Ethnic Groups
in the
Republic of Turkey

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ular "rēyḥ" or "pīr." Proscriptions prevent any close contact with Muslims or their prayers. Deviants are ultimately threatened with anathema.

Descent is claimed from Adam alone, giving the Yezidi a position apart from the rest of mankind, held to be descended from Adam and Eve. Membership of the Yezidi is thus by birth alone, and they are bound not to mix with others. Loyalties are to family rather than tribe. Nevertheless there are clearly-defined patrilineal tribal descent groups. Thus in the Midyat region there are two major tribes, the Çelka and the Ḥalta. The Çelka "dîret" is subdivided into the Dašeka, Kelek, and Şemika; these smaller "dîret" are also divided into "qabîlet," the Dasaka forming the Rebeba, Buzeza and Binuka. The Ḥalta are the largest tribe in Turkey with their centre in Diyarbakir and Siirt provinces (and a branch in Kars?). The Viranşehir region is dominated by the Şerkiân and the Duna (information from the Yezidi Verein, 1985). Much of the persecution endured has been at the hands of Muslim Kurds, notably at Koyuncuk (Niniveh) in 1832; there is therefore little sense of common interest between them.

Polarisation from the orthodox also led to religious coercion by the Ottoman government, as recently as 1892 under Ömer Paşa, and the difficulty of obtaining recognition from Sunni officials still endangers the Yezidi's position despite constitutional guarantees. Continuing pressure has led them to claim recently that they represent an original, Zoroastrian, religion of the Kurds, apparently so as to effect a rapprochement with the latter.

Selected bibliography:
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- Guest, J.S. 1987 (study of survival)
- Josef, I. 1909 (holy books, Arabic texts)
- Joseph, I. 1919 (general)
- Hiscott, R. 1938 (general, mainly Iraq; maps)
- Menzel, T. 1934 EI 1 (general)
- Ritter, H. 1967 (Midyat village list)
- Schneidere, R. ed. 1984 (general, lists of villages)
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25. Zazas: Sunni

Designation:

Self-designation:
- a. Zaza  b. Dimili (not in Erzincan, Kiği, or Mutki areas).

Numbers:
- Census 1965: 150,644 declared persons speaking Zaza, total: ca. 140,000 of these in the Sunni areas.
- 112,701 persons speaking Zaza as second language.

International Relations 1977: 3 2,000,000 Zaza speakers total.
The general census count is certainly too low as excludes all but 7 (sic!) persons in Tunceli. Confusion arises in these and other lists from the inclusion of Zazas with Kurds in total figures.

Distribution:
- in two main groups and several smaller ones. The main Sunni groups are:
  1. In the mountains south of the Murad Suyu from Genç to Palu and Lice, and northwards to Bingöl, reaching apparently as far east as Solhan (K.E.E.N. some 345 villages).
  2. The semi-nomadic Dimili of the lower-lying areas, living in the hills between Karacadağı in Urfa and Derik in Mardin, apparently extending northward to Çunguy and Çermik in Diyarbakir (K.E.E.N. some 72 villages).
  In addition to these, there are some smaller groups in:
  3. Mutki (Bitlis), apparently extending to Baykun (Siirt) (K.E.E.N. 11 villages).
  5. Pütürge (Malatya).
  6. Hnos (Erzurum).

* See survey 1.
7. The Census 1965 lists 992 persons speaking Zaza in Kars, but these do not appear in the K.E.E.N. They are known locally as Zaza Turkmen, and are said to live in Selim and Ardashan.

8. A further group of 16 villages is reported in Niğde, Aksaray.

Language:

various dialects of Zaza (Zaza, Zaza or Dimli), an Iranian language, related to Gorani, but already distinguished from the Kurdish language by O. Mann in 1909. See Mackenzie in this volume. Zaza and Kurdish are not mutually comprehensible.

Religion:

Sunni Muslim: Shafii.

Group identity:

effectively by language, though, as emically seen, by religion which, like that of the Kurds, is generally differentiated from the Hanafi mezheb of the Turkish Sunni majority as the Shafi mezheb, and seen in sharp opposition to Kurdish or Zaza Alevilik (23, 26). It is noteworthy that the Zaza are not usually distinct in religion from the Kurds in the same region; Varko seems to be an exception. The language is sufficiently different from Kurdish to prevent effective communication between the two groups, except among well educated people, in spite of this, many Zazas now regard themselves as Kurds (see above, 22, 23), and have long done so. Tribal organisation is still recognised, and lists are given by Dersimi (1952: 57) for Kiği which apparently extend to many of the Zazas in Bingöl, though no details are given for the more southerly Zaza. Of those listed (Porikan, Maskan, Maksudan, Lertigan, Kureysan, Bana, Ýoruk, Çekan, Çarekan, Gutan) however, some (the Maskan, Kureysan, Bana, and Carekan) are known to be Alevi. Ethnically some confusion has arisen from, on the other hand, efforts by Kurdish nationalists to swell their numbers by claiming the Zaza as their own, and on the other, semi-official propaganda which treats the Zazas and the Kurds as part of the same "problem" (Baytoci 1984a and b; Gülensoy 1983 and 1984b). The Sunni Zazas have in the past felt themselves sufficiently distinct from the Alevi Zazas to attack the latter at the behest of the government following the rising in eastern Dersim in 1916; this is characteristic of the complete lack of solidarity between them. Sunni Kurds are aware of a set of cultural and even physical traits which set Sunni Zaza apart from themselves, though not so far as the Alevis. For their Kurdishness, see Mackenzie and van Brunswijk in this volume.

Bibliography

Dersimi, M. N. 1952 (Tunceli and surroundings, distribution)
Mann, O. 1932 (language, map, designation, areas)
Sengen, N. 1950 (general, all groups)

26. Zazas: Alevi

Designation:

Alevi Zazas, Zaza Alevis; Ger. Alewitsche Zazas; Tkr. Alevi Zaza(lar); Ali-ilahi.

Self-designation:


Numbers:

Census 1965 150,644 declared persons speaking Zaza:

- total of Alevi and Shafi (see 25 above).
- ca. 2,506 of these registered in known Alevi areas.

This figure is certainly too low as it excludes all the Alevi Zaza in Tunceli (Dersim) but for 7 persons; the rest have apparently been classed as Kurds.

K.E.E.N. 1965 619 villages total, Alevi and Shafi Zaza. 160 of these villages in known Alevi areas, but no figures are available for Erzincan, Sivas, or Malatya.

147 villages in Tunceli registered as Zaza, and 214 as Kurdish, with little overlap, out of a total 414, i.e. 35.5% Zaza. The total population of Tunceli in 1965 was 154,175, thus the number of Zaza-speakers should then be 55,000 in Tunceli, all Alevi.

K.E.E.N. 1964 confirms 373 villages Alevi, 1 Shafi, and 58 Hanefi in total of 414. Some of these Alevi are Kurds (see above, 22).

Distribution:

in two main groups and three extensions:

1. In Tunceli in the sub-provinces of Hozat (35 villages), Nazmiye (13 villages), Ovacik (53 villages), and Pülümür (46 villages), giving a total of 147 villages out of 200 in these sub-provinces (73.5%). The region extends from the Munzur Dağları in the north to the Murad Suyu in

4 See Survey 1.
the south (K.E.E.N.; Svangén 1950: 411). Some migrate to yaylas in summer.

2. Along the right bank of the Euphrates (Fırat) from the Bingöl Dağları to the Malatya plain.

3. An extension of this group includes the Zaza element among the Koçgiri (Koçkiri) tribes in Sivas, in the sub-provinces of Zara, İmranlı, Kangal and Divriği (districts of Bulucan, Beypınar, Kavak, İmranlı Merkez and Karacaoren). This comprises the Çerekhan and Giniyan tribes (Dersim 1952: 61–3; Svangén 1950: 411).

4. A further extension into Erzincan and further east into Erzurum includes the Kureş tribe in the northeast of Erzincan Merkez sub-province (Merkez and Tanyeri districts), and Çayırık sub-province (Merkez and Başköy districts) (Dersim 1952: 67–8).

5. A group in Diyärbakir, Hani sub-province (K.E.E.N.).

Language:

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

Religion:


Group identity:

through a combination of language, the endogamy inherent in Alevilik, and the closed, esoteric nature of the cult itself. Tribal divisions were still apparent in the 1970s (cf. Dersim 1952: 43–69; Öztürk 1972: 43ff., esp. 46), cash evoking strong loyalties both to the group and its leader. Tribal land is owned to a large extent by hereditary chiefs (reis) who may control many villages. A further loyalty is traditionally due to cult leaders at three levels, pir, mürted, and rehber (dede, baba) who formerly visited the towns and villages in a prescribed circuit, and at regular intervals, to direct worship and in return receive donations in cash and kind as an established right, though no more than the expression of respect and spiritual dependence among their followers. The religious authority of the dede is formalised through genealogies derived from the Prophet’s family (Ehl-i Reyn), through one of the twelve imams. The tribes are consequently divided into those (seyid) associated with these genealogies, and those who are not accepting an inferior standing. As with the Alevi Kurds, reference to descent from the Prophet’s family has fulfilled the need for a common tribal ancestor. The bond between the two levels of tribes is dependent upon the iktar benn, the Alevi confirmation of faith, which is binding for life. Within the seyid tribes are specific families whose long cultural standing enables them to provide most of the dedes for both groups. Dedes remain responsible for any part of their tribal following which changes location. Group unity is reinforced by the freely-entered bond of misahiilik between individuals.

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

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

Bibliography:

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Svangén, 1950 (general all groups)

See Bumke in this volume.

27. Ossetes

Designation:

Ossetes, Ossetians; Ger. Ossen, Osseten; Tk. Osetin, Asetin, Kushatlar.

Self-designation:

Iron (s.), Irattî (pl.), Ir (collective); also Digr, Digrun/Digran, Yegos (collective); and Tuallag, Tuallagöl (pl.).