

BEIHEFTE ZUM TÜBINGER ATLAS
DES VORDEREN ORIENTS

Reihe B (Geisteswissenschaften) Nr. 60

Ethnic Groups
in the
Republic of Turkey

compiled and edited

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ular *şeyh* or *pîr*. Proscriptions prevent any close contact with Muslims or their prayers. Deviants are ultimately threatened with anathema.

Descent is claimed from Adam alone, giving the Yezidi a position apart from the rest of mankind, held to be descended from Adam and Eve. Membership of the Yezidi is thus by birth alone, and they are bound not to mix with others. Loyalties are to family rather than tribe. Nevertheless there are clearly-defined patrilineal tribal descent groups. Thus in the Midyat region there are two major tribes, the Çelka and the H̄alta. The Çelka *aşîret* is subdivided into the Daseka, Keleka, and Şemika; these smaller *aşîret* are also divided into *qabîlet*, the Daseka forming the Revena, Buzera and Binoka. The H̄alta are the largest tribe in Turkey with their centre in Diyarbakır and Siirt provinces (and a branch in Kars?). The Viranşehir region is dominated by the Şerkiân and the Duna (information from the Yezidi Verein, 1985). Much of the persecution endured has been at the hands of Muslim Kurds, notably at Koyuncuk (Niniveh) in 1832; there is therefore little sense of common interest between them. Polarisation from the orthodox also led to religious coercion by the Ottoman government, as recently as 1892 under Ömer Paşa, and the difficulty of obtaining recognition from Sunni officials still endangers the Yezidis' position despite constitutional guarantees. Continuing pressure has led them to claim recently that they represent an original, Zoroastrian, religion of the Kurds, apparently so as to effect a *rapprochement* with the latter.

Selected bibliography:

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25. Zazas: Sunni

Designation:

Zazas; *Ger. Zaza; Tk. Zaza; Kurd. Zaza, Zaz.*

Self-designation:

a. Zaza b. Dimili (not in Erzincan, Kiğıt, or Mutki areas).

Numbers:

CENSUS 1965	150,644 declared persons speaking Zaza, total: ca. 140,000 of these in the Sunni areas. 112,701 persons speaking Zaza as second language.
K. E. E. N.* 1960-70	619 villages total: 465 villages in the Sunni areas.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 1977: 3 2,000,000 Zaza speakers total.

The general census count is certainly too low as excludes all but 7 (*sic!*) persons in Tunceli. Confusion arises in these and other lists from the inclusion of Zazas with Kurds in total figures.

Distribution:

in two main groups and several smaller ones. The main Sunni groups are:

1. In the mountains south of the Murad Suyu from Genç to Palu and Lice, and northwards to Bingöl, reaching apparently as far east as Solhan (K. E. E. N. some 345 villages).
 2. The semi-nomadic Dimilî of the lower-lying areas, living in the hills between Karacadağ in Urfa and Derik in Mardin, apparently extending northward to Çüngüş and Çermik in Diyarbakır (K. E. E. N. some 72 villages).
- In addition to these, there are some smaller groups in:
3. Mutki (Bitlis), apparently extending to Baykan (Siirt) (K. E. E. N. 11 villages).
 4. Varto (Muş) (K. E. E. N. 37 villages).

Others are reported at:

5. Pütürge (Malatya).
6. Hınıs (Erzurum).

* See survey I.

- the south (K.E.E.N.; SEVGEN 1950: 411). Some migrate to yaylas in summer.
2. Along the right bank of the Euphrates (Fırat) from the Bingöl Dağları to the Malatya plain.
 3. An extension of this group includes the Zaza element among the Koçgiri (Koçkiri) tribes in Sivas, in the sub-provinces of Zara, İmranlı, Kangal and Divriği (districts of Bulucan, Beypınarı, Kavak, İmranlı Merkez and Karacaören). This comprises the Çarekan and Giniyan tribes (DERSİMİ 1952: 61-3; SEVGEN 1950: 411).
 4. A further extension into Erzincan and further east into Erzurum includes the Kureyşan tribe in the northeast of Erzincan Merkez sub-province (Merkez and Tanyeri districts), and Çayırılı sub-province (Merkez and Başköy districts) (DERSİMİ 1952: 67-8).
 5. A group in Diyarbakır, Hani sub-province (K.E.E.N.).

Language:

as Zaza Sunnis, but Turkish is used by some (not all) groups for religious ceremonial. Now threatened by exodus of population and education of younger generation in Turkish.

Religion:

Alevi Muslims. Cf. Nos. 2, 6, and 23.

Group identity:

through a combination of language, the endogamy inherent in Alevilik, and the closed, esoteric nature of the cult itself. Tribal divisions were still apparent in the 1970s (cf. DERSİMİ 1952: 43-69; ÖZTÜRK 1972: 43 ff., esp. 46), each evoking strong loyalties both to the group and its leader. Tribal land is owned to a large extent by hereditary chiefs (*reis*) who may control many villages. A further loyalty is traditionally due to cult leaders at three levels, *pir*, *mürşit*, and *rehber* (*dede*, *baba*) who formerly visited the towns and villages in a prescribed circuit, and at regular intervals, to direct worship, and in return receive donations in cash and kind as an established right, though no more than the expression of respect and spiritual dependence among their followers. The religious authority of the *dede* is formalised through genealogies derived from the Prophet's family (*Ehl-i Beyt*), through one of the twelve imams. The tribes are consequently divided into those (*seyyid*) associated with these genealogies, and those who are not, accepting an inferior standing. As with the Alevi Kurds, reference to descent from the Prophet's family has fulfilled the need for a common tribal

ancestor. The bond between the two levels of tribes is dependent upon the *ikrar bend*, the Alevi confirmation of faith, which is binding for life. Within the *seyyid* tribes are specific families whose long cultural standing enables them to provide most of the *dedes* for both groups. *Dedes* remain responsible for any part of their tribal following which changes location. Group unity is reinforced by the freely-entered bond of *müşahiplik* between individuals.

As an external element, the inaccessibility of Tunceli has both protected these tribes and isolated them, strengthening their identity as a group. It still remains the centre for loyalties among the outlying groups, even though the traditional organisation has been rejected among the younger generation (see BUMKE in this volume).

Language appears to be secondary to *Alevilik* in identity: a group of Zaza in Sivas, Zara, living among Alevi Kurds now consider themselves Kurdish even though some of the elder members still speak Zaza. Close and cordial relationships are maintained with Alevis in other areas, such as Malatya and Maraş, and *dedes* exchange visits. Some intermarriage occurs, despite the tendency towards tribal endogamy. The usual polarity between Alevi and Sunni, however, is extended to Shafii Zaza and Kurds.

Bibliography:

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 MANN, O. 1932 (designation, areas, language)
 MOLYNEUX-SEEL, L. 1914 (Tunceli)
 ÖZTÜRK, S. 1972 mez. tez. (Tunceli Alevis)
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See BUMKE in this volume.

27. Ossetes

Designation:

Ossetes, Ossetians; *Ger.* Ossen, Osseten; *Tk.* Osetin, Asetin, Kuşha(lar).

Self-designation:

Iron (s.), Irättä (pl.), Ir (collective); also Dıgur, Dıgoron/Dıguran, Dıgor (collective); and Tuallag, Tuallägtä (pl.).