

THE ALEVIS IN TURKEY

The emergence of a secular
Islamic tradition

David Shankland

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The Alevis, a heterodox Islamic group in modern Turkey, have no church, no established doctrine and no shared liturgy. Instead, their religion has developed in rural Anatolia through hereditary holy figures who transmitted esoteric religious thought through music, poetry and collective rituals.

Using ethnographic material gained over a period of five years residence in Turkey, David Shankland shows how social change in the rural, hierarchical, rather closed Alevi communities is leading to the emergence of a unique secularist Islamic tradition. By including much contrasting information about the way the Alevi communities differ from the Sunni, their orthodox counterparts, this work is able to offer original insights into the wider processes of social change that are transforming Turkish society as a whole.

David Shankland is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Bristol, and formerly Assistant and Acting Director of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. For many years a specialist on Turkey, he is the author of numerous academic articles, the popular booklet *Simple Etiquette in Turkey* and the monograph *Islam and Society in Turkey*.

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS:
PETER SHANKLAND MBE, 1901–1995
AND
MARION SHANKLAND, 1925–1997

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FOREWORD

As this work is concerned greatly with the difference between two Islamic groups, a preliminary description of their respective religious practices is offered below.

Most of the Sunni population regard themselves as believing Muslims: the men pray in a mosque and affirm the importance of the five conditions of Islam: *İslam'ın beş şartı* (believe in the one God; pray five times a day; give alms; keep the fast in the month of *Ramazan*; make the pilgrimage to Mecca), though not all practise them assiduously. Pious men may say that the *Kuran* encapsulates all the knowledge in the world and all the books that have ever been or shall be written. Such men tend to dislike music or dance, regarding it as sinful. Some men, perhaps half a dozen in most villages (though on occasion a village may have none or substantially more) are members of an Islamic brotherhood, *tarikât*, often the *Süleymançıs*. These men regard the *tarikât* as a complement to orthodox Islam, a way of better understanding and implementing the revealed, infallible word of the *Kuran* and the immutable work of the Prophet *Muhammed*, and not as an alternative path to truth. Other currents of Islamic thought include the modernist movement represented by the *Nurcus*, or the *Fethullacıs*, and also the political Islam.

Alevi religious doctrines are often based on those of the *Bektaşî tarikât* and are very strongly influenced by a text known as the *Buyruk*, which they attribute to *İmam Cafer*. According to both *Bektaşî* doctrines and the *Buyruk*, the first and necessary step towards personal development is mastering orthodox practice, which they know as *Şeriat*. In practice, however, most Alevi do not hold the *Kuran* to be literally true, and they go only very occasionally to mosques. The great majority of Alevi do not regard praying by genuflecting, going to Mecca, fasting in *Ramazan*, or paying alms to be a requirement for religious fulfilment. Instead, they favour the contemplation of a mystical, or esoteric version of faith, which they know as *Tarikât*, and trace its source to secrets that have been revealed by God to Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law. While the Alevi practice of religion in the sub-province has gone through many reformulations and changes in the past decades, it is currently influenced by a growing populist movement in Turkey as a whole which is likely to result in a codification, albeit one sometimes contested, of their hitherto largely oral tradition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the years that this research has been in progress, I have become indebted to a great many people. Most of my initial village work among the Alevi took place between 1988 and 1990. I thank the villagers for the warmth of their welcome, and would like to take this opportunity to apologise for my intrusion into their lives. The major part of the fieldwork was financed by an Anglo-French Scholarship awarded by the Economic and Social Research Council, to whom I am very grateful. Later research trips or support have been sponsored by the William Wyse Fund of Trinity College, the Royal Anthropological Institute, and the Pantyfedwen Fund of the University of Wales Lampeter, to whom I must also offer my thanks.

While in Turkey, the Anthropology Department at Hacettepe University welcomed me warmly, and gave me much sound and useful advice. I later became a lecturer at the Middle East Technical University, and would like to thank the Education Faculty staff and students, who have provided me with some of my happiest memories of being in Ankara at that time. The French part of the award was ably supervised by Altan Gökalp, who generously shared the results of his work with me.

My second long period of residence in Turkey was between 1992 and 1995, as the Assistant, then the Acting Director of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. This most fruitful period was smoothed by the splendid management of Gülgün Kazan, and the rest of the institute's staff. I would like once more to place on record my debt to their wonderful efficiency. My third research period has developed from 1995 onwards, where I have researched most summers at the excavations of Çatalhöyük, in Konya. These trips have been supplemented by a year's research leave funded by the Economic and Social Research Council between 2000–2001.

These three long periods of research mean that I write now with, if still an imperfect acquaintance, at least fourteen years' knowledge of one village community and its surroundings, as well as a wider experience of researching in different parts of Turkey. I do not feel that this is sufficient, but there comes a time in all research when results, even if provisional, may be offered, and I feel that this point has now come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Indebted to so many, it is perhaps invidious to name individuals. However, I would like to thank Aaron Cass, who while we were still undergraduates together, suggested absolutely correctly that Turkey would be a fruitful and creative field in which to research. The many exigencies of my early fieldwork were nobly borne by my parents, Peter and Marion Shankland, to whose memory this work is dedicated. I would also like to acknowledge in particular the assistance and advice of Peter Avery, David Barchard, Ildiko Beller-Hann, Atilla Çetin, Hüseyin Çetin, Nuri Çetin, Patricia Crone, Clement Dodd, Ayşegül Dorken, Ernest Gellner, William Hale, Chris Hann, Alan Macfarlane, Andrew Mango, Neal Robinson, Nükhet Sirman, Paul Stirling, Lale Yalçın and her delightful parents, Aydın and Nilüfer, and Ahmet Edip Uysal. It is a sad reflection on the mutability of our kind that no less than six of these mentioned individuals should already have passed away.

Over the years, so far a number of papers and one introductory work *Islam and Society in Turkey* (Shankland 1999a) have appeared. This volume is written to complement that introductory volume, and consists of a detailed justification of some of the claims made there, notably those with regard to the Alevi movement. While I have attempted to keep any repetition to a minimum, occasionally an ethnographic quotation is drawn from that earlier effort. Part of the argument in Chapter 5 was put forward in a paper presented at a conference at the College de France in November 2001, the proceedings of which are to be published. Chapter 8 expands an argument on Gellner's significance that was first put forward in my 'Integrating the rural: Gellner and the study of Anatolia', *Middle Eastern Studies* (1999b), vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 132–149. Earlier summary versions of my overall argument may be found in 'Social change and culture: responses to modernisation in an Alevi village in Anatolia', in Hann (1994) *When History Accelerates*, pp. 238–254, and also 'Diverse paths of change: Alevi and Sunni in rural Turkey', in Stirling (1993), *Culture and Economy*, pp. 46–64.

Finally, I should acknowledge that the way I treat the ethnography has been influenced in particular not just by the work of Gellner (1981), but also by Stirling's work over many years in Sunni Turkish villages (e.g. 1964, 1993), and Sirman's unpublished PhD thesis (1988) and her articles (e.g. 1990a) on the relationship between villager and state. I am equally indebted for the generosity with which these researchers gave their time in discussion, though I remain, of course, responsible for any assertions made.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

Turkish is written in the Latin alphabet, with a few special characters:

- c is pronounced like ‘j’ in jam
- ç is pronounced like ‘ch’ in chip
- ı is pronounced like ‘i’ in Cyril
- ğ is not pronounced, it lengthens the preceding syllable
- j is pronounced like ‘g’ in gendarme
- ş is pronounced like ‘sh’ in ship
- ü is pronounced like ‘u’ in the French *rue*
- ö is pronounced like ‘eu’ in the French *veut*

Throughout, all Turkish words in italics (e.g. *Bektaşî*) are spelt according to Turkish usage, but all those in plain text (e.g. Bektashi) are written as would be normal in English. English plurals added to Turkish nouns are not italicised.

Throughout the text, ‘*Şeriat*’ and ‘*Tarikat*’ are used to signify the particular Alevi interpretation of these terms, while ‘*şeriat*’ and ‘*tarikāt*’ are used to indicate ‘Islamic law’ and ‘brotherhood’ in general.

A list of Turkish political parties and their acronyms is provided in the glossary in Appendix 1. In order to avoid confusion, throughout the text I have used only those abbreviations derived from the Turkish, so that, for example, the Republican People’s Party, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, always appears as *CHP*.

INTRODUCTION

In this book, I discuss a heterodox Islamic group in Turkey known as the Alevi, and address the way that their community has become secular, albeit within a very wide range of personal belief. It would be disingenuous to claim that such a study can be made without controversy. Even leaving aside the question of individual faith, the possibility of clashes with the majority Sunni population, the relationship between religion and the state, the place of politics in religion, and the question of the respective numerical proportion of Alevi to Sunni are all topics where varied and forceful views have been brought to bear. These debates are likely to become even more heated in the future.

It might be useful, therefore, to note immediately that it is an unheralded success of the Republic that for much of its seventy-five years' existence systemic conflict between the Sunnis and the Alevi has been avoided. There has, of course, been other social unrest, such as the tragic situation in eastern Anatolia and the civil violence that led to the 1980 coup, conflict that has drawn in the Alevi communities and impacted upon them. Nevertheless, in marked contrast to the Ottoman Empire, for much of the history of modern Turkey, many of the Alevi (and particularly the Turkish Alevi) have felt able to identify strongly with its aims, and have prided themselves upon their loyalty.

In spite of this, the situation has been, and remains, potentially difficult. There has been sporadic violence. In brief but bloody riots at Çorum, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziosmanpaşa (a district of outlying Istanbul), and at Sivas, Alevi have been killed. These riots appear to have been at least partially religiously motivated, exacerbated by a frequently held idea among Sunni activists that *Alevilik* ('Aleviness') is not rightfully a form of Islam at all. The Alevi, on the other hand, frequently point to substantial changes in the relationship between religion and state that have occurred since the Republic's inception. They claim, for example, that whereas they have supported secularism wholeheartedly, the state has become far more active in supporting religion, and in particular a Sunni form of Islam, than was envisaged by the Republic's founders. This means that many Alevi fear that the state may once more become an instrument of prejudice, just as it was in Ottoman times. They claim, further, that

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explicit recognition of their distinct religious tradition is the only way to avoid marginalisation within modern Turkish society.

At the time of writing, in 2002, the situation is calm, but becoming extremely uneasy. The rapid economic changes that have been part of the Republic's history have been accompanied also by great social upheaval. While the signs of modernisation are evident throughout the country, many Alevis feel that they have not been equal beneficiaries in the transition from a predominantly rural to an urban society. The reasons for this are indisputably complex and not easy to elucidate with any precision. Nevertheless, if a growing number of Alevis feel that they are both excluded from their rightful place in the Republic on religious grounds, and that they are increasingly poorly off from the material point of view, the situation may deteriorate. What has been until now a substantial success may become an increasingly polarised source of conflict, one that the recent economic crises can only exacerbate.

The present study

My ethnographic research in Turkey on this topic began back in 1988, when I began to look for a suitable area in which to conduct a village study. The rail network is not extensive, so I travelled by coach, and followed the existing road network. Services usually begin at sub-province or province towns and run to large towns: in this manner, I journeyed from Ankara to the Black Sea, along the coast to Trabzon, across the Pontus mountains and returned towards Ankara across the northern part of central Anatolia.

When the coach stopped at a sub-province town which looked quiet I alighted and put up in a small hotel. I was still new to the country, so over the coming days I worked at learning Turkish and at the same time arranged to visit nearby villages. I was interested in music so, at the first village I visited, I asked about celebrations and how they were conducted. The man I spoke with replied that, though they liked music at festivals, no one in the village played. Another added that when they needed musicians they hired them from a village 'on the other side of the hill'. So I went to that village. The head man brought coffee, and explained that there were musicians, but that, along with the village youths, they had all gone to Istanbul for a wedding. Back in the town, I made conversation with people as best as I was able. During the next weeks, I learnt that the people in the sub-province were all Muslim but split into two sects: Alevi and Sunni. Further, that no Sunni village had musicians. The Alevis, on the other hand, specialised in music. Thus, in my first days in the sub-province I had first visited a Sunni village, and they had sent me to an Alevi village to meet musicians.

After a delay, I found a house to rent in one of the Alevi villages. I learnt that they are different in many respects from the Sunni villages, not just in their taste for making music. In the Sunni villages, all male believers are declared equal to each other, but in the Alevi, men are divided between those descended

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from a holy lineage and those who are not. There is a mosque in the Alevi village, but usually the Alevi worship in their homes, in collective ceremonies at which both men and women are present, led by these holy men, whom they refer to as *dedes*, literally ‘grandfathers’. The *dedes* are not just holy leaders, they also have the right to mediate in quarrels. The Sunnis have no such mechanism to solve disputes.

I could have written extensively about this ethnographic material alone. There are, even today, still very few accurate descriptions of Alevi village life based on concentrated ethnographic research. There is no doubt, then, of the use of such a study, nor indeed of the lacuna in our knowledge. Even if my study remains partial (and all ethnographic study sadly must remain partial), there could be no doubt of its potential as an illustrative example.¹

In spite of this encouraging beginning, I very soon became dogged by various difficulties. The Alevi villagers were reluctant to talk about their religion. This was partly because there was a proscription against disclosing their lives to outsiders, but also it seemed that there were other difficulties as well, a level of uncertainty or unease at the possibility of theological debate that was quite different among the Sunni community. Indeed, on each occasion that I went to the town at the centre of the sub-province, or to a Sunni village, I was struck by the self-confident belief of many men. While the Alevi had to be coaxed, teased and persuaded to talk about almost any aspect of their lives, but especially religion, many Sunnis would talk for hours about the tiniest detail of Sunni Islam, and would frequently try to convert me. This forced me to ask myself, what is it about these people’s lives which leads to such opposing directions of belief? Why should one group be strong in religious conviction and anxious to expand their body of believers, while the other is introverted and, seemingly at least, uncertain?

The position was made more interesting by the similarities between the two sides. In the sub-province, the Alevi are in the minority, but the villages of both sides consist of farmers tilling land owned by themselves, and there is no discernible difference in their traditional economies. People of both sides are ardently proud of being part of the Republic. Both wish ardently to modernise, *modernleşme*, and develop, *gelişme*, and were profoundly influenced by the economic and social transition that this implies. Both appeared to migrate from the sub-province in large numbers; in almost every village they claimed that a substantial number of households have gone, in some as many as a third or a half. Nevertheless, the Alevi claimed that their villages suffered more in population loss than the Sunni. I myself had the impression that some Sunni villages were becoming flourishing small towns, though others were depleted.

Taking these factors into account, I decided that, as well as attempting to present a body of ethnographic information, I would also try to suggest a more general pattern that would allow me to present this material within the wider, changing context of Turkish society. This general conclusion, albeit one that needs an enormous amount of clarification and expansion, may be summed up

as follows: *both the Sunni and the Alevi villagers want to modernise but the traditional social organisation and religion of a Sunni village are sufficiently adaptable to survive as they do so, whereas the Alevi villages experience substantially greater conflict and difficulty.*

Illustration and relevance

Any characterisation of social change such as this inevitably remains inadequate. My years of ethnographic work have only made me realise how very difficult it is to make any decent summary at all of a person's way of life, let alone one in another culture, with all its attendant possibilities of misinterpretation, superficial knowledge and an inadequately appreciated historical context. It is worth repeating this: I claim no infallibility, and no certainty that I have the correct answers. Nevertheless, equally, the fourteen years that have gone by since my first trip to the field in Turkey have enabled me to become fairly confident that this characterisation is not entirely mistaken, however baldly, badly or awkwardly put, and that, if valid, it may indicate an aspect of social change of fundamental importance to our understanding of modern Turkish society.

To give an illustration: it remains a seemingly unavoidable facet of development that, to take their place in the modern world, a people, or community, must become an integral part of a nation–state. The relationship varies tremendously across the world but is reciprocal: to rule successfully, a state wishes to keep order, to obtain people's loyalty and educate them so that they may take their place in the nation. People themselves gradually obtain an increasing part of their identity from their place as citizens, and transfer, or affirm, their allegiance to the nation, from which in turn they expect material and moral support. Thus there is a patrimonial relation between state and citizen; the state educates, guides, rules, enriches and protects in return for fidelity; most people are members of only one nation, and that nation has first claim on their loyalties.²

In Turkey, this aspect of modernity is particularly clear. There is an understood and acknowledged divide between being a citizen (*vatandaş*) and the state (*devlet*). This distinction is at once hierarchical, in that the *vatandaş* is supposed to respect the state official *memur*, and their functions, but at the same time it is explicitly reciprocal. Once a person has accepted the state, they feel that they have the right to become extremely demanding in terms of the services that they may expect in return for that loyalty, whether practical or ideological. They may, for example, demand religious services, road investment, school teachers, health facilities in a local context, look for moral decisiveness, such as action over prostitution,³ or international intervention to protect Islamic or Turkish communities abroad. If a response is forthcoming, then broadly, at least a group may feel satisfied: if not, then (as when many felt that the state was slow to react to the earthquake disaster in the west of Turkey in 1999), public response may be demonstrative, vocal and sharp.

In this book, I argue that this vibrant, continuing, even intensifying relationship between citizen and state is compatible with traditional Sunni village–state relations and that the traditional social order within the Sunni villages is compatible with their being absorbed gradually into the national, dominant, centralised administrative system, a system that they in turn have been able to influence very substantially. This compatibility contributes towards a Sunni rural village potentially being able to expand from a rural community into a flourishing urban settlement. In contrast to this, I suggest that the Alevi cannot integrate into the modern Turkish state without conflict between this integration and belief in their myths, rituals and ideals because, taken literally, these undermine the legitimacy of the central government. Their mechanisms of social control must change far more radically than those of the Sunni villages because the right to solve disputes becomes transferred from indigenous mediators, the *dedes*, whose position is supported by the traditional myths, to figures whose authority is sanctioned by central government. Further, the Alevi settlements are much smaller than the Sunni; a number of them together are declared a village by the state, causing conflicts of loyalty, ownership and identity within their communities as they reformulate into one larger state-sanctioned unit. All this contributes towards the difficulties that the Alevi have experienced in developing their villages into urban settlements.

It is important that I make it quite clear that I am comparing the *traditional* Alevi way of life with the *traditional* Sunni way of life, and claiming that the Alevi must change more than the Sunni in order to become part of the Turkish nation. Otherwise, it might be said that the Alevi are more ‘modern’ than the Sunnis precisely because many claim that they find it easier than the Sunnis to accept the founding tenets of the Republic.⁴ Indeed, Alevi may refer to themselves as ‘modern people’, *biz modern insanız*, where what they intend by ‘modern’ is that they have embraced Atatürk’s secular, Western cultural orientation. However, this is similar to what I am arguing from another point of view. I assert that, as the Alevi take their place in the nation, they turn from their traditional religious setting, with its insistence on literal belief in the myths which justify its existence, to accepting the secular tenets of the Republican state. This necessitates a fundamental change in cosmology.⁵ The Sunnis, on the other hand, often maintain their existing belief system within the framework of a nation–state that they have been able to reform, in part at least, in their own image,⁶ and the world-view of those who have done so undergoes less radical a change than that of the Alevi.⁷

Ways of thought

Underlying my explanation is an assumption that different types of traditional social organisation and ways of thinking are compatible with the modern world to varying degrees and react to it in different ways. It is not, of course, original to make this a basic assumption of a sociological enquiry. Within the social

sciences, Max Weber himself made the difference in worldly success between the Catholic and the Protestant world-view central to his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. This tradition has continued within anthropology, wherein seminal figures such as Bateson were interested in ways that social organisations might be compared (e.g. *Naven* 1936). Much later, in *Mind and Nature* (Bateson 1981), he relates this to evolutionary theory as a whole, emphasising that the investigation of living phenomena (and evaluating their success or failure) are absolutely reliant upon comparing and establishing the differences between relevant groups.

How was I to differentiate between the Alevi and the Sunni in my analysis from a causal point of view? Any difference I found between the two communities had to be one which was sufficiently important to bear the brunt of the very large theoretical weight I was placing on it. For example, men of both Alevi and Sunni villages grow moustaches, but Alevi men trim their moustaches in a way quite distinct from the Sunnis. The Sunni men cut a slight nick so that the centre of the upper lip is exposed. The Alevi, on the other hand, allow the moustache to grow. This is not a trivial difference (a man may in certain circumstances be anxious to conceal his background but his moustache gives him away), but it is not important enough to be used as an explanation of the diverse way the Alevi and the Sunni are changing. Equally, that the Alevi are a minority (though of great, even growing importance and I return to consider this point again below), is not in itself enough to explain the different way that the two groups are changing, because we have to know something of the mechanisms within each group which are contributing to this change.

I finally decided that the fact that the two sides *order* themselves in the traditional setting in greatly different ways was a possible way to make sense of the ethnography. That order is of the greatest importance to human groups, and often difficult to achieve, is indisputable. This is true for Turkey as a whole, which has suffered three coups in the past forty years, and for the immediate setting of the villages, where quarrels and disputes have to be continually resolved. In addition, it appeared to me that to take order as the starting point for an investigation has the added advantage that the problem is very unlikely to be no more than the artefact of the investigator; that to investigate the problem of how order is achieved might be one way of protecting the results of the project against the possible charge of being no more than a reflection of the initial approach.

Social organisation in village Turkey

In the sub-province (as outlined briefly in Chapter 2) I found that both Alevi and Sunni villages consist of a number of households whose members till land which the household itself owns. Its residents usually consist of a nuclear or extended patrilineal, patrilocal family. The household head in both the Alevi and Sunni villages is usually the oldest fit male. He expects his wife, children

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and grandchildren to be subordinate to him. In many other ways, the two sects differ enormously. In the Sunni villages, there are no elaborate techniques for dispute settling. If a person is upset or angry with another, they may become *küs*, on not-speaking terms, with the other but they have no other redress (other than violent retribution) but to go to the state courts. In the Alevi villages, just as in the Sunni villages, people may become *küs* with one another, but, unlike the Sunni villages, the situation can be resolved by the intercession of holy men, *dedes*. Such a reconciliation may take place at any time that a *dede* is invited to intervene in a dispute. Also, reconciliation takes place before collective religious rituals. Indeed, according to the Alevi creed, it is forbidden to worship unless all in the room are at peace with one another.

At this point in my enquiry, this train of thought led me into an area which has become unfashionable. The importance which religion plays in the social order of the Alevi villages made me reconsider afresh the connection between what is sometimes known as 'structure' and 'culture', a frequent subject of discussion among the founding figures of modern social anthropology. The premise of their argument is that the ideology of a community is vital in ensuring the perpetuation of its social organisation. Simply put, that those on top of a hierarchy tend to profess, and even insist upon, a world-view that maintains that hierarchy.⁸ An obvious instance would be the way that a lineage who is in a privileged position may teach that they are particularly favoured by God to fulfil that role, or to take a contrasting example, the way that those who favoured apartheid would claim that holy writ ordains, even demands, their assuming a dominant position. This assumption of an intimate connection between ideology, power and status seemed to fit my ethnographic findings very well. Indeed, the more I studied the two groups, the more I was convinced that the key to any explanation of the way the groups are changing must take into account both their traditional ways of thinking and their social organisation, and then attempt to indicate the way these are affected by the ever-growing integration of the villagers into the state.

Ethnographically, with regard to the Sunni villages, the question is tackled in detail in Chapter 3 by describing the extent to which their communities are compatible with the growing, encroaching interaction between the state and the outside economic world. The overall model hinges around the following point: that both culture and the social order are inculcated by the authority to which a person or people have given their subservience. This might sound a little awkward, but it is already implicit within the original anthropological model, which assumes that those favoured by the social order teach (often successfully) their own validation. I emphasise also that there is an element of reciprocity: given that an authority is accepted, those who are subordinate attempt to manipulate those in authority to teach them in accordance with what they wish to learn. Thus, I suggest that, as villages gradually take their part in the nation-state as a whole, given a Sunni man is able to retain his belief, he insists on the state teaching Islam because, having accepted the authority of the state,

he feels it should also teach the principal values by which he orientates his life. This explains, for example, the conditional loyalty that lies at the heart of the frequent expression, *dinsiz hükümet olmaz*, literally, ‘a government without religion is out of the question’.⁹

The Alevi villages

My approach to the Alevi villages revolves around the same main themes. I begin my discussion in Chapter 4 by showing that the Alevi villages are dispersed into small village quarters. Each has a separate agricultural cycle which does not fit easily into the overall, village status which a number of village quarters have been given together. This disjunction between the state-given categories of village life and the traditional ones is further accentuated by there being two distinct chains of authority. The village holy men, *dedes*, trace their allegiance through Saint *Hacı Bektaş* back to *İmam Cafer, Ali* and the Prophet Mohammed, while the position of the village head man, *muhtar*, is supported and legitimated by the state. In Susesi, the village in which I lived, the head man often came into conflict with the *dedes*.

Following this opening presentation, in Chapter 5, I explore the relation between order, social control and religion within the Alevi village in more detail. I discuss first the way *dedes* mediate in quarrels, and show that they are validated both by the overall Alevi cosmology and by myths which the *dedes* themselves teach. I then illustrate the way the Alevi creed takes one aspect of Islamic mysticism (*edep*, that it is the aim of the believer to reach the God that is within us all), and relates this explicitly to the social order: they say that God can only be reached if all are at peace within the community, that God is reached by doing another a kindness with no expectation of return, for then we enter into our hearts, the true Mecca, where God lies.¹⁰

In Chapter 6, I return to social change with a description of difficulties and the conflicts within the Alevi communities. First, I discuss the weakness of the *dedes* and the difficulties entailed in holding collective religious ceremonies as the community becomes increasingly disparate. I then describe a number of different positions that it appears possible for men to adopt as they react to the changing circumstances of their world. Some men find that *literal* belief in the Alevi religion becomes weakened. However, these people do not dismiss *Alevilik*, but rather treat it explicitly as a culture, *kültür*. Thus, the idea that it is good to behave well towards other members of the community does not disappear. Rather, it may find a new niche. It no longer becomes validated by its place within a religious system, but now, some Alevis say that it should be respected because it is appropriate behaviour in society (*toplum*). Thus, in a way reminiscent of Durkheim’s claims in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), initially the ideas governing conduct within the group are subsumed under religious justification, then, as they lose their sacred validation, they are approved directly as prescriptions governing social behaviour.

The situation is changing too quickly for any writer to make more than a tentative commentary. However, a growing Alevi ‘revival’, the first signs of which were becoming increasingly apparent in the field already in 1988, has contributed to making them far better known on the national and international scene. Partly through the organs of ‘civil society’, i.e. associations and trusts, partly through the expansion of new media, established positions are beginning to appear, with many groups calling for increased recognition from the state, and others against such a move. These issues are treated initially in Chapter 6, and then in more detail in Chapter 7. However, any tendency for groups to define themselves through religious or ethnic affiliation may become sensitive, nowhere more than in Turkey, and it can only be hoped that the early success of the Republican period in easing tension between the two groups may be replicated within the dictates of the more fluid contemporary world.

The last chapter is more comparative, and at the same time a little more theoretical. In it, I examine more explicitly the anthropology of Muslim societies through the work of Gellner. My reason for including this discussion here is that, while Gellner’s work has in part provided the inspiration of this research, his conclusions remain controversial, and in great part unaccepted. Here, I argue that, while of course scepticism is a welcome requisite of all academic work, Gellner’s depiction is valid for Turkey in important ways. If this is the case, there are far-reaching implications, not just for our understanding of social change within Turkey, but also for the body of theory that he supported. While this debate may be pursued subsequently in a further work, this last chapter is intended as a summary of this position.

Chapter 1 serves as a general summary of the argument by offering a synoptic position of Alevi and Sunni in the Republic. Politics not just in Turkey, but in Anatolia itself is so varied, so complex and is changing so rapidly that it hardly seems possible to link any micro-study such as I have done to wider societal changes with any degree of certainty. However, it seems equally faint-hearted not to make the attempt. Chapter 1 therefore contains a summary of the way it appears that the Alevis have emerged as a distinct group within the Republic, their dominant collective ideas, and their experiences as the nation continued to develop. Work on the Alevis is continuing, and it is perhaps possible that the coming decade may see a reliable comparative exploration of their pre-traditional organisation and their early integration into the Republic. This general presentation should therefore be treated as provisional, and I look forward to revising it in the light of the future information that may appear.

Specific assertions

Though interested in an overall model which could be claimed to have some adequate intellectual grounding, I have also been concerned to state my general impressions in such a way that they are sufficiently concrete for another researcher to go to Turkey and to explore whether these assertions are right or

wrong.¹¹ This is partly as insurance. Models are continually in need of refinement, alteration and tinkering to justify their existence but straightforward assertions are easier to debate and easier to refute.¹² I summarise here, therefore, the main assertions I would make in addition to the claims outlined above. For the sake of clarity, I indicate here also the extent to which I believe these claims are valid with regard to Turkey as a whole.

1 Alevi and Sunni sedentary communities are radically different in the way that they order their social life in their traditional setting.

The Alevis hereditary holy men are empowered to solve disputes but, according to the dominant religious philosophy, women are equal to men. In the Sunni communities, however, no man is regarded by birth as being superior to any other (nor are there men empowered by birth to judge in disputes) and women are explicitly regarded as inferior to men within their religious cosmology. Ethnographically, this distinction appears to be most valid with regard to the settled communities of Anatolia. It may be partly true for those on the Black Sea coast, and for sedentary groups in the east. Among the tribal Kurdish population in the east, and certain small nomadic groups, the distinction may become more blurred.

It is worth clarifying that I certainly do not wish to imply that all Alevi communities are the same. There are enormous distinctions between different regions, different groups, and even between smaller communities (such as a lineage or village quarter) within a larger group. Equally, I am happy to accept that this level of diversity means that a sense of a common Alevi identity must not be taken for granted, but may have gone through a process of perhaps even deliberate social engineering. However, I do believe that they hold certain underlying organisational principles in common, not found in the Sunni communities, that have a profound influence on the way that they develop and change.

2 Traditional Sunni settlements are larger than traditional Alevi settlements, which tend to be dispersed in small village quarters that together make up a village.

There is, as yet, no work on traditional settlement pattern distribution throughout Anatolia. For the moment, however, my strong impression is that this assertion holds good for central and western Anatolia. It is less likely to be true on the Black Sea coast, with its traditionally much more dispersed settlement pattern.¹³

3 As a proportion of their total respective rural populations, more Alevis than Sunnis are migrating to the large towns and cities.

Again, on the basis of my enquiries I believe that this is the case for Turkey as a whole, though the exceptional conditions in the east may render it not true for some areas. This assertion goes to the heart of the demographic pattern that I believe is emerging in contemporary Turkey, whereby the Alevis, rather than create their own urban spaces, tend to move to the large cities dominated by Sunnis, such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. This will take careful comparative research to establish conclusively: however, I believe that there are very few

Alevi villages which have expanded in their own right to become towns, and very few sub-province centres (other than Hacıbekaş town) where there are a majority of Alevis.

4 *The Alevis vote for the left wing of Turkish politics far more than they do for the right.*

The Alevis have been known throughout Republican history as voting for the secular left, and this is borne out in the sub-province where I worked. It is sometimes thought that this firm orientation will decline, particularly as the traditional ‘left’ and ‘right’ divisions in Turkish politics become less clear. However, I hold this generalisation to remain broadly true, and think that it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

5 *Many (not all) Sunni are able to retain literal belief in their religion and many (again, certainly not all) wish the state to support their interpretation of the faith. Alevi are, on balance, more inclined to religious scepticism.*

This statement needs a great deal of qualification, though I believe that it is broadly true throughout Turkey. Very briefly, while there is an immense range of beliefs, it appears that a majority of Sunni people retain a literal belief in the rules of orthodox religion: that is, they believe that they are the revealed commandments of God, and that they should be respected by all other aspects of social life. Debates within the Sunni faith are therefore likely to assume that faith is a ‘given’, and the ensuing debate surrounds the question of whether the state should be supportive of religion, and the extent to which science may be reconciled with religion’s tenets.

The Alevis, however, often appear to have developed a more sceptical attitude throughout the Republic. Today, while the situation is changing rapidly and there are a number of different strands, they are equally likely to view their religion quite explicitly as a ‘culture’ rather than as sacred commandments that have to be obeyed to ensure salvation. A description of this transition may be found in Chapters 6 and 7, and in Chapter 8 I look at the sociological aspects of this question more systematically.

6 *The Alevis are faring less well than the Sunni in the race to become affluent, that is, they are in danger of becoming an underclass.*

I believe that this is true of Turkey as a whole, and that it might be particularly true for the Alevi Kurds. Leaving aside any, perhaps rather worrying, practical implications of this development, it has a certain theoretical significance because it spans the transition from traditional Anatolian societies, where social organisation and relations with the state appear to be the most important indicator of subsequent change, to a more familiar modern setting where economic mobility becomes a potentially significant social denominator. Indeed, this is one of the most frequently debated topics by the Alevis themselves, and is touched upon throughout this work, most particularly in the final chapter.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I should perhaps affirm that in making these specific assertions concerning social change, I do not imply any assumption of

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absolute certainty. Indeed, quite the opposite, I am acutely aware that it is extremely difficult to be certain of anything at all. The reason that I express these ideas so firmly here is through a conviction that the only way that we can make progress is to phrase our questions in such a way that another researcher can take them up, confirm, revise or reject them.

1

ALEVI AND SUNNI IN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Turkey tends to be known in the West in rather specific ways: for its being formed out of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, its secularism, its readiness to become part of the European Union, and for its possessing seemingly intractable political problems such as the Cyprus question or a so-called ‘democratic deficit’. The economic and social developments that have changed the country over the past seventy-five years are rarely integrated with these dominant perceptions. Yet they are nowhere more relevant than when considering the evolving circumstances of the Alevis and their changing relations with the Sunni majority.

At the Republic’s outset, the Alevis were a predominantly rural community, inhabiting mainly, though by no means entirely, an area to the central east, and south-east part of the country. Today, after several decades of rapid migration, they are predominantly urban, occupying usually the outlying areas of large cities, such as Istanbul, Ankara or Izmir. Again, at the outset of the Republic, their communities were little known. The villagers themselves expressed a strong proscription against permitting outsiders to enter their ceremonies, and they actively avoided explaining their doctrines to others.¹ Today in Turkey, Alevi services are frequently held in public arenas and documented on television, their recorded music is sold in outlets almost everywhere, and their lives are described in a booming local publications industry, most (though not all) authored by the Alevis themselves.² While opinion is often diverse, there is a significant voice demanding that the state make explicit recognition of their culture, something that as yet has not formally taken place.³ There has even been a model text book designed to be appropriate for state religious education lessons written from the Alevi point of view, though it has not yet been adopted.⁴

Thus, any work that cares to treat the Alevis has to account for the way that a rural, remote, diverse, private, largely oral Islamic society has become urban, public, active, secular and, to a great extent, begun the express process of codification of its previously diverse largely unrecorded culture within the modern city setting.⁵ In order to begin this task, it is helpful to revisit, extremely briefly, certain relevant aspects of the Republic’s founding.

The population of modern Turkey

The population of the Republic of Turkey took its present form at the end of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of flight, exchange, catastrophe and war, the hitherto religiously mixed population became predominantly Islamic.⁶ In contrast, the ethnic composition of the country grew more varied. Already, in Anatolia the majority Turkish population, itself of diverse background, was offset by Kurds and other groups, such as the Laz of the Black Sea coast or Arabs in the south-east. As the Ottoman Empire contracted, they became leavened with Muslim immigrants from across the Balkans, the Caucasus, Crete and the Fertile Crescent, a policy of welcome that was continued by the Republicans. A huge variety of other groups, albeit in small absolute numbers, such as Gypsies, as well as the remnants of some very ancient groups such as the Yezidis, Nestorians or the Chaldaens, complement this picture.⁷

The new nation was founded upon the presumption that these differences were not important: that a person may be from Anatolia, Russia, the Balkans, the Middle East, or Arab, Caucasian, Turkish, and so on, and it would not make the slightest difference to the fact of their citizenship. However, it was (and is expected still today) that all will identify with the ‘Turkish’ character of the Republic. While persons may speak whatever language they will in private, they are expected to accept being educated in Turkish, and to accept that the foundations of national identity are posited upon its ‘Turkishness’, a programme that also included a sense of egalitarianism, becoming modern by embracing the West, emphasis on order, hard work, education, sport and culture.

Religion in Turkey

This attempt to create a uniform public national ethnic identity was paralleled in the field of religion. While the Republic became a secular nation–state, the state chose from the outset not to withdraw from the field of religion entirely. Instead, through the Republican People’s Party, who were in power until the elections in 1950, the nation’s leaders attempted to minimise its relevance to the new Republic, emphasising instead the scientific, rational organisation of society. Albeit perhaps reluctantly, faith was catered for through proclaiming a reformed Islam, one that would stress the importance of individual piety rather than atheism or unbelief. This Republican version of the faith stressed the appropriateness of moral behaviour (*ahlak*) in this world, and while it rejected *Şeriat*, Islamic Law, broadly accepted the legitimacy of the five pillars (acknowledge the one God; pray; perform the pilgrimage; pay alms; and keep the fast). This innovation was, in effect, a puritan secular version of faith, one that stressed the Koran and the need to rid the believer of intermediaries between the self and God. It is used sometimes still today as a justification for the ban on brotherhoods, the *tarikats*, with their insistence on hierarchy and separation.

This decision both to restrain and to permit religion had certain immediate consequences. In that the state had never declared itself against faith absolutely, it meant that it was able gradually to accommodate successive moves towards re-Islamification after the transition to democracy in 1950. This re-Islamification has continued until the present, albeit within a Turkey that is growing steadily more diverse as it modernises. Further, because it had also decided right from the outset that the basis of its reformed Islam was to be, broadly speaking, Sunni practice, it was able to take certain formal steps: grant permission to build mosques, print Korans, facilitate the pilgrimage to Mecca, which gradually resulted in, albeit within the secular nation-state, a huge increase in public orthodox activity. This has had the effect of persuading some, and displeasing others, particularly the Alevi community, but it has the advantage that, rather than direct confrontation, in many areas of society expanding religious practice has become based upon a series of negotiations centring upon a recognised and established body of doctrine sanctioned by the state through the aptly named Directorate of Religious Affairs.⁸

All this means that, while the Republic was founded upon the premise that 'Turkishness' would be a suitable and sufficient channel through which national identity may be formed, it has gradually permitted Islam to play a greater role in the public life of the country. Today, these sentiments together, and not just 'Turkishness' constitute an intertwined but dominant conception of what it means to be a citizen of the Republic. To an outsider, the way that this citizenship is inculcated may appear inflexible, with its fierce patriotism, iconography and regular public rituals, but it has ensured that Turkey has been, albeit with many civil upheavals and sometimes vociferous debate, a viable nation-state generated from a collapsed empire in an otherwise very unstable part of the world.

Identification and group organisation

This, however, leaves us with a question. What is the overlap between the plethora of Turkey's ethnic and religious groups and subscribing to these dominant twin perceptions of nationhood within the present-day Republic? Such a question is of fundamental importance to the history of the nation, yet extremely difficult to answer, not least because ethnic and cultural identities may evolve and change with such rapidity. Nevertheless, there does appear to exist a pattern, one that is most relevant to our study.

It is clear that the indigenous non-Islamic groups have found it increasingly awkward to combine long-lived membership of the Turkish state and also sustain their communities; that is, the remaining overall number of indigenous Greeks (*Rum*), Christians, Jews and Armenians has steadily declined, even though there have often been notably successful individuals in business, political or public life who may be drawn from these circles. This implies that the number of non-Muslims of Turkish nationality, already low, is becoming

steadily lower. Contrariwise, within the Islamic population, it appears that diverse groups of mixed ethnic backgrounds have easily been remarkably able to identify with the precepts of Turkish nationalism unless their sense of differences has been supported, indeed shaped, by their possessing a traditional social organisation that is founded in opposition to the central state.

For instance, though I am not aware of any scholarly study that specifically examines this question, my own experience suggests that the many and varied Balkan and Caucasian immigrant groups would seem to have become politically and culturally part of the Turkish Republic with very little friction, as is evidenced by a number of accounts produced by their members, tracing their history within the nation.⁹ That is not to say that all their communities have been successful: obviously some have found it easier to establish themselves than others. It is also a fact that, as in the case of the great wave of refugees that came from Bulgaria during the 1980s, sheer numbers have on occasion seemingly made rapid integration problematic. Nevertheless, it appears to have been possible for successive major groups of immigrants throughout the century, even if not obviously Turkish, to become *Türk* without drastic upheaval: somehow, they fit in.

Another example, even more striking, of the way that ethnic diversity may become successfully integrated is the Black Sea coast. This is an area that is at once both diverse and distinct, in which a proportion of the population is of a non-Turkish minority known as 'Laz'. As there exists also a Laz language, this population may be expected to sit uneasily with a centralised Turkish Republic. However, in a series of researches that have continued from the 1980s to the 1990s, Ildiko Beller-Hann and Chris Hann have illustrated the astonishingly successful, even enthusiastic way that they have become part of Republican society. Thus, a coast so infested by bandits that the British authorities were reduced during their brief occupation to reporting vainly the appalling state of civil disorder, is now among the safest and the most prosperous parts of the country. Of course, this may change: identities may be renegotiated, and I have no idea what the effect of new electronic media may be in encouraging or facilitating the future sense of ethnic identity. However, at present they appear to possess, or have developed no coherent ethnic 'Laz' identity that might force people to choose between being 'Laz' and being 'Turkish'.¹⁰

In contrast, we may take the Kurdish communities of eastern Anatolia. As in other groups, throughout Turkey's modern history, there have been Kurds who have achieved the most senior positions, but there has equally notoriously been periodic strife, terrorism and rebellion that have resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people. Unlike the Laz groups, whose ethnicity today appears to be expressed through a fairly mild regional sense of difference – an ethic of hard work, of piety, of being tough on women, of distinctive dances – the Kurdish movement has given rise to a full programme of alternative nationhood expressed politically both nationally and internationally to which some, though certainly not all, subscribe. Yet, unlike the Laz or the Balkan groups,

organisationally the Kurds are distinct: they possess a tradition of opposition to central government. This opposition is founded upon a tribal system that enables large groups to come together to form independent resistance to state authority. This, accompanied by a fierce cultural sense of independence and presumption of the legitimacy of armed resistance, appears to have encouraged a volatility that is markedly, even entirely absent on the contemporary Black Sea coast.

The Alevi

The Alevi illustrate this contention afresh, though in a different way, this time through a markedly distinct religious and personal ethic. Should a Kurd wish to become part of the wider nation, there is no reason why their ethnic origin should become clear at all to the outside world, and, but perhaps for the heightened tension during the very peak of the violence in the mid-1990s, it need be no impediment to their advancement. Being an Alevi, however, is another matter. Here, choice becomes markedly less straightforward. Even in times of comparative or sustained peace, the moral, philosophical and existential consequences of being part of the Alevi religious communities are so profound as to influence not just aspects of faith, but also the way one leads one's secular life as well.

A recent study by Michael Meeker illustrates neatly why this seemingly permanent sense of difference may become so significant. In a detailed historical analysis of Of, a town on the Black Sea coast, he suggests that maintaining a sense of the common everyday symbols, phrases and habits of orthodox religious life enabled an otherwise extremely diverse population both to interact freely among themselves and to create links easily far outside their immediate circle. This implies that a sense of being part of the Islamic community, even within a secular republic, enabled ethnic differences among orthodox believers to be overlooked or forgotten in all but the sharply distinct Kurdish tribal regions in eastern Anatolia, and provides a forceful argument as to how such diverse ethnic, linguistic and national groups could form modern Turkey so smoothly.¹¹

The Alevi, on the other hand, are far less comfortable using active participation within a supra-religious community as a means to establish wider social contact. Instead, they have preferred to stress citizenship within a secular nation. As this conception of national identity is only one strand of the dominant Turkish/Islamic perception of citizenship, it means that they only partially overlap with the majority view. That is, their not giving priority to fasting, to praying in the mosque, or to the everyday sayings and affirmations of belief, has meant that they are not automatically incorporated into one of the most important means by which diverse peoples have been socialised into a Turkish national community.

Just as in the Kurdish case, however, this sense of difference is buttressed by

the Alevis possessing a social organisation that is distinct, and in many ways predicated upon not being part of the central system of state control. While there are very great differences between regions, and between groups, Alevi society may be characterised, and contrasted with the Sunni way of life in certain marked ways, as insisting upon a sacred hierarchy in which some persons only are permitted to be religious leaders, upon esoteric ideals influenced by mystical interpretations of faith, and upon closed, collective ceremonies that include both men and women. As is later explained in more detail, this social structure permits the comparatively independent transmission and practice of a religious and cultural tradition that is not sanctioned by orthodoxy or indeed by the state. It is also used to regulate disputes and mediate in quarrels within the community, enabling its members to declare themselves independent of the central authorities.

Thus the distinct way that the Alevis have become increasingly prominent in the Republic may be related, just as in the case of the Kurds, to their possessing a society that is predicated upon resistance to central rule. Much of this study is devoted to arguing that it is this that has led to an alternative sense of citizenship, one that has fused with the early Republican vision to form a secular conception of self and state, and one far less dependent upon religion than the majority of the Sunni population.

Kurdish and Turkish Alevis

As in all models of society, there are complications. One of them is that 'Aleviness' crosses ethnic boundaries: that is, there are both Kurdish and Turkish Alevi groups, as well as smaller communities where ethnicity tends to merge with religious identity, such as the Abdals, or the Tahtacıs.¹² It is widely thought that the overall sense of an Alevi identity is very strong, so strong that it overcomes ethnic differences. This is certainly partially true: there are occasions when the Alevi Kurds have clearly not acted in concert with the Sunni Kurds against the state (for example, there are few Alevis in the PKK), and many publications by Alevis today (such as that by Şener quoted from below) simply assume that their comments are good for all Alevis, not just the Turkish or the Kurdish communities. It is also true that, in general, Alevi communities, of whatever background and however diverse, have embraced a secular conception of society and self as they move into the modern world.¹³

However, there are also differences that as yet have hardly begun to be studied systematically.¹⁴ In my experience, the Turkish Alevis are likely to be sedentary rather than tribal or transhumant, and to regard themselves as being affiliated with the Bektashis, who are known as a Turkish brotherhood. I have a sense that the Kurdish Alevis appear less likely to identify so strongly with Hacı Bektaş, whose tomb is situated towards the west of the country, and are more likely to be affiliated with local shrines or saints. Again, while many Turkish Alevi groups in Anatolia may have had a complex, even syncretic, relationship

with orthodox Islam, it appears that the Kurdish Alevi have been less ambiguous in their rejection of Sunni forms of worship, and resent more strongly suggestions that mosques might be built in their communities.

These differences in religious orientation in turn are partly reflected in the terminology that is used to label the communities. The settled, Turkish Alevi may sometimes refer to themselves as village Bektashis. Certainly this was one of the first self-descriptions that I heard during the beginning of my fieldwork in the 1980s, one that is also noted by Birge. However, the Kurdish Alevi are more likely to call themselves 'Kızılbaş', a term that refers historically to the Safavid tribes who fought against the Ottoman Porte, with whom the Alevi are presumed by many to have been allied. As 'Kızılbaş' has long been a term of abuse used by Sunnis to refer to Alevi in general, its occasional contemporary use as a willing self-label is both defiant and has connotations of rebelliousness against the Turkish state that are quite different from those of being a perhaps unorthodox but hardly dangerous 'Bektashi'.¹⁵

These remarks must remain tentative. My own fieldwork has been among the Turkish Alevi, and I regret deeply that I have not been able to work among the Kurdish Alevi. It is worth noting, however, that their recent history also appears to be in some respects noticeably divergent. While the Turkish Alevi can stress their Turkishness, and Kurdish Sunnis their religious bond with the contemporary Republic, neither route is available to the Kurdish Alevi in any straightforward way. This is not to say that many of their members are not happy within the Republic: many are, and I have met Alevi Kurds occupying the highest civil service positions. However, where a sense of exclusion has predominated, the result appears to have been markedly volatile, and often violent. Indeed, it appears that a high proportion of asylum seekers in Europe, and particularly in the United Kingdom, are Kurdish Alevi, and that some among them at least have found the political alternative of revolutionary atheist Marxism attractive, an ideology that does not sit easily with the established political positions of the majority of the Turkish population.

Clarification of terms

It is perhaps helpful to make an immediate clarification. It is important to stress that all ethnic terms may emerge, change and suddenly become significant when before they may not have been. Thus, though it is surprising that a term so widely used today should be so new, it is likely that the blanket term 'Alevi' to refer to the heterodox groups of Anatolia as a whole is fairly recent, perhaps no more than a century old.¹⁶ Indeed, not just 'Alevi' but even 'Kurd' and 'Turk' may be regarded as becoming common currency comparatively recently, or at the very least as having changed their meaning very substantially since the Republic was formed. However, this historical fluidity does not contradict the model that I should like to put forward. My suggestion is that the creation of larger groupings has in fact been encouraged by the very clarity in which people

may form links with the nation–state, that by stressing ‘Turkishness’, and later ‘Sunni Islam’ as the dominant national identifiers, groups, communities and villages throughout the land were led in turn to make a choice as to which community they were going to become a part of. This meant, for example, that groups who were unsure in their religious practice might choose to emphasise Sunnism, and Sunni villagers of a very diverse past choose to simplify and minimise that diversity of origins in favour of being simply Turkish.

However, members of two groups, the Alevis and the Kurds, have on occasion reacted systematically or unwillingly against this incorporation. In each case there is a growing, even burgeoning, literature that explores and simplifies their past so as to create a coherent sense of identity and separation wherein the one has reacted against the dominant Islamic ideals, the other, the Turkish. I argue that the development of these contrasting, distinct identities has been encouraged and sustained by their possessing social organisations that are founded in opposition to central rule. This gives them a tradition, and in many cases also a certain degree in reality, of independence from the state system that has helped to spark, and can fuse with their new ethnic or religious identity.

Numbers

It is with the above clarification and caution in mind, I offer extremely tentatively some sense of numbers. It also should also be stressed that, while censuses have been conducted in the Republic regularly every ten years, it has never been part of its programme to request information on a person’s religious affiliation (other than to ascertain whether they are Islamic, Christian or atheist, *dinsiz*), or to ascertain their ethnic background. For this reason, researchers have had long to rely on estimates which, not surprisingly, vary according to a person’s personal orientation. Some claim that the number of Alevis is as high as 30 per cent of Turkey’s population. Others state that there are as few as 10 per cent.

My own feeling, based admittedly on largely superficial knowledge of any but that actual area where I have researched, and offered purely tentatively, is that the proportion of Turkey’s population that today holds itself to be Alevis is unlikely to be over 20 per cent, and perhaps nearer to 15 per cent. This is partly based on the consideration that while there are very few areas which consist entirely, or almost entirely of Alevis, there are many large regions where they appear to be lacking in any but very small numbers, such as Konya. Even if this lower figure of 15 per cent is ultimately shown to be broadly accurate, this would still constitute a highly significant mass in that it implies, assuming that Turkey’s population is 65 million, there are about nine or ten million Alevis.

Again, while it is hardly possible to do more than estimate, it seems reasonable to suggest that 20 per cent of Alevis are Kurds. The proportion of Alevis among immigrants from the Balkans appears to be proportionately much higher, particularly those from Albania, where Bektashism has traditionally been very strong. There appear to be rather less Alevis among the Çerkez, and still

fewer among the Laz. I perhaps should repeat immediately that these figures are offered only as possible indications, and it is quite possible that a major survey in the future could cause them to be revised.

The Turkish Alevis

The Turkish Alevis, then, are not one, unified group, nor even a concrete historical entity. Nevertheless, at the point when my research began, in the 1980s, within their conception of *Alevilik*, ‘Aleviness’, were agreed collective components that assumed importance in part at least because of the way that they resonate with the founding principles of the Republic. Perhaps the most important of these is love of Atatürk. The loyalty that the Alevis feel towards Atatürk can hardly be exaggerated. They regard him as a number of things: the founder of the nation and a protector from religious persecution, the man who rescued them from foreign rule, who revealed scientific enlightenment and modernity to a sometimes reluctant population, and enabled Anatolian, Turkish civilisation to emerge once more after centuries of Arab and Koranic-dominated interpretations of history.

As the Alevis later became disillusioned with the re-Islamification introduced by the various political parties after 1950, Atatürk’s memory often becomes conflated with that first period of Republican People’s Party rule, and recalled with longing in poetry and song. To give an example, many Alevis have become school teachers, attracted by the Kemalist insistence that the enlightenment should be taught vigorously, taken to those who are too remote or too young to have yet heard it. As teachers, they also often also contribute to local or national publications. A folk poet named Mihneti, whose poem is quoted below, follows this tradition. In his piece, he calls for Atatürk, and in doing so mirrors mystical religious poetry’s traditional yearning after an unobtainable goal.

Atatürkü arıyorum	I am seeking Atatürk
Her zamandan çok muhtacım Atatürk’ü arıyorum, Ulusaldır benim acım, Atatürk’ü arıyorum.	I am in need more than ever, I am searching for Atatürk, My need is national, I am searching for Atatürk.
Birçok devlet kurumunda, Devrimlerin yorumunda, Uygulanma durumunda Atatürk’ü arıyorum.	In many departments of state, In the interpretation of the reforms, In their application, I am searching for Atatürk.
Demokratik aşamada, Sorumluluk taşımada,	In the level of democracy, In the assumption of responsibility,

Bağımsızca yaşamada, Atatürk'ü arıyorum.	In the freedom to live without restraint I am searching for Atatürk.
Moda olan türbanlarda, Spordeki şalvarlarda, Adı kalan bulvarlarda, Atatürk'ü arıyorum.	In the fashion for turbans, ¹⁷ In the <i>şalvar</i> worn in sports, In boulevards carrying just his name, I am searching for Atatürk.
Hiç dinmeyen acılarda, Sıkıbaşlı bacılarda, Bakan olan hacılarda, Atatürk'ü arıyorum.	In the pain that grows never less, In the sisters who cover their heads, In the ministers who go on the pilgrimage, ¹⁸ I am searching for Atatürk.
Uygarlaşma savaşında, Yoksulun yanbaşında, İşçi-memur maaşında, Atatürk'ü arıyorum.	In the fight to become civilised, At the side of those impoverished, In the wages of workers, of civil servants, I am searching for Atatürk.
Üretimde, tüketimde, Yönetimde, denetimde, Eğitimde, öğretimde, Atatürk'ü arıyorum.	In production, in consumption In administration, in management In education, in teaching I am searching for Atatürk.
Yapıtların nicesinde, Anlatımın tümcesinde, Arapça'nın Türkçe'sinde, Atatürk'ü arıyorum.	In all works, In all explanations, In Turkish that has become Arabic, I am searching for Atatürk.
MİHNETİ'yim düştüm yola Soruyorum sağa, sola, Ah, bir bulabilsem n'ola, Atatürkü'arıyorum.	I am MİHNETİ, I am on this road, I am asking, to the left and right, Ah, if I should find, what would be? I am searching for Atatürk.

Radical or 'left' sympathies

This loyalty for Atatürk and the Republic is expressed practically in a number of ways: in a willingness to be conscripted or to serve in battle, in respect for civil servants, in defending the country against criticism. However, the Alevis also feel a profound ambiguity towards central rule, feeling that it is powerful, has discriminated against them in Ottoman times, and is now doing so again. This feeling of dismay is one reason why they are commonly and correctly held to be

part of the Republican left wing, and an important part of their contemporary self-conception as being a deprived minority. It is a theme expressed in many of the dozens, even the hundreds, of books that are devoted to the Alevi cause. The illustrative quotation below is taken from one of the earliest of these, a work written by Cemal Şener that has gone through a number of editions.

Broadly, the book *Alevilik Olayı* ('The Alevi Phenomenon' (1982)) consists of an overall appreciation of the Alevis from their first separation from the mainstream of Islam until the Republican period. Many follow this model, and interperse their own distinct interpretation or commentary on Alevi affairs as they are doing so. Şener's work differs from the majority, however, in its careful prose style and his ability to express complex arguments in a clear way. The extract here comes from towards the end of the book, in which he sums up the place of the Alevis in the new Turkish Republic. It follows a section in which he has stressed the affinity that the Alevis felt towards Atatürk, and the corresponding warmth with which they were treated by the Republic during its early period. Nevertheless, problems remained.

The Republican period and Alevilik

In spite of the positive approach of the Republican administration, the Alevis were unable to avail themselves sufficiently of the opportunities now on offer. This was because until the Republic, the Alevi villagers were forced to live in the furthest, remote, poorest mountain villages and hamlets. They had very little contact with the outside world. They devoted themselves to the struggle for existence within closed economies. Among them, there were almost no tradesmen, almost none who knew how to read and write. As a result, in spite of the possibilities, they were unable to find a place in urban centres. They were unable to avail themselves of this great historical opportunity. In terms of centre-periphery relations, they remained on the periphery.

During the years that the Republic was being founded, the Alevi population consisted of perhaps 20–25 per cent of the total population. That is, the majority of the population was Sunni. Further, they [the Sunnis] lived in cities. The remains of the Ottoman administration infiltrated the [new] administration from every side. The Republicans needed time to organise their own personnel. The 'Single Party Period' [1926–1950] was devoted to this struggle.

Atatürk separated religion and state with his secularist reforms. Everybody's religious belief was free. But, in spite of this, the mosques were organising opposition to Republican rule. The Alevis attempted to make use of the situation to move into the centres. In part, they wanted to send their children to school and educate them. But the mosques and the remnants of the old regime were not prepared to cease their attacks.

The Alevis expected a great deal from Republican rule. But these expectations were not fulfilled. During the period of single party rule, the *jandarmas'* rifle butts were pointed mostly towards the villagers. The Alevis were, in essence, villagers. The Alevi-Kurd population in the east rose up against this cruelty. The Dersim Rebellion was the greatest and bloodiest of these uprisings.

The difficulties that the Alevis experienced under the Single Party Period explain why some of them supported the Democrat Party that came to rule with its crushing majority in 1950. Their support for the Democrat Party was but brief. The Alevis' adverse reaction was especially stimulated by the Democrats banning the Turkish call to prayer in the mosque and returning to Arabic, and by their racist, and other anti-democratic, chauvinistic activities . . .¹⁹

Alevis and orthodox religion

The two approaches that I have quoted above I believe are typical for much of the Alevi movement, and would be accepted by them. They are certainly so for the villages where I worked, and indeed both works were lent me by the villagers themselves. They provide goalposts, albeit simple ones, for the orientation of the Alevis towards the Republic: Turkish, secular, patriotic, but still a minority that has not acquired the equal status that it assumed or hoped would be possible.

However, one area that appears not so accurately recorded in the expanding literature, yet is crucial to the ethnographic record, is the complexity of the Alevis' practice of religion as I experienced it. At its core, it consists of a ritual or set of rituals known as the *cem*, which is presided over by holy men, often known as *dede*. It is part of the purpose of this ritual to pray to Ali, to recall the names of the first twelve *imams*, and to mourn the martyrdom of Hasan and Hüseyin. It is this inclination to Ali that sometimes leads outsiders to suspect them of Shi'ism, a charge that the Alevis with whom I lived always denied, linking Shi'ism with 'those fanatics from Iran'.

However, the *cem* is not the only ritual or religion in the community: there are naturally also prayers, funerals, marriages and blessings. These draw not just on the Turkish prayers of the *cem* but also the Koran, may involve a Sunni mosque *hoca* and borrow too from other religious traditions. This creates a syncretic tradition where both Alevi and Sunni practices may be respected within the village. Indeed, as only *dedes* may lead the *cem* ceremonies, a man who is not a *dede* but who is interested in religion may choose to pursue the more orthodox career of mosque and prayer. Some even attempt a career in the state's Directorate of Religious Affairs, though only a handful appear to have actually succeeded in doing so for any length of time.

Mehmet Hoca

The story of *Mehmet Hoca*, a man who is presently, in 2002, a school teacher in Istanbul offers an immediate illustration of this religious syncretism. He was born in 1945 in Susesi, the village where I lived. There, he went to the village primary school. His lineage enjoyed a certain respect. It was known as one of the first lineages to arrive, and had, in previous generations, often provided a *medrese* education for its members. Mehmet, however, had lost his father at a young age. In order to survive, his family had gradually sold off what fields they had, and were now completely impoverished. He found himself with no power to protect his mother and siblings against his father's brother's family, who were encroaching upon what little goods they had left.

Accordingly, he resolved to leave the village, and seek to better his, and their, fortunes. At the time that the account begins, in the mid-1950s, he had become a *hamal*, a poorly paid porter of goods, in the local provincial centre. There, he was offered a place in a special, religious school (*İmam-batip*) by an important man in the community. He was therefore eligible for a post in the civil service as a religious functionary, and he sought such a position on graduation. The secular basis of the Republic meant that officially speaking, his religious orientation was not relevant, though it soon became an obstacle imposed upon him by the local people where he was stationed because they expected their functionary to be Sunni. Rejected by his congregation for being an Alevi, he was forced to change profession, becoming a teacher. However, he still wishes to follow his orthodox religious convictions and does so, moving closer back to his natal village as exposure again threatens.

Account 1.1 Mehmet Hoca

Leaving the village, I went to the provincial centre. I found work there as a *hamal* [porter]. One day, a man for whom I had carried a load called me into his house before he had paid, and offered me a meal. The man had formerly been the town's mayor. While we were eating and talking, realising that I wanted to study, the man said, 'If I send you to school, will you go?' I agreed. The man took me to the town's *İmam-batip* lycée and there registered me as a pupil. There was a dormitory for the school's pupils, maintained by a *vakıf* [pious charity], and they gave me a bed there.

I told two of my friends at Susesi of this opportunity to go to school, and later they came to join me. However, conditions were hard. The material that the school provided was completely based on *Şeriat* [i.e. Sunni-inspired], they regarded *Alevilik* as a fifth, unacceptable *mezhep* [sect]. There was one teacher who provided some information on the Alevis, but none of the others had any idea. Finding this religious atmosphere too difficult, and not being

completely destitute, my two friends went back to the village. However, I had no choice, so I carried on with my studies.

Never having been outside my village for any length of time, I had not experienced such religious prejudice before. Still, I finished school, and applied for a post from the Directorate of Religious Affairs. They gave me a good position, as a *müftü* [religious official] in a sub-province in Batman [a province in the south-east]. There, the people working at a large petrol refinery began to enquire where their new *müftü* came from. When I arrived, I told them. It became clear that I was an Alevi.

At Batman, they are Shafi, which is a strict sect.²⁰ In spite of the fact that I had been officially appointed [by the state], the adverse reaction of the people prevented me from taking up my job. At the same time, I began to receive letters from my future wife in the village, who told me that her friends were worried about me spending my time washing corpses [before burial: one of the tasks of a mosque *imam*].

Given this difficult situation, I applied immediately to begin conversion teacher training in the Diyabakır college. I worked there for a year without pause, and then qualified as a teacher. On doing so, I resigned from the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and began working for the Ministry of Education as a teacher. I took up my first job therefore in 1963–64, in a Sunni village in my native province. After two years, I went to the army, where I completed military service as an ordinary soldier. Back in the same Sunni village again, I taught at the school, and because I was an *İmam-hatip* graduate, I used to go to the mosque and occasionally to offer a sermon. The people there liked me.

However, then one day, there came two beggars from a village near to my birthplace. They went around the village where I was working, begging, saying as they did so ‘You have a fine *hoca*, but did you know that he is a *Kızılbaş*?’ The villagers reacted very badly to this, saying, ‘The *hoca* is a pious man, how can he be a *Kızılbaş*?’ There was a village *ağa* [great man]. They told him what the beggars were saying. He ordered the beggars straight away to be brought to him, and, angry with them for insulting the village *hoca*, took from them the food that they had been given, and had them driven and beaten from the village.

That evening, the village watchman knocked at my door and we went together to the village *ağa*. He said, ‘I don’t want to repeat unfortunate things, but a good Muslim like yourself has been accused of being an Alevi. Still, we beat the accusers and drove them from the village.’ I was very upset. I replied, ‘They said many terrible things about our Prophet Mohammed, but none of them were true. I wish that you had not beaten the poor beggars.’

After that, I felt that I couldn’t stay in the village any longer. I

asked for a transfer, and arrived at a village still Sunni, but right next to our own. There, though I still went to the mosque and occasionally offered a sermon, it was not as dangerous as where I was before because they knew already that I was Alevi, and had let me go there on that basis.

In those days, during the month of Ramadan, the Directorate of Religious Affairs used to send official, roving preachers to give sermons. One such Friday, after school, I went to prayers at the mosque. The peripatetic preacher was offering a sermon. He said, ‘On *Kandil* [Holy] Nights,²¹ all things in nature may worship, including animals, even the stones on the mountain sides. There is one thing, however, that cannot. That is, the Alevis, who are quite incapable of doing so.’ I was in the congregation. All eyes were upon me. We went outside afterwards.

The village head came to my side. He said, ‘How did you like the sermon?’ I said, ‘I liked it a lot. The preacher spoke beautifully, but the foundations of the mosque have been shattered.’ I added that I would like to meet this roaming sermon-giver in order to show him a book, to talk to him. I was going to show him that it says in the Koran that all things may worship [that he was wrong to exclude the Alevis].

There is a saying even of Muhittin Arabi ‘*Putu tapan insanın ibadeti, putu değil, Allah’ın putu yansayan nurunadır*’, ‘An idolater’s worship is not [directed] to the idol, but to the light of God that is reflected through the idol’.²² I thought that this sort of sermon gives quite mistaken information to the community, and I believe one of the key sources in the division between Alevis and Sunnis.

In spite of the fact that I wanted very much to meet with this man, they wouldn’t let me, and he left the village without me speaking to him. My relations with the village nevertheless remained cordial. They came to my brother’s wedding [in Susesi]. We were so crowded that we had to call upon the resources of two *mahalles* [village quarters] to put up the visitors. The resulting arch of hands was fifty metres long. This was their way of showing their friendship to me.

Everyday life in the Republic

The mixed experience that *Mehmet hoca* had when he left his natal village is one with which many Alevis could identify. Indeed, they may at any time be the butt of jokes or comments, wittingly or otherwise. For example, in 1990 I visited with an Alevi friend, who was a civil servant, the former head of the Motherland Party (ANAP) organisation in a provincial centre. This man was known to have retained great power of the transfer of civil servants within the region. My friend had already tried repeatedly to move his posting unsuccessfully, and now visited this unusual patron as a last resort. We were forced to

wait as the man made small talk to a room full of supplicants. At one point the man said loudly, 'Of course there are no divisions in Modern Turkey, no class, no recognition of Kurd or otherwise, all are *Türk*, isn't that right?' To which all murmured agreement. Then he added, 'But some people are Alevi. This is the real division in life. Alevi women sleep with everyone, are untrustworthy, isn't that the case?' My friend perforce acquiesced to this calumny, which was repeated several times, so as not to jeopardise his chances of a transfer. After we emerged, he was not at all surprised that the ANAP man should say such a thing.

Not just such informal or casual discrimination but also outbreaks of violence have occurred in the Republic against the Alevis. These appear to occur most often at moments of heightened national or political tension. For example, when the Welfare (Islamist) Party was approaching its height, a folklore congress was held at Sivas. Partly organised by Alevis and partly by left-wing secularists, it included a famous writer Aziz Nesin. After a series of demonstrations by Islamic activists, the hotel in which the delegates were staying was cut off from the surroundings by a crowd and set alight. Those within were prevented by them from escaping, and the emergency services were noticeably slow to arrive. The resulting deaths by incineration of the incarcerated delegates shocked a great many in Turkey and served in part to heighten the awareness of the secularist movement as a whole of the dangers that they faced. To the Alevis, though, the event quickly became part of their popular history, and to them was just one more incident in a long line of events and repression that they trace back to Ottoman times.²³

In spite of these difficulties, there is no overt discrimination against the Alevis. There is no formal mention that they are 'Alevi' in their identification cards. While, because their hierarchical organisation is inspired by the Bektāşi model, the early Republic interdiction on the brotherhoods includes the Alevis as well, they have been able to continue to worship within their own rural communities. In other ways too, through becoming civil servants, through politics, through becoming active in the left-wing movement, through music, or joining the military, they have played an active and varied and sometimes very influential part in the Republic. It should be noted too, that by and large it appears that the western and central Alevis, geographically and perhaps also ideologically closer to the Republic, have not suffered from the savage fighting in the east of Turkey which appears to have impacted upon the more predominantly Kurdish Alevi communities.

Social change and modernisation

That life is often compromised, but still possible, means that the people with whom I have worked have been able to benefit at least partially from the widespread modernisation that has taken place throughout Anatolia. Such a major change may hardly be summed up briefly, but it might be noted that though

there are, sadly, some who have insufficient nourishment,²⁴ for many food is plentiful, varied and cheap. Municipality services, while often seemingly in disarray, often do work, encouraged by a lively local democracy that makes it very clear indeed when a mayor is unable to deliver.²⁵ The infrastructure associated with development: communications, health and education is in place almost throughout the country, and has been continuing at a steady pace.²⁶ The development of a mass media, already a preoccupation in the early Republic, has in recent years produced mature and extremely lively television and radio, to say nothing of a variety of newspapers. There is continuous investment in the road system, which, outside the main cities, is doing a good job of keeping up with a huge increase in car ownership, as is witnessed by the growth in motorways and ring roads around the larger cities. Long-distance bus services to almost anywhere in the Republic are outstanding, far better in their frequency, comfort and time-keeping than some in Europe.²⁷

The creation of the urban population

While there are many ways that this transformation, or perhaps partial transformation, to modernity could be analysed, the demographic transformation that has accompanied this widespread economic change appears to be particularly relevant to the Alevi case. While the reliability of statistics is always a problem, it appears legitimate to suggest that in 1923, the urban population of modern Turkey consisted of about two million people, or about 14 per cent of the total population at that time. In 2002, it is equally thought that urban population is now about 40 million, or about 60 per cent of the total present-day population.

Popularly, the most important consequence of this twenty-fold increase in urban population is regarded as being the growth of the largest cities, where the newly migrated villagers inhabit shanty-towns, *gecekondus*, that constitute huge belts around the previous established centres. This phenomenon is indeed of the greatest importance, but it is in fact only one aspect of the population shift. The total population of Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara today stands at about 20 million. This means that the remaining approximately 20 million so-called 'urban' population has to be accounted for through expansion of the smaller, provincial settlements ranging from Adana, Bursa, Gaziantep or Konya to the (originally) much smaller such as Bolu, Kırıkkale or Eskişehir, providing a much more diffuse picture of urbanisation than is implied if only the largest cities are taken into account.

Thus, throughout Anatolia, many thousands of villages and municipalities are and have been in a continual competition to establish themselves. Those who are successful in growing constitute reservoirs of population that provide both statistically and practically a highly significant counter-balance to the crushingly crowded great metropolis, albeit one that is both popularly and also within the scholarly literature paid scant attention.

The state and provincial development

Nevertheless, far from being against this process, the state finds rural or provincial growth far preferable to the indiscriminate rises in population in the shantytown areas, and does its best to encourage its taking place. The possibility of such co-ordination is greatly facilitated by a centralised administrative system, and the way that it acts as a conduit for the distribution of resources. As a whole, Turkey is divided into provinces, and these provinces are in turn divided into sub-provinces. Ministries remain in Ankara, but they have representative departments in provincial centres, and in most sub-provincial centres too. Depending on the rank that a settlement is awarded, and depending also upon its population, they are automatically entitled to a certain level of state services from this centralised, multi-faceted system, which funnels resources accordingly.

The smallest officially recognised community is the village, *köy*. The village must elect a head man, the *muhtar*, who represents them to the state offices in the nearest sub-provincial centre. When needs be, the state takes a number of small settlements and declares them collectively a village. The resulting community is awarded no direct subvention (other than a very small budget to cover the *muhtar's* expenses), but the mere fact of communal recognition means that they appear on the officially drawn maps, that they have a voice in the centre, and that they will be considered a distinct entity when resources are being planned and allocated to rural communities (such as road, health officer or school), or when boundaries need to be drawn and established.

The next level up in the scale is to become a municipality, *belediye*, which brings distinct and direct resources in its own right, including a monthly budget for the municipality, and a vastly increased chance of obtaining civil servants for any outstanding positions that may exist within the village infrastructure. A municipality may become in turn a district centre, *bucak merkezi*, then a sub-province centre, *ilçe*. In each case, a rise up the official state scale brings with it substantial funds to pay for the establishment of local political institutions and increased infrastructural facilities in the shape of schools, roads, health centres, hospitals, police, energy projects, and finally, universities. Each of these stages has a knock-on effect as the steady influx of wages into the community begins to increase the potential market available to local small retail and construction businesses, and provides renewed impetus for a village (now a town perhaps) to continue to develop.

Who benefits?

Of Turkey's population, who benefits from this complex, universal, mutually understood but deadly serious game of modernisation and expansion? Briefly, I would assert that the greatest beneficiaries of the transition *in situ* from rural to urban that has been so crucial in Anatolia have been, by and large the Sunni communities. The Alevis, in contrast, have failed to maintain their rural popu-

lation, failed to establish substantial communities through organic growth. It also appears that they have failed to maintain their rural population, and, even though they have on occasion created a foothold in a provincial town, appear increasingly to be leaving these, occasionally even being forced out, and heading for the largest cities.

Such a hypothesis is difficult to prove. Nevertheless, it appears the case that it is valid for the sub-province where I worked, and it has been borne out by later journeys that I have made. If it does turn out to be generalisable, then it has profound implications. It would mean, for example, that the countryside is becoming gradually more homogenous as a number of Sunni villages gradually grow and turn into towns, but Alevi villages contract, and their members leave to become part of the cities. It implies not so much that the Alevis are being excluded from the urban life of the Republic, but more that they appear to have difficulties in creating urban contexts that are purely their own, that they may interact but not themselves control.²⁸ This in turn may encourage a sense of persecution where none, at the foundation of the Republic, was intended. Such considerations would lead us into a more comparative study, one that is touched upon in the final chapters of this work. First, however, we turn to the sub-province where I worked, and to the detailed illustration of these initial claims.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested that there is a particular relationship between social organisation and the way that ideological movements have developed within the Republic. While in no way wishing to deny that there is a huge spectrum of views, it appears that the tone is set by the majority, sedentary Turkish Sunni population, who have insisted upon an overt identification with orthodox Islam along with a purely Turkish nationalism. These communities have also been the chief recipients of the urbanisation process in Anatolia. I suggest that even where diverse communities are perfectly well aware of their non-Turkish background, they have often been able to identify with these dominant norms of citizenship with surprisingly little discomfort, and therefore have not been excluded in any discernible way from taking their place within the nation.

The exceptions derive from those communities with a distinct social organisation based on opposition to central rule. Thus, many Kurdish Sunnis have become part of the Republic through education, marriage, profession and inclination to an extent that is not sufficiently recognised. Other Kurdish persons, however, have not, a sense of alternative affiliation that is most profoundly reflected among the Kurdish Alevis, who appear to be politically the most radical. Both Kurdish groups have periodically resorted to rebellion or conflict.

The Turkish Alevis, who form the main focus of this study, identify with a sharply secular Turkish Republic, a form of secularism that is supported by some but not by the majority of the Sunni population. This particular secular orientation may be linked to their traditional social organisation and the way that their

communities integrate with the modern nation state. Today, though the Alevis have played a major part in the Republic's history in many ways, they appear increasingly to be moving to the very largest cities, unable to form large distinct urban communities in their own right, and unable too to be comfortable with the openly religious sentiment that dominates the public spheres of the Republic. This general overview provides the background for the particular study that now follows.

2

THE SUB-PROVINCE

The sub-province which forms the subject of this study has little flat land. The hills begin close to the river and rise, sometimes steep, sometimes less inclined, but always climb until its boundaries are reached. On the lower slopes there is brushwood, coarse grass and stunted pine. Higher up, there are small oak trees growing among the fields. Higher still, the brushwood gives way to flatter areas of sweet pasture and there are patches of deciduous pine forest.

The one substantial town, also the sub-province centre, is the home of nearly all the civil servants stationed within the sub-province, and its economic centre. There are almost no tourists; two hotels cater mainly for travellers and junior civil servants visiting on government business. There are no large firms: the only two private businesses to employ more than ten people are the town bus company and a gravel extraction company. There is, though, a plethora of small shops: tradesmen selling household utensils and electrical goods, grocers, butchers, pharmacists, barbers, tea-houses and restaurants. Artisans: tinsmiths, mechanics, blacksmiths, cobblers, goldsmiths and tailors cluster together in their own distinct areas. Doctors and lawyers share a street below the town hospital, while a bedraggled dentist's surgery lies on the outskirts of the town.

The sub-province's villages are reached by tracks leading from the single main road which, as time goes on, are gradually being tarmacked. Even the most isolated village remains no more than an hour in a minibus or van from the sub-province centre. The web of small roads and tracks, the town at their centre, is almost the sole easy way of communication between villages, the alternative being to walk across the hills. Some of these hill paths are just passable in summer for a tractor and trailer, but not without risk of a spill.

There are no large landowners. The fields around any one village are nearly always owned and tilled almost entirely by the households which inhabit it. These households may plant wheat, barley and maize as staple crops. The villagers plough their fields either using draft oxen or tractors, though the number of draft animals is falling quickly. Exceptionally the villagers irrigate their fields, but most are left at the mercy of the elements. If a household has no access to a tractor, albeit an increasingly uncommon situation, its members may plough using a wooden plough, scatter seed by hand and reap the harvest using a

scythe or sickle. They may carry the harvest to the threshing ground using a fixed-axle cart or, if the ground is too steep, a sled, both drawn by oxen. Threshing is achieved either by tossing the sheaves into a machine called '*patos*', which chops the stalk and separates the grain, or by hand using a board studded with flints dragged by any combination of horse, ox and donkey. If necessary, the wheat is separated from the chaff by winnowing.

Agricultural life in the sub-province is hard. All over the sub-province the soil consists chiefly of clay and is often stony. Even when ploughed by tractors and encouraged by fertilisers, the yields are poor, usually varying between one to one and a half in a bad year, to one to fifteen at best. The yield is constrained in part by the soil, in part by the climate. The autumn rains are held up in the clay and it is difficult for the villagers to sow their fields in conditions dry enough so that the seed does not rot, whereas if they wait too long, winter sets in, making planting impossible. Conversely, the dry spring and summer mean crops are often short of water.

Villagers may sell part of a surplus crop of wheat, maize or barley in the market in the sub-province centre but, unlike so many other regions of Turkey (such as the tea-growing areas on the Black Sea coast, the melon fields of the Çumra plain near Konya, or the cotton-producing regions of the west and south-east), almost no crops are grown for sale. To create cash through agriculture they may turn to animal husbandry, though this is not yet organised in any highly intensive way. A household may keep a few oxen throughout the winter, rear them carefully and sell them the next season at a profit, keep a small flock of sheep to exploit the lambs and wool, or construct a larger manger and rear sixty or seventy beasts for the beef market. Water buffalo, *manda*, are usually kept in ones and twos for their creamy milk, whose products may occasionally be sold, either as cheese or as yoghurt.

There are very few sources of regular wages. A family may obtain a little money through one of its members taking on casual labour; for example, if a man has a particular task, perhaps building a new stable, he may pay his neighbours or other acquaintances by the day for the duration of the work. In most villages, a few men actively pursue a trade such as making agricultural equipment or carpentry and live off it successfully, others may turn a hand less committedly when an opportunity offers. Increasingly there are workers or civil servants in receipt of a pension who have returned to the village to retire, having spent their working life in the town, or even in Germany. Among some of the villages, but not all, and not where I lived, carpet weaving by women has become a valuable source of income.

Except for state funds, by far the most cash comes into the sub-province through remittances sent back by relatives who have left the sub-province and found work, sometimes in other Turkish cities, sometimes abroad. We may summarise the relative importance of money obtained by agriculture against that through remittances by saying that families who have a generous relative abroad who sends money regularly over a period of years are comfortable: 100

D-Marks (now 50 euros) a month for cash needs, together with self-sufficiency in food production, being adequate to get by. Those households without money coming in from outside can raise an equivalent or greater income only with difficulty, the task involving extremely hard work, land and adequate labour.

While there appears to be no major stratification according to class or occupation, the population is split clearly between Alevi and Sunni. With the possible exception of any civil servants who may be stationed there, seventy-four of the villages are entirely Sunni, and twenty are Alevi. Two have a mixed population of both Alevi and Sunni, though in this case the villagers live in separate village quarters. Thus, throughout the villages of the area, people of different religious persuasion live apart from one another. The town I estimate as being at least 95 per cent Sunni.

While the villagers of the sub-province may have diverse origins when questioned closely, collectively all but three appear to regard themselves as indigenously *Türk*. The exceptions are a Caucasian (*Çerkez*) village, one from the Balkans (referred to locally as *muhacir* or *göçmen*, immigrants) and one mixed village which is divided into two quarters, the one *Türk*, the other *Kürt*. Most of the immigrant village's households have moved to Istanbul, leaving only a handful of people behind. The Caucasian, *Çerkez* village has been absorbed well and are known as an industrious and successful community. The Kurdish settlement results from one of the resettlement decisions in the early Republican years. In this work, 'Alevi' refers to conditions prevailing to the best of my knowledge among all the Alevi in the sub-province. 'Sunni' applies to the indigenous Sunni; the extent to which the analysis is applicable to the three incoming groups is not yet clear.

Alevi and Sunni villages

The Alevi and Sunni villages are not only physically set apart from one another but there is also little social contact between them. The only occasion when the Alevi recall violent conflict against the Sunni was during the unrest which preceded the coup in 1980.¹ Then, they said, each Alevi village guarded itself with watchmen drawn from their number for fear of being attacked by the Sunni. Non-violent interaction between sects is likewise limited; there are many Sunni men who have not visited an Alevi village, and likewise Alevi who have not been to a Sunni village. This is partly due to lack of affinal ties. Marriage bonds are very stable, and regarded as an opportunity to further economic and social intercourse between the respective families for the indefinite future but Alevi and Sunni only rarely intermarry.

The separation is exacerbated by mutual distrust, often expressed in religious terms. When I travelled in the Sunni villages I was repeatedly told that the Alevi are not Muslims because they do not pray in a mosque nor keep the *Ramazan* fast, and that their women are promiscuous. The Alevi are aware of the insults and on their part tend to regard all Sunnis as fanatics, *yobaz*. I

sometimes heard them denigrate Sunni worship, saying that to pray in line in a mosque was not really prayer at all.² Today, many Alevi villagers avoid travelling in the Sunni communities, some expressing fear of violence. This is perhaps likely only in exceptional circumstances: it remains true, however, that it would be extremely rare for an Alevi villager simply to pay a visit to a Sunni village, and unless there is a clear reason for their making such a call, they are very reluctant to do so.

The distrust between the sects does not preclude the occasional cross-marriage. In the 1980s, the head man of *Ekmek*, the Alevi village just above Susesi, gave two of his daughters to Alevi families and one also to a family in a neighbouring Sunni village, albeit one that is known as being Alevi until early this century. There are other casual contacts also. One man in Susesi sold a pair of oxen to a man from a Sunni village whom he had met forty years before while on his military service, and was very pleased to have rekindled this contact. Occasionally, if his business is pressing, a man from an Alevi village goes to a small weekly market held in one of the large Sunni villages.

Musicians

There is often more overlap between Alevi and Sunni villages during times of ritual. Many Alevi villages have one or more families whose members are professional or semi-professional musicians, *mehter*. The instruments they play are usually the *saz*, an eight-stringed instrument similar to a mandolin, the *zurna*, a pipe with a double-reed and *davul*, drum. They may be also highly skilled on a shepherd's pipe, *kaval*. The *saz* is used in religious ceremonies, though it may also be played at weddings and when drinking with friends. The drummer and piper play together as a team at weddings and at other, larger celebrations such as circumcisions or festivities in the mountain pastures.

There are no players of the pipe and drum in any of the Sunni villages of the sub-province but some of them nevertheless desire to celebrate their weddings with musicians. Therefore they commission one or two teams of musicians from the Alevi side to come and stay in their villages for the duration of the festivities. In this case, the musicians have an important place; they welcome guests, accompany them as they approach the wedding house, play a variety of dances, *halay*, which the youths perform with the groom, chant a special air as *kına*, henna, is applied to the groom's hands and another as the bride is being taken from her natal home to that of her groom.

The Alevi musicians are used in other ways within the sub-province. They are regularly commissioned by the town council to play in the street and wake people up just before dawn during the month of Ramadan. They may also be asked to play at open wrestling competitions to heighten the sense of occasion. During my stay, they were invited to play at the circumcision of the *jandarma* commander's son; the party took place within the *jandarma* compound, a location which they would normally avoid.

There is occasionally opposition to the musicians from the Sunni villages. I would estimate perhaps between a fifth and a quarter of the Sunni men to be actively concerned with maintaining the five pillars of Islam, and self-consciously, even assertively Muslim. The others may go to the mosque on Friday, probably fast during the *Ramazan* but are less conscious of conforming to Islam in their everyday lives. Some of the Sunni villages are dominated by these intense believers, who argue that all music is sinful, *günah*, evokes sexual excitement, *şeyret*, and against the word of the Koran. From these villages, Alevi musicians are banned. These villagers hold instead a different type of wedding, namely, at which there are no musicians but a man chants hymns, *ilahis*.

All over the sub-province, the ability to play an instrument is identified as being characteristic of the Alevis and a further element marking the differences between the two sides. One Sunni man said to me, '*Zurna çalana kız vermez!*' '(They) do not give girls to those who play the *zurna*' when explaining to whom the Sunni villagers give their daughters in marriage. A Sunni youth who wanted to learn the *saz* told me the following story:

Account 2.1

This summer a friend came. We gathered together with our comrades at the village threshing ground to play the *saz* and sing quietly. We made very little noise but the gathering lasted most of the night. An elder saw us, however, and in the coffee house the next morning spoke with the 'greats', *büyükler*, of the village. My father became very angry, came into our house, took the *saz* and broke it in two, saying it was *hor* (forbidden, or despicable). 'Are you *Kızılbaş*?' he said, 'that you play music thus? Are we following their traditions that you behave as they do?'

Relations between Alevi and Sunni at the centre

Most villagers, when possible, leave active dealings with the central authorities to the village head, or other respected figure, but all except the poorest men go regularly to market. While visiting the town, Alevis and Sunnis keep out of each other's way. Most of the few Alevi families in the town run shops, restaurants and tea-houses; Alevis from the villages usually patronise these, and not those owned by Sunnis. There is a garage owned by an Alevi man which maintains and repairs Alevi vehicles, and several owned by Sunni men to which Sunni men go. There is rarely open hostility. The market place is strictly neutral. The only open fight I saw or heard of on a market day took place between two rival lineages from the Kurdish village. The last time open confrontation ensued between sects was said to be in 1980, just before the military coup. The Alevis say that then their shops were smashed by fanatics and many of the Alevi families living in the town were forced to migrate.

The two sects come into closer contact with each other during the Ramadan, which is an exciting time; the streets are fuller than usual and men spend the entire day sitting with their friends looking out at the streets of the town. Those restaurants with Sunni proprietors close during the day, opening before the evening break of fast when they fill with men shouting at waiters for their food. Bakeries stay open throughout the night, preparing pidda bread, then, just as the skies grow pale, the thump of the Alevi drum and wail of the pipe wake the faithful for the pre-dawn breakfast.

The restaurants run by the Alevis stay open during the day, their windows covered in newspaper, and do much better than usual. During the opening days of the *Ramazan* this is in part due to Alevis coming from the villages, curious to watch the Sunni fasting. Mostly though, it is because those Sunni men who do not wish to keep the fast come to the restaurant, and, protected by the newspaper against the glances of their acquaintances, are able to eat without fear of recrimination.

Despite the apparent peace, Alevis often feel uneasy. They do not discuss customs, beliefs or events in any way relating to their religion where they may be overheard by Sunnis. The town, because it is predominantly Sunni, is an environment in which they do not express themselves freely. This feeling of isolation is reinforced by five mosques whose call to prayer resounds throughout the town, and by a large, Ottoman-style mosque being built through subscription in the town's central street.

Alevi, Sunni and the state

Alevi and Sunni villagers have a great deal in common and also deep differences in their attitude towards the state. Both sides try to gain jobs as civil servants, *memur*, and when they do so they are able to work alongside one another. Neither Sunnis nor Alevis wish to separate and create a country of their own. They are both intensely proud of the achievements of Atatürk in creating modern Turkey. They both share the idea that the state is infinitely rich, the provider of all if it so wishes, and a vehicle for sensible people to exploit. *Devletin mali deniz, onu yemeyen domuz*, 'The property of the state is an ocean, he who does not eat it is a pig [stupid]' is a famous saying that I heard from both Alevis and Sunnis. This concept is reinforced in the sub-province where the state is clearly the only institution with the power or money to initiate large-scale projects.

Alevis and Sunnis disagree as to the task of the state with regard to religion. The Sunnis, though they are intensely proud that Atatürk founded modern Turkey, are far less likely to approve of the drastic secular reforms which he initiated. Though most Sunni men would hesitate before speaking out openly against anything which Atatürk decreed, it is difficult for an active believer not to feel a deep ambivalence towards him. Not all men are such activists, but for those who are, the feeling goes deeper than a simple dislike of the anti-religious

aspects of the early Republican government. The Sunnis regard it as the duty of the state to actively support Islam, as part of its reason for existing (see Chapter 3). In contrast, the Alevis view the Republic as a bastion against Sunni Islam, and Atatürk as the creator of the ideal way to live within a modern country, an aspect of their culture that we will look at in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

The Alevis complain that it is clear the state is no longer the opposer of Sunni religion; they point to the vocational (*İmam-hatip*) schools for Muslim preachers, attended today entirely by pupils from Sunni villages, the growth of the brotherhoods, television programmes favouring religion on television, the *müftü* (religious functionary) offices in the sub-province centre, the religious lessons taught in schools, the new large mosques which are being built in many villages. In particular, they stress the increasing confidence of active Sunni believers. For example, they may say that it is increasingly difficult for those who wish to eat or smoke during *Ramazan* to do so, and that teachers in schools are finding pupils forbidden by their parents to perform calculations of interest rates in mathematics lessons.

The last development is deplored not only by Alevis but also by Sunnis who are less interested in religion. The following story illustrates this. It was told by a local *Çerkez* man who was a manager in one of the government offices of the sub-province to an Alevi school teacher while I was present:

Account 2.2

On the national holiday of *kurban bayramı* [the feast of sacrifice] together with two doctors and their wives, we went to a quiet spot just above the town to celebrate the holiday. The doctors had it in mind to drink, so we placed two bottles of *rakı* [a popular strong drink similar to pastis] in a stream to cool. We went a little further on and sat down. In front of us came a number of youths, led by two teachers from a faculty of higher religious studies, home on leave. The group prayed and intoned hymns. *Hu çektiler* [recited the name of the one God in a fashion characteristic of an Islamic brotherhood].

After watching them we returned to the *rakı* and found that the bottles had been broken. The doctors turned to the youths who had been worshipping and remonstrated. The youths responded by denying the doctors' right to fault them and insulted their wives. I knew the youths, and tried to say something but they insulted me too.

The next day I was walking in the town and many of my friends, whatever their political views, were upset. Among the crowd I saw some of the youths involved. I said to them, 'You have broken the rules. The state has founded Tekel [the state drinks monopoly], and sells *rakı* to those it sees fit. These doctors had given four and five years' service to the state. I couldn't believe the way you behaved.' They did not listen.

Conversion

The division between Alevi and Sunni appears today to be fairly stable. However, it has not always been so. Both Alevi and Sunni villagers say that long ago the population of the area was predominantly Alevi, but then during the Ottoman Empire gradually converted to becoming Sunni. The remaining Alevi villages emphasise the persecution and pressure that they suffered at that time. They may recount one local event in particular, saying that Yavuz Selim, the seventeenth-century Sultan sometimes known as the ‘Grim’, whom they regard as one of the greatest haters of the Alevi, passed the winter in one of the sub-provinces’ mountain pastures (*yayla*) on his way to lead a campaign against Iran. As the news came of his arrival, many villages where he chose to encamp found it expedient to convert to become Sunnis, and remained so after he left.

Conversion appears to have taken place too, even until quite recently, not so much in a collective, abrupt way but with previously known Alevi communities gradually emphasising Sunni rituals until they ceased to regard themselves primarily as Alevis. Today, these villages known to have converted may be referred to, pejoratively as *dönek* (dialect, literally ‘turned’). The following is a précis of a story I have heard from both Alevis and Sunnis when discussing the ‘*dönek*’ villages:

Account 2.3

When a wrestling match was held between the villages of the sub-province, the master of ceremonies called for the Sunni men to go to one side of the field and the Alevi to the other. When they had gone to their respective ends, the villagers of . . . (then recently turned Sunni) remained in the middle quite unable to decide whose side to fight on.

The comment after the story is told is usually that the *dönek* villagers had become *tarafsız*, literally ‘without side’, and by implication, had no group of trusted allies to whom they could show, and from whom they could receive, allegiance. Some men add that it is impossible to turn from Alevi to Sunni because other men do not forget one’s past so easily.

Susesi and Ekmek

Susesi, the village in which I stayed, and its immediate neighbour Ekmek are able to recount similar experiences, both involving attempts to convert through figures moving to the village from outside. During my stay, in 1988–1990, the head of Ekmek (the man noted above as having given one of his daughters in marriage to a Sunni village) was a pious man in the orthodox sense, attending mosque regularly. He would deliberately hold all important village business in his house, which was next to the mosque, just after the Friday prayers, thus

encouraging the men of the village to attend. As the village consisted of ten spread-out village quarters (*mahalle*), this meant that some had to walk for nearly an hour to attend the prayers each week.

It was explained to me that his grandfather had come to the village in order to convert it to Sunni Islam. He had failed to do so, but stayed, going both to the Alevi *cem* ceremonies, and also leading the prayers from the mosque. The present-day head-man's orthodox-style angered four of the ten village quarters, but pleased the remaining six. These six quarters closest to the head man were adamant that they were no longer interested in holding *cem* ceremonies, and approved of his actions. The other four, on the other hand, who provided both minstrels and *dedes* to the surrounding countryside, were equally adamant that they wished to maintain the Alevi traditions. For much of my stay, the disputing sides discussed separating into two separate villages.

In Susesi itself, there appears to have been a similar occurrence. The village is slightly more compact than Ekmek and has stronger *dedes*. Nevertheless, one village quarter, who traditionally opposed the *dedes*, seemed to use orthodox Islam as a way to combat their authority. In the early 1970s, when *Mehmet hoca*, who features in Chapter 1 as the boy from the village who had attended the local religious (*İmam-hatip*) school, finally returned to the village after teaching in the surrounding area, he was dismayed at what he regarded as the lax religious practice that he found. Stimulated by his religious school education, he tried to persuade the villagers to give priority to orthodox practice, which they know as *Şeriat*, as against their more mystical or esoteric tradition. In doing so, he opposes the *dedes*, whom he now regards as sinful. However, as the account concludes, a change of heart comes from a most unexpected quarter. The conclusion of the account shows the functioning of a *dede* at what would be regarded as its most appropriate: not intrusive, waiting to be consulted, but to the point, and effective. A note in elucidation on the parable with which the story finishes: the 'Mevlana' is the usual name in spoken Turkish for Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi dervishes at Konya. Yunus Emre is a famous Anatolian mystic whom the Alevis regard as being one of their most important religious forbears, and whose words they often quote:

Account 2.4 Mehmet Hoca – continuation

When I moved back to Susesi, there were three main factions. First, there were the *dedes*, who maintained that they were on Ali's path. They did not look upon Ramadan very favourably, nor upon five prayers a day. Then, there was a second group: their followers, who were bound to them absolutely without condition. Then, there were a third group, based on the largest lineage in Yüksek *mahalle*. These were neither bound to the *dedes*, nor to the *Şeriat*. Yet, in order to offer coherent opposition to the *dedes*, whose influence they resented, they would follow the five pillars more closely than the rest of

the village. The *dedes* used to call them jokingly after the name of the Sunni village where I had been working, as theirs was the nearest *mahalle* to it geographically.

I worked at making the *mahalle* fulfil the 'five pillars'. During the Ramadan we hired a *mehter* [drum and pipe] team to get them out of bed in the morning before dawn. There were three people who had had a *medrese* education in the village, with their help we formed a group against the *dedes*. We formed a link with the headman of the village at that time. We mended and restored the mosque. We retiled the roof, and put down carpet. For two years, we observed the Ramadan. We offered prayers after the fast's end each evening at the mosque.

Whilst this was going on, one day my life changed through a dream that came to me as I slept. I dreamt that I was on my balcony. I saw a horse coming across the fields in front of me. I saw that the horse was extremely powerful, a war horse, hooves beating the ground. On its back was a strong, bearded man in armour. The horse came on and stopped exactly in front of me. The bearded person on the back, drew his sword, and said,

'I am Hazreti Ali! Mehmet *hoca*, you are going very quickly forward. Stay where you are, or I'll cut off your head!'

He disappeared in a flash, I woke up, drenched in sweat.

Now, in *Şeriat*, there is a rule: Satan [*Şeytan*] may adopt any guise, but he cannot appear to humans in the guise of Mohammed or in that of his house [*Ehli-beyt*]. How could Satan therefore appear as Hasretin Ali? It must have been a genuine apparition, it must have been Ali himself.

I asked myself, who is the most knowledgeable person in *Alevilik*? Dursun *dayı*, I said. He was the most intelligent, the wisest *dede* of the village. I decided to go to him for advice, because this dream made me very worried. I went to Dursun *dayı* and explained the dream, that I had seen Ali, that he said 'Stay where you are, or else I'll cut off your head.'

Dursun *dayı* said, 'You are attempting a firm partition [of religion] (*şekilcilik*). You should examine the Alevi path: you are not entering its depths. You have devoted yourself purely to the knowledge offered by the *Şeriat*. You should investigate *Alevilik*.' I borrowed some books from Dursun, I borrowed some too from one of the other most regarded *dedes* in the area, and also from his *musabip* [religious partner] in the next village.

Until then, I had always fought with Dursun. Dursun would say that the five pillars are not right, that they were not true. Now, there are four sources of Islam; the *Kuran*, *hadis*, *icmai' ümmet*, and *kıyas*. I had a six volume set of instructions from the *İmam-hatip* school that

explained these things. Dursun just said that these were nonsense, written by an Armenian who didn't know anything, and that all the *hadis* [sayings of the Prophet] were made up anyway. That Dursun was so rude about the sources of my education meant that I kept away from him, because he had no knowledge other than that which he had gained from his father and his father in turn.

Anyway, I borrowed some books. From the knowledge I gained from them, I learnt that with only fasting and prayers gets nowhere. I learnt that the heart of the matter is humanity (*insanlık*), the person (*insan*). Slowly I learnt that this was the true meaning of *Alevilik*. [He offers an illustration.] When the *Mevlana* had finished his six-volumed *Mesnevi*, he sent word to *Hacı Bektaş* asking him whether he wanted to read it. *Hacı Bektaş* sent Yunus Emre along to do so. Yunus Emre read the *Mesnevi*. *Mevlana* asked him, 'How did you find it?' Yunus replied, 'You didn't need to write it so long, I've combed it right through, and my image appeared within' ('*Ete, kemiğe burundum, Yunus gibi göründüm*'). That is just it, that is the point [i.e. the secret of religious life lies within the person, not within textual exegesis]. From that time on, I ceased to oppose *Alevilik* in the village.

Migration, modernisation and politics

Mehmet Hocas's abortive campaign to institute a more Sunni-based form of religion in the village appears to mark the high point of orthodox religious feeling, at least in the community's modern history. Subsequently, the lineages opposed to the *dedes* embraced a much more sceptical interpretation of religion. This coincided with the rise of Ecevit to power and the rise of the political left within Turkey as a whole, and provided the village head man, the *muhtar*, who was subsequently to come to power, with much of his impetus to rule. At the same time, the villagers appear to have begun to internalise much more strongly the idea that development or modernisation should play a key part in their lives. Indeed, nearly all the villagers that I met in the area possess a deep and frequently expressed desire to modernise, *moderleşme*, or to develop, *gelişmek*. Exactly what is meant by 'develop' varies from person to person but with regard to material things it usually implies possessing consumer goods, particularly televisions, refrigerators, cassette players and videos, moving to a concrete or brick house, gaining a living other than by farming and living in a settlement with a modern infrastructure, asphalt road, schools, doctor, telephones, water and electricity.

In every village there are active men campaigning for services to be brought to them, but many more feel that their aspirations can only be fulfilled by leaving the sub-province. Daily conversation is full of references to *göç*, migration, and its ramifications; the merits of different countries, the possibilities and difficulties of obtaining visas and the amount it costs to build a house. Almost

everyone appears to have a close relative who has migrated. In almost every village they told me that a substantial number of households had gone, sometimes as many as a third or a half.

Historically, it appears that out-migration in the sub-province developed as follows. Until the 1950s, only a few men from each village seem to have migrated to look for work in the towns. One man from the village in which I lived became a fireman in Ankara, another walked to Istanbul and found work, eventually bringing up his children there. Seasonal migration was prevalent, either to pick fruit on the Black Sea coast or casual work in the sub-province centre. Migration is said to have increased in the 1960s, and then accelerated enormously in the 1970s as people began to realise that to work in Germany or another European country could be a lucrative and secure occupation. Initially those who went to Germany planned to retire to their native villages, but now those who return tend to move to Istanbul, or perhaps build a house in the next sub-province, which is closer to Istanbul, and more prosperous. In the late 1970s and 1980s, permission to work in European countries became more difficult to obtain, and it is no longer possible to gain visas to travel freely abroad in Western Europe. Some men find work in the Middle East but migration to destinations within Turkey has continued, and even accelerated.

Though a migrant leaves the village, it is unusual for him or her to sever ties, either social or economic, with those who remain. A man who is abroad and earning money usually remits money back to kin who are in the village. To whom he sends money depends in part on the warmth of the relationship, and in part on the degree of kinship. Where the possibility exists, and in descending order of priority, a man sends money to his wife and children, his parents, brothers, brother's children, sisters and sister's children. More distant relatives are less likely to receive money regularly but may in exceptional circumstances.

The worker abroad may help in other ways. Those in the village exert all the pressure they can on their friends and relatives abroad, requesting a visa so that they may come and join them. There are several ways that this may be possible. Those abroad may prepare the ground for a marriage of convenience (said in 1989 to cost 5,000 DM in Germany) or simply obtain a tourist visa for the relative in the village and shelter them on the visa's expiry. They may arrange also a genuine marriage with a Turkish national possessing foreign residence rights, usually a relative born there. In return, those who have left the village to work in Western Europe know that by keeping on friendly terms with the village they can return if they fail to accumulate sufficient funds to retire safely elsewhere. They may benefit also from the village being a reservoir of people with similar values to their own, and arrange a visa for a relative from the village so that they can obtain a dependable spouse or business partner.

With regard to migration within Turkey: if a man is fortunate, relatives and neighbours in the town have established themselves in a particular trade and built up a network of professional ties. He may then find an immediate niche through their help. The most successful example of this was a Sunni village

whose members worked as goldsmiths, both in the sub-province centre and the covered market in Istanbul. No Alevi village had so apparently lucrative a profession, though one did supply the bath attendants to a famous Turkish bath in Istanbul. Far more villagers are leaving, though, than can be absorbed in this way; the possible openings in the city are fewer than the numbers of people who want them. Rather than a man arranging an occupation before going, he often moves to Istanbul and there relies on the welcome of neighbours and kin who have already moved while looking for a way to make money.

When I visited the area outside Istanbul to which many of the villagers migrate I found that conditions were difficult.³ There was no running water or sewage pipes, little industry nearby to provide work and no obvious means by which families were making enough money to survive. In this precarious position, with no solid home or job, the support of the village is often very important. A man's relatives may send food via the coach services from the sub-province, whose final stop is in the area of Istanbul where most of those from the sub-province have settled. If all else has failed, he may return to the village and eke out a living farming until an opportunity to migrate offers itself again. Some men leave their small children in the village in care of their parents. Not only is the air more healthy and the food better than in Istanbul, but also the children have a better chance of gaining an adequate primary schooling. The schools in the poor areas of Istanbul are overcrowded and understaffed and it is often difficult to have one's child admitted to them. The village primary schools are rarely as crowded. If the village has a middle school, the man may even leave his children in the village until the age of fifteen, in which case they may make a significant contribution to subsistence farming in the village.

Thus, each village becomes divided as people's aspirations become more ambitious. Formerly, the village was a sedentary community in which a person expected to live and die. Now, few people under middle age anticipate spending their complete existence there. The villages themselves are changing function; they are a retirement place for the old, a base for migrants to return to or work from, and a school for the young so that they may be successful in life in Turkey as a whole. It is important to note though, that there is no mechanism or organisation which pools resources donated by migrants. The links they retain with the sub-province are almost exclusively governed by kin and neighbour, each person sending money to their own community. Villages become more bound into the world outside the sub-province than before but they do not become more closely linked with each other. The traditional life of the Alevi and the Sunni villages in the sub-province is largely separate; even as they open towards the world it remains so.

Population and settlement figures

That large numbers of people have migrated is confirmed by examining the results of population census since 1935. The results are freely available through

the Institute of Statistics in Ankara. These show that from 1935 until 1975, the population of the sub-province matches the rate of growth for Turkey as a whole. There is a sharp fall in 1975, after which the population begins to grow again, though more slowly.

In general, there is perhaps no reason to doubt that these figures are a fair reflection of population movements. However, thereafter there is a major problem using the statistical data relating to the population census for anything more than the most general of conclusions. One of the aims of almost any village or community is to climb the administrative scale, while the actual confirmation of such a change in status is partially dependent upon political, or bureaucratic good-will, it also is influenced by population. For this reason, many of those who have migrated do not actually change their place of registration when they leave the village. If a village senses that it may be on the brink of becoming a municipality, they send word to their former neighbours who then travel back to their natal settlement a few days before the census and show themselves on the appropriate day. In this way, a settlement with no more than a few hundred members may officially be registered as having several thousand. This would admittedly be an exceptional case, though by no means unknown.

The problem, then, with using any such census figures is that it is difficult to distinguish from genuine cases of rising population and those artificially boosted. In travelling around the sub-province, it appears that all the Alevi villages are shrinking, and that some Sunni villages are converting themselves into flourishing towns. This is supported by the official statistics. The Sunni village population follows the trend already established; a steep rise until 1975, followed by a fall and a subsequent rise until, according to the figures, the Sunni population is now as great as it has ever been. On the other hand, the Alevi population begins to fall as early as 1970. The fall then steepens so much that almost half the remaining Alevis appear to have migrated from the sub-province between 1980 and 1990, so that from approximately 20 per cent of its overall population, they fall to less than 10 per cent. This statistical support of my more qualitative impression is welcome. However, the difficulty of ensuring that the figures are accurate means that they can only be taken as a confirming indication, and are not appropriate for precise statistical manipulation. This means that I believe my contention that more Alevis than Sunnis are moving to the towns is correct, but it will perhaps need a dedicated demographic survey conducted independently of local interest groups to prove this conclusively.

Patronage and politics

Turning to the political voting figures, here there is a little more reliability. They cannot be used to extrapolate population statistics because, just as for the census, people often travel back to their natal villages to vote. However, they do appear to be honestly conducted for the most part, and therefore they do largely reflect the political orientation of the community concerned. Further,

because Alevis and Sunnis live largely separately, it is possible to gain a fairly accurate impression of the way that the rural population of the sub-province have voted by sect over time.

Specifically, the Prime Ministry Institute of Statistics in Ankara provides detailed general election figures for the sub-province since 1961, and by village since 1965. These show (Appendix 4) that almost every political party standing nationally has also provided candidates for the province, to whose votes the sub-province votes are counted and usually the vote is split among them. Only once has the voting in the province been almost unanimous, in 1969. Then a man from one of the sub-province villages stood for parliament as an independent candidate. The votes he won were enough to secure him a place in the assembly.

It would seem that Sunni and Alevi voters in the sub-province combined together on this one occasion because there was a clear chance that if they did so their man was going to win. In the absence of such a dominating figure, the villagers rely on networks built up with a party over a number of years. National political parties retain offices in the sub-province, making speeches and campaigning on behalf of their policies. Those who support them work with each other to apply pressure to the administration and to make friends within it, hoping that their loyalty towards each other will one day be rewarded by their party's control of central government, by-passing their rivals in the sub-province and giving direct access at last to the wealth and power distributed from Ankara.

If we assess the national election results from 1965 until 1999 according to Alevi and Sunni villages, we find indeed that the most significant divide in politics nationally, that between parties associated with the left, *sol*, and the right, *sağ*, is reflected in the way the sects cast their votes. This division reaches its peak in the most hotly contested election of all, that in 1977, when no less than 97 per cent of the Alevi vote went to the Republican People's Party, the *CHP*. Albeit slightly less clearly, this ideological orientation continues over time, so that between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of the Alevi vote in any one election usually goes to the left-wing party or parties of that time. Contrariwise, markedly fewer Sunni votes go to the left-wing parties, a tendency that has continued and accentuated over time. Indeed, in the 1999 general election, the Sunni villages counted for only 2 per cent of the *CHP* vote.

One conclusion we can draw is that throughout the period in question, the local division between Alevis and Sunnis expresses itself through their adherence to large national political parties which do not have an explicitly sectarian policy; that is, Alevi and Sunni usually subordinate their religious identity within the greater left/right division of Turkish politics as a whole when it comes to voting practices. There are two exceptions. First, a proportion of the Sunni vote within the sub-province consistently goes to an ostensibly orthodox religious party (and therefore anti-Alevi) such as the *MSP* (National Salvation Party), the *RP* (Welfare Party) or the *FP* (Virtue Party), a trend that has even strengthened over time. Second, the Unity Party (*BP*), which split the Alevi vote in 1969 and

1973, was led by Alevi religious leaders from Hacibektaş town. It was therefore a concerted effort by the Alevi population to gain political power. It was short-lived. Unable to collect enough votes nationally to gain more than a few seats, it collapsed and lost its support when its representatives formed part of a coalition which included right-wing religious parties in the late 1970s.

In the sub-province (and frequently in Turkey as a whole), a man conducts business, official and otherwise, with those he knows best.⁴ Knowing this, active men from every village try to create links with the officials in the centre. Not all villagers are comfortable with the higher status of the officials, but those who are may visit a dozen or more acquaintances in their offices and shops in succession, drinking a glass of tea in each, in part simply renewing their acquaintance, but also exchanging news on how to achieve a certain task and ascertaining whether the other has a friend who might be able to help a particular project along. Such links are important in daily life, not just for special favours. Contact with the state bureaucracy is inevitable, interaction with it lightened enormously by knowing people and being familiar to officials; a teacher one knows well can be persuaded to pass an inadequate child in a school exam, a doctor to give preferential treatment, the head of the *jandarma* not to press charges, the forest watchman to ignore a conspicuous new fence cut from forbidden pine and the cooperative bank manager not to press for repayment.

The number and level of contacts a village achieves are in part due to the personalities involved in negotiating for them, but any encounter is shaped by the protagonists' mutual assessment of one another; a man calculates the other's relation to himself with regard to wealth, rank, kin, contacts, sect, mutual friends and political party. The most pervasive of these factors is political party. That politics should be so important is partly due to the mechanics of the election system, wherein political parties reward their loyal, local supporters with better access to state services when their party wins, and place them in the most attractive posts. Thus the party in power has a direct and immediate influence on the actions of those who staff the government administration and on who receives the services they distribute.

Overall, the secular left, the side chosen by the Alevis has not enjoyed a majority government since the onset of free elections in 1950. Consequently, from the point of view of patronage, the Sunnis enjoy a more comfortable relationship with the authorities in the centre than the Alevis. This is shown most simply by the fact that five Sunni villages had received municipality status by 1990. These five villages are now among the largest in the sub-province. The Alevi villagers with whom I lived were able to obtain extensive irrigation channels and a middle school when Bülent Ecevit was in power in the late 1970s. However, during my stay in the village, after many years of rule by the Motherland Party, they felt that they had few friends in power to turn to to fill vacancies in their schools when teachers left, or to help them gain a doctor, automatic telephone, or gravel for their roads.

In spite of these difficulties, the fact that the Alevis in the sub-province have

been such active members of the secular left in its different incarnations means that they have not been totally excluded from the infrastructure that is modernising the countryside. Not just in the late 1970s, but also in the 1990s, national government has been shared between left and right. Further, the Republican position adopted by the bulk of the villagers is indeed a mainstream position. Emphasising their Republic credentials is one means by which they have been able to maintain and pursue close contacts with the administration, ensuring that even if they may lose to political opponents in the short term, ultimately they do gain their share of the services that are provided by the administration. This high level of integration became particularly clear in the decade subsequent to my stay in Susesi, that is between 1990 and 2000. Then, the state decided to award three Alevi villages in the sub-province municipality status for the first time. This in turn provided an asphalted road, enhanced transport facilities, a properly maintained school and new telephone exchanges.

It is sometimes suggested by commentators that politics in Turkey is merely a matter of patronage, that ideology or belief play little part in a person's or a community's political orientation. In fact, this does not seem to be the case in any straightforward way. Rather, in Turkey as a whole, a number of quite markedly different understandings of the way the nation should move forward have emerged. These have coalesced broadly around two respective positions that are the mirror image of each other: in one the voter favours the state's support of religion but liberal measures in the field of economics, as is illustrated by the policies pursued by the late President Özal. In the other, the voter wishes for state to be involved less in the field of religion, but regards its at least partial control of the economy as being essential for material progress. In the sub-province, rival groups within the Sunni villages tend to express their differences with each other by voting for different parties that nevertheless broadly remain the first option. The Alevis, however, remain broadly convinced of the latter option. Here, then, political orientation reflects quite genuinely the emergence of different conceptions of modernity. Both are possible positions to adopt within the framework of the Republic. Though one is more successful than the other, neither position can be reduced purely to patronage. It is to investigate this further that we turn now to first a more detailed description of the Sunni villages, then finally to Susesi itself, and a detailed consideration of the Alevi ethnography.

3

THE SUNNI VILLAGES

A model of rural integration

In Chapter 1, I suggested that the Sunni village population in the area is maintaining itself overall, but that some of their villages are growing larger, others smaller. I did not examine how it is that they have the potential to grow. The initial question in this chapter is therefore, 'How is it that some Sunni villages are able to survive and even expand as they come in increasing contact with the state and the outside world?'

Sirman has also studied this question. After examining a Sunni cotton-producing village in Söke, in the west of Turkey, she concludes:

Extension of roads, education and electrification especially in the west of Turkey has helped the integration of these communities into the social, economic and cultural life of the nation as a whole. Contrary to the experience of other similar communities in Turkey where change has produced massive upheavals . . . transition to commodity production in the Söke region has been rather smooth and has not destroyed the fabric of social relations within the community.¹

The argument by which Sirman reaches this conclusion is detailed and convincing; she explains that the household is able to take up cotton production without the relations of authority within it breaking down, that a complicated network of social and economic interaction between households maintains cohesion in the community and that the plenty resulting from their success ensures the village retains its population.

Like Sirman, we are also interested in investigating how it is that village communities are able to survive and expand, but our emphasis is different. Whereas Sirman conceives life in the village communities greatly in terms of how it reacts to changing economic conditions, we are interested also in why many Sunni men should continue to believe, why they should want the state to support the practice of their religion, and what enables the state to accommodate their desire. It is only by explaining these connections that we can understand why the Alevi continue to feel themselves a religious minority discriminated against by a majority for whom religion remains an integral part of social life.

The chapter has a second aim, this time on a more abstract level. In later chapters, I shall describe the ways in which the Alevi villages are changing. Underlying the explanation I shall put forward is the proposal that lack of political success is not enough to explain the difficulties faced by their communities, but that the Alevi social organisation, their very way of life, encounters particular difficulties as it interacts with the changing conditions of the sub-province. For this to be a verifiable theory we need to be able to conceive of a way of life which is more compatible with modernisation than the Alevi villages appear to be. The Sunni villages provide that alternative model.

The Sunni villages and the state

In its interaction with the sub-province the state has two priorities: to keep order and to teach its inhabitants to be responsible citizens of the nation.² To fulfil this task it has various means at its disposal; it is the sole body permitted to supply education qualifications or to teach Islam. It is the sole permissible legal authority. It monopolises violence. It conscripts all males for eighteen months in the armed forces. It controls the radio and television, even in the case of the private sector, where a channel may be closed down or its broadcasts suspended. It labels people; every citizen must carry an identity card, and every settlement has a place in the government administrative scale.

A state must be authoritarian, otherwise it cannot claim the right to judge others, but states vary in the care, and the severity, with which they interact with their citizens. The attitude of the Turkish state is one of benevolent, often rather unthinking, paternalism. Rural communities, for example, may largely run their own affairs, so long as they do not break any rules in blatant fashion and so long as disputes do not lead to bloodshed.

This approach is reflected in a pamphlet published by the state planning office in which Tuğ, its author, claims that the state desires that a settlement be absorbed into the administrative scale in a manner as far as possible congruent with the indigenous organisation of the community:

Village administration thus is at the base of the local administration . . . The individuals come together almost with natural ties . . . these societies are not created by the government, but a social fact is given a legal status, i.e. they are administrative establishments getting their force from law.³

All the land and all the settlements within the sub-province are defined by the state as being part of one village or another and the boundaries between one village and the next noted and approved.⁴ The state declares pasture, woods and scrub within the boundary a collective good. The villagers are not permitted to sell such land, fell trees growing on it, nor open fields within it, but only they may use it and all villagers are given equal rights to do so. Services, such as the

cooperative bank, the health centre or the school, which the state awards to the village, it expects to be constructed on land donated by the villagers. The state also defines collective property, as it does the land on which the mosque and cemetery are built.

All the Sunni villages I visited, heard of or saw at a distance, unless prevented by the lie of the land, consist of a single group of patrilineal, patrilocal households clustered together in the centre of the village territory, in the midst of which is a mosque.⁵ I would estimate an average-sized village as having between 70 and 120 households, each usually containing two or three generations. Nearly all households own some fields on one side of the village and some on the other. All the villages I visited or enquired of have a single rotation cycle; the villagers sow wheat or barley collectively on one side of the territory owned by households from the village, and then, the next year, on the other side. There are no sharp internal divisions within the village; villagers may regard themselves as coming from different village quarters, but to come from a particular quarter gives no rights over any of the land or other resources.

We can see several ways in which Tuğ's claim that a 'social fact is given a legal status' is vindicated. The villagers themselves make a distinction between land which is owned by a household and land which is not. Ploughed land is regarded as being the property of individual households, land which is not yet ploughed up as being available for exploitation by any man.⁶ The state declares only unploughed land collective property. Thus, though it imposes a distinction between collective and individual property rights, it does not disrupt the existing pattern of ownership,⁷ but merely prevents any further extension of individual holdings.

In differentiating between individual land and collective land which must be used by all, the state mirrors existing agricultural practice. Households usually tend their own fields and gardens. They usually use their own labour and, if aided by a neighbour, they reciprocate by working for that neighbour on his or her land.⁸ Sheep, goats and bullocks are grazed by the whole settlement as one flock on unopened land within the village boundary, supervised by a shepherd paid for by donations in cash or kind from every household in the village. Indeed, by protecting this collective pasture against further incursion, the state enables the traditional mixed pastoral/agricultural economy of the village to survive when otherwise it would have been taken over by a few individuals with the power to plough over all the land.⁹ In turn, this contributes to the cohesion of life in the village as a whole; the oscillation between households concentrating on their individual holdings but on occasion working collectively is reflected in many aspects of the social organisation and ritual of the village.

Further, the category 'village' is imposed on a single settlement with no internal divisions; the village boundary is at once the social, economic and territorial boundary of the community and the legal boundary given to it by the state.¹⁰ The *muhtar*, head man, whom every village is compelled to elect, and whose main function is to act as a link between the authorities and the villagers,

represents only one community and the services which the state gives the villagers may be shared out by all without claims of priority by one part of the community or another.

Of course, the interaction between the state and villages extends beyond one of boundary designation and property rights, and to explore this I describe the internal life of the villages in more detail below. Before doing so, two general points. The Sunni settlements have adopted a religion which has been associated with the urban government of the country for centuries. Being also sedentary, they have deprived themselves of the traditional means of opposing the central authority in Islamic lands. They are neither tribal nor do they differ in sect from those that govern them. Their very lifestyle implies obedience to the central authority of the state, even if they do not always agree with its actions.

Also, the state is at once intrusive and creative in the way it interacts with the villages. It is intrusive in the property and land rights it imposes on the communities but it is creative in that, by naming a settlement as village, municipality or administrative centre, it gives people a location and a territorial base legitimated by the universal authority of the state. Thus, Tunçdelik, another official of the state planning office, writes of the state-approved collective land as 'real estate [which] constitutes the very *existence* of a village' (my emphasis).¹¹ In a Sunni village, where the community boundary is the same as the legal boundary and the state-approved collective land, shared freely by all, provided a focal point by the village mosque, the institutions of the society are already inextricably bound up with the authority of the state. Just as the villagers have no pretensions to a tribal life, with its associations of rebellion and independent existence, and as they have accepted Sunni Islam with its connotations of urban authority, so they have based the very existence of their settlements on criteria given to them by the state and rely on them for the community's continuing viability. The process described in Chapter 1 by which the villagers compete to make the state's institutions play an ever greater part in people's lives as they modernise is accordingly not an innovation but an intensification of already existing relations of subordination and affiliation between state and Sunni villager.

Rank and authority in the Sunni villages

The most important principle of interaction between people in Sunni villages may be stated as follows: no man has the right to dominate any other by virtue of his birth, but all women are subordinate to all men.¹² In addition, though the exact relation between any individuals is affected by factors such as personality, wealth and worldly experience, their behaviour towards each other is greatly constrained according to the closeness of the kinship relation between them and their respective sex and age.¹³

When a man is young he comes under the immediate control of his parents. As he grows older, he pays less heed to his mother, but remains under the

authority of his father and other senior male relatives. After his father is dead, he has no immediate master, and may compete much more freely with other men of the village, though in appearances at least he is expected to defer to those men who are older than himself.

A girl is also controlled first of all by her parents. When she marries she becomes the responsibility of her husband. She remains under his control until she becomes a widow, when she may enjoy a greater degree of freedom. At any time, though, she remains constrained by male relatives and the other men of the settlement, all of whom feel they have the right to control her behaviour.¹⁴ This pattern of authority is reflected in the way the public spaces are used. If a man meets a woman on the path, then she stands back and lets him pass, likewise if they find themselves going through a door together. If two men pass each other, they exchange a greeting *aleyküm selam* but only exceptionally is a woman offered a 'selam' by men; usually they are ignored. Women avoid the central areas of the village such as the coffee-house or the main square. Only if they are accompanied by a man is their presence in the open accepted as legitimate. The man need not be her husband, but should be one who can claim the right to control her in that context, such as her elder brother.¹⁵

A similar combination of rights and spheres of control operates in the household. Where practical, the household's head is the oldest male. He expects his wife, children and their children to obey him. Though the course taken by any one household may be subject to various degrees of negotiation between its members, ultimately he has the authority to sell the household fields and to decide the way the money of the household shall be channelled.

The same authority pattern appears in the division of labour; women occupy themselves with the tasks involving the internal running of the household, men those to do with the external; men work in the household's fields and go to market, women tend its garden, milk the sheep and cattle, fashion cakes of dung for fuel, look after children, and prepare and serve the food.¹⁶ Thus, the household may be conceived as a unit of production and consumption maintaining itself through mutual cooperation but under the man's sway. Men themselves gain much of their status and weight in the community through possessing a wife and fields.¹⁷ Many, where necessary, are prepared to defend their rights to such control with violence.¹⁸

Disputes in the village and daily interaction

In daily interaction, where possible, a person avoids contradicting another directly. To do so may be taken as a declaration of hostility, or of defiance. Disagreement is expressed rather through the degree of enthusiasm with which one accepts the other's proposal, or simply by behaving as one wishes but ensuring that on the surface at least the relations of authority and subordination outlined above are respected.¹⁹

The concern with not openly confronting people also appears in the way

disputes are conducted. If a person is determined to show their displeasure with another the usual way to do this is to become *küs*, 'not-speaking terms'. *Küs* has various degrees of intensity. If a person is extremely angry he or she may avoid the other as much as possible. The situation may then become very tense and a chance meeting might lead to confrontation, exchange of insults and violence. If less angry, *küs* may mean no more than going about one's daily life, making clear one's disapproval by not addressing the other person directly.²⁰

A state of *küs* between two individuals may spread, usually following the social divisions of the community.²¹ Thus, if two people who have argued come from different households, then the households may collectively become *küs*, if very serious, the patrilineage as a whole may become drawn in to the dispute so that a number of households become on not-speaking terms with each other. If a village has argued with another, then all its members may become *küs* with the other.

Solving disputes

There is no indigenous, codified law nor are there tribunals within the village through which disputes may be brought to a close, or blame apportioned. Occasionally, an older person or friend of disputants may intervene and persuade them they should be at peace. The possibility of a reconciliation varies according to the seriousness of the quarrel. If an argument has led to blood being shed, it is unlikely that the intercession of friends, neighbours or relatives is effective. In that case, the dispute may become a blood feud, and simmer for years, the quarrel occasionally flaring up into violence, as is described in the account of the on-running feud below.²²

Lineages

There is a debate among those who have worked in Anatolian villages (though, curiously, I do not think that it has reached print), on how significant lineages are in Sunni communities.²³ In the sub-province, they appear to operate as described in Stirling's early (1951, 1964) work. There are a number of lineages in each village, but no village regards itself as coming from a single ancestor. There is no segmentary lineage organisation in which each lineage has a clear place with relation to each other on a mutual scale of descent, and therefore a fight between two lineages draws in others, obliged to fight by their conception of common ancestry. However, men do exchange favours such as labour or goods more closely with their patrilineal relatives than with other people of the village and may turn to them for help at elections or support in times of conflict.

A dispute is most likely to become violent if it is over women or land; such disputes often also involve the lineage.²⁴ For example, when visiting a

neighbouring village I was told that the community divided in 1984 before the local elections around two lineages, one claiming to support DYP, the other ANAP. The incumbent lost his post. Still aggrieved some years later, he made insulting remarks concerning the winning man's daughter. The brother of the winning man met the previous head man on a path, and after an argument shot and killed him. The respective lineages were still *küs*.

The following account is from the village I visited on first arriving in the sub-province. I collected it perhaps ten months after the last murder had taken place and talked for several days to the villagers concerned in the feud:

Account 3.1

Idris went to serve his period of conscription in the army. On his return he found his wife had had a boy by another man. Wanting to avoid trouble and being humiliated, he went to Istanbul and found work in a construction site. He died almost immediately in an accident. His brother was therefore expected to marry his widow, who had given birth to several of Idris' children before he had gone into the army. To clean his honour he shot and killed the man who was the lover of his dead brother's wife and then married her. He went to jail for twelve years.

On coming back he was tending his flocks one day and was shot dead by the brother of the man he had killed. This man, Cemalettin, in turn went to jail.

On returning, Cemalettin was very nervous and began to drink. One day he was in the coffee-house and drew his pistol while arguing. He did this to scare his enemies, not to use it, but his daughter stepped in between her father and his opponent and by accident she was shot in the hand. Some time later, he was in the habit of going to stay in a solitary house near the summer pastures, where his friends would come and see him and drink. On his return during the winter he passed a flooded stream on the outskirts of the village. A woman was in danger in her house so he waded into the water to help her. As he did so he forgot to be on his guard. The son of the man he had killed had been following him for a week and, seeing he was not paying attention, shot him in the back of the neck. The murderer ran and hid in another village. When learning by telephone the man was really dead he came back and gave himself up to the gendarmes.

The men whose families are fighting come from different lineages. Cemalettin's is the smaller of the two. The two lineages have long avoided taking paths where they might meet each other, and avoid visiting houses where they might find members of the other present. The smaller lineage is finding life very difficult in the village, and most of its households have moved to Istanbul.

In the next example, I was visiting the village concerned at the time of the dispute, and watched the arrival of the gendarmes. I collected the details of the story over the next few days:

Account 3.2

There was a widow and a man whose wife had lately died. He wanted to marry the woman, and pressed her to do so, but she refused. He persisted, and finally grabbed and tried to take away a woman who was sitting by the side of the widow, thinking that it was her.

On this, the men of the woman he had grabbed beat him up and he went to hospital. His son came from Istanbul. Two days later the assaulted woman's brother ran into the son of the refused man. A scuffle ensued. The brother was hit on the head with an axe and taken to hospital in the province centre. After this a general fight took place between the two lineages concerned, in the centre of the village. The gendarmes arrived from the next village, where they were stationed, stopped the fight and took people away.

Social control and ideology

Mardin in an early article entitled 'Opposition and Control in Turkey' writes: 'Villagers are brought to heel by the community, not by the enforcement of explicit norms known and applied by the village council,²⁵ but by the subterranean workings of the "grapevine".²⁶ His conclusion appears to remain valid. No researcher has found organised dispute-settling mechanisms indigenous to Sunni sedentary communities, and Mardin's conclusion that, in their absence, the influence of neighbours' checking and watching is important in the way that people's actions are constrained has been reiterated by Delaney and Stirling.²⁷ However, the sanction of peers in controlling behaviour interacts with many others, including those concrete ones, such as economic compulsion, and others less tangible, such as respect, love, loyalty and belief which operate partly as ideals of conduct instilled in infancy and are continually reaffirmed, recreated or changed in everyday life.

It is here the advantage of making a comparison between the Alevi and Sunni communities becomes clear. We shall find that though spheres of authority within households, and the means of production, are similar in both Alevi and Sunni villages, they are discernibly different in the means by which they retain order in their communities. Thus, though we cannot be sure that we have found more than a tiny part of the mechanisms which ensure social control in a community, we can point out where the Sunni differs from the Alevi. Ultimately I shall argue that the fact that they do differ in this way turns out to be of the utmost significance, because their respective ways of achieving order are associated with a different philosophy of life, and it is by virtue of the accumulated

impact of these differences that the two communities react differently when faced with the modern world.

Religion

Though concerned with social control, in her research Sirman does not mention the part played by religion at all. It is one of the cornerstones of social anthropology that a coherent ideology subsumed under the rubric 'religion' supports the existing power relations within the community, so its omission is puzzling. It is possible, though, that the economic plenty of the region has rendered the power of religion as a controlling cohesive force less evident.²⁸

In the sub-province, I found that most Sunni men affirm that they are believers, and are proud of being Muslim, *Müslüman*.²⁹ Though men vary greatly in the details of their belief, they possess a common cosmology. They assume Allah to be omnipotent and omniscient. Allah judges a person after their death, and according to His wish he sends them to heaven (*cennet*) or hell (*cehennem*). Allah makes His decision by evaluating whether they have behaved appropriately in this life, the guidelines for which He has laid down in the Koran, dictated to His last prophet, Muhammed. Though the Kuran (and the sayings, *hadis*, of *Muhammed*) hold the key to correct conduct, God's desire of men may be summarised in the form of five conditions; the famous 'pillars' of Islam: (a) believe in the one God; (b) fast during the *Ramazán*; (c) make the pilgrimage to Mecca; (d) pray five times a day; and (e) pay alms. Men's adherence to these rules varies, but all accept that these are the ideal rules of life for a believing Muslim.

All the believers I spoke to maintained that there are further strictures on conduct which is permissible in God's eyes and that which is not. To behave according to the precepts of Islam is *sevap*, favourable, to eat food which is acceptable according to Holy Law is *helal*, an action carried out according to the teachings of Islam is *hayırlı*, auspicious. Breaking religious prescriptions is subject to various degrees of fault. *Haram* are those things expressly forbidden by Islamic law. *Günah*, translatable as our 'sin', are those things or actions disapproved of by God. Men vary according to what they regard as being *günah*. It is characteristic, though, that a man justifies his conclusions by claiming that the position he extols is written in the Koran.

In the Sunni villages, Islam plays a definite role in perpetuating men's domination of women. The men I spoke to regarded it *günah*, sinful, for a woman not to wear a headscarf and *günah* for her to disobey her husband, and her body was *haram* to other men.³⁰ Islam functions in a different way with regard to relations between men. While women are told they are inferior,³¹ and their subordination is endorsed by religion, any man can be as holy as any other by fulfilling the ritual demands made on him by God. Thus the equal distribution of temporal power among men in the village, where none is permitted to judge another but all may judge women, is paralleled in its religious philosophy.

The same two principles also operate at the village level. Mosque-going is not held to be absolutely necessary unless on one of the two religious festivals³² of the year, but most men attend the Friday noon service and *iftar*, the prayers held daily after the break of fast during *Ramazan*. Women, however, are not permitted in the mosque except at *Ramazan*, and only then curtained off, out of sight of the men. The mosque ceremony, almost exclusively male, ensures those who hold authority and power in the community also dominate access to the ideal place of worship, while the exhilaration of worshipping together strengthens ties and minimises the inequalities between them.³³

Other constraints in the hierarchy of power

Though Islam is the most important control on people's actions, it is not the only one.³⁴ A man justifies his right to control women also by invoking honour, *namus*. *Namus* supports an ideal of masculinity which demands an aggressive attitude towards the world, according to which an insult is responded to with an insult and a blow with a blow. *Namus* is lost if a man's wife is unfaithful, or if he fails to stand up for himself as befits a man. We see *namus* operating in the above account of the feud, where the man who was reluctant to murder his wife's lover left the village, while his brother, before he was prepared to marry the woman, now widowed, felt obliged to murder her lover.

Another conceptual constraint is respect, *saygi*. Within the sexes a person must show *saygi* to one older than him or herself, and a wife must show *saygi* to her husband. A woman demonstrates *saygi* by not interrupting her husband when he is speaking, not contradicting his assertions, not leaving his presence without permission and by obeying his wishes. *Saygi* does not rest explicitly on a religious sanction, but rather is an acknowledgement of the authority to which the husband and head of the household is due. A third sanction is *ayıp*, shameful. For a woman to run is *ayıp*, for a woman to walk across the open spaces of the village in front of the tea-house is *ayıp*, to disobey one's husband is *ayıp*. To say '*ayıp*' to another is to imply that they have seriously transgressed a social norm but it too has no explicit religious justification.

Thus women's inferiority is reinforced through a number of interlocking concepts, which, when combined with the physical circumstances of their position, place them in a predicament from which it is extremely difficult to escape. If a woman denies the right of religion (with the accusations of *günah* that this may give rise to) to control her, she still has to overcome the social norm, breaking which is *ayıp*, to obey her husband, and deny his right (which he regards as vital to his *namus*) to sole access over her. If she overcomes this, she has to overcome the respect (*saygi*) owing to her husband instilled over years of upbringing. Even if she denies all this, she has to acknowledge the obedience due to his superior physical strength or face a beating. If she decides to flee, she has no experience of the towns and nowhere to go if she runs there.³⁵

The relationship between older and younger men is much less clear-cut, and

full of tension. For a man, absolute submission to the will of another, such as a man should give to his father, is a stage of their life that they must go through on the road to full adulthood. It does not have the absolute quality of women's inferiority to men. A father's control over his sons must always remain a delicate balance between encouraging them to make an exception for their father, and teaching them to behave as a man should, that is, be answerable to no other man. Thus, fathers claim that they should be shown respect, that it is shameful that a son should disobey his father, and they may also threaten disinheritance or refuse to support a son's marriage plans, but their authority is increasingly brought into question as the youths mature.³⁶

Diverse beliefs among men

I estimate, very roughly, that perhaps up to 20 per cent of men³⁷ may be regarded as actively Muslim. Of the remainder, I would suggest that 10 per cent are indifferent or hostile to religion, and the rest fall into the middle category of believers, extreme in neither way.³⁸ In the following paragraphs I shall examine the way village life accommodates men of different beliefs, but in order to do so I offer first a brief description of village ritual life.

Ritual cycle in a Sunni Anatolian village

Ritual in a Sunni village can be seen partly in Durkheimian, partly in Van Genepian terms. The path on which a man embarks by adhering to the tenets of religion is the auspicious, *hayırlı*, side of a cosmology which also includes its sinful, *günah* or forbidden, *haram* side. Accepting this path leads the believer into rituals marking the passing of each day by virtue of the five prayers, each week through the Friday sermon at the mosque, each year through the *Ramazan* fast, religious holidays and feast of sacrifice, and the passage of life itself by virtue of circumcision in youth, marriage, pilgrimage to Mecca in old age and funeral in death.³⁹ In short, the natural order of the world is paralleled by the community holding collective rituals both to mark its revolving and the passage of individuals through it; these rituals are subsumed under the rubric 'religion'.

The rituals vary in the extent to which their conduct is defined. There is only one permissible way to perform a mosque ceremony, that taught by the state, and no villager suggests that there may be an alternative to it. Likewise the rules of *Ramazan* are clear and inviolate. Marriage, circumcision, engagements and the two annual religious festivals are not so well defined. There is no *a priori* assumption of the festivities which may accompany them, they are a part of the overall life of the community which is open to argument and debate. The significance of this point becomes clear below.⁴⁰

Those who believe less

No extravagant displays of faith are demanded of men. If a man does not explicitly question the existence of God, attends the mosque on Fridays (if he is seen in its vicinity at the time of prayer), and pays lip service to the rituals of religion, then his disbelief needs little discommode him. For example, if a man wishes to ignore the fast he may go to a restaurant and eat; it is important only that he is not seen doing so.⁴¹ This explains why, during the *Ramazan*, the Alevi restaurants in the sub-province centre are filled by Sunni men (Chapter 2), where they are likely to be seen only by men who, like themselves, are breaking the fast. Likewise, all but one of the Sunni restaurants have back rooms, at which alcohol may be consumed out of the public eye. Factors similar to those which we have seen operating already in the sections describing disputes in the village; the reluctance to confront others directly or a desire to avoid the condemnation of his fellows, impede a man from openly damning religion, but he is able to avoid its more stringent requirements quite easily.

Those who believe strongly

Those who are active believers differ most conspicuously from men who are sceptical in that they believe they have the right to impose their philosophy of life on others. No man has quite the same attitude towards the world, but those who believe strongly share many of the following characteristics: they emphasise the importance of the five conditions of Islam. Whereas most men revere the *Kuran*, those who are aggressively religious proclaim that it is the source of all knowledge that the world possesses or ever shall possess, and that all books in existence stem directly from it. They invoke the name of God as frequently as possible, for example saying, *Elhamdülillah* or *Allah çok şükür* (Praise be to God). They insist more strongly than other men on the seclusion of women. They frequently appear to be afraid of women's evil qualities or they stress that they are untrustworthy. I occasionally heard such men say *kadın şeytandır*, 'Women are devils', and that women should be buried more deeply in the ground than men.

In the village, few men drink wine, but most are prepared to drink *rakı* claiming that it is only wine that the Prophet forbade. Men who believe strongly eschew all alcohol, claiming that it is *günah*. Equally, such men protest that dance is *günah*, some adding that it is so because it gives rise to *şeyvet*, sexual excitement. Such men do not laugh, do not speak loudly, shout or move hastily but are careful to be as considered as possible in all their movements. Often, they take great care over their appearance and wear a suit and a collarless shirt, buttoned up at the neck. Many are bearded and carry *tesbih*, rosaries.⁴²

We may note immediately that from the point of view of the village organisation, there is an important symmetry. Strong believers, in their insistence that women should be separate from and inferior to men, support the existing social

order. Men who do not believe strongly (successful imposition of whose views might threaten the social order) are not so intrusive, and hesitate to express their views.⁴³

That is not to say that there is no quarrel between those with different degrees of belief. Those who believe strongly do argue with those who are less committed. But when they do, it is over the rituals I mention above as being open to debate. For example, marriage. Men who believe strongly often attempt to ban Alevi musicians from their villages, substituting a different type of wedding ceremony in their stead. They may use the *müezzîn* (caller to prayer) of the local mosque in place of music, asking him to intone *ilâhîs*, sombre religious hymns. Whichever ceremony ultimately is performed, the debate is not over the presence of the mosque and the subordination of women, but whether religion should spread out of the acknowledged religious sphere to dominate all ritual life. Men who are not strong believers are prepared to divide their lives into compartments,⁴⁴ sometimes sacred, sometimes less so, men who are strong believers desire that Islam should underpin all men's existence all of the time, few men reject the sacred entirely; because the shared conception of the sacred is congruent with the social order, the social order itself is not threatened.

The mosque and the brotherhoods

In the villages, Islam is officially represented by the mosque *imam* who is a civil servant. He calls the village to prayer five times a day, and leads services in the mosque. He performs *nikah* to solemnise marriages, presides over burial services and often runs a *Kuran* course from the mosque for children of primary school age. He is not a free agent of religion, rather an official administrator of religion's practice and extremely limited as to the doctrines he may pursue. For example, he has no authority to preach *ex tempore*. Each week a sermon which has been sent by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Ankara via the *müftü* offices in the sub-province centre arrives in the village, which he must read out to the congregation. I only heard two sermons,⁴⁵ but these emphasised the importance of belief to the individual, the importance of respecting the secular basis of the law of the land and the role of the mosque in fostering a collective spirit in the community.

Those men who believe strongly that Islam should be practised often say that the state is not religious enough. The expression they use is 'the government is without religion', *bükümet dînsiz*. While men differ in the way that they may enlarge upon this phrase, in general most mean that the state does not support Islam sufficiently, and above all that it does not employ the *şeriat*. These men are often members of *tarikât*, Islamic brotherhoods. Though the *tarikât* are officially still proscribed, having been banned at the beginning of the Republic, they appear active to varying degrees in most Sunni villages in the sub-province, the most prominent being the *Süleymancı*. Some men claimed to be *Nurcus*, followers of Said-i Nursi.⁴⁶

I was puzzled for a long time why the *tarikats* should be prevalent. Neither the *Süleymançıs* nor the *Nurçus* seem to play a mediating role.⁴⁷ I think the answer, in part, is that at their base lie extensive networks of patron–client relations. The *Süleymançı tarikat* in the sub-province is based in a hostel, *yurt*, which provides food and lodging to poor boys who would otherwise be forced to give up formal education.⁴⁸ The boys are encouraged to study at the state schools and pass the examinations which lead to the civil service. When a graduate is established, he is expected to help the work of the *tarikat*. The building of a second hostel in the sub-province was coordinated by a successful professional who was himself brought up in a *Süleymançı* hostel. When I visited the hostel being built, the workers employed were proud to explain that they were giving their services for nothing, and took me to each different part of the building, explaining the different places that the materials had been sent from, as gifts, some from as far away as Ankara and Samsun, and boasted of the extent of their contacts all over Turkey.

If this interpretation is correct, the *tarikats* function as *éminences grises*, manipulating and negotiating for their members, extolling a philosophy which is outside that officially condoned and existing just under the surface of everyday life. To this extent, they are similar to political parties in that they act as organisations with the aim of being able to assert their members' philosophy of life to the central authorities, and they often act in coordination with them. In the sub-province, the brotherhoods support a party as a block; invariably one of the right-wing ones such as the DYP, RP or ANAP.⁴⁹ Given the privacy of balloting, it is difficult to obtain exact evidence but the connection became explicit before the local elections in March 1992. In the sub-province, the village in which the *Süleymançıs* are most powerful is also the village which supplied ANAP's candidate in the local elections. When an ANAP member of the Grand National Assembly came to the sub-province centre and made a speech from a coffee-house in support of their candidate, the pupils from the *Süleymançı* hostel were driven into the town and hidden in the middle of the crowd, and I watched as they were told by their masters to applaud, or hiss as the moment required.⁵⁰

The state's priorities

The way the state achieves order in the Sunni villages has already partially become clear. The existence of the village is reinforced by the authority of the state in recognising a village and its traditional agriculture, reliant on the separation between individual land and collective pasture on which the state insists. By administering Islam and controlling the doctrines which are taught, the state impedes the villages from dividing between those who believe intensely (who, if the mosque were under their control, would be able to dominate its teachings and spread their doctrines further) and those who believe less. On the other hand, through supporting the mosque, the *imam* and the Sunni tenets of Islam,

the state endows them with its authority, making it difficult for a man who is sceptical of religion to express his opposition.

More directly, the state's involvement extends into the relations between the people of the village. When a village is made a municipality, a squad of *jan-darma* is billeted within it. Each improvement in the roads leading to the village means that the village can be policed more easily. Villagers themselves now have recourse to the courts where they might previously have attempted to solve a dispute among themselves. Some quarrels, for example when a man wishes to obtain a divorce officially so that he can declare himself free to marry a spouse abroad, can only be satisfactorily dealt with by the central courts. The authority of the state even in Ottoman times (through the *Şeriat* courts) was the only formal way that the villagers could resolve disputes; increasingly it is becoming the only accepted means. However, we may note that the lack of a privileged body of men within the village who might act as mediators means that the gradual shift of responsibility for dispute solving to the state does not disturb the internal hierarchy of men.⁵¹

I have not yet discussed Kemalist doctrine, but a brief mention is necessary to consider further the role of the state in the villages. As I interpret early Republican history, one of the aims (though of course not the only aim) of Atatürk's reforms was to create a set of rituals, myths and symbols which would provide a complete parallel to those of Islam so that from then on a person in modern Turkey, if they so wished, would be able to lead their lives without any need to have recourse to religion.⁵² He pursued this aim with regard to the political and social unit in which people live, the rituals with which they mark the passing of their lives and the means by which the government retains law and order.

One of Atatürk's first acts was to create a Grand National Assembly to replace the sultan as the highest body in the land, in which was vested the sovereignty of the people. Under his guidance, the Grand National Assembly passed decrees replacing Arabic script by the Latin, Islamic law with a combination of the Swiss Civil Law, Italian criminal and German economic codes. Islamic education institutes were closed down and replaced by purely secular schools and universities. Nationhood was buttressed by a systematic emphasis on the pre-Islamic history of Turkey and corresponding lack of interest in the Ottoman and earlier Islamic periods. Anatolian folkdances became regarded as useful symbols of Turkish national identity, taught in schools and performed in processions. Economic and social programmes were less well articulated⁵³ with the notable exception of an explicit ideology that henceforth women were to be regarded as equal to men.⁵⁴

It is often remarked that Kemalism has failed. I do not regard this as a useful judgement. If it was Atatürk's hope that by creating a Turkey in which a person could live free of religion, religion itself would wither away, then clearly he has not succeeded. The decades since the earlier militant secularism of the Republican Party have seen a gradual increase in the amount of money spent by the

government on religious education, on providing *imams* for village mosques, on administering the pilgrimage to Mecca and on publishing works examining the place of Islam in the modern world.⁵⁵ But he has been successful in that the nationalist ethic which he created remains similar today to that formulated in the earliest days of the Republic, and that the reforms he instigated have substantially remained in place. While Kemalism, the religious philosophy, has been a partial success, Kemalism, the source and unifying symbol of national identity, has been a triumph.

This selective success means that any government of Turkey is in a predicament. They cannot scrap the Kemalist base of the Republic because it is so intertwined with the national consciousness, but the moral teachings of the state have broadened and diversified. The state continues to teach that the Republic is based on the secular principles of Atatürk. It continues to respect and display in all public buildings the sayings for which Atatürk is best known but it also acknowledges that the religion of the country is Islam. It teaches through schools and mosques that the moral basis of one's life, *ahlak*, is satisfactorily catered for by Islam, and attempts to show that this is in conformity with Atatürk's life and thought.

We have already discussed the presence of the mosque *imam* who is the most significant provider of government-inspired Islamic sentiment. The main channel through which the Kemalist heritage is inculcated is the schools.⁵⁶ On entering a school one is faced by a bust of Atatürk. The bust stands on a pedestal, which in turn is placed on a square of red carpet marked off by a rope. Above the bust is suspended a saying of Atatürk such as '*Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!*' 'How happy is he or she who says "I am a Turk!"' or '*Ey Türk gençler, öğün, güven, çalış!*' 'Ey Turkish youth, struggle, trust, work!' Suspended next to the bust is a copy of the speech made by Atatürk to celebrate the tenth year of the foundation of the Republic. At the end of each week the pupils assemble outside the school and the Republican flag is raised, to the accompaniment of its pupils singing the national anthem. The school curriculum includes lessons on Republican history, and each text book has a preliminary leaf showing Atatürk's portrait and the first verses of the national anthem.

Among national public holidays are several marking the foundation of the Republic and also several marking Islamic festivals. The onus on organising celebrations on those days which mark the Republic falls on the teachers of the village, who arrange for the children to sing commemorative songs and poetry and to form a procession which then marches in front of the assembled village. I went also to the mosque on the day of *kurban bayramı*. A celebratory sermon in the form of a cassette had been sent by the *müftü* based in the provincial centre, on which he urged that the religious festivals are particularly appropriate occasions for all villagers to go to the mosque.⁵⁷

The same parallel doctrines appear in the school's lessons on morals, *ahlak*. For example, a text book for children in the third year of Middle School, at which time most children would be perhaps fourteen years of age.⁵⁸ After a

full-page picture of the Republican flag over which is printed the national anthem, 'Atatürk's speech to youth' is quoted in full. It begins 'Ey Turkish youth! Your first duty is to the perpetuity, the preservation and the defence of Turkish independence and the Turkish Republic' and continues in like mode. The book itself is divided into ten units; the first describes the *Kuran*, the prophets which lead up to *Muhammed*, and gives an account of the Prophet's life. The second describes the circumstances in which ritual cleansing, prayer, fast and pilgrimage may take place. Successive sections discuss the relation between Islam and secularism (*laiklik*) and describe Muslim ceremonies and special religious days. Later sections emphasise the duty that each person possesses to their fatherland (*vatan*), and outline polite behaviour. A final section illustrates the beauties of Islamic art and architecture.

The existence of the parallel doctrines of Kemalism and Islam, both embodied in the state, each claiming to be able to cater for large parts of a person's philosophical needs, means that there is great flexibility in the position which any individual may take up and still regard themselves as lying within the parameters of the legitimate membership of Republican Turkey. We shall find this of the utmost importance when analysing the political position taken up by the Alevi villages. With regard to the Sunni villages, one should conceive of a spectrum. All villagers wish to modernise. Those believers who are less intense accept that a nation may be modern and secular as Atatürk prescribed, but retain their belief. The position that these men take up has been explored in detail by Richard and Nancy Tapper,⁵⁹ and indeed is similar to the ideals described above in that they are able to conceive of a distinction between secular and a sacred part of their lives. Those who are explicitly sceptical are few, as I have stressed, but these are likely to regard Kemalism as a successful moral and political philosophy as well as a principle on which a state may be governed and be current or former members of the *CHP*.⁶⁰ Strong believers, on the contrary, minimise the secular moral philosophy extolled by Atatürk, lay great stress on Islam, and admire Atatürk almost purely for the victories he achieved, a *gazi*,⁶¹ conqueror for the faith. These people find it most difficult to accept the legitimate authority of the secular government to rule and are likely to be members of a brotherhood.

I have already stated that the state appears to ignore the brotherhoods as long as they do not openly assert their opposition to secular law. The government in power, however, cannot ignore them because it is in part dependent on their votes. The response of those in government to this group appears to be to accommodate their philosophy to some extent. The *ahlak* book described above is typical of the text books used in lessons. However, among other publications which emerge from the Directorate of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and which are sent to schools for their libraries, are books which assert that far from being contrary or opposed to the modern world, Islam in fact has anticipated its inventions, that the discoveries of science merely confirm the revealed and infallible nature of the *Kuran* and wisdom of its tenets. The

attitude of those who run the state, therefore, appears to be that though officially the *tarikats* are illegal, their presence is better tolerated than banned, so among the diversity of the state publications it is better to cater for those who believe intensely in Islam than ignore them all together. Alternatively, and perhaps as well, it may mean simply that those who have won power aided by the *tarikats* groups are now paying back their obligations by letting the organs of the state produce literature which is appropriate to the *tarikats* world-view.⁶²

The village order and Kemalism

The key to the village social order is the egalitarian ideal between men and the subordination of women. Whether a man leans more towards Kemalism or Islam makes little difference to his attitude here; both philosophies are egalitarian and have no truck with those that claim they are privileged by birth. The subordination of women is more complicated in that Kemalism prescribes equal treatment of women. Pupils in state schools are not segregated, the same uniform is worn by both sexes, and girls do not wear headscarfs. Republican inheritance laws demand equal inheritance for women, and they, as well as men, have the right to vote.⁶³ In spite of this, women's place within the village remains markedly inferior. Of course some women do struggle against the authority of men but the multi-tiered nature of the conceptual and physical bind in which women find themselves means that their position has improved only very slowly.⁶⁴ I have seen men manipulate women's votes by simply waiting next to them in the polling booth and checking what they have put inside their voting envelopes. Fathers may use their existing authority over women to try to avoid sending them to school, certainly to prevent them going on to higher education. Inheritance rights are more complicated, and an area where Republican law is in direct contradiction to traditional village life. I have the gravest doubts of the efficacy of the state inheritance law in the sub-province,⁶⁵ but even if women's shares are respected according to Republican Law, Sirman's thesis shows that men may retain the land and property, and pay women their share in movable goods. Their husbands (or whomever the woman is bound to) can then exploit these goods.

The same pattern emerges when one looks at the problem from the wider perspective of the relations between the state and village. Women have little access to the town outside the village, and, unlike men, they are not conscripted. Thus the fund of knowledge about the external world in the village is increasing all the time, and possession of this knowledge becomes more and more important in order to operate in it successfully, but its acquisition is skewed in favour of men.⁶⁶ I stress that I do not wish to deny that women do attempt to gain such rights that they perceive that they are able to, but, in many different ways, the odds are stacked against them succeeding.

The third bond noted in the sketch of village social structure above was that between young men and their fathers. It is among the most frequently made

generalisations on modernisation that younger men are increasingly reluctant to stay under their father's roofs, and the ideal traditional household of three generations is giving way to one of two, a father, his wife and their children.⁶⁷ However, it is unlikely that more than a small proportion of any village ever actually had the ideal, three-generation household,⁶⁸ and in any case the household unit depends on the dominance of its head and the capability to divide by sex and provide labour, not on the number of generations within it. The earlier splitting of sons from their fathers does not therefore impinge on the order within the village but simply means that a greater percentage of men in the village become household heads.⁶⁹

The opening questions reconsidered

The question posed at the beginning of the chapter was: 'How is it that the Sunni settlements are able to survive their integration with the state and even grow larger?' Much of the above analysis has been devoted to showing various compatibilities between the villages and the state. Among these are the subordination to the state inherent in the villages' combination of sedentary life and Sunni Islam, the lack of internal mediators, the way each single settlement is incorporated into the national scale as a village, the state's respect for indigenous land rights, the willingness of the state to control, to support but not to allow to become fanatical the Islam taught in the village mosque and the blind eye that it shows towards the *tarikats*. We may sum the argument up more generally that to a great extent the Sunni community can allow the state to take responsibility for running the community without undermining either the prevalent social order or that part of the indigenous body of beliefs which supports that order, and that the state is willing to take on this responsibility in a way which is sympathetic to its indigenous organisation.

In Chapters 1 and 2 I attempted to place the villages of the sub-province in the context of their ever-increasing interaction with the world outside the village, not just by virtue of greater contact with the state but also through kin and friends who have migrated. Certain aspects of Sunni village life are appropriate to this greater interchange. In marked contrast to the Alevi villages, religious practice in the Sunni village is not disrupted if people migrate; no single man or woman plays a vital part in its practice except the *imam* who is supplied by the state. Households may migrate in their entirety but the independence of each household unit means that the viability of the village economic unit is not affected. Incoming households, if their livelihood is secure and they are not rejected by the existing villagers, can fit easily into the community; there are no initiation rituals, as long as they are prepared to acquiesce to the Sunni religion, they can fit in easily into the mosque-based religion of the village,⁷⁰ nor (given that the lineages are losing their importance) is men's ability to defend themselves bound up with a group of kin or other association.

Men and their belief

I ask also, 'Why is it that men still believe?' It is extremely difficult to answer such a question but there must be *something* which makes Alevi and Sunni different in their ability to believe, and as it is extremely unlikely to be genetic, it is surely legitimate to look for an answer in the way they react to the pressures which mould their lives.

Mardin, in his monograph on Said-i Nursi, suggests that men continue to believe because they are able to conceive of the world around them in Islamic terms: 'What I suggest is that the reproduction of Islamic societies is linked to a common use of an Islamic idiom by the members of such societies.'⁷¹ This has undoubted force when thinking about the villages. Those men who believe intensely, who regard Islam as the universal base for all their lives, have succeeded in combining their culture with the ever-expanding cognitive horizon offered by the modern world by the simple expedient of declaring that everything that is ever invented or ever will be invented is commensurate with and anticipated in the *Kuran*. Given the omniscience of God and the revealed status of the text enshrined in the traditional religion, this is a straightforward step for such men to take, and ensures that the doctrine is insulated against any surprises that the world might present; to this extent it provides men with a stable, common world-view with which they can interact and communicate in modern conditions. We see an obvious example of this in operation in the *tarikats* organisations, where men of like mind join together to exert pressure on the authorities both to improve their material conditions and to impose their way of thinking on the administration, the idiom which they use to communicate being Islam.

Another, more general example, can be seen in the changing mosque architecture of the village. Almost all villagers want to live in a town. Their ideal of urban life is not Ankara, the capital of the Republic but Istanbul, the Ottoman capital with its great imperial mosques. In almost every household can be seen a wall-hanging depicting the Istanbul mosque skyline. In all the Sunni villages I visited, the villagers have destroyed the traditional structures of wood and daub and replaced them with concrete edifices in the Ottoman imperial mosque style with minaret and dome. This conforms to Mardin's suggestion of 'root paradigms', key concepts which are continually pressed into service; their longevity explained by the crucial place they still are able to play in the way individuals orientate their lives; the imperial-style mosques are appropriate expressions of both their beliefs and the desire the people have to model their behaviour on urban life.

In direct contrast to other commentators, for example, Gilson (1982), Mardin explicitly denies that religion is used as a camouflage for power relations within a society, or (in the terms used in this chapter) as a means of reinforcing a social hierarchy. For example, contrasting his approach with Foucault's, he writes, 'Foucault's discourse is held together by relations of power; my own use

of the term refers to cognitive problems.⁷² Mardin's is a wonderful book – meticulous, rich and stimulating – but I find it astonishing that he can refer to Islam as a purely *cognitive* problem. Anyone who has seen a man (as I have) raise his fist to emphasise his actions and shout: 'A wife not wear her headscarf? First, I tell her it is a sin to be bareheaded, if she still refuses I beat her, then if she still won't cooperate, then I divorce her' would have little doubt that in addition to its ability to give men an identity and purpose in life, it has also a more earthy function.

Gellner (1984) begins from a very broad perspective, exploring ideologies which are likely to be most successful in an industrialised (or industrialising) nation. He concludes that characteristically they are egalitarian, universal and have a minimum of what one might call 'difficult-to-believe' components. In brief, the explanation he gives for this is that a successful ideology in a modern country must be in accord with the necessity for a homogenous population; homogeneity is dictated by the social mobility and change which an industrial economy depends on. Beliefs which contradict this requirement, or which are greatly and obviously at odds with the body of knowledge which is generating industrial society will lose their attraction. With regard to Islam, he notes that it has components within it which are compatible with these requirements:

Islam always has an in-built proclivity or potential for this kind of 'reformed' version of the faith . . . Under modern conditions, its capacity to be a more abstract faith presiding over an anonymous community of equal believers, could reassert itself.⁷³

This approach is illuminating with regard to the sub-province where, as we have seen, the villagers use either Kemalism or Islam, or a combination of both doctrines to orientate their lives. Both are egalitarian and both allow direct access to the social unit of which men believe themselves a part and thus conform to Gellner's 'abstract faith presiding over a community of anonymous believers'. One of the most frequently reiterated Republican sayings is 'How happy is he or she who says "I am a Turk".' Similarly, a person's affirmation of belief in Islam (the first of the five pillars) is enough to enable them to become Muslim. Both approaches to life are watched over by the state, and a man may regard himself affiliated to either or both simply by virtue of being a Sunni born within the boundaries of modern Turkey.

There is a problem. Gellner's account does not allow us to decide why most men should prefer Islam to Kemalism. On this Mardin suggests:

Kemalist ideology was long on views concerning the virtue of Turks, the benefit of secular republicanism for personality expansion and the contribution of universal education to progress. It was short on methods that would enable individuals to tackle issues arising in the family circle. It did not answer queries relating to the authority of the

father . . . Neither did Kemalists have a view of rituals that would give meaning to life-stations such as birth, adolescence, marriage and death.⁷⁴

I think Mardin is correct, but that there is also a much more basic difference between the two doctrines: the one advocates absolute equality for women, and the other explicitly regards them as inferior. Sunni Islam is that rare phenomenon in the modern world (but terribly useful for those who hold power), a *tenable* universal philosophy supported by the government in power which explicitly sanctions the inferior status of those who are already subordinate. There is therefore an in-built incentive for men to remain believers in the village situation, where the social order in the community is so dependent on the separation and expulsion from sight of women and the man's individual status and honour are so absolutely intertwined with sole access over his wife.⁷⁵

Men, the state and Islam

The desire that most men have to make the state support Islam in Turkey is unquestionable. Pragmatically, one can see why this might be the case. The tenets of Sunni Islam are far easier fulfilled in a state which supports, rather than is opposed to Sunni Islam. The pilgrimage to Mecca, for example, is co-ordinated by the Turkish government. The total number of pilgrims who will leave from Turkey are agreed in consultation with the Saudi government. The government charters buses and arranges for the *Kızıl Ay*, the 'Red Crescent', an organisation similar to the Red Cross, to be in attendance to supply medical facilities. The Department of Religious Affairs sends information as to the cost and necessary formalities to mosque *imam* via the *müftü*. The *imam* reads these to the congregation. These, of course, are a few examples among many; the government is the very fount of religious knowledge and administration in Turkey, providing a huge body of explanatory material to which the most remote village has access, and training sufficient mosque *imams* so that every village may have at least one stationed within it.⁷⁶

Further, and obviously, the villagers also hanker after the authority of the state to support their religion because of the legitimacy it gives to their beliefs. The mosque becomes difficult to question when it is protected by the state, as does the *imam* who, by virtue of his position in the civil service, is an approved part of the state mechanism, as I explained above on order in the village.

These explanations are part of the overall picture but I think one can approach the emotional base of the problem more deeply. I stressed at the beginning of the chapter that women are guided and dominated by their husbands and fathers, who themselves have no immediate masters within the village as they reach adulthood, though they should respect the wishes of men older than themselves. In the above sections I explain that men regard themselves as being part of a state to which they owe their subservience, though they may

couch their affiliation in partly Islamic and partly Turkish terms. These points have also been considered by Sirman, who points out that men, through their greater access to the organs of the state, are more part of the nation than women. Further, Delaney puts the elements together to make an all-embracing three-part hierarchy which she refers to as the ‘traditional authority structure’, suggesting that women are under the authority of men, who are in turn under the authority of, and closer to the state than women.⁷⁷

This does not yet explain the extraordinary desire which many men have that the state support Islam, but it may give a clue. On the basis of my experience, and of the research by Sirman and Delaney, it appears to me that the inculcation of moral values in Turkey is inextricably bound up with subjugation to a superior authority, that is, though all people are learning from their surroundings all of the time, individuals permit themselves to be taught, particularly when they are in a position of submission to a greater authority.⁷⁸ If this is the case, then the chain of authority which we have outlined for the social organisation within the village is both a means of ensuring a social hierarchy and a conduit by which the values are taken on board by individuals. Men are not just dominated by the state, they also expect to learn from it and their characters to be constructed by it, likewise women are not only dominated by men, they also learn their orientation towards the world from them more than from other sources. In addition, this relation is reflexive, a person by the very act of subordination expects that they will be guided by the figure of authority to whom they have submitted.

The desire men have that the state support Islam now becomes explicable. Submission to the authority of the state carries with it also the expectation by men that the state will take on the responsibility to teach the values with which they orientate their lives. *Given* that men believe in Islam, then it is absolutely vital to them that the state should support their beliefs. Failure to do so induces such profound distress because by their subjugation to it they have opened themselves up to what it will teach them, what they wish for is Islam. If it does not do so, at best it betrays the principal mechanism of acculturation in Turkish society and at worst (in its presumption of equality for both men and women) horribly contradicts the premises by which they lead their lives.

Politics, the state and Islam

The fourth question asked in the introduction to the chapter is ‘What enables the state to accommodate the desire the people have that they support Islam?’ Only a brief explanation is needed here, because I think the most significant part of the explanation is in accordance with conventional theory.

In Turkey, the winning political party, if it wishes to stay in power, must reconcile the villagers’ desire to modernise with their desire to practise Islam. The state (protected by the army) has rather different priorities: to keep order and protect the integrity of the nation. This uneasy relation has been in existence only since 1950, when the first genuinely free elections were held. It has

broken down in 1960, 1971 and 1980 when the army had to intervene to ensure social order.

In an article written just after the third coup, Stirling suggests that the unrest which led to so much violence was due to a gap between the undermining of the traditional means of keeping order in the villages as they modernise (which he dates as having its greatest effect only after 1950) and the time needed by the villagers to adjust to a different form of social control, one in which a man allows the state to assume the responsibility for most of the means in which order is retained in a community.⁷⁹

I have briefly summarised his rather more elaborate argument but it enables me to ask, why, since 1980 there has been no more need for coups. I think the answer is the generals who were governing Turkey between 1980–1983, aware of the problem which Stirling describes, made a quite conscious effort to supplement the means of social control which they had over the villages by encouraging the apparatus of the state to support the practice of Islam and that this is the aim of the famous *Türk-İslam sentezi* which emerged during the generals' rule. In effect, they were exploiting the congruence, so dear to anthropologists, between religion and social order twice over: first, the compatibility between the traditional religion of the village communities and the social order within them, second, that the social hierarchy within the Sunni communities depends on, and welcomes, the authority of the state particularly when it is expressed through religion.

After 1980, therefore, there has been a greater convergence between the aims of the state and that of any government than before (indeed, the politics that Özal pursued with regard to Islam changed little after the generals had resigned from power).⁸⁰ Both the government and the state support Islam, one motivated by popularity, the other by social order; the successful combination of these two ensures that Islam remains the establishment ideology in Turkey. It is this particular combination which explains the continuing importance of Islam in the sub-province, not just among the villagers, but also in the realms of the state and politics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, then, this chapter contains a number of arguments, which may be summarised as follows. For a settlement to maintain population as the sub-province modernises it must be able to produce citizens of modern Turkey.⁸¹ By definition, it can do this only by integrating with the state. The more it integrates, the more responsibility for running the community is transferred to bodies who are sanctioned by the state. With regard to both the economic and social institutions of the community and with the way men form their identity, Sunni villages are amenable to this integration, and the low level of specificity of the social organisation means that their settlements are open to large and rapid changes in population. With this preliminary model in mind, we turn now to the Alevi villages.

4

SUSESİ

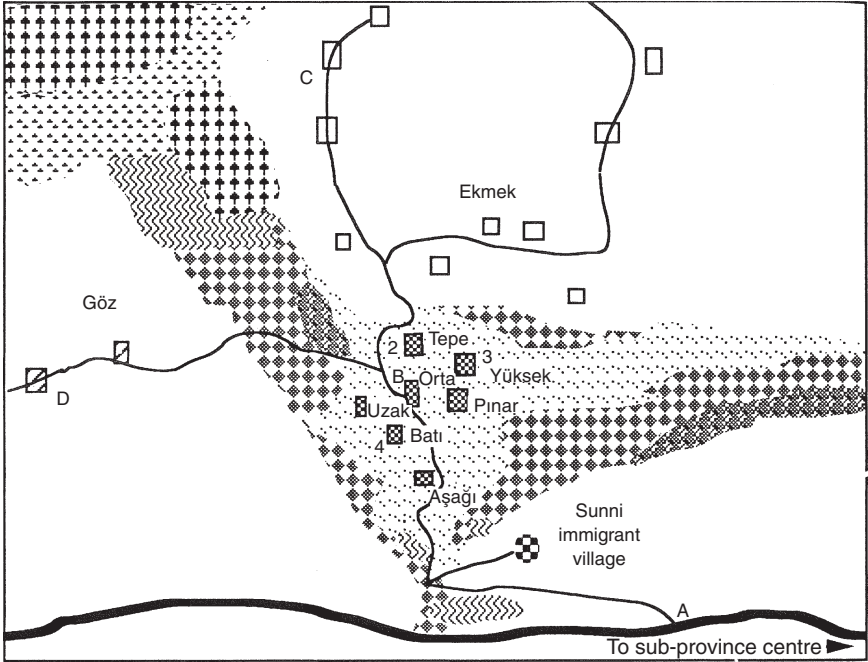
An Alevi community

The Alevi villagers in the sub-province, just as do the Sunni, live in nuclear settlements. Each predominantly consists of patrilineal, patrilocal households whose members usually own any fields that they may till. Each settlement pursues its own rotation cycle and households of one settlement only rarely possess fields in the territory of another. However, the number of households in each Alevi settlement is less than in the Sunni villages. I would estimate the average Alevi settlement to have between fifteen and twenty households, the largest I came across was about fifty, the smallest, four.

An Alevi village, as defined by the state, comprises of a number of these settlements, which the villagers refer to as '*mahalle*', village quarter. No Alevi village in the sub-province has less than two distinct and separate *mahalles*; Susesi has seven, the closest village, ten. The most I found in a single village was twenty-two. Figure 4.1 shows Susesi and the two immediate neighbouring villages, both Alevi also. The scale is approximate, I made the map by walking and travelling over the ground. The track running up from the road passes through scrub for about 2 kilometres, then turns and rises steeply through fields up to the village, passes through, and still rising steeply splits, one fork going to Göz, the other to Ekmek, the two immediately neighbouring villages. These three Alevi villages have little contact with the immigrant Sunni village (indicated by the checked oval on Figure 4.1) though the track passes it within a few hundred metres on the way to Susesi, and its lights can be seen clearly at night across the vale.

Susesi's seven *mahalles* are marked as checkered squares. The other Alevi villagers in the sub-province regard these as being rather closer together than is normal for Alevi villages, nevertheless it takes at least forty minutes to walk from the lower point of the village to its upper level, and each *mahalle* is distinct. Even Pınar and Yüksek, which at first glance appear almost to merge into each other, are divided by gardens which fall between the houses themselves. The two *mahalles* of Göz, the smaller of the two neighbouring Alevi villages, are about 20 minutes' walk apart and the ten of Ekmek are spread even further apart.

In Susesi, the only time of the year when the *mahalle* divisions are of little



- Key**
- = Dirt road
 - ▬ = Tarmac road
 - ▤ = Tilled land owned by households irrespective of village quarter
 - ⬆ = Forest (mainly used by village quarter close by)
 - ⋯ = Land divided according to village quarter
 - ⊠ = Untilled shrub
 - ⋄ = Mountain pasture
 - ⊞ = Village quarter
 - ⊞ = Rock
 - ⤵ = Field boundary between village quarter

Scale: from B to A is about 50 minutes' walk.
 From B to C about 40 minutes, from B to D 50 minutes

Figure 4.1 Susesi, indicating road and neighbouring villages

Notes

Land types are slightly simplified. Thus, areas which are marked fields may nevertheless have a proportion of shrub, some areas marked shrub nevertheless have stunted trees and so on.

importance is during the annual sojourn in the mountain pasture, *yayla*, situated about three hours' walk above the village. For the rest of the year each *mahalle* largely looks after its own affairs with regard to subsistence farming, though the exact degree of independence varies. The dotted area in Figure 4.2 shows fields which are divided according to *mahalle*, and the inset how the boundaries fall within this area. Within these boundaries, each *mahalle* has traditionally pursued its own rotation cycle. The one exception to this clear demarcation is a large swathe of land which falls away beneath Pınar and Aşağı where households from both own fields.

Mahalles are self-sufficient, or nearly so, in other ways too; all have a communal bath house, *yunak*, but for Yüksek and Pınar, who share one which lies on the boundary between them, and all but Aşağı have trees within their territory from which they obtain firewood. Aşağı obtain their wood by cutting branches and scrub from the territory of the next village who, as long as this is done unobtrusively, do not appear to object.

Within each *mahalle* is a number of shallow patrilineages. Lineages rarely cross *mahalle* boundaries, thus the largest territorial group which is united by descent is the *mahalle*. Lineages function similarly to those in the Sunni villages; a possible means by which a person may cooperate if they wish, capable of playing a significant part in disputes, exchanging labour and regulating behaviour but a person is rarely absolutely obliged to commit themselves to them. Indeed, in Susesi, migration damages lineage groupings severely and some are so depleted that they consist of only one or two households.

Any services supplied by the state are allocated to all the inhabitants of the seven *mahalles* equally as a village. At the time that I began my research, in 1988, services in Susesi which had been provided by the state, or with the state's assistance, were as follows: a primary school with staff quarters; a middle school; a telephone line, with a manual telephone exchange; piped water from a natural source in the mountain pasture; extensive irrigation channels (though these never appear to have been put into operation); a concrete bridge spanning a stream which crosses the track as one comes in to the village; electricity sufficient for domestic purposes; a health centre, *sağlık evi*, and a branch of the cooperative agricultural bank. All the buildings pertaining to these services have been donated, or built by the village, but once dedicated to a particular function, out of bounds for all those without proper business there. Though the villagers are extremely proud of them, they remain very obviously an intrusion from outside the traditional life of the community.

In sum, the *mahalle* is the basic residence unit, the place where each person enjoys their closest social and kinship ties. These overlapping, reciprocal ties are strengthened by the *mahalle* being the centre of property and economic rights from the point of view of subsistence farming within the community. The village unit, sanctioned by the state, and not by traditional lore or usage, is the principal channel by which the inhabitants are socialised into the nation and, because it embraces a number of *mahalles*, at once introduces a category with

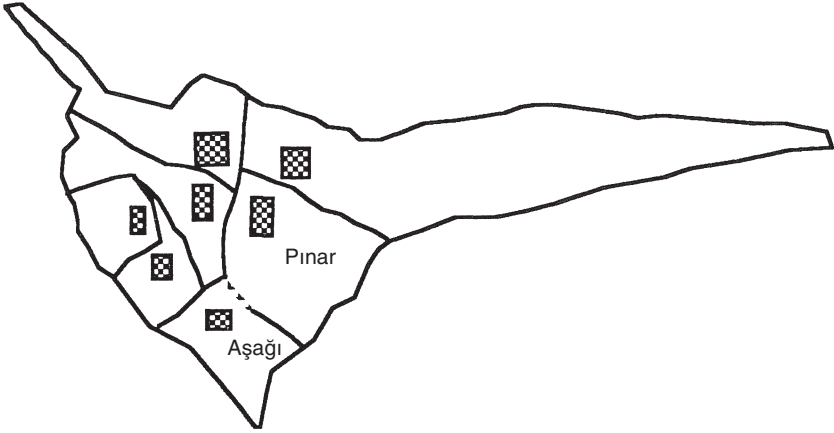


Figure 4.2 Susesi: *mahalle* divisions

its own rules and laws which is incongruous with the *mahalle* divisions. The villagers nevertheless feel a part of this unit, and much of the following ethnography reveals a tension between the traditional way of life, which is based on the *mahalle*, and the alternative orientation provided by the state.

Migration and the changing village economy

The day I arrived in the village in 1988, I was met by a lorry piled high with bedding, sacks of grain, furniture and kitchen equipment groaning its way along the track down to the road. This movement continued throughout my stay so that from about 110 inhabited households, the number dropped to about 90 over the course of the eighteen months during which I rented a house in the village. Sometimes whole households leave, then they lock the door to their house and tack boards over their windows so that children do not break in. Sometimes an old man or woman, not wishing to go to the city, remains behind, perhaps living off stores of grain, tending a single cow and maintaining a solitary donkey or mule. If a couple has aged together, then sometimes they send their sons to the city, hoping that they will make a success of life there and be able to support them in their old age. They often send their children produce from the village: eggs, butter, cheese, flour, even meat, saying that it encourages them not to forget their parents. Sometimes, even though middle-aged, they also try to leave the village and move to Istanbul where so many of the rest of the village have gone.

These are the most unfortunate. Others have relatives who have done passably well in Istanbul, at least well enough to send a few liras occasionally to

their relatives in the village. Slightly better off still are those whose relatives have found a steady job as a *memur*, civil servant, and can often send a little more back, more regularly, to their relatives in the village. The most fortunate have relatives in Germany who have found steady work. These can live off the cash which is regularly remitted from Germany. But these are only about one-fifth of the village households. The overall note is one of a community which is becoming increasingly aware of its comparative poverty and, indeed, lack of material things.

Sirman has put forward a simple and plausible model of economic change in Tuz, where she worked (1988). She shows that the villagers have successfully turned to growing cotton in place of their traditional crops, and use the cash raised from selling the cotton to buy the raw foodstuffs from the market in the nearby sub-province. A similar model is implicit in a work by Hann (1990), where he describes how villages in Rize have gradually left their indigenous crops to grow tea, which they then sell to the state. In Susesi, this is reversed. Many of those who can, leave. Those who stay earn what money they can by casual labour, remittances or other occupation and use this money to finance their growing needs. They still, however, provide nearly all their nutritional needs through subsistence farming and have not developed any significant cash crops.

That the village's economy remains rooted in subsistence agriculture accentuates a profound and frequently articulated contradiction between the life that many villagers lead in fact and that which they desire. The ideal for almost all younger men is to become a worker in Germany. After that, at least for those who are still young enough, it is to become a civil servant, often a school teacher. Failing this, it is to move to Istanbul and enjoy the sensation of living in a town, even though they are not very likely to lead a comfortable life there. Even in 1990, at the end of my long stay, in practice, most villagers were but reluctantly living off their land, turned firmly towards the towns in spirit, but bound into some at least of the traditional farming methods through a lack of any obvious alternative.

Religion in the Alevi village

Among the Sunni villagers, Islam is the most coherent and embracing of the various ideologies and concepts which serve to perpetuate the existing social order. This is also the case among the Alevis, but theirs is a different type of Islam, one which differs greatly from the Sunni.

For practical purposes, most Sunnis in the sub-province define *Müslümanlık* mainly by literal belief in the Koran, praying in the mosque, and the 'five pillars'. The Alevis minimise the importance of these criteria, saying that they possess 'Alevi conditions' of Islam, *Alevi'nin Şartları*. These are *Eline, diline, beline sahip ol!* 'Be master of your hands, tongue and loins!' Interpretations of these conditions vary, but they usually begin with the proscription: 'Do not take

what you have not yourself set down, do not tell falsehoods, and do not make love outside wedlock!’ Depending on the interlocutor, they may go further, to stress the focus on the person (*insan*), and on humanity (*insanlık*) that this philosophy implies. These conditions and ideas are not exclusively Alevi; they are present throughout Turkish culture as a whole, in the esoteric or Sufi side of Islam, where they are known as *edep*.¹ But the Alevi have raised them to a jural level, so that they are explicitly a defining characteristic of their culture.

The community as a whole acknowledges *Hacı Bektaş* and his descendants, *efendis* as their spiritual leaders.² The *efendis* today live in the town of Hacibektaş, in the province of Nevşehir, about half a day’s drive from the sub-province. They come perhaps once or twice a year to the village in which I lived, to collect dues and to reaffirm their contact with the villagers. They do not play a large part in their lives, though the villagers do say that the *efendis* are a type of higher court to whom they can appeal for judgement on points of ceremony or for mediation.³

In the village, the everyday burden of teaching and maintaining the Alevi interpretation of Islam falls on the *dedes*. I estimate that 10 per cent of the village population are accepted as being of a *dede* lineage. In turn, all men, whether *dede* or not, are follower, *talip* (lit. pupil) of a particular *dede* lineage. A *cem*, collective ceremony, can only be held if a follower lineage offers a sacrifice to their *dede*, and *dedes* may only mediate in a quarrel if they are invited to do so by a follower lineage. Also, once a year, before the winter sowing, the *dede* is supposed to visit all his *talip* lineages, ascertain from them any disputes which they have had during the year, reconcile them and leave them ‘clean’, *temiz*, for the coming planting season.

The Alevi are clearly influenced by Shi’ism; they maintain the ‘twelver’ tradition: that Ali holds a special position of favour, that his son Hüseyin was murdered at the Kerbala, that the rightly-guided caliphs succeeded him until the twelfth, *meti*, disappeared and will ultimately return. The villagers say that they were taught how to perform the *cem* by Ali, and a slow-stepping dance in the *cem*, the ‘*sema* of the forty’, *kirklar semahı*,⁴ commemorates the first men and women who gathered around Ali and learnt from him. Ali, they say, learnt his knowledge from Mohammed, who was commanded by Allah to impart his esoteric knowledge of religion to Ali and ultimately to the villagers. Some of the *dedes* maintain that the Alevi are the *Ebli-beyt*, the rightful descendants of the Prophet’s household, and that therefore the Alevi as a people are privileged in the sight of God.

This religious philosophy is elucidated in a work named *Buyruk*, ‘Decree’. The villagers claim that this work, which they read in a modern Turkish edition, is the collected teachings of *İmam Cafer Sadık*, the sixth of the twelve *imams*. Most practising *dedes* possess a copy and some know it well. This book contains no codified law, but rather is a series of descriptions of different facets of the correct workings of religious organisation and ritual, anecdotes and ritual prescriptions.

The relationship between the *Buynuk* and religion in the village is discussed in the next chapter. However, even though absolutely central to the Alevi conception of Islam, it has not yet appeared into English, and has only just begun to be treated in the academic literature.⁵ Here, therefore, I offer an extended extract, translated literally from its first two chapters. The first describes how Mohammed was introduced to the original forty followers of Ali, who were learning how to conduct the *cem* ritual from him. The second recounts that Ali was chosen by God to become Mohammed's representative, that Mohammed concurred with this, and that the two men became one. The event in the first section hinges around Mohammed's ascent to God on his going to Miraç. This revelation is a central part of Islamic thought, and features also in the Koran, though the Alevi version is unusual in its emphasis on the place that Ali holds within this divine transmission.

Section 1
The cem of the forty

Mohammed was walking early one morning to Miraç. Suddenly a lion appeared on the road. The lion roared at him. Mohammed did not know what to do. At once he heard a voice: 'Ey, Mohammed. Place your ring in the lion's mouth!'

Mohammed did as he was told. He placed his ring in the lion's mouth. The lion grew quiet. Mohammed continued on his way. He reached the highest part of the skies. There he was reunited with his companion.⁶ He spoke with Him ninety thousand words. Of these, thirty thousand were on the *Şeriat*, they descended to humans. The remaining sixty thousand became a secret to Ali . . .

When returning from Miraç, Mohammed saw a dome in the city. This dome aroused his interest. He walked to its door. Inside people were talking. Mohammed knocked on the door in order to enter. One from inside asked: 'Who are you, why have you come?'

Holy Mohammed: 'I am a prophet. Open! I would enter. I would see the beautiful faces of the developed ones!' From within: 'Prophets do not come among us. Go and be a prophet to your community,' they said. On this Mohammed drew back from the door. Just as he is going, a voice comes from God:

'Ey, Mohammed, go to that door!' it commanded. On this command from God Mohammed went again to the door and knocked. From within: 'Who's that?' they asked. Mohammed: 'I am a prophet. Open! I would enter. I would see your blessed faces,' he said.

From within: 'Prophets do not come among us. In addition, prophets are not necessary to us,' they said. On these words, the emissary of God again turned away. He was leaving when again God commanded: 'Ey Mohammed, turn back! Where are you going? Go and

open that door!’ The emissary of God went again to the door. He rang on the door-knocker. On ‘Who are you?’ coming from within, Mohammed replied: ‘I am a poor son, come into existence from nothing. I came here to see you. Is there permission for me to come inside?’

At that moment the door opened. Those within: ‘Hello! Welcome, you have brought good fortune, let your coming be auspicious,’ they responded. The assembly sat, talking with each other, in places for forty. Mohammed stepped inside with his right foot saying: ‘The sacred, the holy door has opened. In the name of God, the merciful and the compassionate.’

Inside sat thirty-nine people. Mohammed saw that twenty-two were male, and seventeen female. On Mohammed entering, the believers rose to their feet. All indicated a place for him to sit. Ali was also in the assembly. Mohammed sat by his side but he did not realise he was Ali. There were a host of questions in Mohammed’s mind. ‘Who are these people? All sitting in the same way, who are their great ones, who are lesser?’ he thought. He saw that it was superfluous to ask questions but he was unable to control himself.

‘Who are you? How do they address you?’ he asked. Those within: ‘We are the forty,’ they responded. Mohammed: ‘Well, who are your leaders, who are your lesser ones? I do not understand.’

‘Our leaders are leaders, our lesser ones are leaders. Our forty are one, our one is forty.’

‘But one of you is missing, what happened to this one of you?’

‘This one is Selman, he has gone out. He has gone gathering. But why did you ask? Selman is here, he is among our number.’ Mohammed asked the forty to show this. Thereupon Ali extended his blessed arm. One from the forty, saying rise (*destur*)! smote Ali’s arm with the knife. Blood began to flow from Ali’s arm. Blood began to flow from all their arms. At this moment a drop of blood came through the window and dripped in the centre. This blood was the blood of Selman who was outside. Then one of the forty bound Ali’s arm. The blood of the others stopped also.

Selman came back. He had brought with him a single grape. The forty took this grape and placed it in front of Mohammed: ‘Ey, duty-holder (*bizmetkari*) of the poor ones, perform a duty (*bizmet*) and share this single grape,’ they said.

Mohammed looked at his predicament. ‘They are forty, there is but one grape. How am I to divide this single grape?’ he wondered. At that moment God said to Gabriel: ‘Beloved Mohammed is in difficulties. Quick!, take a dish of light from heaven, and go there. Crush the dish inside the plate. Let him make sherbet, give it to the forty and them drink it.’

Gabriel took a dish of light and came in front of the emissary of God. He gave God's greetings and placed the dish in front of Mohammed: 'Make sherbet, Mohammed!' he commanded. As they watched, the forty were asking themselves what Mohammed was going to make with the grape. Suddenly they saw a dish form out of the light in front of Mohammed. The dish gave off a light like the sun. Mohammed put a drop of juice in the dish. The forty drank the sherbet. They all became drunk as in the beginning of creation. They rose from where they were sitting. This time saying 'O God!' raised their hands in worship. They began a *sema*. Mohammed together with them danced the *sema*. The forty's *sema* was lit by a holy light.

... Mohammed asked who were their holy leaders and guides. The forty said: 'Our holy leader is Ali, without a doubt and without dispute. And our guide is Gabriel, peace be upon him.' Upon this, Mohammed understood that Ali was there. Ali walked straight to Mohammed's side. When Mohammed saw Ali he made him room, with a salute. The forty, Mohammed joining in, bowed, made way and gave him room. Then Mohammed saw in Ali's finger the face of the lion to whom he had extended his ring.

The second extract is perhaps of almost equal importance, in that it describes the foundation of a custom known as 'brotherhood', *musahip(lik)*, here come about as Mohammed and Ali demonstrate not just their spiritual but also their physical unity. *Musahip(lik)* is still practised among Alevi communities today, and is regarded by some Alevis as being a cornerstone of their society. Thus, in Susesi, only two couples who are bound together as *musahip* may dance the 'sema of the forty' that is today the culmination of the *cem* ceremony, described in the extract above as being taught to the community by Ali, and references to the custom will occur occasionally in the ethnographic description.⁷

Section 2

That Mohammed and Ali are companions

After joining in the forty's *sema* Mohammed rose and returned to his house. All his disciples came to visit him. The disciples said to Mohammed: 'Ey emissary of God ... Explain what God said to you, we also would know.' On this, Mohammed commanded:

'Ey believers, God's secret is the truth (*Hakikat*) ... Come! be followers to the *Hakikat*. The disciples: 'What is *Hakikat*, oh, emissary of God?' they asked. Mohammed commanded: '*Hakikat* is to confess with the tongue, affirm with the heart, believe and have faith. To love yourself, and the community. To submit yourself to a saint (*pir*) and obey his commands.'

Then Gabriel came. Gabriel said: 'Ey, Mohammed. God has

decreed your giving this position to Ali.’ But Mohammed wanted to avoid doing this. Gabriel came again. ‘Ey, Mohammed, why do you not fulfil God’s decree?’ Mohammed replied: ‘There is no pulpit (*minber*).’ Gabriel said: ‘God commanded you to build a pulpit on a giant scale, climb it and fulfil your duty.’ On this Mohammed gave a sign. The believers built a pulpit on a giant scale. Mohammed climbed to the top of the pulpit. First he read a fine sermon, then:

‘Ey, believers, Shah Ali has come to the *Hakikat*. Come, strive after Ali,’ he commanded, and he took Ali’s right hand. He brought him to the pulpit. He opened his sash with sacred hands. He pressed Ali to his breast. The two entered into one gown. The two showed their heads from one collar. Two heads, but one gown appeared. And Mohammed said: ‘Your blood is my blood, your flesh is my flesh, your body is my body, your soul is my soul (*ruh*), your spirit is my spirit (*can*).’

Mohammed’s disciples, who were watching this event, were surprised. One from them requested jealously: ‘Ey, emissary of God, take off your gown, we would see also.’

On this, Mohammed took the gown off from his body. All that were there saw that Mohammed and Ali had become one body. ‘We have believed, ey emissary of God,’ they said. The prophet donned his sacred gown. ‘Ali and I are one fruit of the same tree,’ he said. Then he took Ali’s hand. He placed one thumb on another. He said that Ali should be his deputy. He read the following verse: ‘Ey, Mohammed, without a doubt those who bow to you, count as if they have bowed to God.’

Then he read the following prayer for Ali: ‘My God. Help those who support him, and be an enemy to his enemies. Help those who give him help, weaken those who bother him . . .’ Then he asked for his prayer rug. They brought his prayer rug. Mohammed climbed down from the pulpit. With Mohammed’s permission, Ali spread it so as to face Mecca. He placed Mohammed’s sacred sash on the prayer rug. Then he walked three paces from it, the first in the name of God, the second in the name of Gabriel, the third in his own name. Bewildered, the believers watched.

Mohammed began to speak: ‘This is the sash with which Gabriel bound my waist on the night of *Miraç*. I also gird your waist,’ he said. He bound the sash on Ali’s waist. He tied the first knot in the name of God, the second in the name of Gabriel, the third in his own name. Of this tight knot of three, he placed one on the left side and one on the right. ‘La ilahe illalah, Mohammed is God’s prophet, Ali is His Saint,’ he said and returned to his seat. The disciples sat also. The Prophet turned to the believers and said:

‘Ey believers, each of you two accept that you are brothers!’, he commanded. Thereupon every believer found himself a brother. Each two men accepted that they were brothers to each other. Thus all

believers became companions. In this choosing Ali remained alone. He, the greatest of the believers, rose:

‘Ey, emissary of God, with whom would I become brother? I have remained alone,’ he said. Mohammed: ‘Ey Ali, you are my brother. Exactly like Moses and Aaron. After this go and bind the waists of those who follow and believe in you,’ he commanded.

The believers wanted to celebrate this event. A believer fetched biscuit, oil and dates. Ali, in front of Mohammed, made morsels from the biscuit, oil and dates and offered them to all the believers. All of the believers ate the morsels and were full. One morsel was left over. At this time Hasan, Hüseyin and Fatümatüz – Zehra were in Medine. Those who were at the assembly placed the spare morsel in a vessel. They gave the vessel to the duty holder of illustrious descent, Selman-i Farsi. Selman-i Farsi without letting the vessel touch the ground conveyed it to Medine. There he left it in front of a disciple. Among devotees, sending morsels to express delight originates from this event. In our times, in memory of this event the people of the *Tarikat* give morsels to each other . . .

Tarikat and *Şeriat*

Though, of course, individual Alevis are articulate to varying degrees, in certain contexts they may refer to their preferred style of life as ‘*Tarikat*’. By *Tarikat*, the Alevis mean praying collectively in a ‘reunion’, *cem*, respecting their *edep* ‘three conditions’, and paying heed to the body of esoteric lore associated with their traditions as exemplified by the *Buyruk*. ‘*Tarikat*’ also contains an assumption of allegiance to certain men (in this case, *dedes* and *efendis*) who have been designated by God to keep order among the Alevis, and who, with the approval of the community, are its guide to correct conduct.

Often, a man may compare ‘*Tarikat*’ with ‘*Şeriat*’. By *Şeriat*, the Alevis do not usually mean to imply the codified law of Islam, rather, praying in the mosque, interpreting the Koran literally, and following the ‘five pillars’, that is, the daily round of religious life as they understand it to be in a Sunni village. They also equate *Şeriat* with the power and exercise of authority by the central government, and contrast this with their way: with the authority that is given to *dedes* to bring disputing parties to peace, and with the way that peace in their communities is reinforced by their collective ceremonies.

In spite of the possibility of defining such distinct spheres, to the Alevis *Şeriat* is not an equal authority but through its being concatenated with the force of the central government, one which dominates them, and from which they must protect themselves. But not by violence. The Alevis are sedentary and live in stable, small clustered communities; they have no tribal, segmentary lineage organisation through which to unify to oppose the force of central government nor means to attack and flee in the fashion of nomads. Rather, they

have traditionally reacted to the perceived pressure of central government by closing their community to non-Alevi.

In Chapter 2, I explained that they avoid any discussion of their religious practices in front of those who are not Alevi. As well as this, *cem* ceremonies are held after dark, with a minimum of fuss, so that, even after living in an Alevi village for years, a Sunni man (for example, one stationed there as a school teacher) may be entirely ignorant of all but the simplest aspects of their religion and not even know in what months of the year the Alevi worship. This reticence spreads even to seemingly more mundane aspects of their lives, so that it is difficult to ask any direct question and receive a straightforward reply.

Passive accommodation rather than resistance to external authorities is a well-known feature of Shi'ite communities,⁸ who frequently sanction *taqiya*, or dissimulation. The Alevi in the village do not appear familiar with the term, nor with the idea (in spite of their dislike of direct questioning) of systematically lying to protect themselves. While in the field this lack puzzled me, as did another feature of their religion. It is by no means clear whether the Alevi can be labelled Shi'ite or not. The Alevi rarely categorise themselves as anything but 'Alevi' and, in the village at least, have no desire at all to call themselves Shi'i, saying that the Shi'i are 'those fanatics from Iran'.⁹

The answer to both these quandaries is that the Alevi build in to their religion such flexibility that it is quite acceptable for them to follow the precepts of Sunni Islam when they find it expedient to do so. Because of this, they do not need to profess *taqiya*, nor do they appear unambiguously Shi'ite. The flexibility stems from their particular use of the 'four doors', *dört kapıs*, to God, which are well known in Sufi practice. These are: *Şeriat*, *Tarikat*, *Marifet* and *Hakikat*. While interpretations may vary, and sometimes be very elaborate, briefly these are: *Şeriat*, they say, is to respect and follow the orthodox tenets of Islam, but, at the same time, to remain on the surface of existence; *Tarikat* is to look below everyday reality to the depths which lie below; *Marifet* is to have begun to acquire knowledge; *Hakikat*, to become at one with God, to reach unity with divine reality.¹⁰

Within the Alevi creed, these doors both refer to an individual's progression towards God and encapsulate the different strands of *Alevilik* as an overarching philosophy of religion. Thus *Şeriat*, as well as having the connotation described above of being typical of religious life within the Sunni communities, is also regarded a legitimate preparation for the second stage towards God, albeit one that is inadequate if pursued exclusively. *Tarikat* is the level, they say, that most Alevi have reached. The holy, *dede*, lineages are supposed to have reached, either today or at some time in their past in the form of a founder who was blessed by God, the fourth *Hakikat* stage.¹¹ They also say that the prophets leading up to Mohammed, and Mohammed himself are on this fourth stage. The third, *Marifet*, seems to be redundant in that it had no observable corresponding rank within their community other than the knowledge that there is, hypothetically, such a stage.

Using the ‘four doors’ as the basis of their view of Islam rather than pursuing a straightforward opposition between two ways of life has enormous consequences for the way the Alevi communities can adapt and live within the Sunni world that encompasses them. It means that the Sunni villagers, though they can suspect that the Alevis are not *Müslüman* at all, do not necessarily find it easy to condemn them in outright fashion because of the ease to which Alevis can adjust to Sunni practices when they need to. Whether in his village or in a strange place, an Alevi man can go to the mosque, read the Koran and respect the ‘five pillars’, saying as he does so that he is no more than taking the first step towards religious fulfilment which his own creed encourages him to do. For example, I met an Alevi acquaintance of mine while I was visiting one of the most active of the Sunnis villages in the sub-province. He was stationed there as a health officer, and went to the mosque and outwardly respected the *Ramazan* fast along with the other men of the village. He appeared to be very well accepted by them. His family, who lived in the next Alevi village to Susesi, simply took it for granted that he would do this, which certainly meant that it was easier for him to settle in to a strange village.¹²

Such a dual orientation is not just a practical solution to external religious pressure. It also provides a way for the particular, preferred interpretation of religion within the village to be linked to the wider body of orthodox history and theology that they regard as being characteristic of Islam, and clears the way for individuals, or groups, to explore such orthodox practice if they feel such inclination. This connection may be genuinely valued: though no men appear to follow the *Şeriat* path as *Mehmet boca* first mooted when he returned to his natal village, a few men keep the *Ramazan* fast each year. While unusual, it is possible that an Alevi man may wish to go to Mecca on the *hac*. It used to be entirely normal for a *dede* to be sent by his family to the *medrese*, the Sunnis religious schools of pre-Republican days, to learn the basic precepts of Islam. I met two such men, in the village when I began my work, one of whom provided the description of the *cem* ceremony given in the next chapter.

This dual interpretation of religious life may also be seen clearly in the formal positions that are available for men within the community. Only a *dede* may lead *cem* ceremonies, or pronounce the prayers and rituals that are associated with them: this is known as *dedelik*. Any man, however, may interest himself in *Şeriat*. Such men are known within the village community as *hocas*, and the practice, *hocalık*. These men may have significance in several ways. In part, *hocas* have a secondary, replacement role for *dedes*. If there is no *dede* present and a prayer, for example, a grace before a meal, is required, then a *Şeriat* prayer is often deemed to suffice and someone who is known to be fond of such prayers is asked to pronounce one.

The villages respect and distinguish between the two types of prayer quite easily but differ in their responses to each: *Şeriat* prayers are in Arabic and consist of verses from the Koran or pious hymns, *ilahis*, also in Arabic. An Alevi prayer is in Turkish, and contains references to Ali, or Hüseyin or Hasan.

During such a prayer, the villagers place their hands in front of them on the dining table, with just the tips of their fingers touching its surface, and call out 'Alahalaaa!'. After it finishes, they raise their right hand to their lips and kiss the backs of the second and third finger. After a *Şeriat* prayer, they call out 'Amin!' and pass their hands over their faces. These responses are specific, and never intentionally confused with each other.

Hocas are not always merely substitute religious figures for the *dedes*. They are used specifically to intone an *ilahi* to mark the end of the *cem*. They are also used to wash cadavers, lead the burial service, *cenaze* (which the villagers told me in 1990, quite definitely, even proudly, are 'just like those in Sunnis villages') and to recite a prayer over a copy of the Koran just before the consummation of a marriage.

It is worth noting that the respective religious traditions have different social roots within the community and mark a quite different social style of worship. The practice and the perpetuation of '*dedelik*' are firmly based in the domestic life of the *mahalle*, where gender separation is not insisted upon, and it is usual, even mandatory for men and women to worship together in *cem* ceremonies. The villagers have now built a communal building within which to worship, which they know as *cemevi* (lit. '*cem* house'), an aspect of the Alevi revival that I discuss in Chapter 6. However, when I was first in the village, *cem* ceremonies still had no special building, but were held in the large, main room (known in village dialect as '*ev*') of a house, some of which had originally been constructed on generous lines with this purpose in mind. *Dedes*, and minstrels, *aşıks*, are still trained by their peers and older relatives at home. While this may change soon as electronic media multiply, the textual base of *Alevilik* has lain not in the government publishing houses or within the state's education system (from which Alevi ideals remain excluded), but in books describing *Bektaşılık/Alevilik* and the *Buyruk* which were traditionally brought to the villagers by the *efendis* from *Hacıbektaş* town, passed from hand to hand, and discussed within the household.

In contrast, *bocalık* is firmly based in the mosque, which only men attend. Nearly all Alevi villages, however dispersed the individual *mahalles*, have only one mosque. They are usually without the minaret and concrete dome which are typical of the Sunnis mosques, made from traditional building materials and not obviously distinguishable from a normal house. In previous years it would be normal for the village *imam* to be drawn from one of the village number, from a lineage that specialised in such training. Now, they are trained government officials, appointed from outside the village. This position, like other services provided by the government, is awarded to any village only if they make a formal request, *dilekçi*. All the Alevi villages but one in the sub-province have made this request and been awarded with an *imam*, invariably Sunni. In Susesi, the villagers are friendly to their *imam*, sending him bread, allowing him to cut wood from the village copse and even giving him a field to plough for nothing. The village women told me that they persuaded his wife to drink tea with them, even though she was afraid of them at first.

While few men pray at the mosque regularly, it is much more crowded on the two religious festivals of the year sanctioned by the state: the holiday to mark the end of *Ramazan*, and the Feast of Sacrifice. I attended the Feast of Sacrifice service in Susesi in March 1989, and calculated that about fifty, that is approximately one-third, of the males who were in the village at that time, came to the mosque. After the service, as is normal all over Turkey on the day of a festival, *bayram*, those who had attended the service lined up and each shook hands with the next in turn, in order of age, so that every man shook the hand of every other.

In spite of this duality, it is clear that many men remain profoundly ambivalent towards *Şeriat*, towards the mosque services, and towards religious functionaries. On the one hand, they are a way to celebrate the village with a collective ritual sanctioned by their overall Islamic cosmology, one that they may deeply respect. One man, for example, told me that he burnt the accumulated coffins outside the village mosque while the *imam* was away because he passed them every day and they reminded him of his dead brother.¹³ Having done so, he was unable to work out whether to take them in this way from the mosque courtyard was a sin, and this troubled him deeply. On the other hand, the mosque is representative of a way of life which the Alevi dislike, and often fear. Whenever there is a demonstration which appears to have a religious spur, for example, when there were violent disturbances in Istanbul against the law that women must remove headscarves to enter university premises, the Alevi blame fanaticism stirred up by mosque *imams* during the Friday services.

This ambivalence is often expressed through jokes about Sunni Islam, often at the *imam's* expense. For example, I describe below how the *imam* in Susesi attempted to obtain a transfer. Thinking that he was successful, he arranged to move. Among his possessions was a huge sack of onions. On failing to secure his new position, he returned to the village, still with the sack of onions. Even normally sombre villagers found this extraordinarily amusing and chortled for days that even if he had not obtained a transfer, he had not lost his year's supply of onions. Again, while visiting a neighbouring town I was introduced to a teacher who was said to be one of the most popular teachers who had ever been stationed in Susesi. When I asked why, my friends said that one night, while very drunk, he had opened the window of the teachers' quarters, and called a wonderfully loud and clear *ezan* (call to prayer). Thinking that it must be dawn, one old man called to his wife for his trousers, and made his way to the mosque in the middle of the night, to the great amusement of the other villagers, who had guessed that it was the teacher who had made the call.

The uncertainty also spreads to the villagers when they consider their own position. Most men are clear that they are Muslim. However, others may themselves maintain that they are hardly, conventionally speaking, Islamic at all. They may, in this case, refer to a shamanistic past, and say that they were only converted to Islam after the Arab invasion of Anatolia. Others may suggest that they are half-Muslim, half-Christian: *yari Hristiyan, yari Müslüman*. Thus, one

afternoon, late in the summer of 1989, three Sunni men came in a jeep to the tea-house in Susesi, outside which I was sitting at the time. One man was a retired Koran-course teacher, the other a *hacı* (a man who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca), the third, their driver. They explained that they were collecting poplar trees to use when constructing the new town mosque in the sub-province centre, which they expected to be given as *hayır*, charitable gift. No man in the tea-house offered any trees, though one said that if they were to build a church then he would be happy to donate trees from his land. Great laughter followed, and the men drove off in irritated fashion to the village above ours. They had more success there, though it is also Alevi. However, the *hacı*, who was old and frail, was knocked down and killed by one of the poplar trees that were being felled for the mosque. Some of the men of Susesi expressed no regret at all on hearing this, saying that he was a *yobaz*, fanatic. Others were shocked at the idea of a man being killed while working for a pious cause.

The village, the outside world and the *muhtar*

Thus far, I have sketched a society dispersed into small village quarters still partly occupied with subsistence farming, however reluctantly, with a distinct unusual tradition, but with a sophisticated cosmology with which to relate this tradition to the dominant, Sunni community by which they are surrounded, a Sunni tradition that they maintain is still, in great part, associated with the forces of the state. I have argued too that this outer world has not been entirely rejected, but been in great part internalised within the community: further, that one such way that this incorporation may be conceived is as an interplay between two interconnected spheres, the outer, village shell of the community and the inner core of the *maballe*.

The *muhtar*, the village head, falls into this outer, protective role. In all the Alevi villages that I have known, to be *muhtar* is regarded as an important position, much more so than appears to be the case in the Sunni villages.¹⁴ This was particularly notable in Susesi, where one particular man had been head man over a long period. He was at the peak of his influence, and his hospitality was famous during the time that I was in the village. He entertained dignitaries with gusto. He spent many of his days in the sub-province centre drinking with figures of all political persuasions. He took members of the village to the government offices in the centre when they needed to appear in front of the judge or governor. He spoke for the village with vigour when they were visited by the *jandarmas*. He is proud of the ways in which he helped the individual villagers, and used this claim to great effect in the elections of March 1989, when he again won a five-year spell as *muhtar*.

The following account is typical of the stories of his prowess. Other than perhaps a very experienced civil servant stationed there, no other person in the village has anything like the ability described in this account to make contact

with the officials in the sub-province centre. Indeed, the *muhtar*'s friendship with the surgeon and the other doctors could be matched by only a few other village *muhtars* in the sub-province.

Account 4.1

While waiting for the mini-bus to go to the sub-province centre from the village, I began talking with one of the men and he told me the following story.

My wife was very sick, and I took her to have some X-rays. I was not happy with the outcome and so took them to the hospital in the sub-province centre accompanied by the *muhtar*. The guard at the hospital tried to stop us entering, saying that entrance was forbidden. The *muhtar* simply pushed him aside and entered. The doctors were all at lunch so the *muhtar* went to the doctors' dining room. The surgeon, on seeing the *muhtar*, whom he knows well, invited them to eat. The *muhtar* took out the X-ray pictures and the surgeon passed them to his fellow doctors to look at. They wrote out a long prescription. I said that I couldn't pay for a list as long as that, so the *muhtar* took the prescription, gave them to the surgeon himself and said: 'Write us just one medicine.' Taking the prescription to the chemist I found it was 18,500 *lira* (about £5). I couldn't pay this even so went back to the *muhtar* and said: 'Just now I've no money.' The *muhtar* took the money from his pocket and gave it to me. I bought the medicine and gave it to my wife.

The *muhtar* himself, in a conversation with me, attributed his ability to be so successful to two years in jail when he was a youth, followed by two years' military service in the eastern part of Turkey, so that when he returned to the village he was afraid neither of the outside world nor of other men. Whatever the root of his great confidence, his position in the village was not gained without making enemies, nor without his first defeating the different factions who have opposed him.

Thus, until the end of the 1970s, in Susesi the village mosque was controlled by a particular lineage which was known as *bocagıl*, 'the lineage of the *boca*'. As the *muhtar* was beginning his rise to power, the incumbent mosque *boca* was from this lineage, and so respected that the villagers would plough and reap his fields before theirs without anticipating any reward (a traditional compliment to an important man in the village).

When in due course the mosque *imam* died, the new *muhtar* seized the opportunity to rid himself of the indigenous *boca* lineage by requesting that the village receive a state *imam*. When he arrived, the *muhtar* gave him the house next to his own in which to stay, so that he could watch him better. This plan worked. The incumbent when I was in the village was young, not very bright

and outwardly respectful of the *muhtar*. That the *muhtar* was still conscious, however, of the problems which might stem from a more active *imam* is shown by an event during my stay:

Account 4.2

The *imam* was dissatisfied with his position in the village, mostly, he said to me, because he was fed up with no one coming to the mosque for its services. His brother, who was the assistant head of the *İmam-batip* school (the school for religious vocational training) in the sub-province centre was appointed temporarily head of the *müftü* while the official head was away. He immediately called his brother to work for him in the sub-province centre. The *imam* took up everything and went. The *muhtar*, on hearing this, went to the *müftü* offices and said that unless the *imam* came back, he would write a *dilekçi* (petition) to close the position of *imam* in the village.¹⁵ He was prompted to do this because the *imam* of a nearby Sunni village, far stronger in character than the present quite ineffectual *imam*, was rumoured to be coming to the village. On that day, however, the true head of the *müftü* offices came back, and said that he didn't want the brother of the assistant head in his offices. Not finding an alternative position, the former *imam* returned to the village.

The muhtar and the dedes

The relationship between the *dede* lineages and the wider village community is complex, and may change according to conditions and the personalities involved. Some of this complexity will emerge in later chapters. However, simply but not misleadingly put, I think it is true to say that the *dedes* had a powerful influence over the actions and activities of the villages until the late 1970s. That this sequence appeared broken is greatly due to the *muhtar*. He talked to me about his opposition to the *dedes*. It appears that it was always based on a philosophy of absolute and utter scepticism that there can be anything whatsoever in the accounts they give of the past and in the special powers which they claim. He told me, for example, that he overturned a grave which was supposed to be of a venerated saint and found nothing there but a horse's skeleton. On another occasion, he told me the following story:

Account 4.3

There was a tree held to be sacred, *yatır*, in one of my fields. I was not permitted to plough in its shadow, so that as a consequence a big part of my field went unploughed. I got rid of it by chopping it down and burning it. They said that lightning would strike me from the sky, but it didn't.

By the time of my fieldwork, there was little opposition to the *muhtar* from the *dedes*. Indeed, that which emerged appeared to revolve around my presence. At the beginning, the *dedes*, though not pleased to have me in the village, did nothing to oppose me except not always respond to my overtures and not invite me to their houses. Indeed, they were always scrupulously polite and courteous, whatever their inner thoughts. More overt opposition emerged when I made known my desire to attend the *cem* ceremonies. The *dedes* of the village were absolutely against this, though the *muhtar* supported my request. He waited until a *dede* from a neighbouring village was visiting one of his followers, *talips*, in Susesi. Together with several of his lineage, and myself, he visited the *dede* at the follower's house. The *muhtar* explained to the *dede* in a long speech that I was not a tourist, that I had been in the village for a considerable time, and that he would like to sponsor me to enter the ceremony that evening. The *dede*, after considering briefly, replied '*Muhtar, kendi köyünde sultandır*', 'a *muhtar* is sultan in his own village' and acquiesced to my attending. At the ceremony itself, the *dedes* who lived in the village stayed away in protest, but no one openly objected to my being there, and I was able to witness it in its entirety.¹⁶

The muhtar's other opponents

Periodically a man emerged who was prepared to challenge the *muhtar* directly. This happened rarely, however, because the *muhtar* attempted to make the position untenable in the village of all who opposed him. The son of the last indigenous mosque *hoca* to emerge from *hocagil* was forced to leave by the *muhtar* before migration was so prevalent, and he had a hard struggle to set up a shop in Istanbul. Though I met this man in the sub-province occasionally, he never came to the village and was extremely bitter. Another man attempted to stand as a candidate before the elections in 1989. The *muhtar* simply provoked a quarrel, punched him on the jaw and told him to leave the village.

The one group of people whom the *muhtar* seemed unable to quash easily are returnees from Germany (*Almanclar*, 'Germans'). In 1990, the villagers estimated that about seventy households were living in Europe, most of them in Germany. The villagers say that the first of the villagers left to work in Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Those that left first of all invested their new-found wealth in the village, buying fields and building large concrete houses which showed their new position. One man spent a large sum on a dry stone wall to enclose his fields. On their return trips to the village, they quickly found that life in the village was no longer congenial to them and built homes in Istanbul or in the local towns, so that now most of their brightly painted houses are empty. Two returnees remain in the village, however, and their position is awkward because the villagers regard them as having wasted their opportunity to make money, proof of their failure shown by their staying in the village.

Both men resented not being regarded with more authority by their fellow villagers, and regarded themselves as superior to them because of their

experience abroad. One of them opened a *kahve*, tea-house.¹⁷ This was the second *kahve* in the village. The first, in *Orta mahalle*, was the oldest in the village and acted as an unofficial focal point for villagers. Minibuses to the town left from there, and the *muhtar* called meetings there when he wanted to organise collective work, *angora*, on behalf of the village community (for example, a water channel). This second *kahve*, run by the returned German worker, acted as a focal point for those villagers who were enemies of the *muhtar*, and from it, in March 1989, he ran a campaign to try to become *muhtar* of the village. Though it was difficult to find men who would publicly indicate their support, he campaigned hard. His wife, who was an active, intelligent woman, tried to gain votes from the other village women by persuading them to vote for her husband. His campaign failed by a very large margin.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a sketch of Susesi from several different approaches, albeit in a preliminary way. The most important points are: the discontinuity between the *mahalle* and the 'village' category by which they are linked; the dissatisfaction of the villagers with their lives though they still continue sporadically to work their land; the existence of a clearly articulated tradition which defines the Alevis as being different from the Sunnis (though in a subtle way, so that they can regard themselves as similar to the Sunnis when they need to); the assumption that there are holy men, *dedes*, who are privileged to teach the Alevi way of life, and the contention that the Sunni way of life may frequently become synonymous with the rule of the central state. Finally, I have indicated the way that divisions in the community may revolve around the three most important occupations from a structural point of view: *dede*, *boca* and *muhtar*, with different factions and individuals appearing dominant at any one time, though it would appear, at least, as if the village unit and its elected representative are gradually gaining in force.

While during this preliminary description it has been noted that both relations with the Sunni practice of religion, and with Christianity, may occasionally be subjects of amusement, it is important not to give a mistaken impression. There are a number of different political and social currents within the village, some sceptical, some less so. However, religious satisfaction, the search for oneness and unity with God, though inevitably influenced by the rapidly changing social conditions, does remain a heartfelt dilemma for many. It is to this preoccupation, and the organisation of religion within the community, that we now turn.

RELIGION, RITUAL AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The public spaces of the Sunni villages are dominated by men, who worship together, without women, in the village mosque. This dominance and segregation are found also within their respective households, where men and women lead largely separate lives but the men possess overall authority. One conception of the relationship of men to other men, and of men to women, serves to regulate both domestic and public relations. By contrast, in the Alevi villages, relations between the sexes and between men differ sharply depending on whether they fall in the public or the private sphere. In the private sphere of the *mahalle* and the household, *dedes* are treated differently from other men. But there is no segregation of men and women, and both sexes worship together in the *cem*. In the public sphere, to be from a *dede* lineage carries no special rights or privileges; women are secluded and men worship alone.

In the Sunni villages, peace-keeping authority has been awarded to the state. There are no internal mediators and there is no elaborate mechanism to solve disputes. Those who believe strongly reinforce the subordination and segregation of women and the ideal of equality between all men, but religion has no explicit peace-keeping function. *Alevilik*, in contrast to this, is court and religion rolled into one: a regulatory, mediating and reconciliatory function is present in almost every part of its doctrine and practice. Thus there is a correlation between the participation of women in ceremonies, and the great significance which they possess for the social order in the Alevi villages. This does not necessarily mean that women are equal in all ways to men: rather, that there is a doctrine of social control enshrined in the *cem* which acknowledges all people, and requires that all, whether men or women, be answerable to it. This chapter, the longest in the book, is devoted to exploring these issues in more detail.

Men, women and social control

In a Sunni village women possess their own space independently of men, both in that they have elaborate rituals which men do not attend and a distinct domestic sphere.¹ Women's relationship to authority is also absolutely clear. From the women's point of view, men have to be manipulated, persuaded and

even coerced in order to behave as they would wish, but men hold ultimate responsibility and there is absolutely no doubt that they do so.

Women in Susesi are not presented with such a clear view of authority, nor such a distinct domestic space. Women still do the tasks normally associated with women in a Turkish village; they clean, cook, prepare food, milk, tend the gardens and look after children, but they do not do so in a separate environment from the men. Within the household, there is no segregation. Eating, preparing food, gossiping and entertaining visitors (provided they are also Alevi) take place in one large room, *ev*, with both men and women present. While women are doing tasks outside the home, for example, gardening or baking bread, men feel not at all constrained against joining in or sitting with the women and talking. This difference between Alevi and Sunni is reflected in their domestic architecture. The Alevi houses are square, and have one or more very large rooms and smaller auxiliary bedrooms (see Figure 5.1). The Sunni households are rectangular in shape, and built as a series of smaller rooms.²

Alevi women, unlike the Sunni, appear to have no specialised rituals which are theirs alone.³ There are no *mevlud* (readings of a poem of that name which describes the birth of *Muhammed*, attended separately by men and women, but more frequently held by women) such as those discussed by Nancy and Richard Tapper.⁴ Alevi women do go to shrines in search of fertility or health⁵ but they go together with their husbands, and together they sacrifice a sheep which has been blessed (*tekbirleme*) by a *dede*. Women do dance alone in the bride's house before she is collected to go to her groom, but they join up with the men later to dance together. When they do so, they dance the same step as when alone, this time dove-tailing with the men.

Though the separation between men and women is less, the Alevi household social structure is similar to the Sunni. That is, the household head is, where possible, the senior male. Women, though they should be shown respect according to their age, are subordinate to men's wishes, and expect to be treated accordingly. There are rare cases of uxorilocal marriage, *iç güvey*, but women usually move to their husband's home, give up their maiden name, and gradually transfer their allegiance to their new household from their old, and the figure immediately in control of their lives changes from their father to their husband. Also, the lack of separation between men and women dissolves as the domestic sphere moves into the public. When men wish to talk they tell the women to leave them alone. They also tell the women to leave if there are strangers present. Outside the home, just as in the Sunni villages, women should not cross any open space unless they are accompanied by a man. They must never cut across a man's path, they must never enter a door before he does. Women never go to the tea-house.

Women are also segregated in those *Şeriat* rituals which take place at the village level; indeed, to the Alevi, one of the characteristics of the *Şeriat* way of life is that women are separated from men. When the women leave the men, they occasionally remark, semi-ironically, '*baremlik/selamlık*.' (in a house where

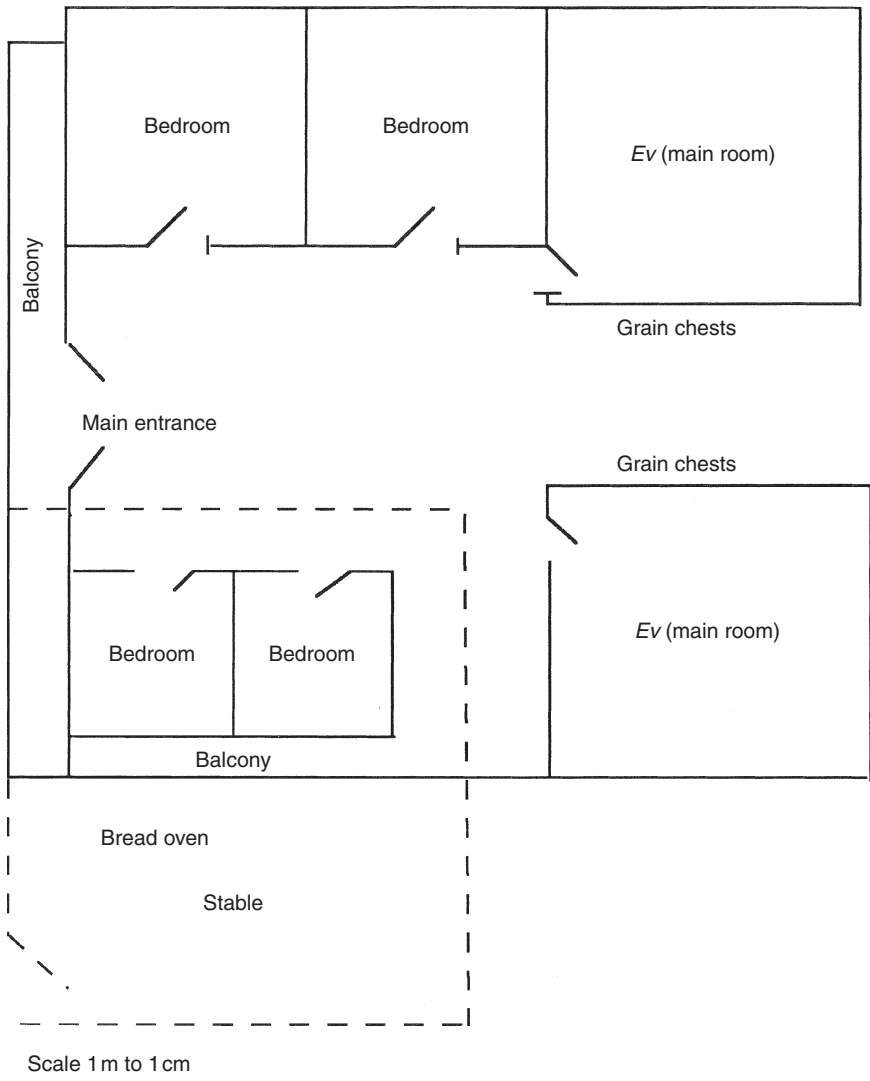


Figure 5.1 Susesi house plan

Note

The stable, within which is the bread oven, lies below the main part of the house. There are fourteen people living in the house. Though the bedrooms are used at night, the lower *ev*, main room, is the only large room inhabited during the day.

residential segregation based on religion is practised, *haremlük* is the term for the women's quarters, *selamlük*, the men's).⁶ In Susesi, and, so far as I am aware, in all the Alevi villages of the sub-province, women never go to the mosque. In Susesi, during the funeral, *cenaze* (the ceremony which they regard as being similar to the Sunni), women stand apart, away from the men, as the *imam* speaks the service over the corpse. Women are not permitted to accompany the pall-bearing procession to the cemetery, nor be present at the interment, and they are forbidden to go to the grave for forty days after the burial.

I have stressed that Islam in the Sunni villages is only a part of a complicated network of concepts which serve to keep women controlled by men; by far the most organised, developed and embracing of the different ideologies in use but only one of them. The Alevi men do not use Islam to control women in the same overt way; thus, where a Sunni man might accuse a woman of *günah*, sinful conduct, if she does not obey her husband or fails to wear her headscarf, the Alevi use *ayıp*, a general word with a powerful connotation of 'not done', of transgressing a specific rule but with no religious overtones. The Alevi have other ways of expressing the control of women by men too: that a woman must not go out into the open spaces of the village simply because she is a woman, that women are equal to men but just a little bit weaker, that she must not cross a man's path because it causes bad luck to the man if she does so, that it destroys the household's honour, *namus*, if she is unfaithful, but none of these are explicitly rooted in their religious practice.

Instead, Alevi village doctrine requires that women take part in its rituals. The *cem* takes place with both men and women present, face to face with one another. The culminating dance, the 'dance of the forty', which celebrates the first men and women to learn the secrets of the doctrine from Ali, is conducted by two married couples. Throughout men behave towards women, and to each other, with marked courtesy, more than in everyday life, addressing women as 'sisters', *bacı*, and men 'brothers', *kardeş*. This emphasis on inclusion may be seen again in the criteria of who may be defined as more holy than another. Just as *dede* lineages consist of men distinguished from other not so blessed lineages, so the wife or daughter of a *dede* is counted more holy than other women. Such women are called '*ana*' (lit. 'mother'). *Anas* have no active role in *cem* ceremonies other than that they sit apart from other women, but it is regarded as part of their duty to resolve quarrels among women, to teach women the *Tarikat* path, and to be a support to the *dede*. Even the segregation involved in *Şeriat* rituals at the village level is not tied to that assertion of the malevolent nature of women which helps to sanctify the Sunni conception of male superiority. The sexes separate because that is the way *Şeriat* rituals are supposed to be conducted rather than any more explicit reason. Alevi men laugh at the idea, prevalent in the Sunni villages among firm believers, that to see a woman during a *namaz* ruins the ritual ablution, *aptest*, or that to touch a woman is in some way defiling.⁷

In spite of the higher position which religion gives to Alevi women, it is difficult to extrapolate from that and assert definitely that their position is

simply equal. The threat of physical or sexual violence certainly is by no means absent. Though very much less likely today than in the past, unguarded women on occasion have been taken by another man and removed to his household. Women have markedly less interaction with the outside world than men. Women still today never shop alone in the market in the sub-province centre. This puts widows in an extremely difficult position, for though no longer tied to their husband, they are fearful of being cheated through their inexperience and I have seen them implore men to buy things on their behalf. Materially, the Alevi inheritance rules prescribe equal shares among sons and nothing at all for women. The men are absolutely emphatic that this is an invariable rule, '*Kadın hakkı yok!*' (Married) 'women have no rights!' Those cases of inheritance I knew conformed to this rule. Some men qualify this by saying that before marriage a woman is supposed to inherit as would a son, but after marriage she loses her rights. There is just one unmarried woman in the village, aged about sixty, whom they say was emphatic that she didn't want a husband. Her nephew, who was involved in the partition of his grandfather's (her father's) estate, told me that he gave her a small outlying field in order to respect the spirit of their inheritance law but he certainly was not going to give her an equal share when she should have married and found security that way.

There is a further, though more abstract reason that I would suggest why Alevi women cannot be regarded as entirely equal. There is no hard and fast rule when the women should be left alone and when they should be with the men. When men wish they tell them to go, otherwise women may stay. Even when they do stay, women are never quite sure when they are allowed to join in with the conversation with the men and when not. As a result, it seems to me that Alevi women may be faced with a certain level of structural uncertainty, because they can never be quite sure what reaction they are going to receive from the figures of authority who control their lives.⁸

In sum, then, from the point of view of the concept of the person embodied in their dominant religious ideology, Alevi women are favoured as equal to men. This means that they are clear and active participants in the rituals described below, which decisively regard the partnership between husband and wife as being the cornerstone of the village social order. On the other hand, from the woman's point of view, they are rarely left alone, they have little ritual space, no axiomatic property rights and an uncertain relation with authority. In the urban setting, I think that the religious insistence upon women's equality may become an advantage, and even vastly facilitate their integration into modern society, a point that I take up later. However, in the traditional setting, men remain clearly in charge.⁹

Hierarchy, mediation and text

When I began to read and translate the text that the Alevi villagers regard as being written by *İmam Cafer*, the *Buyruk*, I was struck as to the way it mirrors

the villagers' description of their religious tenets. Nevertheless, it is difficult to be sure of the relation between it and the actual practice and perpetuation of religion in the village. The *Buyruk* appears to be possessed almost entirely by *dedes*. Many refer to it, and keep it wrapped in a soft piece of cloth to protect it. However, there is more than one modern edition available, and I have not heard it said that any particular version is the 'final' one. I only once heard it mentioned in a prayer, and not at all as a text whose words must be respected to the letter. It is never taken into religious ceremonies. Rather, *dedes* absorb those aspects they find interesting in their own time and recount them in the course of commentaries, *yorums*, on songs and poetry first sung by minstrels. The *Buyruk* would therefore appear to be a rich source of ideas, one that shapes the villagers' thoughts within the overall, mostly oral, traditions on which they found their society but is not in itself constitutive of a body of dogma that must be followed.

To give a detailed example, one centred on the question of religious hierarchy. The *Buyruk* that the villagers appeared to use most often during my stay consists of forty sections, each explaining a different tale, moral or command of God; some recount parables involving the Prophet and his followers, others outline ceremonies, others specify particularly desirable characteristics for people to adopt in their behaviour. Sections 3–5 and 7–9 are particularly significant in their emphasis on a restricted hierarchy. They describe six ranks of men: successively *Pir*, *Mürşid*, *Rehber*, *Sofu*, *Talip* and *Mürid*.¹⁰

Pir, *Mürşid*, *Rehber* are different ranks of teacher. The *pir* is the senior figure, and described as being the descendant of 'Muhammed-Ali', the only rightful leader of the community thus:

Pirlik and the forms of worship *Şeriat*, *Tarikat*, *Marifet* and *Hakikat* derive from *Muhammed-Ali*. This is why someone who is not from the lineage of the prophet is not permitted to give guidance as a *pir*. That a devotee should recognise as a *pir* anyone not from the lineage of *Muhammed-Ali* is not open to discussion. The food and drink eaten by a person acting wrongly in this way is impure [*haram*]. Their *Tarikat* is apostate, their *Hakikat* is apostate. Their guidance, repentance is not valid. Because *Muhammed-Ali*'s lineage has forbidden it. A person who does not accept *Muhammed-Ali*'s lineage is without foundations. They have no base. They are no initiate at the monastery of the twelve *imam*.
(p. 17)

The *mürşid* is depicted more abstractly, as a gardener who makes sure that the eaters of fruit in the garden do not consume poisonous fruit. The next section, on the *rehber*, is more specific. He is depicted as a guide who may be appointed by the *pir* when he is not himself present: 'The *rehber* is one who shows the *talip* the road to light, to enlightenment. He is assistant to the *pir*, his representative at times and in areas where there is no *pir*' (p. 25).

The next three sections *Sofu*, *Talip* and *Mürid* consider different ranks of followers. They resemble each other closely, and throughout stress the importance of submitting to a *pir* and the other teachers:

According to *İmam Cafer Sadık*, *Şeriat* is to know the truth, *Tarikat* is to behave truly, *Marifet* is to choose the true road, *Hakikat* is to attain the truth. The *talip* must be well conducted in all four . . . The *talip* is one who follows a *pir* descended from the lineage of *Muhammed-Ali*. The *talip* is one who cooks at the cauldron of the *pir*, learns the correct path and follows without fail the decrees of the *pir* . . . The *talip* approves with their tongue and believes in their heart. One who knows the struggle of *Muhammed-Ali*. Those on this road are pursuing the correct path, are acquiescent (*riza*) in all things, and turn not from this acquiescence.

(p. 38)

As noted in the previous chapter, in Susesi there is also a profound religious hierarchy, but it is confined to three ranks, *efendi*, *dede* and *talip*. In spite of the slight difference in nomenclature, the village conception of their duties matches closely those outlined in the *Buyruk*. *Hacı Bektaş* is referred to by the villagers as ‘*Pir*’, and his descendants (the ‘*efendis*’) as their leaders. The *dedes* are often referred to as ‘*rehber*’. Some claim to have official permission to practise from the *efendi* lineage, an authorisation that the *Buyruk* mentions is open for a *rehber* to obtain. The *vaziyetname*, ‘diploma’, or ‘authorisation’ given below, for example, was given to a local *dede* by one of the *efendis*:

Vaziyetname

Minstrel . . ., descended from the sons of . . ., of the lineage . . ., illustrious son of . . ., now resident in . . . village, is in every respect a worthy model and guide. This *vaziyetname* assures that upon the followers to this hearth transferring their allegiance and respect to said licensed seventh son of . . . sure and peaceful love (*muhabbet*) comes to the community.

Sealed and dated

Despite these parallels, neither *dedes* nor their followers justify their behaviour by direct reference to the *Buyruk* nor, indeed, is there ever any mention that there are categories outlined by the *Buyruk* but not found in the village. Each practising *dede* lineage has an oral account which explains its past, within which is often a mention of their ancestors attending the monastery of *Hacı Bektaş* and also of their own ability to perform miracles. They express this by saying that they are ‘people/possessors of ‘*keramet*’, *keramet sabibi*. *Keramet* is sometimes rendered in English as ‘charisma’, but is best translated in this context as

‘the ability, given by God, to perform miracles’.¹¹ Independently of any other consideration, *keramet* is a mark of God’s favour and places a lineage in the *Hakikat* rank, the fourth level, where one is in contact with God, at liberty to control the material world and superior to others.

One *dede* lineage tells the following story, which illustrates *keramet*, about the dervish ‘*derviş*’ who was their founder. While this excerpt is brief, it contains particularly poignant motifs within Betashi lore and symbolism.¹²

Account 5.1

One day while the *Padişah* [ruler, sultan] from Istanbul was passing he stopped in the valley with his soldiers. They spent a long time looking for food, but in vain. However, they came across a dervish and took him to the *Padişah*. The *Padişah* said, ‘My men are hungry, but we can find nothing to eat.’ The dervish hit the ground with his staff and a deer rose out from the earth. The dervish said, ‘Slaughter and eat it, but you must return all the bones to me.’

They ate the deer, collected the bones in its fleece and gave them to the dervish. One of the soldiers, however, had put a bone in his pack. When they had eaten, the dervish said a prayer. The deer became alive again and ran, stumbling owing to its missing bone, into the forest.

The *Padişah* said: ‘We have had meat to eat, thank you, but our hands are greasy, may we have hot water?’ The dervish banged his staff again and hot springs came out of the ground . . .

The next account was recited to me by one of the most active and articulate *dedes*. He did not live in the village, though he is regarded as being from the same lineage as the most important *dede* lineage within it, and most of the households in one *maballe* are his followers. I have translated it from a tape which the *dede* made at my request, keeping as closely as possible to the form the original explanation took. As the *dede* was telling the story to an audience (there were several other people in the room), and not with an eye to making a coherent written account, the events described are perhaps not immediately clear.

At the outset of the story, the man mentioned as the founder of the lineage is *Muhittin Arabi*. Known in English scholarship as Ibn Arabi, Muhittin Arabi is one of the most famous of all Muslim mystics.¹³ The *dede* describes Muhittin Arabi’s early travels, and explains that finally he is martyred in *Şam* (Damascus) by fanatics. Later, a Sultan comes to Damascus and solves a riddle which Muhittin Arabi had had inscribed on the mosque before he died. This leads the Sultan to discover a cauldron of gold, from which those who are praying in a mosque believe they are going to benefit. They abandon their prayer to receive their share. This barbed insult at those who worship in a mosque is typical of the Alevis’ ambivalent feelings towards mosques and the type of genuflecting prayer which takes place in them.¹⁴

The action then shifts suddenly to Hasan, a descendant of Muhittin Arabi, who has become a farmer. He is approached by *Hacı Bektaş*, who shows him that he has '*keramet*' because he can make melons ripen only just after they are planted. Later, at his house, where *Hacı Bektaş* has become a guest, Hasan is invited to attend *Hacı Bektaş*'s monastery. He agrees, and there is trained until one day he performs another miracle by boiling a cauldron with only a handful of grass as fuel. Realising that he is now ready to set out on his own, *Hacı Bektaş* sends him to the sub-province to be a *dede*, the *dedes* from whom the *dede* telling the story claims his immediate descent at the conclusion of the story. Thus, the narrator is implying to the audience that his lineage has performed many miracles, has received professional training and authorisation from *Hacı Bektaş*, and is descended further back, in its own right, from a great mystic. He does so with wit, and in a manner calculated to please:

Account 5.2

Hazreti Muhittin Arabi came to Konya in the year twelve hundred and two, married there, came to Kayseri in Anatolia, there had a child, Hasan, and came to . . . From . . . he went to Malatya and from Malatya to Damascus. There, when he said, 'What you worship is under my feet', he was martyred by fanatics. [But] he had had written on the mosque, "When *sin* comes to *şin*¹⁵ what I really am will become apparent", so says Muhittin Arabi.'

Two hundred years pass, and a Sultan of Turkey, Yavuz Selim comes to Damascus. He sees the writing and solves it; *sin* means 'you', *şin* means 'troops'¹⁶ [and he asks] 'Where is this man's grave?' [They reply] 'When Muhittin Arabi said, "What you worship is under my feet", they martyred him.' 'Where?' 'Over there by the mosque.' 'Dig!' [says the Sultan] They dig and there appears a cauldron of gold.

'Aghh', they say, 'The Sultan will give out all the gold to those who are praying.' They empty out of the mosque, half-way through the prayers. 'Haa! This seems to have been a great man' [says the Sultan] 'what you really worship is money. Your God is money. You've killed this fellow and made him a martyr. Show me his grave!' They hadn't put him in a grave. They buried him in a ditch in a cemetery on the mountain top. Yavuz Selim found his resting place and there had made a memorial, a *tekke*.

One summer day when Hasan from that lineage was sowing water melons *Hacı Bektaş* came to his farm and there directed: 'Farmer, go and get us a water melon and we'll eat it.' The farmer replied: 'How can I get a water melon, I've just planted them?' At *Hacı Bektaş*'s side was a dervish. The dervish said, 'A kindness has life, go to the first row you sowed and look.' Hasan went to the far part of the field. The plant had grown, developed fruit, and three melons were ready. He took the

three melons and placed them in front of them. The dervish took two, and left one for the farmer. The people there, on seeing *bızır*, begin to day-dream [of riches], they are not able to know that these are developed ones (*ermiş kişi*).¹⁷ They rise and leave. A little later Hasan says, ‘Ah!, I was sowing melons and they ripened. These people were people with grace (*keramet*), developed people.’ He goes after them, but can’t find them. Returning to his house he sees that they have become his guests.

The dervish said, ‘This is *Hacı Bektaş Veli* descended from the twelve *imam*.’ They embraced.¹⁸ *Hacı Bektaş Veli Sultan* said, ‘Do you want children and success or holy intercession and a home?’ (*Evlât mı isten? Devlet mi isten, himmet, ülke mi isten?*) On the farmer saying, ‘I have neither children, nor success . . .’, his wife dug him in the ribs (she spoke true Turkish)¹⁹ and said, ‘My sovereign, with my man, as partners, we’ll sort it out and then say what we want.’ On going outside she said to her husband, ‘What a stupid man you are! You’d ask for success and children, success and children are worldly goods, they come and go. Let’s ask for intercession and a home.’ They said, ‘Let’s ask for a home’, and went inside.

‘*Hacı Bektaş*, give us intercession and a home.’ The *Hacı* said, ‘To give intercession and a home is not [as simple as] success and children. If you want to take duties (*hizmet*) in my monastery, and [through this] receive intercession, then welcome.’

And they went to the monastery of *Hacı Bektaş*. While they were there, performing their duties, a son was born. *Hacı Bektaş Veli Sultan* said, ‘I would give him his name, let it be Muhittin.’ He gave him Muhittin Arabi’s name, his grandfather’s.

In *Hacı Bektaş*’s convent there is a black cauldron, which takes twelve oxen. He who can make the cauldron boil with a handful of dried grass, he takes the rank of *halife*.²⁰ After seven years’ service [Hasan did this] and *Hacı Bektaş Veli Sultan* said, ‘Let your name be from now on *Hasan Bostan Kollu* [Melon-Arm Hasan].’ He wrote out his licence in the name of *Bostan Kollu Hasan*, and said, ‘Go! Teach in the villages of . . . in the area of . . . in the *Tarikat* of *Bektaş Niyazi*. If there are those in dispute, make them at peace, make two hearts one, do all that it necessary for people to live humanely.’

When there he died, according to his last wish he was buried in the field in Kayseri, in the village of . . ., where the melon ripened. His tomb is there. Some of his sons stayed in . . . village, others in Susesi. One who was called . . . came to . . . in the village now named . . . I, . . ., am from this family.

In sum, then, the *Buyruk* provides the villagers with a blueprint of the roles which different people should fulfil, traditions by which they can justify their

position and reminders as to various rituals they can conduct. On the other hand, it does not replace such rich accounts which justify the position of the *dedes*, makes little attempt to tie itself down as to the specifics of daily life in any one place, is not used as a precise ritual handbook, nor does it impose a legislative code. That is, in spite of the existence of a sacred text, the great weight of the inculcation, teaching and perpetuation of Alevi religious thought lies with the local, holy patrilineages, the *dedes* and the oral tradition that supports them.

Dedes and 'dedelik'

Figure 5.2 shows the three Alevi villages which I know best: Susesi, Ekmek and Göz, and their respective village quarters. Among the three villages as a whole, about one in ten households are accepted as being *dede*. This ratio appears to be constant in the other Alevi villages of the sub-province and in the surrounding area. However, there is not necessarily a *dede* lineage in each village. Göz has no *dede* lineage at all, one *mahalle* of Ekmek consists entirely of *dede*, otherwise that village has none. One *mahalle* in Susesi likewise is regarded as all *dede*, and two *mahalle* have *dede* lineages among them but are not entirely *dede*.

Dede lineages may have much longer genealogies than lineages with no claim to holy status. Sometimes these accounts include descriptions of moves from place to place. The *dede* lineage in Tepe *mahalle* in Susesi is one of these. They trace their immediate descent to a village about a day's journey away across the valley, and say that men left Susesi in turn to move on to two other villages, the one about seven hours' walk away, the other twice that distance. The long description above was given to me by one of the *dede* from that further village. Not all *dede* lineages give such detailed accounts. The *dede* lineage in the village above, Ekmek, say they come from a holy founder who lived on the Black Sea coast, where his tomb now lies. The two other *dede* lineages in Susesi simply assert, much more generally, that they came from a wandering, nomadic past. This lack of specificity appears to coincide with a lack of active *dedes* among these lineages.²¹

The immediate reason for a lineage being accepted as being *dede* is that they are accepted as being sanctioned by *Hacı Bektaş* as being so. These claims are supported by myths such as the above, and, from a wider perspective, are embodied within a cosmology which assumes that some men may be closer to God than others. Nevertheless, on a day-to-day level, the actual requirements and function of a *dede* are more specific. To be accepted as a wise *dede* and shown respect accordingly, a *dede* must be:

- temperate in character, careful with his words and refrain from swearing;
- hospitable;
- honest in his dealings with others;
- in full possession of all his faculties;
- able to mediate between factions, and people, with skill;

- fluent in the services and ritual which comprise *Alevilik*, and able to comment intelligently on its interpretation within the community.

In return, besides the respect of the community, a *dede* is entitled to dues for any service rendered. In 1989 this was usually 10,000 lira, about £3, and is referred to as '*bakkullah*'. *Dedes* are also entitled to the pelt (*post*) and breast (*dös*) of any sacrifice which is offered to them and a small annual due.

Though all men within a *dede* lineage are theoretically qualified to teach *Alevilik*, not all are active. Rather, one man gradually becomes the most sought after as the most competent and accepted by the rest of the lineage as the most

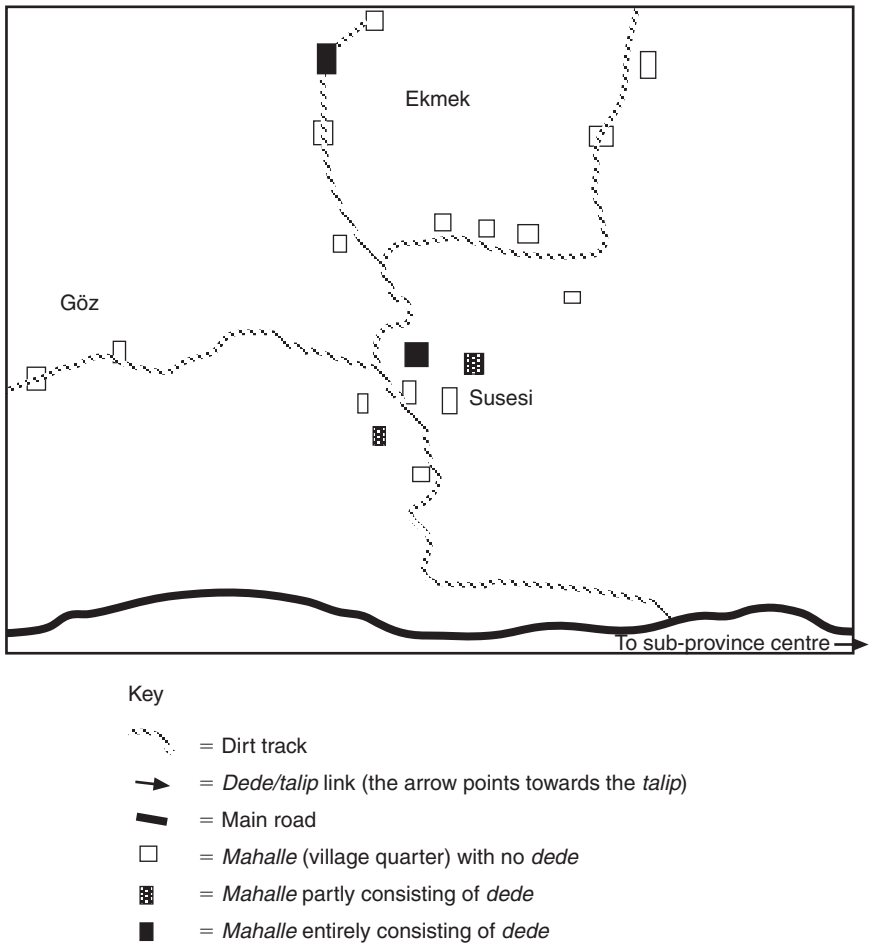


Figure 5.2 Indicating the location of *dede* lineages in Susesi, Ekmek and Göz

fit to lead ceremonies. Seniority given by age is an important factor. No son can practise *dedelik* while his father is still alive, and it is emphatically not done (*ayıp*) for a son to express any ambition to take over his father's position. Age helps also in becoming the centre of attention. It is bad manners to interrupt a man older than oneself, thus in the daily struggle to show that one has a better knowledge of Islam, and a wiser interpretation than the other *dede*, the oldest man in the gathering can often talk as long as he desires. Ultimately, though, whether a man is successful or not is demonstrated by the willingness of his followers to respect his judgement, the number of sacrifices he is offered by them, the number of followers who come to his house and the frequency with which he is asked for advice.

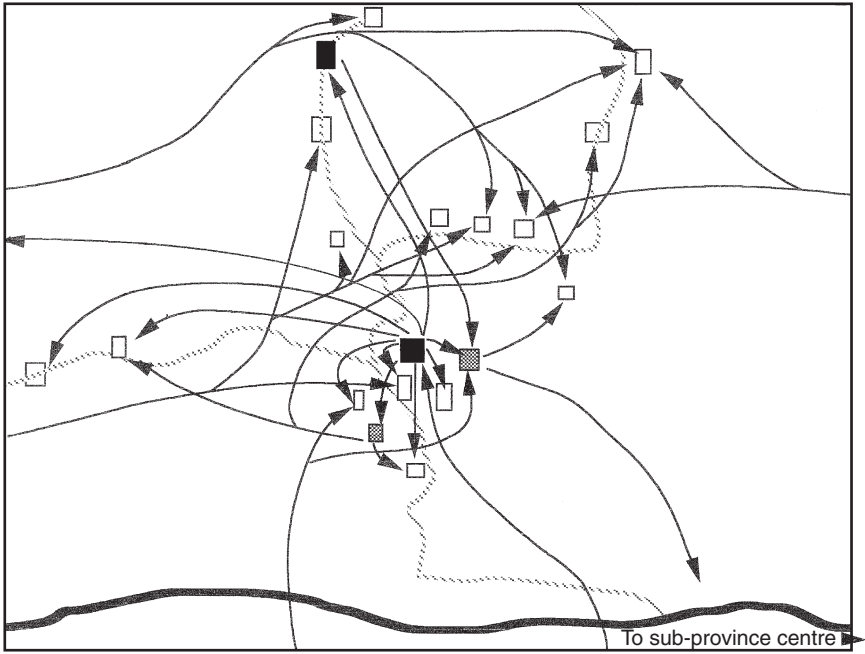
Dede/talip links

Every lineage, whether *dede* or not, is a follower to a *dede* lineage. This link can become rather complex when traced in detail, because even within a village quarter different lineages may possess *dedes* from entirely different places, sometimes close, at other times rather further away. The *dede* lineages in Ekmek, Susesi and Göz possess followers within these villages and among other villages in the area. The *dedes* in Tepe are by far the most significant. I would estimate they have fifty follower lineages, comprising about five or six hundred households, in all, spread out in about fifteen villages. A summary of these links with respect to Susesi and the two local villages are given in Figure 5.3.

Followers have no right to break the link between *dede* and *talip*, said to have been decided by *Hacı Bektaş* himself, unless their *dedes* are inadequate to perform their duties or they behave in a dishonest way. *Dedes*, however, are entitled to re-allocate followers as they wish. This may happen because a *dede* lineage becomes temporarily bereft of competent *dedes*. It may also happen when a *dede* lineage splits on the death of a prominent *dede* and cannot come to any compromise about how to share out the remaining follower lineages. A nearby lineage, for example, told me that they divided into two sub-lineages over such a discussion, one half agreed to accept the bulk of the lineage's fields in return for giving up *dedelik*, while the other half took over all the followers.

If a lineage does not split, and has many followers, then it is the agreed custom to rotate responsibility for a number of follower lineages between different competent *dedes* within the lineage. In practice, however, one *dede* appears to gradually become dominant over the others and when the time comes round for the less powerful *dedes* to run ceremonies, they defer to the most highly regarded *dede* of the lineage.

The link between *dede* and followers can vary greatly. At its strongest, a follower lineage is proud of their *dede*, venerates their interpretations and enlists their services for help in many matters to do with their daily lives; not just to mediate quarrels but to help on their behalf in marriage negotiations (*dünürlük*), with fertility and health in special rituals, and, through frequent



- Key
- = Dirt track
 - = Dede/talip link (the arrow points towards the talip)
 - = Main road
 - = Mahalle (village quarter) with no dede
 - = Mahalle partly consisting of dede
 - = Mahalle entirely consisting of dede

Figure 5.3 Links between *dede* and *talip* lineages

visits and talks, continuous advice on how to organise their lives. At a less close level, a follower lineage may offer a sacrifice when the *dede* visits, and invite him in the event of a very serious quarrel. At a more distant level still, a follower may do no more than attend an annual service, the *görgü* (discussed below), pay a very small annual due and be polite to his *dede* on meeting. At worst, a follower may reject their *dede* entirely.

The power relationship between *dede* and follower is thus very subtle. If the followers wish it so, a *dede* can play an enormous part in their lives and influence many of their actions. If they do not, then simply by not inviting a *dede* they

need have almost nothing to do with him. Outside the collective religious ceremonies, the *dede* is not supposed to mediate in disputes unless asked to do so, and the religious ceremonies themselves take place only if the followers offer a sacrifice to their *dede*. On the other hand, the *dede* lineages hold a monopoly of *Tarikat* religious practice, and through the rule that a *dede* can change their followers at will, but the followers cannot change their *dede*, have great flexibility in the way that they can retain their position over the followers through times when their influence might otherwise be lost. The following account illustrates these points:

Account 5.3

The *dedes* in Batı *mahalle* in Susesi have followers in both Ekmek and Göz as well as in Aşağı *mahalle*. Among these follower lineages, the present Batı *dede* are remembered principally for their late grandfather. His eldest son moved to Germany, where he was an active *dede*, and maintained links with the village where his wife and children remained. However, in Germany he eloped with the daughter of his ‘*musahip*’ (a religious partnership struck between men, said to be the same strength and bound by the same rules, as kin, discussed in more detail below). A scandal resulted, both because he already had a wife in the village, whom he was abandoning, and because, by marrying the daughter of his *musahip*, it was said that it was as if he had eloped with his own daughter. It made matters worse that the girl was twenty years younger than him.

For many years, he was unable to come to the village. One day, when he decided to come back for a wedding, the youths stoned his car from above as it passed by the road, breaking its windows and windscreen. Shaken, he went to the *muhtar*, who was very unsympathetic, saying that he had brought on his own downfall. The *muhtar* told him that if he complained formally about the assault to the authorities in the sub-province centre, he would likely to find his predicament even worse. He left the village straight away.

The adverse reaction was so great that he was forced to give up being a practising *dede*. He was obliged to give a very large sum of money to his former wife in the village, and in addition to buy his son there a tractor. In later years, the man regretted his actions greatly, he would weep when talking with his peers, saying that he had lost all his honour, and position in the community through a single hasty action.

After the debacle, the lineage found themselves without any active *dedes*. His son, though still in the village, and interested in being a *dede*, was unable to assume sufficient authority. A nephew, who enjoys great respect because of his honesty and the efficiency with which he works, does not wish to become a *dede*. This left only one other

nephew of suitable age, who was not respected enough to be consulted over daily matters or brought in to solve disputes. Thus after the man was disgraced, there were no adequate *dedes* in the lineage to administer their followers in an active way.

In practice, during this fallow period, if the remaining *dedes* from the lineage paid a casual call on any followers, they were still treated with respect. Their one very admired figure referred all followers who came to him for advice to the Tepe *dedes*. For ceremonies, the Batu *dedes* still sat in that part of the room reserved for *dedes*, but they invited the Tepe *dedes* to conduct their ritual duties. Later, in the middle 1990s, the disgraced man's brother returned to the village to retire, having also been a worker in Germany. Having decided to take up *dedelik*, he has been accepted as an appropriate, and active person to lead ceremonies and now does so. This difficult period is therefore, beginning to be overcome, and the lineage's followers once again are in direct and active contact with their *dede* lineage.

The following two examples show *dedes* at work as mediators. The first is by one of the *dede* in the village, recalling his first triumph. This I have compiled from notes made during our conversation. The second is from Susesi and illustrates the way that a *dede* may be used to bring two opposing patrilineages together. It involves, mainly, the *muhtar* and the lower *mahalle* of Ekmek. I collected an account from one of the participants, and over the next days, talked with other members of the village in order to confirm the details:

Account 5.4

My father told me it was time to go to the *medrese*. I went, learnt how to make *muskas* [charms containing a written verse of the Koran], and wandered through the villages making money by selling them. I was resting with a friend one day and several brothers walked past, they passed without a *selam*. 'These people are not Muslim,' I said, 'to pass without saying anything.' My friend explained that for ten years they had not spoken because of an argument about water that was going through the courts. I said, 'I'll sort it out', so one day they, myself and my friend met together. I explained what *Müslümanlık* is, that to fight is wrong. After a long discussion they said, 'We'll make peace but what about the courts?' They decided simply not to go any more to the courts and for this I took from each a *teneke* (measure) of wheat. Thus I made money.

Eventually a note came to them from the courts to say that they should attend their hearing. 'We have made peace,' they said. On asked why they replied, 'A *dede* came who also knew *bocalık*. We listened to him and made peace.' On hearing this the judge was so

curious he asked to meet me. The next time I was in that village we did so, and we had a meal together.

Account 5.5

Kol *mahalle* (the closest *mahalle* to Susesi belonging to Ekmek) left their goats to graze freely on some fields below their territory. They were eating some of the crops of the *muhtar*. He sent warning to Hasan of Kol that they must not do this again.

The next day, however, the goats were again left free to roam. [Thereupon] the *muhtar* collected thirty-five of the men of the *mahalle* together and saying, 'Let's go and get those goats', took up the village rifle.²² The rest of the men gathered up their rifles, which they had secretly hidden. They took the goats to a pasture belonging to Yüksek *mahalle*. The goatherd, son of Hasan, ran away when he heard them coming and gave the news to Kol that they were being taken.

Hasan came running after his goats to save them. Hasan's five brothers came running after him as they heard the news and after the brothers came running the rest of the *mahalle*, who are anyway all related. On arriving at the pasture Hasan began swearing at the collected Yüksek *mahalle*. As he shouted the *muhtar* let off the rifle, once to the ground, and once to the sky. On hearing the sound, Hasan shouted, 'They'll kill us!' but still advanced to about 100 metres before stopping. On seeing how close he had come, some of the *muhtar*'s friends said, 'Let's get that man.' Immediately some of Yüksek *mahalle* ran, grabbed Hasan and dragged him in front of the *muhtar*, who hit him twice.

Just then the brothers of Hasan arrived and began to swear. At last, though, they said that they would give whatever they were asked. Yüksek *mahalle* refused this offer and began to drive the goats towards the village. The elder brother of Hasan said, 'Don't, whatever you do, do that!' At which the *muhtar* said, 'I have one friend in Kol, Mehmet. If you fetch Mehmet, I will discuss things.' They fetched Mehmet accordingly and after discussion, on pain of not repeating the offence, Yüksek *mahalle* released Hasan and the goats.

A year later a problem emerged between the same people. Hasan collected his lineage and, crossing a boundary common to both parties one night, levelled trees, cleared the ground and planted wheat. The *muhtar* waited his opportunity for five or six months. The two *mahalle* were already *küs*, so they did not speak to one another. As the crop was maturing the *muhtar* gathered some men, this time from the village as a whole and reaping it, threw it on to one of his lineage's fields nearby. Kol found out in the morning but were unable to do anything about

it. Relations were now so bad that they were unable to pass through our village and had to go by the hill road.

Two months later two of the *muhtar*'s cows, who were grazing freely on the *mahalle* pasture, did not come back. There was no herdsman, they were grazing freely. Yüksek *mahalle* collected together and, with the village watchman, searched for two days. Dursun Dede, and a few others, met in the *muhtar*'s house and decided that they had looked everywhere, they had not been eaten by a wolf because there are no remains. Accordingly, Hasan and his brothers must have taken them. We sent news telling them to give back our cows but they denied taking them. Then we heard that someone had seen them being grazed in Kol *mahalle*. The *muhtar*, saying 'I'm going to kill that man' took the rifle and ran to find him. At last he came back, being unable to do so. Four of us from the *muhtar*'s lineage, Ismail *hoca* and Dursun *dede* went to the *muhtar* of Ekmek. He said he had no reason to interfere but would call the Hasan brothers. Four of them came. The village council of Ekmek came also. We said, 'If you have the cows give them back.' They denied all knowledge, however, and after half an hour got up and left. The *muhtar* was powerless to do anything about this. We couldn't go to the courts because this would mean that we were unable to sort out our own affairs. There were threats made daily.

Ten days later the senior of the Hasan brothers came to the *muhtar*'s house, where we were sitting. He went with the *muhtar* to another room and said we, Kol, want the promise that if we are able to find your cows, then we can have absolute peace. The next day the *muhtar*, Ismail *hoca* and three of us from the *muhtar*'s lineage went to Kol. They slaughtered a sheep, offered raki, and we made peace. They gave back one cow. In the place of the other, which they had eaten, they put money.

The reconciliation was achieved by Dursun *dede*. He waited until the market day in the sub-province centre,²³ when he was able to meet the Kol brothers, and told them that if they went to the *muhtar*'s house and asked for peace, then they would have a favourable reply. Dursun then told the *muhtar* that if the Kol brothers came to his house to make peace he should give them a hospitable welcome. When eventually they came to offer terms he persuaded the *muhtar* to accept them.

Mediation, transcendence and imminence

That a particular sacred lineage should be responsible for mediating in disputes within a rural setting is a long-running theme within social anthropology. Particularly in its earlier years the discipline was interested in examining the

social organisation of those groups who appear to be independent of the state, or at least who form much of their identity and daily lives through a self-conscious contrast with central authority. Their answer was, in the absence of more obvious means, such as the police or law courts, the patrilineal organisation of the tribe itself may constitute an essential aspect of a society's means of achieving social control. This set of ideas came to be known as 'segmentary lineage theory' and was made most famous by Evans-Pritchard who worked on this idea in the Sudan. It was applied subsequently by Evans-Pritchard himself to an Islamic tribal community in Libya, then by Lewis working in Somalia, Gellner in North Africa, and finally Van Bruinessen in eastern Anatolia, working among the tribal Kurdish communities, all of whom wrote major works using this model as a central aspect of their descriptions.²⁴

We look once more at these arguments in the final chapter. However, it may be stressed here that the argument put forward by those who wrote on this issue, such as Evans-Pritchard and later Gellner, relies on the assumption of a volatile relationship between male conception of honour and the wider social organisation of that society. Thus, tribal groups such as the Nuer, the Berbers, the Sunni Kurds and the Somali Bedouins all possess a highly unstable, aggressive ethos within which men compete to defend their honour.²⁵ If a dispute does not remain contained within interchanges between two men, their agnates join in. This may trigger a wider conflict, which, owing to the flexibility with which different levels can combine or split, allows many different alliances to form, so many that almost every situation can be first provoked, then contained within opposing segments of roughly equal weight.²⁶

Religion, in as much as it feeds into these exchanges of honour and conflict, appears to operate in these societies in a way that is strongly reminiscent of the Old Testament 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'. Thus, it would appear not just a conceit (as is sometimes suggested) that Evans-Pritchard famously thought that it was possible to use the Old Testament as a framework for Nuer theology. This ethos is rather different among the Alevi community. While individuals, households, lineages and whole communities may dispute with one another, reconciliation is attempted through stressing the peaceful side of religion. All must be at peace for the *cem* ritual to be held. The Alevi living philosophy is pervaded with the idea that individual salvation lies in avoiding confrontation. To be reconciliatory, be calm, to turn the other cheek, is given a positive value, and celebrated in their texts, rituals and poetry as an auspicious, even a holy thing.

Further, the *Tarikat* 'way', which supports this reconciliatory approach, cuts across even the community's underlying patrilineal social organisation. For example, ideally, every man must marry. Having married, according to the *Tarikat's* rules, he should form a partnership with another man who is also married, so that their two households are indissolubly linked. This bond is known as *musabip*. The partnership is formed by both men sacrificing a sheep, and holding a *cem* together. When it is completed, the two men are said to be

related just as if they are brothers, and their two households are supposed to act towards each other accordingly; to go in and out of each other's houses freely, to borrow money or goods in times of need, and to rely on each other's support and attendance in times of need such as marriage or death.²⁷

In the *Buyruk*, the custom is said to derive from the way *Ali* and *Muhammed* became one. The villagers did not mention such a derivation to me, but they do say that only those couples who are *musahip* to each other should dance the 'sema of the forty' which takes place in the *cem*, only they can take on ritual functions within the ceremony (known as the 'twelve duties'), and that only they can receive the sacrificial morsels (*lokma*) from the *dede*. In Susesi, while I was in the village, no new *musahip* partnerships were formed, and they said that none had been since the late 1970s. Several households in Tepe *mahalle* (that with the active *dedes*) were linked in this way, however, and the villagers often affirmed the importance of *musahip* in principle.

Through this immersion into mystical or Sufi ideas, the image of God that is experienced by the villagers through their membership in the village's activities becomes, from the theological point of view, highly sophisticated. In effect, it presents God as being both imminent and transcendent at the same time. The internalised conception of God, as being a part of all people, both men and women, is stressed in many ways: it is said, for instance, that the point of worship together is to see into one another's faces, and thereby into the heart, where the true God lies. At the same time though, God may be fearsome, cast supplicants into heaven or to hell at a wish, and has sanctioned particular lineages through a sign to be leaders to the rest of the community.

This twin conception of God is profoundly intertwined with the mediating function of the *dedes* within the community, and indeed may be said to be essential to their distinctive means of achieving social control within the traditional setting. This more specific exploration of the concatenation between Alevi religious ideas and social control forms the theme of the following discussion.

God as omniscient authority

In its fundamental assumption of the relationship between God and His people, the Alevi cosmology is similar to that of other Islamic societies. God (for whom they have many names, but most usually *Allah* or *Tanrı*) is the supreme judge and the perceiver of all things. He is omnipotent, omniscient but merciful. After a person's death, according to their conduct on this earth He sends them to heaven or to hell, but He may be influenced by intercession (*sefaat*) on the dead person's behalf.

While in great part a person is judged, whether man or woman, principally by the way that they have behaved during their lifetime, the Alevi say that *Allah* can also be placated by a service held by those on earth in memory of the dead person, and by a sacrifice offered to the community and eaten in His name. The service is known as *Dar çekme*, and the sacrifice as *Can ekmeği*.

Dar çekme

The villagers say that the ‘*dar çekme*’ ceremony is a direct attempt to influence God as the deceased is standing before Him and He is deciding his or her fate.²⁸ Some people say that the ceremony is held three days after a person’s death because initially the deceased is a guest in God’s house, and only after this time has elapsed will He judge them. The ceremony is short, and I did not attend one while in the village, just missing several occasions. I did, however, gain a detailed description from a friend.

The ceremony takes place in the *ev*, main room, of the deceased person’s house. The *dede* lineage of the dead person is invited to attend, as is a *hoca* (it must be an indigenous *hoca*, this being one of the ceremonies which are closed to non-Alevis). The *dedes*, of whom there may be up to half a dozen, sit along one side of the room, the *annes* (wives or daughters of *dedes*) to their right, the *hoca* to their left, and the person offering the sacrifice to the left of them in turn. In front of the *dedes* are, ranged alternately, male and female, twelve people of the village in a horseshoe formation. They face the row of *dedes* and there is, unusually, said to be no minimum age requirement, though it is unlikely that very young children would take part.

The leading *dede* begins by pronouncing a brief blessing, and then the *hoca* reads a longer prayer. This long prayer is the central part of the ceremony. The *dede* then says a prayer to close the proceedings. The company move to another room, where the sacrifice, *can ekmeği*, usually a sheep, is eaten, having been blessed by a *dede* and boiled with cracked wheat (*bulgur*) earlier during the day. Eating the sacrifice, unlike the ceremony itself, is openly advertised, and I often joined in this.

Later, the village *hoca* let me take a copy of the long prayer. It assures God of His power and asks for His mercy. The requests to God are made in the name of many different figures in their religious tradition, so that the prayer as a whole is a detailed account of their sacred allegiances. There are references to the twelve imams, to the prophets, to famous dervishes, and to Horasan, from whence many Alevis say their original teachers came. The provenance of the prayer is not clear – the *dedes* of the village say that it was given to them by their forefathers to pass on to the *hoca* of their choice. It has no parallel in the *Buyruk*, which does not mention such a ceremony.

The passage below is representative of its tone, and consists of repeated requests revolving around the phrase ‘*hakkı için*’. I have rendered this ‘in the name of’ to try to capture some of its flow. Literally, *hakkı* means ‘right’, ‘due’ or ‘truth’ and *için* ‘for’ but the implication of the phrase taken together is ‘for the (righteous) respect due to’:

O God! Our faces are black, our sins are many . . . do not refuse our prayer. In the name of your Godliness, in the name of the great, beautiful Light, in the name of Muhammed Ali Nebi, in the name of the

cloaks of the Saints, in the name of Mecca and Medine, in the name of all the Prophets, in the name of the martyred soul of *İmam Hasan*, in the name of the blood of *Hüseyin*, and in the name of the great Twelve Imams, in the name of the tongues which are saying 'God is Great', in the name of the blood spilt by martyrs, in the name of the offerings made by the developed ones, in the name of the three, the seven and the forty . . . in the name of the Saints of Horasan . . . accept our prayer . . .

Can ekmeği

'*Can*' is a difficult word to translate. It usually means 'life force', i.e. that which distinguishes animate from inanimate objects. 'That part of the disembodied spirit which, after death, is particular to the individual' is perhaps best in this context so that '*can ekmeği*' implies 'food (or bread) for the spirit of the dead person'. *Can ekmeği* may be held at any time that the relatives of a dead person wish to remember him or her, and not just after a '*dar çekme*'. For it, a sacrifice is prepared and served with favourite foods (perhaps stuffed vine leaves, yoghurt with pasta, beans cooked with meat). A representative from all the households of the village should attend the meal, which in the summer is laid out on long trestled tables outside the house, and then they leave immediately after they have eaten. There is little ceremony other than the act of eating itself, except that the *dede* is invited to say a prayer. For example:

El hamdülillah
Lokmalar kabul ola
Ocaklar aydın ola
Yiyene helal ola
Yedirene delil ola
Geçmişlerin canına değe
On iki imam dergahına kayıt ola
Gerçeğe hu!

In the name of God,
Let (the) morsels be accepted,
Let hearths be lit
Let (only) permitted (foods come) to those eating
Let guides come to those drawn
Let there be value to the souls of those past
Let (them) be registered in the monastery of the twelve imams
Attention to the truth!²⁹

Nearly all the lines of the prayer have more than one meaning, and refer to different aspects of ritual practice, but its supplicatory tone is clear. In the second

line *lokmalar*, morsels, implies both the food which has just been eaten, and the entrails of a sacrificial sheep handed out by *dedes* in a *cem*. Hearth, *ocak*, refers both to the literal hearth in the house, to the lineage which owns the house and also to the *dede* attached to the house; a man may refer to his *dede*, for example, as ‘our hearth’, *ocağımız*. The final phrase, ‘Attention to the truth!’ is the normal way to close a *dede* prayer.

Ritual ceremony and the *dedes*

The *dedes* reflect God’s authority on earth. Indeed, it is the presumption that *dedes* are in some way qualitatively different from other men by virtue of their closer contact with God which allows them to mediate in disputes.

That the *dedes* occupy an intermediary position between God and His followers, that they are His spokesmen and have the capability to help others contact Him is important not simply in giving the *dede* the authority to mediate in quarrels in everyday life but is also a key element in ritual. We have noted already that only *dede* may teach *Tarikat* doctrine or conduct *Tarikat* ceremonies. In *Tarikat* rituals, the focus of ceremonial activity is in the centre of the room, in a space called the *meydan*. *Meydan* literally means ‘place’, or ‘square’, but in the *Tarikat* it is a prayer rug spread out in front of the collected *dedes*. At various occasions during the ceremony *talip* step onto the *meydan*, if men, having first taken off their socks and jacket. There, standing before their *dede*, the *talip* bow their heads, place their right foot over their left, and their right hand over their hearts. They refer to this as *dara durmak*, ‘to be paused in a situation of *dar*’ (cf. the *dar çekme* ceremony above) and say that the position of the *talip* in front of the *dede* is parallel to that of a person who is standing before God. While in the *dar* position the *dede* may question a *talip* as to their conduct, approve their holding a duty, *hizmet* (see below), declare a punishment for a misdemeanour or simply instruct them in the correct way to behave.

The following extracts from the *Buyruk* use the occasion when two couples become *musahip*, partners, to illustrate the ceremonial role of the *dedes* as they speak to the followers:

Buyruk Section 11 MUSAHİP

At the place of reckoning (*dar meydanı*), in front of the *pir*, those who are about to become *musahip* cover their feet. *Rehber*: ‘Let there be love (*aşk*)!’ On this, the five kiss the *meydan* and stand upright again.³⁰

Rehber: (addressing the *dedes*), ‘Hû, developed ones of *Tarikat*!’
Pir: ‘Hû, *Şeriat* traveller. Where do you come from, where are you going?’
Rehber: ‘We are coming from *Şeriat* and going to *Tarikat*.’

After the *rehber* has said this, the five together leave the place of reckoning, go to the threshold, and come back. The *rehber* again begins speaking: ‘Hû, developed ones of *Tarikat*!’ *Pir*: ‘Hû, *Tarikat*

traveller! Where do you come from, where are you going?’ *Rehber*: ‘We are coming from *Tarikat* and going to *Marifet*.’

Again they turn back, they go to the threshold and again they stand upright. *Rehber*: ‘Hû, developed ones of *Marifet*!’ *Pir*: ‘Hû, *Marifet* traveller! Where do you come from, where are you going?’ *Rehber*: ‘We are coming from *Marifet* and going to the *Hakikat*, the secret.’

Pir: ‘You cannot go! There is snow, there are impassable mountains, there are unfordable rivers. You cannot cross these passes, you cannot pass these floods. There are great obstacles, there are very difficult surroundings . . . Those would come, come! If you would come, do not turn! The goods depart of those who come, the soul departs of those who turn! Die but offer yourself. Die! Do not turn from offering . . . These I have said to you, and I would have you hear, my children.’

Rehber: ‘My *pir*, believing in God we have come to the being of the assembly, to the way of *Muhammed-Ali*, the presence of *Hunkar Hacı Bektaş Veli* and to the community of *Muhammed*, slaves to God, followers to *Hüseyn* believing, trusting in these, the names we remember. Our death is possible, our turning back is not. Our heads are bare in front of you, our feet stripped. We are in the presence of reckoning, our faces to the ground. Whatever comes from the *pir* we have said “*Allah, Allah*, by *Allah*”, and stood at the place of reckoning. Our necks thinner than a hair’s breadth, our road sharper than a sword. We have believed, we have brought forth faith. Together we have come to your presence.’

. . . The *pir* gives advice to the *musabip*:

‘My children, you have become *musabip*. First, a *musabip* does not separate his house from another *musabip*’s. He does separate his goods. He will not take without permission things from the other’s house. If, may God prevent it, an argument emerges between you and if you stay at odds until the heat of July, then your pain will find no remedy.

If *musabip* does not speak plainly to *musabip*,
His way is crooked in the next,
Muhammed-Ali does not intercede for him,
Spoke *Muhammed*, listened *Ali*.
The *musabip* who parts ways with *musabip*
God will smite and overturn his foundations
Command him to the fire of seven hells
Spoke *Muhammed*, listened *Ali*.

For you to be followers I want four things of you. First, it is necessary to know the *Şeriat*. Second, it is necessary to know the *Tarikat*. Third it is necessary to be a possessor of knowledge of *Marifet*. Fourth,

it is necessary to be a person of the secret Truth. To be worthy of these things it is necessary not to tell lies, not to eat forbidden things, not to have sexual relations outside marriage, not to gossip, not to take up those things you have not set down with your hands, not to say "I have seen" of those things you have not seen with your eyes. It is necessary not to trouble anybody else. You will do all those things I have said. You will show respect to those greater, you will love those lesser . . . You will not stray from God's path. Have you heard, my children!

The *musabip* say in reply, 'By God! (Yes) . . .'

The Immanent God and *aşk*

Omniscient authority is one, vital conception of God among the Alevis, but they have a second and complementary image, which relies on a much more internalised perception of the divine. They say that there is a part of God within all people, their soul, *ruh*. They are aware of the Koranic account of the creation, but their most frequently described account of the way human beings gained a soul is as follows: 'God created the earth and the creatures who dwell upon it. He gave them each life, *can*, but He found that He had nothing with which to reflect Himself in them, so He gave them all a piece of Himself, *ruh*.' The *ruh* does not die on the death of the mortal body, but returns to God. During our earthly existence, our *ruh* can be reached by entering into our hearts. This may be achieved in turn by behaving with a certain orientation towards the world; by being patient, by not retaliating when injured, by doing deeds with no expectation of return, by hurting nobody, by being courteous, peaceable and honest in one's daily dealings and by respecting the rights due to others. *Kimsenin hakkını yemem*, 'I eat (abuse) no others' rights!' is a way they have of expressing this. An old minstrel once said to me '*namazımız tahammül, aptesimiz sabır(dır)*', 'Our prayer is forbearance, our ritual cleansing patience.' Another, when a host had run out of cutlery, said, 'One spoon is enough among seven dervish', '*bir kaşık, yedi dervişe yeter*.' Another, that if struck on the cheek, one should turn the other side. Equally, in everyday conversation, the villagers say that to give something to another without expectation of reward is the equivalent of going on the *hac*, because one enters into the heart where Mecca truly lies.

The transcendent and immanent sides of God, when taken together, provide an immediate and future reason for people to behave well. We have seen this in the final speech of the *pir* above, in the way he exhorts people to behave honestly. In addition, by striving continually to behave in a way which hurts no other, a person may make contact with God while still on this earth. The *edep* philosophy extolled by the Alevis, their 'three conditions', are a succinct statement of this overall orientation, one that implies very strongly that it is through continual striving for perfection in worldly moral conduct that divine approval

will ensue. Thus, a frequent interpretation by *dedes* of 'Be master of thy hand, tongue and loins' is 'Do not take what you have not yourself set down, do not make love outside marriage, do not say you have seen what you have not.' In addition, I have heard a *dede* take a part of this phrase, for example the 'tongue', and expand it into a general account of the evils involved in gossiping, saying that a false tongue can be the most bitter of all enemies. This combination of good conduct and auspicious reward is described explicitly in the *Buyruk* as follows:

From *Buyruk*, Section 7, 'Sofu'

Those (*sofu*) who embrace each other on their thresholds become *hacı*, *gazi* a thousand times, they escape from great and minor sins, become purified, without sin. Then the *sofu* among the people resembles the angels in the sky, the *huri* in the heavens, the moon and sun among the stars, and brings to mind God's messengers . . .

. . . If a *sofu* goes to another *sofu*'s house, he is saved from the sins he has committed with his feet. If he kisses his hand, he is saved from the sins he has committed with his hands. If he looks from his heart to the other's face, he is saved from the sins he has committed with his eyes. If he loves a *sofu*, he is saved from the sins he has committed with his heart and his will. And if he gives to eat food of this world to a *sofu*, then in heaven God will offer him the food of heaven. If a *sofu* goes to a *sofu*'s village, province or country, then he wins a hundred thousand mercies, a hundred thousand abundances and a hundred thousand good deeds. And if the *sofu* who is the householder smiles at that *sofu*, then a hundred thousand misfortunes, a hundred thousand accidents go far from his village.

(p. 33)

Aşk and longing

The idea that God can be reached through continual struggle to behave in the correct way permeates the village; indeed, in the *edep*, it is the defining characteristic of *Alevilik*.³¹ But it receives its most poetic representation in songs played by a minstrel, and in a mystical conception of love. The villagers say that God can be reached through love, *aşk*, because by loving we enter into our hearts. The word for minstrel, *aşık*, means 'lover', and if a person wishes to pay a compliment to another they may say *aşıksın*, 'You're a lover.'³²

Minstrels are usually, but not always from a *dede* lineage. The necessary techniques are passed from established *aşık* to promising children. The instrument used is always a *saz*, an eight-stringed instrument similar to a mandolin, though with a larger body. Their songs, *deyiş*, use images familiar in Sufi poetry to express longing for God, particularly the nightingale who is seeking the rose, and may be performed on any occasion when requested.

These two ideas, that love is one way of manifesting God, and that all people should be at peace with one another, are brought together in the Alevi conception of collective worship. At *Tarikat* rituals, all present must be at peace. All people must see into each other's faces as they pray, by praying face to face they see into each other's hearts and thus come close to God. This peaceful, collective worship is known as *muhabbet*. The authorisation to practise being a *dede* quoted in the first part of this chapter shows clearly that this is one of the aims of worshipping together. It ends: 'on *talip* from this hearth transferring their allegiance to said licensed son of . . ., peaceful and sure *muhabbet* comes to the community'. It is present also in the collective prayer, *halkacık namazı*, from which I quote below, of which the villagers are very proud. Then, they say, every person in the room can see into each other's face, and therefore their hearts, as they pray. They contrast this form of prayer with that of the Sunni in a mosque, where they say all the worshippers are ranged in line and cannot see each other's faces:

Hoş geldiniz canım dostlar
Silinsin kalplardan paslar
Bu meydanda, bu meydanda
Silinsin kalplerden paslar
Bu meydanda, bu meydanda

Welcome, friends, dear ones,
Wipe impurities from your hearts,
In this place, in this place,
Wipe impurities from your hearts
In this place, in this place.

Uzağı eyledik yakın
Toplandık buraya, bakın
İncitme kimseyi sakın
Bu meydanda, bu meydanda (×2)

We have made far, near,
We are gathered together, look,
Take care, bother no one,
In this place, in this place. (×2)

The second:

Yedi yıldır hasretlik çekerdim çekerdim
şükür sevdiğime düş geldi yolum (×2)

For seven years I have longed
Praise be, my way has come across my love (×2)

Yıllar vardı tatlı bülbül aramaz uğramazdı
şükür sevdiğime düş geldi yolum
şükür dostlarıma düş geldi yolum

For many years the sweet nightingales came not,
Praise be, my way has come across my love
Praise be, my way has come across my companions

Can cana hasretlik çekince böyle
Onu kavuşturur Cenabım ona
Kusurum varsa müvret affeyle
Şükür sevdiğime düş geldi yolum (×3)

Longing together, thus, face to face
The Lord, my God, brings us into contact
If there are those who are angry respond with forgiveness
Thank God my way has come across my love.

The *cem* and the *görgü*

In Susesi, the most important collective *Tarikat* rituals are the *cem* and the *görgü*. The *görgü* takes place annually, just before the winter ploughing season begins. There is no restriction on the number of *cem* ceremonies, but none can be held before the *görgü* has taken place, and none after 6 May, or *Hıdrellez*.³³

The *cem* has no fixed length, and can often last up to four or five hours. Its principal aim is to worship, to come closer to God through collective, peaceful prayer, but it also commemorates the Alevis' allegiance to *Hacı Bektaş* and the twelve imams through a series of rituals which they refer to as the 'twelve duties', *oniki hizmet*. It is extremely important that all in the community are at peace to hold such a ritual, and a *dede* may be able to pressure a community to come together through this requirement, as is explained in the account below, an explanation that I recorded in 1989 from a leading *dede*, now sadly passed away in a traffic accident:

Now, if there are small sorts of encroachments on another's boundary, problems of escaping with a girl, we solve them, make them at peace ... The *dedes* ... do not send every subject to the courts. Whether in village or town, except for serious assaults, we make peace among people. We make two hearts one (*iki gönül bir ederiz*). They (the villagers) live in a human way. This is the defining characteristic of the *Alevi-Bektaşî Tarikat*. Those who go to the *Tarikat* of *Hacı Bektaş* never permit a division in their midst.

I would give you an example. I went to a village a little the other side of ... This village had split into two over the question of the

mulhtar. The two sides had complained about each other.³⁴ I don't know what they hadn't done . . . there was going to be a murder. For some years they had been unable to collect in the same place and hold a sacrifice. Haa! There were some followers of mine on the present *mulhtar*'s side. I met with them. After that I met with the side of the opposition. 'You', I said, 'If you don't make peace among yourselves, these are your children, you have children, (to the other side) you have children, if there is a murder, if you do not prevent this murder (then you will be responsible). I would bring you to peace. Mohammed's way is the way of the heart (*gönül*). The way of God.' I worked for four days, on the fifth I brought them to peace. I was presented a peace sacrifice. They embraced, kissed, we ate their sacrifice and the sacrificial morsels.³⁵ 'Let *Allah* be content with you,' they said, and I departed.

The way one of the oldest *dede* in Susesi described the *cem* to me is given in the account below. He speaks in the present tense throughout, which is a frequent way of narrating an event, and I leave this unaltered to try to catch his style. The first paragraph describes the preparations as the people arrive, settle down, and the sacrifice is prepared. Here the relevant points are the way that the followers pause in front of the *dede*, acknowledging his authority, before they sit down, and then they embrace with the people nearest them to show that they are on good terms. The second paragraph describes how the man who has offered the sacrifice is questioned, and the *lokma*, entrails of the sacrifice, distributed. The third outlines the different steps which are necessary to go through the 'twelve duties' and close the ceremony:

Evening has arrived, everyone has gathered [together], and those arriving paused at prayer, the *dede* has said prayers [over them], all have performed a *niyaz* [embrace] with each other, kissed hands, they have sat on their knees, the *dede* has said to them 'Ho!', the whole company has said 'Ho!' also. He [the *dede*] has said 'Sit at ease!' and they have sat at ease. People have washed their hands, the *meydan* has been brushed clean, the *boca* has read the Koran, the *dede* has said another prayer. A *duaz imam* is sung [by the minstrel]. The *dede* has said, '*Allahballa!*' and again he says a prayer. The *dede* has said, 'Go and fetch [the sacrifice]!', and they have fetched it. The *dede* blesses it [*tek-birleme*]. The sacrifice is slaughtered, cut up and is cooking. The *aşık* takes up his *saz* and sings. After this we (*dedes*) offer interpretations on the songs sung by the *aşık*, and in this way we keep occupied.

The sacrifice is cooking, is it ready? It is. The man who is tending the sacrifice takes it from the hearth. We (*dedes*) take the entrails. Now these entrails; if there is a person at odds with another he does not eat them. If the person giving the sacrifice is at odds with another, his sac-

rifice is not eaten. If he does have an argument, then he is brought to peace.

Now we come to the twelve duties (*on iki hizmet*). For each, a man comes to the *meydan*, one who has a *musahip* partner. He puts his right foot over his left (and kneels bowed in front of the *dede*). The first duty holder passes round the news of the *cem* taking place. The second is the *iznikçi*, he watches the door and makes sure that the shoes are tidy. The third is the one who takes the water around for people to wash their hands. The fourth is the minstrel. The fifth is the one who distributes the food. The sixth is the *çırakman*, he lights a flame. The seventh is the *saki* . . . this is to remember the water which they did not give to Hüseyin, who died a martyr without water, the eight . . . the ninth is the sacrifice. The tenth is the one who watches that all behave while in the *cem*, the one who holds a staff in his hand. The twelfth is the *sema*, the *sema* of the forty. They rise to dance the *sema*. Two women and two men. Mohammed himself danced the *sema* with the [original] forty . . . then, after a prayer it is finished. They eat the sacrifice, the *dede* gives permission for the people to leave and they return to their homes.

. . . But I have only given you a simplified version, there is much needed to fill in the gaps . . . (and he continues to tell the story of the twelve imams and the martyrdom of *Hüseyin*).

I attended one *cem* ceremony and one village sacrifice during my stay in the village, and the above description is an accurate reflection of what I saw, though it needs a little elucidation.³⁶ During the time of my first research in the village, a *cem* was always held in the largest room of a house, and had no special building. All tables and chairs were taken out of the room, and replaced with cushions and rugs on which the congregation sits. As it becomes dark, the *dedes* arrive, rather before the rest of the congregation (*cemaat*). They take up their place alongside the hearth, the man who will lead the ceremony at their head. From now until the end of the evening they do not leave their places, and they say that one of the most difficult parts of a *dede's* job is this having to stay perhaps five or six hours in the same spot. As each villager arrives they line up, making no differentiation between man and woman, quickly and respectfully in front of the *dedes*, and bow their heads, their right hand over their hearts, and their right foot over their left. The *dedes* say a short prayer, given below, and the women go to their part of the room, the men theirs:

Darın didarın kabul ola,
Hayır hizmetin kabul ola,
Hayırlı muradın hasil ola,
İstedğini dileğini Allah Muhammed Ali vere.
Gerçeğe Hu!

Let the prayers of suffering be accepted,
 Let the sacred duties be accepted,
 Let sacred wishes be granted,
 Let *Allah* Muhammed Ali give what is needed, what is desired,
 Attention to the truth!

After they have sat down, each person embraces the person on either side of them. This is the *niyaz*, the ritual embrace referred to in the accounts above. It is at once an acknowledgement of the relations of equality, inferiority and superiority which exist between any two people, and a public declaration of amity; a younger person kisses the hand of an elder, an elder kisses the eyes of a younger, equals shake hands and kiss each other's cheeks. To those sitting further away, those who have just arrived place their right hands over their hearts and, bowing slightly, say 'Hu!' They say that this is the equivalent of *merhaba!* (the everyday greeting 'hello!'), but said only in rituals. No one speaks loudly, and all are careful to move quietly and be courteous to each other.

There is no restriction on the number of *cem* which may be held in the village at the same time, but no more than one should be held in any village quarter, *mahalle*, and all the households in each village quarter should send representatives. Ideally, this should be the household head and his wife, but it may also be a different couple, man and daughter, brother and sister, mother and son, and so on. If a couple do not come, then at the very least one person should attend.

When all have arrived, a senior man says to the assembled *dedes*, *Hu! Dede-yimiz, hoş geldiniz!* 'Welcome, our *dede*.' To which the *dedes* reply, *Hu! Hoş bulduk!* 'Well-found!' and the ceremony begins with a *halkacık namazı*, collective prayer. The villagers lay great stress on this prayer and say that while they are praying all people are looking into each other's faces, and so into their hearts. During it, they do not genuflect, but stand, and, as the *dede* recites, rapidly, call *Allahhalla!* The following is an extract:

Halkacık namazı (collective prayer)

O Lord (*Ya Rabbi*) you are great, you are gracious, O Lord. You are capable of all things. You have the power of warding off misfortune, hidden and evident, and calamities from your slaves, O Lord. *Allah*, you will do so, *İnşallah*, Forgive our faults. Accept our repentance. O Lord, You will scatter every mishap, every misfortune, O Lord. Let skewers and hatchets dog those from those who commit in wrongful deeds, jealousy, envy and hypocrisy. Let doubt never strike the hearts of believing slaves. We have found this knowledge in the *Buyruk* of *İmam Cafer* . . . For the slave who weeps a single tear for *İmam Hüseyin* at the Kerbala, O Lord, award us grace. The rightful God is

Allah, Mohammed is his companion, the companions are the poles of the earth; the twelve imams. To the unity of the twelve imams, to the power of belief, let us say *Allah, Allah. Allah*, your slaves calling *Allah!*, guard, hide them from misfortune, pain. Let the helper in remedying your pain be *Ali*. O Lord, award our lot with grace. *Nuri Velî*, the munificent, *Ali*, poles of the earth, approach! The twelve imams, our *pir*, our master, *Hacı Bektaş Velî*, grant favour. Attention to the truth!

At this point the space in front of the *dedes* is bare. Now they begin to turn it into the ritual space on which much of the ceremonial activity will take place. The wife of the household head in which the *cem* is being held comes before the head *dede* with a brush. He blesses it, and she sweeps the floor in the centre of the room. She returns with an embroidered rug, and on it being blessed, spreads it out. The *meydan* is now ready. The *aşık*, who sits at the side of the *meydan* facing the hearth, sings a *duaz imam*, a song commemorating the twelve imams:

Account 5.6 The opening verses of a duaz imam

*Gelin hey erenler umudu kesmen
Bülbül işini zar eder Allah
Nasibim az deyin Mevleya küsme
Anide nasiplerini var eder Allah*

Come, developed ones do not give up hope,
God makes the work of the nightingale piteous,
Saying, ‘my lot is little’, do not become angry with God,
God in an instant makes good fortune.

*Muhammed Alinin sırrı yayılmaz
Hasan Hüseyini seven ayrılmaz
Nice bin ayıplar yüze vurulmaz
Rahmet sahibidir sır eder Allah*

The secret of *Muhammed Ali* is not revealed,
Those who love *Hasan, Hüseyin* do not break away,
How many thousand shameful (things) do not come
to trouble the surface [of life].
God is the dispenser of mercy, he makes the secret.

*Zeynelin rengine boyanmıyanlar
Ol İmam Bakira dayanmıyanlar
Ol Ali evlat nesline inanmıyanların
Malşerde gözünü kör eder Allah*

Those who are not of Zeynel's colour,
Those who are not trusting in Imam Bakir,
Those who do not believe in the lineage of Ali's children,
God blinds them at the last judgement.

Now the sacrifice is brought to the *meydan*. The sacrifice, usually a sheep, though it may also be a goat, is made ready by combing its hair and cleaning it of thorns and twigs. They place apples on its horns, calling these 'heaven's apples'. As it waits in the *meydan* the minstrel sings a sacrificial song. If the sheep reacts violently, then they take it away and find another, if it stays calm, when the song is finished it is taken away, slaughtered, chopped, and its carcass placed in the cauldron to begin cooking. The sacrificial song is as follows:

Erenler, evliyalar, kırklar, yediler
Onikimamların kurbanı budur
Cümle evliyarlar cümle nebiler
Onikimam kurbanı budur

Developed ones, saints, the forty, the seven,
This is the sacrifice of the twelve imam,
The community of saints, the community of the holy messengers,
This is the sacrifice of the twelve imam.

Anam kısır koyun atam Cebrail
Nefesimden halık oldum hükmüne gayır
Bilendi bıçağın gelendi soyum
Onikimamların kurbanı budur

My mother is a barren sheep, my father Gabriel,³⁷
Through my breath I have become God, outside all laws,
The knife is sharpened and come to my skin,
This is the sacrifice of the twelve imam.

Yem cigerim yedi kere kırktılar
Etcügezim pare pare dittiler
İbrahim sürüsüne kattılar
Onikimamların kurbanı budur

They have seven times sliced my entrails into forty,
They have cut my flesh into pieces,
They have made me join the flock of Ibrahim,
This is the sacrifice of the twelve imam.

He erenler bize bulmam bahane
 Yarın varacağız ulu dıvana
 Rıza lokmasıyız geldik meydana
 Onikimamların kurbanı budur

He! Developed ones, I do not find an excuse for us,
 Tomorrow we will be at the *divan* of the great God,
 We have come to the *meydan* (with) our morsels of acquiescence,
 This is the sacrifice of the twelve imam.

Derviş alim kanım negaha dökmem
 Hak için ölmeği hiç alem çekmem
 Pirim gelmeyince postumdan çıkmam
 Oniki imamların kurbanıyam ben

Weeping dervish, I do not spill my blood for nothing
 To die for God bothers me not at all
 I do not leave my place until my *pir* has come
 I am the sacrifice of the twelve imam.

After the song is sung, and the sheep is removed, the *dede* asks whether any person in the room has a quarrel. If they do so, then they should come forward to the *meydan* and have their dispute settled. Even if no person in the room has admitted to a quarrel, the man who has offered the sacrifice to the *dede* must come forward to the *meydan*, and affirm, in response to the *dede's* questions that he has no quarrel with any other person in the room. The *dede* then asks the congregation whether they are content with this man. If they are, then the twelve duties may take place, and the man's sacrifice is accepted. To undergo this questioning is known as 'to die before dying', and is treated in more detail below, in the description of the *görgü*.

The twelve duties are said to be prescribed by *Hacı Bektaş*, and necessary to go through to hold a successful *cem*. They consist partly of ritual requirements, and partly of allotted tasks in the management of the assembly. As described by the *dede* above, the person who is to hold, or has been holding a duty, comes to the *meydan* and a short prayer is said over them. Thus the doorkeeper, the person who has alerted the village to their being a *cem*, the minstrel, the person who is watching the sacrifice, all are blessed while kneeling in the *meydan*. Later duties include lighting a match while on the *meydan* and blessing a bowl of water held by a man on the *meydan* in order to commemorate *İmam Hüseyin*. In the above account, the *dede* stumbles in allocating exactly one duty to each number until twelve. This is normal. The *dede* does not refer to a specific book in which the duties are laid out (though there is a section on the twelve duties in the *Buyruk*) and in local practice the order in which the duties are called to the *meydan* varies, or may even be the subject of discussion and argument. All are agreed, however,

that the culmination of the twelve duties lies in the *kırklar sema*, the *sema* of the forty, stressing this over the other actions which take place during their course.

To dance the *sema*, two men and two women, who must be *musabip* to each other, move on to the *meydan* and, accompanied by the minstrel, dance in a slow, intricate short-stepping dance which is sombre and reverent. During it, their heads are bowed and their hands crossed over their chests. After it has finished, the minstrel changes the song, and a different dance begins: the *gönüller sema*, dance of the hearts. This is different. Though there are still two men and two women, the rhythm is much more rigorous, and the men turn first one way and then the other, throwing out their arms, and the women raise their arms outstretched and whirl in a complete circle. The requirement that all dancing should be *musabip* is relaxed, and men and women queue up to dance as long as the *aşık* is content to play. The villagers say that the idea of the second *sema* is that everyone should go home cheerful in the unity of the *cem*, and not made sombre by the worship. After the *sema* indeed, when the sacrifice is brought out, the mood is relaxed and people talk quietly as they eat.

The *görgü*

In the autumn, before the season of the *cem* may begin, a series of rituals called *görgü* are held. The villagers say that these mark their new year and that until they have been conducted no one should sow their fields. In Susesi there are seven *mahalles*. On the first night the ceremony is held for *Batı*, *Aşağı* and *Uzak*, on the second night for the *Yüksek* and *Pınar*, and on the third for *Tepe* and *Orta* (see Figure 4.1). The *Tepe dedes* are asked to officiate and the most senior is asked to become the village *dede*, *köy dedesi*. During the course of the three days, a couple from every household in the village go forward to Ali's space to answer whether or not they have a quarrel with anyone in the room. To undergo this questioning is called 'to die before dying'. They explain the expression 'to die before dying' by saying that the interrogation they undergo from the *dede* is parallel to that which they shall receive from *Allah* after they have died. The twentieth section of the *Buyruk* spells this out as follows:

Section 20 To die before dying

God decreed, 'O, my slaves, die before dying! See your reckoning before the day of judgement!' Well, how is this possible?

It happens by making a person's emotions and selfishness disappear, and by following a *pir*. Those who have made a *musabip*, gone with them on the true path, shared goods and beasts heart to heart, and given themselves up to one another, go once a year go to the *pir*'s (the representative of *Allah*, *Cebrail* [Gabriel] and *Muhammed-Ali*) side. In the presence of the *pir*, and in front of the people, they take the penalty for the sins they have committed in the year.

... That day is like the day of judgement. The *pir* is regarded as the deputy of God. He asks the graveside's question: 'If you have taken something give it! If you have given something take it! If there is someone you have made weep make them smile. If there is something you have spilt, make it full. If there is something you have knocked down, take it up.'

... The followers must think to themselves: 'Let questions be asked me in this court, that they not be asked in the next. Whatever it decrees in the Koran, I would behave accordingly. At the court of the *pir*, and that of God, let my face be unblemished, I would behave, and lead my life according to the four doors and the forty commands.' If not, whether with or without witnesses, if he or she hides what they have done and does not tell, they would be a liar in the Great *Tarikat* ... on the day of judgement, at the assembly of the resurrected they will wait in vain [to go to heaven]. No one will stand up for them in support.

If necessary the follower's head is taken, if necessary their life. If necessary the follower is driven from their house, pitchers, millstones are hung around his neck. Needles are driven into their feet. Skewers are held to their brow. The laws of our road are thus.

(pp. 89–90).

In the village, after the congregation has collected together in an appropriate house, the *görgü* begins with a *balkacık namazı*.³⁸ Then, rather than a sacrifice being brought forth (as it would in a *cem*), couples begin to go forward to the *meydan*. If a lineage has too many people present to go to the *meydan* together, then it splits according the closeness of the patrilineal ties between them. The following extract is from a tape of the ceremony which I witnessed in 1989.

After an initial formula, the *dede* asks:

Dede: Evveli baştan sizi sizden soruyorlar, evinizinen, ocağınızınan, çoluğunuzunan, çocuğunuzunan, feylinizinen, amelinizinen, gövdedinizinen, nice berisiniz? Dört çamdınızla kendinize yarı garmi?

Dede: Beginning from the first they ask of you, of your homes, of your hearths, of your wives, of your children, of your husbands, of your actions, of your bodies, what do you say? Are you happy within yourself?

Meydandakilar: *Eyvallah, dede.*

Those in the centre. 'By God, *dede*.' (Yes)

Dede: Allah hepinizden razı olsun. Ellerinizinen koymadığınızı alman, gözünüzünen görmediğinizi söylemen, ... komşu

hakkında, yol babında, verecekte, alacakta, bilenler bu kişilerden razımsınız?

Dede:

Let *Allah* be content with you all. [To those in the centre] Do not take what you have not yourself set down, do not say what you have not yourself seen . . . [to the watching congregation] on neighbour's rights, in the narrow part of the road, on that to be given, on that to be taken, those who know, are you content with these people?

When the existence and circumstances of a dispute have become clear, the *dede* suggests a reconciliation based on whether the disputants have shown the correct degree of respect to each other (a young man must respect an older, a wife her husband), or abused one another's rights (*hakki yemek*). The congregation then must agree with his decision, or else it is not valid. The *dede*'s suggestions are supplemented by a '*görgü* committee', *görgü* heyeti, of which he is the head. The other members of the committee are not necessarily *dede* but must be respected men of the village.

If the problem cannot be resolved, the person disagreeing with the majority must leave, and is said to be fallen, *düşkün*. In this case at best he or she will be forbidden entrance to religious ceremonies and at worst will not be spoken to or allowed to work with others on daily tasks, or may even be forced to leave the village. If one of a *dede* lineage fails to pass through the centre, then the whole of the lineage is forbidden to practise until he or she has done so.

The examples below are from the *görgü* at which I was present in 1989. In spite of the aggressive tone of the extract from the *Buyruk*, the Alevi way of ensuring social order, at least in Susesi, places great emphasis on restoring harmonious relations between people. In the disagreements below, the ideal solution to any problem is seen as the public re-affirmation of good relations between the two relevant people by going through the *niyaz*, the embrace. The *niyaz* in turn entails acknowledging the subordinate relationship between younger and older people, so that one of the most important principles of the village social structure is reaffirmed each time a quarrel is resolved.

Examples from the *görgü*:

- 1 A man aggrieved with his neighbour because he had sold a field without giving him an opportunity to buy it.

Solution: the younger told to kiss the hand of the older, the older to kiss the younger's eyes, and the two not to argue in future.

- 2 A man failing to visit his sick brother.

Solution: it was wrong not to wish a sick person well. The brother still being sick, the offending brother shook hands with his wife, and was made to promise to visit the next day.

- 3 A woman losing her temper with her neighbour because she believed he had taken a piece of firewood from her door.

Solution: it was wrong for women to swear, and anyway he hadn't taken it. They shook hands.

- 4 A young man, whose father had died, throwing stones at a neighbour's sheep.

Solution: his mother said that she could not control him. It was decided to ask the *muhtar* to speak to him, and all who saw him causing trouble to beat him.

- 5 An opponent of the *muhtar*, one of the returning men from Germany described in Chapter 3, had reported to the sub-province governor that the *muhtar* was spending time in Istanbul and therefore not in the village. The man who made the complaint came to the *meydan* and said that there was no connection between events particular to the village and those to do with the state, that *Tarikat* could be separated from *Şeriat*. On this there was an outcry of protest, one man made a speech saying, 'When *Şeriat* is separated from *Tarikat*, then Alevi life in this village is finished.'³⁹ The offending man withdrew. There was great consternation at this because the man was one of the *dede* from *Batı mahalle* and as he had not been through the ceremony, the whole *dede* lineage would be unable to conduct the ceremony for their followers in the neighbouring village. He was persuaded to come back again.

Solution: his brother's son spoke up, a man who commands great respect, and a member of the *jörgü* committee. He explained that he had talked with the *muhtar* (who was not present through illness) and been appointed his representative. He promised he would reconcile the two men's differences soon. On hearing this promise the assembly allowed the man through without taking the matter further. When I went back to the village the next summer I found that, indeed, the two had resolved their quarrel.

Conclusion

In describing the main rituals in the village, I have stressed the way that they are buttressed by complementary but different religious perceptions of the deity. In itself, such descriptive approach may be justified in various ways: as the presentation of a set of ceremonies for which we have very few first-hand descriptions,⁴⁰ or as an example of the way social control may be achieved through an intertwined sense of fear of the afterworld yet the possibility of present-day, individual satisfaction through being part of a peaceful collectivity. However, looking at the ceremonies in such piecemeal fashion has other uses too. The pace of change within the community is hardly slowing down. As the village opens out to the outside world, inevitably its way of thinking goes through changes as well. Being sensitive to the idea that such doctrines may have different components helps us to realise how some aspects of their thought may be brought into focus, and others undergo eclipse as a result of this social change.

While experience has taught me that it is better to be cautious than otherwise when assessing these matters, it appears that, for some at least, the idea of an authoritarian God is declining, leaving a much clearer sense of the importance of an inner conception of self that may be experienced, or developed independently of the ritual setting. For these people, *Alevilik*, rather than seen as the collective subservience to a road, or a way, may become regarded as an individual life path. Faced with drastic social change, the community may, therefore, turn from the possibility of a transcendent, orthodox God (as is exemplified by the Sunni communities around them) towards an internalised sense of self that is far less reliant upon the formalised inculcation within the framework of traditional religious ritual than before. For these people, being an Alevi is widened to something that is common to all humanity, not restricted to a chosen group of believers within a wider creed, and perhaps, not even to do with religion.⁴¹

This is, of course, an extremely abrupt summary of a particular inclination that appears to have been active within the village. It is one that has made it possible for many of the village to achieve a close sense of identity with the Republic, and particularly with its left-wing nationalist ideals as expressed throughout the first Ecevit era. However, as the village becomes increasingly in contact with the Alevi revival that is a marked feature of life in Turkey today, the situation may change once more. It is to these issues, and the changing circumstances of ritual activity in the village, we now turn.

6

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE ALEVI COMMUNITIES

One of the most difficult aspects of writing ethnography is how to present in linear fashion ideas and sequences that are perceived, as it were, all mixed up. The question is still more difficult when the comparatively brief time-scale over which intensive field work takes place is considered. I stayed in the village in 1988 and 1999, for a year in total over an eighteen months' period, but even this meant that I was able to witness many occurrences merely as snap-shots of far longer sequences that only later have I been able to follow more clearly.

To give an example: one day in 1988 I was walking with a member of the village in the market place in the sub-province centre, when we met another man from the village, though now resident in Istanbul. He was a teacher. Rather than wishing to pass the time of day, he scowled furiously when he talked with us and parted company as soon as he could. This cameo, vastly removed from the usual hand-shake, greetings and willingness to exchange news remained in my mind. Only gradually, I learnt that the immediate reason for this sharp reaction was that the man I was walking with was from the same lineage as the village head man, who had acted in support of an old ally turned foe of the teacher's, causing the teacher to lose a serious quarrel in 1975, thirteen years before.

Further, I realised only much later, in discussions with the villagers, that a key long-term factor leading to the quarrel lay in the fact that the teacher was from Pinar *mahalle*. The people of Pinar *mahalle*, although they had aspirations to gain power in the village, often had had to act as a client group to Yüksek *mahalle* in struggles against the *dedes* of Tepe *mahalle* and their clients. The teacher's opponent was also from Pinar *mahalle*, indeed, he was a relative by marriage on his mother's side. He had few patrilineal relations to help him with quarrel against the teacher. Nevertheless, he defeated him decisively by finding support from the *muhtar*, who headed the dominant lineage in Yüksek *mahalle*. In effect, then, the teacher's enemy had successfully manipulated the larger *mahalle* into taking sides in a quarrel within their client group, a quarrel that he would otherwise have had insufficient strength to win. So seriously had this dispute ended, that the teacher was forced to leave the village by applying for a transfer, giving stimulus to his continuing rancour. Thus, the disagreement and

bad feeling were rooted within a structural division that extends as far back into the history of the village as can be remembered, a division that even extended into the official, civil service life of the village school.

Even more worrying than the complexity of piecing together this kind of background detail is the question of cause and effect in long-term social processes. For example, in trying to piece together the social life of the village over the past three decades, I indicate below that I believe there has, broadly speaking, been a fall in violence. In an earlier article, I explained this by suggesting that the rising population initially put enormous pressure on the agricultural resources of the village, but that this pressure later declined as the population fell, and, in any case, the greater part of the economic resources available to the villagers began to derive from outside the community.¹ While this explanation still holds good, and is even confirmed by later events,² I would today probably take an even longer view, and say that over the last hundred years of village history, there was until the onset of outward migration an increased reliance upon subsistence agriculture. This shift, which meant that the village was in turn less reliant upon semi-transhuman animal husbandry, seems to have been accompanied by an increased emphasis on the importance of all being at peace with one another, and a decline in what the villagers themselves sometimes call admiration for 'robbery and banditry'. In other words, the way that a male person's character is evaluated appears to have changed with the dominant means of agricultural production, perhaps encouraged too by the stability that was brought to the region after the transition to the nation-state.

Of course, I cannot be sure that these processes have taken place: it simply appears that way in retrospect, at the present stage of my knowledge of the community and its past. In this uncertainty, I feel acutely the dilemma outlined so forcefully by Malinowski, when he stressed the great difficulty in asserting any fact with confidence in a community whose past is almost entirely unrecorded. I do not think that there are any easy, or obvious answers to these problems. One can only bear in mind continuously the artificiality of the exercise in ethnography as it is presented in written form; remember that there will always be details lacking that may have later to be added and impressions may need to be altered. To this extent, at least, ethnography appears to me increasingly to represent what might be called an exercise in partiality.

In this chapter, then, without any pretensions at being exhaustive and without forgetting that such a summary represents an enormous over-simplification, I suggest that a certain sequence has occurred. It appears to me that over perhaps the past four or five decades, the efficacy of Alevi religion as an instrument of social control has declined, but 'Aleviness' as a *culture*, as a collection of interlocking ideals and symbols which people may use to assert their identity has strongly emerged. I believe that it is a consequence of this is that, during my time in the village, *Alevilik*, 'Aleviness', was less celebrated in *Tarikat* rituals than in collective rituals which are not explicitly religious, such as marriages or drinking sessions, often known as *muhabbet*.³

While the villagers as a whole continue to enjoy such celebrations, those who participated most often tended to be those who identified themselves most actively with the left-wing, 'social democrat' movement, which was dominant for the two decades between 1970 and 1990. These people, above all, appeared to be able to use the symbols or representations of their culture: recorded music, song, dance, and indeed its history and ideas independently of its religious setting. They would stress the universality of Alevi culture, its emphasis on humanity or the person, or the way that it provides an appropriate way to live in the modern world while, politically speaking, devoting themselves to activism through the CHP or its temporary offshoot, the SHP.

Over time, however, the dominance of this interpretation of Aleviness as a political orientation appears to have become less clear. The most important representatives have gradually left (the *muhtar* moved to Germany in 1993). Yüksek *mahalle* in which they were based appears also to have, even if temporarily, become eclipsed by Tepe *mahalle*, who are all *dedes*, who now provide the village head. The social democrat movement has also declined in popularity in Turkey as a whole, most noticeably in that the CHP lost their representation in parliament in the 1999 elections.

In the last decade too, the village appears to have become influenced by the growing 'Alevi revival', a revival that has led once more to a strengthening of religious ritual, though with certain important reformulations. Whatever its more distant origins, the practical source of Alevi religious thought and practice has long been the folk poets and hereditary religious figures of rural Anatolia. Now, though, the migrant Susesi village population in Istanbul appears to have been instrumental in attempting to buttress religious practice within their home community, and are active also in debating reformulations of Alevi doctrine at the national level. In general at least, they appear to have found that their efforts to influence the village are sympathetically received. In other words, the migrant population in Istanbul, now much larger numerically than the remaining population of the village, are a critical factor even though they are many hundreds of kilometres away. Partly through their intervention, while the earlier emphasis on the person, on the universality of Alevi culture, is not replaced, it is now accompanied by an explicit sense of 'Aleviness' as a religious orientation.

Decline of authority

Alevilik, if viewed as a revealed religion whose doctrines are literally true, is a system of thought which also claims legal authority. The different elements on which this power is based consist of acceptance of the inherent superiority of the *dedes*, the ratification of the *dedes*' decisions at collective rituals, the power of the community to present a coherent response to a wrong-doer, and the inculcation of a sense of appropriate behaviour, this last encapsulated within the *edep* philosophy. The programme as a whole is supported by the *Buyruk* text,

but also more immediately through a rich corpus of ritual, music, poetry and song.

Many of these elements appear to have slowly weakened over a long period of time. The *dedes* in the village have gradually lost authority. This is partly due to a lack of competent *dedes*. Only those born into a *dede* lineage may become *dede*, so that *dede* lineages depleted by migration or death cannot make up their number from non-*dede* within the village. During my long stay in the village, the remaining *dedes* were either old and therefore not in contact with changing conditions, or, if younger, not fluent in the necessary religious knowledge.⁴ Some villagers became quietly derisive, others continue to show the *dedes* respect but avoided asking them to officiate in a *cem*. In the whole year I spent in the village only two were held.

As more of the village gains an income from the outside and more people migrate, life in the village becomes less based on the mutually intertwined interests and controls of a tight-knit community. The problems besetting those living in the village often involve negotiations with kin and friends living outside, sometimes as far afield as Germany, and are not likely to be solved simply by those remaining resolving their differences with each other. Sensing this, many doubt the relevance of a community-based sanction. Also, the most serious punishment in Susesi is banishment. Well more than half the households have left, and most of those remaining spend much of their time trying to raise the money to move. Those still in the village are distressed that their neighbours have gone and are not inclined to make more people leave.

As such large numbers of people have migrated, those people remaining in the *mahalle*, though neighbours, are often not as closely related to each other as they are to the migrant workers outside the village. This decline in the cohesion of the individual *mahalles* is matched by an equivalent shift in identity; the village unit is taking over as the most important residence unit by which people define themselves. This can be seen not just in the village, but also outside. When the villagers leave the sub-province and settle in Istanbul, they do not build or rent houses according to *mahalle* divisions, but according to village. There, men often collect in a tea-house as Susesi migrants, and during weddings and *muhabbet*, sing songs celebrating the fine water, women and landscape of Susesi, making no specific heed of the *mahalle* from which they come.

As I witnessed the situation in 1989, then, the dominant feeling by far was one of hesitancy and uncertainty. It appeared also that to some men, the difficulties experienced with respect to the formal religious organisation of the community were a source of quiet, almost grim satisfaction: the fulfilment of a secular ethic that does not require belief to maintain a balanced life. Others, though, even if they did not feel themselves sufficiently influential to impede the decline, viewed it with anxiety. The more pious villagers were willing to be led still by *dedes* but sceptical as to whether their religious direction was adequate. Many were scathing as to the *efendis* at Hacıbektas, their traditional leaders, whom they accused of political inconsistency.⁵ Few would have refused

to go to the religious ceremonies if they were organised, yet some, certainly, were clear that they found the restrictions which the ceremony entailed, such as the obeisance to the *dedes* and to the community, irksome.

Village sacrifice

This sense of uncertainty was felt strongly in a village sacrifice, *köy kurbanı*, that I witnessed in 1989. A village sacrifice is held annually, the evening after all the households in the village have been through the ‘die before dying’ ceremony discussed in the previous chapter. It is similar to a *cem*, but there are slight differences in emphasis. Instead of one *talip* offering the sacrifice to their *dede* (thereby meeting its cost), a small financial contribution is made by every household in the village. Instead of the sacrificial meat being eaten on the spot after the ceremony has finished, each household takes back an equal portion to their home and eats it in their own time. Also, instead of just the households of the *mahalle* in which the ceremony is being held having to attend, representatives of all the households in the village must be present. This necessitated a large room, of course, but several of the houses of the village had such extremely large rooms, and if there are too many people, it is regarded as acceptable to sit just outside.

At the time of the occasion described below, at which I was present, the *muhtar* was seriously ill in hospital and had decided to offer a personal sacrifice alongside the village sacrifice, the meat of the two animals to be cooked together. The evening began badly. The *muhtar*’s sacrifice was safely tethered, already blessed during the day, but the village sacrifice was to be brought to the *meydan* and the sacrificial song sung over it by a minstrel as usual. After the people had gathered and taken their places, it turned out that the village sacrifice had disappeared. Several people went out to look for it but without success.

Then, a man of the village burst in late, past the restraining hand of the watchman at the door, who was both young and not very bright, and whose prime duty was supposed to have been to prevent incursion. The incoming man was very drunk, so much so that he was unable to stand steadily, right foot placed over the left, as he bowed in front of the *dedes* to receive the necessary greeting before sitting down. Though it is usual to drink in the village, to be drunk in a *cem* service is *ayıp*, shameful. The *muhtar*’s mother, who was anxious that the service go without a hitch so that it would have the most benefit for her son, began to grumble audibly.

The drunken man was taken out, amidst increasing disturbance, and several men saw that he was placed in a stable to cool down. Then the man who had lost the sacrifice was found and brought to the *meydan* to be questioned as to what happened to it. While he was trying to explain, it was located. The congregation began to settle down again, but then the drunken man returned, walking straight to his former place. Again, grumbles began to be heard, and many of those present were greatly unsettled. The minstrel, a boy aged 14, who was

playing in his first sacrifice (the usual village minstrel having migrated to Istanbul) played two songs, very nervously, in order to quieten the noise.

The extract from the tape recording given below begins at this point. There are two protagonists. *Hüseyin Dayı* is old and hard of hearing. He is regarded as being the best of the Susesi *dedes* by the villagers because in spite of his increasing age, he is said to be generous, as never having been anything other than peaceful and pious in his actions. They say also that he knows the religious formula better than any other man. For this reason he is asked to officiate in all ceremonies involving the Tepe *dedes*. The other man who speaks is *Hasan Dede* from Ekmek, the village above Susesi. It was appropriate, even necessary, that he should be there because the *muhtar*'s patrilineage are among his followers, and their sacrifice is made by offering it to the *dede*, their *ocak*, 'hearth', as their immediate religious and spiritual leader.

As will become clear, the elderly *dede* is unable to keep control of the proceedings. It looks as if the gathering will break up in disarray. At this point, the younger *dede* from Ekmek bursts into an impassioned speech and succeeds in holding the assembly together. His long speech is interesting in that it provides an example of the way a *dede* may use the religious ideas discussed in the previous chapter to control an extremely serious threat to the social cohesion of the village. At the same time, that he needed to make the speech at all is indicative of the difficulties that were facing the success of the evening, indeed, his tone throughout is imploring rather than confident.

The extract begins with the older *dede* making a favourable comment on the young minstrel's playing, saying that it is the Turkish version of the *Kuran*. By its end, the congregation was completely subdued, even awed at the brilliance of the younger *dede*'s exhortation, and the sacrifice ceremony proceeded with no further interruption.

Extracts from a tape of the village sacrifice of 1989 in Susesi

Hüseyin Dayı: 'The words sung by this friend [the minstrel] are Turkish, the *Kuran*'s Turkish. We shall lend our ears and behave accordingly.'

In spite of the calming influence of the songs, the drunken man is unable to stay still. The whispering from the people around him becomes louder and *Hüseyin Dayı* finally says: 'My offspring, my son, you are of our children, you came here, you are in a place of worship. It would have been better had you not found yourself here but we are tolerant.'

Man: (visibly distressed at this public admonishment), says: 'I'm leaving' and stumbles away.

The sacrifice is brought in, and the minstrel sings the sacrificial song. Then the murmuring in the gathering rises as they begin to discuss the way the man was asked to leave. Shouts

coming from outside make it clear that he has not yet gone away. *Hasan Dede* from Ekmek asks for permission to speak, but his request is not noticed by *Hüseyin Dayı*, who is disturbed at what has happened and begins to think out loud.

Hüseyin Dayı: ‘My uncle, the lamented *Nebil*, said that God said to our Prophet, ‘My emissary, I created you for me, I created your house for you. If I had not created your house I would have created nothing in this world.’⁶ . . . The sun warms, the moon lights . . . all for us. The God of divine truth from his own perfection created the skies . . . Given this creation’s backward, four-footed creatures, how were people created with two feet? What are people, then? Where are you to know what are people? You are unable to know . . . In the days of the lamented uncle, I was brought up in the times of the mobilisation,⁷ – he said ‘My son!’ . . . then came the call-up, there was *İsmail*, the son of a sergeant, my uncle’s child. He was a watchman they say . . . he shouted . . . ‘*Mehmet* uncle, *Mevlut*, *Ramazan*, *Hasan*, *Hüseyin* and Minstrel *Veli* all have call-up papers.’ Mobilisation was declared, eighty people went from this village. They went, from those eighty, eight even did not return. Then came the terrible earthquake. What else can I say. Know this! Know thyself and behave accordingly! If not, what can I do? My responsibility is to say this, let him not hang on to my collar . . . this is the duty of the guide [*rebber*] . . .’

The sounds of an argument from outside grow louder, some men stand up and go outside to see if they can help to control the drunken man. The talking inside the room also grows louder, and it looks as if the gathering will break up. Then *Hasan Dede* begins to speak, without asking for permission this time:

Hasan Dede: ‘A Sunni person uses the five conditions. Is this not so? We say that we are the people of the *Tarikat* but we are unable to be people of the *Tarikat*. The *dede* said a little earlier, ‘a person must know their humanity’, you should say not ‘What has become of me’ but ‘What will become of me? It is necessary to know this’, he said. Assembly (*cema’at*), like this one cannot be people of the *Tarikat*.’

The *muhtar*’s mother mutters: ‘. . . a sacrifice cannot be done like this’ and rises to leave. But she is prevented by *Hasan dede* speaking even more forcefully:

‘There is a saying of Holy *Hüseyin*, “If you would come, come; if you would turn, turn. The goods of those who come, the life of those who turn.” This is the foreword of the *Kuran*.⁸ We are sitting in the *Tarikat* of Holy *Hüseyin*. I beseech

you, do not be ignorant of God's divine love . . . A *görgü* means to bring people together, to listen to their hearts. Here a person of the *Tarikat* comes not to destroy people's hearts but to make them. Let God accept your hearts, let God let no one be inadequate for their path. I am recounting the words of *Holy Hüseyin*. "From those who come, goods, from those who turn, life!" From those who profane here, life departs! Pay attention to this!

'People are the *Kuran*. A person must know themselves . . . Other men worship with five conditions, we are the people of the *niyaz* (embrace). We, with the *niyaz* will go to the happy judgement day. What are you becoming? I request, I beseech you. Here in three, five villages remain people of the *Tarikat*. What are you becoming? Your end will be confusion! If we bathe, if we wash it will not go from our backs. Know this for certain! "Agh, I am dying", said my lamented father. He cried and spoke at the same time. He gave his soul to the longed-for God. He said, "My son, the road is ended." What does this mean? It means that he was a person of faith.'

'Apart from these words . . . we will become beasts! No *Şeriat*, no *Tarikat*, no *Marifet*, no *Hakikat*, no honest work, no worship, what will happen? A person's death is between their eye and brow.¹⁰ It comes to young and old. The soul has gone, finished. It is necessary to strive a little for the next world, more than for this. This assembly must not disperse for the words of one ignorant man. Let God give assent to your intentions!'

' . . . The body is one, the spirit is one, the blood is one, the skin is one. Once you have entered here, siblings are one, wives are one, husbands are one, children are one. There can be a lone voice from no-one. From the words of the minstrel, the words of the *dede*, a person listens to the words of the scriptures . . . we are the people of the *niyaz*, the people of the *Tarikat*, are we going to be thus people of the *Tarikat*?'

Complete silence followed his speech. Then:

Hüseyin Dayı: 'What was the last problem, *Mehmet*? Why did they leave? What happened?'

'Nothing. Do not interfere, *dede*. Nothing, *dede*, continue with the worship.'

Hasan Dede: 'A misdemeanour took place, *dede*.'

***Muhabbet* and other collective rituals**

The tensions in the community are not leading to violence, indeed the village is probably less violent a place than it used to be. When the village population was

at its peak, from the late 1960s into the 1970s, the villagers say that there was a severe shortage of water and of fields. They say there were continual disputes, that the allocation of water channels often led to arguments, that a man could never be sure that his flock would return in the evening without one or more of the beasts missing, and the smallest things, axes, hammers, pieces of firewood would disappear, presumably stolen. They say also that there was great difficulty in finding enough land to plough, and that this could only be solved by moving to fields further away from the *mahalle* and into the distant village territory near the mountain pastures. Now there is more than ample bread and fresh vegetables, no shortage of land and sufficient water for irrigation. It is difficult for a family to make money but life is more comfortable than before.

On a deeper level, though, the increased contact with the outside world through migration has decreased the homogeneity and interdependence of the people in the community. As the villagers' economic world shifts from competing with each other for agricultural resources they cooperate with each other to gain services and to pool knowledge about how to succeed in the outside world, which also appeared to reduce conflict. For example, one of the ways in which a man used to show his status was to increase his holdings in fields. The early migrants to Germany, before they lost the inclination to compete in the village setting, used their savings to buy land in the village. One of the fields in the centre of the village territory is renowned for the very high price for which it changed hands in a gambling session between two workers while they were in Germany. During my stay, only a handful of men thought it worthwhile to spend money in buying up fields, and much land was fallow. This lack of competition, combined with a sufficiency of food, meant that it was easier to remain at peace with one's neighbour than before.

Though *cem* ceremonies were held only infrequently, wedding ceremonies were celebrated with great vigour and with very little friction. They were much more frequent than *cem* ceremonies. On my second weekend in the village, I arrived late in the evening from Ankara, and was taken immediately to a household in Tepe *mahalle*, where the son of a *dede* was celebrating his wedding. In one of the rooms of a large house, there was a long table around which men were seated. Meat steamed in small dishes along the table's centre, alternating with bottles of *raki*. Sliced cucumbers, pickles, bread, tomatoes, roasted chick-peas and great jugs of water completed the repast. Two young men were acting as waiters, and continually replenishing the meat to ensure it was hot. When I arrived, men were drinking in unison, downing one small glass of *raki* at a time. The married women of the household one by one came into the room and drank a glass of *raki* with the men. As the evening went on, the drinking increased until the noise was great. The drinkers called a minstrel in and asked him to play. Men stood up, called for silence, and made speeches. Finally, far into the night just before I left exhausted to go to bed, one man stood up, shouted 'I'm a *dede!*', and, losing his balance, fell out of the window.

Though the villagers do not draw an explicit parallel between the two types

of ceremony by calling one the 'sacred' and the other 'profane', this Durkheimian approach does appear to be a useful analytic distinction in that both types of ceremony offer the villagers the chance to celebrate their songs, dances and outlook on life in a structured setting, though the aim of the *cem* is religious, and the immediate aim of the wedding celebrations is not.

To examine these parallels more closely: marriage celebrations last three days, and are divided between the house of the groom and the house of the bride. On the first day, neighbours, friends and relatives come to the house of the groom and celebrate. The second day is similar, except that acquaintances from villages further away attend. On this second day, if the marriage takes place in Susesi or in a nearby village, celebrations at the bride's house begin. On the third day, the two sides come together as the groom goes to the bride's house and takes her away.

Throughout the three days, lively dancing takes place. It moves through a distinct sequence. It begins with the musicians (the *mehter*, piper and drummer) playing a *halay* (folk-dance) of the sort which is found all over Turkey, and indeed on both the Sunni and Alevi sides of the sub-province. The dancers take three or four steps to the right and one back in a repeated sequence. At this point, the Alevi dance is different from the Sunni only in that the women dance alongside the men in the Alevi villages, and separately, out of sight of each other, in the Sunni. From this point on, the two sects differ. After a *halay*, the Sunni men dance with their hands in the air, mimicking the way the Sunni women dance when they are on their own. In the village, the dancers form a circle, and move through a sequence of preparation (*hazırlama*), a faster stepping, clapping dance called *elli* (with hands), and finally to a *gönüller semahı*, the same 'dance of the hearts' which rounds off the *cem* ceremony. There is no limit to the number of dancers who may join in, so at one moment there may be several dozen people dancing in unison, the women whirling with their arms outstretched, and the men throwing their arms vigorously first one side then the other, and stamping their feet, the whole dance in a circle, moving in an anti-clockwise direction. During the dance, the men often shout *Haydar!*¹¹

Men may form around a table and drink at any time during the three days of the wedding. This is known as *muhabbet*. The drinking, at least at the beginning of the evening, is highly ritualised. One of the company, who must be a man able to control the gathering, is appointed *saki*, distributor of drinks.¹² No man may begin before the *saki* has given a formal toast to open the proceedings, and thereafter all men at the table must obey the *saki*'s command to drink. In addition, no man may leave the table without the express permission of the *saki*. If he does so, he is open to punishment, *sitem*, from the *saki*. The standard punishment they term a *Cebraıl*, an 'Angel Gabriel', and consists of a cockerel and a bottle of *raki*, donated to the people drinking.

I have been present at many gatherings at which the minstrel began by singing a drinking song, then moved on to laments, mourning Ali or in praise of the twelve *imam*. For example:

Dönen dönsün, ben dönmezim yolumdan (i)
Ali, Ali, Ali, Ali'ya doğru (ii)

Bir gün mahşer olur, divan kurulur (×2)
Haklı, haksız orda hemen belli olur

(ii), Suçlu olmayanlar orda belli olur
(i), (ii), (i), (ii).

Let those who turn, turn, I do not turn from my road
Ali, Ali, Ali, true to Ali.

One day comes the day of judgement, (the) court is assembled (×2)
There, (who are) right and (who are) wrong becomes clear straight-
away.

Ali, Ali, Ali, true to Ali.
There, those who are not guilty becomes clear straightaway.

Let those who turn, turn, I do not turn from my road,
Ali, Ali, Ali, true to Ali.

Let those who turn, turn, I do not turn from my road,
Ali, Ali, Ali, true to Ali.

The minstrel then usually plays a sequence of songs culminating in a *sema*. At the sound of the *sema* it is was quite normal for a man to call for his children, both boys and girls, and encourage them to dance to the accompaniment of cheers from the drinkers. Often women are present, either sitting with or waiting on the men. They usually dance in the *sema* with the men.

When the men are very drunk, often one or more of them stands and shouts 'Silence! I want to say something.' On being allowed to talk, they say, 'We're all friends (*dosts*) here, are we not? There is unity (*birlik*).' They then take a drink of *raki*, and the *saki* hands them a *lokma*, a piece of meat from the entrails of the sheep which is being eaten, to swallow immediately after they have taken a drink. If there is no meat available, they still perform this gesture, for example, with a piece of cucumber or a piece of potato. They sometimes say that this gesture recalls the single grape from which Ali made sherbet, aided by the Angel Gabriel, in the *cem* of the forty.

Thus, in 1989, the power of the *dedes* was waning. The religious ceremonies over which they preside were ever less popular. A few villagers still believed without question the teachings of the *dedes* as the true form of Islam, many more were sceptical as to the worth of religion. All I spoke with or witnessed remain attached to their dance and song, but practised them mainly in a secular

setting. Here, the dance and song were seen not as religion but as a part of 'Aleviness', even though the sentiments expressed, and structure of the gatherings, may be very similar to those in the religious rituals, particularly in their emphasis on mutual peace and goodwill. I witnessed, therefore, a community in which for many individuals the symbols and ideas of religion are coming to be seen as culture, a culture that can be celebrated in its own right rather than being linked to a distinct body of theological exegesis.

To say 'culture' may sound curiously artificial, but the borrowing is made by the villagers themselves, using the word as it would be pronounced in French, *kültür*. Thus, the Susesi villagers refer to a neighbouring *mahalle* in Ekmek, who supply the musicians for much of the area, as 'very cultural', *çok kültürlü*, citing their prowess in music, dance and poetry. Even though they are proud of being Alevi, those who lead *muhabbet* sessions the most often, and enjoy singing the songs, are precisely those who are most sceptical as to the worth of religion. It is also these people who tend to listen most enthusiastically to their music and dance on pre-recorded cassettes. Again, if asked, they refer to *kültür*, rather than religion, and indeed given their identification with a Kemalist ethic that does not need religion in order to achieve individual fulfilment, find the suggestion curious, even a little distasteful.

Counter-currents

It is inevitably problematic to put any specific figures on the way men react to the difficulties facing the collective *Tarikat* rituals, and the weakness of the *dedes*. A few strive, perhaps 15 per cent, to keep up the appearances of the *dedes*' authority. Perhaps half of these men are themselves from *dede* lineages. They say that the tales told of miracles are true and the *dedes* should be respected accordingly. Perhaps 10 per cent of the villagers, as a whole, are indifferent, or hostile to the *dedes* and are sceptical about all aspects of religion. These people may call themselves atheists, *ateist*, and are likely to be younger, and either be from Yüksek *mahalle* (which has long been held to be such a bastion of scepticism), or in close contact with the social democrat trends that they represent.

The remainder of the men are more difficult to categorise. They would like to continue to believe in the appropriateness of the *cem* ceremonies, but they cannot bring themselves to offer a sacrifice to a *dede* for whom they have little respect, nor do they enjoy sitting in a crowded room in an uncomfortable position for five or six hours far into the night. The predominant reaction among these men is to maintain that the Alevi religion does not strictly call for the involvement of *dede*, nor for the *cem*, perhaps that God is to be found, in any case, within all hearts. They do attend *can ekmeği* services described in Chapter 4 for the soul of a dead person, they may themselves sacrifice a sheep if a person falls ill or if they wish for the success of an important project. If a service is arranged with a famous *dede*, they may attend and they go through the *görgü*

once a year, but they do not actively try to interact with the *dedes*, nor themselves try to hold *cem*.

Those who still wished to maintain the ceremonial aspects of religion in the village on occasion turned to the *muhtar* for help. In his earliest period as *muhtar* he had been actively against the *dedes*. As time went on, however, he appears to have become more sympathetic, condoning the practice of religion, so long as the *dedes* remained under his authority and did not attempt to impose their views on the running of the village. For example, *efendis* visit the village once or twice a year, to collect dues and reaffirm their contact with the villagers. When they come, they do so with a favoured local *dede* at their side, and together with this *dede* visit one of the village households where they are confident of a warm welcome. The villagers then come to this house to pay their respects. Men and women usually come together, the woman carrying a tribute to the *efendis*. This offering is brought in the form of produce, often wheat. The *dedes* accompanying the *efendis* take the produce, and sell it back to the villagers for cash, the idea being that the *efendis* cannot conveniently take the wheat away with them.

When, during the latter part of my fieldwork, an *efendi* visited the village, he went directly to Tepe *mahalle*, where the remaining active Susesi *dedes* live. There he waited, but few villagers came to see him. Very worried, one of the villagers came running down from Tepe *mahalle* to the tea-house in Orta *mahalle*, where I was sitting with the *muhtar*, and explained that not enough people were going to visit the *efendi*. The *muhtar* immediately rose and told the man to fetch some people from the other *mahalle* of the village and join him in the house where the *efendi* was visiting. Later I also was sent for and witnessed the latter part of the *efendi*'s visit, which the *muhtar* presided over, and did his best to make successful.

Even here, though, the different currents of thought within the village remained clear: most villagers were polite. One or two were disinclined to shake hands with the *efendi*, claiming that they represented a feudal dominance over the village, and glowered rather during the conversation. Another, though, came to the threshold, entered but refused to stand in the *efendi*'s presence, crawling painfully on his stomach to his presence, took his hand and kissed it reverently. Though the villager himself was not discomforted, the *efendi*, at this clear allusion to his supposed divine descent from Ali, became so. As a businessman with widespread contacts nationally, he looked a little embarrassed, and said, 'Those days are past now.'

The situation after 1990

At the point when I left the village, not just in Susesi, but also in the local Alevi villages, the number of *cem* ceremonies was falling. Indeed, in some of the *mahalles* of these neighbouring villages, it was said that they were no longer held at all. Today, however, in 2002, there is a clear sense of a revival. There is

assuredly more than one reason for such a change. However, one factor is clearly that the village has been greatly encouraged by a general resurgence of Alevi religion in Turkey, reflected in particular in the increased number of *cem evi*s, 'cem houses' that have been built. *Cem evi*s may vary from being often simple structures in rural areas, perhaps no more than an entrance hall, off which is perhaps a small kitchen, leading to a room large enough to hold a service. Usually with little decoration, they may have a picture of Hacı Bektaş on the wall, and rugs on the floor. In large cities, however, they may be much larger, containing several rooms, where Alevi's may meet and talk, as well as worship. In a few cases they may be larger still, and consist of purpose-built complexes, in which case they may contain very large rooms, enough to seat several hundred people, and act as a social centre to the local Alevi migrant population.

In Susesi, concerned at the decline, some men had already contemplated a specialised building in which they could hold *cem* services in the late 1980s, though they decided that it should be best described a *halk evi*, a 'people's house'. Partly, this name was chosen at the insistence of the social democrat trend in the village, with the idea that the building might be used for other functions as well as religion. Partly too, it is intended to recall the early Republican People's Party's (to them) very successful initiative to establish village houses known also as *halk evi*s in which villagers might receive training, education and learn other skills.

Built in a field just within the Tepe *mahalle* boundary, the *halk evi* in Susesi consists of a well-kept, solid, white-painted, one-storey building. There is first a small porch, then one passes through an annex with a kitchen, then into the main, large room where *cem* services are held. It opened for services in 1994. It proved popular immediately, and has at the same time encouraged some immediate innovations in religious practice. An obvious one is that it has become a focal point for the whole village, matching the gradual transfer of emphasis onto the collective village identity, now municipality. It can also draw its congregation from the whole population equally, rather than just the *mahalle* where it might be held. Indeed, the key is kept at the Susesi municipality offices, rather than with any one person, or with a *dede* lineage.

As well as providing a focal point where one did not previously exist, there are other innovations as well. Two of these were instigated by the *muhtar*. Encouraged by Christian services he saw in Germany, he insisted that the distribution of sacrificial morsels, *lokma*, begin with the poorest of the community, those sitting or standing at the back, rather than with those who are most favoured in the eyes of the *dede*, as is customarily the case. Further (and the villagers claim that they have seen no other like this anywhere in Turkey), the central space, around which the service takes place, is surrounded by pews, which face inwards. The villagers explain this by saying that when the *muhtar* was once visiting Germany, he was once again influenced by the churches, where the congregation sat in comfort in rows of seats, and he felt that this custom should be reflected in the village as well.

The villagers also stress the increased convenience. Using money donated by migrants in Germany, they have bought three hundred sets of crockery, spoons, knives and other equipment for the kitchen. There is a wide metal rack just outside the building upon which the meat may be suspended while it is being flayed. There is a large cauldron only for the use of sacrifices. This means that, in order for a *talip* to hold a sacrifice, it is sufficient that they invite their *dede*, arrange for the purchase of a sacrifice and buy a large measure of cracked wheat (*bulgur*) to go with the meat. This is in marked contrast to the previous situation. Then, the necessary utensils had to be borrowed and returned subsequently, the house prepared for a huge number of guests who would have to be looked after, and very large quantities of food prepared in sometimes rather restricted kitchen space. This has certainly encouraged the number of *cem*s.

Perhaps the greatest innovation is that the timing of services has also changed radically. Whereas, traditionally, *cem* services only took place in the winter, after the *görgü* has been held, now they are held most frequently in the summer, when those who live away from Susesi have the chance to return on leave, and wish to celebrate their return with a sacrifice. Some villagers expressly say that this has less to do with any pious purpose than a wish to make a generous gesture. Whatever the immediate motivation, it is certainly a great help to their frequency that there is a ready stream of people through the village who are prepared, and indeed can afford, to offer a sacrifice.

Pressure from Istanbul

It is clear, then, that the increased convenience, the focal appeal, the migrants' sacrificing, a greater sense of *Alevilik* as a distinct tradition, and a decline in the social democrat movement as a mainstream national political movement, all have contributed towards a renewed sense of confidence in religious practice in the village. This accompanies a continuous, almost generic, but rising fear of the Sunni activist movement. There is, however, a further motivation. There is an increasing insistence from a group of men in Istanbul not just that they wish to take part in ceremonies when they visit, but that also the villagers themselves who have remained behind must be more vigorous in their adherence to the ritual cycle, that all in the community must go through the *görgü* each year, i.e. the individual questioning followed by the village sacrifice and, indeed, without question that each lineage must remain linked with their appropriate *dede* lineage when required from the religious point of view.

Whereas the social democrat movement insisted that the *binding* aspects of their religion were the ones that could safely be dispensed with as members of the modern Turkish nation, such as the link to the *dedes*, the literal belief in a creed, or the forced confession in front of the whole community, this pressure from Istanbul is quite the other way round. Here, they are concerned to maintain *Alevilik's* existence as an explicit form of social control, based on just those

elements that appeared previously to be weakening, and against which the social democrats objected.

While I have not had the chance to conduct fieldwork in Istanbul at any great length, I think that there are sufficient indications to offer an initial explanation as to why this may have come about. When the migrants from Susesi left the village for Istanbul in low numbers, say in the early 1970s, they appear not to have ended up in any one district, rather becoming dispersed, depending on where they had found work. Often too, they had gone there as civil servants: teachers, postal workers, electrical repair technicians and so on, which inevitably created a certain separation. Later, however, when the wave of migration really intensified, they moved into a distant district, very far from the centre, that was still considered a *gecekondü*. Often, they went without a definite job, and when they arrived there it was extremely difficult to make a living. This area, however, began to act as a magnet for those remaining in the village, and there soon resulted a very substantial population, certainly more than remain in the village itself.

Even when I first visited the Susesi migrants there in 1989, enormous efforts were being made to establish a viable urban community, resulting in a dynamism that those in the village often admired. Nevertheless, life remained very hard indeed. Roads were being constructed only with great slowness. There was no drainage system, resulting in a solid mess when the area becomes waterlogged from rain. There was extremely high unemployment. The diet, particularly for those accustomed to the variety and freshness of village produce, was poor and for some insufficiently nutritious to prevent malnutrition. There were few schools, and those that there were had enormous classes. Money was extremely tight. These difficult conditions mean that the established social relations between families, spouses and relatives have been put under enormous strain.

In the subsequent decade, great strides have been made. A main street with shops is now well established. Many apartment buildings have been constructed. These are not regarded as expensive to buy, so that if the family has been able to sell any property before moving, even in the village, they can often live without paying rent. Nevertheless, life remains difficult. Unemployment is very widespread. There is still no drainage system. They often have to struggle very hard to gain what services they can from the responsible municipality in the area, such as adequate distribution of drinking water in the absence of mains supply.

To the migrants even as they work to establish their living area, the state, in such an outlying area, with its already stretched services, has felt remote and insufficiently caring for them to urbanise with the speed with which they feel is necessary. The conventional aspects of central control such as police, traffic police, municipality police (*zabıta*) or *jandarma* are not common in the area, and would appear in substantial force only if (something that has not happened in this area) there were widespread disturbances. On the other hand, the diffi-

cult business of simply avoiding hunger hardly has encouraged the traditional form of social control through long *cem* ceremonies and elaborate songs and teachings, even if there was a home big enough in which to accommodate people for such a ceremony.

One response of the village to this situation was, in 1991, to found an association for the 'Culture and Cooperation of Susesi village'. The aim of this association is not just to act together in order to provide increased services, but to coordinate the migrants in such a way that *Alevilik* may be retained. Its central offices are in Istanbul, though there are also close contacts with the village and with the migrants in Germany, who are often asked to provide money for specific projects. The same founders of this association also wrote from Istanbul, directly to their religious leaders in Hacı Bektaş, and explained their worries and their plans in a letter:

Letter from migrants in Istanbul to Hacıbektaş

To a high dignitary at Hacıbektaş,

My sir, we wish to make known the feelings and thoughts of one group of people in this great wide world. In this way, perhaps all the wishes of the Alevis and the Bektashis will be made known to you. These concerns will perhaps have already reached your ears. However, this letter must be taken seriously. This community no longer has time to squander. Hacı Bektash's principles are being broken. Of course, this way will not end but we must come to ourselves at once, and we must use the requirements of this age to do so.

We offer the following for your consideration:

- 1 A computer work-centre must be founded at Hacıbektaş. Using all available possibilities, information must be collected, the various communities' needs and desires must be ascertained, and recorded on these computers.
- 2 The [moral and religious] requirements of the [Hacı Bektaş] way must be made known.
- 3 The community is increasingly growing more aware, it is growing increasingly against 'taking without giving'. The visits from the *efendis* must be organised carefully, and people not irritated by them. Such visits and meetings must not take place under the influence of alcohol.
- 4 *Dedes* must absolutely be officially approved [by the *efendis*]. This way must be taken from ignorant people, it must be given to competent hands, and an education campaign must be begun.
- 5 There must be an Alevi-Bektaş congress of specialists from all regions. The decisions taken, book, cassette, newspaper, brochure, and all other means available must be made known to the community.

- 6 Steps must be taken to gain influence on the state through official channels. Why shouldn't courses in *dedelik* be opened, just as there are Koran courses?

With our respects and regards

In due course, the following reply arrived in response to their worries. In itself, it is an interesting insight into the troubles that an Alevi religious leader has felt over the years, in particular in its admission of tensions between the local *dede* lineages (who may claim that their inspiration to lead comes directly from *keramet*, God's favour), and the Bektashi lineage, the *efendis*, who are supposed to authorise them. It is not, however, able to offer any direct help in the villagers' desire to form an Alevi centre. The Turkish is much more elliptical than the forceful letter from the villagers, but still clear:

Hacıbektaş: 1991

My dear sirs,

I wish you good health and happiness, peace and love.

I have received the letter that you sent. I was very pleased to receive it. It is impossible not to agree with the suggestions that you made. They are my ideals too, from the bottom of my heart. However, how will it be possible to realise them? It is one thing to desire something, another to begin, to make them happen. Even though it is difficult to outline these things within the confines of a letter, we will briefly try to explain.

In advance, I should explain that the duty of replying has fallen to me, through the workings of fate rather than any abilities that I might have. I see myself as the holder of a duty according to my abilities, attempting to be as useful that I may, as a humble slave of God. I am cognisant of this duty to serve, however heavy its responsibilities. Perhaps you are unable to guess how this heavy burden has crushed me, caused me sleepless nights.

It must be confessed that if the beloved Prophet were to come today, he would not recognise the Islam, the teachings that have been given to Hacı Bektash Veli. These are both in such a state of degradation that he would not recognise them. How has this come about? It is not possible within a letter to explain, to discuss why this should be.

In spite of everything, we are of the opinion that we may be proud that we are not cut off from our roots, from our people, from our trying to pursue the road of the *ehli-beyt*, that we have not lost our love for these things, not lost our respect, and not put out the light [of inspiration].

I do not believe that the six objectives, objectives that we all desire, that you have outlined are achievable in today's conditions. However, please God, before long, they will be achievable.

For fifty-one years, I have tried to follow this road. In the course of this time, the number of *dedes* who have come to me [for official approval] would not pass the numbers of fingers on two hands. Those who come, do not come back, do not send their greetings even.

I have never been in favour of the *efendis* making visits [to collect dues]. However, I have been unable to prevent it. I have been unable to explain this to either the followers, or to those making the visits. I have spent a lifetime in this struggle.

Of course, it goes without saying that a person must not go to a place of worship under the influence of alcohol. I have attempted to explain this to everybody, everywhere, but who takes any notice? If you put a bottle of drink [in welcome] in front those who come, if you fill their pockets [with drink], how is it possible to impede this?

You say that the *dedes* must always be licensed. The majority of *dedes* say, 'My ancestors came before Hacıbektaş', or even 'He had no descendants anyway'. There are those who say, 'My ancestors are older'. How is it possible to discipline those who wish to act in this way, who do not know the truth?

When those such as you wake from their deep sleep, then it will be possible easily to realise your objectives.

Whether the arrival is *efendi* or *dede*, how do you know whether he has the right to be there? Everybody is proud of their forebears. However, the right to have this pride must be accompanied by observing the laws of the saints. If that person is not acting in accordance with their forebears, then they are in any case not of use. We are not compelled to act as these have done. This lesson must be well taken.

Even if yet small, I am happy to see that a number of people have woken up to this. I hope that this community will realise their desires. I believe that they will.

For this reason, to you all my best wishes, peace and love, may God give you health and happiness.

[signed]

At the same time as writing to the *efendis*, the villagers in Istanbul have been active in interaction with the wider revival among the Alevi in Turkey, speaking at national meetings. They have also helped to coordinate and construct a *cem evi* in the area where the migrant villagers live. Here, in collaboration with other migrants from other Alevi villages, they first obtained a piece of land from the municipality. Then through donations from throughout the area, built a very large building, with a huge salon, kitchens, space for a library and office, underneath which is a car park.

Now, the *cem evi* is run in collaboration with a trust run by İzzettin Doğan, the *Cem Vakfı*. İzzettin Doğan is a prominent national figure who has achieved some success in gaining support for *Alevilik* from the state. Using funds

obtained by Professor Doğan, several of the villagers are employed at the *cem evi*, including one member of the village association, and another, a *dede*, specifically paid to practise *dedelik* on behalf of the local community. The *cem evi* has been a great success, and often has many hundreds of people at its services.

Having strengthened their organisational base in Istanbul, the most active members in this campaigning appear to have turned their thoughts to the village. One of their greatest worries has been that the difficulty of making a living in Istanbul has led some of the village population into inappropriate ways of making a living, or to failing to observe the strict moral code. After falling into still worse times, they sometimes move back to the village, living off what money they have managed to salvage, and practising subsistence agriculture there. Once there they are inclined to refuse to join in the collective ceremonies, and may even refuse to join in the *görgü*, the compulsory appearance before the community that would deal with, or at least expose their relations with, the rest of the villagers.

Further, while some of the migrants from the village remain dispersed throughout Turkey, that the majority live in the same place in Istanbul has encouraged the maintenance of very close contacts with the village. There is a daily bus from the sub-province centre that goes directly to the migrant settlement. As transport infrastructure improves, it is becoming more and more usual for people to shuttle, even if only for a short time, between the village and Istanbul. Further, those in Istanbul, experiencing such difficulties, have maintained their close dependence on each other, as they try to establish the settlement there. All this means that there is still a correspondence between social organisation, economic life, and the close-knit desires of one community. Indeed, in the absence of a clear integration into urban society, it appears as if it may be interpreted as an attempt at least to transport the traditional rural means of social control to the city setting, albeit to its periphery. One man, one of the most active of the social democrats in the 1970s remarked sadly to me, 'They are taking the village to Istanbul, rather than becoming part of urban society.'

It is too early to judge how successful they will be. My own feeling at present is that, unless a really radical form of *Aleviness* should take root, the thrust of the Istanbul revival on the village is unlikely to alter the situation radically. At present, it aims to cajole, to persuade, and to threaten withdrawal of collective support to those who do not take part. It is not punitive, nor indeed does it intrude into the household. Its themes: collective activity, peace, honesty and morality are those that all can identify with and many take seriously. It cannot enforce these aims as clearly as before, because those in the village rely almost entirely on remittances or pensions from outside: those who do not wish to take part simply stay at home. While the *Cem Vakfı* hopes to receive support from the state for the provision of Alevi religious services, it remains a profoundly secular movement, firmly Republican in orientation. Not everyone agrees with its aims, but they remain close in presentation and practice to existing village thought.

Conclusion

My argument in this chapter, and indeed in this work as a whole, is that the efficacy of the Alevi religion as an instrument of social control is growing less but that Alevi religion as a *culture*, as a collection of interlocking ideals and symbols which people may use to assert their identity, survives with greater ease. For many villagers this survival, 'Aleviness', becomes celebrated less in *Tarikat* rituals than in collective rituals which are often not explicitly religious, and can be combined with Kemalism to form the basis of a secular ethic within which to live as a member of modern Turkey. The revival of religious activity that is influencing the village needs to be seen in this light, in that it reaffirms repeatedly the subordination of religion to the state while emphasising the necessity of maintaining Aleviness as a distinct tradition. Indeed, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the revivalist movement has built on the greater public recognition of Alevi culture than first emerged through this secular fusion with the emergent left in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Nationally, however, it should be stressed that there are very many different Alevi groups. These are often extremely active, forming committees, holding conferences and launching publications with almost bewildering speed. It is extremely difficult to assess the varied ways in which they are emerging and the impact that they may have. However, one trend does appear to be clear. Overall, rather than retreat into closed village communities once more, the dominant impression that emerges from the resurgent Alevi movement – the journals, books, speeches, political activism – is of a minority that is desperately worried about its place in the Republic *vis à vis* the Sunni majority. Before, their reaction may have been to close themselves off from outsiders. Today, far from concealment, their doctrines, sophisticated discussions of Alevi religion, of Alevi history, of the appropriate next step are perpetuated through modern media and explained to the world in a way that would have still been astonishing to many at the beginning of my research in the village in 1988.

Yet, this in itself brings new considerations in turn. The Republican state has never regarded itself as recognising any particular group as being different from any other. The revival of Sunni Islam, while something that has been acutely disturbing to many Alevs, has always taken place in a general sense, as the gradual taking over by the state of religious practice and worship without specifying the sect. Any potential Alevi redefinition of themselves as a distinct Islamic movement sits uneasily with the official assumption that adherence to the orthodox canons at an individual level must lie at the core of acceptable piety, regardless of sectarian affiliation. It is to these issues, and the wider relationship of the Alevi villages with the state, that we turn in the next chapter.

THE ALEVIS, EVOLVING IDENTITY AND THE STATE

When considering the Sunni villages' integration with the nation-state, I asked four questions: What enables their villages to flourish and grow? Why are most men able to retain their faith? Why do they wish the state to support their religion? And, finally, what enables the government to fulfil this wish? If we ask the equivalent questions with regard to the Alevi villages, they become: Why does it appear that the Alevi villages are contracting rather than growing in size? Why have debates surrounding faith been for the most part markedly sceptical, and almost invariably secular in tone?

The third and the fourth questions are a little more complicated to phrase. As we have seen, most Alevi men look to the government to support them as they modernise, to protect them against the Sunnis, and to uphold Atatürk's reforms. Some also think that there should be explicit recognition of *Alevilik*. Nevertheless, when the government does make a move to acknowledge Alevi religion, for example, it associated itself closely with the important annual festival in Hacıbektaş town in 1989, many are very suspicious and concerned. The state in turn appears to be just as unsure whether such recognition should be maintained. The Directorate of Religious Affairs, for example, the main channel through which support for religious activities is provided, makes no provision for the Alevis, nor are Alevi doctrines taught in schools.

The third question then becomes: Why are the Alevis so ambivalent towards the government's taking an interest in their religion? The fourth: Why does the government take hesitant, only partial steps in being associated with the Alevis?

Development of Alevi villages

When trying to explain why the Sunni villages are able to flourish, and to grow in population, my answer in part was that the state chooses one settlement and designates a village, that there is no rank of men whose position becomes overturned by the state gradually taking over responsibility for dispute settling, that there is a very low level of specificity in their social organisation, and there their sedentary way of life, combined with their being Sunni, already implies a subservience to central authority. As a result, the Sunni villages are able to hand

over more and more of the communities' administration to the state without profound disruption, and they are amenable to large changes in population without an essential social institution being damaged.

The Alevis in the sub-province are similar to the Sunni in their methods of traditional agricultural production, but otherwise all these things are reversed. A number of settlements are designated 'village'. Some men are more holy than others. The Alevi traditional social organisation is highly specific in that every lineage is in theory attached in perpetuity to a holy lineage. Men's first allegiance, according to their religion, is to these holy men, and the authority they represent. The difficulties which this creates when the Alevi settlements are trying to integrate into the nation have already in great part become clear. Their mechanisms of social control must change far more radically than those of the Sunni villages because the right to solve disputes becomes transferred from the *dedes* to figures sanctioned by the central government. As men internalise membership of the Turkish nation, with the loyalty and the allegiance that this implies, they frequently question literal belief in the myths and traditions by which the *dedes* are supported.

Further, there is no core to the Alevi village community such as is found in the Sunni villages by virtue of the correspondence between the villagers' presumption and the state's allocation of what is collective pasture or common ground. In the Alevi villages, the state-designated collective pasture conflicts with that owned by each *mahalle*, and, in Susesi, each *mahalle* retains use of its own pasture when it is able. Even when the separate *mahalles* do cooperate as a village to exploit the services available from the state and individuals embrace their identity as villagers, this distinction remains, and may precipitate disagreement between them.

There is also no obvious discourse in which shared rituals can be celebrated. Shared drinking sessions, *muhabbet*, are not sufficient in themselves to provide a collective identity for a whole village community. *Cem* ceremonies gain much of their *frisson* by conveying a sense of a persecuted minority and it is difficult to use them as focal points of a village community which is only seen as such in the first instance because its inhabitants feel able to accept the state's designation of them as a village, and the villagers are not sufficiently attracted to the Sunni, mosque-based Islam led by the Directorate of Religious Affairs for it to be a sustainable alternative.¹

Any attribution of others' motivations must always be hesitant and partial. However, my conclusion as to why the Alevi villages are emptying so much more quickly than the Sunni would certainly include the suggestion that they cannot integrate into modern Turkey without the difficulties, contradictions and disorganisation that such a change in orientation requires, appearing more painful to them than simply moving to a city and starting life again in a fresh context. In the town, the contradictions which beset village life are markedly reduced. 'Aleviness' remains important, even strengthens as a cultural filter through which to relate to the modern world, but the villagers are propelled

into a setting where the vast proportion of their public life is by definition created and defined by being part of the urban nation. The most important structures of Alevi life: the hierarchical, *dede*-based culture and the immediate weight of the community through the *cem* become far less intrusive almost by definition; a person may take part in them if they wish, but the possibility of escape from them is offered the moment that a person's economic situation becomes independent of the immediate setting of their fellow migrants. The modern, urban world therefore has an immediacy of access that could be provided by the traditional village setting, even if it could be made economically viable, only with great difficulty.

The Alevis, Kemalism and secularism

At one level, that the Alevi should have been supporters of secular Kemalism is obvious. It offered them relief from persecution, whether real or supposed, a Republic within which they were promised full rights irrespective of their sect. It is perhaps hardly surprising, then, that so many of the Alevis should continue to venerate the Kemalist endeavour as they attempt to become part of the wider nation, whether in Istanbul as migrants or more generally in the civil service or other spheres. However, the Alevi veneration for Atatürk goes further than appreciation for the reforms he instigated when he created the Turkish nation. Many regard Atatürk as a creator of an ideal way of life, and often regret the elections in 1950 which led to the demise of the CHP. Some *dedes* even say that they love him as much as they love *mehti*, the twelfth, vanished *imam*, who is supposed to return one day to rule.² Birge noticed this very early, saying, 'Many Bektashis . . . claim that they are content with the situation as it is, feeling that [Republican] government action has now ensured for all the social life which formerly was to be found only in the secret ritual of the Bektashi order.'³

There are many parallels between early Republican ideology and the Alevi way of looking at the world which help to explain this veneration. For example, we may consider the Republicans' emphasis on the pre-Islamic, Turkish roots of the nation. The Alevis often embrace this eagerly, contrasting themselves with the Sunnis whom, they say, have been converted to Arabic culture.⁴ Though Alevi vary in the way they are able to describe their history, some of those who are most articulate use the following explanation. They say that there was a teacher, Ahmed Yesevi, who ran a Sufi school at Horasan in Iran, and that Hacı Bektaş was one of a number of Ahmet Yesevi's pupils sent forth to spread Alevi doctrine. They say that the task of these pupils (now become teachers) was to support the victories gained by Alp Arslan, the Seljuk general, by ruling the conquered territories in Anatolia and bringing their inhabitants to peace.⁵

Dede lineages sometimes use this part of the Alevi heritage to link their descent directly to one of Ahmet Yesevi's pupils, thereby missing out Hacı Bektaş in their explanation of their past. The dervish described in Chapter 5,

who struck the ground and made a deer appear for the Padishah's troops, is one such.⁶ To most though, Hacı Bektaş appears as at once the religious fountain-head of their movement and also a great Turkish leader, one who has few Arabic (and by implication Sunni Islamic) influences. Some Alevis also say that he is representative of a pre-Islamic, shamanistic cult which constitutes the true Turkish religion. These Alevis may even say that the monotheistic, authoritarian God *Allah* is a needless creation of the Sunni, pointing to their polytheistic, shamanistic past, and embrace Atatürk's explorations into a pre-Islamic Anatolian past with enthusiasm.⁷

The Alevi preoccupation with being Turkish rather than Arabic shows itself also in their use of language. We have already seen that in the village they make a distinction between '*Tarikat*' prayers, which are in Turkish, and that they contrast these with *Şeriat* prayers, which are in Arabic. Further, they prefer to refer to God as *Tanrı*, the old Turkish word for God, rather than the Arabic *Allah*. The more politically conscious among the villagers indeed are deeply sympathetic to the change from Arab to Latin script, and to the language reforms instigated by the *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Turkish Language Council) which was set up by Atatürk to reform Turkish or Arabic borrowings,⁸ and regret its closure after the 1980 coup.⁹

That in spite of this correspondence, the Alevis remain ambivalent towards the state, and some make only uneasy peace with it, I think can be explained in both abstract, and in more specific, ways. From the general point of view, citizenship requires a shift in allegiance from the chain of hierarchical authority that runs through from follower to *dede* to the state, but it entails only a partial rejection of their culture. Whether within the framework of the collective rituals or not, they are used to ordering and establishing their own affairs, and accept that it is their responsibility to do so. This sense of separation is in marked contrast to the Sunni villages where I have worked, whose members, while they may criticise the government officials for their real or perceived inadequacies, feel a much greater sense that the nation was created for their benefit.

There are also more practical reasons for such ambivalence. While the Republic remains secular, it has gradually supported more and more of the practice of Sunni religion. There have been, and remain, supporters of the early Republican reforms in all walks of life, but these increasingly find their voices muted by the strength and variety of supporters of orthodox religious practice. As the CHP, or the secular left, have never won a majority since the onset of free elections, the Alevis fear that the state is now inevitably influenced by religious affairs, and that its officials are no longer convinced by the secularist message. Almost any action or activity that the state may pursue is therefore potentially suspect in their eyes.

These conflicting feelings were put in sharp relief by the Hacı Bektaş festival, *şenliği*, in 1989. In August each year, Hacıbektaş town becomes a focus for Alevi from all over Turkey. The meeting does not have an explicitly religious purpose. Rather, as its title, 'festival' suggests, it is a celebration of Alevi dance,

music and poetry. Different teams of *sema* performers show their way of dancing (which vary greatly from one part of Turkey to another). Famous *aşık*, minstrels, play to large crowds. Less famous ones, but nevertheless highly skilled, enter competitions for medals.

In 1989, for the first time, the government decided to take notice officially of the festival.¹⁰ At that point, the Motherland Party, the right-wing, pro-religious party founded by the late President Özal, were in power. They arranged an official programme, which included a debate between representatives of the Alevi community and a Sunni teacher at a Theological Faculty, held in the presence of the Minister for Culture. They arranged for the *sema* dances to be programmed properly and the dancing to stop promptly at 11 o'clock at night, and for there to be an official opening with speeches. The Minister himself, the leader of the SHP (secular left), and a spokesman for the DYP (right wing, led by Demirel) all spoke at the opening, at which I was present.

The speeches were elaborate and complementary, as is normal in such settings, but the most controversial was that given by the Minister of Culture, Namık Kemal Zeybek. It can be contrasted with that made by Erdal İnönü (the son of İsmet İnönü, the first president of the Republic after Atatürk) who is the head of the SHP. Erdal İnönü gave a conventional speech (from the Alevi point of view), describing the way that the Alevis, in their immediate acceptance of Atatürk's efforts to set up the Republic, showed their important place in a *laik* Republic.¹¹ He also stressed the worth of their humanism (*humanizm*) to the democracy which is modern Turkey. He received tumultuous applause. In quite a different vein, the Minister for Culture explained first of all that the Alevis had been instrumental in creating the glorious success of the Ottoman Empire through the Janissaries (*yeniçeris*).¹² He then went on to say that the government intended to set up a permanent *sema* group at Hacıbektaş to play for tourists, and to build a large town mosque (which at that point was lacking).

Later, at the debate held in the presence of the minister, a representative of the ministry handed out works published by the government to the audience explaining the history and philosophy of Hacı Bektash.¹³ During the debate itself (the purpose of which was to discuss different aspects of Alevi culture), the Alevi representatives told the minister quite bluntly that if the government wanted to help the Alevis they could leave Hacıbektaş town alone to look after its own affairs. I learnt later, also, that a large unofficial concert had been held at a sacred area just outside the town by a popular, nationally known minstrel, which had an even higher attendance than the official events in the town itself. The Alevis I spoke to in the town itself were very angry at both the idea of having a new mosque (new mosques are built in the Ottoman classical pattern, with large minarets and dome, a style which the Alevis particularly dislike) and at the idea of their dances, which many of them take very seriously indeed, being used as a tourist attraction.¹⁴

That a government should decide to acknowledge a folk festival may not seem very surprising, but in the Turkish context it is an innovation. Republican

tenets hold that there is no difference between Turkish citizens. Why the ANAP government should suddenly decide to intervene, breaking fifty years of completely ignoring the Alevis officially, is therefore worthy of thought. It is possible, of course, that it was no more than a rather clumsy way to seek votes for the next general election, though the fact that all the main three parties were represented would seem to belie this simple explanation. It is possible also that the state was reacting to a sense, widespread in general citizen–state relations in Turkey, that any large-scale gathering needs careful supervision. As Hacıbektaş is a sensitive and important site, and the festival is growing ever larger, it may be easily comprehended that administrators felt that close supervision was better than the possibility of the size and extent of the gathering growing out of control.

While this is no doubt part of the answer, it does not explain why the government should intervene particularly at that point. To my knowledge, though the festivals were attractive to left-wing groups,¹⁵ they were not actively plotting against the state or the government. As a speculation, however, it did seem to me that the tentative approaches by the political parties at that point may have been bound up with several impulses at once. The end of the 1980s marked a point at which the Alevi ‘revival’ was becoming hard to ignore. For the first time, really substantial quantities of secondary literature explaining Alevi culture were available in shops, and the movement appeared to be gaining momentum nationally. Further, the Özal period marked a time when there was widespread realisation that the sharp left–right conflict had been extremely destructive. Pre-1980, the Alevis assured me repeatedly, there was no middle of the road, liberal tradition which a person could take up. One was either for the left, or the right. The ideas which one had inevitably bore the colour of one’s political persuasion. In responding to this realisation, moderates may have felt that the Alevi way of life should be acknowledged as a part of modern Turkey without remaining concealed in left-wing movements. On the other hand, the radical parts of the Motherland government, seeking a public recognition of religion as a way to avoid further social conflict, may have felt that emphasising the overall Islamic basis of the Alevi tradition would be a way to welcome them in to the ‘Turk–Islam’ synthesis that was at that point supported by them as a way of bringing conflicting groups into a sense of greater unity.

What kind of recognition?

It is worth offering a summary of the circumstances that make the situation so very difficult. It may be recalled that the Turkish Republic was founded on the idea that no public acknowledgement of any specific cultural or religious group at all should be permitted, other than generically *Türk* or, likewise, Muslim, *Müslüman*. In spite of the subsequent controversies over the Kurdish movement, this social mechanism for the inculcation of a sense of egalitarian nationalism has broadly worked very well. However, in part it has relied upon an

intellectual sleight of hand by which support of 'religion', *din*, in general has come to mean an orthodox, Sunni interpretation of religious history and theology.

This has in turn given rise to an evolving, continuous debate and conflict between those who support secularism, and a resurgent political Sunni Islam, a debate that has no obvious end. However, one consequence of this long encounter is that both the secular and the Islamist sides have become accustomed to the rules of engagement. The phrases, slogans, manoeuvres and actions that they pursue are to some extent predictable and they are conducted according to decades of accumulated political experience as to what is and what is likely to be achievable and what not. Thus, the secularist side rarely calls for recognition that God does not exist, knowing that the reaction from the Islamists will be so furious as to provoke physical violence. Likewise, though, the political Islamists know that open calls for the *şeriat* will, depending partly upon the context in which they are made, lead to the authorities restricting their actions. Thus, I was once a visitor in an Islamic television station in Istanbul. One of the guests in the room complained to its Director that the station was not calling for Islamic revolution firmly enough. The Director replied to his visitors that they had been called in for 'talks' with the Public Prosecutor, indeed, that the Public Prosecutor had been quite right to summon them because they had on occasion gone too far. He explained that now they had reached an informal agreement within him as to how they might proceed further without provoking an official reaction, and in return for this the Prosecutor had arranged that any charges would be withdrawn.

In contrast, when '*Aleviness*' is discussed, there is as yet no accumulated body of practice whereby this negotiation may take place. Official, formal recognition of *Alevilik* raises the question of exactly what is being recognised. In as much as '*Alevilik*' is based on the Bektashi or other brotherhoods, then recognition may mean equally acknowledgement of the dozens of other *tarikats*. This would clearly be as unacceptable to the administration as it is to the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which is determined to remain neutral on that question, indeed officially disapproving of all *tarikat* groups as heresy, because of the assumption inherent within their organisation that some men are closer to God than others. However, if *Alevilik* is to be defined as a religion in itself, the situation becomes even more awkward from their point of view. Taken literally, *Alevilik* is in fact a form of Shi'ism, albeit one that does not insist upon the five pillars. The reverence that the Alevis hold for Ali, for *İmam Cafer*, and their interpretation of the early schisms within Islamic history takes them, theologically speaking, to a quite different sectarian viewpoint, one that Sunni activists find again heretical.

There is a third alternative, and that is in effect to regard *Alevilik* as a movement that can make its peace, if it wishes to, with Islam as is practised in the Republic. This viewpoint stresses their traditional syncretism, their occasional willingness to go to mosques and their acknowledgement of the *Şeriat* as the

first point in religious knowledge. In effect, it reverses the priorities within *Alevilik* whereby orthodox practice is a substitute for the profounder knowledge that is gained in the *Tarikat*, and makes the five pillars essential to its religious life. This is perhaps the solution most favoured by the Directorate of Religious Affairs, but in as much as it denies any acknowledgement of the Alevi interpretation of religious fulfilment infuriates many of the Alevis themselves, who are profoundly aware of the differences between the two styles of worship. It is this movement from above that makes them talk occasionally of ‘assimilation’, and is illustrated by the ANAP proposals at the Hacı Bektaş festival.

In short, then, the religious alternative of absorption into the Sunni fold that is on offer is not attractive to more than a small number. Yet, there is simply no space for Aleviness as an official, distinct religion, and there is no existing mechanism within the fabric of the Republic for their acknowledgement as a minority cultural group. Even discussing these matters remains awkward and volatile. Faced with this dilemma, one of the most well-established approaches within Alevi thought has been to advocate returning to secularism in the Republic as it was originally envisaged, which would remove the need for any public acknowledgement, and at the same time enable them to live freely.

Debate in the Grand National Assembly

A renowned debate in the Grand National Assembly illustrates these issues. It took place in 1992, at the committee stage of the forthcoming year’s budget discussions, at the point at which the members of the Assembly were to discuss the allocation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. The quotations below are taken from the partial transcription of the speeches published by Pehlivan.¹⁶ The discussion took place at a time for optimism in Turkish politics. The left, the SHP, under Erdal İnönü were in power, sharing a coalition government with the DYP. Süleyman Demirel was Prime Minister. The possibility of peaceful cohabitation between left and right, and comparatively steady economic growth meant that it was possible to be guardedly hopeful as to the future. Above all, it marked a success for the Alevis, who through their participation in party politics had gained, it was thought at the time, some sixty members in the assembly as SHP representatives.

Here, the discussion hinges around two different viewpoints. The first is straightforward: the Islamist, Welfare Party wish for more money to be spent on religion, they applaud the government for what has been done and concentrate on trying to bolster the budget given to the Directorate still further:

Considering collectively the central and provincial administrative offices of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, there are at present 87,188 official posts but at present only 76,536 of these are actually filled . . . of the empty positions, 4,500 are mosque prayer leaders or preachers [*imam-hatip*], 450 callers to prayer [*muezzin*] or caretakers,

130 Koran course teachers, 167 cleaners, and 38 drivers. We have asked permission from the Ministry of Finance and Customs for transfers to be made, but it has not yet been given.

... In addition, thanks be to God, there are in our nation every year built a further 1500 mosques, and 300 Koran courses are opened. [Accordingly] in addition to the empty positions outlined above, we have asked for a further 1500 callers to prayer, 1500 Koran course teachers, 500 cleaners, and 300 miscellaneous posts. Though nine months have passed since this request, it has not yet been fulfilled.

The opposing view is held by the SHP spokesman, Şahin Ulusoy, a member of parliament, himself an *efendi* from Hacıbektaş, and a leading and important member of the Alevi community. In a much more radical speech, he suggests that the only successful way to achieve 'civilisation' is through the separation of religion and state, and that one of the reasons for the comparative underdevelopment of the Arab countries is their inability to make this distinction. He suggests that the Directorate of Religious Affairs contradicts the secular basis of the Turkish Republic, something that is guaranteed in the constitution, and should be closed down. In a closely argued passage, he further suggests that as much as the Directorate overlooks the immensely different varieties of Islamic thought, it can be said to represent no one group. Therefore, it comes to constitute a new interpretation of Islam, something that is inherently fractionalising and damaging to the body politic. He is frequently interrupted in his speech, particularly when he begins to hint at the problems faced by the Alevis:

Chairmen, honourable members, according to the 1990 census our population is 56 million. As against this, again according to official figures, there are 66,674 mosques, 383 *imam-hatip* [religious] schools, 22 Faculties of Theology, and 4,446 Koran courses. However, of our population 20 million [ie. the Alevis] do not go to mosques, they have other places of worship. They know that their great figures within Islam, their beliefs are cursed, made fun of in mosques, that they are not treated with respect or love.

(*Other voice*): There is no such thing, no!

(*Other*): They are all Muslims, there could be no cursing in a mosque!

(*Other*): They are all 60 million Muslims!

I say that for centuries this has been done, that this is a fact of history, you cannot deny it! [Noise from the room]

(*Other*): You've not been to a mosque! They are all Muslim!

(*Other*): In which mosque did this take place, there is no such thing!

We do not wish it so but we live with these problems. Please, listen to the nation's problems!

(Other) Shame! Shame! You cannot speak like that, a mosque can be no place of cursing!

... (similar interventions)

Chairman: Please, speaker, choose words in such a way that you offend no-one

Ulusoy continues to outline his position. He suggests that the enormous investment given to mosques, to Koran schools, because it only impacts upon a small part of the population, is wasted money, even sinful. He also suggests that Alevi children, because they attend schools and prayers that are purely based upon the Sunni model, are beginning to suffer from psychological problems, causing rifts within families, the smallest but most important of the social units of the nation. Though interrupted by occasional shouts, he finishes his presentation by suggesting that compulsory religious education should be lifted and repeats the contention that the Directorate of Religious Affairs should be abolished, thus leaving religious education to parents, and in the hands of the respective diverse religious groups in the country:

Long experience has shown us that this organisation [the Directorate] sadly does not display tolerance towards other beliefs. They insult, deny and, even using the strength that they have gained from the state, attempt to assimilate us. However much we all are bound to this nation and people's indivisible unity, however much respect we possess for it, and however much we see it as our security in this future, we must by discontinuing this body attain a nation with a more contemporary and scientific order, one that is more appropriate to the secular system that is found in the developed countries. These are painful truths . . . We ask the government, and our great assembly, to withdraw compulsory religious lessons, so contrary to the universal tenets of the constitution, to leave them to parents and to individuals, to withdraw government funds where they are being used as propaganda for one viewpoint only.

Diverse currents

Since this budget discussion, the Alevi movement has grown and diversified. At the same time, the situation in Turkey has become more volatile. The Islamist movement has risen extremely sharply, though suffered a setback when Erdogan, after a brief period as Prime Minister, was forced to resign, and his

party was closed by the Public Prosecutor (a decision that was subsequently ratified by the European Court of Human Rights). The armed forces, particularly the army, have repeatedly stated their worries at the rise of fundamentalism, most notably in a declaration known as the 'February 1997' recommendations. Though their relationship with authority remains uneasy, many Alevis applaud the armed forces, and particularly the army's commitment to secularism, fearing only that their intervention has come too late.

Already sceptical of politicians, the catastrophic financial mismanagement that has become apparent from 2000 onwards has made many disillusioned with the existing parties. This is all the more so because the party to which the Alevis have been closest, the CHP, is not even in the Assembly because it failed to pass the 10 per cent barrier necessary for representation in parliament in the 1999 elections. Further, given the uncertainty of the political spectrum in future, there is no guarantee that the left as a whole will be able to offer them their traditional route to incorporation into the public life of the Republic.

The Alevis have long been interested in self-organisation through civil associations (known in Turkish as *derneks*) and trusts, *vakfs*, such as the *Cem Vakfi* run by İzzettin Doğan. Their importance to the Alevi movement is likely to grow still further. Such organisations, while they have to abide carefully by certain rules, are often permitted in practice to flourish freely, and the *Cem* movement is a good example of how they may become effective. Overall, Doğan's approach to the Directorate of Religious Affairs contrasts with that put forward by Ulusoy because he, rather than attacking the Directorate directly, suggests that the state should support the Alevis in making their own centres of worship, the *cem evi*, 'cem houses' such as that the Susesi villagers have been working with in Istanbul. He has been partly successful in that, though the sums involved appear to be more than a tiny fraction of those available to the Directorate, the government has awarded apparently direct subventions from the treasury to his movement since the late 1990s, and it is by virtue of these that he is able to be active in his aims.

The *Cem Vakfi* is significant in part by virtue of the quiet scholarship of its founder, its close link to the government, and the friendship which Professor Doğan appeared to forge with President Demirel when he was in office. Other active Alevis, though profoundly interested in such organising, do not wish for such close contact with authority. They are reinforced in that suspicion by the violence that has been shown against the Alevis, such as at Sivas, or when a number of demonstrators in Gaziosmanpaşa, a predominantly Alevi, shantytown area in Istanbul, were killed by the police. The result is many publications that plead that the Alevis should remain unified, that they should exert themselves for collective change, and for the collective good but, rather than call for cooperation with the state, they plead for recognition of the seriousness of the Alevis' plight. The following quotation comes from a part of a work by Balkız in which he is attempting to explore ways that the Alevi movement may go forward from their present impasse:

1 In our country, and in the world as a whole, there have been rapid, disconcerting developments. Socialism, even . . . if temporary, and its dynamic and bright future only occluded . . . has suffered a defeat. They [Alevi inclined to socialism] have given up hope, they have fallen under the influence of the negative propaganda of certain *petit bourgeois* elements . . .

2 For hundreds of years, the Alevi maintained their own organisations appropriate to conditions in their villages. When it became impossible to maintain the relationship between *talip, dede* . . . to maintain the customs such as the *cem, görgü, müsahiplik*, fast, sacrifice . . . it was natural that a desire to form [new] organisations should follow in turn.

3 The Alevi are face to face with attacks to an extent that they have never before seen in their history. The state, which through hanging, slaughter, and exile was able to induce fear and quiescence into the Alevi but not to destroy them, for the first time has changed its tactics and now tries to win, to entice, to turn into Sunnis, to assimilate and thereby wipe them out. With, 'Why do you feel yourself excluded?', 'Thanks be to God, We are all Muslim, there is one Koran, one Prophet, one Nation and one Flag', 'You are children of this land, don't remain outside of its umbrella' and similar sentences, they constructed mosques in Alevi villages. Seeing no congregation within them, they brought back compulsory religious lessons, and forced pupils to witness how to pray in the mosques during them. With radio and television broadcasts they attempted to introduce the Turkish-Islam synthesis as a basic ideology. As cunning election slogans the Refah Party borrowed the words of Pir Sultan Abdal, 'Come, Let us Be One', and the MHP, Hacı Bektaş Veli's 'Let us be one, Let us be strong, Let us be active', and taunted them with the words of Ahmet Yessevi to Hacı Bektaş Veli, 'Why don't you follow the word of your *pirs*?' The Alevi response to this would certainly not be in single words. This was another reason why the Alevi felt it necessary to organise themselves.

4 In Turkey, the *Şeriat* has never been as threatening as it is today . . . the Alevi are in the forefront of those who will suffer most. *Şeriat* will attack the Alevi with more aggression even than they will the communists. Their own history emphasises this as a sacred duty. Only by organising can the Alevi stop this danger, and further occurrences of *Sivas*. They are aware of this.

5 In the end, the Alevi have understood that organising their human strength is the only weapon that is more powerful than the atom, the hydrogen bomb. The socialism that they no longer admire if nothing else has taught them this, and in doing so has left a rich inheritance and experience.

There is only one condition that will make it possible for these diverse elements to gather under one roof, and that is a collective aim. The collective aim of the Alevi-Bektaşî organising themselves must be to join in the struggle to create a secular, democratic order in the true sense in our country . . . They must not fall into the left's situation before [the coup of] 12 September, with its fractionalised associations.

Radicalisation and the person, '*insan*'

The language of the international left that Balkız uses is not at all unusual, and it reflects accurately enough the speech and approach of those who adopt this radical approach. However, it is not employed as a replacement of Alevi traditional symbolism and ideology in any straightforward way. Rather, it fuses with it, so that *Alevilik* itself is reinterpreted as being identical with the aims of a sharply oppositional socialism. For instance, Yorukoğlu discusses Ruhi Su, one of the most talented and brilliant of Alevi minstrels to have emerged within the Republic as follows:

At this point I wish to discuss a genuine people's artist, and a genuine communist, RUHI SU . . . Ruhi Su, born in Van in 1912, but brought up as an orphan in Adana . . . attended music school and became a member of the conservatoire in Ankara . . . He was banned from playing on the radio in 1943 for singing an Alevi song, the first person to do so . . . In 1952 he was convicted of being a member of the Communist Party and sentenced to five years in prison. The bourgeois dungeons did not break his spirit. The party may have abandoned him, but he did not abandon the party. With his *saz*, with the Alevi songs to which he gave tongue, he made an enormous contribution to the rising class struggle.

At the same time, the relationship with religion becomes far more problematic than that suggested by either Ulusoy or by Doğan. While these two approaches differ in that one suggests that the state subvert Aleviness, the other not, neither seeks to question the basic presumption that *Alevilik* is a tradition within Islam and will continue to be taught as one. As *Alevilik* becomes closer to the left, however, this assumption changes. We have already seen that, in Susesi, even those who are sceptical of Aleviness as a religion may continue to observe it as a culture, using its characteristic symbols and music instead as a way of life in the Republic. The politicised activism described here is similar in some respects, but illustrates also a profound ideological transformation. The creation of social order through *Alevilik* in the village relies upon simultaneously a sense of an imminent and a transcendent God. The two conceptions are conjoined in that the person may find God within themselves, and that internalised God is held to be a reflection of an omnipotent, omniscient, transcend-

ent being. While from the theological point of view this may be regarded as unacceptable, because it permits the person to become part of God himself, the consequence of this dual conception is that the Alevi in their traditional setting are able to stress simultaneously the worth of humanity, and the importance of humility in the face of the Divine.

As *Alevilik* becomes more secular, the conception of God becomes almost entirely internalised and conflated with the person, *insan*. This may be seen explicitly, for example, in the title of Yorukoğlu's work quoted from above, *The Greatest Book to Read is the Person*, which is by implication claiming that the person is more significant than the Koran. It may be seen also in the work of Ismail Metin, who has published a work, *The Alevi Constitution*, that tries to sum up the essence of Alevi life as a series of aphorisms with accompanying commentary. In this work, the fourth section reads as follows:

SUBJECT: THE PERSON

SAYING 4: THE GOAL OF ALEVINESS IS THE PERSON

- The goal of Aleviness is the person.
- In Aleviness, everything is within the person.
- In Aleviness, there is no institution, individual or entity or anything that may be served other than the person.

Explanation: Every system of thought has something it takes as its founding tenet . . . In *Alevilik* this thing is the person, *insan*. This person is so great that everything becomes in comparison of secondary importance. As the Alevi create ways of thinking against the fanatical ideologies of the fundamentalists, see how they stress the significance of the person. The person is God, the Kabe lies in the person's heart . . . the tongue of the person is the Koran . . . it may be seen that everything revolves around the person.

(Metin 1999)

Thus, the Sufi's cry of ecstasy, 'I am God!', regarded as the pinnacle of profound understanding and conveyed often through a mass of complicated symbolism and secret doctrine, may become completely routinised, a casual and assertive claim to place the individual and their desires at the centre of the universe. This shift can lead to a profoundly peaceful humanism, and frequently does. It may also lead to a notable phenomenon whereby individuals, or sometimes whole Alevi associations, may interpret Alevism as an international culture, and therefore seek to explore its diverse roots in not just Islam but also in other traditions, in shamanism, in pre-historical Anatolian religions, or in Christianity.

However, that same emphasis on individualism can also interact with a left-wing 'progressive' political philosophy that is more unstable. Among groups

which possess a much more radicalised interpretation of the social world, one that relies upon, and feeds off, the communist ideal of the inherently illegitimate state, it may become less a route to toleration than one of hardened bitterness as to the perceived lack of respect that is paid to the person in modern Turkey. Indeed, if a group or organisation both lose faith in the state and respect for divine authority, they may turn more easily to imposing their music, dance and anti-authoritarian motifs into the service of a revolutionary ideology. Albeit in comparatively speaking very small numbers, this willingness to use violence appears to occur most frequently among the Kurdish Alevi, but occasionally it does appear among the Turkish Alevi too. It is a worrying sign that the most active of these radicals appear to have begun to use suicide, either through explosives or through starvation, as a way to make their message felt.¹⁷

Secularism in modern Turkey

All these approaches, whether revolutionary Marxist, Republican or quietist, have in common that they are secular. They make no attempt to suggest that the state's programme be influenced by religious affairs, and accept that public morality must be founded upon laws that are agreed through a commonly agreed system of law. Albeit tentatively, in terms of our earlier argument with regard to the Sunni villages, it is possible to restate why secularism should so frequently be part of the Alevi ideologies in the following way. Both the Alevi and Sunnis in the sub-province studied wish to be part of the Turkish nation. The two most important social relations in the modern world are respectively those between men and the nation with which they identify, and men and the women whom they expect to dominate. Sunni Islam is admirably suited to strengthening both these relations; it extols subservience to a central governing authority which can then administer its people, and it extols dominance of men over women. Alevi religion can be used for neither of these tasks by the Susesi villagers. On the contrary, by virtue of its insistence on the rightful leadership of the twelve *imams*, taken literally, it regards governing by central rule as entirely without legitimation. And, though in fact women are subordinate to men, there is nothing in the Alevi religious creed which says that they should be treated in any way different from men. On the contrary, it supports their equal participation in social life. In short, because there is little in the Alevi religion which can be used by men to perpetuate the social structure of which they increasingly become a part, or to reinforce their position within it, there is no reason for them to continue to embody religion's moral message within the confines which it has set itself in the traditional setting. The vast majority of Alevi men do not reject the humanitarian element within their religion, on the contrary, they stress this aspect, saying it is their culture, but its sacred underpinnings are no longer so immediately relevant to their lives.

This is admittedly a rather abstract argument, but I think that it is broadly

accurate. Even if it may need a great deal of qualifying, however, one potential question that it helps immediately to phrase is, how permanent is this transition? In other words, does the Alevis' ability to stress a general secular humanism depend on the particular concatenation of nationalism and secularism that was offered by the early Republican period, or is it a broader reflection of the transition to the modern world? It is difficult to be sure. In the fifteen years since this research began, the Alevis have become known, just as I have described them, as a secularising community both in Turkey and in Europe. Where I have later begun to work, in Germany, officials sometimes have remarked to me that they feel entirely at home with the Alevis, exactly because they are able to see religion as a reflection of their culture rather than the precise fulfilment of divine commandment.

However, just as any other complex religious philosophy, there are harsher sides to *Alevilik*, and it is possible that if circumstances were to change, these would be brought to the surface. Already in 1990, I was told of a reformulation of *Alevilik* that reached a quite different conclusion of the most appropriate road to modernity. Ten years later, it is becoming clearer that this version of 'Alevilik', rather than reject the links with Iran that were formerly part of Alevi history, welcomes them, and has forged links with the modern Iranian state. Instead of the traditional local *dedes*, they regard themselves bound to spiritual leaders who are sent from Iran. From them, they learn a form of Shi'ism that insists on the veiling of women, on men and women worshipping apart, and upon the importance of the *şeriat*. Rather than reject mosques, this movement, which is known as the 'Ehli-beyt yolu', appears to create or build Shi'ite mosques which act as centres of religious activity in a way that is unusual in Alevi villages. While active in Germany, particularly in Berlin, it is also said to influence the Alevi community in Turkey in urban Çorum, a province to the east of Ankara. In this case, it appears indeed that the segregating, puritanical elements of orthodox practice have come to the fore, and once more with an emphasis on the subordination of women. The result appears to be a religious revolutionary spirit that is as potentially aggressive as any other form of fundamentalism.

One of the most important aspects of what might be called the traditional spectrum of ideas with which the Alevis have forged their bond of citizenship with the Republic is the way that they have a core of symbolism and ideology in common, even when they appear to disagree. For example, *cem evi*s, 'cem houses', in the larger cities may become places of worship and at the same time centres for publication, discussion and celebration of Alevi culture, discussions that attract sceptics as well as the pious. Conferences devoted purely to secular matters, such as the place of the Alevis in Turkey or to folklore, such indeed as that at Sivas which resulted in the massacres, may begin with a *sema*. The Ehli-beyt yolu, with its radically different approach, appears to have scant possibility of sharing ground in the way that these majority positions have been able to do. It therefore raises the possibility of a split within the Alevi movement between

Shi'ite activists and totally committed secularists. This would be both an innovation in itself and perhaps indicate a new phase within the history of the Alevis in modern Turkey whereby, able to present a coherent face to the outside world for much of the Republic's history, they now divide sharply against each other. Of course, it should be stressed that the Ehl-i beyt yolu at present is a tiny movement, but the mere possibility of the ideas within *Alevilik* being reassembled in this new way is at once thought-provoking and worrying.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the changing, fractious and indeed difficult relationship that the Alevis have developed with the state in Turkey, difficulties that appear quite different, indeed almost a mirror image, of those that are typical of the Sunni communities. The situation is changing very quickly, and my comments have only covered a tiny fraction of the material available. However, it is safe to assume that the multiple process of writing down a culture that has hitherto been largely oral will continue, and that there will always be different strands of thought within that movement. While it would be foolhardy to maintain the possibility of predicting any long-term trend, it is also highly likely that for the immediate future, at least, the predominant weight will be on the secularisation of the community, and that any counter-current will be confined to a small group.

In presenting papers concerning the changing position of the Alevis in Turkey, I have sometimes been asked why I have not considered the influence of the migrant Alevis abroad, those in Germany in particular, where there is a flourishing Alevi community. I have not done so in this account because among the villagers where I worked the intellectual influence of the migrants abroad from Susesi has been slight. In other ways, migration has had an enormous influence. The matters that they reported: the orderly ways of German society, the honesty with which everyday transactions were made, the quality of the transport and medical services, as well as the obvious affluence of everyday life, were and are discussed continuously. Further, that the public celebration of Alevi religious culture was, and is, possible in Germany in complete freedom was undoubtedly of great interest to the Susesi villagers. It was partly in emulation of the openness that they had heard of as occurring in Germany that they were prepared to permit me to share their ceremonies in the village setting, something that would normally not have been done.

Nevertheless, when the villagers in Germany wished to know more of their traditional religious beliefs and cultures, it was to the village that they sent for information, not the other way round. They would consult *dedes* in their summer vacations, ask for cassettes to be made of music and commentaries, or send a ticket and a fare for the *dedes* to visit them where they were living. Further, the accelerating process of secondary literature, with its extended commentaries on the situation of the Alevis in Turkey, was for the most part

produced in Turkey, published in Ankara and Istanbul, and written by veterans of the struggles of the 1970s, and the great social changes that have taken place in Anatolia in the last decades. One of the first text books of Alevi religion, one written with the intent to provide Alevi text books for secondary school education in Turkey, was written not through consulting the Alevi movement in Germany, but through a commission of editors touring through the Anatolian villages, asking the *dedes* their opinions and interpretations of Alevi cultural and religious norms.

This is not to imply, however, that the question of 'Aleviness', or indeed the intellectual relationship will always be dominated by the Alevis who have remained in Turkey. Indeed, there appears to be a shift whereby the Alevi movement itself is becoming internationalised as communications and technology facilitate rapid interaction between people, and the centres of Alevi thought in Berlin, Cologne and other large German cities are gradually assuming greater importance. At the same time, the writings of Western researchers on the Alevis, such as those of Professor Irene Mélikoff, are rapidly being translated into Turkish. Turkish Alevi writers themselves are beginning to work and publish from European universities. The most systematic and thorough collection of varied aspects of Alevi cultural life that has yet appeared has been produced by Dr Ismail Engin from the Oriental Institute in Hamburg. Partly as a result of this work, in 2002, for the first time, the Alevis have won the right from a German *Land*, Berlin, to be regarded as a distinct religious group. This will undoubtedly lead to the further codification and study of *Alevilik* and be a rapid stimulus to the creation of an independent literate tradition.

In contrast, the situation in Turkey remains uncertain. An Alevi association has recently been refused the right to act freely in the Republic, on the grounds that the explicit use of Alevi in its title contravenes the Constitution. The Alevis are still refused permission to teach Aleviness as a distinct doctrine within the schools, and they still are forced, through the taxation system, to support the Directorate of Religious Affairs though it trains no *dedes* who might provide spiritual leadership to them. This leads the Alevis themselves, and indeed others who may write about them, to characterise their single most important problem as being one of recognition, a search for recognition that will undoubtedly continue against a background of increasing awareness of their culture at a European level.

However, it should be reiterated, creating a public religion out of *Alevilik* rather than a private secular culture is genuinely an extremely tricky business. The Alevi readiness to accept an internalised God, the importance they give to Ali, their permitting men and women to worship together, their distrust of mosques are unorthodox perceptions of faith within a society where orthodox interpretations of religious life are increasingly dominant. This means that it is really very difficult to achieve an immediately better solution than the one that the Turkish Alevis themselves have already evolved. By not dismissing, but not giving priority to, orthodox practices, they have been able to avoid drawing

attention to themselves publicly and to avoid the opprobrium of activists, which can be extremely aggressive. In other words, even after the events of 2001, it is easy to forget from the comparative peace of Europe that religious fundamentalism is genuinely life-threatening. Those who express religious scepticism regularly in Turkey are often bullied, threatened, beaten up or murdered. However unpleasant, there is simply no profit to be gained from denying this. Unless the state is strong enough to protect Alevi worship and Alevi people against attacks upon them, recognition is in itself no panacea to a more just or equal participation in society, and may make things worse.

There is a further problem. Just who, which and what is being recognised? It is worth reiterating that, first, within the anti-secular/secular divide that is so important, the Alevis have almost in their entirety come out in favour of the founding Kemalist reforms. They have conspicuously resisted open calls from the Welfare and later the Virtue Party to re-identify themselves primarily a religious minority. Second, when the immense and growing heterogeneity of the Alevi population is taken on board, it becomes clear that those who are seeking reaffirmation of their traditions through explicit acknowledgement from the state represent only one strand of thinking. Of course, Alevis wish to be free to act as they wish: this goes for any population, but many have no desire whatsoever to be recast as a *millet* either by their traditional religious figures or by well-wishing advisers in international academic and institutional politics.

Of course, only the future will tell how the diverse Alevi movement will develop. However, it would be a tragedy if, the Republic having escaped much of the bloody conflict between sectarian movements that was prevalent in the Ottoman Empire, the misplaced wholesale attribution of characteristics helped to create a clear boundary in fact where no such unanimity exists. It is at moments such as these that the powerlessness of the anthropologist to do good in preventing future conflict, even if we had precise enough knowledge of the situation to be sure of what steps to take, is most bitter to accept. It may be, indeed, that all we can do is describe and to hope profoundly for future peace.

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Comparative and theoretical reflections

This book contains a number of related arguments that can be summed up briefly as follows. Not just the large cities but the whole of Anatolia is going through a process of rapid modernisation and infrastructural change. One characteristic of this change is that hitherto very small rural settlements may grow to become towns, in effect, become urban. I suggest that this rural demographic expansion appears to be centred almost exclusively upon Sunni settlements, even when they are of diverse ethnic backgrounds. The Alevi villages appear not to be making this transition to urban life *in situ* but their population moves instead to the large cities: Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara, resulting in a systematic fall in the size of their rural communities. Of course, I do not wish to suggest that *all* Alevi villages are suffering a fall in population, only that this appears to be a very marked trend. Just how marked, and whether it is specific to certain regions or more local circumstances, can only be established with further, comparative research.

I also suggest that the emergence of the Alevis as a secular community is a reflection of the wider transition to becoming part of the modern nation, and cannot simply be regarded as a desire to be relieved of actual and perceived persecution by the Sunni majority. This is in itself an important aspect of their lives in Turkey, but does not explain the way that they have allied themselves so forcefully with the idea that religion is a personal matter, and not something that should influence the state.

While the Alevis are marked by the near unanimity of this secular orientation, they may fuse with other elements in Turkish society who are also persuaded by the Republican version of secularism, particularly though not only the political left. Among other secularists are also followers of the mainstream political parties: the young in the larger cities, devoted to consumer culture, women's groups who are persuaded of the opportunities to work that were only available to them after the Republic became secular, the military, and the majority of the business community. However, these represent, albeit not necessarily the best off financially, usually those who are the longest established in the urban framework of the Republic. The dominant pressure from the newly expanding urban Sunni settlements, and indeed from those who have recently moved to the cities, is for the state to support Islam more strongly still than it is as present.

Theoretical reflections

Throughout the presentation of these claims in the previous chapters, I have attempted to keep the text largely free of extraneous discussion of secondary literature. Nevertheless, there is available a comparative theoretical debate concerning Islamic societies to which these claims are highly relevant. It lies in the work of Ernest Gellner. Over a period of more than thirty years, Gellner has developed and published a number of related theories concerning the Islamic world. These publications range from brief notes to the sustained treatment in his book of collective essays, *Muslim Society*. Together, they represent a highly ambitious effort by a Western scholar to understand the sociology of Islam in the twentieth century.¹

Gellner's work has been controversial, and there has been a number of publications attempting to refute it. Most famously perhaps, Geertz's review, quoted on the cover of the paperback edition of *Muslim Society*, acclaims it as 'The boldest and most ingenious . . . attempt in recent years to present a general account of the fundamental features of social life in the Islamic world.' Yet, if the review itself is consulted, it reveals that Geertz was far more ambivalent than this quote suggests.² Other critics have attacked the ethnographic basis of Gellner's conclusions – Munson, for example, in an article in *Man*, which also draws on early sceptics such as Hammoudi.³ A very substantial volume of collected essays devoted to Gellner's life and ideas was at its most heated, and most sceptical, when his theories of Islamic society were discussed.⁴ Said, towards the end of Gellner's life entered into a brisk, sharp though deeply hostile exchange in the *Times Literary Supplement*. A recent issue of the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society* (formerly *Man*) in 2002 contained a further attack, this time by Roberts.⁵

On the other hand, there are supporters too, even if they may outnumber the critics. Şerif Mardin, one of the most distinguished of all sociologists working in Turkey, has consistently defended Gellner's work. Wolfgang Kraus, a contemporary Austrian ethnographer researching in Morocco, finds that his fieldwork supports rather than refutes Gellner's, and has written specifically defending Gellner's position. Many works appearing today, such as a recent volume by Alan Macfarlane, continue to acknowledge the influence and stimulus of his ideas.⁶

I do not seek here to reassess the arguments over his North African material. Nor am I able to treat in anything but the most superficial way the fascinating but complex world of Ottoman history. I do believe, however, that his model is immensely helpful to our understanding of modern Anatolia, that it explains indeed a great deal of the diverse paths of modernisation that I believe are characteristic of Turkey today. In spite of this, it is only correct to note that not only have critics disagreed with Gellner but the author himself was profoundly unsure of the extent to which the model applied to the Turkish case.⁷ This puts me in the slightly awkward position of disagreeing with Gellner on the grounds

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that he is, at least in great part, correct. A certain amount of clarification would appear to be appropriate.

One of the main reasons that Gellner's work is important to these ideas is that he combines the main groups within Islamic societies in a coherent analytical framework in terms of government and opposition. This means that he discusses the rural and the unorthodox as well as the urban powers at the centre, something that is so often omitted in discussions of Turkish society.⁸ However, his prose is dense, and a number of arguments can be found throughout his works.⁹ I discuss here, in turn, four of his most important contentions, all from *Muslim Society*.

Contention 1

At one level, Gellner's argument is simple. He begins by suggesting that Islamic societies are usually divided internally between urban, settled populations and tribal 'penumbra' (his term) who are more mobile. He discusses Ibn Khaldoun's cyclic model whereby rulers, softened and corrupted by urban life, are conquered by tribes. The tribes, now in power, weaken and are conquered in turn. He assumes that, at least until the onset of modernisation, this is broadly correct (1981: 16–29, 192–193).

Contention 2

He suggests that the social base of the rural rebellion lies in the segmentary lineage model. Simply put, this model predicts that lineage groups divide or coalesce along patrilineal lines according to the place or scale of a disagreement. The more important the conflict, the more segments will become involved (*ibid.*: 29–48, 190–191). If threatened from the outside, the group as a whole may combine together to face the common enemy. At any time, mediators, privileged through being more holy than other lineages, may attempt to bring about a reconciliation between opposing individuals or groups. These holy men may also become leaders in times of rebellion. This is the most controversial part of his work. However, for Gellner (and for the anthropologists who developed the theory), it offers a way to explain how the tribes can organise themselves, and resolve disputes, independently of central authority.

Contention 3

Gellner further suggests that the urban sedentary peoples, subordinate to the power of the state, possess a different style of religious life from those tribal peoples who operate as much as they are able outside its rule. Specifically, that a 'sober, scriptural' version of the faith is applicable to urban culture, and a less codified, rather more extrovert, person-centred version is appropriate to the tribal context. He further asserts that this 'inside' or 'outside' the sphere of the

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state is a crucial divide, one that influences many aspects of social life. It is worth quoting a sample of this part of the argument. Referring to the rural, or oppositional groups, he writes:

Roughly speaking, there are two dominant life-styles. In one of them, your women work in the fields, are not secluded or veiled . . . social groups are very well defined and visible, religious life is centred on public festivals in which women play a very definite part, and which reaffirm the identity and boundary of groups.

Then, turning to the settled groups under the state's control:

By contrast, there is on the other hand a more urban style based on commercial or bureaucratic employment in womenfolk are secluded, and veiled when they come out . . . where groups are more ambiguous and ill-defined, and where ritual life is more sober, rule-bound, scripturalist, individualistic, anonymous, and has a more marked tendency to exclude women.

He ends by comparing the two, with the comment: 'The former style of course produces much less docile subjects of the state than the latter' (*ibid.*: 163).

Underlying his argument overall is a firm causal chain: independence from central authority requires mechanisms of dispute resolution, such groups need figures to judge, or at the very least reconcile, disputants, and this in turn leads to a particular interpretation of sanctity which privileges and protects those who are held to be those mediators. This in turn has implications for many other aspects of society, including its gender relations.

Contention 4

Interwoven throughout is an assumption that this set of arguments only works for the pre-modern period. He asserts that Islam will go through a transformation as it modernises, particularly that the beneficiary of this transformation will be the dominant urban 'style', which is literate and egalitarian (*ibid.*: 56–72). He assumes, contrariwise, that there will be a reaction against those who claim inherited sanctity, and that the tribal groups will be unable to maintain their independence in the face of vastly increased central state power. He also suggests a number of reasons why those who have adopted the 'puritan' reform are able to retain their faith within the context of the nation-state, a trend that he sometimes refers to as 'secular-resistant'. The consequence of this thought, as he was himself clearly aware, is that the Islamic faith may be able to combine with nationalism in modern, or at least modernising, countries resulting in a clash with a rapidly secularising West in which religion is increasingly less important.¹⁰

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Through lack of space, I am able to state only the outline of his argument. In his detailed exposition, he is careful to shade, to allow for the complexities of individual and collective life, to acknowledge that no trend is exclusive. However, these are at least the broad bones of his thesis.

Gellner's initial thought (*Contention 1*) that the model does not apply to Ottoman Turkey seems to be correct. Ibn Khaldoun's suggestion that urban decline is an inevitable consequence of governing is refuted by the success of Ottoman Turkey. Nevertheless, in Turkey there are peripheral groups who traditionally wished to lead their lives as much as possible outside the power of the state. In particular, the Kurds (whether Alevi or Sunni) and the Turkish Alevis have founded much of their societies in opposition to central control. It also does appear to be the case that rebellions were attempted, particularly from the Kurdish east, and that these were highly significant threats. The 'penumbra' that Gellner regards as characteristic for Islamic societies certainly exists in Anatolia, though the state was in this case able to survive the opposition that they offered.

Gellner asserts (*Contention 2*) that societies opposing the state characteristically possess a lineage organisation and mediators who can reconcile disputes, yet who may also lead a rebellion. Here, he is drawing upon a famous and long-lived debate within social anthropology. Yet, once so popular, the model has now become increasingly controversial, so much so that there are many researchers in Britain, at least, who would dismiss it out of hand. I believe that these dismissals have been both erroneous and hasty, and demonstrably so when the Turkish case is taken into account. By any interpretation, the Kurdish people appear to have formed tribes, and equally in their internal organisation they are dominated by patrilineal groups which combine and recombine in fluid ways. Equally again, they have coalesced in rebellion against the state, led by religious leaders who may also mediate in disputes. The leading ethnographer of the Kurdish peoples, van Bruinessen has systematically collected a wealth of material, both his own and through extensive use of travellers' accounts, that demonstrates the way that alliances could be formed and reformed within the patrilineal tribal ethos or the way that lineages of saints, or holy men, could act as both leaders in rebellion and mediators in times of conflict. So sure is he of his ground that he refuses to enter into the controversy, but simply reaffirms that his material may be made sense of through the segmentary lineage model.¹⁰ Indeed, the fact that soon after the Republic was founded, the Kurdish tribal Sunni in large part combined together, and under the influence of Şeyh Said, a leader from a religious lineage, staged such a fierce rebellion that it took a large part of the Republican army to suppress it, appears to be fairly solid evidence in its favour.

Gellner does not appear to be aware of the Alevis, particularly the Turkish, sedentary Alevis, who are more quiescent than his model of rebellion would imply. Here it may be possible to suggest a variant of his theory, one that turns out to have very interesting consequences for his overall model. For Gellner,

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one of the most important aspects of his approach was not just that the segmentary model was an adequate, or even very good, way of explaining the way a community may organise in the absence of central authority, but that there appeared to be no other way. Thus, part of his long exposition in the first chapter of *Muslim Society* is devoted to arguing against Montagne's suggestion that there may emerge among the Berber's 'checkerboard' moieties which act as a balancing factor in the emergence of conflict. In his critical article, Roberts (2002) suggests that this refusal to entertain the possibility of alternatives is a serious misjudgement. He believes that it led not just Gellner but others too to underestimate the extent to which peoples have formulated varied indigenous means of opposing and interacting with state authority in North Africa. He fears too that this has contributed to a failure in national and international polity that has in turn contributed to the subsequent bloodbath between fundamentalists and the state in Algeria.

While it seems a little tendentious to blame Gellner for the atrocities (he markedly avoided playing any part in political affairs, even if such an influence had been possible), Robert's argument is otherwise highly relevant. The Alevi possess mediators who depend on inherited sanctity for their authority, they do organise relationships between mediator and follower via patrilineages, they do resolve their own quarrels, and (in the traditional setting) they do organise their lives as much as possible in opposition to central authority. However, they illustrate also a number of significant contrasts with the material covered by Gellner. The whole thrust of the segmentary theory model lies in explaining the way that mobile, nomadic or at least transhuman communities, sometimes very large, may lead their lives. It helps us too to understand the way tribal groupings may reform, rebel and create links with each other in fluid and varied ways through the idiom of kinship, and resolve disputes through a combination of religious and mediating functions in a single office.

However, the Alevi communities with whom I have worked are not nomadic but highly sedentary farmers. While lineages are extremely important among them, they are not large. The greatest community that may be united through the idiom of a common ancestor is the village quarter, the *maballe*, which would sometimes have no more than a dozen households, and certainly in my experience no more than fifty. Further, each lineage has a different *dede* lineage to whom it is linked. These cross-cutting ties act as a restraint against larger groupings uniting because there is no one *dede* who is responsible for the whole community. When the community does meet for collective *cem* services, their tone is inward-looking and other-worldly. The ceremony stresses the differences between the Alevi form of life and the central tenets of religious orthodoxy, but makes no attempt to proselytise. Thus the sedentary Alevi constitute an important example of a community who have organised their lives outside central control, but one that is sociologically markedly different from the tribal model: they are dispersed, small in size, quiescent, closed to outsiders and highly stable.

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This way of life is made coherent within the Islamic tradition by having recourse to the great body of esoteric lore present in Islamic mystical ideas. It conflicts sharply with Muslim groups such as, for example those discussed by Evans-Pritchard, Lewis and Van Bruinessen and Gellner himself in that, in the societies described by them tribesmen may join a *tarikât* and learn its teachings, but the great majority do not. All the Alevi, on the other hand, join in with their *Tarikat* as a matter of course, and its teachings are absolutely intertwined in the everyday life and outlook of every member of Alevi society.¹² This means that both a mystical, esoteric interpretation of religion's rules, an interpretation which is at once hierarchical and internalised becomes dispersed throughout the community, available to all its members, both men and women, by virtue of their birth into an Alevi community. This universal peaceful mysticism combined with patrilineal mediation within highly sedentary communities, something that Gellner only knew to operate in the more confrontational tribal environment, helps greatly to provide them with a viable and sophisticated mechanism of small-scale social control.

Gellner suggests (*Contention 3*) that there is a fundamental dividing line in Islamic societies between those who accept, and those who reject the authority of the central state in terms of their traditional social organisation. This emphasis, and his characterisation of the problem, are certainly borne out by the Turkish material. Both the Kurds and the Turkish Alevi make less 'docile' citizens of the state than the sedentary Turkish Sunni communities. Both Kurds and Turkish Alevi, while different in many ways, are fond of celebration, music and have elaborate public ceremonies, such as weddings, from which women are not excluded, as Gellner suggests. Further, it is the Sunni communities, where the dividing line between the public and the private is drawn within the household rather than at the outer boundaries of the community that have been able to absorb the infrastructure and integration with the state, to cope with the massive expansion that is a consequence of the transformation to full-scale urban life. The Alevi communities, with their complex negotiation of hierarchies, their desire to keep the life of the community hidden, and their willingness to incorporate both sexes into the social order have found themselves unable to rebuild their traditional communities in an urban image. Thus the most enthusiastic supporters of the Republic, and those who were, and are most convinced by its message live out that aim in the city, distanced from their own rural roots.¹³

Gellner suggests (*Contention 4*) that as they modernise, Islamic nations go through a process of bureaucratisation and purification of faith. Albeit in an unusual way, Turkey did institute just such reforms, though, as they took place simultaneously with the creation of the secular Republic, their import has been often overlooked. The early Republicans were not just against the *şeriat*, they equally acted against the hereditary leadership of the *dedes*, banned the *tarikats*, regarded any form of worship at tombs entirely inappropriate, and scorned as superstitions, *batıl inançları*, well-known religious practices such as vows in the

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name of saints, healing through charms, or appealing to supernatural beings such as *cins* or *peris*. By reducing the practice of the faith to the Koran, and to the five pillars, they in fact instituted a very great simplification of religious practice. The fact that it was packaged within a secularist reform may also help to explain why it has been overlooked that the reforms are regarded by some, even sometimes fiercely pious, people as an acceptable solution to the religious dilemma of how to lead one's life in the modern world.¹⁴

Gellner is also perfectly accurate when he stresses the fact that many also have been 'secular-resistant', that they have found the separation between individual faith and state unacceptable. It is this that explains, more than anything else, the re-adoption of religion in the Republic after the transition to democracy in 1950. Just as he predicted, faith itself is proving astonishingly strong in the face of a modernisation that might be expected to erode literal belief. In Turkey, there are a huge variety of approaches to this expression of faith, approaches that are propagated and stressed through an expanding and buoyant media as well as in mosques, discussion groups and brotherhoods, now tolerated if not welcomed by many. Famously, one of the most successful of these is Said-i Nursi, the brilliant thinker who succeeded in creating (to his followers) a plausible way to reconcile faith with scientific reason. There are, too, much more extreme or immediately violent versions of Islam reform such as those advocated by the Turkish Hizbullah that may not have much in common with other, more intellectual variations of religion but whose literal faith may hardly be doubted.

This would seem to imply that of all Gellner's theories of Islam, this final contention is the most successful. Here, too, however, there are difficulties. A possible weakness of Gellner's overall scheme is that his conception of Islam in the modern world occasionally appears rather uniform. In other words, while he noted that some countries, such as Turkey and Tunisia, have deliberately decided to adopt a moderate form of Islam, he fails to suggest an actual Muslim community that has wholeheartedly welcomed or adopted secularism. It is here that we see the importance of his refusal to acknowledge other groups within pre-modern or traditional Islam other than orthodox scribes or rebellious tribesmen. In their wholesale embrace of a secular outlook, the heterodox Alevi, whether quiescent and contemplative or the more rumbustious Kurdish Alevi, really do appear to be different in some qualitative way from orthodox communities. Indeed, so marked is this trend that they appear to falsify his insistence that Islamic societies invariably maintain their faith.

In Gellner's own terms, a possible train of thought in explanation of how this may have come about would be as follows. While the complexities of the Alevi past may never be known precisely, it appears agreed by specialist historians that they were often tribal or nomadic communities who inhabited that uneasy geographical region between the central power of Iran, on the one hand, and the gradually more orthodox Sublime Porte on the other. While they were exposed to many different currents of Islamic thought, one of the most

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effective was a form of revolutionary, mystical leadership espoused by Iranian Shi'ism. This brought the Alevis into violent conflict with the Porte, itself ever more inclined towards Sunnism. It resulted too in widespread, brutal massacres and forced conversion, a persecution that reached its peak during the time of Sultan Selim in the seventeenth century. Following this military catastrophe, those who remained rejected any desire or attempt to convert or act against the central Ottoman state, but instead concentrated upon running their own affairs in isolated, sedentary groups. This readiness to, as Gellner remarked in his opening statement in *Muslim Society*, 'render unto Caesar' marks them out sharply from his characterisation of orthodox Islam, whose communities he regarded as invariably unable to accept such a step.

Having settled, the form of social control that these sedentary groups adopted was extraordinary in its esoteric emphasis. It insisted upon the possibility that God may be found with all persons, that this is the foundation of all worship. Though they never quite rejected orthodoxy entirely, this explicitly humanist interpretation of religion provided a vision of a God that was at once individual and forgiving as well as inscrutable and punitive. In the traditional setting, this doctrine was overseen and inculcated by *dedes*, but the *dedes* themselves could very easily be seen as extraneous to this philosophy once the Alevis accepted the legitimacy of the Republican nation state, as indeed could their insistence upon selective divine intervention in the ways of man.¹⁵ In this way, a humanistic and tolerant doctrine that insisted upon the importance of the person and peaceful sociability shed its doctrinal shell, taught by inherited leaders now perceived as outmoded, and merged with the new citizenship to provide a sense of membership of the new nation-state.

Another way of describing this transition would be to note that the shift made by the Alevis over time is almost exactly the opposite of that suggested by Gellner as being typical for Islam societies. Whereas he suggests that it is the lax, unorthodox, musical, even sensuous part of the faith that must go by the board when Islam becomes modern, in the Alevi case it is their relationship with the mosques, with the five pillars that they wish now to abjure. Whereas previously such a link was an essential aspect of their faith, an aspect to explore, to resist, to minimise even, but still needed to maintain their claim to be part of the Islamic community, now it is precisely that aspect of their faith that they find sits most uneasily with their concept of how a righteous person should lead their life in the contemporary world. In this case, it is the mystical, even the sensual and not the puritanical, that has provided the bridge to modernity for an Islamic society, and it is for this reason that so many seek to minimise their orthodox connections when they write the history of their culture for the twenty-first century.

Just how serious Gellner's failure to trace this alternative path to modernisation within Islam may turn out to be is not yet clear. The recent, very public rise of fundamentalism combined with the pressure that believers place on the state not just in Turkey, but in other countries such as Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt,

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Algeria or Morocco, make it very difficult to assess the extent to which Islamic activists are representative for all groups within their society. There are communities within Islam, sometimes known rather unfortunately perhaps as *ghulat*, 'extremist' sects, who parallel the Alevis, such as the Druze in Syria and Israel. It is possible that the Alevi case will be replicated among these comparatively small groups.¹⁶ It might also be that there are persons or communities who have a traditional affinity with moderate philosophies such as that of the Mevlana in Konya, or that espoused by the Persian poet Hafiz, and have chosen to stress this within the modern context, yet without the clear boundary markers that mark the Alevis so sharply off from the Sunnis in Turkey. In other words, Gellner's insistence on noting those parts of the Islamic world which are 'secular-resistant' may have led him to take less account of those individuals, still pious, who are able to redefine their faith in a moderate way, perhaps drawing upon Sufism to do so. The question, even if there is no clear answer, remains pressingly relevant to our times.¹⁷

Does this mean that Gellner's overall arguments need drastic revision? Not necessarily. It is typical of all very ambitious models of human society that they need revision and change. Gellner, through his desire to cover a very wide breath of material using sharply defined arguments, was perhaps especially vulnerable to this need.¹⁸ The existence of the Alevis certainly illustrates a lacuna in his depiction of the ethnography of the Islamic lands. They also are highly relevant to his argument as to how Muslim societies change as they modernise, in that their secularisation leads into an area that he hardly considered. In other respects, however, his contentions appear to be highly relevant, even to the extent of their being extended and enriched through the comparison with the Turkish material. He is absolutely correct in suggesting that the sociological division between those who oppose, or accept, central rule is crucial. He is absolutely correct that secularism in Turkey has experienced very great difficulties. The areas that he finds of great import – tribes, mediation, patri-lineage, rebellion, puritanical reform, faith – are indeed central to an understanding of its modern history, and he is equally right to become impatient with those who regard these aspects of society as no more than a figment of the anthropologist's imagination. Thus, at the very least, the dismissive criticism that his theories have met with need to be reconsidered, and, at best, he might provide a profoundly creative focus through which further work might be oriented.

Class and social order

There is one final clarification that should be made. Throughout this work, I have not looked at the way that class patterns may act as an internal dividing factor within Turkey. One of the reasons that I have taken this line is that, where I worked, there appears to exist no class division in the sociological or economic sense between Alevi and Sunni traditional communities. Both groups

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were typical peasant subsistence farmers, owning and tilling their own land, and there were no large land-owners among either group. There were also very few landless families. The Alevis certainly sometimes suggested that their land was poorer than the Sunnis, but this was not always true. Some of the Sunni villages that I saw were profoundly impoverished, and markedly worse off than the Alevi villages from the point of view of natural agricultural resources. Thus, the factors that I have discussed in detail – social organisation, ideology and religion, and relations with the state – appear sharper tools than any analysis that would privilege purely economic factors when explaining the great differences between the two groups.

Such economic distinctions may, however, become more significant as the social life of the Alevi communities shifts more and more into the urban setting. This may be illustrated in part through the contrasting work of Paul Stirling, who charted over nearly fifty years, that is, from 1948 until his death in 1996, the way that a subsistence Sunni village gradually has integrated with the modern nation. He found that, as the villagers moved into the cities, their social mobility was far higher than is often supposed. He would point out, for example, that the *gecekondular*, shanty-town, dwellers who form a poor majority in the cities are often held to be a static pool of exploited workers.¹⁹ Stirling felt that this is misleading, and that quite the opposite was true. In fact, when he studied those from his study village, Sakaltutan, who had migrated, he found that they very quickly opened out very large differentials between them in terms of the wealth and status that they had achieved, far more so than any assumption that the migrants were trapped victims of economic circumstances might imply.

He explained this variable mobility in part through the fact that the Sakaltutan villagers gradually came to specialise in one trade, building and plastering. Through this, many villagers were able to build a steady series of contacts, work opportunities and networks that led them to being absorbed successfully into the large local cities in the south, particularly Adana. This meant that, though they were extremely poor peasants when he first worked among them in the late 1940s, a potential meritocracy emerged where the most fortunate, sociable and able were able to take a proportionally greater part in the transition to a cash economy by building up business: rising from skilled labourers, to overseers, to contractors. Even those less fortunate were able to benefit from working for their more successful acquaintances from the village, and Stirling noted explicitly that there was very little unemployment among the Sakaltutan migrant community as a whole. He also suggested that a crucial aspect of this transition to affluence was the way that the villagers were able to build houses illegally on the land surrounding the cities that, though built without permission, would usually be ratified and ultimately title deeds awarded by the local municipality.²⁰ In this way, even though without capital, with hard work it was possible for villagers to accumulate property in the expanding urban environment.

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Stirling sadly has now passed away, and cannot be consulted further upon this matter. When applied to the Alevi case, however, integration between the town and countryside may not be working in quite the same manner. It appears that the Alevi villages in the sub-province have not achieved a specialisation in the same way as the Sunni villages. For example, one Sunni village specialises in producing doctors, another in building construction, another in goldsmiths in the covered bazaar in Istanbul. In contrast, the Alevi villages appear to have no such trade, indeed the diverse ways in which the Susesi villagers seek to make a little money are surprising in their diversity (see Appendix 3). Only one Alevi village in the sub-province appeared to have evolved a clear profession, and this was as bath-attendants in a large *hamam*, Turkish baths, in Istanbul. Given the uncertainties of this form of bathing in modern Turkey, and the dispersed nature of the activity, it would seem unlikely that this would lead to affluence in any consistent way.

Further, in attempting to make the transition to urban life, the Alevis are handicapped in a number of ways. If my analysis is correct, then their communities are rarely expanding to become urban in their own right, that is, they always have to seek modernisation outside their settlements. However, in doing so, because they are traditionally a rural community, they have no existing contacts in the towns upon which to rely, and from which they could seek aid in times of difficulty. Indeed, the opposite is the case. When they have tried to move into the local sub-province towns in the region where I worked, they have been forced out in times of crisis: in the nearest sub-province centre there were a much larger number of Alevis until just before the 1980 *coup*, when the strength of the right-wing gangs forced many of them to leave. Similarly, there is another quickly expanding local town to which the Alevis moved throughout the 1980s and 1990s, specifically attracted by the possibility of being part of a social democrat, liberal urban atmosphere that they felt existed there. However, the subsequent rise of the MHP, the far-right party in power nationally until 2002, has forced the Alevis to migrate once more. Disappointed, they are trying their luck in Istanbul, as so many from the villages have already done.

Nor is life necessarily easier for those who have chosen to integrate through the civil service. While there is no discrimination against the Alevis at any formal level, in practice there appears to be a glass ceiling that is very difficult for them to overcome. Indeed, junior Alevi civil servants whom I know – the teachers, museum officials, clerks – are profoundly wary of their position. One of their greatest fears is that Sunni revivalists or the MHP should discover or exploit their sectarian affiliation, and as a consequence force a transfer to an unwanted part of the land. While by cautiously guarding their position, many do last until retirement, few seem to rise to the higher positions and only the most self-confident can shake off a sense of their own vulnerability.

In previous years, politics, through the CHP, SHP or the DSP appeared to be the one way that Alevis could rise with less difficulty. Certainly, the most successful man in material terms from Susesi was a career SHP supporter, who

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had succeeded in becoming mayor of a large municipality in Istanbul. Curiously, however, towards the end of the 1990s and as the next decade begins, it looks as if this particular route will no longer be as straightforward. One consequence of the collapse of the left in Turkey has been a seeming turning away from the Alevis within the CHP (with whom the SHP later merged), the party with which they feel most comfortable. Further, Ecevit's party, the DSP, in a move that seems to be mirrored in other parties as well, has gradually turned away from grass-roots constituency affairs, and become little more than a reflection of the will of its leader. This shift towards political centralisation has been facilitated by the list system of proportional representation, that enables an unscrupulous party leadership to control extremely tightly who rises, and who falls, in the pecking order for assembly seats, whatever the constituencies may feel in the matter. By thus reducing politics purely to control by party leaders, the social democrat ethos in the moderate left that originally had attracted the Alevis is perforce eroded.

All this suggests that the Alevis may be increasingly forced out of an urban Turkey that is hovering uneasily on the brink between further modernisation and an economic implosion of great severity. The early Republican period had the great merit that they felt that, whatever difficulties they may continue to face, at least the new nation was not founded in such a way that was inherently against them. The later, democratic period from 1950 until 2000 offered them the compensation, at least, that there existed political expression for their views through the left, even if there were increasing concerns as the country as a whole continued to re-Islamify. This meant, at least, they were able to take a partial part in the expanding economic wealth of the nation as a whole.

Today, as political remedies appear increasingly remote and ineffectual, and as Turkey experiences its most sustained economic contraction perhaps since the Great War, the possibility of the systematic impoverishment of the Alevi community can hardly be ignored. In this case, what was originally a difference in traditional social organisation may gradually transform into a situation wherein the majority of the Alevis become an underclass from which it is genuinely difficult to escape. Combined with the increasingly tense, even volatile ideological situation, and the calls for recognition that are just as awkward for the state and government of the day either to accept or to refuse, the possibility of sustained, perhaps even violent protest, whether reflected through extreme reformulations of political or religious positions, is great. It is an unheralded success of the Republic that it has avoided religious differences between Alevis and Sunnis becoming the focus of endemic violence throughout much of its history. It is, however, a success that may be extremely difficult to replicate in the future.

Appendix 1

GLOSSARY OF TURKISH WORDS¹

- Adak** vow, often made at a *türbe* (q.v.).
- Ahlak** morals.
- Alevilik** ‘Alevi-ness’, i.e. the daily practice of being an Alevi.
- Alevis** Islamic minority consisting of perhaps 15–20 per cent of Turkey’s population.
- Ali** relative and son-in-law of the Prophet *Muhammed*, is revered by all Muslim communities, but held in special regard by the Alevis.
- Ana** lit. ‘mother’ (dial.). In Alevi villages, honorary term for the wife of a *dede* (q.v.).
- ANAP** *Anavatan Partisi*, Motherland Party. Founded in 1983 by Turgut Özal, markedly right of centre, favourable towards orthodox religion.
- AP** *Adalet Partisi*, Justice Party. Active from 1960 until 1980, led by Süleyman Demirel after the closure of the *DP* (q.v.). Broadly, pro-business and favourable also towards religion.
- Aptes** (or **abdest**) ritual cleansing, mandatory before prayers.
- Arabesk** popular musical movement.
- Aşık** minstrel, folk musician or poet, also has strong connotations of love, particularly esoteric or mystical love.
- Atatürk** founder of the Turkish Republic.
- Ayıp** shameful, or ‘not done’.
- Bayram** (religious) holiday.
- BBP** *Büyük Birlik Partisi*, Great Unity Party. Small breakaway party from *ANAP* (q.v.) led by Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, draws also on the *MHP* (q.v.). Extreme right-wing Islamist.
- Bektaşî** famous Anatolian *tarikat* (q.v.) founded by Hacı Bektaş (q.v.), that emphasises mystical understanding.
- Belediye** (town) municipality, rank on the official scale that attracts automatic financial and infrastructural subventions from the state.
- Beş şart** the five ‘pillars’ of Islam; namely: believe in the one God; pray five times a day; fast during the month of *Ramazan*; make the pilgrimage to Mecca; and pay alms.
- Buyruk** Alevi sacred text, said to be written by *İmam Cafer*.

- Camî** mosque. Centre of religious activity for Sunni men, markedly less so for the Alevis.
- Can** lit. spirit, that which makes something alive as opposed to dead. Used by the Alevis to denote friend or fellow, particularly in song or poetry.
- Cebrial** the Angel Gabriel. Features often in religious accounts as bringing succour to the Prophet *Muhammed*. In traditional Alevi village life, also the name of a punishment for those who transgress the formality of the drinking table.
- Cehennem** hell.
- Cem** collective prayer meeting (Alevi). The central ritual in Alevi religious life, one incorporating both men and women. All present must be at peace with each other for the ceremony to take place.
- Cem evi** lit. ‘*Cem* house’, building constructed specifically to hold *cem* ceremonies, growing in popularity among Alevi communities since the mid-1980s. May vary from a simple small structure in a rural location to elaborate complexes in the urban setting, particularly Istanbul.
- Cenaze** funeral (also, body of deceased).
- Cennet** heaven.
- CHP** *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, Republican People’s Party. Oldest extant political party, derived from the original *Halk Partisi* (People’s Party). Closed down in 1980, re-opened again in 1990. Secular, and (in recent decades) left of centre.
- Dayı** lit. mother’s brother. Used in Alevi villages as a term of respect.
- Dede** lit. ‘grandfather’, respectful name for a man descended from a holy lineage especially Alevi. Within the Alevi village communities, one who may be both leader and teacher of Alevi religious tradition and mediator in disputes.
- Dernek** society or association.
- Devlet** the state.
- Din** (monotheistic) religion.
- Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı** Directorate of Religious Affairs. Large civil service institution, devoted to the teaching of religion in the Republic.
- Dört kapı** four ‘doors’ to enlightenment: *Şeriat* (q.v.), *Tarikat* (q.v.), *Marifet* and *Hakikat*. While these doors are known widely throughout Islam, they play a particularly important role among the Alevis. While their application varies across Anatolia, where I worked most Sunnis are held to be on the first, *Şeriat* level, and most Alevis on the *Tarikat* level. A genuine *dede* would be held to be on the highest, *Hakikat* level at which one is held to be unified with God.
- Dost** lit. companion. Used in mystical religion (especially Alevi) to indicate soulmate.
- DP** *Demokrat Parti*, Democrat Party. Moderately right-wing party, favourable to religion. Successfully led by Adnan Menderes until its closure in 1960. Subsequently re-opened but not yet achieved mass support in new incarnation.

- DSP** *Demokrat Sol Partisi*, Democratic Left Party. Led by Bülent Ecevit to some electoral success in the 1990s. Nationalist and secular, rather suspicious of Western influence in Turkish affairs.
- Düğün** celebration, often wedding.
- DYP** *Doğru Yol Partisi*, True Path Party. Founded and led by Süleyman Demirel after the closure of the *AP*. Led by Tansu Çiller, Turkey's first woman Prime Minister, after Demirel became president in 1993.
- Edep** lit. '*Eline, diline, beline sahip ol!*' 'Be master of your hands, tongue and loins', a well-known Sufi saying throughout Turkey that is widely regarded by the Alevis as being the foundation of their faith, and sometimes known as their 'three conditions' as opposed to the 'five pillars' of Islam.
- Efendi** lit. a superior or noble person, but used by many Alevis as a distinct rank denoting those descended directly from Hacı Bektaş (q.v.).
- Ezan** call to prayer from mosque.
- Farz** obligatory religious duty.
- Ferfane** formal Alevi gathering at which a number of persons share the meat of an animal (sheep or lamb) and drink together.
- FP** *Fazilet Partisi*, Virtue Party. Founded after the Welfare Party's closure in 1998. Came third in the April 1999 elections, subsequently closed down for anti-secular activities.
- Gecekondü** shanty-town, lit. refers to a hut erected in a night.
- Gönül** heart, soul.
- Görgü** (Alevi) The questioning by a *dede* to his followers as to their conduct, may take place within the course of a *cem* (q.v.), or separately. Also the name given to an annual ceremony where all in the *maballe* (q.v.) must go through such a questioning by the *dede* (q.v.).
- Günah** sin.
- Hac** pilgrimage to Mecca.
- Hacı Bektaş** Anatolian saint, founder of *tarikât* of that name, held by many Alevi communities to be their leader, and to be descended from Ali (q.v.).
- Hacıbektaş** name of Anatolian town where lies the *tekke* (q.v.), now a museum and tomb, of *Hacı Bektaş* (q.v.). Location of important annual Hacı Bektaş festival.
- Hadis** sayings attributable to the Prophet Muhammed.
- Hayırlı** holy or auspicious, also used to describe an act of magnanimity.
- Hoca** teacher. Also used loosely to refer to man learned in the orthodox Islamic tradition, or one who is able to lead orthodox prayer.
- Hükümet** government.
- İl** province.
- İlahi** intoned religious poetry, sometimes used as a substitute for music at wedding celebrations in Sunni villages.
- İlçe** sub-province.
- İmam** mosque prayer leader.
- İmam-hatip [school]** schools founded during the Republic in order to train

mosque prayer leaders and preachers, though still within the framework of the secular education system.

- İnsan** the person, the central component in many Alevi interpretations of religious philosophy.
- Jandararma** semi-military, mostly conscript force largely used to keep the civil order in the countryside.
- Kadro** post or situation in the civil service.
- Kaymakam** sub-province governor.
- Köy** village, smallest officially recognised settlement.
- Kuran** sacred book of Muslims.
- Kurban** sacrifice.
- Kürt** diverse ethnic group traditionally inhabiting the east of Turkey, consisting of about 18 per cent of Turkey's population. Found also in Iraq and Iran.
- Küs** to be on 'not-speaking-terms', state of separation before reconciliation.
- Laz** generic name given to minority population on the Black Sea coast.
- Mahalle** village quarter or, in a town, district. Important social unit in Alevi village life, usually between four and fifty households.
- MÇP** *Milli Çalışma Partisi*, Nationalist Work Party. Far-right wing, led by Alparslan *Türkeş* until closed by the coup in 1980. Re-opened as the *MHP* (q.v.).
- Medrese** Ottoman (religious) school.
- Mehter** lit. janissary band, used in Anatolia to mean drummer and piper, often of Alevi extraction.
- Memur** civil servant.
- Mevlana** the monastery complex formerly possessed by the *Mevlevi* (q.v.) brotherhood in Konya, now a state museum. Also the name given to Rumi, the founder of the brotherhood, in popular speech.
- Mevlevi** the name given to followers of Celaletin Rumi, whose tomb is now part of the Mevlana museum, known in the West as the 'whirling dervishes'. Now the location of an annual festival and the focus of international attention as positing a universal esoteric humanism.
- Meydan** lit. open space or square. Also in a *cem* (q.v.) ritual space at the centre of the congregation.
- MHP** *Milli Hareket Partisi*, Nationalist Action Party. Far-right wing. Led for many years by the late Alparslan *Türkeş*. First great success in the April 1999 elections, led by then new leader, Devlet Bahçeli.
- MNP** *Milli Nizam Partisi*, National Order Party. Erbakan's first political party. Active for a brief period between 1969–1970.
- MSP** *Milli Selamet Partisi*, National Salvation Party. Necmettin Erbakan's second political party, active from 1972 until 1980.
- Muhammed** the last Prophet, favoured by God to receive the word of the *Kuran*.
- Muezzin** caller to prayer from the mosque.

- Müftülük** local religious office, part of the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* administration (q.v.).
- Muhabbet** lit. peaceful, friendly interaction. Used also in Sufism, and particularly by the Alevi, for drinking sessions that may verge upon the holy. May also imply divine love, or collective worship of the divine.
- Muhtar** elected village (or district in town) head, an office that appears to have often carried more weight in Alevi village communities than in the Sunni.
- Musahip** (Alevi) religious partnership formed between two men and their respective families, said to be similar and as strong as that between two brothers.
- Nakşibendi** a large *tarikât* (q.v.) which insists on the importance of orthodox doctrine.
- Namaz** ritual prayer.
- Niyaz** ritual salutation between members of a brotherhood. Important gesture of amity among many Alevi communities.
- Nurcu** follower of Saidi Nursi, religious leader who stressed the importance of scientific learning in conjunction with belief. One of the most popular religious movements in Turkey today.
- Ocak** lit. hearth. Used by Alevi communities to mean a follower's *dede* lineage.
- Örgütlenmiş** organised.
- Pir** lit. 'saint' or leader of a brotherhood. Used often by Alevi to imply Hacı Bektaş and his descendants.
- Raki** strong spirit similar to pastis, regarded by some Alevi as being a sacred drink.
- Ramazan** month of the Islamic calendar during which believers are called to fast during the hours of daylight.
- Rehber** lit. guide. May also be a distinct position in a brotherhood organisation signifying the designated representative of the *pir*. Among the Alevi where I worked, used as an alternative term for *dede*.
- RP** *Refah Partisi*, Welfare Party. Founded in 1983. Led by Erbakan from just after its foundation. Explicitly religious in orientation, closed by Constitutional Court in 1998.
- Ruh** lit. soul. In mystical Islam, especially Alevi, that part of God that is to be found within all, and can be reached through prayer, or through better understanding of the divine mysteries.
- Saz** eight-stringed instrument similar to a mandolin, the preferred instrument of Anatolian folk musicians, and particularly the Alevi, who may employ it in both religious and secular settings.
- Selam** courteous greeting between Muslims, of considerable social significance, especially in the village setting.
- Sema** traditional dance, especially Alevi. While there are different forms of *sema*, among the most significant are the *kırklar seması*, a slow dance

- danced usually only in the *cem* (q.v.) that celebrates the partaking of the secrets of life from God to the Alevis, and a more lively *gönüller semahı* that may be danced at both *cem* and overtly secular events such as a wedding. Both are danced men and women together.
- Şeriat** (a) Islamic law; (b) first step towards religious understanding; (c) general term used to characterise the form of religious life in a Sunni village (Alevi); (d) general word meaning the ‘state’ (Alevi).
- SHP** *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*, Social Democrat Populist Party. Active after 1983, moderate left-wing secular, shaken by scandal, merged with the re-opened *CHP* (q.v.) in 1993.
- Şi’i** Shi’ite, a faction within Islam which broke from the followers of *Muhammed* after his death, claiming that the legitimate succession of the Islamic community was through *Ali* (q.v.) and his descendants.
- Şirk** assuming that God may have equal partners, a heresy of which members of *tarikats* (q.v.) are often accused by orthodox clerics.
- Süleymancılar** popular activist Islamic group, organised through network of study hostels, which stresses the authority of the *Kuran* and the importance of discipline.
- Sünnet** (a) corpus of Islamic lore built on the actions and example of the Prophet *Muhammed*; (b) circumcision. A custom followed by both Alevi and Sunni, though in Anatolia traditionally more likely to be celebrated with a substantial celebration among Sunni communities than Alevi.
- Sünni** the orthodox Islamic majority, consisting of about 80 per cent of Turkey’s population.
- Susesi** the village where much of the research for this work was conducted.
- Talip** pupil, or follower, often of a specific lineage of holy men (especially Alevi).
- Tanrı** God, or *Allah*.
- Tarikat** (a) Islamic brotherhood. Organisationally, usually but not always divided between different ranks of follower, and a leader (or descendants of a leader) who has or have been shown to possess charisma. While the doctrinal content may vary greatly, their tendency to form opposition to central rule led them to being banned by the early Republic, though they have gradually returned to form a significant role in Turkish political and religious life.
 (b) A general self-description used by the Alevis on occasion to distinguish their preferred form of worship from that of the Sunnis, which they characterise as *Şeriat* (q.v.).
 (c) The second of four doors or ‘ways’ to enlightenment, *dört kapı* (q.v.). In the Bektāşi and the Mevlevi philosophies, one that stresses the internal, esoteric nature of God, and love of all humanity.
- Tasavvuf** mysticism.
- Tekke** place of worship of a brotherhood, often centred on the grave of a holy man.

- Torpil** the specific use of influence in order to obtain a position or favour.
- Türbe** tomb. Often held to be the location of spiritual or other-worldly influence through intercession that may be offered by the dead saint who is there buried. While this belief is widespread in Anatolia, it is often regarded often as inappropriate or simply superstitious by orthodox religious activists.
- Türk** the ethnic majority of modern Turkey, consisting of about 80 per cent of the population, also used to imply allegiance to modern Turkey and the Republic.
- Ulema (pl.)** clerical officials in the Ottoman Empire.
- Vakıf** pious foundation, charitable trust.
- Vali** provincial governor.
- Vatandaş** (fellow) citizen.
- Yatır** burial place of holy man.
- Yayla** mountain pastures.
- Yezidi** small, very unorthodox religious minority mostly found in the east of Turkey.
- Zabita** law and order force employed by municipalities.
- Zaviye** brotherhood lodgings.
- Zekat** alms, one of the 'five pillars', *beş şart* (q.v.).
- Zurna** double-reeded piped instrument often played in conjunction with the drum (q.v. *mehter*) at celebratory occasions.

Appendix 2

SUSESI HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

Table A2.1 Simple households

	<i>No. hlds</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>No. persons</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Married couples	14	14	28	6
Married couples, children	36	36	160	34
Married couples, husband's mother				
Married couples, husband's mother, children	8	8	51	11
Father with children, no wife alive				
Married couple, children and other kin	4	4	21	5
Married couple, husband's younger siblings				
Married couple, children's children (with sometimes other kin as well)	6	6	29	6
Married couple, husband's younger siblings, mother				
Married couple, children, husband's mother, mother's sister, mother's father	1	1	8	2
Sub-totals	69	69	297	64

After Stirling (1964).

APPENDIX 2: SUSEŞI HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

Table A2.2 Joint households

	<i>No. hlds</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>No. persons</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Fraternal joint	1	1	10	2
Paternal joint, one child married, without grandchildren	2	2	13	3
Paternal joint, one child married, with grandchildren	11	11	74	16
Paternal joint, more than one child married, without grandchildren				
Paternal joint, more than one child married, with grandchildren	3	3	29	6
Special paternal joint no 'grandchildren'				
Paternal joint, with grandchildren (but no children)	1	1	6	1
Special paternal joint with 'grandchildren'				
Patrilineal married couple, daughter staying put, groom moving in (<i>iç giivey</i>), children	2	2	10	2
Patrilineal joint, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren	1	1	8	2
Sub-totals	21	21	150	32

After Stirling (1964).

APPENDIX 2: SUSESI HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

Table A2.3 Fragmentary households

	<i>No. hlds</i>	(%)	<i>No. persons</i>	(%)
Widow with children	2	2	9	2
Widower living alone	4	4	4	1
Widow living alone	3	3	3	1
Widow living alone, son in village				
Unmarried woman, living alone	1	1	1	–
Sub-total	10	10	17	4
Totals	100	100	464	100

After Stirling (1964).

Note: In June 1989, Susesi consisted of 100 households. In each household there were between one to four generations of men and women, all close kin. Residence is almost entirely patrilocal, and every person living within the village was an accepted member of a particular household. The importance of this became clear soon after arriving in the village. When walking by the lowest *maballe* with a friend, an old man emerged, bowed, very thin and with a long beard. After we passed him, my friend explained that he used to be a householder in that *maballe*, but one day, after the death of his wife, had declared himself tired of poverty and work in the fields. In spite of the entreaties of his sons (who had gone to Istanbul), he sold his land and went to the town, spending his money on gambling and drink. Later, on its running out, he took casual labouring work. On becoming too old for this, he had taken to begging and sleeping under hedges. He stayed alive by virtue of some distant relatives putting out bread for him. On the onset of winter he died, found in a field. His funeral, at which there were very few people, was the first I attended in the village (cf. Stirling 1964: 35: ‘Only through membership of a household does an individual take part in the economic life of the village. Otherwise, survival is only possible by begging’).

Overall, the household data for Susesi is remarkably consistent with that collected by Stirling in 1950. Stirling divides households into those with one married couple (simple), those with more than one married couple (joint), and those with no married couple (fragmentary). Tables A2.1–A2.3 above do the same for Susesi. They show that about a fifth of the households and a third of the population of 464 persons live in joint households, and most of the rest in simple households. Stirling found that about a quarter of the houses were joint and also found that the third of the village lived in joint households. A slightly higher number than Stirling found are ‘fragmentary’, but this is the only obvious demographic difference.

Appendix 3
SUSESI ECONOMY

APPENDIX 3: SUSESİ ECONOMY

Table A3.1 Simple households

	<i>No. of hlds</i>	<i>No. of persons</i>	<i>Money from</i>			<i>Ploughs fields (no. of hlds)</i>	<i>Tractor (total no.)</i>
			<i>Eur.</i>	<i>Ist.</i>	<i>State pension</i>		
Married couples	14	28	2	4	2	11	
Married couples, children	31	141	9	3	3	29	2
Married couples, husband's mother, children	7	45	5			7	2
Married couple, children and other kin	4	21	1			4	
Married couple, children's children (with sometimes other kin as well)	5	26	1	3	1	5	
Couple, children, husband's mother, mother's sister, mother's father	1	8				1	
Sub-total	62	269	18	10	6	57	4

APPENDIX 3: SUSESİ ECONOMY

<i>Working oxen</i> (total no.)	<i>Sheep total number</i> (no. of hlds)	<i>Donkey/ mule</i> (total no.)	<i>Milch cow/ buffalo</i> (total no.)	<i>Approx. dönüm</i>				<i>Other profession or source of income</i>
				<10	10-30	30-60	60-90	
16	5, 10, 10, 45 (4)	14	14	4	8	2	Walling (1) Roofing (1) <i>Dedelik</i> (1) Husband migrant worker + wife tends chickens and sells eggs (1) Sells eggs (1) Plumbing (1) Roofing (3) House painter (1) Minibus driver (1) Village watchman (2) Chicken rearing (2) Fattening young oxen (4) Carpenter (1) <i>Mehterlik</i> (drum/pipe player) (2) <i>Dedelik</i> (1) <i>Hocalik</i> (1) <i>Kahveci</i> (tea-house keeper) (1)	
46	25, 10, 10, 20, 30, 10, 25, 25, 8, 10, 25, 15, 6, 10 (14)	31	43	2	21	8	<i>Muhtar</i> Fattening young oxen (1) Minibus driver (1) Walling (1)	
8	20, 20, 30, 20, 10(5)	7	14		2	4	1 <i>Muhtar</i> Fattening young oxen (1) Minibus driver (1) Walling (1)	
6	20, 20 (2)	4	5	1	1	2	Village watchman (1) Chicken selling (1)	
6	6, 8, 8, 6 (4)	5	5		5		<i>Ayzk</i> (minstrel) + Bee-keeping (1)	
2	15 (1)	1	2			1		
84 (42prs)	487 (30)	62(1 per hld)	83 (1-2 per hld)	7	37	17	1	

APPENDIX 3: SUSESİ ECONOMY

Table A3.2 Joint households

	<i>No. of hlds</i>	<i>No. of persons</i>	<i>Money from</i>			<i>Ploughs fields?</i>	<i>Tractor (total no.)</i>
			<i>Eur.</i>	<i>Ist.</i>	<i>State pension</i>		
Fraternal joint	1	10				1	
Paternal joint, one child married, without grandchildren	1	6				1	
Paternal joint, one child married, with grandchildren	9	64	2		2	8	1
Paternal joint, more than one child married, with grandchildren	3	29		1		3	3
Paternal joint, with grandchildren (but no children in village)	2	12	2			2	1
Patrilineal married couple, daughter staying put, groom moving in (<i>iç güvey</i>), children	1	5		1		1	
Patrilineal joint, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren	1	8	1			1	
Sub-total	18	134	5	2	2	17	5

APPENDIX 3: SUSESİ ECONOMY

<i>Working oxen</i> (total no.)	<i>Sheep total number</i> (no. of hlds)	<i>Donkey/ mule</i> (total no.)	<i>Milch cow/ buffalo</i> (total no.)	<i>Approx dönüm</i>				<i>Other profession or source of income</i>
				<10	10-30	30-60	60-90	
4	70 (1)	2 1	2 2		1	1		<i>Mehterlik</i> (1)
12	15, 25, 20, 10 (4)	8	12	2	4	3		Diesel flour mill+Grocery shop (1) <i>Dedelik</i> (1) Teacher (1) Raising and selling bullocks specifically for the beef market in Istanbul (1) <i>Mehterlik</i> (1) Clerk in village Cooperative bank – bullocks (1) Bank clerk in sub-province centre (1) Tea-house keeper (1) <i>Dedelik</i> (2)
6	110, 60, 40 (3)	6	10				3	
	5 (1)	2	2		2			
2	25 (1)	1					1	
2	45 (1)	1	1		1			
26	425 (11)	21	29	2	8	5	3	

APPENDIX 3: SUSESİ ECONOMY

Table A.3 Fragmentary households

<i>Fragmentary hlds</i>	<i>No. of hlds</i>	<i>No. of persons</i>	<i>Money from</i>			<i>Ploughs fields</i>	<i>Tractor (total no.)</i>
			<i>Eur.</i>	<i>Ist.</i>	<i>State pension</i>		
Widow with children	2	9	1	1		2	
Widow living alone	4	4	1	1		3	
Widower living alone	3	3	1			2	
Unmarried woman living alone	1	1				1	
Sub-total	11	18	3	2		8	
Totals	91	421	26	16	8	82	9

APPENDIX 3: SUSESİ ECONOMY

<i>Oxen (total no.)</i>	<i>Sheep (total no.)</i>	<i>Donkey/ mule (total no.)</i>	<i>Cow (total no.)</i>	<i>Approx dönüm</i>				<i>Other profession or source of income</i>
				<i><10</i>	<i>10-30</i>	<i>30-60</i>	<i>60-90</i>	
2	10 (1)	2 3 2 1	3 3 1		2 2 1 1			
2	10 (1)	8	7	2	5	1		<i>Dedelik (1)</i>
112	522 (42)	91	119	11	50	23	4	

Appendix 4

SUB-PROVINCE VOTING PATTERNS

These figures are generated by identifying which are Alevi and which are Sunni villages, and then consulting the detailed statistics provided by the National Institute of Statistics. Very small post-1990 parties have been omitted. The greatest likelihood of error is if a substantial number of Sunni persons are registered in an Alevi village to vote (for example as *imams*, school teachers or other functionaries), and vice versa. Nevertheless, Alevi and Sunni by and large live apart from one another, and I estimate that the likely margin of error due to a person being in a village not of their religious persuasion is likely to be no more than 1 per cent.

While Turkish politics in detail is extremely complicated, over the period covered by these tables it broadly consists of two mainstream positions: secular left, and moderately religious right. The Alevi and Sunni villages usually cluster around these two positions. There are exceptions. There is an independent candidate in 1969 who attracted votes from both groups. There is also occasionally an explicitly Alevi party, such as in 1973 (TBP). This broad picture changes slightly in the 1990s, when more sharply Islamist, and right-wing nationalist parties gain favour with the Sunni villages. They have often been present, such as in 1977, when they took 11 per cent and 14 per cent of the Sunni village vote respectively. In 1999, however, they had increased their share, so that such parties (MHP, FP and BBP) took altogether 60 per cent. The Alevis, though they were attracted to Tansu Çiller's DYP in the 1995 elections, remain a solid force on the secular left. This is particularly marked with regard to the CHP, whose support collapsed among the Sunni communities in 1994 and 1999, but still attracted 50 per cent of the Alevi vote.

Political parties¹

ANAP – Anavatan Partisi	Motherland Party, right-wing religious
AP – Adalet Partisi	Justice Party, central right
BBP – Büyük Birlik Partisi	Great Unity Party, right-wing Islamist
BaP – Barış Partisi	Peace Party, pro-Alevi secular
BP – Birlik Partisi	Unity Party, pro-Alevi secular

APPENDIX 4: SUB-PROVINCE VOTING PATTERNS

CGP – Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi	Republican Reliance Party, secular Kemalist
CHP– Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi	Republican People’s Party, secular left
CKMP – Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi	Republican Peasants’ Nationalist Party, right-wing nationalist
DP – Demokratik Parti	Democratic Party, right
DSP – Demokrat Sol Partisi	Democratic Left Party, secular nationalist left
DYP – Doğru Yol Partisi	True Path Party, moderate right
FP – Fazilet Partisi	Virtue Party, Islamist
HADEP – Halkın Demokrasi Partisi	People’s Democracy Party, Kurdish
HP – Halkçı Partisi	People’s Party – secular left
IDP – İslahatçı Demokrat Partisi	Reformist Democracy Party, far right-wing nationalist
LDP – Liberal Demokrat Parti	Liberal Democrat Party, centre left
MÇP – Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi	Nationalist Work Party, right-wing nationalist
MDP – Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi	Nationalist Democracy Party, post-coup favoured party
MHP – Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi	Nationalist Action Party, far right
MSP – Milli Selamet Partisi	National Salvation Party, Islamist
RP – Refah Partisi	Welfare Party, Islamist
SHP – Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti	Social Democrat Populist Party, secular left
SP – Sosyalist Parti	Socialist Party
TBP – Türkiye Birlik Partisi	Turkish Unity Party, secular Alevi
TİP – Türkiye İşçi Partisi	Turkish Workers’ Party, socialist
YTP – Yeni Türkiye Partisi	New Turkey Party, centre right

1965 General Election (%)

	<i>AP</i>	<i>CHP</i>	<i>CKMP</i>	<i>TIP</i>	<i>YTP</i>
Sunni	53	28	5	6	8
Alevi	22	63	4	5	6

1969 General Election (%)

	<i>AP</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>CHP</i>	<i>MHP</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Sunni	2	1	1	–	96
Alevi	1	33	–	1	65

APPENDIX 4: SUB-PROVINCE VOTING PATTERNS

1973 General Election (%)

	<i>AP</i>	<i>CHP</i>	<i>CGP</i>	<i>DP</i>	<i>MHP</i>	<i>MSP</i>	<i>TBP</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Sunni	63	12	2	4	4	12	3	1
Alevi	9	25	3	1	2	1	50	9

1977 General Election (%)

	<i>AP</i>	<i>CHP</i>	<i>CGP</i>	<i>DP</i>	<i>MSP</i>	<i>MHP</i>	<i>TBP</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Sunni	45	19	4	2	11	14	1	5
Alevi	1	97	-	-	-	-	1	-

1983 General Election (%)

	<i>ANAP</i>	<i>HP</i>	<i>MDP</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Sunni	49	18	30	3
Alevi	11	80	8	1

1987 General Election (%)

	<i>ANAP</i>	<i>SHP</i>	<i>DYP</i>	<i>DSP</i>	<i>İDP</i>	<i>MÇP</i>	<i>RP</i>
Sunni	48	6	20	8	3	6	8
Alevi	21	64	7	1	1	1	2

1991 General Election (%)

	<i>DYP</i>	<i>ANAP</i>	<i>SHP</i>	<i>RP</i>	<i>DSP</i>	<i>SP</i>
Sunni	26	26	5	37	5	1
Alevi	3	11	83	1	1	1

1995 General Election (%)

	<i>RP</i>	<i>DYP</i>	<i>ANAP</i>	<i>MHP</i>	<i>CHP</i>	<i>DSP</i>	<i>HADEP</i>
Sunni	37	24	18	14	3	3	1
Alevi	3	39	3	-	53	1	0

APPENDIX 4: SUB-PROVINCE VOTING PATTERNS

1999 General Election (%)

	<i>DSP</i>	<i>MHP</i>	<i>FP</i>	<i>ANAP</i>	<i>DYP</i>	<i>BBP</i>	<i>BaP</i>	<i>CHP</i>	<i>LDP</i>	<i>HEDEP</i>
Sunni	7	28	30	10	18	2	–	2	1	3
Alevi	27	1	2	11	7	–	1	45	2	1

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The only monograph based on village fieldwork remains that by Altan Gökalp (1980), though throughout the last century there have been sporadic, detailed articles which often contain interesting ethnographic information, e.g. Yalman (1969), Naess (1988) or Bumke (1989). While primarily a historian, the works of Irene Mélikoff (e.g. 1998) are deeply informed by repeated journeys in Anatolia. The long researches of Van Bruinessen in the east of Turkey have culminated in a quite brilliant series of essays that partially cover religion among the Kurdish Alevi (2000a). There is also an increasing number of publications that treats the Alevi phenomenon more generally such as the edited volumes by Kehl-Bodrogi *et al.* (1997) and Olsson *et al.* (1998), or the monograph by Kehl-Bodrogi (1988). These general works are inseparable from works in Turkish about the Alevi, of which there are a very great number. Of these, Bal's recent survey of two villages on the west coast (1997) and Kaygusuz's novel with a rural setting (1991) are perhaps of most interest, and it is also worth noting the researches of Georgieva on Bulgarian Alevi that have been translated into Turkish from that language (1998). For an extensive Alevi bibliography, one that covers much of the earlier material, see Yaman (1998).
- 2 Hann (1990) refers to this process in the title of his monograph on the introduction of tea in the Black Sea coast as *The Domestication of the Turkish State*. For a more general discussion of the state in Turkey, see Finkel and Sirman (1990).
- 3 See Beller-Hann and Hann (2001), for a discussion of local reaction to 'Natasha' activities on the Black Sea coast.
- 4 Lerner's work (1958), entitled *The Passing of Traditional Society* (which contains an account of the modernisation of a village near Ankara) is often criticised for conflating the idea that 'modern' must necessarily also mean 'secular'.
- 5 Cf. the fascinating, meditative remarks by Mélikoff, where she sums up in one chapter her thoughts on social and religious change among the Alevi after forty years of working study (Mélikoff 1998: Chapter VIII).
- 6 Of course, Sunni men differ enormously in the way they achieve this accommodation. This was described for the first time, I believe, by Rustow (1957). See also Richard and Nancy Tapper (1987b).
- 7 This point deserves a little immediate clarification. I certainly do not wish to claim that the early Republican desire to impose a radical form of secularism sat easily with a village religious ethic that sought divine assurance in all things (cf. Stirling 1964). However, I would argue that there has been a closer rapprochement, one often entailing a great deal of negotiation, between the Sunni communities and the state than has often been realised. An outline sketch of this argument may be found in

- Shankland (1999b), and a summary with reference to Stirling's research in Shankland (1994). Cf. Meeker (2002).
- 8 The point could be put in another way by saying that the British social anthropology of this tradition is interested in studying a social order and the way its culture (defined as 'the sum of learned knowledge and skills – including religion and language – that distinguishes one community from another') relates to that order (Lewis 1976: 13–21). The definition of culture is taken from page 17 of that work.
 - 9 For instance, an Islamic television station broadcasting in Turkish from Germany known as *Hak-TV*. Seemingly produced by followers of Cemalettin Kaplan, much of the material consists of chants including the intoned phrase '*Dinsiz devlet yıkılacak*', '[A] state without religion will collapse', referring to the Turkish Republic. On Kaplan and his followers, see Schiffauer (2000).
 - 10 In fact, *edep* is known and cited throughout Turkey as one of the sayings of mystical Islam. The Alevi are interesting in that they have brought this idea to the fore and made it the very definition of their sort of Islam. On *edep*, see Schimmel (1975). On the Alevi and Turkish mysticism, see the diverse works of Mclikoff (e.g. 1992).
 - 11 This is, of course, the Popperian endeavour. See Popper (1968).
 - 12 Popper (1968: Chapter 1) discusses the relationship between individual propositions which are easy to conceive as falsifiable and the way models are built up from them.
 - 13 See Beller-Hann and Hann's recent work on the Black Sea coast (2001), also the relevant sections of Andrews (1989: new edition forthcoming).

1 ALEVI AND SUNNI IN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- 1 On the rural Alevis in the early Republican period, see the brief but pointed comments in the justifiably famous work of Birge (1937), and the interesting report edited by Birdoğan (1994b), seemingly commissioned by the Committee for Union and Progress, and first printed in journal form in the 1920s.
- 2 To give a few concrete instances: favourable descriptions of Alevi ceremonies were broadcast on state television during the month of *Ramazan* under the early part of Demirel's presidency in the 1990s, and frequently discussion on the Alevis appeared in the media throughout this period (see Pehlivan, 1993, for some sample extracts); specifically Alevi music such as Aşık Veysel and Ruhi Su or Arif Sağ is available in nearly all intellectual bookshops, such as those in İstiklal Caddesi in Istanbul, or Kızılay in Ankara; popular descriptions of Alevi life by the Alevis, such as those as Şener (1982) or Yörükoğlu (1992) are matched by literally hundreds of other rival publications and articles, many of which are listed in the very useful bibliography of Alevi publications compiled by Yaman (1998), and published by an Alevi organisation in Mannheim, Germany.
- 3 From many, see the publication of a seminar by the Cem Vakfı, *Din-Devlet İlişkileri ve Türkiye'de Din Hizmetlerinin Yeniden Yapılanması Uluslararası Sempozyumunu* (International Symposium on State-Religion Relations and the Restructuring of Religious Services in Turkey), 1988.
- 4 The text book that has until now been refused permission to be taught in the Turkish schools is Keçeli and Yalçın (1996). This was written on the basis of discussion and talks with village *dedes* in Turkey by an Ankara publisher. In 2002, however, the Alevis in Berlin won the right to teach their religious culture in German schools for the first time, a development that is discussed in Chapter 7.
- 5 The best general accounts to get a feel for Alevi issues in English are probably the collected volumes by Olsson *et al.* (1998) or Kehl-Bodrogi *et al.* (1997).
- 6 See McCarthy (1983).

- 7 The diversity of Turkey's population is well described in Andrews' *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey* (1989, 2nd edition in press).
- 8 These developments are discussed in more detail in Shankland (1999a: Chapter 1).
- 9 See for example, Öner (2001).
- 10 See also the new study by Michael Mecker (2002) of the Black Sea coast, discussed below. In it, he stresses explicitly (Chapter 1) that the Laz have no distinctive indigenous organisation that makes them distinct from the centralising state.
- 11 See also Mardin's masterly study (1989) of the popular rise of Said-i Nursi.
- 12 The best starting point to study the Abdals is possibly Andrews' crucial work on ethnic groups in Turkey (1989: new edition pending). The Tahtacis have been written about by several authors; for a recent work, see Engin (1998), which includes a useful bibliography.
- 13 As the international exploration and recognition of Alevi culture gather apace, it is sometimes held that the Alevi communities have in some way always been secular. This is such an important misconception that it should be noted quite explicitly once more that the Alevis have had to learn secularism as so many other monotheistic agrarian societies have done. It is quite possible, even likely (as I argue throughout this work), that there is something in their traditional make-up that provides them with a penchant towards secularism when it is offered to them, but that is an entirely different matter.
- 14 See, however, the essays of Van Bruinessen (2000a), which are unlikely to be bettered as depictions of religious life among the Alevi Kurdish communities.
- 15 On 'Kızılbaş' see Gökalp (1980). It is also worth noting that, in parallel fashion, Cuinet (1890) appears not to use the word Alevi, but uses 'Kızılbaş' to refer to the Alevi tribes to the east, and calls the settled Turkish Alevis in the west 'Shi'ite'.
- 16 Professor Mélikoff has very kindly confirmed (personal communication) the comparative recent coinage of 'Alevi', and also suggests that the term Alevi itself may be shifting from a comparatively neutral term to one that has become more pejorative, rather as has happened with 'Kızılbaş' (on this latter, see also Mélikoff 1998). See also Van Bruinessen (2000a).
- 17 In the first line, the poet is referring to the increased use of headscarves by students, something that is theoretically forbidden in any civil service or governmental building, in the second, to the habit of pious sportsmen, after a victory, pulling on a pair of trousers (to cover their naked legs) and offering a collective 'thanks prayer' in the stadium. One instance of this is said to have taken place in Konya, after a football team sponsored by Kombansan Holdings, a religiously inspired industrial group, won a match.
- 18 i.e. Government ministers who go on the *hac* to Mecca.
- 19 Şener ([1982] 1993: 152–153).
- 20 On the Shafi in the east of Turkey, see the comments in the collected essays of Van Bruinessen (2000a).
- 21 'Kandil' nights mark the birth, conception, ascent (on his way to Miraç), and night of power of the Prophet Muhammed respectively. On these latter in the Turkish context, see Özdemir and Frank (2000).
- 22 Ibn Arabi has great importance in the village, and his ideas appear to have permeated much of their thought. See also Chapter 4.
- 23 There are many works on the Sivas massacres. I have found one entitled *Sivas, 2 Temmuz* (1994) most useful.
- 24 The best introduction to the modernisation of Anatolia remains perhaps Stirling (1993: Introduction). In that edited work, see also Belma Akşit for an article on malnutrition in migrant areas in the cities.
- 25 On local administration and municipality elections, see Finkel and Sirman (1988).

- 26 Broadly, these developments are reflected in the annual year books, published by the State Institute of Statistics (e.g. *Türkiye 2000*), who can also provide more detailed breakdowns on request.
- 27 Another way of putting this issue, from the macro point of view, would be to note that in spite of the periodic economic crashes, production has grown steadily almost throughout the Republic, often at a rate of more than 5 per cent a year. This has resulted in the Turkish economy being ranked at around twentieth in the world in terms of absolute gross domestic product. On early works on Turkish modernisation, see Lerner (1958), also Hann (1990), Beller-Hann and Hann (2001) for case studies of the Black Sea coast.
- 28 While there are no doubt exceptions, at present even taking the whole of Anatolia into account, the only sub-province centre that I am aware of that has a majority of Alevi population is the town of Hacıbektaş, and the only provincial centre Tunceli, though it also should be noted also that it is said that the Alevis are leaving Tunceli for the larger cities of Izmir, Ankara and Istanbul.

2 THE SUB-PROVINCE

- 1 For an analysis of the events leading to the coup in 1980, see Dodd ([1983] 1990). For a mention of there being violent conflict between Alevi and Sunni at that time, see Hale (1986).
- 2 Yalman (1969) finds similar insults were exchanged where he worked.
- 3 For a work on the *gecekondus*, dwellings ‘formed in a night’ outside the cities, see Karpat (1976).
- 4 Dodd ([1983] 1990: 40). Among other discussions of patronage, see Sayar (1966), Özbudun (1976), Yalçın (1990) or Güneş-Ayata (1990).

3 THE SUNNI VILLAGES

- 1 Sirman (1988: 384).
- 2 For Turkey as a whole, of course, the state’s requirements are rather more complicated, for example, in that it must produce also highly educated people, and stay solvent. See Stirling (1982: 573). Neither of these are priorities of the state in this instance; higher education and high finance take place outside the sub-province.
- 3 Tuğ (1975: 3–4).
- 4 Stirling (1964: 135, 271) notes that village boundaries became fixed by the state with the introduction of the Village Law in 1924.
- 5 Stirling (1964: 26) finds a similar pattern. Referring to Kayseri he writes, ‘All the villages in the area . . . are self-contained clusters of buildings separated from one another by stretches of unfenced land.’ See also Sirman (1988: 36): ‘Rural Turkey is a mixture of nucleated villages and small towns which act as administrative and economic centres.’ I would regard this as a characteristic of central Anatolian Sunni villages – though not necessarily of other areas of the country, see Hann (1990).
- 6 Stirling (1964: 134–140).
- 7 There have been periodic attempts at land redistribution by the state. These only reinforced the village ideal that all households should own some fields because the redistribution was aimed at creating smallholdings out of land taken from large landowners. Sirman notes; ‘This law [the Land Reform Bill of 1945] was supposed to provide “land to the tiller” by distributing land to the peasants . . . this land was supposed to provide for the subsistence of a family . . . it was on the basis of the *households* that the distribution took place’ (1988: 248–249; emphasis in original).

- 8 Sirman (1988) explores this in depth. See also Stirling (1964: Chapter 5) and Schiffauer (1987: Chapters 3 and 4).
- 9 Sirman (1990a: 26–27), for example, describes how the villagers she worked with complain that they have almost entirely given up animal husbandry and wish to enlarge their individual cotton-producing holdings at the expense of land held by the state to be collective pasture, but they are not permitted to do so. On economic innovation in Anatolia within a sedentary context, see also a remarkable doctoral dissertation by Cemil Bezmen (1996).
- 10 Sirman (1988: 87): ‘Thus the village constitutes a unit within which a number of goods and services are produced and exchanged outside the sphere of commodity production. Village boundaries mark the outer limits within which these activities take place.’ See also Stirling (1964: 29): ‘People belong to their village in a way they belong to no other community. On any definition of community, the village is a community – a social group with many functions, not all of them explicit, and to which many people are committed by birth or marriage and bound by many ties.’
- 11 Tunçdelik (1974: 66–67).
- 12 See Delaney (1991), for an extended monograph on this theme. I should emphasise that I do not wish to minimise the extent to which authority is evaded, subverted and resented rather than this basic organisational principle is the starting point from which subsequent negotiations take place.
- 13 See also Delaney’s discussion of *izin*, ‘permission’, in Stirling (1993).
- 14 See Belma Akşit in Stirling (1993) for a description of women’s life cycle, also Stirling (1964: Chapter 6). Gender relations within Anatolia are covered in most detail by Delaney (1991), though a contrasting view is provided by Hann in Stirling (1993), also Beller-Hann and Hann (2001).
- 15 See also Sirman (1988: 91): ‘Agnates should take care of, and protect (and control) each others’ wives and daughters.’
- 16 For a detailed analysis of the division of labour in an Anatolian village, see Aydyn (1986: Chapter 7). While I believe that this characterisation of gender relations is broadly true, the Black Sea coast may offer an exception. See Beller-Hann and Hann (2001).
- 17 Sirman (1988: 109–110) especially: ‘It is on the basis of their being authoritative people, that is men, that individuals are able to enter into the “public” sphere.’ A similar argument appears in Jamous (1981), where he evaluates men’s honour in terms of the extent of their *zones de control*, where a ‘zone of control’ is fields, wife and family.
- 18 The household in the Sunni village conforms very closely to the conventionally accepted vision of peasant households in the theoretical literature. For example, see the detailed summary in Macfarlane (1978: Chapter 1).
- 19 Mardin wrote in similar vein: ‘hints, admonishments, mild remonstrances, repeated entreaties are part of the Turkish way of doing things before we reach the drop that makes the glass spill over’ (1969: 383–384).
- 20 Stirling (1964: 248–249), Delaney (1991: 189). Professor Werner Schiffauer informed me in conversation that the same is true for the village in which he worked, illustrating his point with the following anecdote: at the annual feast of sacrifice it is customary throughout villages in Turkey for men to go to the mosque and, after the ceremony, line up outside the mosque; each man shaking hands with every other in turn, passing down the line as they go. This is seen as an opportunity to make up quarrels and reconcile enemies. Knowing that two men were quite irreconcilably opposed, he asked them what they had done; one of them told him that rather than shake hands, or alternatively make a public display of their enmity, they had as dis-

- crectly as possible avoided greeting each other, simply passing on to the next man in the line. See also Schiffauer (1987: 56–63).
- 21 On quarrels spreading according to the social structure, see Evans-Pritchard (1940).
 - 22 See also Stirling (1964: 149): ‘Those who feel they have been let down have no sanctions to apply except to withdraw from social relations with the offenders – unless the matter is serious enough to call for violence.’
 - 23 See, however, the recent discussion in Meeker (2002: Chapter 1).
 - 24 Ünsal (1985) gives a detailed breakdown of his research into the blood feud, commenting on its preponderance even in recent times (pp. 222–223). See also Yalman (1979).
 - 25 Not a village institution, but imposed by the state according to the village law of 1924.
 - 26 Mardin (1969: 383).
 - 27 Delaney (1991: Chapter 3), Stirling (1982: 572). See also Mansur (1972) writing on Bodrum.
 - 28 I must confess scepticism, given that the villagers described by Delaney seem to be both firm in their belief and very well off. Until Sirman has published her findings on religion in the village this must remain a vital moot point.
 - 29 Cf. Nancy and Richard Tapper (1987b: 60), referring to the town in which they conducted fieldwork: ‘By and large, *Eğirdir* people are religious . . .’
 - 30 This has been explored in detail by Delaney, and indeed forms the subject of her 1991 monograph. See also Stirling (1951: Chapter 14).
 - 31 Stirling describes a similar experience: ‘As I have said, several times, in discussing women or questioning men about their home life, I was told that women are *hayvan gibi* – like animals . . . men do not altogether act on the proposition, but that they should affirm it so often and, on occasion in front of the women and girls, is significant of the relative prestige of the sexes’ (Stirling 1951: 58).
 - 32 *Şeker bayramı*, ‘sugar festival’, celebrating the last day of Ramazan, and the feast of sacrifice, *kurban bayramı*.
 - 33 Sirman (1990b) notes that women play a separate role, though equally important, supporting ties between the household of the community through frequent visits to each other, out of sight, and independently of the men.
 - 34 It is necessary to spell out the points below partly because of the monograph (1991) by Delaney. Its theme is that all aspects of village life can be reduced under the single rubric ‘man monopolises the right to create life, women are the bearer of his children’. She appears perhaps to overlook occasionally that this is very much her abstraction of life in the village (though an extremely convincing and fascinating one). From the actor’s point of view life may appear a little different, constrained by multi-stranded, evasive, often conflicting ideas. This point will become relevant again when we discuss the Alevi ethnography, because they are monotheistic in the way characterised by Delaney, yet their religious cosmology has components which make it difficult to be used so explicitly for the domination of women within the community.
 - 35 This point is made very strongly by Delaney (1991).
 - 36 Tezcan (1985) analyses inter-generational conflict in the Turkish context.
 - 37 The discussion below sadly omits any discussion of diverse beliefs among women. This is not due to choice but compulsion, for I spoke very little with women of either sect in the sub-province. I have discovered no work which discusses the implications that different levels of belief among women have for order in Turkish villages, though Dr Emine Incirlioğlu has confirmed (personal communication) that, as one might expect, they range greatly in levels of piety.
 - 38 Rustow (1957) reaches similar conclusions with regard to Turkey as a whole.

- 39 For an extended description of the role of Islam in life cycles in Turkey, see Rustow (1957).
- 40 I owe this point partly to a conversation with Nancy Tapper in 1986, for whose stimulating ideas on the role of wedding rituals *vis à vis* the state I am grateful. See also her paper 'Changing Wedding Rituals in a Turkish Town' (1985).
- 41 Cf. Nancy and Richard Tapper (1987b: 60–61), describing their fieldwork: 'One dentist, who closes his office during Ramazan because dental treatment is held to break the fast, estimated that 50 per cent of all men in town, and probably many more women, scrupulously keep the fast, but that another 30–35 per cent of all men make a show of doing so.'
- 42 I was struck throughout my fieldwork by the appropriateness of Weber's description of the Calvinists in his *Protestant Ethic* to these men:
- there was not only no magical means of attaining the grace of God for those to whom God had decided to deny it, but no means whatever. Combined with the harsh doctrines of the absolute transcendence of God and the corruption of everything pertaining to the flesh, this inner isolation of the individual contains . . . the reason for the entirely negative attitude of Puritanism to all the sensuous and emotional elements in culture and religion because they are of no use towards salvation and promote sentimental illusions and idolatrous superstitions.
- 43 Cf. Sirman (1990a: 29) which indicates how strongly denial of God is reacted to:
- a number of young students had walked into the coffee-house declaring that God was dead . . . These were the kind of activities that have been designated by the media as 'terrorist' acts, perpetrated by the enemies of the Turkish nation.
- 44 A similar division is noted by Stokes when he describes his fieldwork on a village in the Black Sea coast; in particular he describes how the sacred/profane division fits in with the overall annual cycle. For most of the year the villagers are in their main settlement, but they go to the mountain pastures during the summer. They regard the mountain pasture period as one in which they can play music, drink and dance with far greater freedom than when within the village. Indeed, he suggests that it is the social importance of moving to the *yayla* that has encouraged them to keep up this custom even though its economic significance has lessened (Stokes 1993).
- 45 I was not welcome in the Sunni mosques, and was able to go only twice to those on the Alevi side, once when visiting Ekmek, and once in Susesi for the Feast of Sacrifice.
- 46 The same connection between the strong religious believers and the *tarikats* is found by the Tappers: 'The religious fanatics, such as those of two clandestine religious Islamic sects, the *Nurcu* and the *Süleymancı*' (1987: 61).
- 47 This is corroborated by Mardin who traces the failure of Said-i Nursi as a mediator (1989: 34–35).
- 48 Margulies and Yıldızoğlu (1988: 16) mention also that the *Süleymancı*s possess rural hostels to encourage poor youths to study.
- 49 There are repeated but passing mentions of the connection between *tarikats* and right-wing political extremism in the literature, e.g. Toprak (1981). The national library in Ankara, however, furnished me with a pamphlet which states this orientation explicitly: *SÖLCULARIN Süleymancılık Uydurmasına CEVAP*, 'AN ANSWER to the calumnies cast at *Süleymancılık* by the LEFT-WINGERS' (1970).
- 50 Pickering (1989: Chapter 1).
- 51 The state does disrupt the freedom with which lineage quarrels may be pursued (a

doctor friend in one of the Sunni villages told me that he had to write an official medical report to the *jandarmas* on any occasion that blood was spilt in anger in the village) but no particular rights are imbued in the lineage. Indeed, both Stirling and Sirman (personal communication) informed me during this research that lineages in the villages they study are of increasingly little importance. See also Meeker (2002: Chapter 1).

- 52 The reforms have been described in many publications. Lewis (1961) remains perhaps the most lucid summary. Mardin (1971) offers a view close to the one I postulate here.
- 53 On the economic policies of the early Republic, see Hale (1981).
- 54 For a general overview, see Shaw and Shaw (1977). On the policy of the Republic towards women, see Kandiyoti (1991).
- 55 See B. Lewis (1950), Thomas (1952), G. Lewis (1957: Chapter 20) and Stirling (1958) for comments on the early changes. In the preface of his French edition of *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Lewis writes
- A l'intérieur, l'islam est incontestablement beaucoup plus puissant dans la vie publique Turque qu'à aucun moment depuis la chute de l'empire ottoman. L'instruction religieuse fait maintenant parties du système éducatif; on trouve les ouvrages religieux partout; et les diplômés des écoles confessionnelles, de plus en plus nombreux, occupent d'importantes fonctions publiques (1988: vii).
- Susannah Pickering has kindly sent me fifteen official charts published by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Spring 1992, listing the level of government activity and its involvement in religion in various ways: They detail (among other things) that the number of officially registered mosques went up from 54,667 to 62,947 between 1984 and 1987, that the number of children in *Kuran* courses has gone up from 68,486 in 1979 to 155,403 in 1989, that the number of *Kuran* courses being taught has gone up from 2,610 in 1979 to 4,715 in 1988–89, that the number of people going on the *hac* has risen from 10,805 to 92,006 over the same period. See also a pamphlet, *Đm Eđđitim Raporu* (Report on Religious Education), published by the Directorate of Religious Affairs.
- 56 Makal's *Bizim Kőy*, excerpts from which appeared in English as *A Village in Anatolia* (1954), is a renowned account of the difficulties faced by a school teacher, newly trained in the tenets of Kemalism, as he tried to persuade the villagers of its worth.
- 57 The same duality appears in the television, which is owned by the state. On the days marking the Republic it shows state processions from Ankara, on those marking religion it broadcasts passages from the Kuran.
- 58 Dr Ethem Ruhi Fıđlalı (1988).
- 59 Richard and Nancy Tapper (1987b).
- 60 The problem of disbelief in Islam and disbelief in Kemalism, therefore, I met very little in the villages. I lived not only in the villages, but also in Ankara (see Acknowledgements). There, in the universities, it is obvious that many younger people have faith in neither ideals, but their study lies outside this work.
- 61 On *gazi* in Turkish thought, see Mardin (1989: 3–5).
- 62 We return again to the thesis that all people want to become modern. Members of the *tarikāt*, almost without fail, appear to be working from a position which enables them to believe in the universal validity of Islam and also enjoy the benefits of a consumer society (cf. the detailed treatment of the *Nurcu* by Mardin (1989), the essays on the brotherhoods in Tapper (1991), and the brief treatment by Norton (1994)) and this is the reason that they come so sharply into conflict with the authorities. That the *Nurcus* may have influenced the production of school text books is

- confirmed by Pickering (1989: 114–115). See also Şaylan's *İslamiyet ve Siyaset* which gives contemporary voice to these fears, and whom Pickering also mentions.
- 63 Kandiyoti (1991).
- 64 This question has been considered by Starr in several publications from the point of view of women and the state courts, for example, Starr (1978). See also an article by Kandiyoti (1988) with the suggestive theme 'bargaining with patriarchy'.
- 65 Stirling (1964: 120–131) notes that inheritance is complicated by the different methods men may use to support their claim, appealing to tradition, the Republican Law, or the village interpretation of *Şeriat*.
- 66 Sirman (1990a).
- 67 Kandiyoti (1985) sets the debate in its Turkish context. Though men all over the sub-province complained frequently that the old three-generation household is now found much less than before, thus confirming this generalisation, it may not apply to Susesi.
- 68 Stirling (1964: 40).
- 69 Stirling (1988: 8), and Belma Akşit in Stirling (1993).
- 70 Thus an Alevi civil servant stationed in a Sunni village is as a matter of course invited to attend the mosque, and as long as he does so, few remarks are likely to be made as to his background – assuming that he has admitted that he is Alevi at all. The reverse is not possible; even an extremely well-integrated Sunni civil servant in an Alevi village (at least in the villages of the sub-province, and I believe that this is the case for the rest of Turkey as well) is not permitted into their religious ceremonies and therefore remains an outsider to the community.
- 71 Mardin (1989: 3).
- 72 Mardin (1989: 8).
- 73 Gellner (1984: 41).
- 74 Mardin (1989: 170).
- 75 My explanation assumes that there is something within the Islamic faith which assumes the axiomatic inferiority, or at least separation, of women from men (and therefore the power to run society). One can put it into terms as follows: 'no intense group of believers anywhere in Islam sanctions the intermingling of men and women'. While there may be the occasional exception, this would seem to be a hypothesis worthy of further thought.
- 76 Contrary evidence as to the importance of this is provided by Stirling (1958) who comments on the villagers' difficulties when a lack of trained *imamş* became apparent.
- 77 Delaney (1991).
- 78 This explanation is deeply influenced by a view of human development represented by Bower (1982), and the theories put forward by Bateson in *Mind and Nature* (1981) and his earlier collected short essays (1972).
- 79 Stirling (1982).
- 80 On the role of Islam in politics, particularly after 1980 see Şaylan (1987).
- 81 It is possible that this conclusion may lead to misunderstandings; my general point that people leave an area when they are not content must, *ipso facto*, in the absence of forced migration, be true. I am arguing that the ability to feel part of modern Turkey is a vital process in this decision whether to go or stay, and that people can only feel this sense of belonging when they have submitted to the state's authority and feel they are being made part of the nation. I do not deny that there are other, contributing factors, as to whether people migrate or not.

4 SUSESİ

- 1 On *edep*, see Schimmel (1975). On the relationship between Turkish mysticism and Alevi religious thought, see Mélikoff (1992).

- 2 Norton (1983).
- 3 The best introduction to the Bektashis is still Birge (1937). However, for an admirable collected volume, with many of the leading contemporary scholars of the Bektashis contributing, see Popovic and Veinstein (1995). Among others, the relationship between the Bektashis and the Alevis has been studied by Mélikoff, who sums up her research in a recent monograph (1998), though see also her earlier volume (1992).
- 4 *Sema* conventionally means a dervish dance, for example that of the whirling dervishes of Konya. The Alevi in Susesi have two distinct *sema*, the ‘*sema* of the forty’ mentioned here, and ‘the *sema* of the hearts’, *gönüller semahı*. These are both discussed in more detail.
- 5 Moosa (1988) writes that the *Buyruk* is known to the Bektashis, and also to the Ahli-Haq, and to the Shabak (both heterodox Shi’ite groups). The Ahli-Haq are found in Iran, the Shabak in Iraq. The *Buyruk* he describes as being used by the Shabak appears to be quite dissimilar to that used by the Alevis. Some of the tales he quotes as being told by the Alevi-Haq, however, bear a great resemblance to those in the *Buyruk* I found among the Alevis. Notably, Minorsky appears to have been told an account of the ‘*cem* of the forty’ very similar to that I give here (Moosa 1988: 118). There is no overall one edition of the *Buyruk* that has precedence over any others, and further editions are appearing as research into the hand-written manuscripts of yesteryear continues. I studied that edited by Bozkurt, though that by Atalay was also known to the villagers, as well as perhaps others, such as that published by Cem Yayınevi (see *Buyruk* in Bibliography).
- 6 *Dost*, lit. companion, but used to imply fervent platonic love also. The sentence is referring to the oft-declared desire of esoteric believers to reach unity with the creator, implying that Mohammed’s contact with God took the form of such a mystical reunion.
- 7 There are many references to the *musabip* tradition, for example see Mélikoff (1995), Kehl-Bodrogi (1988).
- 8 Khuri (1990: 19, *passim*), which contains a useful appreciation of the attitude of Shi’ite communities to central rule.
- 9 See also Gökalp (1980: 9–10).
- 10 Birge (1965: 102–109).
- 11 The idea that most Alevis are on the *Tarikat* path is more important than it might sound, because it denotes very clearly the constraints and the internalised, humanist philosophy that they regard as being most appropriate for a person to lead their lives. A further contrast might be made with the Ahli-Haqq, who, in Van Bruinessen’s characterisation (2000a), appear to regard the fourth, *Hakikat*, rank as being the most important. This appears to give the Ahli-Haqq a way into a much more enchanted universe, with a preoccupation with reincarnation, saints, and the manifestations of God on this earth that is markedly stronger than that practised among the Alevis among whom I have worked.
- 12 See also the two mixed Alevi/Sunni villages described by Bal, where the Alevis appear to have joined in with very many of the Sunni rituals and activities (Bal 1997).
- 13 In Islam, it is usual for the corpse to be taken out of the coffin, and buried in a shroud. The villager was referring to the coffins that had therefore been used to transport a dead person, but now lay empty after the funeral had taken place.
- 14 On the position of *muhtar* in other parts of Turkey, see Stirling (1964), or Beller-Hann and Hann (2001).
- 15 This threat is a powerful one, because of the irreligiousness implied in a village which has no *imam*. Certainly no *müftü* official would relish being embroiled in such a controversy.
- 16 I should like to add that I now feel most embarrassed at this intrusion. Later, the

dedes with whom I spoke were unfailingly friendly and hospitable, and I valued their help greatly.

- 17 Literally ‘coffee-house’ (*kahve* also means ‘coffee’), but tea is the staple drink provided in them.

5 RELIGION, RITUAL AND SOCIAL CONTROL

- 1 Cf. Roper (1973), Glazer (1978) or Dobkin (1967).
- 2 Cf. Delaney’s plan of a Sunni house (1991: 234).
- 3 I insert the note of caution because it is not possible to be sure on this point until a female researcher has provided a fuller picture of the life lead by Alevi women.
- 4 Richard and Nancy Tapper (1987a).
- 5 (Nicolas 1972) or Nancy Tapper (1990).
- 6 Redhouse Dictionary (1987: 541).
- 7 Yalman (1969) found a similar disdain for the supposedly defiling nature of women.
- 8 This would lead us to an application of Bateson’s double-bind theory (1972). I am indebted to Professor Alan Macfarlane for a most helpful conversation on this theme.
- 9 Lloyd and Mageret Fallers (1976) argue in analogous fashion that Sunni women enjoy more freedom than is commonly realised by virtue of their separation from men.
- 10 The *Buyruk* in use during my stay was that edited by Fuat Bozkurt (1982). However, subsequently that edited by Atalay (1993) came into use. See also a further version published by the Şahkulu Sultan *cem evi* in Istanbul (1995). For a most scholarly discussion of the *Buyruk* and its antecedents, see Kehl-Bodrogi (1988: 104–112), also Mélikoff (1998: xxiv).
- 11 See Gilsenan (1973) for a sustained discussion, also Redhouse Dictionary (1987: 369).
- 12 Van Bruinessen gives several similar accounts in his articles on heterodox Islamic beliefs in Anatolia (2000a).
- 13 See Nicholson (1921: Chapter 2).
- 14 The villagers make no reference to any written text in listening to or explaining this story. However, it does appear to refer to an event popularly supposed to have occurred in Muhitin Arabi’s lifetime. I am most grateful to Professor Neal Robinson for his advice on this point.
- 15 *Sin* is the fifteenth letter, *Şin* the sixteenth letter of the Ottoman alphabet.
- 16 He construes the riddle as meaning, ‘When you come with your troops, who I really am will become clear.’
- 17 The *dede* is making a contrast between two types of miraculous influence. The first is *hızır*, the spirit or embodiment of nature. *Hızır* is widely supposed to take the appearance of an old man. He is renowned for performing miracles for those who have been polite to him such as saving the life of a person in a difficult situation, or warning them of an impending danger. The miraculous influence with which the *dede* contrasts this is that of a person with *keramet*, one who has reached the fourth *Hakikat* level and is at contact with God. In the story, the onlookers understandably mistake the miracle which they have seen performed as being one by *hızır*, and do not realise the true ‘developed’ character of *Hacı Bektaş*. *Hasan* begins to realise his mistake, and when he returns home, *Hacı Bektaş* finally reveals himself and presents *Hasan* with the opportunity to study with him. On *Hızır*, see Ocak (1990).
- 18 That is, they performed a *niyaz*, a ritual embrace, ‘salutation of a dervish to his superior’ (Redhouse Dictionary 1987: 889). *Niyaz* is very significant in rituals in the village, and is returned to below.

- 19 *Öz Türkçe*, literally 'Original Turkish'. The term used by the language reformers to denote Turkish before it borrowed extensively from Arabic. See Chapter 7.
- 20 In the Alevi context *halife* is used to mean the right to practise *dedelik*.
- 21 Cf. Gellner's description of Ahansalian holy men in the Atlas Mountains (1969).
- 22 Each village is permitted to possess one rifle, for which the *muhtar* is responsible.
- 23 The market-place is neutral ground, in which one should not pursue individual quarrels. See Chapter 1.
- 24 Evans-Pritchard (1949), Lewis (1961), Van Bruinessen (1992).
- 25 In a most suggestive work on North African Berbers, Jamous characterised this as a defence of 'zones of control' (Jamous 1981).
- 26 The actual groupings on the ground do not necessarily accurately reflect real kinship divisions, as Kuper (1982) stresses in his criticism of segmentary theory (see also Holy (1979)). Indeed, it is obvious that they could not (and Kuper misses this point entirely) because the most important function of the segmentary lineage is to balance conflict. Real lineages are never equal in strength, but temporary alliances with an agnatic core can easily form and change in size until both sides are opposing each other with equal force, and then a reasonable settlement reached. With unequal forces or strict adherence to lineal links this would not be possible. This was brought home to me by a Berber tribesman during my first fieldwork in the Atlas Mountains; when I asked him why more, related villages did not join in a fight between his and the next valley, he replied, 'But why should they join in when the forces between the two sides are already equal?' The interplay of the segmentary organisation and the aggressive ethos with regard to Evans-Pritchard's research is explored in Douglas (1980: Chapter 6).
- 27 See also Gökalp (1980: 215–219), where he suggests that from the functional point of view, *musahip* links people together in a way which cuts across patrilineal groups, thus aiding cohesion in the society.
- 28 '*Çekmek*' has several meanings, 'to draw out', 'to attract', 'to undergo'. The villagers seem to use it here in its last sense, thus the phrase becomes 'to experience', *dar*. '*Dar*' also means several things: 'a situation of great difficulty', 'the gallows', 'the place where a person is judged'. All three meanings are pertinent to the overall connotation of *dar çekme*, which the villagers appear to understand, therefore, as a situation in which a person becomes as a supplicant towards a judge. We shall see below that *dar* is also used to describe the position of the follower as he or she sits in front of the *dedes*.
- 29 This prayer is very similar to one described by Birge (1937: 167).
- 30 The *Buyruk* here assumes three ranks, where the villagers use two. In this case, the *pir* is the equivalent to the village *dede*, the *rehber*, who presents the supplicants in the text not being used in the village.
- 31 Though the history of the Islamic mystical ideas in the village is obviously difficult to trace, the idea of behaving in a perfect way, to copy an ideal way of behaviour which reaches its apotheosis in men who have achieved union with God is very prominent in the philosophy of Ibn Arabi, and I wonder whether it is significant that the *Susesi dede* trace their descent back to him. On the philosophy of Ibn Arabi see, for example, Burckhardt (1976) or for an extract from Ibn Arabi himself which is very close to the explanations the villagers themselves give, see Ibn Arabi (1976). For a more general account see Schimmel (1975: Chapters 6 and 7). I am indebted to Aran Cass, and to Professor Neal Robinson for most stimulating discussions of these issues.
- 32 For the place of love in Sufi thought see, for example, Nicholson (1914: Chapter 4) or Schimmel (1975: Chapter 3).

- 33 While *Hidrellez* is celebrated widely throughout Anatolia, the Alevi are unusual in that they incorporate that day into their ritual calendar.
- 34 The implication is that each side had made formal complaints about the other to the central authorities.
- 35 In the *cem*, the *dede* hands out morsels of the sacrificed beast's liver to those whom he especially favours.
- 36 For descriptions of the ceremony, including the 'twelve imam', see also Birge (1937: Chapter 4, part 5) or Gökalp (1980: 207–214). For an essay in Turkish that relates the Alevi beliefs to the sequence of the twelve *imam* in Islamic history, see Bender (1993).
- 37 Here, the minstrel has become the voice of the sacrifice.
- 38 The *görgü*, while known throughout the Alevi community, appears to take different forms. An interesting survey is that published by Metin (1992). See also the fictional treatment by Kaygusuz entitled 'The Last Görgü Cem', *Son Görgü Cemi* (1991).
- 39 I take this to mean, 'when Tarikat no longer has temporal authority over the events in the village . . . then *Alevilik* is finished'.
- 40 Of the different compendiums of the Alevi ritual poetry that are now available in Turkish, the closest appears to be in the work of Erdoğan (2000).
- 41 This is a very wide issue, but see in particular the detailed treatment by Kehl-Bodrogi (1988), the essays in Kehl-Bodrogi *et al.* (1997).

6 SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE ALEVIS COMMUNITIES

- 1 I hope to pursue this Malthusian issue in a further piece of research. For a recent anthropological perspective, see Macfarlane (1997).
- 2 The only open conflict during the 1990s took place between Yüksek and Tepe *mahalles* and revolved around water rights. There is usually enough water for everyone who remains in the village, but on this occasion drought had almost halted the usual steady supply. The quarrel was later resolved. There is now (in 2002) once more enough water.
- 3 The work of Martin Stokes on the Black Sea coast is relevant here in that long before, a village where he worked was said to be an Alevi community, though now Sunni. Nevertheless, the villagers continued to give importance to *muhabbet*, merging this with their summer festivals in the *yayla*, mountain pastures (personal communication). See also the description of this work in Stokes (1993).
- 4 *Dursun dede*, the man who resolved the conflict between Yüksek and Kol, died in 1980.
- 5 Here, they are referring to the way that the members of parliament elected for the Alevi's Unity Party in the late 1970s joined in a coalition with Ecevit and Erbakan. The resulting disquiet led to the destruction of the party.
- 6 *Ehli-beyt yaratmasaydım, hic bir şey yaratmazdım*. The *dede* is suggesting that the Alevi are the chosen people of God because they are the followers of Ali and his descendants.
- 7 The mobilisation during and after the First World War, which culminated in the victories over the Greeks.
- 8 In fact, it appears in the *Buyruk*, though in slightly different words. I interpret the phrase to mean 'you may not win worldly goods if you come to the *Tarikat*, but you will not lose your chance of everlasting life'. The long account of the *dede* descended from *Muhitin Arabi* in Chapter 5 contains a similar idea when *Hacı Bektaş* invites *Hasan* to choose between *himmet* (saintly influence) and *devlet* (worldly influence/success).
- 9 That is, as he died he successfully came into contact with God.

- 10 Death may come at any time.
 11 'A surname of the caliph Ali' (Redhouse Dictionary 1987: 466).
 12 *Saki* (lit. 'water-distributor') is a figure who appears frequently in Persian poetry, also in settings which are ambivalent in that they are in part merry gathering, in part worship. See, for example, Heron-Allen (1899) on the sources of Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*.

7 THE ALEVIS, EVOLVING IDENTITY AND THE STATE

- 1 Naess' very interesting article (1988) on an Alevi village in the east of Turkey confirms many of these points. The village he visited appeared to be on a path similar to Susesi, but perhaps further along it. He explains that the last *cem* was held before he arrived in the village, that they had rejected the last *dede* completely, and that the villagers claimed that the *mahalle* divisions in the village were once more important than they were at the time of his visit, but that by then they had lost their integrity as independent units through the fields in them being sold and ownership dispersed throughout the whole village. He also notes that the villagers had turned to mosque-based worship, but that it was not a success.
- 2 On *mehti*, see Donaldson (1933: Chapter 21).
 3 Birge (1937: 85).
 4 See Yörükoğlu (1992).
 5 Alp Arslan was the conqueror of the Byzantines at Malazgirt (AD 1071). In fact, Ahmet Yesevi lived a century after Alp Arslan, see Birge (1937: Chapter 2, part A). Otherwise, the main Alevi/Bektashi idea, that there were highly trained Sufi leaders who came from the east during the time of the *Türk* invasion of Anatolia, and that Ahmet Yesevi was prominent among them is regarded as being historically true by Birge (1937) and by Mélikoff (1998). The subject of the invasion of Anatolia is, of course, an enormous debate, which I do not feel qualified to enter here.
- 6 I have deliberately avoided an investigation into the connection between Shah Ismail and the Alevi in this work. It would appear to fit in very well with the investigations of Birge and Mélikoff to surmise that the Alevi were converted (or at least supported) in their religion via the instigation of Shah Ismail when he was trying to defeat the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century (Birge 1937: 62–69). Indeed, Mélikoff suggests such a connection (1975). I have found nothing in the sub-province to contradict such a supposition. But, on the other hand, I have found nothing to support it either, in that the villagers have no sense of an historical attachment to Iran, other than through its earlier Sufi movement of Ahmet Yesevi. See also Savory (1975).
- 7 These are well described in B. Lewis (1961).
 8 On the language reform, see G. Lewis (1957: Chapter 14).
 9 There are further similarities between the Alevi and Kemalism. For example, according to the Republican ideology, the folk dances found all over Turkey are ways through which people can celebrate the Turkish roots of their nation. There is still now a government department employed in collecting folk tales. Every child is taught folk dances while at school. Folk dance and folk tales are still the subject of government conferences and publications, for example, *Türk Halk Kültürü Araştırmaları* (Turkish Folk Culture Researches, 1991). In the villages, school teachers are encouraged to make the pupils perform folk dances as a way of celebrating national holidays which are important in Republican history. In a Sunni village, these dances conflict with the actively religious believers, as described in Chapter 2. In an Alevi village, however, the dances are already the principal way in which Aleviness is celebrated. On occasions when the teachers in the schools have

- been Alevi, I have seen their Alevi pupils dance the *gönüller semahı*, the ‘sema of the hearts’ for them with a will, outside the schools to celebrate national holidays.
- 10 I would like to thank the William Wyse fund of Trinity College for a most generous award to pay for the expenses incurred in attending the festival.
 - 11 The Alevis often claim (though of course the precise disentangling of the historical record may question this straightforward assumption) that they were instrumental in the success of Atatürk’s early journeys across Anatolia when he was trying to raise support for the nationalists’ cause. For example, Şener (1991).
 - 12 The janissery regiments were organised around Bektashi leaders. See Weissman (1964).
 - 13 Coşan and Özbay (1990) and Sezgin (1990).
 - 14 Men who still believe find it wrong that a religious dance should be so exposed to the careless eye of the tourist, and those who regard the dances as representing Alevi culture find it wrong that so serious a subject should be treated merely as a tourist attraction.
 - 15 A volume entitled *Hacı Bektaş Veli*, published as the first volume in a series by the ‘Hacı Bektash Tourism Association’ in 1977 is the result of a meeting held at Hacı Bektash town. In it there are both historical researches, and essays discussing the revolutionary (*devrimci*) and ‘societal’ (*toplumcu*) aspects of Hacı Bektash’s ideas. This gives it an unmistakable ‘lefty’ connotation. The word ‘*devrim*’ was later banned by the generals.
 - 16 Pehlivan (1993: 145–160).
 - 17 The most popular organisation appears to be the DHKP-C, who are active in Europe as well as in Turkey. An offshoot of the earlier Dev-Sol (lit. ‘Rev. Left’), they include Sunnis as well as Alevis. It appears in particular that the DHKP-C is chosen by the Alevi Kurds rather than joining the PKK. See also Engin (1999).

8 CONCLUSION

- 1 Gellner (1981).
- 2 Geertz, *New York Review of Books*, 27 May 1982: 25.
- 3 Munson (1993), Hammoudi (1974).
- 4 Hall and Jarvie (1996).
- 5 Roberts (2002).
- 6 Mardin (1989), Kraus (1991, 1998), Macfarlane (2001).
- 7 ‘Another objection to the theory ... arises from the very existence of the Ottoman Empire’ (Gellner 1981: 73).
- 8 Bernard Lewis’ seminal work on modern Turkey (1961) traces the Westernisation of the Ottoman Empire, and the subsequent founding of the Republic without considering the internal dynamics of the Republic at all, outside the immediate political context in Ankara. Geoffrey Lewis ([1957] 1965), while full of interesting comment, does not provide information on rural society unless it impinges upon government. Later historians such as Shaw and Shaw (1977), Davison (1988) and Zürcher (1994) are equally deficient in this regard. The inescapable conclusion is that indeed these people have been drawn exclusively to Atatürk’s great feats and the politics and economics of the urban scene, but then should not the claim to be writing history *in general* be tempered by making this more modest aim explicit? See also Sirman (1996).
- 9 Gellner often discussed Islam within the context of his wider views on social change, industrialisation and modernisation (e.g. 1995 or 1992). His ethnographic work in North Africa is written up in full in Gellner (1969), to which the edited volume Gellner and Micaud (1973) is also relevant. For a full bibliography of Gellner’s writings, see Hall and Jarvie (1996).

- 10 For this perspective, see also Gellner (1992).
- 11 Van Bruinessen's main work remains his historical monograph (1992). However, he has repeated this conviction more recently; see, for example, his collected essays on Kurdish nationalism (2000b). Zürcher (1994: 178) writes:
- That a sheikh, religious leader, exerted great political influence was not at all extra-ordinary . . . The leaders of these dervish orders were often called in to decide quarrels between different tribes, and this gave them prestige, connections, and often considerable wealth . . . Sheikh Sait himself was an influential member of the Nakshibendi order.
- 12 It is a question of emphasis, of which of the ideas within a society are bound up with the conception of correct behaviour. Alevi men are jealous and defend their honour, of course, but when they do, it is regarded as laudatory from the point of view of personal salvation not to reciprocate, and to allow themselves to be brought to peace. Among tribesmen, revenge, either in the form of an indemnity or reciprocal violence, is accepted as an appropriate response to a tort, and the idea of peace is much less articulated. Tribal Alevi, for example, the Alevi Kurds, presumably possess equally a highly articulated idea of revenge and also one of the appropriateness of behaving in a peaceful fashion. Alevi Kurdish ethnography is scanty, but there is a hint of the difficulties such a volatile society faces in Bumke's article on the Kurdish Alevi, in which he describes the way *pir* are losing their influence, and tribal fights flourish accordingly (Bumke, in Andrews 1989).
- 13 Yet another way to elucidate the importance of this insight is to note that Gellner is redrawing the conventional rural-urban divide by suggesting that the sedentary village communities within the state's control should be considered as part and parcel of the same cultural and religious sphere as the established urban areas controlled by the state: that is, he is assuming that Ibn Khaldun's contrast between *makhzen* (zone within the state) and *ziba* (zone outside the state) is far more important, even in the modern world, than is usually credited. If my contentions regarding the social and demographic expansion of hitherto small Sunni villages into larger towns (and the subsequent contracting of the Alevi communities) are substantiated, then Gellner will be shown to be absolutely correct in insisting upon the importance of this division in that the contrast 'within or outside the state's control' has proven a better predictor of later development than any simple rural-urban dichotomy.
- 14 This issue is explored further in my *Islam and Society in Turkey* (1999a).
- 15 There is a growing argument within the field as to whether the Alevi and Bektashi were as knowingly supportive of the initial nationalist resistance movement as their literature now implies (e.g. Şener or Öz). This controversy is not essential for the argument here, because whatever the immediate cause of their affinity, there is no doubt as to their subsequent readiness to link themselves to the Kemalist ideals.
- 16 These other groups are discussed in Moosa (1988), and also in the work entitled suggestively *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, by Kehl-Bodrogi *et al.* (1997). See also Olsson *et al.* (1998).
- 17 There is some evidence of this alternative route to modernity in the success of popular or moderate Sufism in the West, such as that of the Beshara Foundation, who base many of their ideas on the works of Ibn Arabi, or again of the international study groups based on the Mevlana who attend their ceremonies once a year, and preach universal peace.
- 18 This pressing desire to overlook alternatives to his argument may be generic within his thinking, as Macfarlane suggests in his recent evaluation of Gellner's historical philosophy, which he illustrates to have been seriously compromised by a refusal to admit the complexity of feudal society (Macfarlane 2001).

NOTES

- 19 See White (1994, 1996) for an interesting study among an Istanbul migrant community.
- 20 The researches of Stirling may be found on-line at the Department of Anthropology in the University of Kent (http://era.anthropology.ac.uk/Era_Resources/Era/Stirling/index.html). This site contains both his database and many of his written articles.

APPENDIX 1

- 1 This glossary is an expanded version of Shankland (1999a: 198–201). By far the best Turkish–English/English–Turkish dictionary is still the full Redhouse (published in Istanbul, but widely available overseas). While the Redhouse is particularly strong on religious terms, a reliable and useful specialist source is Esat Korkmaz, *Ansiklopedik Alevilik Bektaşılık Terimleri Sözlüğü*, Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Alevi-Bektaşî Terms (1994).

APPENDIX 4

- 1 English usages in part after Dodd (1990: 223–224).

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