurds in this field who were the first to tame horses, farm wheat, build settlements outside caves, build temples, introduce mathematical and geometric principles and use a telescope.⁷⁸ The Near East is considered the cradle of civilizations and the Kurds have a very distinctive role in the development of these civilizations. This Golden Age ended only with the arrival of the Arabs, Persians and Turks in the region.⁷⁹ Consequently, humanity did not reach the same rate of discoveries, inventions and civilizations as in the period of Kurdish political hegemony before 534 BC.⁸⁰

The barbaric Other is generally implied as the logical correspondence to the civilized Self explicitly described. Mihutuli, nevertheless, states explicitly that in the early periods of civilizational development no Semites (Arabs), Persians or Turcomans were in the region. 'There is no information', he continues, 'about what they did in this period in the Middle Asian and Arab deserts or in which conditions they lived. It has not been proven that they have contributed to civilization or science.' History is seen as the eternal struggle between the defending, civilized insider and the aggressive, barbaric outsider. These outsiders did not only attack and occupy the homeland, furthermore they did not possess a history of civilization and 'turn the civilized history upside-down and remove from it in barbaric and clumsy ways the elements which created civilizations'.⁸¹ As shown in the myth of resistance the Kurds are seen not to have been influenced at all by the outsiders. Torî links this to the deep cultural roots of the Kurds, which reflected Arab, Ottoman and other influences. The Kurds

introduced their specificity also to Islam, for example by founding their own *tariqat*, even though they gave up their own dualistic religions.⁸²

The uncivilized Other is represented in the Islamic periods almost exclusively by the Ottomans—a term used interchangeably with ‘the Turks’. They built their society, in the framework of a ‘plunder ideology’, merely on military bases. After the external expansion had ended, they turned after Sultan Süleyman I (d.1566) to internal plundering of the conquered territories.⁸³ Consequently, the cruelty of the present-day Turkish army ‘is a heritage of the Ottomans’.⁸⁴

The revisionist stance challenges this view on two levels. First, the single-sourced and encapsulated narrative is refuted. Although the Kurds are also endowed with special characteristics, these are the products of reciprocal influence with other peoples. Welat stresses that among the elements integrated are those of Arab, Persian and Turkish communities.⁸⁵ Secondly, the definition of other peoples, especially the Turks as barbaric is questioned. Aksoy hints at the problematic perception of settled peoples who often considered nomadic peoples to be barbaric owing to the differences in their way of life. Although he follows a negative description of Turks, he denies that they can be simply called barbaric.

The inside–outside dichotomy, as worked upon in the myths of national character and homeland, has a further consequence: historical personalities who are generally described as Kurds and whose main field of activity was outside the proper homeland are excluded from the narrative. Saladin, for instance, is generally not mentioned. In a series on ‘Historical Kurdish Personalities’ he is not given a full entry, but is only referred to in a half-sentence.⁸⁶ In an isolated article on Saladin the Ayyubid confederation is not labelled as a Kurdish state or integrated into a Kurdish national history.⁸⁷ One could argue that this is due to the contemporary dispersion of the Kurds and the difficulties in realizing the national project even in the core regions. A narrative claiming state history in outside regions seems in this case to be superfluous. With regard to Saladin, his absence in the sources under scrutiny might furthermore be linked to the fact that he does not play a salient role in the Turkish national discourse. Contrary to the situation in the Iraqi or Syrian sovereign states, the need to ‘reclaim’ him is not a salient theme for Kurdish historiography in Turkey.

The formation of national identity is not only limited to the content of the respective identity, but the boundaries of the relevant group play an equally important part in this process. It has been shown above how the Other and the Self are defined without actually considering the question of where the limits of these categories are. Here, I will describe how a group which is a

subject for discussion is included into the Self by taking the example of the Alevi.

The Alevi are either defined as a heterodox Islamic sect and community or as the continuation of pre-Islamic Zoroastrian and Manichaean beliefs. Generally the former definition is adhered to in the literature.⁸⁸ Owing to the differences in definition the term is best seen as a 'blanket term' describing a large number of heterodox groups with largely differing beliefs and rituals.⁸⁹ This group is particularly widespread in Anatolia. Their proportion of the overall population of Turkey is estimated at between 10 and 30–40 per cent. The share of the Kurds among Turkey's overall Alevi is estimated at between 10 and 30 per cent, and the share of Alevi among Turkey's Kurds at approximately 30 per cent.⁹⁰ The Alevi in Turkey include Arabic, Azerbaijani, Turkish and Kurdish speaking groups, with the latter two groups being quantitatively the most important. The Kurdish speaking group is divided into speakers of the Zaza dialect and the Kurmanci dialect.

The Alevi have generally supported the Turkish Republic, whose official secularism promised a certain protection for heterodox groups. Throughout the existence of the Turkish Republic the importance and strength of Alevi identity decreased, which led in the early 1980s to speculation about the disappearance of Alevism as a community. This changed during the 1980s, which led not only to a vivid debate on the definition of Alevism,⁹¹ but also to a 'major cultural and political struggle ... for the souls of the Alevi of Turkey'.⁹² The major contending loci of loyalty are thereby Turkish nationalism, Kurdish nationalism and Alevism.

The official Turkish stance towards Alevism has been to define it as a specific form of Islam linked to pre-Islamic Turcoman roots. It is thereby often considered to be the heart and soul of Turkish culture, which it maintained throughout the centuries. The tolerance by official Turkish institutions regarding the developing crystallization of a specific Alevi identity in the 1980s has also been aimed at the Kurdish national movement. With public state support following for Alevi, the Kurdish speaking Alevi were particularly targeted in order to prevent a shift of identity towards Kurdish nationalism.

The participants in the Alevi debate during the last decade are, among others, involved in constructing their own community that had previously not existed as such. With processes best described as an 'Invention of Tradition'⁹³ the community is mainly constructed via History. The authors have, therefore, tended in recent years to de-emphasize the Turkishness of Alevism and stress the importance of a cultural mosaic in Anatolia. Nevertheless, nearly all Turkish and Zaza speaking authors agree on a vaguely defined Turkish origin for Alevism.⁹⁴ The Kurdishness of Alevism plays a marginal role within this debate among Alevi. This stance is mainly

represented by Bender who can be seen as the link between the current debates on Kurdishness analyzed in the present article and the debate on Alevism analyzed by Vorhoff.⁹⁵

The Kurdish national movement also sees Alevis as an important group for inclusion. As a large part of the Kurdish speaking Alevis speak the Zaza dialect, this group is of special relevance for the definition of the boundaries of Kurdishness. The PKK, for instance, has since 1994 published a special Alevi journal, *Zülfikar* with the slogan 'The one who denies his origin is a bastard!'⁹⁶ Bender argues that Alevism is based on Kurdish roots. In order to show the Kurdishness of Alevism he advances three main points. Firstly, he argues that Alevism is an extension of Zoroastrianism, which was the religion of the Kurds. By citing a number of similarities between the two beliefs, for example the holiness of fire or monogamy, a continuity is shown over time in these 'Kurdish' religions. Furthermore, Alevism is clearly dissociated from Islam. By presenting Islam as the aggressive outsider, the narrative continues that 'one part of the Kurdish people converted under compulsion to Islam, while a large part retracted towards the heights of the Zağros and tried to protect their old beliefs under an Islamic cloak. The name of this development: Alevism.'⁹⁷ Lastly, he tries to dissociate Bektaşism⁹⁸ from Alevism, by representing it as a later development under the Ottomans, which is not linked, as often claimed, with Hacı Bektaş Veli.⁹⁹

The last point is essential for the question of how to define the group of Turkish-speaking Alevis. Frequently, this group is implicitly included into the Kurdish community in the texts under scrutiny. This, either by stating that the Alevis 'do not speak any more the language their mothers and fathers spoke'¹⁰⁰ or by continuously referring to 'Kurdish Alevism', whereas a 'Turkish Alevism' is never mentioned.¹⁰¹ This trend is also observed by other authors, such as Vorhoff who speaks of an 'inversion' of the Turkish thesis concerning Alevism.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the above definition of a Turkish Bektaşism versus a Kurdish Alevism is probably meant to create a dissociation between Turkish- and Kurdish-speaking Alevis. Although Bender does not view Bektaşism as linked with Hacı Bektaş Veli his writings contain a tendency similar to the phenomenon that appears in nation-orientated discussions among Alevis: Turkish-speaking Alevis tend to use Hacı Bektaş Veli as their symbol, while Kurdish-speaking Alevis use the sixteenth-century poet and rebel Pir Sultan Abdal as their symbol.

Demir takes a slightly Inter-Activist stance towards the question of the roots of Alevism. While he agrees with the broad lines described by Bender, he stresses that 'it is impossible to deny that Islam, the other religions in Anatolia and the Turcomans contributed to the richness of Alevism.'¹⁰³

The discussion concerning the description of the highly contested group of Alevis shows two major points. Firstly, the subject of Zaza-speaking

Alevi is not discussed at all. They are implicitly included since they are not even mentioned as a potential special group within the community of Kurdish speakers. It seems that the authors here adopt a strategy of silence towards the Zaza tendency to develop an independent identity. Secondly, Turkish-speaking Alevi are generally defined as insiders by the writers irrespective of linguistic factors. Nevertheless, it seems that a dissociation could occur on the basis of the construction of a Kurdish 'real' Alevism versus a Turkish 'invented' Bektasism.

This article examined the way in which early Kurdish history is written by parts of the Kurdish intellectual elite in Turkey. On the basis of this examination I shall now conclude with three major points regarding the actual state of this historiography. However, it is necessary to stress that the aim of the present article is not to classify Kurdish historiography in Turkey into rigid and clearly separate categories. The aim is rather to understand the perception of history within one crucial source in a concrete period in order to establish a point of departure for future comparative studies.

This article shows that Kurdish history is vividly discussed by the Kurdish intellectual elite in Turkey and perceived in a variety of ways. This is due mainly to the fact that we are dealing with the ideas of an intellectual elite. It is not necessarily linked to the absence of a central nation-state or the relatively recent character of Kurdish nationalism on a large scale in Turkey. The heterogeneity of national historiographies on the elite level has been shown with regard to its manifestation within Turkey in this article and is also a widely observed phenomenon with regard to the European context.¹⁰⁴ Thus we are confronted with a normal phenomenon that has also not been changed by the development of a strong Kurdish movement, which has been mainly single-centred around the PKK in the 1980s and 1990s.

Although the existence of different perceptions of history demands an interpretation, the fact that this debate is led in public is much more surprising for the reader of these sources. Controversial subjects are discussed openly and at times quite polemically. This openness does not exist in the quite similar debate on Alevism in Turkey, where a common identity is discussed and defined as well. This is explained by the aim 'to push through interests against an environment experienced to be between ignorance and hostility, as well as to formulate, form and maintain a "We".'¹⁰⁵ As this description is also valid for the Kurdish case, it is questionable if external pressure and internal striving towards homogeneity are sufficient to explain the degree of openness in a debate.

Secondly, Kurdish national historiography in Turkey is mainly directed towards, influenced by and responsive to Turkish national historiography on a popular level. This is visible in the choice of the geographical area covered, the redefinition of central myths of Turkish national historiography and the centrality of this discourse with regard to contested themes, such as for example Alevism. The Turks are also the main Other, as shown in the section on the myth of national character. As Vali has argued for the Kurdish contexts in the different countries and shown in relation to the Iraqi context, Kurdish national identity emerged in the framework of the relationship between the Self and the Other, which are the Turkish, Persian and Arab identities.¹⁰⁶ These conditions of the formation of national identity have led partly to the formulation of a symmetrically inverted *Türk Tarih Tezi*. This is not a major tendency in the texts examined, but at least Selahaddin Mihutuli can be named in this regard. Other national discourses, for instance the Iranian one, play a less salient role and are not as explicitly referred to. The fact that *Newroz* is also the first day of the Iranian calendar or that the late sixteenth century source *Şerefname* was written in Persian are ignored. Certainly the discourse described above also opposes the discourse on Muslim unity as adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nevertheless, the specific conditions of the Kurds in Iran do not seem to influence the historical perspective. While the Alevi–Sunni split in Turkey is visible, the Sunni–Twelver Shiite split in Iran does not leave its traces. This is the case even though the religious split in Iran influences political orientation to a certain degree: the Twelver Shiite Kurds tended to support Ayatollah Khomeini and were less enthusiastic for autonomy projects than the Sunni Kurds.

The Turkish national discourse has a fundamental role in the formation of the discursive space in which Kurdish identity is discussed. In the source examined, this relationship is linked (a) to the nature of the source and the background of the authors and (b) to tactical transformation of the major player of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey in the 1990s: the PKK.

The texts are published in a popular source – a level where in Turkish publications the *Türk Tarih Tezi* remains alive. The readership of these texts, which are published in Turkish, has been largely educated within the Turkish national discourse. At the same time, the authors bear the heritage of the Kurdish, mostly leftist, parties of the 1970s, which were influenced by Kemalist thoughts and attitudes.

The PKK has, since its foundation in the late 1970s, gone through a series of tactical transformations. From the proclaimed aim of an independent unified Kurdistan, via the aim of an independent Turkish–Kurdistan, it turned in the 1990s to the aim to establish autonomy

within the Turkish state. This development has been recently carried on when the PKK declared that it was abandoning the armed struggle in order to resolve the 'problems of Turkey' by democratic means.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, the focus on the Turks as the main Other, on Anatolia as the homeland or on the Ottoman Empire as the major enemy in the Islamic periods suggests that the historical imagination has been influenced by these transformations. In this regard it is not surprising that the relationship with other Kurdish communities in neighbouring countries is of minor importance in the framework of the discourse examined. Nevertheless, this article shows that the concurrent national discourse is not the only point of reference. Other dimensions of identity, such as for example Alevism or Islamism, play also an important role in the development of Kurdish historiography.

Finally, despite the heterogeneity shown above, Kurdish historiography in Turkey is characterized by a widely shared tendency towards a vision of a predominantly ethnic history. This tendency is clearer the more an author adopts Monopolist stances. Ethnic history is understood here as the perennial approach which regards Kurdishness as a constant factor in history, defined on biologist or linked essentialist cultural bases. Via the central myths, peoples, events or geographical areas are included into or excluded from a continuous narrative of Kurdishness. The 'motor of history' in this narrative is the clash between peoples, expressed predominantly in the form of the dichotomy between barbarism and civilization. Marxist approaches are absent despite explicit Marxist stances in the course of the historiographical discussion.¹⁰⁸ The debate between Monopolists and Inter-Activists therefore remains a question of degree, and not about whether the concept of ethnic history is valid at all.¹⁰⁹ Sakallıoğlu argues that identity in the Kurdish society has moved from one with strong religious components in the 1920s–1930s to one with strong class components in the 1960s–1970s, to one with a predominantly ethnic core layer in the 1990s.¹¹⁰ Consequently, the sources are a reflection of this shift. In order to test this link it would be interesting to examine historiographical texts of the preceding periods.

There are similarities between the sources in this article and Vali's reading of the historical writings of the Iraqi Kurds Muhammad Amin Zaki (published in 1931–33) and Jemal Nebez (published in 1984), in which he observes an intensification of the ethnic factor. The former's writings are largely liberal in perception and do not absolutize ethnic differences or involve ethnic stereotypes. The latter's writings, on the contrary, are characterized by a perennial approach, where perceived national differences are absolutized and presented as given historical facts.¹¹¹ As a hypothesis it can be suggested that the move towards an identity constructed around

ethnicity is not singular for the Kurdish context in Turkey, but also valid for Kurdish historiographies in the other sovereign states.

For the future the above findings must be set into a comparative framework with Kurdish national identities in other nation-states. Although the point of departure must be the relationship with the respective hegemonial identity, a comparative outlook will contribute to the depth of our understanding of the development of Kurdish national identity.

NOTES

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1. 'Kurdish historiography' here is understood as texts with historical subjects published in publications or within publishing houses sympathetic to or supporting one of the actors of the Kurdish national movement.
2. With the exception of A. Vali, 'Nationalism and Kurdish Historical Writing', in *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.14, pp.23–51 (1996), whose source basis is monographs written by Kurds from Iraq, and K.M. Ahmed, *Tarihin Tarihi, Kürtlerde Tarih, Tarihte Kadın* (Istanbul, 1997), pp.51–116, which is mainly interesting for information on individual writers.
3. A. Vali, 'The Kurds and their "Others"', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol.18 (1998), pp.82–95.
4. C. Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), pp.193–233.
5. Referring to the debate which started in the early 1980s, especially with the studies: E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983) and B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983/1991).
6. G. Behrendt, *Nationalismus in Kurdistan* (Hamburg, 1992); M. van Bruinessen, 'Kurden zwischen ethnischer, religiöser und regionaler Identität', in C. Borck, E. Savelsberg and S. Hajo (eds.), *Kurdologie: Ethnizität, Nationalismus, Religion und Politik in Kurdistan* (Münster, 1997(a)), pp.185–216, or to a lesser degree H. Ağuicenoğlu, *Genese der türkischen und kurdischen Nationalismen im Vergleich* (Münster, 1997).
7. Such as, for example, A.C. Turner, 'Kurdish Nationalism', in P.J. Chelkowski and R.J. Pranger (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Middle East* (Durham and London, 1988), pp.379–410 or J. Blau and Y. Suleiman, 'Language and Ethnic Identity in Kurdistan: A Historical Overview', in Y. Suleiman (ed.), *Language and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa* (Richmond, 1996), pp.153–64.
8. I found the following studies particularly helpful for this issue: N. Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder, CO and London, 1992); G. Gürbey, 'The Development of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s', in R. Olson (ed.), *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s* (Lexington: 1996), pp.9–37; M. van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society and the Modern State', in T. Atabaki and M. Dorlejin (eds.), *Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity* (Utrecht, 1990), pp.24–51.
9. H.J. Barkey and G.E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (New York, 1998), pp.15 f.
10. Ü.C. Sakallioğlu, 'Historicising the Present and Problematising the Future of The Kurdish Question in Turkey', in *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.14 (1996), pp.1–22.
11. Zaza is differently defined as a Kurdish dialect or an independent language. Bruinessen includes the Alevis among them within the overall category 'Kurdish Alevis', while

- Vorhoff differentiates between 'Kurds' and 'speakers of *Zazaki*'. M. van Bruinessen, 'Aslını inkar eden haramzadedir!' The Debate on the Ethnic Identity of the Kurdish Alevis, in K. Kehl-Bodrogi, B. Kellner-Heinkele and A. Otter Beaujean (eds.), *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East* (Leiden/New York/Cologne, 1997(b)), pp.1–23; K. Vorhoff, *Zwischen Glaube, Nation und neuer Gemeinschaft: Alevitische Identität in der Türkei der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1995).
12. Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society*, pp.35 ff.
 13. Bruinessen, *Identität*, pp.205 ff.
 14. Bruinessen, *Kurdish Alevis*, pp.15 f.
 15. For details of the developments, see M. Strohmeier, *Seldschukische Geschichte und türkische Geschichtswissenschaft* (Berlin, 1984), pp.102 ff.
 16. İ. Beşikçi, *Türk Tarih Tezi ve Kürt sorunu* (Ankara, 1977), p.20.
 17. As expressed for example in the works of Turkish historians of the Ottoman Empire such as Halil İnalcık, Selim Deringil or Şerif Mardin.
 18. H. Millas, 'History Textbooks in Greece and Turkey', in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol.31 (1991), pp.21–33.
 19. M. Yeğen, 'The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity', in S. Kedourie (ed.), *Turkey. Identity, Democracy, Politics* (London/Portland, 1996), pp.216–29, here p.216.
 20. M. van Bruinessen, 'Shifting National and Ethnic Identities: the Kurds in Turkey and Europe', Paper presented at the international Symposium 'Redefining the Nation, State and Citizen', Istanbul, 28–29 March (1996) (a), p.2.
 21. K. Kirişçi and G.M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: an Example of Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London, 1997).
 22. D. Köksal, 'Who Writes about the Kurdish Problem (review article)', in *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.17 (1997), pp.174–80, here p.175.
 23. For example '*Dicle-Firat*' in 1962 or '*Yeni Akış*', in 1966; for information on the Kurdish press until the 1980s see K. Burkay, *Geçmişten bugüne Kürtler ve Kürdistan*, Vol.1 (Istanbul, 1992); especially for the 1990s see M. Yücel, *Kürt Basın Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1998).
 24. I.G. Imset, 'Turkish Roulette: The Freedom Enjoyed by Turkey's Profuse and Daily Newspapers Does Not Extend To Their Kurdish Counterparts', in *Index on Censorship*, Vol.25 (1996), pp.74–7.
 25. Imset, *Turkish Roulette*, p.74.
 26. *Özgür Politika*, 10 May 1999, p.2.
 27. Currently there are efforts in the exiled community in Europe to unify and modernize Kurdish: Bruinessen, 'Shifting National' (1996) (a). Here Kurdish satellite TV plays an important role.
 28. In terms of contributions to the newspaper and other publication cited in the present article.
 29. S. Mihutuli, *Arya uygarlıklarından Kürtlere* (Istanbul, 1992) ('From the Aryan civilizations to the Kurds').
 30. C. Bender, *Kürt uygarlığında Alevilik* (Istanbul, 1991) ('Alevism in the Kurdish civilization').
 31. G. Aksoy, *Tarihi yazılmayan halk: Kürtler* (Istanbul, 1996) ('The people whose history has not been written: the Kurds').
 32. M.S. Bilgin, *Yapraklar açana dek* (Stockholm, 1997) ('Until the leaves open').
 33. Torî, *Qolinç* (Istanbul, 1992) (in Kurdish).
 34. Torî, *Ferheng Kurdî-Tirkî, Türkçe-Kürtçe* (Istanbul, 1992).
 35. Gürdal Aksoy, 'Kürtlerde tarih bilinci ve söylenci' ('Historical consciousness and story among the Kurds') (23 Nov. 1994, p.10).
 36. Rohat Alakom, 'Bir halkın tarihini düşman yazamaz' ('The history of a people cannot be written by the enemy') (11 June 1996, p.9).
 37. Şerefxan Cizirî, 'Tarih anlayışı üzerine' ('On the comprehension of history') (12 Nov. 1994, p.10).
 38. Şerefxan Cizirî, 'Birey ve tarih' ('The individual and history') (18 Dec. 1994, p.10).

39. Hasan Oğuz, 'Tarih biliminin öncüsü' ('The pioneer of history [writing]') (24, 25 and 26 Oct. 1996, p.8).
40. G. Aksoy, 'Kürtlerin kökeni bilim dünyası'ndaki yeri' ('The place of the Kurds' roots in the scientific community') in *Berhem*, Vol.6-7 (1993).
41. Aksoy, *Tarihi yazılmayan halk*.
42. M. Sıraç Bilgin, 'Tarih yazıcıları' ('The writers of history') (27 June 1996, p.9) or Şerefhan Cizirî: 'Özgür tarih' ('Free history') (15 July 1996, p.9).
43. Şerefhan Cizirî, 'Tarih anlayışı üzerine' ('On the comprehension of history') (12 Nov. 1994, p.10).
44. Deniz Çelik, 'Resmi Kürt tarihinin sonu mu?' ('The end of the official Kurdish history?') (29 March 1996, p.9).
45. Gürdal Aksoy, 'Tarihte Kürtler, Kürtlerde tarih' ('The Kurds in history, history among the Kurds') (4 Jan. 1995, p.10).
46. Gürdal Aksoy (4 Jan. 1995).
47. M. Can Yüce, 'Kürt tarih yazıcılığında yöntem üzerine' ('On the method in Kurdish history writing') (17 and 18 June 1996, p.2).
48. S. İzzet Güven, 'Cemşid Bender'in tezleri üzerine' ('On Cemşid Bender's theses') (21 Dec. 1994, p.10).
49. Torî, 'Tarih tartışması' (The discussion of history) (14 June 1996, p.9).
50. Gürdal Aksoy, 'Tarihte Türk isimleri' (Turkish names in history) (13 July 1994, p.10).
51. Torî, 'Kürtçe' de dil birliklerinin oluşması' ('The development of linguistic units within the Kurdish language') (6 Oct. 1995, p.9).
52. Geertz, *Ideology*, p.220.
53. G. Smith, V. Law, A. Wilson, A. Bohr and E. Allworth, *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.24 ff.
54. Selahaddin Mihutuli, 'Arya-Sümer Kürt anonim kültüründen motifler' ('Motifs from an anonymous Aryan-Sumerian Kurdish culture') (10 July 1997, p.9).
55. Toplum Yaşam Servisi, 'Adım adım güneş ülkesi'ne – Meraş (Gurgum)' ('Step by step towards the country of the sun – Maraş') (2 Nov. 1995, p.12).
56. M. Can Yüce (17 and 18 June 1996).
57. V. Minorsky, 'Kurden' in *Enzyklopaedie des Islam* (Leiden, 1913-36).
58. Cemşid Bender interviewed by Aydın Dere, 'Cemşid Bender'le Kürt tarihi üzerine ...' ('With Cemşid Bender on Kurdish history ...') (26 Sept. 1995, p.9).
59. Gürdal Aksoy (4 Jan. 1995).
60. Toplum Yaşam Servisi, 'Adım adım, güneş ülkesi'ne: Erzincan, Meraş, Qers, Erzirom' ('Step by step towards the country of the sun – Erzincan, Maraş, Kars, Erzurum') (5 Oct., 2, 16 and 30 Nov. 1995).
61. Selahaddin Mihutuli (10 July 1997).
62. Toplum Yaşam Servisi, 'Adım adım güneş ülkesi'ne – Ağrı' (Ararat) ('Step by step towards the country of the sun – Ağrı') (12 Oct. 1995, p.12).
63. Torî, 'Anadolu uygarlığında Kürt etkisi' ('The Kurdish influence in the Anatolian civilization') (9 April 1994, p.8).
64. Cemşid Bender interviewed by Aydın Dere (26 Sept. 1995).
65. Toplum Yaşam Servisi, 'Adım adım güneş ülkesi'ne doğru – Mardin' ('Step by step towards the country of the sun – Mardin') (28 Sept. 1995, p.12).
66. For example M. Ali Welat, 'Kürdistan ortak kültürlerin anasıdır' ('Kurdistan is the mother of the common cultures') (7 Oct. 1994, p.10).
67. Fatih Sönmez, 'Türk egemenlik sistemi içinde: Ermeni halkının trajik sonu' (Within the system of Turkish sovereignty: the tragic end of the Armenian people) (24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 April 1996, p.8).
68. Ragıp Zarakolu, 'Adlarını başkaları verdi' ('Others gave their names') (29 Sept. 1997, p.5).
69. Selahaddin Mihutuli, 'Halkı kurtaran kahraman' ('The hero who liberated-liberates the people') (17 July 1997, p.9).
70. Toplum Yaşam Servisi (2 Nov. 1995).

71. Toplum Yaşam Servisi (16 Nov. 1995).
72. Tori, 'Tarihte duygu sömürüsü' ('The exploitation of emotion in history') (1 Aug. 1996, p.9).
73. Hüsseyin Kaytan, 'Ateşi bedenler uyandırıyor' ('The bodies lighten the fire') (22 March 1994, p.12).
74. *Sharaf-nāma* written by Sharaf al-Dīn Khān Bidlisi (b.1543) is a history of the Kurds written in Persian. Today the author is often perceived in the sources under scrutiny as an early Kurdish nationalist; see for example Mehmet Can, 'Xanê, Kürt ulusalcılığının babasıdır' ('Xanê is the father of Kurdish national consciousness') (24 Oct. 1995, p.9).
75. Yılmaz Varol, 'Kawa Kürt mü?' ('Is Kawa a Kurd?') (7 July 1994, p.10).
76. Cemşid Bender interviewed by Aydın Dere (26 Sept. 1995); Tori (9 April 1994); Selahaddin Mihutuli (17 July 1997).
77. Selahaddin Mihutuli, 'Uygurluğun yaratıcıları; Aryalar' ('The creators of civilization: the Aryans') (2 April 1994, p.8).
78. Cemşid Bender interviewed by Aydın Dere (26 Sept. 1995).
79. Selahaddin Mihutuli (2 April 1994).
80. Cemşid Bender interviewed with Aydın Dere (26 Sept. 1995).
81. Selahaddin Mihutuli (2 April 1994).
82. Tori, 'Kültürün bütünselliği' ('The consistency of the cultures') (29 March 1996, p.9).
83. Çetin Arkaş, Burhan Babaoğlu, Nurset Benek, 'Türk-Batı ilişkilerinin tarihsel temelleri' ('The historical bases of Turkish-West relations') (12 Sept. 1996, p.8).
84. Fatma Gönen, 'Türk ordusunun dünü bugünü – Vahşet Osmanlı'dan miras' ('The present and past of the Turkish army – Cruelty is a heritage from the Ottomans') (22 Jan. 1996, p.8).
85. M. Ali Welat (7 Oct. 1994).
86. Araştırma Servisi, 'Tarihi kürt kişilikleri' ('Historical Kurdish personalities') (19, 20, 21 and 22 Sept. 1995, p.8).
87. İlhami Yazgan, 'Kürt orijinli İslam Sultanı' ('The Islamic Sultan of Kurdish origins') (17 June 1997, p.9).
88. See for example Vorhoff, op. cit. (1995).
89. M. van Bruinessen, 'Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey', in *Middle East Report* 200 (1996 (b)), pp.7–10, here p.7.
90. P.A. Andrews (ed.), *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey* (Wiesbaden, 1989), p.57 and pp.116–17.
91. This debate is the subject of the study by Vorhoff (1995).
92. Barkey and Fuller, *Kurdish Question*, p.67.
93. Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention*.
94. Vorhoff, *Alevitische Identität*, pp.111 ff.
95. Vorhoff, *Alevitische Identität*.
96. 'Aslını inkar eden haramzadedir!'
97. Cemşid Bender, *Aleviliğin Tarihi Kökeni* (The Historical Root of Alevism) (7 Aug. 1995, p.8).
98. This is an Islamic mystical order traced back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and to Hacı Bektaş Veli. Owing to its close interweaving with Alevism, both terms are today often used interchangeably.
99. Cemşid Bender, 'Aleviliğin kökeni üzerine düşüncüler' (part 3 of 3) ('Reflections on the roots of Alevism') (28 Sept. 1996, p.8).
100. Ziya Aydın, 'Tarihini unutan bir halk, köledir' ('The people who forgets its history is a slave') (14 March 1996, p.9).
101. Haydar Demir, 'Arap kültürünün boğduğu din: Zerdüştlük' ('The religion, which was throttled by the Arab culture: Zoroastrianism') (1 April 1994, p.8).
102. Vorhoff, *Alevitische Identität* (1995), p.114.
103. Haydar Demir (1 April 1994).
104. See for example S. Berger, M. Donovan, and K. Passmore (eds.), *Writing National Histories* (London/New York, 1999).

105. Vorhoff, *Alevitische Identität* (1995), p.79.
106. Vali, *Kurdish Historical Writing*, p.50.
107. *Guardian*, 10 Feb. 2000.
108. For example, M. Can Yüce (17 June 1996) or Şerefhan Cizirî (18 Dec. 1994).
109. With the exception of M. Can Yüce (17 and 18 June 1996).
110. Sakalhoğlu, *Historicising*, p.14.
111. Vali, *Kurdish Historical Writing*, pp.31 ff.