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HISTORY, POLITICS, AND LAW

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TRAPPED BETWEEN THE MAP AND REALITY

Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan

Maria T.O'Shea

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Bo Sheerwan we Nirwan We bo hamu Mindalani Kurd

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Foreword

The events of the past decades have left little doubt about the role of the Kurdish people in shaping the complex history of the Middle East. Repeatedly and in various ways the Kurds, so often perceived as victims, have shown their capacity and readiness to be actors in matters that concern them. Their activities, perhaps together with the efforts of Western journalism and scholarship in the past decade, have undoubtedly had the effect of putting the Kurds 'on the map' as far as Western public opinion is concerned.

But there, one might say, is the rub! A juxtaposition of the words 'Kurd' and 'map' is apt to remind one of the lack of a geographic definition of 'Kurdistan'; of the fact that the Kurds are probably the largest ethnic group in the world without a state of its own; of the Allies' off-hand treatment of Kurdish aspirations to nationhood in the years after the First World War, and of all the lamentable consequences that may be associated with this.

The apparent contradiction between the Kurds' strong sense of identity and the lack of a clear geographic expression of that identity inspired the research that led to this book. Maria T.O'Shea, a social geographer who is fluent in Kurdish and has an unusually wide-ranging knowledge of Kurdish culture both in the homelands and in the Diaspora, decided to explore the various factors shaping the development of the Kurds' mental map of their homeland, and its relationship to the objective, political map they are forced to live with. In this work, which grew out of her doctoral thesis, Dr. O'Shea casts her net widely, considering the range of methodological and theoretical approaches that have a bearing on her theme, objective and subjective perceptions of Kurdistan, questions of self-definition, social and political factors, natural resources, crucial phases of Kurdish history, as well as the way the outside world has perceived and dealt with the Kurds. Dr. O'Shea analyses these factors with great insight and understanding, and above all objectively!

Maria T.O'Shea, in other words, has done the Kurdish people the service of taking its history and problems seriously. She analyses the complex system of factors that most Kurds take to support their claims to identity (and which others have so lightly declared irrelevant) without the condescension implicit in the 'romantic' approach that can sometimes be found in works on the Kurds. Neither her method nor her conclusions would have been different had the history of the group she studied been less traumatic. Dr. O'Shea looks with clarity at the many factors that gave the Kurdish people the sense of identity that helped them withstand the trials and denials inflicted upon them over the past eighty years, but she also examines the many internal and external factors that make the practical realisation of this ideal so problematic.

This objective and scholarly approach may vex some, but most Kurds will probably

thank Dr. O'Shea for it. As far as the general public is concerned, this is a book that no one with an interest in the Kurds, in Middle Eastern History, or in modern Oriental Studies, can afford to leave unread.

Philip G.Kreyenbroek

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Gottingen, Germany

Acknowledgments

Many people assisted me in so many ways with the preparation of my doctoral thesis, and then with this book. I have acknowledged some of them or their comments in footnotes, although many more must remain unacknowledged. Many people informed my research, directed me, discussed ideas, discovered materials, and procured obscure documents, books, and maps. Others helped in more practical ways, such as with translations, organising travel or offering hospitality in Kurdistan. I owe a great deal to these people, and as some of them would wish to remain anonymous, I hope my many friends and helpers will be contented with the knowledge that I appreciate them and their assistance very much. In particular I have always been touched by generous hospitality in Kurdistan, when there were so many other pressing local concerns. What I have learned about courage, fortitude and acceptance from Kurdish people has been of great help in life these last few years.

The Economics and Social Research Council generously granted me a research studentship, including a year's maternity leave. Professor Keith McLachlan oversaw several changes in direction, as practical difficulties forced me to explore new research avenues. On his early retirement, Dr. Robert Bradnock was prevailed upon to supervise the completion of a rather disordered thesis. Dr. Bradnock was unstintingly generous with his time, intellectual input, and support. The thesis benefited from many of his insights, as well as his tactful corrections of my prose. Professor Philip Kreyenbroek has been a most generous academic mentor as well as friend.

I would also like to thank my family and friends, who had only half my attention for so long. My husband, Dr. Yadi Jayran-Nejad, has generously supported me in many ways, throughout the many years of research and writing, as well as life's vagaries. Although sorely tried, he has never failed me.

In this last year I relied much on the emotional and practical support of my friend Michelle Brown, which enabled me to prepare this book.

I should also thank Dr. Stephen Karp and the staff of North Middlesex and Chase Farm Hospitals, for the professional care that has kept me at my desk for the last three years.

Finally, thank you to anyone who has taken the trouble to read this book. I hope it was thought provoking, and that it may serve to stimulate discussion and further research on the Kurds, Kurdistan, and the dilemma of dispossessed peoples.

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Notes on Maps

The original sources for the maps are given as footnotes in the text. The maps are, with two exceptions (12.3, 12.4, which are annotated exact reproductions), adaptations of the originals, or originals. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Mrs. Catherine Lawrence, of SOAS's geography department for redrawing all these maps.

On the three introductory maps Fig. 1.1, Fig. 1.2, and Fig. 1.3, place names follow the Times Atlas conventions. Other maps show the names as on the original, thus they differ considerably in spelling and language, depending on the author and the period. Kurdish equivalent names are italicised. There is no one accepted method of transliteration for Kurdish names, especially as the pronunciation changes with language and dialect spoken, as well as the Latin or modified Arabic scripts. On many maps, Arabic place names are preceded by the prefix al- (the). Many maps use sh and ch, rather than the ş and ç used in modern Turkish. Some names have changed over the years, and some names and places have been obliterated, at least from official records. A list follows of the common places that have more than one name, and also very diverse spellings. The most usual Kurdish names are italicised. For Arabic and Persian place names I use commonly recognised spellings for ease.

Aleppo/*Haleb*
Ankara/Angora
Arbil/Erbil/*Howler*
As Sulaimaniah/*Sulaymania/Sulaymaniah*
Cizre/Jezireh ibn Omar
Diyala River/*Sirwan*
Diyarbakir/Diarbekir/Kara Amid/*Amid*
Gaziantep/*Antep*
Kahraman Mara_/Mara_
Kermanshah/Bakhtaran
Mahabad/*Sauj Bulaq*
Reziyah/*Urmiah/Ormiah*
Sanandaj/*Senna/Sinneh*
Sanliurfa/*Urfa*
Tiflis/Tiblisi
Trabzon/Trebizond
Tunceli/*Dersim*
Ushnuyeh/*Shnow*

Notes on Transliteration, Spellings, and Names

I have applied the transliteration system as used by the International Journal of Middle East Studies, which is a modified version of the Encyclopaedia of Islam system, where *qaf*=q, not k; *jim*=j, not dj; roman double-letter equivalents are not underlined; the *l* of *al* is not assimilated to the following consonant.

All words found in the concise Oxford English Dictionary are used with that spelling, with no diacritical marks and without italicisation. No diacritical marks are used in proper names, place names, or names of well-known literary works, other than <*ayn,* when necessary. Well-known names, such as Ali, and Shi'ite, which appear in English dictionaries, are written without <*ayn*. Modern Turkish proper names and place names in the text which are now in the modern state of Turkey, are written using the modern Turkish script and spelling. The use of the modern Arabic, Persian, Russian, and Turkish place or proper names is not intended to denigrate or deny the existence of Kurdish equivalents, which are provided in the notes on maps, and used in the text when appropriate to the period or the sense of the text. The use of certain Kurdish place names is not universal, even amongst Kurds from a certain area. I have used only the common-era (AD) dates, in the interest of clarity. This is not meant to indicate any preference for European or Christian perceptions of history.

List of Abbreviations

CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
FCO/FO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office/ Foreign Office
GAP	South-east Anatolian Project
IO	India Office
IPS	Indian Political Service
KDP	Kurdish Democratic Party
KDPI	Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
Unicef	United Nations Children's Education Fund

Figure 1.1 Political Map of Kurdistan

Figure 1.2 Topographical Map of Kurdistan

Figure 1.3 Map of Kurdish Tribes

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

THE ACADEMIC MOTIVATION

My PhD thesis was an exploration of the geopolitical content of the debates surrounding the ongoing search for Kurdish identity, as well as of attempts to create a Kurdish state. I initially was intrigued by the extent to which nationalism failed to create viable states for certain groups in a culturally diverse region of the Middle East. I wanted to examine the reasons why, in the case of Kurdistan, clearly articulated national identities have been insufficient to support the state idea at crucial historical junctures.

I wished to apply a critical analysis to some of the geographical, historical, and cultural factors shaping Kurdish identity, and the ways in which Kurdistan's location has affected those factors. Perceptions of Kurdistan and Kurdish identity have changed over time and space, and I set out to examine the ways in which these perceptions have been projected onto historical, political, and cartographic realities. I could see that the role of geography in Kurdistan's history, in its relationships with the wider world, and in the wider world's perceptions of the region had not really been examined.

In the seventy years since the end of the First World War, there has barely been a period of ten years during which Kurdistan has not been the scene of armed struggle, mostly with the expressed aim of self-determination. The region has seen continuous military action since 1980. Towards the end of the 20th century, the war in Turkish Kurdistan had been raging for almost 20 years,[1] during which time over 21,000 people had died as a result of the conflict. 3,185 villages were destroyed in the 1990s, leaving 364, 742 people homeless.[2] In 1996 alone, there it was alleged that there were almost 3,000 military fatalities in eastern Turkey, and that sixty-eight of the few remaining villages in the area were destroyed.[3] It is extensively documented that the Iraqi State attempted genocide against its Kurdish population in the 1980s,[4] with the loss of up to 200,000 lives and 4,000 villages.[5] In northern Iraq, a de facto Kurdish state, the Kurdish Autonomous Area (KAA), came into existence in 1991.[6] This mini-state degenerated into civil war after 1994 and all outside agencies were driven out.[7] The KAA survived as two separate political administrations until the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. The assassinations of Iranian Kurdish political figures in Europe throughout the 1990s[8] demonstrated that Iran feels no more in control of its Kurdish minorities than do its neighbours.

However they are counted, the Kurds constitute the fourth largest ethnic and linguistic minority in the Middle East, after the Arabs, Turks and Persians; against all of whom they have waged liberation struggles in the last seventy years. Kurds exist in a contiguous zone, where they have been located for at least several hundred years, an area which, by a number of key criteria, could readily be defined as Kurdistan.

Kurds have existed at the cultural and geographical margins of empires and states for centuries. The maintenance of their separate Kurdish identity may have, to a large extent, depended on this peripheral location. Certain other advantages have accrued to the Kurds as a result of their location,[9] yet Kurdistan and the Kurds have also suffered greatly as Kurdistan has lain in the path of so many invaders,[10] and played a major role in complex power struggles.[11]

Kurdistan can be defined most easily by what it is not. It is not, and never has been, a recognised state. It is not entirely linguistically, ethnically, or religiously unified as a region. It does not have any sort of unified political leadership with agreed political and cultural demands. It does not constitute an economically distinct region, and has few economic and communication links between its parts. It is not a clearly bounded territory, despite possessing a clearly perceptible core area. Due to the prevailing dominant political discourse in the region, even to discuss Kurdistan as a cultural abstract may be fraught with danger. Kurdistan's importance lies not in its existence as a geographical region, nor even as a geopolitical zone, but rather its potential. Yet despite its divisions, despite its inadequacies, Kurdistan, and the concept of Greater Kurdistan[12] survive the reality as a powerful amalgam of myths, fact, and ambitions. Kurdistan exists on many levels of discourse amongst its inhabitants, supporters and those who would deny it.

Kurdistan exists as more than a myth, although it possesses a mythological element in that it is perceived as more than it is at present, and is imbued with a mythological history. The Kurdish view of crucial periods in their history differs from both that of the colonialists who established the political map as we know it today, and that of the victors in the struggle to establish homelands and maintain hegemony over the region in the twentieth century. The various 'histories' of Kurdistan need not be seen as truth or falsity, but just the results of differing perceptual approaches. The Kurdish denial of the conflicting territorial claims of other minority groups such as the Armenians emphasizes the individual subjective approach to history taken by all groups. The regional events of the 1990s have demonstrated that the 'Kurdish Problem' has not been solved to the satisfaction of all parties involved. The region continues to be very unstable, and neither Kurdistan nor the Kurds have been adequately integrated into the new host states established over seventy years ago.

As a result of the intensification of the Kurdish struggle for expression, there has been an increase in not only political and military struggle, but also Kurdish literary and academic efforts. In the last decades of the 20th century, Kurdish historical mythology underwent a particularly florid phase in Kurdish sources, and the extent to which this is useful to the articulation of Kurdish aspirations, or the extent to which such claims obfuscate the important issues currently at stake is unclear. Ignoring demographic changes and denying aspects of the past are usual in the manufacture of a national myth, but in the case of the Kurds, such attempts may weaken their international sympathy in certain circles.

Severe constraints exist on the establishment of a Greater Kurdistan political entity. To a large extent those the same constraints that have existed since the critical historical period immediately after World War I, when Kurdistan had the greatest chance of becoming something more. Those constraints merit examination, as do the reasons that the Kurds were ultimately deprived of the chance to exert any control over their own

destinies whilst still maintaining their Kurdish identities, and why Kurdistan exists today still only as a cultural abstract.

The period immediately following the First World War was a key focus of my thesis for several reasons. National self-determination had come to be regarded as the secondary war aim of the Allied forces, especially after the entry of the United States. The ensuing Peace Process was theoretically about facilitating this aim, but in reality the negotiators spent most of their time drawing boundaries for existing political entities. The period represents the peak of recognition of nationalism as a legitimate force in world politics, yet nations proved to be more easily defined in theory than in reality. The difficulties met by the Allies, and the means they used to achieve their aims illustrate the conflict between two forms of nationalism: that of national self-determination, a potentially revolutionary process, and national determinism, or the use of nationalism as a tool of the state.[13] This offered an opportunity to examine 'some aspects of the geography of nationalism at the peak of its influence.'[14] From 1991, I began to deconstruct both the Foreign Office archives recording the fate of Kurdistan and simultaneous colonial accounts.

I have attempted to examine Kurdistan geosophically,[15] using this process to disentangle the varying perceptions of the region, examining the many disparate discourses that have woven and maintain Kurdistan as a concept and as an entity.

The history and present condition of Kurdistan are both intrinsically bound up with its geography. It lies on the major overland trade routes between Asia, Europe, Russia, and the Arab Middle East. These routes were also the facilitators of many invasions, which repeatedly destroyed the economic, political, and social structures of Kurdistan. The resulting under-development in all spheres did not allow the processes that would possibly have allowed the Kurds to establish a viable political entity. The combination of Kurdistan's location, resources, and potential caused outside powers to become involved in the fate of Kurdistan. For the Kurds, it could be said that Kurdistan had a profoundly unfavourable geopolitical situation, in that local or Great Powers would constantly combine to deny any real Kurdish political entity. Despite the region's vicissitudes, and the fact that their distinct identity does not mesh with a state identity, the Kurds have managed to forge and maintain a distinct Kurdish national identity. Certain writers, in pursuing this line, have considered the existence of a Kurdish identity to be despite the region's geopolitical disadvantages,[16] whereas the distinct character of Kurdish identity appears to owe much to Kurdistan's geography, including some of those features that might superficially appear to be unfavourable.

I chose to examine specific historical periods that I felt illustrated the effects of geography on internal regional developments, as well as on the nature of Kurdish identity. The early history of Kurdistan and the Kurds has become a key element in defining Kurdish self-perception, despite the impossibility of establishing a continuous narrative. The establishment of Kurdish political and cultural entities, and their fates are examined, as well as the perceived 'golden age' of Kurdish autonomy between the early sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The poorly recorded and rarely examined period of the First World War and its catastrophic effects on Kurdistan is given some prominence. It was the period immediately following this devastation of much of the region that was to be the key defining moment in Kurdistan's history of missed opportunities. The perceived motivations of the powers involved as well as the nature of

the promises made form one of the funding myths of Kurdish national identity. By this time, the pattern of outside interference in Kurdistan's affairs was well established, and only the players were to alter throughout the next seventy odd years. Additionally, Kurdistan's political divisions and geopolitical orientations have not changed substantially since that time. The writing on Kurdistan that was amassed at that time continues to inform the nationalist discourse. Pressure of space has meant that the history of Kurdistan following its, apparently final, division cannot be further explored, except in as much as later events influenced the speed of development of a Kurdish national identity.

Geography continued to influence the Kurds' perceptions of themselves and Kurdistan, especially in that the map of Kurdistan was to become the most clearly visible aspect of the Kurdish nationalist mythology. Many aspects of Kurdish nationalist mythology are clearly influenced by geographical factors, many of which can be seen to have influenced historical events. Nationalist versions of those events have been co-opted into the creation and maintenance of a Kurdish national identity.

THEORETICAL FIELDS

The very eclectic approach I have taken in exploring Kurdistan owes much to my multi-disciplinary academic background involving politics, history and anthropology, as well as to my previous involvement in healthcare. This latter may initially seem an irrelevancy to the topic. However, just as the patient's perception of his or her illness, as well as input from experts must play a large role in diagnosis and forming a treatment plan, so I believe an holistic approach can be applied to the study of a region. When that region is one that does not exist in any of the classic geographical categories for study, an holistic approach is even more necessary, as none of the accepted methodologies can easily be applied. That the very existence of the region is a matter for debate in some quarters complicates the approach further.

GEOSOPHY, GEOPIETY, TOPOPHILIA

Each society has its own geographical views and it is essential to understand the earth from their viewpoints. In the case of an area like Kurdistan, which is home to a group of people who perceive themselves as a stateless nation, there is a need to understand their attachment to this concept and to their perceived territory.

Wright considered geosophy to be 'the study of geographical knowledge from any or all points of view… It extends far beyond the core area of scientific geographical knowledge or of geographical knowledge as otherwise systematized by other geographers… It covers the geographical ideas, *both true and false,* (my emphasis) of all manner of people, not only geographers but farmers and fishermen, business executives and poets, novelists and painters, Bedouins and Hottentots, and for this reason it necessarily has to do with subjective conceptions.'[17]

Tuan has developed this theme in his elaboration of the attachment of humans to their surroundings. Kurds have a strong attachment to both their real place of origin and also

often to their concept of all of Kurdistan. For Kurds this attachment is most usuallf expressed through love of Kurdistan's natural features and landscape. It is the mountainous landscape more than the cultural milieu that is usually a focus of nostalgia for exiled Kurds, even those who grew up in cities in the plains. Children, both in Kurdistan and in the Diaspora, are frequently named after specific Kurdish topographical features, many of which are not known through personal experience.[18] Other children are called by names evoking an idealized rural/mountainous environment.[19] Many Kurdish proverbs reflect this obsession with the mountains. Examples are legion, including;'the Kurds have no friends but the mountains',[20] 'level the mountains and in a day the Kurds will be no more'. A Kurdish writer forcefully asserts that, 'To a Kurd the mountain is no less than the embodiment of the deity: mountain is his mother, his refuge, his protector, his home, his farm, his market, his mate, and his only friend. This intimate man-mountain relationship shapes the physical, cultural and psychological landscape more than any other factor. Such a thorough attachment to and indivisibility from their natural environment is the source of many folk beliefs that all mountains are inhabited by Kurds'.[21]

The religious concept of geopiety for Tuan is a 'special complex of relationships between man and nature', as opposed to the 'broad range of emotional bonds between man and his terrestrial home' meant by Wright.[22] As Tuan points out, attachment to a place might not be so strong if it were not for the fact of exile. The attractions of home are often only apparent when compared to the new host environment. Even Kurdish nomads, often assumed to be incapable of strong attachment to a place, are accepted by Tuan as capable of a powerful attachment to a heartland. Tuan sees patriotism as a form of geopiety, where the intimate knowledge and memories of a place are expanded to a pride in an abstract state.[23] Kurdish propaganda is certainly aimed at just such a process.

Topophilia is, according to Tuan, 'the affective bond between people and a place or setting. It is diffuse as a concept, vivid and concrete as a personal experience.'[24] Tuan's understanding of perception of place applies very much to the Kurdish situation. As he points out, egocentrism and ethnocentrism are universal human traits. All peoples structure space, both geographical and cosmological, with themselves at the center, thus the Kurdish view of themselves as at the heart of the Middle East, rather than as peripheral actors is only natural. Herodotus commented on ethnocentrism amongst the Persians thus: 'Of nations they honour their nearest neighbours, whom they esteem next to themselves. Those who live beyond they honour in the second degree, and so with the remainder, the further they are removed the less the esteem in which they hold them.'[25] Additionally Tuan comments that all groups draw their homeland as bigger, citing the Alevik Eskimos and the Texans.[26] However, Tuan claims that the modern state is too big to command topophilia, as it is too large a bounded space to experience directly. I would argue that in the case of the Kurds, the pressure that is existent upon them to deny Kurdistan causes them to extrapolate the construct of topophilia to apply to a wider area that they perceive as Kurdistan. Much of the nationalist creation of Kurdistan depends on its perceived topographical features rather than on its inhabitants, institutions or other particularities.

Maybe it is necessary to elaborate a little on the use of the word 'place'. Agnew and Duncan believe that the geographical meaning has largely been eclipsed by the fact that classes and status groups have displaced places and geographical settings as the major

operational units of social theory.[27] This can be considered a very 'Western' viewpoint, which clearly may not be applicable in the Middle East, where class structures are not that of the industrialized West. The class divisions in Kurdistan are widely seen as transcended by primordial and/or nationalist loyalties. The low level of modernization in Kurdistan as a whole almost means that we are able to see geopiety and topophilia in their unaffected form before the displacement of place and geographical settings. Agnew and Duncan provide three senses of place—the spatially bounded area of distribution of social and economic activities; the setting for routine social interactions; the anthropologists' and cultural geographers' 'sense of place'. All these are seen as competing definitions, but for me Kurdistan as a place potentially encompasses all of these senses of place.

Entrikin has noted that 'concepts of place and region have occupied an ambiguous position in the conceptual landscape of twentieth century social science.' The study of regions has been relegated to the 'periphery of social science and beyond'. As regional studies do not conform to the physical science model of scientific rationality, they have become academically degraded. The study of place and region has been called chorology. Place and region are the same, but differ in geographical scale.[28]

Ultimately for Tuan, 'place is not only a fact to be explained in the broader frame of space, but it is also a reality to be clarified and understood from the perspective of the people who have given it meaning.'[29] It is this that I would like to attempt, by examining some of the strands of discourse that have given Kurdistan meaning, and that are used to shape the concept of Greater Kurdistan.

Discourse refers to all means of communication with each other, to a 'vast network of signs, symbols and practices through which we make our world(s) meaningful, to ourselves and others.'[30] Gregory points out that social theory is in itself a discourse, that all theories are situated and all knowledge is informed by our local knowledge, which is then extrapolated to the wider world. To speak of discourse rather than discipline is not to escape the bonds between power and knowledge, but rather to 'reflect explicitly on those constellations and their distinctive regimes of truth.'[31] Like Gregory, I am more interested in the discourses of geography than the discipline of geography. Thus, 'Geography in this expanded sense is not confined to any one discipline, it travels instead through social practices at large and is implicated in myriad topographies of power and knowledge. We routinely make sense of places, spaces and landscapes in our everyday lives—in different ways and for different purposes—and these 'popular geographies' are as important to the conduct of social life as are our understandings of (say) biography and history.'[32]

NOSTALGIA, MYTHS AND LANDSCAPE

As Lowenthal points out, 'we inherit the deadly disease of nostalgia.'[33] Kurds, like all peoples in the world, seek roots in the past, a justification for their future aspirations. Much geographical work has been focused on human alienation from nature and from historical and geographical roots. Samuels tells us that 'the geography of alienation is the history of the search for roots, ie. for places that bind and with which one can relate. Rootedness—the attachment of place, belonging and the identification with places serves

to illustrate that search. The history of mankind is here a history of man's search for his roots…human history is the history of boundary making, maintaining and changing.'[34]

As Lowenthal points out, all nations emerging from colonial subjugation feel obliged to manufacture a long and glorious past. He quotes Nietzsche, 'Mythless man stands eternally hungry, surrounded by all past ages, who digs and grubs for roots, even if he has to dig for them amongst the remotest antiquities.[35] Lowenthal also points out that we prefer a remote and malleable past to a recent one perhaps too painful or well known. Hence Kurdish historical writings tend only to expound dubious ancient legends. Lowenthal was further aware that 'the landscape serves as a vast mnemonic system for the retention of group history and ideals.'[36] In the case of Kurdistan, an ideal landscape has been manufactured, one of a mountainous rural idyll, that bears little relation to the manufacturers' experiences of the region. This ideal landscape serves to create a uniform feeling of attachment amongst Kurds to their territory, especially those Kurds in exile. The truth is that most of Kurdistan is *terra incognita* to most Kurds, but they project their intimate experience of the part they know well onto the political concept of Greater Kurdistan. A past history of a unified region has been created, a set of myths to bind its inhabitants, and the newness of the mythology renders it unable to absorb challenges such as the changed landscape and demographic changes. Kurdistan is unchangeable. As Levi-Strauss put it, 'myths are machines for the suppression of time.'[37]

THE MAP AS DISCOURSE

A stylized map of Greater Kurdistan has become the single most important device for Kurds in disseminating the concept of Kurdistan abroad. It is the most visible weapon in the Kurdish nationalist arsenal. How this map came to be common currency, and the usefulness of propaganda cartography to the Kurds will be discussed in this book. The map is the most visible form of discourse about Kurdistan, and must be treated as such. As Harley points out, 'Maps are a way of conceiving, articulating and structuring the human world.'[38] Kurdish propaganda maps do not represent any likely Kurdish political entities. Nor do they represent the official aims of the Kurdish political parties. These parties usually seek autonomy within the host states, respecting both international and internal administrative boundaries. Thus we must ask what these maps are really representing. They may be the articulation of an ultimate political goal, hidden behind moderate short-term aims, or they may be simply an expression of ethnic solidarity. They may not have any relevance to Kurds other than as a means of impressing their existence on a world where they have no real representation or means of self-expression. The Kurds have at no time been on the verge of, nor requested a unified Kurdish state, such as that projected on nationalist maps.

In discussion of how groups perceive the environment, Goody tells us that 'the shared world view changes constantly through time with the addition and subtraction of different emphases and elements.'[39] Yet the Kurdish group perception of the extent of Kurdistan has apparently not changed over fifty years, despite the demographic upheavals that undoubtedly impinged on all Kurds' consciousness. Nationalist Kurdish spatial perceptions of Kurdistan appear to be fixed and unchanging, regardless of the many demographic and social changes that have befallen Kurdistan.

Gould and White note that the amount and type of information about different localities varies enormously amongst individuals,[40] so how much more must the information about such a large tract of land vary amongst its 20–30 million inhabitants? They note that 'perceptual filters screen out most information…filter control is crucial, both on a personal individual basis and on a larger governmental scale.'[41] The filter control applied by regional governments on information about Greater Kurdistan is so rigorous that Kurds should remain ignorant of any knowledge about Kurdistan beyond the individual's national boundaries. If Kurds inside Kurdistan share their European counterparts' familiarity with the projection of Greater Kurdistan, it represents an amazing triumph for Kurdish nationalist propagandists. As far as I am aware, cognitive mapping techniques have not been used on members of a stateless nation, although the existence of folk regions, which are not administratively documented, has been established.[42]

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

In order to understand the nature of Kurdistan, the exploration of historical themes is vital. Such an approach can be informed by the approaches of Guelke and Darby. Guelke notes that a good regional geographer is also an historical geographer, and that the perceived failure in the past of some regional geographical approaches has been because the central need for historical perspective has been ignored. Historical geography must be the foundation of regional geography.[43] Darby asked, 'Can we draw a line between geography and history? All geography is historical geography, either actual or potential.'[44] It is Wright's approach to historical geography that appeals to me most.[45] Much of the history of Kurdistan is the history of imperialism in the Middle East. The decision-making process in the region has almost always been out of the hands of the local inhabitants. Even with the end of Great Power Imperialism, patterns of imposed decision-making have continued in states controlled by elite groups. The Kurds are usually left with recourse only to violent uprising to exercise their influence. Imperialism may endure in some of its aspects long after blatant political coercion has ceased. It may persist as 'internal colonialism'. Those ethnic groups such as the Kurds who are subject to this process represent a form of consciousness which is open to manipulation, and whose self-awareness may wax as well as wane according to changing conditions and stimuli.[46]

Lewis notes that there are many ways of defining and sub dividing history.[47] These include the traditional (who, when and where?), the sophisticated (by what and how?), the intellectually ambitious (why?), the methodological, and the ideological, which is determined by the function and purpose of the historian. The written and even oral history of the Kurds and Kurdistan has usually been of the latter persuasion, as they are the subjects of little traditional historical study, let alone more detailed studies. Lewis divides history into three strands. Remembered history consists of inherited historiography, statements about the past and a community's collective memories. Recovered history is that which was rejected by communal memory and then recovered by academic scholarship. Finally, invented history is history for a purpose, which can be either fabricated or take the form of a reinterpretation of the two former strands of

history. Due to the limitations on research in Kurdish Studies, there has not been the academic recovery of the region's history that Lewis describes in Israel and Iran. Kurdistan's remembered history has been only fairly recently molded by Kurdish academics into an invented history.[48] A consistent collective memory requires a unified ethnos or leadership to support and re-enforce it, thus the Kurds have several such collective memories, many of which are at variance with those of other Kurds. They are also subjected to collective memories and invented histories of their host states that deny them a role or are at variance with their histories. Lewis warns that the academic who seeks to analyze the past may in the process kill it. However, as well as cleansing the collective memory, such attempts to correct the errors and fill in the gaps in remembered history may bring much that is new, and in the process, enrich it.

A remembered past can be used to explain and justify present circumstances on which there is dispute. Each party to a conflict will have its own version of the past; 'warring authorities means warring pasts'[49] is an axiom that can apply literally as well as metaphorically. Lewis feels that a remembered past can aid in the prediction of and control of the future. Invented history can be spontaneous, such as the heroic sagas of the Kurdish *dengbezh,*[50] or officially sponsored and ultimately imposed. The Kurds have been subjected not only to the officially sponsored inventions of their host states, but also to the inventions of Kurdish nationalists who seek, as do state authorities, to justify their origins and legitimacy. Perversely, Kurdish nationalist history seeks to undermine authority, yet bolsters the authority of Kurdish nationalist leaders. According to Lewis, nationalist historiography rejects the dynastic past, old loyalties and previous bases for group identity. Yet Kurdish nationalist history must rekindle and maintain many such loyalties.

There are several historical themes to be explored. The conflicting territorial claims of Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians make it clear that the conflict of interests is indeed more complex than that simply of the politically dominant ethnic group or imperial power against the voiceless Kurdish minority. Competition for resources exists amongst the powerless as well. The Armenian exiles' attachment to a homeland that has had no basis in reality for more than seventy years shows how perceptions of place may become ossified by a sort of mass suspension of disbelief on the part of an ethnic group. For Armenians, history stops in 1924, and many Kurds are also prey to such a suspension of the historical process.

Kurdistan exists in the heart of an ethnically and geographically complex region. It may be argued that this region forms the cultural margins of several adjacent territories, and certainly it can be demonstrated that it has long acted as a buffer zone, both by accident and design, between rival regional and colonial powers. The perception of the region's inhabitants of Kurdistan as the 'heart of the Middle East' is perhaps at odds with the region's historical role as a buffer zone. The region continues to pose an intriguing conundrum: all parts of Kurdistan are marginal, ethnically, geographically and economically to their host states, and exist as classic frontier regions. Conversely, Kurdish propaganda and perhaps local feeling views these parts as merely segments of the central zone of Kurdistan.

The Kurds and the Armenians were, until the twentieth century, the two major occupiers of this region, and competed amongst themselves for primacy and access to resources. In addition, the existence of several other small ethnic and religious groups has

fragmented the region further. The possibilities for exploiting the rivalries of these groups has been recognized by successive powers and used with varying degrees of success. In the twentieth century, the complex ethnolinguistic make-up of the area has undergone further changes, probably the most rapid and varied in its history. These changes are hard to document due to the lack of documentation and investigation; the conflicting claims made by the various groups and commentators; and the sensitivity surrounding such a long-standing border zone. It is however possible to outline the nature and extent of the ethnographic changes, the territorial claims, and the background to the changes in international frontiers considered by several groups to be unreasonable.

It is impossible at present to investigate the putative extent of Greater Kurdistan, or the legitimacy of defining certain areas as part of Kurdistan, using techniques such as ethnographic surveys or census taking. Many inhabitants of, as well as exiles from, this area give scant regard to the changes of the twentieth century, holding the apparent belief that Kurdistan, and to a lesser extent, Armenia, exist as unrecognized states, and lie, awaiting that recognition, ready to break the chains that tie them temporarily to the surrounding states.

Perhaps more interesting is the recurring theme that an independent state of Kurdistan, as well as Armenia, was justified in international law by the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which allowed for the formation of such a state. It was widely believed that only the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne prevented this coming to pass. However, it can be seen from the relevant articles of the Treaty of Sevres and the accompanying map that the area designated as Kurdistan in no way corresponds to any conceptualization of Kurdistan, and appears to be simply a postscript to independent Armenia. (Fig. 10.9)

The period following the First World War was a key defining one in Kurdistan's history as the present state divisions of the region are largely existent from that time, thus much of the present unrest in the area has its roots in that period. This was a time when a growing awareness of national identity, both globally and regionally, was to clash with dramatic and apparently irrevocable frontier changes that were being imposed on peoples who barely comprehended the implications of those changes. The history of the region since then has largely consisted of periodic expressions of discontent with either the international frontiers or the ethnic power balances which were emergent from the period following the First World War. In addition to examining the roots of the current situation, one can challenge the received history and political mythology of the nationalist liberation struggles, and to argue that such oversimplification of the issues does their causes a disservice in the long run.

In the case of Kurdistan, it already lay within the territory of more than one power, the Ottoman Empire and Iran, and had been thus divided since the seventeenth century. This is disregarding the substantial Kurdish diaspora that already existed in Russia and the Levant. The further division after the Great War, into northern and southern areas was to compound the problem of disunity, not create it. It was clear that the Allies had no wish to antagonize Iran, and thus the Iranian Kurds were never to be included in any plans for Kurdistan. This awareness, that a Kurdish state in any part of Kurdistan would cause irridentist problems for neighbouring states, was to be an important factor in the Allies' capitulation to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923. Kurdistan's integration, politically, economically and culturally into the surrounding regions had very real strategic

importance then, as it does now for their host states, both in terms of their resources and their border locations.

Many of the constraints on an independent Kurdistan have changed since that time. Despite nationalist efforts, Greater Kurdistan may be seen as largely a cultural abstract rather than a potential state. The very visible nationalist maps of Kurdistan are part of an effort to manufacture a viable state, even to the extent of creating sea access, which has understandably entered the mythology of nationalist ideology. In the same vein, the myth of the 1920s destruction of Greater Kurdistan is just that, largely a myth. Unification in the 1920s was as unlikely as it is in the 1990s. Many of the reasons for the failure to create a Kurdish state then still exist now. The scattering of the Kurds among at least four different states in a period when states are becoming increasingly economically as well as politically centralized, suggests that they, like other minorities, may have been directly drawn into their host states, thereby weakening further their own group cohesion, at least in the political sense. It is significant that, despite the well-ingrained idea of Greater Kurdistan, no significant Pan-Kurdish political or even cultural organization exists, and attempts at co-operation are plagued by battles and betrayals. The ability of the concerned governments to pit Kurdish groups against one another and against other states, as the preceding imperial powers did, perhaps highlights the inability of the Kurds to stand aloof from the existing political boundaries.

METHODOLOGY

Using several geographical approaches to the examination of Kurdistan inevitably means that no one methodology is sufficient. An eclectic approach is thus necessary. In a discussion of the limits on the use of private archives by historical geographers, Hall bluntly notes that 'historical geographers are obliged to make concessions in methodology'.[51]

The study of a region such as Kurdistan poses many practical difficulties. It is divided between countries using Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and Russian as their official languages. Many or even most Kurds are illiterate in Kurdish, thus even many Kurdish sources exist in these languages. A volume of literature in exile exists in the languages of the host countries, especially Swedish, German, and French. During the Imperialist phase in Kurdistan, most documentation is in English or French. However, we do not know what documents may exist in Ottoman Turkish in the Turkish archives. Documents from this period are not yet freely available in Turkey.

Kurdish language itself presents many difficulties. It exists in at least two main language forms, and although there is some degree of mutual intelligibility in the region where their use overlaps, it is not possible to communicate freely. One Kurdish language is written in a form of the Arabic script, and one in a form of the Latin/Roman script in Turkey, and in Cyrillic script in the old Soviet Union. Learning Kurdish is difficult due to a paucity of learning materials, and the many dialects make practicing Kurdish extremely fraught. Many Kurds prefer to speak a lingua franca, such as Persian, with foreigners, as they find that more comprehensible than our attempts at Kurdish. The absence of a unified state and diffuse means of communication, both spatially and intellectually, means that Kurdish has immense variation from town to town and village to village.

The political divisions in Kurdistan extend to a Kurdish level also. Existing divides, compounded by political divisions and years of manipulation by central government have left deep rifts between different Kurdish groups. There is hostility between some Kurdish political groups, even groups in the same host country. Cultural differences mean that Kurds from the same region of Kurdistan tend to associate largely with each other in exile, and an entree to one group may disbar one from contact with another.

Finally, travel to the area itself was extremely problematic. In my travels to Iranian Kurdistan, I found that it would be grossly inappropriate to attempt to investigate any aspect of my thesis in an active manner. Offers of assistance from officials, when give from outside the country, never materialised within Iran, and I was advised that my research field was too sensitive. The consequences for my informants of assisting me informally with my queries on such a sensitive issue could have been serious.

Although getting to Turkey was easier, a researcher with any scruples must avoid compromising the local population. In both Iran and Turkey, personal safety from government agents is also an issue. The north of Iraq has been a de facto Kurdish state for over ten years, and presented the only opportunity to really conduct sensitive research. There were, however, certain constraints existent in the zone. The region had been under blockade from Iraq, and received only basic humanitarian supplies through Turkey. Living conditions were often abysmal, with chronic shortages of power and reliable water supplies. Food was, at times, in short supply. Aside of these practical difficulties, there were sporadic bombings by the Iraqi government, and cross-border raids by Iran and Turkey. Since 1994, the Kurdish factions pursued an occasionally violent civil war, culminating both in the division of the region into two zones on control, and the invited entry of the Iraqi armed forces in 1996, which seriously compromised both foreigners and those who assist them. On the research front, both the people and the provisional Kurdish administration were very sensitive to what they saw as attempts to denigrate their struggle for freedom. Discussions of national mythology and problems of Kurdish disunity were not very popular.

Reliance on secondary sources for research in this region is justified, as the lack of work in this area and the eclectic nature of the literature available means that little analysis of these sources has previously been attempted.

As part of my work examines the validity of defining an area as ‘Kurdistan’, I employ cartographic comparisons, and accounts of both travelers to and inhabitants of the region, in addition to official government documentation and accounts from the European colonial period. The lack of indigenous national and thus cartographic awareness and ability was a major factor in the removal of the decision-making process away from local influences, to the level of imperial and colonial powers. It was possible to examine the depth of geographical awareness by looking at contemporaneous Kurdish literature or oral traditions, and also by examining the pattern of Kurdish life at that time, involving as it did a substantial tribal and migratory component.

Most of this information was recorded by the European travelers to the region, especially those of the nineteenth and twentieth century. It was these accounts, with all their limitations and inherent ‘orientalist’ biases which informed the most momentous period of decision making in the area, following the First World War. Although much of this body of work was compiled with the strategic aims of the European powers in mind, much of it was, at least initially, informed by a genuine thirst for knowledge of *terrae*

incognitae, admittedly colored by the narrative of the cultural interaction between the protagonists. All these accounts, like private archives, are subject to methodological limitations. Such accounts can never be 'typical' of anything within a region, in that they are not reflective of the experiences of 'ordinary', probably illiterate people.[52] They are, however, reflective of a set of cultural and political values practically universal amongst the class and type of travelers and administrators who would be the major decision-makers in the region.

I have documented the origins of the stylized maps of Greater Kurdistan, and have examined their authenticity, politically and culturally. This has been done by means of comparison with the 'official geography' of the region and primary and secondary source materials including data on population; examination of the cartographic rationale; and interviews with inhabitants of strategic areas, Kurdish nationalists and other Kurds in the diaspora.

The historical sections are largely based on historiographic techniques. I used the archives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the India Office, and the army and air force at the Public Record Office, Kew. I have copies of relevant documents from the American Foreign Service. As the regional states were not party to the negotiations to any extent other than is dealt with within the colonial archives, I believe that this should render a full account of events as viewed 'from above'.

In addition to the archives of the period, there exist several personal accounts of the events, as well as diaries and travellers' accounts, which do not appear to have been exploited to any great extent previously. As Kurds and other ethnic groups indigenous to this area have been unable to record much of their history in literature, there is a heavy reliance on oral history. I have used this oral received history as a source of both fact and relevant mythology. Given that many sources relating to the region within which Kurdistan lies manage not to mention Kurdistan at all, there is really very little chance of locating non-partisan accounts. Those sources dealing with aspects of Kurdistan, are in themselves partisan by the very fact that they refer to Kurdistan as if it existed. Thus oral histories will probably be no more or no less biased than any other sources, and I refer to interviews with informants throughout the book.

Finally, it should be noted that I completed my doctoral thesis in 1998, and that parts of it were written earlier than that. For various personal reasons it was not published until 5 years after submission. Although I have added a postscript, I was only able to revise those parts of the original manuscript that I felt were essential. It is my opinion that events in Kurdistan have not led to any significant revisions of my earlier conclusions. Clearly, some data is now rather old, and for example, the chapter on Kurdistan's economy uses what are now rather elderly primary sources. Kurdistan's general economic overview remains essentially little changed, and the labour involved in revision would not be time usefully spent. Updating this chapter would have been a doctoral thesis in itself, so it is my hope that younger scholars will take up my inadequacies in this and other areas. Where I feel that changes are significant I have tried to address these in the endnotes. I hope that the reader will bear in mind this time lag when outdated information irritates.

CHAPTER 2
Perceptions of Centrality from the Margins

DOES KURDISTAN EXIST?

Even the very existence of Kurdistan has been a matter of contention, and its disputed extent is even more controversial. Few serious attempts are made to deny the existence of a discrete area occupied predominantly by Kurds, and hosting the majority of the Kurdish *ethnie*.[1] Indeed evidence can be offered that such an area has been recognized, documented and possibly mapped by Europeans for at least 200 years,[2] and described by Kurdish writers for 400 years.[3] With the aid of cartographic comparisons of these sources, it is possible to document the existence of a common core area, straddling the present-day international boundaries of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, of which only the extent and uniformity are in doubt.

THE HEART OF THE MIDDLE EAST?

A frequent theme on the part of Kurds and those writing about Kurdistan is to refer to Kurdistan's location at the heart of the Middle East, and certainly it is in the center spatially of the northern tier of the Middle East. It is not only, however, in this sense that Kurdistan is perceived as having a central location. Kurds have frequently seen themselves as close to the center of Middle Eastern politics, of playing a major role in regional policies.[4] There is an inherent contradiction, as although Kurdistan functioned as a buffer zone between rival empires for a very long time, this important function arose as a result of its very peripheral location. Until the emergence of the nationalist challenge to state sovereignty after the First World War, and the discovery of mineral resources, absolute control of this very marginalized area was not considered to be of paramount importance.

Tuan's understanding of perception of place applies very much to the Kurdish situation. As he points out, egocentrism and ethnocentrism are universal human traits. All people structure space, geographical and cosmological, with themselves at the center, thus the Kurdish view of themselves as the heart of the Middle East rather than the peripheral players is only natural. Herodotus commented on ethnocentrism amongst the Persians thus: 'Of nations they honour their nearest neighbours, whom they esteem next to themselves. Those who live beyond they honour in the second degree, and so with the remainder, the further they are removed the less the esteem in which they hold them.'[5] Additionally Tuan comments that all groups draw their homeland as bigger, citing the Alevik Eskimos and the Texans.[6] So as inhabitants of Greater Kurdistan, Kurds, or at least Kurdish nationalists, structure Kurdistan as a central and larger space.

Kurds usually decry what they perceive as superpower involvement in their inability to obtain statehood, yet there is evidence that the fate of Kurdistan has been of strategic importance to the superpowers only insofar as it can be manipulated to control the surrounding states.[7] Curiously, at key moments, the Kurds have requested more, not less superpower involvement. General Mustafa al-Barzani is reputed to have offered Kurdistan as an American state in the 1970s, and to have told Henry Kissinger, US Foreign Secretary, that all Kurdish oil would be placed in their hands, if only the Americans would aid the Kurdish liberation struggle. The Kurds in northern Iraq eagerly welcomed the intervention of the coalition forces that created the 'Safe Haven', and were very keen for a greater American and European presence in the area.[8] The Kurds of Northern Iraq remained true to form in their enthusiastic support of the US-led invasion of Iraq to topple the Saddam Hossein regime.

It has also been poorly appreciated in political and historical studies which consider the role of super and great powers in the region, just how uninformed the formulators of regional policy have been concerning Kurdistan. This was a major problem in the key period of decision making after the First World War,[9] and continues to be so now. Kurdish studies are very marginalized on a worldwide basis. There is only one chair of Kurdish studies in Europe,[10] and only one in the US.[11] The UK has no permanent official university course in Kurdish studies or language. It is possible to complete a course in regional studies of the Middle East and learn only what Kurdistan is not, rather than anything of the Kurds or their homeland. Some courses are partially funded by sponsors who would frown upon the inclusion of any course element that implied the Kurds as worthy of study in the way of Turks, Arabs, or Persians.[12] Although there are less than 700,000 Circassians in the world, speaking several languages, it is possible to study Circassian languages in at least one British university.[13] This does not apply to either Kurdish main language. Media coverage of Kurdish affairs reflects this unfamiliarity with the region and its inhabitants. As coverage of events requires background explanation, most stories are considered too remote from mainstream concerns. Foreign correspondents also have to consider that their postings may be in jeopardy if they cover items relating to the host country's treatment of its Kurdish citizens.

There are, however, some logical bases for this perception of strategic centrality on the part of the Kurds. Historically Kurdistan lay on several important trade and communication routes. During the Achaemenid period, King Darius' Royal Road, from Susa to Sardis via Arbil, ran through Kurdistan. It later lay along the Silk Road, and all major routes from East to West, until the opening up of sea routes in the fifteenth century. For the British Empire, it lay on the overland route to their imperial jewel, India. It has also been, and remains the site of interstate rivalry, and has been the theatre for many violent and non-violent expressions of these rivalries. As following chapters demonstrate, there can be few areas that have been traversed by so many armies in such rapid succession.

Kurdistan is host to the headwaters of two of the most significant water-courses within the Middle East. As increasing aridity threatens regional stability in the Middle East, the region may well be deserving of closer attention. It is already the site of the largest water control project in the Middle East, and thus the source of interstate friction generated by the questions surrounding the control of watercourses. A best-selling American novel published in the 1990s revolves around a scenario whereby the regional water shortage

catapults a newly unified Kurdish rebel leadership into the position of prime regional political negotiators, as they pose a terrorist threat to the region's water supplies.[14] This same novel, incidentally, one of few fictional works featuring Kurds, portrays both the Kurdish guerrillas of the Worker's Party of Kurdistan (PKK) and Syrian Kurdish activists, as Islamic fundamentalists, demonstrating a typical unfamiliarity with its subject material.

Kurdistan is also close to the earliest known sites of human urban and social organization[15] and host to some extremely old centers of continuous urban habitation, such as Arbil. It's location on the flank of Mesopotamia, one of the first sites of urban organization has been significant, as Kurdistan has been contained within the sphere of many advanced civilizations, and yet rarely completely subjugated. This has given Kurdistan many of the advantages of higher culture, whilst maintaining a distinct identity outside that of the major imperial centers of civilization.

The Kurds are the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East, and the largest without a state of their own. Still they exist in peripheral, underdeveloped parts of their host states. This very isolation has allowed them to maintain a separate identity even in the face of strong state centralization and hostility to their culture and political aspirations. They see themselves as an island in a sea of more fortunate ethnic groups. Their neighbours have historically perceived them more as flotsam left at the margins of their civilizations.

Whatever one's view of Kurdistan, and whatever its future, its symbiotic relationship with the surrounding states has always been a feature and will continue to be complex and tangible for the future. The complexity of those relationships is hard to disentangle. There are mutual dependencies at a multitude of levels, both articulated and unarticulated. Many Kurds have sought the advantages of integration and co-operation with the host states or empires and have met with varying degrees of success. Divisions of 300 years, or even 70 years cannot be more easily breached than the bonds that tie a region to its hinterland, in whichever direction the hinterland is perceived to lie.

CORE-PERIPHERY CONFLICT

'In political geography, the center and periphery images convey two different ideas: first, a symbol of systematic organization of space around the notion and through the function of centrality; second within that established order, the opposition between the dominant center and a subordinate periphery, suggesting the possibility of confrontation.'[16] It was this possibility of confrontation that informed the works on core-periphery in geopolitics in different forms since Sir Halford John Mackinder formulated his heartland theory early in the twentieth century.[17] In Mackinder's 1919 scheme, control of the Heartland, Eurasia, that is European Russia, Siberia, Central Asia, northern Iran and northern Iraq, would enable control of the World Island. This concept was developed by German geopoliticians further into a system of pan-regions, with the northern portions of the globe containing the core regions, and the southern regions forming the periphery.

By the 1940s, Spykman put such studies in an overtly military context with his suggestion that the US exert control over a key area, or Rimland around the heartland to control and prevent the expansion of the USSR in the fortress of the Heartland.[18] As the

Cold War remained the dominant feature of world politics, Cohen revised the heartland-rimland thesis.[19] The world was divided into global and regional geostrategic regions, which were functionally defined. In his world model, there were two geostrategic regions: the trade dependent maritime world, and the Eurasian continental world. These regions were divided by two 'shatterbelts' the Middle East and South East Asia. These shatter belts were distinguished by fragmented political and economic character. As both geostrategic regions have footholds in the shatterbelts, they are of vital strategic importance in rivalry between the geostrategic regions. Thus containment is a key aim within the shatterbelts, which can never be completely controlled. Both hot and cold wars occur by proxy in these regions, allowing them to function as buffer zones.[20] In addition to its site within Cohen's shatterbelt, an historical analysis of Kurdistan demonstrates this pattern in microcosm, with Kurdistan first the theatre for Ottoman-Persian rivalry, then Russo-Turkish rivalry and finally Great Power rivalry in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kurdistan conformed always to Cohen's description of the Middle East as a polynodal region, lacking a single core.[21] The diffuse nature of Kurdish society, the shifting tribal loyalties and the poorly developed civic culture left Kurdistan as a perfect example of a miniature shatterbelt. Several of these themes are still in evidence now.

Further analysis of the core area model explored the relationship between core areas and the development of the European state system. Pounds and Ball developed a theory of advantage that led to the establishment of a core are as the germinal area of a modern state. Primarily, a core area should have an economic surplus that offers the resources for defense and expansion. These factors might include fertile soil and good nodal location for trade.[22] If applied to Kurdistan, this can be worked to give several explanations for the non-development of a state around a core area in Kurdistan. For a variety of reasons, environmental and social, few parts of Kurdistan have ever produced an economic surplus. Although Kurdistan was historically crossed by many trade routes, these lay to the north and south. Also, trade in commodities produced in Kurdistan gravitated towards the surrounding plains. The mountain tribal nomadic lifestyle was in symbiosis with that of the plains agriculturists, and thus trade and exchange took place between a variety of lowland centers and Kurdistan's diffuse population.

Gottman analyzed the political partition of the world and concluded that it was based on movement (of people, ideas and commodities), which causes instability and iconography, or a system of symbols and beliefs, which creates stability. These two forces are in opposition.[23] Hartshorne further developed the idea of opposing forces in his theory of territorial integration. This depends on centrifugal forces, which pull states apart and centripetal forces that are binding. The former includes physical characteristics, which vary greatly in importance. The greatest centrifugal forces are those relating to diversity in population character in a state, such as language, ethnicity and religion, as well as inequalities. This includes regional inequalities. The latter consists of the state idea, which is closely associated with nationalism.[24] Taylor argues that as with all functional theories, the work of Gottmann and Hartshorne assumes a status quo. They assume that territorial organization is the purpose of the state, yet the state is a response to the needs of certain groups at the expense of other groups.[25] Certainly that is true in the Middle East state system.

An alternative model of core-periphery is provided by Wallerstein and developed by Taylor, whereby they are defined in world economy terms. Peripheralization implies that

new areas did not join the world economy on equal terms, they joined the periphery of the world economy, and the economic processes occurring within that region are what define it as peripheral. Wallerstein refers to processes, not regions or states, and denies that space can be peripheral or core in nature, rather it is the core and periphery processes that structure space. The world core areas are those areas where high wages are earned, and there is increased technology and a diversified production mix. Peripheral regions are those areas where low wages, low technology and simple production occur. A further category exists, the semi-periphery, where a mixture of the two processes occurs. These areas exploit the periphery, but are themselves like the periphery, exploited by the core.[26] Thus in the Wallersteinian/Taylorian model, the whole of the Middle East is peripheral, in that it is a region economically exploited by the core capitalist zone. However, if in a spirit contrary to Wallerstein's refusal to examine the economy at a state level, the situation of Kurdistan is examined, again a microcosm is clear, where most of Kurdistan (excepting the oilfields of Kirkuk) is peripheral to the surrounding states, in terms of the economic processes that structure its various parts.

A PERIPHERAL FRONTIER LOCATION—SOME ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The role of frontiers as 'crossroads' of civilizations, noted by historians such as Arnold Toynbee, was further explored by Strassoldo, who noted the importance of certain contact areas in the spread of and genesis of ideas.[27] Ibn Khaldun recognized as early as the fourteenth century that not all developments in society occur in the core areas.[28] In the case of the Chinese Empire, the need to protect the imperial frontiers from barbarians led to the creation of frontier 'marches', which necessitated the instigation of a feudal system of political and economic relations. Thus feudalism can be seen as a product of the impact of the periphery on the center.[29] Kurdistan's location meant that in key periods, the imperial powers created, sponsored, or at least allowed to exist, such entities as Kurdish tribal confederations and principalities, in order to defend their frontiers.[30] Kurdistan was marginal in Strassaldo's terms, but more central in importance, in that it was bounded by empires rather than buttressing an empire against barbarians, in which case, it could probably have secured a lasting measure of autonomy or developed to the extent that had other core-conquering peripheries.

Strassaldo also examines the concept of the 'marginal man', who is a member of two worlds. Such marginality can be seen as the psychological parallel of the frontier situation. It is not by chance that many great Empire builders are from marginal areas,[31] this is a result of the need to stress their membership of the dominant group, to extreme limits. Empire building then becomes the inevitable outcome of the internal disorganization of the 'marginal man'.[32]

Toynbee also explored Ibn Khaldun's process of progressive shifting of power from centers of civilization to peripheries as civilizations degenerate at the core. Some elements are absorbed by the peripheral elements, which then conquer the cultural core and create a new core in the old periphery.[33] Examples of this process include the Macedonians and the Manchurians. This process does not seem to have been particularly true of Kurdistan, but the region produced at least two dynasties (The Ayubi and Zand

dynasties) that took control of another core area, creating a new core, although not in Kurdistan itself. Additionally, many Kurds have sought office in their host empires[34] and states, and on attaining success have not promoted Kurdish interests within the core polity.[35] Kurds have also played an important role in defining and propagating both state nationalism and the nationalism of other groups.[36] Kurdish representation in the communist parties and Marxist organizations has also always been notable, possibly partially stemming from the Kurdish experience of core-periphery economic exploitation. Marxism also offers a possible internationalist solution to the dilemmas of marginality in economic, ethnic and social terms.

To a certain extent, the Kurdish liberation struggle is fuelled by the under-development and under-integration of the Kurdish territories, which are located on the periphery of their host states. Anthony Smith suggests that 'peripheral regions' are characterized by stagnant, dependent economies. This being the case, the inhabitants of such regions are likely to be attracted to nationalist movements, which have their roots in economic theories of ethnic changes.[37] Such theories include that of Hechter, who in analyzing Celtic nationalism in Britain, suggests that groups create cultural reasons to bolster legitimate demands for economic equality.[38] Such factors have also been noted as being relevant to Kurdistan.[39]

Kurds could in certain respects be claimed to have benefited from their frontier location, both in the era in which Kurdistan acted as a buffer zone between rival empires,[40] and later, by exploiting their proximity to international boundaries. Economic advantages have perhaps been few, other than allowing a flourishing Kurdish smuggling industry.[41] Political advantages have been largely two-edged, allowing Kurds to seek the support of rival imperial powers to achieve their own ends, but allowing the imperial powers to combine forces to defeat them.[42] Militarily, Kurds are known to be skilled at guerrilla warfare, exploiting the harsh mountain terrain to their advantage.[43] Additionally, their border location enables both guerrillas and civilians to escape into neighboring countries, both to continue operations[44] and to seek sanctuary.[45] Kurdish leaders and tribes have for a long time been armed by outside powers, and encouraged to fight under them or to defend borders. Many tribes and factions have then absconded with their weapons to the support of other parties or to their own ends.[46]

A GEOGRAPHICAL OVERLAY OF KURDISTAN

Spatial relationships of centrality or peripherality only represent one aspect of the significance of the physical and environmental resource base for its geopolitical status. The character of the resources themselves has also been shown to be of potentially great significance, as has been illustrated above.

The area that can be generally described as Kurdistan consists of an arc of mountain chains enclosing a series of interior basins, astride the international boundaries of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. It includes the Pontic and Taurus mountains in the north, the northern and central Zagros and some of the southern Zagros range. In the west, the mountains become rolling hills down to the Mesopotamian Plain; to the east lies the Iranian Plateau; and to the north the mountains become the highlands of Armenia and Anatolia. The entire area covers roughly 400,000–450,000 km^2. Many peaks are higher

than 4000m, and even most Kurdish cities are sited at over 1000m above sea level. Kurdistan is well supplied with watercourses; almost all the headwaters of the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Aras rivers lie within northern Kurdistan. Among these, Kurdistan is host to the Murat, Botan, Greater and Lesser Zab, Diyala (Sirwan) and SafidRud rivers. The two largest lakes, Lake Van in Turkey and Lake Urmiah in Iran both contain salt water. There are several dams exploiting the plentiful river waters, especially in Turkey. Kurdistan has important oil deposits, as well as deposits of phosphates, lignite, copper, iron and chrome. Exploitation of non-hydrocarbon minerals has been very limited. The main oilfields at Kirkuk in Iraq have an estimated reserve of 16,000m barrels. There are smaller oil deposits at Ain Zaleh and Khanaqin in Iraq, Kermanshah in Iran, Batman in Turkey and Rumalan in Syria.

The plains of Kurdistan have a sub-tropical climate, but the high elevation makes the winters very cold. Many mountain villages are entirely snow-bound all winter. Climatic extremes vary between −30°C in winter (Saqqez, Iran) to +45°C (Diyarbakir, Turkey). Average annual precipitation in the plains is between 200 and 400 mm, in the lowlands between the mountain ranges about 600mm, and in the mountain ranges it exceeds 1000mm, mainly in the form of snowfall.

The higher precipitation and cooler summers than elsewhere in the Middle East gives Kurdistan a more promising agricultural potential than much of the neighboring territory. However, much of the precipitation is lost when the spring snowmelt runs off the now largely bare mountains into the plentiful rivers, or forming seasonal watercourses that benefit the downstream populations rather than the Kurds. Kurdistan was once thickly wooded;[47] timber and oak galls were notable exports. Demands for timber from the plains, defoliation during combat and aerial maneuvers, and the lack of replanting programs have led to sparse or even non-existent tree growth and soil erosion, with its resultant agricultural consequences. Now only about 5.5m hectares are forested, and less than half of the 14.5m ha. suitable for cultivation is tilled. The main farming products have traditionally been livestock, mainly sheep, cereals, and tobacco. Attempts at introducing commercial crops, such as soft fruits and strawberries in southern Iranian Kurdistan, met with some success. But overall, the poor living gleaned from the generally unsophisticated subsistence farming in the area, along with political unrest has fuelled rural-urban migration, thus perpetuating the poor agricultural output. The frequent wars in the area and widespread uncertainty about the future have also led to a disinclination to invest in farming. The generally lower level of development in Kurdistan than in the surrounding areas means that the agricultural techniques and agrarian relations deplored by Dr. Ghassemlou in 1965[48] are largely still in evidence, despite the increasing use of dam related technology on the plains.

The mountainous topography means that the communications infrastructure is poor. Little attempt has been made to overcome the difficulties presented for several reasons, such as: neglect of the Kurdish regions by their host states; the desire to limit cross-border communications; regional conflict; centralizing policies by the host states; and perpetuation of some long-standing economic and cultural orientations.

Kurdistan is in essence land-locked. Its only access to the sea would be either overland or to the Persian Gulf via the Euphrates River. Any route would involve passing through territory, which cannot legitimately be considered as part of Kurdistan. The consequences

of this for the Kurds are potentially serious. I will elaborate later on Kurdish attempts to create a vision of a Greater Kurdistan with sea access.

CONCLUSIONS

There is an inherent contradiction between the Kurdish nationalist discourse that places Kurdistan as the 'Heart of the Middle East', and the geopolitical reality of Kurdistan's marginal, peripheral location. It is its peripheral location that appears to be the key to a geopolitical analysis of Kurdistan, its importance in regional and even global terms, and in its failure to develop as an entity.

Kurdistan falls within Mackinder's 'heartland' and Spykman's 'rimland', the control of which was considered essential to world domination. Historically, control of Kurdistan awarded greater power to an empire, which then could protect its core. Within Cohen's 'shatterbelt' theory, historical and geographical analysis of Kurdistan shows a pattern analogous with his buffer zone theory, whereby Kurdistan has acted as a miniature shatterbelt between opposing forces, and also lacks a central node from which to develop a position of power. Kurdistan appears as a microcosm of the peripheral zone, within a peripheral zone. This can be used to define Kurdistan and to explain why other theories can be applied to it. Pounds and Ball's theory of under-development in the periphery can be applied to Kurdistan, and consolidated by factors created by Kurdistan's location. In the Wallerstein-Taylor model of core-periphery economic relations, individual states are deemed irrelevant to global definitions, yet if applied to Kurdistan within its host states, it fulfils all criteria for a peripheral region, even when processes rather than spatial factors are used as a basis.

Kurdistan's very peripherality meant that no imperial power regarded control of the region as absolutely necessary until after the First World War, when both the discovery of mineral resources, and Kurdistan's challenges to state sovereignty, accorded the area a greater importance. Prior to the modern period, Kurdistan's peripheral location allowed it to function as an important buffer zone, inculcating the Kurds with the artificial notion that they were not peripheral in regional geopolitics. The Kurds have benefited to some extent, in short-term ways, from their marginal, peripheral location, yet in the long term, this peripherality has been a major barrier to state formation and development.

CHAPTER 3
The Social Context of Political Fragmentation

THE SHATTER ZONE

Kurdistan's location, straddling the Anatolian/Zagros mountain chains, contributed to the heterogeneity of its ethnolinguistic makeup. Groups wishing to avoid interference from central government, such as tribally organized people, who consider their own form of government to be adequate, or heretical or unpopular sects, have often been drawn to inhospitable yet habitable regions. In these deserts and mountain areas, they are free to act out their lives without undue interference either from the state or more orthodox citizens. As mountain ranges usually offer inadequate prospects of supporting large numbers of people, mountainous areas in the Middle East have tended to host a variety of small ethnic and religious groups. This tendency can be seen in the mountains of Lebanon, the Caucuses and the Anatolia\Zagros axis. 'The mosaic of communities in the new state of Lebanon was the product of a specific historical evolution in which the security potential of the mountains featured prominently.'[1] The poor communications within such areas, and maybe also the rigors of life therein, reinforce the disparate nature of the population, often tending to splinter into further groups. Such groups also tend to favor habitation at the far reaches of state territorial authority, and thus the Anatolia\Zagros axis fulfills all desirable criteria for people wishing to escape state control. A strong sense of local identity and opposition to ruling élites from outside are also likely to have contributed to religious dissent, as well as to the presence of heterodox groups, all with distinct identity. This heterodoxy in Kurdistan, and indeed amongst the Kurds was a major determining factor in their actions and fate in the twentieth century. Until recently, certainly until the First World War, Kurdistan was host to a very large number of diverse religious groupings,[2] and to several ethnic and linguistic groups in addition to Kurds, Arabs, Turks and Persians. Rassam has described northern Iraq as a shatter-zone of sectarian and linguistic groupings.[3] The same has been true of most of Kurdistan.[4]

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Even Sunni Muslim Kurds are not exempt from this tendency to unorthodox religious splintering. Kurdish expression of Islamic belief usually finds an outlet through the Sufi brotherhoods or *tarīqat,* under the guidance of recognized sheikhs. One of these orders, the Naqshbandiya order, is a quietist Sufi movement, and although strong in all of Kurdistan, is not uniquely Kurdish. The other, the Qaderiya order, practice eccentric forms of religious devotion under the guidance of sheikhs who are almost deified by their followers. This latter is almost entirely Kurdish in its structure and practice within the

region,[5] whereas the Naqshbandiya order has adherents from Turkey to Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, from all Muslim ethnic groups. The role of the sheikhs is crucial to large segments of Kurdish society, and the religious orders and charisma of the sheikhs have been major unifying forces in Kurdistan.[6] The earliest Kurdish uprisings in Eastern Anatolia and Iran were led by sheikhs,[7] who were the only means of uniting both the conflicting tribes and the non-tribal people. In fact Islamic credentials were essential in a nationalist leader until the secularization of the nationalist movement in the 1960s.

There are non-Sunni Muslims in Kurdistan, such as the Shi'ite Faili Kurds of Iraqi[8] and Iranian Kurdistan as well as Shi'ite Kurds in the southern parts of Iranian Kurdistan, especially around Kermanshah. Many of the 150,000 Faili Kurds, of Kermanshahi origin, were expelled from Iraq to Iran from the 1960s onwards, as they could not receive full Iraqi citizenship, their ancestors having declined Ottoman citizenship in an attempt to avoid military conscription. The Alevis of Eastern and Central Anatolia (4–5m)[9] are often asserted to follow a form of extremist Shi'ite Islam.[10] It is however, difficult to know if Alevism is the present form of an older religion that absorbed some superficial Islamic traits, in addition to earlier Turkic and Iranian aspects, or, less likely, a branch of Shi'ism that has absorbed elements from the older religions.[11] Of the five pillars of Islam, the Alevis adhere to only one, the declaration of faith or *shahada,*[12] and their forms of worship show links with the existing Kurdish religions of Yezidism and Yaresanism[13] and with Christian[14] and pagan practices.[15] Although some proportion of Alevis is undoubtedly Turkish, an unknown number have putatively Kurdish origins or affiliations.[16]

Until the 1950s, there were a substantial number of Jews in Kurdistan, with a few now remaining, mainly in Iranian Kurdistan. In 1948, there were known to be 187 Kurdish-Jewish communities: of them, 146 were in Iraqi Kurdistan, 19 in the Iranian region, 11 in the Turkish region and another 11 in the Syrian region; A total of some 30,000, 20,000 of whom lived in northern Iraqi Kurdistan.[17] Until they emigrated en masse to Israel in 1950–1, there were more than 20,000 Jews in Iraqi Kurdistan.[18] In the earlier part of the twentieth century, over 4000 Jewish Kurds had emigrated to Palestine.[19] The Jews of Kurdistan in Turkey mostly emigrated before and after the First World War, due to local pressures and their social symbiosis with the annihilated Armenian population.[20] They had inhabited both villages and urban settings, especially on the Mesopotamian plains.[21] Kurds are now a distinct community in Israel,[22] with their own quarter in Tel Aviv. They continue to maintain a Kurdish identity and to lobby for the support of the Kurdish struggle. Most studies of Kurdish Jews originate in Israel.[23]

Economically well integrated into Kurdish society and, unusually, knowing no Hebrew,[24] Jewish Kurds were largely peasant farmers, maybe forming 20 percent of the peasantry at one time in certain areas.[25] Cohen points out that Kurds lived within the framework of the Ottoman administrative and social system just like their Muslim neighbors, that is, as *reyet.*[26] Certainly, the Iraqi Jewish Kurds were not socially upwardly mobile like the Babylonian Jews. The degree to which they were accepted as Kurds, or coexisted harmoniously with their neighbors is a matter for debate,[27] but they were apparently reluctant to leave, and have maintained a strong Kurdish identity in what many see as a forced exile in Israel.[28] It is usually accepted that it is possible to be a Jewish Kurd. Indeed as most of the Jewish Kurds were probably originally converts in situ, it is possibly that existing social relations remained operative. There were villages

entirely inhabited by Kurds, such as Sandor, a village of 100 families; cities with a sizeable Jewish quarter such as Mosul with 600 families; and even a town such as Zakho, where the 600 Jewish families were almost half the population.[29]

The Iranian Jewish Kurds were reputedly more integrated with the local population than those Jews in the rest of Iran, although many anecdotes exist concerning their mistreatment at the hands of the Muslim population.[30] Jews in Iranian Kurdistan were concentrated in the cities of Sanandaj, Kermanshah and Urmiah where they were concentrated in the merchant class and professional occupations, especially medicine; a few peasants existed and a few families were to be found in other smaller cities. It is estimated that in the 1950s there were 3–4,000 Jewish Kurds in Iran,[31] although the 1979 Islamic Revolution has meant that most of them have moved to the security of larger groups in the major cities of Iran, or preferably abroad. There are still Jews living amongst the Kurds in northern Syria, although they are socially and economically very marginalized, and little is known about their identification with Kurdish culture.[32]

Despite such a noticeable Jewish presence in the recent past, there is now very little sign of their existence in Kurdistan. Although the inhabitants of those places once occupied by Jews deny taking any specific actions, the Kurdish landscape has been expunged of any reminders of the Jewish Kurds. No functioning schools or synagogues exist to service the few remaining Jews, and all such buildings have been demolished or altered until they bear no traces of their former functions. Even the city of Zakho bears very few traces of its Jewish past. On a visit in 1992 to this, the town of his birth, Yonah Sabar, lecturer in Hebrew at the University of California, could find only one identifiable Jewish building. A Hebrew inscription on a lintel post was found under a pile of rubble, in the corner of a workshop that a family acquaintance told him was once their local synagogue.[33] Many Kurdish Jews took advantage of the collapse of Iraqi border control after the 1991 Gulf War to visit their ancestral homes, only to suffer similar disappointments. The ability of Kurdish society to adapt to such changes in ethnic and religious make-up seems to depend on rapid acceptance of new communal balances. Like the Armenians, the Jews were soon forgotten, as was their contribution to Kurdish cultural and economic life, although it was in many cases significant.[34]

The Christian groups in Kurdistan were those like the Armenians in the north, whose historical homeland overlapped Kurdistan; those who were the remnants of non-Kurdish speaking inhabitants, such as the Assyrians in central Kurdistan and the Surani around Mardin; and Kurds who were converted by close contact with Christian groups or by missionary penetration, mostly to Catholicism or Protestantism.

The Armenian presence has ceased to be of any significance other than that of historical note and the power the Armenian lobby in the USA can exert over foreign policy. It is significant that Armenian territorial claims overlap those of the Kurds, historically and until the present time. Estimates of the number of Armenians in eastern Anatolia at the end of the nineteenth century generally agreed that there were almost two million.[35] Relations between Kurds and Armenians were politically uneven as the majority of Armenians were peasants or *reyet,* subject to the tribesmen, who were mostly Kurdish, although most craftsmen and traders in what is now northern Kurdistan were also Armenian. The demise of the Armenians in 1915 thus adversely affected both agricultural production and urban and commercial life. Many Armenians converted to Islam or became Alevis, especially in the Dersim region in the late nineteenth or early

twentieth century.[36] Those who survived the massacres and deportations either fled to the Caucasus where an Armenian republic was established, or emigrated to the West. There remain only small groups of Armenians in Diyarbakir, Derik near Mardin, Urmiah and Sanandaj, and possibly in other cities. Some half-Kurdicised Armenians still inhabit their villages south of Siirt.[37] In all of Turkey there are probably fewer than 100,000 Armenians, most of those are concentrated in the western cities.[38]

The other Christian groups were much larger prior to the First World War. The 200,000[39] or so Nestorians or Assyrians, as they were encouraged to call themselves by missionaries after the excavation of Nineveh in 1842–5, were concentrated in the province of Hakkari, and on the Urmiah plain in Iran.[40] In the former region, they were tribally organized warriors who were thus socially equal to Kurds, and in the latter were *reyet,* subject to the Kurds, Turks and Persians. Many Assyrian tribes were organized in confederations alongside Kurdish tribes, and their autonomy was tacitly recognized by the Ottomans, who were unable to control the area militarily. Nineteenth century missionary penetration created rifts in their tight-knit social structure, leaving them open to Kurdish attack by rival Kurdish tribes. As the Assyrian tribes allied themselves with the Allies in the First World War, many of them even serving in a force, the Assyrian Levies, most of them fled the region and were resettled in 1925, having believed until then that their Russian and British mentors would ensure them a homeland. Many remaining became active in the Kurdish liberation movement or communist parties of the newly created states. The overlap between Assyrian and Kurdish identity and its divergence is extremely confusing. Since the nineteenth century, Christians in the area using the Aramaic liturgy were labeled as both an ethnic group and the descendants of the ancient Assyrians, on dubious etymological grounds.[41] This has largely become an accepted mythology by them and many of the surrounding Kurds, and yet their resultant territorial claims would be in direct competition with those of the Kurds.[42]

There were smaller Christian groups in Kurdistan. The Syrian Orthodox Christians, Surani, or Jacobites, lived mainly in the Tur Abdin area east of Mardin. Like the Assyrians, they were descended from the Aramaic-speaking peoples of the region, but were divided as a result of theological arguments about Christ in the fifth century. The Chaldeans, most of whom lived in Mosul Province were converts from the Church of the East to Roman Catholicism, from the sixteenth century onwards, who continued to use the Syriac liturgy. Many Chaldeans were from the *reyet* groups, who possibly hoped to gain protection from the western powers who sent the Roman Catholic missionaries, and they came to greatly outnumber the Assyrians.

All these Christians shared the liturgical and possibly colloquial use of Aramaic, which had been the chief unifying force in molding Middle Eastern Christians into a uniform culture, regardless of their origins.[43] They had become, in effect, ethnic groups by the time of the Arab invasion as they practiced endogamy. Christians in the region were divided confessionally, partially as a result of their location. The Christians in Persia found it expedient to build upon the theological disputes and so cut themselves off from those in the Roman Empire in the west, in order to dispel any doubts about their loyalty to their Persian rulers.[44]

The Christian presence in Kurdistan is much depleted, and they remain a significant presence only in cities like Urmiah in Iran and in parts of northern Iraqi Kurdistan. Syrian Christians still maintain two monasteries near to Mardin, places of study and pilgrimage.

Mardin (pop.40,000) now supports less than a thousand Christians, and less than 30,000 Syrian Christians remain throughout the Tur Abdin Plain, centered on Midyat. Cities like Diyarbakir possess one small Armenian church, which serves the dozen or so remaining Armenian families, as well as a Syrian church serving surrounding villages.

It can be persuasively argued that Western missionary manipulation from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, followed the significance of Christian minorities as pawns in Great Power rivalry, destroyed any symbiosis in confessional relations in Kurdistan, ensuring Muslim-Christian hatred and the destruction of the Christian communities.[45] For example, in 1846, 7,000 Nestorians were massacred in Botan, when the local Kurds believed that a hilltop mission was to be used as a fort to attack them, and 1846 saw the massacre of 50,000 Christians in Kurdistan, due to tensions created by missionary activities.[46] As chapter 8 details, the Christians of Kurdistan were victims of the ethnic cleansing policies of the First World War, after which the ethnic and religious makeup of Kurdistan was dramatically altered.

In the early twentieth century there were several other small religious groups living in Kurdistan, which have now largely been assimilated or dispersed. Luke erroneously claimed that in Mosul province there were Manichaeans who followed a synthesis of Zoroastrianism and Christianity, reduced in numbers to a few thousand from 20,000 families in the seventeenth century, and that they occupied a specific niche as boat builders and silversmiths.[47] The Shabak, a rural 'ultra-Shi'ite'[48] group, still live around Mosul, although they are rapidly moving to the cities, where they assimilate into mainstream Shia culture. They live in the vicinity of a variety of ethno-linguistic communities, including Muslim and Yezidi Kurds, Shi'i Turkomen tribes, Christian villagers of three confessions, Arab Bedouin, Sunni Arabs, and Kurdish-speaking gypsies.[49] Until 1958, there were also Jewish inhabitants in the region, which is perhaps the last remnant of the pre-First World War ethnolinguistic diversity to be found in Kurdistan. Even in 1960, there existed such villages as Tell Toqaan (population 326), fifty miles from Aleppo, which consisted of 'a *sh(rba* or soup of tribal and non-tribal Turks, Kurds and Circassians'.[50] Rassam describes the way in which such marginal minority groups in the region adapt to their socio-political environment by maintaining a *reyet* or client relationship with a more powerful group. He also describes how rapid social or economic change in the region alters the ancient patron-client relationships that had allowed largely peaceful coexistence. She also notes that such *reyet* religious or ethnic minorities are sympathetic to communist ideologies, and that party members may take over the advisory and protective role of the old patrons.[51]

In addition to the various manifestations of the world's major religions, Kurdistan is host to at least two religions of Kurdish origin. Like Alevism, both of these religions exhibit some superficial Islamic traits such as the veneration of Islamic figures: in the case of the Ahl-i Haqq\Yaresan of southern Kurdistan,[52] the veneration of Ali, the Prophet Mohammed's son-in-law; and in the case of the Yezidis of northern Iraq and eastern Turkey, veneration of Sheikh 'Adi, a Sunni sufi. Both religions exhibit many features of Zoroastrian practices and beliefs, and there is reason to believe that they are both strongly influenced by an even earlier Indo-Iranian religion.[53]

Both sects are essentially secretive about their beliefs and practices, necessarily so, as they have been persecuted extensively both by central government and their neighbors. They both operate a caste system, which means that they are restricted to endogamy.

Both were organized tribally in the past, particularly the Yezidis, who were often allied in confederations with the Assyrian tribes. The Yezidis also had, as many still do, a symbiotic 'brotherhood' arrangement with the neighboring Christians, who reciprocated refuge in times of religious strife with Muslims. The Yezidis were largely tribally organized, and at one time in the seventeenth century, had an independent principality, Sheikhan, before it was absorbed into a neighboring Muslim principality. In the case of the Yezidis particularly, a fierce anti-literacy tendency and the absence of a single sacred book has meant a gradual loss of knowledge about its origins and even tenets of belief. The Yaresan are grudgingly accepted as Shi'ite Moslems in Iran and thus can live quietly. Shia Kurds may well have almost all been followers of this religion at one time. The followers of these religions are undoubtedly Kurdish,[54] indeed their sacred languages are Kurdish,[55] but they have often been rejected by other Kurds, and are thus potentially vulnerable to pressure from outside Kurdistan to deny their Kurdish origins or affiliations.[56]

There are probably no more than 2,000 Yezidis left in Turkey, 100,000–250,000 in Iraq and 5,000 in Syria. 50,000 Yezidis live in the Republic of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, having migrated there in the early nineteenth century.[57] In Armenia, they make up the majority of Kurds. There is a substantial diaspora in Germany, maybe of 40–50,000, which is likely to increase in the near future as more Yezidis wish to leave Iraq.[58] It is very hard to establish figures for the Yaresan, who claim 5 million adherents inside Iran.[59] However, as around 37 percent of the almost 2 million population of Kermanshah Province are estimated to be Yaresan, there are probably around a million or so, including those in Luristan, Azerbaijan and Iraq.[60]

THE ETHNIC MIX

As well as surrounding Kurdistan and competing for resources with the Kurds on the margins, the other major ethnic groups in the Middle East also inhabited several pockets within Kurdistan, particularly in the cities. Heretical Arabs, Turks and Persians found sanctuary in the mountain fastness of Kurdistan, and although in many cases they were partly absorbed into the existing society, many remained as distinct enclaves. There are important Arab enclaves, both Christian and Muslim in southeastern Turkey, as well as in most major cities in Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan. There were a considerable number of Turkomen villages in northern Iraq, and several cities such as Mosul, Kirkuk and Erbil still have a substantial Turkoman population. There is a great deal of intermingling of Kurds and Azeris in north-western Iran, with the city of Urmiah sharing an Azeri\Kurdish identity and being the focus of the covetous desires of both nationalist tendencies. There are of course substantial Turkish populations in all Turkish Kurdish cities, and Persian populations in Iranian Kurdish cities. These may be of long standing, or simply an imported administrative class, depending on the city's history.

The highly stratified nature of traditional Kurdish structure presented major barriers to the absorption of non-tribal newcomers. Although pastoral nomads were never the majority of Kurds, they had disproportionate power and wealth. The Kurdish tribal elite traditionally dominated, both economically and politically, the settled peasants, who were often not thought of as real Kurds at all.[61] There was some basis for this feeling, as the

non-Kurdish minorities were nearly all settled, and apart from the Nestorians of Hakkari and some Turkomans, the non-Kurds or non-Muslims were largely settled and had no or only weak tribal affiliations. Thus the distinctions between the Kurdish peasantry and other settled peasants were prone to blurring, with significant intermarriage within religious license. There were and still exist, several institutionalized means of co-parenting and sibling adoption across religious and even ethnic divides.[62] Nevertheless, both the Kurds and other groups remained vulnerable to government incitement periodically to massacre whichever of their neighboring group were unpopular with the government of the day. Allowing or even encouraging such acts offered opportunities for governments or regional powers to intervene, and to take retaliatory action. The ability of central and local governments to pit the Kurds and their neighbors against one another was further complicated by the similar manipulation on the part of tribal leaders involved in complex power struggles. Not only the Kurds, but all the other inhabitants of this ethnic and religious mosaic have often appeared to be mere pawns in a chess game played at several levels simultaneously, where the opposing players are not eager for the game to come to a decisive end.

HISTORIC HARMONY?

Any reference to communal and ethnic friction, either in the past or at present, is unpopular amongst Kurdish nationalists. Kurdish accounts of the region's history have often aimed at minimizing such tensions. Although explanations for such tensions can be sought, there has been a tendency to denial rather than justification. Yet, for example, Yezidi Kurdish oral traditions recount in considerable detail their past massacres by Muslims.[63] In turn it must be added that the sixteenth century Yezidi Emir of the Soran principality reputedly used his position to persecute local Shi'ite Muslims.

Some degree of economic and cultural symbiosis is a necessary feature of an area of such ethnic and religious diversity, thus it may be true that inter-communal and interethnic relations were tolerable for most parties, for much of the time. However, that this symbiosis undoubtedly concealed vast inequalities in status, personal freedoms and economic opportunities. The Christian *reyet* were often regarded with benign tolerance by their exploitative Kurdish tribal overlords, just as the Muslim Kurdish peasantry were possibly excluded from urban decision-making and economic opportunities, at the expense of minorities who excelled in administration and commerce.

Even now, the majority of nationalist Kurds will deny that religion plays a role in the nationalist ideology, and even tend to claim for example, that Assyrians are Kurds. Certainly, since the 1940s secular nationalism has gained the upper hand, with all major Kurdish political parties officially welcoming Kurds of all religious persuasions and even non-Kurds.[64] Yet in reality intermarriage between religious groups is rare,[65] even in the diaspora, and social contact is limited. In areas where communities live in close contact, a certain antagonism, or at least well-developed sense of 'the other' is common.[66] Yet it is rare to find any examination of these themes by Kurds. Indeed, such themes are only used, usually in a hostile manner, by non-Kurds, to portray the Kurds as aggressive and uncivilized.[67]

A 1992 thesis on *The Contemporary Religious Situation Among the Kurds of Iraq* details the large number of religious groups found in Iraqi Kurdistan, and speculates as to their origins and ability to co-exist. The (Kurdish) writer concludes that the Kurdish Muslims and local Christians are bound together by age-old friendly ties, and that despite a period of 'tension after the First World War…the two communities returned to their *historic harmony*' (my italics).[68] Further, this writer considered intercommunal relations as so good that, overcoming recent government attempts to divide them, 'the two communities merged together to such an extent that it became difficult to distinguish Christians or adherents of other religions and sects or their customs and social and economic patterns from Kurdish Sunni Muslims.'[69]

A few examples of such distinctions that are evident at the present in the city of Dehok in northern Iraqi Kurdistan, illustrate the pitfalls of denying such differences. By simply walking in the streets of Dehok, one can easily distinguish the majority of Christians and Yezidis from the Sunni Muslim Kurds, as they differ in dress styles. The Muslim Kurds wear Kurdish clothes, covered with the Arab *abaya,*[70] they may also cover their faces. The majority of Muslim men, following the 1990 uprising, wear Kurdish clothes, and their headdresses distinguish them by tribal or political allegiance. The Christian women wear conservative European clothes with uncovered heads, as might educated Muslim women, and as do the few educated Yezidi women. Yet the local population can immediately discern, by nuances of non-verbal and verbal communications, as well as subtleties of dress, the religious persuasion of such women. If Yezidi and Christian men wear Kurdish clothes, their clothes will indicate their tribal affiliations, and thus their religion. Additionally, Yezidi men always wear red turbans, although tied differently to the similar turbans of the Barzani tribe. Traditional Yezidi men wear white Kurdish suits, and most of the women wear long clothes, possibly with a headscarf, but never the *abaya*. They always wear straight trousers under their long skirts, rather than the gathered trousers of other Kurds.

Even in superficial aspects such as clothing, the non-Muslims are clearly differentiated. Economically, certain occupations are the province of certain religious groups. For example, the selling of alcohol is handled by non-Muslims. Villages were traditionally populated by only one religious group, and these habitation patterns have been continued in the urban setting, or in the 'model villages' built by the Iraqi government to re-house the inhabitants of the destroyed villages. Thus opportunities for social integration are limited. So culturally, there is very little mixing of the confessional groups, and intermarriage is very rare, requiring elopement and creating lasting rifts in the communities.[71] The social barriers between Muslims and Yezidis are well noted,[72] as are the interactions between Christians and Yezidis.[73] The fact that the Kurdish administration opted for reserved Christian and Yezidi seats in the Kurdish Parliament of 1992, indicates further that there are clear communal distinctions.

It may be that Dehok differs from other Iraqi Kurdish cities, in that it hosts a greater number of non-Muslims, including Yezidis, many of whom arrived after 1991. The presence of a new influx of missionaries with the aid organizations since 1991, may also have affected intercommunal relations. However, conversations with local non-Muslims indicated strongly that there are clear social and economic divides, that non-Muslims are socially inferior, and that their relations with the Kurdish nationalist organizations have been tense at times.[74]

FURTHER DIVISIONS

In addition to the religious, ethnic and tribal divides, there was also both a mountain\plain division and a highly stratified social structure, both in the countryside and the cities of Kurdistan. The mountain inhabitants, even when non-tribal peasants have often viewed the plains-dwellers as soft and lacking somehow in admirable features. The mountain dwellers were often able to live off raiding the plains dwellers, who could rarely pursue their attackers into their mountain strongholds. There was an antagonism between the two peoples that was a barrier to unification, and a disincentive for them to co-operate in any ventures.

The inhabitants of Kurdistan were, until after the First World War, divided into three broad classes. The *reyet*[75] or tax-paying subjects were usually settled peasants. Originally this term, meaning flock, applied to non-Muslims, and although the term was expanded to all peasants. The non-Muslims had to pay a poll tax, *jizya,* and although this was supposed to go straight to the central treasury, in Kurdistan, it was often allocated to pay local military outfits, or even partially appropriated by the Kurdish princes. Additionally, non-Muslim landowners had to pay more than double the share of their crops in taxes than Muslims. The *reyet* had few rights, other than inheritance of their small-holdings. They could not carry arms, nor did they traditionally serve in the army, and they owed labour to their overlords. They were often treated with complete contempt by their (usually) Kurdish overlords.[76] It has been suggested that throughout Kurdistan, this section of the population often consisted of the more ancient population, who were now subject to the tribal invaders.[77] In eastern and southern Kurdistan, non-tribal peasants were called *guran,* as in the probably pre-Kurdish local language, at least indicating such a possibility.[78] Occasionally, Kurdish *reyet* were subject to non-Kurds, such as the Assyrian tribes of Hakkari, or Turkish or Persian overlords. The distinguishing feature of this class was their lack of tribal affiliations, even if they had once been tribespeople, kinship ideology had ceased to be useful to them.

The overlords were usually from the tribal military caste, usually referred to as *ashiret,*[79] tribal, or in Ottoman terms, *sipah,* feudal military nobility. The overlords were known by a complex variety of titles, in different languages, but the most common now are *aqa* and *khan*. They paid no taxes, but were rewarded for their military services by the rulers of the state or occasionally more local rulers. They could usually keep the tithes from the peasants, as well as other tax incomes, in return for maintaining law and order, and providing military services.

The term Kurd itself has been used synonymously with nomad, at least since the Islamic conquest.[80] However, the majority of Kurdish tribes at any one time have been settled or partially settled. The Kurdish tribe does not usually follow an extended family ideology, as do many Arab tribes, but is spatially based. Lineage is of less importance than economic and resource factors, the most important of these was usually grazing land for livestock, but also includes subject peasant villages, tax collection rights, and territorial control awarded by central government. Tribal confederations may contain several kinship groups, who are well aware of their diverse origins. Tribespeople may have no kinship links with the chief, and the chief may be an acknowledged outsider. Especially from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, religious figures were able to take over or create new tribes.

Tribes like the Barzanis, were created in the mid-nineteenth century, when the sheikhs of Barzan attracted many non-tribal peasants who were dissatisfied with their treatment at the hands of neighboring tribes.[81] Additionally, tribal confederations could contain non-Muslim groups. The Yezidis and the Assyrians of Hakkari, in particular were tribally organized, and often belonged to largely Sunni Muslim tribal confederations. Tribal structures and boundaries were very flexible, with new tribes and confederations often forming, successful tribes attracting more followers and unsuccessful tribes declining or even vanishing.[82]

There is an inherent incompatibility between tribal structures and those of the state. The chief controls interaction between his (or possibly her) followers and other tribes or the state. When the state extends its taxation and administrative system to all citizens, the tribal structure is unnecessary. As McDowall points out, the conflict between the tribe and the state must make one skeptical of tribal chiefs who claim to support a Kurdish state entity, rather than an independent tribal entity, as they would be destroying much of their raison d'être.[83]

There remain, even now, traces of a split within Kurdish tribal society, based on an imagined conflict of more than two thousand years ago, between the Zilan and the Milan ancestral tribes.[84] This manifested itself as a tendency amongst the tribes to the left or right tendency. (Not in modern political terms.) This tendency could be exploited by the ruling dynasties, who were above this dichotomy.[85]

At the top of the social hierarchy was the dynastic, ruling class. The ruling families could easily be outsiders, either appointed by the state, or having achieved power by talent and luck. Many of the religious sheikhly dynasties of the nineteenth century were also founded by talented individuals from outside the tribal power structure, or from other areas.

The non-Kurdish minorities were disproportionately concentrated in the cities, where they often functioned as artisans and professionals, being excluded from tribal society and often lacking the tribal patronage necessary to a stable agricultural living. In particular, Armenians, other Christians and Jews were concentrated in the cities, where they were able to seek protection from the authorities and recourse to their rights under the Ottoman *millet* system. The Turkomans and sedenterised Arabs tended to be active traders and flourish in the bazaars of cities.[86] The administrative class was usually imported from the centers of imperial civilization. Wealthy tribal leaders may settle in the city, where they often developed a taste for the culture of the urban elite. Thus, by the end of the 19th century, there existed the curious situation of cities such as Kirkuk, in which Kurdish inhabitants were the minority, but all the surrounding villages were Kurdish, and its environs were traditional Kurdish tribal territories.

The Kurds were thus often excluded from decision-making processes, which occurred in the cities, a situation which was to have immense repercussions for the Kurds, when decisions were made concerning their political and state development. There was a great deal of friction between the city dwellers and the surrounding tribespeople and settled peasantry. The languages of choice in the city were often other than Kurdish, and the city-dwellers would often deny being Kurdish.[87]

CONCLUSIONS

For a variety of geographical and historical reasons, Kurdistan was, at least until the First World War, host to large numbers of diverse religious groups and several ethnic and linguistic groups, even in addition to Kurds, Arabs, Turks and Persians. Kurdistan was, and to some extent remains, a mosaic of potential identities. Many social divisions, which were major barriers to unity in the past, have now been breached. Increased urbanization, the government inspired destruction of the tribal system, land reform and a certain degree of economic opportunity and mobility have all combined to break down many social divisions. The decline in non-Kurdish, non-Muslim minorities within Kurdistan, has also hastened social changes, although political organization still reflects some of the old divisions.

Splintering from orthodoxy, fragmentation of religious affiliation, and digression from prescribed tenets and practices have been features of religious practice in Kurdistan, even of major world religions like Christianity and Sunni Islam. Many religious practices in Kurdistan show elements of earlier indigenous religions and cultures, meshing religious and Kurdish cultural identities in at least two minority religions. Yet as followers of essentially non-Kurdish world religions, most Kurds have also been subject to external pressures to also identify with co-religionists in the wider region. With the increasing secularization of the Kurdish nationalist movement, especially since the 1940s, religious identity has officially been subordinated to a sense of Kurdish ethnic identity. Yet the decreasing numbers of non-Muslim Kurds living in Kurdistan have meant that the Kurdish nationalist discourse relates only in an ideological way to non-Muslims. It may be argued that some groups, such as Kurdish Jews and Yezidis have demonstrated the limited extent of their identity with the territorial concept of Kurdistan by mass emigration. Yet they maintain their Kurdish identity, and particularly in the case of the Yezidis, it is an essential aspect of their self-perception.

Although it is now a fundamental tenet of the Kurdish nationalist discourse that there existed an historic harmony between both the Kurds and the other inhabitants of the region, as well as between Kurds of different religious persuasion, this is an ahistorical view. The competing territorial ambitions of the various inhabitants, as well as economic rivalry and religious imperatives ensured that, although a certain symbiosis necessarily existed, this was a precarious accommodation. The recent homogeneity of a shrinking Kurdish territory has meant that contact with 'the other' takes place more in the diaspora than in the original location of tension. Intellectuals at the forefront of the nationalist movement can submerge their differences in exile, and assume that the historical context is unchanged. Within Kurdistan, past diversity as a feature of Kurdish identity may remain alive in some folk memories, but its physical legacy on the face of Kurdistan has been almost completely eradicated.

The increased homogeneity of population in Kurdistan has probably had a positive effect on the formation and maintenance of a distinct Kurdish identity in situ. However, as much of the intellectual impetus for the Kurdish nationalist movement and also for promotion of a unified identity comes from the diaspora, there is acertain blindness to the changes in ethnic and confessional distribution over the last century. The effective

elimination of the past tensions by the near elimination of non-Sunni Muslim Kurdish groups in situ, allows the intellectual nationalist discourse to portray a harmonious past and to imagine a future of diversity and harmony within the Kurdish territory. Distance of space and time allows the Kurds to re-imagine their social history.

In addition to the questions of ethnic, religious and linguistic division, Kurdish society is riven by other divisions, which have all been factors in the failure of Kurdistan to achieve statehood, and to create a unified imagined community. The Kurdish nationalist movement is seriously challenged by its denial of the diversity of interests and allegiances within the present nationalist movement, and also the historic tensions within Kurdish society and Kurdistan's territory.

CHAPTER 4
Defining a Kurdish Identity

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY

In the nationalism theorist Anthony Smith's terms, the identification of a group as an 'ethnic' involves the acceptance that 'the core of ethnicity… resides in this quartet of myths, memories, values and symbols' and that 'ethnicity is largely mythic and symbolic in character'.[1]

An ethnic is defined by Smith as a group possessing a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity.

Ethnicity is not simply a matter of birth—all notions of ethnicity are cultural and political constructions, despite the frequent assumption that they are determined biologically.[2] This misconception acts as a spur to Kurdish attempts to create a mythic past of common ancestry.[3]

In his seminal analysis of the Middle East, anthropologist Dale Eickelman asserts that the social and political significance of ethnic and religious identity, as well as the ways in which they are maintained, transformed and reproduced, alters significantly according to specific historical contexts.[4] Any analytic framework for understanding 'ethnicity', must take into consideration both these changes and notions concerning the motivations and attributes of members of one's own ethnic group as well as others. He also notes that ethnic identities are not 'block-like units of an ahistorical mosaic of objective culture traits, amenable to easy mapping.'[5] This fluidity of identity and the significance of changing historical contexts is demonstrated clearly by historical analysis of Kurdistan and its inhabitants and also in the changing ethnic identities of Kurds and their neighbors even now.

Prior to Eickleman, the anthropologist Fredrich Earth reviewed many of the pitfalls of defining ethnicity as a given, almost biological element. Rather, he looked at the ways in which ethnic group identities and boundaries are produced and maintained in 'socially effective' ways.[6] Earth's instrumentalist approach maintains that culture is manipulated to sustain subjective claims to ethnic identity, which then support the collective economic and political interests of a particular group. Eickelman concludes that Earth's approach, although logical, lacks an adequate notion of how social processes are related to the production of the cultural conceptions with which people distinguish themselves from 'other' ethnic categories, and with which they account for, evaluate and weigh the importance of these distinctions. 'Cultural notions of identity are constantly adjusted to changing requirements, and are not reducible to implicit aggregate notions of 'interests.''[7]

Throughout the Middle East in general, 'ethnicity is a term that varies in its contemporary political significance and 'in the sheer diversity of the forms of identity

characterized (primarily by outsiders to the region) as 'ethnic".[8] It is difficult, as Eickelman points out, to find specific counterparts for the English terms concerning ethnicity in the Middle East, and this is particularly true of Kurdish, where a bewildering number of terms exist as loan words from Arabic, Turkish and Persian many of which vary in meaning or nuance with locality. Similarly to the situation described in Afghanistan, in Kurdistan, the word *qawm* can mean, depending on the context; tribe, subdivision of a tribe, a people sharing a common origin or region of residence, or a shared religious or linguistic identity.[9] It can also be used to mean distant kin, or a large very extended family.

Within Kurdistan, entire tribes that were once known as Turkish became Kurdish and vice versa.[10] Tribes and individuals have converted religion and thus ethnic affiliation to escape persecution.[11] There are Kurds who retain the memory of their Armenian ancestry.[12] Overlapping identities have perhaps been the key to identity within Kurdistan. A Sunni Zaza speaker can be a Zaza, a Kurd, a Sunni Muslim and a Turkish citizen. He can also define his affiliation by social class, tribe, rural or urban place of origin, affiliation to a religious leader and political beliefs. Each of these identities will be at the fore in different social, political and historical contexts. In the case of the Zaza, they may be primarily defined currently as Kurds, but in areas of Sunni-Alevi friction, the religious aspect of identity may be more relevant and to the forefront of self image. The paucity of anthropological literature on the Kurds is noted by Eickelman, as is the difficulty in establishing their numbers and determining which groups can be appropriately labeled as Kurds given the shifting boundaries of ethnic identity.[13]

WHO is A KURD?

As McDowall points out, 'nothing, apart from the actual 'borders' of Kurdistan, generates as much heat in the Kurdish question as the estimate of the Kurdish population'.[14] Obviously, the host states may attempt to deny the presence of Kurds or other ethnic or religious minorities within their borders, such as Turkey, or they are more likely to try to reduce the figures. They can do this by such devices as: creating unrealistic criteria for inclusion within the group;[15] 'moving the goalposts' for inclusion;[16] declaring members of the group aliens, as in the case of the Fayli Kurds of Iraq[17] or many Syrian Kurds;[18] attaching unpleasant consequences to inclusion within a group;[19] the use of enthusiastic state endorsement of the undesirability of membership of a group and the advantages of assimilation;[20] population dispersion, either by force[21] or by encouraging the push\pull factors of migration[22]—this aims at either assimilating the group more rapidly, or at least of weakening ethnic solidarity; recording population figures on the basis of habitation, not ethnic/religious choice.

The Kurds themselves will of course try to expand the number of those regarded as Kurds, to increase their credibility. This mostly takes two forms: co-opting members of other groups from within the Kurdish area and members of groups on the margins of Kurdistan as honorary Kurds; and adding population by region, regardless of population changes leading to a decline in the percentage of Kurds within an area historically part of Kurdistan. I will examine two possible examples of the first two strategies, that is respectively, the cases of the Alevis and the Lurs.

THE ALEVIS: AN IDEOLOGICAL AND ETHNIC FRONTIER?[23]

The Alevis appear to have split from Shi'ite Islam, possibly the Ismaili or Sevener sect,[24] and to have created a new religion, incorporating several pre-Islamic features.[25] They largely inhabit a triangle in eastern Anatolia, between Diyarbakir, Sivas and Erzerum, although they are also to be found in Syria, Lebanon and the Kurdish enclave of Khorasan in Iran. The Alevis of Dersim are also known as Kizilbash[26] or Dersimlis. Both they and the Zaza 'Kurds', who are mostly Sunni Muslims, speak dialects of the same language, Dimli or Zaza, as it is most commonly called.[27] There are also Alevis who speak Turkish both in Eastern and Central Anatolia.[28] Both Alevis and non-Alevi Zaza speakers define themselves sometimes on the basis of linguistic affiliation, sometimes on ethnic\cultural bases and also on political affiliation. It is very hard to identify how many Alevis exist in Turkey. In the last ethnic census in Turkey (1965), Alevis were not listed separately, but rather according to linguistic affiliation. Recent estimates vary to between 1.5[29] to 4 or 5 million.[30] Alevis make up a disproportionate number of the Turkish migrant community in Germany,[31] as a result of ethnic and religious intolerance in Turkey. Although Alevis may feel persecuted by Sunnis,[32] they may well identify with the secular Kurdish nationalist struggle as a path to liberation. They are also, due to certain elements of religious ideology, very active in Marxist groups, so many have been attracted to membership of the PKK, the main Kurdish political organization in Turkey. These paths were chosen by large block of young Alevis in the 1970s, when religious and political oppression left hundreds of Alevis dead.[33]

In the words of Ruth Mandel, who has studied the shifting ethnic identity of Kurdish-speaking Alevis in Germany, ethnicity is 'a malleable label… depends on who is the salient other in a given context'.[34] Given that the number of Alevis who are willing to define themselves as Kurds, at least situationally, has risen dramatically over the last 10 years or so, many Kurds feel justified in adopting as Kurds, not only all Alevis, but by extension all Zaza speakers.[35]

The political identification of Turkish Alevis with their Kurdish co-religionists has been documented as early as during the Kurdish rebellions against the Turkish Republic in the 1930s in the Dersim and Sivas regions,[36] and has been used as support for the co-opting of Zaza-speaking Alevis as Kurds. Seyfi Cengiz, leader of the Dersim Communist Movement, who decries both the Turkish and Kurdish nationalist refusal to deny the Alevis and the Zazas a distinct national identity, disputes the Kurdish nature of these rebellions, claiming them as Alevi inspired and led. Additionally, he also claims that the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion was a Zaza revolt, and that all other 'Kurdish' uprisings in Turkey have been Alevi revolts, revised by Kurdish nationalists.[37] Cengiz's views on Kurdish attempts to co-opt Alevis as Kurds, are informed by his anti-nationalist, socialist beliefs, and are maybe both extreme and not shared by the majority of Alevis and Zaza-speakers. Nevertheless, the reaction of the mainstream Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey to his writing indicates that he raises many uncomfortable questions for Kurdish nationalists about their own chauvinism and possible revisions of history.

The views of linguists on the separateness of the Zaza language and its dialects may be utilized by Turkish nationalists to deny them Kurdish identity, but Cengiz argues that Kurdish nationalists attack compelling evidence to deny Dimlis their own identity in a way that is damaging to Kurdish as well as Dimli culture.[38] On talking about the rights of

minorities amongst the Kurds within the PKK, its leader, Abdullah Ocalan asserted that the Turkish security forces were responsible for the increase in political and cultural activity on the part of the Alevis and Zazas. For them to claim a separate non-Kurdish identity was seen as a threat to the Kurdish nationalist movement.[39] It has been suggested that the Dimlis were obliged to adopt Kurdish ethnicity due to the failure of their own rebellions, in an attempt to broaden their appeal, and it appears that, since the mid 1980s, a shift may again have occurred, where Alevis and Zazas feel able to claim an identity for themselves, discarding their Kurdish affiliations, except for tactical purposes.[40]

The debate over the origins and identity of Dimlis and Zazas, has an intriguing parallel in questions surrounding the origins of the Gurani speaking Kurds of southern Kurdistan. Their language shares some common features with Dimli/Zaza, and many are adherents of Yaresanism, which has some connections with Alevism.[41] The inhabitants of Hawraman, who speak Gurani, traditionally considered themselves to be a distinct people from the Kurds, with origins southwest of the Caspian Sea.[42] They have increasingly come to be thought of as Kurds, with a greater degree of intermixing over the last fifty years or so. Nevertheless, they exhibit still a distinct language, material and literary culture, political and historical tradition, and religious peculiarism.[43] There is no real current debate on their identity, as that of the Alevis, for several reasons. They are few in numbers, and Hawraman is remote and poorly explored. There are few studies of their language or their culture, and few Gurani speakers live abroad. This is partly to do with numbers, and partly as they have not been widely involved in nationalist political struggles, or indeed any political activities, unlike the Alevis. Additionally, adherents of Yaresanism are notoriously and necessarily secretive about their activities.

THE LURS: PERIPHERAL KURDS?

The second example of an ethnic conundrum facing the Kurdish nationalist movement is that of the Lurs. The Lurs inhabit an area known as Luristan on the southern margins of Iranian Kurdistan. They are Shi'ites, whose dialect is shows features normally considered typical of both Kurdish and Persian, and they may as individuals choose to define themselves as Kurds, according to personal feelings, situation and of course who is the questioner. The Lurs have been established as a group within this area since at least the thirteenth century[44] and many have their own claims to be the descendants of the Elamites, thus the present name of the province, Ilam The co-opting of the Lurs as compulsory Kurds seems to be closely connected with the attempts to create a larger Greater Kurdistan, with access to the Persian Gulf.

This was made explicit in 1947, when the first very detailed map of Kurdistan's territorial extent was published, showing the whole of Luristan, and even further south to the Gulf as part of Kurdistan.[45] The accompanying text acknowledges that the place of the Lurs raises many questions, as well as offering an opportunity for sea access and oil exploitation. Bizarrely, the authors assume that the extension of Luristan to the Gulf will 'throw back Khuzistan to Irak (sic.)'. They note that ancient Arabic and Persian sources, as well as nineteenth century travelers have always considered the Lurs as Kurds. Citing a 1946 Kurdish nationalist insurrection in Khorramabad in Luristan, as well as the cultural life of the Lurs and the social activities of Lurs in Egypt and Baghdad, the

authors conclude that Lurs are often more Kurdish even than other Kurds. Their 'unbiased conclusion' concurs that the Lurs would be happier under Kurdish than Persian suzerainity, assuming that feudal customs are abolished.

Ethnic affiliation is at its most fluid on the geographical margins of any ethnic group, and the encroachment of the surrounding cultures on the margins of Kurdistan given the numerical superiority of the surrounding ethnic groups, and their advantages of state support. Van Bruinessen notes the shrinking of the core Kurdish region, and yet the increasing homogeneity of that core as other groups either leave or throw in their lot with the Kurds.[46]

BACK TO THE POPULATION QUESTION

Another troublesome controversy over population figures is whether or not to include those Kurds outside Kurdistan proper. There are substantial, long-standing Kurdish enclaves outside Kurdistan, as a result of forced deportations, in Central Anatolia and Khorassan, Iran. There are also Kurds in Central Asia, as a result of their deployment by the Persian Shahs to guard the eastern flank of the empire; Kurds in Azerbaijan as a result of northward migration; Kurds in Lebanon, originally the remains of garrison tribes, and latterly migrants; and Kurds in Georgia and Armenia largely following the eighteenth century migrations of Yezidi tribes from Sheikhan, to avoid Muslim persecution. There is of course a substantial Kurdish diaspora in Europe[47], and Van Bruinessen estimates that one quarter to one third of the Kurds live outside Kurdistan.[48] There is a large Kurdish population in almost every city in the northern Middle East, especially in Turkey. In fact, Istanbul may well be the largest Kurdish city in existence![49]

So where does that leave us as to the population of Kurdistan? The figures given by Kurds and outside observers vary enormously. Commentators have, in the last l0years or so given estimates as varied as 7–7.5m,[50] 16m,[51] 22m,[52] 26m,[53] 28m,[54] 30m.[55] I will give a breakdown of McDowall's population figures, as his basis for conflation is well explained and his estimates fall in the middle range of estimates. Bearing in mind the

POPULATION ESTIMATES (1996)*

Country	**Total Population**	**Kurds**	**Percentage of Population**
Turkey	60,000,000	13,200,000	22%
Iraq	19,300,000	4,400,000	23%
Iran	61,000,000	6,100,000	10%
Syria	13,400,000	1,100,000	8%
Former Soviet Union		500,000	
Elsewhere		700,000	
	Total	26,000,000	

*Estimates in rounded figures

difficulties outlined above, all estimates are exactly that, or even ‘guesstimates’, and should not be taken as more than that.

HISTORICAL ATTEMPTS AT DEFINITION

There have been few reliable ethnographic censuses of this area, and very few serious attempts at cartographic representation of Kurdistan and the distribution of Kurds. Of course the usefulness of the former is dependent on the knowledge that chosen ethnicity is variable and depends on the frame of reference within which such information is sought. Ethnic affiliation may or may not be an individual’s or a group’s primary loyalty focus nor an important means of self-identification. Thus if Kurdistan is viewed as an expression of nationalist sentiment, and approximates a projected nation-state, ethnicity may be a political choice and such a choice can depend on the perceived gains to be made from membership of such an entity. An undertaking of the latter exercise is of course in itself a conundrum, as Kurdistan exists presently as a cultural/ political abstract.

In the 1960s, the Turkish government initiated, but abandoned and suppressed further attempts at a project, *Köy Envanter Etüdleri* or village inventory studies, to establish ethnic distribution in Turkey. The Iranian Armed Forces Geographical Bureau conducted similar work in the 1940s and published the results.[56]

More modern ethnographic mapping attempts have been made by intelligence agencies, academics and nationalists. Of the former, the Central Intelligence Agency generously delineates Kurdistan, including many far-flung enclaves, but the small scale of the map (1:20,000,000), which covers the territory from Egypt to India, means that few individual place names occur, so the map avoids the controversy of detail.[57] (Fig. 12.10) The Library and Research Department at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office limits itself to a map grading the distribution of Kurds in Kurdistan and its immediate surroundings by three percentages, 60–100%, 20–60% and under 20%.[58] (Fig. 12.11) This thus manages to be even less controversial. It is a modified version of this map that McDowall uses.[59] (Figs.12.12 and 12.13)

Using what had been achieved by the 1960s Turkish village inventory, an ethnographic map of Kurdistan in Turkey was designed by Nestmann in 1989.[60] Also in Germany, the University of Tübingen produced several relevant maps in its Atlas des Vorderen Orients (TAVO) series. The Middle East Languages and Dialects,[61] and the Middle East Ethnic Groups[62] maps show a clear Kurdish core area, again considerably more homogeneous in the south than in the north and northwest, where Turks and Christians are very intermingled. The ethnic groups map shows a much greater degree of shattering than the linguistic map, and curiously, there are substantial differences between the two maps in the boundary of the Kurdish speaking and Kurdish ethnic areas. Both of these also differ substantially from the region ascribed to Kurdish habitation in the ethnic map of Iran,[63] although the author is the same as that of the Middle East ethnic map, and they are part of the same series, subject to the same editorial and academic control. The differences are greater than can be explained by the differing scale allowing for finer definition. These discrepancies illustrate the difficulties inherent in such mapping projects, and why such attempts can only be used as rough guides to the extent of Kurdish habitation and the Kurdish heartland.

Kurdish nationalist attempts to map Kurdistan have usually been aimed at both extending Kurdish territory in general, and also securing key strategic regions, such as resource rich areas, key cities and communication routes, such as sea access. A notable exception to this school of cartography is the map produced for The Kurdish Program in New York by Samande Siaband.[64] This map tactfully confines itself to an outline of the Kurdish heartland, where Kurds constitute 'the predominant proportion of the population', and areas within and external to that area where 'Kurds constitute a substantial proportion of the population'. The core area is restrained, especially in its southerly and westerly extent. Lurs are not co-opted as Kurds, a key difference between this and what can be called propaganda cartography. The sources are also listed, including the Iranian army intelligence and Russian atlases from the 1960s. Only two sources are from post 1970, three are from the 1920s and 1930s. Despite being undoubtedly a thorough and conscientious attempt, the map is, like most, a reflection of history rather than a contemporary account.

There is a dependency on the part of most Kurdish nationalists to rely on ethnographic data gathered prior to the First World War. In the Ottoman Empire at that time, ethnicity was not a politically sensitive issue, and it was possible to attempt some on the ground examination of ethnic and religious distribution. Possibly the most detailed ethnographic map ever produced was the Ethnographical Map of Eastern Turkey in Asia, Syria and Western Persia, issued in April 1919 (1:2,000,000).[65] This was produced by the British Foreign Office and appears to represent the synthesis of British official understanding of the region in 1919.[66] The map is over printed on a British Royal Geographical Society map of 1910, and in the collection of the Royal Geographical Society is confusingly dated 1917.[67] (Fig. 10.6) Although extremely detailed, the map does not seem to reflect the contemporary situation of 1919, as there are extensive areas of Armenian habitation, especially around Lake Van, as well as intact Nestorian homelands, which by 1919 had been completely eradicated. It must be assumed that map was dependent largely on data from prior to the First World War, and of course, there exists the possibility that the ahistoric approach to the Christian population density was informed by the purposes of the Foreign Office. The cultivation of Ottoman Christians, especially Armenians was part of the Allied policy to weaken the Ottoman territorial claims, especially in Eastern Anatolia.[68] Of course, in territorial terms, the Kurds would appear to have significantly benefited from the population changes, which removed their Christian competitors.

However, the map shows clearly several salient features. That there was a core Kurdish heartland is clear, but it is clear that the ethnic picture was most complex in certain areas. In general to the north of the latitude of the Greater Zab, the Kurdish presence is less dense and mixed with Armenians and other Christians. In particular the north west of Kurdistan showed a particular mosaic of ethnic groups, as did the area to the west of Lake Urmiah. The boundaries of Kurdish habitation were not sharply defined in most areas, but included corridors of infiltration of other groups, and additionally corridors of Kurdish expansion.

Most cities were either located on the margins of the Kurdish core, often close to, or inside, the corridors of non-Kurdish inhabitants. Many cities were inhabited by or surrounded by non-Kurdish minorities. For example Mosul lies on the Tigris, which according to this map, divided nomadic Arabs from Kurds. Mosul is shown as inhabited by Christians and Arabs, with a block of Turkish settlement nearby. Kirkuk is shown in a

Turkish enclave; Van and Malatya within Armenian enclaves; Urfa and Diarbekir flanked by Turkish and Armenian settlement; Mardin inhabited by Christians and Arabs, located alongside an Arab corridor; Urmiah as Persian, surrounded by Turks and Christians. Although the removal of the Armenians and other Christians created a more homogeneous Kurdish core, the Turkish and Arab minorities would remain to pose a dilemma in declaring cities Kurdish or not. The map illustrates the roots of Kirkuk's problems. During the 1970 Iraqi Kurdish autonomy negotiations, agreement could not be reached on the status of Kirkuk. Although the province of Kirkuk was inhabited by Kurds, the city was dominated by Turkish and Arabic inhabitants. The government had exacerbated this situation by incentives and other policies aimed at reducing the Kurdish presence. This map shows that the population transfer policies followed by the regional states created at the end of the First World War were not solely responsible for the ambiguities of the Kurdish population situation.

Izady demonstrates the Kurdish nationalist blindness to over seventy years of changes in ethnic distribution and demography. Referring to the 1919 Ethnographical Map, he states, 'few changes need be made today to this extremely valuable map, except of course to account for the obliteration of the Armenian ethnic element…as a result of World War I'.[69]

CONCLUSIONS

Ethnicity is in itself hard to define theoretically, and made more so in practice by the complexities of Kurdish identity.

The historical and existing heterogeneity of Kurdish society has created special contradictions for Kurdish nationalists and for attempts to define 'Kurdishness'. Although there is no reason why heterogeneity of population should necessarily lead to conflict, the nationalist ideal would appear to indicate a fairly homogeneous nation as the ideal.

The various conundrums arising from attempts to set parameters on ethnicity complicate attempts to estimate the number of existing Kurds. The paradigm of 'whoever considers him or herself a Kurd, is one' is inadequate in the face of shifting identities. Ethnicity alone, as commonly interpreted, is too crude a term to satisfy the need for self-awareness in certain individuals and groups, and in both state ideology and nationalist liberation movements, national or ethnic identities are allocated to groups not usually on an individual basis. Within the Kurdish nationalist movement itself, there has been, and still is, a desire to assign wholesale Kurdish ethnicity to certain groups, even if they are not willing recipients of that label. The existence and elaboration of Kurdish ethnicity is a vital strand of the Kurdish nationalist discourse, but ethnicity is both seen as given and used as a political tool rather than the cultural choice it could be.

There has been, and continues to be, a fluidity of identity amongst the inhabitants of Kurdistan, and the significance of historical contexts is demonstrated, not only by the

historical analysis in the following chapters, but in the changing ethnic identities of Kurds and their neighbours, even now. Over-lapping identities have been the key to understanding the nature of Kurdish ethnicity, and individual choices of identification have been based on both practical and ideological considerations, as well as altering with temporal and spatial factors.

CHAPTER 5
Kurdistan's Resources, Real and Imagined

THE KURDISH AGRARIAN LIFESTYLE

Parallel to the theme of Kurdish oil wealth, there exists the myth of the Kurdish rural idyll, where the majority of the Kurds live in harmony with nature in a landscape of agricultural plenty. This is a powerful unifying myth, as discussed in chapter 11. Taken as a whole region, Kurdistan's economy has traditionally been based on agriculture. As recently as 1992, over half the population was living in rural areas and engaged in agriculture.[1] Subsistence farming based on animal husbandry (sheep and goats), sparse cereal production (wheat, barley, rye), and cash crops such as tobacco and sugar beet, has traditionally supported the majority of Kurds. Contrary to popular perception, very few Kurds were ever pastoral nomads, but many of the tribes were semi-nomadic, that is they wintered in their villages, practiced agriculture alongside animal husbandry and took their flocks to summer pastures, which may be either hours or days away from their villages.[2] The fully sedentarized Kurdish peasantry have traditionally been subject to the tribal elite. As a general rule, mountain peasants who practice subsistence farming are landowners, although their land is limited and unproductive, whereas plains dwellers are usually tenants or agricultural laborers, having previously been sharecroppers. The introduction of large-scale agricultural practices from the 1950s onwards reduced the advantages to landlords of sharecropping agreements. Although the plains of Kurdistan may well produce crop surpluses, the tenant farmers and laborers are unlikely to profit by them, and only the land owning class, the *āqāwat* or *khans* are enriched.[3]

THE AGRICULTURAL REALITY

In possibly the first exception to the Kurdish tradition of extolling the virtues of the agrarian life,[4] Ghassemlou, the Czech-trained Marxist social scientist and politician, portrayed the Kurdish peasantry as victims of a harsh feudal system.[5] Despite the rapacity of landlords, he noted that full agricultural potential was not reached. He criticized not only the landlord class, but inadequate use of technology and insincere attempts at land reform. He claimed that only 24 percent of the 40 percent of cultivatable land in Kurdistan was under tillage. Even so, he estimated that agriculture provided 65–80 percent of the income of Kurdistan as a whole.

By 1978, Ghassemlou noted the changes wrought by the rise of capitalism, limited agrarian reform, rural-urban migration and the demise of tribalism in Kurdistan in Iran. Still, however, he stated that the area was predominantly agrarian; with 65–70 percent of the population still being involved in agriculture, and 80 percent of the region's income derived therein.[6]

This, however, has changed dramatically throughout Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan, as a result of the demise of the rural life.[7] The Turkish Agricultural Association estimated the loss of agricultural production, as a result of the village clearance policies in Eastern Turkey in one year alone, to be in the region of 13 trillion TL (US$350m).[8] In Mardin Province in 1994, possibly 37,149 hectares of arable land and 115,447 hectares of pasture fell into disuse. In Diyarbakir in the same year, livestock numbers fell by 50 percent, forest cover by 60 percent and stockbreeding income by 30 percent.[9]

Saddaji wrote that ‘Kurdistan is an agricultural region; nevertheless it faces formidable odds stemming from both natural and man-made causes.[10] The land available is not fully utilized, and realization of Kurdistan’s full agricultural potential is limited by: limited arable land, insufficient use of the water supply, small landholdings, and sparse use of fertilizers, machinery and good seeds. Rural poverty and civil war have led to a shortage of young workers, and thus many farming communities have been reduced again to the most basic subsistence farming.

OIL RESOURCES

It is perhaps unfortunate for the Kurds that Kurdistan has large deposits of oil. This alone has ensured that Kurdistan has not been neglected by outside powers and that Kurds will not be left to decide their own future. Kurdish historical mythology revolves around two main themes—the agrarian idyll, and claims that oil deposits were the prime motivation behind Britain’s annexation of the province of Mosul in the 1920s. This is despite the fact that the true extent of, and the importance of, oil may not have been fully recognized at that time.[11]

Within Greater Kurdistan, oil deposits are exploited around Mosul, Kirkuk, Khanaqin and Ain-Zaleh in Iraq; around Qasr-e Shirin in Iran, around Batman in Turkey and around Rumeylan in Syria. The 11 or so small fields in Eastern Turkey are Turkey’s only domestic oil resources. However, the estimated reserves of 1000m barrels are expected to be exhausted by the middle of this century and production has rarely amounted to more than 85,000 barrels a day.[12] Domestic oil and gas reserves supply only 12 percent of Turkey’s hydrocarbon requirements. The oil extracted from the Naft Shahr field in Iran is not more than about 25,000 barrels per day.[13] (Iran’s total output is 3.620m b/d, with total reserves of around 93,0000m barrels[14]). The Syrian fields, which are Syria’s only deposits, produce 570,000 b/d, with an estimated reserve of 1.7m barrels.[15] The oilfields at Kirkuk are the second most important in Iraq (after the Rumaila fields), with an estimated reserve of 16,000m barrels, of the total 100, 000m barrels. They account for about 70 percent of Iraqi oil production, which before the 1990 Gulf War was around 3m b/day.[16] Major refineries are located at Batman, Turkey; Mosul and Kirkuk, Iraq; and Kermanshah, Iran.

Many major oil pipelines run through Kurdistan. Oil from the Turkish fields is piped to a main line, which used to run to the Mediterranean Sea at the port of Dürtyol. This pipeline is of course the subject of stringent security by the Turkish armed forces. In Iran, the Naft Shahr oil flows via pipeline to the Kermanshah refinery. In Syria, the oil is piped to refineries at Horns and on the Mediterranean coast.

The most strategically vulnerable pipelines are those crossing international boundaries. Additionally, one of Iraq's oil export routes used 980km of pipeline running from Kirkuk to Dürtyol in the Eastern Mediterranean. This transited Kurdistan for the bulk of its route, and was the target of a PKK bombing attack in 1981. In December 1980, Iraq was exporting 650,000 b/d via the Turkish pipeline, conceding 250,000 b/d to Turkey as a transit fee.[17] When the Iran/Iraq War meant that Iraq was unable to export by tanker, the Mediterranean outlet was the only alternative. In 1982, Syria closed its section of the 1.4m b/d Iraq/Syria/ Mediterranean pipeline. The Turkish route was Iraq's only oil export outlet, so by 1987, Iraq was exporting 1m b/d via the pipeline. Thus a parallel line with a capacity of 500,000 b/d was constructed, terminating at the port of Yumurtalik. A further 240km line with a capacity of 70,000 b/d was constructed directly from Ain Zaleh to the Batman refinery.

Following the 1990 Gulf War, these pipelines were not used due to the UN embargo on Iraq exports, until 1997, when an 'oil for food' deal was structured by the UN Security Council. In the first six months, 119.5m barrels of oil flowed through the Turkish pipelines to Batman. Another $2bn worth of oil pumping was agreed in June 1997.[18]

The Iraqi oil sites have been a source of constant disagreement. Iraq is the only state ever to have reached an autonomy agreement with its Kurds. Since Abd' al-Karim Ghassem's government which came to power in 1958, Kurds have been recognized by the Iraqi constitution as equal partners with Iraq's Arabs.[19] The Kurds hoped that Ghassem would be persuaded to give them autonomy, and their ambitions were focused on the oil city of Kirkuk. During the ethnic and sectarian strife leading to the overthrow of Ghassem in 1963, the Kurds in Kirkuk attacked the Turkomans living there, perhaps attempting to become the dominant ethnic group in the city.[20] With the advent of the Ba'ath government in 1963, it was acknowledged that the Kurds had a right to a de-centralized government. During the ensuing negotiations, the question of Kurdish claims to Kirkuk proved to be the major stumbling block. The autonomy proposals were based on the sharing of oil revenues, to which the Kurds claimed they were entitled, as the oil was in Kurdistan. No government proposals conceded the oil-producing province of Kirkuk, and the inability of both parties to compromise on this led to the resumption of fighting.

Further negotiations with the Ba'athi government from 1969 led to a peace agreement in 1970. Again, the question of Kirkuk, amongst other things was to prove insoluble. A census was planned to determine in which areas the Kurds formed the majority, but was postponed several times and the government were loathe to apply it to Kirkuk. It has been claimed that the area's Turkomans were hostile to the Kurds and did not wish to join the Kurdish region.[21] What is almost definitely the case is that the government had already begun to Arabicize the city and especially the workforce on the oil installations. Accusations were made of the government falsifying the population figures and refusing Kurds permission to register themselves. In kind, the government accused the Kurds of bringing in alien Kurds from over the borders, and refused to include the Faili Kurds who did not hold Iraqi citizenship. The 1974 nationalization of the Kirkuk oil industry and the failure to institute proportional distribution of the oil revenues, was followed by a 'take it or leave it' autonomy proposal from the government. Largely because of their unmet demands for Kirkuk and also because of the interference of foreign agents, the Kurds rejected the autonomy law.

The oil installations in Iranian Kurdistan are in that area which has perhaps ceased to be part of Kurdistan due to assimilation, population changes and the development of loyalties to the Islamic Republic. However in Turkey and Syria they provide, not a focus for border disputes, but a reason to refuse any autonomy concessions whatsoever to Kurds, and care is taken to ensure that the area around such installations is not solely Kurdish in population.

The security of their oil fields and installations in Kurdistan is always a worry to the states concerned. Oil revenues may provide the means of financing Kurdistan, but they also provide a compelling motive for the surrounding states to maintain their claims to Kurdistan.[22]

WATER RESOURCES

Kurdistan's water resources are possibly its greatest asset, both in the form of precipitation, and in its rivers and bodies of water. Water is also an important motivator behind regional state policies, both regarding individual states' indigenous Kurds, and their support of Kurdish insurgency in other states.[23]

The central mountainous 'spine' of Kurdistan, running northwest-south-east from Lake Van in Turkey into the Zagros mountains in Iran, receives heavy precipitation of 1000–15000mm per annum.[24] Due to the extremely mountainous topography, and exacerbated by deforestation, most of this, both rain and snowmelt, runs off into the valleys, feeding the river systems, which supply agricultural needs on the plains or indeed even outside the region. The actual rainfall on the plains of Kurdistan rarely exceeds 400mm per annum.[25]

Except those parts of Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan that border on the desert, Kurdistan possesses an abundance of watercourses. It is host to the head-waters of three major river systems: the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Aras.

MAJOR RIVERS AND THEIR LENGTHS IN KURDISTAN[26]

River	km	River	km
Tigris	637	Euphrates	971
Murat	**460**	**Greater Zab**	**450**
Aras	547	Little Zab	200
Sirvan	300	SafidRud	200
Jaghtu	240	Zarrinehrud	220

There are many lakes in Kurdistan, the largest of these, Lake Urmiah (5500 km^2), and Lake Van (3713km^2) are very salty.

Water springs are very common in Kurdistan. The prefixes *sarab* or *kani* in Kurdish place names indicate the presence of springs. These serve as the main source of domestic water and artificial irrigation in many parts of Kurdistan. In large areas of Kurdistan, it is

impossible to walk more than 2km without encountering a spring. These are of course more prolific in the spring than other times. Some of these springs are very powerful: the spring of Sarab Ghambar, in the southern reaches of Iranian Kurdistan, emerges at the rate of 650 gallons per second. Some cities, such as Kermanshah in Iran are supplied with water from spring sources. The abundance of springs is considered by Kurds in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan to be one of the most beautiful features of Kurdistan's topography. Due in part to the abundance of water, as well as the climate, the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan have long been a favored location for summer palaces for both the Iraqi elite and notables from other Arab countries.[27]

Kurdistan is host to many hydraulic projects. Several rivers and lakes have been dammed, both for water storage purposes and less commonly as part of hydroelectric projects. There are 7 dams and 8 hydroelectric power plants in Turkish Kurdistan. In Iranian Kurdistan there are 3 storage dams with a total capacity of 875 MCM. Three rivers in Iraqi Kurdistan have been dammed, the Greater Zab, the Little Zab and the Diyala, giving a combined lake area of over 300km^2. These latter 2 dams were providers of hydroelectricity to Baghdad.

THE LARGEST EXISTING RESERVOIRS IN TURKISH KURDISTAN[28]

Province	Dammed Lake	Area (km2)
Elazig	Keban	675
Diyarbakir	Devegecidi	32.1
Gaziantep	Tahtakopru	23.4

STORAGE DAMS IN IRANIAN KURDISTAN[29]

River	Dam	Useful Capacity (MCM)	Cultivation Area
Mahabad	Mahabad	190	21
Zarrinrud	Zarrinrud	486	31
Gheshlagh	Vahdat	199	20

DAMS IN IRAQI KURDISTAN[30]

River	Darn	Useful Capacity (MCM)
Little Zab	Dokan	6800
Diyala	Derbendi Khan	3000
Greater Zab	Bekme/Al-Faris[31]	

The largest water storage, hydropower generation and flood control project in the Middle East is sited in Turkish Kurdistan, the South East Anatolia Project (GAP). This project was started in 1970. The first dam, the Keban, was completed in 1974. GAP is one of the largest construction project in the world, including the construction of 3 major

hydroelectric and irrigation projects on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The dams will produce a total 7500MW of electricity and will irrigate 1.5–2m.ha of land in Kurdistan, thus doubling the region's agricultural output.[32]

The largest dam is the Ataturk Dam, whose construction started in 1981. When filled in 1991, it became the fifth largest rock-fill dam in the world. This dam is expected to generate 2,400MW of electricity and to irrigate the vast plains of Urfa province. Its capacity of 48b MCM, exceeds the total annual discharge of the Euphrates and irrigates 2,175,000 acres of land.[33] Much of the water held behind the Ataturk Dam, will be diverted via the Sanliurfa Tunnels. These tunnels, with a total length of 57.8km., will enable : the irrigation of 476,374 ha of land, 327,725 ha by gravity and 148,699 ha by pumping.[34]

In the 40 years prior to the GAP project, the state brought only 1.4m acres of land under irrigation in all Turkey, and produced only 34MW hours of electricity nation-wide in 1985.

Water from Kurdistan has also been anticipated as a cash commodity, to be sold via the 'Peace Pipeline' to the parched Gulf states. The pipeline was proposed in 1990 as a 1,700 mile-long pipeline from the Ceyhan-Seyhan river system in the east-central Taurus mountains. It would have supplied Jeddah via Syria and Jordan through the eastern spur; and the western spur would have had access to Iraqi watercourses, flowing via the United Arab Emirates and eventually as far south as Oman. This project was put on hold, among other reasons, because of the non-feasibility of passing through unstable Iraq. However its cost was estimated at US$21,000m. It would have provided 6,000m MCM of water per annum, requiring more than one quarter of the Ceyhan and Seyhan rivers' output. Syria viewed the Peace Pipeline proposals as a Turkish plot to divert attention away from the disadvantages of the GAP project. Certainly, such a proposal would generate much support for Turkey in the region from the proposed recipients.[35]

The GAP project illustrates the strategic importance of control of watercourses vital to more than one Middle Eastern state. The Turkish government feels very strongly that they have a right to utilize all water arising from within their international boundaries as they see fit. Over 90 percent of the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates originate in Anatolia.[36] The Euphrates alone flows from Turkey into Syria at the rate of 30,000m MCM per manipulate this flow is a serious source of anxiety to both Syria and Iraq. The water loss to irrigation and evaporation by the GAP project is over 14,000m MCM per annum.[37]

In 1987, Turkey agreed not to let the water flow to Syria fall below the rate of 500CM per second, the rate claimed by Syria to be necessary to operate its hydro-electric power plants. However in 1990, Turkey all but halted the flow of the Euphrates into Syria and Iraq for one month during the filling of the Ataturk Dam. During this time, Syrian hydroelectric power plants were unable to function, and agriculture suffered irreversible setbacks. It was claimed by Turkey that increased flow in the weeks prior to that had made up for the flow loss.[38] Nevertheless, swift mobilization of Syrian forces ensued, and an increase in logistical support for the PKK activities in Turkey from both Syria and Iraq. Observers often see the water question as the main reason that Syria lends support to the PKK. Just as Turkey can turn the water on and off, so Syria can manipulate the Kurdish insurgency.

The PKK were initially hostile to the GAP project, feeling that it was a means of further exploiting Kurdistan, to benefit the west of Turkey. Its environmental consequences were criticized, as were the import of Turkish labor and the increased military presence needed to protect the project. However, as Kurdish farmers benefit from the increased irrigation, the project has become genuinely popular, and the PKK have revised their objections. The official became that the GAP project would serve an independent Kurdish state very well.[39]

NON-HYDROCARBON MINERALS

Kurdistan in Turkey has sizeable mineral resources, including phosphates, lignite, copper, iron and chrome. Almost all Turkish iron is extracted from the Divrigi mine, which according to Kendal is a Kurdish area, now included in the predominantly Turkish speaking province of Sivas.[40] The reserves have been estimated at 28m tons and output in 1993 totalled 4.4m tons.[41] The chromite deposits at Maden, north of Diyarbakir are substantial. Exports of chromite in 1993 netted $18m (1992, $32m).[42] Other state-exploited minerals include, copper at Ergani, near Diyarbakir, and lead and silver at Keban.

It has been claimed that Iranian Kurdistan has rich mineral resources.[43] However, apart from small-scale lead mining at Maku, there is no mining industry nor are there any plans to exploit mineral resources.

The world's largest rock sulphur deposits lie southwest of Arbil at Sharqat in Iraqi Kurdistan. In 1988, reserves were estimated at 515m tons.[44] Sulphur is also a by-product of petroleum and natural gas refining. In 1989, 1.4m tons were exported.[45] It is used in soil fertilizers and pesticides, but also forms the main ingredient of gunpowder and several poison gases. As Izady points out, 'the raw materials for the chemical weapons used on the Kurdish population by the Iraqi military may well have been harvested from the land's own mineral wealth'.[46]

INDUSTRY IN KURDISTAN

Kurdistan is host to little industry other than the oil refineries. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it remains a primarily agrarian region; the towns and cities have traditionally been produce market centers and centers of trade and administration rather than industrial sites or centers of manufacturing. Despite massive rural-urban migration, and the disintegration of the agrarian lifestyle, an alternative industrialized lifestyle has not developed.

Of Turkey's 5,064 public and private industrial establishments, only 185 are located in the Kurdish regions, employing 34,318 workers or 3.9 percent of the region's industrial workforce.[47] Sajjadi calculated that as 96.4 percent of industry in Turkey is located outside Kurdistan, only 1 in 280 people in Kurdistan can possibly find employment in industry as opposed to 1 in 47 in the rest of Turkey.[48] Thus surplus labor that has been released from agriculture cannot be absorbed into the industrial sector, increasing regional emigration. A Turkish parliamentary committee described Diyarbakir in 1997 as

'the capital of destitution, where 311,000 adults are unemployed for only 127,000 in more or less stable jobs'.[49]

In addition to the mining industry, there are a few small industrial installations. An export cigarette factory at Bitlis; tobacco processing plants at Malatya and Bitlis; sugar refineries at Elizag and Malatya; cement factories at Kars and Erzurum; a textile factory at Diyarbakir and the oil refinery at Batman with an annual capacity of 800,000 tons.[50]

In Iraq, the industrial sector outside the oil industry has been very much neglected, and especially so in Kurdistan. Major industrial projects have been concentrated at Baghdad, Mosul and Basra. The industrial sector is dominated by consumer-oriented industries, there are no intermediate nor heavy industries.

There were in 1992: two tobacco and cigarette factories at Sulaimaniya and Arbil; a sugar refinery at Sulaimaniya; a number of flour mills; four cement plants (one at Kirkuk, two at Sulaimaniya, and a large plant at Sinjar with a capacity of 2m tons); several small consumer goods factories (shoes, clothes, household goods). Kurdistan accounted at that time for only 8.3 percent of large industrial units and 7.7 percent of the total industrial employees in Iraq.[51]

Of course the presence of even a small industrial sector pre-dated the 1991 events after which any data on developments in Kurdistan outside the 'safe haven' is hard to obtain. The area of the safe haven contains the cities of Arbil and Dehok, Arbil being the largest and most developed Kurdish city. Industrial installations inside the safe haven suffer from power shortages as they are not connected to Iraq's national grid, and also a shortage of technical expertise and spare parts. The markets for goods also no longer exist in what has become a barter economy.

Kurdistan in Iran is very undeveloped, even in comparison with the other parts of Kurdistan. There were in 1992 a tobacco factory, three sugar mills, two textile mills, several carpet-weaving workshops and many mosaic tile and brick factories. The traditional household industries, such as tailoring and carpet making provided additional employment and income. The three 'Kurdish' provinces in Iran had in 1992 only 311 factories employing more than 10 workers, employing only 12,000 workers, half of those in Turkish dominated West Azerbaijan.[52]

COMMUNICATIONS LIMITATIONS

Despite its extensive river systems, Kurdistan suffers from poor communication networks. The watercourses are rarely navigable. A feature of Kurdish communications is that the major urban centres are connected to the major centres of the host states rather than to each other, for several reasons.

Communications across the international boundaries dividing Kurdistan are practically non-existent for reasons of topography as well as state security; the boundaries run for the most part through inhospitable mountain chains. However, even within the portion of Kurdistan in one state, travel from one place to another may involve a circuitous route, for reasons not entirely topographical.

For strategic reasons the provincial capitals throughout Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria are linked to the capital rather than each other. This was mostly the function of a

twentieth century rapid increase in communications, organized by a centralized state and thus not unusual for the region.

Communications were largely inherited from imperial dictates. Thus the region's railways were to facilitate communications with India, and were not designed to serve local needs. In the twentieth century, roads and railways were needed in order to extend state control, including military access to troubled tribal regions, and also to provide supplies to the capital from the provinces.

Two international road routes run east to west across Kurdistan, although since the Iran-Iraq war, the southern route has remained mostly closed except during the major refugee crisis in March/April 1991, when Iran allowed Kurdish refugees to proceed into Iran. Since December 2003, the Iranian government opened the border to civilian traffic, except during periods of conflict. The non-international roads are rarely asphalt surfaced and also tend to be susceptible to weather conditions, and the heavy snowfall in much of Kurdistan means that many rural areas are completely isolated in the winter. This isolation provided a useful winter quarters for Kurdish insurgents, thus the regional governments have pursues a policy of evacuating certain areas, as opening up access was so fraught with difficulties.

The two major rail routes from Europe through the Middle East to the Indian subcontinent and the Persian Gulf enter Kurdistan, the northerly route via Lake Van runs west to east through northern Kurdistan, and the route from the northern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf runs through western Kurdistan as far as Kirkuk before turning south.

The mountainous topography means that it would be difficult to establish a much better communications infrastructure within Kurdistan, and the historic mountains to outlying plains economic orientation may well indicate the only practical communication network.

In addition to the many barriers to cross-Kurdistan communications, there exists the major communications stumbling block and barrier to Kurdish unity, that of the absence of sea access. Globally, around a fifth of states are landlocked, and few are economically prosperous. Europe contains several landlocked states, where excellent communications and relations with their neighbors have enabled them to function. In the Middle East, Afghanistan is landlocked, and it suffered, prior to its political troubles, from the underdevelopment associated with such a misfortune. The newly independent central Asian states are all dependent on Iran or Turkey for export transit. The vulnerability of Iraq's oil exports during periods of enmity with Syria (1976–9 and 1982–9) the Iran-Iraq War 1080–90), and since the 1991 Gulf War, shows the dangers of reliance on foreign governments for vital export routes. Only when surrounded by amenable, stable governments can a land-locked Kurdistan be considered as a viable state.

CONCLUSIONS

Kurdistan is, in many respects, resource rich, but those resources are seen as integral to the needs of Kurdistan's host states, and thus represent constraints on the development of Kurdistan as an entity, rather than the advantages that might be assumed. In particular, the existence of a well-developed oil industry in Iraq has presented serious barriers to autonomy proposals for Kurdistan. To a certain extent, Kurdistan's water resources

present another barrier to unification, and this is a factor that may increase in importance. The interdependence of the regional states over matters relating to the exploitation and transport of such resources as oil and water ensure that their interests are best served by mutual agreement on policies towards Kurdistan. Those policies ensure no unpredictable disruption to resource availability or transit.

The persistent belief that Kurdistan is rich in agricultural resources is no longer supported by the facts, despite a traditional agrarian lifestyle, which still informs so much of Kurdish cultural identity. Yet for reasons expanded in later chapters, it continues to capture the imagination of the Kurdish nationalist discourse. Although Kurdistan's oil and water resources are fully utilized, there appears to be a general neglect of other developmental aspects in all parts of Kurdistan, so there is little industry, and communications are oriented at the needs of the host states' core areas. Despite the disintegration of the agricultural sector, once the basis of economic, as well as cultural life in Kurdistan, an alternative industrial lifestyle has yet to develop.

The uneven, but generally poor, economic development in Kurdistan, combined with topographical factors and the pattern of core exploitation of various Kurdish peripheries has reinforced the divisions of Kurdistan. Communications are oriented outwards rather than to within Kurdistan, and the question of sea access in a landlocked potential state is another potentially serious barrier to realistic statehood proposals.

CHAPTER 6
Tying Down the Territory
Conceptions and Misconceptions of Early Kurdish History

SOME HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DILEMMAS

For a variety of reasons, the history of the Kurds and Kurdistan are poorly represented in conventional historical accounts of the region, and it is easy to see why Kurds have come to feel that they are deliberately excluded from such accounts. As far as ancient history is concerned, we appear to know a great deal more about those civilisations that no longer exist, possibly because they now represent no possible threat to the present ruling powers. The Kurdish nationalist movement may have reached such a level of consciousness that a more complete history is sought to complete the 'imagining' of the Kurdish nation.

The Kurdish nationalist discourse on Kurdish history has traditionally devoted most efforts to the examination of certain defining moments in Kurdistan's history, and the speculative ancient history of the Kurds was, until recently, usually accorded only brief coverage. This usually consisted of noting the references of Greek historians and geographers to peoples whose names bore some etymological similarity to the Kurds, and an examination of the origins of the word Kurd, after Driver et al.[1] Writers on the Kurds, both Kurds and non-Kurds, were happy to reiterate that the Kurds were probably the descendants of the Medes or, less commonly, the Gutis, without feeling the need either to create a complete ancient history, nor to ensure an overlap between the history of the ethnos and that of Kurdistan itself. The imperative to establish an ancient territorial claim was subordinate to that of claiming a distinct ethnic identity to their neighbours and their descendants. The questions surrounding Kurdish origins, their ancient history and indeed that of their present territory, Kurdistan, were largely left unanswered, even in nationalist tracts.

However, the early attempts to establish an ancient separate identity for the Kurds fused with the desire to establish a continuity of habitation, identical to the extent of present territorial claims. The work of certain Kurdish writers have identified the history of the Kurds with that of the territory of Kurdistan, and this is best illustrated by an examination of the work of Mehrdad Izady of Harvard University, whose writing illustrates both the logical culmination of this fusion and the speed with which certain ideas can become part of the Kurdish nationalist discourse.

It has been claimed that geographical as well as historical accounts of a region or state 'tell it from the victor's angle'.[2] This arises from two tendencies. Firstly that of generalizing about core doctrines, values and political orientations of nationalist movements, and thus to lose the historical accuracy and dynamism inherent in conflicts. Secondly, there is a tendency to accept the dominance of state-centered core-periphery

perspective and the assumptions arising out of that viewpoint. The sub-state actors are neglected and the stateless minority may be perceived as victims, rather than as creative and dynamic. Geographers, like historians tend to read materials written in the languages of the dominant state, rather than the minority languages, thus the minorities' ideas are poorly represented in scholarly literature.[3]

It should be borne in mind that the history of Kurdistan and the history of the Kurds are not necessarily the same thing, and it is this obvious, but fundamental flaw that fails to inform most attempts to establish and elaborate a history of both. A similar dilemma presented itself to the founders of modern Turkey. The Turks originated in Central Asia, and by the time they arrived in Anatolia many of the great Anatolian civilizations were already long past, or in terminal decline, like the Byzantines. Apart from a school of nationalist thought in the 1930s, the Turks do not usually claim to be the descendants of these peoples, such as the Hittites, but use them to illustrate the ancient and illustrious history of Anatolia, or the present geographical expression of Turkey. Of the Turks themselves, nothing is really known before the sixth century AD. Following a period at the start of the Republic, during which Anatolian history was emphasized rather than pan-Turkism, investigation of the Central Asian origins of Turkic peoples continues. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Turkish history was considered to be that of the Ottoman Empire or of Islam, and, whilst emphasizing the newer, modernizing achievements of the Turkish Republic, these achievements have not been neglected in the nationalist myth. Thus in less than eighty years, the breadth of Turkish history has dramatically widened, incorporating three very different pasts into the service of the national myth.[4] Of course, as in many other nationalist histories, the role and even existence of the non-ancestral other national groups, such as the Armenians, Greeks and Kurds has been ignored or excised.

NATIONALIST HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTS AND THE BUILDING OF A MYTH

Pitifully little is really known of the early history of the Eastern Anatolia/Zagros inhabitants. Accounts exist largely courtesy of the surrounding plains' cultures. This has not prevented the Kurds from conflating a historical myth of continuous inhabitancy of the region by a clearly identifiable Kurdish ethnos, commencing at least as early as the time of the Medes, and even much earlier. Much of this mythology is based on etymological supposition. This makes accounts of the pre-Islamic period very confusing, especially when they refer to (usually unsourced) contemporaneous inscriptions and accounts. Moreover, as Izady correctly points out, 'Middle Eastern history has all too often been written by its hegemons'.[5]

Few issues have recently gripped Kurdish academics, and even Kurdish sympathizers, as much as the question of the origins of the Kurds, which it appears they feel must be decisively clarified and recorded. In historically autonomous states, continuity is expressed through the legal and political institutions, but people like the Kurds, with no state apparatus[6] need to exploit different resources to create a cultural continuity and a collective memory. As Smith described it, 'creating nations is a recurrent activity which

has to be renewed periodically'.[7] The insistence on creating a myth of early origins appears to be part of this process.

Despite not having a dominant common ancestor folk-myth existent in several tribally organized societies in the Middle East,[8] many Kurds chose to believe that they are the descendants of the Medes. This is in the face of an absence of evidence that the Medes remained intact during successive waves of both invasion and migratory tribes into this area. This is also the starting point for most brief accounts of Kurds and Kurdistan as well as the accepted lore of most nineteenth and early twentieth century travelers and writers.[9] This innocuous supposition is persuasive, but the main territorial premise underlying it spawned further attempts to establish an older pedigree based on extending the same logic.

There is no reason to believe that the Medes or indeed any other group, should have preserved their racial integrity, even in their mountain fastness, when the other defunct regional empires' inhabitants were absorbed into new ruling groups. It is of course more realistic to see the Kurds as an amalgam of the many groups which made their home in the Anatolia/Zagros axis and of those who passed through on their way to elsewhere. Indeed, Ghassemlou confidently asserted that 'it has been scientifically proved that Kurds are the descendants of the Zagros area, ancient residents of the Zagros area, and of the Indo-European tribes that entered this territory during the second millennium BC'.[10] He then goes on to establish credentials for the Gūtī and Lūlūbit tribes. But on the same page he notes that the Kurds are generally regarded as the descendants of the Medes, and that their history begins with the conquest of Niniveh in 612 BC. He also discusses the etymology of the word Kurd, applying all common theories with equal enthusiasm.[11] An early exponent of this Medes ancestry theory was Hussain Al-Hussnni Mukriani, native of Rowunduz, possibly the possessor of the first printing press in Kurdistan,[12] who wrote an account of Kurdish history, replete with Aryan motifs, in 1925. This work is little known, and rarely referred to as it stressed the Kurdish links with their Aryan homeland.[13]

The Gutis, who were established in the area to the north west of the Kassites and north of the Akkadian Empire also feature regularly in attempts to establish the origins of the Kurds. This is attractive, as considerably more is known about the Gutis, through Assyrian as well as Sumerian. Their warrior history and temporary conquest of Akkadia and Sumer render them ideal candidates for Kurdish ancestors. Waheed, in a 1955 Pakistani work on the Kurds, gives innumerable etymological suggestions for the origins of the Kurds, based on Assyrian inscriptions, and also suggests the Gutis as the Kurds' ancestors. Waheed writes that local tales have the twenty-fourth century BC Gutian Kingdom as sharing the boundaries of present day Kurdistan, until the absorption of most of it into the Assyrian Empire, as well as that Kurds widely accepted the Guti as their ancestors.[14] His account of Gutian history continues as if they were the direct ancestors of the Kurds. This conclusion was also reached by Safrastian in 1945, who also discounted entirely the 'Medes were Kurds' theory in favour of the survival of the Guti under other names,[15] and Zaki Amin in 1931.[16] More recently, a United States Congressman told the US Congress that the Kurdish Guti kings ruled Persia and Mesopotamia over for 4000 years.[17]

The culmination of attempts to establish an unbroken chain of Kurdish historical presence in Kurdistan, as well as a glorious history is reached in one of the most

outstanding, as well as astonishing, attempts to create a complete Kurdish history by using a combination of remembered, recovered, invented and borrowed history,[18] that of Mehrdad Izady, a Kurdish scholar from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University.[19] He traces the existence of Kurdish culture back more than 50,000 years, to include the Neanderthal findings in the Shanidar caves.[20] His thesis is the astounding claim that, 'I treat as Kurdish every community that has ever inhabited the territory of Kurdistan and has not acquired a separate identity to this day, or been unequivocally connected with another identifiable nation, the bulk of which is or was living outside the territories of Kurdistan. This is consistent with what is accepted by consensus for the identification of the ancient Egyptians or Greeks, and the relationship they have to modern Egyptians and Greeks.'[21] Using this thesis, as well as judicious extension of the boundaries of Kurdistan, Kurds can claim credit for the Neolithic revolution;[22] the invention of agriculture (prior to Mesopotamia); the domestication of animals; the invention of material technologies, such as pottery, metalwork and textiles; cuneiform writing; urban communities, until Kurdistan was overshadowed by Mesopotamia. According to Izady, although unsourced and elsewhere not mentioned, in the 3rd millennium BC the Qutils established a unified kingdom and were the only Zagros group to conquer part of Mesopotamia, namely Akkadia and Sumer, which they ruled for 170 years.[23]

Izady elaborates on the existence of city-states and kingdoms prior to the Median Empire's hegemony. Rather than being absorbed or dispersed by invading groups, Izady posits that the indigenous peoples absorbed whichever of the new arrivals might contribute something. Contrarily, new arrivals are never allowed to establish a different ethnic dominance in the region, only to add cultural traits. Thus the Hurrians established a new identity for the existing peoples by unifying them, rather than displacing them. Political pluralism and liberal culture is also considered to be a feature of 'all ruling houses with their roots in Kurdistan'.[24] The logical fate of the population of a weakened area beset by successive waves of Median and Scythian invaders escapes Izady, who then sees the Kurds, having been Aryanized, as the rulers of the new Median Empire. Although admitting to 1500 years of Assyrian hegemony in the region, and the integration of Aryan groups, the Medes and pre-Aryans, Izady appears to assume that the inhabitants of Kurdistan can form a continuous culture, despite such transformations as he describes. He claims that 'Kurdish political hegemony stretched from Greece …to the Straits of Hormuz' in the first century BC, having thrown off Archaemenian and Selucid rule. Presumably he means that the Parthian Empire was Kurdish, due to its Median element.[25]

Even during the classical period, for which there are more sources, Izady continues his flawed axioms. A fundamental problem in Izady's reasoning is that he confuses the Kurds with Kurdistan. Although a history of a non-state area would be an admirable project, giving a broad scope to aid understanding, his desperate desire to associate the modern Kurds with the extent of their current territory informs and obfuscates all his work.

Although Izady's thesis is so fundamentally flawed, the overall theme is likely to become an inherent part of the Kurdish mythology. Indeed, many articles and works now refer to Izady as an authority on Kurdish history. The comprehensiveness of his work, as well as the assurance with which it is presented, imply a widely accepted version of

events. The striking and novel use of maps make the ideas presented both easily grasped and reproduced. Since the publication of this work, several of his themes have become explicit in other works, and certainly in what might be loosely termed 'propaganda literature', in the way that the works of European and other travelers were cited. Citing Izady's work offers an alternative to charges of orientalism, lends a pseudo-academic tone to writings, and can be used to justify almost any Kurdish nationalist myths. This also illustrates the difficulties inherent in working with secondary sources, especially for the ancient history of the region.

The burgeoning electronic media allows Kurds to disseminate ideas rapidly throughout Kurdish communities in the diaspora and also to other interested parties. The recent rapid growth in 'Kurdish' web sites had meant that the work of Izady has received a much wider audience than could have previously been imagined. In perusing many of these sites, it is apparent that information on certain topics, and especially on ancient history, has been lifted wholesale from Izady's writing.

Izady's work is the logical culmination of years of writing, both by Kurds and non-Kurds on these themes. The writer of a 1990 article claims that, 'We are in possession of ancient historical records which establish beyond a doubt that the Kurds have been living continuously in the Kurdistan high-lands since the beginning of history in 3000 BC'. The 'beginning of history' is defined as the time of the first written historical records in Sumer.[26] This confusing account continues to tell us that the Kurds are recorded in Sumerian records in reference to the Land of Karda, near to Lake Van and connected (how, is not elaborated) to the Kur-ti-e, who lived to the west of the lake, with whom Tiglath Pileser I fought. Tiglath Pileser I also defeated the Gūtī, so it is hard to see the tangent connecting the Gūtī with the Kur-ti-e,[27] who would then appear to be contemporary with them. The history of the Gūtī is then expanded, as well as their destruction at the hands of the Assyrians, who then 'waged war against ancient Kurds and their ethnic relations…for 700 years'.[28] The Kashshu, the Gūtī the Lulu and the Shubaru are all then considered to be Kurdish.

The same article refers to the 'Zagros nation' those many groups of Zagros peoples referred to in historical records. Thus there is a shift away from the purely philological argument to the territorial argument whereby, as for Izady, any past inhabitant of present day Greater Kurdistan was Kurdish. Indeed Al Karadaghi claims that the Zagros tribes were homogeneous in speech and ethnically related. Among these groups the most prominent were the Elamites and the Kurds, who lived to their north. The Kurds are then claimed as of the Elamite group and as belonging to an ancient Caucasian race. Bizarrely, the Kurds are considered to belong to this ancient Caucasian race, and yet all the other Zagros groups were 'branches of the same ancient Kurds who appeared on the scene at historical times and in different parts of the Zagros highlands'.[29] The article concludes that, 'the kingdoms of Lullu, Guti, Nari, Urartu, and the new empires of Kassite and Hurri-Mittani were founded by the same group of people who were ethnically and linguistically related'.[30] The Kurds are then presumed to have 'coalesced with the Medes, when they changed their Caucasian language to the Median dialect'.[31] At the downfall of the Median Empire, the Medians did not migrate, but the ruling Median elite was absorbed by the Kurdish, non-Median subjects, who were already speaking Median.[32] To some extent this is logical, but ignores the effects of further invasions.

The art and material culture of the Medes is poorly recorded, indeed the British Museum notes the elusive nature of Median artifacts,[33] yet there have long existed a plethora of attempts to draw connections between Median and Kurdish culture. The Al Karadaghi article is one of many attempts to compare Kurdish physical types, dress, music, and war customs with those of the Medes.[34] Further attempts were made at an exhibition in New York in 1995, to link modern Kurdish headdresses with archaeological remains of 1,800 to 2,900 years ago.[35] The Kurdish provenance of artifacts is rarely acknowledged, as state authorities are the controllers of access and possessors of finds. The British Museum displays 7th Century BC artifacts from Ziwiye, a site near Saqqez in Iranian Kurdistan, as Median. Artifacts from Ziwiye are also displayed in the Archaeological Museum in Tehran as well as in Sanadaj, Kurdistan, Iran. In fact little is known about the people who generated these beautiful artifacts, and they could be Median or Mannean. It is perhaps unfortunate for Kurdish nationalism that Kurds do not have enough academics to appropriate archaeology to distinguish their heritage from those of the Persians.

Jwadieh, in his classic, much cited 1960 dissertation on the origins of Kurdish nationalism devotes only 26 pages to the pre-Islamic history of the Kurds and does not refer to the existence of a Kurdish entity in that period. He notes that the Kurds never established a great empire of their own, but that 'The Empire of the Medes, one of the reputed ancestors of the Kurdish people, was the only great national state which may be said to have been established by the Kurds.'[36] In his chapter on the history and origins of the Kurds, Jwadieh uses the same variety of philological and historiographic source material that still informs later writings on the topic, yet concluded, after Minorsky, that the 'Medes and the Parthians played a very important role in shaping the character and the composition of the Kurdish race and language',[37] rather than reaching any firm conclusions on Kurdish origins. The ambivalent approach that Jwadieh adopted seems to imply that the ancient history of the Kurds and also their connection with the spatial expression of Kurdistan was a less important component of the nationalist movement at that time.

KURDISTAN AND THE KURDS IN ACADEMIC HISTORY

General texts on the history of the Middle East, both academic and popular, tend not to dwell on the Kurds, perhaps appropriately to their marginal locations in the empires and states that are seen as the main historical actors in the region. As discussed, the ancient history of the region is that of the successful empires, and to a large extent, the modern history is also that of the hegemons. The Kurds are marginalized in all their host cultures, thus their version of, or role in history is not really covered by mainstream historians. Their historiographic materials are scattered and varied, there are no central archives for Kurdish history.

However, on occasion, the coverage of the role of the Kurds in history or in the modern Middle East is so neglected, distorted or one-dimensionally portrayed, that it is easy to see how the Kurds may see an academic complicity in a conspiracy to deny them or Kurdistan an existence. Certainly, it would appear that academics tend to approach their subjects from the direction in which they are most comfortable, and that is usually

the history or political culture of one of the region's major powers. Thus approaches are informed by the absorbed prejudices of that culture.

Wallerstein sees recounting the past as a social act of the present, thus all history is transitory knowledge; the truth changes as society does. There is no such thing as an uncommitted historian or social scientist, all assertions of truth are based on assumptions involving the metaphysics of values. He also notes that objective knowledge can only be produced when all major groups in the world system are represented.[38] It is certainly true that neither Kurds nor Kurdistan are well represented in mainstream Middle Eastern studies. There is generally a wide gulf in academic style and credibility between studies of Kurdistan and those of states, empires and the wider region.

In *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East,* Bernard Lewis notes that the Kurds are the one remaining linguistic and ethnic minority of any importance surviving in the central lands of the Middle East, and that there is evidence that they have been there since remote antiquity.[39] Other than that, they are mentioned only briefly as a complication to Arabism in Iraq.[40]

In *The Making of the Modern Near East,* Yapp accords the history of the Kurds a greater prominence, including the Ottoman attempts to destroy the remaining Kurdish emirates at the end of the eighteenth century, the increased conflict between the Armenians and the Kurds, the role of the Hamidiye Cavalry and the problems associated with dealing with the Kurds after the First World War.[41]

Yet in the seminal The Near East Since the First World War, Yapp allocates only a few scattered paragraphs to the Kurds. Although the various Kurdish insurrections are referred to, their underlying causes are not examined. The six wars between the Iraqi Kurds and the government are dealt with summarily; the total coverage of the fifth war was, '(the government) resumed struggle against armed guerrillas in Kurdistan.'[42] The 1979 Iranian Kurdish uprising is mentioned, but its course and outcome is not, other than '…it continued for several years'.[43]

In the updated section of the newest edition of the work, covering the period 1989–95, the increase in Kurdish nationalism since 1960 is noted for the first time. Despite a lack of detail on the nationalist violence in Turkey from the 1970s, there is room to establish that the violence was only on the part of the Kurds, and that it was financed by forced loans and the proceeds of crime.[44] Although establishing that in the period 1992–95, 15,000 lives were lost as a result of the conflict in Turkish Kurdistan, and that 200,000 Turkish soldiers are based in Eastern Turkey, Yapp asserts that the Turkish government made 'extensive concessions' to the Kurds in 1991, and that 'some degree of autonomy' was granted in 1993.[45]

In the same text, Yapp states that the Kurds of the Syrian Jezireh, 50 percent of the population, are opposed to integration in Syria.[46] In fact this area was the object of plans for an Arab Cordon, not fully instituted, in the 1960s. And between 1965 and 1975, some 30,000 Kurds were forced to leave this area for Lebanon or major cities, as a result of official harassment and the implantation of 7,000 armed Arab settlers, displaced by the Tabqa Dam.[47] The ways in which the 1990 Gulf War affected the Kurds of Iraq is not mentioned, nor is the attempted genocide of the Kurds in Iraq.

A more balanced account of the recent history of the Middle East is that of Cleveland, who refers to the Kurds at several key junctures from 1920 onwards and up to their role in the 1990 Gulf War and the establishment of the 'safe havens' in May 1991. The

activities of the Kurds or critical location of Kurdistan before 1920 is not discussed, but coverage of that period is necessarily brief.[48]

There have been several doctoral theses concerning aspects of Kurdish history[49] and several works on specific periods, notably the pioneering works of Robert Olson.[50] The work of Professor Ahmad, especially concerning Russian primary sources and the early twentieth century is also unique,[51] and many non-historians have contributed to the oeuvre.[52] The majority of writing on Kurdish history appears in journal articles. Probably the broadest and probably the bravest attempt at a history of the Kurds is McDowall's landmark *A Modern History of the Kurds*.[53] Even here, the coverage of the spatial frame is limited to after the Arab invasion, the Kurds of Syria and Russia are ignored (due to constraints of space), and certain periods are dealt with very sketchily. Nevertheless, aimed at the general reader, this is the only substantial attempt at both presentation and analysis of the broad modern history of the Kurds. Prior to this work, the classic texts on Kurdistan generally followed a similar structure of dealing with Kurdistan according to its host states, with no reference to primary historiographic sources. They also tended to be edited works, with very varying content and style from chapter to chapter, covering considerably more aspects of Kurdistan than the historical.

KURDISTAN BEFORE ISLAM

The Anatolia/Zagros axis has formed a natural barrier to empire expansion since Sargon I (2371–2316 BC) and his successors created the first Mesopotamian Empire. Sargon's Akkadian Empire collapsed partly as a result of repeated raids by mountain dwellers from the central Zagros. The successive empires of Ur, Assyria and Babylon also failed to totally breach the Zagros divide. The Zagros region was home to many small kingdoms and city-states, mostly known of only through the records of the contiguous plains cultures. From 1244–650 BC much of western Kurdistan lay within the new powerful Assyrian Empire. Tiglath Piliser I waged war on a people called Kur-ti-e in the mountains of Azu, identified by Driver as the modern Hazo (Sasun) range to the west of Lake Van,[54] which is often offered as proof of the existence of ancestors of the Kurds.[55] For 700 years the Assyrians fought with many Zagros inhabitants such as the Gutis and the Kassites.

The constant friction between the plains and mountain dwellers so weakened the Zagros tribes that the Medes and other Aryan invaders found little resistance. The Median Empire, established by the Zagros tribes with help from the Persians to the east, was based in the heart of the Zagros range—for the first time an empire straddled this area, and for the last time the mountain dwellers were able to dominate the plains dwellers. Although technically the region was under Persian Archaemenian control by the sixth century BC, there is little evidence that the central government was able to exert any control over these mountains, nor indeed that they had any great interest in this inaccessible, poorly explored area.

At the start of the period of Persian/Greek rivalry within the Middle East, Xenophon noted in 401 BC that the Karduchoi, who inhabited the mountains to the east and south of the Botan River, were fully independent and paid no homage to the Persian ruler.[56] That the Karduchoi could have any connection with the Kurds is vehemently denied on

philological grounds by MacKenzie.[57] The Greek historian Diodorus putatively noted that the inhabitants of these mountains were so much trouble to the empires and foreign armies that efforts were directed solely at dissuading them from raiding the plains.[58] Herodotus, the sole, but buy no means wholly reliable source for this period, does not mention any name that seems to relate to Kurds, but mentions a satrap of the Achaemenid Empire, which may be Bohtan.[59] Driver asserts that, 'the territory occupied by the Kurdish race in historic times seems to have been the district called by the Greeks Karduchia, and by the Greeks and Romans Corduene or Gordiaea, by Syriac writers Qaru, whence the earliest Arabic authorities derived the name Qarda, the country bounded roughly on the north by Armenia, on the west by the river Euphrates, on the south by the Arabian desert, and on the east by the ancient kingdom of Media.'[60] The extent of this district was small, in the hills between Diyarbakir, Nusaybin and Zakho. The same article refers to an account by the Greek geographer Strabo concerning the Kyrtii,[61] nomads and brigands, who were spread over Armenia and the Zagros mountains in the second century BC, although this does not tally with the small area assigned to these proto-Kurds by other writers. The Syriac writers identified Qardu in terms of mythical happenings, such as the beaching of Noah's ark on Ararat. Driver also notes that a Babylonian Talmudic writer referred to Abraham's seven year sojourn amongst the Qardu. Qardu is also noted by Syriac historians as a Nestorian diocese.[62] In the first century BC, Corduene was conquered by the Armenian Tigranes II, and its king was executed. By 115 AD Corduene again had a king, having only been superficially Armenicised.[63] We have no way of knowing the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of Cordeune, nor of any of the peoples described who possibly were the ancestors of the present Kurds. The Encyclopaedia of Islam compares the names of various historic groups in the area, including the Khaldi (Assyrian: Urartu) who were established around Lake Van in the ninth century BC, but who were driven out by the Armenians from the seventh century BC. Whatever their origins, the article concludes that the Kardu/Qardu or Karduchoi were identical with the Kurds, and that this view was considered axiomatic at the beginning of the twentieth century.[64]

Around the time of the decline of the Hellenistic Empire, most of the Zagros rulers either joined the Parthian federation or were absorbed by it. During the four centuries of the Parthian era (247 BC–226 AD) there were seven semi or fully independent principalities around the area that would later be known as Kurdistan. These included: Mada (Media); Elymais (Luristan); Kerm (Kermanshah); Mukriyan (Mahabad); Shahrezur (Sulaimaniya); Barchan (Barzan); and Sanak (Sahna).[65] Even the following Sassanian Empire was unable to exert direct control over this region, the eastern half of Kurdistan falling within its boundaries, and was forced to resort to the use of vassal kings under the strong centralization drive of Ardeshir II.

In the north of present day Kurdistan, the Hittite Kingdom gave way to the Uratian Empire based on the city of Van, from about 1000–600 BC. The inhabitants of this empire were absorbed or driven out by the invading Scythians, Medes and Hayasa. This northern area became known as Armenia by the Greeks and Persians from around 500 BC and was absorbed into the Alexandrian Empire and thoroughly Hellenized. Armenia later became a province of the Roman Empire in 114 AD, as did Assyria. So at this time, Kurdistan was divided between rival empires, the provinces of Armenia and Assyria were buffers against the Parthians. The Armenian and Assyrian provinces were converted to

Roman Christianity very early, before 600 AD. Armenia was later divided between the Romans and the Persians in 387 AD. The Byzantines suppressed and attempted to disperse the Armenians. There was a brief resurgence of the monarchy in the ninth and tenth centuries in Lesser Armenia, and from the eleventh to the fourteenth century there was an important Armenian kingdom around Cilicia, north of the Gulf of Alexandretta.

The presence of Armenians was to continue in this region, later bordering the area inhabited by the Kurds, until the end of the early part of the twentieth century. The overlapping territorial claims of the Armenians and the Kurds, and the ensuing conflict of interest continued to be an issue until the 1920s. It is clear however that the Kurds gradually expanded northwards, and that this process was to be much accelerated by the vicissitudes of the Armenians, their migrations, deportations and finally their annihilation within that region in the early twentieth century.

By the time of the Arab invasion, a single ethnic term Kurd (Arabic plural *Akrād*) was applied to an amalgamation of Iranian or Iranicized tribes. Of the latter, some were autochthonous, (like the Kardu), some Semitic (hence Kurdish genealogies) and some Armenian.[66] The existence of Iranian non-Kurdish elements has been clearly established, in that the Gurani and Zaza languages are clearly not Kurdish, but probably remnants of the pre-Kurdish inhabitants of the region.[67]

CONCLUSIONS

As largely sub-state actors, Kurds are often denied a role in official regional histories, and suffer from the state-centered core-periphery perspective that informs much of even academic history. Divided between several states, and also retaining the legacy of longstanding internal divisions, the Kurds lack the state machinery necessary to generate an alternative history, which would award them a greater role.

As history is written by the hegemons, and Kurdistan lay at the margins of, or within several early empires, our knowledge of even the Kurds' ancient history comes largely from the accounts of their neighboring cultures or subjugators. Even so, sources are few, ambiguous and occasionally contradictory. It is impossible with the information available to achieve a reasonable understanding of either the precise origins of the Kurds, when they coalesced into such an identifiable group, or their early history, much before the Arab/Islamic invasion. The available historiographic materials are not easily accessible, and are often fairly impenetrable. Given the state of the knowledge, it is possible to write many contradictory historical accounts, and much of any such attempts will be extrapolation.

Even in modern European academic historical writing, the Kurds are either poorly or actually misrepresented. Accounts of their history are error-strewn and tend to show the clear state biases of their authors. It is therefore not surprising that Kurdish nationalists are skeptical about conventional historical accounts, and seek to create their own versions, with themselves as the central actors.

Although it appears that the ancient origins of the Kurds was a search that occupied the minds of European academics and writers more than those of the Kurds themselves, recently, the matter has been devoted greater attention within the Kurdish nationalist discourse. The early, and to some extent logical, claim that the Kurds were the

descendants of the Medes established the premise of territorial occupation within Kurdistan. Further attempts, using tortuous logic, have been made to mesh the territory of Kurdistan with the history of the Kurdish ethnos, and provide twin myths of ancient Kurdish history and territorial rights. These attempts have culminated in a definitive account, which, in some ways persuasively, confuses the history of Kurdistan, and in fact a region even wider in temporal scope, with the history of its present dominant ethnic group, the Kurds.

For several reasons, practical and ideological, this version of history has become explicit in successive writing on the Kurds, and appears to have gained credibility by repetition. The dubiousness of the axiomatic approach taken in the first instance is concealed with repeated citation, until it enters the living Kurdish mythology.

CHAPTER 7
From Province to Principality to Pawn
Kurdistan as a Buffer Zone

THE ARAB ISLAMIC ERA IN KURDISTAN

Kurdistan's recorded history really began with the writings of the Arab historians, although during the period of Arab hegemony Kurdistan was of little strategic importance, being far from any sensitive border region. Nevertheless, certain patterns began to emerge in Kurdistan, which became characterized by poor administrative control from the imperial center, a high rate of social and economic disturbance and uneven or retarded development, due largely to the many invasions, and frequent disruption by traversing armies.

The Kurds came into contact with the Arabs following the capture of Takrit and Hulwan in 637 AD. The Kurds supported the Persian governor of Ahwaz in southern Persia, against the Arabs in 639 AD, and are thought to have mounted several rebellions in unison with Persians and Christians.[1] For Kurdistan, the Arab Islamic invasion was completed in around 642 AD, commencing when the Arab armies defeated the Persian Sassanid Empire at the Battle of Qadesiyah. The final decisive battle, ushering in Arab regional hegemony, occurred at Nehāvand, within the strategic Zagros axis, ushering in a period of relative calm for Kurdistan. Once it was apparent that they could not repel the Arab invaders, most Zagros tribal chieftains appear to have submitted to the Arab armies and converted to Islam. The other inhabitants of the region were converted to Islam fitfully, and never entirely. Tribes who remained in the most inaccessible parts of the mountain ranges were most likely to retain their old religions and customs.

The region was to remain a religious as well as an ethnic mosaic well into the twentieth century. The Muslim inhabitants of Kurdistan adopted the Shaf'ai school of Islam, at least superficially, as practiced throughout the area until the Ottoman period. The frontier of the Islamic Empire was far away to the north with the Khazar Empire; to the west with the Byzantine Empire in Anatolia; and to the east with the Indian subcontinent. Kurdistan was not located at that time in a sensitive border region, so its strategic importance was negligible.

Kurdistan remained poorly controlled by the Imperial center, and such dynasties and autonomous regions were tolerated as long as taxes were paid when requested and troops levied in times of need. The region was poorly developed. The Kurds themselves, however were more important to their rulers. The Kurdish tribes frequently rose in rebellion, and continued to jostle amongst themselves for power and lands, throughout the next 300 years of Arab hegemony.[2] Kurds were noted for their provision of troops to Islamic armies. Kurdistan had a reputation similar to Scotland as an acknowledged source of good officers and troops.[3]

The tribal warrior class dominated Kurdistan, practicing transhumancy and pastoralism in peacetime, depending on stockbreeding and war spoils, including raiding, for support. Inadequate lands for all tribes undoubtedly encouraged the participation of Kurds in military life. The non-tribal peasants *(reyet)* and the urban dwellers formed lower segments of society, regarded with disdain by the tribesmen. The peasantry existed entirely at the mercy of, often rapacious, tribal chiefs. The urban dwellers included many Armenian and Jewish artisans and entrepreneurs.

Kurdistan suffered not only from a rigid and undeveloped social and economic system, but also its location ensured a high level of disturbance. As Kurdistan lay en route from Iran to Mesopotamia, it was traversed by many raiding armies. In the eighth century, the Khwarazmian nomads from east of the Aral Sea crossed Kurdistan several times on raiding expeditions as well as in the mid eleventh century, the Ghuzz raiders. The Byzantines also occasionally forayed into the region.

As the Abbasids declined in power throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, a number of principalities and dynasties sprang up in Kurdistan, many of which were led by Kurds. The emergence of so many dynasties was part of a wider phenomenon throughout the Iranian parts of the Islamic Empire, a period referred to by Minorsky as an 'Iranian intermezzo' between the collapse of Arab hegemony and the consolidation of Turkish power.[4] The most noted of these dynasties were: the Shaddadids (c951–1071/5) in east Transcaucasia between the Kur and the Araxes rivers; the Marwanids (c.984–1083), south of Diyarbakir and to the north of Jazira; the Hasanwayhids (c.959–1095) who exercised control over the Zagros between Shahrizur and Khuzistan, to the east of the Shatt al-Arab;[5] and the Annazids (c.991–1170 who occupied the frontier region between Iraq and Iran, with its capital at Hulwan.[6]

The Ayubid dynasty differed from the others in that its base was outside Kurdistan. Its founder, Salah ad-Din Ayubi (Saladin)[7] (c. 1137–1193), was a Kurd born in Takrit, outside Kurdistan, to a family of military and political mercenaries. Continuing in this tradition, Salah ad-Din soldiered in Syria, becoming Vizier to the Fatamid Caliph in Egypt, from where he established a power base and extended Abbasid rule, strengthening Sunni orthodoxy, and overseeing the demise of the Fatamids. Under Salah ad-Din, the Christian crusaders were driven out of Jerusalem, Palestine and Syria. He became the Islamic leader perhaps most popularly known and admired in Europe, but his Kurdish origins are only rarely alluded to. Although Kurdish, Salah ad-Din was born and lived outside Kurdistan, and undoubtedly saw himself as an Islamic soldier rather than as the founder of a Kurdish dynasty.[8] Nevertheless, he is a source of nationalist pride to most Kurds.

Arab writers in the tenth century AD were the first to give detailed and unequivocal information about the Kurds, and these detailed the Kurdish dynasties. They also listed over twenty tribes and the presence of Kurds outside Kurdistan, such as in Fars Isfahan and Khurasan. They also give information about Kurds in the armies and their habitats.[9] Driver adds that towards the end of the ninth century Al-Yaqubi noted that the Kurds lived to the east of Iraq and west of Persia, and Masudi noted them also in other farther flung provinces, even as far as Syria, Basra and Khorassan.[10] It was known that there were Christians dwelling amongst them, and that certain chiefs ruled over tracts of Armenian and Azerbaijan. In further works it was suggested that the Kurds numbered more than 500,000 families, and that they had built several towns, including one in the

vicinity of Isfahan.[11] It was reported that the Caliph Marwan's mother was a Kurdish slave.[12]

THE ARRIVAL OF THE TURKISH DYNASTIES

In 1071, the Seljuks defeated Armenia and Byzantium and the Kurdish tribes submitted peacefully, being wary of the destructive potential of Turkic invaders. The Seljuks were the first power to assert ruthless central control over Kurdistan.

The first official use of the name Kurdistan dates from the time of Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157 AD), who created the first Kurdish province,[13] with its capital at Bahar,[14] to the north east of what is now Hamadan. It was governed, not by a Kurd, but by the Sultan's nephew, Sulaiman Shah.[15] This province encompassed the whole area between Azerbaijan and Luristan, and included the regions of Hamadan, Dinawar, Kermanshah and Sennah (Sanandaj), to the east of the Zagros mountains and to the west of Shahrizur and Khuftiyan, on the Zab river.[16] This was the largest state-acknowledged area to be named Kurdistan, and like the rest of the Kurdish regions fluctuated both in its extent and in its degree of freedom from central government. Kurdistan's time as merely the periphery of empire was to last for around 300 years. During this time, the inhabitants were largely at the service of whichever empire might require their services and skills, mainly of a martial nature.

The first half of the thirteenth century proved disastrous for Kurdistan. Twenty odd years of Khwarazmian raiding, only to be followed by Mongol invasions, left the area depleted. Not one inhabitant of Diyarbakir was left alive. Mardin and Nusaybin were similarly sacked. Five years later, Shahrizur was pillaged and Diyarbakir was revisited. Both en route to and after the sack of Baghdad in 1258, the Mongol armies swept though all of northern Kurdistan. All cities in Kurdistan were either destroyed or depopulated. The tribes were badly affected, with many confederations collapsing and new tribes emerging. Cultivation was abandoned in many areas, the mobile wealth of livestock was more secure and nomadic mobility offered some chance of escape from invaders. By the fourteenth century, Kurdistan's revenues were only one tenth of those in the pre-Mongol period. Mustaufi, the geographer noted that, although in Seljuk times the revenues of the province amounted to 2,000,000 dinars annually, they had sunk to 201,500 dinars in his lifetime under Mongol depredations.[17] Urban civilization was spurned by many tribes, and nomadic culture became dominant for centuries.[18] Kurds also spread out to the north and west, penetrating both Greater and Lesser Armenia,[19] establishing their dominance over the agriculturalist Armenians.

The Arab geographers appear to have had little to say about the Kurds in the tenth and eleventh century. In the thirteenth century Mustaufi defined Kurdistan as being 'bounded by Arabian Iraq, Khuzistan, Persian Iraq, Azerbaijan and Diarbekir'.[20] Yaqut noted that there were five Kurdish *zumum* of several towns and villages each, which were virtually independent, offering only military service to the Sultan. These were Zinjan between Isfahan and Arrajan; Bazinjan in the Jibal; Zizan and Rihan near to Ardashir; and Kariyn near Kirunian. The same source states that there were two cities named Kurd in Persia, and that Zawazan, a large tract of land between the mountains of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Diyarbakir, and Mosul had a population of Kurds and Armenians. Much detailed

information is offered, including intelligence of more than twenty towns inhabited by Kurds. In the province of Fars alone there were 500,000 Kurdish tents, and Kurds had overrun large tracts of Luristan. He also comments ruefully on the ill effects of the Kurds' tendencies to raid their neighbors in cities in Khuzistan and Azerbaijan.[21]

One hundred and fifty years after the first Mongol invasion, in 1393, Tamerlaine captured Baghdad, sacked Mosul and moved west. Meanwhile, however, his son was pillaging the major Kurdish centers and laying waste to the villages. Diyarbakir and Mardin were again devastated. In 1401, following a Kurdish revolt, Tamerlaine sacked Arbil, Mosul, and Jazira. Only one Kurdish village was spared in the Jazira region.[22]

Shortly before this time, Ibn Battuta visited Sinjar and some parts of Kurdistan adjoining Mesopotamia, where he noted the ascetic practices of a Kurdish sheikh and also the tensions between Kurds and Arabs at Hillah in Mesopotamia.[23] Around the same time Ibn Khaldun found Kurds living as far afield as Morocco.[24] These were probably the tribes who had fled the Mongol invasions.[25]

Following Tamerlane's death in 1404, two confederations of Turkish tribes, the Qaraqoyunlu and the Aqqoyunlu, gained independence and territorial control. The former was centered originally in the north-east of Lake Van, and took over most of Azerbaijan. The latter took Amid (Diyarbakir) as its capital. Most of the Kurdish emirates fell under the control of the Qaraqoyunlu, even if only nominally, as in the case of Siirt, Bitlis, and Hassankeyf to the west.[26] Further west, around Mardin, Amid, Harput, and Erzincan, the Kurds were subject to the Aqqoyunlu. The Kurds seemed to be very marginal to rivalry between these confederations, with most battles occurring in Mesopotamia.[27] With the ascendancy of the Aqqoyunlu over the region, Kurdish tribes and dynasties that had been close to the Qaraqoyunlu were exterminated.

By the end of the fifteenth century, international commerce was shifting from land routes to sea routes. Vasco de Gama's successful rounding of the Cape of Good Hope in 1497 established a sea route to India and the Far East, ensuring that Kurdistan, mountainous and insecure, held little appeal as a transportation route from east to west.[28] Kurdistan thus lost much of its economic infrastructure rebuilt after the Mongol invasions, and importantly, lost the throughput of information and technology. Local production decreased, as did the numbers of artisans. Cities became little more than market towns, and Kurdistan was even more politically and economically impoverished.

THE OTTOMANS AND THE SAFAVIDS

The Sunni/Shia schism occurred at the end of the seventh century, officially arising over the question of caliphal succession to Mohammed the Prophet. Persians, chafing under Arab cultural and political domination, possibly sought a way to re-establish their past cultural and political heritage and to halt the encroachment of Arabism in Persia. By the fourteenth century, Persia officially adopted Shi'ism as the state religion under Shah Ismail I (1501–1518), the first Safavid Shah, who had seized control from the disintegrating Aqqoyunlu Empire. Shah Ismail asserted control over the Kurds with considerable bloodshed,[29] as they had, as usual, taken advantage of the weakness of their rulers to reclaim their independence, which they were reluctant to surrender. The ruling elite of the Kurdish emirates was eliminated, or if co-operative, sent to far off positions.[30]

From this time certain tribes, and especially the inhabitants of cities and areas under cultural and economic suzerainty of Persia, were subject to the proselytizing efforts of the Safavids. In particular the Safavids supported, and were supported by the Kizilbash[31] tribes, largely Turkomen tribes in Eastern and southwestern Anatolia, who were followers of the extremist teachings of the Safavid sheikhs. In 1505, the Kizilbash formed the bulk of Safavid forces, which took Kurdistan as far west as Maraş by 1507, and Mosul and Baghdad in 1508. With Safavid encouragement, Kizilbash ideas spread across eastern Anatolia, and major uprisings troubled the Ottoman government, which launched a vicious campaign against the Kizilbash tribes.

Shah Ismail later adopted *ithna>ashari* Shi'ism as the state religion, abandoning the extreme Kizilbash beliefs, but only tribal groups on the fringes of Persia could escape Shi'ism.

The majority of the Kurdish Muslim inhabitants of western Persia apparently remained Shaf'ai Sunnis, the school of Sunni Islam initially practiced in the region, other than the Kizilbash, who included several Kurdish tribes, but mainly consisted of Zaza/Dimli and Turkish speakers. Those Kurds who were Muslims were possibly more likely to identify with the Caliph, initially Arab, and later Ottoman, in whose service many had served as soldiers, being renowned for their martial capabilities, rather than with the later Shi'ite Persian rulers.[32]

The Ottoman Empire had expanded to the west of the Aqqoyunlu, conquering most Turkish petty states to become the major challenger to Aqqoyunlu hegemony. When Selim I (the Grim) took power in 1512, his hatred of the Kizilbash and Shah Ismail ensured a major confrontation in 1514. The Governor of Diyarbakir evacuated the region, pursuing a scorched earth policy, which did not halt Ottoman progress. Many Kurdish Emirs submitted allegiance in advance of Selim's invasion, following approaches through a Kurdish diplomat, Idris Bitlisi, and the Ottoman forces were welcomed into many parts of Kurdistan. However, the withdrawal of the Ottomans for the winter allowed the Kizilbash to try to wrest back their losses, during a year of total chaos and 'uncoordinated warfare'[33]

The Persian capture of Baghdad in 1508 was reversed at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. Kurdish military aid to the Sultan Selim won them a pact that formally recognized, over the next two centuries, up to sixteen Kurdish principalities or emirates of various sizes and up to fifty Kurdish *sanjaqs* (fiefdoms), within the Ottoman Empire, covering about 30 percent of Kurdistan.[34] Some of these principalities were totally sovereign, although bounden not to rise against the Sultan, nor to alter their frontiers. Thus, even at a time of recognition of Kurdish sovereignty, the spectre of a united Kurdistan guided any negotiations on the part of the Ottomans. The integration of these principalities into the Ottoman imperial system was entrusted by the Sultan to Idris Bitlisi, who had wide ranging discretionary powers.[35] He appointed hereditary rulers from the old aristocratic families, in contrast to the policies of the previous two imperial administrations.

KURDISTAN AS A BUFFER ZONE

Kurdistan was to become the buffer, not only between the Arab\Semitic, and later Ottoman, culture, and the Persian culture, but also between the two major branches of

Islam. Kurdistan became the main theatre for Ottoman-Persian rivalry. Mesopotamia and the area to the north were to be the target of rivalry between the newly emergent Shia Safavid Persian Empire and the Sunni Ottoman Turkish Empire, which perceived Persia's religious heresy as much a challenge to its legitimacy as its competing territorial claims.

Chaldiran marked the beginning of a successful policy of pitting the Kurdish principalities and tribes against both the rival empire and each other to prevent the development of a unified region presenting a threat to the central governments. Mesopotamia was lost and won twice more in the following 30 years, each time with the aid of Kurdish mercenaries. Although the Kurds generally sided with the Ottomans as co-religionists, they were frequently receptive to inducements from the Persians. The Ottomans had the added attraction of willingness to rule through local chiefs, whereas the Persians wanted to govern through Persian or Turkoman administrators, although this was hard to enforce. The Persians did permit the House of Ardelan to continue to rule over the central Zagros range and the land to the west of it, notably Shahrizur. Their capital was at Sennah (Sanandaj). The Ottomans, whilst pursuing anti-tribal and centralizing policies throughout the empire, established a quasi-feudal system in Kurdistan. They also created nomadic tribal confederations outside the emirate system. Many of these approved tribes were used to police the Armenian borders in the north and to dominate the less predictable Turkomen groups.

The Kurdish principalities and tribes became most adept at exploiting their situation.[36] Kurdish troops and tribal alliances played a key role in all struggles for supremacy in the area. There were few ruling families who were constant in their support of one empire. Many tribes, for example the Jaf, relocated so they straddled the border regions, thus ensuring safe refuge when they backed the wrong side. Northern Kurdistan was harder control, due to the hard winters, so certain areas were rarely re-conquered.

This time was, thanks to the relative equilibrium between the two empires, a fairly stable time in Kurdistan's history; a time that is mythologized by many Kurds as a period of independence and freedom—a 'golden age', as described by A.D.Smith.[37] Smith observes that any nationalist history creates both a poetic space and a mythological golden age. This latter myth is the central drama in Smith's eight myths of nationalist history. He describes this as a 'Sleeping Beauty Complex': the nationalist struggle will awaken the enslaved nation and facilitate a return to the time of perceived freedom. So it this period on which many nationalist historians expend most energy. It is also significant that at this time, the first Kurdish literary works appeared. Kurdish intellectuals previously used the languages of the elite such as Persian, Arabic or Turkish. The most important work of the period, and possibly ever, was the seminal Mem u Zin, which is now widely interpreted as an expression of nationalist sentiment.[38] Certainly it offered an analysis of the divisions within Kurdish society, and the ways in which their neighbors exploited the Kurds' weaknesses.[39]

It is clear, however, from contemporary accounts that neither the Kurds, nor the central government, were content with this state of affairs, and that a continuous jostling for power existed. The rivalry between the ruling houses could be exploited to devastating effect. For example the House of Ardalan, which by the early fourteenth century controlled a vast region astride the Zagros mountains, was largely faithful to the Persian Shah, thus forfeiting its land west of the Zagros. Their desire to regain their lands enabled the Iranians to use them to recapture the fertile Shahrizur Plain, site of their old

capital. This region changed hands several times, until, in the 1630s the 400-year old walled city of Sharezur was razed by the Ardelans under the direction of the Persian Shah.[40] Thus internecine warfare added to the devastation of civic life and economic stability by invading armies.

Occasionally, the rival empires came to realize that they had little to gain from this tug-of-war, except maybe financial ruin, so they concluded the Treaty of Amassia in 1555. This first attempt at a political solution to the regional conflict was to last for only 20 years. Further fighting led to the Persians reconquering Mesopotamia in 1623, only to cede it to the Ottomans again in 1638. The following year saw the Treaty of Zohab, and the first mutual acceptance of a broad border swathe between the two empires. The border was based on the existing tribal loyalties within the region, but due to the shifting nature of these loyalties the frontier zone was over 100 miles wide from the Zagros in the east to the Tigris in the west.[41] The imperial conflict was now contained within this zone. Thus the Kurdish tribes had not only considerable autonomy, due to their peripheral location, but as the empires tried to coerce and coax allegiances in an attempt to ensure frontier security, they had considerable leverage and access to wealth. The imperial conflict was thence to be manifested in shifting tribal loyalties, inter-tribal conflicts and raiding with impunity.[42] There was agreement, however, between the rival powers that Kurdish citadels should be destroyed.

By the late seventeenth century, these manifestations of imperial rivalries had broken Kurdistan into fewer and smaller territories, all constantly scheming against each other. In Persia in the sixteenth century, Hamadan and Luristan had been detached from Kurdistan, leaving only the Ardelan principality, with its capital at Sanandaj. The Ardelans were frequently controllers of all Iranian Kurdistan, as the Safavids lost central control throughout the mid-seventeenth century. (The principality of Ardelan was abolished in the 1860s, as Iran became centralized under Qajar rule.) The area of Kurdistan under control of the Ottomans increased, as the Ottomans could divert military forces away from conflict with the Persians.

The Kurdish House of Baban had taken advantage of the Afghan invasion of Iran in 1721 to invade Iran and control Sennah for 10 years, having ejected the Ardelans. Throughout the rest of the century the Kurds struggled for local supremacy in their reduced area of feudal autonomy, and the Ottomans and Persians continued to mount periodic full scale wars within Kurdistan. The 1746 Treaty of Kurdan followed 16 years of full-scale war, during which time the Persians made 3 attempts to treaty, and confirmed the 1639 boundary. Nadir Shah of Iran died in the following year, and thus the treaty was not ratified until the 1823 Treaty of Erzerum. In 1806 and 1811 there had been further wars in the area, without a decisive outcome. The Imperial powers therefore followed the policy of allowing the area to be semi-independent, therefore functioning as a check to the expansion of the rival empire. The status quo was thus more or less maintained, with Kurdistan as almost a third country as a buffer between the feuding parties.

This was of course what the empires feared most, a strong and independent Kurdistan. Thus great care was taken to continue the policy of sowing discord in Kurdistan, usually finding the shortsighted principalities fertile ground for their attentions. The Treaty of Erzerum was the first Ottoman/Persian treaty to refer to Kurdistan, and to prohibit imperial meddling in Kurdish areas across the border. It was also the first treaty to

mention the migration of tribes, and of regulations for border crossings of people other than pilgrims.[43] The treaty also allowed for the prevention of raiding and cross-border escapes by certain named tribes.[44] There was also an understanding that cross border migration, if perceived as a ploy to avoid conscription or evade justice, would be prevented.[45]

THE INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE POWERS IN THE OTTOMAN-PERSIAN BOUNDARY

The Kurdish principalities had thus far been able to survive by exploiting their buffer location, yet this very location made them vulnerable, and their established pattern of behavior was to be further exploited by the new powers in the area, initially the Russians, and then the British. During the nineteenth century, Kurdistan was not only at the margins of the Ottoman and Persian Empires, but it was also nudging the Russian Empire, thus becoming the theatre for the Russo-Turkish Wars (1804–13 1828–30, 1877–78). The British became increasingly alarmed by Russian expansionism, and thus favored the maintenance of Kurdistan as a buffer zone to check the Russians. Thus the British were to collaborate in settling the Ottoman/Persian border dispute to ensure just such a zone, and their active involvement in its affairs.[46] The Treaty of Berlin (1878), which concluded the Russo-Turkish Wars, provided for the needs of the Ottoman Empire's Christian subjects, and thus was to provoke Kurdish nationalist feelings, culminating in the attempt to create a united Kurdistan, led by Sheikh Obeydullah, and involving the invasion of Iranian Kurdish territory.[47] This uprising, once it had stifled the Armenian movement, as suited the Ottomans, was suppressed by the combined efforts of the Russians, Iranians, Ottomans and the British. The ultimate disadvantage of Kurdistan's location was now obvious. The rival powers were always able to manipulate the Kurds, and were always able to overcome their differences as a result of their mutual animosity to any real Kurdish gains that might have resulted in a loss of territory.

In 1842, Britain and Russia formed a Joint Commission of Investigation, shortly followed by the Treaty of Erzerum. The Commission surveyed the zone from 1848–52 but left the demarcation to the powers involved. In 1869, the wildly inaccurate joint map, the 'Carte Identique', was produced, concluding only that an area of 25 miles width contained the frontier. Having agreed to 'split the difference' over the inaccuracies, the Commission culminated in the 1913 Protocol of Constantinople. Fig. 7.1 shows the fluctuations in the boundary between Persia and Turkey before the First World War.

It was decided that a Commission of the Four Powers should demarcate the three quarters' of the frontier that was agreed, and decide the last quarter on the ground. This demarcation took ten months, and involved the erection of 227 pillars. Colonel Ryder, the British member of that Commission, was aware that the Kurds were unreceptive to the demarcation of the boundary. He commented that There's more fun and freedom in the raiding line when no-one knows exactly where the frontier lies',[48] and 'The fixing of a frontier was repugnant to the finer feelings of the Kurds.'[49] The Commission was attacked by Kurds and shot at, and many of their pillars were uprooted. Sir Arnold Wilson commented that Kurds 'have a conception of frontiers which is different from

ours but quite reasonable. Sovereignty is not vested in land but in people. Freedom of movement…is essential to nomads.'[50]

Ultimately, the Kurds learned to exploit the fixed boundaries for political and economic gain,[51] and indeed their border location proved a useful boost to the Kurdish economy.[52]

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EMIRATE SYSTEM

In the early 1830s, the Ottomans were confronted by the reality that they had lost effective control of their highly centralized empire's hinterland. They determined to wrest back control over the Kurdish emirates, which had ceased to believe that they existed at the behest of the central government (Fig. 7.2). The penetration of the area by both the Russians and European and American missionary groups had begun to alter social relations, elevating the Christian peasantry from subordinates to protected status.[53] Amongst Christians, jockeying for support from missionaries had led to many religious schisms. In Hakkari, splits amongst the tribal Assyrians, previously equal to the Kurds, left them open to Kurdish attacks. 'US missionaries succeeded in sowing sectarian dissent in a *millet* that had persevered as a unit for centuries under Islamic government'.[54] Banditry was increasingly a problem in Kurdistan, as rival emirates encourage raiding on their neighbors.

Ottoman involvement in the 1832 Egyptian rebellion allowed the ruler of Rowanduz, Mir Rashid Mohammed,[55] to embark on a military campaign of expansion, forcing the governor of Baghdad to acknowledge his gains and invest him as a pasha. However, he continued to expand, overtaking several Kurdish emirates until he controlled the region between the Greater Zab and the Khabur Rivers, and was involved in talks with the Iranians and the Russians. Many atrocities were committed against Yezidis and Christians within the scope of the Pasha's armies, and during his reign several towns were besieged and almost destroyed.[56]

The Ottomans became seriously worried, and Rashid Mohammed was seduced into submission to Ottoman forces by false promises and with the aid of a British agent. Great Power intervention in the fall of the principalities had commenced. With the defeat of Rashid Mohammed Pasha only Botan really remained of the emirates. The Ottomans began to encourage the ruler of Botan, Badr Khan[57] to attack the Nestorians, knowing that this would lead to European demands that the government take reprisal action to limit the power of the emirates. Despite Badr Khan's valiant defence of the emirate, including an eight-month siege of his fortress, and his declaration of independence, by 1845, the emirate was no more, the ruling family exiled. Within five years, Sharif Khan of Bitlis was also defeated and the enfeebled House of Baban was dismissed from its capital at Sulaymania. The emirate system was at an end.[58]

Figure 7.1 Ottoman-Persian Boundary

RELIGIOUS STRIFE AND LAWLESSNESS

Friction between Muslim Kurds and the mainly Armenian Christians increased the more Christian countries and their representatives penetrated the region. Although the Kurdish tribesmen had probably always treated their sedentary peasants with contempt, there had been a degree of symbiotic economic relationship, which ensured a continuing modus vivendi. Russian involvement with Armenians created suspicion and tension between them and the Kurds, and many Armenians migrated northwards to Russia. A British traveler to the area in 1913 noted that 'the shadow of Russian military power is thrown

Figure 7.2 Major Kurdish Principalities from the Seventeenth Century to the 1860s

across the Caucasian frontier, and Russian consuls are becoming the most powerful protectors of the oppressed.'[59] The area was in such a state of disorder and the position of the Christian minorities was so insecure that, 'neither race nor religion is any protection from Kurdish exactions'.[60]

The power vacuum created by the demise of the emirates, and the now uncontrolled activities of minor tribal chiefs, led to an increase in general lawlessness and disputes between tribes, their *reyets* and the religious and ethnic minorities. Although able to carry out their first aim of eliminating the Kurdish emirates, the Ottomans had been unable to achieve their main aim of imposing central authority. The need for authoritative mediation in conflict was fulfilled by the rise to power of sheikhs. These religious leaders were, due to the respect accorded to them, able to mediate in disputes and exercise political authority.[61] Religious zeal was one of their political tools, directed at Christians, Jews and Yezidis. The most prominent of these was the Naqshbandiya sheikh, Obeydullah of Shamdinan, who dominated Bohtan, Badinan, Hakkari and Ardelan.[62] In an act tantamount to recognizing Obeydullah as the leader of the Kurds, the government appointed him as commander of the Kurdish tribal forces during the last of the century's Russo-Ottoman wars (1877–78). This experience inculcated in him a desire to rule the Kurds, in both Turkey and Persia, as a secular monarch, as well as spiritually.

The 1878 Treaty of Berlin, which concluded this war, included at Russian insistence, an article for European protection of Armenians in the Ottoman-Iranian border region from the Kurds and the Circassians. This was seen by the Kurds as the precursor to the

establishment of an Armenian state in their midst. The war again brought famine, devastation and poverty to northern Kurdistan. Thus to Obeydullah's personal ambitions and his concern at the region's mismanagement, were added the plight of the Kurds[63] and inter-communal rivalry, as a spur to Kurdish rebellion.

It has been suggested that, during the thirty or so years after the destruction of the emirates (1847–1880), the resultant increase in tribalism left the Kurds less integrated into a state of any form and less able to move towards the establishment of a state of their own.[64] However, this view is contradicted by Olson, who believes that the lack of direct emirate rule allowed the mobilization of the popular appeal of the *tarīqats*.

With the arrival of the British consuls in Kurdistan to oversee the reforms directed at the Christians, the possibly of Asia Minor becoming a Christian-led protectorate with a favored status for Armenians and Nestorians fired Obeydullah into action.[65] The Kurdish League was the first organization of its kind, supported by the Ottomans as an antidote to the Armenian question. Being still in possession of the weapons provided for use against the Russians,[66] Obeydullah's forces revolted in Hakkari. His forces were defeated but he was well treated by the Ottomans. His prestige as a leader enhanced, having failed in Turkey, he invaded Iran in October 1880, but was soundly defeated. The Ottomans realized that he was more than they could control and exiled him. Both Britain and Russia were opposed to any Kurdish independence movements.[67] The former because it did not want Iran subjected to any disturbance that might allow Russia to become involved, and the latter because it feared a Kurdish state on its Caucasian flank which might cost it its newly-won territories. The Ottomans were interested in such anti-Armenian and European movements, but not in the aimed outcome.[68]

THE HAMIDIYE CAVALRY

The 1891 establishment of the Hamidiye Cavalry[69] by the Ottomans aimed to use tribal Kurdish irregular troops, exploiting the religious tensions, to provide a force against the Russians.[70] The troops were encouraged to abuse Armenian villagers and to collect taxes on their villages. Encouraged by the Russians, the Armenians had begun to defend themselves from Kurdish and Turkish assaults, setting up armed groups and political organizations. Throughout Kurdistan, as well as in the rest of Turkey in the 1890s massacres of Armenians were perpetrated by Kurds as well as Turks. The Hamidiyeh were particularly active in these massacres. Olson notes that the situation by 1896, the logical culmination of Armenian-Kurdish tension since 1878, was like a civil war, the Armenians supported by the Russians and the British, the Kurds by the Ottomans.[71]

The Hamidiye were also a means of achieving greater centralization of authority in the east, impeding British penetration, encourage pan-Islamism and create a new social and political balance in eastern Turkey. The tribally based regiments were forbidden to unite except in times of war, and then under an Ottoman general. The Officers were schooled in a special school in Istanbul, and officers were paired with Ottoman regulars. The Hamidiye system allowed the tribes involved to dominate others, so inclusion was enthusiastically sought, and the introduction of conscription for all Kurds not in the Hamidiye made it an even more attractive option.

That only Sunni tribes were permitted to join the Hamidiye exacerbated Sunni/Shia/Alevi/Yezidi rivalries, dividing the Kurds. It also ensured that a Sunni current would color the emergent Kurdish nationalist movement, and the non-Sunni Kurds would feel little desire to revolt at the abolition of the Sunni Sultan. From 1891 to 1914, the Hamidiye Regiments were the concentration of Kurdish power, with more than 50,000 armed men.[72] The officer training process ensured that the officers learnt about Balkan nationalism and met Arab and Turkish nationalist officers. Their children attended military schools, gaining a secular education. The power of the Hamidiye led to the reduction of the power of the sheikhs, again the Kurds were encouraged to organize themselves tribally to prevent any unified aims or action.[73] The Hamidiye also suppressed the growth of a Kurdish middle class during this period, which might have become a source of Kurdish nationalist ideas.[74]

EDUCATIONAL IMPOVERISHMENT

The frequent wars in Kurdistan, as well as the frequent political and administrative flux, severely affected many aspects of Kurdish life, one aspect being the education of the Kurdish elite and even masses. Education, until the late nineteenth century was based in Islamic schools, until the extension of Ottoman rule saw the opening of modern schools. It was in these schools that Kurdish literature emerged. This explains the predominance of mullahs in literary achievements Although the Qur'an was taught in the medium of Arabic, Kurdish must have been the medium of explanation of Arabic grammar and even of teaching certain subjects. Indeed Ahmad Khani compiled a Kurdish-Arabic lexicon for use in mosque schools, as well as a short, versed explanation of Islamic tenets.[75]

According to Evliya Çelebi[76] an important source on seventeenth century Kurdistan, Kurdish towns of that time supported a flourishing number of mosque and primary schools, where the teaching medium had been Kurdish. At that time, the town of Bitlis (pop. c.26,000), which always had a reputation for piety, possessed 110 large and small mosques, five of which had attached important schools. Diyarbakir had fourteen mosques, each of which operated two schools; Van six mosques and twenty primary schools. The Sharafnameh of Sharif Khan Bitlisi claimed that there were 500 religious scholars and students in Bitlis in 1597.[77]

Libraries existed within important mosques, and these were frequently lost when buildings were razed by invading armies. The Red Mosque of Mahabad, built in 1678, had by the nineteenth century 'innumerable books'.[78] The library in Sanandaj contained 2,000 volumes,[79] and at the start of the twentieth century, a tekiyeh in Van had a library of 3,000 volumes, forty or fifty in Kurdish.[80]

Although by 1890, Bitlis's population had increased to 38,886, there were only fifteen remaining mosques and four *tekiyes*.[81] In the middle of the nineteenth century, several Kurdish commentators deplored the loss of schools, education and learning in Kurdistan.[82]

INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth century saw Kurdistan undergoing yet more momentous changes. Without their emirate system, and with the decline of tribalism and the increase in sedentarism, encouraged by both the Ottomans and the Persians, Kurds underwent an identity crisis. The tribal chiefs gradually evolved into settled landlords and thus sought a peaceful life, integrated into the regional and state capitals. Recent advances in military technology favored regular armies, not rifle wielding mounted tribes, thus making tribal independence harder to achieve.

The Persian and Ottoman empires began to decay, hostage to Great Power intervention and economic exploitation of their resources. The crisis of empire being played out around them led many ambitious Kurds, especially those in Istanbul and in positions of authority to seek a new identity, one that would enable them to participate in a wider political culture, that is to identify with Turkism. Several Kurds were pioneers of Turkism, including Ziya Gökalp[83] from Diyarbakir, who was to write 'Principles of Turkism' in 1920. Gökalp's work later formed the basis of Turkism as a political ideology. In the provinces, many Kurds sought a way that would enable them to cling to the past, that is an Ottoman identity under the Caliphate relying on tribal and traditional religious values. For others the loyalties and identity associated with ethnicity were articulated in two main ways. There was the possibility of maintaining existing socio-economic relationships, thus seeking autonomy within the wider ethnically varied community. There was also the possibility of ethnic separateness and complete independence. There were two main Kurdish political movements under formation; that of religious autonomists like the Sayyids of Nehri, one of whom, Sheikh Said was to lead the 1925 rebellion, and that of the Badr Khans for secular secession, led by the deposed rulers of Botan.

The Great Power penetration of Kurdistan became more intense. By 1907 all of Iranian Kurdistan was within the Russian orbit. Turkey encouraged Kurds to exploit the power vacuum and only the British Russian co-operation to determine the frontiers brought any sort of order. The 1908 Young Turk Revolution led to social reforms in western Kurdistan, favoring the peasantry, dismantling the feudal system, imposing some order and improving the economy. The demise of many feudal elements and tribes enabled Kurdish and Armenian peasants and townspeople to live together more harmoniously, a development that disturbed the government who feared such an alliance in the east. Russian intrigue was suspected as secret Armenian-Kurdish negotiations came to light. Faced with such dangers, the government reverted to the old policy of co-opting the aghas and tribal irregulars. Anti-Armenian feelings were encouraged, and the Russians were portrayed as the means of a Christian attempt to destroy Islam.

Two Kurdish uprisings occurred early in the twentieth century. In 1908, a Barzani sheikh petitioned the Young Turks for recognition of Kurdish religious and cultural rights in Badinan, which led to repeated armed clashes. In 1914, the same sheikh struck an alliance with other leaders and possibly with the Russians. He was driven to Russia by the Ottoman forces, later being captured by rival a Kurdish tribe who handed him to the

Turks for execution. In the same year there was an uprising in Bitlis, supported by the Russians, which was easily suppressed.

On the eve of the First World War, Kurdistan had been divided between the Ottoman and Persian Empires since the seventeenth century. There was also a substantial Kurdish diaspora in Russia, following the deployment of Kurdish tribes by the Persian Shahs to central Asia to guard their eastern flank. Additionally, migration of Kurds northwards had led to a significant presence in Azerbaijan; and migrations to Armenia and Georgia of mainly Yezidi Kurds had occurred in the eighteenth century to escape persecution by Muslims.

CONCLUSIONS

Following Kurdistan's absorption, if not complete control, by the Arab/Islamic Empire, Kurdish political entities developed during the period in which Arab hegemony was in decline and Turkish power was yet to be consolidated. The major 'Kurdish' political entity was the Ayubid Empire, which was based outside Kurdistan, and its Kurdish character is more a retrospective wish-fulfilment than a realistic assessment. Kurdistan was characterised by poor imperial control, which initially was not considered important, as other than lying on or close to major trading routes, Kurdistan had little strategic value. Due in part to those routes also allowing the conduit of invading armies, Kurdistan was seriously hampered in several respects by frequent invasions, or at least marauding armies en route to other parts.

This pattern of constant upheaval and instability stunted all aspects of Kurdistan's development, allowing the tribal nomadic mode of life to continue longer here than in surrounding areas. In particular, the Mongol invasions saw a return to nomadism, and a sharp decline in urban organization, agricultural cultivation and non-tribal forms of association. The fifteenth century world shift in trade routes from land to sea also plunged Kurdistan into further decline.

When, in the sixteenth century, Kurdistan found itself in a new role, that of buffer zone between the newly emergent Safavid and Ottoman Empires, its fortunes seemed, at least politically, to be waxing. By exploiting their location between rival empires, certain Kurds were able to rule emirates outside imperial control, and by making tactical switches of allegiance, to wrest major political and economic concessions. Although this period is seen retrospectively by most Kurds as a 'Golden Age' of freedom for Kurdistan, such freedom was, to a large extent, illusory. The ability of the imperial powers to sow discord amongst the Kurds created a pattern that seems to endure today. Dynastic organization was an essential tool for the imperial powers to exploit the Kurdish emirates, and this also stunted social development in Kurdistan, creating a highly stratified society and increasing the dominance of certain classes and tribes over the cultivators, ordinary towns-people and other tribes.

The emirate system was the creation of the imperial powers, and thus, having developed too far for imperial comfort by the nineteenth century, it fell to them to destroy the Kurdish power bases. This was achieved with lasting effects on Kurdistan's development. The destruction of the emirates ended effective control of certain tribes, and the imperial centres were unable to exert any alternative administrative control. The

urban and civil structures were again irrelevant to Kurdish life; without emirate patronage centres of learning and artisan crafts fell into decline; and the entire area fell prey to lawlessness and religious strife, as the tribes harried the *reyet* of all religions.

Opinion is divided as to the long-term effects of this period on Kurdish political development. Although the Kurds were left without an urban or non-tribal elite to provide leadership or initiate social and political developments, the vacuum allowed the emergence of the non-tribal sheikhs, initially to act as mediators, but who later provided an alternative political organisation and leadership. The imperial solutions to the chaos of Kurdistan, such as the establishment of the Hamidiye, as well as the manipulations of both imperial and colonial powers of the Kurdish-Armenian rivalries, was to have lasting repercussions for both Kurds and Armenians. Such interventions would play a major role in the development of Kurdish nationalism and their failure to profit from the events following the First World War.

By the early twentieth century, the Kurds became increasingly sedenterized, and their tribal chiefs were more effectively attached to the imperial power centers. Nationalist organizations developed, and the sheikhs continued to play a role in these and in political leadership. The decay of the imperial powers allowed a greater degree of Great Power penetration, and certain Kurds became involved in the search for a new identity that would reconcile their situation with the possibilities brought by the ongoing momentous political and social changes throughout the region.

CHAPTER 8
The First World War

KURDISTAN AS A THEATRE OF WAR

As discussed in previous chapters, Kurdistan had already been the stage for the enactment of regional rivalries, and the location of several wars, all of which, to some extent, involved the Kurds. From the outset of the First World War, Kurdistan became the theatre for much more complicated rivalry, involving more distant powers, such as the British and German in a more intense way than ever before. Great Power infiltration dramatically increased, and Kurdistan was to remain a focus of such rivalry until the present time. The war affected Kurdistan in several unfavorable ways, and was to have long-lasting repercussions.

The Kurds were closely involved in the course of the war, both as the passive inhabitants of a region devastated by extensive fighting, and as combatants on all sides. As in the past, local rivalries and tensions, both amongst the Kurds and between the Kurds and their neighbors were exploited to devastating effect. The dramatic population changes that occurred in the region were the logical conclusion of outside manipulation of the Kurds and their neighbors, and dramatically shaped the historical narratives of the Kurds, the Armenians and the Assyrians, who were to become naked competitors for the same territory, rather than neighbors.

The events of and effects of the First World War in Kurdistan are neglected in most accounts of the war, at the expense of the European theatre and the Palestine and Arab Fronts. Events in the region were relatively poorly reported in Europe even during the contemporaneous period.[1] Kurdistan was in the unfortunate position of being bounded by three war fronts, the Caucasus, the Persian and the Mesopotamian Fronts and was the scene of a four-year struggle between the Ottoman, Russian and British armies. The Ottoman-Russian conflict during this war was the continuation of at least two hundred years of conflict, in which the Kurds were involved both as inhabitants of the theatre of war and as combatants on both sides, suffering all the consequences therein. As in previous manifestations of Ottoman-Russian rivalry, the Kurds were actively recruited and manipulated, as were the Christian inhabitants of the region.

In the words of Prof Mazhar Ahmad, Kurdish historian, '[Kurdistan] was surrounded by fire on every side, and scorched by the flames coming from various directions and in every form. It may, therefore be claimed that the Kurdish people participated in the events of the First World War from the very beginning, although they had no choice in the matter or vital interests to serve.'[2]

THE RUSSIANS AND THE CAUCASIAN AND PERSIAN FRONTS

Lazarev, a Soviet historian, traced the outbreak of war in the Middle East to attacks on Russian interests in Iranian Kurdistan that preceded the Ottoman-Russian hostilities in the Black Sea on 29/10/14.[3] A further raid of 400 tribal cavalry on 30/10/14 was intended to throw into disarray the Russians occupying Urmiah, as the Ottomans feared that the new Russian railhead to Julfa would be used in an attack on them. The Russians expelled not only the attackers, but also all Kurds and Sunnis from the plain of Urmiah. Turkey expelled Armenians from the border zone,[4] and thus began the dreadful cycle of deportations and massacres that were to punctuate the war in Kurdistan.

The Russians had been at war with the Ottomans four times in the nineteenth century (four times in the eighteenth century)[5] and, although the Russians were forced by the 1878 Treaty of Berlin to withdraw from Erzerum, they had retained Kars and Ardahan. The Ottomans saw the outbreak of further hostilities as a chance to reclaim their Caucasus territories. Enver Pasha's plan to defeat the Russians and occupy the Caucasus involved a war front beginning at Ardahan, north of Kars, extending south to Sarikamish and thence to Urmiah inside Iran. Within four months the Russians had defeated this front in the west, at Sarikamish, with the loss of three quarters of the Ottoman forces; 70,000 lives, over 30,000 of whom died of cold. Civilian displacement and casualties were not recorded, and the personal humiliation of Enver Pasha meant that news of the depredations in the east was suppressed. The Russians went on to occupy Van, and then Erzurum, Trabzon, Erzincan, Mush and Bitlis.

The vast majority of the Ottoman Ninth Army, deployed in Erzurum, the Tenth Army in Sivas, the Eleventh Army in Elazig and the Twelfth Army stationed in Mosul consisted of Kurds, as did the many irregular units deployed at the fiercest battles.[6] Thus even before the civilian losses were counted, over 300,000[7] Kurdish soldiers were to perish in the fighting, or as result of injuries, cold and hunger.

The Russian military involvement in Kurdistan was of long standing, resulting not only from a general interest in access to the warm water ports of the Persian Gulf, but also the many military campaigns in the region.[8] In addition to the Russo-Turkish wars, there had been two wars with Iran in the first half of the nineteenth century. A Russian commanding officer in the Caucuses had noted in 1900 that, 'Russia has been forced to fight two wars with Iran and four wars with Turkey in this century. The Kurds have always participated in the Caucuses battles of these wars. At first, their participation had been only as enemies, later also as allies. There is no doubt that in our future wars in Asia Minor, we will also have occasion for more frequent contact with this great freedom-loving people, that does not at present recognize the conventions of civil stability.'[9] It was expected then, that the Kurds play an active as well as a passive role in the First World War.

Contact between the Russians and the Kurds increased, and both Kurdish civilians and soldiers were targets of Russian and British approaches. Early in 1915 15,000 mounted Kurds deserted the Third Army alone, more than five sixths of their numbers, and almost all the Kurds deserted at the Battle of Dilman in May 1915.[10] It was common in border regions for Kurdish soldiers to defect with their arms, as instructed by their chiefs. Non-

conscripted Kurdish tribesmen were incited by the British to attack Ottoman troops to gather arms.[11] Russian study of Kurdistan intensified in military and academic circles. Russian political and military officials and their agents provided detailed and precise reports on developments in Kurdistan to the Foreign Ministry and to the Caucasus command.[12] In addition to studies and on the ground research, Russian Orientalists translated works from English. In particular, Nikitine and Minorsky were prolific writers on many aspects of Kurdology, and their work was to inform the policies of both the Russians and, later, the Soviets. Still, the heavy handed treatment meted out by the Russians, their clear favor for the non-Muslim minorities, Armenians and their ill-advised policies, despite the urgings of Kurdish specialists,[13] left the Kurds less than friendly towards them.

Much as the Ottomans had allowed the Kurds to harass the Armenians, the Russians allowed the Armenians to exploit their favored position vis-a-vis the Kurds. Kurdish support toward the Russians dwindled and they were open to British approaches. The Russians intended to occupy Kurdistan as far south as possible in order to squeeze the Ottoman troops between them and the British, who were approaching from Mesopotamia. Additionally the existence of the Sykes-Picot agreement allowed Russia a sizeable portion of Kurdistan. An additional agreement existed from 1915 that would divide Iran between the British and the Russians. Iran's neutrality at the start of the war became increasingly compromised.

The Germans were also interested in Iranian territory as a potential base for its operations, although their propaganda efforts were concentrated in the south and east of Iran. With German and Ottoman encouragement, some Kurds became involved in the *jangali* rebel movement in the north of Iran, a Kurd becoming Minister of War in the movement.[14] These rebels were encouraged to campaign against the Allied forces. With tacit approval from Tehran, German agents also worked out of Kermanshah, attracting many agents and supporters throughout Kurdistan. They inflamed anti-Russian feeling to such an extent that Russians were forced to evacuate from any region not under Russian control, and the Russian consul in Mahabad was assassinated.[15]

The early incursion of Ottoman troops in western Iran, who occupied Khoy, Urmiah and Tabriz allowed great penetration of Ottoman and German agents into Kurdistan. At one stage, some Kermanshahi feudalists, aided by the Shikak and Sanjabi tribes set up a 'Free Persian Government' in Kermanshah headed by Nizam as-Saltaneh. The German minister in Iran, Count Von Karitz, acted as military attaché.[16] The Ottomans retained control in western Iran for five months, after which the Russians regained the area until the end of the war, and the Kermanshah government collapsed. Once in control, the Russians entered Mahabad and Sanandaj, and by February 1916, Kermanshah and the Ottoman-Iranian border. Skirmishes over control of Kermanshah continued. The support of Kurdish tribes allowed German agents to prevent the Russian and British forces from contact throughout 1916. The Russians were forced to an increasing awareness that they must control Kurdistan and its tribes. Of a total Ottoman force of 14,000 in Hamadan, to the west of Kermanshah, 10,000 were Kurds, most of whom deserted after the return of the Russians.[17] The Russians engaged in a frenzy of establishing contacts amongst the Iranian Kurds. They released Simko, giving him an allowance and making him governor of part of Kurdistan. The British encouraged the Russians to enter Iraqi Kurdistan in December 1915 as they had troops under siege in Mesopotamia and wanted to be relieved

from the rear, through Baghdad.[18] Russian advancements were short lived in the Rowanduz area, as their brutal policies towards Kurdish tribal leaders caused the Kurds to again support the Ottomans who reclaimed the area. Rowanduz was almost completely destroyed by the Russians, apart from the Russian garrison, which in its turn razed by the Ottoman troops on reoccupation.[19] Of Rowanduz's 2000 houses, only sixty were left, and only three out of one hundred villages in the Rowanduz region were intact by the end of the war.[20]

In the light of Russia's failures in south-western Kurdistan, Minorsky, who was charge d'affaires in Tehran, suggested greater Russian involvement in anti-Ottoman Kurdish movements, especially that of Sheikh Mahmoud. He noted that Russian control of the part of the Baghdad Railway that was intended to pass near the Russian zone of influence was vital and would be expedited by greater funding of Kurdish movements. On his advice, overtures were made to Sheikh Mahmud and other Kurdish leaders.[21] Minorsky was aware of the futility of urging the Kurds to armed uprising, thus advocated earning their goodwill, by guaranteeing them national rights.[22] Minorsky's 1917 policy suggestions were approved by the pre October 1917 government.[23] The Russians organized several conferences in Kurdistan, attended by tribal chiefs, including a three-day event in Iranian Kurdistan in July 1917, attended by over 2,000 Kurds, and representatives from Russia, Iran and Britain. Like a similar meeting near Sanandaj two months later, this aimed to unite the Kurdish tribes and establish a coherent leadership policy, a recurrent problem being the lack of accepted leadership amongst the Kurds.[24]

The February 1917 Revolution in Russia did not lead to any real change in policy in Kurdistan, although the British increased their co-operation with Russian forces, until the October Socialist Revolution brought further changes. Ahmad notes that Russian sources show that many Armenian and Kurdish leaders were coming to the realization that an Armenian-Kurdish détente was essential, and that they had both been badly used by Tsarist forces. Russian authorities were displeased by this development and this may explain why Russian troops stayed in Kurdish regions.[25] Following the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, all Russian troops were withdrawn from Kurdistan, with the exception of officers opposed to the Revolution. The Kurdish tribes had taken advantage of the disorder between the two revolutions to obtain weapons, and these were co-opted by Enver Pasha into an Islamic Army to fight the Socialist menace.[26]

THE BRITISH AND THE MESOPOTAMIAN FRONT

At the outbreak of war, the British Prime Minister had expressed fear of the 'eternal danger…in Kurdistan', the problems of which were worse than those encountered by the British in India, and which he saw as a future threat even when they had disposed of Mesopotamia.[27] British agents were 'no less active or successful than those of their Russian allies or German and Ottoman enemies.'[28] Certainly in Kurdistan outside Iran, the British were admired by Kurdish intellectuals; they had already explored the area extensively before the war, and had several Kurdologists on hand.[29] The British were more successful than the Russians in forming alliances with Kurdish leaders and tribes, possibly due to the degree of field intelligence gathered in the recent past.[30] This was the source of some resentment and suspicion amongst the Russian officials, who feared that

the British planned to occupy Kurdistan in order to safeguard Mesopotamia after the war.[31]

British military strategy was shaped by two compelling imperial concerns, firstly to defend the approach to India,[32] and the second to protect Iran's oil fields. This latter imperative was vital, as the British navy had converted to oil fuel in 1912.[33] Thus the British invasion of Mesopotamia commenced in November 1914, before the Ottoman-Russian front opened. The Mesopotamian front was always the most compelling for the British, the northern part of Iran had been allocated to Russia as a sphere of influence in 1907.

The British had been wary of Ottoman hegemony in Mesopotamia since the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, when both Britain and Germany feared a loss of influence in Turkey. One of the pressing regional concerns was that of continuing the Baghdad Railway from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. Despite previous opposition, amid concern about German rivalry in Turkey, Britain became involved in the project to complete the railway only two months before the outbreak of the war. Despite wider imperial rivalry, the Germans and the British had succeeded in reaching agreement over their economic and strategic interests in Turkey. Despite Ottoman fears of partition at the hand of their European investors, they feared Russia more and thus entered the war on the side of Germany, in return for guaranteed national integrity against Russia.[34] It has been suggested that the complex story of Anglo-German co-operation and rivalry in Turkey shows how imperialist rivalries amongst the European Great Powers were contributing to the instability, which made the outbreak of war possible. The existence of a large and yet fragile state, such as the Ottoman Empire, tempted stronger powers to stake a claim for spheres of influence and economic control. The Ottoman Empire was the object not only of encroachment by the European Great Powers but also of the nationalist aspirations of its non-Turkic subjects, encouraged by contact with agents of the Great Powers.[35] The resultant continuous crisis affected the Young Turk Revolution, which then contributed to the processes that would see the collapse of the empire.

British forces occupied southern Iraq almost immediately after the Ottoman Empire officially declared support for the Allies. As the Ottoman armies were occupied on the northern and western front, which were far removed, local officials encouraged Kurdish and Arab tribes to defend the Empire against the infidel. Sheikh Mahmoud led over 1,000 Kurdish horsemen as part of an offensive against the British at Shu'aiba in April 1915. Both sides suffered great losses,[36] but the Ottomans were decisively beaten and Kurdish disgust at the Ottoman command led to widespread indifference to the British invasion and abandonment of the *jihad*.[37] It appears that, towards the end of the war, the British began to regret the awarding of Mosul to the French as a sphere of influence,[38] and it also that the war in Iraq reflected the importance to the British of obtaining control over Iraq as far north as possible. For example, only twelve days prior to the Mudros Truce at the end of October 1918, when the Allies were clearly about to be victorious, the British were willing to lose almost 2,000 troops in fighting south of Mosul.[39] As the Russian October Revolution had meant the withdrawal of their northern Allies from 'the great game' played out in Kurdistan, Britain stood to be the sole player of importance.

Once in control of Baghdad, the British began to establish greater links with Kurdish leaders.[40] Officers with India experience, or those who had previously traveled in Kurdistan became very active in Kurdistan, reporting back to Baghdad. These included

Major Soane and Captain Noel. A Kurdish newspaper was published in Baghdad under British supervision, edited by Major Soane. This newspaper, *Têgeyashtinî Raste* (Understanding the Truth), was of a very high literary standard and sought to impress on the Kurds the high ideals of the British, contrasted with the awful prospect of a return to Ottoman oppression. Editorials stressed the separation of politics from religion and sought to incite a nationalist feeling amongst the Kurds and the Arabs, who would then feel free to resist the Ottomans. Additionally, they portrayed the Unionist Government as avowed secularists, whereas the British sought to defend Islamic virtues. The newspaper even named many British converts to Islam as proof of their sympathies![41] The Kurds were clearly encouraged to believe that the British sought to aid them in a liberation struggle against the Turks, and were exhorted to rise in armed rebellion. Appeals to Kurdish historical mythology and to the admired qualities of their leaders clearly showed the advantages of previous research in the area. Special attention was paid to Kurdish chiefs in Baghdad or other areas of British control. News of the activities of the Arab forces in the Hijaz and Syria was used to encourage Kurdish ambitions, especially those of the tribal chiefs.[42] The underlying theme of many editorials was that 'Britain knows the Kurds more than other countries know them'.[43]

THE END OF THE WAR

The Mudros Truce between the Allies and the Ottoman Empire was proclaimed on 30/10/18, by which time the British were in control of most of Iraqi Kurdistan, although not Mosul city itself. Using articles of the truce that allowed for strategic occupation and for the capitulation of all Ottomans in Mesopotamia, the British took all of Mosul vilayat. Such British initiative meant that the French were effectively excluded. The Russians had already 'quit the game', and withdrawn their troops, although the Caucases were still the scene of fighting between the Bolsheviks and the White Russians.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

Both Kurds and the Christians of Kurdistan were victims of ethnic cleansing policies, either planned or incidental. Such events had been predicted by British agents before the outbreak of hostilities.[44] There was also widespread intercommunal and interethnic violence. This was aggravated by the Christian/Muslim divide inherent in the Russo-Ottoman conflict and the legacy from the past wars. In particular, the Russians exploited both the nationalist ambitions of the Armenians and the territorial competition between Christians and Kurds. This was achieved by allowing the Armenian volunteer regiments in the Russian army free rein in occupation, and in favoring Christian inhabitants in occupied areas. The Russians also undertook reprisals against Kurds and Turks who were accused of attacks on Christians. In 1914, Russian forces garrisoned around Bayazid used Armenian troops. When they left, only one tenth of the Kurdish local population survived.[45]

In 1915 alone, over 70,000 of around 200,000 Assyrians left their traditional tribal lands for good.[46] In November 1915, as the Russians retired northwards from Azerbaijan

under Turkish and Kurdish attack, most Armenians and Assyrians from the plains around Urmiah and Tabriz fled after them, many dying in the snow. Those who survived the journey entered Urmiah, which was laid to siege after which 5000 Christians perished at the hands of the Turkish and Kurdish auxiliary troops.[47] Almost one hundred villages were destroyed in the locality. Simultaneously, a 1000 Christians were killed in Salmas, in a massacre instigated by Simko (Ismael Āgā the Shikak leader, who was later banished to Georgia by the Russians, who returned once they had crushed the Ottomans on the western part of the front.[48] Simko later arranged the assassination of Mar Shamon, the Assyrian patriarch in March 1918, under the pretext of a meeting to discuss co-operation.[49]

Another 80,000 or so Assyrians trekked south to Baghdad to contact the British army in 1915, losing half their number to attacks and deprivation.[50] In 1918 a refugee camp of 40–50,000 Assyrians still existed near Baghdad.[51] In September 1919, Arnold Wilson (Civil Commissioner in Baghdad), suggested moving the Kurdish inhabitants (around 2,000 families) out of the Amadiya region and resettling the Assyrians there. This followed Kurdish attacks on the few remaining Christians and the murder of two political officers in July. The Foreign Office agreed in principle, as long as the Kurds were compensated, but the local military authorities were wary,[52] the refugees were resettled randomly throughout Iraq.[53]

The Ottoman government issued a series of edicts and decrees throughout the war, aiming to disperse the Kurdish population, and to ensure that Kurds constituted less than ten percent of the population in resettlement areas. Kurdish leaders were often relocated in the western Turkish cities and forbidden to communicate with their kinsmen. The numbers of deported Kurds are estimated at up to 700,000, up to half of whom died of starvation, exposure or ill treatment.[54]

Since most cities in Eastern Anatolia possessed substantial Armenian minorities, probably the majority of whom welcomed Russian invasion, the Armenians were often active in the Russian ‘liberation’ of cities such as Van and were the victims of reprisals when the Ottoman army reoccupied the city. That the Armenians staged a treasonable revolt on Ottoman re-occupation of Van was one of the official lines on the annihilation of the Armenians of that city.

THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) that came to power following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 proclaimed the equality of all Ottoman citizens, regardless of religion. Armenian activists had worked closely with the Young Turks, as had Kurdish intellectuals, and both expected to maintain this relationship. The CUP’s political liberalism was short lived, and within a year, the response to growing ethnic awareness within the empire was to proscribe political associations based on ethnicity. Once started on this path, Turkish ethno-nationalism advanced rapidly.

The CUP instituted economic and social reforms to curb the power of the tribal chiefs and to create a more stable situation in Eastern Anatolia. The Hamidiye Cavalry was disbanded, and the Kurdish and Armenian peasantry were able to live quietly and in some harmony.[55] In the autumn of 1909, A Kurdo-Armenian conference was held in

Shamdinan. The President of the Ottoman Council of State, Sheikh Abd al-Qadr, although echoing the official CUP line, worried them: 'We must live like brothers with the Armenians. We must restore those lands, which they claim and which have not yet been restored.'[56] The Kurdish cheifs who had fled to Iran from the CUP's reforms, possibly saw opportunities to curry favour with Armenians, and in 1910 Sayyid Nursi[57] suggested in Diyarbakir that, 'Kurdistan belongs to the Kurds and Armenians, not the Turks'.[58]

Any co-operation between Kurds and Armenians constituted a threat to both the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and also to the ambitions of the Russians, and later the British, in Eastern Anatolia. One of the CUP's main weapons in curbing Armenian-Kurdish co-operation was the reforming of the Hamidiye Cavalry, renamed the Tribal Light Cavalry Regiments. These occupied many of the old Hamidiye chiefs, exiled in Iran, and they were soon to forget their interest in co-operation with the Armenians. The CUP realized that the feudal powers of Kurdish chiefs were a good check to other developments, and that the greed of such leaders could be exploited effectively, so all social reforms were reversed.

There had been periodic massacres of Armenians since the end of the nineteenth century,[59] and even in 1909, the CUP had done little to halt, and possibly aggravated, the massacre of around 30,000 Armenians in Adana.[60] Although possibly 60,000 Ottoman Armenians served in the First World War, some fled to Russia at the outbreak of the war, and joined the Russian volunteer regiments, which were used to take several towns in eastern Anatolia. Within a year of the war's outbreak, Armenians in the Ottoman army were disarmed and used as forced labor. Having lost its intellectual elite in government campaigns of arrest, and then its young men, the Armenian community was powerless to resist the mass deportations and exterminations. A few could hide, with the protection of local non-Armenians, some escaped to Russia or the Balkans, but for the majority their fate was death, either immediate or most likely, en route to concentration camps in Syria. To the numbers killed in this deliberate policy to annihilate the 'Armenian problem', should be added the Armenians who died in the Turkish offensive into the Russian Caucasus in summer 1918, as well as after the capture of Baku in the following autumn. The many refugees to Russia found famine conditions after the 1917 October Revolution, and few survived. Overall, it is estimated that 1.5 million Armenians died in a period of twelve years or so.[61] Although certainly not the architects of this slaughter, the Kurds had been implicated and also initially saw themselves as the beneficiaries of this ethnic cleansing.

THE RESULTING DEVASTATION

The First World War laid waste to Kurdistan, which was left 'in a complete shambles'.[62] Between one and one and a half million Armenian civilians had perished, with another half a million displaced.[63] Up to half a million Kurdish civilians and 300,000 combatants from the Turkey proper were killed.[64] Adding the deaths of Iraqi, Syrian, Iranian and Russian Kurds, it is considered likely that almost one million Kurds in total died.[65] Prof. Ahmad concludes that 'no other people of the Near and Middle East suffered so much

misery or misfortune as the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Kurds because of the war'.[66]

By the end of 1917, Kurdistan was in the grip of widespread famine and pestilence. The harvest had failed in 1917, many civilians, including the farmers, were displaced, and the various marauding armies had eaten, taken or destroyed most food supplies. Only women, children and the infirm had been able to work the land for the war years as a consequence of conscription. As parts of Kurdistan were occupied and reoccupied in turn by the Russians, the Ottomans, the British and the Ottomans again, retribution was wreaked on the civilian population each time for assumed complicity and cooperation.[67] A contemporaneous British account of the activities of General Dunsterville noted that Through the unhappy land [of north-western Persia] five armies had passed in eighteen months, both Turk and Cossack, living on the country and leaving desolation behind him. Crops were burnt, granaries seized or destroyed'. The a severe drought affected the 'dying population of north west Persia.'[68] There was little shelter left after the mass destruction, and the few remaining buildings were being broken up for fuel.[69] The Kurdish citizens of Diarbekir, Mush and Bitlis had been driven out by the Ottomans, supposedly in order to billet the army. They were forced to take refuge in Aleppo and Mosul, reduced to eating dead animals and even cannibalism.[70] Arnold Wilson gave a harrowing account of the horrors he witnessed in 1918 on the Khanaqin-Kermanshah road, where people were dying of starvation, and of the difficulties in transporting relief supplies.[71]

In one of the most detailed inventories of the devastation sustained in the war, it can be seen that Sulaymania lost nineteen of its twenty-nine mosques, all three of its *tekiyes,* all but one of its twenty-one *khans* or inns, six hundred and twenty-seven of its 3,142 shops, four of its six bazaars, half of its bath-houses and coffee shops, thirteen of its eighteen gardens and 1,813 of its 3,142 houses.[72] A traveler to Kurdistan in 1919 noted that Sulaymania's population was reduced from 20,000 to 2,500, cannibalism was in evidence and it was impossible to bury all the bodies in a decent fashion. In Rowanduz, only sixty out of 2,000 houses were still intact.[73] Fifty-two out of eighty-one Baradusti villages were destroyed, and one hundred and fifty-seven families of the tribe survived of over 1,000. The Karawuk tribe had been reduced to seven families in 1919, having been one hundred and fifty strong at the start of the war. He also commented on the high death toll following the 1919 influenza epidemic.[74] Another eyewitness reported that, 'Even stale bread and boiled beans were as scarce as medicine, available only to the fortunate few. To be one of those was almost out of reach…. Local people were no longer able to bury their dead…and a few women could scrape a meager living by selling their bodies.'[75] In 1918, Rupert Hay, British Political Officer entered Altun Keupri, where he noted that only 1,000 of a 3,000 population was left, the rest having emigrated or died of starvation. The Turkish troops who had camped in and around the town for some months had left all their waste around the town, which was in the grip of serious infestation.[76] Khoi's population had been reduced by war and famine from 10,000 to 4,000, half its houses were in ruins and the people destitute, in the face of over 50 percent inflation. He organized a poorhouse to care for nearly 300 orphans,[77] and claims that his prompt arrival prevented the death of thousands more of starvation, and the complete desertion of the town.[78]

Major Noel found that in the *nayya* of Polta, consisting of eleven villages, near Malatiya, of seven hundred men conscripted to the army, only fifty had returned, most of those maimed or enfeebled. Based on the pre war population of the village of 2,000, Noel calculated that up to 35 percent of the population had been conscripted, compared to a maximum of 15 percent in Europe. Only 200 of 400 houses remained, plus another 100 widowed households. Although their losses were great and the number of ploughs reduced by half, there were no deaths from famine, as the reduced population benefited from the resultant grain surplus.[79] In his report on the 4–4,500 household tribe of Reshwan, to the south of Malatya, Noel noted that the number of viable households in the tribe was reduced by 35 percent, primarily due to the burning of deserters' houses, followed by famine and influenza. Of 2,000 conscripts, 1,000 deserted and 9000 had not returned by June 1919. Requisitioning from the tribe amounted to 2,500 horses and mules, 25,000 sheep and goats, 60 camels and 1,000 oxen and cows.[80]

The economic chaos evident in the Ottoman Empire was compounded in Kurdistan by the devastation. In 1917 alone, the price of bread in Turkey had risen to twelve times the price in 1913, meat prices had tripled, rice had risen fifteen times, animal fat more than twelve, and petrol more than fifteen. By 1918, inflation of basic foodstuffs was running at over 200 percent,[81] thus only the rich had been able to purchase the limited supplies of food. As Prof. Ahmad notes, Kurdistan was not only the scene of much of the fighting, but had a weak economy and a fragile infrastructure.[82] Major Noel observed grain in 1919 around Diarbekir to be fourteen times its pre-war price.[83] The provisioning of all the troops alone would have taken a severe toll on the region. The inflation even in southern Kurdistan, where there had previously been a surplus of agricultural produce, caused wheat prices to rise sevenfold throughout the war.[84] Although it is impossible to know how much livestock was depleted, it is known that the livestock in Turkey as a whole dropped from forty to nineteen million.[85] There is no reason not to assume that this was reflected in Kurdistan, and in fact the losses in Kurdistan may well have generated this data. All livestock was available for requisition by the Ottoman troops and taxes on livestock, which were regularly increased led to Kurds forfeiting their livestock. The livestock of some northern tribes who took refuge in the southern plains were unable to survive the heat and died.[86]

Major Noel noted for the village of Kulikin a village near Maraş, that the villagers possessed only 250 goats and sheep after the war, as opposed to 350 before, and only ten out of fifteen ploughs.[87] In another village only twenty out of eighty horses were left, and only half the sixty odd ploughs.[88] The Gurrejik tribe had half the number of sheep at the end of the war, and 1,800 of their 2,000 mules had been requisitioned.[89]

The British troops were horrified by the conditions discovered in Kurdistan. They provided extensive relief, which was gratefully received by the Kurds, who were thereafter generally very well disposed towards the British.[90] On the occupation of Khanaqin in 1917, after repeated ravages by Turkish and Russian troops, only one third of the population remained and Wilson recounts that the British administration, led by Major Soane, was joyfully received.[91]

Of course the poorest and least able had suffered the most. Many notables had been exiled, and thus were free of the privations endured in Kurdistan. Other landowners were able to decamp to their homes in Tehran, Istanbul and Baghdad, where the effects of the war were less keenly felt. Those with money were able to purchase what remained of

food supplies, and thus the *āqāwat* wealthy merchants and tribal chiefs and their families were most likely to survive. The privileged elite may even have capitalized on the situation, such as the grain hoarding merchants,[92] and the chiefs of tribes who were adept at switching loyalties.[93] The efforts by the Russians, Ottomans, British and German governments to influence leaders also increased disparities in wealth and power in the region.

CONCLUSIONS

The events of the First World War not only destroyed much of Kurdistan's fragile infrastructure, but also negatively affected the demographic and social balance in the area. Not only did Kurdistan lose many young men in the fighting, but also the civilian losses were enormous. The power of the ruling élites was strengthened, as was the system of tribal representation. The intertribal rivalry, encouraged by outside agents, was to compound Kurdistan's social and leadership problems at a crucial time. This was to be a time of flux during which, in order for the Kurds to gain any advantage or even express any opinions, sound leadership was essential.

The *reyet,* many of whom were Christian, suffered perhaps the greatest losses, thus adversely affecting agriculture profoundly, in a region dependent of its agricultural output. The devastation of the cities was compounded by the loss of the non-Kurdish artisan class, thus even when rebuilt, cities were never able to regain their economic vibrancy and civic culture.

The ethnic and religious makeup of Kurdistan underwent its most enormous change at any period in its history, and left the region more ethnically homogeneous in favor of the Kurds, yet riven with social cleavages. Despite maybe being guilty of only complicity in, and even then possibly of limited extent, the Kurds were to be blamed as the main perpetrators of the massacres of Armenians and other Christians. At the logical culmination of the effects of European penetration in the nineteenth century, there was a complete breach between the Kurds and their onetime Christian neighbors, that the dreadful events on the part of all parties during the First World War had left irreparable. Confessional conflict had left the position of Jewish and other non-Moslem Kurds untenable, and they began to seek alternative locations, thus contributing to the homogenization of the Kurds. The legacy of the ethnic and religious conflict meant that the previous inhabitants of Kurdistan feared each other and also feared further reprisals for their actions, thus in the post war period, a settlement would have to be found that protected them from each other.

Politically, the Kurds had had their national aspirations nurtured and encouraged by the agents of the Russian, Ottoman, German and British armies. The Kurds had especially high expectations of the British, in part because they had actively encouraged nationalist feeling against the Ottoman government, and also because the British army and agents had assisted in the relief of the post war devastation in Kurdistan. These expectations were not met, and the bitterness of that perceived betrayal would become one of the dominant strands in the Kurdish nationalist discourse.

CHAPTER 9
The Image From Outside
Strategic Concerns

THE BIRTH OF KURDOLOGY

The political changes that occurred in the Middle East following the First World War, meant that making studies of, or traveling in, Kurdistan became either hazardous or the expression of an undesirable political aim. However, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a great interest on the part of many Europeans and latterly also on the part of their governments. There was a body of work published on Kurdistan that probably surpasses that of any period since.

It was partly the information available from these early studies that was used to formulate Great Power policy during and, possibly more importantly for the Kurds, after the First World War. Chapter 8 detailed some of the ways in which European agents used their knowledge about Kurdistan during the War to ensure the co-operation of the Kurds. At that time, much of Kurdistan's fate in the modern world was decided, although the available information could have been used more effectively than it was.

Such information then also formed much of the basis of Kurdish nationalist perceptions, in the absence of much indigenous information, and Kurdish nationalists still have an ambivalent relationship with the European 'travelers' as well as the European academics. The importance of these early accounts should not be underestimated, as they are still important primary sources for many types of study, particularly with historical-geographical themes. Many of the people who contributed to the contemporaneous knowledge of Kurdistan were to develop their expertise and establish the field of Kurdish Studies. The backgrounds of writers on Kurdistan, as well as their purposes, affected both their own views and the ways in which those views influenced external policies towards the Kurds.

MOTIVATIONS FOR EXPLORATION

The region came to be explored in some detail partly because of its strategic location. Kurdistan was the theatre for rivalry between the Ottomans and Russians, jut as it had been for Ottoman-Persian rivalry until the Persian Empire retired in a weakened state. It also came to be an area of great strategic importance in the rivalry of the Great Powers, especially Britain, France, Germany and Russia.

The area was vital in communication terms. Kurdistan lay on strategic trade and communication routes, and had done for two millenniums. An 1854 German map of Kurdistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Public Record Office illustrates the 'Great

trade routes from Constantinople and Trabzon to Persia'.[1] It offered Russia a possibility of access to the warm water ports of the Persian Gulf, and lay on the route to the greatest of Britain's imperial possessions, India. The building of the Baghdad Railway, part of which was projected to pass through Kurdistan, lent an added importance to the area and increased European rivalry and anxiety about one colonial power obtaining primacy, although there were some joint projects for the sake of oil exploration. In the early twentieth century, the area was known to be host to probably extensive oil deposits, which increased its economic importance.

The various countries with an interest in Kurdistan had different motivations, which in turn influenced the type of people who traveled to the region, as well as the nature of their research. Thus early traders with Kurdistan, such as Italian merchants took a keen interest in economic potential, as well as political and social aspects that would influence commercial exploits. The French and the Italians followed later by the Americans, and to a lesser extent the British, took a keen interest in the souls of the Kurds and other indigenous regional people. Their close contact with and identification with local Christians colored their perceptions of Kurds, whether Sunni Muslims, or adherents of other sects, who were all seen to some extent through the eyes of their often resentful Christian neighbors.

The German economic imperative threatened certain British and Russian interests, but until the First World War, the Germans showed little interest in exercising political power. As the British government became aware of this, they were able to reach a mutually beneficial agreement with the Germans over the Baghdad Railway project. It was both the Russians and the British who had real perceptions of Kurdistan's strategic importance. This is reflected in the nature of the studies by British and Russian agents. It is note-worthy that both of these powers had a mutual interest in continued political and social fragmentation in Kurdistan. Despite its strategic importance to Russia and Britain, both had an interest in maintaining Kurdistan's geographical and strategic marginality, so that they could continue to conduct their activities in the region, as well as maintain it to some extent as a buffer zone with no real power centre.[2] This is not to underestimate the economic importance of the region to both these powers, but that their strategic interests took precedence is evident. Much anxiety about Kurdistan was based on pre-emptive policies rather than really indicated by events. As in Afghanistan, Russia and Britain took care to ensure that nothing threatened the frontiers of their empires, or the supply lines to their imperial possessions.

NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY TRAVELERS

The nineteenth century was period of relative security in Kurdistan for foreigners, with the establishment of various consular missions. It was also a period of increased economic colonialism, and an age of great European travel and exploration. In addition to the European consuls, the region saw the arrival in the region of Christian missionaries and a great many travelers. Most of these travelers were 'gentlemen of independent means', educated and wealthy. They were consuls, spies, churchmen, engineers, geologists, botanists, archaeologists and scholars. Many of them were considered geographers in the widest sense, not confining themselves to narrow disciplines,

presenting their research findings at geographical societies and publishing in geographical journals. Many of the travelers had military connections, most of them through the Indian Army, and their findings are scattered throughout the political and secret files in the Public Record Office and the India Office. Others were either members of, or were to be enrolled in, the India Political Service, serving either in India or the Persian Gulf.

GERMAN TRADE AND INDUSTRY

German engineers had long been active in Turkey, and Berlin and Istanbul were already connected by railway. German travelers and Orientalists such as Professor Oskermann, Professor Hartmann and Hugo Makas, had been writing about Kurdistan since the eighteenth century.[3] They had considerable knowledge about history, language, customs and the political and social life of the Kurds. Owing to close relations with the Ottoman elite, and widespread economic penetration, it was natural for German interest in the Kurds to increase, and for the body of information to be used to expand economic opportunities.

The German involvement in the Ottoman army offered many opportunities for contact with and the study of the Kurds, with military control as an underlying aim. For example Field Marshal Helmuth Karl von Moltke (1800–1891) who was employed by the Sublime Porte between 1834–1839 to reorganize the Ottoman Army, wrote sympathetically about the conditions of the Kurds, although he was involved in suppressing uprisings.[4] German officers had surveyed the area and studied features on their strategic and economic features, especially transport routes.[5] A German officer called Groerbud was the first European to visit some parts of Kurdistan, taking pictures and drawing maps. The German Consul in Erzerum, Andreas, initiated contact with Kurdish chiefs in the early twentieth century, as well as surveys of towns like Dersim and Kharput.[6] Possibly the earliest attempt at an ethnographic map of part of Kurdistan was produced in Germany in 1854.[7] The Uratian cuneiform inscriptions at Van were recorded in 1827 by Schultze, who was murdered for his pains by the Emir of Başkale.[8]

Economic gain was a factor in much German contact with the area. The town of Ushnuyeh in Iranian Kurdistan was a large center for German wool purchase, destined for a German factory in Tabriz.[9] German trade centers were founded in several parts of Kurdistan. Between 1880 and 1911, German trade with the Ottoman Empire increased by 22 times: Kurdistan was very important in German economic policy.[10] By 1907, the British Foreign Office was seriously concerned about German economic penetration, as well as the Baghdad Railway issue, causing someone to remark that, ‘the whole of Mesopotamia is overrun by German commercial travelers’.[11]

BRITISH EXPLORATION

The British showed an even keener interest than the Germans in Kurdistan. Initial travelers indicated an economic interest, at least in the trade routes. Employees of the East India Company had traveled there from the second half of the eighteenth century.

From 1806, and especially in 1820–21, Claudius Rich undertook extensive travels in Kurdistan, drawing some of the first local maps and informing on may aspects of Kurdish life.[12] Rich became the first Permanent Resident in Baghdad (1807), succeeded for a time by Henry Rawlinson.[13] Travelers such as Kinner[14] and Morier[15] wrote about the region in the first twenty years of the nineteenth century.

Ely Bannister Soane (later to become a major in the British army) had learned Kurdish and Persian in Kermanshah in 1906–7, whilst in the employ of the Anglo-Persian Petroleum Company, and had considerable proficiency in Kurdish, as well as other local languages. During the following two years, he traveled in the region, masquerading as a Persian.[16] He then published extensively on the Kurdish language. Soane was appointed British Vice-consul in 1913 at Qasr-e Shrin, and then went on to a military career, with a particular interest in propaganda and publishing.[17] During the First World War, he carried out secret missions, including establishing close relations with the Jaff tribal leaders. By 1919, he was the Political Officer in Sulaymania, and until his final return to the UK in 1921, played a major role in consolidating British influence in Kurdistan. His career demonstrated the way in which an adventurer with linguistic and local knowledge could be coopted by the British to assist with their activities in Kurdistan.

Isabella Bird traveled through Kurdistan, her writing comprising the first extensive documentation by a European woman.[18] By the end of the century, Captain Frank Maunsell had published not only a detailed geography of Kurdistan as a whole, but one of the first maps of Kurdistan, centered on Kurdistan, showing the extent of Kurdish habitation.[19] As British military attaché in Constantinople, Maunsell and the honorary attaches, such as Mark Sykes, Aubrey Herbert and George Lloyd covered much of Kurdistan, as well as Syria and Mesopotamia in their journeys, and compiled reports for British Military Intelligence. The political and secret files of the Public Record Office and the India Office are scattered with reports and maps from these sources.[20] Professional agents were also employed, such as Colonel Massey, who surveyed Kurdistan widely between 1893 and 1903.[21]

In the early years of the twentieth century, British travelers, scholars and agents were practically tripping over each other in Kurdistan, including Lynch, Sykes, Driver and Soane. Sykes gathered extensive data on Kurdish tribes, which again had useful military applications.[22] Consuls, such as Dickson in Van, traveled widely, publishing their observations in the Geographical Journal.[23]

Extensive efforts were made in Mesopotamia and its environs in the field of archaeology, and the British Museum funded excavations in both the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, archaeological explorations were undertaken by Rich, Rawlinson, Layard,[24] Ker Porter,[25] and Rassam,[26] most of whom also bequeathed writings on the Kurds.[27] These archaeologists oversaw the birth of Assyriology, which far eclipsed studies of the Kurds and considerably elevated the regional Christians who came to be known as the descendants of the ancient Assyrians. Like the writers of other nationalities, they often viewed the Kurds unfavorably in relation to their Christian neighbors.

Of course as the war approached, it became clear that the British had designs on Kurdistan, and most travelers and researchers were either military or political agents or were co-opted into their service. Much of British activity in the region, like the Russians,

French and Americans, was directed at the Christians and other minorities in Kurdistan, about whom a great deal of material was produced.

The military and political records of the First World War show how important these, and to some extent, earlier travelers were in forming policy, and later in deciding the outcome of the Peace Process. Despite the availability of such information, and indications that it informed many agents of the Indian Political Service and the Indian Army, the British Government and certainly the Foreign Office made poor use of this body of work. Arnold Wilson commented that the War Office had appeared to be barely aware of the existence of the Kurds.[28] In March 1919, Wilson attended a meeting in Paris with military and civil experts on Western Arabia, to find that only Gertrude Bell, who had returned from Iraq at his suggestion, had any knowledge of Iraq or Persia (and presumably the Kurds). He and Miss Bell were unable to convince the Military and Foreign Office Delegations that the 'Kurds in the Mosul vilayat were numerous and potentially troublesome'.[29]

RUSSIAN DESIGNS

The Russians were extremely interested in Kurdistan, strategically due to its Caucasian ambitions and its yearning for Gulf access, as well as an economic outlet. Russian travelers had written on the area since the 15th century.[30] Several Kurdish tribes had been active participants in the ten Russo-Ottoman wars and in the two Russo-Iranian wars,[31] and the Treaty of Golestan in 1813 had conceded some Kurdish territory to Russia, in addition to the existing well-established Kurdish Diaspora.

The first Russian diplomat to Ottoman Turkey was installed in Constantinople in 1701. From that time, the Russians took a keen interest in developments in Kurdistan, and their diplomats included detailed reports on domestic situations involving the Kurds.[32]

A great deal of Russian research openly focused on the importance of Kurds and Kurdistan in possible military strategies, and was commissioned by the Army or Foreign Office.[33] During the nineteenth century, several Russian officers and diplomats gathered information of commercial and military interest on Kurdistan, including Proskoriakov, who spent several years in the Russo-Ottoman border region, drawing up maps of Erzerum and its environs. He described Erzerum as 'the crossroads of trade in Asia,' such was its economic importance to Russia.[34] One of the first maps of Kurdish tribes was produced by Col Kartsov in 1896, accompanied by a synopsis of the history of contact between the Russian military and the border tribes.[35] Another Russian officer, Capt. Averianov, published an extensive work, with the self-explanatory title, *The Kurds in the Wars of Russia with Turkey and Iran during the Nineteenth Century: The Current Political Situation of the Kurds of Turkey, Iran and Russia*.[36] Much of the focus of this work appeared to be aimed at the role of the Kurds in a future confrontation in the region, possibly extending Russian territory greatly to the south.[37]

Their interests also began to expand in the twentieth century to include Mesopotamia,[38] and an anxiety about the Baghdad Railway and its advantages to German interests in the region. Economic anxieties were particularly to the fore, and the burgeoning number of Russian consuls took an interest in trade as well as political and

military intelligence.[39] A keen interest in local Christians also dominated regional forays. At this time Minorsky and Nikitine, Russian diplomats, and later leading Kurdologists, began to publish studies of Kurdistan and the Kurds. In 1913, A.A.Arlov, the Russian Consul-General in Baghdad traveled in Kurdistan and published his findings.[40] During the First World War, a former consul, Prince Boris Shakhovski, was entrusted with overall supervision of Kurdish intelligence by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in addition to his existent task of improving economic and trading links.[41]

Several academic institutions were inaugurated in Russia to study the countries and peoples of the Near and Middle East,[42] and Russian orientalists were probably more active than any others in the study of Kurdistan, aided by the mass of information available in diplomatic and military archives.[43] A British traveler in Kurdistan saw a Russian living as a Kurd, who claimed to be a fugitive from justice, but who was assumed to be a spy.[44]

The spread of Russian influence in Kurdistan became a perceived threat to several countries, and the Ottomans, the Iranians, the British,[45] and the Germans all tried to undermine Russian activities. This hostility, combined with Russian hesitation to provoke the other regional players, is in Ahmad's opinion, the reason that Russia's apparent policy of southward expansion was not a success.[46] Rather they confined themselves to concerns about how to win the Kurds to their side in any future conflict. The growing Russian interest in the Armenians and Assyrians, and especially their clear policy directed at Armenian ascendancy during the First World War, alienated many of their erstwhile Kurdish allies.[47]

THE AMERICANS

As the United States of America was so distant and in little need of the markets of the Middle East, economic links were few, although a treaty of trade and friendship with the Ottoman Empire was entered into in 1830.[48] This allowed the US the same privileges as certain European states, as well as the right to set up consulates. A similar treaty with Iran in 1856 granted extensive privileges to American traders.[49] The Tabriz consulate established a tradition of operations in Iranian Kurdistan.[50]

American missionaries had been active in Kurdistan since 1820, funded by the state department, and many of them published studies and reports on Kurds. The US established a mission in Tabriz in 1856, from which they operated in Iranian Kurdistan for the next hundred years. By 1914, there were 675 American schools in Turkey, with around 35,000 pupils, including some Kurds. Over 100,000 Armenians became Protestants, as did some Assyrians.[51] The penetration of American missionaries can be cited as one of the primary causes of the deterioration in communal relations in Kurdistan.[52] Ahmad notes that, not only were many missionaries invited to be unofficial consultants to the government on questions relating to the Ottoman Empire and the Paris Peace Conference, but several missionary officials were friends of President Wilson, who took office in 1912 and managed the Peace Process after the War.[53]

THE ITALIANS

The Italian sources on Kurdistan are amongst the oldest of the European sources, and until the extensive writings of Dr Galletti, they were quite unknown.[54] Italy entered the war late, was not active in the eastern war theatre, and ended the war in a weak position,[55] its opinions were not greatly solicited during the Peace Process, thus this large body of literature was not really available to the decision-makers. In the early twentieth century, Italy had had fewer links with Kurdistan, due to its war with the Ottoman Empire.

An Italian missionary published the first Kurdish grammar and dictionary in the West in 1787,[56] and possibly the first,[57] and certainly the first European, book on the history of Kurdistan was published in 1818 in Naples.[58] From the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Italian travelers, diplomats, missionaries and merchants crossed Kurdistan on their way to Mesopotamia or Persia. The majority of Italian travelers to Kurdistan left only brief notes, as they were passing through. However, Italian Catholic missionaries were active in the region, especially in Mosul. In 1632, a mission of Capuchin friars was established in Mosul, followed by a Dominican mission, taken over by the French in 1859. The residents of these missions wrote widely on the Kurds. Politics, trade and religion were the main aims of expeditions, until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[59]

Campanile's[60] account of various aspects of Kurdish society was colored by his contempt for the customs of the Kurds, but provided a very interesting analysis of Kurdistan's political structures and geographical location and advantages. He notes the remarkable strategic location of Kurdistan, in that it 'offers the safest and most comfortable withdrawal for an army fighting in that area.'[61] Additionally he felt that Kurdistan was an area of great economic potential and commercial wealth, possibly the most self-sufficient area in the Middle East. He berates the Kurds themselves for not exploiting the region's resources, such as minerals (including bitumen), and its agricultural possibilities, which could create an export surplus, to places as far off as Europe. He even suggests that the abundance of streams would enable the establishment of factories. Ultimately he concludes that, 'Kurdistan is a badly known and neglected treasure. Its inhabitants are like Tantalus who starves in the middle of abundance.'[62] If Italy had sustained its connections with Kurdistan, this work might well be made more familiar by the nationalist discourse on Kurdistan's resource potential.

In the nineteenth century, between 1848 and 1861, Italy produced an alternative group of 'gentlemen travelers', the Italian patriot exiles, who were strongly influenced by the Romantic movement, and admired 'noble savages' such as the Kurds.[63] During this time, Italian officers served with the Ottoman army, such as Allesandro de Bianchi, who took a special interest in the Empire's eastern provinces. He not only provided well informed data on the Kurdish population, but also the tribes, informed by a sympathy for the Kurds over the Turks, despite his role as Turkish interlocutor. He also provides an analysis of the Russian nationality laws as they apply to Kurdish tribes, to Russian military advantage. He also stressed, as had Campanile, the possibilities for guerrilla warfare in Kurdistan.[64]

FRENCH MISSIONARIES

French economic links with the Ottoman Empire were extensive.[65] The total railway lines in Ottoman territory built by the French at the end of the nineteenth century amounted to 1,266 km.[66] Thus the French were allocated 40 percent of the total shares of the Baghdad Railway project. French culture was very influential throughout the Ottoman Empire, and French was the preferred language of the intelligentsia, including those Kurdish intellectuals living in Constantinople.[67]

French missionaries were active, especially in Mosul Province, which was to become the area of most intense European competition. Overall, French missionaries were built around 500 schools in Turkey, enrolling around 60,000 pupils.[68] Several French missionaries became known Kurdologists such as Pére Thomas Bois, who contributed an article on Kurds to the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam. De Morgan's 1895 Mission Scientifique to Persia, consisted partly of a geographical exploration of Iranian Kurdistan.[69] The French took a particular interest in the Armenians amongst and around Kurds, and were initially their greatest advocates during the peace talks. The reports from missionaries were used to inform this stance.

NEW USES FOR THE TRAVELLERS' ACCOUNTS

It is clear that during the First World War, the officers who had traveled in Kurdistan were co-opted into efforts to control the region. Their linguistic skills, cultural and political knowledge and their contacts were exploited in the jostling for control in the region. Kurdistan was abutted by three warfronts and was the theatre not only for extensive fighting, but also for political machinations to win the favor and assistance of the Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians.

Any further studies of the region were undertaken only in the light of military and political ambitions, and the area became a strategic concern rather than the interesting exploratory challenge it had been to many previously. The activities of European agents in Kurdistan greatly contributed to the body of knowledge about both the region and its inhabitants, but early work remained the basis of all further work. The period leading up to the Paris Peace Conference was a time of great data gathering, as political agents such as Wilson and Noel were assigned to study the area thoroughly and to prepare reports for use by the British delegation in Paris.

THE INDIAN POLITICAL SERVICE

Indicating the importance of the region to the India Office, the British Consul in Baghdad was usually appointed by the Indian Political Service (IPS), where he was elevated to the status of a resident, with such ritual honors as a detachment of thirty Indian sepoys as an honorary guard.[70] The IPS also appointed the Political Resident and Political Agents who ran the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms. Sir Arnold Wilson had been Gulf Political Resident before his appointment as Civil Commissioner for Iraq (1917–20), and his successor, Percy Cox had also been his predecessor in the Gulf. The IPS agents produced a huge

volume of works, offering their first hand experiences of the Middle East, including several relevant to Kurdistan. Hay's account offers a good illustration of the devastation widespread in Kurdistan after the First World War, and of the British administration.[71]

These accounts illustrate the attitudes which the IPS brought to the administration of the region. As Rich puts it, 'The mentality of the Gulfites was created in their English public schools… The Gulfites were courageous … They exhibited a remarkable concern for the nuances of dress and decorum… They expected deference. But most important, their first concern was for the Empire, not for Kurds or Arabs or Assyrians.'[72] The IPS had exercised more than supervisory responsibilities and was known for its propensity to engage in extra-curricular activities,[73] with a clear policy that the end justified the means.[74] Many of the prejudices that informed the work of the IPS are writ in their most virulent form in Thomas Lyell's *Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia*.[75] Lyell was an advocate of the civilizing presence of a Western presence in the Middle East, and a great supporter of the imperial idea. He was deeply prejudiced and bigoted towards all the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, intensely pragmatic and a great admirer of his mentor, Arnold Wilson. It appears that the maxim of Claudius Rich, whilst Resident in Baghdad, was still taken to heart: 'Nothing but the most decisive conduct will do; any other will increase the insolence of his (the 'Oriental's') disposition.'[76]

The 1914 invasion of Basra by an Indian expeditionary force, under the control of the Indian Government, and the subsequent military expansion had extended the administration of the IPS, under the rule of Percy Cox. As in the Gulf, the administrators set to work to create a ruling elite with whom they could work in the future. In the case of the Kurds, this was to prove very difficult. The IPS agents generally supported a policy of forceful and direct intervention in Mesopotamia and its neighboring regions.[77] Their own involvement in Middle Eastern affairs reaching beyond the Gulf into Mesopotamia was enhanced by the fact that India was forced to provide much of the forces for the Middle East campaigns.[78]

The Government of India was always suspicious of Russian designs, following the enactment of the 'Great Game' in Afghanistan and northern India. The India Office, like the Foreign Office, saw Russia as far less a threat in the region than German commercial interests, and advocated diplomatic co-operation with the Russians. In fact Cohen suggests that 'the India Office was itself chiefly responsible for the exclusion of the Indian Government from the formulation of Britain's Mesopotamian policy.'[79] The India Office and the Foreign Office also did not see eye to eye over the formulation of a Mesopotamian policy, other than to agree that the Persian Gulf was, and should remain part of the British Empire.

The biographer of Sir Percy Cox suggests key differences in the views of the importance of the Persian Gulf to the India Office, as seen from London, and as seen from India itself. In London, the issue at stake was to ensure the security of the sea and land routes to the sub-continent. In India, however, the government saw the key issue as the very security and permanence of British rule in India itself.[80] As this implies, any potential threat to the British presence in the Gulf was seen from India as a double threat. The presence of other European nations in the Gulf could not be countenanced, nor could any indigenous power along the Asian route to India be allowed to become too powerful. The question for the Indian Government was that of the impact that such a threat could have on Indian public opinion in India itself, where the keystone British government was

the illusion of infallibility. This was to be of great importance in understanding the actions, not only of Sir Percy, but of all officers of the IPS.

Helmreich posits that, whatever disagreements between the British parties to the Peace Process, there were fundamental principles, based on regional rivalries, to which all subscribed. Chief among these was the protection of routes to India. In the past, the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was the policy at the foundation of this requirement. Although new ways had to be found to implement policy, the real enemies remained the same, that is France and other European rivals, the German economic menace having been defeated by the war.[81]

The responsibility for the Mesopotamian Campaign was, in February 1916, transferred from the Government of India to the British War Office. Due to the extreme friction between the Military Commander, General Maude, and the Chief Political Officer in Baghdad, Percy Cox, Cox was allowed to report to the India Office, rather to General Maude, having initially reported to the Government of India.[82] This illustrates both the complexity of command and reporting structures, and the deep divisions between the parties involved. It was indeed, during this period, difficult to talk about 'the British' when there were so many actors.[83]

SHIFTING POLICIES

'British' policy towards Kurdistan was unclear and fluid, undergoing several changes during that two years, and also following the Treaty of Sevres until the final division of the area by the 1926 Treaty of Lausanne. Policy was not only fluid, but varied according to the interests and perspectives of the decision makers. The India Office was usually at variance with the Foreign Office, and felt that they should have more power, as did the Government of India, due to their strategic concerns and extensive experience with tribally organized societies.

These policy changes were informed by strategic, political, economic, and to some extent, humanitarian concerns. One of the key issues defeating attempts to administer and plan for the future of the region was the confusing ethnic and confessional distribution, and the momentous changes that it had undergone before and during the war. Theoretically the Peace Process was guided by the ideology of the right to national self-determination. Of course at that time this raised several different questions in relation to Kurdistan, which was already divided between two powers, and thus there was no possibility of creating a unified Kurdish state.

It was not even entirely clear whether there was a clear sense of national identity amongst the Kurds, and their leadership problems were a major stumbling block. Both their ability to organize themselves in a nation-state, and their desire to do so was doubted. The Armenians and Assyrians had territorial ambitions in direct competition with those of the Kurds. This factor, plus judicious manipulation of existent rivalries by outside powers, ensured that these groups could not accommodate each other in any plans for statehood, and that increasing violence diminished the possibility of a peaceful division of the region.

However, for certain periods, there were suggestions that a Kurdish state could be created. This was dependent on solving the 'Armenian Question', and also on

establishing which areas were appropriate to be allocated to Kurds, Armenians, Christians and other local ethnic groups. These divisions also had to accord with British control of Mesopotamia (the one clear aim throughout) and its needs, as well as meet the approval of the other Great Powers, with whom there were pre-existing agreements of territorial divisions. Incidents between the Kurds and their neighbors disrupted several of these plans, as did shifting loyalties, leadership problems and more strategic concerns. It is clear that, aside from the defense of British interests, the competing aims of Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians, not to mention the Arabs, who had been promised a Mesopotamian state, could never be met. Too many expectations had been raised, and the populations were too integrated to establish clear boundaries.

Attempts to grasp the complexities of the situation spawned several ethno-graphic maps of Kurdistan. These varied from on the ground sketches to the elaborate April 1919 attempt to map the entire area.[84] (Fig. 10.6) This was probably a synthesis of all the studies undertaken over the previous hundred years, it certainly did not allow for the population changes experienced as a result of ethnic cleansing in the First World War. Bizarrely, a Peace Conference memorandum on Mesopotamia written just two months earlier was accompanied by a simple ethnographic map of Mesopotamia, which differed enormously, although it did emphasize that there was a considerable are of debated overlap between the Kurdish and Arab territories.[85] (Fig. 10.7) This memorandum contained a suggestion that Southern Kurdistan and Mesopotamia be unified, with a Kurdish tribal confederation under British guidance, along with an autonomous Nestorian area.

Once the Peace Conference had allocated Mesopotamia to the British, the political agents and administrators sent to the region continued to produce enormous quantities of material on the Kurds, yet the sources of pre 1920 are still amongst the most important and most studied. It was almost a time of innocence, when nationalism was less relevant and the Kurdistan could still be comfortably viewed as a whole. After that time, maps representing Kurdistan contained within them a political ambition, and attempts to map the extent of Kurdistan were left to the Kurds.

It was not until 1921, after the Paris Peace Conference, that a Middle East Department was created, with a political committee for Kurdistan, and the question of Kurdistan's fate was coherently addressed at the Cairo Conference in March 1921.[86] Following that, the British policy towards Kurdistan shifted again before the final territorial division of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1926.[87]

CONCLUSIONS

By the early twentieth century, there was a large body of information on Kurdistan available in European languages. The nature of such writings indicated the strategic importance of Kurdistan to the European powers, particularly the British, the Russians and the Germans. That Kurdistan was of commercial significance is clear from the writings of commercial travellers and by reports on the economy of Kurdistan. Such works illustrate the importance of communications and resources in the region.

The types of research carried out by agents of each country also indicate something about the nature of those countries' individual interests in Kurdistan, which informed

their regional policies. In particular, German economic penetration was of concern to the British, especially during the prolonged negotiations over the building of the Baghdad Railway. The Russians demonstrated clear military as well as economic plans for influence in Kurdistan. All European powers who investigated Kurdistan took into account possible military strategies, and when Kurdistan became a theatre of operations during the First World War, this information, as well as more general information on the Kurds was utilized for war intelligence purposes, with varying degrees of success, as was detailed in chapter 8.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century was a period of unprecedented exploration of Kurdistan, and all aspects of both the area and its inhabitants. Many of the British travelers who wrote on Kurdistan were co-opted by the British government, or at least its agencies, to assist in exerting control over the region. However, a vast body of material on Kurdistan was neglected. The prejudices and interests of those personalities were to exert influence over the decision-making process during and after the war. The administration of Mesopotamia and Kurdistan largely fell to the Indian Political Service (IPS), whose distinct character and views were very significant during the period when information, which would decide Kurdistan's fate, was gathered and filtered for presentation to various government bodies.

The role of the IPS was complicated by the fluid arrangements for control of the Mesopotamian military campaign as well as the later administration, and by the perceived conflict of loyalties between them as agents of the Government of India, with responsibilities to the India Office and the British Foreign Office. The complications inherent in these arrangements were expressed in the fluidity of policy over Kurdistan, which is further explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10
The Colonial Division of Kurdistan

EXISTING AGREEMENTS

The surrender of a weak Turkey to the allies in 1918 left the region in a state of turmoil, and the peace settlement conference was to take two years to organize. It was already more or less decided that there would be a Mesopotamian state, but the northern border of that state was completely undecided, and open to many suggestions. In principle, President Woodrow Wilson's ideal of creating nation-states was accepted, but the diverse nature of the population of Eastern Anatolia and Northern Mesopotamia made it extremely difficult to even propose a suitable division of these regions. In particular, the six eastern vilayats of Anatolia[1] plus the vilayat of Mosul were to become a focus of dissent over their future. There were also other strategic considerations such as the defense of routes to India and promises made to other allies, to be considered.

During the First World War, the British and French governments concluded a secret treaty dividing the Ottoman territories into French and British zones—the 1916 'Sykes-Picot Treaty'.[2] (Fig. 10.1) When the Russian Government became aware of this treaty, their complicity was assured by the allocation of a share in the territories. The allocation of the northern area to Russia was abrogated by the Bolshevik takeover in 1917, leaving the area north of the Lesser Zab River, area 'A', in the French sphere of influence. All of the area south of this, area 'B', was to be a British sphere of influence. The areas of territorial allocation were coloured on the official maps, and in subsequent discussions and communications were usually referred to by colour, rather than by name. These spheres were not fixed, as Mosul, originally French, was left to British control in 1918 in return for a French share of the oil production. However, the need to consider the French interests in the region was to play a large role in British decision-making.

The Italians had been enticed to enter the war on the Allied side with the incentive of a 'just share of the Mediterranean region adjacent to the province of Adali (Antalya)' as well as that province itself.[3] On learning of the Sykes-Picot Treaty, the Italians pressed for a similar agreement concerning their claims. Thus were the Allies forced to add an area, 'C', to the maps indicated zones of influence. The British and French concern over Italian claims in Turkey caused them to be wary of involving Italy in discussions over the fate of Mesopotamia.[4]

THE PEACE PROCESS

Theoretically, the Peace Process was guided by Woodrow Wilson's doctrines of self-determination and collective security. This put European diplomats on entirely unfamiliar ground, as the previous assumption behind all European peace settlements had been the

primacy of the requirements of the balance of power over the preferences of the populations affected by border changes. In Wilsonian terms, it was not self-determination that caused wars, but rather the lack of it and the instability caused by the pursuit of the balance of power. In a complete reversal of the Great Power methods of operation, the new world was supposed to be based on principles not power, and on law not interests, for both victor and vanquished.[5]

Wilson's fundamental statement of the US peace aims was set out in his fourteen points of January 1918.[6] These were to evolve into four principles (11.02.18), four ends (04.07.18), and five particulars (27.07.18), all of which stressed the self-determination of nations, and the principles of consent of the governed. The Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918 supported these aims.[7] This declaration, as well as the statements from Wilson, were taken to heart by many Kurds. When, in June 1919, Sheikh Mahmoud, the leader of a Kurdish revolt was apprehended, he was reputedly wearing a Koran strapped to his arm, on the flyleaf of which was written in Kurdish, the Anglo-French Declaration. He was also able to recite Wilson's twelfth point, specifying national-self-determination.[8]

The Paris Peace Conference was envisioned as a forum for all the peoples of the world. It was structured into a hierarchical system of increasingly important and exclusive councils of delegates. The lesser states' delegates could address all the councils, to underline the conference's democracy, but this aggravated the time-consuming nature of the process. With twenty-seven states invited to participate, and innumerable lobbyists thronging Paris, the conference rapidly descended into a 'free for all', with fifty-eight committees and 1,464 meetings.[9] The slowness of the process was frustrating, especially for Wilson, in whose lengthy absence domestic support for both his vision and specifically the League of Nations was waning. Towards the end of the Peace Conference, Wilson's personal desire to oversee the creation of a new world order was subjugated to a desperate sense of urgency to conclude the process.

The slowness of communication with the Middle East, and the multiple actors involved in decision-making, both regionally and in London and Paris,

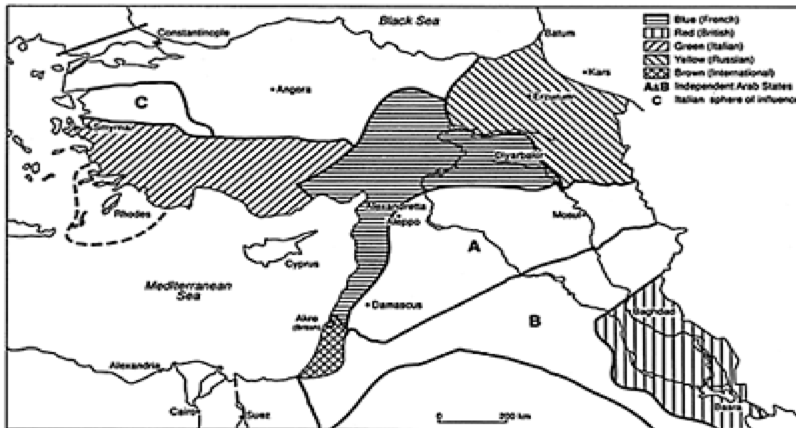

Figure 10.1 The Sykes-Picot Plan, May 1916

also hindered the speed of the settlement in Turkey.[10] Arnold Wilson, Civil Commissioner in Baghdad, noted that replies from London to his suggestions took up to a month to arrive, by which time, so much had changed. Thus he argued strongly that all policy should be agreed in Baghdad, and that the Indian Government should be excluded, as they were too busy on the home front to desire any policy-making role in these regions.[11] Wilson complained that he found himself in constant negotiations with the High Commissioner in Constantinople, General Allenby at the General Head-quarters in Egypt, the War Office, the Cabinet, the Indian Office and the Government of India. Further, the British and French representatives in Tiflis, and the British Minister in Tehran also had to be kept informed.[12] More than once, the Government of India asked for proof that Indian views were actually reaching the peacemakers. When such proof was not forthcoming, Indian officials suggested that such private correspondence directed at Paris, London and Baghdad be made public.[13] Ultimately, the Government of India and the India Office were not consulted on the final drafting of the Treaty of Sevres, and the Indian delegation was very unhappy with several aspects of the final terms.[14] The majority of the treaty was drafted by the Middle Eastern political section in Paris,[15] without consultation with the Foreign Office, 'a bad and dangerous arrangement', as Curzon called it.[16]

It has been suggested that for the British Government, bearing in mind the difficulties inherent in using that term, three main concepts underlay the Peace Conference. They were the desire to maintain supremacy in the Near East, the challenge posed by France as an economic competitor, and the realization that supporting Constantinople would no longer achieve those ends. The creation of an Armenian state would remove control of the route to India from Turkey, whilst also buffering a possible future Russian resumption of expansionist policies. However, the British did not want the burden of the Armenian mandate, nor did they wish their competitors, the French to take it. For this reason, the British supported the US authority in plans for the area, until the time that Wilson lost domestic power, and the British realized that the US would not be able to shoulder the burden, after which time they abandoned Armenia.[17]

KURDISTAN AS A POSSIBILITY

The fate of Kurdistan was not high on the agenda for the British, or any European power at the end of the First World War. The Russians had withdrawn from the war and were not party to the Peace Process, the French were initially interested in Mosul, and the British appeared interested in Kurdistan as far as it affected their plans for Mesopotamia and other strategic concerns.

There already existed a budding Kurdish nationalist movement and there had been past uprisings that could be interpreted as having a nationalist basis.[18] Indeed, several sectors of the British government were initially enthusiastic about the creation of some sort of Kurdish state/protectorate. However, there were several difficulties facing them. The incompatibility of the Armenian claims with those of the Kurds, yet the need to consider the claims of the Armenians on both humanitarian and political grounds, was a major stumbling block. Also, the lack of consensus amongst the Kurds, and the absence of an acceptable representative made their case weaker, and meant chaos and confusion at

every level. The Kurds had no real representation in Europe,[19] and the population figures most bandied about for the area were those of the Armenian representatives, which did not recognise, for whatever reasons, the massive decline in the Armenian population.[20] The Kurds were also identified with the Ottomans in the suppression of other minorities, having been successfully pitted against the Christians by the Sultanate. Thus it was not initially considered that a Kurdish state could exist in areas of mixed territories.

The area was one vital for communications, especially with India,[21] and the oil wells of western Persia. The Baghdad Railway was not completed, and had been a feature of European policy in the region since before the war. Neither railways nor telegraph lines could be entrusted to an unstable state.

The existence of the map in Fig. 10.2 indicates the consideration given to communications.[22] The presence of oil in the area meant that it had special strategic importance, and there were concerns about control of the region's water resources.[23] It was also an area rich in potential conscripts.[24] Concerns about the costs and irritations of supporting a less than viable state were also under consideration. Finally, the question of where the state of Kurdistan was to be was perhaps to merit the greatest debate of all, and to prove an insoluble problem.

The British government had included Kurdistan as a geographical entity on its maps for the earlier part of the century, indicating the general region including that part lying in Persia. Major F.R.Maunsell,[25] who had mapped Kurdistan during his travels in 1892,[26] was to be responsible for the War Office's maps of the Middle East during the period before the First World War. Maunsell's projection of Kurdistan, although perhaps a little over-generous, (Fig. 10.3) might have served as a useful starting point for the mapping of a potential Kurdistan, true to the Wilsonian ideal. It does clearly demonstrate that such an area was discernible in the nineteenth century, and the approximate area differs only in its borderlands, not its interior, from later Kurdish projections. However, the Persian territory was not under the aegis of the Allies and unsubstantiated promises concerning the Ottoman territories had already been made; to the Armenians and the other Christian minorities, and by Major T.E.Lawrence to the Hashemites. Kingdoms and homelands had to be created, and to a large extent, Kurdistan had to be cut to fit the Middle Eastern cloth left.

A Mesopotamian state was almost a given, and the British were faced with the need to establish and maintain that state at minimal cost, and also to at least pay lip-service to the Wilsonian principles of self-determination, even if that would apply to national determination without corresponding state boundaries. It has been suggested that the British government, under Curzon's influence, were so virulently anti-Turkish, that they did not wish their new creation to share a border with Turkey.[27] Certainly, the problem of what should exist above the British occupied zone, and what would become of the zone between the proposed Armenian state and northern Mesopotamia. There were further possible concerns about Bolshevik infiltration from the Caucasus, and a Kurdish buffer state would be a cheap means of protection.

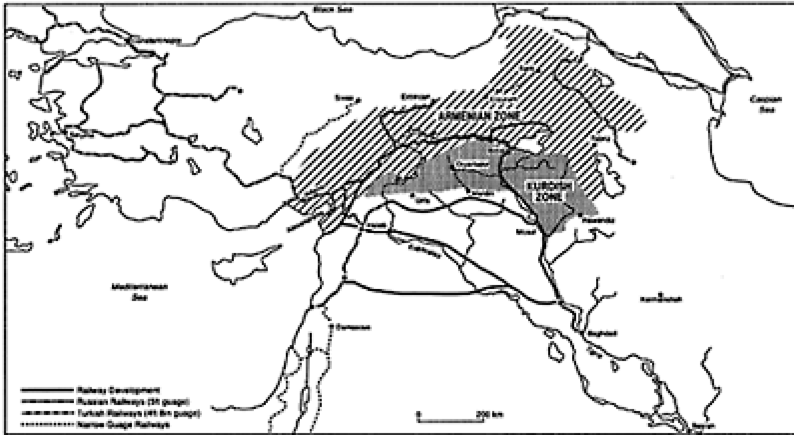

Figure 10.2 Map to Illustrate the Boundaries for Armenia and Kurdistan Showing How the Main Lines of Communication go to the Mediterranean and the Gulf

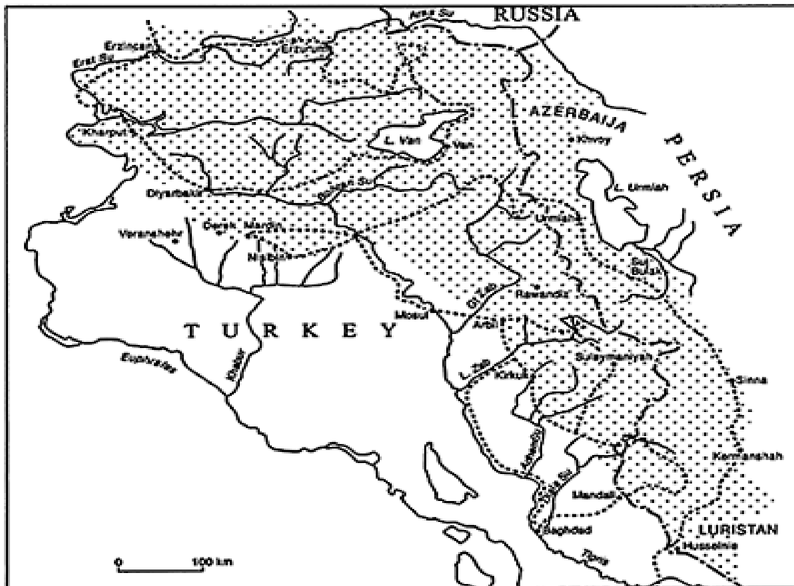

Figure 10.3 Map to Illustrate Captain F.R.Maunsell’s Travels in Kurdistan

The troops were tired and the monetary cost of the war had been enormous. Even in 1919, 4,000 Levies were still in Mesopotamia, using a £335,000 budget, something that Winston Churchill felt obliged to deny in Parliament.[28] Experience on the North West Frontier had shown that if the mountain tribes are pacified or otherwise occupied, the plains, whether of India or Mesopotamia, could be defended with the minimum of troops.

THE PROBLEMS OF KURDISH REPRESENTATION AND CONFLICTING KURDISH CLAIMS

Aside from the lack of unified leadership inside Kurdistan,[29] there existed a problem of representation in Europe, and more specifically at the Paris Peace Conference. The representative chosen by the British to attend the Peace Conference was Sharif Pasha, raised in Constantinople, resident in Paris, and later recognised as divorced from the mass of Kurds by class, origins and outlook.[30] He also ultimately nursed ambitions to become Emir of a newly created Kurdish state.[31] Arfa writes that Sharif Pasha spent the years of the First World War in Monte Carlo, having fallen out with the Committee of Union and Progress over his anti-German stance. As a staunch supporter of Sultan Abdul Hamid, he had been Ottoman envoy to Stockholm.[32]

Various offices of the British Government, at home and abroad were bombarded with claims and submissions from organisations claiming to represent the Kurds. In Constantinople, where the Kurdish societies had always been most active, the British High Commissioner was approached by the Kurdish Committee delegation, headed by Senator Sheikh Abdul Qadir, the head of the Bedran family of Shemdinan. In a memorandum, the Kurdish Committee claimed all of Turkish Armenia, the ex-Russian lands around Beyazid and the whole country on the Persian side of the frontier, at least as far as Luristan', on the grounds that the Kurds were pastoralists and needed access to their pastures. However, ultimately they would accept judgement on the frontiers of the future Kurdish state by the Peace Conference.[33] The great number of petitions caused the High Commissioner to seek advice from Baghdad as to the incompatibility of reconciling Armenian claims with satisfactory treatment of the Kurds.[34] Also in Constantinople, an unofficial report surfaced of a meeting between the Turkish Government and the Kurdish Committee, including Emin Ali Bedrkhan. The Ministers of War and Marine (sic) offered to recognise the existence of Kurdistan, and to ensure that the Armenians would only secure territory in the Caucasus.[35]

Early in the Peace Process, the Comité de l'Independence Kurde in Egypt claimed a large area as a potential Kurdish state, extending in the north to the Caucuses, west to include Erzincan and including all of the claimed Armenian state, southern and Persian Kurdistan. Like many of the Kurdish submissions, it dwelt on the incompatibility of Armenian claims with those of the Kurds.[36] Five months later, this group informed Sharif Pasha that they would massacre any remaining Armenians if an Armenian state were established. Thinking it helpful to his cause to illustrate the depth of Kurdish anxiety over Armenian claims, Pasha passed this on to the Foreign Office, where of course it was poorly received.[37]

Sharif Pasha informed Sir Percy Cox that for the Kurds, their needs as pastoralists outweighed historical and ethnic considerations, thus as long as the boundaries of a

Kurdish state included adequate winter and summer pastures, the Kurds would be contented. Pasha made several suggestions as to the least area that would satisfy their needs. However, as he saw the Armenians as potential fifth columnists for the Bolsheviks, he thus recommended that Diyarbakir, Kharput, Bitlis, Mosul and Urfa *sanjaqs* be included in the Kurdish state, to block Russian designs on the area. In his comments on this interview, Toynbee advocates jettisoning Pasha as representative as too demanding.[38] Pasha ultimately resigned his position as Kurdish representative to the British Ambassador in Paris in April 1920, mistrusted by Kurds in Istanbul, Kurdistan and the Europeans. From then on, the British did business with local leaders, such as Sheikh Mahmoud.

In addition to the conflict of any Kurdish claims with those of the Armenians, there was an additional conflict of territorial claims with the Assyrians. The plight of the Assyrians during and at the conclusion of the First World War was briefly discussed in chapter 8.[39] The Assyrians had a degree of support in their claims from the French and the Americans, due to their contact with missionaries, although the British appeared quite willing to renege on any offers made to their 'smallest ally'.[40] The Assyrian delegate to the Peace Conference offered a very expansive map of the territory they expected as an independent Assyrian state, indicating the impossibility of ever satisfying the expectations of all the region's inhabitants.[41] (Fig. 10.4) Unfortunately for the Assyrians, they were greatly reduced in numbers, and sadly divided, especially over the question of leadership; there was also a degree of enmity with both local Kurds[42] and Arabs. Space constraints forbid further discussions of Assyrian/Kurdish relations and counterclaims, although their claims and existence are usually overlooked in accounts of the territorial division of Kurdistan, other than in those written by Assyrian nationalists.[43]

CHANGING POLICIES AND SUGGESTIONS (1918–1920)

At the end of the war, both the Foreign Office and General Headquarters in Cairo advocated a complete withdrawal from Kurdistan, and the retainment of only Mesopotamia. This was hotly contested from Baghdad, from whence it was clear that both Kurdistan and the Kurds were essential to a secure northern boundary for Mesopotamia.[44] In November 1918, the Foreign Office capitulated and it was proposed that a state of Northern Mesopotamia, distinct from Iraq, with Mosul or Urfa as its capital, be created. Its northern extent was to depend on the Kurds, many of whom were thought likely to wish to join the Arab Mesopotamian State. The 'six vilayats' were thought to be best off under a direct European protection.[45] The former proposal may have originated with Major Lawrence, who had proposed a central Arabo-Kurdish kingdom.[46] In the same month, Kurdish deputies in Baghdad urged British protection and the possibility of a Kurdish confederation was advanced.[47]

At this time, the Civil Commissioner at Sulaymania was Major Noel. He reported that he foresaw little difficulty in creating a British-sponsored

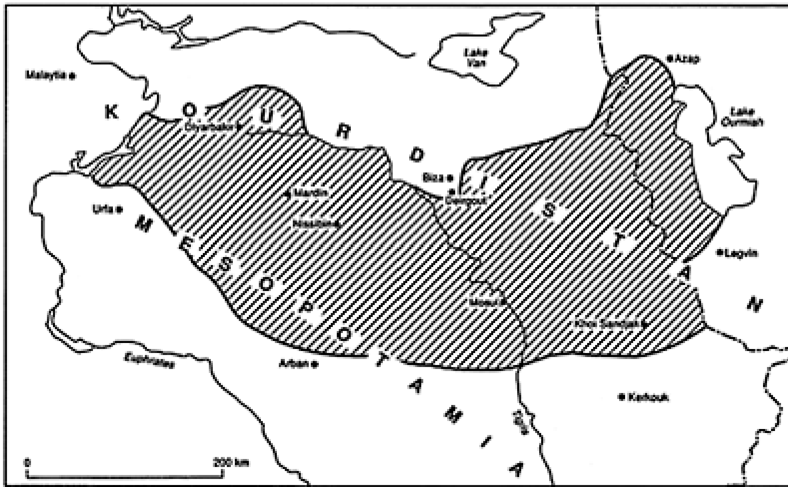

Figure 10.4 Map Accompanying an Appeal by the Assyrian Delegate to the Paris Peace Conference for an Assyrian Homeland

Kurdish state, provided action was taken promptly and vigorously. He advised that the movement was extremely strong and recommended similar actions to the north of Mosul.[48] Noel was to become a firm supporter of Kurdish nationalism, to the extent that he was later assigned to other duties lest 'we find ourselves with a Kurdish Lawrence on our hands'.[49] At the Foreign Office, Lord Toynbee expressed great interest in the idea of a Kurdish state, but was concerned as to where its boundaries might be. The India Office advanced that the Kurds could not be included in one state, due to the 'prohibitive racial and geographical difficulties'. The first definite area was proposed, the area south and east of the Rivers Tigris and Bohtan.[50] Toynbee agreed on this territory, adding that the Kurds north of this area should be included in the Mesopotamian or Armenian states. He did add that these borders might be too small for a viable state.[51] The question of viability was to be ignored in the final decisions later on.

By the end of the month, Kurdish aspirations were so great that Noel urged the government to rapidly create a Kurdish state up to Lake Van, lest they be presented with a fait accompli.[52] The Foreign Office was enthusiastic about self-determination for Kurdistan, but the main reason for British reluctance to proceed was the danger that Kurdistan could not be confined to a suitably compact area.[53] The first real proposals for the Kurdish state were put forward, acknowledging that it would have to be very truncated. The idea of Kurdistan extending to Lake Van was firmly quashed, for two main reasons. Firstly, there were Nestorians in the upper valley of the Greater Zab, and Armenian enclaves started north of the River Bohtan, and Kurdistan should not include districts of mixed population. Secondly, even to allow Kurdistan as far as the Bohtan River would involve asking France to give up rights over part of Area 'A' (According to the Sykes-Picot Treaty). It was proposed that this could be gained in exchange for the

northern sector, originally allocated to Russia. Thus a plan was devised for Kurdistan that those Kurds south of the River Bohtan should be organized as a national federation of tribes under British protection. Those Kurds to the north of this would have to go to the mixed Armenian/Kurdish/Turkish/Greek state, to be labelled Armenia, under French protection.[54]

Despite expansive claims by Kurdish groups as to the real and absolute borders of Kurdistan, the Foreign Office maintained that those Kurds north of Diyarbakir, Siirt, and Başkala were outside any discussion. But the idea of a two-zone Kurdistan gained support. The tribal areas in the northeastern mountains were destined for tribal autonomy, whereas the settled areas around the main towns of Kifri, Kirkuk and Arbil, with their agricultural and mineral resources needed to be dealt with differently. But the latter would probably not be attached to Iraq, as this would make the former area nonviable, so the Kurdish national state would probably include both areas.

At this time, the differences between the Foreign Office, the India Office, and the British government began to emerge.[55] The Foreign Office, from the beginning, wished to set up a centralized administration for the area with Baghdad as its capital, on the Indian pattern; whereas the government was initially in favor of creating nation-states. Meanwhile, the India Office was making its own plans for Kurdistan. Their Kurdistan consisted of the area south of the Bohtan River and east of the River Tigris, bounded by the Persian frontier. It included parts of Bitlis, Van and Mosul, but not Mosul itself. The rest of the Kurdish regions were considered too mixed in population to be allocated to the Kurds. It was pointed out that as the fate of Kurdistan was so closely bound up with that of Armenia, a modus vivendi must be developed between the two races, or the creation of Armenia could not be successful. Armenian success was necessary to ensure that the French would be willing to trade Mosul for Northern Armenia. This was one of the insoluble dilemmas facing Kurdistan: their claims were incompatible with those of the Armenians, yet no Armenia meant no bargaining counter with which to detach the French from Mosul, without which vilayat Kurdistan was not viable.

The idea of a divided Kurdistan was also proposed by the India Office, and the southern region was outlined thus: south of the Greater Zab, to Diyala; the eastern border would be Persia; and the western border an irregular line from the Greater Zab to Diyala, excluding Arbil, Altun Kepri, Kirkuk and Kifri. This was a very truncated area indeed, excluding all the major communication centres. The proposed Arabo-Kurdish kingdom was abandoned, as 'the Kurds have exercised their right to self-determination, therefore Lawrence's plan is defunct.' The Foreign Office was in agreement on this last point. The India Office was first to note that control of and stability in this area was important 'because the paramount power controls the strategic approaches to Mesopotamia and controls the water supply of the eastern affluents of the Tigris,' as well as being a valuable military recruiting ground and containing oil fields.[56,57]

By 1919, the plan for Kurdistan was still no clearer, but it was largely accepted that only southern Kurdistan would fall within any independent Kurdish federation. It was proposed to offer the Kurds this as well as equal rights in the new Armenian state. Sir Arnold Toynbee concluded that it was geographically impossible to create a state for all Kurds because, 'it would have to include non-Kurdish populations of superior civilization and would violate the integrity of Persia. Also, the Kurds are incapable of running such a state.'[58] In reply to Kurdish anxieties about the expansiveness of the Armenian borders

and the neglect of the migratory needs of Kurdish nomads, Toynbee was sympathetic, but anticipated sedenterization of the Kurdish tribes.[59] The problem of Mosul as the economic and administrative center of Kurdistan, yet as an Arab city continued to vex Toynbee. Also, Hakkari, with its geographical connections with Mosul, despite its northerly position, would have to be within the same state.[60]

The Americans began to contribute their feelings on the fate of Kurdistan/ Mesopotamia. They wanted the Bohtan and Upper Tigris Valleys in the Mesopotamian state, as they saw the Anti-Taurus Mountains as the natural frontier between Mesopotamia and Armenia. Also, they considered Mesopotamia less viable without irrigation from the Diyarbakir basin. It was suggested that the increased area of Mesopotamia might provide the Kurdish national movement with a future homeland. This idea was seriously considered, even to the extent of planning possible provincial administrative groupings for the greater Mesopotamia.[61] A map of this proposed frontier between Armenia and Mesopotamia, showing a potential Kurdistan was submitted to the Foreign Office, (Fig. 10.5) taking the Americans at their word and including all the headwaters of the Tigris in Mesopotamia.[62] However, the Foreign Office felt that superfluous territory to administer would be costly and troublesome, and that control of the Zab waters and the lower Tigris would be adequate for Mesopotamia.

The likelihood of reconciling the Kurdish claims with those of the Armenians was becoming increasingly improbable, a problem exacerbated by the inadequacy of the Kurdish representatives, as opposed to the organized and vociferous Armenian ones, and the British tendency to misinterpret the abilities and support of potential Kurdish leaders. This was not eased by Kurdish threats to massacre the Armenians if they were to satisfy their aims at the Kurds' expense.[63] Also there was a lack of support from the other participants in the peace conference. The eagerness of the Kurds in Persia was becoming hard to quell, as they were asking to be included in a united Kurdistan under British protection.[64] Discussion also centered around the proposed nature of the leadership of the Kurdish state and who should fill that position, no one person being acceptable to everyone. Still the Foreign Office considered 'Armenia as unlikely as Arab unity. The Kurds, however geographically and politically split are more real'.[65]

Time was short, and the boundaries of Kurdistan had not been decided upon, although it was clear that several areas were not to be included. The political officer in Baghdad (Wilson) drew the Foreign Office's attention to an ethnographical map completed in April 1919, claiming it to be remarkably accurate and illustrative of the difficulties involved.[66] (Fig. 10.6) The difficulties were further exacerbated by the existence of at least one other entirely conflicting Foreign Office ethnographic map of Mesopotamia, which included Kurdistan.[67] (Fig. 10.7) The leading inhabitants of Erbil had declared themselves loathe to be part of Kurdistan, and anyway, as it was to be on the railway to Mosul it had to be excluded, as did Agra. Dohuk and Zakho were to be in Mesopotamia, because of their oil deposits, as Toynbee bluntly admitted. Wilson proposed the following boundaries: south-west from Khandildagh to point 11.43 on a 1/1,000,000 sheet map, intersecting latitude 37 and longitude 44 or 43. A little north of Jezireh Ibn Omar, north of Nisibin, south of Mardin, north of Ras-al-Ain, along latitude 37 to Berejik, up the Euphrates, following the boundaries of Kharpout, Bitlis and Van vilayats. The vilayats of Trabzon and Erzerum were to become Armenian under the Americans and the remaining

four vilayats, then, were to fall in Kurdistan. Wilson's boundaries were to remain a likely option until the end of the Peace Conference.[68] (Illustrated on Fig. 10.9)

Figure 10.5 Map to Illustrate a More Northerly Border for Mesopotamia

Figure 10.6 Ethnographic Map of Eastern Turkey in Asia, Syria and Western Persia

In the same month, the General Headquarters in Egypt were pressing for a larger area, under the influence of the various Kurdish groups based in Cairo. The vision of Kurdistan extending from Kars to Tiflis to Adana, including Trabzon, Malatya and Rowanduz, and also encompassing the six Armenian vilayats was not dismissed. Far from the Armenian champions in Europe, they were willing to entertain claims that the population of 'Armenia' was in fact 90 percent Kurdish and 1 percent Turkish.[69] General Headquarters frequently took up the gauntlet for the Kurds, being hostile to a French-influenced Christian state in the Middle East. The Foreign Office was extremely sharp about any material advanced from Cairo.[70]

It was Noel, the champion of the Kurds, who was to really apply himself to the thorny problem of the Kurdish border. He also attempted to dispel some of the blocks on the creation of Kurdistan. In conclusion to a lengthy paper about the Kurds, he claimed that 'Kurdish independence is more justifiable historically than Armenian, as the last vestiges of Armenia disappeared in the 14th century.' He accused the Armenian representatives of dishonesty, and pointed out that if Greater Armenia were to succeed, than 1,143,000 Kurds would be dominated by less than 43,000 Armenians. The salient feature of his accompanying map[71] was the broad tract of land lying between Armenia and Mesopotamia. (Fig. 10.8) This area was 'so Kurdish that not even the Armenians claim it'. He points out that if the Armenians were satisfied, this

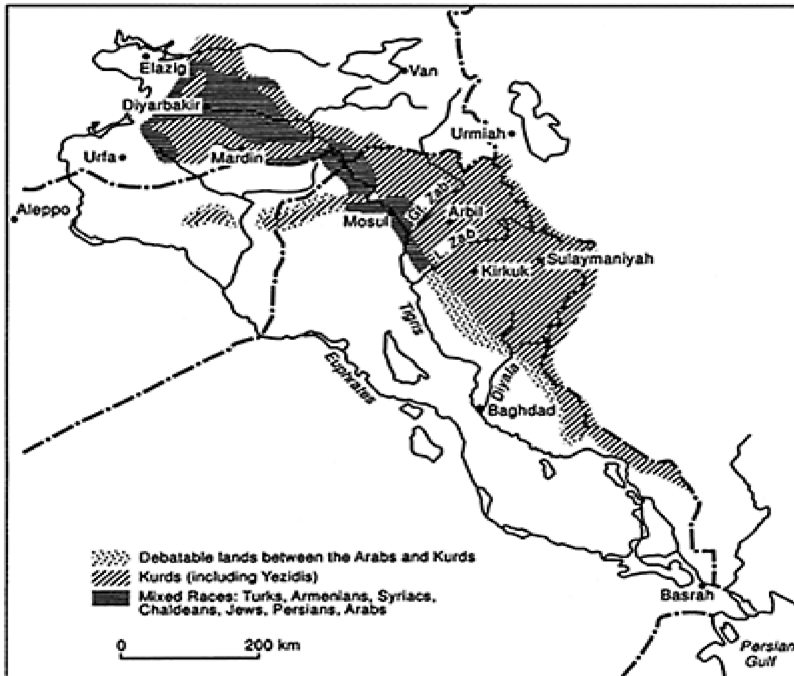

Figure 10.7 Mesopotamia: Racial Divisions

isolated part of Kurdistan would be very problematical as Turkey would be unable to control it. The two immediately obvious options were for it to be absorbed into Mesopotamia, which was already too big and culturally diverse for ease of administration; or to grant it independence, bearing in mind that such a state surrounded by Kurdish irridenta *(sic)* would be extremely unstable. In Noel's opinion, Kurdish tendencies could easily be manipulated to be of either a Pan-Islamic, and thus pro-Turkish, or of a nationalistic nature. Obviously, the nationalist element would gravitate towards whichever power offered assistance, thus he advised the British to forestall Russia by guiding Kurdish nationalism themselves. He also pointed out that Persian Kurdistan, largely disregarded in plans for the area, was an area 300 miles by 50–100 miles in size, with a fairly homogenous population of 1–2 million Kurds and as such might provide a focus for Kurdish aspirations and draw the Kurds towards Persia. This tendency had already been observed in the cultural sphere.

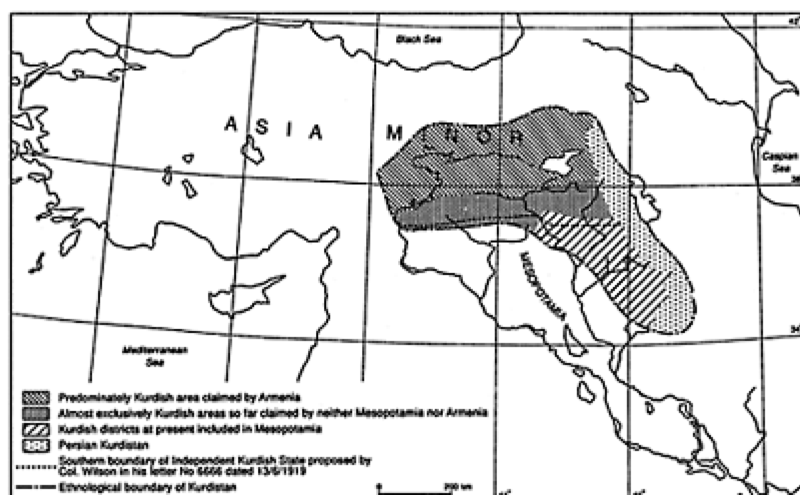

Figure 10.8 Map to Illustrate a Note by Major Noel on the Situation in Kurdistan

Noel accepted that it was not possible to ignore the Armenians, as they had such support in Europe. Therefore, he suggested a compromise. The whole of claimed Armenia and the territories outside Mesopotamia should be labeled 'The Eastern Vilayats', and divided into three zones; the southern to be Kurdish, the middle mixed and the north to be non-Kurdish. After twenty to thirty years' supervision by the mandatory power, the level of development would be such that referenda could be held, and decisions about government could be made. Failing this solution, Noel supported Wilson's boundaries.[72]

The conclusion that the very name of Armenia was inflammatory had already been reached in some quarters, and it was suggested that a change of name would overcome many of the difficulties.[73] Another, perhaps not unreasonable, suggestion was made that Armenia could be incorporated into a Kurdish state with a special role for the Armenian

minority, much as the Muslims had in India. (Of course, this was without the foresight of the later bloody partition of India.)[74]

Meanwhile, the British administration, unable to decide the fate of the Kurds, yet unwilling to relinquish control of them, found themselves pursuing contradictory policies, and raising expectations in the Kurds which could not be met. Their Kurdish agents proved unruly and overly independent, and Britain became increasingly disenchanted with the idea of Kurdish independence. Agreements with Persia that a united Kurdistan would be prevented plus the rising hostility of the impatient Kurds led the India Office to declare in August that 'the inhabitants of Kurdistan are so hostile that we need new railways to pacify them, therefore the Kurds had best be left to their own devices or we will create another North West Frontier problem.'[75] This telegram followed a request from Arnold Wilson for a railway extension to Kifri and Kirkuk.[76] Wilson replied that the administration of the Kurds under British supervision was proceeding well, following the brief insurrection in May 1919, led by Sheikh Mahmud in the Sulaymania district, and that government was by consent. The railway was required for logistical reasons, and that a 'frontier problem' was only likely to occur if the Kurds were deprived the civilizing influence of railways and roads that would increase their links with Mesopotamia.[77]

Within a month, the Foreign Office had reached a similar conclusion to that of the India Office, but also concluded that the Armenian state was an impossibility, due to the difficulties involved in protecting the small number of Armenians. America was unwilling to accept the Armenian mandate, and Britain neither wanted, nor could afford, the Kurdistan mandate. Thus, apart from the creation of a Lesser Armenia, the area outside Mesopotamia and Mosul would be left to its own devices.[78]

Noel made a last attempt to secure a Kurdish state based on ethnographic borders, claiming that the Kurds would revert to being naturally pro-British if Turkish influence were excluded. This claim rang hollow to a government that found itself completely unable to follow the twists and turns of Kurdish alliances.[79]

The disheartened Kurdish representatives from those areas threatened with annexation by the new Armenian state met in July 1919, deciding to back Mustafa Kemal in his struggle to unify a Turkish state and to prevent the establishment of Armenia. The successful Kemalist takeover would later mean that the Treaty of Sevres was not to be ratified, as the new Assembly refused to recognise the agreements of the Istanbul administration.

THE TREATY OF SEVRES 1920

By spring of 1920, at the time of the San Remo Conference, the many British ideas on Kurdistan had coalesced into three main positions, but no compromise could be struck. Wilson in Baghdad wanted Mosul to be a part of the Baghdad-governed Mesopotamian state, the Foreign Office wanted to withdraw the British troops and declare an independent state for the Kurds, like that for the Armenians. The India Office, like the Government of India took a middle line, envisaging a fringe of autonomous Kurdish enclaves to the north of Mesopotamia.[80] Curzon brokered an agreement that a Commission of the Three Great Powers, would draft within six months of the treaty a scheme of local autonomy for Kurdistan for the Kurdish areas, with the right of appeal to

the League of Nations within a year for independence. At Montagu's (Secretary of State for India) wish, he pressed for the possibility of unification should the inhabitants desire it.

The British conclusions for the Peace Conference were that Mesopotamia was to have as short a frontier as possible, that the area to the north was to be largely left to its own devices, as long as Turkey did not regain control of the Kurds. Ethnological frontiers were less important than economic and geographical considerations; therefore Kurdistan could not be regarded as a political entity. The topography of the area was also considered to make unification impossible. It was flatly declared that 'no mandate was to be accepted for Kurdistan under any circumstances.'[81]

The Sevres proposals concerning the Kurds, and also largely concerning the Armenians were simply formalities and a nod to the nationalist policies of Woodrow Wilson. It was proposed that 'a commission, sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments shall draft within six months…a scheme of local autonomy for the predominately Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia….and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia.' It allowed for the protection of other minorities, and the adjustment of the Turkish/Persian frontier.[82] This autonomy was allowed for if requested within one year, and was dependent on the assessed capabilities of those people. The Kurds inhabiting the vilayat of Mosul were to be allowed to join the independent Kurdish state if they so desired, and were considered capable of exercising their independence.[83]

The likelihood of the Kurds being so organized as to be able to present themselves as directed was small, and the viability of this landlocked and truncated state was also minimal.[84] (Fig. 10.9) As Kendal has pointed out, if the treaty's provisions had been carried out Kurdistan would have been divided into five parts, independent Kurdistan being the least well off portion.[85] Anyway, it has been shown that by the time the treaty was drawn up, Britain was largely opposed to Kurdish independence. Although the Armenian and the Kurdish representatives had signed a pact of co-operation,[86] the British made no attempt to advance any of the previous suggestions about a combined Armenian/ Kurdish/ Turkish/Greek/Christian minority state.

KEMALISM, THE MOSUL QUESTION AND THE 1923 TREATY OF LAUSANNE (1920–26)

Factors such as anxieties about defending a larger Mesopotamian state, and anxieties on the part of Faisal, the proposed king of Iraq, about losing the Sunni Kurds he needed to counter the otherwise Shi'ite majority, led to further delays in deciding the fate of Kurdistan. This delay contributed to widespread unrest in Kurdistan, added to which, the other inhabitants of the area were also restive about their uncertain future.

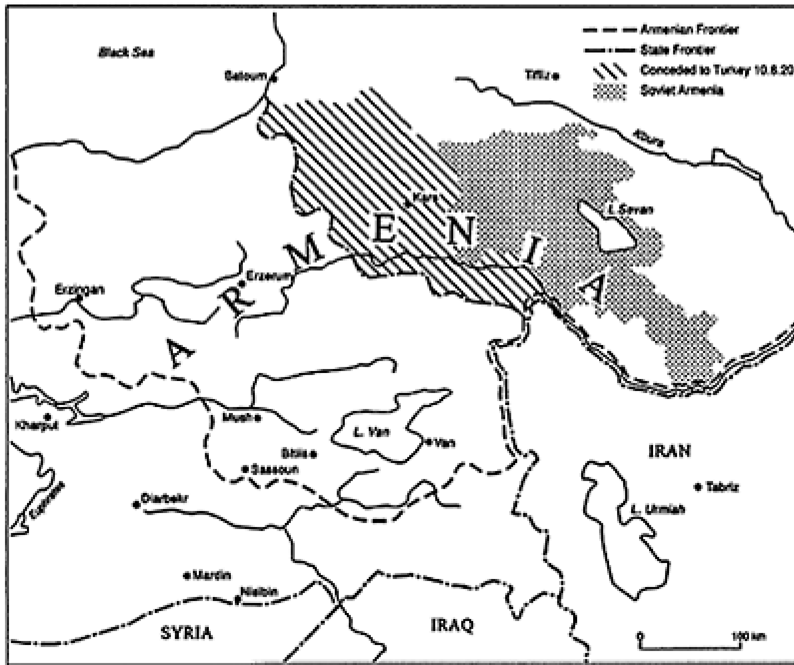

Figure 10.9 The Frontiers of Armenia as Drawn by President Woodrow Wilson

Meanwhile, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, Turkey was mounting an independence war, which was to place Turkey in a newly strong position, with a claim over Mosul vilayat.[87] The deadlock with the Turkish government over Mosul left only one real alternative. As suggested by Cox, the encouragement of the emergent Kurdish nationalist movement would force Kemal into a negotiated settlement favourable to the British. Sheikh Mahmoud was chosen for the position of Kurdish leader, a decision to be regretted, as previously.[88] By 1923, Sheikh Mahmud was so out of British control, that the Royal Airforce mounted considerable operations against him and other Kurdish insurgents, until the Iraqi army reoccupied Sulaymania in 1924.

During the battle for Mosul, the British were aware that 'the Kurds were a formidable danger to the Turks.'[89] Lindsay pointed out that the Turks were committed to forcing a secular and modern republic on more backward Kurds, and of necessity, stamping out, by force, any symptoms of Kurdish nationalism. This task was formidable, but doubly so if some of the Kurdish population passes under the rule of a power imbued, as is Great Britain, with essentially liberal principles.' This menace to the Turkish state's policies was concluded to be the main reason why they were eager to obtain Mosul. The British were willing to adjust the borders to include Rowanduz in Turkey, but not Mosul. There was no solution to the Kurdish problem, as the question of a peaceful solution to the

Mosul question had become more important. Aiding the Kurds would possibly have prevented Turkey from capitulating over the Mosul question.[90]

During this period, sections of the British government were, at least initially, enthusiastic about a Kurdish state to the north of Mosul. In early 1921, at the Cairo Conference, it was concluded that a Kurdish buffer state should be established to the north of Mesopotamia, largely at the urging of Noel and Churchill. Only Percy Cox and Gertrude Bell held the minority view that Kurdistan should be included in Iraq. By May 1921, there was firm support for an independent 'Southern Kurdistan.'[91] Once back in Mesopotamia, Cox energetically opposed an independent Kurdistan, and extensive correspondence with Churchill on the subject ensued.[92] Cox bombarded Churchill with strategic and political reasons for the inclusion of Kurdistan in Iraq, promoting instead a regional administration to satisfy League of Nations requirements on self-determination. Within the year, he successfully convinced Churchill of his case.

During this year, the British flirted with Kurdish nationalism as a weapon against the Turks, until this lost its attractions by December 1921. Nevertheless, the British held Kurdish nationalist rebellion in reserve as a possible tool against Turkey until the resolution of the Turko-Iraq boundary in 1926.[93] The British support for Sheikh Mahmud in 1922 and 1923, was a tactical decision in the battle for Mosul. The Churchill-Cox correspondence of 1921 demonstrates clearly that Kurdish policy was subordinate to Turkish policy, just as it had previously been subordinate to Mesopotamian policy. Olson also points out that the ability of Cox to influence Churchill's final policy indicates the 'diplomatic and political power of the periphery, vis-à-vis the center of the Empire.'[94]

The July 1923 Treaty of Lausanne recognized the new nationalist Turkish state, and most of its territorial demands, removing any last vestiges of hope that the Kurds (or the Armenians) would gain independence. Possibly concerned for Mosul's oil, although undoubtedly involving other considerations the British refused to concede Mosul vilayat to the Turks, the oil revenues having already been divided between the British, French and Americans. The question of Mosul's fate being apparently insoluble, it was eventually left to the League of Nations to decide. No provisions were made for independent Armenian and Kurdish states, nor for the protection of Muslim minorities. The northern boundary of the vilayat of Mosul was ill-defined, and following skirmishes with the Assyrians, the League of Nations drew the 'Brussels Line', a temporary border, behind which they requested the Turks withdraw.

A referendum, however ill-advised and impossible to conduct in such an area, was undertaken by a League of Nations Commission in 1925. The commission found that the Mosul vilayat should be included in the new state of Iraq. The Kurds around Sulaymania had declared for that option for economic and trade reasons, although preferring an independent alternative, and this heavily influenced the commission, who felt that economic and strategic considerations should override ethnic ones. The commission found that there was not a well-developed sense of Kurdish national solidarity. Kurdish nationalist feeling was more developed in the southern areas, but decreased towards the Mosul Plain, being non-existent in the Aqra area. Of course, the economic and political orientations of the notables who offered most opinions to the commission were paramount. The aversion to Turkish rule was confirmed,[95] although some Christians and Yezidis feared Arab rule if Europeans were not in control. The Kurds wanted assurances that they would have Kurdish as their official language, the right to Kurdish officials, and

for the British to have a mandate for at least twenty years, all of which were supported by the League.[96]

The disillusionment of the Kurds, perhaps their shortsightedness in not endearing themselves more to the British, and the needs of both Turkey and Britain, culminated in the total demise of any possibility of a Kurdish state. Kurdistan, as of June 5th 1926, was split between Iraq and Syria, as well as Turkey and Iran.

THE OIL QUESTION

In December 1919, it had begun to dawn on the British that the oil in Mosul may be more important than that of western Persia.[97] The majority of writers on Kurdistan, especially Kurdish writers, emphasize the British designs on the *vilayat* of Mosul, from very early on, even before the First World War. This is the thesis of Nash,[98] Ahmad,[99] and Chaliand[100] amongst others. The 'oil thesis' has become a fundamental myth of Kurdish history. It may be that the importance of the Kirkuk oil fields as a factor in the struggle for self-determination in modern Iraq, encourages the extrapolation of such an imperative to a previous period. This thesis has been persuasively deconstructed by McDowall,[101] who demonstrates that the Mosul oil question was not raised in official British meetings in 1919, and emphasizes the multiplicity of factors involved contemporaneously. My examination of the shifting policies pursued towards Kurdistan also indicates the relative unimportance of oil compared with other strategic factors.

In the period following the Treaty of Sevres, it appears that oil may have entered as a factor of greater importance. This is argued by Olson, who additionally concludes that the British had completely abandoned even strategic support of the Kurds by December 1921.[102] In the Churchill-Cox correspondence, discussed above, which determined the final fate of Kurdistan, oil was never mentioned, despite the battery of arguments assembled by Cox against the creation of an independent Kurdistan. These included economic arguments concerning trade and economic orientation, but never oil.[103]

Even in March 1925, the Turks tried to persuade the British to surrender Mosul in return for exclusive oil exploitation rights, an offer which was declined by the British. This indicates that oil was less important than strategic interests.[104]

CONCLUSIONS

The various positions taken by Kurdish nationalist writers to explain the failure to create a Kurdish state in the period immediately following the First World War tend to rely too much on assumptions concerning the presence of oil deposits in the British desire to annex Mosul. It is also usually assumed that the British had no intention of creating such a state if their strategic needs could be met any other way. This is not the impression gained from the original source materials, and it denies the immense difficulties involved in the possible creation of, and even definition of Kurdistan.

The British were faced with existing agreements over the division of Eastern Turkey, and their continuing regional rivalries, especially with France, complicated the revision of such arrangements. Decision-making did not lie in the hands of only one branch of the

British government, and this was to slow and complicate the peace process. The rivalries between the branches of the government affected the ways in which information and suggestions were processed, and the aims and outlooks of both the branch concerned, and the experience and views of individual personalities were far greater than are usually understood. Ultimately, the terms for the Treaty of Sevres were forged in a rush, with little reference to the parties on the ground, and with the realization that Kurdistan was an insoluble problem.

The avowed aims of the peace process were those of the Americans, not the European powers, and even the Americans were ultimately to withdraw from taking responsibility for the implementation of the Wilsonian ideals. For the British, self-determination was never a priority, and certainly, groups like the Kurds, as well as others, were manipulated in the interests of achieving wider strategic aims.

A wide variety of schemes for territorial division as well as political administration were proposed from different quarters, often several suggestions emanating from one person or quarter. The only constant in support for Kurdish self-determination was an individual personality, Noel, whose very partisanship caused him to be marginalized by the British administration. Perhaps the most startling theme emergent from the archive sources is the sheer inconsistency of British aims and policy in the region, especially with regard to Kurdistan.

The absence of a credible leader for the Kurds, either in Kurdistan or in Europe, allowed the British to manipulate the Kurds, but also frustrated any genuine attempts to seek a settlement that would benefit either the Kurds, or the other regional minorities. The question of the importance of oil resources remains unclear, but it is apparent that at least prior to 1920, Mosul's oil was only a very minor factor in regional strategic considerations, if at all. In all the many options advanced for Kurdistan during 1918–1920, oil was barely mentioned at all. All the evidence points to the marginal importance of Kurdistan in the decision-making process, except in its relation to Mesopotamia, and later to the Turkish state. The Treaty of Sevres was signed in the realization that any potential Kurdish political entity had been abandoned. In the events that followed, Kurdistan was never again seriously considered as an entity, and to look to the Treaty of Sevres as the herald of an independent Kurdistan mistakes words for intention. The inadequacy of the proposed territory is also given scant regard in the Kurdish nationalist mythology.

Additionally, with the benefit of hindsight, Kurdish nationalists assume that oil was at the crux of the matter, and that the British had a clear policy aimed at annexing Mosul in order to secure its mineral resources. This appears another example of Kurdish perceptions of themselves and their territory as central in the perceptions of others. The centrality of Mosul, rather than Mesopotamia, in perceived British decision-making now forms one of the fundamental myths of Kurdish nationalist history.

CHAPTER 11
Kurdish Constructions of Kurdistan

THE UNIVERSALITY OF MYTHS

> 'Because myths are beliefs that cannot be substantially verified by evidence, they are generally regarded as partly or completely false and therefore lacking in reality. But it cannot be denied that when people believe them, their belief has reality, or that people act, even base their lives upon them, especially in times of crisis.'[1]
>
> 'We have created our myth. The myth is a faith; it is a passion. It is not necessary that it be a reality. It is a passion. It is a reality by the fact that it is a good, a hope, a faith, that it is courage. Our myth is the greatness of the nation! And to this myth, to this grandeur, that we wish to translate into a complete reality, we subordinate all the rest.'
>
> —Benito Mussolini 1922[2]

To point out that Kurdish nationalism is based on a set of myths is neither an attempt to deny the Kurds the right to self-determination, nor to single out the Kurds as undeserving of a sense of collective identity. The Kurds are not uniquely fraudulent, nor deluded. Both myths and a collective mythology are universal to all human groups. Over the last two hundred years or so, all putative nations, throughout the world, have based their claims to that identity on a collective mythology. The 'nationalist myth' has become itself the dominant mode of political and cultural thought. Where that mythology has become so commonplace as to be accepted as reality by outsiders, as well as the group/nation concerned, it is simply the case that the group has successfully utilised its collective myths over time to achieve its aims. As Mussolini pointed out, the reality starts with the myth.

Those groups who have effectively achieved their nationalist aims with the greatest degree of success can afford to allow academics to examine the mythological basis of their existence. However, amongst groups like the Kurds who are not only far from achieving a collective identity, but engaged in an intellectual and practical struggle to that end, such challenges may be both unwelcome and threatening.[3]

Perhaps the fundamental myth of Kurdish nationalism is that nationalism is somehow an inherent state of mind, rather than a political ideology. An attachment to a collective identity is not in itself nationalism, and it should not be presumed that all Kurds are nationalists, simply because they are attached to their Kurdish identity. However, the

predominant political discourse amongst Kurds has become, at least ostensibly, that of the struggle for national self-determination.

Kurds, or at least the intellectuals and intelligentsia who generate the nationalist myths, tend to espouse the primordialist definition of a unique collective solidarity amongst Kurds.[4] The role of myths in creating this common identity is usually rejected. The primordialists see nationalist sentiments as a universal attribute of humanity. They equate the modern nation with pre-modern ideas bearing similarities, such as biblical 'peoples', and city-state formations. Nations and ethnic communities are considered to be the basic units of history and socio-biological arguments are used to claim the ethnic group as the basic unit of human organisation. Diametrically opposed to this are the, mostly European, modernists, who perceive nations and nationalism as post nineteenth century creations. Many Kurds see the modernists as denying them any right to a legitimate collective identity, as the emergence of modern Kurdish nationalism occurred considerably later than that of the nation-states responsible for the creation of the Middle East as we now see it.

It is possible however to adopt a middle ground in approach. Anthony Smith points out that one can argue that nations and nationalism of a sort have always existed in the historical record without being universal, nor in any sense more natural than other forms of socio-political organisation. This he refers to as 'perrenialism'.[5] This non-polemical approach is rare in either current Kurdish sources or in attempts to refute Kurdish nationalist aims.

THE KURDISH NATION

Even if we accept the proposition that Kurdistan has existed as a distinct geographical entity as we now know it for longer than a hundred years; that the Kurds fulfill all the accepted criteria for nationhood; and that their legitimate collective aim should be to form an independent nation-state, it is still necessary for the Kurds to create an 'imagined political community',[6] as it is necessary for all emergent nations.

Ernest Gellner points out that 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist.'[7] Yet Gellner somehow ascribes this invention to fabrication and falsity, rather than the imaginative and creative process described by Benedict Anderson, where all communities larger than the primordial village must be imagined. The members of even a small nation cannot ever know most of its fellow members, they cannot share a sense of closeness with them based solely on ethnic origin, which cuts across social divisions alone. A mental image of ethnic and national identity must be constructed artificially, by which means the political community can be imagined and experienced by its putative inhabitants.[8]

We can briefly explore some of the contentions underlying the Kurds' projection of themselves as a nation. The term 'nation' has the ideological connotation inherent in the political aim of nationalism, and also has tended to be fairly rigidly defined by political theorists in organic terms, ignoring the supreme effort of will that can create a nation. I prefer Smith's term 'ethnie'[9] which involves the acceptance that 'the core of ethnicity…resides in this quartet of myths, memories, values and symbols' and that 'ethnicity is largely mythic and symbolic in character.'[10] An ethnic is defined as a group

possessing a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity.

The Kurds share a collective name, although the term Kurd has undergone several changes of use throughout history. It has been used to refer to either only the tribal elite, or to the cultivator class.[11] A similar inconsistency exists now with the term Kurmanj, which is used in Turkey to denote a Kurd, but in Iraq or Iran tends to denote either a villager or a speaker of the northern Kurdish languages.[12] Most importantly, Kurd has now become an accepted appellation by outsiders for a speaker of Kurdish or inhabitant of the Kurdish region.

THE KURDISH WORLD-VIEW

World-view, or cosmology, is a broad, practical ideology or set of beliefs, used by anthropologists to designate shared cultural assumptions concerning the overall nature of the social order.[13] Many of these beliefs are constituted by largely implicit shared assumptions and are completely systematised by those who maintain them, ordinarily not consciously or fully articulated, although forms of conduct can be used to document them. Ideologies inform social practice and provide it with meaning. Ideologies shape and are shaped by the particular social, economic and historical formations in which they occur.[14] As 'shared cultural understandings are elaborated by different social categories, groups and classes in divergent ways, and often change in significance when taken up by new carriers or adapted to novel contexts',[15] it is difficult to generalise about the practises of Kurds, diverse as they are.

Traditionally, European accounts of attitudes and practices of Kurds have been thought to be applicable to all historical periods. Values and practices have been assumed fixed. This assumption of changelessness has been used in parts of the Middle East to justify the colonial domination of those with 'primitive mentalities and customs'.[16] Edward Said and others insist that representations of Middle Eastern societies, which avoid discussion of the impact of political and economic changes, lend themselves readily to such assumptions.[17] Despite Said's rejection of such uses of social anthropology, Kurds themselves seem willing to accept the application of past data, anthropological, historical and geographical, to current situations.[18] It is common for Kurds to refer to past accounts of their existence or of their activities in a positive way, even when the description is less than flattering. Proof of existence is considered more important than political correctness, even by Kurdish academics. It is hard to find any work in the world of Kurdish studies that does not apply past findings, unchallenged, to modern Kurds and Kurdistan.[19] This can be explained by several factors: the paucity of materials; the continued denial of Kurdish existence as a factor to be confronted; the dearth of both Kurdish academics in humanities and of non-Kurdish academics pursuing Kurdish studies.

The implicit core values of the Kurdish world-view, the way in which they produce explicit beliefs and practices and the ways in which they are articulated, are explored by Sweetnam[20] in possibly the most ambitious ever attempt to describe 'Kurdish culture'.[21] She notes that her informants and contacts were largely from a rural environment, and thus 'represent a more focused picture of Kurdish culture, personally maintaining many

traditions to a great degree without assimilating into urban life or a foreign culture'.[22] Although admitting that hers is a qualified description of Kurdish culture, and acknowledging the existence of urban Kurds and urban norms, she clearly has imbued the notion that 'real' Kurdish cultural practices are those of the rural milieu, and that urban culture poses as great a threat to its existence as foreign culture. This is inevitable give the strong bias towards rural themes in both examination of, and articulation of, Kurdish culture.

According to Hassanpour, Kurdish culture is known as *Kurdaware*. He traces the use of this term to Ahmad Khani's poem, Mem u Zin in the seventeenth century, and it has been defined as 'the Kurdish world, something typically Kurdish'. The basic meaning of the suffix is 'in the manner of'.[23] I have found the use of the word *Kurdaware* is less common than the word *Kurdayeti,* defined as the Kurdish patriotic movement,[24] or according to Hassanpour, 'a system of thought…the idea of and struggle for relieving the Kurds from national oppression by uniting all parts of Kurdistan under the rule of an independent Kurdish state'. In Hassanpour's opinion *Kurdayeti* is a secular nationalism, although religious figures may have been and are involved in the religious movement.[25] Thus, not all aspects of Kurdish identity are given equal emphasis in the Kurdish nationalist world view, just as the rural idyll is given excessive primacy in the imagined Kurdish community.

The word *Kurdayeti* is often used when *Kurdaware* would perhaps be more appropriate, but the examination, recording or defence of Kurdish culture is felt to be an inherent part of *Kurdayeti* and morally superior when motivated by nationalist ideals. The political is rarely separated from the cultural in the Kurdish worldview. Hazhar, the Kurdish etymologist defines *Kurdaware* as 'the land of the Kurds', and *Kurdayeti* as 'work for the aims of the Kurdish nation'.[26] Further, Professor Blau defines *Kurdayeti* as 'Kurdisme' or Kurdishness.[27] These looser definitions add weight to the notion of *Kurdayeti* as a worldview or the process of imagining the Kurdish community and Kurdistan.[28]

In contrast to Hassanpour's assertion that, 'the four parts of Kurdistan are thus united by a well-defined nationalist ideology called *Kurdayeti*' I feel that the nationalist ideology is both imagined and articulated in very different ways for Kurds of different nationalities and also of different social and political groupings. However, the rural idyll and the imagined topography of Kurdistan are common unifying features in the Kurdish imagined community. This is technically an expression of *Kurdaware* in Hassanpour's terms, but its expression has become part of *Kurdayeti,* although even the rural experience varies greatly amongst Kurds, in reality and in their imaginings. Despite these very different experiences, there are certain features that seem universal, at least in symbolism, and universally recognised features of the rural idyll.

MYTHS OF ORIGINS

A great deal of effort has been, and still is, expended by Kurdish writers and intellectuals on establishing an historical myth of common origins. The ancient history of the inhabitants of the Zagros mountain ranges is unclear to say the least, and yet many Kurdish intellectuals are remarkably attached to spurious accounts of Kurdish ancient

history.[29] This is not surprising, as Smith points out while a common origin is not necessary for a sense of ethnic community, a myth of common and unique origins in time and place is essential.[30]

There is a truly mythological account of Kurdish origins involving forty Djinn, expelled by King Solomon, who fled to Kurdistan with some captured virgins. This account has certainly appealed to the imaginations of many travellers to Kurdistan.[31] Additionally, there exists a common account, attributed to the Persian epic poem, Shahnameh by Firdowsi, which has been claimed as a Kurdish legend.[32] In this tale, King Zahak[33] is possessed by two snakes growing from his shoulders, which each require daily the brains of a young person. By means of trickery, certain people escaped to the mountains, possibly Kurdistan, and founded the Kurdish nation. Later in the tale, a hero, named Kawa[34] the Blacksmith, slew Zahak, to great public rejoicing.[35]

The role of Kawa has been adopted by the Kurds in Iraq to explain the origins of the Spring New Year Festival (*Nowruz* or *Nevruz*), giving it a nationalist secular rationale, whilst overlooking its pre-Islamic religious origins.[36] *Nowruz* is observed by Iranians, Afghanis, Zoroastrians, Central Asian peoples, and Kurds, and its celebration still incorporates many elements of Zoroastrian mythology, such as fire worship. Banned until 1991 in Republican Turkey, *Nowruz* celebrations are a powerful symbol of Kurdish nationalist aspirations and the holiday period is frequently a time of political tension and even violent demonstrations. *Nowruz* has become the Kurdish national day. In Iran, where all non-Kurdish citizens also celebrate *Nowruz,* it is not considered to be as especially relevant to Kurds in the way it is in Arab Iraq and Turkish Turkey.

These fantastic accounts have been largely made redundant by the frequent assertions by Kurdish writers and their sympathisers that the Kurds are the descendants of the Medes, which undoubtedly they are, in part. Until fairly recently, there was in these accounts an emphasis on philological evidence for the existence of Kurds in antiquity, usually beginning with reference to Xenophon's Anabasis, and his reference to combat with the Carduchin the 5th century BC.[37] The next reference cited is usually that of Marco Polo in the 11th century.[38] An emphasis is usually placed on such references to these Kurds or putative Kurds as unconquered and wild in temperament: 'a warlike and ferocious people'.[39]

As described in chapter 6, more fantastic claims of Kurdish history have recently been advanced. An excellent example of this trend exists in Izady's recent account, where a speculative account of Kurdish history from 10,000 BC onwards is given as if factual. Except in Izady's work, narrative usually skips from Xenephon to Marco Polo to the nineteenth century European travellers,[40] with a brief look at the 'Golden Age' of the Kurdish emirates. The history of Kurdistan in the Middle Ages is based on a couple of literary sources, whose effects on Kurdish perceptions of the extent of Kurdistan I will discuss.

A SHARED HISTORY

Recent Kurdish history is ostensibly less problematic to trace, but may offer little to the cohesion of the ethnic, as it contains no pattern of Kurdish collective action, but rather several parallel histories of Kurds within different empires or states. Thus the shared

memories and histories of Kurds tend to be nationally based. The history of the Kurdish struggle tends to have been that waged against the host government, and how it united the Kurds of one state against their government oppressors. Hence the importance of dwelling on a mythical ancient past when such political divisions did not exist within Kurdistan, and also on the 'Golden Age' of the autonomous Kurdish emirates.[41] In the all important mythologized account of the division of Kurdistan after the First World War, it tends to be ignored that Kurdistan was already shared between more than one empire, and that the Kurds in Iran were not party to any plans for an independent Kurdistan.[42] The possible absence of a majority Kurdish desire for autonomy or independence is also a sensitive issue.

Figure 11.1 The Distribution of Kurdish Languages

THE LINGUISTIC CONUNDRUM

The most common elements of a distinctive shared culture are usually language and religion. Smith points out that language is usually one of the most malleable and dependent cultural categories.[43] For Anderson, the question of language is positively primordial; the nation is conceived in language not blood. Language has 'no date of birth…it looms out of a horizonless past…[and] connects us to the dead. A special kind of contemporaneous community is suggested only by language in the form of poetry and songs.'[44] If language is the basis of the nation, anyone can be invited into the imagined community and naturalized.

In the case of the Kurds, language has become a very contentious issue, as many nationalists mistakenly believe that an ethnic must possess only one language, or at least be able to understand each other.[45] In the case of the Kurds this is patently not the case. There exist two main Kurdish languages or dialects.[46] Kreyenbroek points out that they can be described as dialects only in that they have a common origin and that this reflects

a sense of ethnic and linguistic unity amongst the Kurds. Yet he states that Sorani and Kurmanji, these two main languages, are as grammatically different as English and German, although with fewer differences in vocabulary and pronunciation. There are additionally many local and regional dialects, which may or may not be mutually intelligible to each other. The Gurani and Zaza languages are linguistically separate from Kurdish but act as markers of Kurdish ethnicity.[47] Sorani and Kurmanji have been developed fairly recently into written languages, adopting, respectively, the Arabic and the Latin (In the Soviet Union, Cyrillic) script, and based on the dominant dialect of that language. Debate rages over the correct form,[48] and both languages are developing apace, in the case of Kurmanji largely in Europe.[49]

Many Kurds are reluctant to accept that this situation exists and would wish to either create an artificial synthesis of Kurdish, or to force all Kurds to adopt one standard written and possibly spoken language. Many Sorani-speaking Kurds are dismissive of Kurmanji, and in Iraq, the Sorani language has always been taught in schools even in the northern region of Badinan, where there exists a separate literary and oral Kurmanji (Badinani) language tradition. Even after the establishment of Free Kurdistan in 1991, only one Kurdish language was taught, even though minorities numerically smaller than the Badinani speakers, such as Turkmans and Assyrians were offered mother-tongue teaching.[50] The linguistic divide in Iraqi Kurdistan is carried over into cultural areas[51] and political affiliation. Most of the Badinani speakers are supporters of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), and Sorani speakers tend to support the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Since the mid 1990s, this divide has been reinforced by a territorial split in zones of control in northern Iraq between the two main parties.[52]

Many Kurds wish to deny the situation completely by claiming complete mutual intelligibility amongst Kurdish speakers. There exists a great deal of confusion indeed. Izady has developed a theory of Kurdish language classification, which is markedly different to any other. In his nomenclature, there are two main Kurdish languages, springing from an original proto-Kurdish: Kurmanji, including Sorani and Badinani (what is normally called Kurmanji); and *Pahlawāni,* which include the Dimli/Zaza and Gorani languages. Although accepting the existence of two languages then, he minimises the differences between the ‘dialects’, claiming that speakers of Kurmanji and Sorani can easily communicate, especially after a few days practice. Curiously, he asserts that this classification is accepted by all educated Kurds, whereas, I have not seen or heard any other reference to *Pahlawani,* nor heard Kurmanji in general referred to as Badinani.[53]

A mathematical tool, the Venn diagram, can be used to illustrate the pattern of overlapping between regions of the different Kurdish languages and how the inhabitants of those areas can at least understand, and are probably able to use, all the languages/dialects in that overlap. Those who live outside the area of overlap are likely find speakers of other dialects mostly unintelligible, even though they recognize that a form of Kurdish is being spoken. This overlap can also occur artificially amongst intellectuals and displaced Kurds, where familiarity with other Kurdish languages becomes commonplace over time, and where speakers make an effort to standardize their mode of speech. It is often hard for these Kurds to accept that mutual comprehension must be learned, that Kurdish is not simply one language.

Despite all its inherent difficulties, the Kurdish language, in all its forms, remains possibly the most powerful recognizable tool of Kurdish identity and self-expression.

Most Kurdish languages are easily recognizable as a form of Kurdish, even if almost entirely mutually incomprehensible. Kurds often express great delight at meeting Kurds from far-flung places, who clearly know some form of Kurdish. In particular, the question, 'do you know Kurdish?' is remarkably constant, and will elicit a positive answer, even if the conversation palls after that. Resorting to the use of a lingua franca, such as Turkish or Arabic is very normal amongst Kurds of disparate origins, so much so that Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK, gives almost all his speeches in Turkish. Full comprehension or fluency is in general less important than the idea of familiarity with a recognizably Kurdish language[54] (Fig. 11.1).

RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Probably 85 percent of Kurds are Sunni Moslems. The majority are followers of the Shafi'i school of Islamic law, whereas their Arab and Turkish neighbors are largely followers of the Hanafi rite. Azeri Turks, Persians and Lurs are all Shi'ites. In the south of Kurdistan, many Kurds are Shi'ites, largely in the provinces of Kermanshah and Khanaqin. It is only really in Iran, where the official state religion is Twelver Shi'ism, of the Ithna<Ashari school, that Kurdish Islamic differences are really a possible source of friction, although Kurds' devotion to sufi or dervish orders may set them apart from other Sunnis. It is in praxis, rather than ideology that Kurdish Islam is usually distinguished.

Only two Sufi orders, or *tarīqats* exist in Kurdistan, the Qaderiya and Naqshbandiya orders. They were, from the mid-nineteenth century, the first, and remain possibly the only, organisations which truly cut through class, tribal and international boundaries. In addition to that of teacher, spiritual guide and arbitrator, the role of the mystical leaders or sheikhs of these orders has included uniting rival tribes, thus they have played a major role in the Kurdish nationalist struggles.[55] The first putative nationalist rebellion in Kurdistan was led by a Naqshbandiya sheikh, Sheikh Obeydullah in Turkish Kurdistan in 1880. Sheikh-led uprisings occurred in 1919, 1923 and 1931 under the Qaderiya sheikh, Sheikh Mahmud and in 1925 under the Naqshbandiya Sheikh Said. Although in the Qaderi order, sheikhdom is inherited within the family, in the Naqshbandiya order, sheikhs can rise to prominence from a subordinate position. This enables 'outsiders' to reach influential positions whilst owing no allegiance to any tribe or family. It also allowed the rapid spread of the latter order in the nineteenth century, at the expense of the Qaderiya order. Most prominent political and social figures in Kurdistan, even today, have their roots in a sheikhly dynasty. Jalal Talabani, leader of the PUK, is from the Köy Sanjak branch of the Talebani sheikhs,[56] Mullah Mustafa Barzani, the founder of the KDP, and of course his son and heir to the party leadership, Masud, are descended from Naqshbandiya Sheikhs.[57]

Both Sufi orders share a similar functional pattern, whereby a sheikh gives his deputies or *khalīfas* the right to officiate at meetings in other centres, leading dervishes or initiates, guiding them along the sufi path/way to enlightenment or closeness to God. Each *khalīfa* officiates at weekly meetings in a *khanāghā* or meetinghouse. The sheikh is usually acknowledged as possessing mystical and even magical powers, some of which are passed on to his followers. The sheikhs function as psychiatrists, doctors and advisors to their followers, and even those uninvolved in the Sufi orders will seek a sheikhs advice

or assistance in times of need. Donations are also offered to sheikhs for both temporal advice and *karamat* or 'blessings'. The Naqshbandiyas follow quietist meditation practices, whereas the Qaderiyas are famed for their acts of self-mutilation involving swords, skewers and eating glass or handling poisonous snakes. The blessing of their sheikh is believed to allow them to undergo these rites without injury.[58]

The Christian and Jewish Kurds have a minimal role to play in the creation of Kurdish identity except in that their existence may allow Kurds to claim an identity that transcends that of religion. Also, certainly Kurdish intellectuals, and to a great extent Kurds in general, like to feel that they espouse greater inter-communal tolerance than the surrounding ethnic groups.[59]

Of great interest to the political myth-makers are the existence of two uniquely Kurdish religions amongst the Kurds, namely Yezidism in Iraq, Turkey and the old Soviet republics, and Yarsaranism in Iran. The pre-Islamic origin of these religions has appeal to those Kurds who wish to emphasise the supremacy of their ethnic identity over the religious. Thus these Kurdish religions have seen a surge of interest, both on the part of Kurdologists and Kurdish political activists. In 1992, slogans proclaiming that the Yezidis were the original Kurds were to be seen in northern Iraqi Kurdistan, signed by the Kurdish leader Masud Barzani.[60] All the Iraqi Kurdish political parties made determined efforts after the 1991 uprising to court the support of the Yezidis.[61] This is despite the often unfortunate history of intercommunal antipathy and even violence amongst the Kurdish religious groups.[62] In Turkey many Kurds are also Alevis. Alevis may or may not be Kurdish or Zaza speakers and many Alevis are not of Kurdish origins, but have identified with Kurdish causes, especially in exile in Europe, where Alevis are over represented in the Turkish migrant community in Germany. From the 1970s, Alevis have both identified themselves more readily as Kurds, and also begun to develop a distinct sense of their own identity.[63]

Recent works by Kurds have tended to overemphasise the importance of these religious groups in Kurdish culture rescuing them from the margins of mainstream Kurdish identity where they have languished for so long. For example, Izady claims that less than 60 percent of Kurds are Sunni Moslems, and attempts to diminish the role of Islam in Kurdish culture. He also attempts to link the several heterodox sects in a way that make them simply remnants of an original Kurdish religion, a religion that he implies is more 'natural' for Kurds than Islam.[64] It is probably only in the former Soviet republics with a large number of Kurds, such as Georgia and Armenia, that the experience of being Kurdish is inherently bound up with Yezidism.[65]

MATERIAL CULTURE

There are many other aspects of Kurdish culture that can be, and are, emphasised to foster the unity of the ethnic. It is usually the case that the heterodox nature of Kurds is de-emphasized, and attempts made to thrust one or two manifestations of a particular cultural trait forward until they are accepted as standard Kurdish practice. For example, Kurdish clothing was in the past extremely diverse, with innumerable regional, religious, and class-based variations. Styles of Kurdish dress also changed over time, as they continue to do in those areas where it remains a part of daily life. Dress served as an

accurate indicator of elements such as class, economic status, and origins. Many forms of Kurdish dress have become extinct in Kurdistan, as inevitable for an increasingly urban population, within states that pressurize them to deny or downplay their Kurdishness. Kurds in the diaspora rarely wear Kurdish clothes routinely, and for them, Kurdish clothes have evolved into an aspect of folklore, rather than real markers of identity. Forms of dress, based on certain regional variations have evolved, especially in Europe for ceremonial purposes, festivals, and public display. Intriguingly, the degree to which Kurds in the diaspora dress in their 'national dress' for such activities varies sharply with their state origins, as well as gender: women are far more likely to wear 'traditional' clothing than men. Amongst Kurds from Turkey, only performing artists wear Kurdish 'folk costumes', whereas Kurds from Iraq, both men and women, are most likely to wear Kurdish clothing, and the styles that they bring to predominance are most likely to be adopted for display. The role of the Iraqi state in allowing, and even encouraging such 'safe' aspects of Kurdish material rather than political culture, may have played a considerable part in this phenomenon.[66]

THE AGRARIAN IDYLL

There are few towns of obvious antiquity remaining in Kurdistan, some notable exceptions being Diyarbakir and Bitlis in Turkey and Arbil and Ahmaddiya in Iraq. Few studies exist on the Kurdish urban experience, and studies usually focus on the nomad and peasant elements of Kurdish society.[67] Townspeople have been studied only implicitly, in that Kurdish nationalism was primarily an urban phenomenon.[68] If any common thread of culture unites the disparate parts of Kurdistan, and forms a basis for both Kurdish identity and national mythology, it would appear to be the rural experience. Despite the inequalities and poverty inherent in Kurdish rural life, the rural idyll is idealized by many Kurds, in much the same way that the virtues of nomadic tribal life are extolled by many settled Arabs, throughout the Arab world. As Van Bruinessen noted, 'Cities appear to have been peripheral to the concerns of most Kurds as well as those who studied them',[69] thus further strengthening the myth of the rural idyll.

In describing the traditional story lines of Kurdish love songs in her doctoral thesis, Christine Allison noted that: The concept of the beauty of the *zōzan*[70] is still powerful for a Kurdistan where the overwhelming majority are sedentary. Before the mass exodus of 1991, many Iraqi Kurds had not been up to the mountains except on excursions for pleasure. However, rural life is felt to be the authentic Kurdish life, and its details, both of landscape and of lifestyle have romantic associations: this applies to both Yezidis and Muslims.'[71]

THE RURAL IDYLL AND IMAGES OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Those foods thought of as Kurdish tend to be those of the village—hearty soups, dairy products, and grain-based dishes. Many everyday food-related activities of village people are revered by Kurds, frequently practiced in homes in the urban setting and often exported to foreign lands as symbols of Kurdish identity. Examples include: the making

of flat griddle bread *(nān sāji);* butter churning, providing both Kurdish butter and the national drink, buttermilk *(dow);* yogurt and cheese making *(māst, panir).* All these foodstuffs, the fruits of subsistence farming, and their means of production, are considered to be somehow inherently Kurdish. They appear in proverbs and expressions,[72] are often ostentatiously favored over richer fare, and are considered to be more delicious in Kurdistan than elsewhere.[73] The second lesson of the first Kurdish reader used in Iraqi schools dwells on the delights of *dow,* or buttermilk.

Other elements of rural life such as sitting under a *korsī* (a quilt suspended over a charcoal brazier) in the winter, drawing water from the well, or celebrating festivities outdoors, are often portrayed nostalgically by Kurds. Photographic exhibitions of Kurdistan usually dwell on rural themes.[74] It is rare to see Kurds portrayed in urban contexts. Images of Kurdistan chosen for greetings cards or posters are almost always pastoral,[75] as are themes chosen by modern Kurdish painters, despite their probable urban backgrounds, and studies at urban art schools. Even in Kurdistan itself, this is true. In Sanandaj, of forty odd photographic reproductions with a Kurdish theme for sale in a card shop, all but two dwelt on rural themes.[76] In Arbil, of twenty postcards of Kurdistan, only three had urban vistas, and these were juxtaposed with rural scenes. One of the most popular 'Kurdish' post-cards for sale in Iraq shows traditionally dressed, but clearly urban, Kurds dancing on a mountainside.[77] Tapestry making is a popular activity amongst Kurdish women, and all commercially produced canvases with a Kurdish theme show a rural scene or a rural character.[78] Kurdish costumes chosen for festive occasions in Europe often include items of apparel which were worn in Kurdistan only by shepherds and farmers, but which are immediately recognisable as Kurdish.[79] The Kurdish elementary textbooks used in Iraq, and those prepared for use in Iran contain very few illustrations of urban life, dwelling mainly on story lines or illustrations from rural themes.[80] Early on in the texts, the vocabulary for subsistence farming implements is introduced.[81]

Popular Kurdish given names can reflect this rural preoccupation. Although many Kurds bear Arabic, Turkish, or Persian names, they may have Kurdish names for family use, and certain first names, and even new surnames, chosen by writers, artists, musicians, political and military activists, as well as by parents of Kurdish children are reminders of Kurdistan's agrarian legacy. Many names recall notable natural features of the landscape, such as rivers and mountains.[82] Other names are related to plants and seasons,[83] and place names are also popular, especially those pertaining to Kurdistan's history.[84] Common names include, *Şiwan* (shepherd), *Beriwan* (milkmaid), *Gulestan* (land of flowers), *Zozan* (summer pasture).

Popular and classical Kurdish music draws frequently on rural images, and the most popular singers are those who have a wide repertoire of traditional, folkloric rural songs, even if they are recorded with modern instrumentation.[85] Probably the best known Kurdish singer, both inside and outside the Kurdish community, is a Turkish Kurd known as Şiwan (shepherd) Perwer, who usually wears village clothes, and is most famous for his performance of traditional Kurmanji folkloric songs, in the style of a village minstrel. The symbolism of traditional folk songs is heavily dependent on rural traditions. Tales of romance are almost always set in an idyllic rural setting.[86] Certainly in an urban environment, opportunities for fortunate or illicit meetings between boys and girls would be less common. The freedom of association in villages is a much-admired facet of the

rural idyll. The urban youth would be unlikely to meet any girls who were not his cousins, and marriages are assumed to be more contrived in the city. Describing a woman at her village tasks is one of the most common means of eulogizing her attractions. Physical attraction is often conveyed by images of nature; girls move with the grace of wild animals, they are compared to trees and wild flowers, and fruit orchards are often scenes of unbridled eroticism. In both songs and stories, rural details as well as a mythical tribal past are lovingly recreated and preserved as symbols of how Kurdish life should be, whatever it has become.[87]

THE DEMISE OF THE RURAL LIFE

The rural situation has obviously been gravely affected by events in the region.[88] The rural-urban migratory trend is a feature of all the surrounding states, and the processes at work in the wider Middle East would probably have continued to be felt in Kurdistan. Whereas the 'pull' factors of urban development are strong motivators in urbanization in many parts of the Middle East, in Kurdistan it is safe to say that many of the motivations behind rural flight are of the 'push' variety. Rural poverty may be less an impetus than war, harassment by either government troops or Kurdish guerrillas and government led produce embargoes. Forced deportation has been a policy, at least in Iraq and Turkey. All areas of Kurdistan have been a theatre for war at some time in the in the last twenty years. Turkish Kurdistan has seen over ten years of continuous conflict, with over 20,000 people killed, 2,000 villages destroyed and 2 million people displaced:[89] Iraqi Kurdistan has barely seen ten years of peace since 1960. Lack of state investment may be particularly acute in Kurdish rural areas.

In Turkey, until 1970, around 70 percent of the Kurdish population were living in 20,000 villages and hamlets.[90] By 1985, only 58 percent of the population remained in the rural milieu.[91] Turkish military forces have followed a policy of village clearance to prevent Kurdish civilian support of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) guerrillas in Eastern Anatolia. Such village clearances may also be practiced by the PKK where inhabitants are suspected of collaboration with the government. By 1996, it was estimated that up to 3,000 villages and hamlets[92] had been evacuated.[93] It has been claimed that between 2.5 and 3 million villagers were internally displaced by 1996.[94] The population of cities in Turkish Kurdistan has expanded rapidly,[95] and the Kurdish population of cities throughout Turkey had also necessarily increased.[96] Thus the rural experience is rapidly becoming merely a folk memory in Turkish Kurdistan. The reality of Kurdish life is increasingly likely to reflect urban experiences, most likely that of the *gecokondus* or shanty-towns on the outskirts of major cities.

In Iraqi Kurdistan in 1976, more than 50 percent of the population were dependent on agriculture.[97] The Iraqi government created a village-free cordon sanitaire for 10–15km along the Iranian border following the collapse of the Kurdish rebellion in 1975. In 1988, this 'security zone' was increased to 30km wide along the border with Iran and Turkey. The villages were totally destroyed and the soldiers prevented reoccupation by razing fruit trees and cementing in wells and springs. The government followed policies of mass deportation and forced urbanization until the creation of a safe haven in the north of the country in 1991. It is estimated that 'with the destruction of some 1000 villages during

the previous years, only about 1000 of the previously existing Kurdish villages are still standing, and more than a third of the area of Iraqi Kurdistan was completely depopulated'.[98] In 1991, a journalist was able to comment on the effective termination of agricultural production in Iraqi Kurdistan thus, 'since 1988…there has been little agriculture in Kurdistan. The region's food supplies had to be brought in by truck from the south'.[99]

Certainly in March 1992, it was not possible to find a single village in northern Iraq that had been continuously inhabited until that time.[100] The vast majority of previously rural Kurds lived either in what had once been market towns or in government built 'model villages' with no access to land for farming. It has been administration policy within the safe haven to encourage a return to pastoral life, and many villages have been rebuilt with the help of aid agencies. However, the pastoral image of Kurdish life remains largely an idealized folk memory in Kurdistan of Iraq. Most young Kurds know nothing of farming and have experienced neither the pleasures nor the rigors of village existence.

MOUNTAINS AND MYTHS

Perhaps all nationalists over-emphasize the uniqueness of both their own history and their own territory. That the relationship between territoriality and nationalism is neglected or ignored is suggested by Anderson, who explores the importance of territory to the nationalist myth. Nationalism has to look forward, to the ideal future and also backwards to a fabricated remote past, which justifies the nationalist aim. The homeland is the receptacle of the past, viewed from the present. Time has passed but the space endures. He also points out that nationalism is two-faced in space as well as time. It looks inwards to unification of the ethnos and outwards to seek justification to divide from other, maybe larger territories. Internal conflicts are downplayed during this process, and the boundaries of the national territory are staked out with cultural markers. As culture is not a sufficient basis for territorial delimitation, the movement seeks to also impose a territorial uniqueness.[101] It appears that for Kurds, the Kurdish nationalist mythology is based more on imagined topographical properties than on any other element.

To most Kurds, even urbanites or dwellers of the plains, Kurdistan is defined by its mountainous topography. A common theme in Kurdish culture is the mountains as allies in the many Kurdish military struggles. Such proverbs as 'the Kurds have no friends but the mountains' are well known,[102] and certainly only their ability to melt into the mountains has allowed Kurdish organizations and armies to exist when pitched against state power. Many Kurds use the euphemism, 'in the mountains' to refer to time spent as a guerrilla fighter, and for many ex-activists, time in the mountains is remembered with great attachment, despite its attendant hardships.[103] The support of the villagers, even if sometimes under coercion, has allowed armies to survive in inhospitable and inaccessible terrain. Thus, despite the urban origins of the modern nationalist movement, the mountain village Kurds are often idealised as the true supporters of a nationalist struggle, whereas the city and plains dwellers are co-opted by the host regimes and corrupted by opportunities, bribery and easy living.

As Kurdish writer Mehrdad Izady floridly puts it, 'To a Kurd the mountain is no less than the embodiment of the deity: mountain is his mother, his refuge, his protector, his

home, his farm, his market, his mate, and his only friend. This intimate man-mountain relationship shapes the physical, cultural and psychological landscape more than any other factor. Such a thorough attachment to and indivisibility from their natural environment is the source of many folk beliefs that all mountains are inhabited by Kurds'.[104]

CONCLUSIONS

The uses of, and the impetus to create, a nationalist mythology are almost universal, as is the need to establish close links between the national myth and territory. As territory is the receptacle of the past viewed from the present, it can reconcile the two faces of nationalism, which look simultaneously to the past and into the future national creation. The imagined mountainous topography of Kurdistan contributes to the ability of Kurds to agree on the properties of that territory, and to mentally experience it in similar ways, even from a distance, either spatially or temporally.

An essential element of that experience is an idealization of both the agrarian lifestyle and Kurdistan's agricultural potential. The rural idyll, inherently bound up with the topographical features of Kurdistan, has become the dominant common thread of culture, which unites the Kurdish 'imagined community'. The Kurds have yet to explicitly acknowledge the changed and changing nature of Kurdish society, including the increasing artificiality of the rural experience construct, an experience that is increasingly limited to a distant imagining. Yet the genuine rural experience has preserved many elements of 'typically' or uniquely Kurdish culture, and its decline implies a dramatic change in what constitutes Kurdishness, a change for which the imagined community is probably not yet ready, self-conscious as it is.

Other myths contributing to the creation of a Kurdish identity include such features as language, religion and history, which can be manipulated over time and context to be seen as divisive, or more recently, unifying features. Even aspects of material culture, such as clothing, can be both in decline within Kurdistan, yet simultaneously rescued from obscurity by Kurdish nationalists and recreated as symbols of national identity.

There is an increasing tendency to impose an imagined Kurdish homogeneity over the reality of Kurdish heterogeneity, to try to create an artificial identity, which can be manipulated to achieve nationalist ambitions. Examination of the basis of Kurdish identity can be perceived as threatening, as can discussion of the relevance and origins of the nationalist ideology. The difficulty in separating the cultural from the political spheres in Kurdish terms is illustrated by the difficulties inherent in establishing a terminology for discussion of such themes.

CHAPTER 12
Between the Map and the Reality

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAPS

With the exception of one 1919 map, prepared by Sharif Pasha during the Paris Peace Conference, formal attempts to map Kurdistan have only apparently been made by Kurds since the 1930s.[1] Prior to that, Kurdistan had been mapped by outsiders. Europeans had mapped both the extent of Kurdistan[2] (Fig. 12.1) and various aspects of it[3] since the nineteenth century, and the cartographers to Kurdistan's imperial rulers had included it in their maps.[4] Early Kurdish texts focused on Kurdistan's situation rather than on its actual location or extent, and oral epics, the most extensive genre of Kurdish literature offered no reference to the extent of Kurdistan. Farhad Pirbal, Kurdish historical geographer, admits that there is a paucity of Kurdish material, both textual and cartographic, on the extent of Kurdistan. He thus concludes that 'for the purposes of accuracy, and to study Kurdistan's political geography, it will be better to turn to the maps and atlases of the European geographers.'[5]

Following the end of the First World War, there were attempts to map Kurdistan, in an ethnographic sense, and also in a practical sense, in that suggestions were advanced as to possible boundaries for a Kurdish state. Kurdish suggestions were offered as to the extent of Kurdish habitation and the possible location of a Kurdish state, but only one indigenous cartographic attempt appeared, prepared by Sharif Pasha, Kurdish representative at the Paris Peace Conference.[6] (Fig. 12.2) The pamphlet in which this map appeared was intensely hostile to Armenians, at a time that the Great powers were considering the fate of both groups, and allocates more space to a rebuttal of Armenian claims to statehood, rather than any exposition of Kurdish claims. Additionally, rather than address the question of where a Kurdish state might realistically be established, Sharif Pasha requested a Kurdish state, in accordance with the proffered map. Although very generous in its claims on Mesopotamia, based partly on tribal pasture access, this map is interesting in that it allows for a northern Armenian territory, bordered by Kurds only in the south. If compared to Zaki's 1936 map and later efforts, a logical progression can be seen, excluding of Armenian territorial claims, as the reality gradually dawned that the Armenians were no longer an element in future plans for the region.

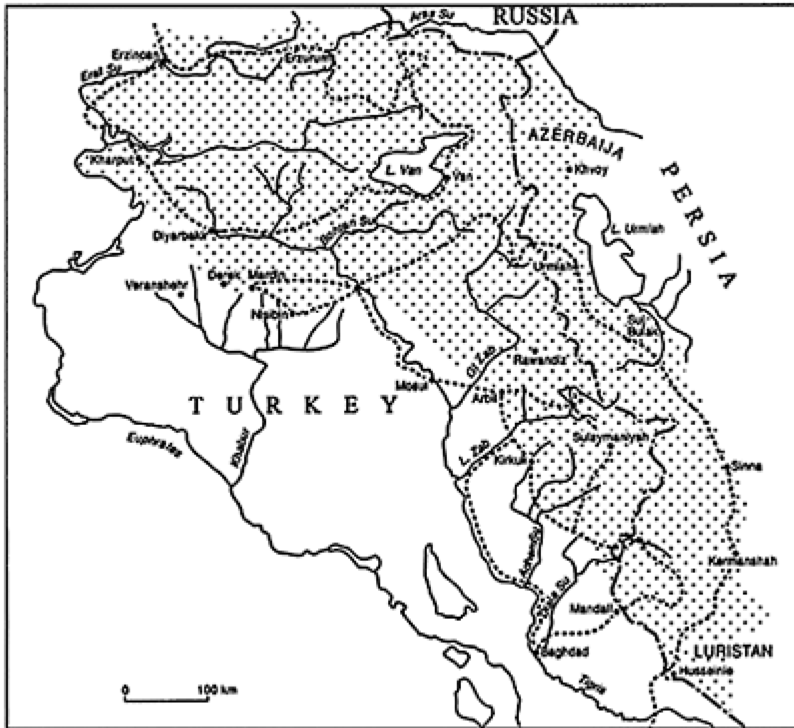

Figure 12.1 Map to Illustrate Captain F.R.Maunsell's Travels in Kurdistan

This pamphlet and map do not appear to be have been considered by the British representatives to the Peace Conference.[7] This in itself indicates the inadequacy of Kurdish representation, as an account of the methods of persuasion at the Paris Peace Conference emphasises the importance of maps. 'Each of the national delegations…had its own bagful of statistical and cartographic tricks. When statistics failed, use was made of maps in colour… A new instrument was discovered…the map language. A map was as good as a brilliant poster, and just being a map made it respectable, authentic. A perverted map was a lifeline to many a founding argument'.[8]

When, throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, Kurds gradually became aware of the power of cartography, they produced maps of Kurdistan, offered as much as boundary proposals as ethnographic maps.

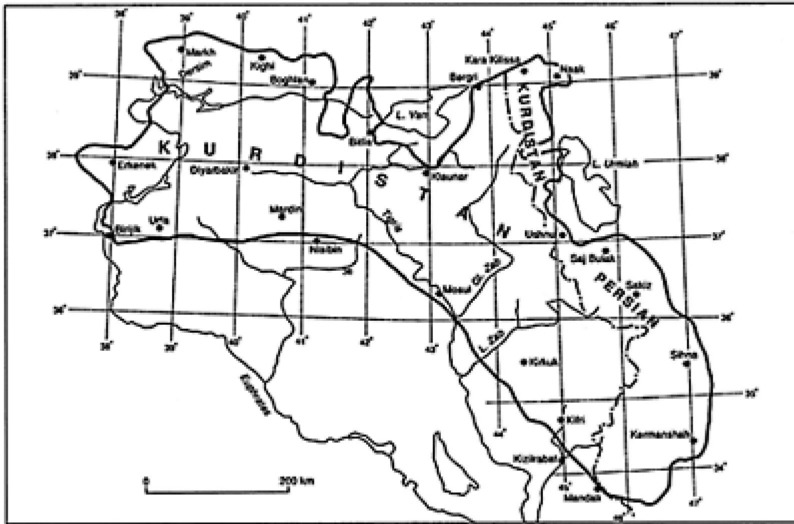

Figure 12.2 Sharaf Pasha’s Map of Kurdistan

Early maps were based largely on the attempts of European travellers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Early on in the indigenous mapping of Kurdistan, attempts were made to establish a more favorable geopolitical position for Kurdistan, involving not only the expansion of its territory, but access to the sea in at least one place, thus overcoming the potential disadvantage of Kurdistan’s landlocked position.[9]

The maps of this period have metamorphosed into possibly the most easily recognized and widely accepted aspect of the Kurdish nationalist mythology. Few attempts have been made to re-examine the basis of these propaganda maps or to alter them in line with the region’s ethnographic and demographic changes. The map has become Kurdistan in the minds of Kurds; its extent is accepted without question, and its origins are assumed to lie in reality.

LITERARY ANTECEDENTS

Kurdish attempts to maximize the extent of Kurdistan are not new. The earliest surviving literary works in Kurdish from the 16th and 17th century took a very broad view of Kurdistan and its geographical constraints. The Sharafnameh, an epic history of the Kurdish nation between 1290 and 1596 written in Persian by Sharaf Khan Bitlisi in 1596, displays extreme expansionist tendencies, at least to the south. He also specifically refers to the Lurs as Kurds.

The Kurdish people are divided into four, their language and culture are separate. First, the Kurmanj, second the Lurs, third the Kalhurs,[10] the fourth the Kuran (Guran). The beginning of Kurdistan starts from the Strait (Sea) of Hormuz on the Indian Ocean, in a direct line to the vilayats of Malaytia and Marash. To the north of this line are the

vilayats of Fars non-Arab Iraq and Azerbaijan, Greater and Lesser Armenia. To the south is Arab Iraq, Mosul and Diarbekir. Sections of this nation have spread from the farthest east to the furthest west.[11]

In the only Kurdish edition, the translator and editor has translated Sharaf Khan's literary mapping into a graphic map, illustrating the enormous area possibly defined as Kurdistan by Sharaf Khan.[12] (Fig. 12.3)

Yet, throughout the work, Sharaf Khan took a rather narrow elitist view of who was a Kurd, dismissing all but the tribal Kurds and the court elite of the Kurdish principalities. Cultivators were not considered dignified enough to call themselves Kurds. As the purpose of this work was to record the exploits of the Kurdish princes, exaggerating the extent of their spheres of control was vital to the scope of the work, so it may not reflect widespread contemporary perceptions of Kurdistan at that time.

The important Kurdish epic poem, Mem u Zin, based on a pre-existing folktale, was written by Ahmad-i-Khani in the 17th century. Ostensibly, it tells the tale of two lovers who are separated by factors outside their control, but Khani weaves historical and geopolitical analyses into the narrative. In a surprisingly sophisticated work, he bemoans the lack of

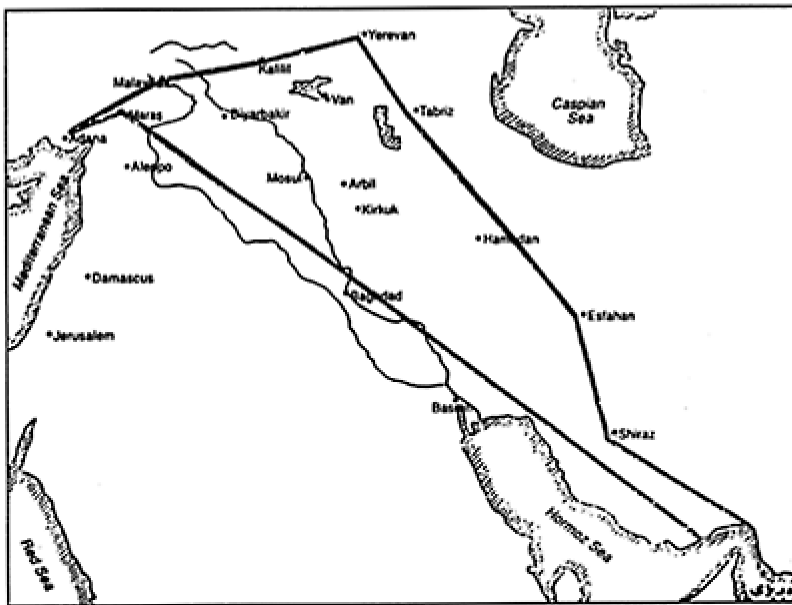

Figure 12.3 Map of Kurdistan in the Time of Sharaf Khan Bitlisi

Kurdish unity and leadership and envisages an era of strong Kurdish monarchy. He appreciates Kurdistan's manipulation as a buffer zone between the Ottoman and Persian empires, vividly portraying the region's unfortunate tribulations. His depiction of the Kurds as unique in their unfortunate location and alternating neglect and mistreatment at

the hands of their neighbors still strikes a chord in the hearts of Kurds today. Many Kurds claim that Khani was exhorting Kurds to struggle against their enemies with the aim of creating a nation-state, thus pre-dating European political thinkers by several centuries.[13] He makes no effort to define the borders of Kurdistan, but assumes that Kurdistan forms a coherent, if not politically united, territorial unit.

Examples of verses from Khani's Mem u Zin show the view he took of Kurdistan's location:

Look, from the Arabs to the Georgians,
The Kurds have become like towers.
The Turks and the Persians are surrounded by them,
The Kurds are on all four corners.
Both sides have made the Kurdish people,
Targets for arrows of fate.
They are said to be keys to the borders,
Each tribe forming a considerable bulwark.

Whenever the Black Sea (Ottomans) and the Caspian Sea (Persians) flow out and agitate,

The Kurds get soaked in blood,
Separating them like an isthmus.[14]

Khani, as did Sharif Khan Bitlisi, had definite views about who was a Kurd. In contrast to Sharif Khan's lordly assumption that the history of the Kurds was that of the ruling elite, it appears that Khani was of humbler origins, and indeed claimed,

I am a self-made man, not well bred,
I am a Kurd, a highlander from the foothills.[15]

Despite claims that Khani was an early advocate of national self-determination, he appears to have been a supporter of a Platonic system of rule by a philosopher King, not necessarily a Kurdish one, but one wise, cultured and benign.

If we had a King.... a fortune would appear for us.
He would worry about us...and he would extract us from the hands of the vile.[16]

Khani further understood that the Kurds suffered greatly from their disunity and the narrow power struggles of their rulers.

…they detest indebtedness.

This courage and high aspiration became a hindrance to carrying the burden of obligation.

Therefore they are always disunited.
They are always rebellious and split.[17]

Khani's views on Kurdistan or the Kurds' unfortunate location continued to be reflected in Kurdish literature. For example in the 19th century, the poet, Haji Qadir Koyi (1815–1892/7) wrote:

Trapped between Red-hats (Ottomans) and Black-hats (Persians),
We are wrecked and will be branded like cattle.[18]

Koyi also possibly gave the most detailed account of the extent of Kurdistan thus far:

Would you, the Kurd, like to know where your friends live?

I shall tell you now: Kurdistan's boundary in the West stretches to Eskandarun and the Taurus Mountains towards the Black Sea.

In the north to the Black Sea, Ardahan, and the River Aras.
In the east to the Alvand peaks and the River Aras, and from Ahwaz to the Euphrates.
Its southernmost border stretches along the Hamrin Mountains, Sanjar, and the Nassibin road.[19]

Koyi appears to be claiming an extremely large area even by modern nationalist standards, as even Baghdad falls within these co-ordinates, Tehran lying just outside. As to be evident later, Armenian territories fall prey to Kurdish ambitions, as do the Laz areas and those of any other minorities. The southern boundaries are not discussed.

Almost all Kurdish writers before the twentieth century were employed by or patronized by the courts of the Kurdish principalities, thus their materials tended to be self-censored, and were likely to flatter their rulers, and not to lament the internecine conflicts throughout the region. Chief topics for literary attention were religious devotion, warrior epics, lovers' tales, and oral folktales. It is possible that a lack of mobility underlies the absence of known oral accounts of the extent of Kurdistan. Writers in the

twentieth century have concentrated on enhancing a sense of Kurdish historical separateness, and accept the extent of Kurdistan as largely given.

INDIGENOUS CARTOGRAPHY

During the period of 1918–1920, when the Kurds had the greatest chance of attaining independence, there was only one known attempt by Kurds to map Kurdistan,[20] and Kurdish opinions on the extent of Kurdistan differed wildly. There were several attempts at drawing the borders of Kurdistan by foreign agents, such as Noel.[21] (Fig. 10.8)

Various claims regarding Kurdistan's area were submitted to the authorities by Kurdish groups, often attracting derision at the grandiose nature of the claims. A Kurdish group based in Cairo claimed, for example, Kurdistan as the following areas:

> *In the north to Zinvin under the Caucauses;*
> *In the west to Erzerum, Erzingjan, Kamah, Arab Kir, Diwrik, Haran, Tel Aafar, Erbil, Kirkuk, Suleimania;*
> *and in the east to Sennah, Bah Kaleh and Mt. Ararat.*[22]

This claim extended very far north, yet was very reticent concerning the southern, western and eastern borders. The British Commissioner in Baghdad was approached by delegates from the Kurdistan Committee, who claimed as Kurdish all of Turkish Armenia, the ex-Russian lands around Beyazid and Persian Kurdistan, at least as far as Luristan. The delegation was clearly more concerned about Armenian territorial claims than anything else, and agreed that they would leave the delimitation of the frontiers of Kurdistan to the Peace Conference.[23]

Sharif Pasha, the official Kurdish representative at the 1920 Paris Peace Conference, initially argued that Kurdistan should include: Diyarbakir, Kharput, Bitlis, Van, Mosul, and the sanjaq of Urfa. He had pragmatically accepted that Iranian Kurdistan and southern Kurdistan would not be included.[24] Interestingly, in the same month, Sharif Pasha fell out of favor with the British delegation. He then produced the more extensive demands, *Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People,* accompanied by the map described above.[25]

Few Kurds had any real idea about the extent of Kurdistan, as the nationalist consciousness had not really developed, and the topography of the area meant that most Kurdish communities were quite isolated. Pastoral tribal use of the area also meant that the ethnic make-up of an area might vary from season to season, and that many Kurds were more concerned with the extent of their tribal lands than with that of Kurdistan. Drawing borders in such an area was difficult; the local people had no cartographic competence, natural resources and land were used in varying ways, there were spatial and time differences in land occupied, and tribal and ethnic allegiances shifted. Expert outside help was unlikely to appreciate the local needs or to have them at heart.[26]

The first known Kurdish map of the distribution of Kurds occurred in the Kurdish book, *The History of the Kurds and of Kurdistan,* written in the 1930s by Emin Zaki Bey,

an Iraqi Kurd and Transport Minister in the Iraqi government.[27] He used several sources, including: Mark Sykes' 1908 map of Kurdish tribes,[28] a map (Fig. 12.4) drawn up by the Commission of Inquiry of the League of Nations of Iraq, and a secret Indian Army map from 1912. Additionally he was guided by information from the Encyclopaedia of Islam.

The Second World War was a time when Kurdish national consciousness was heightened, with increased awareness of events in the rest of the world. Many commentators argue, like Pelletiere, that a Kurdish nationalist consciousness did not develop until during the latter half of the war, when a defensive nationalism occurred in response to the changes in the surrounding societies.[29]

In the 1940s, the first substantial indigenous cartographic attempts came from Kurdistan, the most detailed of which was compiled by a Kurdish group in Egypt in 1947.[30] (Fig. 12.5) It is this map that survived, barely altered, until today in the form of several widely accepted Kurdish propaganda maps. The map is claimed as the result of 'impartial' academic research, according to the accompanying notes, which attempt to justify the results on very thinly

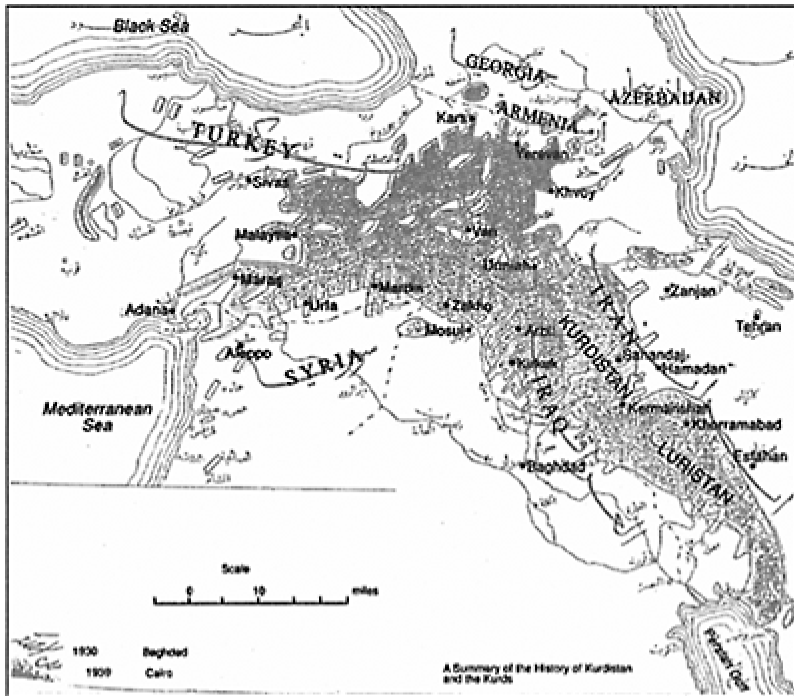

Figure 12.4 Ethnographic Map of Kurdistan by Mohammad Amin Zaki

stretched premises. The authors acknowledge the efforts of Zaki, but denigrate his map for its general sloppiness.

The momentous event for the Kurds during this period was the only successful attempt, however short-lived, at creating an independent Kurdish state. In 1941, the Shah of Iran had been deposed, and Iran was occupied by the Soviet, British, and Allied armies. The Mahabad (formerly known as Sauj Baluk) area in northern Iran remained unoccupied, resulting in a power vacuum. Stimulated by the ongoing Kurdish revolts in Iraq led by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, and encouraged by the Russians, Kurdish parties appeared, and ultimately the Mahabad Republic was declared on January 22, 1946. (Fig. 12.6) The flight of Barzani and 3,000 followers from Iraq, following defeat by the British Air Force, aided the President, Qazi Mohammad, in forming an administration. Unfortunately, the withdrawal of Russian aid, and the re-establishment of government in Iran, meant that the Republic was brought down by Iranian troops within eleven months of its inception.

Although the territory consisted only of the town of Mahabad and the surrounding tribal lands and villages, and lasted for less than a year, its achievements in the ideological arena were great. It was a successful

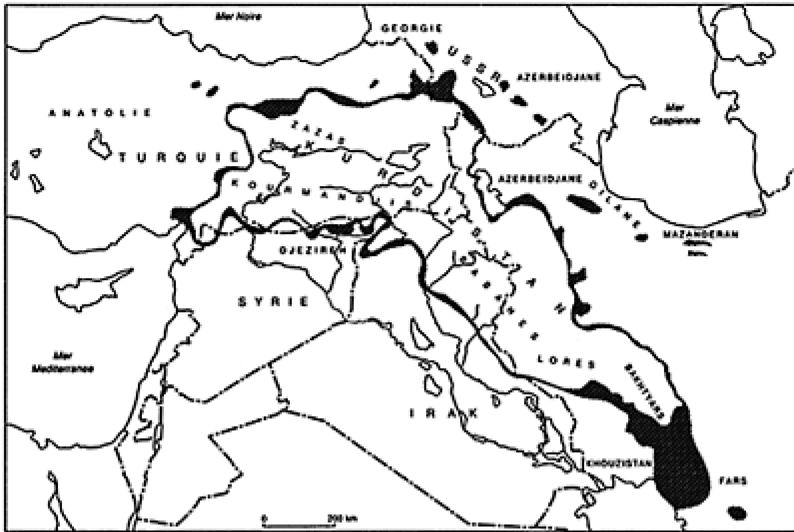

Figure 12.5 Map of Kurdistan, Cairo 1947

Figure 12.6 The 1946 Republic of Mahabad and its Environs

co-operation between Kurds from Iran and Iraq, who had, after all, been divided by a border of sorts for 400 years. Indeed, it was Barzani's troops who defended the Republic to the end. Kurdish culture flourished, and many traditions were rediscovered and used in the creation of a Kurdish national culture, with a national anthem, flag, and nationalist

mythology. The Republic was noted for its attempts to foster liberal democratic government and for the honesty of its leadership. This aborted state has remained an example of the fact that Kurds could work together, and that they could entertain non-traditional government.[31] Importantly, Qazi also considered himself an Iranian, and sought autonomy within a democratic Iran, a policy that remains central to the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran's manifesto.[32]

Despite Qazi's moderate ambitions, he was also sympathetic to Pan-Kurdish ideals. As the Mahabad Republic became a new center of Kurdish culture, interest abounded in the subject of Greater Kurdistan. Indeed, one of the charges brought against Qazi at his trial was possession of a map of Greater Kurdistan.[33] In August 1944, a symbolic affirmation of Kurdish unity took place at the meeting point of the Iranian, Iraqi, and Turkish frontiers, Mt. Dalanpar. The Pact of the Three Borders provided for mutual aid and support in the interests of a Greater Kurdistan.

In Iraq in 1946, shortly before the founding of the Mahabad Republic, the Rizgari party presented a map of Kurdistan to the American Legation in Baghdad, requesting that it be shown to the United Nations Organization.[34] (Fig. 12.7) Although not actually showing the southern tip of the proposed area, one assumes that it has sea access to the Persian Gulf as well as to the Mediterranean Sea. It still does not cover as large an area as the Cairo map that appeared a year later, being less extensive to the northwest, and not claiming Alexandretta. It covers a very expansive area, but as no further information is available about its origins, I cannot say how the cartographers justified their projection. It was, however, the first Kurdish projection of the whole of Kurdistan to be aimed at the outside world. A very similar map, clearly showing access to The Persian Gulf and expanded in the north-west, had been presented at the 1945 Conference of San Francisco.[35] (Fig. 12.8) This earlier map claimed a greater area to the northwest than the Rizgari map, and also expands the Kurdish territory inside Syria. On both of these maps, the convention of hatching debated areas has been abandoned. From this time onwards, the maps of Kurdistan were to be increasingly dogmatic.

The Cairo map was unique in that it had an accompanying text to justify the positions taken. (Fig. 12.5) At the outset, it is admitted that the map is not the result of original study or on the spot investigations. It also adopts the style of hatching the areas about which they are uncertain, thereby giving the map a pseudonomous air of objectivity. The presence of Kurds in any given area is only indicated where it is expressly stated by a trustworthy authority,'[36] state the authors. The truth of the matter is, then, that this map consists mostly of the mental spatial conceptions of certain areas by Kurdish

Figure 12.7 Map Accompanying a Memorandum from the Rizgari Party to the President of the United Nations

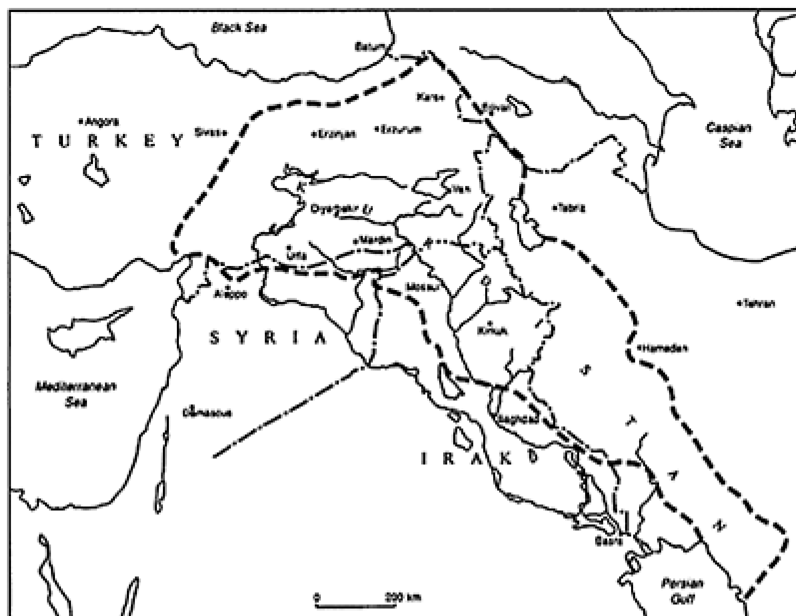

Figure 12.8 Map Presented at the Conference of San Francisco

people themselves. One has only to compare the different views voiced about the population of Eastern Anatolia after the First World War by the indigenous Armenians and Kurds, to realize the effect that living within a particular milieu has on one's perceptions of population figures and spatial allocation of ethnic groups. Local power struggles and land use patterns are just two of the factors that can influence individual perceptions of numerical strengths and extent of influence.

Many of the suppositions on which this map is based are of doubtful veracity, and merit further analysis. They do outline many of the remaining difficulties in creating an ethnographic map, although they show little understanding of blurred and permeable ethnic boundaries. The authors rightly point to the difficulties in defining the term 'Kurd,' claiming that linguistic affinities should not necessarily be the sole guide. Some of the problems involved in defining Kurdish ethnicity were touched upon in chapters 3, 4, and 11, and it should be borne in mind that there are no accepted parameters of definition within which Kurds fall. Within every set of parameters may be found dissenters and exceptions. For example, the Lurs, an ethnic group living to the south of the Kurds in Iran, are presented by the authors of the Cairo map as 'dilute' Kurds who would probably wish to become part of a Kurdish state. It is possible that some Lurs may feel closer to Kurds than to Persians, but it is equally possible that the opposite be true.[37] The Cairo cartographers also include a large part of the traditional Bakhtiari lands within Kurdistan, an inclusion that the text does not attempt to justify.

The hatched areas that include the Mediterranean and those areas by the Persian Gulf inhabited by the Arabs of Khuzistan, are inexplicably attached to Kurdistan, and represent a cynical attempt to provide sea access. No real justification is given in the text for these additions, but it is acknowledged that sea access is desirable for Kurdistan, a fact recognized by others who thus attempt to deny the Lurs their Kurdish origins.

A key phrase that occurs frequently in the accompanying notes is 'in the absence of any other information'. By means of this clause, all of the hatched areas are drawn, and a great deal of the border areas delineated. There is a very detailed depiction of the isolated Kurdish communities around Kurdistan that exist largely as a result of deportations, except perhaps in the case of the Yezidi Kurds in Georgia, who fled Muslim persecution. There were, and presumably still are, Kurdish communities in Baluchistan and in Afghanistan, not to mention the huge number of Kurds in the major cities of the region, especially Istanbul, Baghdad, Beirut, Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo. Despite depicting isolated communities of Kurds, the authors neglect completely to address themselves to the other communities within Kurdistan.

Despite its tenuous background of research and its age, this map, admittedly usually without the access to the Persian Gulf, continues to be reproduced by many organizations as Kurdistan. The naivety of the notes accompanying the original is touching, yet their tone and content also appear startlingly representative of contemporary indigenous commentaries. At least this map adopted the convention of hatching the more extreme spatial excesses of Kurdish claims, a convention largely abandoned by modern Kurdish cartographers.

Unfortunate as it may be for Kurds, it is undoubtedly true that Kurdistan has been 'shrinking' for some time due to both internal and external factors, and any remotely accurate ethnographic mapping of Kurdistan would reflect this. As I previously mentioned, ethnicity may not be a suitable sole basis of determining the extent of

Kurdistan. Ethnic homogeneity has not been a feature of much of Kurdistan, and encroachment by the surrounding dominant groups has been extensive. Nevertheless, Van Bruinnessen points out that emigration of many of the minorities from Kurdistan may mean that the area has become more ethnically homogenous, if smaller.[38]

PROPAGANDA CARTOGRAPHY?

That 'all maps are abstractions of reality'[39] is particularly salient in the case of maps of Kurdistan. There is no agreed reality to represent, yet maps of Kurdistan are presented as the representation of something more than Kurdish nationalists' ambitions. Since the 1946 Cairo map, many maps of Kurdistan have been produced by Kurds and their sympathizers, yet none adequately explain or justify their methodology.[40] Few maps claim solely to be ethnographic maps showing where Kurds live, as this brief would not produce the immediately recognizable 'boomerang' outline that has become a staple of the Kurdish nationalist movement. No one map is accepted by all Kurds, nor even by Kurdish political groups, although they are all share grandiose territorial claims. These maps of Greater Kurdistan have not been used in any negotiations with the governments of host states.[41] All maps of Kurdistan are propaganda maps, yet this suggests to most a map that is 'untrue, evil, or salacious'.[42] This is undeserved, as while Kurdistan may exist via its inhabitants' perceptions, its potential for realization is unknown. The maps of Kurdistan depict a wish-fulfilment of extreme Kurdish nationalism. In the minds and emotions of many Kurds, the maps are a projection of a desired future; they represent the attempts of Kurds to grasp that mythical future and draw it nearer to the present. By a process of Jungian communal focus of wills, the imagined is to be transformed into accepted discourse.

The map most to be found in Kurdish homes, political offices, and display is one labelled in the Latin script form of Kurdish, produced in bright colours and very little ambiguous shading. Its simplicity, clarity, and decisiveness have obvious appeal. It is produced cheaply (£10 retail price) and is in a striking glossy poster form, ideal for displaying on a wall.[43] (Fig. 12.9) It extends Kurdistan to extremes, allowing access to the Mediterranean, but wisely stopping short of the Persian Gulf. The northern Iraqi oilfields are depicted well inside Kurdistan.

From the 1980s onwards, there has been a new convention in maps of Kurdistan, utilizing shading to indicate the density of Kurdish population. In the early 1980s, a very detailed, but not widely distributed, map was produced, supplying sources and employing shading to indicate those areas where Kurds do not constitute a majority, but constitute a 'substantial' proportion of the population.[44] Despite only acknowledging the help of the American Central Intelligence Agency's map of The Peoples of Iran, this very detailed map appears very similar to the CIA map of the Kurdish areas in the Middle East.[45] (Fig. 12.10) It has been left to non-Kurds to create a series of maps utilizing graduated population densities, now apparently the most common convention for maps illustrating works on Kurdistan. If, however, a map produced by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1986[46] (Fig. 12.11) is compared with similar versions appearing in texts on Kurdistan written in 1992,[47] (Fig. 12.12) and 1996,[48] (Fig. 12.13), variations in both the outline of Kurdistan and population density become apparent. This

is particularly interesting in the case of the latter two maps, which were provided by the same author, who based both of his maps on the Foreign Office version, but adjusted them according to his research and informants.[49] Additionally, a language map of Kurdistan in the second text offers a different outline of Kurdistan again.[50] It would thus appear that all maps of Kurdistan are based on distant perceptions, which are shifting over time.

Rather than use the negatively loaded term propaganda cartography, Tyner prefers 'persuasive cartography'.[51] Persuasive cartography's object or

Figure 12.9 Map of Kurdistan, Institute Kurde

Figure 12.10 Central Intelligence Agency Map of Kurdistan

Figure 12.11 Distribution of Kurds, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

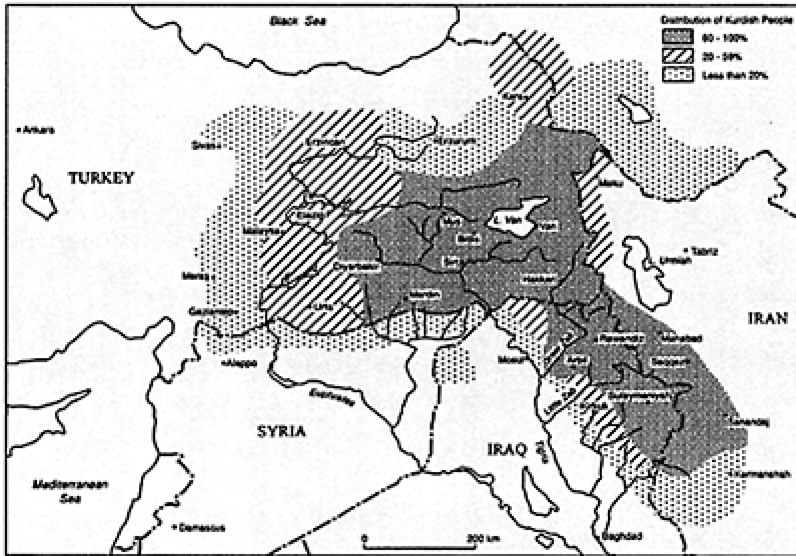

Figure 12.12 Distribution of Kurdish People

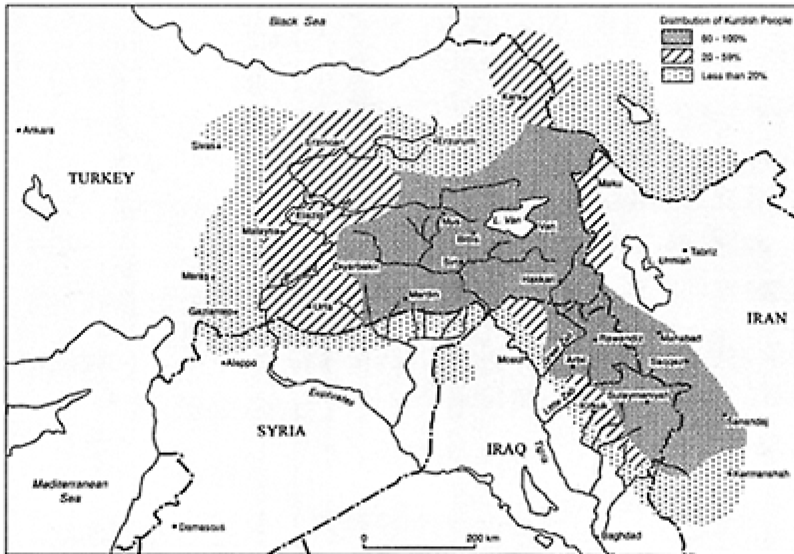

Figure 12.13 Distribution of Kurds Across Turkey, Iran and Iraq

effect is to change or influence the reader's opinion, in contrast to most cartography, which at least strives to be objective.[52] Tyner points out that although all media are used as propaganda channels, the map is little discussed. Yet maps are the most effective and visible means of disseminating the concept of Kurdistan amongst both Kurds and non-Kurds. Maps are useful as they are accepted by many people as truth and accuracy embodied. The difficulties inherent in map-making are rarely appreciated by the non-specialist, the generalisations, simplifications and exclusions are not noted. As Tyner points out, 'unintentional propaganda' may be generated, often in the form of maps, by the teaching of commonly held beliefs of a group. This may form the basis of much of education. Additionally, inept cartography may also be the source of unintentional propaganda.[53] The Kurds are not in possession of a state apparatus to be able to generate an unquestioned nationalist ideology. Yet they have created such a fairly static image of territorial extent amongst Kurdish nationalists with the aid of the constant use of maps of Greater Kurdistan. Most works on propaganda cartography make use of the iconoclastic map images usually employed to illustrate an argument. Kurds do not seem to have adopted any imagery in their map-making other than pseudo-scientific trappings. Even pictures of regional dictators stamping on Kurdistan employed only the written name, Kurdistan, rather than a visual image.[54]

The maps of Kurdistan can only be appreciated rather than dismissed as crude propaganda if cartography is seen as a form of discourse, the only easily available channel for the consolidation and propagation of the discourse relating to both perceptions of Kurdistan and of Kurdish nationalist aspirations. Pickles explains, 'the propaganda map is a useful way to illustrate the text metaphor',[55] He denies a clear division between propaganda and perfect cartography, and emphasizes that the historical

issues in an area may be so complicated that **all** map presentations show a bias towards a particular historical interpretation.[56] The impossibility of rescinding the accepted maps and accepting the ravages of demographic changes is hinted at in Pickles' proposal that 'like any text, the map takes on a life (and a context) of its own, beyond the author's control.'[57] The Kurdish maps of Greater Kurdistan have been accepted by Kurds for so long that they have now a power of their own, they have become an espoused political aim as well as a commentary on ethnicity, spatial perceptions (which may now need to be adjusted to fit the map), historical ambition, and irredentism.

Many of these themes are explored by Harley, who sees maps as too important a means of discourse to be left in the hands of cartographers alone.[58] Harley points out that 'a conceptual vacuum lies between cartography and human geography…cartographic facts are facts only within a specific cultural perspective.'[59] To politically aware Kurds, Kurds have an immutable historical right to certain territories. The other ethnic groups inhabiting those areas are either interlopers who deserve to be removed, or were originally Kurds and thus should revert to being so. The maps represent what is right! Harley comments that 'the scientific rules of mapping are influenced by a quite different set of rules to those governing the cultural production of the map…rules relating to values such as ethnicity, politics…'[60] An example is the rule of ethnocentricity, whereby most historical and modern societies place themselves at the center of cosmography or the world map. For the Kurds, who are usually placed by cartographers at the periphery of state maps, the desire for central representation has been continuously thwarted. Only in maps of the northern tier of the Middle East is Kurdistan centrally located, and then is not defined, or more usually not even depicted. So 'while the map is never the reality it helps to create a different reality. Maps are authentic images. Without our being aware of it, maps can re-enforce and legitimate the status quo…the map is never neutral.'[61] In the case of the Kurds, two parallel status quos exist and are maintained by two very different sets of maps, the status quo of the state, and the status quo of Greater Kurdistan.

Harley[62] examines the ways in which propaganda cartography has been used to the following ends: global empire building, preservation of the nation-state, and the assertion of local property rights. The connection between power and cartographic manipulation is made clear, yet what of its use by the powerless, such as the Kurds? Cartography to justify state irredentism is well documented, yet a powerless group like the Kurds also displays a startling degree of irredentism. Harley's account, as well as other works on the topic, applies more to the efforts of the state powers to deny Kurdistan. All their techniques are there: the representational ranking of certain cities as more important than Kurdish cultural centers; omission of places and features of importance to the Kurds; the suppression of indigenous place names in favour of the toponymy of the ruling group; inevitably placing a Kurdish region at the periphery of the map, cut off from the rest of Kurdistan. Since all 'serious' maps of the Middle East ignore the socio-political concept of Kurdistan, then they are clearly not an accurate representation of the region.

The Kurdish propaganda maps have an obvious disadvantage to the Kurds in that they are too irridentist to be taken as serious political proposals. They may create friction with other minorities and the surrounding ethnic groups in the region, who might feel at risk of Kurdish domination if the Kurds are able to establish a state. The Kurds also display a reluctance to accept the realities of demographic change. If they are so ideologically

inflexible over the question of the extent of Kurdistan, then all negotiations appear to be doomed.

Harley raises another reason for Kurds to be wary of concentrating on the map at the expense of other more intimate forms of Kurdish conceptualization. 'Maps as an impersonal type of knowledge tend to 'de-socialize' the territory they represent. They foster the notion of a socially empty space. The abstract quality of the map…lessens the burden of conscience about people in the landscape. Decisions about the exercise of power are removed from the realm of immediate face to face contact.'[63] The Kurds already have a problem in that they have been in many cases dehumanized by governments, portrayed as the enemy, demonized by opposing nationalists. It may be that rather than emphasizing their separateness they should emphasize their common humanity, their longstanding integration into the region, and their common cause with other groups.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite outside attempts to map Kurdistan, and a sophisticated literary understanding of Kurdistan's strategic importance, indigenous knowledge concerning the putative extent of Kurdistan was sparse until the 1930s. At the crucial time for Kurdish statehood aspirations, there was inadequate cartographic competence amongst the Kurds to affect any perceptions of the region by the decision-making powers.

Following that time, Kurdish awareness of the importance of the map increased rapidly, especially following the Second World War. At this time of globally increased nationalism, the map of Kurdistan became an explicit claim to statehood. As such, it was extended to encompass a potentially viable state, and as such became an expression of Kurdish wish fulfilment. The significance of the map to Kurds is increased by the conflict between their own ethnocentric perceptions and their marginal location on regional maps.

The map of Kurdistan rapidly became, at least in the diaspora, the most effective visible means of disseminating the concept of Greater Kurdistan, which was transformed into a static image, despite the absence of a state propaganda apparatus to foster such an image. The widespread acceptance of such propaganda maps and even their elevation to a central domain in the Kurdish nationalist discourse implies an ossification in perceptions of Kurdistan, as these maps reflect only selected changes in population and demography over the last century in the region. Thus the centrality of the map has potential negative consequences for the Kurdish nationalist discourse, as it conceals the shifting reality of Kurdistan, possibly reducing it to only a mental construct.

CHAPTER 13
In Summary

One of the key themes in an examination of Kurdistan, from a geopolitical perspective, is its marginal, peripheral location, despite a Kurdish nationalist perception of regional centrality. This location has shaped Kurdish history, defines its regional and global importance and has been an underlying factor in its failure to attain an internationally recognized state identity. Kurdistan is a microcosm of a peripheral zone, within a global peripheral zone, and thus all theories of core-periphery relations can be applied and developed in geographical and historical analysis of Kurdistan.

Kurdistan's peripherality has been the key to its historical development or non-development. Control of Kurdistan was useful to imperial powers in order to protect their core areas, rather than in terms of any inherent advantages to occupying Kurdistan. This was the case until after the First World War, when the increased importance of both control of mineral resources and maintaining state sovereignty accorded Kurdistan a greater importance, both regionally and globally.

The role as a buffer zone between empires that fell to Kurdistan in its pre-modern history appeared, superficially, to allot Kurdistan a more central importance in regional geopolitics than is warranted. Although the Kurds have benefited from their location, mostly in short-term ways, this has not been translated into long-term benefits. Rather, the divided and marginal nature of Kurdistan is reinforced by the economic and political patterns that exploit and perpetuate its geopolitical features.

Until the First World War, Kurdistan was a mosaic of religious, linguistic and ethnic groups. It was also a deeply fragmented society, with many layers of social and economic interdependence and divisions. This diversity resulted partially from its geographical features, as Kurdistan formed a 'shatter-zone' of identities. Interactions between Kurdistan's inhabitants have not always been benign, and outside powers were able to exploit existing tensions and manipulate particularly the Kurds into violence against other groups. Kurdistan's population has become considerably more homogeneous over the last century, probably reinforcing the formation and maintenance of a Kurdish identity in Kurdistan. Yet the impetus, largely from the Kurdish diaspora, towards a secular nationalism has led to the a necessary exaggeration of the harmony that existed between Kurdistan's mosaic of inhabitants, and attempts to portray Kurdistan in a way that belie certain changes in ethnic and confessional make-up.

Secondary to this re-imagining of social history is the nationalist blindness to the difficulties inherent in defining Kurdish identity. As with nearly all group identities, there is a certain fluidity of identity amongst Kurdistan's inhabitants, and the significance of historical context is amply demonstrated by both historical and contemporary analysis of Kurdistan and the Kurdish nationalist discourse. Choices concerning identity have been based on practical and ideological considerations, as well as altering spatial and temporal factors. Nevertheless, ethnic identities are assigned wholesale to groups, rather than seen

as an individual cultural choice. This is something of which nationalist Kurds are as guilty as state ideologues.

Although parts of Kurdistan are, in the late twentieth century, resource rich in certain respects, those resources present a barrier to Kurdish unity, as they tie its parts into the infrastructure of its host states. The protection of resources, as did in the past the protection of imperial centers, ensures a degree of cooperation between the regional powers in order to defeat Kurdish insurgency. Examination of Kurdistan's economic structures demonstrates further evidence of its peripheral and marginal character. Poor general development and the exploitation by 'core' regions of Kurdish peripheral location mean that Kurdistan's territorial divisions have been re-enforced rather than breached by any economic infrastructure. Agricultural resources, the basis of much of Kurdish cultural identity are not as substantial, for many reasons, as implied by Kurdish nationalist propaganda.

The Kurds have been largely sub-state actors, and as history is written by hegemons, Kurdistan's history is that of its occupiers. The early history of Kurdistan and the Kurds is either unrecorded or inadequate to form a clear narrative. Even in modern European historical writing, the Kurds are poorly or actually misrepresented. Kurdish nationalists cannot therefore be criticized for seeking to create alternative accounts of their history, portraying themselves as the central actors.

This has recently taken the form of attempts to establish an ancient history and myth of origins for the Kurds. Using the premise of territorial occupation of Kurdistan, the history of the territory of Kurdistan has been meshed with the history of the Kurdish ethnos, and fused into twin myths of Kurdish history and territorial rights. This version of history has become explicit in successive writing on the Kurds, until its inadequate academic origins are concealed. By repetition, the myth has become widely accepted as reality.

Kurdistan's location, which lay in the paths of many invading armies en route to other places ensured a turbulent history and stunted its social and economic development. In particular, the high level of disturbance militated against urban and agricultural development, and also non-tribal social development. These were all factors in Kurdistan's inability to develop as an entity.

The period from the sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries is seen retrospectively by Kurds as a 'golden age' of freedom and political independence. Certainly the existence of semi-autonomous Kurdish emirates allowed Kurdish high culture to develop, although such developments were the province of the ruling élites. However this degree of independence existed as a result of Kurdistan's calculated exploitation as a buffer zone between rival empires. The policies followed by rival empires, of creating and manipulating ruling dynasties, intensified social divisions, reinforcing a tribal hierarchy and further inhibiting political and social advances. The patterns established by the ruling regional powers, as well as the pattern of tactical shifts in support on the part of the Kurdish tribes have endured into the modern period, and color the political scene even now. The further shoring up of tribal and social divisions was detrimental to developments that may have allowed the Kurds to seize later opportunities to establish a lasting Kurdish political entity.

Additionally, the ultimate destruction of the emirates, without effective substitution of imperial control, further plunged Kurdistan into disarray, rendering Kurdistan a region

where urban and civil structures, high culture, and education were an irrelevancy. Imperial solutions to this chaos exacerbated the religious, tribal and social differences between Kurdistan's inhabitants, in particular the traditional enmity between the Kurds and the Armenians was exploited to such an extent that the breach could not be healed, and their rivalry was to remain a tragic feature of the region into the twentieth century, when it was a possible factor in the failure of the Kurds to achieve statehood.

The collapse of the emirate structures, the loss of the urban ruling class, and the ensuing chaos allowed the non-tribal sheikhs to emerge initially as mediators and increasingly as alternative political leaders and loci of power. As tribal chiefs were more effectively co-opted into imperial structures, the sheikhs increased in importance as the only source of leadership for many Kurds. These sheikhs were involved with, and even active leaders of the nationalist movements that began to explore the meaning of a Kurdish identity from the late nineteenth century onwards.

In all of Kurdistan's turbulent history of invasion and as a theater of war for rival regional powers, it is only the devastation wreaked during the First World War that is recorded in any detail, although in a scattered manner, with its effects on Kurdistan largely unacknowledged. The pattern of outside manipulation of Kurdish structures intensified, and all parts of Kurdistan were negatively affected by the war and its aftermath. As a region with no state historians, it is often forgotten that Kurdistan as a region suffered more than any other part of the northern Middle East during the First World War, and that the Kurds were involved as both combatants and as hapless civilians in the carnage of the war. Any urban or high culture remaining from the emirates phase was destroyed in the four years of fighting, and even now, Kurdish civic and agrarian structures and life have not truly recovered.

The war saw the greatest ever changes in ethnic and religious composition in Kurdistan, leaving most of Kurdistan and Armenia to the Muslim Kurds, who were severely weakened, and thus not in a position to capitalize on their position. The incidents of ethnic and religious conflict during the war were the logical outcome of at least a century of manipulation by both the imperial and the European powers of the local rivalries for their own ends. Despite the nurturing and encouragement of national aspirations by the participants in the First World War, the idea of a Kurdish nation was considered untenable, partly due to the poor relations between Muslim Kurds and their neighbors, which after all had been exacerbated with active encouragement by those same powers.

The Kurds had little or nothing to gain from the First World War, which did not technically involve them at all. Yet they were essential to the outcome, and the success of the active parties depended partially on the cooperation of the Kurds, as well as control of parts of Kurdistan. In order to co-opt the Kurds, expectations were raised which were not met, and the betrayal at that time of the aspirations of nationalist Kurds became a dominant theme in Kurdish nationalist mythology.

The activities of the European powers during the First World War with regard to the Kurds were informed by their perceptions of Kurdistan. The perceptions of Kurdistan on the part of Europeans differed greatly depending on their impressions of Kurdistan's strategic importance. In addition to a theater of war, Kurdistan was a site of commercial and strategic rivalry for the Europeans, and during the nineteenth and early twentieth century much of Kurdistan was explored and written about by Europeans. These writings

indicate the aims of Europeans in Kurdistan, and its strategic importance, as the nature of the investigations reflected state aims and ambitions. The personalities of the writers and their individual interests were also reflected in their explorations and findings. In the case of the British, the particular outlook and views of the members of the Indian Political Service were to inform much of the work on Kurdistan, and also the policies pursued. The importance of India in the administration of Kurdistan, and its neighbor Mesopotamia, was significant, and the complexities of British imperial structures affected the decision-making processes in the region.

Although by the First World War, there existed a large body of literature on Kurdistan and the Kurds, in several European languages, much of this was underused, despite a clear desire to gather intelligence that would advance war aims. The rivalries which existed, even amongst the allies, meant that there was no sharing of information, and many policies pursued in Kurdistan were ill-informed and would have unforeseen repercussions. Despite its inherent flaws, much of this literature still informs Kurdish perceptions of their own identity, and is used to establish both a legitimacy of occupation and a distinct identity that was recognized by outsiders, and thus somehow made more real.

The period immediately following the First World War, was one in which the Kurds stood probably their greatest chance of achieving statehood or some other form of autonomous political entity. It is a basic tenet of Kurdish nationalism that the British denied them such an opportunity, wishing to retain Mosul province due to the presence of oil. Additionally, the existence of a severely truncated possible Kurdish state in the aborted Treaty of Sevres is offered as a justification of a Kurdish state in international law. Examination of the documents relevant to the British decision-making process of this period indicates that indecision, inconstancy, and resignation, rather than expediency, underlay the ultimate fate of Kurdistan.

Strategic aims encompassed much more than oil, the importance of which was rather poorly appreciated at the time. The Wilsonian ideal of self-determination was never espoused by the British, and was ultimately dropped by the Americans who initiated the Peace Process. The fate of Kurdistan was complicated by conflicting aims, even amongst the British, inadequate intelligence, and events over which the Allies had no control, such as the establishment of the Turkish Republic. Additionally, the inadequacies of the Kurds themselves, particularly in respect of clear leadership were legion. For the Kurds, any sense of national unity probably came rather too late, at a time that the British had decided that they would abandon Kurdistan.

Many of the themes I have explored relate to the construction of a Kurdish identity and a nationalist mythology. Further examination of some of the facets of Kurdish identity, and their incorporation into a national myth, establishes that both of these have been successfully achieved and maintained, both calculatedly and in more unselfconscious ways. The geography of Kurdistan, and in particular its topography has played a vital role in the relationship the Kurds to Kurdistan, even in the Diaspora. Topophilia is one of the key features of Kurdish identity, and is made explicit in one of the key unifying cultural threads that unite the Kurdish ‘imagined community’, that is the rural idyll.

Whilst it is true that the rural experience has preserved many elements of Kurdish culture, the construction of a shared rural experience is increasingly artificial, as events in

Kurdistan continue to militate in favor of increased urbanization and emigration. However, the rapidity of this process has not been paralleled by an inclusive Kurdish urban culture, nor a clear role in the Diaspora. Alienation fuels nostalgia, and generates a fantasy world of an idyllic agrarian lifestyle, set against a stylized mountainous topography in Kurdistan.

The diversity of language, religion and culture within the Kurdish experience has both positive and negative aspects for Kurdish national mythology. In common with all nationalist mythologies, the Kurdish one necessitates the imposition of a degree of artificial homogeneity, in order to establish unity. Yet the heterogeneity can be manipulated when necessary to include a wider membership and to display a varied and wide cultural identity. Again, like many national myths, especially those of recent foundation or of stateless groups, that of the Kurds is sensitive to perceived criticism.

The close association of Kurdish identity with the imagined territory of Kurdistan is made explicit in the map of Kurdistan. In the Diaspora, it is the most visible symbol of Kurdish national identity, which also satisfies Kurdish ethnocentric perceptions, placing themselves at the center of space, rather than in their usual marginal periphery. The extent of Kurdistan was largely an irrelevancy until the mid-twentieth century, before which time the Kurds relied on outsiders to map their territory. In the absence of an alternative territorial focus, the Kurds have been content to accept a fairly static cartographic image of Greater Kurdistan, which is based in part on outdated demographic investigations, but largely on hearsay.

Given the difficulties inherent in mapping the distribution of the Kurdish population, even defining such a population, and also in keeping pace with the demographic distribution *in situ,* maps of Kurdistan must reflect a concept and a desire rather than reality. Of course Kurdistan exists, as does a distinct Kurdish identity, but perceptions of the extent of Kurdistan and its nature are failing to respond to reality.

Notes

CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION

1. There was emergency martial rule in ten eastern provinces of Turkey from 1987. In November 1996, emergency rule was dropped in Mardin Province as part of a pre General election package, to appeal to Kurdish voters. Over the next five years, martial law was lifted in almost all areas, although harsh restrictions on movement and economic transactions remained in place into 2003.
2. Figures supplied by Seyit Hasim Haşimi, chairman of the Turkish Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry on Migration, at a press conference at the Association of Journalists of the South East, in Diyarbakir on July 28, 1997. Cited in an update from the International Committee for the Liberation of Kurdish Parliamentarians Imprisoned in Turkey (CILDKET).
3. Turkish Human Rights Organisation (IHD) Human Rights Balance for 1996. Jan. 24, 1997.
4. Known as the Anfal campaign, from an Islamic term meaning the spoils of a holy war. The campaign took place in eight regional phases between February and September 1988, using deportations, poison gas attacks, mass executions and urban and village clearance.
5. Middle East Watch, Genocide in Iraq: the Anfal Campaign against the Kurds (New York, 1993) Over 1.5m Kurds were forcibly deported. Over half of the Kurdish dominated territory was cleared of Kurds.
6. The 'safe haven' was established in northern Iraq, in the Kurdish-occupied region, to the north of the 36th parallel in April/May 1991, initially administered by Allied military forces and the UNHCR. By October 1991, Iraqi troops withdrew from all Kurdish areas, apart from Kirkuk and its environs, leaving 15,000 sq. miles and 3 million people under the administration of the Kurdistan Front, an amalgam of Kurdish political parties. Baghdad then imposed an internal embargo on the region. Unicef and non-governmental organisations took over basic aid responsibilities in 1992. In May 1991, over 1m people participated in a general election, choosing 105 members of a General Assembly, a Prime Minister and a President. Power was shared equally between the KDP and the PUK, with 5 seats allocated to Christian and Islamicist MPs. The National Assembly had no foreign policy powers, other than those supervised by Turkey. During the its first five years, 'Free Kurdistan' developed many of the trappings of state sovereignty, with the important exceptions of foreign diplomatic representation and effective control of its borders.
7. Factional rivalries and frustration at both the limited nature of sovereignty and unclear future potential caused the region to degenerate into civil war by Spring 1994, when the general assembly was dissolved. Most foreign aid agencies were evacuated in 1996, when Iraqi troops were invited in by the KDP, to assist in a rout of the PUK from the city of Arbil. The area was then partitioned into two main areas of control, and Turkish and Iraqi troops have made major incursions, both invited and uninvited. The Iraqi Kurds' co-operation with Turkish forces in the rout of Turkish Kurdish forces inside Iraq, indicates the fragmentation of the Kurdish nationalist movement, as does the fact that the Turkish Kurdish PKK requested voting rights in northern Iraq, as the only de facto Kurdish state.
8. Four years after the assassination of four Iranian opposition activists in Berlin, including three senior leaders of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, the District Court in Berlin concluded in its findings that 'Iran's political leadership had ordered' the assassination in the

Mykonos Restaurant. (Middle East International, no 548, April 18, 1997, Bitter Fruits of Mykonos, Saeed Barzin).
9. See chapter 2, A Peripheral Frontier Location.
10. See chapters 6, 7 and 8.
11. See chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10.
12. Throughout this thesis, Greater Kurdistan refers to the political expression of a Kurdish entity, encompassing all parts of Kurdistan, and as shall be explored, often other strategic territories.
13. Taylor 1993, p. 207.
14. Taylor 1993, p. 207.
15. Wright 1947, see below.
16. For example Kendal Nazan The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background, in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, pp. 10–15.
17. Wright 1947, p. 83.
18. For example: Sirwan, the Diyala River in Iraq, and Shaho, a mountain in Iranian Kurdistan, as common in Iranian as Iraqi Kurdistan.
19. For example: (iwan (shepherd), Beriwan (milkmaid).
20. The title of a book on the Kurds written by two British newspaper journalists. (‘No Friend But the Mountains, J.Bullock and Harvey Morris, [Penguin, London 1993]).
21. Izady 1994, p. 188.
22. Tuan, Geopiety: A Theme in Man’s Attachment to Nature and to Place in Lowenthal and Bowden 1976, p. 24.
23. Ibid pp. 25–35.
24. Tuan 1974, p. 4.
25. Ibid p. 31.
26. Ibid p. 34.
27. Agnew & Duncan 1989, Introduction.
28. J.N.Entrikin, Place, Region and Modernity in Agnew & Duncan 1989.
29. Tuan 1974, Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective, p. 213.
30. Gregory 1994, p. 11.
31. Gregory 1994, p. 11.
32. Gregory 1994, p. 11.
33. Lowenthal 1975, p. 1.
34. M.S.Samuels, Existentialism & Human Geography in Ley & Samuels, Humanistic Geography p. 33.
35. F.Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (1875), cited in Lowenthal 1975, p. 31.
36. Lowenthal 1961, p. 260.
37. A.Baker, On Ideology and Historical Geography, in Baker 1972, p. 241.
38. J.B.Harley, Maps, Knowledge & Power in Cosgrove & Daniels 1988, p. 278.
39. Goody 1973, p. 4.
40. Gould & White 1974.
41. Ibid, p. 48.
42. J.E.Schwartzberg, Folk Regions in North Western India in Mukerji and Aijjazudin 1986.
43. Guelke 1982, p. 101.
44. Darby, 1953, p. 6.
45. Wright 1947.
46. Hechter 1975.
47. Lewis 1975, p. 11.
48. See Izady 1994, for possibly the most ambitious attempt to fabricate a definitive history of Kurdistan.
49. Plumb 1969, p. 40.

50. Minstrel, someone who sings or recites epic oral poems and stories, many versions of which exist throughout Kurdistan. Dengbezh were usually attached to the courts of Kurdish emirs, although they also earned their livings as travelling minstrels, as some do now.
51. C.Hall, Private Archives as Sources For Historical Geography, in Baker 1972, p. 279.
52. C.Hall, Private Archives as Sources For Historical Geography, in Baker 1972, p. 279.

CHAPTER 2.
PERCEPTIONS OF CENTRALITY FROM THE MARGINS

1. See chapter 4, on the term ethnic.
2. See chapter 9.
3. See chapter 12.
4. For example, the tragic 1975 outcome of the Iraqi Kurdish uprising showed clearly that the Kurds were merely pawns in a dispute between Iran and Iraq. The Kurdish leadership came very late to the realisation that the US was simply, in order to neutralise Iraq, assisting the Shah of Iran. The Kurds had believed that the US sincerely backed their autonomy struggle, and considered them as regional actors to rank alongside Iran. See Ismet Sharif Vanly, *The Kurds in Iraq* in Chaliand 1993, pp. 165–177.
5. Tuan 1974, p. 31.
6. Tuan 1974, p. 34.
7. See above, endnote 4.
8. The 1946 Republic of Mahabad was achieved and possibly maintained with at least some degree of Russian assistance. See Archie Roosevelt Jnr., *The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad* in Chaliand 1993.
9. See chapter 10.
10. Moscow.
11. The Mustafa Barzani Chair of Global Kurdish Studies, Washington State University.
12. For example a certain Turkish Studies MA is partially sponsored by a major Turkish bank.
13. School of Oriental and African Studies, London University.
14. Tom Clancy, *Op-Centre—Acts of War* Harper Collins, London 1997.
15. The 1951–60 Shanidar Cave excavation on the Baradost Mountain in Iraqi Kurdistan uncovered evidence that the cave had been continuously inhabited for at least 60,000 years since being used by Neanderthals. See Solecki 1971.
16. Gottman, *Confronting Centre and Periphery,* in Gottman 1980, p. 17.
17. Mackinder 1919.
18. Taylor 1993(b), p. 54.
19. Cohen, 1975.
20. Ibid, pp. 85–88.
21. Ibid, p. 254.
22. Pounds and Ball 1964.
23. Gottman 1952.
24. Hartshorne 1950.
25. Taylor 1993(a), p. 153.
26. Taylor 1993(b), pp. 18–20.
27. R.Strassaldo, *Centre-Periphery and System-Boundary: Culturological Perspectives,* in Gottman 1980, p. 47–48.
28. See, Book One of the *kitāb al-'Ibar,* in *The Muqaddimah,* Ibn Khaldun 1974, pp. 33–45.
29. See Owen Lattimore, *The Periphery as a Locus of Innovation,* in Gottman 1980, pp. 205–208.
30. See chapter 7.

31. For example, Alexander the Great (Macedonia), Tamerlane (Mongol/Turk frontier), Napoleon (Corsica), Stalin (Georgia), Ataturk (Albania).
32. R.Strassaldo, *Centre-Periphery and System-Boundary: Culturological Perspectives,* in Gottman 1980, pp. 48–51.
33. Toynbee 1954.
34. Several Ottoman ministers were Kurds.
35. For example Syrian presidents, Husni al-Za<im and Adib Shishakli, were Kurds, but both espoused Arab nationalism. Kurds have been both members and key figures in both the Syrian and Iraqi branches of the Arab Socialist Ba<ath Party.

    Also many key figures have claimed or been accorded Kurdish origins. For example, Turgut (zal, Prime Minister of Turkey in the early 1990s admitted to a Kurdish mother.

36. For example, Gükalp, see chapter 7, Into the Twentieth Century.
37. Smith 1981, p. 29.
38. Hechter 1975.
39. That Kurdistan is an internal colony is one of the key arguments of Turkish sociologist, Ismail Beşiki, first noted in 1969 in *The System of Eastern Anatolia, Social-Economic and Ethnic Foundations, 1969* and further explored in Beşiki, 1991.
40. See chapter 7.
41. 'Livestock smuggling is a vital part of pastoral production in almost all border and mountain villages [in Hakkari]', Yalçin-Heckmann 1991, p. 91. See ibid, pp. 91–95, for an account of the importance of various aspects of smuggling in Hakkari in Turkish Kurdistan, including the smuggling of tea and rice.

    The smuggling of people is a known speciality of Kurdistan, and probably the majority of Iranian refugees since 1979 have come to Turkey or Iraq over the Kurdish mountains, guided for monetary gain by Kurds. Armaments, and increasingly drugs, are other lucrative aspects of the smuggling trade.

42. See chapter 7.
43. In May 1991, an incursion to northern Iraq of over 10,000 Turkish troops supported by massive air power, (According to the PKK, there were 60,000 troops, 450 tanks, Cobra helicopters and warplanes) attempted to flush out the 5,000 at most, PKK guerrillas based in the mountains over the border, as they had tried in two previous spring campaigns. Despite their numerical and weapons superiority, plus the assistance of the *peshmergahs* of the KDP, they lost at least 95 soldiers, whilst killing possibly over 2,000 PKK guerrillas. (The PKK claimed losses of 112, with 791 Turkish casualties) (Middle East International, no 552, June 13, 1997. PKK figures from Halil Atac, Central Committee of the PKK, Press Conference in Beirut, June 3, 1997).
44. The Turkish government claims that PKK guerrillas flee to Syria or Iran after undertaking operations. There have been various 'hot pursuit' agreements between regional governments allowing cross border action to apprehend Kurdish guerrillas, and these agreements are bartered for other concessions. For example, Syrian assistance to the PKK has been widely interpreted as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Turkey over water rights to the Euphrates River.

    The PKK have had bases in northern Iraq since 1991, and the two main Iraqi Kurdish political parties and armies have both been based

in Iran as various times. After the major Iraqi Kurdish uprising ended in 1945, Barzani and his troops escaped to Iran, from whence, following the fall of the Mahabad Republic in 1947, they fled to the USSR. This was mirrored again in 1975 when, following the Iranian halt in logistical support to the Iraqi Kurds at war with Baghdad, their resistance collapsed, and 300,000 Iraqi Kurds, including 40,000 fighters fled to Iran.

45. In March and April 1991, 1.2–1.4 million Iraqi Kurds fled to Iran, 450, 000 entered Turkey and 250,000 were detained at the border. (*The Kurds in Iraq. How safe is their safe haven now?,* David Keen, Save the Children, London 1993).
46. See chapters 7 and 8 for examples of these patterns of behaviour.
47. Dr Monir Morad, SO AS alumnus was a forestry officer in Iraq in the 1970s, and confirms the massive deforestation within living memory. (Personal communication in April 1991).
48. Ghassemlou 1965, pp. 173–177.

CHAPTER 3.
THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION

1. *Religion, Community and Conflict in Lebanon,* in Beaumont et al 1988, p. 389
2. See chapter 4, for Van Bruinessen's view that heterodox extreme Shi'ite groups were more widespread in Kurdistan than has been previously acknowledged.
3. Rassam/Vinogradov 1974 pp. 207–210.
4. Moosa, on the Shabak notes that 'the whole area between the mountains of Anatolia and Persia formed a kind of bridge and melting pot for a variety of peoples, including the Persians, Turkomans, Kurds and Armenians'. (Moosa 1988, p. 8).
5. There are Qaderiyas in Egypt and the Senegal, but their devotional practices and membership are quite different.
6. See chapter 7.
7. See Van Bruinessen 1992 and Olson 1989.
8. The Failis constitute 10 percent of the Iraqi Kurdish population, and are or at least were concentrated in Baghdad and other major cities throughout Iraq. See M Morad, *The Situation of Kurds in Iraq and Turkey,* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992, pp. 128–131.
9. Andrews 1989, p. 57.
10. The Kizilbash (see chapter 7), the precursors of Alevis were adherents of Shi'ite sects. Like other Shi<ites, Alevis now admire Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed, yet their deification of Ali became the only real connection with mainstream Shi'ism. This deification is in itself heretical. Moosa views them as extremist *ghulat* (erroneous) Shi'ites. See Moosa 1987.
11. See chapter 4, The Alevis. Also Kreyenbroek, *Religion and Religions in Kurdistan,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, pp. 101–104.
12. These are, in addition to the *shahada,* regular prayer, pilgrimage to Mecca, the annual Ramazan fast and the payment of taxes. The fast has been limited to one day, and the prayer to an annual obligation. Alevis tend to stress the importance of inner purity, rather than the outward expression of religious orthodoxy.
13. See Kreyenbroek, op cit, in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, p. 101.
14. White 1995, p. 3.
15. See Kreyenbroek, op cit, in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, pp. 101–104.

16. See chapter 4, The Alevis, for further details of the dilemma posed by the Alevis for Kurdish ethnic identity.
17. Brauer 1947, p. 16.
18. Brauer 1947, p. 17.
19. Brauer 1947, p. 17.
20. Intriguingly, some of the first Jewish Kurds arrived in Jerusalem from Urfa in 1896, following massacres in which they had been taken for Armenians by Muslim attackers. Ye'or 1985, p. 379.
21. Cohen 1973, p. 77.
22. There are an estimated 100,000 Kurdish Jews in Israel. (Kendall, *Current Position and Historical Background,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1992, p. 9).
23. There is a fairly large body of literature about the Jews of Kurdistan. See Brauer (1947) Fischel (1949), Cohen (1973), Woolfson (1980).
24. Kurdish Jews spoke their own Semitic language, a neo-Aramaic dialect, unique to their region and ethnic group, known as *Lishna Yeheudiyya, Lashon ha-Galut* or *Targum*.
25. Cohen 1973, p. 93.
26. Cohen 1973, p. 40.
27. Bracha Habas, a European Zionist in the 1930s claimed that there were Jewish slaves in Kurdistan. Woolfson 1980, p. 183. In 1841, the British Consul to Mosul, Charles Rassam, wrote to the Ambassador in Constantinople that the Jews were 'subject to tyranny of the worst kind' by their Kurdish neighbours. (PRO FO 195 No. 228).
28. The 1930s and 40s saw increasing political discrimination against Iraqi Jews, with widespread anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish rioting in Baghdad and other Iraqi centres throughout the 1940s. By the late 1950s, Jewish community status was abolished, and all community property confiscated. Iraqi Jews, including the Kurdish Jews were pressured by both the Iraqi government and the state of Israel to leave Iraq, often reluctantly.
29. Woolfson 1980, p. 91.
30. I have been told by both Jewish and Muslim Kurds that Jew-baiting was common in the 1960s and 70s in Sanandaj and other Iranian Kurdish cities, especially during the Arab-Israeli War and episodes of anti-Israeli feeling. I am also informed that social contact was limited to that necessary for professional relationships, and Jews would not eat with Muslims, nor visit their homes except on business. Forced conversions happened as late as the 1960s. These people were and still are known as 'new Muslims'. (Dr K Rashidian, personal discussion).
31. Magnarella 1969, p. 51.
32. Jews live especially in the town of Qamishliyeh. All 'Kurdish' are subject to the same harsh regime as all Syrian Jews.
33. Personal communication with Dr Sabar throughout 1994.
34. For example, despite the presence of a sizeable Jewish minority in Sanandaj until the late 1970s (3–4,000 of a total population of 40,000 in 1969), with two schools and three synagogues, no trace could be found in 1996 of these buildings, nor of any private homes that once belonged to one of the prosperous Jewish families. A handful of stalls in the bazaar were owned by Jews, noted as they closed on Saturdays, and they were the only sellers of medicinal plants. Many people remembered well-known Jewish doctors or other notables, yet denied any knowledge of their living quarters or of their present whereabouts. This despite there being a time in living memory that there were no non-Jewish doctors in the city. (Personal observations 1992–1996).
35. In 1854, total Armenians in Turkey were claimed to be 2.4m, with a majority in the provinces of Erzerum and Kurdistan. In 1882, the Patriach in Constantinople estimated the number of Armenians in the Empire at 2.66m, of whom 1.63m lived in the 6 Armenian vilayets of Sivas, Mamuet al-Aziz, Erzerum, Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Van. In 1912, the total

estimate had already decreased to 2.1m as the consequence of massacres in the 1890s and of emigration to the Caucasus. Figures from Walker 1991, pp. 19–20.

36. Molyneux-Seel 1914.
37. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society,* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl, 1992 p. 39.
38. Walker 1991, p. 2.
39. Shabaz 1918, p. 25.
40. The official name of the Assyrian church is ‘The Church of the East’.
41. Joseph 1961, pp. 13–17.
42. In April 1992, the Assyrian leader of the Iraqi Communist Party in Dehok informed me that once he had finished helping the Kurds to establish their freedom from Iraq, he would expect that the Assyrian territorial claims would be addressed, at least in theory. A qualified economist, he clearly believed that he was descended from the ancient Assyrians, and that Kurds and Arabs were culpable in the statelessness of the Assyrians. He accepted that Assyrians would not realise any nationalist aims, and felt that they were active in the Communist movement because they realised that internationalism was their only hope of cultural autonomy.
43. Joseph 1961, p. 18.
44. I am indebted to Dr. David Taylor of the Department of Theology, University of Birmingham, for his comments on the Christians of Kurdistan.
45. This is the thesis of Joseph, 1969. See also Ahmad, 1994, pp. 37–39.
46. Joseph 1961, pp. 49–64.
47. Luke, 1925, pp. 29–31. He probably meant the Shabak.
48. Used by Kreyenbroek to refer to religious systems among the Kurds that combine elements of pre-Islamic beliefs with elements originating in Shi’ism, which also includes the Alevis and Yaresan. See Kreyenbroek, *Religion and Religions in Kurdistan,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, p. 101 Moosa used the term ‘extremist Shiites’. (Moosa 1988) For a survey of minor ‘ultra-Shi’ite’ groups, see Shooresh 1992.
49. Personal communication from Mosul émigré, 1996.
50. Antoun and Harik 1972, p. 97.
51. Rassam, *Al-Taba’iyya: Power, Patronage and Marginal Groups in Northern Iraq,* Gellner and Waterbury, 1977, pp. 157–165.

    See also Feitelson, 1959 pp. 253–254 for a description of reciprocity between Jewish *reyet* and their Muslim Kurdish overlords.

52. Both in Iran and Iraq (where they are known as Kaka’is) They are also found in small numbers in Iranian Azerbaijan, Veramin and Hastgerd near Tehran. (Hamzeh’ee, 1990, p. 39).
53. See P.G.Kreyenbroek, op cit in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, pp. 96–99, 101–104 Izady claims the existence of an old religion, called *Yazdâni* or the Cult of Angels, of which both these religions, and also Alevism are variations. (Izady 1992, p. 137).
54. Excepting some Turkish Yaresan in Eastern Anatolia.
55. The Yezidis may use Arabic, but their sacred texts are in Kurmanji Kurdish. For the Yaresan, Gorani Kurdish is their sacred language.
56. As has been the case in Iraq, where prominent Yezidis were asked in the 1980s, to sign a declaration that they were Arabs. (Personal communication from Pir Khadur Sulaiman, Dehok, 1992).
57. Kreyenbroek, *Religion and Religions in Kurdistan,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, pp. 96–97.
58. Personal communication from Professor Kreyenbroek, June 1997, Gottingen.
59. Mir-Hossein 1994, p. 212 Hamzeh’ee claims only half a million adherents (Hamzeh’ee, 1990, p. 39).

60. Mir-Hosseni 1994, p. 212, with my own calculations based on Iran's 1996 population census.
61. Sharif Khan of Bitlis who wrote of the history of the Kurdish people in the 16th century, only considered the tribal and aristocratic inhabitants of the area as Kurds.
62. Such as the sponsoring of a Kurdish man's son's circumcision by a Christian friend. See Sertel 1971 for an account of ritual co-parenting *(kivrelik)* in eastern Turkey. Paul White notes that Sertel appears unaware that this is an Alevi/Kizilbash practice, also sometimes followed by Sunnis. (White 1995, ff.5.)
63. See Guest 1993, pp. 68–69, 104, 134ff, for details of massacres in the last century. Also see Allison 1996, on oral traditions.
64. In the 1960s, a Christian woman, Margaret, fought and died as a *peshmergah,* and became a Kurdish icon of martyrdom, yet she was a communist Assyrian.

The PKK initially welcomed non-Kurdish Alevis and possibly Armenians, attracted by its leftist ideology. A persistent rumour attributes Armenian parentage to its leader Abdullah Ocalan, and to many dead *peshmergahs,* who are often reported by the Turkish military as uncircumcised. (They could also be Alevis.)

From 1991 onwards, the Kurdish political parties in northern Iraq, followed the initiative of the PUK leadership in attempting to co-opt Yezidi Kurds into their ranks. The Assyrians and other Christians were already quite heavily involved in the communist parties and their own organisations, so involving the Yezidis was an attempt both to widen their power bases in Badinan and to foster an ideology of Kurdish unity. A Yezidi *Mir* was elected to the Kurdish Parliament in 1992, and the leader of the KDP, Massoud Barzani made a ceremonial visit to the annual Yezidi pilgrimage at Lalish in 1992. (For information on the Yezidis and the PUK I am indebted to Pir Khaddur Sulaiman, Dehok 1992.)

65. In Allison's account of a tragic Kurdish love story, she notes one version in which they are of different religions, and thus cannot marry. The teller of this version felt that to be self-evidently a reason for tragedy. Allison 1996, p. 200.
66. In northern Iraq in 1992, I found that many Muslim Kurds referred to Yezidis as 'dirt-worshippers', were reluctant to socialise together and that Muslim and Yezidi *peshmergahs* would not routinely eat together, despite their supposed common cause.

Even in the city of Urmiah, which has a very diverse ethnic and religious population both in and around the city, Kurdish Muslim informants were unable to decide whether it was worse to marry a Christian or a Shi'ite Azeri. They felt that the family problems would be worse with the Azeri, but that the Christian would have to convert. (Personal communications in 1996) I have been unable to find an Iranian Kurdish Mullah who does not adhere to the Shi'ite tenet that it is forbidden even for a Muslim man to marry a Christian woman

unless she converts. This is in contravention to Sunni *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence. The late Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) until 1989, had a Christian mother, but this was not widely known, nor was it considered a positive image for a Kurdish leader.

67. For example Shahbaz 1918, and the work of many Armenian authors. An exception to this is the work of Joseph 1961, who explores the background to ethno-religious conflict in his history of the Nestorians and their neighbours.
68. Shooresh 1992, pp. 44–45 See chapter 7 and 8 for details of ethnic conflict in Kurdistan.
69. Shooresh 1992, p. 45.
70. An all-encompassing black cloak, also worn by Arab women.
71. See Allison 1996, p. 181 on abduction, elopement and mixed marriage in the region, historically and in 1992, when a Muslim man eloped with a Christian woman, which created communal tension. Many non-Muslims have vivid oral history traditions concerning the forced abduction of their women by Muslims. (Personal observations, following conversations with Christians and Yezidis from the area.).
72. For example, Allison 1996, on the difficulties of finding an interpreter of the 'right' religious group. Also see above.
73. Ibid.
74. There is a persistent rumour in the area that Margaret, the Christian *peshmergah,* was killed by Muslim Kurdish men, rather than by Iraqi government forces. The very existence of such a rumour is significant, rather than its veracity.
75. Also known as *miskin, guran* or in some areas, *Kurmanj* (See chapter 11 on the meaning of this and Kurd in different contexts.)
76. Nineteenth century travellers were often very shocked by the exploitation of the *reyet,* in particular, obviously, the Christians. Rich compared them to slaves. See Rich 1836, Vol. I, pp. 89, 96.
77. Hamzeh'ee 1990, p. 36.
78. See Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 109–121, for a more considered examination of the possible origins of the *guran,* as well as the Guran tribe, and their relations within Kurdish society.
79. *Ashiret* means a tribe or confederation, but in Kurdistan it also refers to a caste or social grouping, that is the military tribal nobility. See Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 61–63.
80. Van Bruinessen 1992, p. 111
81. See chapter 7 for details on the rise of the sheikhs.
82. For details of many aspects of Kurdish tribal structure, see Van Bruinessen 1992, *Tribes,* Chieftains *and Non-tribal Groups,* pp. 50–132.
83. McDowall 1996, p. 15.
84. Sykes, 1908, p. 470.
85. See Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 75–77 for a discussion of the contemporary relevance of this dichotomy.
86. In particular the cities of Mosul, Arbil and Kirkuk. See Hay 1991, pp. 80–91.
87. As noted by many travellers to the area. For example, Rupert Hay on the inhabitants of Arbil and Altun Kepri. (Hay 1991, pp. 80–84) Also see McDowall 1996, p. 17.

CHAPTER 4.
DEFINING A KURDISH IDENTITY.

1. Smith 1993, pp. 15–16.

2. Hobsbawm notes that in ordinary usage, ethnicity almost always includes a racial element, stemming from a common origin or descent. (Hobsbawm 1990, p. 63).
3. See chapters 6 and 11.
4. Eickelman 1989, pp. 207–227.
5. Eickelman 1989, p. 209.
6. Earth 1969, pp. 10–15.
7. Eickelman 1989, p. 210.
8. Eickelman 1989, p. 208.
9. Eickelman 1989, p. 208.
10. Van Bruinessen, *The Ethnic Identity of the Kurds,* in Andrews, 1989 pp. 618–19.
11. The isolation of certain religious groups and their endogenous practices led to a considerable overlap between religion and ethnicity in the region. For example, the Assyrian tribes practised endogamy to such an extent that they came to embody the characteristics of an ethnic group rather than a religious persuasion. Similarly, Armenian ethnicity and religion were so intertwined, that on choosing to become a Muslim, an Armenian would be forced to choose a new ethnic identity.
12. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society,* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl, 1992 p. 39.
13. Eickelman 1989 p. 211.
14. McDowall 1992 p. 12.
15. For example only accepting as Kurds those who speak only Kurdish, not the state language, as happened in early Turkish censuses.
16. For example insisting that both parents of an individual belong to the same ethnic group, or awarding only the paternal ethnicity. In Iraq in the 1980s, Arab men who married Kurdish women gained certain advantages (housing, cash rewards), and their children were listed as Arabs. In the case of the Fayli Kurds, the general criteria for achieving Iraqi nationality served the government's purpose well.
17. Between 1969–88 130,000 Fayli Kurds were deported from Iraq, around half of these after 1980, due to supposed Iranian sympathies. See M.Morad, *The Situation of Kurds in Iraq and Turkey* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992, pp. 128–131.
18. In 1961, 120,000 Kurds in the Jazireh region of Syria were declared foreigners by government decree, and they and their children are still denied passports or identity cards, although military service is still an obligation. These Kurds had been settled in this previous region of nomads since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. See Mustafa Nazdar, *The Kurds in Syria,* in Chaliand 1993, pp. 194–201.
19. The government campaigns against either Kurds, or certain Kurdish minority groups have had considerable success. For example, the *Anfal* Campaign in Iraq was aimed at not only diminishing the numbers of Kurds, but cowing Kurds in marginal areas into abandoning their Kurdish ethnicity. Minority Kurdish groups like Yezidis have been subject to intimidation to deny their Kurdish ethnicity. See Kreyenbroek 1995.
20. Widely used, particularly in Turkey. It is not surprising that many of the brightest Kurds decide that their future lies in co-operating wholeheartedly with the regime, to the extent of denying their ethnic origins. An example of this is the Turkish writer Yaçar Kemal, who as one of Turkey's best-known novelists, de-emphasised his Kurdish origins until, in his seventies, he became an outspoken champion of Kurdish rights.
21. The widespread Kurdish enclaves, especially throughout central Anatolia and northeastern Iran are evidence of the antiquity of this policy. In Iraq, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, substantial numbers of Kurds were relocated to 'model villages', usually in the south of Iraq. Village clearance and evacuation of the population has been an important tool in eastern Turkey since the 1970s. (See chapters 1, 4 and 11.)
22. Wholesale economic and developmental neglect of Kurdish regions is a charge levelled at all the concerned governments. See chapters 2 and 5.
23. This is adapted from a title in Eickelman 1989, p. 282.

24. The view of Moosa (Moosa 1988). Ismaili or 'Sevener' Shi'ites believe that the last Imam (spiritual leader) was Ismail (d.760). Missionary activities were common, especially from centres in Iran and Syria, close to Kurdistan. Missionaries taught the deeper esoteric meanings of Islam, and this disdain for the superficial appears in Alevi practices. For more on the possible origins of Alevism, see Moosa 1988, pp. 10–36, and Kreyenbroek, *Religion and Religions in Kurdistan,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, pp. 99–104.
25. The Alevis are often referred to as extremist or *ghulat* Shi'ites (by for example Moosa, 1988), whereas despite the advantages incurred by an Islamic label, the Alevis share some common religious features, including old Iranian influences, with both the Yezidi and Yaresan Kurds (see chapter 3, Religious Diversity), and also some Turkic elements. See P.G.Kreyenbroek, *Religion and Religions in Kurdistan,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1992, pp. 101–104. Van Bruinessen has suggested that a considerable part of the ancestors of the present 'Alevi Kurds' were Kurdish and Zaza-speaking adherents of syncretist *ghulat*-influenced sects. He suggests that in the past, extremist Shi'ite ideas were more widespread amongst the Kurds, but that writers of Kurdish history, such as Idris Bitlisi portrayed the Kurds as staunch Sunnis for political reasons. (Van Bruinessen 1996, pp. 10–14) See chapter 3, Religious Diversity, for more on Alevism.
26. For detail on the historical role of the Kizilbash tribes, see chapter 7.
27. This latter term derives from the frequency of the 'z' sound in this group of dialects. It is considered by some Kurds to be a derogatory term. The Zaza language is closely linked to Gurani, a language spoken in an area in southern Kurdistan. Although they are technically not branches of the Kurdish language, as Kreyenbroek points out, they are 'normally identified as Kurds, and regard themselves as such'. (P.G.Kreyenbroek, *On the Kurdish Language,* in Kreyenbroek 1992, p. 70.)
28. For example the Bektaşi and Takhtaji sects, adherents of which are spread throughout Turkey.
29. Mallet, *The Shi'a,* in Tapper 1992 p. 60, acknowledged as an underestimate.
30. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society,* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992, p. 37.
31. Mandel 1987, p. 5.
32. There has been longstanding and frequent Sunni-Alevi friction in Turkey. Kurdish Sunnis have been active in attacks on both Turkish and Alevi Kurds. Mass killings of Alevis by Sunnis occurred in Kahraman Maraş (December 1978), Sivas (July 1993) and Gazi Osman Paşa (Istanbul, March 1995). In the late 1970s, great animosity flared up between the Sunni and Alevi 'Kurds' in Malatya, Elazig and Erzincan. (White 1995, p. 17.)
33. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society,* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl, 1992, p. 46.
34. Mandel 1987, pp. 5–6.
35. Mandel 1987, pp. 5–6.
36. Van Bruinnessen 1996, pp. 16–17.
37. Cengiz 1996. He refers to the Alevis of Dersim as Kirmanc, together with the Zazas, speaking dialects of the Dimli language and belonging to the same people, and cites oral traditions that demonstrate a clear separation from Kurds, for example alternative terms for Kurds and the Kurdish language. The area of Alevi habitation is, according to him, called Kirmanciye by its inhabitants, and is separate from Kurdistan.
38. The suggestion that the Zaza/Dimli language is, like Gurani, not Kurdish is usually dealt with tactfully by linguists and Kurdologists, who tend to bow to the Mandel theory of malleable ethnicity, accepting that the speakers of these languages are Kurds. The suggestion by Minorski et al that these groups were originally Dailamites, from the Caspian region, who migrated to Kurdistan, is often seen as a plot to fragment the Kurdish ethnic identity.
39. White 1995, p. 18.
40. White 1995, Cengiz 1996. White's article explores both the possible origins of the Dimlis, their role in Turkish history and politics, their relationships with Kurds and the mutual advantages in sharing a nationalist movement. For a more cautious account of Alevi identity,

see Van Bruinessen 1996. Also P.J. Bumke, *Kurdish Alevis. Boundaries and Perceptions,* in Andrews 1989.

41. Van Bruinessen 1996, p. 5, and see chapter 3, p. 59 ff. 3.
42. Dailamite origins have also been suggested for the Dimli/Zaza speakers, by McKenzie and others, see White 1995, p. 7.
43. See Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 109–121 for an account of the *guran*.
44. The Travels of Marco Polo, (Ed. Waugh) p. 30.
45. Map of Kurdistan, 1947, RGS Asia Div 27, and accompanying notes.
46. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society,* in Kreyenbroek & Sperl 1992, pp. 33–67.
47. The Kurdish diaspora in Europe and America numbers around 1 million. There are approximately 500,000 in Germany, 50,000 each in France, Sweden and the Netherlands, and 20,000 each in Britain, Switzerland and the US. (Kurdish Information Centre Annual Report 1995–96, London.)
48. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society,* in Kreyenbroek St Sperl 1992, p. 66.
49. The Kurdish population of Istanbul was estimated in 1990 as 2.5m. (Kendall, in *Current Position and Historical Background,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1994, p. 8), as compared to the whole population of Diyarbakir in 1996, which was 1.3m.
50. Pelletiere 1984.
51. Chaliand 1993.
52. Kendall, op cit, p. 9. If Kurds outside Kurdistan are included, this increases to 30m.
53. McDowall 1996.
54. Izady 1992.
55. Current Kurdish 'propaganda' literature. For example *Who are the Kurds?* leaflet, published by Kurdish Aid Association (Scotland) 1992. Until about 5 years ago, 25m was considered to be the upper limit of a generous estimate. However, once a higher figure is used, it rapidly becomes accepted currency, until to give a lower figure is considered to be denying the Kurds' very existence.
56. Published in Razmara 1949–51.
57. *Kurdish Areas in the Middle East and the Soviet Union,* Central Intelligence Agency, Washington D.C. No. 800603 (5444643) 3–86.
58. *Distribution of Kurds,* Map Section, L & R Dept., FCO, June 1986.
59. McDowall 1992, p. 10 and 1996, p. xiv.
60. L.Nestmann, *Die eithnische Differenzierung der Bevölkerung der Osttürkei inihren sozialen Bez(gen,* in Andrews 1989.
61. *Middle East: Languages and Dialects* TAVO Series; Author—Peter Behnstedt, University of Tübingen, November 1990 (1:8,000,000).
62. *Middle East: Ethnic Groups—The Emic View* TAVO Series; Author—Erwin Orywal, University of Tübingen, June 1990 (1:8,000,000).
63. *Iran: Ethnic Groups* TAVO Series; Author—Erwin Orywal, University of Tübingen, November 1988 (1:4,000,000).
64. *Kurdistan* Prepared by Samande Siaband for the Kurdish Program, New York. (1:5,000,000) Date unknown, see chapter 12, Indigenous Cartography.
65. PRO FO 373/1/1, *Ethnographic Map of Eastern Turkey in Asia, Syria and Western Persia.*
66. Although one month later, a less ambitious, but completely dissimilar, ethnographic map was presented to the Paris Peace Conference delegation by the Foreign Office, used for discussion on 19/5/19, although possible produced earlier. (PRO FO 608/96, p. 279, *Mesopotamia. Racial Divisions.* See Fig. 10.7.)
67. RGS Ref.Asia Div 18.
68. For this point I am indebted to Paul White of Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.
69. Izady 1992, p. 3. He also mistakenly gives the map date as 1906.

CHAPTER 5.
KURDISTAN'S RESOURCES, REAL AND IMAGINED.

1. Sajaddi, *The State of the Economy in Kurdistan,* in O'Shea 1992, p. 56 I have relied heavily on Sajaddi for this chapter, as I have not found a comparable, more recent work on Kurdistan's resources. Where possible, I have updated his data.
2. Van Bruinnessen in Kreyenbroek and Sperl, 1992, p. 41.
3. Van Bruinnessen, 1992, pp. 15–17.
4. See chapter 11, The Rural Idyll, on the predominance of the rural idyll in Kurdish mythology.
5. Ghassemlou, 1965.
6. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan in Iran,* in Chaliand, (1980).
7. See chapter 11, The Demise of the Rural Life.
8. *Turkish Human Rights Organisation. Annual Report for 1994,* p. 65. Cited in McDowall 1996(b), p. 22.
9. Ibid.
10. Sajaddi, op cit, p. 58.
11. See chapter 10.
12. Europa, *The Middle East and North Africa* 1996, p. 154.
13. *Iran Yearbook,* 1990 Chapter 13, p. 11.
14. Europa, *The Middle East and North Africa,* 1996 p. 154.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid, p. 487.
18. The first phase raised $1.75bn in revenue, and Turkey was the conduit for 691,000 tons of food and medicines. Of this $215m was spent by the UN on the Kurdish areas of Northern Iraq. (*Middle East International,* No. 552, 13.06.97, p. 15.)
19. Article 23 of the July 27, 1958 Constitution. The Kurds and Arabs are equal partners within this nation. The Constitution guarantees their rights within the framework of the Iraqi Republic' Ghareeb 1981, p. 38.
20. Ghareeb 1981, p. 39.
21. Ghareeb 1981, p. 106.
22. In Spring 2003, an important early target in the US invasion of Iraq was to secure the Kirkuk oil installations, with the help of Kurdish fighters. In summer 2003, Kirkuk was governed by an elected leadership representing Kurds, Arabs, Turkomens and Christians. Debate was continuing about the fate of Kirkuk, which was the only active oil installation in Iraq. The arrest of 11 Turkish special forces soldiers in Kirkuk in July 2003 indicated the importance of Kirkuk to Turkey and the fear that the Kurds may be allowed to control the oil output.
23. The subject of a recent best-selling novel set in Kurdistan. See chapter 2, The Heart of the Middle East.
24. John Dewdney, *Precipitation* in Blake et al, 1987 p. 19.
25. Ibid.
26. Sajjadi, op cit, O'Shea 1992, p. 55.
27. Many of these were abandoned after the 1990 Gulf War. The safe haven is littered with such palaces.
28. Sajjadi, op cit, in O'Shea, 1992, pp. 36–59.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Europa, *Middle East and North Africa, 1996,* p. 163.
33. *Statistical Yearbook of Turkey,* 1989.
34. Newspot, *Turkish Digest,* Ankara Jan. 18, 1990.
35. Europa, *The Middle East and North Africa,* 1996, p. 165.

36. Europa, *The Middle East and North Africa,* 1996, p. 163.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Personal communication from PKK representative, London, December 1995.
40. Kendal, *Kurdistan in Turkey,* in Chaliand 1980 p. 53.
41. Europa, *The Middle East and North Africa* 1996, p. 927.
42. Ibid.
43. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan in Iran,* in Chaliand 1993, p. 95.
44. Europa, *The Middle East and North Africa,* 1996, p. 490.
45. Ibid.
46. Izady 1992, p. 224.
47. Sajjadi, op cit, in O'Shea 1992, p. 41.
48. Ibid.
49. Seyit Hasim Hasimi, MP for Diyarbakir and chairman of the Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry on Migration at press conference in Diyarbakir 28.07.97. Cited in report of the International Committee for the Liberation of Kurdish Parliamentarians (CILKET).
50. Sajjadi, op cit, in O'Shea 1992, p. 41.
51. Sajjadi, op cit, in O'Shea 1992, p. 52.
52. Sajjadi, op cit, in O'Shea 1992, p. 47.

CHAPTER 6:
TYING DOWN THE TERRITORY.

1. See this chapter, Nationalist Historical Constructions, The Kurds Before Islam.
2. Colin Williams, *Minority Nationalist Historiography,* in Johnston, Knight and Kofman 1988, p. 203.
3. Ibid, p. 204.
4. Lewis 1975, p. 38.
5. Izady 1992, p. 23.
6. In the few instances when the Kurds have established an administration, eg. Mahabad in 1946–7; Free Kurdistan 1991-present, the existing chaos and short-term nature of the structure has not allowed such an expression of continuity.
7. Smith 1988, p. 206.
8. For example many Baluchis claim that their ancestors migrated from Aleppo in Syria in the ninth century. (*The Baluchis and the Pathans,* Minority Rights Group No. 48, 1987).

   For Kurdish traditional myths of origins, see chapter 11.

9. Of many references: Wilson 1930, Vol 2., p. 127—The Kurds…are the direct descendants of the Medes'.
10. Ghassemlou 1965, p. 34.
11. His main source for this section is also cited in the Encyclopaedia Brittanica: Rashid Yasimi, *The Kurd and His Land, Race and History.* (Tehran 1940, 1956) In Persian.
12. Personal communication from Sami Shooresh, Kurdish journalist.
13. Mukriani, 1925.
14. Waheed 1955, pp. 42–57.
15. Safrastian 1945, pp. 16–31.
16. Zaki 1936, p. 61.
17. Bob Filmer, Democrat Congressman for San Diego on the floor of the US Congress, May 1,1997, pleading for recognition of Kurdish self-determination.
18. See Lewis 1975, pp. 11–38.

19. Izady 1992, pp. xiii–xiv, 23–72 Much of the rest of Dr. Izady's book is well written, dealing exhaustively with many hitherto unexplored aspects of the Kurds and Kurdistan. However, certain sections, such as that on ancient history are subject to seriously flawed reasoning, and the lack of citation ensures that his own conclusions are presented as factual evidence. However, its wide range of coverage and accessible tone, combined with its affordability and accessibility ensured that it rapidly became a 'bible' for both Kurds and Kurdophiles.
20. See chapter 2, The Heart of the Middle East.
21. Izady 1992, pp. xiii–xiv.
22. A claim advanced in the US Congress, see ff. above.
23. Izady 1992, pp. 30–31.
24. Izady 1992, p. 31.
25. Izady 1992, p. 35.
26. Al Karadaghi 1990, p. 8.
27. Intriguingly, this dilemma was addressed by Safrastian, who noted that Henry Rawlinson erred in his deciphering of Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions, and that the land of *Kurtie* around Lake Van was in fact *Khab-khi.* Kurds could thus only be associated with the Guti in this period. The *Kurtie* or *Qurtie* were a 'red herring', yet obviously an attractive one to Kurdish historians. One aspect of Safrastian's thesis also at least provides a justification for so much of the 'territorial habitation' argument, as he denies the possibility of intercontinental migration, claiming the Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians and Armenians as autochthonous races, living in their native habitats!.
28. Al Karadaghi 1990, p. 16.
29. Al Karadaghi 1990, p. 20.
30. Al Karadaghi 1990, p. 50.
31. Al Karadaghi 1990, p. 50.
32. Al Karadaghi 1992, p. 66.
33. Curtis, 1989.
34. Al Karadaghi 1992 pp. 62–64.
35. The Kurdish Museum, New York 1995—Kurdish Headdress. A Matter of Historic Continuity.
36. Jwadieh 1960, p. iii.
37. Jwadieh 1960, p. 27.
38. Peter Taylor, *The Modern World System,* in Johnston and Taylor 1989, pp. 272–273.
39. Lewis 1994, p. 19.
40. Lewis 1994, pp. 94–95.
41. Yapp 1987.
42. Yapp 1996, p. 325.
43. Yapp 1996, p. 348.
44. Yapp 1996, p. 482.
45. Yapp 1996, pp. 482–483.
46. Yapp 1996, p. 95.
47. Mustafa Nazdar, *The Kurds in Syria,* in Chaliand 1993, p. 200.
48. Cleveland 1994.
49. For example, Foccaro 1994, Yassin 1995, Jwadieh 1960, Hussain 1952.
50. For example, Olson 1989.
51. For example, Ahmad 1994, 1996, plus many works in Kurdish and Arabic.
52. Such as Mirella Galletti in Bologna, author of a doctoral thesis on Kurdistan (*Political Structure and Cultural Development in Kurdish Society,* University of Bologna 1974) and the first book in Italian on Kurdish history for 100 years (*I Curdi nella Storia* [Chieti, Vecchio Faggio 1990]) Also, for example, Bozarslan, Professors Blau and Van Bruinessen.
53. McDowall 1996.
54. Thomas Bois in Encyclopaedia of Islam 1986, *Kurds, Kurdistan* p. 447.

55. See above.
56. Xenophon pp. 11–28.
57. D.MacKenzie, *The Role of the Kurdish Language in Ethnicity,* in Andrews 1989, p. 541.

    In an illustration of how speculative all suppositions are concerning this early period, Sinclair adds that the Carduchians were skilled stone masons and possessed a King and a palace; 'without wanting to make assumptions about the history of the Kurds, none of this sounds like them.' Sinclair 1989, Vol. III, p. 360.

58. Izady 1992, p. 35.
59. Bois, Encyclopaedia of Islam 1989, *Kurds, Kurdistan,* p. 447.
60. Driver 1921, p. 563.
61. MacKenzie, op cit, believes this, and other accounts in Livy and Polybius, were the first mention of the Kurds. He regards them as a tribe, living to the north west of the Persians, possibly neighbours of the Medes.
62. Driver 1921, pp. 564–566.
63. Bois, Encyclopaedia of Islam 1989, *Kurds, Kurdistan* p. 448.
64. Ibid. Minorsky's article in the First Edition of the Encyclopaedia on Kurds appears identical, so this view has not been really examined since the 1930s. (1st Edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam 1913–1936).
65. Izady 1992, p. 35.
66. Bois, Encyclopaedia of Islam 1989, *Kurds, Kurdistan* p. 449 Although it is practical to assume Semitic elements in the Kurdish tribes, the popular genealogies are likely to have been invented to create a claim to Islamic status.
67. Ibid. See also Kreyenbroek *On the Kurdish Language* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992, pp. 70–71 Also see chapter 4, The Alevis, and chapter 11, The Linguistic Conundrum.

CHAPTER 7.
FROM PROVINCE TO PRINCIPALITY TO PAWN

1. Jwadieh 1960, p. 29.
2. Jwadieh details some five major rebellions involving the Kurds between 746 and 938 AD.Jwadieh 1960, p. 30.
3. McDowall 1996, p. 22.
4. Minorsky 1953, p. 109.
5. Encyclopaedia of Islam 1986, *Kurds, Kurdistan,* p. 450.
6. Jwadieh 1960, p. 33.
7. See Lyons and Jackson 1984, for an examination of Ayubi's life and career.
8. McDowall 1996, p. 22. For example Ayubi gave Shahrizur in Kurdistan as a fiefdom to a Mamluk general, rather than to a Kurdish ruler.
9. Bois, Encyclopaedia of Islam 1986, *Kurds, Kurdistan,* p. 450, for details of the writings of historians Masudi (943 AD) and Istakhri (951 AD) All of these descriptions are tempered by the possible definition of a Kurd as an Iranian nomad, rather than in the modern sense of Kurdishness.
10. Masudi, *At-Tanbih Wa'l-Ishraf,* cited in Driver 1921, p. 568.
11. Istakhri, *Mas'alik-ul-Mamalik* and *Oriental Geography,* cited in Driver 1921, p. 568.
12. Al-Tabari (d.923), *Kitab Akhbar ar-Rassul wa al-Muluk,* III, 51. Cited in Galletti 1992, ff. 2.

13. Kurdistan was divided from Jibal Province, which was also known as Persian Iraq. (Le Strange 1903, p. 55.)
14. Le Strange notes that, according to Arab writer, Mustaufi, Bahar possessed a large castle. (Le Strange 1903, p. 55).
15. Le Strange 1903, p. 55 and Driver 1921, p. 572.
16. Le Strange 1903, pp. 55–56. He also includes a map in the appendix.
17. Mustaufi, *Nuzhat-ul-Qulub* (c. 1340 AD) Cited in Driver 1921, p. 572. Driver also notes that these sums were equivalent to £1,000,000 and £100, 750 (in 1921 terms).
18. Jwadieh 1960, p. 37.
19. Van Bruinessen 1992, p. 136.
20. Mustaufi, op cit. Cited in Driver 1921, p. 572.
21. Yaqut, *Mu'jam-ul-Buldan* (c.1225 AD) Cited in Driver 1921, pp. 569–571.
22. McDowall 1996, p. 24.
23. Ibn Battuta, *Voyages* (c.1355 AD). Cited in Driver 1921, pp. 571–572.
24. Ibn Khaldun (c.1332–1406), *History of the Berbers.* Cited in Driver 1921, p. 572.
25. Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-ibar* II, 461:III, 413. Cited in Galletti 1992, ff. 2.
26. Van Bruinessen 1992, p. 137.
27. Van Bruinessen 1992, p. 137.
28. Sinclair 1989, Vol I, p. 116.
29. See Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 141–142 for a translation of a contemporaneous Aramaic account of the occupation of Cizre by Mohmmad Beg Ustajlu, Governor of Diarbekir and Shah Ismail's brother-in-law, and the subsequent suffering of the local population.
30. Van Bruinessen 1992, p. 140.
31. Meaning 'Red Heads' after the red felt caps some of the tribes wore. The Kizilbash religion appears to have developed into Alevism, and the Alevis are still often referred to by this name. See chapter 4, The Alevis.
32. Although it has been suggested that Kurdistan was at one time a hotbed of Shi'ite ideas. It is possible that Kurdish historians downplayed the importance of Shi'ism in Kurdistan to flatter their later rulers, the Ottoman Caliphs. See Moosa 1988, esp. pp. 36–50, and Van Bruinessen 1996, pp. 11–12.
33. Van Bruinessen 1992, p. 144 For a fuller account of this period see Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 142–145.
34. The number, size and independence of these Emirates and fiefdoms varied considerably over the next 200 years. See Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten 1988, for a history of these changes.
35. Jwadieh 1960, p. 39.
36. For details on the political history of certain emirates, see Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 145–151, 157–177.
37. Smith 1986, p. 182.
38. Ahmad -e Khani, 1596. For nationalist interpretation see: Kendal Nezan, *The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background* in Kreyenbroek and Allison, 1996, pp 10–11 and for a very laboured and popular (with Kurdish nationalists) account, Shakely 1992. During this period, Melaye Jezireh also wrote extensively in Boti, the dialect of the Botan Emirate.
39. See chapter 12.
40. See Vassiljeva 1996.
41. The seventeenth century Italian traveller, Pietro della Valle noted that 'Kurdistan seems to be located just here by nature as a natural border, between the two big empires of the Turks and Persians'. *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrinodescritti da lui medisimo in lettere familiari* (Presso Paolo Baglini, Venita 1667) Vol. II p. 9. Cited in Galletti 1992, p. 8.
42. Ismael 1982, p. 2.
43. The Treaty of Peace (Erzerum) Article I. For full text see Hurewitz 1956.

44. Ibid, Article III.
45. Ibid, Article IV.
46. Ismael 1982, p. 5.
47. See Olson 1989, pp. 1–25.
48. Ryder 1925, p. 227.
49. Ibid, p. 238.
50. Ibid, p. 234.
51. See chapter 1, A Peripheral Frontier Location.
52. See Yalçin-Heckmann 1991, pp. 91–95 on Kurdish smuggling.
53. McDowall 1996, p. 40.
54. Naby 1977, p. 237.
55. See Jwadieh 1960, pp. 151–173 for a full account of Rashid Mohammad's life.
56. For example, Amadiyah had lost three quarters of its houses at the hands of the Rowanduzi army. A.Grant, *The Nestorians; or the Lost Tribes* (J.Murray, London 1841), pp. 60–61. Cited in Jwadieh 1960, p. 167.
57. See Jwadieh 1960, pp. 176–211 for a full account of Badr Khan's life, career and relations with the Nestorians.
58. See McDowall 1996, pp. 38–48 for a full account of this period.
59. Guinness 1913, p. 800.
60. Ibid, p. 790.
61. See chapter 11, Religious Factors, for an explanation of the *tarāqat* system that supported the sheikhs.
62. Others included the sheikhs of Barzanja and Barzan.
63. A letter written to Vice-Consul Clayton in Başkale in July 1880 described the characteristics of the Kurdish nation, and their distress at being governed by two disinterested powers. For full text see Safrastian 1948, pp. 62–63 (source, Clayton's report July 11, 1880).

    In another letter, explaining his reasons for attacking Iran, Obeydullah gives estimates of the Kurdish population (500,000 families), and expands his reasons for seeking Kurdish independence. (Parliamentary Papers 100 (1881) cmd.2851, No. 47.

64. Van Bruinessen 1992, pp. 228–229.
65. Although Kurdish violence against Christians was widespread and exacerbated by the expressed aims of the European consuls, there is good evidence that Obeydullah sought to co-operate with the Christians, and to establish himself as their protector in return for their support in his aims. He must have had some limited success, because some Nestorians assisted his attack on Iran; perhaps they could see the disadvantages of rule by more than one power. See Jwadieh 1960, pp. 231–237.
66. 20,000 rifles, according to Consul-General Abbot. Jwadieh 1960, p. 249.
67. Obeydullah expressed the hope that the European powers would take an interest in the Kurdish situation and tried especially to win the support of the British, resulting in a large number of communications to British consuls and American missionaries. See Jwadieh 1960, pp. 221–224, 236–238.
68. Olson sees this as the first stage in Kurdish nationalist development, marking the emergence of the sheikhs as nationalist leaders. (Olson 1991, pp. 1–7.)
69. After its founder, Abdūlhamid II, Ottoman Sultan.
70. Considered by Olson to be have been the second stage of Kurdish nationalism. (Olson 1991, pp. 7–15).
71. Olson 1991, p. 10.
72. Olson 1991, p. 12.

73. There was no nationalist sheikhly leader again until Sheikh Said in 1925.
74. Olson 1991, p. 14.
75. Hassanpour 1992, pp. 87–88.
76. Evliya Çelebi (1611–84) *Kurds in the History of Their Neighbours: Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels* (KZK Press, Baghdad, 1979) In Kurdish. Cited in Hassanpour 1992, p. 77.
77. Hassanpour 1992, p. 77.
78. Noted in 1829 by Mirza Mahmud Banayi. Cited in Hassanpour 1992, p. 77.
79. Basil Nikitine, *Les Valis d'Ardelan,* Revue du Monde Musulman, Vol. XLIX, p. 103. Cited in Hassanpour 1992, p. 77.
80. Sykes 1915, p. 425.
81. Vital Cuinet, *La Turque d'Asia,* Tome Deuxieme, (Ernest Leroux, Paris 1892) p. 562. Cited in Hassanpour 1992, p. 77.
82. Including the poet Haji Qadiri Koyi. See Hassanpour 1992, p. 78.
83. See Gökalp 1968.

CHAPTER 8.
THE FIRST WORLD WAR

1. A contemporaneous account of the First World War, published in 13 volumes from 1915 onwards, gave little coverage to the war in the east, noting that: 'Asia Minor is only of geographical interest in connection with the war in that its Mediterranean coasts afford Germany some means of carrying on her submarine campaign against allied shipping… East of Constantinople it was only at Iskanderun, Aintab, Diarbekr and Bitlis that smashing blows could have been delivered at Turkish power'. The Mesopotamian region's importance was explained in terms of its water communications with India via the Persian Gulf. (Wilson and Hammerston, 1915 onwards, Vol. 12, pp. 193–198) The ravages endured by the local population is referred to only in passing, with relation to north west Persia (vol. 8, p. 180), and the Kurds only as raiders and looters around Baghdad, (Vol 9, p. 161) and enemies of the Armenians, who are accorded considerable coverage, including photographs. I am indebted to Mr William Booth for the use of his library on the First World War.
2. Ahmad 1994, p. 90 Prof. Ahmad's 1975 work is the only real examination of the effects of this period on Kurdistan. Until its translation from the original Kurdish, there was no similar work in a European language. He also offers the only available handling of vital Russian sources for the period and even before. I am greatly indebted to him for his painstaking research, upon which I have drawn heavily in this chapter. Prof. Ahmad is a Russian-trained professor of history at the University of Baghdad.
3. Dr M.S.Lazarev, *Kurdistan and The Kurdish Problem from the 1890s to 1917* (Moscow, 1964), cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 90.
4. Parliamentary Paper, *The Treatment of Armenians*, p. 100.
5. The Russo-Turkish wars took place in the years: 1676–1681, 1686–1689, 1710–1713, 1735–1739, 1768–1774, 1787–1791, 1806–1812, 1828–1829, 1853–1856, 1877–1878.
6. Zaki 1939, p. 229. Zaki was an officer in the Ottoman army and some of his works were in use in military schools in Turkey and Iraq until recently, for which information I am indebted to Prof. Ahmad.
7. Zaki 1939, pp. 274–275, cited in Olson 1991, p. 21. Comparative figures of combat casualties were: Britain 888,000; Germany 1.8m. The Mesopotamian campaign had cost 31,000 British deaths in action.
8. See chapter 9, Russian Designs.
9. Captain P.Y.Averianov, *The Kurds in the Wars of Russia with Iran and Turkey During the Nineteenth Century. The Current Political Situation of the Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Russia*

(Caucasus Zone Military Command Press, Tiflis [Tiblisi] 1900), p. 1 Cited in Ahmad p. 28. See chapter 9, Russian Designs for more on Russian military studies on the Kurds.
10. Allen and Muratof 1953, p. 299.
11. Ahmad 1994, p. 91.
12. These reports were the major primary sources informing the later work of Soviet Kurdologists such as Lazarev, Prof. Jalil Jalile and the Russian educated Prof. Madhar Ahmad.
13. Minorsky noted that force was counterproductive and suggested ‘promises to work for the realisation of autonomy for the Kurds.’ (Lazarev 1964, op cit, p. 450, cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 94).
14. Khalu Ghorban eventually broke away from the *jangalis* and, manipulated by several agents, was killed in an operation against Simko, the Iranian Kurdish chief. (Ahmad 1994, p. 125 footnote).
15. Ahmad 1994, p. 95–96.
16. Arfa 1966, p. 27.
17. Lazarev 1964, p. 340, cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 99.
18. Wilson 1930, p. 96.
19. Rich 1991, p. 172.
20. McDowall 1996, p. 108–109.
21. Kemal Madhar Ahmad, *New Documents and Facts About the Movements of Sheikh Mahmoud,* Al-Taakhi Oct. 8, 1973, p. 2. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 100.
22. Lazarev 1964,op cit, pp. 364–347, 450. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 130.
23. Lazarev 1964, op cit, pp. 351, 451. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 130.
24. Ahmad 1994, p. 129.
25. Lazarev 1964, op cit, pp. 353–354. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 101.
26. Ahmad 1994, p. 101.
27. Asquith’s Diary March 25, 1915, cited in Wilson 1930, p. 83.
28. Ahmad 1994, p. 102.
29. See chapter 9, British Exploration, on the British exploration of Kurdistan prior to the First World War.
30. Although Wilson noted that the existence of the Kurds was seldom, if ever, mentioned by the War Office, even though Percy Cox had been in touch with Kurdish cheifs since December 1914, with an aim to securing their assistance with an advance to Baghdad. (Wilson 1931, p. 4.)
31. Concern was expressed to the Russian Foreign Ministry by the British agent in Qasr-e Shirin, to such effect. Lazarev 1964, op cit, pp. 349, 451, cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 100.
32. A contemporaneous war account noted that the ‘great strategic feature of Mesopotamia in favour of British invasion was its river system…thus was India connected by water…without a break with Basra, Baghdad and Mosul.’ (Wilson 1915, Vol 12, pp. 193–194.)

Even in 1913, Guinness had noted the danger to communications with India, should the Russians expand sufficiently to establish a naval base in the Persian Gulf. (Guinness 1913, p. 801.)

33. Cleveland 1994, p. 143.
34. Joll 1992, pp. 187–189.
35. Joll 1992, pp. 185–190.
36. Wilson 1930, pp. 22–23, 35.
37. Ahmad 1994, p. 103.
38. It was in fact left to British control in 1918, allowing for a French share in any oil production.

39. Ahmad 1994, pp. 106–107. This should be seen in the context of British losses of 31,000 over four years of fighting in Iraq.
40. Wilson noted that General Maude's proclamation to the Arabs was utilised by German and Turkish agents who drew attention to the lack of reference to Kurds, who were clearly to be dominated by Arabs. (Wilson 1930, pp. 266–267).
41. Soane himself had become a Shi'ite Muslim whilst living in Iran, although not necessarily through true conviction of belief.
42. Ahmad 1994, pp. 106–109 for a detailed analysis of news and editorials in *Têgeyashtinî Raste*.
43. *Têgeyashtinî Raste.* No. 3 Jan. 1, 1918, cited by Ahmad 1994, p. 130.
44. PRO FO 371/2080, Buchanon to Grey Oct. 6, 1914 Petrograd, Townley to Grey 11, 14 Oct. 16, 1914 Tehran.
45. Jwadieh 1960, p. 363.
46. Hay 1966, p. 3.
47. For an eyewitness account of these atrocities as well as a map of destroyed villages on the Urmiah Plain see Shahbaz 1918.
48. Lazarev 1964, p. 330, cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 97.
49. Ahmad 1994, p. 127 and footnote for further comment.
50. See Wilson 1931, pp. 35–37.
51. The heat of the unfamiliar plains caused the death of up to 60 a day. (Wilson 1931, p. 36.)
52. PRO FO 608/342/9/1 Wilson to Foreign Office Aug. 4,1919, and Curzon to Sir Eyre Crowe Sept. 24, 1919. In March 1919, Noel had written to Balfour saying that the Kurds feared such a move and had wanted an amnesty for their crimes, which was announced by General Allenby in Mosul. (Noel to Balfour, 3/5/19) Also, Wilson 1931, p. 40.
53. Wigram 1929, pp. 217–220.
54. Prince S.Badrkhan, *The Case of Kurdistan Against Turkey* (Princetown, New Jersey 1929) Cited in Safrastian 1945, p. 76. This does seem likely to be somewhat exaggerated.
55. McDowall, p. 97.
56. Hamid Bozarslan, *Entre la Umma et le Nationalisme* (Amsterdam, 1992) Cited in McDowall 1996, p. 97.
57. Sayyid Nursi was, although an advocate of Kurdish identity, was not a separatist, and intended that Kurds express their identity, and raise their status within the Ottoman Sultanate. He progressed to the advocacy of autonomy for Diyarbakir.
58. PRO FO 371/1244 Matthews to Lowther, Diyarbakir, Dec. 31, 1910.
59. In Sasun, an Armenian revolutionary uprising in 1894, brought later widespread retaliatory violence, encouraged by the government, in which up to 300,000 Armenians perished. (Walker 1991, p. 24.)
60. Walker 1991, p. 25.
61. Account largely taken from Walker 1991, pp. 26–29.
62. McDowall 1996, p. 102 ff.
63. Walker 1991, p. 29.
64. Zaki 1939, p. 259, cited by Olson 1991, p. 21.
65. Olson 1991, p. 21.
66. Ahmad 1994, p. 136.
67. McDowall 1996, p. 102 footnote.
68. Wilson 1915, vol. 8, p. 180.
69. *Review of the Civil Administration from 1914,* p. 47.
70. Zaki 1939, pp. 273–280 for eyewitness accounts. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 131 Also Wilson 1931, p. 33.
71. See Wilson 1931, pp. 32–33.
72. National Record Office, Baghdad, File no. 25/01, *Sulaymania Municipality.* Cited in Ahmad 1996.

73. Rupert Hay confirmed this, and added that Christian auxiliary Russian troops torched the surrounding countryside. Rich 1991, pp. 171–172.
74. Mason 1919, p. 35.
75. Rafiq Hilmi, Kurdish historian, *Memoirs* Vol I, (Baghdad 1956) (in Kurdish) pp. 30–31. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 135.
76. Rich 1991, p. 105.
77. Rich 1991, p. 123.
78. Rich 1991, p. 135.
79. *Diary of Major Noel,* p. 14.
80. *Diary of Major Noel,* pp. 29–31.
81. Prof A Miller, *A Study of the History of Turkey* (Moscow, date unknown), p. 70. Cited by Ahmad 1994, p. 131.
82. Ahmad 1994, p. 133.
83. *Diary of Major Noel,* p. 12.
84. *Têgeyashtinî Raste,* No. 15, 19/02/19. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 134.
85. Miller, op cit pp. 69–70. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 75 ff.
86. *The Question of the Frontier Between Turkey and Iraq,* p. 42.
87. *Diary of Major Noel,* p. 4.
88. *Diary of Major Noel,* p. 5.
89. *Diary of Major Noel,* p. 48.
90. Although operating on the periphery of Kurdistan, the British relief operations in Persia were extensive. For example, Rawlinson wrote that of a pre-war population of 50,000, only 10,000 of Hamadan's population survived the war, and they were dying of starvation until the British arrived. The British troops fed over 1,000 people a day. (Rawlinson 1923, p. 52) In General Dunsterville's 'Hush-Hush' Operation in January 1918, he aimed to rescue the 'dying population of north-west Persia'. (Wilson 1915, vol. 8, p. 180.)
91. Wilson 1930, p. 266.
92. Such cruelty on the part of the merchants and aghas is a noted theme of the oral histories of older Kurds, who experienced these events or were told of them by their parents. See also McDowall 1996, p. 108 ff., noting that a known hoarder of grain in Sanandaj is credited with the deaths of over 2,000 people during the 1916 famine. This is well remembered in Sanandaj today. (Discussions in Sanandaj and Diwandareh, April 1996).
93. Ahmad 1994, p. 135.

CHAPTER 9.
THE IMAGE FROM OUTSIDE

1. PRO FO 925/2818 *Karte Von Armenien, Kurdistan und Azerbeidschan.* Author, Heinrich Kiepert, Berlin. Both the routes pass through Erzerum to Tabriz. The author of this map admits to using the writings of, among others, Ainsworth and Dickenson, British travelers, as well as German and Russian travelers. FO 925/2818 Author, Heinrich Kiepert, Berlin.
2. Almost a pre-Cohen shatter-belt. See chapter 2, Core-Periphery Conflict.
3. A full account of German Studies on Kurdistan was published in Kurdish, *Synopsis of the History of Studies on the Kurds in Germany*, Jemal Nabaz (Journal of the Kurdish Scientific Academy, vol. 2, No. 1 1974) In Kurdish, with an Arabic summary. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 21.
4. Von Moltke 1841.
5. The survey of routes between Mosul and Van by Wilhelm Bachman was of great benefit to the Germans during the First World War. (Ahmad 1994, p. 21).
6. Ahmad 1994, pp. 21–22.

7. PRO FO 925/1984 *Karte von Kaukuses—L(ndern und den Angranzenden Türkiscen und Persischen Provizen Armenien, Kurdistan und Azerbeidjan.* Author Heinrich Kiepert, Berlin. The map shows Kurds in apocket north of Van in the north west, as far as ten miles short of Mardin, and in the south as far as Mosul.
8. Sinclair 1989, Vol. I, p. 122.
9. Ahmad 1994, p. 22.
10. A.D.Novechev, *A Study of Turkey's Economy Before the World War* (Moscow 1937), p. 181, Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 22.
11. PRO FO 800/6 Foreign Office Memo by E.Grey (Viscount Grey of Falloden) Aug. 1, 1907.
12. Rich 1836. A century later, Hay gave Rich as one of only two books used in writing his book. Hay 1991, p. 7 Rich was also responsible for the first European examination of the Nineveh site.
13. Twenty-one years later. Rawlinson's army career began in India, from whence he was sent on a mission to Persia. He was appointed military adviser to the Shah's brother, the governor of Kurdistan. See Rawlinson 1839, 1840. (Not to be confused with the later Capt. A.Rawlinson, Officer in Kurdistan in 1918–22).
14. Kinner 1813, 1818.
15. Morier 1812, chapters 16 and 17. Morier 1818.
16. Soane 1926.
17. He published the Basra Times in 1915 and later Kurdish newspapers such as *Understanding the Truth* (and the *Sulaymania Progress* after 1918.
18. Bird (Bishop) 1891 Unfortunately, Ms Bird died before the First World War, and thus was never asked her opinions about policy in Kurdistan, unlike Gertrude Bell, who had considerable knowledge of Arabs, if not Kurds.
19. Maunsell 1894.
20. For example:

    PRO FO 925/2829, *Central Kurdistan,* 1894, by Maunsell, showing routes for troop passages around Van.

    PRO FO 195/2200, *Map of tribal divisions in northern Mesopotamia* 1915, by Maunsell.

    PRO FO 78/5398, *Petroliferous Districts of Mesopotamia,* 1905, Mark Sykes.

21. Maunsell later fell into disfavour, as he opposed any co-operation with Germany in the region, was sent to Macedonia and retired early, to a life of map-making. (Winstone 1982, pp. 7–8) The standard military and political maps of Mesopotamia and Kurdistan were prepared by Maunsell. (For example *Eastern Turkey in Asia 1916,* PRO W/LP&S/21/G54.
22. Sykes 1907, 1908.
23. Dickson, 1910.
24. Between 1849 and 1903, Layard published at least 6 works on his efforts at Nineveh and Babylon. See Lloyd 1980.
25. Ker Porter also surveyed several sites in Iranian Kurdistan. See *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylon etc.,* (London 1822).
26. Not Christian Rassam, British vice-consul in Baghdad, during Layard's excavations, but Hormuzd Rassam, one of the few native archaeologists, who became the British Museum's representative in the area.
27. See Lloyd 1980, for an account of their efforts.
28. See chapter 8.
29. Wilson 1931, pp. 115–116.

30. Between 1465 and 1466, Vassili travelled Asia Minor to Cairo and back. B.M. Dantsig, *The Near East in Russian Literature and Science* (Moscow 1965), pp. 19–21. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 26. An anonymous traveller spent 5 years in the second half of the seventeenth century throughout the Ottoman Empire, including most of western Kurdistan. (Ahmad 1994, p. 26).
31. 1804–1813, 1826–1828.
32. Ahmad 1994, pp. 30–31.
33. See Ahmad 1994, pp. 25–31.
34. Dantsig 1965, op cit, p. 169 Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 17.
35. V.A.Kartsov, *Notes on the Kurds* (Tibilisi, 1896) Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 27.
36. Caucasus Zone Military Command Press, Tifilis 1900. Averianov also published several other studies on the Kurds, as well as translating French works to Russian, for the Caucasus Military Zone Command News, indicating the depth of interest in the Kurds. Cited in Ahmad 1994, p. 28.
37. Ahmad notes that in 1909, Russia took advantage of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) to occupy an extensive area of Iranian Kurdistan, with, he assumes, the intention of annexing it to the empire. (Ahmad 1994, p. 28).
38. Russian officers published reports on Mesopotamia in 1902 and 1904, with a particular focus on the role of the Hamidiye Cavalry in Mesopotamia and the Baghdad Railway project. (Ahmad 1994, pp. 29–30.)
39. The high number of consulates was due to the direct request to the Ministry of Affairs by the Ministry of Trade. Russia was also the conduit for other European good to Kurdistan. (Ahmad 1994, p. 32.)
40. Ahmad 1994, p. 32.
41. Ahmad 1994, p. 32, who also notes that several Russian words entered Kurdish vocabulary as a result of these efforts. (For example *samovar*) It seems, however, that Russia and northern Kurdistan were economically closely linked for some time before this period.
42. For example: The Asian Museum, affiliated to the Russian Science Academy, established in St Petersburg 1818; the Oriental Studies Dept of St Petersburg University, opened in 1855; the Oriental Studies Dept affiliated to the Asia Section of the Foreign Ministry.
43. For example: William Dittel published *A Study on journeys to the East from 1842–1845,* as well as many other articles on Kurdistan, especially the tribes and the feudal system; Berezen published the first serious works on Kurdish/Christian relations in the 1850s; Lerch studied and published on Kurdish history, literature, language and ethnography in the 1950s; Zernov published the first book form of *Sharafnameh* in 1860 and 1880.
44. Guinness 1913, p. 800.
45. Guinness noted that there was a need for more foreign administrators in Eastern Turkey to break, and forestall further, Russian domination. (Guinness 1913).
46. Ahmad 1994, pp. 35–36.
47. Curiously, in 1913, Guinness noted that the Kurds hated the Turks so much, that they still were attracted to the Russians, despite their championing of the Armenians. This illustrates the complexities of relations in the area. (Guinness 1913, p. 800.)
48. Hurewitz 1956, Vol. 1, pp. 112–113.
49. Ahmad 1994, p. 37.
50. This was still evident throughout the twentieth century. A Consul at Tabriz, William Eagleton, wrote a book on the 1946 Kurdish Republic of Mahabad. After the capture of documents from the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979, the published documents on Kurdistan had mostly been prepared for the Tabriz consulate. (Personal viewing of salvaged documents.)
51. Ahmad 1994, p. 38.
52. See Joseph 1961, Naby 1977, on the Assyrians in Persia, and also chapters 3 and 7.

53. Such as Charles Crane, alter sent with the King-Crane Commission to the Arab East. (Ahmad 1994, p. 38.)
54. Galletti 1978, 1992, 1995.
55. Helmreich 1974, p. 18.
56. Maurizio Garzoni, *Grammatica e vocabolario della lingua kurda* (Stamperia della Sacra Congregazione di Propagana Fide, Rome 1787) See Galletti 1992, pp. 3, 11–12.
57. Although Sharif Khan of Bitlis finished his Sharafnameh (History of the Kurdish Nation) in 1596, it was not published until 1860–75 in St Petersburg.
58. Guiseppe Campanile, *Storia della Regione del Kurdistan e delle Sette de Religione ivi Esistenti* (Dalla Stamperia de' Fratelli Fernndez, Naples 1818). Cited in Galletti 1992, p. 4.
59. Galletti 1992, p. 1.
60. Campanile was an Arabist, and Prefect at the Mosul mission from 1809–1815.
61. Campanile 1818, op cit p. 204. Cited in Galletti 1992, p. 14.
62. Campanile 1818, op cit pp. 118–119. Cited in Galletti 1992, pp. 14–15.
63. Ussher 1865, p. 664 See Galletti 1992 pp. 4–5 for details of the literature produced.
64. Allesandro de Bianchi served as an Ottoman Officer from 1855 to 1855, then returning, as a practitioner of the law, to military court service in Italy. He wrote, *Viaggi in Armenia, Kurdistan e Lazistan* (Gareffi gia Boniotti, Milan 1863).
65. Over 63 percent of the Ottoman debt in 1914 was to France (2bn gold francs). French capital in industry and trade amounted to almost half a billion francs. (Ahmad 1994, p. 40).
66. Compared with 1,020 km of German lines and only 440 km of British. (Ahmad 1994, p. 40).
67. Many of the Badr Khan family, prominent nationalists, were educated in Paris, as was Sharif Pasha, the Kurdish representative to the Paris Peace Conference. The Kurdish historian Mohammed Amin Zaki was fluent in French.
68. Ahmad 1994, p. 41.
69. *Mission Scientifique en Perse par J.De Morgan* (Ed. Ernest Leroux, Paris 1894).
70. Lloyd 1980, p. 38.
71. Hay 1991.
72. Rich, *Introduction,* in Hay 1991, p. xix By 'Gulfites' Rich means those IPS officers who spent considerable time in the Gulf Sheikdoms, rather than in India, and whose perceptions and actions were coloured by their experiences there and their emphasis on the importance of the Gulf route to India.
73. Paul Rich, *Introduction,* in Hay 1991, p. xiii.
74. One of the many examples of this attitude is illustrated by Hay's account of the abduction and accidental death of Yusef Beg, Hay 1991, pp. 186–197.
75. Lyell 1991.
76. Lloyd 1980, p. 37.
77. For example, Hay 1991, p. 316 Lyell 1991, pp. 179, 181, 183.
78. A quarter of a million Indian troops served in the Mesopotamian command.
79. Cohen 1976, p. 74.
80. Townsend 1993, p. 264.
81. Helmreich 1974, p. 12.
82. Townsend 1993, p. 268.
83. See chapter 10, p. 201, ff. 5, for Arnold Wilson's comments on the friction between the India Office, the Foreign Office and the War Office.
84. RGS Ref. Asia Div. 18. See chapter 4, Historical Attempts at Definition.
85. PRO FO 608/96 *Mesopotmia. Racial Divisions.*
86. The political committee for Kurdistan included Percy Cox, Gertrude Bell, Col. T.E.Lawrence and Edward Noel. It was chaired by Winston Churchill. It was probably the first time that all these characters were gathered together. (Olson 1992, p. 30.)

CHAPTER 10.
THE COLONIAL DIVISION OF KURDISTAN.

1. These were: Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Sivas, Mamuretu al-aziz.
2. Agreed between the French George Picot, and the British Mark Sykes, the latter of whom was knowledgeable concerning the Near and Middle East, and especially Kurdistan (See chapter 9, British Exploration).
3. Busch 1976, pp. 70–71.
4. Hence possibly the neglect of Italian sources on Kurdistan in the debate over Kurdistan's future. See chapter 9, The Italians. Although British desperation to find an alternative mandate power for Armenia led to a tentative suggestion that Italy take Armenia in return for Southern Anatolia. (PRO FO 608/83 No. 342–8–3/5104 Conversation between British and Italian delegates regarding Asia Minor.
5. 21.03.19) See Kissinger 1994, for an exposition of this argument.
6. See Helmreich for the text. (Helmreich 1974, p. 8.)
7. Ibid, p. 9.
8. Wilson 1931, p. 139.
9. Kissinger 1994, p. 232.
10. This applied to all areas abutting Kurdistan, not only Mesopotamia. The India Office were unable to determine whether the Foreign Office or the War Office were responsible for the administration of the Caucasus. (PRO FO 371/3283 No. 4022/2, *Interdepartmental Conference, 19.12.17*).
11. Wilson 1931, p. 140 (June 1919) Wilson's personal ambitions are clear from this passage. My reading of archive records would seem to imply rather that the Indian Government wanted more, not less control over the region's fate. (See chapters 8, 9, and below.)
12. Wilson 1931, p. 141.
13. Busch 1976, pp. 101–102. Cites Indian archive sources.
14. '[the Indian delegation] have had no opportunity of influencing the decisions about the territories they are interested in.' Montagu (Secretary of State for India) at the I.O. to Curzon at the F.O. Oct. 14, 1919 (IO L/P&S/l0/851).
15. Toynbee, Mallet, Forbes Adam et al.
16. PRO FO 371/4231, No. 121884, Paris delegation to F.O., Aug. 26, 1919, with H.W.Young and Curzon. Such lack of consultation with the F.O. was typical, Harold Nicholson of the political section noted, 'We never tell them what is happening and we don't answer any of their letters'. H.Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (Grosset and Dunlap, New York 1965), p. 314. Cited in Busch 1976, p. 177 ff.
17. Popular anti-Turkish feeling in the US in the winter of 1918–19, which gave Wilson his mandate, was replaced by a Republican majority in November 1919, and a vote of no confidence in the Peace Process. (Helmreich 1974, pp. 13–22.)
18. See Olson 1989, pp. 1–25.
19. See below, The Problems of Kurdish Representation and Conflicting Claims.
20. For example, in 1912, the Armenian Partriach of Constantinople estimated that of the six 'Armenian' provinces, the population was thus:

Turks:	666,000=	25.4%.
Kurds:	424,000=	16.3%.
Armenians:	1,081,000=	38.9%.

But in 1914, the Russian consul in Van (Mayevsky) estimated the Kurdish population in Van and Bitlis alone as 473,000.

The F.O. estimated the Kurdish population in the six vilayats at 2,470,900. (F.O. Handbook, Armenia and Kurdistan. May 1919 [PRO FO 373/5 No. 5/1].)

21. The question of the defence of India's communications has already been touched upon in chapters 8 and 9. An alternative reading of India's involvement is offered by Busch, who suggests that during this period, the Government of India was most concerned with its internal problems. They thus sought to reduce British imperial intervention in the Middle East, and to make concessions to nationalist forces, so as to not to provide a basis for Indian Muslims to attack British policies. (Busch 1976, *Preface,* p. 6 & pp. 98–102.).
22. PRO FO 925/41230 *Map to Illustrate Boundaries Proposed for Armenia and Kurdistan, Showing How Main Lines of Communication Naturally go to the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf* Feb. 4, 1918, Scale 1:4,000,000 Signed G.S.Elliot, but the only likely Elliot, ex-British Vice Consul in Van, was serving in Eastern Europe during the First World War. See also PRO FO 195/2200, *Map Showing Relation of Baghdad Railway to the Defence of India,* Sept. 5,1905, F.R.Maunsell, whilst Military Attaché to Constantinople, which illustrates the importance of the extension to the railway in British policy at that time.
23. PRO FO 371/3386 No. 207981 *India Office Note on Kurdistan* Dec. 14, 1918 stressed the importance of control of the water supply of the eastern affluents of the Tigris.
24. Ibid, noted that the area was a 'valuable military recruiting ground'. Also, PRO FO 371/1/1 *Peace Conference Memorandum on Mesopotamia,* Jan. 1919, p. 272, notes that there were over 100 Kurdish tribes with no sense of nationality, who would be useful military recruits.
25. Maunsell had been Britain's military attaché at Constantinople, until 1905. (Winstone 1982, p. 9) See chapter 9, British Exploration.
26. Maunsell 1894.
27. McDowall 1996.
28. Wilson 1931, p. 163.
29. McDowall notes that the British were unable to identify a single Kurdish leader, although Sheikh Mahmoud was the nearest thing to one. (McDowall 1996, p. 119) Sheikh Mahmoud Barzinji claimed to represent all Kurds, not only in his native Sulaymania district, but as far as Sennah (Sanandaj) in Iran. Additionally, there was Sheikh Taha of Nikri, who had made common cause with Simko, the Iranian Kurdish tribal leader. The main problem with him, for the British, was that he advocated a Kurdish entity across the border with Persia, something that the British could not countenance. He had also been in Russian custody throughout the war, and had lost some of his power base as a result.
30. In 1920, the I.O. noted that he was a 'phenomenally stupid' dandy, with more money than any other asset. (IO L/P&S/l 0/745 *Note on General Cherif Pasha* April 19, 1920.
31. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Letter from Sharif Pasha to Sir L.Mallet. Pasha suggested that an ideal Emir would be modern, loyal to Britain, with no tribal loyalties, that is, just like himself!.
32. Arfa 1966, p. 31 Arfa speaks warmly of Sharif Pasha, and considered him to be 'enlightened'.
33. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Telegram from the British High Commissioner in Constantinople to Toynbee. Jan. 5, 1919.
34. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Admiral Calthorpe to Baghdad April 24, 1919.
35. PRO FO 608/96 No. 12270/M/1743 Unofficial Report July 10, 1919.
36. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 *Memorandum from the Comité de l'Independence Kurde* Dec. 7, 1918.
37. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Letter from Sharif Pasha to Sir L.Mallet. May 1, 1919.

38. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Account of an interview with Sir Percy Cox on the necessity of a Kurdish state in Armenian interests. Feb. 25, 1919.
39. Chapter 8, Ethnic Cleansing, The Resulting Devastation.
40. See W.A.Wigram, *Our Smallest Ally,* cited in Wigram 1929. Their main supporter was Hirtzel at the Foreign Office, who although denying the possibility of an independent state, felt that there was an obligation to offer repatriation and support for autonomy and protection from the Kurds. (See PRO FO 608/79 No. 342/9/1.)
41. PRO FO 608/83, p. 563, map accompanying an appeal by L.Yacouboff (President of the National Assyrian Council and Assyrian delegate to Paris) for an Assyrian homeland. The map is accompanied by a moving description of Assyrian sufferings and expectations. See also PRO FO 608/79 No. 342/9/1, *The Assyrian People and Their Relations with the Allies in the Present War,* drawn up by the Assyrian Refugee Committee in Tehran, and *The Claims of the Assyrians,* a report by Wilson on the claims of Mar Shimun, Assyrian Patriach.
42. In May 1919, Kurds attacked the few remaining Assyrian villages in Nisibin, fearing the establishment of an Assyrian state. *Telegram from Noel to Balfour* 3.05.19 (PRO FO 608/79 No. 342/9/1) The Assyrians were used extensively in operations against the Kurds, from 1921 onwards, which made it impossible for them to live together harmoniously again. (See Browne 1937, pp. 177–178, and Percy Sykes's comments, p. 181.)

    Between August and September 1919, it was suggested that the Kurds (2,000 families) be evacuated from the Ahamdiah area, where the Kurds had run amok, and Assyrians be repatriated there. (PRO FO 608/79 No. 342/9/1 Correspondence from Aug. 4, 1919 to Oct. 31, 1919 between Wilson and the F.O.)
43. For further details on Assyrian claims and their importance in fixing the northern boundary of the vilayat of Mosul, see previous archive sources, and also Joseph 1969, pp. 147–218.
44. PRO FO 371/4192 Telegram from Commander-In-Chief in Cairo to the War Office and Wilson's reply. Sept. 12, 1919.
45. PRO FO371/3385, D.G.Hogarth, *Memorandum of Certain Conditions of Settlement of Western Asia.* Nov. 12, 1918.
46. PRO FO 371/3386 No. 204298 India Office Note on Kurdistan. Dec. 14, 1918.
47. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 191474 Telegram from the Political Officer, Baghdad to the Foreign Office. Nov. 16, 1918.
48. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 191848 Noel's report on conditions at Suleimania. Nov. 19, 1918.
49. PRO FO 608/95 File No. 365/1/1 Letter from Sir. Hohler to the Foreign Office. July 21, 1919.
50. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 191474 India office Memorandum on the Kurdish Situation. Nov. 20, 1918.
51. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 191848 Sir Arnold Toynbee's comments on Maj.Noel's telegram of Nov. 19, 1918.
52. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 198840 Telegram from Maj.Noel to the F.O. Nov. 27, 1918.
53. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 198840 Comments on Maj.Noel's Telegram of Nov. 27, 1918. Dec. 2, 1918.
54. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 198840 Comments on Maj.Noel's Telegram of Nov. 27, 1918. Dec. 2, 1918.
55. Wilson noted in October 1919 that there the conflict had developed into an open breach between the F.O. and the I.O., necessitating a question in Parliament on June 30, 1919, concerning the means by which policy on Mesopotamia are decided. The answer stated that decisions were generally made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of State for India. Wilson comments that, other than for military matters,

the Secretary of State for India issues policy, after consultation with the F.O. and the Indian Government. Wilson was also ‘painfully aware of the extent of the divergence of opinion between the F.O. and the I.O., and the inability of both offices to control the vagaries of the War Office, which appeared at the time to be almost an autonomous department of HMG.’ (Wilson 1931, pp. 162, 164) For more on the conflict of interests between these parties see chapter 9, Shifting Policies.
56. PRO FO 371/3385 No. 210560 Foreign Office Memorandum. Dec. 7, 1918.
57. PRO FO 371/3386 No. 207981 India Office Note on Kurdistan. Dec. 14, 1918.
58. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Foreign Office memorandum by A.Toynbee. Jan. 27, 1919.
59. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Foreign Office memorandum by A.Toynbee. Feb. 14, 1919.
60. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Foreign Office memorandum by A.Toynbee. Feb. 15, 1919.
61. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Foreign Office memorandum by A.Toynbee. Feb. 15, 1919.
62. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 letter from Col. Gibbons to the Foreign Office March 24, 1919 and *Map to Illustrate Plans for a More Northerly Border for Mesopotamia,* Scale 1:1,000,000, on a standard RGS map. (Ref. MPK 292).
63. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Foreign Office memorandum by A.Toynbee. Feb. 15, 1919.
64. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Telegram from the Baghdad Political Officer to the FO-reports that Sheikh Taha, son of Obaidullah had professed that this was the desire of the Kurds in Iran. May 12, 1919.
65. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Toynbee June 9, 1919.
66. PRO FO 373/1/1 *Ethnographical Map of Eastern Turkey in Asia, Syria and Western Persia.* Scale 1:2,000,000 April 1919.
67. PRO FO 608/96, p. 279, *Mesopotamia. Racial Divisions.* Scale 1:7,000,000. Subject of discussions on May 19, 1919. (PRO FO 608/96/371/1/1).
68. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Telegram from the political officer in Baghdad (Wilson) to the Foreign Office. June 14, 1919.
69. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 General H.Q. Egypt to the Foreign Office. Report on the Kurdish movement. June 6, 1919.
70. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Toynbee writes, ‘yet another Cairo attempt to protest about Armenian favouritism.’ Aug. 28, 1919.
71. *Map to Illustrate Note by Maj.Noel on Situation in Kurdistan.* Aug. 11, 1919 PRO MPK 292.
72. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Paper by Major Noel sent to Foreign Office. Sept. 6, 1919.
73. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Foreign Office note July 5, 1919.
74. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 India Office Summary of British Relations with Kurdistan. Orders issued in 1919 Aug. 22, 1919.
75. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 India Office Summary of British Relations with Kurdistan. Orders issued in 1919 Aug. 22, 1919.
76. Actually completed in 1925, anyway.
77. Wilson 1931, pp. 142–144.
78. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Comments on Sir. Hirtzel’s memo by the Foreign Office. Sept. 19, 1919.
79. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad. Nov. 22, 1919.
80. See Busch 1974, pp. 370–371, for further details.
81. PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1 Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad. Nov. 22, 1919.
82. Treaty of Sevres 1920, Article 62. (Hurewitz, II, pp. 81–87.)
83. Treaty of Sevres 1920, Article 64. (Ibid.)
84. The Frontiers of Armenia, as Drawn by President Woodrow Wilson, Aug. 10, 1920. Map accompanying the Treaty of Sevres.

85. Kendal, The Kurds Under the Ottoman Empire in Chaliand 1993, p. 35, ‘Given all this, it is somewhat surprising that entire generations of Kurdish nationalists have turned to this iniquitous Treaty and presented it as a recognition of the Kurdish cause in international law’
86. PRO FO 371/4193 No. 44/156272 Nov. 28, 1919. Signed by Bubos Nubar, Armenian representative, and Sharif Pasha, proposing an independent Armenia and Kurdistan, with the assistance of a Great Power, and recognising the rights of minorities therein.
87. There is inadequate space here for any real examination of the Mosul question. For a full account see Hussain 1952. For a recent, briefer account see McDowall 1996, pp. 143–146.
88. On Mahmud’s career and activities see, Edmonds 1957, pp. 245–305, Arfa 1966, pp. 113–16.
89. Memorandum by Sir.R.Lindsay (Consul, Constantinople) Feb. 8, 1926 (*Documents on British Foreign Policy,* Ed. W.N.Medlicott, D.Dakin, M.Lambert H.M.S. Publications, 1966).
90. Ibid.
91. PRO FO 371/6343 See Olson 1992, pp. 30–33 and chapter 9, Shifting Policies, for details of the decision-making body.
92. PRO CO 730/2, various numbers. See Olson 1992, for a full handling of these sources.
93. Olson 1989, *The Second Time Around: British Policy towards the Kurds from Mudros to Lausanne,* pp. 52–90.
94. Olson 1992, p. 40.
95. Exacerbated by the abolition of the Caliphate in March 1924, and the suppression of the Sheikh Saied revolt in 1925. See Olson 1989.
96. For the full findings of the Commission, see the *League of Nations: Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th 1924*.
97. IO L/P&S/10/815 *Mesopotamian Geological Reports 1919*.
98. Nash 1976, who offers no real evidence for his thesis, other than the existence of the Turkish Petroleum Company, a British joint-stock corporation from 1912. Of course this was probably formed to exploit the sites around Baghdad.
99. Ahmad 1994.
100. G.Chaliand, *Introduction,* in Chaliand 1993. In the same work, Kendal explores the division of Kurdistan in this period, and does not conclude that oil, at least in Mosul, was a strong motivator. (Kendal, *The Kurds Under the Ottoman Empire,* Ibid, pp. 30–33).
101. McDowall 1996, pp. 135, 142–143.
102. Olson 1992.
103. Olson 1992.
104. McDowall 1996, p. 14.

CHAPTER 11.
KURDISH CONSTRUCTIONS OF KURDISTAN.

1. Shafer, 1972 p. 313.
2. Finer 1935 p. 218.
3. See chapter 4 concerning the response of Kurdish nationalism to the assertion of a separate Alevi identity, the Alevis.
4. For example Hassanpour 1984, Shakely 1992, Izady 1994.
5. Smith, 1993, p. 12.
6. Anderson, 1985, p. 15 This is Anderson’s proposed definition of the nation.
7. Gellner, 1964, p. 169.
8. Anderson 1985.

9. See Hobsbawm 1994, p. 160 for his comments on the use of this term, which prior to Smith's use was used only eccentrically in writing on nationalism.
10. Smith, 1993, pp. 15–16.
11. Sharaf Khan Bitlisi, in his epic history of the Kurds, the *Sharafnameh,* only refers to the tribal and ruling elite as Kurds.
12. Rizgar's Kurmanji-English dictionary (1993) defines Kurmanj as 'a Kurdish speaking person', whereas Blau (1980) defines it as 'Paysan' peasant.
13. Eickelman 1989, p. 148.
14. Marx and Engels 1970, (Originally 1846) pp. 46–47.
15. Eickelman 1989, p. 148.
16. See Eickelman 1989, pp. 229–230.
17. Said 1978.
18. Indeed Said's account is significantly ahistorical, encompassing the period of 1800 to 1950.
19. For example the use of old ethnographic data and maps. See chapter 2, Historical Attempts at Definition.
20. Sweetnam 1994.
21. Attempts such as Hansen 1961, focused only on women in one village and their contacts in one city.
22. Sweetnam 1994, p. 23.
23. Hassanpour 1992, p. 64 and ff.
24. Wahby and Edmonds 1966.
25. Hassanpour 1992, pp. 62–64.
26. Hazhar 1989.
27. Blau 1980.
28. I am indebted to Dr Khaled Ayazi for his comments on the difficulties of defining Kurdish terminology. Two of his comments are worth noting: Firstly that Hazhar's dictionary was complied under the control of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and so some of his definitions may be a little restrained. Secondly, that *Kurdayeti* may, on occasion, have negative connotations, even for Kurdish nationalists, in that it can involve 'negative' aspects of Kurdish culture, such as feudal means of production and social relations, as well as unequal gender relations.
29. See chapter 6.
30. Smith 1981, p. 66.
31. For example, Khan 1982.
32. Ghassemlou 1960, p. 33.
33. According to the Shahnameh, the last King of the Medes, defeated by his grandson, Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenids.
34. This is a very popular first name for Kurds, much more so than its Persian version, Kaveh, amongst Persian speakers.
35. In fact Kawa/Kaveh's role in the written text was less significant. He led a rebellion which allowed the rightful King, Faridun to overthrow Zahak, imprisoning, but not killing him. It does clearly state that the escaped young people became the Kurds. (Ferdowsi 1907, pp. 21–47) As the Shahnameh is largely known from public recitals, it may be that Kawa's role was exaggerated in the Kurdish areas of Iran/Persia, generating this different version.
36. Several Kurdish cities in Iraq have a statue of Kawa, and *Nowruz* has been an official Iraqi holiday since 1958. A Kurdish writer assures us that all Kurds will attribute the origins of *Nowruz* to Kawa, although I think this is certainly not the case for Iranian Kurds, nor for Turkish Kurds. He decries the lack of research into the origins of the festival, allowing it to be declared an Iranian holiday, and thus to increase the Persian cultural domination of Kurdish! (Hussein Tahiri, *Is Newruz the Kurdish National Day?,* Kurdish Newsletter, Deakin University. No. 5–6 May 1997.)
37. Xenophon 1984, pp. 173–92.

38. The Travels of Marco Polo, (Trans. Waugh) 1986 p. 25.
39. Ibid.
40. See chapter 9 for the significance of these accounts.
41. See chapter 7, Kurdistan as a Buffer Zone.
42. See O'Shea, Greater Kurdistan, the Mapping of a Myth? In O'Shea 1992.
43. Smith 1993, p. 27.
44. Anderson 1985, p. 132.
45. In 1789, only 50 percent of French people spoke French, of those only 12–13 percent spoke it correctly. In 1860, only 2–5 percent of Italians spoke Italian as a mother tongue; Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor said that 'Italy is not a country, merely a geographical expression'. (Vaziri 1993, pp. 16, 33).
46. Kurmanji is spoken in Turkey, Syria, Russia, in the northern area of Iranian Kurdistan and north of the Greater Zab River in Iraqi Kurdistan. Sorani is spoken to the south of this divide. Zaza is spoken in the triangle bounded by Diarbekir, Sivas and Erzurum in Turkey, and Gorani in pockets near Kermanshah in Iran. Additionally there are subdivisions of all the dialects.
47. Kreyenbroek, *On the Kurdish Language* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl, 1992 p. 71 See chapter 4, The Alevis, for comments on the re-emergence of a debate over the significance of Dimli/Zaza, and its relationship to other 'Kurdish' languages.
48. See Blau, *Kurdish Written Literature* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1996, p. 23.
49. Ibid, pp. 25–26.
50. This was explained to me by the Minister for Education in Free Kurdistan, as necessary to free those minorities from cultural oppression, whereas Kurmanji/Badinani speakers were Kurds, and thus already benefiting from the advantages of Free Kurdistan. (Answer to my question at the University of the Sorbonne, Conference on Kurdish Language, Paris, January 1994.)
51. For example, the traditional Kurdish clothes differ considerably between the two areas. See O'Shea, *Kurdish Costume: Regional Diversity and Divergence,* in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1996, pp. 135–155.
52. Similarly, in Iranian Kurdistan the northern Kurds, and in particular the Kurmanji speakers tend to support the KDPI, whereas during 1979, Sorani speakers, in particular the speakers of the non-standard Sennehi/Sanandaji dialect supported the Komala (Kurdish Toilers) Party.

   Izady believes that this north/south divide occurred as a result of the Byzantine/Muslim divide in Kurdistan. (Izady 1992, p. 8.)

   MacKenzie argues that the linguistic divide may best be explained by the assumption that the southern Kurds, in the course of time, conquered, and to some extent assimilated, the speakers of another Iranian language, now known as Gorani. Gorani influences may explain certain differentiating features of Sorani.

53. Izady 1992, p. 169.
54. For a fuller account of the origins, history and current state of the Kurdish language, see Kreyenbroek, *On the Kurdish Language* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl, 1992. pp. 68–83.
55. Van Bruinessen, 1992, p. 210 Also Olson 1989. See Van Bruinessen for a full account of the importance of the importance of the *tarīqats* in Kurdish social and political organisation.
56. Van Bruinessen, 1992 p. 222.
57. Ibid, p. 224.
58. Ibid, pp. 235–240.

59. See Shooresh 1992 for an example of the Kurdish need to deny culpability in intercommunal violence, even in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.
60. I saw signs in schools in Dehok noting that ‘We are all Yezidis’ and ‘If there is such a people as the Kurds, then the Yezidis are the most authentic Kurds’ (attributed to Masoud Barzani) in March 1992.
61. See chapter 4, The Alevis vis.
62. See Guest 1987, pp. 68–69, 104, 134 ff.
63. See chapter 4, The Alevis.
64. Izady 1992, pp. 131–65.
65. See Vanly, *The Kurds in the Soviet Union* in Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992, pp. 193–219.
66. For an account of both regional costume variations, and these processes, see O’Shea, *Kurdish Costume* in Allison and Kreyenbroek, 1995.
67. An international conference, *The Kurds and the City,* was convened in Paris in September 1996, the first of its kind, in order to redress this situation.
68. Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Cities: some general reflections.* Keynote speech at The Kurds and the Cities Conference, University of Paris III, Sorbonnne Nouvelle. 19–21 September 1996.
69. Ibid.
70. Summer pasture used by nomads to graze their sheep.
71. *Love Songs and Stories Among the Yezidis,* in Allison 1996, p. 182.
72. For example:

    ‘Bread and yoghurt—a true meal.
    Bread and milk—a meal of a prince.
    Bread and Buttermilk—a deceptive meal.’

    This is a common proverb in Turkish Kurdistan.

    When rocking a child, rhymes are made with *‘meshka, meshka’,* the cured cowhide which is suspended and used to churn butter by rocking it. Its name simulates the noise of swishing milk.
73. Of course, certain areas in Kurdistan are famed for even more delicious versions of these products.
74. For example, Arshi and Zabihi, *Kurdistan* 1991 has 6 out of 126 photographs set in urban settings. Bruni 1995, 13 out of 84, despite the context of travel in Iraqi Kurdistan, where there was little rural life at the time. An exception is Kashi, *When the Borders Bleed* (1994), which includes many photographs of urban Kurds.

    A festival of Kurdish culture, *The Living Fire,* held in London in 1993, used 7 photographs in its publicity poster, of which only one was not clearly a rural setting.
75. Of a series of 8 popular posters on Kurdish life published by Scandinavian Art, none show urban settings. Two series of postcards published by Photo Guittot and Photo Bertolino for the Institut Kurde in Paris, show no urban settings at all.
76. Sanandaj, 1996, personal observation.
77. Arbil, 1992, personal observation.
78. Sanandaj, 1996, personal observation.
79. O’Shea, op cit, in Kreyenbroek and Allison 1996, p. 138.

80. *New Reading,* Books 1 and 2 (Ministry of Education, Baghdad 1971) These utilise almost entirely Kurdish rural themes, although book two includes a number of possibly urban family scenes.

Reading Kurdish, (Islamic Republic of Iran Special Committee for Writing Educational Books, Salahadin Ayubi Press, 1990) This text is resolutely rural in its themes and illustration, even the girls wear Kurdish clothes to school (not allowed in towns). Only one illustration, of a political demonstration shows a possibly urban setting.

81. *New Reading,* Book 1, p. 2 shows a woman using a hand plough. Reading Kurdish, p. 8 shows a sickle, a plough, a winnow, farm animals and farm produce.
82. For example: *Sirwan,* (the Diyala river), *Shaho* (a mountain range), *Awiar* (a mountain peak).
83. For example, *Rehane* (wild basil), *Bahar* (Spring, considered the most beautiful season). Many names have the root *Gul* (flower).
84. For example, *Soran, Goran, Baban*. In addition to regions, names of villages are popular, first names, as are those of mountain peaks and plains.
85. Allison 1996, p. 175.
86. Allison notes that 'dramas of Kurdish songs of love…are rooted in the everyday lives of real people in the villages. The songs are believed to be about individuals who loved in the past, and accordingly they are set in a world where tribes are semi-nomadic, pitching their summer camps in the mountains. People live in tents…. All these details are certainly no longer a part of everyday life…' Allison 1996, op cit, pp. 182–183.
87. See Allison 1996, pp. 174–217 for a full discussion of Kurdish folklore themes. It should be noted that Yezidi secular 'folklore' preserves many mainstream Kurmanji traditions, and overlaps considerably with Southern Kurdish traditions.
88. See chapter 5, The Agrarian Lifestyle, The Agricultural Reality.
89. See chapter 1, Introduction.
90. Kendal, *Kurdistan in Turkey,* in Chaliand, 1980, p. 37.
91. State Institute of Statistics in Turkey Yearbook 1985 p. 37.
92. Where a village consists of between 20 and 200, and a hamlet between 3 and 20 households.
93. McDowall 1996b, *Summary*.

A Turkish Parliamentary Commission noted in July 1997, that 3185 Kurdish villages had been completely evacuated since 1990. (See chapter 1, Introduction.)

94. McDowall 1996(b), *Summary*.
95. The following examples of city growth in eastern Turkey are taken from McDowall 1996(b), p. 19, and illustrate the rapid rate of urbanisation occurring in Turkish Kurdistan:

	1990–1	1996
Hakkari	35,000	80,000
Batman	150,000	250,000
Van	153,000	500,000
Diyarbakir	380,000	1.3m

96. The four cities most likely to attract Kurdish migrants and displaced villagers are Istanbul, Ankara, Adana and Mersin. The latter two are the closest non-Kurdish major cities to the 'emergency region'. The population of Adana increased from 900,000 in 1992 to 1.5m in 1994, and that of Mersin from 550,00 to 1m. (Turkish Daily News Aug. 23, 1994.) It is reasonable to assume that the majority of the new arrivals are Kurdish.
97. Vanley, *Kurdistan in Iraq,* in Chaliand, p. 158.
98. *The Middle East and North Africa,* 1990 p. 472.
99. *The Guardian,* March 16, 1991.
100. Personal investigations, Northern Iraq, March 1992.
101. James Anderson, *Nationalist Ideology and Territory* in Johnston, Knight and Kofman, 1988. pp. 18–36.
102. The title of innumerable articles and a recent book by two journalists, No *Friends But the Mountains,* J.Bulloch and Harvey Morris (Penguin, London 1993).
103. McDowall also notes that 'the idea of Kurdistan for many Kurds is characterised by an almost mystical view of 'the mountain, an imaginary as well as a real place.' McDowall 1996, p. 3.
104. Izady 1994, p. 188.

CHAPTER 12.
BETWEEN THE MAP AND THE REALITY

1. Although a curious map exists from 1925, in a book written by a Kurd from Iraq, and published in Aleppo. The map is actually centred on the Iranian plateau, and does not extend very far west or northwest. The name Kurdistan is written across the Caucasus and northern Zagros mountains. The map is headed, 'The History of Kurdistan' and is surrounded by drawings of Iranian architecture, mythical Iranian beasts, mountains and the sun, and surmounted by an open book. In the same book, a map illustrates the migration of the Kurds from Balkh, to the east of Iran. The text stresses the Aryan origins of the Kurds. (Mukriani Al-Hussnni, 1925.)
2. For example, Maunsell's 1894 article included an indication of the extent of Kurdistan.
3. For example Dickson 1910, included a sketch map of part of Kurdistan, Sykes 1908 included a map of the Kurdish tribes.
4. In the 11th century, the Geographer, Al Qashgari, produced a stylised map of his world, called *States of the East,* which included, alongside all the 'races' known in the east, the land of the Kurds. This may be the first map to include the Kurds. (Susa 1959, frontispiece.)
5. Pirbal 1993, p. 74 Pirbal concludes, though that there are many inaccuracies in such maps, and that the Kurds were marginalized in such maps.
6. *Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People,* Paris, March 1919.
7. I was unable to locate any copy of this pamphlet or the map in the British records of the Peace Conference. I must thank Dr Hassanpour for drawing my attention to the existence of this pamphlet and map, and for sending me a copy.
8. I.Bowman, in E.M.House and C.Seymour (Eds.), *What Really Happened at Paris, the Story of the Peace Conference 1918–19* (publishing details unknown), p. 142. Cited in Helmreich 1974, p. 38.
9. Curiously, Sharaf Khan Bitlisi in 1596 also claimed that Kurdistan extended to the Gulf. See below.
10. A Kurdish tribe based in southern Iranian Kurdistan, possibly singled out as they were Shi'ites.

11. Sharaf Khan Bitlisi 1964, pp. 22–25. My own very loose translation of a very geographically confusing passage. The Arabic footnotes appear to add further precise co-ordinates, for example specifying the extent of regions such as Armenia.
12. Sharaf Khan Bitlisi 1972, (Ed.Hazhar) *Introduction,* p. 128.
13. For a very polemical account of this view in English see Shakely 1992.
14. Beits 220–225. Translated by Hassanpour 1984, p. 50.
15. Beit 355. Translated in Shakely 1992, p. 19.
16. Beits 202, 205. Translated by Shakely 1992, p. 74.
17. Beits 228, 230. Translated by Shakely 1992, p. 84.
18. Translated by Hassanpour 1984, p. 51.
19. This occurs in an endnote to the 1964 Cairo edition of Sharafnameh, as an example of ‘a precise geographic map of…the land of the Kurds’ (p. 587) However, I have since been informed that this same poem has been cited in Pirbal 1993, as the work of Abdul Qadir Asiry, from a 1931 publication (Hawar, No. 11 1931, p. 14). (With thanks to Dr Hassanpour, for bringing this article to my attention.)
20. Sharaf Pasha, 1919. See p. 262, ff. 6.
21. PRO MPK 292 Map to illustrate a note by major Noel on the situation in Kurdistan.
22. Memorandum from Comité de L’Independence Kurde. Dec. 7, 1918 (PRO F.O.608/95 No. 365/1/1).
23. Telegram from the British High Commissioner in Constantinople, *Memoir from the Kurdish Committee Delegation,* Jan. 5,1919 (PRO FO 608 95 No. 365/1/1).
24. Note by Toynbee, and letter to Sir L.Mallet from Sharaf Pasha, Feb. 14, 1919 (PRO FO 608/95 No. 365/1/1).
25. Ibid, both Toynbee and Mallet note their desire to drop him.
26. See Allen 1990, for an expansion of the problems inherent in recording boundaries.
27. Zaki 1936.
28. Sykes 1908.
29. Pelletiere 1984, p. 95.
30. *Map of Kurdistan* Produced by an unknown Kurdish group in Cairo, 1947 Accompanying text. (RGS Ref. Asia Div 27).
31. For more on the Republic of Mahabad see: Eagleton 1963, A.Roosevelt, Jr., *The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad,* in Chaliand 1993.
32. Ghassemlou 1981, p. 96.
33. Eagleton 1963, p. 107 Eagleton claims that this map is one prepared in Beirut by the Kurdish Society. A photograph of Qazi Mohammad in 1946 shows a map in the background that is similar to the 1947 Cairo Map, without the hatching (Fig. 12.5). (Meiselas 1997, p. 185.)
34. Memorandum from the Kurdish Rizgari Party addressed to the President of UNO through the US Legation Baghdad to the Secretary of State, Washington. 23/1/46 Foreign Service of the US No. 1051. Andrews 1982, p. 83.
35. Nikitine, p. 205. No further details available.
36. Notes Concerning the Map of Kurdistan, p. 3.
37. See chapter 4, The Lurs, for the question of Luri/Kurdish identity.
38. Van Bruinessen, Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems, in Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992, p. 40.
39. Robinson et al 1984, p. 7.
40. Only the map prepared by Siamand Sabande, discussed in chapter 4, Historical Attempts at Definition, provides any sort of methodology.
41. It is possibly significant that none of the Iraqi or Iranian Kurdish political organisations incorporate maps of Kurdistan into their regular publications, at least not beyond the incorporation of an outline with no points of reference to indicate its extent.
42. Tyner 1974, p. 1.

43. Institute Kurde, Paris. Cartographer: J.L.Barabasz, printed by M.Hassanne.
44. *Kurdistan* Prepared by Samande Siaband for the Kurdish Program, New York (1:5,000,000). The date is unknown, although the most recent text given as a source was dated 1980, and the organisation appears to be defunct. It has proved impossible to contact Mr Siaband.
45. *Kurdish Areas in the Middle East and the Soviet Union,* Central Intelligence Agency, Washington D.C. No. 800603 (5444643) 3–86. See chapter 4, Historical Attempts at Definition.
46. *Distribution of Kurds,* Map Section, L& R Department, FCO, June 1986.
47. *Distribution of Kurdish People,* McDowall 1992, p. 10.
48. *Distribution of Kurds Across Turkey, Iran and Iraq,* McDowall 1996a, p. xiv.
49. Personal communication from David McDowall.
50. *Kurdish Languages,* McDowall 1996a, p. xvi.
51. Tyner 1974.
52. Ibid, p. viii.
53. Tyner 1974, p. 21.
54. Such illustrations were popular in Kurdish political literature during the period of General Evran's military junta in Turkey 1980–83.
55. J.Pickles, *Texts—Hermeneutics and Propaganda Maps* in Barnes and Duncan 1992.
56. Ibid, p. 199.
57. Ibid, p. 211.
58. J.B.Harley, *Deconstructing the Map,* in Barnes and Duncan 1992, p. 194.
59. J.B.Harley, *Deconstructing the Map,* in Barnes and Duncan 1992, p. 232.
60. Ibid, p. 236.
61. Ibid, p. 247.
62. J.B.Harley, *Maps, Knowledge and Power* in Cosgrove St Daniels 1988.
63. J.B.Harley, *Maps, Knowledge and Power* in Cosgrove & Daniels 1988, p. 303.

Glossary

abaya: black cloak worn by Muslim women in many Arab countries
Akrād: Kurds (Arabic)
Anfal: literally, justifiable spoils of war. The name of an Iraqi government campaign against the Kurds
āqā (pl. *āqāwat):* chieftain of tribe or tribal section, landlord, *khan*
ashīrat: tribe, tribal ‘caste’
beg/bey: ‘feudal’ lord
Caliph: civil and religious leader of the Muslim community, successor of the Prophet Mohammed
dengbezh: minstrel, balladeer
dervish: follower of a spiritual discipline. In Kurdistan, a devotee of the *Qaderiya* order
Dimli: see Zaza
dow: buttermilk
emir: mir, ruler of an emirate
emirate: a semi-independent principality
figh: Islamic jursiprudence
ghulat: exaggerated or in excess, the name given to extreme Shi’ite sects
guran: peasant
Gurani: a group of ‘Kurdish’ dialects, including Hawrami, spoken around the Hawraman area of southern Kurdistan
ijāza: permission, especially to teach the *tarīqa*
Ithna<ashari Shi’ism: Twelver Shi’ism, accepting 12 divinely-inspired religious leaders, as practised in Iran
jangali: a guerrilla movement originating in the Caspian region of Iran
jihad: a religiously sanctioned, possibly armed, struggle
jizya: a poll tax on non-Muslims
karamat: religious blessings
khalīfa: a deputy of a sheikh, who teaches the *tarīqa*
khan: chieftan of tribe or tribal section, landlord, *āqā*
khanāq: a place where sufis/dervishes hold their meetings, the home of the sheikh
kivrelik: ritual co-parenting
korsi: quilt suspended over a fireplace
Kurmanj (adj.Kurmanji): northern Kurd, speaker of Kurmanji, peasant
Kurmanji: dialect of Kurdish, spoken north of the Greater Zab River
māst: yoghurt
millet: a religious minority or ethnic group, the basis of an Ottoman system of administration
mir: ruler of an emirate, emir
misken: poor, subject. In parts of Kurdistan means the subject peasantry
nān (sāji): (griddle) bread
Naqshbandiya: A sufi order, widespread in Kurdistan

nayya: an Ottoman administrative unit
panir: cheese
Pasha: Turkish feudal title
peshmergah: literally 'one who precedes death', a Kurdish guerrilla
pir: an elder, a caste group, used as a title amongst Yezidis and Alevis
Qaderiya: A sufi order, widespread in Kurdistan
Qadi/qazi: judge
qawm: subdivision of a tribe, people with a shared identity, distant kin
qebile: a small tribe, subtribe
reyet: 'flock', the tax-paying subjects, originally non-Muslims, but later expanded to all those not members of the military class. In Kurdistan used to mean non-tribal subject peasants
sanjaq: administrative territorial unit in the Ottoman Empire
shahada: Muslim confession of faith
sheikh: In Kurdistan this is a saintly person, or leader of the sufi orders
Shi'ite: Muslims who follow the 'party' of Ali, that is who believe that Ali, the Prophet Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law should have succeeded the Prophet as the leader of the Muslims
shurba: soup, mixture
sipah: feudal military noble
Sorani: a dialect of Kurdish spoken south of the Greater Zab
sufi: mystic. In Kurdistan, usually of the *Naqshbandiya* order
Sunni: The majority of Muslims, who accepted Abu Bakr as the first Caliph
tarīqa: spiritual path, used also for the order, as well as its system
tekiyeh: in Kurdistan, the same as the first meaning of *khanāqā*
vālī: governor of a large province
vilayet: province (Ottoman Turkish)
Zaza/Zazaki: a group of Kurdish dialects, spoken around Dersim. Also known as Dimli
zōzan summer pasture
zumum: a measure of land

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Abbreviations

AA	Asian Affairs
AAAG	Annals of the Association of American Geographers
AAPSS	Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science
AE	American Ethnologist
AQ	Anthropology Quarterly
BJMES	British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
BSOS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies
GJ	Geographical Journal
GR	Geographical Review
IJMES	International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
JAIMES	Journal of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
JKS	Journal of Kurdish Studies
JRAI	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

JRGS	Journal of the Royal Geographical Society
MEJ	Middle East Journal
MER	Middle East Review
MES	Middle East Studies

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