עצור! גבול לפניך!

STOP! BORDER IN FRONT OF YOU.

قف! الحدود أمامك.

STATE FRONTIERS

BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I.B. TAURIS

Edited by Inga Brandell

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in the Middle East

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INGA BRANDELL

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presented a first draft of their work on Cyprus, and Lars Kleberg gave an initial version of what we can now read in this volume.

This inspiration, including that provided by the yearly meetings of the West and Central Asia programme, has had a significant impact on the individual contributions and the work as a whole. Hashem Ahmadzadeh and Salam Zandi, then doctoral and master students, participated actively in the seminars of the project group, while Katarina Carlberg consistently did a great work assisting the project with documentation as well as administration. In the process of bringing all the contributions together for the publication the support given by professor Bo Utas was invaluable. The thorough reading and comments given by the anonymous readers at I.B. Tauris was of great benefit to the authors and the editor, while the efficient help with the English language given by Margaret Cornell, the meticulous editorial work done by Mirja Juntunen and last, but not least, the maps contributed by Lars Wåhlin, will hopefully have made this volume more readable.

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Finally, a note on transliteration is needed. In order to smoothen the reading of the volume this is strongly simplified in the text, except for Arabic concepts and names. Arabic as well as Turkish names are, when possible, given in their English language international form. *Hamza, alif* and *ayn* are generally not indicated. Fuller transliteration is to be found in the endnotes and the bibliography. Therefore, references to newspaper articles in Arabic and Turkish are given in the endnotes after each chapter, while all other references are within brackets in the text.

Map 1   Map of the area

1
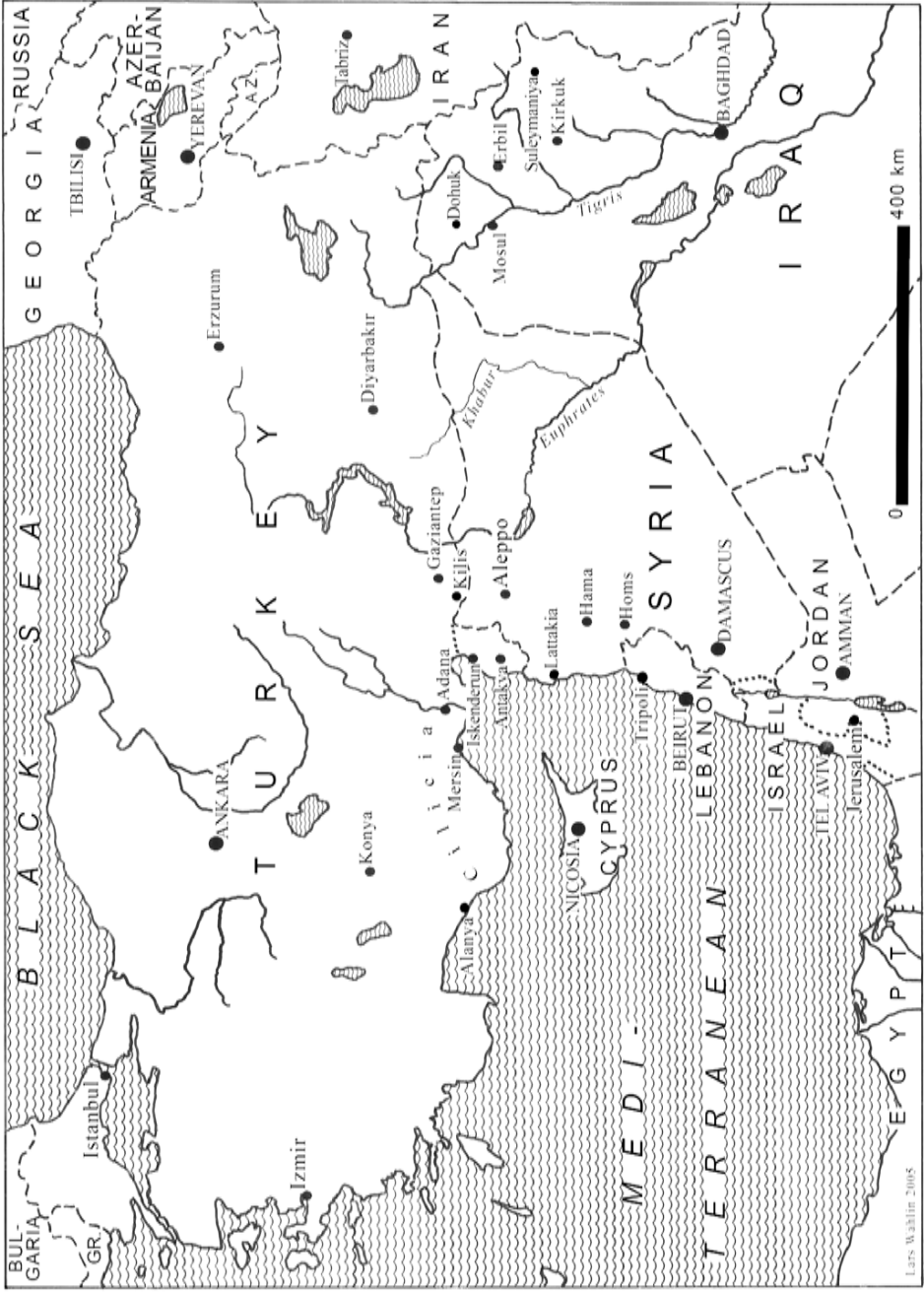
INTRODUCTION

Inga Brandell

This book starts on the *marches*[1] of Europe, in the divided island of Cyprus; it then travels through parts of the Middle East, in particular Syria and Turkey, visits Lebanon and northern Iraq, and finally returns to Europe. Unlike its point of departure, the return is not to the borders of Mediterranean Europe, but to Europe's eastern *marches*, in the lands of Count Dracula. The common topic of the different chapters is state frontiers, borders and boundaries of the nation-state, more precisely the use made of them by individuals and groups of people, and by institutions and governments. Some people use them accidentally when they are simply busy with their own lives; others use them consciously, or on the contrary are constrained by them or outright hindered in their lives. Some uphold them in practice and in imagination. Some construct a discourse about them, perhaps with the purpose of justifying their existence and their actual location, or with the purpose of contesting them and demanding their relocation or even disappearance.

The authors thus have in common a concern with both the concept and the reality of the nation-state boundary, and their relevance to the respective empirical cases. In this introductory chapter the history of the state boundaries in the Middle East is briefly outlined, as well as the general debate on nation-state borders and its relevance for the area. These issues are discussed again in a final chapter, which draws on the findings and analytical approaches in the preceding chapters. Furthermore, underlying the analyses in the different chapters is the questioning of the boundary between cultures, both at a concrete empirical level and at an abstract conceptual level. At the empirical level this concerns the extent to which historical experiences and contemporary conditions diverge such that people and institutions relate to the nation-state border in significantly different ways in different parts of the world. At the conceptual level it raises the question as to the

possibility of addressing a social, political and cultural phenomenon –
here the nation-state border – with the conceptions and theories
produced from other experiences: is there a common meaning of the
state frontier and the nation-state boundary? The latter issue, and the
consequences of a proper understanding of it, are explicitly addressed in
the penultimate chapter. Hence, although finding its material in the
fringes of Europe and in the Middle East, this book is also about nation-
state borders and boundaries in Western Europe, and in the Western
world generally.

The rest of this chapter will first introduce some selected aspects of
the history of Middle Eastern nation-state boundaries, drawing on earlier
research. This is meant to constitute an empirical background for the
subsequent chapters, and at the same time to introduce some possible
different perspectives on the topic. Following this, there is an overview
of the conceptual and theoretical issues with reference to the empirical
field. The chapter ends with a discussion of methodological questions,
and a brief introduction to the various chapters.

State Frontiers in the Middle East

Hatay as an Example

The case of Hatay, since 1939 a Turkish province in the south of that
country, but still included under another name in maps of Syria, will
serve as an entry point both to the topic, and to the scholarly approaches
to it. A long series of publications can be found on this Turkish region
situated on the Mediterranean, with its harbour Iskenderun
(Alexandretta), historical cities like Antakya, and a border not far from
Syria's second largest city, Aleppo. Many of the books on the region
were published in the 1930s and 1940s when the conflict regarding its
future was at its height. The subsequent cooling of the conflict was never
completed, the research interest has persisted and new theses and articles
bring the issue up again. To find all the relevant publications, however, it
is necessary to search under three different entries: Hatay, which is the
name of the Turkish province, Iskanderuna which is the Syrian name and
the Sanjak of Alexandretta, the name used during the French Mandate,
and still in use among European authors.

Iskenderun, the port on the Mediterranean, was heard of during the
winter of 2003, when American soldiers with their equipment were
awaiting for the green light from the Turkish parliament to go ashore
and move westwards towards the Iraqi border. After a couple of weeks
they left Iskenderun. Otherwise, this city has lost some of its importance
as the main regional trading harbour to other ports in southern Anatolia.
Iskenderun once gave its name to the whole region,[2] and was an

important part of the negotiations in the early 1920s when this region was first given a special administrative status within the French Mandate, and later ceded by France to Turkey just before the Second World War. Initially the fate of the Iskanderuna/Hatay region lay within the larger context of the conflicts over the upcoming independence of Syria. Turkey regarded most of this territory as Turkish lands, since it lay on its side of the truce lines of 1918 (see map 6, p. 140) had been occupied by the Turkish army for a couple of months; in spite of that Turkey declared in 1923 that it had no territorial claims on Syria. It came to the fore, however, when in 1936 the French Popular Front government signed the document planning for a future independent Syria, and in 1939, after an agreement between France and Turkey, an elected assembly in the Sanjak voted for its integration into Turkey.

At the time a series of articles and books published in Syria or in France took sides, on the whole against the French 'abandon', advancing, in particular, legal arguments. It was questioned how France was able to cede a territory which was not under its sovereignty, since it was only ruling Syria under a mandate from the League of Nations. Simultaneously authors and activists from Kemalist circles, in Istanbul, Ankara and locally, argued that the region was part of the Turkish 'motherland', and even more that the Turkish speakers in Hatay were the majority and were being oppressed. All these historical, social, political and legal issues remained to be brought up again in later works – political pamphlets as well as academic research. Although a slow normalisation has taken place, the conflict is not officially settled, and its intensity is still felt in some of the scholarly works by authors from the region.

Jacques Thobie, French historian and specialist on relations between France and the Ottoman Empire in the late period and more generally on Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, wrote two versions of a detailed article on 'l'affaire du Sandjak d'Alexandrette' (Thobie 1979, 1985). Consultation of the relevant archives and personal papers in Paris (Foreign Ministry) and Geneva (League of Nations) makes possible a detailed description of how France in the early 1920s was keen to settle the issues with the new Turkish power. The anti-Bolshevik intervention had failed and France could not afford to continue the war. Turkey thus became important as a buffer and an ally in the strategy to contain the Bolsheviks. Turkey, on the other hand, seized the opportunity to break the front it was facing – only in 1923 was it able to oust the Greek army from its future territory – therefore it accepted a treaty in which it was clearly stated that it had no further claims on the territory of the French Mandate, i.e. including the future Hatay.

Thobie's close following of events, involving the work of the Mandate Commission, finally leading to the election of an autonomous assembly in 1938 which in turn immediately decided to integrate with Turkey, a

decision accepted by France, is guided by one main question: namely, *why* France acted against international law, and against the interests and political will of most of the people whose territory it was set to protect through the institution of the Mandate. The answers are to be found among the regular perspectives of political history and international relations, and result from the balance of forces and actions taken by a number of actors, Turkey, France, the Mandate Commission of the League of Nations, and, to a certain extent, the Syrian government. At the most general level the answer will be that only Turkey had a long-term strategy and a clear purpose, which was never the case for France. Or, more precisely, Kemalist Turkey had a clear strategy for *this* territory, while France in both the early 1920s and the late 1930s had other purposes beyond the Sanjak and for which it could be sacrificed. In the 1930s, as is well known, the purpose was to anchor Turkey within an anti-Soviet alliance if there were to be a confrontation with USSR, in which case Turkey had a great geostrategical importance. The question put by Thobie could be answered within a regular analysis of national interests against the background of strategic preconditions in the regional and international context.

Elizabeth Picard revisited the Sanjak in the late 1970s and published her article some years after Thobie (Picard 1983). Her concern, however, is with Turkish Hatay, its economy and its politics. Although she discusses the Sanjak/Hatay as an international issue, its place in Syro-Turkish relations and its impact on them – in fact not very great – her focus is on the effects of the annexation on the region and its population, in particular the Arab minorities, and the handling of the 'national questions' in the Sanjak. When she addresses the same historical events of the 1930s as Thobie, she describes them in terms of 'a conflict between the Syrian and Turkish nationalisms'.[3] The outcome then resulted from the much more attractive offer of the Turkish nationalism – a clear identity, reforms in the domains of religion, administration and language, social transformation, even to a certain extent democratisation, and a prestigious political leader, Atatürk – which together unified the potential local constituency. For the Arabs in the Sanjak, in contrast, the Syrian claim to keep the region within its boundaries meant at the time remaining at least for a period under French rule, as the government in Paris had refused to ratify the treaty of independence. Furthermore, the Arab population in the region, which was schematically made up of Alawites, Christians and Sunni Muslims, adopted different approaches. The Alawites preferred to have as few relations with any central power as possible, the Christians feared a Muslim government, while some Sunni Muslims in particular in the higher classes, were in favour of the law and order they could expect from Ankara. The diverging interests of the Arab populations, and the lack of a clear perspective on the Syrian side,

explains why no effective opposition to the annexation by Turkey was raised.

As Picard is able to show, the result was that not only did the Armenians leave following the annexation,[4] which is well known, but also half the Arab Sunni Muslims, mostly rural labourers. The turkification of names and places that, according to the Turkish law of 1938 was applied in Hatay after the annexation, and an inflow of population from Turkey replacing the rural labour and others who had left took place. 'The Turkish citizens speak Turkish', and Picard observes, when she visits the region in the late 1970s, that the Sanjak citizens of Arab origin, at least the men, speak both Turkish and Arabic. The geographical and economic isolation of the region when it was cut off from the Syrian area of Aleppo, did not mean a lack of integration with Turkey. On the contrary, the presence of the Turkish state was strongly felt through its military, its administration, institutions and monuments. In spite of the turkification, Picard is also able to illustrate the new opportunities for maintaining links with the Arab world, through family connections and affinities, and possible support for local Alawite opposition from Syria in the early 1970s, as well as through emigration for work in the oil-producing countries. Her conclusion, however, returns to the issue of the 'bad treatment' of the national questions in the Sanjak, and she asks if the idea of a federation between Syria, Lebanon and the Sanjak that was discussed in the 1930s could have been a better solution. 'Would such a system, with levels of inclusive sovereignty and flexible relations, have resisted the nation-s tate model and its destructive surgery?' (Picard 1983: 61).

Picard raises questions of political economy and sociology, and of politics *tout court*, concerning the effects of a transfer of territory, with an underlying problematisation of nation-building and identity issues in the Middle Eastern context. The border and the many possibilities of crossing it, for smuggling or for political reasons, and at the state level the conflicts and cooperation it engenders are also part of her border study. More than a decade later Hatay is again studied, but from a different angle. Martin Stokes approaches the borderland of Hatay from a dual perspective: first, that of the 'identity' of young men in Hatay constantly aware of the border and of otherness – *heterotopia* as he calls it following Michel Foucault[5] – and, secondly, the place of Hatay as an (Arab) borderland in Turkey, or as a borderland for the Arabs (Stokes 1998). And he does this through a popular musical genre, the *Arabesk*, heavily criticised both in Hatay and in the rest of Turkey, and considered by many to be a 'hybrid Turkish version of Arab popular songs' (Stokes 1998: 265). Here the history of the transfer of territory does not bring to the fore the diplomats and politicians as in Thobie's analysis, or the social and ethnic groups in Hatay as in Picard's study. The transfer takes

its place in an analysis of the symbols of patriarchal national identity, with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the father. As Hatay has not been conquered militarily as the rest of the country, it remains a 'gendered border' and there is, as it were, writes Stokes, 'a crucial flaw in the masculinity of the border[…]responsible for the steady flow of an Arabness corrupting the Turkish political body, and a femininity which corrupts the vigorous masculinity of the Turkist political principle' (Stokes 1998: 270). The young Turkish men Stokes meets tell him about their fights with 'the Arabs – all *fellahs*', all peasants.[6] Their use of *Arabesk* music, with its longing and complaints, concludes Stokes, bridges for them the 'gap between nationalism and its all too visible limits', in other words, the power which they as Turks close to the border are entitled to and the real powerlessness of their lives (Stokes 1998: 284).

Read as a kind of progress of nation-building and territorial integration, the combined results of the three studies are quite interesting. Thobie, and to a certain extent Picard, focus on the initial figures, the different censuses and population estimates of the 1930s, both of them coming to the conclusion that no objective evidence made this region Turkish. Picard then, when describing Turkish Hatay, lays stress on the ongoing turkification, even discussing whether the Alawites are hiding their Arabness, and she has difficulties in knowing whether the people have 'become' Turks, if they know and speak Arabic or not. In Stokes' later field-work there is no longer any doubt that the region is part of Turkey, one proof of this being that Arabic does not seem to be forbidden in public places any more. But, on the other hand, when this 'Arabness' of the region is definitely out of the question and largely depoliticised, then it comes back in the form of *Arabesk* music, referring to Arabness both in its name and in its content.

Are these studies about the border? Thobie's is the history of how an international boundary was moved from one side of a region to the other – the political history behind the bounding of territories into sovereign nation-states. Picard's field study has its main focus on the difficulties of nation-building resulting from such a story as Thobie relates, in particular as regards the minority population, but also on the remaining conflict between Syria and Turkey over the territory, in other words the illegitimacy, as viewed by Syria, of the actual boundary. Stokes' approach finally is based on the argument that borders create problems for those whose lives they frame, because the modern state with its symbolic apparatus does not fade out on the border. On the contrary, it intensifies in order to coerce or persuade local populations to accept its presence and jurisdiction. Furthermore, the contemporary 'contradiction between nationalism and globalisation' (Stokes 1998: 263), is intensified in border regions where the boundaries cut through formerly undifferentiated territories. Implicitly, then, his analysis of 'Turkishness' stands out more

strongly because of the Arab otherness on the other side of the border – and on the Turkish side as well. The three studies are different examples of what border studies can be about. No doubt they also constitute a good introduction to the empirical question of the borders and boundaries in the Middle East. Hatay is, in the words of another author who has written about the case – a geographer this time, Stéphane Yerasimos – an 'aberration', and he further claims that 'like all extreme situations it does well in disclosing the process of territorial formation of the states of the Middle East' (Yerasimos 1988: 198).

Political Boundaries and Territories

The political boundaries or state frontiers in this volume consist first of a line running east-west between two very 'different territorial formations' as Yerasimos calls them. In the north of it lies the territory resulting from the Turkish national and military mobilisation to reconquer Anatolia and as much as possible of the territory lost following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. And to the south of the line lie the territories formed by the British occupation for limited political purposes, and ruled, on the one hand, by former Great Power agreements and, on the other, by strategic interests regarding the oil resources. The borders further south as well as north south through the Levant are thus essentially a result of power brokering and movements on the ground by European troops. The power brokering had as its background the division made before the war, in view of its imminence and the expected downfall of the Empire, of the Ottoman territory into regions controlled or 'influenced' by various European powers. In contrast to the creation of nation-states within the Balkan part of the former Ottoman Empire, where national movements prepared the ground and more or less obtained their desired territory, the national movements in the areas south (and east) of Turkey either received a different territory from the one they wanted, or were unclear about the territory to which they aspired.

These boundaries were all drawn in the aftermath of the First World War, when the principles of the Westphalian sovereign nation-state were dominant, with the concept of sovereignty now understood in the double sense of an inviolable right to a territory *and* the right of every people to self-determination if it so desired. Never before or after have so many commissions investigated and so many 'peoples' expressed their will concerning their 'sovereignty'.[7] Only to a limited extent were these principles applied in the Middle East, however. There was indeed a report following a visit to the Sanjak of Alexandretta by the Mandate Commission of the League of Nations. Surprisingly, it came to the conclusion that a majority of the seats in the region's assembly should go

to the Turks of the region. The population census was contested by both sides, as people themselves could choose in which category they wanted to be counted, with the possible overlapping of the categories.[8] In the Middle East, as in Europe, the effort to define 'peoples' meant searching for ethnographic, often linguistic, and historical evidence in order to produce statistical categories and overviews. Independently of the immediate impact of the work of the commissions, they introduced a whole battery of concepts linked to sovereignty and its content. As related by Nelida Fuccaro, in the case of the Iraqi-Syrian and Iraqi-Turkish borders the Permanent Mandate Commission thereby fostered among the people they encountered new ways of self-definition whether in terms of 'majority' or of 'minority' (Fuccaro 1999: 132ff).

On the whole, however, two conclusions drawn by Yerasimos in his article on the current political boundaries in the Middle East are worth repeating. First, that until the early nineteenth century only one political frontier existed, that between the Ottoman and the Iranian Empires, forged by centuries of struggle between them. This frontier corresponds, with minor differences, to the current international boundaries between Iran and Iraq, and between Iran and Turkey. The other boundaries were established in the absence of consultation with the local populations as regards their location, and even the creation of new states.[9] The major exception to this is Turkey, where those who inherited the vanquished Ottoman Empire, constituted a national movement able to exploit the divisions amongst the European powers and also to impose facts on the ground. The motives for the European powers were, in the first place and without doubt, the oil resources in the region (Yerasimos 1986: 123, 157). In this context the important consequences were that a boundary was drawn between Lebanon and Syria in order to strengthen the French foothold in the Middle East through its long-standing relations with the Lebanese Christians.

Furthermore, the boundary between Syria and Turkey became located further south than initially planned by the French, as a concession to Turkey, because France wanted to keep the Sanjak, with its economic linkages to Aleppo and to the regions that became Iraq (Thobie 1985: 99). The boundary between Syria and Iraq came to include territories in Syria, which had never been thought about as Syria, since the mandate was carved out when the issue of the Mosul region, now northern Iraq, was still unsettled.[10] Finally, with regard to this last region, Turkey was in the end unable to uphold its stand of treating the facts on the ground at the time of the truce in 1918 as the basis for the future boundaries. The British military advance following the truce, and the extensive commission efforts, led to the end-result that Mosul was included in Iraq, under the British Mandate. So, though Turkey was able after two decades to impose the truce lines as its boundaries in the Sanjak this was

not the case with Mosul. In this volume Lundgren discusses the tensions and paradoxes in Turkish policy towards this region since the first Gulf War.

Borders and Orders[11]

Borders: Terms and Concepts

This volume has as its main focus the nation-state border. Since the early 1990s there has been an extensive use in social and human sciences of the concepts of borders and boundaries, even frontiers, with different metaphorical meanings and referring to different social phenomena. Even when explicitly referring to a state boundary structuralist and semiotic approaches understand it as a limit,[12] while post-structuralists or post-modernists, regard it as both a limit and a periphery.[13]

Interestingly enough, the different European languages do not have the same capacity to distinguish between terms and concepts. While the Germanic languages have at their disposal only one word – *Grenz* – English and French have a number of different words, which are not even common for the two languages in question. The metaphorical invasion of the words 'border' and' boundaries', and sometimes 'borderlands', into the social sciences often refer to the seminal work by Fredrik Barth in 1969, in which he elaborates how ethnic groups act to constitute themselves by establishing a border with others (Barth 1982 [1969]). In other cases, the metaphorical use is an answer to post-modern concerns about peripheral conditions, 'hybrid' identity and other issues when individuals and groups are facing contradictory demands and diverging cultural norms.

The word 'frontier', on the other hand, seems to return in history and political science. This initially French word, originating of course in the military 'front', is used for example by the political scientist Malcolm Anderson (1996), and also by the historian Eugene L. Rogan in his book on Transjordan in the late Ottoman period (1999). However, their denotations are quite different. Rogan is studying Transjordan as a case of those outer regions where, although part of the Empire, only local non-Ottoman rule-making and powers prevailed. This was the case, for example, with Libya, the Arabian Peninsula, Eastern Anatolia and the Syrian steppe. These regions became *frontiers* when efforts began to establish direct rule and introduce the institutions of the Ottoman Empire. This is not far from the imperial Roman concept of the *march*, or for that matter the use made by Turner of the term in his influential work on the frontier in American history (1920). Anderson, in turn, quotes the authoritative geographer J.R.V. Prescott who remarks that 'there is no excuse for geographers using the terms "frontier" and

"boundary" as synonymous'; in the former's opinion, however, this does not correspond to ordinary language and Anderson then uses the word 'frontier' to refer to the international boundary, and 'boundary' to refer to the limits of political and administrative authorities below the state level.[14] The result is that two contemporary scholars, Anderson and Rogan, use the word 'frontier' but with quite different meanings. It can be assumed that Anderson's choice reflects his understanding and approach to international boundaries, in particular in the European context, where they stand as remnants of centuries of military confrontation, and as such constitute hindrances in different ways in the contemporary drive towards integration.

There is no need here to impose a unified use of terms. The relative, but persistent, plurality of the connotations and denotations of the different terms and their concrete and metaphorical use should be kept in mind, however, as they bear witness to the richness of the historical and intellectual references in play. Rooke reminds us about this in his discussion of the terms in Arabic in this volume.[15] It has been shown that classical Arabic geographers, although describing a politically divided world, lacked a concept for the political boundary or border (Brauer 1995). This has been confirmed by studies of the classical Arabic vocabulary (Miquel 1988) and travelogue narration (van Leeuwen 2000). The conclusion drawn by some authors that general cultural attitudes, based on religion, hindered a conceptualisation of the political borderline is, as Rooke states, an anachronism. First, there was a term for the concrete border marks in classical Arabic times which contradicts the idea of the incapacity to envision the territorial boundary. Secondly, only systematic comparison with non-Arabic material from before the establishment of the modern nation-state would show whether the case is not – which seems the most probable[16] – that nowhere were sharp political boundary lines between countries or peoples conceived of in pre-modern times (Rooke 1997). Of course, modern Middle Eastern languages have later on, like the European languages, transformed the meaning of old terms in order to be able to name contemporary political boundaries and borders.

In the contributions to this volume the international boundaries studied, are sometimes looked upon as *borders*, i.e. the periphery of a nation defined by its centre. They can in this case then be looked upon from the centre, or from the periphery. In other contributions the boundaries are conceived of as *frontiers*, defined by their exclusion of and opposition to what is on the other side of the line. The 'technical' term, *boundary*, refers to the line on maps and in treaties, and sometimes marked on the ground.

Borders and Belonging

The first decades of the twentieth century saw intense polemics concerning the nature of political boundaries. Against an earlier judicial understanding of boundaries as the result of treaties between states, some scholars began to assert that there were 'natural boundaries' as well as 'just boundaries'.[17] From this could – and did – follow arguments in favour of the 'correction' of boundaries. These works are important to remember not only for their political consequences but also for their reference to the entity the boundaries surround, a people or a people-state each with its particular characteristics. An organic understanding of the state was here combined with a socio-Darwinist vision of states in eternal competition and struggle. Critics consequently warned about the topic, like the French geographer Jacques Ancel who himself wrote about the geography of boundaries, but considered it 'dangerous for the scholar as it is filled with passions' (1938: preface); or, like the historian Lucien Fèbvre who warned against the justification for all kinds of violent politics offered by what pretended to be a science. 'In reality', wrote Fèbvre in opposition to the German geographers, and particularly Ratzel, 'it is not by beginning with the frontier itself that it can be studied and analysed, it is by starting with the State. *That* type of State, *that* limit to it, and as a consequence *that* frontier in the military and political sense.' (Fèbvre 1962 [1928]: 17-18).

But this line of reasoning was not the one followed in the early twentieth century. Instead there came as the alternative to the organic state with its borders imposed by its very nature, political bounding in application of the principle of the right to self-determination. This was formulated in the American President Woodrow Wilson's 14 points and institutionalised through the League of Nations. In Europe, in cases like the Balkans, Badie comments, the territorialisation on the basis of the principles of sovereignty and every people's right to self-determination led to an extremely severe imposition of identity issues, or what we might call 'ethnification' of politics and territories, imposing only *one* possible belonging (Badie 1995: 46). Contrary to the assumption behind this policy, several contributions to this volume, as well as the above-mentioned case of Hatay/Iskanderuna, clearly show that people often have more than one option when urged to answer the question who they are, in terms of 'people' or ethnicity. Recent historical research, for example on the Syrian Arab national movement in the 1920s and 1930s, has illustrated that the fact that people spoke Arabic, or 'were Arabs', did not necessarily entail that they opted to become citizens in an Arab state instead of the former Ottoman, at the time Turkish, state, were they given the opportunity to chose.[18] Examples are also given by Fuccaro, and others, of sometimes surprising positioning, like, for example, the

alliance between certain Kurdish and Armenian circles in a common nationalist mobilisation and project. Fuccaro takes the analysis further. In her work on the Yazidi Kurds, she states that 'the emergence of Iraqi minorities was a historical necessity of state building [...] It was a process of re-definition of boundaries between state and communities which resulted from the consolidation of modern institutions and which was clearly affected by the fixation of national frontiers in the region.'[19]

The inclusion that the boundaries produce – the belonging and the citizenship, or as Joel Migdal puts it, identity and status (2004: 15) – does not precede but results from *that* State – as Fèbvre wrote – which defines not only its boundaries but also, through its institutions, the categories and conditions of possible inclusion: *millets*, citizenship, majority, minority. Although it may seem so, this is not contradicted by recent research on the pre-modern establishment of international boundaries, as for example the often quoted works by Peter Sahlins on the establishment of different portions of the French-Spanish border (Sahlins 1989, 1998). Sahlins develops an argument against the state-centric perspective, characterising classics like Karl Deutsch and Reinhard Bendix. In contrast to them, he describes the border populations as both autonomous and active parts in the enforcement of the international boundary and the ensuing national institutional integration and cultural assimilation. One of his cases concerns one 'people', all Catalans in the Cerdanya region, who interestingly enough participated in the division of themselves and their double transformation into French and Spanish citizens respectively. Contrary to expectations these Catalans had *more* difficulties than the central national commissioners from Paris and Madrid in coming to terms and reaching a compromise in the process of delimiting the boundary. The bounding of France and Spain, in this case, took place within a context of local competition and conflicts. Sahlins, like Fuccaro, looks into the local society to discover the articulation between the conflicts and lines of division within it and the context and conjuncture linked to the establishing of the boundary – and the nation. The boundary and the nation were not imposed on these people; they pushed for its enforcement. Nevertheless, it was only through the creation of central state institutions, and concomitantly a national ideology, that this new possibility for them to handle their local conflicts and alliances occurred.

As mentioned, the seminal article by Fredrik Barth in 1969 has had a great influence on how the new boundary and border studies are conducted. If, in the early twentieth century the focus was on the nation-state and the polemics concerning its 'nature', scholars in the latter part of the century focused on the 'ethnic group', sometimes inducing reasoning at the level of state and nation as if there were congruence. When Sahlins, for example, wants to explain how the Catalans, both

immigrant Spanish and French living together in the more developed French part, still kept their identity as different nationals, he refers to Barth with the following quotation: 'Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories' (Sahlins 1998: 52; Barth 1982: 10). The question should, however, be raised as to whether the primordial or instrumental need or desire to be part of a group and the reproduction of the group, despite changing membership, which is Barth's argument can be relevant in Sahlin's case. Do people – here the French and Spanish Catalans – stick to their nationality as if it was an 'ethnic group'? Do not the state institutions, the linkage to a political centre, turn nationality into something different, which cannot be reduced to group belonging and identity? Does it not, in particular, join the two dimensions of 'belonging' and of inclusion in politics, and thereby create an access to what is beyond the group itself, even beyond the nation? In the Middle Eastern context Fuccaro relates, for example, how the Yazidi Kurds and other groups in the Iraqi mandate, through their inclusion into the modern state institutions, also began to directly address the international arena, at that time the League of Nations (Fuccaro 2000: 4).

In his introduction to an interesting collection of research on boundaries and belonging in the contemporary world, Migdal claims that the polemics between those who consider that the state boundaries are no longer relevant and their opponents who still see them as fundamental, might be creating a 'false dichotomy'. 'It may be more accurate, he states, to think of a world of multiple boundaries overlapping one another', producing numerous mental maps and many different forms of belonging, sometimes comfortable to combine, sometimes not (Migdal 2004: 22-3). In this contribution Migdal continues his important 'deconstruction' of the state and complexification of the understanding of the relation between state and society already developed in previous works (Migdal 2001). Although stressing that the state – or its fragments – remains 'at the center of the vortex', it is not clear, however, if there remains any reason to distinguish between the nation-state boundary and all the other boundaries dividing groups and surrounding individuals. While it is certainly true that what can briefly be called globalisation works in the direction of the proliferation of borderlines and concomitant belongings, it is still the case though that the nation-state remains, with Etienne Balibar's words, 'the principle reducer of complexities in the world' (Balibar 1988: 243). As such, it constitutes – with its boundaries – not only a fallback but also a powerful competitor to the cosmologies otherwise mainly offered by

religions or quasi-religions. Hence this volume claims that state frontiers, nation-state boundaries, are still worthy of particular interest.

Borders and Sovereignty

> Changes in the function of boundaries throughout history help to illuminate differences in the nature and patterns of interaction of different domestic and international systems. Such a clarification has become important for the analysis of international relations at a time when the world system appears to be characterized by two conflicting trends. On the one hand we observe the virtually universal recognition of territorial sovereignty as the organizing principle of international politics. On the other hand, because of the growth of transnational relations and interdependencies, there is a tendency towards erosion of the exclusivity associated with the traditional notion of territoriality. (Kratochwil 1986: 27).

After the preceding discussion of inclusion and belonging, this statement by Kratochwil introduces in a very clear way the other dimension of the boundary: sovereignty and territory.

Without questioning what might be a too 'systemic' approach,[20] it is worth following Kratochwil when he systematises some distinctions, also introduced and developed by other scholars (Raffestin 1986; Newman 2005). It is useful, as he argues, first to investigate the 'function' of a boundary, and second, to see that the manipulation of location *and* function constitute two different instruments. In the Middle East, from the Capitulations in the late sixteenth century onwards, the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers concerned the function of boundaries. And indeed it changed. This was the era, first, of the establishment and then the extension of the rights of foreign nationals in the Ottoman Empire, ending with the definition as mentioned above of 'spheres of influence' or 'control', implying an ever increasing *permeability* (Newman 2005: 406-7) of the Ottoman boundaries. With the post-First World War events, the *location* of frontiers became the instrument in the power contest. It took time though to stabilise the impact of location. Fuccaro (1999), and Velud before her (1991), have documented this with regard to the limit between the French and the British Mandates (Syria and Iraq). This was in principle a limitation of sovereignty between the two Mandates, but that was not its function; for years it co-existed with a division of labour regarding the maintenance of security and policing of the region that gave the British responsibility for the population on both sides.

With the formal independence of the Mandates in the 1930s and 1940s, the function of the boundaries became the closing off of territories and populations. In the case of Lebanon and Syria, the perception was that colonialism was responsible for the division between

the two countries. Hence there was initially a will to keep the borders open, and treaties were signed with that purpose. After a few years, the free trade agreements were not enforced, and the boundary between the two countries became what has been called a 'border of separation'. This changed, together with the 'function' of the border, as a result of the Syrian military intervention in the civil war in Lebanon. Since then the border has been open. Elizabeth Picard in this volume looks into the exchange at citizen level between the two countries under these different conditions.

Kratochwil's purpose is to 'appraise the role of boundaries in different social systems – domestic as well as international', and with that in mind he proposes to organise the analysis around three types of exchanges mediated by boundaries. At the most basic level, he writes, there is the exchange between the unit and its environment, defined as a residual concept, in other words everything that is not another unit. Secondly, and quite naturally, there is the exchange between one 'unit' and the other 'units' – an exchange which is 'decisively influenced' by the 'actor who maintains the boundaries of the unit'. The third exchange is that between the centre and the periphery of a unit (Kratochwil 1986: 28-9). Relying on the assumption that the states of the Middle East – 'units' – are for the time being exchanging with the same 'environment' as the rest of the world's 'units', a few remarks can be made. The maintenance of the boundaries in the Middle Eastern countries was difficult at the beginning of their establishment because of local as well as international *(environmental)* conflict over their location. In an initial period, the function of the borders was essentially to separate and hence to decrease the total exchange between the newly bounded countries (*units*), at the level of trade as well as at the level of population. This tendency was further strengthened by the siding of the different states with the two opposing forces in the bipolar world, as Turkey became a member of NATO and Syria, in particular, deepened relations with the Soviet Union.

A different situation developed in the last decade of the twentieth century, when the environment changed, as a result of the demise of the Soviet Union, and more directly of the Gulf War in 1990-91. Due to the new environment, in particular the direct involvement of the Western powers in northern Iraq, the 'function' of the boundaries changed. Lundgren in this volume discusses the Turkish-Iraqi border and Picard the Syrian-Lebanese. It is clear in both cases that the changes were the consequences of unilateral decisions, on the part of Turkey and Syria respectively. It could even be claimed that in both cases there was a *de facto* change of location of the boundary, although it was certainly not recognised. Motivated by security considerations these territories – Lebanon and parts of northern Iraq – underwent partial military

annexation, even if they kept their self-determination in other aspects. However, in both cases, formal respect for the principles of territorial sovereignty was upheld, permissions were asked for, consultations took place and agreements were signed. Two conclusions can be drawn from this. The first is that, just as was demonstrated by the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait in 1990, these cases reveal that the principle of the international community, as laid down in the charter of the United Nations, and of the territorial inviolability of its member states, is not always respected in the region.[21] The second is, that, given this contradiction between 'the environment' and the action taken by local as well as foreign actors, there should be no surprise at the resistance to regime change in the region, and in particular resistance to any reduction in the role played by the military in these regimes.

Sovereignty, respect for international boundaries and territorial sovereignty, is in the last resort not systematically an operational principle in relations between states in the region, and between those states and the international system. What, then, can be said about the internal dimension of sovereignty, in other words what Kratochwil calls the 'exchange' between centre and periphery? As already touched upon, after the First World War, the principle of the peoples' right to self-determination was not applied in the Middle East in the same detailed and meticulous way as in Europe. Rights of peoples recognised earlier, like those of the Armenians and the Kurds, were seriously reduced or sacrificed altogether. Censuses and commissions were manipulated, or overlooked when they were in conflict with different concerns. But together with events induced by the war, such as the British support for the Arabic anti-Ottoman upheaval, and the post-Ottoman Turkish mobilisation, the principle of the right to self-determination halted any effort to implement the system of direct control and colonisation, which from 1912 onwards had been planned in negotiations between the European powers. Instead, the Mandate regime was established with the stated purpose of laying the ground for self-determination.

Claude Raffestin has written that limiting is not arbitrary; it is the product of a relationship. As such, it expresses a project and the limits contain information when the project structures the territory (Raffestin 1986: 5). In this volume Micallef, Lundgren and Rooke discuss 'projects' on the Turkish and on the Syrian Arab sides respectively. Although not unproblematic, as studied in detail in other publications by Copeaux (1997, 2000), it is possible to make the Turkish project coincide with a territory that had been defended and reconquered – Anatolia – and with a people – the 'Turks', the great difficulty being, of course, the Kurds, who are too many to just 'become' Turks. In the Syrian Arab context, there was a people – the Arabs – scattered over at least the whole southern Middle East and the Arabian peninsula, and even large parts of

North Africa. The territory then – Syria as Rooke considers it in this volume – could be given different extensions, and was perhaps in the imaginary of its proponents more of a series of places and persons than 'a territory' (Rooke 2000). As is well known, this problem was handled inside and outside the Ba'th party by a fictitious idea of the current territory being only temporarily bounded, and waiting for the later unification of the different Arab states and the whole Arab people. Half a century later, it is possible to see how Arab socialism in its different varieties was constituted to compensate and to establish a real relationship and exchange between the existing populations in the bounded territories and the political centres. At the same time, it can also easily be assumed that the boundaries running with presumably Turks, Iranians, or Israelis on the other side are regarded in a different way from those dividing the Arabs among themselves – a question studied by Emma Jørum in this volume. On the other hand, in spite of the turkification policies, in spite of wars like that between Iran and Iraq, the limit constituted by the international boundaries is even in these former cases not easily recognised as the limit between 'two peoples'. Any boundary in the region cuts through populations who are affiliated.

Anderson remarks that when frontiers divide relatively stable societies, the longer they last, the harder they are to change, and he quotes Fernand Braudel who wrote that: 'Frontiers tend to entrench frontiers and make them seem natural phenomena' (Anderson 1996: 36). More needs to be known, but in spite of half a century of development efforts and institution-building, the stability of these societies cannot be taken for granted. The stability in this context has to do with institution-building on behalf of the state and its legitimacy, and the resources mobilised for the population, and as such, remains, under the prevailing complicated domestic, regional and international conditions, an open question.

Methodological Remarks

This volume has its origin in a multidisciplinary research project with a common thematic and empirical focus – Borders, boundaries and transgression – within a larger Swedish Research Council programme on Culture and Society in West and Central Asia, and in an international conference, Questions of Borders – Questioning Borders, convened in Uppsala in October 2000. The chapters by Copeaux, Picard and Kleberg were first presented at the conference, the others are part of the common project. It was clear from the outset that the universes of discourse and the frames of reference in the disciplines present were many. Boundaries and borders were, for the literary comparatists and historians, closely linked to limits between literary genres, the role of the

literary scene in nation-building, in particular as it is approached in the debate concerning the development of the novel. Benedict Anderson is a reference here, as is the 'post-colonial approach' in its discussion of the limits to the link established by Anderson between nation and novel.

International relations and political science approaches have an altogether different focus, most often on the state, which is analysed as the locus for foreign policy-making. This, in turn, can be seen as the outcome of a complex internal game, or as a practice of upholding itself and the nation in the relations with other states. Recent constructivist theories, or more classical theories concerning 'values' of territories, are possible frames of reference. Yet other conceptualisations could be found among the other disciplines. Anthropologists can draw on a series of different discourses when approaching border issues, from that on the boundaries of the ethnic group associated with Barth, its development within the extensive research on the US-Mexican border, or more recent thinking about the transgressions induced by post-modern society and globalisation: hybridity, heterotopia, and networks structured on a material as well as an ideal basis.

While the different pieces of research presented in this volume remain within their respective disciplines, the course of the project implied the construction of certain common categories, a reflection on the cases chosen in terms of both units and time periods, and on the level of description and explanation. The distinctions made and the methodological approaches proposed organise the exchange between the individual studies and underlie the possibility to add them to each other. They are, to a different extent, used explicitly or implicitly in the individual contributions. Suffice it here to give a brief overview of these methodological considerations.

Actors: Implications and Dilemmas

A first choice was made to structure the research on different groups of actors. This put the focus on something evident but often overlooked, namely that international boundaries are a very different thing depending on who you are. It can be assumed that national borders mean something to everyone living inside the unit that they surround. It can also hypothetically be assumed that different actors within the boundary have different relations to it.

State actors, be they civil servants or politicians, can be expected to maintain, establish and protect, explicitly or implicitly, the borders of the state. They might do this in both words and deeds, when wars are declared, or borders guarded and illegal immigrants rejected. *Intellectuals,* understood in the broad sense of teachers, journalists, scholars and others, tend mainly, through their political and cultural activities within a

more or less public sphere, to give meaning and substance to existing borders, but also in some cases to question and transgress them.

To *non-state economic actors*, the nation-state, constructed by its borders, can be supposed to provide the rules of the game for trade and economic activities. *Economic actors* both benefit from and are restricted by national legislation and norms. Government subsidies and customs duties reinforce national borders, although cross-border economic transactions constantly take place everywhere. *Migrants* finally are the most obvious example of a group transgressing national borders, while at the same time maintaining them in their minds, their imaginations and their activities in exile communities elsewhere. Through the transgressions made by migrants the importance of the border is reinforced; if borders were empty of meaning there would be no point in escaping them or crossing them.

The two first categories identified, central state employees and policy-makers on the one hand, and intellectuals on the other, can be assumed to be directly dependent on the upholding and maintenance of the boundaries for their position as well as their daily activities. When it comes to the third category, people involved in private business and industry, the boundaries might protect them and their activities, but could also be a hindrance. The same would be the case for people who want to move, for whatever reason, and unemployment is only one reason.

The implications are hence not the same, neither are the dilemmas put to different actors by the concrete existence of a nation-state boundary. State actors cannot take its future existence for granted. Challenges to the bounded unit can be made from both inside and outside. The regional or global context may change and significant others who have made possible the formation of a national identity could change or disappear. Intellectuals have to face the fact that not even within the nation-state are there any homogeneous versions of its history, culture or language. Other languages and interpretations of history can always be put forward and the choice between them is not neutral. Their relation to 'truth' and science confronts intellectuals with situations in which 'facts' (about language, history, culture) do not coincide with versions that are functional or necessary to legitimise the existing borders, and in consequence the definition of who 'we' are and who 'they' are.

The dilemma for non-state economic actors is that, on the one hand, the area constructed by the national borders does not necessarily correspond to individual or collective economic rationality, while, on the other hand, the state within this area possibly provides them with protection and a framework for predictable interaction. To migrants, national borders create a discrepancy between the world in which their everyday life takes place and their citizenship. There is not a match

between the borders of the world they live in and their nationality,
defined in a broad sense.

The Cases: Turkey and Syria

Both Turkey and Syria have a unique geopolitical and ideological
position in the Middle East. Kemalism constituted, and continues to
constitute a model for nation-building not only in West and Central Asia
and North Africa but also further afield. Syria, both before and after the
establishment of the state, was the centre for the Arab attempt to resist
the division of the Eastern Arab world into several states, and can still be
made to represent a possible united Arab world, even if few would view
Syrian-Lebanese relations as a realisation of this.

   In comparison with the area in general, both Turkey and Syria appear
as successes in nation-state building, both internally and by virtue of their
presence in the international system. On the other hand the demarcation
of the national border in the Turkish case becomes unclear when pan-
Turkic and pan-Islamic flows have at times been resurrected, not least in
relation to Central Asia. Furthermore, the 'Kurdish question' emphasises
the disputed status of northern Iraq, while also pointing out the inherent
difficulty in integrating a large 'minority' within a nation. When it comes
to Syria, the land borders are disputed not only in relation to Israel but
also in relation to Turkey. As mentioned above, Syria has never accepted
Turkish 'annexation' of the Hatay/Iskanderuna area, and this is a
potential issue for example in connection with the upcoming division of
regional water resources. Furthermore, the international pressure on
Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and uphold its boundaries with Iraq not
only strenghtened its boundary and cohesion but also, and quite to the
contrary, penetrated and fragmented its apparent cohesion.

   In a region marked by multilingualism and mobility, affiliations and
nation-building are, and have been, related to the dividing lines which
can be constructed; namely those that separate the Turkish, the Arab, the
Iranian, the Kurdish, or the belonging to different religions. Thus, along
with the concrete border conflicts, conflicts about resources (not least
water), and strategic conflicts which take place between the states (their
relation to Israel, the competition regarding influence in Central Asia, the
international, particularly but not solely American, presence and
involvement in the region), there emerge questions such as language and
identity not just in terms of belonging but also as national counter-
constructions. As has been pointed out in earlier research, a focus on the
Arab-Turkic divide, both as a territorial relationship between people and
states, and as an identity-forming marker, proves fruitful in a way which
goes beyond the immediate regional interest (Picard 1993).

Conjunctures

An empirical topic like this one, international boundaries and nation-state borders in the Middle East, demands a timeframe. In order to make the contributions build on each other, they focus on two time-periods, two very different conjunctures. The first is the early twentieth century when most boundaries in the Middle East were drawn. The second is the contemporary era of globalisation and liberal encouragement for free trade, as well as regional and international cooperation. 'The disjunction between the organizing principles and the social reality' in Kratochwil's words (1986: 25) during the earlier period has been discussed above. In the later period the contradictions are also strongly felt: on the one hand, the defence in 1991 of Kuwait in the name of the principle of territorial sovereignty, and on the other, infringments on Iraq's territorial sovereignty and, then, a war in the name of the pre- or post-Westphalian principles of the right to preventive and humanitarian intervention.

As will be seen, most of the contributions concentrate on one or other of the two time-periods. Another timeframe altogether is chosen in what were initially conference contributions by Copeaux, Picard and Kleberg. The choice of the 1920s and the post-Cold War periods can be discussed. However, it fulfils the purpose of clearly linking the region, and the issue of the boundary and the borders in it, to the international or global issues of boundaries and borders. For this purpose, it is equally important to have two different time periods. Only then can a general debate arise out of a regional case, avoiding the particularism inherent in the regional and international setting of one specific historical conjuncture.

Synchrony and Anti-diachrony

One of the problems the social and human sciences have to handle is that their research and findings are dated and most often made *post-hoc*, which is of concern also for this project. Cautiousness recommends asking what and how, but why can rarely be avoided. There is always a temptation to read history backwards, to assume that what came first was the cause of what came after. If neo-Darwinist thinking has long not been accepted, the great differences between poor and rich in the world of the late twentieth century encourage thinking about how to get from there to here, generally in terms of 'development', or lately in terms of 'democracy'. Clearly the Middle East was and is part of 'there'; societies that have not yet climbed up the ladder; not yet 'developed', nor 'democratic'. If the issue of borders and boundaries were approached from this perspective, no new findings would be made, the results would already be known, as history read backwards.

Instead, the context, the actors, the thinking of the 1910s-20s are investigated within a synchronic moment in time, without a before and without an after. The same is done by the authors who focus on the later period in their contributions. There are, of course, also historical explanations in the different chapters; it is reasonable to assume that institution-building and ideological debate one day set the stage for the day after. But this will not be taken beyond that point and does not imply that the bounding of territories or nation-building follows any given sequences. On the contrary, these two periods when set alongside each other, both bring forth forgotten history – and with that possible other models and evolutions – and at least to some extent blur the border between 'the West and the rest', in other words the structure of teleological thinking.

Different categories of actors and their relations to the nation-state boundary, Turkey and Syria as the two main cases, the two time-periods and their respective domestic, regional and international conjunctures, the synchronic and anti-diachronic approach handling the problem of causality – these methodological perspectives underlie the collective work of the following contributions, not as a straitjacket, however, and thus often implicitly or only partly present. In this context the multidisciplinarity of the project may be recalled. The scholars make use of the questions and the knowledge produced in other fields, as is always necessary when doing research in a relatively 'under-studied' region.[22] Suffice it here to mention a major additional advantage resulting from a collective multidisciplinary research: the confrontation of the different structuring of the various fields of knowledge brings out a scrutiny of the self-understanding of the history of the respective disciplines, and consequently of the history of their objects of study. To do research on a common topic in a multidisciplinary context entails a questioning of the epistemology as well as the ontological presuppositions of one's own discipline.

Borders and Boundaries

Practices and Transgressions

The research on state frontiers, borders, boundaries and transgression presented in this book is organised in two main sections. The first four chapters concentrate on the use of national boundaries and their transgression. The origin of the boundaries is spelled out, but they are taken for granted as such and are not at the centre of attention. What is discussed in detail is the different actors' practices with regard to these boundaries. The analysis is, of course, often grounded in interviews or declarations, justifying or explaining behaviour or judgements, or

contradicting them. But the focus is on the actors themselves, their activities and their actual relation to the boundary. The following three chapters, in contrast, concentrate on the discourses in the mass media and other intellectual constructs that explicitly discuss, justify or try to give meaning to the existing national boundaries. Here the very boundary itself is the focus, and the divisions it establishes are problematised and analysed. All these chapters develop analyses of Syrian and Turkish, or Turkish-Cypriot, material. The two concluding chapters in the volume address epistemological and conceptual issues. The first draws on discussions referring to European contexts, while the concluding short chapter sums up and discusses some of the empirical, conceptual and theoretical contributions of the other chapters in the book.

As an entry to the topic, the island of Cyprus, with its manifold divisive lines, borders and boundaries, part of the history of the region, but also an isolated instance, imposed itself. The island was once part of the Ottoman Empire, just like the other cases under scrutiny in this volume. But when the turmoil of the First World War brought that Empire down, entailing a struggle over territory and borders, Cyprus had already been for several decades under British control. On the other hand, its independence constitution of 1960 and the subsequent ideological conflicts that led to the divisions of the island were under strong ideological influence from Greek and Turkish mainland politics. Claire Mauss-Copeaux, who has written extensively on memories in the context of the Algerian war for independence and Etienne Copeaux, whose main contributions concern the Turkish vision of nation and territory, visited the island of Cyprus for several lengthy periods of fieldwork in the late 1990s. They highlight stories of borders of separation of many origins and many kinds, showing how, at the level of villages and people, families and individuals, not only space and territory but also time have been divided and broken up. What they are able to document is the very concept of boundaries realised in its most extreme way, and also the long-term meaning it has had in the lives and perceptions of people concerned – a marker which will remain, notwithstanding the possibilities of transgressing the boundaries that existed earlier, and the massive movement across the divide since the opening up of passages in April 2003, even in a future reunified Cyprus.

In contrast, the Syrian traders of Aleppo seem much less concerned about the territorial and national boundaries surrounding them and within which their activities and lives take place. Annika Rabo, author of several anthropological works on Syria, followed a group of Aleppian traders in a lengthy fieldwork. Once as important economically and politically as Damascus, Aleppo was cut off in the 1920s from its earlier connections northwards by the drawing of the boundary between the new Turkish Republic and the French Mandate. Later, with the

conversion of the Sanjak of Alexandretta into the Turkish Hatay, it lost
its seaport and an important hinterland. Both these events were followed
by the arrival of many refugees in the city. But half a century later this is
history. Most traders established other connections. They made use of
the opportunities created by independent Syria's foreign policy during
the Cold War to transgress its boundaries and gain experiences and links
in other parts of the world. These could then be exploited during the
period of economic liberalisation in Syria and of general globalisation
that characterises the time studied. On the other hand, if the
transgression of the boundary to nearby Turkey is of relatively limited
economic interest, it becomes, with liberalisation and modernisation, an
opportunity for tourism, for comparison, and for rethinking an identity
which was once common and which long afterwards remains as a sense
of proximity.

   These issues emerge in a slightly different perspective in the following
chapter by Elizabeth Picard, political scientist with a series of
publications on Middle Eastern issues, in particular on Syria and
Lebanon. Her focus is on the Syrian business community. In the 1960s
many businessmen left their country as a result of nationalisations and
settled in Beirut in nearby Lebanon. A decade later they had to position
themselves in the Lebanese civil war and relate to the growing
involvement of the Syrian regime. These often highly successful private
bankers, industrialists and traders were joined several decades later by
another type of Syrian businessman, emerging from Syria's state
capitalism. At that time, from the 1990s onwards, the stake was the
liberalisation of the Syrian economy, and hence a possible return for the
former refugees. In this chapter the sense of proximity hinted at in the
Aleppo study is made specific and more complex by the fact that the
'straddling' between Syria and Lebanon takes place in a context
characterised not only by a common Arabness and many family links,
but also the strong political and military Syrian involvement in Lebanon.
At the same time, as for the Cypriots in the Copeaux study, the territorial
boundary has played a decisive role for this group of wealthy refugees:
first as the limit between two political sovereignties, and second, in spite
of the growing Syrian influence in Lebanon, as a limit between two
economic systems.

   In the last chapter of this section the actors are not individuals or
social groups but the Turkish state, and the topic its practice regarding its
southeastern border, with Iraq. Here, as is only rarely made public,
Turkey for more than a decade transgressed an international boundary
and violated the territorial and political sovereignty of a neighbouring
country. Åsa Lundgren, political scientist with earlier publications on
foreign policy and on Turkey, examines in detail the paradoxes of a
foreign policy upholding a doctrine of absolute respect for territorial

sovereignty and yet showing a practice of violations, but at the same time trying to maintain respect for the sovereignty of this southern neighbour. Inevitably the dilemmas of the Turkish foreign-policy makers and the Turkish military are based on the fact that the Kurdish people, who dominate what was once the province of Mosul, now northern Iraq, and the whole of southeastern Turkey transgress this boundary that divides them. As in the preceding chapters, the particular conditions of the territorial part of the nation-state building in the region are highlighted, but here from the point of view of foreign policy-makers and state builders.

Discourses and Difference

Borders and boundaries are put into practice, transgressed, upheld. Some of this is, of course, done in a verbal way. Other discourses, however, are neither incidental nor circumstantial, their very purpose is the border or the boundary, the enclosed national territory, its history and the justifications for the location of its boundaries. Boundaries and borders in modern discourse are predominantly part of that connected with the territorial nation-state. In this context a particular non-verbal intellectual construct is the map. Tetz Rooke, in the first chapter of this section on discourses, uses maps together with a couple of important founding texts to discuss the Syrian territory and its boundaries. Rooke is an Arabist and literary historian. Here he compares contemporary Syrian descriptions of the Syrian territory and its boundaries with two works from the early twentieth century, one by the well-known French Jesuit scholar Henri Lammens published before the Mandate, and one from shortly after its inception and part of a great Syrian nationalist endeavour to define the nation scientifically. By drawing also on other recent studies of the 'map-making' of nations, and illuminating the history behind the first formulations of Syria as a bounded territory and a nation, he is able to open yet another window, after Rabo and Picard, on boundary, territory and nation in Syria. Suggestions concerning the weakness of the 'territoriality' of the Arab states are a supplementary result.

Turkey, in contrast, seems to be extremely conscious both of what is and what is not its territory, and its qualities. As Roberta Micallef reminds the reader in her contribution, the National Pact – referred to also in the Copeaux and Lundgren chapters – is here read as the concomitant establishment of the Republic and the definition of its territory. This should correspond to the armistice lines after the First World War. Micallef, working in the field of turcology and comparative literature, takes a closer look at this through the lens of the Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. Her material is the newspaper's reporting on the Hatay region, for the Syrians their claimed Iskanderuna discussed earlier

in this introduction, which in contrast with the rest of the actual Turkish territory was not included from the beginning of the Republic. By highlighting recent articles on Hatay, and linking the tropes connected with the region to the Atatürk saga, she manages in showing both its – changing – function as a rhetorical device and to illustrate the ambivalence surrounding the region and its inhabitants. Here a borderland and its boundary are thought about in terms of inclusion and exclusion, and more concretely so than in the Syrian case. In particular, the Turkish-Syrian divide, as well as the Turkish-Arabic one, is implicit in different ways in many of *Cumhuriyet*'s articles on Hatay.

The discursive construction of this divide is at the centre of Emma Jørum's chapter on the Turkish-Syrian crisis of 1998. Jørum, who is a political scientist, studies four Arabic newspapers' coverage of the events between the Turkish demand in October that year that Syria expel the Kurdish leader Abdallah Öcalan from its territory and immediately stop supporting the organisation he had founded, the Kurdish Workers Party, PKK, and the settlement of the crisis in a Turkish-Syrian agreement a month later. By choosing newspapers from three countries, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, it becomes possible to investigate how the nation-state boundaries are given meaning in terms of history, contemporary power politics, and national identity. In this crisis basic conceptual structures such as the divide between Turks and Arabs, as well as the divide/relation between the different Arab countries, not to mention the place taken by Israel within these constructions, are all brought up. So is once again the territorial issue of Hatay/Iskanderuna, together with the problems surrounding boundary-transgressing resources, such as water. As it turns out, the descriptions and explanations of the crisis, as well as the contextual perspectives offered by the newspapers, differ quite substantially. Interestingly enough, while the divide between Turks and Arabs is at the centre of contest, the one between the Arabs and the Kurds is not really acknowledged, in spite of the fact that the crisis concerned a Kurdish organisation and its leader. In fact, this strengthens the argument concerning the relative weakness of the territorial link, thereby foreshadowing its continued relevance. Divisions and otherness are constructed on political grounds, dominated by the conflict introduced by the existence of Israel. The question of the actual territories and their inhabitants – also Kurds – is seemingly of less relevance and is neglected.

Afterthoughts

The topic of borders, boundaries and otherness is general and specific at the same time. In his chapter on Count Dracula, Lars Kleberg, a specialist in Russian literature and theatre, brings to this volume the

invention of Eastern Europe. The history of the creation of an 'Other' through the invention of Eastern Europe, can be read in parallel with what some of the other chapters tell about Turkish or Arab formulations concerning their 'Other'. But this 'Eastern European' history, which Kleberg discusses with reference to the constructivist approach often related to Edward Said's book *Orientalism*, also puts some questions to the very framework of the scholarly work undertaken and presented in this volume. What about the *translatability* of cultures? Can the meaning inside practices and discourses be approached from the outside? Kleberg's explicit purpose is to discuss what is nowadays called cultural studies. Nevertheless, it concerns the contributions in this book, in spite of the researchers defining themselves in other disciplinary terms. His argument, however, in polemics with much of the postcolonial and more generally contemporary cultural studies, is that a 'dialogical' approach, based on the works of Bakhtin, is more fruitful than that proposed by Said. Furthermore, a qualified transgression of the cultural divide better corresponds to the very basis of epistemology; only by transgressing it can knowledge exist.

As mentioned above, the concluding short chapter returns to the question of the boundary and the border in the Middle East and its transgression, sums up and discusses parts of the analytical propositions and empirical results presented in this book, linking some aspects to a more general and theoretical discussion of the use and meaning of nation-state boundaries.

Notes:

[1] Before the invention of national sovereignty political domination and control related differently to territories. Thus, during the Carolingian Empire, peripheral zones where defence had to be envisaged, were called marches.

[2] Alexandretta and Iskanderuna both refer to Alexander, Iskandar in Arabic, the pupil of Aristotle and the conqueror of Persian Empire in the 4th century BC. The name given by Turkey to the region, Hatay, is supposed to refer to the Hittites who ruled present-day Turkey and Syria in the second millennium BC. According to Yerasimos the name came up in the 1920s and referred also to the Khitay, a turco-mongol people – thus implicitly then staking a Turkish claim on the glorious Hittites as a Turkic people (1988: 207).

[3] Which, she underlines, also illustrates the general difficulties in defining 'just' boundaries in the Middle East (Picard 1983: 49).

[4] In fact, they had arrived at the beginning of the century and could not envisage remaining under a Turkish government. France also encouraged their exodus.

[5] Heterotopia meaning 'an impossible space' containing a 'large number of fragmentary worlds', Foucault as quoted by Stokes, 1998, p. 264.

[6] Picard describes Hatay as a place where Arabic is not spoken publicly, In Stokes' article people complain about the 'all-pervasive sounds of the Arabic language'. Things have changed. Both are relating stories about the unrest and insecurity, political and perhaps criminal of the 1970s. Picard, however, talks about an urbanisation of the Alawite Arabs, who are the 'enemies' of Stokes informants and described by them as 'fellahs', and by him as living in the outlying districts of the city.

[7] See, for example, the discussion by Bertrand Badie under the title 'From Westphalia to Versailles' in his book *La fin des térritoires et de l'utilité sociale du respect* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), pp. 42-51.

[8] Arab-speaking Alawites could accept that they themselves were descendants of the Hittites, and thus, in the history written by the new Turkish power, Turks. On the other hand great Sunni Muslim families with an Arab background and name but for centuries with a close relationship with the central Ottoman power in Istanbul, reading and writing Arabic and Osmanli, speaking Arabic and Turkish, could register as Turks because of their political relations. In the dispute over the figures no serious case for a Turkish majority was made, however. The latter could perhaps be considered the greatest group, but not the absolute majority. The reason why they were given majority status in the Assembly is not explicitly stated in the studies; implicitly, however, the understanding is that the report and proposals of the commission became what they were because France and Turkey wanted it.

[9] The administrative boundaries of the Ottoman Empire – the regions called 'vilayet' are sometimes referred to as motivating the bounding of these territories and in fact supplying, for example, one of the arguments for the Iraq of Saddam Hussein to claim Kuwait. If there is some historical truth in this, the boundaries were certainly drawn with knowledge of those limits, and Turkey often referred to them in the conflict. Many other motivations were expressed, however, as by the British Bunsen Committee which in its report in 1915, used ethnological and historical criteria to divide 'Asian Turkey' (excluding Arabia) into five regions: Anatolia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine, Iraq-Mespotamia. See Yerasimos 1988: 135.

[10] This eastern region, the Jazira, and the French policy to integrate it into Syria is studied in detail by Christian Velud in his thesis (1991). See also his 'En Syrie, de l'Euphrate au Tigre: la question de la frontière orientale', unpublished contribution to the conference 'Questions of Borders – Questioning Borders', Uppsala 2000. France, of course, also initially had plans for Mosul.

[11] This is a reference to a book edited by Mathias Albert, David Jacobson and Yosef Lapid, although they added another contested concept: *Identities, Borders, Orders. Rethinking International Relations Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[12] The earlier work by Raffestin (1986), and in particular Delahaye (1977) are examples of this.

[13] See, for example, the contributions in Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (eds), *Border Identities. Nation and State at International Frontiers* (1998).

[14] To further complicate the matter, border is, according to Anderson, the word used in the US for international boundary since frontier there refers to the meaning given to it by Turner, 'a moving zone of settlement in a continent' (Anderson 1996: 9).

[15] See also Rooke's discussion of the concept and discussion of Ralph Brauer's analysis (1995), in 'Gränsbegreppets historia i arabvärlden' (The history of the concept of border in the Arab world), unpubl. research paper, Uppsala 1997.

[16] See the introductory chapter in Daniel Nordman's *Frontières de France* (1998) for a detailed discussion of the historical use of the different concepts in a French context.

[17] Names to mention here are the geographer Friedrich Ratzel, and Karl Haushofer, as well as the political scientist Rudolf Kjellén.

[18] Peter Sluglett has written about this, see 'From the Ottomans to the Arabs. Some Notes on the Meaning of Borders', paper read at the conference 'Border Questions – Questioning Borders', Uppsala 2000. See also Inga Brandell and Annika Rabo, 'Arab Nations and Nationalism. Dangers and Virtues of Transgressing Disciplines', in *Orientalia Suecana*, LI-LII (2002-03) and its references.

[19] Fuccaro 1999, quoted from her own summary in 'Fixing Borders, Re-Defining Communities. The Case of Northern Iraq'. Unpubl. contribution to the conference on 'Questions of Borders – Questioning Borders', Uppsala 2000.

[20] This is the debate with the whole literature in the stream of 'borders and orders', see also references to later works by Kratochwil and Lapid in the bibliography.

[21] The American-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 only reinforced this impression, whatever the judgement of the political justification of the decision, while on the other hand, the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon two years later pointed in another direction, just like the common action in 1991 against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. However, the general impact of these events could hardly result in a greater confidence in the respect of the principle of territorial sovereignty.

[22] Brandell and Rabo have discussed this at some length in 'Arab Nations and Nationalism. Dangers and Virtues of Transgressing Disciplines', in *Orientalia Suecana*, LI-LII (2002-03).

BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

PRACTICES AND TRANSGRESSIONS

DIVIDING PAST AND PRESENT

THE 'GREEN LINE' IN CYPRUS 1974-2003

Etienne Copeaux and Claire Mauss-Copeaux

This chapter presents some results of an inquiry in both the Northern and Southern sides of Cyprus, before the Green Line separating the communities was opened in April 2003. After some considerations of the original characteristics of that strange borderline dividing the island since 1974 (since 1964 in some places), it focuses on its role in the Cypriots' memories: the Green Line has divided both space and time and has damaged individuals' identity. By means of interviews with the Turkish population of the North, we experienced the pain of a community urged by its illegal government to forget its villages and their past, which is painfully trying to rebuild its memory.

On 23 April 2003, one of the most impassable borderlines in the world was opened: the 'Green Line' dividing the island of Cyprus between a Greek and a Turkish part since 1974. A great number of Cypriots, since then, have seized the opportunity of revisiting their birthplace, the village they had left 29 years before, and meeting their former neighbours and friends. The existence of the Green Line has determined the life of an entire population, deceived by the promises of two extreme nationalisms, and which has spent three decades in sadness or anger on both sides.[1] The opening of the Green Line in 2003, however, has not fundamentally changed the situation. Since 1974 and even 1964, Cyprus has been a land of limits and boundaries, legal or illegal, zonal, national or international, and one cannot travel freely across the country. The legal government of the Republic can exert its own sovereignty only on the Southern part, while the Northern part, although self-proclaimed as the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)', is almost a province of the Republic of Turkey.[2]

The unusual density of the impassable limits has had a great effect on our research, begun when we were living in Istanbul. Of course, it was

very easy for us to go often to the North of Cyprus (a one-hour flight), more difficult and expensive to go to the South (a day trip across from Athens). Above all, we speak Turkish and not Greek. We are aware of the asymmetrical nature of our inquiry; but, as far as we know, very few scholars have undertaken an inquiry among the Turkish population of Cyprus.[3] Of course, some visits to the South were essential to understanding the life and situation of the Turks before the partition. The territory of Northern Cyprus being an illegal republic, however, our research had to be unofficial for administrative reasons, and we had to work very discreetly, given the suspicious nature of the authorities: the Cyprus issue was and still is a *millî dava*, a question which cannot be openly discussed. For these reasons, rather than interviewing officials, politicians, trade unionists or academics as it is often done, we preferred to bring about unexpected meetings, in order to gather unprepared, spontaneous opinions from ordinary individuals like peasants, shepherds, low-ranking civil servants, shopkeepers, craftsmen. We did not leave everything to chance, however. These interviews were provoked in places of our choices, given that we know the past of every village in Cyprus, and in the case of the resettlement of a Southern population, we are familiar with the origins of the inhabitants, and we know and often have photographs of their former village.

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When the British colony of Cyprus became an independent Republic in 1960, the authors of the Constitution, deliberately or not, established a state system based on the existence of what was called *millet* under Ottoman rule, even if the word *millet* itself was not used. Each of the main communities – Greek/Orthodox and Turkish/Muslim – obtained a separate representation with its own Communal Chamber, and benefited from a given ratio for ministries, representatives, civil servants, etc. As an effect of the pro-Turkish policy during the colonial era, that ratio, 70:30, was heavily in favour of the Turks who constituted only 18 per cent of the population as a whole. According to the Constitution, a Cypriot could only give his vote for a candidate from his own community; a Turk was not allowed to vote for a Greek and vice-versa. As a result, the notion of citizenship itself was blurred by the legal and administrative organisation of the communities. Unlike in modern federal states such as Germany or the United States, the status of a Cypriot citizen did not depend on his geographical location in a territory marked off by boundaries, but on his personal identity, in this case on his ethnic and religious identity.[4]

   Such a situation incited both Greeks and Turks to turn back towards

what was considered by the nationalists to be their 'motherland', Greece or Turkey. The new Republic had no national anthem; it had a flag, but the use of Turkish and Greek national flags was expressly authorised by the Constitution, and they were largely used. In addition, since the nineteenth century for the Greeks, and since the birth of the Kemalist Republic (1923) for the Turks, each community was deeply influenced by ideologies and propaganda from its 'motherland'. At school, pupils were taught with textbooks brought from Greece or Turkey.[5] In that strange Republic of Cyprus the watchword of the Greek nationalist movement (EOKA) was *Enosis*, 'union', the abolition of any frontier with Greece; and the watchword of the Turkish-speaking nationalists (TMT)[6] was *Taksim*, 'secession', the creation of a frontier dividing Cyprus into two territories.

The Constitution was soon denounced as 'unworkable' by the Greek community. Intercommunal clashes had already occurred in 1958, and they started again in December 1963. According to the Turkish version of these events, violence compelled the Turkish Cypriots to withdraw to 'Turkish districts' scattered throughout the whole island. Thus, the Turkish Cypriots were physically separated from their Greek compatriots and, according to the Turkish version again, their leaders were barred from government meetings and 'compelled' to establish their own Turkish administration. In contrast, according to the Greek version, the Turkish Cypriots, willingly and without constraint, deliberately chose an illegal and separatist situation.

From that perspective, the Turkish withdrawal, which occurred during the first months of 1964, may be interpreted as the territorialisation of a *millet*.[7] The Turkish districts were fallback positions, where Turkish Cypriots, fleeing from isolated and threatened villages, or mixed villages, took refuge; but it happened very often, too, that the Turks were forced by their own nationalist organisation, the TMT, to withdraw to these enclaves. Often, the Greek inhabitants were expelled by force beforehand. On both sides, supporters of peace and reconciliation were killed by extremists from their own community. The Turkish districts quickly received military support from Turkey, consisting of arms and officers. At the end of 1967 a Provisional Chamber of the Turkish Government (*Geçici Türk Yönetimi Meclisi*)[8] was established: a so-called state came into existence, led by the Turkish Vice-President of Cyprus Fazıl Küçük, the Turkish members of the Assembly, and the members of the Turkish Communal Chamber, that is, the Turkish side of the legal power founded in 1960.

This authority was exerted over a strange geographical entity: 45 enclaves, constituting only 1,5 per cent of the whole Republic of Cyprus, scattered all over the island, with a population of 80,000 natives and 25,000 refugees. The biggest enclave, including about one-third of the

Turkish population, consisted of the northern half of Nicosia, and stretched to the Pentadactylos Range, controlling the impregnable fortress of Saint-Hilarion and the main road joining Nicosia to Kyrenia, a Greek-speaking harbour on the Northern coast. Only two other enclaves were settled with over 5,000 inhabitants, Kiados (Serdarlı)[9] and Lefka, seven had more than 2,000, and the rest consisted of very small zones, even isolated small villages, like Kampyli (Hisarköy) or Gialia (Yayla). Until 1967, these Turkish districts were often besieged and attacked by Greek-Cypriot nationalists, and life in what became ghettoes was, at least in 1964, that of a prisoner.

   Turkish nationalists considered a common life with Greek Cypriots to be impossible: anyway, according to their views, a common life had never even existed, for historical, cultural and social reasons. The intercommunal clashes, which occurred in 1958, 1963, 1964 and 1967 (around 1,000 dead on both sides), seemed sufficient proof that the idea of *taksim* (separation) was justified. These statements very soon became a dogma taught in textbooks, and were further expressed in the preamble of the Constitution of the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (1975 and 1983) (Eroğlu 1976: 7, 69-70, 166).

   In July 1974, following a pro-Greek *coup d'état*, the Turkish army invaded Cyprus. Within a few weeks the North was occupied; the Greek-Cypriot population was forced to flee to the South, and within a year almost all the Turks of the island were gathered in the 'occupied zone' in the North. Cyprus was then *de facto* divided into two parts, separated by a cease-fire line, the 'Green Line', already in existence in Nicosia since 1964, and stretching all along the island from Kokkina (Erenköy) to Famagusta. A 'Turkish-Cypriot Federated State' was proclaimed unilaterally in 1975, followed by an unrecognized 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus' (TRNC) in 1983. Even if around 1,000 Greeks and 500 Maronites remained in the North, this process proved to be the accomplishment of the territorialisation of a Turkish Muslim *millet*, to the extent that the rights and duties as defined in the constitution of the TRNC (1975) dealt not with 'citizens' of Northern Cyprus but with 'Turkish citizens' (*Türk yurttaşı*), clearly meaning that non-Turkish or non-Muslim inhabitants were only a secondary category.[10]

A Plurality of Frontiers

Former Turkish Ghettoes

From 1963 to 1974, the Turkish ghettoes had their boundaries. They were not 'borders', of course, either from a legal point of view, or in their material aspect. Turkish Cypriots were not numerous and, even if the Turkish ghettoes were small dots on the island's map, these districts

were a fair size on the ground and difficult to protect against Greek activists; everything was possible: attacks, ambushes, murders, abductions, traffic. The villages were organised militarily with their combatants (*mücahit*) under the orders of officers (*komutan*) provided by the Turkish army. EOKA's and TMT's combatants controlled the main roads and crossroads, and most of Turkish villages were protected by some fortifications.

But, for the Turks, the ghettoes' boundaries effectively *were* borderlines: when entering a Turkish village one entered part of a self-proclaimed 'autonomous' Turkish zone. Therefore, when a Turkish Cypriot went out of an enclave – this happened very often, except for the inhabitants of Nicosia, given the scattered Turkish population – he was always stopped and questioned by Greek-Cypriot policemen or irregular patrols, as if he were an illegal migrant in his own country. Most of our interviewees remember these difficult moments of fear, which were an integral part of their everyday life for ten years and could be brought to a conclusion by abduction or even death. One of them said: 'I knew only four sentences in Greek: What is your name? Which is your village? Where do you come from? Where are you going?', the sentences of basic police questioning.

Today, one can still observe some traces of the Turkish enclaves, such as observation posts, sentry boxes, and, around some villages, fortified houses and barricades made of barrels. Along the limits of the biggest enclaves, some Turkish fortified camps are still visible, their walls and trenches facing the Pentadactylos Range and its Greek positions. In the South, and at least until 1997, former mixed villages were empty, or in ruins; some parts of them have been razed to the ground, like in Mathiatis or in Kofinou. Often, nothing has changed since 1963 or 1974: bullet marks on the walls, slogans praising Turkey or Rauf Denktash, the successor of Fazıl Küçük at the head of the Turkish community, then 'President' of the TRNC, while on the walls in the North slogans continue to praise the Greek leaders, Makarios and Grivas, or EOKA. Often, the Cypriots still live among or beside the ruins, having within their sight sad remembrances of a civil war, testimonies of the former presence of an alterity now gone away.

Within the boundaries of the TRNC, where the majority prior to 1974 was Greek-Orthodox, the inhabitants of former Turkish enclaves are the only people in Northern Cyprus to have never been forced to migrate; they are proud of having protected their villages against the *Rum*[11] – 'A *Rum* never came here' –, proud of knowing the past of their own village. Today, these villages have a more living agriculture, in contrast with the neglected fields and houses of the ancient Greek villages, whose population has fled, and which are now inhabited by migrants from South Cyprus, or from Turkey.

Map 2   Cyprus
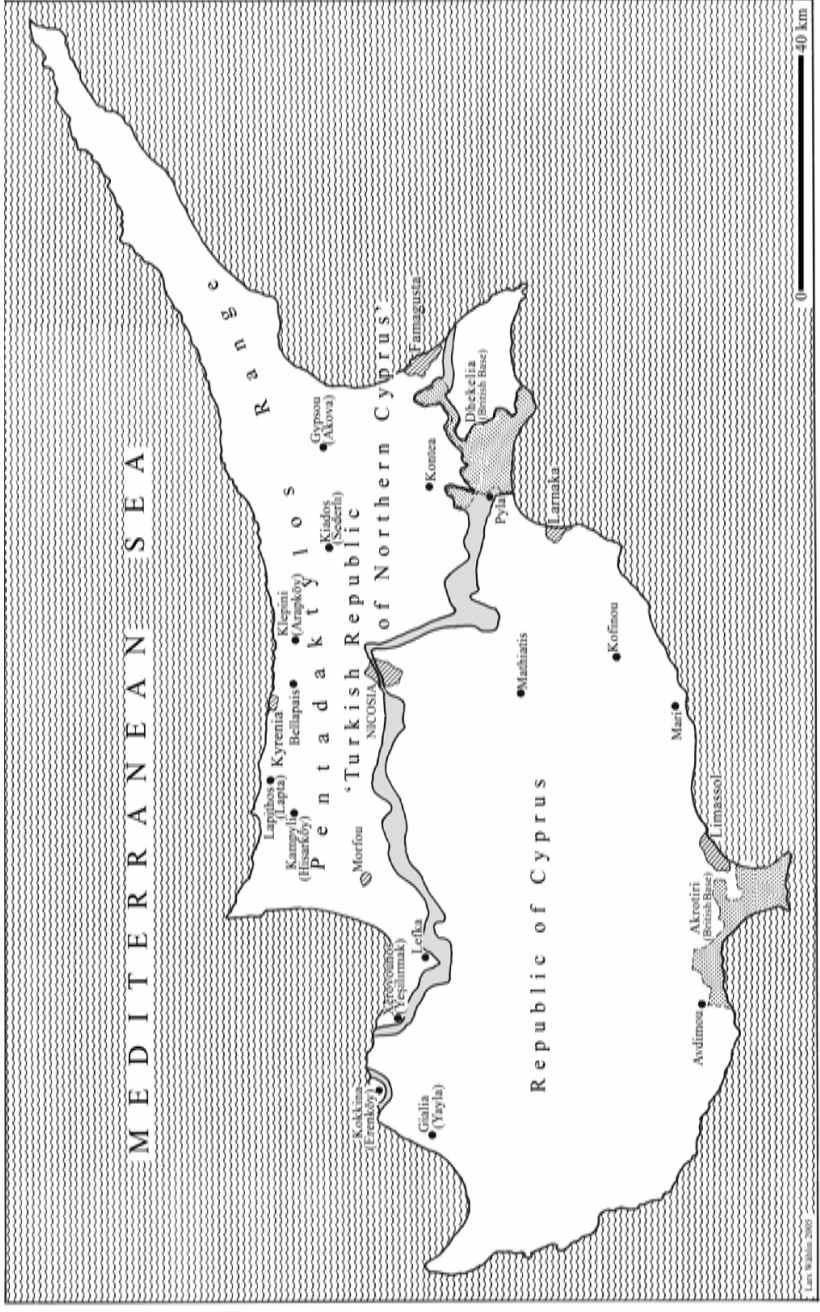
The 'Green Line' and the buffer zone shaded grey. The two British military bases are dotted.

The Green Line

If the traces of ancient enclaves are discrete, the Green Line is famous and striking. Drawn first through Nicosia at the very beginning of the inter-ethnic clashes in June 1958, it was then consolidated in January 1964 by the British commander in chief, who was in charge of peacekeeping in Cyprus before the intervention of the United Nations in the summer of 1964.[12] The line was drawn according to the distribution of the Turkish and Greek populations of the town: roughly, the Turks in the North, the Greeks in the South. The rest of the line, which runs today for over 180 kilometres across the island, results from the cease-fire following the Turkish invasion of 1974.

In any case, the Green Line is not a line, but a buffer zone (3 per cent of the whole island), very thin at Nicosia, where only one street and the surrounding houses have been evacuated, but several kilometres wide in some places, including the international airport of Nicosia, now disused, and some villages like Pyla which are still inhabited. Galo Plaza, a UN representative who wrote an official report about the situation in 1965, describes the Green Line as follows:

> All through this period there were two kinds of 'green line' in Cyprus, and few people dared to cross either kind. There were firstly the physical barriers, constructed out of roadblocks, strongpoints, fortified houses, sandbagged walls and trenches. These were the barriers that at many places in the island kept the two communities apart either by force or by the fear of arrest, abduction or gunfire. They prevented the normal flow of traffic for purposes of both business and pleasure, and became indeed part of the machinery of what came to be regarded as an economic blockade by the Greek-Cypriots against the Turkish-Cypriots. They curtailed the functioning of government services and development activities. They prolonged the abandonment by many people of their houses, farms, businesses or jobs on any side or the other...The second kind of 'green line' was the psychological kind...The physical impediments to normal contacts between the communities were serious enough; hardly less so was the psychological impediment caused by the suppression of the healthy movement of ideas, for which were substituted slogans and counter-slogans shouted by propaganda machines across the dividing lines in uncompromising, provocative or hostile tones.[13]

The Green Line is often compared to the Berlin Wall, but it is very different, 'less professional', and much more permeable, as we will see later on.[14]

Borders with Great Britain

Surprisingly, there are borders with Great Britain. When Cyprus became independent, two British military bases, Akrotiri and Dhekelia – another 3 per cent of the island – remained under British sovereignty. Within the bases, the law is British, but 60 per cent of the land is Cypriot property.

The Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area, between Larnaka and Famagusta, lies between the two parts of the island; as a result there is a buffer zone under British authority, offering employment possibilities for about 3,000 Cypriots, Turks and Greeks, and large-scale contraband opportunities. For Turkish Cypriots, who suffer from the imported Turkish inflation, working on the base provides the possibility of earning 'good money' in pounds sterling. Thus, it is not surprising that the inhabitants of the Turkish enclave of Avdimou, near the Akrotiri Base Area (next to Limassol), preferred to be rehoused in Kontea, next to the Dhekelia Base Area, rather than the richer and prettier village of Lapethos (Lapta), where they were first settled. In addition, the British base of Dhekelia was very important until 2003 for intercommunal meetings; under certain conditions, it gave access to the village of Pyla, in the UN buffer zone, where members of Cypriot civil society who are in favour of reconciliation found the opportunity to meet far from the control of the Northern or Southern authorities. Until 2003, this village, as well as the Ledra Palace, headquarters of UNFICYP in Nicosia's buffer zone, offered the only opportunities for such intercommunal meetings.

Legal and Illegal Borders with Turkey

The third kind of border is an alleged international frontier between the TRNC and Turkey. Northern Cyprus pretends to be a state, but Turkey is the only country which recognises it. According to international law and the Greek-Cypriot point of view, when one comes from Turkey to the TRNC, one illegally crosses the frontier of the Republic of Cyprus. From the Turkish point of view, one crosses an international borderline with the TRNC. There are therefore policemen and immigration controls, and customs, but the policemen and customs officers are, from the international point of view, those of a puppet republic, and illegal.

In general, crossing an international borderline means an immediate change in public and state semiology: if not language, then flags, money, national icons, public monuments are different, as well as state rituals and liturgy. But when one enters the TRNC, surprisingly one observes many differences in the way of life, but similarities in the field of state semiology: there is always a *Turkish* flag flying beside that of the TRNC; the currency is Turkish *lira;* public monuments and street names are devoted to Turkish heroes (mainly Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, and events related to the Atatürk saga). The whole national ritual and liturgy is imported from Turkey. Symmetrically, on the other side, in the independent and internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus, the *Greek* flag usually waves on churches and public monuments; public celebrations and national holidays are imported from Greece as well.

On the Turkish side, this situation results from a nationalist dogma.

The TRNC is supposed to be an independent republic ('the second Turkish republic in history'), but, according to the Constitution itself, it is an inalienable part of a great 'Turkish nation' (*Türk Ulusu*).[15] According to the dogma, the Turkish nation has no boundaries and exists in every place where Turks are living; from this viewpoint, a Turkish Cypriot is a citizen of the TRNC, but he must consider himself as a Turk and not as a Cypriot. 'Cypriotism', Cypriot identity, is regarded as a sin by nationalists. The TRNC, with its Constitution, government, citizenship, its laws often inherited from the British period, but with its strange relationship with its 'motherland', neither independent nor a colony, can be defined as a Turkish protectorate.

But the indecisiveness of the 'border' between Turkey and Northern Cyprus is compensated by the obsessive presence of the Turkish army: there are dozens of military camps and forbidden zones, themselves protected by controlled strips with chicanes and speed bumps, and a ban on photographing. The camps are often on the sites of former British camps, or former EOKA training camps, the latter mostly in or around monasteries. Moreover, two of the four existing Maronite villages have been evacuated in order to create military camps. Finally, in front of the Green Line itself lies a wide zone (1-3 kilometres) under Turkish military control and forbidden to everybody.

This military presence is in itself a semiology, and claims that everybody is under the control of the Turkish army. In any event, the Turkish Cypriot police is directly under the authority of the Turkish army. Thus, the whole territory is spotted with the semiology of a restricted area, just like when one approaches an international borderline. The TRNC as a whole appears itself to be a frontier, a huge buffer zone between Turkey and Greece, a front between two nationalisms and two religious identities.

1974-2003: Blockade and Claustrophobia

This atmosphere is oppressive and not only for psychological reasons. Turkey's military occupation has created a political and diplomatic deadlock, leading to an international blockade,[16] and preventing investment. Until 2004 the country had only one trading partner, Turkey, which reduced the Turkish Cypriot economy to ruin. In any case, a Turkish Cypriot could hardly travel abroad, since foreign authorities, apart from those of Turkey, did not recognise his passport; even after 2004 Turkish Cypriot sportsmen have not been able to compete outside of Northern Cyprus. Many Turkish Cypriots complained that they were living in an open-air prisoners' camp and were suffering from claustrophobia. A slogan of the Union for the Patriotic Movement (YHB), a leftist party, claimed in 2000: 'Let's put an end to this life in an

open-air jail!' As some of our interviewees commented, 'Cyprus is beautiful, but she is only beautiful', or: 'We have lived in peace for 25 years, but peace is not enough: we need to live in a normal state; we want to travel, at least to the South.' Another said: 'You Frenchmen, you have Europe. You may be in France in the morning, in Germany in the evening. I can't go even to the place where I was born, although it is my own motherland.'

In April 2003, the opening of the Line unexpectedly put an end to this claim. The beginning of the admission process for the Republic of Cyprus into the European Union urged the Northern authorities to make a move. Finally, when the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU on 1 May 2004, the whole population of the island, including the residents of Cypriot origin and their descendants within the TRNC, became Europeans. Now, most of the Turkish Cypriots have got their 'European' passport and can travel anywhere.

Cat-flaps

Unlike the boundary which divided Germany, there was only one checkpoint along the Green Line, itself protected on the Turkish side by a second, militarily controlled, buffer zone. In 2004 we had no information about 17,000 mines or so scattered in almost 110 minefields, within or near the buffer zone. Before 2003, the Line was supposed to be hermetically closed and controlled. As Rauf Denktash stated in 2000, retaliating to allegations of narco-traffic from the North to the South, 'It is impossible to pass anything; a lamb or even a fish could not pass through the Green Line.' On either side, the road network has been destroyed: main roads like those leading from Nicosia to Morfou or Larnaka have been cut off. On the Turkish side of the Line, the landscape is abandoned, and the access to certain villages like Xerovounos (Yeşilırmak) is forbidden even to their former inhabitants.

But in fact, even before 2003, the Green Line was not impassable; there were certain cat-flaps, and people could cross over, but the modes of passage depended on the vision of either camp. According to Turkish views, the TRNC is a legal state, with its own international state frontier, and what is illegal is the Greek Cypriot Government. Either side denies the other the quality of a legal state, and even after the opening of the Green Line either side lives with the fiction of the non-existence of the other.

Coming from the North, a foreigner has always been allowed by the Turks to go to the South. But the Greek-Cypriot police would immediately have stopped and even arrested him, as an illegal migrant. In 1997 three Romanians, succeeding in crossing over from North to South, were arrested and brought to court in Larnaka; the statement of

the judge reflects a schizophrenic point of view: 'Everybody must know that the port of Kyrenia has been closed since 1974.' In fact, Kyrenia is not only one of the liveliest cities in Northern Cyprus, but also the main port of the TRNC for passenger traffic; how could the Romanian immigrants understand that statement? Moreover, if such a clandestine immigrant is arrested near the Line on the Turkish side, before having crossed over to the South, he will be judged not by a civil jurisdiction, but by a Turkish military one, because his crime is not crossing the Green Line, but (i) penetrating in a first degree military zone; (ii) violating a forbidden military zone, and (iii) attempting to cross to the South from a forbidden military zone.

Turkish Cypriots, however, have always been welcome in the South, but before April 2003 they would have been stopped at the checkpoint by Northern policemen in this case, except if they had special permits, for instance for medical reasons. But according to some of our interviewees, some people fled to the South on the occasion of bi-communal festivals organised by the UNFICYP in the buffer zone: the men fled first, found jobs in the Greek part of the island, and their families joined them later. This type of crossing was fairly rare, but some people used to cross over only for a while, for the fun of going to the other side, the pleasure of hearing the Greek language, which is a part of their identity, even when they do not speak it.

Before 2003, going from South to North, only foreign tourists were allowed to enter the 'occupied zone' and for a day-trip only. For Greek Cypriots, a special permit was rarely granted, except for the families of Orthodox or Maronites who remained in the North. For the rare Turkish people living in the South, paying a visit to their parents who remained in the North led to Kafkaesque situations: they had first to go to Larnaka airport to fly to Athens, then to Istanbul, and finally to Ercan, the TRNC's 'international' airport. Since 2003, according to the new regulation, every Cypriot citizen has the right to cross over from South to North, since the North is considered an integral part of the Republic of Cyprus. But the Cypriot government and political parties have advised people against crossing, for going to the North is considered to be a recognition of the illegal TRNC. Curiosity about the other side has grown stronger however, and within three months the majority of the population crossed, in both directions. Since 2004, crossing the Line is free for every Cypriot and for the European Union's citizens. It remains forbidden by the Southern authorities for other foreigners, including Turks of continental origin.

The situation did not become normal, however. On 24 April 2004 a majority of the Greek population of the island voted against the plan for reunification proposed by the United Nations. This froze the division of the island and brought comfort to the TRNC, which thereafter receives

assistance from the EU. There was no solution to the claim for the return of their property to the Greeks who had fled to the South and no possibility for them to resettle in the North. The Turkish Cypriots who have become citizens of a member of the European Union can travel every day to the South for work, studies, medical visits or to settle.

Transgressions and Incidents

As the South does not accept the existence of the Green Line, one of the slogans of the refugees' organisations remains: 'Our frontier is at Kyrenia', namely on the Northern coast. Before 2003, the buffer zone was often the scene of provocative attempts to cross the Line, or, conversely, efforts to prevent tourists paying a visit to the North.

Among others, serious incidents occurred in August 1996, when Greek and Greek Cypriot protesters tried to cross the Line near Famagusta. A demonstrator was beaten to death by Turkish extreme rightists (the 'Grey Wolves'), and a few days later, a new protest march ended with the death of another Greek Cypriot, shot down by a Turkish-Cypriot high-ranking official (Copeaux and Mauss-Copeaux 1998: 271-91). For years, these serious incidents had very bad consequences for Turkish diplomacy. But on either side, such events were highly profitable for nationalism, since they provided martyrs: 'If nobody sacrifices himself, a soil can't become a nation, a nation can't become a state, and a state can't live', claimed the TRNC's Minister of the Interior.[17] When a Turkish-Cypriot soldier was shot dead near the Line in September 1996, his funeral was an opportunity for a nationalist demonstration, in the presence of the Turkish Prime Minister, Mrs Tansu Çiller. Blood has a sacralising function; as blood has flowed when the Ottomans conquered Cyprus, the Turkish presence in Cyprus is considered to be sacred;[18] once blood has flowed on the Green Line, the Green Line itself is sacred. 'We drew our frontier with our blood, we can't accept any change', or 'We can't give back what we payed for with our blood' (*Kıbrıs*, 11 September 1996).

Another kind of transgression is contraband. Even before the opening in 2003, the traffic was massive through certain villages of the buffer zone like Pyla, or through the British sovereign bases. Cattle passed from South to North, ruining the Northern cattle-breeding, and fish, cars and, above all, drug from North to South. Before 2003, one of our interviewees, a Turkish-Cypriot civil servant, who is in favour of reconciliation, made this incredible statement for an official: 'Yes, there is contraband, but it is politically good for us, because it keeps links between the *Rum* and us. Such links are a necessity.'

Peaceful Transgressions

There were peaceful transgressions, as well. The Green Line has always been denied by pacifists and 'Cypriotists' of both sides.[19] Generally leftists, they support the idea of reconciliation, and they want at least a bi-communal and bi-zonal Cyprus Republic. Before 1998, permits were granted for bi-communal meetings on either side. Most of the participants were trade unionists. For example, associations of teachers met several times in South and North Nicosia in May 1997; each meeting was followed by a pan-Cypriot trade union forum and by a new meeting in North Nicosia. The participants worked on very precise matters like nominations, promotions and salaries. Such a meeting occurred with journalist trade unionists in 1997. But in retaliation for the rejection of the Turkish candidacy to the European Union in December 1997 (the Luxemburg summit), bi-communal meetings were forbidden in 1998. Some meetings then took place in the buffer zone, under the protection of the UN, and, thanks to the UN, it has been possible since July 1998 to make telephone calls from one side to the other – which was impossible before. Soon afterwards, of course, mobile phones and e-mail played an important role in bi-communal links. If the Green Line was an obstacle to meeting, the buffer zone was, however, an ideal place for reconciliation. The UN periodically organised common manifestations, among them a famous concert featuring a Turkish and a Greek pop star, in May 1997, which took place despite strong and violent nationalist opposition from both sides.

In addition, in either direction there was a peaceful and official way of crossing the Line; two pilgrimages were allowed, one for the Turks to the South, to *Hala Sultan Tekkesi* near Larnaka, the other for the Greeks to the North, to Agios Andreas Monastery, at the end of the Karpas peninsula. Some of our interviewees, openly atheists, attended the first pilgrimage, only for the fun of seeing the South and, overall, of fleeing for a couple of hours from the 'open-air jail'.

Finally, information has always crossed the Line. Besides TV and radio channels, and the Internet, one or even several pages in Cypriot newspapers present news from the other side, and translations from the other side's newspapers as well. As a result, people in the North have always known about the political life of the Greek side, and have been particularly concerned about living standards in the South, which is three times richer than the North.[20] This remains a source of social and political tension and frustration, an incitement to social claims.

Dividing Past and Present

For 29 years, the Green Line not only divided the island into two parts, but human life into past and present. Greek-Cypriot refugees from the

North have always claimed the right to return to their former situation, and to recover their houses and properties in the North; they still live with the hope of making a return and they expect the expulsion of Anatolian settlers from Cyprus. For them, there is no frontier dividing the island. Meanwhile, they have created associations and communities in exile; Greek municipalities of the North still exist; Morfou, Kyrenia or Famagusta still have, in the South, a mayor and a town council; there is still a bishop of Kyrenia living in the South. In addition, Turkish Cypriots who came from the South to the North in 1974-5 continue to keep their former communities alive. Very often they have been resettled according to their village of origin, in one or several neighbouring villages evacuated by the Greek population. They arrived in very difficult conditions in 1974, fearing Greek reprisals,[21] and bringing with them almost nothing. Sometimes, they were able to bring 'icons' of their former life: sportsmen of Mari brought the cups of their club, displayed now in a showcase in their club-house at Bellapais, like sacred objects linking them to their past. Very often, they renamed their new village with the name of their village of origin,[22] often seen as the paradise of childhood, lost at an age when prejudices are not rooted in minds. Since they could not bring their belongings, not even photographs, the past, until 2003, lived only in their memories.

In addition, in 1974, Turkish Cypriots coming from the South were urged to forget their past and their lost villages: they were told that a new life of peace and quiet was opening for them, thanks to the 'heroic peace intervention of the Turkish Army' and under the protection of Turkey. A new Turkish Republic, child of the Great Republic of Turkey, was about to be created, and nostalgia was to be banned. In fact, even in the leftist circles of Turkish-Cypriot society, nobody desires a return to the pre-1974 situation; inter-communal tension and clashes, violence and even massacres are hard memories to live with. And nobody would now accept a third migration, after the flights in 1963 and 1974: many of them would prefer to migrate to London, or somewhere else in the Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, for 29 years, nostalgia was in everybody's mind and sometimes drove them crazy, like two or three people we met. Nostalgia and official directives lead to strange contradictions. People can hardly manage remembrances and ideology together, like this old imam who said: 'I do not want to remember even the name of my village.' Yet, he invited us at home, an old Greek house, and showed us slogans of the EOKA, which, 25 years later, he had not erased. In general, at least until 2002, neither Turkish nor Greek Cypriots have erased the traces of otherness, even traces of violence: slogans on the walls, bullet impacts, old Turkish street plaques in the South, and names of some shops left in Greek, in the North.

For 29 years, they tried unsuccessfully to forget. Hearing of our visits to the South, they asked for photographs, but often they were not able to endure the sight of their village. Often, the Turkish quarter of their village has been razed to the ground. A teacher seeing his old school in ruins, another teacher seeing the coffee shop of his mother, had their hands shivering with emotion. In every case we were the first people they met, to have seen their own village, sometimes their own house. And they often asked for more, they asked us to go again to the South, to photograph their village, their house, a landscape, a tree; to visit their former neighbours and friends: 'Have they installed electricity? Do they keep the vineyards well? Did they tar the streets?'

They realised that these remembrances are a part of themselves, concealed by order of Turkish nationalism. A woman, seeing her father's shop among our photographs, burst into tears; but she said several months later: 'You brought me my inner life back again.' The Turks wanted to remember their life in the South, they wanted to hear again the sounds of Greek language, and often they even wanted to pass on their notions of Greek language to their children. During these decades, they have feared a loss of identity; they have feared their Cypriot identity being merged into an Anatolian Turkish identity, which is an alien one. In the years preceding the opening of the Line, they have recognised that the forty-year-old generation had a crucial role to maintain that identity.

Until 2003, the last step in recovering their Cypriot identity lay in death. The elders had one desire, to pray at the grave of their parents. But on either side, the nationalist fury has destroyed some Muslim cemeteries in the South, and the tombs of all the Orthodox cemeteries in the North. We stayed silent when a woman said in 1999: 'We had a wonderful garden, with all kinds of fruit, vineyards, and trees. I don't regret the garden, nor our shop and properties. The only thing I regret is not to being allowed to go to my mother's grave.' How could we say that we had seen only the site of her village cemetery, which had been razed to the ground? When they died in the North, their last act referring themselves to a Cypriot identity was their self-definition in the death announcements: 'Originally from Paramal, then established in Aşagı Bostancı, our mother and grandmother Zehra Tahir Bulak....' On their tombstones, the inhabitants of Gypsou (Akova) are identified as Vudalı, 'from Vuda', the village near Larnaka where they came from in 1974. In the cemetery of Klepini (Arapköy), a village where Turkish Cypriots and Anatolian settlers live together, the Cypriots identify themselves as *Öz Arapköylü*, 'genuine native of Arapköy'. The tombstone is the site of a last, definitive claim to a Cypriot identity.[23]

For 29 years, there was no possibility of return, either to the South or to the past. It is too soon to say how the opening of the Line will change minds: will Cypriots consider as irreversible the situation created by

violence thirty or forty years ago? Or will they have the will to erase the effects of violence (even the destruction of cemeteries), in view of the fact that they have been inflicted, neither by Greeks nor by Turks, but by nationalism? After the opening in 2003, everything is going more easily, but there will be a painful lapse of time, perhaps several years, during which everybody will be confronted with his own past, with his childhood, and above all, with the destructions. The future of the island is now in the hands of the youngest, who have not suffered, but who must, however, overcome the hatred and resentment transmitted by the school, and sometimes by their own parents.

The task is difficult. The whole history of Turkey in the twentieth century can be interpreted as a territorialisation of the Muslim *millet*, and the construction of modern Greece constitutes its Orthodox mirror. The two nationalisms confronted each other in Cyprus in order to complete this construction through the transformation of religious identities into national ones. The Greeks tried to achieve the territorialisation of the Orthodox 'nation' by provoking the departure of the Muslims from the island (something that occurred in Crete). The Turks pursued the process begun in 1915 (the Armenian genocide) by the exchange of populations in 1923 (the secular republic of Turkey constructed *de facto* as Muslim) and the expulsion of a great number of *Rums* from Istanbul between 1955 and 1963. Their objective was reinforced by the attitude of the Greek Cypriots who, in 2004, rejected the plan for reunification proposed by the United Nations (the Annan Plan). Thus the island will remain divided, in one way or another. The cease-fire line of 1974 will remain a limit between the two *millets*. But, against these nationalisms in confrontation, Cypriot civil society struggles to find again the wealth of a bi-communitarian life and to build what has never existed on the island, namely a citizenship devoid of all religious connotations.

Notes:

[1] Regarding nationalism in Cyprus, see Peter Loizos, 'The Progress of Greek Nationalism in Cyprus. 1878-1970', in J. Davis (ed.), *Choice and Change. Essays in Honour of Lucy Mairin* (London: Athlone Press, 1974); Michael A. Attalides, *Cyprus. Nationalism and International Politics* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979); Niyazi Kızılyürek, *Cyprus Beyond the Nation* (Nicosia: Cassoulides Printing Works, 1993); Mehmet Hasgüler, *Kıbrıs'ta Enosis ve Taksim Politikalarının Sonu* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000); Rebecca Bryant, *Imagining the Modern. The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Caesar Mavratsas, 'Approaches to Nationalism. Basic Theoretical Considerations in the Study of

the Greek-Cypriot Case and a Historical Overview', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 22,1 (1996), pp. 77-102; idem, 'The Ideological Contest Between Greek-Cypriot Nationalism and Cypriotism 1974-1995. Politics, Social Memory and Identity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20,4 (1996), pp. 717-37; idem, 'National Identity and Conciousness in Everyday Life. Towards a Sociology of Knowledge of Greek-Cypriot Nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism* 5,1 (January 1999), pp. 91-104.

[2] Some references for understanding the events: Nancy Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt. An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978); Pierre-Yves Péchoux, 'Les dimensions géographiques d'une guerre localisée. Chypre, 1974-1976', *Hérodote* 3 (July-September 1976), pp. 6-44; Mehmet Ali Birand, *30 Hot Days* (London, Nicosia and Istanbul: Rüstem & Brother, 1985); Joseph S. Joseph, *Cyprus. Ethnic Conflict and International Concern* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985); Peter Loizos, *The Heart Grown Bitter. A Chronicle of Cypriot War Refugees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); idem, 'Understanding 1974, Understanding 1994', *The Cyprus Review* 6,1 (1994), pp. 7-19; Philippos K. Savvides, 'The Dynamics of Partition. The Domestic-Structural Dimension and the Case of Cyprus', in *Recherches en cours sur la question chypriote, Cahiers de Recherche GREMMO – Monde arabe contemporain* 9 (2001), pp. 77-92.

[3] For a general presentation of Northern Cyprus, see C. H. Dodd (ed.), *The Political, Social and Economic Development of Northern Cyprus* (Hemingford Grey: Eothen, 1993).

[4] It is not very easy to define what a 'Turk' or a 'Greek' is. In Cyprus, and in Turkey before 1923 as well, a part of the Muslim population spoke not Turkish but Greek. During the 1950s, and 1960s, the Turkish nationalists carried out a turkification of the Muslim Cypriots, urging them to learn and speak Turkish, turkifying place names, etc. Cf. the interesting testimony of Kutlu Adalı, *Dağarcık* (Nicosia: Işık Kitabevi Yayınları, 2 vols, 1997-2000), pp. 168-202. [First published in 1963, Nicosia: Beşparmak Yayınları]. The author was murdered in July 1996, probably by Turkish extreme rightists.

[5] About history teaching, memory, collective identity: see Yiannis Papadakis, 'Greek Cypriot Narratives of History and Collective Identity. Nationalism as a Contested Process', *American Ethnologist* 25, 2 (1998), pp. 149-65; idem, 'The Politics of Memory and Forgetting in Cyprus', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3,1 (1993), pp. 139-54; Loris Koullapis, 'History Narration in Greek and Greek Cypriot Textbooks of History', in E. Copeaux (ed.), *Recherches en cours sur la question chypriote, Cahiers de Recherche GREMMO – Monde arabe contemporain,* 9 (2001), pp. 93-106; Rebecca Bryant, *Imagining the Modern. Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus.* London, I.B. Tauris 2004, pp. 129-55. About history as taught in Turkey, see Etienne Copeaux, *Espaces et temps de la nation turque. Analyse d'une historiographie nationaliste, 1931-1993* (Paris: CNRS-Éditions, 1997); idem, *Une Vision turque du monde à travers les cartes* (Paris: CNRS-Éditions, 2000).

[6] EOKA, *Ethniki Organosi Kiprion Agoniston* (National Organisation of Cypriot Combatants), founded in April 1955; TMT, *Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı* (Turkish Organisation of Defence), founded at the end of 1957, forbidden by the colonial power in Summer 1958, thereafter clandestine.

[7] About this concept cf. B. Lewis and B. Braude, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1982). For interethnic relations and local life, see John G. Peristiany, 'Honour and Shame in a Cypriot Highland Village', in John G. Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Peter Loizos, *The Greek Gift. Politics in a Cypriot Village* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995); Jan Asmussen, 'Life and Strife in Mixed Villages. Some Aspects of Inter-Ethnic Relations in Cyprus under British Rule', *Cyprus Review* 8,1 (1996), pp. 101-110.

[8] The term 'provisional' – *geçici* – was dropped in 1971. Cf. H. Fehmi, *A'dan Z'ye KKTC. Sosyal ve Ansiklopedik Bilgiler* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992), pp. 79 ff.

[9] The Turkish names given in brackets were often used even before the nationalist wave. But the turkification of place names became systematic in the enclaves after 1964, and in the whole Turkish side of the island after 1974. Cf. Jack C. Goodwin, *A Historical Toponymy of Cyprus* (Nicosia: Publishers Distributors Cyprus, 1978), p. 1150.

[10] Concerning the confusion between nation and religion in Turkish nationalism see E. Copeaux, 'Le nationalisme d'État en Turquie. Ambiguïté des mots, enracinement dans le passé', in Alain Dieckhoff and Riva Kastoryano (eds), *Nationalismes en mutation en Méditerranée orientale* (Paris: CNRS-Éditions, 2002), pp. 23-40.

[11] The word *Rum*, in Turkish, designates an Orthodox Greek living outside Greece (Cyprus, Istanbul, etc.). It is not derogatory. Cf. Samim Akgönül, *Les Grecs de Turquie* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia Bruylant, 2004).

[12] The UNFICYP (United Nations' Force in Cyprus) was created by Resolution 186, on March 4, 1964. See M. Harbottle, *The Impartial Soldier* (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 63-8; about UNFICYP also P. Achilléas, *Chypre. L'UNFICYP* (Paris: Montchrestien, 2000).

[13] Galo Plaza's report, 1965, para 50. This report can be found on the Republic of Cyprus' Internet site.

[14] Yannis Papadakis presents some aspects of divided Nicosia in his articles, for example 'The National Struggle Museums of a Divided City', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17,3 (July 1994), pp. 400-19, and 'Walking in the *Hora*'. 'Place' and 'No-Place' in Divided Nicosia', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 8,2 (1998), pp. 302-27.

[15] Preamble of the 'Constitution of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', in *North Cyprus Almanac* (London: Rüstem & Brother, 1987), p. 41.

[16] The embargo results from a 1994 decision by the Court of Justice of the European Communities that member states should refuse merchandise with a certificate of origin delivered by the TRNC.

[17] Quotation of Kemal Atun, when he visited some martyrs' families, *Kıbrıs*, 21 June 1996. About the incident which occurred in Güvercinlik (Acheritou), *cf.* Cypriot newspapers, 11 September 1996.

[18] As early as 28 January 1963, a monument was erected in the Northern suburbs of Nicosia, dedicated to the '80,000 martyrs', Ottoman or Turkish soldiers who had fallen in Cyprus from 1570 to 1958.

[19] Civil society and pacifist trends in Cyprus are analysed by Gilles Bertrand, *Le Conflit helléno-turc* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2003).

[20] In 1999 the GNP *per capita* was of US$ 4,500 in the North, while US$ 14,500 in the South.

[21] Such events took place in August 1974 in Dochni, Mari and Zygi, where militiamen shot a great part of the male population.

[22] For example, Mari, on the South coast, also had a Turkish name, 'Tatlısu', which was given to the village where the population of Mari was resettled (Akanthou on the Northern coast), and the Bellapais Sports Club's name still is 'Tatlısu Spor Kulübü'. There are dozens of similar cases.

[23] About the rejection of the Anatolian population, see E. Copeaux and C. Mauss-Copeaux, 'Rejets et identifications dans les populations du nord de Chypre', in E. Copeaux (ed.), *Recherches en cours sur la question chypriote, Cahiers de Recherche GREMMO – Monde arabe contemporain* 9 (2001), pp. 107-18.

3

TRADE ACROSS BORDERS
VIEWS FROM ALEPPO

Annika Rabo

This chapter is about some international trade links to and from Aleppo, Syria's second largest city with a population of about 1.6 million inhabitants. Aleppo is the metropolis of the northern and north-eastern provinces of the country and a trading and industrial city with a rich agricultural hinterland. It is the administrative centre of the province of Aleppo, which is not the largest, but the most populous province in Syria. The city is situated close to – about 60 km – the present Turkish border, and near the busy international highway and border station of Bab al-Hawa. Historically, Aleppo has been economically and politically linked to the north and the east. The modern border with Turkey cut off many of its historical trading relationships and affected Aleppo traders much more than those in Damascus. In terms of trade, as will be discussed in this chapter, Aleppo – for decades – became more distant from Turkey than from Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia, Romania or Uzbekistan. Yet, traffic in people and goods was intense in the border area between Syria and Turkey even in the period when relations between the two states were less than friendly. Women in particular were engaged in trade across this border.

   Most international borders create economic constraints and obstacles. Yet, such borders may also create opportunities for some people. For those living in the borderland, and those connected with the benefits of smuggling, borders may constitute their main source of livelihood. In many ways a border can be regarded as a linchpin for the scope of national policies. The extent to which a border can be transgressed, the nature of that transgression and the gains and losses incurred throw light on overall state-citizen relationships.[1] In this chapter the focus is on non-governmental economic actors involved in trade across borders. In these

endeavours they are thrown into close contact with governmental actors who establish, maintain and protect the borders of the state. As will be shown, the meanings attached to borders, boundaries and transgressions are not uniform among Aleppians engaged in international trade, and perceptions of and views on Turkey and Turkish-Syrian relations are complex and in a state of flux. Aleppo can be studied as an illustration of how the fairly recent nation-state borders in this region affect a city and its population. In particular, Aleppo can be seen as an example of Syrian relations with other parts of the former Ottoman Empire, a theme brought out in other chapters in this volume.

The borders of the Syrian nation-state have been both protected and transgressed in various ways in the past half-century. In this chapter, however, the emphasis will be on the period after the 1990s – a period which can be characterised as one of increased economic liberalisation and globalisation. Through an analysis of the practices and discourses of Aleppians engaged in trade across borders, the chapter will throw particular light on territoriality and belonging. By way of family networks – or family-like networks – traders[2] are able to create real, or imaginary, homes away from home. These networks underpin their self-esteem as traders and thus contribute to their success.

The chapter is based on fourteen months of anthropological fieldwork among Aleppo traders. Data-gathering began in 1997 and was mainly carried out between 1998 and 1999. Shorter visits were also made between 2001 and 2005.[3]

Aleppo and Its Market

Today Aleppo is perhaps the most economically important city in the Syrian Arab Republic. Its covered market quarters are the largest in Syria, extending over 10 kilometres. Anyone arriving in Aleppo will notice the hustle and bustle of trade going on in almost every corner of the central part of the city. Everybody seems to be engaged in either selling or buying. The intensity of the throng reaches its peak in the old market area and in a circle surrounding the old city centre. Apart from retail shops, market stalls, carts and ambulating salesmen, there are warehouses, offices and workshops. Every nook and cranny is utilised in the pursuit of livelihood. Traditional craftsmen have to a large degree disappeared in Aleppo, due to competition from industrially produced consumer goods. New craftsmen have appeared, however, to service the needs of the private sector. There are skilled mechanics, carpenters and electricians who occupy spaces in the vast market. There are innumerable small shops selling coffee, tea, soft drinks, sandwiches and sweets. There are porters, shoe-shiners and tourist-guides. In Aleppo there are about 70,000 registered trade companies, and annually between 8,000 and

10,000 traders pay membership dues to the Aleppo Chamber of Commerce, founded already in 1890 and the oldest in Syria. Membership is necessary for all who want to export or import legally.

Aleppo is not only a trading city of considerable importance. It is also an industrial city. Its economic base today, as earlier, consists of yarns and textiles. The majority of the shops and enterprises in the old market, and the majority of the industrial establishments, sell, buy, or produce and process yarns, cloth and clothes. The ownership and management structure in the Aleppo market is highly complex. Most traders are owner-managers of small businesses, which might be jointly owned with brothers, sons or other close relatives. Traders also invest or engage in a multitude of economic ventures, when this is possible. A person can be an employee and also trade in his spare time. The large pre-industrial Aleppo market was also very heterogeneous, and depended on a division of labour based on skilled craftsmanship (Marcus 1989: 158ff). Today, however, occupational categories are much more porous and flexible. The traders discussed in this chapter are all involved in international trade of some kind. The majority are Sunni Muslims but some are Christians. Most, but not all, have their shops or offices in the old covered market. All of them have at least occasionally invested in production as well as in trade. The vast majority have been brought up in trading families. Although a number of these traders could be considered extremely well-off, they generally spoke of themselves as belonging to a 'middle stratum'.

Aleppo, its market and its traders are very much affected by the presence and the ubiquity of the modern Syrian state. For more than thirty years policies were largely pro-public sector. Now the situation is different. The most noticeable shift in Syria in the late 1980s was the impoverishment of public sector employees, while traders/industrialists became better-off. A great many of my informants, however, complained about, worried over and discussed the 'frozen' state of the trade and claimed that only a few years ago trade was 'much better'. This was before the worsening economic situation in the former Soviet Republics and the collapse of Aleppo's 'speculation houses'.[4] Some traders remarked that the early 1970s were a period of brisk business. Others remembered the 1950s as the decade of economic expansion. Traders also talked of the nationalisation in the 1960s, when banks and industries of a certain size were seized by the state, and when imports and exports became more tightly regulated. Any given trader, or traders, in any given part of the market or the city, had specific views on the recent history of economic booms and busts and the history of trade across borders.

Aleppo Trade 1950-2000

In the early years after Syrian independence Aleppo traders benefited
from an increased demand for cotton during the war in Korea. Traders
rented land in the north-east, along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers,
cleared it, installed diesel-pumps, hired labour – often from the Aleppo
region – and cultivated cotton. These pumps revolutionised agriculture
in the north-eastern regions, and the profits were enormous.
Concomitantly huge areas of land were put under the plough in the
plains of the north-east, and cultivated with wheat and barley. Urban
traders, mainly from Aleppo, leased enormous tracts of state-owned
land, or leased land from tribal leaders who had received land titles
during the French Mandate. The river-lands were also mainly in the
hands of tribal sheikhs. In the early 1950s fortunes were amassed from
such ventures by rural notables and Aleppians (Rabo 1986: 29). The
long-term benefits of these ventures can be questioned for the rural
areas, but the profits were invested in Syrian industries and demand for
industrial and agricultural services soared. In other parts of Syria as well
agricultural output rose. Rural areas became more firmly tied to urban
centres, the road-system expanded, and slowly Syria became more
integrated. The agricultural expansion of the north-east became the
economic motor for the whole of Syria, and the basis of most export
earnings.

Aleppo was the centre for all these activities in the north-east, with
banks and credit facilities and commercial know-how. Foundries,
mechanical workshops, grain-storage and ginning facilities expanded.
Large automated textile industries grew, but small-scale producers
survived by gearing production to the poorer consumers. Damascus,
however, was dominant in terms of numbers and size of industrial
establishments. But investors and traders from Aleppo and Damascus
cooperated across regional and religious divisions (Heydemann 1999:
42). Industrial enterprises, however, were tightly linked to agriculture. In
the rural areas, especially to the south of Aleppo, discontent grew and
brought a number of peasant protests demanding redistribution of land,
which landlords met in Aleppo to prevent. But later a large peasant
meeting took place in the city (Heydemann 1999: 66-7), foreshadowing a
shift in the balance of power in the late 1950s, from the old urban elites
to new elites with a rural, or small-town background, culminating in the
Ba'th revolution of 1963.

In terms of investment in industry and agriculture, the state became
the most important actor. But the private sector was never pushed to
one side in Syria. In particular the small traders in the covered market
continued to survive, and even thrive following the Ba'th takeover. In
the early Ba'th period nationalisation of large and middle-sized industrial

and commercial enterprises took place and many Aleppo industrialists and wealthy traders left the country, mainly for Lebanon (see Picard in this volume). The emerging economic philosophy of the Ba'th was based on the belief that the state should own and control the major industries in order to hasten the development of import substitution, with agriculture as the foundation of the economy. The state subsidised basic consumer goods and put strict controls on the export and import of commodities.

In the early 1970s, with the takeover by Hafiz al-Asad, the regime enhanced freedom of movement for the private, 'non-exploitative', sector, and was also able to secure aid and investment from the oil-rich Arab countries. In the 1980s, however, growth slowed down considerably in Syria and real incomes decreased, despite rising Syrian oil revenues. The value of imports far exceeded that of exports. Already from the end of the 1970s shortages of basic consumer goods, controlled by the state, were legion. People queued for bread, and bartered for cooking oils, sugar, eggs, tea and coffee. In the mid-1980s the regime launched a campaign to increase exports, both from the public and the private sectors. Hard currency earned through exports could, to a certain extent, be used for imports. But cutbacks in the public sector became noticeable, and all through the 1980s *ad hoc* economic measures were taken to bolster the value of the Syrian currency. By the end of the decade it was clear that the state was no longer able to control domestic economic policies by controlling trade policies (Perthes 1995: 57). In 1991 a new investment law was passed which liberalised investment possibilities for the private sector, leading to its rapid growth. The market became flooded with consumer goods, but not everyone could afford them. Earlier measures had stimulated investment mainly in trade, real estate and services. The new law made industrial investment more attractive. Most private industry in Aleppo, however, still remains small-scale and employing fewer than ten workers (Cornand 1994: 135).

Trade across Borders

The main Syrian exports consist of oil, cotton and textiles.[5] Syria is not a country of free trade. It never joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and only started negotiations with the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Syrian currency is not convertible, and the country has also, until recently, been completely closed to the penetration of global capitalist enterprises.[6] Unlike many other countries the terms of Syria's economic liberalisation have not been dictated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Perthes 1995: 7).[7] Syria negotiated an Association Agreement with the European Union from 2000 to 2004,[8] and the EU is its largest trading partner, both for

exports and imports, far exceeding trade with the Arab countries. Germany has a special trade agreement with Syria for the import of textiles and cotton thread. But the German market is very competitive and only cheap, high quality exporters are successful. In Aleppo a number of large factories have been established since the more liberal investment law of 1991. Clothes are exported to France, Germany and Lebanon. In the 1970s, and again after the Gulf War in 1991, the Syrian government also received substantial aid from the oil-rich Arab states. Customs duties between Syria and Lebanon are being phased out and there are negotiations to reduce them on trade between the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Syria. Many Aleppo traders and producers benefited from trade with Iraq in the late 1990s. One of my informants won a contract with the United Nations through the Oil for Food Programme. In the spring of 2003 he was devastated by the effects of the war on Iraq and on his business.

Syria had close military relations with the former Soviet Union. The value of its debt to the former Soviet Union was almost US$ 18 billion in 1991, about the amount of the Syrian annual GNP (Perthes 1995: 35). Earlier, this debt was partially serviced by deducting the value of goods exported to the Soviet Union. State and private factories in Syria benefited from this arrangement. In 1991 Russia agreed to waive most of the debt, but the export of Syrian products continued. Aleppo traders often commented that the city had benefited greatly from this. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s trade with Russia and the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union was very brisk and many, mainly female, traders came to Aleppo to do business. The exports consisted mainly of colourful female clothes in synthetic materials. By the end of the 1990s, however, this market was not as lucrative as before. Many of the former Soviet republics faced severe economic problems. Secondly, according to my informants, other countries were becoming either cheaper or 'better' to import from.[9] Some traders/producers, they said, had sold merchandise of bad quality to their Russian and Central Asian partners, and this eventually backfired.

In tourist brochures the enormous covered market in Aleppo is often described as 'medieval' and the trading practices as 'unchanged' through the centuries. Walking in the narrow alleys, looking at the small shops selling colourful silks and cottons, the famous Aleppo soap, or spices and herbs, it is possible to imagine that the market is indeed unchanged. But the enormous caravanserais, where caravans were unloaded, have not seen camels for a very long time, and most of the cloth sold in the retail stores is woven from synthetic yarn. The old market is still multilingual and ethnically heterogeneous. Kurds from the rural areas are important customers and there are still Turkmen and Armenian traders.

But Italian, to catch the attention of important tourists, or Russian, used in trade with customers from all over the former Soviet Union, can equally well be heard. In the old market, in the shops and offices, in the warehouses in the old caravanserais, as well as in the busy trading quarters surrounding it, telephones and faxes connect the traders with partners and markets outside Syria.[10] Some of these connections, and some of these markets, reflect very old trading links, such as spices bought from India, Indonesia and Malaysia; others are of more recent origin.

Bashar,[11] in his mid-forties, has a large office in the old town. He is part of a huge very well-known trading family which has established itself mainly in household utensils. Bashar's grandfather, and later on other relatives, became wholesale and retail traders. His grandfather imported from China, France, Germany and Sweden and was the agent of several well-known trade brands. Now, more than twenty shops in the 'household' market belong to family members, who have been large distributors of household utensils and china in north-east Syria. Around 1985 Bashar started to work as an agent of foodstuffs, in which he has a trading venture with seven close relatives. He is also a partner with others in the production of plastic, and invests in other ventures he finds profitable. Bashar has close links with Lebanon, both for imports and exports. He is the agent for *mate*[12] from Argentina, and, with a Syrian expatriate, has invested in the production of eggs in Romania. He frequently travels to other Arab countries, and to West and East Europe, attending fairs or looking for new business opportunities.

Mahmud, in his mid-forties, is also from a well-known trading family, mainly established in the yarn trade and the production of textiles. He is a close friend of Bashar and one of his many business partners. Mahmud's brother is a retail trader in synthetic yarn which he imports from Korea, Taiwan and Indonesia. Mahmud has a dye factory working on commission for textile producers, who, in their turn, export cloth, mainly to the Arabian peninsula. He has also established a chemical factory with machinery imported from Italy. Mahmud has invested in food factories in Morocco and Egypt, and he frequently travels outside Syria with his friend Bashar.

Abd al-Jabbar, in his mid-sixties, is from an old trading family, and he has a factory producing head-covers for men. Much of his business is conducted in his small wholesale shop/office and a warehouse in the old market. His production is almost totally geared towards export, mainly to Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Every year he also spends a number of months in Mecca, where he shares retail facilities with a business associate. He sells a lot during the pilgrimage season, when Muslim traders combine the *hajj* with business activities.

Jurjus, in his early forties, inherited (together with his brothers) a vast

business in mechanical spare parts, established in the 1950s during the years of agricultural expansion in the north-east. The brothers have shops close to one another in one of the spare-part districts of Aleppo. Another brother is a medical doctor and a major importer of medical instruments from Western Europe. Jurjus is also the agent for many foreign companies for one particular product. He used to sell Swedish and German brand names, but these are now too expensive for most of the Syrian market, and Italian and even Turkish brands are more profitable for him. With a partner he recently opened a West European name-brand store in Aleppo, which is run as a franchise from the parent company, involving management and book-keeping according to the latter's specifications. He travels frequently to Lebanon for business and pleasure, but also visits many other countries.

Jamil, in his mid-forties, used to be a teacher of Arabic. His paternal grandfather came to Aleppo as a trumpeter in the Turkish army, and stayed. Two of his brothers have studied Islamic law and live outside Syria. Jamil was inspired by a third brother to open a textile business, and he contracts small factories to produce clothes to his specifications solely for the export market. He has two different niches: one selling rather gaudy, synthetic clothes to the cheap 'Arab' market of Marseille, the other producing high-quality cotton underwear for the German market.

Eyad, in his late forties, comes from a family of traders. He has four stores in the central part of Aleppo selling men's clothing and shoes. Eyad's four brothers all have stores in the centre of Aleppo. With a partner, he also has a small factory making men's suits. In addition, he owns a fruit and a sandwich stall. He imports walnuts from Romania and sells chocolate and cookies back to Romania, arranging the transport himself and also taking along goods from other traders and producers. Eyad owns a flat in Bucarest and frequently travels to Romania.

Hassan is from a large well-known family of traders who have been working for generations mainly in textiles. He started trading while he was a government-sponsored student in Odessa, and continued his studies in the Soviet Union, all the time supplementing his student allowance through trade. Hassan received a postgraduate degree, worked for the government for some time, and then quit. He has two textile shops in the covered market mainly selling sheets, towels and clothes to rural customers. He invests in real estate and sometimes, alone or in partnership with others, commissions the production of cloth or clothes, and he also has a storage facility for textiles to be exported to Russia and the Central Asian republics.

The above traders have developed their cross-border trade in various ways, but typically through networks of family or close friends. Many in Aleppo have established trading in countries where they, their relatives or friends, once studied, or where friends or relatives have settled. The

numerous links to the countries of the former Soviet Union, to Romania and Bulgaria, and to Germany bear witness to this. The large Syrian importation of Italian machinery has paved the way for close contacts with Italian companies. Aleppo's export asset – freely admitted by my informants – is the low wages paid to Syrian workers. The products they buy, sell or produce can be competitive on many markets because Syrian labour is still cheap. The state also encourages exports, and ventures covered by the new investment law are exempted from taxes for a number of years. Multinational corporations have established factories in Syria. Quite a lot of the work is actually done in small workshops in Aleppo, where labourers – often minors – work under dismal conditions for very low wages. Of the above traders only Jurjus' venture into franchising is covered by the new investment laws, but my informants admitted that they had benefited from the pro-private switch in economic policy. Even small enterprises could be highly profitable.

The Aleppian Entrepreneurs

In many ways my informants regard themselves as heroic traders-entrepreneurs struggling against the colossus of the state. Aleppians often complained loudly that their city was greatly disadvantaged in comparison with Damascus. They claimed that they contributed to national welfare more than any other Syrians through their industriousness, skill and sheer hard work. Hikmat, a trader with a small textile factory, said that originally the Damascene traders and industrialists were cleverer, but that Aleppo traders had become much more active as exporters. He complained that Damascene traders had better links with important figures and politicians, and claimed that when Aleppo traders started to really compete for exports, the Damascene traders 'blocked' Aleppo. 'All the flights for foreign businessmen who used to come to Aleppo first and only secondly to Damascus, have now been re-routed to Damascus first.' But air freight from Aleppo in 1996 considerably exceeded that from Damascus, despite the fact that work on the enlargement of Aleppo's airport was extremely slow.[13] Aleppians also complained that their city was dirtier than the capital, and that President Hafiz al-Asad visited Aleppo only once during his thirty years in power.

Scores of other examples were brought up to stress that Damascus, the capital, fed on Aleppo, the periphery. For example, property in central Aleppo which generates income is to a large extent owned by the Ministry for Religious Affairs. But under the centralised system of Syria, this income cannot be managed directly in Aleppo. In such complaints 'Damascus' can actually be understood as a metaphor for the state or the regime.[14] Hence Aleppo traders, when it suited them, cultivated an image

as the Syrian 'other' – disadvantaged but clever and hard-working. Clearly, such an image could be a business asset or used as an excuse for possible failure. But images like these did not stop business relations or friendships between traders from both cities, when they were mutually beneficial.

These Aleppo traders saw economic liberalisation as something good, but insufficient and wrongly administered. They were not blocked by government agencies when they tried to export or travel abroad. They were all members of the Aleppo Chamber of Commerce which facilitated travel and trade links with foreign countries. But the bureaucracy surrounding exports and imports was lamented by all. A large number of government agencies are involved in issuing permits for import/export, partly because of the differentiated scale of foreign currency, which, in turn, has been linked to the new investment laws since 1991.

Adnan works in import/export trade and is also a part-owner of a foodstuffs industry. One day he spelled out to me all that he thought was wrong in the official handling of exports and imports. One basic problem, according to Adnan, is that nobody exports in their own name, because a possible loss incurs too many risks. First, the exporter must have money in order to be able to buy or produce. Then he has to deposit a guarantee with the bank, corresponding to 75 per cent of the value of the export, if this is higher than US$ 200,000. If he is unable to sell his goods abroad, the bank guarantee is forfeited to the state and one may even be imprisoned. To avoid this traders, when exporting, use the names of people with no visible assets. Then, in the case of a forfeit, there is no money to be confiscated. These 'export-names' are in reality fronts for big dealers who make an enormous profit on 'leasing' guarantees for exports and imports. Adnan also complained that anyone wanting to export needs a massive amount of papers and stamps from various government departments. According to him, most traders bribe their way through the paper work. The new law, which was supposed to increase investment in 'production' has in reality, according to most traders, only created new opportunities for fraudulent practice.[15]

According to my informants, the complicated rules and the lack of transparency in bureaucratic matters made for the spread and growth of corruption, especially in business related to imports and exports. The taking of bribes is ubiquitous and, according to my informants, increasing in the Syrian public sector. Bribery is not a new phenomenon, but has extended into every part of the public sector. Campaigns to identify and imprison corrupt employees have routinely taken place in Syria since the end of the 1970s, but corruption was always loudly complained about. While most traders blamed the government for the enormous increase in corruption, the willing participation of the traders

shows that corruption is always a two-way street, something many Syrians, both traders and non-traders, hotly debated. Most traders expressed an aversion to involving themselves too deeply with the state. They were all linked to government agencies in various degrees, but many outwardly cherished their non-involvement. Mahmud, with the chemical factory, told me that he used to import the material needed for his factory, but that he had given up doing so because it was too complicated to get the various permits, and he preferred to pay a little bit more for the products on the Syrian market. 'It is not worth the trouble of bribing and hassling with customs.' Mahmud also said that, for him and his network of friends and family, it was important not to be involved with the Syrian state banks. 'I could expand my business, take a loan and extend. But I don't want to. I believe that the paying of bank interest is un-Islamic.' When he needed credit he found it through his network of relatives and friends. Such an expression of Islamic attitudes should be taken not only at its face value but also as an expression of the ambivalence towards Syrian bureaucratic and political structures, which are disliked and avoided, but also profited from when possible.

Turkish-Syrian Relations

For traders like Jurjus, Jamil and Hassan, the distance from Ankara or Istanbul, or even Iskanderun has for decades been greater than from Tashkent, Moscow or even Seoul. This distance has in many ways been cultivated in the capitals on both sides of the border since the First World War. In Syria the Ottoman period is routinely described as 'five hundred years of darkness'. In textbooks the 'Turkish' rule is likened to colonial exploitation. Such views were also present among citizens at large, in Aleppo and elsewhere. What is habitually described as the 'underdevelopment' of the Middle East was typically explained in terms of the long period of Turkish rule, in which 'the Turks' fostered feudalism and despotism and never developed a functioning bureaucracy. There is much to blame on 'the Turks'.[16] In Aleppo the river Queiq, with its source north of the border, is today little more than a foul-smelling trickle,[17] and the bad smell is routinely blamed on 'the Turks' who had stopped the flow of water. In Aleppo, the fate of Armenians after the First World War was often highlighted as an example of Turkish savagery. In the 1960s and 1970s stories of highway robberies in Turkey were common and Syrians claimed that it was not safe to travel in Anatolia. Historical soap operas about the first decades of the twentieth century either depicted Turks (all men) as brutish and cruel, or as rather ridiculous figures speaking broken Arabic. But just as 'Damascus' was sometimes used by the Aleppo traders as a metaphor for the current regime, popular readings on 'Turkish rule' and 'Turks' could be used

metaphorically to represent current conditions in Syria. Despotism and absence of the rule of law 'before' could, and often was, translated to contemporary Syria.

Yet in Aleppo there was not only distance from Turkey, but also proximity. On a more mundane level, Aleppians often acknowledged historical links with 'the Turks'. The local cuisine, extolled, cherished and both prepared and eaten with reverence and gusto, was said to be more Turkish than that in Damascus. The local dialect was said to contain more Turkish words and expressions than other Syrian dialects. Recently, Turkish popular music has become quite popular among the young. 'We used to be more Turkish here than Arabic', informants often said. And many Aleppians have a grandfather or grandmother who was born in Turkey. This is not counting those who were born in the Iskanderun/Hatay province, now residents in the city, who in many cases still have relatives on the other side of this ambiguous border.

Official Syria and official Turkey have certainly not been the best of friends. The loss of the Iskanderun province is a constant reminder of colonial treachery. From the Syrian point of view, it is a symbol of promises betrayed. In the post-Second World War period, Turkey received Marshall aid, quickly recognised Israel and joined NATO, and hence demonstrated its Western interests and loyalties. In 1958, at the height of US efforts to create a Turkish-Arab defence pact, the political conflicts were extremely intense in the Middle East. Troops were massed on both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border, and in Syria fear of a Turkish invasion was widespread, and not totally unfounded.[18]

In the autumn of 1998 Turkey demanded the extradition of the Kurdish leader Öcalan, and added that Syria must recognise the 1939 border and change its official maps accordingly. Syria asserted that Öcalan was not in Syria and that Syrian maps would not be changed. The propaganda war on Syrian television and in the media was quite intense (see Emma Jørum in this volume) and massive Turkish troop movements were reported. Yet, in Aleppo, my trader informants remained calm, insisting that there was no war in the making.[19] The border station of Bab al-Hawa, on the international highway, was kept open, and Syrian air flights between Damascus, Aleppo and Istanbul were still in operation. The Syrian government, fearing 'popular demonstrations', increased the number of guards outside the Turkish Consulate in Aleppo, but these guards spent their time idly watching the passers-by.

This crisis in many ways throws light on the ambiguous relations between Syria and Turkey as viewed from Aleppo. There has been conflict, but also cooperation. The Iskanderun/Hatay border is not officially recognised by Syria, but it functions as an important *de facto*

international border.[20] Until the 1960s the railway connecting Aleppo with the north-eastern towns meandered through both Turkey and Syria. In 1997 the value of official imports – mainly manufactured goods – from Turkey was about two-thirds the value of imports from all the Arab countries combined. The value of Syrian export to Turkey – double that of imports – was about one-third the value of exports to all Arab countries. Syrian exports to Turkey consists mainly of oil, but also live animals and food products. Syria's official economic relations with Turkey are far more intensive than those with Iran, one of Syria's allies.[21]

Official relations between the two countries improved in 2000, and the Turkish President attended the funeral of President Hafiz al-Asad in June that year. It was also announced that the new Syrian President, Bashar al-Asad, would choose Turkey as the first non-Arab country to visit. Despite tensions over water rights in the Euphrates, discussions between officials from the two countries continued. In April 2001 the Syrian Minister of Defence received a Turkish military delegation and in June the same year a Syrian military delegation visited Turkey to discuss 'technical, scientific military training and cooperation'.[22] A private Syrian-Turkish company started to set up a huge ultra-modern synthetic yarn-spinning factory on the outskirts of Aleppo in 2003. That year the Turkish government decided to clear the south-eastern border area of mines. Mutual official visits have increased enormously since then and various kinds of agreements have been signed.[23] Turkish is again heard frequently in Aleppo. This renewed form of commercial and industrial cooperation is favourably viewed by my informants. One of them said: 'We have long-established relations with the Turks. We are half-Turks here in Aleppo, anyway! And we should have good relations with all our neighbours. It is good for Aleppo to be closer again to Turkey.'[24]

Legal movement across the border has always been available although Syrians must have a visa to enter Turkey.[25] But even when many of the smaller border stations were closed, due to conflicts, people on both sides of the border have been able to get special permission – from the provincial authorities on both sides – to visit relatives on the other side. The borderland is mainly inhabited by Kurds, and thousands of Syrian Kurds visited relatives in Turkey during the religious holidays in 2001. About half a million Jordanians and a million Lebanese came to Syria in 1996, but more than 156,000 Turkish nationals officially visited Syria the same year. More Iranians visited Syria, but the number of Turkish border crossings still signify intensive relations.[26] Syrians mostly travel to other Arab countries and to the former countries of the Soviet Union, but they visit Turkey more frequently than Western Europe.

In 1999, immediately after the crisis between the two countries had subsided, travel agencies in Aleppo increased their cooperation with their Turkish counterparts. One agent said that Western Europe was too

expensive for most Syrians, but that Turkey was still affordable 'because their currency is even worse than ours', adding that Turkey was 'almost like home', only cleaner and providing much better service. He recommended couples to spend their honeymoon in Adana ('lovely place, very romantic, with excellent hotels') and he also arranged 'pilgrimage' tours to Turkey for Aleppo Christians. He was envious of the Turkish government's plans to expand tourism even more. Nothing comparable was being done by the Syrian authorities. He continued: 'We actually have just as good, if not better, sites as Turkey. But we don't develop our tourist resources. Sometimes I think our government does not want foreigners to come.'

Many of my informants had visited Turkey and gone further than the Iskanderun province. They often remarked that Syria used to be more developed than Turkey, but now it was the other way round. One trader had taken his family three times by car all the way to Istanbul and he really liked that city. Another trader placed Istanbul second only to Cairo. Munir, in his late thirties and extremely busy with his shop, small workshop, and family commitments, had not been outside Syria for fifteen years. Suddenly he flew off to Istanbul for a few days with a friend who knew the city quite well. His father did not want him to close the shop and leave, but the son insisted that he needed to go for business reasons. He was extremely enthusiastic when he came back: 'Istanbul was fantastic! The hotel was right in the centre, and it was cheap and clean. There is absolutely everything in Istanbul. All kinds of people and all sort of things. There is of course a bit of social chaos...but I really liked it. People were very nice to us. It was not the East but Europe.' He displayed a folder from an Aleppo travel agency selling package tours to Turkey. 'A week in Turkey including Mersin, Antalya, Alanya for only 14,500 lira. That is so cheap when they ask 3,500 lira for a few days in Lebanon!'[27]

Trade across the Turkish Border

Even if tourist visits to Turkey are increasing, this does not account for the many border crossings. Of the people crossing the Syrian-Turkish border many, most probably, make numerous trips, and much of this traffic is probably undertaken by professional borderland smugglers, crossing the border on a daily basis.

Samir claimed that in the 1950s Syrian products were smuggled into Turkey, but now Turkish products flowed across the Syrian border. In the market for household utensils traders were visited daily by itinerant salesmen with smuggled goods from Turkey or Lebanon. Almost all Aleppo street-vendors selling tools, electric appliances or china sold Turkish products that had been smuggled into the country. Many of the

stores selling fancy women's dresses and suits in the bourgeois quarters of the city had Turkish clothes. Samir claimed that the Turkish government's economic policies had helped Turkish industrialists, while in Syria economic policies had instead been detrimental to economic development and industrial exports. In the new trade and customs agreements between the two neighbours, Syria risked, he emphasised, 'once again' becoming the reservoir for cheap labour and raw materials.

Traders occasionally got into trouble for selling smuggled goods. One trader selling pots and pans and china was visited by customs inspectors, probably after a tip off from a colleague or relative with a grudge. Since he was unable to produce invoices and custom clearances for the Turkish goods in his basement, he was taken to the customs prison. Neighbours and relatives were quite worried. How would customs calculate the value of the undeclared goods? Would it be high enough to send him to prison for economic crimes?[28] But after two days he was released. His family had raised enough money to pay the bribes and get him out.

Although the value of goods smuggled from Turkey most probably cannot be compared with the value of legal trade, it is still very important in Aleppo's regional economy. Many people are engaged in, and earn their living, from this traffic. Azaz, a small town north of Aleppo, close to the border, used to be visited by scores of Aleppians on Fridays, going on shopping tours, mainly for clothes. Every day there were buses and taxis going to and from Antakya, in Iskanderun province, carrying goods across the border. In the late 1990s gasoline was brought from Syria and sugar from Turkey, along with whatever other consumer goods could be profitably traded. My informants had no moral objections to either buying or selling smuggled goods from Turkey (or elsewhere). They were firm believers in the free movement of capital and goods when this was profitable for them. But the act of smuggling professionally was not esteemed. Professional smugglers were not despised, but the business of smuggling was only for people who lived in the borderland, or who had connections with that borderland. Smuggling into Syria could not be conducted without close, even intimate, daily dealings with sundry employees on the border. My informants avoided such contacts.

In Aleppo both men and women agree that only men can be 'real' traders. There are women in Aleppo who trade – buy and sell – but they are not considered, nor consider themselves to be traders. Many women, however, are recognised as being connected economically with the market. Some Aleppo women work as assistants in shops selling women's clothes in the more 'modern' quarters of the city. But in general, women work in the confines of their own or other women's homes. There are many women in the rather gender-segregated Aleppo who work on commission for shopkeepers/traders by selling clothes to other women.[29] Women are also very active in cross-border trade. Many

women earn small sums of money by reselling clothes, accessories, perfumes or make-up that they, or others, have bought in Lebanon or the oil-rich countries. In Aleppo clothes smuggled from Turkey are, on the selling side, handled almost exclusively by women. Some work with Turkish smuggled products without intermediaries.[30] This trade, which mainly involves female sellers and customers in the homes, does not challenge the dominant perception of female modesty and seclusion among male Aleppo traders.

One hot summer night, Hind, the wife of one of my informants, had a party for about fifteen of her female relatives to celebrate the move to her new house. I was invited to join them. We had cold drinks, food and fruit. Over coffee a female trader[31] arrived with two big bags, out of which she pulled an amazing number of clothes that were handed around among the guests. This woman had been especially invited to come. She showed informal summer dresses, shorts, T-shirts, underwear and bathing suits for children and women. Hind's guests tried many of them on, laughing uproariously when the fit was too tight or too loose. Most of the clothes were made of cotton and they were all made in Turkey. Despite the enhanced versatility of Syrian products, Hind's guests insisted that the Turkish clothes had nicer colours, were more modern and were better cut than the Syrian. The guests ordered and put goods aside, and the female trader promised to bring more of the items she ran out of. One guest told me that the trader asked the price for which she herself had bought each item for, to which each customer would add an extra sum, to give her a profit. The guests were having a good time, and they knew their expenditure was for a good cause; the trader was a divorced women supporting two children. Unlike themselves, she had to work for a living.

Not all women in Aleppo are bound by the ideal of female seclusion. Neither Jamila, in her late forties, nor her husband, is a native of Aleppo and both have been public employees. Jamila had become a female trader after working as a public employee for 23 years. She took early retirement and accepted a lump sum of 150,000 Syrian lira (about US$ 3,000) rather than receiving a monthly pension. She invested 100,000 lira in her husband's newly opened shop for electric appliances. Then he went bankrupt and started to work as an accountant, while Jamila started to sell glassware and household utensils that she bought from Turkey and which were smuggled into Syria by a former colleague. Jamila's business picked up and she began to earn quite well – about three times the amount she had earned as an employee. Then she launched into women's clothes, which people delivered from Turkey and she sold in her house. Clothes made a better profit and were less bulky. Later Jamila started to go to Antakya herself, but she never brought anything across the border herself. Others did this for her. 'It was very easy to deal with

traders in Antakya. I managed in Arabic and paid in Syrian currency. It was all a matter of trust. I could sell a suit for 10,000 lira and make a profit of 1500 lira on each one.' Then she became a partner in a shop selling clothes smuggled from Turkey, where she got a salary and part of the profit. 'But then, alas! Customs made a raid and everything was confiscated.' For two years she had done housework only. She used to keep the family, she said, and to earn more than her husband, and she found it humiliating to have to ask for money. 'There are still many women selling smuggled clothes in their homes but now people have so little money that profits are low. I am thinking about some other possible project…perhaps in the service sector.'

Borders, Boundaries and Transgressions

My informants have extensive and varied international experiences. But they have all chosen Aleppo and Syria, or – in the case of extended sojourns abroad – a kind of Aleppo away from Aleppo, as their arena of greatest significance. My informants, like many other Syrians, were simultaneously firmly rooted and deterritorialised in and through what I would describe as three overlapping homelands.

There is a *limited homeland* consisting of their village or their urban quarter. For my informants, this spatially limited homeland typically seemed to consist of the particular part of the market where they had their shops or offices, where they spent most of their time, and to which most were very attached. Then there is a *political homeland* of the nation-state of Syria which shapes their lives in many important ways. It is a political homeland many feel ambivalent about, or constrained by, but a homeland they cannot escape from without difficulty, even in exile, or as migrants. For traders the political homeland was acutely felt in all international transactions. My informants often said that they would like to see far-reaching economic changes. They wanted the economy to be more open and free. They often complained that the creativity of traders and industrialists was blocked. In this they sounded like businessmen in most parts of the world. Traders often claimed that the relative isolation of Syria was a constraint on their activities, and they never once admitted that their own markets were protected by the Syrian state. Today Syrians face fewer bureaucratic and political difficulties when leaving the country to study, to work, to do business, or simply to go on holiday. But there is still a gap between the, at times, xenophobic attitudes of nationalistically minded bureaucrats or politicians, and the eagerness with which Syrians, in general, cross their national borders.

Finally there is also an *extended homeland* consisting of the many links Syrians have – mainly through their past and present family histories – with other locations in the world. All urban Syrians have family members

who live or have lived in another country. Most Syrians, urban and rural, have ancestors coming from places that are not part of contemporary Syria. To uproot oneself and to move is part of a remembered and living history. This is thus more of an imagined homeland of sometimes vast proportions, which today often acts as an impetus towards migration or trade. This imagined homeland contributes to the common Syrian claim that Syrians are adaptable and can manage to survive anywhere. Not only Aleppo traders stress their cleverness and ingenuity. 'Put an Aleppian (Damascene/Syrian) anywhere in the world and he will find a living.' Not all Aleppo traders make it, of course, and few make a fortune, but they expect of themselves and others to be able at least to make a living. This attitude is, perhaps, their best asset when transgressing borders.

In this extended homeland Bucarest, Mecca, Moscow and Tashkent were in the 1990s closer to my informants than Antakya or Ankara. But given the new economic opportunities, and given the improvement in official Syrian-Turkish relations, Iskanderun/Hatay, Ankara and Istanbul are once again becoming part of Aleppo traders' extended homeland. Looking at these homelands from the perspective of *longue durée* – a perspective which seems eminently suitable in this part of the world – it is obvious that the overlap is malleable and flexible, where the relative importance of the homelands has both a diachronic and a synchronic dimension for the actors involved. The history of Aleppo could in such a perspective be effectively utilised to cultivate and forge intense cultural, economic and political interrelationships across the present-day Turkish-Syrian border.

Notes:

[1] For important contributions to this debate see, Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, (eds), *Border Identities. Nation and State at International Frontiers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[2] I use the term 'trader' rather than merchant, businessman or entrepreneur for my informants. They classify themselves, and are classified by others, as *tujār*, roughly corresponding to the English 'traders'. A *tājer* (s.) in Aleppo may, as will be pointed out in the empirical cases, trade as well as have industrial interests. A trader is always a man, and the female equivalent (*tājira*) carries different and much less socially valued connotations. A male trader is of and in the market. While a female trader may earn a considerable income, as will be pointed out in this chapter, she will never be part of the public Aleppo market.
[3] For more details see Annika Rabo, *A Shop of One's Own. Independence and Reputation among Traders in Aleppo* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

[4] All over Syria, but especially in Aleppo, speculators in the late 1980s borrowed money from private individuals, invested it in economic ventures, including land, and promised fantastic returns on the investments. The bubble burst in the mid-1990s and many traders in Aleppo were still, in the late 1990s, suffering from the effects.

[5] Syria's oil is mainly found in the north-east provinces, where most of the cotton is also grown.

[6] In 2003 the government ratified a number of private bank licences, and my informants became confident that private banks would soon open in Syria. They claimed that such banks would ease their work but seriously doubted if Syrian capital abroad (including their own) would be placed in these new banks. By Spring 2005 the confidence in private banks seemed to be increasing, but my informants still needed banks abroad, since there is still no free movement of currency.

[7] Some of my informants argued that increased US pressure on Syria since the 'war on terrorism' in the wake of September 11 has speeded up the pro-private sector policies of the Syrian regime. Although they certainly want to see more such policies, they are, at the same time, highly critical of what they see as US global pressures.

[8] In the summer of 2003 a few of my informants in Aleppo (and a surprising number of informants elsewhere) thought that the Syrian-EU negotiations concerned actual Syrian membership of the European Union. Such discussions centred on the positive aspects of 'joining Europe'!

[9] For similar developments and discussions in the Laleli district of Istanbul, see Caglar Keyder, 'A Tale of Two Neighborhoods', in C. Keyder (ed.), *Istanbul. Between the Global and the Local* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 1999) and, Mine Eder, 'From "Suitcase" Merchants to Organized Informal Trade? The Case of Laleli District in Istanbul'. Paper presented at the Fourth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence & Montecatini Terme 19-23 March 2003, organised by the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

[10] Since 2002 cellular telephones have become an important means of communication (and a status symbol) among many of my informants. For international calls, however, the ordinary telephone lines are used.

[11] The names of traders are fictitious.

[12] *Mate* – or *yerbamate* – was introduced to Syria by migrants returning from South America. It is sold as pulverised leaves and in Syria is mixed with warm water and sugar. It is mainly drunk in the Western parts of the country. *Mate* still serves as a reminder of old migratory links.

[13] In 1996 the airfreight from Aleppo was 27,077 tons and from Damascus only 10,719 ton (Statistical Abstracts, 1997).

[14] In Damascus many native city people, in turn, commonly complain about the excessive influx of people from the provinces, and that big trade is no longer in the hands of 'real' Damascene.

[15] There was widespread complaint in Syria that the new investment law of 1991 was utilised to import cars under the auspices of 'tourist ventures' and that many of the factories set up with a five-year tax exemption had been closed

down when taxes had to be paid. In short, most people complained that every step of the way the purpose of the reform had been twisted and circumvented. This might not be true in every case, but the lack of trust spread disbelief and misgivings, and served to legitimise one's own action or non-action.

[16] Cf. Elizabeth Picard, 'Aux confins arabo-turcs: territoires, sécurité et ressources hydrauliques', in E. Picard (ed.), La Nouvelle Dynamique au Moyen-Orient. Les relations entre l'Orient Arabe et la Turquie (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993), p. 165.

[17] In the Ankara agreement of 1921 between France and Turkey, the waters 'shall be shared between the city of Aleppo and the district to the north remaining Turkish, in such a way as to give equitable satisfaction to the two parties' (art. 12).

[18] Cf. Patrick Seale, The Struggle for Syria (London: I.B. Tauris, 1965), pp. 299-306.

[19] People talked and speculated, of course, and various interpretations of the crisis were offered.

[20] None of my informants in Aleppo saw the change of this border as remotely possible.

[21] Statistical Abstract, Foreign Trade Statistics 1997. These numbers are hard to interpret, of course, because Turkey might not be the end destination for much of these exports.

[22] See e.g. www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/010608/200160804.html

[23] There has, for example, been an agreement to open a joint stock market in Damascus, and an agreement to open a free trade zone in the border area north of Aleppo. And in May 2005 the wife of the Turkish Prime Minister spent three days in Syria as the guest of the wife of the Syrian president.

[24] These new cordial relations, and the positive light in which they were judged, must, of course, also be understood in relation to the perception of Syria's precarious position in the region, not least after the US occupation of Iraq and overt threats to Syria.

[25] In the summer of 2003 I was told that Aleppians obtain a visa with great ease from the Turkish consulate in the city, and that people living in the border region get a visa directly on the Turkish border.

[26] Iranian tourism in Syria is carried out within a special Syrian-Iranian agreement.

[27] A note of comparison: 3,500 Syrian lira (US$ 70) is what a qualified teacher in secondary schools get as a monthly starting salary. It is not nearly enough to live on, much less to support a family on. 14,599 Syrian lira is more than the official salary of a Syrian minister. In the summer of 2003 some informants told me that, instead of going to the Syrian coast they went to Turkey for a holiday. They claimed it was cheaper and that cities like Antalya had much better tourist facilities.

[28] Undeclared goods to the value of more than 30,000 Syrian lira (US$ 600) was considered an economic crime and could lead to stiff prison sentences.

[29] There were also many poor women who worked in their homes on a piece-by-piece basis for workshops or small industries. Many women also laboured in workshops owned by a male family member, or worked at home for the family business. Official statistics never capture this female labour.

[30] Although I have no solid empirical data, female smugglers seem in many ways to have advantages over male ones. Their relationship with border officials will of necessity be different; officials would probably be more lenient and permissive towards 'poor, helpless women'.

[31] This woman was called a 'female trader' (*tājira*) but the party guests did not compare her work with that of their husbands.

MANAGING IDENTITIES AMONG EXPATRIATE BUSINESSMEN ACROSS THE SYRIAN-LEBANESE BOUNDARY

Elizabeth Picard

Faced with the challenge of state formation in the Middle East since the First World War, government authorities had to overcome a number of common difficulties in their attempts at creating a political community on their new national territory. The most frequent was to establish agreed fixed international boundaries separating the domestic realm from the exterior, the world of (supposed) social solidarity from the world of Leviathan. In this respect, the separation of Lebanon from Syria bore similarities with the demarcation between Syria and the new Turkish state. A foreign colonial power (France) played a significant role in the negotiation, mingling its own interests with those of the new local governments, and tipping the power scale between the local states in order to achieve its own political ambitions. Hence, the transfer of Iskanderun to the Turkish state in 1939, or the carving out of Greater Lebanon in 1920.

Another similarity was the length of the interstate crisis in relation to border fixing in spite of periods of appeasement. In the case of Syria and Lebanon, as in the Syrian-Turkish case, the crisis lasted well after independence, and international boundaries are still a topical question today. Official declarations at the time of independence in 1943, and the simultaneous adhesion of Beirut and Damascus to the League of Arab States the following year, seemed for a while to clarify the bilateral relationship. However, although most (not all) of the territorial boundaries between the two states were finally agreed upon, their meaning and political implications remained subject to public debate. Moreover, the two related questions of the separation of Syria and Lebanon, and of the inclusion within Lebanon of peripheral areas carved out of the Ottoman *wilāya* (province) of Damascus, such as the Bekaa,

Tripoli and Akkar, were reopened years later, during the Lebanese civil war. They continue to nourish a political controversy to this day.

A third similarity has to do with the functionality of the international boundary, and more specifically with the discrepancy between state boundaries and social (ethnic, linguistic, religious, tribal) boundaries. However, in the Syrian-Turkish case, strong nationalist doctrines contributed to impose a sharp distinction between Turkish and Arab identities as the only legally relevant national distinction, thus provoking a stream of migrations, forced assimilation, and marginalisation of the various minorities remaining within each state.[1] In the Lebanese-Syrian case, the circumstances were different, as the two states could not claim a different ethnic identity: their populations were both Arab. However, their international boundary cut across communal territorial continuity (as in the case of the Sunnis from Tripoli on the Lebanese coast to Homs in the Syrian hinterland, for example), or communal solidarity (as in the case of the Druzes in the Lebanese Shuf and the Syrian Jabal al-Arab). Moreover, active communal networks (such as those linking the Orthodox Christians from various cities of the Levant) operated across the boundary.

If not according to an ideological definition of national identity based on ethnicity (Smith 1986: 23-35; Aflaq 1962: 242-49), on what criteria could the distinction be made between the Lebanese and the Syrian states? More specifically, on what criteria has the border between Syria and Lebanon been not only drawn but also accepted, challenged, lived, interpreted, imagined – all activities that can be summed up as its *invention*? These questions call for an examination of its formation process, its changing image over time, as well as the variety of actors involved in the process.

Besides the legal drawing and official keeping of the international boundary, its mental, ideological and practical uses involve a large variety of actors. It would be meaningless to make a distinction between those who take responsibility for defining the boundary (the international system, the Syrian and Lebanese political authorities), on the one hand, and those on whom the boundary is imposed and who sometimes utilise it (such as traders, smugglers, migrant workers, tourists, transnational private and public institutions, etc.), on the other. At a given time, each of them for his (her) own part gives meaning to the border through his (her) discourse and practices, and contributes to the plurality of its meaning.

Inventing the boundary also implies that social and political actors draw on collective values and norms that change over time, according to change in the regional configuration and in the domestic arena as well as in the relations between the domestic and the regional realms. In Lebanon, for example, the border with Syria was seen and dealt with

differently during the statist Shihabist period (1958-64), the fling of ultra-liberalism that succeeded it, the civil war (1975-90), and the post-war reconstruction period. In Syria, the officers who seized power in the late 1940s, the Unionist leaders of the United Arab Republic (1958-61), the Ba'thist regime after 1963, all looked at the boundary with Lebanon through different eyes.

To this synchronic diversity and diachronic variation in the definition of the border, a third dimension had to be added after the Cold War. Globalisation had new effects on the international system. It led to the blurring of the distinction between domestic and foreign realms, between public and private spheres, in matters of security, markets, communications as well as in the formation of social movements. It contributed to the withering of the Westphalian notion of state sovereignty: the Weberian monopoly of the use of legitimate force, the territorialisation of state power, the separation between the state and other social actors (Migdal 2001: 26). It gave density, and sometimes autonomy, to the border area through the creation of free zones, the granting of dual citizenship, the bilateral management of public goods, and new configurations of meaning.

Within the framework drawn by the three notions of synchrony, diachrony and globalisation, this chapter aims at examining the process of construction/deconstruction of the Lebanese-Syrian border *from the point of view and through the practices of* one group of actors whose contribution to the process can be considered strategic. The group concerned is made up of the Syrian businessmen who had left Syria since the creation of the United Arab Republic in February 1958 and had settled, and prospered, in Lebanon. Choosing a non-governmental actor in order to analyse the international boundary separating Lebanon from Syria imposed itself. In most of the studies already available on the subject, the boundary has been examined in a classic international relations perspective privileging the state, and even more in a narrow governmental perspective (Qubain 1961; Dawisha 1980; Chehade 1990), thus ignoring complex processes and dynamics. Also, analysing the distinction between Lebanon and Syria by means of the examination of businessmen's representations and strategies allows us to bridge the gap between international relations and political economy, and possibly to throw light on the domestic structures that make the specificity of each state with regard to the other (Evangelista 1997: 217-22). While I am aware that by choosing to examine *one* set of actors, this chapter offers only a limited view of the Lebanese-Syrian boundary, what it intends to do is to shift the perspective and shed a new light on the shaping of this border, and on its meaning.

In order to reflect upon the redefinition of the Lebanese-Syrian border since the end of the civil war in Lebanon and following the

second Syrian economic *infitāh* (opening) in 1991, two 'critical junctures'
(Collier and Collier 1991: 31) are successively examined, in which these
businessmen contributed to the (re)definition of the border: (i) the
period of their emigration to Lebanon (1960-65) and (ii) the early years
of the Syrian regime's involvement in the Lebanese civil war (1976-82).
Privileging the examination of strategic junctures and periods of crisis
(Dobry 1986) over the observation of continuities imposed itself in view
of the existing documentation as well as the narrative of the actors. In
spite of their economic power and, as discussed in the chapter, their
political influence on, and at some point ethical leadership in, the
Lebanese polity, the Syrian businessmen of Lebanon have not been
studied by historians, sociologists, or by political scientists to this day.[2]
One could even suggest that they have successfully managed to remain
hidden. As a matter of consequence, the main sources documenting the
present study are the discourses of members of the business community
themselves, interviewed in informal non-directive sessions in 2000-2002.[3]
Although the interviewees had a natural tendency to insist on their
formative years when asked about their life story, most of their testimony
made clear that the two periods cited above (1960-65 and 1976-82) were
of special importance. They offered a clue to the understanding of their
posture and strategy during the course of the new Syrian-Lebanese
relations in the 1990s-2000s.

The main argument of the chapter is that *ottomanism* offered an
implicit but still efficient reference for modern actors of the Near East
when dealing with their economic and political environment, even after
the creation of nation-states such as Syria and Lebanon. Here, *ottomanism*
is used in its anthropological (and somehow a-historical) dimension. It
refers to shared sensitivity, culture and *arts de faire* – what today's
sociologists call a common public sphere – inherited from four centuries
of Ottoman rule over the lands stretching along the eastern shores of the
Mediterranean.[4] Throughout this period, a constant flow of human,
material and symbolic exchanges between the Near Eastern provinces
was inspired by a nomadic *habitus* that contradicted territorialisation and
the stabilisation of identities and belongings. This flow was a strong
indication of the ecological and cultural unity of the region, especially
through its linguistic characteristic (the common use of Arabic since the
seventh century), its sectarian identities (mainly Sunni and Greek
Orthodox) as well as its traditional social mode of domination – the rule
of landowners and urban notables. Sociabilities developed at the regional
level, spreading families around in several cities, and encouraging
individual mobility during professional lifetime. In the political realm,
patrimonialism was a common characteristic of local powers whose
incumbents generally imposed an authoritarian rule on populations they
considered to be subjects – not citizens, while clientelism pervaded elite-

mass relations. All these common characteristics wove a shared, if not unified, social and economic space known as *Bilād al-Shām* (Damascus' land), that offered a base for regional political designs long after the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire.

Lebanon and Syria became independent nation-states only twenty-five years after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. A large majority of the notables who were entrusted with political power in Beirut and Damascus at the time (Hourani 1946) had personally experienced Ottoman governmentality – meaning the mode of exercising power (Foucault 1997: 655). While Lebanon officially endorsed the Ottoman heritage through the adoption of political communalism and the National Pact of 1943 (Akerli 1993: 184-92), the new Syrian military and revolutionary leaderships were prompt to reject it, only to enhance its conservation within the society and its instrumentalisation by extra-parliamentary opposition forces (Seale 1965: 74).

Far from withering away at the end of the Ottoman era, *ottomanism* persisted within the societies of the Near East as a paradigm of discourse, and mode of functioning of domestic and trans-border relations. It did not matter only for the religious, landowning, and administrative notables *(a'yān)* whose heirs had managed to stay in power in the first years of independence. By means of penetrating in the minds of the people of every layer and segment of the local society (with specific modalities and meanings for each layer and segment), it remained a structure of signification for state policy and popular sensitivity as well as for actors' strategies long after the disappearance of the Empire. *Ottomanism* even met a new fortune in the late 1970s in reaction to the flaws in the process of nation-state building in several Arab countries, the re-mobilisation of communal identities, and the growing porosity of international boundaries to religious, ethnic and political movements (Picard 1993: 160-5). Thus, the social, economic, and political practices of the local actors constantly referred, consciously or unconsciously, to a regional and networked definition of space (Denoeux 1993: 11-25), as discussed here in the case of the Syrian businessmen who settled in Lebanon. Add to this that, in recent decades, globalisation offered a favourable background to *ottomanism* through its 'natural' support for trans-boundary identities and networks, as well as the development of a new partnership between the state and private actors according to the new requirements of governance (Rosenau 2003).

When Syrian Businessmen Fled to Lebanon

The departure of the business community from Syria, and the settlement of some of its members in Lebanon, can be considered two steps of a unique process, according to the 'push and pull' theory. I therefore

examine the circumstances and causes of the departure of the business community from Syria, and then their beginnings in Lebanon. In order to understand the significance of the international border in the process, I take into consideration the common cultural references of Lebanon and Syria, then the preferential choice of Lebanon by the Syrian bourgeoisie.

Exile and Settlement

The departure of the Syrian business community from Syria in the late 1950s and 1960s was considered a forced departure by the majority of the interviewees. Actually, it was the result of a deep divorce between Syria's new revolutionary leaders and the entrepreneurial class. Before the revolutionary period, the societies, economies and polities of Lebanon and Syria had been closely related and very similar since independence: in both countries primordial solidarities and communal loyalties prevailed over a nascent national integration. After twenty years of Mandate and in the wake of the Second World War their economies were still mainly agricultural and outward-oriented. In both countries landowners, new industrialists, and traders aimed at forming a 'power block' in the Gramscian sense (Portelli 1972: 86-9), that spurred leadership. In Beirut as in Damascus the polity was officially organised according to republican parliamentarism, but was actually permeated by pervading clientelism.

Only with the dispute over the financial incomes of the *Intérêts communs,* especially the customs taxes, did contradictions grew between the import-export merchants in Beirut who were in favour of an ultra-liberal economy (Shehadi 1987), on the one hand, and industrialists in Damascus and Aleppo who advocated state control (Sadowski 1984: 152). Syria opted out from the *zone franc* in 1950, and its government began to exert control over the national industry and agriculture (Heydemann 1999: 177). At that time, there was no contradiction between a rapidly growing state apparatus and the entrepreneurial class – big landowners who developed extensive dry farming, new industrialists or private bankers – in spite of the establishment of successive military regimes between 1949 and 1954.[5] Only popular demonstrations against the triple aggression at Suez (1956) signalled a change in the political balance of forces. Even in the first years of the United Arab Republic, the limited land reform imposed by the Nasserist regime was of little concern to the land-owning aristocracy (Métral 1980: 298-300). As for the nationalisation of a few industrial companies, it was promulgated only in late 1961 (Ducruet 1969: 54).

Things changed when the Ba'th party came to power in March 1963, a date that really marked the end of the liberal age and the downfall of the

traditional notables. It also marked the rupture and the beginning of an open confrontation (such as in Hama in April 1964) between the Syrian business community and the new radical-populist regime. A series of actions against private enterprise were adopted: the nationalisation of banks and exchange control (May 1963), of 90 per cent of industrial companies (January 1965), of 80 per cent of external trade (1967), as well as the adoption of an extensive land reform between 1963 and 1966. Excluded and repressed within Syria, the capitalists had no external resources to check the Ba'thist policies. They soon became conscious of the contradiction between their interests and those of a committed populist regime. Acceleration of the transfer of their money out of the country began as early as 1963. With capital fleeing the country, a large part of the entrepreneur elite chose to leave as well, which neither the bureaucrats nor the new Ba'thist militants would be able to substitute for. In four years (1963-67), several hundred thousands of people (out of a population of some 5 million) – Syrian businessmen and their families – left their country. In consequence, Syria was soon hit by a severe economic crisis.

Lebanon welcomed a large part of the Syrian capital and manpower, even though the brief 'civil war' of the summer of 1958 bore witness to the fragility of the country. Syrian capital brought in between 1958 and 1970 has been estimated at 500 million LL.[6] The balance of border movements noted by the Lebanese national security police indicated that the number of Syrians in Lebanon doubled between 1963 and 1969.[7] In sharp contrast, the early 1960s saw Syria in growing political and economic turmoil, while Lebanon experienced the most peaceful and prosperous period of its history. In Beirut, the short civil war episode in 1958 had ended with the establishment of a more respected and more efficient government. The state was slowly institutionalising (creation of the Banque du Liban in 1964), while transport, the public services, and the banking sector took advantage of the new oil prosperity in the Gulf (Dubar and Nasr 1976: 67-9). The growth of the processing industry and the tertiary sector (70 per cent of GNP in 1970) offered plenty of well qualified jobs and high profits.

The new Syrian immigrants arrived at a favourable time in a country with relaxed legislation and endless private accommodation. While private banks were closing in Syria, new branches were opening in Lebanon to which Syrian financial activities were soon relocated, and their managers resettled. Capital transferred by Syrian expatriates was preferably entrusted to Syrian-managed banks, which soon became hegemonic in the Lebanese banking system. According to a recent report, 22 out of 70 of the bank directors in Beirut in 1971 were of Syrian origin (Mansour 1999: 7). As for traders and industrialists, whereas they were able to transfer (illegally) only a part of their capital,

they benefited from their high education, their proficiency and skills, while they brought with them their networks of clients and suppliers. Some had only to transfer their previous activity such as the production or import of building materials, spinning or cloth mills. Others took advantage of the trauma to invest in new booming market niches such as pharmaceutical products or the importing of cars. Things were less easy for landowners who received forty-year bonds in compensation for their lost domains, and took years transferring some of their financial assets and gradually selling parts of their remaining properties, and they did not always succeed in entering new business. On the whole, Syrian expatriate businessmen would rather invest in de-territorialised activities such as trade and banking – a practice common among emigrants all over the world.

When telling the story of their departure and crossing the border, most of the interviewees evoked an atmosphere of emergency and a forced exodus. They said they had to leave places and belongings all of a sudden; they remembered their family clinging together in the car, the truck overloaded with hastily piled up furniture; they recalled difficult negotiations at the customs and the payment of bribes. While their narration contains all the stereotypes of forced exile of the kind shared by so many other refugees around the world (Mehlman 2000), most of those concerned also alluded to one or several journeys back to Syria in the following weeks or months, in order to sell a property, settle a pending business deal, or visit those members of the family who had chosen to stay behind, and sometimes retained their position in the public administration under the new regime. While some cases were reported of people arbitrarily jailed for a few days, which spread anxiety among the business community, they were neither banned from Syria nor physically threatened in general. Rather, they chose to enter Lebanon not because their survival was at stake, but because they wanted to regain the liberal atmosphere that had sustained their past prosperity.

Globally, the economic success of the Syrian businessmen in Lebanon was remarkably fast, just like anywhere they settled (the United States, Canada, France)[8] But in Lebanon, it was especially 'smooth', as put in English by one of the interviewees. Entrepreneurs from Syria were soon propelled among the most important and richest bank managers, in the import-export sector, and in industry as attested by the fact that an eminent Syrian family ranked among the seven largest industrialists of Lebanon in the early 1970s. It is difficult, however, to estimate their success, due to the difference of attitude towards wealth and economic success in Beirut and in Syrian society at the time. The social history of the Levantine Arab provinces has given birth to a different *ethos* according to the religious context (Christians being more extrovert than Muslims), the inscription within international space (hinterland cities

being isolated, while the coast had long been open to foreign influence), the relation to time (Syrian entrepreneurs privileging long-term investments and legal institutions, while their Lebanese counterparts looked for rapid gains, and endeavoured to take advantage of fluid situations and changes of fortune), the relation to money (the austerity of the Syrian bourgeoisie contrasting with the prodigality and ostentation of the rich Lebanese), etc.

In actual fact, the *émigré* Syrian entrepreneurs became integrated extremely rapidly within the economic as well as the social Lebanese elite. They soon occupied leading positions because they had received an excellent education, and were far-sighted, and ambitious: They were the perfect example of 'learning capitalism'.[9] However, they did not fully adopt the economic practices and daily manners of their Lebanese partners which were distinct from their own business ethic and social values. They insisted on the inner border that distinguished them from the Lebanese, and stuck to the collective values of their (national) community, although striving to blend into the society of their new homeland – an apparent contradiction rightly depicted as 'intimate nearness of difference' by Rania Ghosn. Tending to concentrate in specific neighbourhoods of Beirut – the richer in Hay al-Sarasiq, Aleppians in Badaro, Damascus Sunnis in Ras Beirut – the new Syrian expatriates did not usually appear in public, did not participate in political life, and were hardly mentioned in the press, in sharp contrast to the Palestinian economic and financial elite at the same period (Ben Mahmoud 2002: 80-95).

A large majority of the new immigrants sought and were granted Lebanese citizenship, anxious as they were to raise a legal boundary between them and the Syrian government. Most of them found rapid and easy ways to do this, either they 'returned' to the national choice initially made by their family in the first years of the Mandate (1923-25) by putting forward their father's Lebanese citizenship, and asserting they had never been Syrian. or they took advantage of the granting by Camille Chamoun in 1958 of Lebanese citizenship to thousands of Near Eastern Christians. They sought the patronage of a Lebanese leader, the protection of their community clerics, or managed to bribe a civil servant in the Ministry of the Interior. Only a few had to wait until the large wave of naturalisations in 1994 to become Lebanese. However, as the naturalisation process could drag on for years, families had to search for solutions to travel, often as expensive as the purchase of a South American passport. While it cannot be said that they feared specific threats from the Syrian regime (as did political opponents who had also taken refuge in Lebanon in the same period), their willingness to adopt Lebanese citizenship was rarely restrained by any Syrian patriotism. In other words, they did not share a 'diasporic consciousness' (Cohen 1997)

linking their individualistic pride to their national (Syrian) identity, although the Syrian law makes it impossible to renege on Syrian national identity. In consequence, their crossing of the national border may be analysed as the result of a rational choice made in order to maximise individual gains. While their strategy took place in a deeply antagonistic configuration with Lebanon, which considered itself a haven of pro-Western democracy threatened by the radical stance of its pro-Soviet Syrian neighbour (Kerr 1967), the Syrian business community in Lebanon contributed to the strengthening of the Syrian-Lebanese boundary by their quality of 'border people' (Wilson and Donnan 1998: 4).

In the early decades, the group lived in denial of its origins. Syrians tried to dissimulate their *shāmī* or Aleppian accent in public places, they refrained from alluding to their past life. While aiming at facilitating their integration into the Lebanese elite, the strategy of smoothing the difference paradoxically went along with a deep consciousness of collective identity, a great care for collective memory and home traditions, as attested by the preservation of culinary customs as well as the frequency of endogamous marriages – although not as numerous as marriages with Lebanese from the same religious sect. This double-edged strategy of 'entryism' and withdrawal is reminiscent of the destiny of the French *pieds noirs* – at least the wealthiest of them – who, incidentally, left Algeria in the same years, with their eagerness to forget a bitter past and make a new life. Like the *pieds noirs* in France, the Syrian *émigrés* blended into Lebanese society while feeling estranged from it. Like them, they were to be confronted by their memory three decades later, through an unpredictable turn of history.

Foreigners but Not Strangers

Rejection by Syria of its class of businessmen (the *push* factor, according to migration sociologists) combined with the *pull* of the Lebanese (or rather Beiruti) economic space in the mid-1960s. *Push* and *pull* are not sufficient to explain the preference for Lebanon on the part of the Syrian business community, nor its discreet but undeniable success in the country. Of course, many other Syrian exiles chose to settle in other places, mainly in the Americas, and soon in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates, especially Muslims. To illustrate the specificity of his choice, one of the interviewees commented on a photograph of his promotion's graduating day in a prestigious Syrian secondary school in the 1960s (he himself had left Damascus in 1967 at the age of 20), and remarked that 26 out of 30 of the students on the photo had also left Syria. Among them, only two had settled in Lebanon, and their choice bore a special meaning.

This is where the *Ottoman* paradigm appears heuristic. For, contrary to the expectations of so many entrepreneurs and analysts of the nation-state in the Near East, the establishment of modern territorial states did not put an end to the solidarity and circulation of members of extended families – *āl, 'ā'ila, ahl* or *hamūla* – from one city of the region to another, nor to the effectiveness of networks organised around marriages, genealogy and traditional alliances. Every city in the Near East, from Aleppo to Nablus, from Jaffa to Tripoli (not to mention Alexandria in Egypt), shared the same social structure and a similar urban culture, and members of extended families felt at home wherever they moved. At the time of independence of Lebanon and Syria, for instance, several ministers in each country were related by marriage: Riyad al-Solh married the niece of Sa'dallah al-Jabri, Abdallah al-Yafi a cousin of Khalid al-Azm, Muhsin al-Barazi married Solh's sister, Selim Taqla had been born in Homs, etc. (Zisser 2000: 15, 100, 165, 187). In 1960, a rich industrialist family based in Beirut and Damascus could pride itself on having a deputy in the Lebanese parliament, and another in the Syrian one.

Throughout the twentieth century, the existence of these trans-boundary networks allowed the elite to survive political reversals thanks to its regional mobility. For example, Syrian leaders often had to take refuge in Transjordan at the time of the French Mandate. Incidentally, another group of Syrians had already emigrated to Beirut two decades before the 1950s: the Christian (and, in lesser numbers, Sunni) trading and land-owning bourgeoisie who left Iskanderun after the Turkish takeover of the province in 1936-9. This tradition was extended after independence, when the Mardam Beys became accustomed to residing between Damascus and Beirut (Mardam Bey 1994). During the 1950s, Khalid al-Azm had to take refuge in Beirut on several occasions, and finally settled there (al-Azm 1972).

Although the new entrepreneurial Syrian elites *(khāssa* or *nukhba)* of the 1950s and 1960s originated from a lower social stratum and were more numerous and diversified than the old notables *(a'yān)*, they also adopted the *Ottoman* logic by extending their business networks in the region and especially to Beirut, even after the creation of the two states. In the years following independence, Syrian banks either opened a branch in Beirut or were legally Syrian-Lebanese institutions. Every trader and merchant from the hinterland had an office in Beirut harbour, the more so because Lattakia was still under construction. Every businessman recalls the dispatching of a son or a younger brother to the Lebanese capital in order to open an office. Most of them had a second house there, where members of the family would live permanently. They all grew used to travelling to Beirut for business purposes and, for some of them, to commuting weekly along the 80 kilometres of bad road linking the two capital cities. Around a quarter of them (although the

sample is not representative) had married in Lebanon before settling in the country, and most of them had attended a Lebanese boarding school, and spent the summer in the Lebanese mountain. They had established close relations and friendships in Lebanon, which they were able to make use of at the time of their emergency arrival.

One of the interviewees resorted to a lexical invention in order to describe the circulation of members of his social group in the regional space, and their ease in adapting to political contingencies and local conditions on either side of the Lebanese-Syrian boundary. 'We are straddlers', he said (in French, *chevauchants)*'. Another stressed that Beirut used to be secondary, compared with Damascus, for his family business (banking and industry) for several decades. It was only in the 1960s that the Damascus branch of the family joined up with the Beirut branch that had already settled there in the early 1920s. And in a few cases, the family left behind one or two members when leaving Syria, thus allowing them to manage their remaining properties by 'remote control'. Later on, in better times, they might become the junior partners of their prosperous cousins in Lebanon, as discussed in the final part of this chapter. More than the entrepreneurial mind or appetite for profit, this family dimension (should I say 'this familiarity'?) explains the success story of the exiled Syrian businessmen in Beirut. Unlike so many political and economic migrants around the world, unlike those Syrians who preferred a distant exile, they were foreigners – but not strangers – in Lebanon, thanks to the strength of *ottomanism*.

Deepening the Political Divide

As mentioned in the introduction, the border between Lebanon and Syrian is less a historical than a political boundary, and even less a natural boundary separating two distinct geographical identities. In spite of official clarifications during the 1936 negotiations for independence between France and each of Syria and Lebanon, and notwithstanding friendly cooperation between the elites of both states after 1943, irredentism, on the Syrian side, and mistrust among the Lebanese leadership attested to the persistence of deep ambivalence in Lebanese-Syrian relations. With the successive changes of regime in Damascus from March 1949 on, each country became a refuge and base for the political opponents of the other: For example, members of the SSNP, a party that advocated the political unification of the Levant, fled to Damascus after their failed coup in Lebanon in 1949. Ex-Syrian ministers and even presidents chose Beirut for a peaceful retreat after they had been ousted from power. Syrian politicians of all kinds plotted the next revolution or military coup in the crowded cafés along the *Corniche Raouché* or in summer mountain resorts. Syrian military and

police squads as well as members of special units would more often than not track them down across the border (Rathmell 1995: 167), thus provoking deep tensions between governments now ideologically alienated, and turned into enemies. Following the climax of the crisis of 1958 – with Lebanon obtaining the dispatch of a UN observation mission to check Syrian military infringements of its national territory – trans-boundary security operations and political pressures on the Lebanese government became Syrian usual practice, the more so after the Ba'thist-military coalition seized power in 1963. Interestingly, this kind of practice can be analysed altogether as de-territorialised, in relation to criminal networks outside the Middle East (Seurat 1989: 91-6), and as related to Damascus's Greater Syria territorial ambitions with regard to Palestinian, Jordanian and Lebanese lands and polities (Pipes 1989).

Most of the Syrian business community settled in Lebanon kept voluntarily away from governmental unfriendly interplay. First, their stakes were clearly in the economy, not the politics of Lebanon, notwithstanding the fact that their past experience had broken the spirits of many of them. Intellectuals like Edmond Rabbath, who wrote extensively about the history and institutions of Syria and Lebanon while showing little interest in the fate of his family shares in the newly nationalised *Khumasiyya* weaving company, were the exception.[10]

Second, the kind of banking and trading activities they were mainly involved in required that they observe 'positive neutrality', as said by one of the interviewees, in other words openness to market opportunities regardless of the social and political configuration that sustained them. As long as the Lebanese regime provided a secure environment for the market through an exceptional array of ultra-liberal legislation (such as banking secrecy or freedom of dismissal for employers), the Syrian *émigrés* were willing to become part of the 'merchant republic' with its neo-Phoenician ideology (Shehadi 1987). Their attitude was not inconsistent with the relative disaffection they (like the traditional notables) used to display for politics, and even more for public policies, in Syria during the 1940s and 1950s, which had caused their estrangement from the rest of Syrian society and, finally, their loss of political power on behalf of representatives of other social classes.

It came as no surprise that the Syrian exiled community showed some interest in the 'reformist' attempts *(harakat al-tashihiyya)* by the new regime of Hafiz al-Asad in the early 1970s. In the Syrian parliament, a few seats were tacitly allocated to 'independent' candidates in the 1973 legislative elections. Simultaneously, the Ministry of the Economy adopted a few measures encouraging investment and private business, and allowing *émigrés* to sell their remaining frozen properties. Indirect messages were also sent to businessmen in Beirut, offering them the

opportunity to regularise their sons' military status (the younger generation had escaped the universal draft)[11] as well as to recover some of their properties (families' houses but also land, and a few factories), in expectation of their return to Syria. Although some of them seized the occasion to settle their relations with the regime, to receive a limited compensation for their loss, and to confirm their Syrian citizenship by registering their children, very few agreed to return for more than a visit. Not only was the Lebanon of 1970-75 at the height of its economic prosperity, boosted by a sharp rise in oil revenues following the October 1973 war, but Asad could hardly persuade them to return since he was remembered as having been part of the Ba'thist leadership that had endeavoured to turn Syria into a 'popular democracy', and had led the disastrous June 1967 war.

In actual fact, the first Syrian *infitāh* did not last, and the growth of the 1970s was mainly attributable to public investments thanks to Arab subsidies. For the few businessmen who chose to re-invest in Syria, it was a short-lived and somewhat unsuccessful experience. Nevertheless, Syrian society did not manifest hard feelings towards them, and the *émigrés* were numerous among the half million people who took refuge from the war in Lebanon during several months in 1975-76. They also got into the habit of flying abroad from Damascus airport during the years when Beirut airport at Khaldeh was inaccessible to the inhabitants of the Eastern Christian regions. In the town of their origins, in their own family house, among their parents and ancient neighbours, they discovered with astonishment and emotion that they were still the sons of their fatherland. Whatever their denial, their Syrian identity had been concealed, but not lost.

The war in Lebanon, however, induced a process of invention and crystallisation of collective identities on an ethnic and confessional basis that did not spare the Syrian *émigrés* (Makdisi 2000). Only during the early months of the Two-year war (1975-76), was alignment still conceivable on a class basis. While several Muslim entrepreneurs opted to try new beginnings in the Gulf or in Europe, others moved from West to East Beirut in order to escape the mayhem of the 'Palestinian Progressist' movement, by seeking the protection of the Christian militias. Soon afterwards, it became clear that East Beirut solidarity involved rapprochement either with Camille Chamoun's *Parti National Libéral* or with the Phalangist Lebanese Forces of the Gemayels. Syrian Sunnis, and also Orthodox, whom an ancient history of peaceful urban cohabitation with the Sunnis made particularly suspicious to the Maronite leadership, were especially pressed to choose between the two camps. Although they tend to be discreet on the subject, the *émigré* business community hinted that they had to pay a heavy financial tribute to the PNL or the LF in the tradition of the *khūwa* extracted from city dwellers of the Near East by

their Bedouin protectors, in order to be allowed to carry on their activities (Picard 2000: 304). Like their Lebanese counterparts, many of them were driven willy-nilly into international and domestic trades, and financial and real estate transactions that benefited firstly their new patrons. Banks, especially, were involved in money laundering, while arms, oil and illicit goods trade bred enormous profits, sometimes also precipitating the ruin of an unwise investor. As a consequence, the fifteen-year period of war saw rapid and unexpected changes in the distribution of wealth among the Syrian expatriate community. It was hardly perceptible at the time, although it portended new social hierarchies in the post-war reconstruction period.

The war caused another important re-alignment, political this time, as the tactical alliance between the Christian leadership and the regime of Hafiz al-Asad encountered a revers of fortune due mainly to regional circumstances in 1977: the visit of Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem, his acceptance of a separate peace with Israel, and the subsequent hasty reconciliation between Syria and the PLO. Anti-Palestinian feelings, partly fed by the harsh competition between Palestinian and Syrian economic actors in the Lebanese arena, had already brought the Syrian business community closer to the Christian Lebanese Forces. Now, for decades to come, Syria would figure as the main enemy of the Christian forces – an enemy described indistinctly as Muslim (in spite of the crackdown of the Ba'thist regime on its Islamic opposition in 1982), 'socialist' (referring to its statist economy), and dictatorial (because of the overwhelming power of its military and governmental elite).

Who could be more sensitive to these accusations than the Syrian *émigré* businessmen? They were only hesitant to acknowledge the first charge for, although Christian in their majority (especially in East Beirut since the beginning of the war), they originated from a somewhat multi-confessional (not to say secular) milieu whose economic interests ignored communal boundaries. But the two other accusations rang a loud bell in their minds. They had left Syria because of a doctrinaire takeover of national production and trade by the state. They had been faced with a Ba'thist regime that had invested itself with illegitimate power, and had found no resource against it in the law. Then, in 1969, and again in 1973 for several months, they had witnessed the economy of Lebanon being almost paralysed by the political blockade imposed by Damascus on road transport, in an early demonstration of the hegemonic ambitions of Syria with regard to its Lebanese neighbour. In 1978, as the Syrian army advanced inside Lebanon and imposed its rule on every region except the South bordering on Israel, the central Christian region became physically encircled and politically isolated. The boundary between liberal Lebanon and authoritarian Syria was being moved closer to the exiles. It reached the limits of the 'Eastern areas' controlled by the Lebanese

Forces, and disturbing news began to spread about Syrian military searching for young Syrians in Ashrafiyeh in order to enrol them by force. Siding with the Christian forces under Bashir Gemayel, and sometimes fighting in their ranks, appeared not only logical but necessary to some of them, confronted as they felt themselves to be with the perspective of a second forced exile, were the Syrian military to succeed in taking over the central Christian region.

In consequence, Christian militias such as the *Tanzim*, and the Lebanese Forces under the leadership of Bashir Gemayyel from 1978 to 1982 (thereafter, internal divisions in the militia would arouse disaffection and cautiousness), received the support of two very different kinds of Syrians. The first category was made up of Syriac fighters recruited in the miserable quarters of East Beirut, whose extreme poverty and ancient animosity towards Muslims (they were refugees from the terrible First World War ethnic cleansing in southern Turkey) made them perfect mercenaries. The others were members of the *émigré* business community who decided to throw their money, influence and competence behind the so-called Christian side. They were to be found at various levels of the LF apparatus, even within the military council assisting Bashir. Unsurprisingly, the most radical *Lebanists* among the LF leadership – in the sense of being opposed to Syrian domination but also supporters of a homogenous Christian smaller Lebanon even at the price of secession and collusion with Israel – were of Syrian origin. Later on, when the luch of the LF turned and its leadership had to acknowledge the Syrian power on the ground and abide by its rule, these militants of Syrian origin were particularly vulnerable to reprisals from Damascus and its Lebanese allies. At the intermediate level, militants and fighters had little choice but to emigrate again, this time to Canada and Australia. In the upper ranks, family and business networks were of great effectiveness in smoothing the relations with the Syrian command, because families had cleverly maintained the tradition of diversifying their alliances, places of settlement, and political orientations, and also because they were able to strike lavish economic deals with their new Syrian patrons.

Nevertheless, the reverse of loyalty displayed during the war by these members of the expatriate Syrian bourgeoisie, although a minority phenomenon, sheds an interesting light on the representation of the Lebanese-Syrian border in their narrative; its implicit coincidence with a communal divide (Lebanon being the Christian, and Syria the Muslim state), and its strong ideological dimension, economic liberalism being equalled to political freedom on one side of the boundary, statism to the suppression of civil and political rights on the other. Through the self-image of these actors caught in the confrontation between their country of origin and their country of adoption, questions arose: How contingent

was such a political divide? How resistant would it be to historical change? And what would be the role of the exiled community in consolidating, or blurring, the international boundary after the war?

The Production of a Regional Space

The period beginning in 1990 saw drastic changes in the political life of Syria and Lebanon as well as in their bilateral relations. It is no coincidence that these important changes took place in the context of globalisation, with the vanishing of Soviet influence in the Middle East, and the growing intervention of the Washington-based multilateral institutions in the ailing rentier economies of the region, through a string of political conditionalities supposed to help reorganise public administrations and bring democracy to the people. In the wake of the 1990-91 war against Iraq, international consensus and local weariness brought the Lebanese civil war to an end with the implementation of the November 1989 Taif agreement. As for Asad's Syria, it took two path-breaking steps simultaneously: Participating, although with reservations, in the Madrid Arab-Israeli peace process, and launching an economic initiative to private investors and entrepreneurs through the adoption, notably, of Law 10 of 1991.

Although discussing the multiple aspects of the transformation of Lebanese-Syrian relations after 1990 goes beyond the framework of this chapter, it is important to stress three characteristics that help analyse the new role of the Syrian expatriate business community in Lebanon during this period. First, the war ended with an almost complete Syrian takeover of the external and domestic security of Lebanon, and the demobilisation of all militias except *Hizballah*, Syria's close ally and *bras armé* in the South. With tacit international consensus (including the United States and Israel), the sovereignty of Lebanon was then downgraded, transforming it into a 'quasi-state' (Jackson 1990). Behind its formal return to constitutional life and the rehabilitation of its national army, the ultimate power lay henceforth in Damascus, and was exerted through a chain of Syrian military and security command all over the Lebanese territory.

Second, de-ideologisation became a characteristic of the Lebanese and Syrian polities, while common collective norms and political practices drawn from a living Ottoman heritage substituted for the dead ideologies. In Syria, Ba'thist references to Arab unity and socialist redistribution gave way to a crude display of power and a cult of the supreme leader. The regime soon made it clear that the limited economic liberalisation was not to open the door to the formation of political parties outside the National Progressive Front *(Jabha wataniyya),* nor to criticism of its human rights record and core leadership. Simultaneously,

the formula of consensus confirmed at Taif, with its flaws and misdeeds related to the inclusion of warlords in the post-war government elite, guaranteed a return to the representative character of the Lebanese political system, and freedom of opinion in society. But now, the confessional distribution of seats in the parliament and government was being altered by the display of wealth and physical intimidation. Thus, a difference in scale in the use of sheer violence, and a power hierarchy between the two polities, were substituted for their difference in nature: a powerful Syria dominated a weak Lebanon, both regimes being closely intertwined through clientelist relations.

Third, the Lebanese war, in combination with the limited Syrian *infitāh,* accelerated the inscription of the local economies in dense and diversified trans-regional networks made up of financial transfers and the importation of goods, and, moreover, characterised by the growing mobility of skilled professionals. Lebanon had indeed been a precursor of globalisation by earning its prosperity as a hub connecting the Gulf countries to Europe already in the 1960s and 1970s. The difference, now, was not only of magnitude, but also in the dichotomy often referred to as 'glocalisation' (Appadurai 1996): on the one hand, a capacity to change places, shift roles, adopt a different status, and build human experience beyond the traditional circulation of money and goods, that contributed to the emergence of individualism among Arab Near Eastern upper classes; on the other hand, a growing consciousness of, and loyalty to, prescribed identities and local belongings, which resulted in the consolidation of infra- and trans-boundary solidarities, while challenging the nation-state framework (Roy 2000).

Old and New Syrian Business in Lebanon

Economic reconstruction was considered a priority by the post-war governments of Lebanon, rather than social reconciliation or political reform (Débié and Danuta 2003). The cost of rehabilitating the infrastructure and public utilities, estimated at around US$ 2.2 billion in the early 1990s, soon soared to more than 30 billion, and the process was still far from complete thirteen years later (Hamdane 2000: 70). On the whole, it offered exceptional opportunities to the market and business companies. In the domain of importing, things were not so stimulating since the slump of the Lebanese pound (down 500 times from 1975 to 1995) rendered foreign products over-expensive for middle- and lower-class consumption.

In general, businessmen of Syrian origin had resisted the war turmoil well and, while they confessed to having travelled abroad more often than their Lebanese counterparts, they were still to be found in eminent positions in the banking, contracting and importing sectors in the

aftermath of the war. Was such durability due to their far-sighted and cautious management, as they proudly claimed, or was it their past experience in adapting to political upheavals? Syrian identity among the business community was more than ever associated (at least in their discourse) with wealth and discretion. The few Syrian members registered in the Beirut branch of the Lebanese-Syrian Chamber of Commerce founded in 1995 under the auspices of the government in Damascus, did not belong to the milieu of immigrants settled in the country in the 1950s and 1960s who rather chose to turn away from an institution obviously linked with the Syrian regime. They found it safer and more efficient to take advantage of their personal long-standing connexions. Moreover, it became more difficult after the war to distinguish 'Syrian' capital and managers in Lebanese enterprises, since restructuring, inter-marriage, and the passage of one generation (from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s) blurred 'national' identities among businessmen. I have often been misled by insiders who drew my attention to this or that actor, only to discover that the man originated from Palestine, or from a specific area of Lebanon, but not from Syria proper.

However, there has been an important change in the composition of the Syrian business community in Lebanon. Since the second half of the Lebanese war (after 1982), and more extensively in the reconstruction period, the émigré business community was joined in the Lebanese arena by a new brand of Syrian entrepreneurs and investors (Bahout 1994) who owed their accumulation of capital to profits made in relation to public enterprises in Syria, mainly importing for the public sector. This 'state bourgeoisie' (Perthes 1992) had been granted special rights to operate across the border, especially the right to deal in foreign currencies, and enjoyed personal protection from a patron and partner, a member of the Syrian military or Ba'th party leadership.

Due to such military-mercantile collusion, the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, which lasted nearly thirty years, although not everywhere as continuously as in such areas as Akkar or the Hirmil-Bekaa, has sometimes been analysed as class-oriented. A regime whose leadership originated principally from the underdeveloped rural areas of Syria (the Jabal Ansarieh, but also the Eastern Euphrates valley, and the Hawran) strove to take its revenge on the Lebanese capitalists for the comparatively mediocre record of the Syrian economy since the breaking off of the *Intérêts communs*. Thus, the Ba'thist power took advantage of its military control of the Lebanese territory to pillage the local economy. While privates and non-commissioned officers looted houses to bring home cars, fridges and TV sets, senior officers in charge of various Lebanese regions reigned over quasi-fiefdoms, and accumulated capital mainly through the control of intense smuggling of consumer goods (oil)

and illicit products (narcotics) across the Lebanese-Syrian boundary (Sadowski 1985). After several decades of relative deprivation in comparison with Lebanon, 'ils [the Syrians] se sont refaits'.[12]

After the war, the institutionalisation of Syrian-Lebanese relations via a series of agreements signed in the 1990s, and the numerous opportunities offered by the reconstruction, brought this new Syrian bourgeoisie directly on to the Lebanese market, in close relation to their enriched military patrons (here likewise, genealogical and marital links between both groups were salient and significant). These new economic actors succeeded in imposing themselves as partners in major contracts such as in cellular phones as well as on the real estate market, thus revealing their interest in levying taxes, securing rents, and living in lavish suites looking on to the Mediterranean, rather than investing in the economic recovery of Lebanon. With those of their Syrian fellow-countrymen established in Beirut business and banking since the 1960s, they shared in various Lebanese reconstruction contracts, including the controversial *Solidere* project for downtown Beirut. However, contrary to a cliché invoking ethnic (or sectarian), local (such as between Aleppians), and national solidarity, the latter did not become privileged partners of these powerful *nouveaux riches* who preferred to deal with ex-militia leaders and new Lebanese tycoons like Hariri. Between the various groups of Syrians investing in the Lebanese economy, there was competition; deals were struck and interests converged according to individual and network preferences. National identity was not the decisive criterion.

In one domain, however, the long established bourgeoisie were obliged to deal inevitably with their fellow countrymen: banking. For not only had private banks been banned from Syria since the 1960s, but, as mentioned earlier, capital and managers of Syrian origin had made their way to the core of the Lebanese financial landscape. Although it was sometimes argued that Syrian capitalists preferred European rather than Lebanese banking institutions, while Syrian deposits in Lebanon represented only a temporary step towards safer accounts overseas in spite of the attractiveness of Lebanese banking secrecy, the amount of Syrian deposits in private accounts in Lebanese banks was estimated at over US$ 6 billion in 2003 *(Daily Star*, 22 April 2003: 4).[13]

When it came to the major financial arrangements related to projects in real estate or in the new Lebanese economy, new Syrian investments were often managed in those powerful Beirut institutions where Syrian *émigrés* had long played a leading role either as owners or as managers. New Syrian investors felt 'represented by these banks', namely, banks such as Banque du Liban et d'Outre Mer, Audi, Banque Européenne pour le Moyen-Orient, or Société Libanaise de Banque.[14] In return, negotiations and transactions with Syrian investors placed Syrian bank

managers in a web of mixed feelings, and contradictory loyalties. According to their comments, professionalism and interest prevailed over identity logics in dictating their attitudes. They were eager to show national and international institutions like Union des Banques du Liban and the International Monetary Fund that they could handle such deals with neutrality and success. But they also had to be careful not to confront powerful members of the Damascus elite, for undeniably security reasons. Moreover, they were preparing for a major financial and political challenge: in the 1990s, Syria was about to re-authorise private banking activities on its national territory.

A New Regionalism?

In 1991, when discussing the content of the Lebanese-Syrian treaty of Brotherhood and Co-operation with a Lebanese economist and future minister of Finance, I hinted that, in spite of its blatant bias in favour of Syria, the forced rapprochement could offer a long awaited opportunity to reverse the bilateral balance of power, as Lebanese economic actors would be given a chance to turn the military domination by Syria into an economic domination by Lebanon. Lebanese industries and exports would benefit from the opening of a large consumer market next door, and be stimulated by the diminution of custom fees.[15] In other words, businessmen of Syrian origin would take advantage of their knowledge of local needs and consumers' habits, as well as of their connexions with the local society. Indeed, at that time, certain Syrian expatriates from Lebanon cautiously attempted to reactivate a few industrial activities, preferably in Aleppo where state control was less felt than in Damascus or Lattakia. However, the limited liberalisation of the Syrian market, and the emergence of an enriched bourgeoisie with new consumerist behaviour, opened up little space for the official exportation of Lebanese products, as confirmed by the record of bilateral trade figures.[16]

For their part, Syrian industrialists resisted Lebanese concurrence. They strove to avoid the mediation of Lebanese importers in order to deal directly with foreign, mainly European, firms. They endeavoured to supply their domestic market with consumer goods of the kind manufactured in Lebanon but at cheaper prices. Also, while smuggling decreased in the post-war period, due to the reduction in custom duties, and Bashar al-Asad's crackdowns on smuggling networks in 1995 and 1999, parallel off-the-record arrangements still accounted for a major part of imports from Lebanon to Syria. On the whole, what could be observed was only the sketchy outlines of an emerging sub-regional economic space including Lebanon and Syria. This economic region, although controlled by a single political power, was far from unified, mainly because of the different standards of living in the two countries,[17]

and the long period of socialisation and politicisation by two dissimilar
regimes. At least, what was taking place in the field of production and
trade was a kind of forced complementarity. For the Syrian expatriate
community in Lebanon, the fact that the Ba'thist regime was still
unpredictable, the financial legislation obsolete, and the resources of the
society limited, constituted as many invisible barriers to their crossing
back to Syria.

Banking was another issue. While the re-opening of private
institutions had become a matter of economic urgency for Syria since the
late 1980s, it was understood that the country lacked the necessary
capital, officially at least.[18] The legal and practical aspects were discussed
in successive open *nadawāt*, meetings held alternately in Beirut and
Damascus in 2000 to 2002, with the most important in January 2003 in
Damascus under the title 'Lebanese-Syrian banking cooperation',
attended by tens of managers of the largest Lebanese banks, who did not
spare their criticisms and demands on the Syrian government.
Negotiations between Syrian senior civil servants and Lebanese top bank
managers, many of them of Syrian origin, respected the codes of local
civilities. At some point, however, emotion and bitterness showed, and
the discussion became more like a family dispute than an international
negotiation. It was frank, also, as many bankers had an intimate
knowledge of Syrian financial institutions, of the practices of the political
leadership as well as of the size of its underground transactions.[19] They
were especially cautious about securing legal international guarantees
against Syria's erratic monetary policies and fixed interest rates, as well as
the government's meddling in their future activities.

The laborious negotiations between the Syrian government and some
of these banks also involved the International Finance Corporation (the
World Bank's private sector arm) and the Commission of the European
Union. In 2001, Law 24 allowing the private sector to operate in Syria
was adopted: this required a 51 per cent Syrian holding in the capital of
the new banks. And in Spring 2003, the first three Lebanese banks (along
with three others) were granted approval. Their chairmen, all of them
Syrian expatriates, announced that they had struck deals with local
investors, among them the powerful head of the Union of Syrian
Chambers of Commerce. Interestingly, one of the three banks concerned
was approved two months after the others, and it was hinted that its
chairman had been unable to prove his Syrian identity. Although the
problem was soon settled, and the 51 per cent Syrian majority secured,
the irony of the situation did not escape observers' attention. Some forty
years after fleeing their country and reneging on their national identity,
Syrian businessmen in Lebanon were looking back over the international
boundary, invoking their ancient citizenship, and seeking a privileged
economic return.

All this at least suggests that in the future Lebanese Syrian sub-regional economic space, Syrian expatriate businessmen may play a pivotal role. Their 'straddling' posture allows them to make the most profit from the slow ongoing process, thanks to their experience in both countries, their knowledge of procedures, and their inscription in networks operating across the boundary. Once the most convinced advocates of the construction of a solid Lebanese-Syrian boundary, they are cautiously promoting fair bilateral cooperation, and the construction of a joint economic space. For this purpose, they have to pay the price of seeing their identity challenged and their past questioned, and become entrusted with the responsibilities of 'good governance' according to the Washingtonian rules. In a word, to live with the paradoxes of post-modernity. In the meantime, they enjoy flying from Beirut to Aleppo for lavish weekends in the city's aristocratic *beits*, transformed into luxury hotels. Back in the ambience of their forlorn dreams, they negotiate contracts and draw up investment projects.

How relevant does the *ottomanism* paradigm remain for analysing Syrian-Lebanese relations today? On the one hand, the relatively short history of each state suggests a strong tendency towards differentiation and the formation of a specific national identity grounded in a state-controlled territory. Whatever its flaws, especially in the Middle East, the nation-state model has a future ahead of it, be it only for the ambitions of local elites. To this state-building process, the Syrian *émigré* businessmen brought more than their fair share: Not only did they transfer their symbolic and material capital from one side of the border to the other, thus contributing to a lasting imbalance between the Syrian and the Lebanese economies, but they also endeavoured – discreetly and, on some occasions such as during the civil war, openly – to shape a Lebanese polity antinomic to the Syrian polity they had escaped from. The fragile Beirut Spring of 2005, which saw hundreds of thousands demanding the end of thirty years of Syrian military presence on Lebanese soil, bears witness to their success, and to the indisputable existence of national boundaries in the Arab Levant.

On the other hand, however, the transformation of the local societies during the past century in Syria as well as in Lebanon, and the modernisation of the local economies, have resulted in the growing mobility of individuals across the international boundary (such as Syrian workers in the Lebanese manpower market), and in the strengthening of infrastructural (power lines, pipelines, motorways etc.) as well as social and cultural networks. However reluctantly, the Syrian *émigré* community in Lebanon was bound to play a pioneering role in the revival of historical networks, as can be observed in the process of developing the private banking sector in Syria in the 2000s. The recent investment of *émigré* bankers in the fragile Syrian market and the plans of their fellow

businessmen do not only express the selfish greed of 'unruly capitalism' taking advantage of the wind of deregulation. They also relate to that intangible element we call culture: ethics, values, habits, practices, inscribed in durable, quiet memories of an idealised past, when the Empire was without boundaries. The nostalgia of *ottomanism* feeds their strategies across the boundary.

Notes:

[1] As referred to in the case of Iskanderun by Inga Brandell in the introduction to this volume.

[2] A notable exception is the excellent but unpublished MS thesis submitted by Rania W. Ghosn, 'Syrian Elites' Practices and Representations of Beirut. The Intimate Nearness of Difference', (London: University College, 2003).

[3] Eight initial contacts and interviews were conducted by Perla Srour, at the time a student at INALCO (Paris), in Lebanon in 2000. I undertook in-depth and specific interviews of seventeen others in 2001-02. The large majority of them asked to remain anonymous. They were all selected at random through personal contacts.

[4] It should be clear that I am not referring to *ottomanism* as the intellectual and political nationalist movement that spread throughout the Empire in the early 1900s, as studied by Hasan Kayali (1997).

[5] According to Winder (1962-63), merchants and capitalists have made up around 10 per cent of all cabinet ministers from 1946 to 1958.

[6] According to Dubar and Nasr, 1976: 356. It represents approximately US$ 1.5 billion. There is much speculation about the total amount transferred out of Syria between 1958 and 1967. An interviewee gave the figure of US$ 6 billion. Ghosn in her footnote 19 quotes an official report published by *The New York Times* (17 May 1966) which estimates that more than US$ 200 million had been smuggled into neighbouring Lebanon during the period 1961-5.

[7] From 129,509 on 1 January, 1963 to 255,264 on 1 January 1969. Direction Centrale de la Statistique, *Recueil de Statistiques Libanaises* (Beirut: Ministère du Plan, 1969) quoted in Lamothe, 1975: 67.

[8] The largest landowner in the Jazira resettled in Spain and successfully cultivated rice in the Guadalquivir basin.

[9] The expression is Joseph Maïla's, a Lebanese vice-recteur of the Institut Catholique de Paris. Interview, 3 June 2002.

[10] A Syrian Catholic from Aleppo, Rabbath became a renowned *Lebanese* scholar and jurist. He died in the late 1990s.

[11] After 1963, exemption from military service became restricted and the *badal* (financial compensation) was raised (Batatu 1999: 158, quoted by Ghosn, n. 8).

[12] Interview with a European diplomat, Damascus, 11 July 2002.

[13] *The Financial Times* estimated total Syrian capital abroad at US\$ 50 billion in the early 2000s, and Oxford Business group at US\$ 100 billion in *Emerging Syria*, the Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, Ghassan Rifai, was said to have mentioned the amount of US\$ 185 billion at an international conference in Copenhagen in 2002.

[14] According to an interviewee, Beirut, 3 May 2003, 70 per cent of the deposits at BLOM were made by Syrians from Lebanon and Syria.

[15] Customs duties were cut at a rate of 25 per cent per year from 1998 to 2001.

[16] In the 1990s, Lebanon remained officially Syria's fourth economic partner after Italy, France and Turkey. Syria was even less important for Lebanon. The situation deteriorated in the late 1990s. See *al-Ba'th al-Iqtisādi*, 15 August 2000, 'Inkhifād kabīr fī harakat al-tabādul al-tijārī' (Big slump in bilateral trade). In the meantime, there have been successful investments by Syrian bankers such as the production of detergents in Aleppo by the Obegis.

[17] In 2000, GNP per capita was US\$ 4,500 in Lebanon and 1000 in Syria. US-CIA (2001), *Handbook of the Nations. The World Factbook* (Detroit: Grand River Books).

[18] Since the breakdown of several unofficial financial institutions in Aleppo in 1997-8, the Syrian financial authorities were especially eager to deal with strong banks and avoid 'amateurs'. Interview, Central Bank of Syria, 30 April 2003.

[19] Neeman Azhari, for example, the COS of BLOM, had been COS of Banque de l'Orient arabe in Damascus, then Minister of Finance in the early 1960s. He left Syria for Lebanon in 1962.

5

DEFENDING THROUGH VIOLATION
ANKARA'S CONTRADICTORY STRATEGIES OVER THE TURKISH-IRAQI BORDER

Åsa Lundgren

The most obvious understanding of a border is that it is simply a line on the ground, dividing two states from each other. But more than that, a border delineates and defines the entities it encircles. The issue addressed in this chapter is the relation between a state and its borders. A growing body of literature has explored the role of borders in the building of national identities as well as in the construction of political order.[1] One international relations scholar, Yosef Lapid, has even suggested a new research agenda built on the three key concepts: identities, borders, orders. According to Lapid, these concepts are best defined, and best discussed, in relation to each other:

> [A]cts of bordering (i.e., the inscription, crossing, removal, transformation, multiplication and/or diversification of borders) invariably carry momentous ramifications for political ordering at all levels of analysis. Processes of identity, border, and order construction are therefore mutually self-constituting. Borders, for instance are in many ways inseparable from the identities they help demarcate or individuate. (Lapid 2001: 7).

The interest in the way identities, borders and orders are interrelated stems from a questioning of the Westphalian order in which the world is carved up into distinct and mutually exclusive units. Mainstream international relations theory (mainly neo-liberalism and neo-realism) has been criticised for treating this international order as if it was fixed and pre-given. The so-called constructivist turn in studies of international relations has led to a stronger focus on how states constitute themselves or are being constituted (Brown 2001: 119).[2] It is emphasised, in the constructivist discourse, that identity is about difference. 'Any particular identity always exists as one of a set of possible identities and makes no

sense in other terms.' (Brown 2001: 129). Against this background, borders are crucial because they maintain the difference upon which national identity is based. Borders tell us where one state ends and another begins. They differentiate compatriots from foreigners, *us* from *them*.

In general, the aim here is to take seriously the fact that states exist only in relation to each other. 'States are established, maintained and reproduced in an effective OR ideological confrontation and comparison with other states.' (Brandell 2003: 3). Obviously foreign policy would not make sense if there were not 'foreign' countries and 'foreign' people. They are foreign because they reside on the other side of the border, and it is only in relation to them that a nation inside the borders exists.

Borders do not, however, simply exist out there as part of the material reality. They are invented by people and they have to be maintained by people. Some borders have become so established that they have reached a state of 'naturalness'. In these cases the border might not need surveillance. A person might cross it without anyone noticing it, in fact without even noticing it himself. Nevertheless, in one way or another, borders have to be put into practice in order to continue to exist. They are usually recognised in an agreement. They are marked on maps and often in the terrain, sometimes merely by poles or stones, sometimes by wire, mines and watch-towers. Borders are administered, surveyed and usually controlled. If all practices that manifest the existence of the border were to end, it would, at some point, sink into oblivion. The more contested a border is, the more important it is to sustain it.

Whether or not a border is contested, or the degree to which it is contested, depends on the identification of the individuals living on each side of it. If their identification with the state to which they belong is unambigous, the role of the border might merely be to confirm existing identities and belongings. If not, the border has to be actively maintained or maybe even violently enforced. In the long run, it has been argued, borders 'will not survive and prosper unless the individuals they enclose develop a sense of self and become a community of fate and not simply a collection of individuals' (Brown 2001: 129). The stronger the community is, and the stronger the support for the ideology on which the state is based, the more fixed and secure are its territorial frames. According to Barry Buzan, every state is based on some ideas which hold it together. Typically, these are 'nationalism (especially civic nationalism but sometimes ethnonationalism) and political ideology'. When the ideas on which the state is built are challenged, the political order is threatened. To encourage defection from the state identity and thus threaten the territorial integrity of the state, is one example of such a challenge. Another is to question the ideology which justifies an existing structure of the government (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 150).

Buzan makes a distinction between, on the one hand, ideas which give states and governments their legitimacy and, on the other hand, ideas 'that identify individuals as members of a social group' (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 119) – for example, a nation. Thus, 'ideologies and other constitutive ideas and issues defining the state' (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 144) are kept analytically separate from national identity. Buzan argues that national identity is often entangled with, and yet distinct from 'the explicitly political organisations concerned with government' (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 119). Empirically, they may or they may not coincide. In any given state all citizens may not share the same national identity. If, however, there is a common 'we'-feeling among all citizens and if the identifications with nation and state more or less coincide, the more fixed and settled are both the state and its borders.

Some writers have explored how foreign policy plays an instrumental role in reproducing and maintaining the state and the domestic political order. William Bloom has analysed the connection between foreign policy and the construction of national identity. When Bloom talks about national identity or nation-building, he refers both to the establishment of the state itself as a political entity, and to the processes of creating a national identity among the people. Nation-building is thus defined as 'the process whereby the inhabitants of a state's territory come to be loyal citizens of that state' (Bloom 1990: 55).

Foreign policy can be used, Bloom argues, to create a situation in which the mass of the people can perceive a threat to their common identity and, furthermore, a situation in which the *whole* national community feel that they share the same experience in relation to a foreign actor. The political attractiveness of this mobilisation of mass national sentiment is, according to Bloom, that it is the widest possible mobilisation that is available within a state. It theoretically includes the total national population, transcending domestic dividing lines. A politician who manages to symbolically associate her/himself with national identity and mobilise it, will then possess a virtual monopoly of popular support (Bloom 1990: 81). Bloom describes foreign policy as 'a tool for nation-building'. When a nation-building project has been successful, there is a general identification with the nation among the citizens and the nation corresponds to the state. There is also a tendency among the citizens to defend and enhance the shared national identity. Bloom emphasises that a nation is never finally settled. Nation-building is an 'ongoing necessity' for all states.

David Campbell defines foreign policy as a *boundary-producing political behavior* (Campbell 1996: 169). Instead of taking the present international order and the domestic-foreign distinction for granted, Campbell argues that the interstate system is created and reproduced through the practices

of foreign policy. From this perspective, foreign policy is not, in essence, a political activity *across* borders with the aim of protecting the pre-given interests of pre-existing states. On the contrary, it is a political practice which *produces the reality in whose name it operates* (Campbell 1990: 266).

The interest in human practice and in the construction of identity described above has led to many valuable insights into how to understand foreign policy and state behaviour. There are, however, reasons to be cautious about over-stressing the constructed nature of the state and about focusing solely on identity-building. Wilson and Donnan remind us that the institutions and the agents of the state 'see themselves as objective entities with concrete, bounded and unilinear goals'. It is therefore important to bear in mind that two processes are taking place at the same time when foreign policy is conducted. At one level, states are always in a state of becoming since they have 'no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality' (Campbell 1990: 11). They are therefore in permanent need of reproduction, and foreign policy is a political practice that reproduces the state by maintaining the boundary between domestic and foreign, between 'the community inside' and the 'anarchy outside'. At another level, although states are social constructions, they do exist, and they pursue foreign policy in the name of the state, protecting its interests and ultimately its survival. As Wilson and Donnan argue:

> the state is an object whose reality will be denied if we focus exclusively on deconstructed representations of it, and nowhere is this more apparent than at the borders, where the powers of the state are monumentally inscribed. Nations and their individuated members may be in a perpetual condition of becoming, but this is only partially true of the state. The state exists. (Wilson and Donnan 1998: 8).

Bearing this in mind, this empirical study of Turkey's foreign policy towards northern Iraq, will take into account that the reproduction of the state is taking place alongside the protection of national interests – interests which are seen by the state and foreign policy-makers, as objective and real.

Following the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, governments in the Middle East were, as Elizabeth Picard points out elsewhere in this volume, faced with the challenge of 'creating a political community on their new national territory'. New international boundaries were established to separate 'the domestic realm from the exterior, the world of (supposed) social solidarity from the world of Leviathan' (Picard, p. 75). The successor state of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic, founded in 1923, was no exception. The attempt to replace a multi-national, multi-ethnic empire with a territorial nation-state is, in fact, a still on-going project. The borders of the new Republic corresponded, more or less, to the positions that the Turkish army had

managed to secure by military force. On this territory, inhabited by people of mixed ethnic belongings, a nation was to be created. The newly founded nation-state had to find a unifying principle which could embrace both Turks and Kurds and a number of other ethnic groups. Turkey's attempt at a solution was to choose a definition of the nation which was not based on ethnicity but on the territorial principle.[3] Everyone living on the territory of the Turkish Republic, i.e. within its borders, was a Turk. The borders were thus crucial in defining and delimiting the nation. In the absence of an uncontested existence of a Turkish nation, the territory has taken on a special meaning and security has become closely linked with the protection of territorial integrity. Statements like 'Turkey does not have a pebble stone to give away' or 'the Turkish Republic does not covet an inch of any country's territory' indicate that the inviolability of the present territorial demarcations stretches, at least symbolically, all the way down to inches and pebble stones. However, this claim for absolute respect for territorial sovereignty becomes complicated, as Inga Brandell concludes in the last chapter of this book, when inhabitants of the territory, or 'neighbouring states harbour, or could harbour, other national projects concerning the same territories' (Brandell, p. 205). Owing to the fact that the Republic was founded on a territory, part of which is included in Kurdish national aspirations, a fragility was built into the Turkish-Iraqi border from the very beginning. The contestability of this border makes it a good case study for exploring how state actors maintain a border running through areas where identities do not coincide with territorial demarcations. Given this reality, how has the Turkish state 'practiced' its border with Iraq?

The chapter describes Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq from the end of the Gulf War in 1991 up to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The Kurds in northern Iraq gained *de facto* independence as an unintended consequence of the 1991 Gulf War in which Iraq was defeated. In the aftermath of the war, the Kurds made an attempt to rise up against the regime in Baghdad. The uprising failed, however, and thousands of Iraqi Kurds, escaping from the advancing Iraqi army, left their homes and fled towards the Turkish and Iranian borders. In response to the erupting refugee crisis, UN Security Council Resolution 688 was adopted and Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) launched (Gunter 1993: 295).[4] OPC was a tri-party arrangement between Washington, Ankara and London which enabled US and British planes to fly regularly over northern Iraq, to prevent Saddam Hussein's forces from entering the region. These measures led to the creation of a safe haven and a no-fly zone in northern Iraq and made it possible for the refugees to return home (Kirişci 1996: 22; 2004: 291).

What happened, however was, that not only the military but the whole Iraqi state withdrew completely from the Kurdish-controlled region in the north, leaving behind a political and administrative vacuum. The first years of Kurdish self-rule were marked by conflicts and civil warfare between the two ruling Kurdish parties, but the situation improved in the mid-1990s and soon people in this part of Iraq were generally far better off than their compatriots in the rest of the country.[5] The Kurds filled the administrative vacuum with their own institutions. A functioning infrastructure developed and there were budding civil and political liberties. The *de facto* Kurdish state acquired some of the characteristics of a recognised nation-state. It had control over a delimited territory. Furthermore, the leaders of the two Kurdish parties in the north established independent external relations. They began meeting and negotiating with foreign governments independently of any influence from Baghdad, and established representations in a number of foreign states.

Looking at developments in Iraq during the 1990s, we may conclude that the fact that the Kurds in northern Iraq were allowed to rule themselves on a protected territory, and to develop independent external relations was, at least partly, an effect of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey actively promoted the initiatives to create a safe haven and a no-fly zone in northern Iraq (Kirişci 1994-95: 44-50). It also maintained continuous contacts with the two Kurdish Iraqi parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and contributed to the economic survival of the Kurdish self-rule.[6]

Thus, a reality came into existence in northern Iraq – a reality which Ankara would strongly have wanted to avoid. In order to change the prevailing situation, however, Ankara felt compelled to act in such a way that it ran the risk of maintaining it, and also gave the impression of contradicting the basic principles of its own foreign policy. In what follows I want to show how Turkey continued to maintain the Iraqi border despite the fact that for over ten years, it violated that same border. I want to describe these dual and parallel processes of violating and maintaining. Before turning to these more contemporary events, however, we shall make a brief return to the time when the Iraqi and Turkish states and the border between them were established.

The Settlement of the Turkish-Iraqi Border

When the Ottoman Empire was dismantled following its defeat in the First World War, the new leaders accepted the loss of the Arab parts of the Ottoman state and declared that they had no intention of trying to rebuild Turkish power in the Middle East. The budding republic was, however, determined to include the province of Mosul, today northern

Iraq, as well as the Sanjak of Alexandretta and Antakya (Hatay) in the new nation-state. According to the National Pact,[7] those parts of the Empire in which Turks and Kurds were in a majority formed a whole which should not be divided. This aspiration led to a dispute with Britain. The British were determined to make Mosul a part of Iraq. During the peace negotiations in Lausanne, the chief Turkish delegate Ismet İnönü refused to abandon the Turkish claim to Mosul and when the peace treaty was signed in 1923 the question was left unsettled. For Turkey, giving up Mosul could have been seen as a failure to achieve the objectives of the National Pact, and between 1923 and 1926 the Mosul question was the dominant issue in Turkish foreign policy. Bilateral negotiations between Turkey and Britain to settle the issue took place in 1924 but failed, and Britain referred the question to the League of Nations, whose Council in 1925 unanimously awarded the province to Iraq. Turkey, which was not a member of the League, did not accept the decision and opposed the Council's right of jurisdiction. The question was then referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice which decided that a decision by the Council should be binding. In the re-opened bilateral negotiations that took place in 1926, Turkey accepted the League's decision, and Mosul was handed over to Iraq. In compensation Turkey was to receive 10 per cent of the oil royalties from the province for the next 25 years. Turkey's only alternative to accepting the deal with Britain would have been to go to war and that was not an option for the war-weary young state (Hale 2000: 47-59). Nevertheless, Mosul had been incorporated in Atatürk's conception of the territory of the Turkish nation-state and it was only with reluctance that Turkey gave it up (Robins 1992: 81).

Since the issue was finally settled, Turkey has, at least officially, abandoned all aspirations to 'reclaiming' Mosul. Successive Turkish governments have reiterated that respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring states is the main pillar of Turkish foreign policy, a description with which many researchers would agree.[8] But there are also signs, from time to time, of an undercurrent of irredentism in Turkish foreign policy. After the Gulf War in 1991, for example, President Turgut Özal as well as his successor, Süleyman Demirel, demonstrated an openness to the idea of Turkey gaining control over Mosul and Kirkuk. They hinted that the border was 'to some extent artificial' and that Mosul and Kirkuk had been taken away from Turkey unjustly (Gunter 1993: 302; Kirişci and Winrow 1997: 167). On occasions like these we can see, as one Turkish scholar puts it, 'the fragility of the officially proclaimed "defensive nationalism" and the potential for the rise of an offensive nationalism in its stead' (Köker 2002: 3). Ever since the establishment of Kurdish self-rule in northern Iraq there has been speculation in neighbouring states about Turkey's

aspirations in the region and whether or not Ankara has hidden plans to finally realise the National Pact. So far, however, the official policy has remained unchanged and the traditional cornerstone of Turkish foreign policy, the territorial *status quo*, is still firmly in place.

Protecting National Interests

When the power vacuum evolved in northern Iraq, Ankara discerned two main threats to the Turkish state. First, the separatist organisation PKK[9] was able to take advantage of the absence of the Iraqi state and military from northern Iraq to intensify its raids into Turkish territory. Secondly, Ankara saw a risk that the Iraqi Kurds would seize the opportunity to declare independence and to attempt to establish a Kurdish state. Ankara tried to protect its national interests by military incursions into Iraqi territory with the aim of eliminating the PKK, killing the rebels and destroying their bases. In order to block the establishment of a Kurdish state, and to cooperate in the fight against the PKK, Ankara also established formal and regular relations with the leaders of the Iraqi Kurds.

Violation of Iraqi Territory

Turkey had started to make cross-border incursions into northern Iraq already in the early 1980s and continued with these during the eight-year-long war between Iraq and Iran when Iraq was unable to control the northern Kurdish part of its territory. During this period the governments of Turkey and Iraq had an agreement which allowed the Turkish military to make frequent incursions into northern Iraq when in hot pursuit of PKK guerrillas (Gunter 1999: 118). But after 1991, Baghdad began to disapprove of Turkey's incursions, claiming that they were violating its territorial integrity. In a letter to the UN Security Council, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, described the large-scale offensive which took place in 1997 as 'a blatant and serious violation of the bases of international law and the UN Charter'.[10] Iraq also condemned Turkey for extending the mandate of Operation Northern Watch, which in 1997 became the new name for what was previously called Operation Provide Comfort, claiming that Operation Northern Watch had no legal basis.[11]

According to the KDP's representative in Ankara, extensive co-operation between the Turkish General Staff and the two Kurdish parties in northern Iraq started in 1992. In October that year Turkey despatched some 20,000 troops to northern Iraq to uproot the PKK from its bases in the area – an operation which was supported by the Iraqi Kurds (Kirişci and Winrow 1997: 163). Later on, however, Turkey

conducted major operations solely on the Turkish military's own initiative.[12] On 20 March 1995, 35,000 Turkish troops were sent in in what was described in a Turkish daily newspaper as 'the country's biggest military expedition in history'. A month later they had moved 30 kilometres into Iraq along the entire length of the Iraqi-Turkish border, seezing control of the city of Zakho as well as the stretch between Zakho and the Syrian border, and thus eliminating Kurdish control of a 12 km stretch of the Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline (Roberts 1995: 59). By early May the invasion was getting towards its end and most units had been withdrawn. It was reported that 568 PKK guerrillas had been killed and much of the PKK's infrastructure in the region destroyed (Boundary and Security Bulletin 1995b: 15). When the operation started there were probably around 5,000 PKK guerrillas in northern Iraq; the majority of them managed to escape, either to other parts of Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq or to Iran and Syria or even into Turkey (Roberts 1995: 59). An even larger incursion took place on 14 May 1997, when 50,000 troops were reported to have entered Iraq. In October the same year Turkish forces went in again and approached the cities of Erbil and Kirkuk (Gunter 1998: 38).

In the mid-1990s a number of major military operations of this kind took place. The Iraqi Kurds were critical of them since they sometimes resulted in civilian casualties. Turkey gave up large-scale military operations after 1997. Thereafter the Turkish military continued to enter the region but only in small numbers. According to the KDP's representative in Ankara, Turkish soldiers, usually mountain troops, crossed the border from time to time, usually after having received information about PKK strongholds in the mountains, stayed for a few days and then returned. A closer cooperation between the Turkish military and the KDP (which controls the area on the other side of Turkish border, while the PUK controls an area further south, bordering Iran) developed after 1997, consisting mainly of exchange of information and sometimes joint military operations targeting PKK rebels.[13]

In 1995-97 during the period of the large-scale operations Turkish troops usually stayed in Iraq for one or two months. In addition to these incursions, the Turkish army rotated in and out of northern Iraq throughout the 1990s.[14] It is difficult to know exactly how many times it crossed the border since the TMF (Turkish Military Forces) had authorisation from the Turkish Parliament to conduct these kind of limited operations, whenever it was deemed necessary. It was the military, not the government, that decided when and how often the army crossed the border.[15]

During 1994 the *Boundary and Security Bulletin* reported the following border crossings by the Turkish military. On 12 January, Turkish security forces advanced 5 km over the border, with helicopter support, in search

of PKK guerillas. Later in the same issue, the *Bulletin* writes that the Turkish Air Force had carried out a raid into northern Iraq, inflicting 'heavy losses' on the PKK fighters in the Zala camp. There is no mention of exactly when this happened but the media reports that the *Boundary and Security Bulletin* refers to date from 28 January. On 30 January a cross-border raid was carried out by Turkish jets on the Kurdish guerrillas. Some time later, the Turkish Military Forces carried out an air operation on the Mayzi and Keryaderi regions of northern Iraq, close to the border with Turkey, when heavy losses were inflicted on the 'terrorists'. No precise date is given but the sources quoted by the *Boundary and Security Bulletin* date from 6 February (Boundary and Security Bulletin 1994a).

On 4 May Turkish aircraft were reported to have bombed several villages in Iraqi Kurdistan. Later the same month 80 PKK members were reported to have been killed when Turkish forces attacked PKK bases in the Mayzi region of northern Iraq, in response to intelligence reports of a group of 500-600 'terrorists' gathering to cross into Turkey (Boundary and Security Bulletin 1994b). In late July the Turkish Air Force carried out a raid on Kurdish 'terrorists' based in Iraq, hitting a group of 100 'terrorists' at an ammunition dump, killing 70 of them and destroying the dump. Turkish military sources confirmed on 5 September that the Air Force had carried out a cross-border operation against a group of 'terrorists' preparing to cross into Turkey. Turkish reports indicated 51 killed and 74 wounded among the group (Boundary and Security Bulletin 1994c). Turkish media sources reported on 12 December that an air operation had been carried out against two shelters of the 'separatist terrorist organisation' in the al-Madina region of northern Iraq using Air Force planes and Cobra helicopters. The Turks claimed that heavy losses were inflicted (Boundary and Security Bulletin 1995a). To sum up: Turkish forces seem to have entered Iraqi territory nine times in 1994.[16] This is only a description of what took place during one, randomly chosen, year. Nevertheless, it gives an idea of the extent and character of the operations.

A violation of Iraq's integrity even more remarkable than the military incursions was Turkey's small but permanent military presence in northern Iraq. The Turkish Foreign Ministry has confirmed that Turkish soldiers were stationed in northern Iraq after the introduction of Operation Northern Watch in 1997. In a speech in March 2003, about a week after the US-led invasion of Iraq began, Turkey's representative to the UN stated: 'it is common knowledge that elements of Turkish Armed Forces are stationed in northern Iraq. And, they were sent there not yesterday but years before in the context of "Operation Northern Watch"'.[17] This is obviously a sensitive issue and the Foreign Ministry does not give any numbers. Estimations given by other sources vary. In

2002, Reuters reported that Turkey had 5,000 troops in the region.[18] According to one researcher, 8,000 troops remained inside Iraq when the large incursion in 1997 was over (Gunter 1999: 118).

Involvement with the Iraqi Kurds

In the early 1990s Ankara established formal relations with the KDP and its leader Masoud Barzani and with the PUK and its leader Jalal Talabani. Up till then Turkey had carefully avoided having contacts, at least openly, with these parties since this was considered to be in conflict with the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a neighbouring state (Aykan 1996: 347).[19] Nevertheless, in the summer of 1991, both the KDP and the PUK were invited to Ankara to meet with the then President Turgut Özal. In order to maintain these contacts it was seen as necessary to establish permanent KDP and PUK representation offices in the Turkish capital. A few months later, however, in October 1991, the KDP decided to withdraw its newly opened representation as a protest against the Turkish incursions into northern Iraq, since, according to the KDP, those resulted in civilian casualties and damage. In order to mend fences with the KDP, Özal once again invited Barzani to Turkey in February 1992. The representative of the KDP in Ankara, Safeen M. Dizayee, who was based in London at that time, was asked to come to Turkey on a temporary basis to arrange the meeting. However, what was supposed to be a temporary arrangement soon turned into something permanent.

After they had been established, the representations were in regular contact with the Turkish Foreign Ministry. In response to a question about how often he was in contact with the Foreign Ministry, Mr Dizayee said, 'Whenever they have certain queries, we have certain inquiries, we have certain requests, they have certain requests for visits or whatever, I mean, it could be almost on a daily basis sometimes. Whenever it is necessary we are in contact, but it is regular.' During these contacts a wide range of issues were discussed: security matters, political developments in the region, relations with neighbouring countries and with Europe, etc.[20]

Apart from the permanent representations, Ankara also had meetings with the leaders of the northern Iraqi Kurds, the closest contacts being with Masoud Barzani who paid six official visits to Ankara between 1991 and 2001. When the Kurdish leaders visited Ankara they were always received by the top political leadership such as the Prime Minister, the President, the Foreign Minister and by high-ranking military and intelligence officials.

There were two main reasons why the Turkish government established relations with the Iraqi Kurds. First, the Turkish army needed

their cooperation in the fight against the PKK. Secondly, Ankara was anxious to make sure that the Kurds did not declare independence or make any unilateral moves against the unity of the Iraqi state. Even though Turkish policy-makers did not like it, a state-like entity gradually emerged in northern Iraq after 1991 and Ankara had to adjust to this. The central government in Iraq had withdrawn completely from Iraqi Kurdistan and if Ankara wanted to have a say over developments taking place there, it had to interact with the Kurdish parties.

The dilemma for Ankara was that both the military incursions and the political relations with the KDP and the PUK challenged the status of the border between the two states. If foreign policy is defined as a political practice which reproduces the state by constantly maintaining the boundaries between domestic and foreign, Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq risked having the opposite effect, namely, blurring the sanctity of the border, undermining Iraqi sovereignty and, inadvertently, encouraging the emergence of Kurdish statehood. In order to avoid these unintended consequences, the Foreign Ministry and the government tried to maintain the meaning of the border as a divider and definer of both the Turkish and the Iraqi states.

Maintaining the Border

Different practices, verbal and symbolic, were used to reproduce the border and to counteract the effects of the policy outlined above. First, Ankara actively and continuously declared its commitment to Iraqi territorial integrity and sovereignty. Secondly, diplomats and politicians were insistent that the violations of Iraq's territory were in fact not violations, since the situation in northern Iraq was a *sui generis* situation to which normal rules of interstate interaction were not applicable. Thirdly, Ankara was very careful to define the Kurdish leaders and the self-rule region as integral parts of the Iraqi state and to stress the sovereignty of the central government in Baghdad.

Thus, while the Turkish army violated Iraqi territory on the ground, the government and the Foreign Ministry in Ankara persistently asseverated their respect for Iraqi sovereignty. Even after a decade or more of continuous transgressions of the Iraqi border, Turkey's policy remained the same: the territorial integrity of Iraq must not be violated. In order to maintain the respect for the border, Ankara gave a certain interpretation of the incursions and the military presence in Iraq. Neither the location nor the legitimacy of the existing border was ever questioned. The Foreign Ministry never hinted that the border should be re-negotiated or that it had lost its importance. There were no official Turkish claims on historical rights to the territory on the other side of the border. The official view from Ankara was that Turkey's presence in

Iraq was, in fact, aimed at protecting Iraq's territorial integrity, almost as if Turkey violated the border *in order* to defend it. According to Özdem Sanberk, a former Foreign Under Secretary, Turkey was sitting in northern Iraq in order to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity. Similar statements have been made by Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül and others.

The official motivations for the Turkish infringements of Iraqi territory was that they were necessary acts of self-defence. In 1995, Turkey's permanent representative to the UN, commenting on the military operation which took place that year, stated that, since terrorists attacked Turkey and then escaped into northern Iraq, using the area as a safe haven, Turkey had no choice but to undertake a limited operation into northern Iraq. In official statements Turkey repeated over and over again that the sending of troops into Iraq should not be taken as a sign of Turkish claims on that territory. Süleyman Demirel, President at the time of the major incursion in 1995, said about that operation that it did not aim 'at northern Iraqi territory but was against the armed bandits who are stationed in that land. It is not an invasion but it is an anti-terrorist operation'.[21]

The Foreign Ministry stressed that the prevailing situation, in which the central government in Baghdad had no control over the northern part of its territory, was a temporary one and that it was a *sui generis* situation because of the power vacuum. 'It is a very important principle', said one Turkish diplomat, that 'we see the situation in northern Iraq as an extraordinary situation and every arrangement realised in northern Iraq as temporary'.[22] In Ankara's security perceptions, Turkey was facing a vicious terrorist threat and in order to protect the state and its citizens, the Turkish Army had to fight the PKK and also, if necessary, pursue the rebels across the border. Since the Iraqi government and Iraqi forces were not present and had no authority over northern Iraq, Turkey had to take measures. 'Nobody can expect Turkey not to do anything', said the diplomat quoted above, adding that if the government of Iraq had been present in northern Iraq, Turkey would have solved the security problem as a bilateral issue by cooperating with Iraq.

That northern Iraq was still under the sovereign rule of the Iraqi central government was emphasised in other ways as well; for example, in 2001 when Ankara announced that it had plans to open a second border gate with Iraq and made a point of declaring that the Iraqi administration, and not the peshmergas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (as in the case of the already existing border gate), would be in charge of it. After a visit by Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Loğoğlu to Baghdad in June 2001, the Turkish press reported that discussions had taken place between the two governments concerning a new border gate. It was stated that Iraq would be solely responsible for the management,

monitoring and protection of the Iraqi side of the gate. This was described as an attempt to reinforce the sovereignty of the Baghdad administration in the region. According to a Turkish daily, one reason for Turkey to open a direct border gate was to give a message to the Kurds and in particular the KDP that Iraq's sovereignty could not be infringed and that Turkey's interloctur was the central authority in Baghdad. In the same context, Turkish officials were quoted as saying that Ankara did not consider northern Iraq as 'the lands of Masoud Barzani, these are the lands of Iraq and our counterpart is Baghdad regarding the construction of the second border gate'. Furthermore, in 2001, Turkey introduced visa requirements for Turks entering Iraq even if they were only crossing into northern Iraq.[23] Since Baghdad had no control over the Iraqi side of the Turkish-Iraqi border, and since the Iraqi Kurds would not stop Turkish citizens from crossing the border and entering northern Iraq, it seems as if Turkey introduced the visa requirements mainly to reinforce the principle that northern Iraq was not an independent territory where the authority of Baghdad could be ignored.

The relations between the Turkish state and the KDP and PUK also constituted a dilemma, since they were an acknowledgement of Kurdish self-rule and could be seen as an interference in Iraqi affairs, thus undermining the boundary between the two entities Turkey and Iraq.[24] While pursuing its contacts with Barzani and Talabani, Ankara ran the risk of granting them implicit status or recognition as political leaders representing a separate political entity. Obviously, Ankara was anxious to avoid this and was therefore always very careful to define the status of the Kurdish leaders. When Barzani went to Turkey in May 2001 and was received by the then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, four main concerns were raised during the meeting. The first was about reaffirming 'how he [Barzani] is being "defined" in Turkey', a senior Turkish official is reported to have said. And the same official is quoted as saying: 'We told them that he is seen as a political party leader in Iraq, in order not to create a misunderstanding on his title and mission'. The second concern Ankara raised was about repeating Turkey's 'respect for the territorial integrity and unity of Iraq, again, in order not to create a false impression'.[25] Thus, Ankara emphasised that Barzani was a 'leader of a political party in Iraq', not a representative of an autonomous Kurdish region. The 'false impression' that Ankara did not want to create was that northern Iraq was a separate entity challenging the integrity and unity of Iraq by having independent relations with foreign states. One Turkish diplomat defined the Kurdish leaders as follows:

> We don't recognise them as political partners, there is nothing political about them… They are the elements at the moment filling the power vacuum and with whom we have to cooperate in the fight against PKK.[26]

By such a definition Barzani and Talabani were stripped of even semi-official status and of any kind of recognition as political leaders representing a legitimate Kurdish administration. They were simply elements filling a power vacuum.

During the 1990s and at least until the invasion of Iraq in 2003, there was a possibility that the existing situation in northern Iraq would transform itself into a permanent reality. The likelihood of such a scenario was of course increasing with time. Ankara feared that in the Kurdish self-ruled region in the north a generation would grow up which did not feel any sense of belonging to the rest of Iraq. The longer Kurdish self-rule continued to prevail, the more likely it was that it would become more and more established. When asked if the *de facto* situation might not eventually become both permanent and legitimised, a Turkish diplomat admitted such a risk: 'Not in terms of legitimisation, but in terms of people getting used to this'. He did, however, deny that Turkey was granting the Iraqi Kurds a kind of recognition by cooperating directly with them:

> No, no... we tell them and we treat them as – Mr Barzani is the chairman of the Kurdish Democatic Party of Iraq. Mr Talabani is the chairman or the president of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. That's it. ...if the impression we give outside is that Turkey is sort of recognising a different entity there, a separate entity there, that's something we have to look into very carefully because it is not the intention at all. ...We repeat to them and to everybody, Erbil, Suleymaniya, Dohuk are integral part of Iraq. There is a power vacuum there. There are problems there. These problems need to be resolved within Iraq, by the Iraqis... We want to encourage Baghdad and them to solve this problem among themselves.[27]

Ankara's aim was to persuade the Kurdish leaders not to act on their own, but to turn to Baghdad and to let the future of northern Iraq be decided by the whole Iraqi population. Its message to the KDP and PUK was that they should not take their problems outside, but should solve them together with the central government. When Barzani and Talabani were received officially in Ankara, 'taking their problems outside' was, however, exactly what they were doing. They were, in effect, acting on their own and beyond the realm of Baghdad. If Turkey had completely avoided interference in Iraqi politics and closed down all its contacts with the Kurdish leaders, then it would not have had any influence over their choices and actions. On the other hand, by having official contacts with the Kurds, Ankara might have gradually undermined Iraqi sovereignty. And the longer the contacts continued, the more the Kurdish leaders appeared as statesmen and the more likely it seemed that the situation would turn into something permanent and, in the long run, pave the way for a Kurdish state. Ankara was aware of this risk and was even accused of being hesitant about supporting the

democratisation process in northern Iraq out of fear that this would make it even more difficult to reintegrate the region into the rest of Iraq.

The End of Saddam Hussein's Regime

In March 2003, the conditions which had prevailed in Iraq for over a decade changed and the structure of the state, the Kurdish region in the north included, all of a sudden became a *tabula rasa* that had to be given a new form. Since the efforts to find a political solution for post-Saddam Iraq began, Ankara's priorities have remained the same as they had been prior to the invasion. Ankara continued to insist on the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. Turkish policy makers have strong reservations about a federal Iraq which, they fear, would divide the population along ethnic lines. The Turkish Foreign Ministry emphasised, during the reconstrution of the Iraqi which began in 2003, that it was up to the Iraqi people to choose their own political system but nevertheless offered its 'friendly advice':

> We think that an administrative structure along ethnic and religious lines would not be a good idea, because it would strengthen separatist and centrifugal forces and in the longrun may cause fragmentation of the country.[28]

Other policy objectives concerning control over Kirkuk or the protection of the Turkmen population are part of the same ambition – to avoid and undermine any possible move towards a separate Kurdish state. The invasion in 2003 heightened the worries of Ankara, since it was unclear what would happen with Iraq after Saddam Hussein was replaced.

One could argue that the situation which prevailed before March 2003 constituted, in the long run, a bigger risk to Turkey than the invasion. For over a decade the Kurds were able to rule themselves and to establish their own institutions. A major challenge to Turkey was to ensure that Kurdish 'statehood by stealth' (Kirişci 1995/95: 45), did not turn into a permanent reality. But the *de facto* situation in northern Iraq became more and more 'real' with each passing year and up until 2003 time worked against Turkey. Seen from this angle, the invasion offered an opportunity to reduce what was considered a major threat to Turkey's national security. If the invasion had not taken place, Saddam Hussein could have remained in power for years to come. In the post-war negotiations on the future political structure of Iraq, the policy of the Kurds was to not accept anything less than they had already achieved after 12 years of *de facto* independence. If the self-rule had prevailed for another 10 or 20 years, the split between the Kurdish entity in the north and the rest of Iraq would have become even more solid and the chance

that the Kurds would agree to be reintegrated into Iraq would have become even slimmer. For over ten years, Ankara had persistently argued that the situation in northern Iraq was, and had to be, a *temporary* one. But when the opportunity finally came to end this situation, Turkey was against it out of fear that the Kurds might make a secessionist move. Turkish foreign-policy-makers preferred an awkward but familiar situation over the uncertainty of change.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has demonstrated how Turkish foreign policy towards northern Iraq has been about protecting state interests. It has also argued that, at another level, the policy has served to reproduce the reality in whose name it operates – a reality consisting of two sovereign, territorial nation-states defined and delimited by the international boundary between them. Turkish foreign policy has thus been interpreted as an activity *across* a fixed border and, at the same time, as a border-producing activity.

Although Turkey, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, managed to gain independence and to avoid falling under foreign rule, its successive governments have nevertheless been struggling with the same problem as most other governments in the region, namely, to establish a state where national identity and territory coincide and where the state is present on the whole territory, from the centre all the way out to the borders. The existence of overlapping religious, cultural and linguistic identities which cross-cut international boundaries has made, and still makes, these efforts highly contested. For the existing states, any aspirations and demands for alternative demarcations, such as the creation of a Kurdish state, have to be nipped in the bud. In the battle over the population's national identification, states do not tolerate competitors.

Constructivist international relations theory has thrown the spotlight on how foreign policy serves to establish and reproduce the state. Looking at Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq, we can conclude that foreign policy can, simultaneously, have the opposite effect. Foreign policy might, although unintentionally, also undermine the integrity of borders and state sovereignty. In the Middle East where, in comparison with Europe and America, very few borders have reached a state of 'naturalness', and where the distinction between 'domestic' and 'foreign' is even less clear-cut, conducting foreign policy is an unpredictable task. At the same time, for many governments and foreign-policy-makers in the region, the enforcement of borders is particularly urgent, and may result in a stronger tendency to use foreign policy as a tool for state-building.

Is it possible that Turkey's foreign policy towards northern Iraq was in fact not aiming at preserving the present border? Was there instead a hidden irredentist agenda, an intention to occupy and incorporate northern Iraq into Turkey? Such a conclusion does not seem very likely. I would argue that there are no reasons to doubt the sincerity of the official foreign policy goals in this case. To preserve the territorial *status quo* and thus the existing borders is considered a matter of survival by Ankara. The annexation of northern Iraq would be like opening up a can of worms that Ankara would rather keep closed. Fear of disintegration permeates the security thinking of the Turkish state and any moves that indicate, even if only potentially, that the present borders are up for discussion are considered threatening. This is also the reason why the mere thought of an independent Kurdish state is regarded as a major threat against the Turkish nation. Creating a Kurdish state would, in the eyes of most Turkish policy-makers, be like opening Pandora's box: It would encourage all the different ethnic groups in the region to fight for independence and might lead to the break-up of existing states. The builders of the Republic are still struggling to create a fit between state and nation, and any territorial change, especially in a predominantly Kurdish region, is regarded as damaging. One thing is clear, Turkish foreign-policy-makers will continue to be on the alert until the day when, and if, a democratic and unitary state model is established in Iraq and the Kurds in the north are reintegrated into the rest of the country.

Notes:

[1] Some contributors, among many, to this discourse are Ashley (1987); Campbell (1990), 1992, 1996); Dodds (1994); Wilson and Donnan (1998); Blake and Shoefield (1987); Lapid (2001); Brown (2001).
[2] For a review article of 'The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory', see Checkel (1998).
[3] This is the *official* description of Turkish nationalism. How citizenship is defined and understood in practice is quite another issue which is not being discussed here.
[4] Resolution 688 condemned the repression of the Iraqi civilian population and mentioned particularly the Kurdish population.
[5] According to *Turkish Daily News*, 29 June 2001, foreign diplomats who had visited the region 'say it is ironic to see one part of Iraq and its 4 million people in the north enjoy all these rights and have democratic institutions whereas the centre and south of the country still live under an iron rule'. For similar reports see *Turkish Daily News*, 29 October 2002 or *The New York Times*, 28 July 2002.

[6] Revenues from cross-border trade with Turkey was crucial to the economy of the Kurdish region. *Turkish Daily News* reports on 1 November 2001 that 'at least 100 trucks bring Iraqi crude oil across the border to Turkey every day'. KDP took dues on the Iraqi oil sold to Turkey and charges on traffic across the Khabur border gate. See also McDowall 2004: 389-90 and Kirişci 1996: 31.

[7] The National Pact was a short document that laid down the principles and aims of the nationalist resistance movement led by Mustafa Kemal. The resistance movement persuaded the Ottoman government to hold elections for the parliament in October 1919. Members and symphatisers of the resistance movements managed to win most of the seats and in January 1920, the parliament, unanimously adopted the National Pact. To Mustafa Kemal the National Pact defined and set the boundaries for the new Turkish nation. See Kirişci and Winrow 1997: 77; 92.

[8] See, for example, Shaw and Kural Shaw 1976-77: 376; Celik, 1999: 119ff.; Kirişci 1996: 38.

[9] The Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, started an armed struggle for independence from Turkey in the 1980s, although the organisation was founded already in the 1970s by Abdullah Öcalan. PKK is characterised as a terrorist organisation by the EU, the USA, Iran and several other countries.

[10] Aziz' letter is quoted in Keesing's *Record of World Events*, Vol. 43, May 1997. See also *Turkish Daily News*, 26 October 2001 which reports that Iraq has asked the UN 'to ban Turkish incursions in the north' and demanded that '[t]he United Nations should shoulder its responsibility and demand the Turkish government to stop immediately its military aggression against Iraq'.

[11] *Turkish Daily News*, 28 June 2001.

[12] Interview with Safeen M. Dizayee, representative of the KDP in Ankara, 30 November 2000.

[13] Interview with Safeen M. Dizayee, representative of the KDP in Ankara, 30 November 2000.

[14] Interview with senior US diplomat. Ankara, 1 December 2000.

[15] Interview with senior official in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 18 July 2000.

[16] Whether the *Boundary and Security Bulletin* provides a complete list of all incidents is not clear. There may of course have been crossings that are not reported in media. *Boundary and Security Bulletin* is published by the International Boundaries Research Unit at Durham University in the UK. In every issues there is a summary of international news concerning border issues.

[17] 'Statement by His Excellency Ümit Pamir, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations, at the Open Meeting on Iraq, New York, March 26, 2003', published on the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.tr (printed 7 July 2004).

[18] *Turkish Daily News*, 12 September 2002.

[19] Aykan describes this as a domestically controversial step taken by Turgut Özal. The military, for example, believed that, after these contacts had been established, Turkey would no longer be in a position to expect Iraq not to interfere in its own Kurdish problem.

[20] Interview with Safeen M. Dizayee, representative of the KDP in Ankara, 30 November 2000.

[21] Demirel is quoted in *Turkish Daily News*, 5 April 1995, Sanberk in *Turkish Daily News*, 7 November 2001. In *Turkish Daily News*, 24 March 2003, Foreign Minister Gül is quoted saying that Turkey's presence in Iraq is aimed at protecting that country's territorial integrity. See also *Turkish Daily News*, 8 April 1995.

[22] Interview with senior official in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 18 July 2000.

[23] See *Cumhuriyet*, 20 June 2001; *Turkish Daily News*, 19, 20, 29 June and 30 August 2001

[24] David McDowall (2004: 384) makes a similar point when he argues that 'while Ankara withheld *de jure* recognition of the Kurdish government, its reliance on Iraqi Kurds implied *de facto* acceptance of realities'.

[25] *Turkish Daily News*, 12 May 2001. The third and fourth concern had to do with security issues, mainly the threat posed by PKK, and with the Turkmen population.

[26] Interview with senior official in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 18 July 2000.

[27] Interview with senior official in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 20 July 2000.

[28] 'What is Turkey's Iraq Policy?', document published on the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.gov.tr (printed 20 July 2004).

BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

DISCOURSES AND DIFFERENCE

6

TRACING THE BOUNDARIES
FROM COLONIAL DREAM TO NATIONAL PROPAGANDA

Tetz Rooke

In 1999 the Department of History at Damascus University arranged a conference dealing with the history of trade and boundaries in the Near East and North Africa. On the topic of boundaries one of the conference papers presented a rather extreme account of Syrian history. The paper claimed that 'Arab-Syrian civilisation' is the origin of all other civilisations on earth, be they Greek, Japanese or Native American, that the 'Syrian Arabs' are the oldest civilised people on earth, that the Arabic language is inherently superior to all other languages in the world and in fact the mother language of them all, and last but not least that the true territory of Syria, then designated as 'Greater Syria', is considerably larger than that of the Arab Syrian Republic of today, referred to as 'Lesser Syria' (Muhammad 1999).

The main purpose of this myth-making narrative appears to be to challenge the legality of the existing territorial divisions of the geographical area composed of parts of present-day Turkey, Iraq and Saudi Arabia and including all of Jordan, Palestine/Israel, Lebanon and Syria. The 'historical' and 'natural' boundaries of these lands must replace the 'artificial' colonial boundaries of the present, the author of the paper, Dr Najjah Muhammad from Damascus University, argues. Her wish to redraw the map is supported by ethnically based arguments, creating the image of an eternal Syrian nation in search of a lost homeland. And she strongly believes in the creation of a unified 'Greater Syria' with new political boundaries as the one rightful solution (Muhammad 1999: 202-205).

To the outside scholar Muhammad's paper represents a typical piece of ideologically dictated history writing in the service of nationalist propaganda; the genre is all too well known from different parts of the world. Through a mixture of fabricated and skewed facts it attempts to

cast today's territorial consciousness and political conflicts into the past in order to promote a specific political agenda in the present. This contemporary example of Syrian territorial imaginations or 'frontier fictions' illustrates how modern Arab historians, like Najjah Muhammad, and geographers have played, and continue to play, their part in the 'priesthood of the nation', especially when engaging in the discipline of historical geography.[1]

In this chapter we shall examine three other twentieth-century texts of geography and history that also belong to the same 'cult'. They all describe 'Greater Syria' as an integral, clearly bounded territory with a population forming a distinct 'nation' or 'people' of its own. What types of boundaries do the different texts identify? How are they visualised, by maps and in words? What are the main arguments for the boundaries that are drawn in the texts and how are they constructed? What is the connection between these arguments and politics? How convincing are they? And where do they originate?

The first text we shall study is an article by the Jesuit Father Henri Lammens written in 1916: 'L'ancienne frontière entre la Syrie et le Hijaz: Notes de géographie historique'.[2] The second is a well known history study in six volumes entitled *Khitat al-Shām*, published in Damascus between 1925 and 1928 by a group of Syrian-Arab nationalists led by the president of the Arab Academy, Muhammad Kurd Ali.[3] And our last example is a contemporary geographical dictionary commissioned by the Syrian government, *al-Mu'jam al-jughrāfī li al-qutr al-arabī al-sūrī*.[4]

All three texts present similar statements about Syria's boundaries, but with very different political motives. The image of Syria as a geographical and historical entity with fixed boundaries since antiquity can be shown to have originated in Europe in the late eighteenth century. In time this idea became the basis of French colonial policy in the area. Precisely the same vision of an integral Greater Syria subsequently became the territorial goal of the anti-colonial Arab independence movement after the First World War. And today we find almost the same arguments about a primordial and eternal 'Natural Syria' ritually repeated in the political rhetoric of Ba'thist Syria.

Colonial Imaginations

The idea of Syria as a coherent geographic and historic entity appears to have its origin in the Enlightenment salons of Paris. There it was grafted on to the Arab concept of *Bilād al-Shām* that traditionally referred both to the city and the region of Damascus. As a region *al-Shām* had indeterminate boundaries and an Islamic connotation because of the yearly pilgrimage caravan to Mecca that had Damascus as its starting point. The term Syria, on the other hand, had Christian connotations and

was also used as a synonym for the 'Holy Land'. But now the two names came to signify the same geographical space (Kiwan 1997, Ma'oz 1997: 211).

From Paris the new understanding of the name Syria was brought to the Middle East by European diplomats, militaries, missionaries and travellers. The boundaries of this geographic or historic Syria, made equivalent to the Arabic *al-Shām*, were reformulated at different times in accordance with the political situation of the moment and the colonial prospects. For example, when the First World War broke out the French dream of establishing a colony in Syria surfaced and took concrete form. A discussion about the exact boundaries developed.

As a manifestation of this we find in 1916 in Beirut the Jesuit priest Henri Lammens (1862-1937) developing his theories about the boundary of Syria to the south. Lammens, who was a master of the Arabic language, tries to establish the precise coordinates for the hypothetical southern boundary by studying classical Arabic texts written by pre-Islamic poets and medieval Muslim geographers. He rapidly comes to the conclusion that the Arabs traditionally did not recognise sharp political boundaries. His sources are therefore often contradictory when it comes to the attribution of a given place to a larger territorial unit, such as *al-Shām* or *al-Hijāz*, the north-western part of the Arabian peninsula. Traditional boundaries among the Arabs were rather like zones, where influence overlapped and sovereignty was indeterminate, Lammens says.

Nevertheless he believes that it is possible for him to establish a precise line through the desert corresponding to the ancient boundary between the countries of Syria and Hejaz. This borderline he draws not too far north of Medina in-present day Saudi Arabia, somewhere between Tabuq and Madain Salih (Lammens 1928: 325).

The colonialist bias in the interpretation of the historical facts is obvious. The purpose of Lammens scientific study is quite explicit: it is to tell the French military and politicians how much territory they should lay claim to once the Ottoman Empire is defeated. His article finishes with a description of the fertility of the oases between Tabuq and Aqaba. He summarises the economic potential of that area, which on historical grounds he defines as being a part of Syria. 'Cette indication, les maitres de la Syrie nouvelle auraient tort de n'en pas tenir compte', he concludes (Lammens 1928: 331).

In European circles at the time the notion of fixed boundaries, stable for 'at least thirteen centuries' in Lammens' words, surrounding an integral territory called Syria had been an accepted truth for well over a century. Perhaps the first to formulate the idea was the French traveller Volney (Kiwan 1997: 103). However, the details of the boundaries, their exact geographical position, did not become an urgent matter until the first decades of the twentieth century. The urgency of boundary fixation

was a direct response to the imminent territorial disintegration of the
Ottoman Empire, as Lammens' article well illustrates. His text may be
interpreted as an attempt to maximise the territory of Syria, using historical
arguments but with a colonial intention.

Others, too, studied the boundaries of Syria with the aim of delimiting a
future French colony, *'une grande Syrie française'*, in the former Asian-Arab
provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The secret Sykes-Picot agreement of
1916, the year of Lammens' article, is of course indirect evidence of this. A
more direct trace of the same 'cartographic' effort is a map published in
Paris in 1915 and produced by an 'Oriental Christian' named Cressaty,
who was attached to the French projects concerning the future of the
Levant.[5] This illustrative map of the colonial dream is a near blueprint of a
similar map said to be from the archives of the French Foreign Ministry
dating from 1910.

Map 3 'La Syrie française'
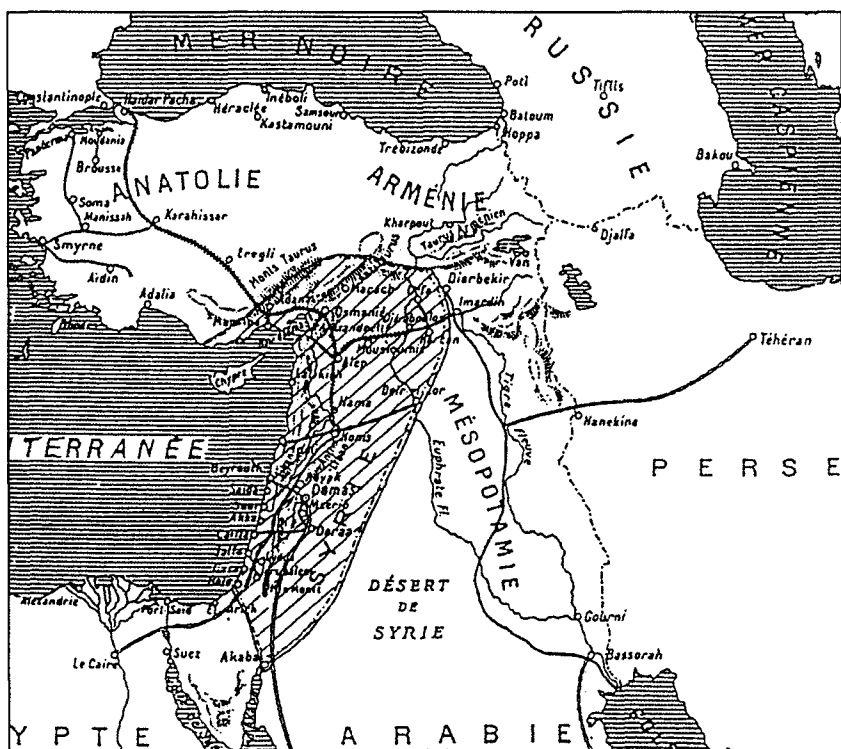
Source: Chevallier (1992), p. 7, from R. Jean-Michel Cressaty, *La Grande guerre.
La Syrie française*, Paris 1915. (Technical revision by Lars Wåhlin.)

The latter is reproduced in the *Geographical Dictionary of Syria* published in the 1990s (al-Mu'jam 1990-1993, I: 30). However, in its modern use by the Syrian regime this cartographic image has an opposite purpose from that of the original. Now it figures as an element in an anti-colonial discourse. The colonial dream has turned into a national one.

Map 4 Syria and Mesopotamia
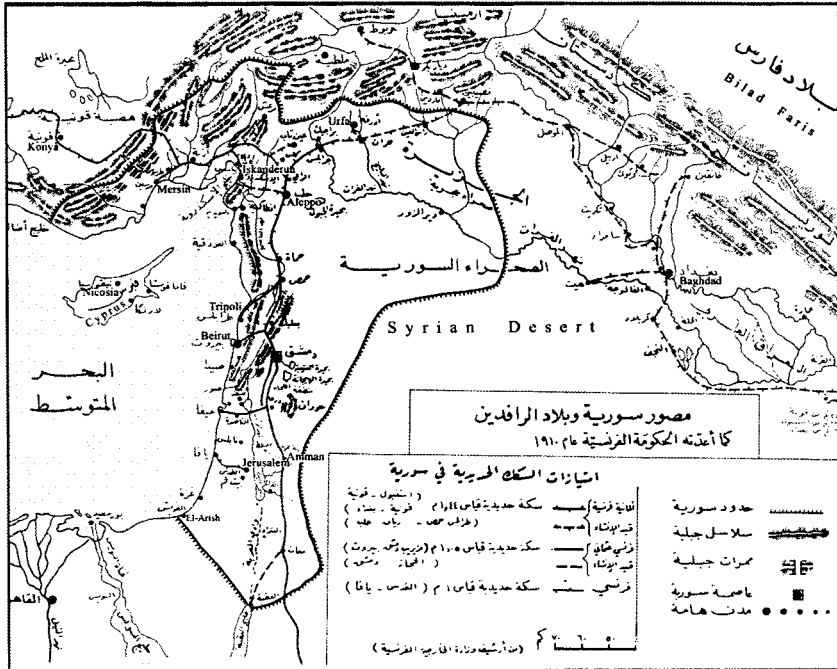
'Map of Syria and Mesopotamia as prepared by the French Government in 1910', from *al-Mu'jam* (1990), p. 30, no source given. Syria's borders are represented by the sharp jagged line. The left part of the legend shows railway lines and concessions. (Technical revision, English names added by Lars Wåhlin.)

Early Nationalist Imaginations

When and how did this transformation happen? There are two related answers. On a general level it could be said to have happened with the spread of nationalism as an ideology in the Middle East in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The nation as an abstract idea of a united people, an *umma,* required a territorial complement, a united homeland, a *watan.* This latter term, which in classical Arabic usage has a more restricted meaning of birthplace or place of residence, gradually acquired the meaning of 'fatherland' or *patrie.* In this meaning it soon became a

familiar word to all Middle Easterners, Turks, Arabs, Kurds and others. 'Love of the fatherland is part of religion' first became a popular slogan and later a war cry.[6] And in the quest for a *watan* the European notion of an integrated Syria took hold as one of the better suggestions, because it was not based on ethnicity or religion but on a territory common to all.[7] Admittedly, in Ottoman times there existed a consciousness among the urban elites in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine of sharing cultural bonds, of living in the same geographical region, of living in *al-Shām* or *Bilād al-Shām* as it was called by the Arab geographers. However, this term was ambiguous. On the one hand, *al-Shām* signified the whole area north of Hejaz and west of the Euphrates at large, but also more specifically the region around the city of Damascus, as well as being a name for the city itself. Except for the Mediterranean, *al-Shām* had no distinct boundaries. And the term never had any political significance until it came to be associated with the term Syria in its Orientalist and colonialist expression.

The translation of the European geography into an Arab nationalist geography began in the middle of the nineteenth century. Syrian Arab intellectuals defined the land of Syria as a territorial entity according to the European idea of natural and historic boundaries already in the 1850s and 60s (Ma'oz 1997: 211). Around 1865 the term Syria was adopted by the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul as the common name for one of the provinces, that conformed with the French terminology and concept. Substituting Syria for *al-Shām* was a sign of administrative renewal. The dominant idea before the First World War was that the Asian Arab provinces should remain within the Ottoman state, conceived of as the homeland, but be given increased autonomy. A discussion about precise political and territorial boundaries was thus superfluous. It was only after the war that 'natural Syria' emerged as a political project with broad support in Arab political circles. It was first then that an Arab debate about territory and political boundaries began.

The General Syrian Congress that convened in Damascus in 1919-20 took up the Greater Syrian idea as a defence against the territorial demands of the European victors. On 8 March 1920 the delegates declared [Greater] Syria independent within its 'natural boundaries' that were now conceived of as sharp lines in the terrain. The southern boundary was defined as a line from Rafah on the Mediterranean to Aqaba, and from there to a point south of al-Jawf in present-day Saudi Arabia. From al-Jawf the claimed borderline continued north through the Syrian desert to al-Bu Kamal on the river Euphrates. It then followed the river north to the tributary of Khabur that formed the continuation of the eastern boundary up to the the the foothills of the Taurus Mountains (al-Mu'jam 1990-93, I: 31; Velud 1991, I: 177).

According to James Gelvin's study of early nationalist movement in

Syria, the demand for independence within 'natural boundaries' did not really gain precedence until the late spring of 1919. The nationalist leaflets and posters that are preserved in the archives from the preceding period, between October 1918 and April 1919, do not express this demand. At that stage the independence movement had a pan-Arab as opposed to a pan-Syrian focus, and the boundary issue was still a continous source of internal conflict among the nationalists. Gelvin traces the shift towards a definite Syrian representation of the emerging nation as the effect of political circumstances, successful popular agitation and the influence of exile circles in Egypt, who because of their marginalisation there came to identify themselves as 'Syrians' in political contexts and to nurture a distinct 'Syrian' identity. Part and parcel of this identity was the notion of 'Natural Syria' within the boundaries that also came to be adopted by the Syrian Congress (Gelvin 1998: 61, 73, 150-64).

Formulating the boundaries was one thing, but making people understand and accept them was another. Most inhabitants in the proclaimed homeland lacked a strong sense of all-Syrian territorial identity. They did not feel that they belonged to the same community and formed one nation. The elites of Aleppo had stronger ties with Anatolia than with Palestine or even Damascus (Gelvin 1998: 82-3, 129, 146 n. 6).[8] The Bedouin tribes east of the Dead Sea had their summer camps inside Syria's 'natural' boundary, but took their flocks outside it in the winter into the desert; the idea of an integral Syria was contrary to their experience and concept of territory. And for the average person in Damascus the word 'Arab' still had a bad connotation, basically meaning primitive nomad or robber. Furthermore, Jewish and Maronite political leaders imagined the national homeland and its boundaries quite differently from how the delegates of the General Syrian Congress imagined them. The former groups represented a nationalist trend that aimed at creating a Jewish State and a Maronite State and competed with the pan-Syrian and pan-Arab trends for popular support. From a Syrian-Arab point of view, education was necessary to spread the patriotic message and win the battle of ideas. The territorial identity of the Syrians had to be reinforced or created, if need be.

How do you reinforce territorial identity and raise awareness about political boundaries that do not exist in the common consciousness? To create a geographical description of the country is one way of doing it. By classifying, systematising and codifying its elements you govern and shape its identity. The man behind the idea of a comprehensive geographical work about Syria defined a priori by its 'natural' boundaries, was the president of the newly founded Arab Scientific Academy in Damascus, Muhammad Kurd Ali (1876-1953). For more than twenty years he had been gathering historical and topographical information

about Syria. This material became the basis for a combined national history and geography published in six volumes between 1925 and 1928 under the title *Khitat al-Shām*, 'Syria's Topography'. Kurd Ali's material was supplemented by studies of the economy, agriculture, trade, communications, administration, religion and local customs by experts in these fields. The publication was sponsored by a committee of Damascene notables, some of whom later came to belong to the leadership of the National Bloc (*al-Kutla al-wataniyya*). Thus, even if commonly ascribed to Kurd Ali as an individual, the *Khitat al-Shām* is also a collective creation. The work represents an attempt by a group of Syrian-Arab nationalists to define the identity of their country and to promote patriotic feelings among the inhabitants, but also to diagnose the nation's weaknesses and prescribe a cure for its recovery.[9] This text is an attempt to create a nation by producing a master-narrative foundation myth that has subsequently been taken over almost intact by the institutions of the present Syrian state.

Boundaries in Khitat al-Shām

Boundaries are an issue on many levels in *Khitat al-Shām*. First of all and most importantly they define the scope of the information included. Geographical boundaries decide what is considered to be a 'national event' in history and what is not. They define the limits of the land, and thus the content of the country. They tell what and who belong to the homeland and what and who do not. *A priori* inscribed in history and geography, they bring people and things together in an imagined community that did not previously exist in such a concrete form. Without such clear boundaries the nation-building project would fail. On a more concrete level the boundaries are a theme in the geographical description and are discussed as a political problem in the historical narrative. But they are also addressed in discussions about language, ethnicity and religion in the country.

   As an element of the description of *al-Shām*, 'which is the Arab name for this dear country and covers all districts that today go under the modern terms of Syria and Palestine' (Kurd Ali 1983, I: 47), Kurd Ali supports his definition of the boundaries with a combination of arguments:

1) By reference to international treaties. This is the case with the Syrian-Egyptian boundary, which was delineated in a treaty between the Ottoman and British governments in 1906. Kurd Ali accepts this treaty as respecting the natural boundaries of his homeland, including today's Israel and Palestine. This south-western boundary of Syria he is thus able to pinpoint in detail. He mentions its distance in meters at some places in

directions given in compass degrees, from Taba on the Red Sea to the coast of the Mediterranean (Kurd Ali 1983, I: 10-11).

2) By reference to European scholars, *'ulama al-ifranj.* For example he quotes definitions of Syria's boundaries from Bouillet, *Dictionnaire d'historie et de géographie,* Elisée Reclus, *Nouvelle géographie universelle,* and Baedeker's *Guide to Palestine and Syria.* He does not mention the definition by Volney in his *Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte,* however, even if he includes this book in his bibliography. In many respects *Khitat al-Shām* can be defined as 'Orientalism by an Oriental'. It is written in dialogue with contemporary European studies and theories, not only in the field of geography but also in the description of society, using Darwinist models and phrenology to define the Syrian race, for example (Kurd Ali 1983, I: 11-12, 34).

3) By reference to Arab geographers like al-Idrisi and Yaqut and Ottoman historians like Katib Çelebi. Kurd Ali was fluent in Turkish and had been an Ottoman official in his youth, it should be remembered. However, in his use of the Arab sources he is not as thorough or curious as Lammens, whom he used to argue against on most historical issues, but not on the Syrian boundaries. Furthermore, he does not try to compare the information of one Arab geographer with that of another. He just repeats their reports as they are in the conventional style of Arab compilators (Kurd Ali 1983, I: 8-9, 12).

4) By rhetoric, using persuasive metaphors and emotional language. For example, Kurd Ali imagines the homeland as a human body. What is the most vital part of the body? It is the heart. What is the heart of Syria? It is the capital, Damascus. What is in the interest of Damascus is also the interest of the country as a whole; such is the logic implied. The centre's point of view leads to a hierarchisation of the topographical and other material. It is mostly ordered city by city, always beginning with Damascus, which is given much more space in the text than other urban centres like Aleppo, Beirut or Jerusalem, for example. Rural districts are even more disadvantaged. This order is symbolic of the relative importance of the centre versus the periphery, but the idea of a capital as such also implies awareness of the integrated territory with clearly defined boundaries.[10]

5) By military reasons. The 'natural boundaries' are the best. They are *natural,* not because they correspond to a religious division (Turks too are Muslims), or a linguistic division (Egyptians too speak Arabic) or an ethnic division (Kurds too live in Syria), but by virtue of natural topographical conditions that make them easy to defend. *Khitat al-Shām* reports on a visit by a deputation of intellectuals *(mufakkirūna)* from the four cities of Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Damascus to the French High

Commissioner of the Mandate in 1925. Their mission was to present the political demands of the nation (*matālib al-umma*) to him and to complain about French policy. Among the complaints we read the following: 'Syria within its natural boundaries is one country *(watan wāhid)*, by virtue of language, national identity *(qawmiyya)*, customs, morality and history. Nothing justifies its division and making it into small statelets[11]...They [the predecessors in the post of High Commissioner] have deprived this country of its natural boundaries and defence-lines. If the boundaries are not strategic *(askariyya)* and natural they will not protect its independence.'(Kurd Ali 1983, III: 198-9).

6) By economic reasons. The colonial boundaries hinder trade in the region and prevent economic development. As an example Kurd Ali describes the collapse of the Damascus-Palestine trade after the establishment of the new boundary between the British Mandate of Palestine and the French Mandate of Syria.

Syria's 'natural boundaries' are not congruent with ethnic or linguistic boundaries, Kurd Ali admits. Yet, loyalty to the territorial state, *al-watan*, is predicated on respect for, if not love of, Arabic as the official language also by the linguistic minorities on the margin. To Kurd Ali, language is the single most important factor in creating a strong state. It is the Arab majority and the Arabic language that are given pre-eminence. Referring to the examples of the United States and Canada, he argues for a differentiation between ethnicity on the one hand and national identity *(qawmiyya)* on the other. All great nations are composed of different ethnic components held together by a common language (Kurd Ali 1983, I: 85-6).[12]
    This form of centralism through language is aimed at warding off separatism and politicisation of ethnicity. It is a copy of the Ottomanist ideology, except that the official language in that case was Turkish. In fact, the Arab-Syrian nationalism propagated in *Khitat al-Shām* resembles Ottomanism in many ways. Both ideologies argue for the necessity of a unified administrative language that should be taught to all subjects, and both promote an identity based on patriotism and individual equality, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation. Here, we may recall King Faysal's slogan 'religion is for God, the country for all' *(al-dīn li Allah, al-watan li al-jamī)* (al-Ās 1988: 172, 187, 221), which is also the dictum that governs the spatial projection of Syria in *Khitat al-Shām*.
    In his discussion of language and boundaries Kurd Ali implicitly signals awareness of the difference between traditional boundaries and modern political boundaries. Talking about the borderland he prefers to use the term *tukhūm* rather than *hudūd*. In the north where Turks, Turkmen, Arabs, Kurds and Armenians live in a mixture that does not follow any straight line, he talks about *al-tukhūm al-shāmiyya* rather than *al-*

hudūd al-shāmiyya. Implied in the term *tukhūm* is a certain geographical vagueness; it is not generally used for a political boundary. It implies a view of the relationship to the boundary from within – 'the end or limit of whatever is inside' (Brauer 1995: 12). Thus in using this term Kurd Ali signals a centralist logic in his approach to the people living on the 'margin'. The margin is a margin only when viewed from the centre.

Besides the persuasive metaphor, another rhetorical device in the text is repetition and enumeration. In *Khitat al-Shām* the national territory is not represented by a set of drawn maps, historical or others. At this time there was still no cartographic attempt made by Syrian Arabs, who had to rely on colonial maps of the type we have already seen. Kurd Ali and his team therefore have to use other techniques than cartography to 'show' their readers the form of the country and to mark its geographical features. The map is written instead of drawn.

At regular intervals lists of different kinds interrupt the narrative. These lists function as a kind of verbal illustrations or maps; they attempt to produce a mental image of the territory just as full of sharp details as the topographical map and with the same kind of symbolic power. In the geographical description of Syria, for example, we first find a list of the country's cities and towns, including the historical ones that have now diminished in importance or fallen into ruin. Next follows a list of mountains, lakes, plains, grazing lands, rivers, with the beautiful scenery also described. After that there comes a list of all the trees and plants that grow in *Bilād al-Shām*, followed by another list of minerals and hot springs (Kurd Ali 1983, I: 53-5). Reading these names, a boundary becomes visible separating 'inside' and counted from 'outside' and discounted.

In relation to the colonial truncation of 'natural Syria' that Kurd Ali otherwise severely condemns, it is interesting to observe that places/sites on the other side of the contested, newly delineated, Syrian-Turkish boundary are not included in any of his lists (an important town like Gaziantep, for example). Cilicia, too, is absent from the image. In his practice Kurd Ali apparently respects the 'unhistorical' boundary to the north. At the same time places in Syria's neighbours to the west (Lebanon) and south (Palestine and Transjordan) make up a large part of their items. Here the writer does not stop at the colonial boundary.

Another observation is that the Jazira province east of the Euphrates is not included in Kurd Ali's geographical notion of the homeland. The river Khabur is not mentioned in any list, nor the heights of Jabal Abd al-Aziz or the spring of Ras al-Ayn, for example. But, at the same time, the Euphrates as a boundary line is also made relative when the Ottoman district of Deir al-Zor, which covered territory on both sides of the Euphrates, is counted as a part of Syria (Kurd Ali 1983, IV: 190).

The catalogue technique is characteristic of the work as a whole. It is

also used in other contexts than geography, creating the same impression of completeness, a metaphor of strength, of homogeneity through complementarity, and of an integral geographical space. As Dominique Chevallier has succinctly put it: 'Kurd Ali rassemblait des morceaux pour offrir un sentiment d'ensemble' (Chevallier 1992: 5).

But from a literary point of view the result is not a happy one. Catalogues generally do not make good reading. One example is the chapter on science and literature (al-'ilm wa al-adab) (Kurd Ali 1983, IV: 3-98). Here page after page is filled with names of literati and Islamic scholars, the date of death if known and, sometimes, a few words about their contribution to literature or scholarship. These lists are arranged in centuries according to the Muslim calendar, but the names of the persons are not put in alphabetical order.[13] It appears as if the author's main concern is to manifest the existence of these men and women – a few paragraphs enumerate women scholars and poets (Kurd Ali 1983, IV: 53, 66, 70) – as a collective rather than as individuals, like the type of list you find engraved on a memorial as a token of nationhood. Typically, in listing his contemporaries active in the fields of science and literature Kurd Ali has no biographical information at all to give us, just names: page 67 consists of a list of 110 names, page 68 of 118 names, page 69 of 119 names and so on. The ideal reader is obviously capable of identifying these people without any help. He is probably supposed to be one of them. He probably also knows where everybody lives or comes from. In that case the mental image created by these names would provide a map not only of the cultural life, but also of the territory.

National Imaginations

In as much as the modern nation is an 'imagined community' its spatial form has to be imagined as well, implying the need for a sharp definition of geographical boundaries. Often interpreted in biological terms as a human being, the nation is metaphorically pictured as an immortal father or mother figure. It follows that the spatial form of the nation, its territory, is most easily imagined as a body. The English language illustrates this common analogy by some of its metaphors. The 'capital' is the chief, 'head', of the country which controls the 'heart' and perhaps also the 'extremities' of the land. The national territory is charged with symbolic value, united as it is by organic ties said to be of 'vital' importance. Losing territory is like losing a limb, a serious handicap or even a mortal danger to the body-nation that may then 'bleed' to death. In other situations the nation is 'strangled' by its enemies because it is not getting enough space to 'grow'; the boundaries are like a noose around the neck and obviously have to be expanded. This analogy is a reappearing feature in Arab nationalist discourse as well (e.g. al-Ās 1988:

173-202). During one of the nationalist demonstrations in Syria in 1920 a car drove around with a man dressed up in a suit that symbolised the map of Syria, implying that the territory of the nation is a human body and indivisible (Gelvin 1997: 270).

Naturally the motherland or fatherland is endowed with a life-story of its own. It is common usage to talk about the 'birth of the nation' and to regard it as having a character and identity different from others', just like humans. National history then becomes a form of collective autobiography. National geography for the same reasons resembles a kind of collective self-portrait. Sometimes the two 'art forms' of national history and national geography are combined in one and the same work, of which *Khitat al-Shām* is a good example. This is the familiar kind of work where the topography of a country is described in detail, including statistics about population, the economy and many other things.

At the beginning of the 1990s a five volume topographical dictionary belonging to the same genre was published in Syria. As a text, *al-Muʿjam al-jughrāfī li al-qutr al-arabī al-sūrī* has a clear ideological, not to say propagandistic, tendency. The first volume gives a summary of the history, geology, climate, flora and fauna, population, economy, agriculture, communications and so forth of the country. The other four volumes represent an alphabetical dictionary of place names in Syria, providing similar but more specific data about each particular place. Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of the work is that it includes information about cities and villages and districts in Turkey as well, despite its national scope. Thus the province of Iskanderuna/Hatay is consequently treated as an integral part of Syrian territory. This means that you can look up a Turkish city like Antakya or read about the economic development of the Amiq-plain, for example, as if it is was a Syrian matter; the national self-portrait shows an ideal image rather than a real one.

In its historical introduction the *Geographic Dictionary* offers an interesting discussion of 'the stolen northern territories' *(al-manātiq al-muʿtasaba al-shamāliyya),* openly identified as Cilicia, Upper Mesopotamia and the aforementioned province of Iskanderuna/Hatay (al-Muʿjam 1990-93, I: 38-44). The text argues that Syria's present international boundaries are historically incorrect. The correct northern boundary line should follow the 'natural boundaries of Syria' *(hudūd Sūriyā al-tabīʿiyya).* These imagined boundaries of Syria are also the imagined boundaries of *al-watan al-arabī,* the Arab Homeland. The existence of Arab speakers on the other side of the existing frontier between Syria and Turkey is made an argument for territorial claims. This expression of irredentism is marked by the use of strong words like 'crime', 'injustice' and 'wrong' to describe how France and Great Britain divided the Middle East between themselves and Turkey after the First World War. A set of historical

maps is included to prove the case of the unlawfully 'stolen' Syrian territories.

What are the purposes of these maps? One purpose could be to reinforce territorial identity among the inhabitants of a country where such identity is historically weak and is also challenged by other identities represented by other maps, like that of Greater Kurdistan, for example. This identity-enforcing motive is characteristic of the whole dictionary as such. Geographical description does not only communicate empirical knowledge but also ideology, especially when the territorial legitimacy of the sponsoring state is contested or not yet firmly established. From a discursive point of view official dictionaries like *al-Mu'jam* belong to the same symbolic order as the national anthem, the national flag, the national dress and other paraphernalia of the nation-state. The mere fact that these things exist proves that the nation in question also exists, according to the logic implied in them.

Noteworthy in this Syrian narrative of the past is the simultaneous and seemingly unreflecting use of two geographical traditions, the colonial and the classical Arab. As we have seen, the first tradition, the notion of a geographic or historic Syria within 'natural' boundaries as shown in this dictionary – mountains, rivers, desert, and sea – is originally a colonial invention. It was then taken over by the Arab nationalist movement in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine and further developed in works like *Khitat al-Shām*. It later also became the basis for the nationalist political party known as 'Parti Populaire Syrien' (PPS), *al-Hizb al-sūrī al-qawmī al-ijtimā'ī* under the leadership of Antun Sa'ada. The fifth paragraph of the party programme describes the 'Syrian homeland' in geographical terms, referring to it as an area defined by nature with mountains, seas and rivers as boundaries (Shamis 1958: 14-5). And today it lives on in the national rhetoric of the Syrian state.

As for the second geographical tradition, the concept of *al-thughūr* belongs to the Islamic division of the world into *dār al-Islam,* the House of Islam, and *dār al-harb,* the House of war. *Al-thughūr* was the fortified places of the Muslim warriors in the frontier zone between Muslim-controlled and non-Muslim territory.[14] How the two traditions are superimposed on each other may be seen from the key to Map 5

Anachronistically the medieval frontier zone is drawn as a sharp line characteristic of the modern nation-state boundary. This line, based on a religious division existing for some hundreds of years, is then explained as representing the 'natural' and 'historic', and thus eternal, boundaries of Syria. Note also the term *hudūd al-thughūr,* 'the boundaries of the frontier fortresses' which is a new invention and not to be found in classical texts. There is no recognition in the text of the fact that pre-modern political boundaries in the area were of different types from modern state boundaries. The colonial boundaries are considered as false, of course,

but the alternative is not the dissolved internal boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. It is the imagined boundaries of 'natural Syria' that are presented as the historically correct ones in a piece of 'persuasive cartography'.[15]

Map 5 Syria's 'stolen areas'
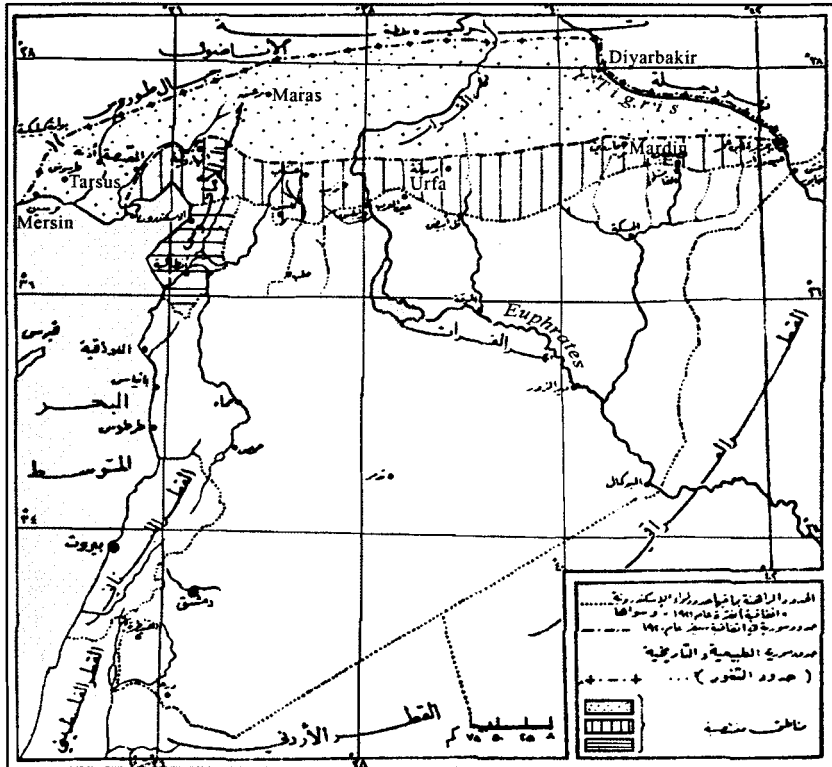
The dotted line (••••) represents Syria's present international boundaries and the one claimed by Syria in the north-west, the dots-and-stripes line (– • – •) shows the borders agreed upon in the treaty of Sèvres in 1920. The northernmost line, dots, lines and crosses (+ – • – • +), depicts Syria's 'natural and historical borders', from *al-Mu'jam* (1990), p. 34. (Technical revision, English names added by Lars Wåhlin.)

Conclusion

Geography serves as one of the props of nationalism. The geographical boundaries of the homeland 'frames' the image of the national self. Thus examining the creation of national boundaries means examining the creation of the national self. Whether it is a question of Nordic identity,

European identity, African identity or Syrian identity, we are faced with discursively created concepts. And just as there are no essential national identities to be found, geopolitical entities, whether they are called the North, Europe, Africa or Syria are all cultural abstracts open to contest.

Studying the dream of an integrated Syria is particularly instructive in this respect, because Greater Syria is a geographical region that was never a polity and yet is endowed with political boundaries on many maps. Such a study gives us an insight into how geography and cartography can be mythologised the same way as history can, and how a 'master narrative' which in this case is a 'master map' may or may not influence events.

Notes:

[1] *Frontier Fictions* is the suggestive title of a book by F. Kashani-Sabet (Princeton, 1999) which studies the central role of historical geography in Iranian nationalism and the impact of territorial 'imaginations' on political events in Iran in modern times. For a study of the similar relationship between geographers and nationalism in Egypt see Israel Gershoni, 'Geographers and Nationalism in Egypt: Huzayyin and the Unity of the Nile Valley, 1945-1948', in H. Erlich and I. Gershoni, *The Nile. Histories, Cultures, Myths* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner 2000). The designation of the geographers as members of 'the new priesthood of the nation' is made by Anthony Smith in *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (1986). Other categories in this 'priesthood' include historians, archaeologists, philologists, folklorists, as well as poets, writers and musicians for example. Within the common project at the origin of this volume, these are uniformly referred to as 'intellectuals' since they are all linked to and dependant on the existence of a national public sphere (cf. Chapter 1, p. 18-19).

[2] Henri Lammens, 'L'ancienne frontière entre la Syrie et le Higaz; notes de géographie historique', in *L'Arabie occidentale avant l'hégire* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1928). The article was originally written in 1916 and first published a year later in *Bulletin de l'Institut français de 'archéologie orientale*, 14.

[3] Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat al-Shām*, 6 vols. (Damascus: al-Matba'a al-hadītha). Reprinted in a second revised edition and again reprinted in a third edition in 1983 by Maktabat al-Nuri in Damascus.

[4] Henceforth referred to as al-Mu'jam.

[5] The map has the title *La Syrie française*. It is reproduced in Dominique Chevallier, 'Consciences syriennes et représentations cartographiques à la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du XXe siècle', in Thomas Philipp (ed.), *The Syrian Land in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), p. 7. Chevallier considers the idea of 'Natural' Syria or 'Historical' Syria to be a joint expression of both French colonial and Arab nationalist ambitions and created in dialogue between them. However, this view neglects the precedence of the

French 'mapping' of Syria and the dependence of the Arab nationalists on French representations. The nationalist map that Chevallier compares with Cressaty's map is more than ten years later (1925-27) and belongs to another political situation (ibid., p. 5).

[6] As a war cry the slogan was used by the Arab fighters in the Syrian revolution of 1925-27. See *Safha min al-ayyām al-hamrā'. Mudhakkirāt al-qā'id Sa'īd al-'As, 1889-1936.* [A Page from the Red Days. The memoirs of general Sa'īd al-'As], p. 172.

[7] For a summary of the origin and Arab usage of the term *watan*, see Tetz Rooke, 'Writing the Boundary: Khitat al-Shām by Muhammad Kurd 'Alī', in Yanagihashi Hiroyuki, *The Concept of Territory in Islamic Law and Thought* (London: Kegan Paul, 2000).

[8] Cf. Kamil al-Ghazzi, *Nahr al-dhahab* (Aleppo, 1993), vol. III, pp. 655-6. In Aleppo Turkish had been commonly spoken since the Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century. Many people had part Arab, part Turkish lineage, especially among the elite who preferred to marry into Turkish or Turko-Circassian families. The commercial orientation was towards the north. Anatolia was the main market and the main source of raw materials and foodstuffs. There was also a large Kurdish population in the city, as well as other minorities.

[9] In order to finance the printing of this monumental work the committee took up subscriptions in advance. The first edition ran into 2,000 copies and of these half were subscribed. The intended public was the new class of professionals and intellectuals with a modern education – lawyers, doctors, and journalists, for example – that existed in the urban centres of Syria and Egypt.

[10] On the territorial significance of the capital, see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped. A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 162-3.

[11] After the occupation France decided to divide the area into miniature states, statelets, each with a flag of its own.

[12] When he mentions Denmark, Sweden and Finland as further evidence of modern countries united under the banner of language and suggests that the Syrian people (*al-shāmiyyūn*) should emulate these, Kurd Ali is unaware that ethnic separatists could use the same examples, because the Nordic countries also have a common history and culture. Nevertheless they became separate nations.

[13] The dating system in *Khitat al-Shām* is not consistent. Both the Muslim and Christian calendars are used. The author shows a tendency to let the Hijri calendar dominate when dating 'Islamic history' and mostly uses the Christian calendar for recent events, but there are many exceptions to this rule.

[14] On the Arabic term *thaghr/thughūr*, see Brauer (1995), p. 14.

[15] This term I have borrowed from Maria T. O'Shea's inspiring analysis of Kurdish projections of Kurdistan, 'Between the Map and the Reality: Some Fundamental Myths of Kurdish Nationalism', in Les Kurdes et les états, *Peuples Méditerranéens*, no. 68-69, June-December, 1994, p. 180.

Map 6   Hatay/liwa Iskandarūna
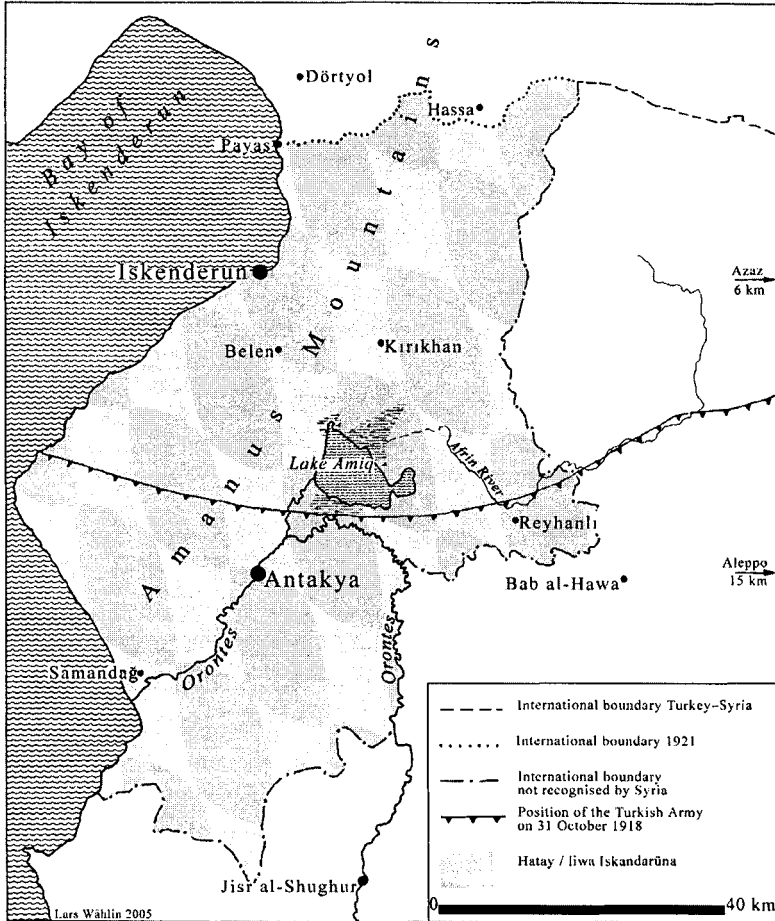
By Turkey added districts not included. Position of Turkish army from
S. Yerasimos (1988), p. 199.

HATAY JOINS THE MOTHERLAND

Roberta Micallef

The solid line indicating where the Republic of Turkey ends and the Syrian Arab Republic begins denotes a borderland with a unique, complicated and yet very rich history. Part of the current Turkish-Syrian border, 820 kilometres in length was established only in 1939, when the region, which is now known as Hatay, was ceded to Turkey and became the 63rd province of the Republic. Since gaining independence in 1946 Syria has challenged the legitimacy of this border. One such occasion was the Berlin International Tourism Fair, in March 2000, when the Syrians distributed maps that included Hatay within Syria's borders. While the Turkish-Syrian borderline was shown as a national border, the area encapsulating Hatay was within lines indicating a temporary border. And in smaller maps showing the important touristic and historical sites in Syria, this district was placed within Syrian boundaries. According to both Syrians and Turks, this border divides a community. At the Berlin fair when Turkish journalists asked the Syrians why they were distributing these erroneous maps, they were told that the maps indicated the fact that people on both sides of the border were related; it was also pointed out that there were historical links between this region and the rest of Syria.

'Hatay' and its 'joining the motherland' are important tropes in the narrative of the Turkish nation-state. As with many other rhetorical devices, the Hatay story is used to promote arguments of very different persuasions by different actors. And yet the citizens of Hatay have not always benefited from the full rights enjoyed by other citizens of Turkey. In this chapter we shall examine the coverage of the 63rd province of the Republic of Turkey, Hatay, from 1998 to 2003 in the much respected Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. The newspaper's articles reveal the fact that the citizens of Hatay find themselves in contradictory positions. According to an article in *Cumhuriyet* of 21 September 1998, unlike

citizens from other provinces of Turkey, at one point, the citizens of Hatay were unable to obtain visas from the Saudi government to participate in the pilgrimage to Mecca.

The period 1998-2003 captures dramatic changes in the political landscape of the region. In 1998 tensions were mounting between Syria and Turkey over the issue of the PKK and its leader Abdullah Öcalan, whom Turkey suspected of being given safe harbour by Syria. Tensions between the two states abated somewhat after the capture of Öcalan in 1999, and even more so in the wake of the US-led invasion of Iraq. With the election of the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) on 3 November 2002, *Cumhuriyet* shifted from being the establishment paper to becoming the opposition paper, thus adding yet another dimension to be taken into consideration when analysing its articles. Thus the 1998-2003 timeframe allows us to examine how the rhetoric changes in even such a respectable daily as *Cumhuriyet,* to parallel the political circumstances of its times and its own position without breaking the continuity of the story line, which articulates one cycle of the myth of the nation which remains 'eternal and natural'.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Cumhuriyet* and Hatay are all closely linked. The founder of the Republic of Turkey was also a major force behind the establishment of *Cumhuriyet* and laid the groundwork for Hatay becoming part of the Republic of Turkey although his death preceded the finalisation of his plans regarding the region. Thus, in this chapter we shall first explore the relationship between these three – Atatürk, *Cumhuriyet* and Hatay – and the history of the 63rd province. The fact that the province changed its name three times during the course of the twentieth century, as discussed by Brandell in the Introduction, gives some indication as to why its past needs to be explained in order to understand its present. In keeping with the subject of this book, the second part of this chapter explores articles dealing with Hatay and the topics of borders and belonging in particular.

Atatürk, *Cumhuriyet* and Hatay

Quotes attributed to Atatürk such as 'The press is the united voice of the people, it is a force by itself, a school, a leader' reflect the importance he placed on the press (Oral 1968: 7). His actions confirm that these were not mere empty words. The new Turkish government faced much criticism early on from the Istanbul press; in fact, only two months after the establishment of the Republic, journalists and others expressing opinions in print media contrary to the government, found themselves in court. In December 1923 the key figures of three newspapers, *Tanin, Tevhid-i Efkar* and *İkdam,* were sent to Independence Tribunals because they had published material the government found objectionable. At this

juncture, Mustafa Kemal called a meeting with the Istanbul press and asked them to accommodate Ankara. However, the tension between the two loci of power did not abate.

According to the memoirs of Yunus Nadi,[1] one night at the Dolmabahçe palace Atatürk said to him, 'Let us publish a newspaper in Istanbul in the middle of Bab-ı Ali,[2] a newspaper that will put up a fight with all these people who are enemies of Republicanism and support the Caliphate. Let the name of the newspaper be the same as our new regime, 'republic'. Let us call it *Cumhuriyet*. Let's make the old headquarters of the Committee of Union and Progress[3] the headquarters of the newspaper. Are you in? What do you say, can we succeed in this?' (Karaca 1994: 30). The first issue of *Cumhuriyet* appeared on 7 May 1924 with a message on its front page from its chief editor Yunus Nadi, proclaiming its impartiality: 'Republic is a word that belongs to the country. We are its representatives and defenders. When this foundational idea is taken into account we can say with certainty that our newspaper is neither the newspaper of the government nor of a party' (Karaca 1994: 201).

Apart from its origins and place in the Atatürk saga, *Cumhuriyet* also has a special status because of its longevity. It is the longest running newspaper in the Republic of Turkey. A certain 'mystique' has developed over the years about this particular newspaper. As Karaca puts it eloquently, 'for years it was the first newspaper that all the heads of the various newspapers in Bab-ı Ali read first thing in the morning. It was the newspaper that people approached somewhat shyly because until recently it was thought to be a serious newspaper, the newspaper of ideas that not everyone could read or understand. It was the newspaper that everyone read if they wanted to see an editorial that contextualised events and explained them' (Karaca 1994: 17-18). Over the years *Cumhuriyet* suffered from internal disagreements and coups which attempted to push it to the right or to the left. It continues to be a respected newspaper that is widely read, but it is also seen as the establishment newspaper. And yet in November 2002 when the Justice and Development Party (AKP), with a religious and conservative constituency, came to power, there was once again strife between the government and the press. In this chapter we are not concerned with the factual accuracy of the articles reported in *Cumhuriyet* but rather with the narrative it continues to weave regarding Hatay and the underlying tensions and contradictions presented within it.

While Atatürk's troubles with the press became apparent early on in his regime, the question of Hatay was a pressing one toward the end of his presidency and his life (İnan, 1981: viii). According to Turkish history books and the memoirs of Atatürk's contemporaries, the case for Hatay becoming part of Turkey proceeds along the following lines. When the

Mondros Armistice of 31 October 1918 was signed, the Sanjak of
Alexandretta, nowadays Hatay, was in the hands of the Turkish military,
with Mustafa Kemal at the head of the armed forces in this region. He
and the new Turkish government took the lands that were in Turkish
hands during the armistice to be the lands remaining in the *Misak-ı Milli*
or the National Pact.[4] Hatay should therefore have remained within
Turkish borders. In the Treaty of Lausanne signed on 24 July 1923
Turkey accepted the boundaries established in Ankara with the Franklin-
Bouillon agreement of 1921 which left the Sanjak of Alexandretta
outside the boundaries of the Republic of Turkey.

The Sanjak was a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious
community, each group with its own set of numbers supporting its
respective claim to the region. According to estimates provided by the
French High Commission in 1936, out of a population of 220,000 39 per
cent were Turks, 28 per cent Alawites, 11 per cent Armenians, 10 per
cent Sunni Arabs, 8 per cent other Christians, while Circassians, Jews and
Kurds made up the remaining 4 per cent. Although Turkish speakers
formed the largest single community, the Arabic speakers who included
the Alawites, Sunni Arabs and the non-Armenian Christians were
numerically larger than the Turks (Khoury 1987: 495).

Fahrettin Altay, one of the top Turkish military leaders during the War
of Independence, and one of those who remained close to Atatürk after
the war, recalls travelling to Adana in 1923. He writes about the great
happiness he felt at entering Adana and meeting the jubilant people of
Çukurova and witnessing the joyous celebrations of independence. The
one point of sadness, the one element detracting from the celebrations,
was 'our unlucky, black-clad siblings from Hatay who had sought refuge
here. The tears they shed with the wish "save us too" were breaking our
hearts...Our one comforting thought was that sooner or later Atatürk
would manage to save this piece of our homeland with our siblings who
remained on the other side' (Sorgun 1998: 379).

Elizabeth Picard points out that in 1936 the Sanjak of Alexandretta
was Syrian territory over which Turkey had renounced its sovereignty
(Picard 1983: 49). Turkey accepted the inclusion of Alexandretta in the
French mandated territories on the understanding that it would be
granted a special regime (Hourani 1946: 207). While Turkey did impress
upon the inhabitants of the Sanjak that it was paying attention to the
development of Turkish culture there, official Turkish involvement only
re-emerged after the Franco-Syrian agreement of 1936 (Shambrook
1998: 291). In September 1936 France announced that it was going to
grant independence to Syria and that independent Syria would include
the Sanjak. The Turkish community in Alexandretta followed
developments in Turkey closely, to the extent of implementing the hat
and alphabet reforms, which had been passed in Turkey (Zürcher 1993:

211).[5]

As the end of the Mandate period approached, Turkey became more active in the pursuit of its goals. Already in a speech given on the occasion of the opening of Parliament on 11 January 1936 Atatürk had stated to loud applause and shouts of bravo:

> At this moment, the main issue that occupies our people day and night, is the fate of İskenderun, Antakya and its vicinity. (Öztürk 1990: 1114).

Atatürk renamed the Antakya and İskenderun Aid Organization in Istanbul, the Association for the Rule of Hatay.[6] At the diplomatic level Turkey expressed concern for the 'Turkish majority' who were about to be placed under Syrian political authority. On 10 October 1936 Turkey submitted a note to the French Foreign minister requesting that France grant independence to Alexandretta and Antioch as it was to grant it to Syria proper (Weisband 1969: 171).

In his speech opening Parliament the following year on 11 January 1937, Atatürk commented, in his review of foreign policy events during the past year, on Franco-Turkish relations and his belief that, because of the positive direction the Hatay issue had taken, these would also progress in the desired way. He referred to Hatay as a 'major national cause' (Öztürk 1990: 1133). Providing further evidence of his belief in the power of print media to sway public opinion, Atatürk also published articles on the subject of Hatay under various pseudonyms.[7]

According to an agreement reached at the League of Nations on 29 May 1937, the Sanjak was to be autonomous in its internal affairs but attached to Syria in every other field. Turkey and France were to guarantee its territorial integrity. On 23 June 1939 an arrangement for the final settlement of territorial questions between Turkey and Syria was signed in Paris and Ankara. The French formally gave up their rights over Hatay in exchange for Turkish promises not to seek additional Syrian territory and to respect the Syrian border (Khoury 1987: 513). On 29 July 1939 the Parliament of the new Republic of Hatay declared the union of the Republic of Hatay with the Republic of Turkey (Zürcher 1993: 212). Many Arabs and Armenians left the territory (Hourani 1946: 212-13).

The Coverage of Hatay in *Cumhuriyet* 1998-2003

If one searches for Hatay in the archives of *Cumhuriyet* (1998-2003), one finds roughly 1500 articles covering the full range of topics one would expect to find about any region. However, in addition to sports events, scientific events, important meetings, natural disasters, economics, crimes of passion, crime in general, there are also quite a few articles

about Hatay in which the province appears to function as a rhetorical device. Then, in turn, it is linked by Turkish journalists or their sources to Turkish foreign policy concerns. Several indignant articles about the way citizens of Hatay are treated by outside governments and their own government appear between 1998 and 2003. I shall concentrate on the topics most relevant to questions generated by the national border. Are the citizens of Hatay seen as citizens of Turkey? Syria is reported as claiming Hatay as its own. How is this viewed and how does this affect the sense of Turkishness experienced by the rest of Turkey? The joining of Hatay to the 'motherland' is frequently shown as an example of diplomatic victory and used in arguments concerning other 'Turkish' border issues such as Iraq and Cyprus. How this memory is presented and why and how, as Brandell puts it in the Introduction, it affects 'borders and belonging', is a question we shall explore further.

This study includes both news reports and editorials. We are thus examining both the pieces which are supposed to present 'an objective set of facts in an unchanging universe', and those which are acknowledged to present a 'fragmented view which allows the reader to construct his or her own version of reality' (Sparks 1992: 39; Fiske 1992: 53-4). However, we are neither reading nor digesting the narrative in the way an ordinary newspaper reader would receive it. The average reader would normally be expected to read the newspaper chronologically; the reader accessing the archives approaches the articles haphazardly. The average reader would read the entire newspaper as opposed to specific articles about one particular province of the country. And even the social agent reading critically and questioning the order imposed on the information, would not then turn around and impose his or her own order on the information as I have done. I subdivided the articles relevant to border issues into three categories: (i) the porous border, (ii) one nation, (iii) Hatay in memory.

The Porous Border

The line depicting a national border on a map may well be a solid line but in reality most borders, including the Turkish-Syrian border, are porous. This border in general is represented as a dangerous one. It is a border through which things and people that endanger both Turkey and the world attempt to infiltrate the country. The line separating Hatay from Syria, a section of this borderline, is no exception. In 1998 as the tensions over the Öcalan case were mounting and the Syrian ambassador to the US was filmed on Arab-American TV channels claiming that Hatay was Syria's stolen province, the military build-up on the Turkish side was phenomenal, according to *Cumhuriyet*.[8] Depending on the situation with Syria, the military presence in this area increased or

decreased during these years. If the crisis was severe enough, the residents of the borderland were subjected to martial law. The coverage in *Cumhuriyet* makes it clear that, regardless of the level of the tension between the two nation-states, the strong military presence in the region was a constant.

Cumhuriyet, particularly in 1998, published articles reflecting the escalation in tensions in the region. Reports on the military build-up on the Turkish side, as well as activities on the Syrian side, became a constant feature.[9] Articles about the impending arrival of PKK fighters appeared. One such article suggested that a large group of PKK militants gathered in the foothills of Kurt Dağı, which stretches from Syria's Afrin river to Kilis, and were getting ready to cross into Hatay.[10] The military response to the situation was also heavily reported. Other Turkish dailies with respectable circulation figures echoed sentiments expressed in *Cumhuriyet* when it came to the case of Hatay.

The people in the borderlands on either side of the border theoretically claimed by both governments were also victimised by both. When the situation with Syria is tense, we begin to see articles describing how families are split by the border and celebrate holidays either across barbed wire or in a 'neutral space' provided by Turkey. Turkish newspapers also periodically report the plight of Turkish families divided by the border. Kurban Bayramı,[11] a religious holiday, became a metaphor for their condition in 1999, when the families were photographed waving at each other across barbed wire.[12]

On the other hand, by 2003, as the diplomatic and military tension between Syria and Turkey began to subside, the goals of the Turkish Armed Forces in the region changed. The border with respect to a specific threat to Turkey and Turkish citizens became less porous. The armed forces were described as forming a shield against the PKK militants who wanted to cross into Turkey. But the border continued to remain porous in terms of the things and people that might be a threat to the West. According to articles in *Cumhuriyet*, people and arms meant for rogue states or terrorist organisations were finding their way to Hatay through this border. People were being smuggled in and out of Turkey at this particular stretch of the Turkish border. These people, however, did not want to stay in Turkey; they wanted to move on to Western Europe.[13] Iranian weapons – enough to arm a small army – were discovered in the city of Batman, hidden in secret sections of TIR trucks going through Hatay, probably intended for Lebanon, according to one of the articles about gun smuggling across this border.[14]

Even when the crisis with Syria has abated, this is a border that requires constant vigilance. These articles can be read as a plea for a greater military presence and more funding for the military, or as a subtle criticism of the military. However, another interpretation is that the

emphasis placed on this border highlights the importance of Turkey for the Western world. According to the Hatay story, this border will always require constant monitoring.

One Nation

Borders are supposed to designate where one nation-state ends and another begins. The border is a place where it becomes very clear who belongs and who doesn't, who can enter freely and who must show a passport or even a visa. Borders divide one nation from another. Sometimes, however, the border divides communities; people belonging to the same ethnic, linguistic, religious group find themselves with different passports. At a border we find zones of contact where categories cannot be clearly defined. In the borderland people may belong to some of the same categories, but not all of them.

In the *Cumhuriyet* version of the Hatay narrative, in both Turkey and Syria a national border divides a community. Could this explain why, according to the same narrative, the Turkish state views the citizens of this province as 'potentially guilty' or as transgressors? From what we can glean by reading *Cumhuriyet*, Turkish citizens from Hatay are not given the same treatment as Turkish citizens from other provinces. Young people from this region, who wanted to attend university elsewhere in the country, faced security checks by the police.[15] A student sued the Hatay *Ağır Ceza Mahkemesi*[16] for wrongful imprisonment. He was suspected of belonging to an undesirable organization but the charges were dropped and he was paid a considerable sum of money.[17]

An article published in *Cumhuriyet* of 21 September 1998 reported that in Hatay the office of identity registration (*nüfus müdürlüğü*) gave people submitting applications for new identity cards or renewals, their documents after researching whether or not they had connections with foreign countries. The head of the Hatay Bar Association, Nabi İnal, stated: 'We must counteract this injustice and stop damaging the honour of the people of Hatay which belongs to the motherland, and stop treating them as potentially guilty'. He continued, 'People registered in Hatay when applying to the identity card directorate, are asked whether they have relations with Syria or not. According to article 10 of our constitution everyone is equal before the law, regardless of reasons such as: language, religion, race, gender, thought and belief'. Arguing that this treatment makes them out to be potential criminals, the citizens of Hatay demanded that it be stopped immediately.

While the territory they live on is proclaimed to be an indivisible part of the motherland, the citizens of Hatay, simply by virtue of living on this piece of land are suspects according to this article. However, from the coverage in *Cumhuriyet* it becomes clear that the citizens of Hatay

reject the role of the victim. According to the *Cumhuriyet* articles, the citizens of Hatay are cognisant subjects who are reacting in order to change their situation.

The majority of Turkish Muslims are Sunni Muslims; however many religions are represented in Hatay. An interesting article published on 28 March 2001, entitled 'Let's Restructure the Ministry of Religious Affairs', turns out to be about the Alawite Nusayris living in Hatay. The article is based on interviews. The author is keen to show that he believes firmly that this people not only have a home within the boundaries of Turkey, but also that they are loyal to the state and have been so since its inception. The Nusayris present themselves as staunch secularists. The government, according to the persons interviewed, should not concern itself with its citizens' religious education. Every group should address their own spiritual needs. However, the taxes which support the Ministry of Religious Affairs should be restructured so that every group can benefit from them and not only the Hanafi (Sunni) Muslims. The interviewees also argue on behalf of Jews and Christians and other Muslim groups. Those presenting the views of the Alawite Nusayris make it clear that this group is not interested in being part of greater Syria, but that they are loyal Turkish citizens. Their line of argument – secularism, religious equality for all and an equitable distribution of funds – demonstrates a sophisticated appreciation of the contemporary theses in favour of human rights and religious freedom used in multinational organisations such as the UN and the European Union. Globalisation is not just for the metropolis; it has also reached the periphery.

This episode in the Hatay narrative also demonstrates how well versed in rhetoric the people of Hatay are. The representatives of the Alawite Nusayris are in this case using the very same logic and reasoning that guided the early Republican government. They are turning the laicism argument, which has been used to restrict religion to the private sector, as an argument to allow this and other religious groups the same privileges as those accorded to the majority Sunni Muslims.

President Ahmet Necdet Sezer of Turkey, on the 2002 anniversary of Hatay's 'joining the motherland', commented that this event takes its place in Turkish history as an example of political victory through peaceful diplomacy. He explained that the joining of Hatay to the motherland was the result of a conscious choice by the citizens of Hatay. 'With the unanimous decision by the parliament of Hatay our citizens from Hatay who are tied to the motherland from their hearts claimed their past and chose their own style of living and national identity'.[18] Many parts of the Hatay story are made up of such statements confirming that the citizens of this region are really loyal citizens of the state and that this territory will never be detached from the motherland. What is not said in this case makes the newspaper reader wonder why

such emphasis is being placed on these two points. No one seems to feel
the need to articulate the fact that the citizens of Ankara, or any other
part of Turkey for that matter, are fully fledged, loyal citizens of the
Republic.

When we compare the articles in which the military security apparatus
and the representatives of the state are articulating their views or their
activities are being discussed by journalists, with those about the actions
of the citizens of Hatay, a very different picture emerges. The actions of
the latter, their accomplishments, the actions of the members of civil
society from Hatay belie the words of the representatives of the Turkish
state. If we read the articles about the accomplishments of the citizens of
Hatay alongside those relating the words of politicians about the same
area we are left with two contradictory visions. The citizens of Hatay
emerge as members of the Turkish nation who are fully aware of their
rights and are able to use them not only to defend themselves but also to
further their causes. The contradiction in the manner in which some of
the branches of the Turkish state treat the citizens of Hatay and the way
in which they behave is clear. The military and security forces seem to be
very suspicious of the citizens of Hatay, and yet these same citizens are
taking their cause to courts established by the government and winning
like the aforementioned student. The citizens of Hatay are using the
laicism principle to fight for their own religious freedom and referring to
the Turkish constitution to combat discrimination.

Several of the articles in the 1998-2003 timeframe are about neglect by
the national government and the protests it engenders. Also many
articles reflect a local consciousness of history and pride in it that is paid
verbal homage by the national government, but which is otherwise
neglected. The Ministry of Culture, and the Minister of Culture in
particular, were criticised in an article published on 2 May 2002 for
allowing the building which had housed the Republic of Hatay's
government to become a pornographic movie house. The journalist
made this discovery through a tour he was taken on by a local guide. The
tradesmen of Hatay show confidence in themselves and the institutions
of the Republic of Turkey when they protest publicly about their
representatives to the national assembly. The Chamber of Agriculture of
Reyhanlı organised a meeting on the Syrian border, to protest against the
import of cotton from Syria.[19]

The Hatay province was the site of a number of natural disasters
during these five years, including earthquakes and floods. Again, reading
Cumhuriyet one is left with the impression that the province has met with
neglect from the national government after each disaster. After the
terrible floods of 2001, the tradesmen of Antakya once again found
themselves organising protests because the promised aid never arrived.
Not only did the aid not arrive, but a proxy also ruled them until a

suitable governor could be found. The tradesmen and artisans held a meeting and press conference in front of a bust of Atatürk complaining that since the 4 April they still had no governor, and although 40 days had passed since the flooding, they had received no government aid. They stated 'We can only tell our problems to Atatürk. Because the leaders of the government made promises but have not yet kept them. We don't want politicians like these.' They complained that their representatives to the national assembly had done nothing to help the victims of the flooding, which was causing misery and spurring them to protest.[20]

Interestingly, an agreement is then signed between the representatives of the education system and the military in Hatay specifying what each institution is responsible for in the case of a natural disaster, so that they can react more efficiently in such a situation. Then again, the Ministry of Education has been very successful in Hatay. Metin Bostancıoğlu, the Minister of Education, opened the new teaching year with the good news of vocational higher education without entrance exams for high school graduates. Minister Bostancıoğlu, who had come in September 2001 to Hatay for the opening ceremony of the primary school education week, participated in the ceremony held at the Cemil Şükrü Çolakoğlu primary school. Emphasising that he had chosen Hatay for the ceremonies because the number one in the ÖSS,[21] the student selection examination, which determines which university graduating high school students will attend, came from this city, the Minister said: 'This shows that quality in the education system has spread to every corner of Anatolia. Previously only Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and such big cities produced successful schools. Now quality has spread to the four corners of the country.'[22]

It also becomes clear that there is cooperation between the Ministry of Education and branches of the provincial government. Schools all over the country are facing budget problems. The Minister suggested that they talk to the municipal governments to see if they could obtain free water: 'The municipal governments water the trees for free to beautify the country, why not the schools in order to beautify the country?' He reported that the education budget was so tight that the needs of the schools could not be met, and suggested that the students campaign for free water for schools. In Hatay his suggestion met with approval. Support for the 'Our school' campaign came first from the mayors of cities in the province of Hatay.[23]

The military, the government and academia also intersect in Hatay. In 2000 discussions about Hatay took place in Iskenderun on a panel entitled 'On the 80th anniversary of the *Misak-ı Milli*. Iskenderun and its environs'. The Mayor of Iskenderun, Mete Aslan, in opening the discussion, commented: 'Not one single citizen of Hatay would give up his flag or his country. I believe this.' According to the report, Mete

Aslan asked for scientific clarifications regarding Hatay's past and present. With the permission of the Iskenderun Brigade Command and the Naval Intelligence Command, 67 officers also observed the panel. The speakers, according to *Cumhuriyet*, only discussed the usual official pronouncements and documents regarding Hatay, as for example the governor of Hatay who said that 'the Hatay problem was solved without one bullet being fired', and stressed how Atatürk, 'despite his serious illness...displayed his sensitivity [to this issue] to the whole world.'

All the main ingredients of the Hatay story are present in the above paragraph: The doubts about the loyalty of the citizens of Hatay, their belonging to the nation or the 'horizontal fraternity', the military watching the proceedings, the academics refusing to touch on a potentially dangerous issue and the representative of the civilian national government providing the standard line on Hatay. Again it is a citizen of the province, the Mayor of Iskenderun himself, who lays the main issue about Hatay on the table, and it is he who demands that the issue be dealt with.

Other articles in *Cumhuriyet* demonstrate that the citizens of Hatay are participants in the nation-state and its institutions. Regardless of what is said or thought about them, the citizens of Hatay take part in the nation-state. An article in *Cumhuriyet* of 28 April 2003 showed the citizens of Hatay flexing their political muscles. Hatay, which used to be known as the stronghold of the left, said the article, is showing great changes. Republican People's Party loyalists are leaving and the largest increases are being seen in the Justice and Development Party (AKP). In response, for the first time on 7 September 2003 the RPP held an election propaganda meeting in Hatay, in which representatives from cities such as Adana, Mersin and Gaziantep were invited to participate. Residents of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir were also able to simultaneously watch the meeting, which was transmitted on television. The politicians were watching Hatay, which would produce 10 representatives to the parliament, very carefully.

Memory

Memory, especially public and/or official memory, can function as a powerful force for social and political influence. Memories can be set in different contexts, which change their meaning. From 1998 to 2003 'Hatay joining the motherland', and 'Atatürk on his death-bed' orchestrating the merging of Hatay with the rest of the country, are two tropes that were evoked repeatedly to drum up support for other land/nation-related causes. These tropes are harped upon to chide errant politicians, to legitimise the stance of the military, and to a certain extent to make Hatay as organically part of the country as the other 62

provinces from the days of the National Pact, if not earlier.

In a series of essays entitled 'The Wide Angle', Hatay was used not only to comment on current events but also as a rallying point. In the piece commemorating the 62nd anniversary of Atatürk's death (in 1938) on 10 November 2000, the author discussed how on his deathbed, against the protests of the West and France in particular, Atatürk fought for Hatay. The article criticised contemporary Turkish politicians, who were trying to accommodate 'the West', by reminding them of Atatürk and Hatay. The author wrote that, while Atatürk fought the West for independence, he did not fight Western civilisation. The article reminded the politicians that Atatürk did not meet the West with any kind of complexes such as 'let us not make Europe angry'. Atatürk, it said, did not pay attention to Europe's political stipulations, and it equates the situation with Cyprus to the situation with Hatay; then we had the Hatay problem and now we have the Cyprus problem. 'The Westerners and some people on the inside are saying, "Get rid of it or you'll never westernise, get rid of it or you'll never enter the EU".' Hatay becomes the rallying point against European and American imperialism in the region.

An article that was part of the same series but published in 2001 reminded the reader of important anniversaries that took place on 23 and 24 July. 'This is the 93rd anniversary of the removal of censorship from the Turkish press (1908), the 82nd anniversary of the Erzurum Congress (1919), the 78th anniversary of Lausanne (1923), the 62nd anniversary of Hatay joining the motherland (1939), the 38th anniversary of workers' rights (1963).' In the paragraph on Hatay the author wrote:

> Exactly 62 years ago Hatay joined Turkey. The Second World War was about to begin. The nations of the world had opened their mouths in order to swallow nations and even continents; they had revealed their teeth and claws. Even in those circumstances, Atatürk who was nearing death with his serious illness managed to add Hatay to the Turkish lands. That day, in the final months of his life…couldn't Atatürk have removed Hatay from his sight? Couldn't he have said 'I gave it, I am rid of it?'

The author of this piece is creating a continuity from the first constitutional revolution during the Ottoman period to the contemporary Republic. In this essay he discusses first how, although workers have the right to unionise, this has brought them little more than the right to perform traditional folk dances to the accompaniment of traditional instruments. He defines the Erzurum Congress as the first step of an anti-imperialist war. He tells us that, according to the West, this was a rebellion, according to the Istanbul government, a stab in the back, and according to the Turkish press, it was the first step in the war of independence by the adventurous Mustafa Kemal and his friends. In

2001, 78 years after Lausanne, he condemns those who criticise 'nation-states' in favour of globalisation.

In terms of contradictions this piece is very interesting. It is a thorough criticism of Turkish politicians on every possible front. As he covers each anniversary in his piece, the author points out the failures of Turkish politicians: 'Workers were granted rights but they are meaningless; we saw ourselves as Europe's equals once, now the politicians are begging to be allowed into an exclusive club; they are failing to protect the nation which now includes part of Cyprus.' This author is not the only *Cumhuriyet* writer to criticise the political elite. On 31 December 2002 Metin Ersan, in another editorial, echoes his sentiments on the relationship between Hatay and Cyprus and reminds the reader that Atatürk said: 'Peace at Home and Peace in the World', but that he also said: 'if you want peace be ready for war'. Ersan connects the European Union with colonialism and its efforts to incorporate Greek Cyprus with an effort to make the Turkish Cypriots colonial subjects of the Europeans and the Greeks.

There are also pieces that highlight Hatay's separate history. These are not editorials and they are most probably not meant to emphasise or draw attention to the fact that Hatay is different. These are news reports commemorating events unique to Hatay. Every year the death of the one and only President of Hatay is commemorated with a government ceremony and receives press coverage. On the 19th anniversary of his death Tayfur Sökmen was commemorated at his mausoleum in the Zincirlikuyu cemetery. Murat Sökmenoğlu, his son and a former member of the Parliament of Turkey, led the ceremonies in which his father's friends and colleagues participated. They included speeches by his colleagues, a moment of respect, the playing of the national anthem followed by readings from the Quran and helva and sweets being offered to those participating. While highlighting Hatay's different history this particular piece also manages to highlight the 'organic' link between the Turkish nation and Islam. Such an event can also become politicised. On the 23rd anniversary of his father's death, Sökmenoğlu used the occasion to draw attention to recent events.[24]

The Syrians also have memories of Hatay. As reported in *Cumhuriyet*, the Syrians remember when Hatay was their province and aspire to regain it. According to the Turkish press, the Syrian aspirations regarding Hatay are one of the major causes of tensions between Syria and Turkey. Between 1998 and 2003 Syrian memories of Hatay as reported in *Cumhuriyet* have to do with reconquering the land and equating Turkey with Israel as outsiders stealing Arab lands. Thus, it is not surprising that during this time period Turkish problems with Syria are frequently blamed for Turkey's failures in foreign policy with Arab countries. In response to the question of whether Turkey's difficulties with the Arab

world were being provoked by Syria, the then President Süleyman Demirel said in 1998: 'That Syria is provocative is a reality. Syria says that Turkey and Israel are uniting. We say that Turkey is solving its problems in a peaceful manner. If Turkey wanted to use force; do you know Turkey's strength? It would probably not need another country'.[25]

At the height of the tensions between Syria and Turkey in 1998, *Cumhuriyet* also published a curious piece, which presented a contradiction to the news coverage. The memories of a retired ambassador, Ismail Soysal, who had been sent to Syria to oversee another tense moment, allowed for the possibility of a change in relations with Syria based on a precedent:

> As soon as Syria became independent in 1946 in a statement sent to the representatives of foreign countries the Foreign Ministry stated that the Syrians would remain faithful to all of the agreements signed during the French Mandate. However, in 1953 the Syrians claimed that Hatay had been taken by force and should be returned to Syria. In addition, new maps showing Hatay as part of Syria were published. The Turkish representative, Karasapan, was recalled from Syria.

Soysal then recalls that the Syrian head of state was removed from power by a military coup. Adnan Menderes, the Turkish Prime Minister subsequently came in 1955 on a visit to Damascus, and Soysal pursues: 'I witnessed myself how the winds of friendship were blowing.'[26]

Following this article pieces such as İlhan's editorials began to appear. Attila İlhan's conversation piece records what Atatürk said about Hatay as reported in the memoirs of two of his contemporaries, and argues that fighting against American imperialism is just as justified as what Atatürk wanted to do when fighting against French imperialism. He criticises those who use Atatürk for their own political ends and argues that Turkey should make peace with Iraq and Syria, and should take the lead in peace negotiations in the Middle East. News reports about the rapprochement between Syria and Turkey and its practical aspects appear in *Cumhuriyet*. Syria allows Turkey to open a cultural centre in Damascus and no longer shows Hatay as belonging to its territory. In the wake of the Iraq operations Syria and Turkey are trying to come up with a peaceful solution to their differences. Al-Shara, the Syrian Foreign Minister, after signing an agreement in Ankara in 2003, held a press conference at Esenboğa airport, at which *Cumhuriyet* quoted him as saying 'We have come due to a common goal. The area where we live needs peace not war.'[27]

Almost concurrently the editorials in *Cumhuriyet* started to evoke other memories of Atatürk than his struggle for Hatay on his deathbed. A piece by Attila İlhan entitled 'I am going to be a gang leader in Hatay', connected Hatay's joining the motherland with a struggle against Western imperialism, but there is a new wrinkle in this story. Writing in

2003 in light of the potential invasion of Iraq, İlhan was using Hatay to demonstrate the fact that Western imperialism could be fought. The journalist went on to say that Atatürk had made connections in 1919 to organise the Lebanese and Syrian Arabs' resistance to the European colonialism, while leading the Turkish War of Independence.

Memory, like editorials, creates a space between truth and fiction. A piece based on one person's memories has a certain legitimacy; it is the account of a first-person witness. At the same time, a memoir is not accountable in the same way as a news report. The person relating the information may not have had access to the full picture or may be unwilling or unable to remember. But it is a useful device in convincing people about the 'natural and eternal' quality of the point being made.

Conclusion

We could summarise the Hatay narrative according to *Cumhuriyet* between 1998 and 2003 as follows: Hatay was acquired diplomatically towards the end of the French Mandate. Atatürk fought the Western imperialists and death simultaneously, winning the battle against the imperialists and losing the battle against death. All the interested parties concur that there are organic links between the Syrians and the citizens of Hatay. How much of a security threat these links make the citizens of Hatay seems to be the question. Their loyalty appears to be suspect in the eyes of the military and security apparatus. And yet the citizens of Hatay are reportedly using to the full their rights as citizens and organising themselves politically and as members of civil society in order to exert pressure to improve their situation. Life in the borderland seems dangerous and difficult at times. It seems to complicate travel to certain countries but at the same time it appears to have its advantages. Young people from this province have access to both Syrian and Turkish universities.

In terms of Turkish foreign policy Hatay does appear to be a rhetorical device, and depending upon the political needs of the moment it is remembered in one way or another. The change in the Hatay story is not one that is being made in the metropolis or in the seat of the national government; it is coming from within the region itself. The citizens of Hatay are reaping the benefits of the national education system and are flexing their political muscle. Now people from the traditional centers of power are watching Hatay. While it may suit the needs of the national government and the military to keep alive the specter of Hatay as the embattled province, either in order to maintain the military apparatus or as an excuse for foreign policy failures or the failure to intervene appropriately in the region, the citizens of Hatay, as their narrative

unfolds in *Cumhuriyet* are making use of the tools they have to improve the quality of their lives as citizens of the Republic of Turkey.

Notes:

[1] Yunus Nadi [Abalıoğlu], 1879-1945, began working in 1900 as a journalist for *Malumat Gazetesi*. In 1918 he founded *Yeni Gün Gazetesi*. He took part in the war of independence and shifted the publication of his newspaper to Ankara. He participated in drafting the first Turkish constitution and founded *Cumhuriyet* in 1924.

[2] The name given to the seat of the Ottoman government from the beginning of the nineteenth century till its fall. Today this area is the headquarters of the Turkish print media.

[3] In Turkish the *Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* – whose leaders led a rebellion against Sultan Abdul Hamid II (who was officially deposed and exiled in 1909). They ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1908 until the end of World War I in November 1918.

[4] Adopted on 20 January 1920, based on resolutions of the Sivas and Erzurum congresses, the National Pact was the official statement of the goals of the resistance movement and remained so throughout the independence war. The pact consisted of six articles. According to the first article, the territories inhabited by an Ottoman Muslim majority (united in religion, race and aim) formed an indivisible whole, but the fate of the territories inhabited by an Arab majority which were under foreign occupation were to be determined by plebiscite (Zürcher 1993: 144).

[5] The hat reform abolished the fez and replaced it with a Western-style hat. The alphabet reform converted the Ottoman script to the Latin alphabet.

[6] 'From World War I to 1938 Hatay', available from http://tr.wikipedia.org [accessed 9 September 2005].

[7] An article in *Cumhuriyet* on 22 October 1936 under the name İ.M. Mayakon and using the name of the editor Yunus Nadi Abalıoğlu. After 14 December 1936 he published articles on Hatay and between 22 and 27 January he wrote articles under the name Asim Us in *Kurun* or originally *Vakit*.

[8] 'Sınırda yığınak karşılıklı sürüyor', *Cumhuriyet*, 4 October 1998.

[9] Horasan, *Cumhuriyet*, 'Cumhurbaşkanı Suriye yi Onbeş Yıldır Uyardıklarını Söyledi', 8 October 1998; 'Suriye Sınırına askeri yığınak', *Cumhuriyet*, 3 October 1998.

[10] Bodur, 'PKK'ye karşı kalkan', *Cumhuriyet*, 10 September1998.

[11] Known as Aid al-adha in Arabic this Muslim holiday commemorates the Prophet Abraham's sacrifice. The holiday takes place at the conclusion of Hajj or holy pilgrimage.

[12] 'Sınırda bayram', *Cumhuriyet*, 31 March 1999.

[13] 'İnsan Kaçakçılığı Köprüsü', *Cumhuriyet*, 1 January 1999.

[14] 'Terör silahları İran'dan', *Cumhuriyet*, 14 February 2000.

[15] Aygın, Necati, 'Haksız Tutuklanan Öğrenciye Tazminat', *Cumhuriyet*, 3 August 1998.

[16] The courts dealing with serious crimes.

[17] Bodur Akın and Sahiye Say, 'Hataylı'ya Potansiyel Suçlu Uygulaması', *Cumhuriyet*, 21 September 1998.

[18] 'Diplomasiyle Kazanılan Zafer', *Cumhuriyet*, 24 July 2002.

[19] Bodur, 'Pamuk Üreticileri 10.Yıl Marşı'yla Yürüdü', *Cumhuriyet*, 5 October 1998.

[20] Solak, 'Antakya Hala Yardım bekliyor', *Cumhuriyet*, 20 June 2001.

[21] Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı. All high school graduates in Turkey who want to go on to university studies, must take this exam. They are then assigned their course of study based on the number of points they receive and their list of preferred courses of study.

[22] 'Sınavsız Meslek Yüksekokulu', *Cumhuriyet*, 11 September 2001.

[23] 'Bizim Okulumuza Belediye Desteği', *Cumhuriyet*, 11 September 2001.

[24] 'Sökmenoğlu Çeteyi Savundu', *Cumhuriyet*, 4 March 2002

[25] Balcı, 'Politikada Sorunlar', *Cumhuriyet*, 10 May 1998; 'Arap Dünyasını Suriye Kışkırtıyor,' *Cumhuriyet*, 7 May 1998.

[26] Soysal, 'Türkiye-Suriye Gerginliği Nereye Varacak?', *Cumhuriyet*, 8 October 1998

[27] 'Esad'dan Sezer'e Mesaj', *Cumhuriyet*, 14 January 2003.

8

THE OCTOBER 1998 TURKISH-SYRIAN CRISIS IN ARAB MEDIA

Emma Jørum

The end of the Cold War and the 'unfreezing' of borders, especially in Europe and Central Asia, with the emergence of a considerable number of new independent states, have resulted in an increasing interest in issues related to borders and territory. Scholars from various disciplines have examined and explored both the functions and the significance of borders as territorial inter-state demarcations and, increasingly, their symbolic meanings and roles in the constitution of identities. Within the emerging post-Cold War border-related literature, borders are perceived as both institutions and processes that demarcate and negotiate the state as well as its territory, population and identity (Blake 1994; Anderson 1996; Paasi 1998; Tronvoll 1999; Wilson and Donnan 1998).

This chapter deals with the significance of borders and identity as reflected in the Arab press at the beginning of October 1998 when tension broke out between the two neighbouring states Turkey and Syria. A three-week-long bilateral crisis ended in the signing of a security agreement which constituted the first step in a considerable improvement in Turkish-Syrian relations. Resulting in the gradual warming up of long-standing chilly relations, the October 1998 crisis became the starting point for what both sides have characterised as a new page in the Turkish-Syrian bilateral relations; as the most recent major conflict between the two countries, with its threat of producing the first Turkish-Arab war in modern times, it inevitably received wide attention in the Arab media. It therefore provides an excellent opportunity for examining Arab interpretations of a conflict between an Arab state and Turkey.

The approximately 800 km-long Turkish-Syrian border, established through French-Turkish negotiations between 1920 and 1939, constitutes the longest Arab-Turkish border. Although by no means

strictly a border that separates Arabs from Turks, and while the border area contains many different ethnic and religious groups, this is nevertheless a border representing the dividing line between the former Ottoman Empire's Turkish and Arab provinces. The Ottoman Empire, and the roughly 400 years during which the greater part of the Arab world formed part of it, have clearly had an impact on how Arabs and Turks perceive each other today. Even though 80 years have passed since its demise, the Ottoman Empire continues to constitute the major point of departure in Arab-Turkish perceptions of each other (al-Daquqi 1996, 2001) and, as we shall see in this chapter, it also became part of the coverage of the Syrian-Turkish crisis of October 1998.

In the Arab world, the so called turkification (*tatrik*), carried out during the final years of the Empire, is looked upon as a sign of Turkish disdain and racism towards Arabs, and Ottoman/Turkish rule is often pointed to as the main cause of what is described as the 'backwardness' of the area (al-Jamil 1989: 13-17, Brandell and Rabo 2003: 35, al-Daquqi 2001: 11).[1] On the Turkish side, the notion of Arab back-stabbing and treason has lived on since the Arab revolt of the First World War which helped bring down the Ottoman Empire (al-Daquqi 1996: 195). As al-Daquqi's twin studies, *The Image of the Arabs among the Turks* (1996) and *The Image of the Turks among the Arabs* (2001)[2] have shown, stereotypes are reproduced on both sides, in school textbooks and the media as well as in literature, folklore and cartoons.

Even though there is scholarly disagreement over whether the modern territorial state system in the Middle East was created totally by colonial powers or whether the currently existing Middle Eastern states are based on nuclei produced by indigenous pre-colonial forces (see for instance Harik 1987; Korany 1987; Mufti 1996), most of the *borders* in the region are colonially imposed. While two opposing attitudes towards these borders can be discerned – one that wishes to revise them and one that wishes to consolidate them (see Rooke in this volume) – as time has passed the latter approach seems to predominate. Several factors account for this. The drawing of state borders generates a dynamic for state projects of internal homogenisation (Anderson and O'Down 1999: 598), a sense of national unity is often created in colonial territories through the struggle for independence (Brandell and Rabo 2003) and as recently created states acquire longer histories they begin to identify with quite closely defined territories (Buzan 1991: 92).

While state borders have thus consolidated, creating state-based loyalties, identities and interests at one level, two pre-colonial identities continue to have an impact at the supra-state level: Islam, with the idea of belonging to an Islamic *umma*, and Arabism, with the notion of an Arab nation (today extending over 22 sovereign states). These simultaneously co-exist and compete with state-level identities and

interests, fuelling a debate over whether these supra-state identities should entail the political unification of the Arab/Islamic peoples or whether the Islamic *umma* and the Arab nation should rather be the basis for solidarity, shared interests and cooperation between sovereign states. With these different identities simultaneously at work, several possible hypotheses could be put forward with regard to Arab press coverage of the Syrian-Turkish crisis. Approaches based on Islam and the sense of a common past within the Ottoman Empire would probably produce coverage in which Syria and Turkey are perceived as equals that should not allow disputes to come between them. Approaches based on Arab solidarity would produce coverage in which Turkey is necessarily perceived as the aggressor, and the shared Ottoman history is additional proof of the divide between Arabs and Turks. Approaches based on pure 'state-centred' identities and interests would, on the other hand, rather produce coverage dominated by each state's current relations to Syria and Turkey.

At the same time, press coverage and comments are a matter of who gets to speak. Media may be censored, effectively hindering or encouraging the reporting of certain things. The reporting of events may thus have a secondary, or even principal aim, in, for instance, producing legitimacy for one's own actions and/or reinforcement of a state-based national identity. When it comes to state-controlled media it can be expected that they will serve as a means to establishing, maintaining and protecting the borders and the identity of the state.

This chapter provides an illustration of the coverage of the 1998 Turkish-Syrian crisis in the Arab press. It focuses on differences and similarities in these newspapers' accounts of the three-week-long crisis, its causes and consequences, their descriptions of the two parties to the conflict, Syria and Turkey, as well as their views of the differences between Arabs and Turks and the significance of this. Included in this study are all articles with an explicit connection with the conflict, published between 1 and 31 October 1998 in four Arab daily newspapers: the Syrian *Tishreen*, the Lebanese *al-Safir*, the Jordanian *al-Ray* and the Lebanese *al-Hayat*.[3]

Arab-Turkish Relations and the October 1998 Crisis

Although the historical baggage from the Ottoman Empire, and especially from its final years, continues to play a major role in forming negative Arab-Turkish mutual perceptions and perhaps sometimes still guides post-imperial interactions, more recent points of tension have been added. On the Turkish side, some Arab governments have been accused of interfering in Turkey's domestic affairs by exploiting religion and/or supporting hostile elements with the aim of threatening both

Turkey's national security and stability as well as its territorial integrity. Arab failure to support Turkey over the Cyprus question has further added to a Turkish feeling of Arab hostility. Although Turkey voted against the partition of Palestine in the UN General Assembly in 1947, it was the first Muslim country to recognise the new state of Israel in 1949, establish diplomatic relations and allow its Jewish citizens to emigrate there. The Turkish membership of NATO in 1952 further added to the Arab perception of Turkey as anti-Arab, and in the post-Cold War context this perception has been reinforced by a Turkish-Israeli military cooperation. Although begun earlier, a number of military agreements were signed in 1996 covering exchange of counter-terrorism information, cooperation and joint naval exercises (Inbar 2001: 199). This Turkish-Israeli cooperation alters the balance of power in the region and has provoked expressions of concern by a number of Arab states. As we shall see, this cooperation is often referred to as 'the Turkish-Israeli military alliance' in the Arab press and is pointed to as proof of Turkey's hostile intentions.

However, as will become obvious below, a widespread feeling of mutual suspicion and disloyalty does not automatically result in the Arab press siding with Arab Syria in a Syrian-Turkish conflict. The papers' coverage of the crisis shows that the drawing of state borders during and after the First World War has resulted in state-building (nation-building) projects in which state interests and rivalry have emerged which supersede any underlying 'Arab' sentiment towards Turkey. The Arab-Turkish border, as the boundary between Turkey and Syria is sometimes referred to, can – just like any other border – take on different meanings and functions and does not necessarily decide where one's feelings of solidarity lie.

Syrian-Turkish Relations and the October 1998 Crisis

Within Turkish-Arab relations, a number of factors have made Syrian-Turkish relations especially complicated, and Turkish-Arab issues have often been reinforced in the Syrian-Turkish context. Despite strong commercial ties across the border, political relations between the two governments have long been uneasy. As the result of an agreement between France and Turkey in 1939, Syria lost its Iskanderuna region to Turkey. Now renamed Hatay, this region remains one of the issues pending a final bilateral solution, as Syria has never formally recognised the present border (see Micallef's contribution in this volume and Jørum 2005). A currently more pressing issue awaiting solution is the water question, with Syria accusing Turkey of withholding water in the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and Turkey accusing Syria of withholding water in the Orontes river. Furthermore, the fact that the Syrian-Turkish

border for several decades constituted one of the borders between NATO and a state with strong connections with the USSR created a tension which lingered on beyond the end of the Cold War. Syria has also been one of the states most active in condemning the above-mentioned Turkish-Israeli cooperation, and has repeatedly aired suspicions that this cooperation is first and foremost directed against Syria, leaving it partially encircled by an alliance, the ultimate goal of which is to put pressure on it and weaken it. On the other hand, Syrian condemnation of Turkish-Israeli cooperation, has led to Turkish accusations of Syria using this cooperation as an excuse to try to turn all Arabs against Turkey. Furthermore, for many years Turkey accused Syria of supporting terrorism by assisting groups fighting against the Turkish state. Two such group were the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA)[4] and the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK)[5]. According to Turkey, Syria provided both of them with training camps in Syria and Syrian-controlled areas in Lebanon, as well as a base for attacking Turkey across the border. In short, then, Turkey and Syria had long accused each other of being a threat to their national security. When the October 1998 crisis broke out, state-level tension between the two neighbours was therefore neither new nor unusual.

The crisis building up at the end of September and beginning of October 1998, had its roots in the above-mentioned Syrian support for the PKK. At the beginning of October, Turkey demanded an immediate end to this support and the expulsion from Syria of the PKK founder and leader, Abdallah Öcalan. There were also reports of an additional Turkish demand – that each country should respect the territorial integrity of the other[6] – but the crisis came to centre on the PKK, leaving the Turkish-Syrian border question unresolved. While Syria denied any support for the PKK and the presence of any PKK fighters in the country, Turkish President Süleyman Demirel warned that Turkey was about to lose patience. In a speech to the Turkish Parliament at the beginning of October, Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz accused Syria of waging an indirect war against Turkey and claimed that, according to the UN Charter Turkey had a right to self-defence.[7] There were reports of mobilisation on both sides and what looked like a possible war scenario built up.[8] The Presidents of Iran and Egypt, Mohammad Khatami and Hosni Mubarak, undertook mediation in the conflict – the former in his capacity as the then President of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the latter as the most recent host to the Summit of Arab heads of state. The mediation led to Syrian-Turkish negotiations in the Turkish city of Adana the 19 and 20 October, resulting in the Adana Agreement.[9] The same day there was an announcement by Turkey that Öcalan had been in Russia for the past week, and thereby confirming that he was no longer in Syria.[10]

The Syrian-Turkish crisis of October 1998 has often been referred to as a turning point in Syrian-Turkish relations. As a result of the 20 October Adana Agreement, which brought the crisis to an end, the most serious obstacle to an improvement in relations – Syrian support of the PKK – was removed. Despite bilateral issues still awaiting solution, relations between the two countries have improved considerably since 1998. The Adana Agreement has been followed by a number of treaties on cooperation in various fields and steps have been taken to 'de-dramatise' the border. For instance, a joint decision was taken to remove land mines in an area of 350,000 m² along the Syrian-Turkish border between Sharnaq in southeastern Turkey and Samandağ in the disputed province of Hatay/Iskanderuna.[11] Visa requirements between the two countries have been relaxed and in 2001, during a follow-up meeting to the Adana Agreement, Syria proposed that the biggest free trade zone of the region be formed along the border.[12] Starting in 1999, some of the border crossings have been opened for Muslim holidays, allowing divided families to celebrate together without having to apply for normal visas, and in September 2002 an annual security assessment report by the Turkish military council stated that Syria was no longer a danger to Turkey.[13] Furthermore, early 2003 saw the opening of two Turkish cultural/language centres in Damascus, one under the auspices of the Turkish Embassy and one at Damascus University, and early 2004 saw the first Syrian presidential visit to Turkey in over 50 years, which both sides characterised as being a great success.

The climate between the two states have thus changed dramatically for the better during the years following the crisis. In October 1998, however, bilateral relations were at the peak of their animosity; and the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to examining how this animosity was reflected in four different Arab newspapers.

The October 1998 Crisis in Four Arab Daily Newspapers

Although the four papers covered in this study published a fairly similar number of pieces on the crisis, they differ in the weight given to reporting and analyzing its development. Syrian *Tishreen*, together with the clearly pro-Syrian Lebanese *al-Safir*, largely concentrate on reporting widespread support for Syria and almost universal condemnation of Turkey. *al-Safir* offers a wide range of analysis and is the foremost paper when it comes to attacking Turkey. The other Lebanese paper included, *al-Hayat*, offers little analysis and focuses on reporting new developments without much comment. The greatest variation is shown in the Jordanian *al-Ray*, where some of the analytical articles published sharply contradict the reporting and the editorials. This variation is not seen in either *Tishreen* or *al-Safir*, where the message is invariably the same, and only to

a small degree in *al-Hayat* where comments and analyses on the subject are scarce.

The coverage of the crisis in these four papers provides an illustration of both regional relations and Syria's perception of its regional role at the time. As will become evident below, the crisis was not viewed in isolation but gave rise to comment on a wide variety of regional issues. In January 1998 Israel, Turkey and the United States staged a search and rescue exercise – Reliant Mermaid – off the Israeli coast. Although claimed to be aimed only at developing coordination in handling rescue operations at sea, the exercise came under heavy criticism from a number of countries in the region as the development of a Turkish-Israeli axis.[14] Turkish-Israeli cooperation had given rise to heated discussions during the summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference a month earlier, in December 1997, and Syria had been particularly harsh in its demands that Turkey break off its relationship with Israel.[15] During the crisis of October 1998 Israeli-Turkish relations were a point of criticism brought against Turkey by all four papers, although to varying degrees.

During the 'Reliant Mermaid' exercise, Jordan had enjoyed observer status and this, together with the fact that Turkey had trained Jordanian pilots in flying US F-16 planes had led Syrian officials in September 1998 to refer to Jordan as the third part of the Turkish-Israeli alliance and thus a threat to Syria.[16] Jordanian policy, both with regard to Turkish-Israeli cooperation and towards the October 1998 crisis, was discussed in both the Jordanian *al-Ray* and the Lebanese *al-Safir*, and not surprisingly their points of view differed profoundly.

September 1998 also saw the tentative reconciliation meeting between the two Kurdish parties in northern Iraq, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). Invited to Washington by the Clinton Administration in order to create a united front against the then Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, PUK leader Jalal Talabani and KDP leader Masoud Barzani attempted to bring about reconciliation between the two warring factions. This meeting was part of the so-called Ankara Process, sponsored by the US, Britain and Turkey and aimed at bringing peace and stability to northern Iraq. It resulted, among other things, in an agreement drawn up on 17 September 1998, to deny the PKK sanctuary in northern Iraq and to leave southern Kurdistan as part of a federal Iraq. While it was officially welcomed by Turkey,[17] this agreement was commented on by several papers as having angered Turkey to the point where it had to take out its frustration on Syria.

The month prior to the October 1998 crisis had seen increasing tension over a Greek-Cypriot decision to purchase and deploy Russian missiles on the island, a step Turkey threatened to go to war over, should it be carried out. Cyprus had also started its accession negotiations with

the European Union at the end of March 1998. As Turkey had been excluded from the European Union enlargement process in July 1997, several papers pointed to Turkish-European relations as well as Cypriot-Turkish tension as reasons behind the conflict.

October 1998, the time of the Syrian-Turkish crisis, was also a month of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations leading to the signing of the Wye Plantation Agreement on 23 of October. Syrian fear of an Israeli-Palestinian peace, in which Syria would be left isolated in the Arab-Israeli context and partly surrounded by the so-called Turkish-Israeli alliance, provides an explanation both as to why Syria was eager to comply with Turkish demands concerning the PKK[18] and to improve Syrian-Turkish relations, as well as the Syrian *Tishreen*'s carefulness not to incite feelings against Turkey.

Last but not least, October 1998 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October 1973 war. Of immense importance in the legitimisation of the Syrian regime as a war of liberation,[19] the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war also became part of the reporting of the October 1998 Turkish-Syrian crisis.

As becomes evident below, the crisis gave rise to comments on several of the issues discussed in depth in other contributions to this volume, such as Turkish policy in northern Iraq (see the chapter by Åsa Lundgren), Hatay/Iskanderuna (see the chapter by Roberta Micallef), Syrian-Lebanese relations (see the chapter by Elizabeth Picard), the Cyprus question (see the chapter by Etienne Copeaux and Claire Mauss-Copeaux) as well as the Ottoman Empire, the fall and legacy of which form the point of departure for the general question of the drawing of borders in the Middle East.

We shall now move on to the reading of the articles. In order to give a systematic picture of the papers' coverage of the crisis, the rest of this chapter is divided into four parts, each focusing on a specific theme covering the papers' reports on (i) the reasons behind the crisis, (ii) descriptions of Turkey and Syria, (iii) the importance given to the fact that one of the parties to the conflict is an Arab state and how that relates to calls for Arab solidarity with Syria and, finally, (iv) the outcome of the crisis. As we shall see below, the four papers covered the crisis in fundamentally different ways and differed in their analyses of the crisis, its causes and outcomes. Local readers were thus likely to get quite different impressions of what was really going on during October 1998.

Reasons for the Crisis

Even though all four papers agree that the crisis was sparked off by Turkish threats against Syria, the reported reasons behind these threats as well as the timing of them differ. The Syrian *Tishreen*, the only paper

published in a party to the conflict, distinguishes itself throughout the month by offering considerably less information than the other three papers. Not only does it report both the beginning and the end of the crisis a day later than the others, it does not make clear what the Turkish accusations were about until the crisis is already over. A reader following events only in *Tishreen* will therefore get the impression that the Turkish threats have come out of the blue and for no apparent reason. According to *Tishreen*, the so-called Turkish-Israeli alliance lies behind the crisis and Turkish accusations and threats are made only to assure the objectives of this alliance. The precise aims of the alliance are not specified, but it is repeatedly reported that the alliance is directed against all Arabs and Muslims.

To a lesser degree, Turkish domestic problems and a wish to divert the attention of the Turkish public away from these, are mentioned as an additional reason for Turkey's behaviour. These domestic problems are most often not specified, but when they are they include financial problems, tensions between secularists and Islamists, and corruption and scandals caused by connections between the Turkish government and the mafia.

On a few occasions throughout the month the PKK, Öcalan and Turkish accusations of Syrian support are mentioned, but always in separate articles with no explicit connection to the conflict. About a week into the crisis the paper gives its first report as to what the conflict is about, and states that it 'has something to do with a problem which Turkey has faced for years and that everybody knows that Syria has nothing to do with'.[20] This, according to the paper, well-known problem is not specified. The same day, in a separate article in which the ongoing crisis is not mentioned, *Tishreen* reports that Lebanon's Foreign Minister has denied that the PKK was present in either Lebanon or Syria. Since there is no mention of the conflict or the Turkish accusations against Syria, a reader depending only on *Tishreen* is ignorant of the fact that the PKK and the ongoing crisis are in any way related. Not until the last day of the month, ten days after the signing of the Adana Agreement, does *Tishreen* make the explicit connection in one of its headlines: 'Turkey stated: "Syria supports the Kurdish Workers' Party".'

Tishreen is thus obviously anxious not to bring up Syrian support of the PKK, or any other possible Turkish-Syrian point of disagreement, as a cause of the conflict, but focuses on laying the blame on Israel and Turkish-Israeli relations. This way of interpreting the crisis is shared by the Lebanese *al-Safir*, which describes the crisis as the result of a variety of causes, none of which is linked to the PKK. While *Tishreen* avoids making the explicit connection between Turkish accusations of Syrian support for the PKK and the crisis, *al-Safir* brings up these accusations but invariably dismisses them as an excuse. The 'true reasons' thus have

to be sought elsewhere. Most of these true reasons are connected with the Turkish-Israeli alliance, the aim being to help Israel 'dissolve what is left of Palestine and keep Syria busy with something other than the [Israeli-Palestinian] peace process and Palestinian concessions'.[21] As mentioned above, Syria had heavily criticised Turkish-Israeli military cooperation during the Islamic Conference summit in December 1997, and it is claimed in *al-Safir* that the crisis stems from a Turkish wish to put pressure on Syria to put an end to its condemnation of the alliance.

Al-Safir also offers a number of reasons not connected with Israel. These include Turkish attempts to divert attention from domestic problems, largely the same as those cited in *Tishreen*. Turkey's hatred of the Arabs is also suggested as lying behind the crisis. A number of texts suggest that Turkey's real frustrations are with other states, but that it does not dare to pick a quarrel with them. Instead, it chooses Syria as this suits both Israel and the United States. Along this line, troubled relations with Greece, Cyprus, Russia and the European Union are also mentioned. It is further suggested that Turkey wants to create a new regional role for itself after losing its strategically important Cold War role as a buffer between East and West. Bringing pressure to bear on Syria is seen as a good start. One analytical text places the reasons for the crisis outside the political sphere, and provides perhaps the most 'creative' explanation in suggesting that Turkey initiated the crisis to help US President Bill Clinton get over his sexual scandals.

Both the Jordanian *al-Ray* and the Lebanese *al-Hayat* report that the reason behind the Turkish threats was Syrian support for the PKK. Neither of these papers questions the truth of these accusations, but *al-Ray* inserts in one of its editorials the claim that Turkey is withholding water in the Euphrates and Tigris rivers from Syria, and is thereby not itself entirely innocent. Syrian-Turkish disagreement over the allocation of water in these two rivers has often been pointed to as the reason for Syrian support of the PKK, but *al-Ray* is the only paper to bring up the water question. *Al-Ray*, then, pictures the crisis as the result of the misconduct of both parties. Although both *al-Ray* and *al-Hayat* stick to the PKK as the central problem in their reporting, the analytical texts published by them suggest other possible reasons.[22] According to the analyses in *al-Ray*, one of the main reasons behind both the crisis and its timing is the Turkish-Israeli alliance. It should nevertheless be pointed out that *al-Ray* is the only paper to publish an article denying the existence of a Turkish-Israeli alliance and stressing that the so-called alliance is a matter of Turkish-Israeli cooperation only.[23]

According to the analytical texts placing the crisis within the context of Turkish-Israeli cooperation, the Turkish threats are meant to intimidate Syria in order to increase its flexibility in possible future peace negotiations with Israel. It is thereby suggested that the crisis is aimed at

forcing Syria to accept concessions and less than a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six Days War, in exchange for peace. Others, in line with what had been suggested in the Lebanese *al-Safir*, claim that Turkey, frustrated by the loss of its special role within NATO after the fall of the USSR and by its failure to join the European Union, is trying to create a new regional role for itself by 'playing the Kurdish card'.

Suggestions of the true reasons behind the conflict brought up in analyses published in the Lebanese *al-Hayat* are that Turkey is frustrated with the increasing European support for the PKK and that it is suffering from domestic problems which it wishes to take out on Syria. The Turkish-Israeli alliance, which is given a central place in all three other papers, is also brought up, but only as something political analysts and politicians have claimed to be behind the conflict. No writer in *al-Hayat* either denies or confirms any possible Israeli role or influence in the conflict. The September 1998 meeting in Washington between the leaders of the two major Kurdish parties in northern Iraq, the PUK and the KDP, and their resultant agreement are brought up by analytical texts in both Lebanese papers, *al-Hayat* and *al-Safir*, as a reason for the Turkish-Syrian conflict. Turkey's frustration with this US-brokered initiative is suggested as a reason for its threatening Syria (even though it is not made clear how a conflict with Syria would alleviate Turkish frustrations).

The Syrian *Tishreen* and the Lebanese *al-Safir* thus report on the crisis as the immediate result of Turkish-Israeli cooperation ('alliance') and Syrian support of the PKK is clearly overlooked. The Jordanian *al-Ray* and the Lebanese *al-Hayat* report this Syrian support of the PKK as the immediate cause of the crisis, though their analyses suggest that the timing of the conflict may have other causes.

Descriptions of Syria and Turkey

Also when it comes to describing the two parties to the conflict, Turkey and Syria, the papers differ. The Syrian *Tishreen* is cautious in its descriptions of Turkey. It obviously does not want to make matters worse and it takes care not to insult the Turkish people or Turkey *per se*. Turkish politics is described as hostile and aggressive but it is specified that it is the Turkish military or Turkish politicians who threaten Syria, not Turks in general. While *Tishreen* thus does not itself directly incite feelings against Turkey, it readily quotes others who are prepared to do so. For instance, Turkey is said to play a central role in the international drug business together with Israel (quoted from al-Muharrir news), the disasters Turkey caused the Arab Homeland when it controlled its assets for 500 years [sic] are obviously not enough and Turkey continues to

play its colonial role (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*), Turkey's goal is to do a favour to 'the Zionist entity' (quoted from the Iranian *al-Wifaq*), and Turkey's cooperation with Israel means that it supports the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and Muslim holy places (quoted from an unspecified 'reliable source'). The one target of insults stemming directly from *Tishreen* is Israel. Throughout the month Israel is pinpointed as the real creator of the conflict and a hostile and expansionist entity, constituting a threat to all Arabs as well as the region in general. During October, *Tishreen* further publishes a number of articles on Israeli-Turkish relations that run parallel to reports of the conflict. While these articles do not mention the ongoing crisis, they report that the Israeli and Turkish mafias and governments are cooperating in money laundering, and it is clear to the reader that Israeli-Turkish affairs should be viewed with utmost suspicion.

Apart from one of the two analytical texts published in *Tishreen*[24] which states that 'Syria has adopted a calm and balanced position towards the crisis that Turkey has created',[25] *Tishreen* sticks to quoting others also when it comes to descriptions of Syria. If information on the crisis itself is limited in *Tishreen*, the opposite can be said about quotations of people, organisations and parties that condemn Turkey and praise Syria. These quotes stem from a variety of sources ranging from the Lebanese Foreign Minister to the Students' Union of Mauritania and associations of Syrian emigrants in South America. These different sources are all given equal weight and leave the reader with the impression that Syria is universally recognised as the ultimate defender of the Arab cause and widely admired for its wisdom and patience in its calls for diplomatic talks in the face of unprovoked Turkish aggression.

If the Syrian *Tishreen* is careful not to directly incite feelings against Turkey, the contrary can be said of the Lebanese *al-Safir*. *Al-Safir* is the paper that goes furthest in its attacks on Turkey. In both articles and analytical texts Turkey is described as aggressive, violent, provocative and even self-destructive, driven by its 'disgusting hostility' towards the Arabs. While *Tishreen* is careful to point out that the Turkish military and politicians are making the threats, *al-Safir* often claim that 'the Turks' are behind the threats. Turkish hatred of the Arabs, it is explained, is nothing new. But this time it has become more acute than ever and has even driven Turkey to want to embark on a military adventure against the Arabs.

As *al-Safir* pointed to Israel as a main cause behind the conflict, Israel also plays a major role in the paper's description of Turkey. Turkey is said to have conspired against the Arabs in their struggle against Israel, while failing to understand that Israel is only using 'its stupid ally'. It is pointed out that, unlike Israel, Turkey is no stranger to the region, but its actions have put it in the same category as Israel and at present it has

even surpassed Israel in its hostility towards the Arabs. Rejected by the European Union, Turkey has chosen to ally itself with the 'small West' when 'the Big West' refused to accept it. To further emphasise the connections between Turkey and Israel, a comparison is made between the Kurds and the Palestinians. These two peoples are said to be in the same situation, they are reportedly treated in the same way, and both Turkey and Israel point to security in order to justify their respective actions against them.

The Ottoman Empire is brought up on several occasions and it is claimed that Turkey has a hidden agenda to restore it. One writer, calling attention to the fact that October 1998 was the anniversary of not only the 1973 October war but also the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, expresses the hope that the Turkish anniversary will not turn into an excavation of old Ottoman anti-Arab politics.[26] Where a distinction is made between the Empire and the Republic of Turkey, Turkey is seen as a continuation of the Empire, and will never forgive the Arabs for having caused its downfall. Other Turkish ambitions for the future are also noted. According to one article, Turkey dreams of becoming the leading nation of the Turkish-speaking world in Central Asia, and of performing ethnic cleansing within this region and possibly also in its own neighbourhood.[27] While *Tishreen* and *al-Safir* offer the same perception of the crisis and its 'true' causes, *al-Safir* is the one directly attacking Turkey and the Turks.

While Turkey, and the Turks in general, are pictured as aggressive and provocative, Syria, in contrast, is described as calm and wise in its constant calls for diplomatic talks. For the common good of the region, Syria is trying to maintain good neighbourly relations with Turkey no matter what reservations it may have concerning the government that rules Turkey. It is pointed out that the powers that be in Turkey are a domestic affair for the Turks themselves to decide, thus indicating a desire to contradict Turkish accusations of Syrian interference in its domestic concerns. While Turkey is thus described as a threat to all Arabs, Syria is described as their defender and 'the last citadel of Arab resistance'.[28]

Articles and editorials published in the Jordanian *al-Ray* make no explicit comments on either Syria or Turkey, but it is understood that Syria is in the habit of interfering in the domestic concerns of its neighbours. This is especially clear in references to Syrian-Lebanese relations but also to Syrian interference in Turkey through its support of the PKK, and past conflicts between Jordan and Syria are also brought up. It is further understood that Syria is lacking courage, for instance through reports that Syria raised its voice against Turkey only after making sure that there were a good number of mediators between them, ensuring that Turkey would not actually attack. At the same time, *al-Ray*

publishes a number of analytical texts that have much more to say about
both Syria and Turkey and that say these things explicitly. In these texts,
Turkey is described as a hypocrite for supporting the Kurdish rebellion
in northern Iraq while complaining that somebody else is supporting the
Kurds in Turkey. Turkey is also described as a servant to world Zionism
and Israel and this is what keeps Turkey from enjoying good relations
with the Arabs and Muslims at large. One of the writers also mocks
Turkey for not being welcome in Europe despite its efforts to adapt to
Western ways by removing the old Turkish *tarbush*.[29]

In their descriptions of Syria, analytical texts in *al-Ray* initially keep a
low profile. About a week into the month of October, following a
statement by Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlas, this changes. During
the commemoration of 25th anniversary of the October 1973 war, Tlas
accused Jordan of having prevented Iraqi and Saudi reinforcements from
reaching Syria during the war, thereby decreasing Syrian chances of
success. Even though this was not the first time during the crisis that
Tlas had accused Jordan of collaboration with Israel, this statement
provoked the most reactions and these are clearly reflected in the
analytical texts in *al-Ray*,[30] several of which engage in attacks on both
Tlas and Syria. The image of Syria emerging here is that of a state
continuously fighting and attacking those with whom it should stand
united. One of the writers asks how Tlas can expect the Arabs to stand
by Syria when he is constantly attacking them. Another suggests that
Tlas' great age has caused his memory to fail him, but that if he would
only use his head he would remember the truth. Furthermore, it is
claimed that there is no popular solidarity whatsoever with Syria among
either Jordanians or Palestinians in Jordan. This, it is pointed out, has
nothing to do with Tlas' most recent announcement but with the bitter
experience these peoples have had of Syria in the past. According to
several writers, Syria has no right to call itself Pan-Arab as it has
specialised in insulting the Palestinians. It is pointed out that thus far no
Arab state has announced that it would consider an aggression against
Syria as an aggression against itself, even though, three days earlier, the
other three papers reported that Libyan leader al-Qadhafi had done so.[31]
Even Iran, one article states, has chosen to mediate in this conflict even
though it has previously stood by Syria. Syria is further to blame for the
starvation in Iraq, thus indicating the different stands taken by Syria and
Jordan on the 1991 Gulf War and the UN-imposed embargo on Iraq. It
is even suggested that, if Syria could have its way, all Arab capitals would
be placed under an embargo.

The picture emerging from the analyses and comments published in
al-Ray is thus of an isolated and lost Syria, which cannot count on any
heartfelt Arab support. Only one of the analytical texts attempts to
smooth things over by stating that at this point it is important to show a

united Arab front no matter what reservations Jordan has regarding some of the Syrian policies towards Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.

The Lebanese *al-Hayat*, which is the most low-key in its coverage of the crisis, is also the paper that has least to say about the two parties to the conflict. Syria is not commented upon at all, while two of the three analytical texts state that Turkey feels superior to the Arabs.

A Syrian-Turkish or an Arab-Turkish Conflict?

Is a Syrian-Turkish conflict automatically understood as an Arab-Turkish conflict, and does it call for Arab solidarity, as a conflict with Israel would do? The Lebanese *al-Safir* and the Syrian *Tishreen* invariably call for Arab solidarity and picture the crisis not as Syrian-Turkish or even Arab-Turkish, but ultimately as an Arab-*Israeli* conflict with a varying degree of active Turkish participation. According to the Lebanese *al-Safir*, Turkey deliberately runs Israel's errands, thereby serving not only Israel but also the United States and its own hidden agenda, which is hostile to the Arabs. *Tishreen* is a little more careful, indicating that Turkey is being exploited because it does not know any better. Both papers claim that all Arabs and Muslims are targets and are threatened by the crisis.

The reader who is dependent on *Tishreen* can take comfort from the fact that, according to the paper, all Arabs stand by Syria. The conflict thus not only calls for Arab solidarity, but it immediately *produces* it. The articles published in *Tishreen* are thus the complete opposite of the analytical texts in the Jordanian *al-Ray* in which Syria, as mentioned above, is pictured as isolated and abandoned because of its constant verbal attacks on its fellow Arabs. Neither does *Tishreen* comment on Foreign Minister Tlas' accusations of Jordanian cooperation with Israel during the 1973 war nor the reactions this provoked in the Jordanian media. Instead, *Tishreen* lets the reader know that the aggressive Turkish military and politicians do not enjoy any support or understanding at all, either in Turkey or anywhere else, while Syria is admired for its wise stance and its concerns for the stable and peaceful future of the region.

While *Tishreen* reports that all Arabs stand by Syria, *al-Safir* states that this is an Arab duty and that all Arabs *should* stand by Syria. However, not everyone complies with this obligation. For instance, Jordan is heavily criticised throughout the month for failing to support Syria, and is then accused of taking a neutral stance (i.e. not pro-Turkish, my remark) against the will of the people, and it is predicted that the kingdom is now headed towards chaos. Towards the end of the month, two articles mention Jordan as the third party in the Turkish-Israeli alliance, probably with its participation as an observer in the joint Turkish, Israeli and US search and rescue exercise in January 1998 in mind.

The Jordanian *al-Ray*, on the other hand, reflects the crisis as a purely Turkish-Syrian one and the fact that one of the parties to the conflict is Arab does not change anything. Instead, the editorials published in *al-Ray* stress that there is no difference between an Arab and a Muslim and that the common interest of all Muslims should be the guideline of interaction. Neither is Arab solidarity called for by the Lebanese *al-Hayat*, which pictures the crisis as strictly Turkish-Syrian and does not comment on either Arab or Muslim identity.

What Was the Outcome of the Crisis and Who Stood to Gain from It?

After two days of bilateral negotiations Turkey and Syria signed the so-called Adana Agreement on 20 October 1998. None of the four papers published the text of the Agreement or gave any details apart from those mentioned below. Instead the Syrian *Tishreen* of 24 October published a full page, detailed article on what had been agreed in the Israeli-Palestinian Wye Plantation Agreement, signed the previous day.

The official text of the Adana Agreement was reportedly in Arabic and Turkish only, and while the Turkish version was leaked and published in the Turkish press, the Arabic version was never published (al-Jahmani 1999). It is unclear, however, whether the initially leaked Turkish version was the one Turkey brought to the negotiations and which was modified in Adana or whether it was the text actually agreed-upon.[32] The major point of disagreement among the four papers after the signing of the agreement was whether or not Syria agreed to all Turkey's demands, especially the security apparatus Turkey suggested as a necessary means to ensure that the agreement would be respected. According to the text now available on the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the security apparatus was not agreed during the negotiations. Instead the Syrian delegation promised to convey the idea to the Syrian authorities and to come back with an answer as soon as possible.[33]

Both the Syrian *Tishreen* and the Lebanese *al-Safir* provide a picture of the agreement as an agreement between two equal parties in which no one side had to make concessions to the other. As mentioned above, *Tishreen* reports on the ending of the crisis a day later than the others. On 21 October, the day the other three papers report the signing of the Adana Agreement, *Tishreen* reports that Arab and Muslim condemnations of Turkey are continuing. The Yemeni Prime Minister is reported as calling on Turkey to sit down at the negotiating table and there is no mention of the Syrian-Turkish negotiations held in Adana on the two previous days, 19 and 20 October. The agreement is first mentioned in *Tishreen* on 22 October, when it is reported that the negotiations – not previously mentioned in *Tishreen* – have resulted in an agreement on

equal treatment. The security apparatus reported by the other papers is also mentioned, but it is denied that it is part of the agreement. According to *Tishreen*, the climate of trust which now exists between the two countries makes such an apparatus unnecessary, and it is further stated that the political editor of the Syrian News Agency has discovered that the investigation apparatus which some media reported as part of the agreement does not exist.

According to *al-Safir*, even though the agreement itself does not involve any concessions by either party, it was a concession on the part of Turkey to negotiate in the first place even though it is not spelled out what solution Turkey would have preferred. The agreement is reported to consist of a Syrian promise not to set up PKK bases in either Syria or the Bekaa Valley, which puts in question whether Turkish accusations of the bases already being in existence were true.[34] It is reported that, according to an anonymous Syrian diplomat, the agreement states that the two countries will not permit activities that might threaten each other's security. This is an advantage to Syria as it can be applied to the Turkish-Israeli alliance. This means that Syria is getting something important out of the agreement, which *al-Safir* is the only paper to point out. The fact that the crisis was solved peacefully and that both Syria and Turkey are reported to be satisfied with the outcome is balanced by hints and reminders of continued Israeli-Turkish cooperation as well as a Turkish wish to provoke more trouble. For instance, it is reported that 'Turkey seemed eager to keep a line open to the crisis'.[35] Furthermore, *al-Safir* is the only paper to point out that the outcome of the crisis was not satisfactory to Israel, which is said to be trying to disturb the newly improved Syrian-Turkish relations.

Jordanian *al-Ray* describes the final agreement as a Syrian concession. The content of the agreement is reported to consist of a Syrian promise to end its support for the PKK. The paper leaves no doubt that Öcalan was previously in Syria but has now been expelled, and it is the only paper to report that Kurdish prisoners in Turkish prisons burned themselves to death in protest at his expulsion. There is no mention of the fact that, according to Syria, it had never supported the PKK but was only promising not to do so in the future. Furthermore, *al-Ray* reports that the Turkish-Israeli alliance was not discussed during the bilateral negotiations in Adana. For the reader following events in *al-Ray* this is clearly a Syrian concession, since the paper had earlier reported that a Syrian condition for agreeing to negotiate had been that Turkey should withdraw from its 'alliance' with Israel. *Al-Ray* further reports Turkish doubts as to whether Syria will keep to the agreement and that a security apparatus has been agreed upon as a means of assurance.

The only analysis published after the signing of the agreement argues that the notion of equal treatment on which the agreement is based is

simply an expression of Syrian subordination. While both countries agreed not to support groups hostile to the other, this will not, according to the analysis in *al-Ray*, imply any change in Turkish policy since it had not supported groups hostile to Syria in the first place. Instead, the analyst reports, the Turkish investigators who will enter Syria as part of the security agreement will be working, while the Syrian ones in Turkey will spend their time playing backgammon at some café. It is also pointed out that the signing of the agreement should teach Syria to respect the Palestinian Authority, which made concessions to Israel in the face of a greater imbalance of power than that Syria finds itself in with regard to Turkey.

Like *al-Ray*, Lebanese *al-Hayat* gives the impression that, in order to reach a final agreement, Syria was the one that had to give in. Like *al-Ray*, it comments on the issues not discussed during the negotiations and which are clearly Syrian worries, such as the Turkish-Israeli alliance and the disagreement over water. *Al-Hayat* also reports that Syria complained that the Turkish army had crossed its borders, but no further details are given and *al-Hayat* is the only paper to mention this incident. Both Syria and Turkey are however reported to be pleased with the agreement.

Four Papers' Coverage of the Crisis: A Coherent Picture?

The Turkish-Syrian crisis of October 1998 and its aftermath were given great prominence in the Arab media, with several of the regional newspapers and magazines producing special issues containing in-depth analysis and follow-up reports. In this chapter, we have examined the coverage of the crisis provided by four different Arab daily newspapers: the Syrian *Tishreen*, Lebanese *al-Safir*, Jordanian *al-Ray* and Lebanese *al-Hayat*. As we have seen, readers following developments in the Syrian-Turkish crisis in these four papers obtained fundamentally different reports and analyses of the crisis, its causes and consequences.

The Syrian *Tishreen*, the only paper representing a party to the conflict, distinguishes itself by reporting new developments a day later than the other papers suggesting a strict control of the material published. It also offers considerably less information than the other three papers. It is careful not to incite feelings against Turkey and constantly puts out a message of Syria's good intentions and desire for friendly relations with Turkey. The reader is informed about the Turkish accusations of Syrian support for the PKK only in a roundabout way, and for the reader dependent only on *Tishreen* it is not clear what the conflict is really about until it is already over. Among the other matters reported by the other three papers, but omitted by *Tishreen*, are Syria's announcement that it is strong enough to defend itself, that Syria – in response to Turkish accusations of support for the PKK – accused Turkey of withholding

water from Syria, that some governments in the world expressed understanding and support for Turkey, and that the Turkish Parliament discussed the possibility of imposing economic, military and political sanctions against Syria. Furthermore, about a week into the crisis, the other three papers reported that there had been sounds of explosions on the Syrian side of the Syrian-Turkish border. According to these reports, Turkey speculated that these might be PKK bases being blown up.

Tishreen is also the only paper not to mention that Turkey carried out military manœuvers in the disputed region of Hatay/Iskanderuna, a region to which Syria – as mentioned before – still has claims. The three other papers' mention of this area and their contextualisation of it further illustrate their stands and follow their lines of reporting throughout the conflict. The Jordanian *al-Ray* calls it 'the Turkish province Hatay (Iskandarun)', *al-Safir* calls it 'the Syrian region Iskandarun occupied by Turkey' and *al-Hayat* refers to the area as 'the Iskandarun province in southern Turkey'. Only the pro-Syrian *al-Safir* mentions that this is an area to which Syria still lays claims. In addition, *al-Safir* devotes an analytical text to the issue of Hatay/Iskanderuna, the message of which is that Iskanderuna was lost through a French-Turkish agreement to 'bury the Arab dream' of creating an Arab Empire. The conflict over Iskanderuna is now not only a Syrian but also an Arab national responsibility which, like the question of Palestine, can only be resolved by means of Arab unity.[36] Even though several papers in the Arab world carried interviews with then Syrian Information Minister Muhammad Salman stating that the Iskanderuna question was a national cause on which Syria could not make concessions[37], Syrian *Tishreen* does not mention either the area or the Turkish manœuvers. This contradicts Gilquin's claim that Hatay/Iskanderuna became a matter for discussion in the Syrian media during the October 1998 crisis (Gilquin 2000: 159).[38] Avoiding talking about Hatay/Iskanderuna is the way Syria and Turkey has kept it since then, since this issue is awaiting a formal solution but is not at the top of the agenda in either state (Jørum 2005). Instead, *Tishreen* concentrates on reporting worldwide, and especially Arab, support for Syria and condemnation of Turkey. The final agreement is an agreement between equals, and opens up a new page in Syrian-Turkish relations.

Lebanese *al-Safir* largely follows the same line as *Tishreen* but offers more information and invariably incites feelings against Turkey and the Turks throughout the month. Turkey is said to hate the Arabs, to be conspiring with Israel and secretly striving to rebuild the Ottoman Empire. Both *al-Safir* and *Tishreen* picture the conflict as Arab-Israeli, *al-Safir* with Turkey as an active Israeli ally and *Tishreen* with Turkey as somewhat insecure and uncertain about its goals and ambitions for the future of the Middle East.

Both the Jordanian *al-Ray* and the Lebanese *al-Hayat* report on the

crisis as Turkish-Syrian in which no Arab solidarity is called for. While *al-Hayat* does not comment further on the subject, *al-Ray* publishes several editorials in which it stresses that Arabs and Muslims need to stand together and let their common interest be the guiding light of their actions. It also publishes several analytical articles in which Turkish-Israeli relations are seen as a major reason behind the crisis. Both *al-Ray* and *al-Hayat* describe the final outcome and the signing of the Adana agreement as a Syrian concession.

While fundamental differences can be highlighted, especially between the Syrian *Tishreen* and Lebanese *al-Safir* on the one hand and the Jordanian *al-Ray* and Lebanese *al-Hayat* on the other, the four papers also have significant things in common. None of them bring up the Kurdish question. Even though the Kurds are mentioned either to illustrate Turkish hypocrisy or to compare Turkish treatment of them with Israeli treatment of the Palestinians, no background information is given on the Kurdish Workers' Party or its conflict with Turkey. A comparison of their mention of Kurds and Kurdistan again show that *Tishreen* is eager to keep the information limited. On 20 October all four papers report that PKK leader Abdallah Öcalan has announced that he is in Kurdistan. Öcalan reportedly explains that, while it is true that he had visited Syria from time to time, this was always unconnected with the Syrian government (for the reader depending on *Tishreen* it is still not clear at this point that Öcalan's whereabouts are in any way connected with the ongoing Syrian-Turkish conflict). While *Tishreen* finds it suitable to stop here, the other three papers report that Öcalan claimed that his visits to Syria were in order to visit 'the Kurdish people'. All three define Kurdistan as consisting of south-eastern Turkey, northern Iraq and eastern Iran and none of them mention Syria as containing parts of Kurdistan. Nor do any of the papers comment on who the 'Kurdish people' Öcalan claims to visit in Syria might be.[39]

Significance of the Coverage of the Arab Press

Naturally, the reasons behind the differences in the pictures provided by the four papers' coverage of the crisis could be sought in a number of places. Different degrees of freedom of expression and censorship could be one explanation. We have seen how different and contradictory views and opinions are published in the Jordanian *al-Ray*, where the greatest variation is found in the analytical texts, suggesting that Jordanian journalists are at least somewhat free to express opinions that do not coincide with government policy. No such variation exists in either the Syrian *Tishreen* or the Lebanese *al-Safir*. The two Lebanese papers, *al-Safir* and *al-Hayat*, provide their readers with fundamentally different reports and analyses of the crisis, also suggesting a Lebanese freedom of the

press. Another explanation could be that the different papers' coverage is better understood as a reflection of the different political interests behind them. Although it is within neither the scope nor the capacity of this study to determine the precise reasons, they are most probably a combination of the two. Neither of these two features is unique to the four papers included in this study nor to the Arab world.

Returning to the initial question, the significance of borders and identities, Arab-Turkish relations and perceptions of each other and the influence of this on Arab reporting of a Syrian-Turkish crisis, the study has shown that, even though the rhetoric of common Arab interests and unity lingers, especially in analyses and comments on the crisis, the view of how far this should or actually does extend differs. The Syrian *Tishreen* largely concentrates on reporting on the universal Arab support for Syria, giving the reader the impression that all Arabs support Syria in this conflict with Turkey. This is contradicted by the reports of the other three papers – even though the Lebanese *al-Safir* stresses that all Arab states *should* support Syria. The Jordanian *al-Ray* is the paper which most clearly criticises Syria and also the paper to take the clearest stand against the necessity of Arab solidarity. This emphasis on the existence of Jordanian interests outside 'the Arab cause' has been confirmed more recently in the Jordan First (*al-urdunn awwalan*) campaign, launched by King Abdallah II in late 2002.

Syrian *Tishreen* and Lebanese *al-Safir* are the papers that make the least distinction between Syrian and the Arab interests as Syria is described as the Arab state best representing the Arab interest. Although not evident from *Tishreen*'s reports on the Syrian-Turkish crisis, a clear indication of a changed Syrian perception of the Syrian vs Arab interest can nevertheless be found over time in both Syrian official rhetoric and policy on the Golan Heights, as these have moved from being occupied Arab territory that, together with other Israeli-occupied areas, should be liberated within a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace, to being an occupied *Syrian* territory, the liberation of which will be assured through bilateral Syrian-Israeli negotiations.[40] The present state borders and the state-based identities have thus gained in importance as the different states have developed both internally and externally, and are not likely to be removed anytime in the near future.

At the same time, the reports show that, although the relatively recently drawn state borders are strengthened, borders and frontiers of older non-geographical structures are still vigorous and play an important part. This becomes evident as the reports frequently refer to older, historical conflicts such as Turkish-Arab relations during the era of the Ottoman Empire as well as the importance of being Muslim. Not only geographical borders are therefore important, but so are ethnic and religious ones. Other than Arabs and Turks, ethnic groups are not

discussed, even though the Kurdish question is central to the conflict. A reason for this may be that all the papers are published in countries that include minority populations and where the question of ethnicity vs nation is to varying degrees sensitive. Nevertheless, the Kurdish question has continued to play a part in Turkish-Syrian relations since the 1998 crisis, as their shared interest in opposing the creation of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq is one of the reasons Syria and Turkey have seen a significant improvement in their bilateral relations during the last few years.

Taken together, the reports included in this study serve as an illustration of an ongoing renegotiation of old structures. This indicates that, although historical identities and ties continue to play a part, these coexist with, but are increasingly guided by and will in the future possibly be increasingly restricted by, relatively recently drawn state borders that have in practice become less and less questioned as an artificial division of the Arab nation.

Notes:

[1] al-Daquqi (2001: 11) points out that this is an idea mostly held in the Eastern part of the Arab world, while in the Maghreb the Ottoman Empire is rather considered to have saved the Levant from Western imperialism.

[2] *Sūrat al-arab ladā al-atrāk* (1996) and *Sūrat al-atrāk ladā al-arab* (2001), both published by Markaz dirasāt al-wahda al-arabiyya in Beirut.

[3] In total 274 articles, divided between the papers as follows: Syrian *Tishreen* 67, Lebanese *al-Safir* 74, Jordanian *al-Ray* 63 and Lebanese *al-Hayat* 70. This chapter is based on my unpublished MA thesis 'The Turkish-Syrian October 1998 Crisis and the Arab Press. A Study of Four Arab Newspapers' Reports of the Öcalan Crisis' (Department of African and Asian Languages, Uppsala University) written in Syria in 1999. I would like to express my gratitude to Professors Hasan Abbas and Mahir al-Charif at the former Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes in Damascus, now Institut Français du Proche Orient, for their invaluable help in preparing the thesis. The selection of papers to include was to a great extent shaped by what was available in Syria at the time. The two Lebanese papers as well as the Syrian one were available in Damascus. The Jordanian paper was available at the Asad Library in a censored version. I brought it uncensored from Amman. For a study of how Turkish press reported on the crisis see Salam Zandi, 'The Turkish-Syrian Crisis and the Turkish Press. A Discourse Analytical Approach' (MA thesis, University of Uppsala, 2000).

[4] ASALA reportedly killed thirty Turkish diplomats including their families, drivers and guards between 1973 and 1984. It was apparently broken up after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Beirut (Pope and Pope 1997: 44).

[5] The PKK was founded by Abdallah Öcalan in 1978 with the goal to create an independent Kurdish state. In 1984 it began an armed struggle against the Turkish state. In 1999 the Turkish government estimated that about 30,000 people had died as a result of this armed struggle, see 'Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's Opening Remarks at the Press Conference for International Journalists in Ankara', 21 February 1999 available at the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.gov.tr). In September 1999 the PKK announced that it would end its armed struggle and in early 2002 it changed its name to the Congress for Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan (KADEK).

[6] 'Askandaroun Sanjak and the International Court of Justice', 17 October 1998 at www.arabicnews.com and al-Daquqi 2001: 47.

[7] 'Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz speaks on Relations with Syria at the Plenary Session of the TGNA', available at the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (http://byegm.gov.tr).

[8] According to Mr Ömer Onhon, Head of the Middle East Department at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'some very unpleasant things would have happened' had Syria hesitated to meet Turkish demands (interview 26 April 2002).

[9] An unofficial translation of the minutes of the Adana Agreement is available on the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.mfa.gov.tr/grupa/ac/acf/adanaeng.htm cited 23 July 2003.

[10] Öcalan was arrested by Turkish security forces in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 1999. He was convicted of treason and sentenced to death in June the same year. In 2002 his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

[11] See 'Syrian-Turkish Border Strip to be Prepared for Cultivation', 4 February 2002 www.arabicnews.com and 'Turkey Clears Mines on the Border', 26 February 2002 www.bbc.co.uk.

[12] Saadet Oruc, 'Syrian General Adnan Bedr al-Hassan to Visit Ankara', *Turkish Daily News*, 5 March 2001. Plans were being made for free trade zones at all Syrian-Turkish border crossings.

[13] 'al-Anwar: Positive Turkish Message to Syria', 23 September 2002 www.syriadaily.com.

[14] See for instance 'Turkey-Israel Naval Exercise under Fire', BBC, 7 January 1998, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/45398.stm

[15] See for instance 'Turkey under Pressure to Drop Israeli Links', BBC, 8 December 1997, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/37749.stm.

[16] See for instance, 'Turkiyā tujrī tadrībāt askariyya maʿ al-Urdunn wa Isrāʾīl: Yılmaz yabdaʾu ziyāratahu li-Ammān al-yawm' (Turkey carries out military exercises with Jordan and Israel: Yılmaz starts his visit to Amman today), *al-Bayan*, 6 September 1998.

[17] See 'Joint Declaration by Turkey, the US and the United Kingdom Regarding the Agreement reached by KDP and PUK', 10 November available at the website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.gov.tr).

[18] It is still not officially admitted in Syria that it ever hosted Öcalan or supported the PKK.

[19] The October 1973 war has been dedicated a hall of its own at the Damascus Military Museum and is the only Syrian-Israeli war to be presented at the

museum. The Syrian paper included in this study has taken its name from this 'victorious' war, *Tishreen* meaning October.

[20] 'al-qiyāda al-markaziyya li al-jabhat al-wataniyya al-taqaddumiyya tastamiʻu ilā taqrīr hawla al-tatawwurāt wa al-tasʻīd al-turkī: lughat al-tahdīd laysat sāliha wa lan tujdi nafʻan maʻ sūriyā' (The central leadership of the National Progressive Front listens to reports on the developments and Turkish intensifications: The threatening language is not proper and will not lead to anything good with Syria), *Tishreen*, 6 October 1998

[21] 'Turkiyā tadkhul tarafan fī al-sirāʻ al-arabī al-israʼīlī' (Turkey enters as a party to the Arab-Israeli conflict) *al-Safir*, 7 October 1998.

[22] *Al-Hayat* published three and *al-Ray* 24 such texts.

[23] 'taʻāwun – lā tahāluf' (Cooperation not alliance), *al-Ray*, 9 October 1998.

[24] The low number of analytical texts in *Tishreen* is not due to a general scarcity of such texts. In fact, every day throughout the month of October Tishreen published at least one analytical piece on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Most of them are condemnations of the negotiations, the expected Palestinian concessions and the Palestinian decision to negotiate with Israel outside of a broader, Arab framework.

[25] Muhammad Khayr al-Wadi, 'al-tadāmun maʻ Sūriyā' (The solidarity with Syria), *Tishreen*, 12 October 1998.

[26] Muhammad Mashmūshi, '"harb tishrīn"…al-turkī!' (The Turkish…'October War'!), *al-Safir*, 6 October 1998.

[27] '"Al-Hulm" al-turkī' (the Turkish 'dream'), *al-Safir*, 26 October 1998.

[28] Muhammad al-Majdhūb, 'Sūriyā lan takūn wahdahā fī al-maʻaraka' (Syria will not be alone in the battle), *al-Safir*, 9 October 1998.

[29] The tarbush (fez) is the traditional hat which was made mandatory for all male Ottoman citizens in 1832. After the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the Turkish government forbade Turkish citizens to wear it, as part of a modernisation campaign.

[30] None of these articles specified the nature of Tlas' accusations. The reader is merely informed that they were related to the role Jordan played in the 1973 war.

[31] This was not reported in *al-Ray*.

[32] According to the Syrian report *Turkiyā wa Sūriyā* (Turkey and Syria) by Yusuf Ibrahim al-Jahmani (1999), the Turkish press published the original Turkish demands and not what was actually agreed upon during the negotiations. The report further claims that there are differences between the Turkish and Arabic texts that could not be blamed on translations. However, the report does not contain the agreement nor does it give examples of these differences.

[33] www.mfa.tr/grupa/ac/acf/adanaeng.htm, cited 23 July 2003. However, according to Turkish diplomats in Damascus, Syria later agreed to this and this is one of the main reasons why bilateral relations have improved.

[34] Article 3 in the minutes available at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states 'As of now PKK camps are not operational and definitely will not be allowed to become active'.

[35] *al-Safir*, 23 October 1998.

[36] Ussam Nur al-Din, 'liwā Iskandarūn mas'ūliyya qawmiyya arabiyya' (The region of Iskandarun is an Arab national responsibility), *al-Safir,* 10 October 1998.

[37] See, for instance 'La Syrie ne renoncera jamais à Alexandrette, souligne Damas', *L'Orient le Jour,* 20 October 1998, and 'wazīr al-i'lam as-sūrī: lā yumkinu al-tafrīt fī al-Iskandarūn', *al-Bayan,* 20 October 1998.

[38] In his *D'Alexandrette au Hatay* (2000) Michel Gilquin recounts the French handling of the Alexandretta question. He concludes that Syria has never officially recognised Turkish sovereignty over the region, and that during the Turkish-Syrian October 1998 crisis Iskanderuna was brought up by the Syrian press. While it is true that there has been no recognition, and that the region is still marked as Syrian territory on the maps, since the early 1970s the policy of the Syrian government has been not to mention the area. The fact that *Tishreen,* Syria's main newspaper, did not bring up the dispute over Hatay during the crisis makes it highly unlikely that any other Syrian mass media would have done so.

[39] In the absence of official figures, Kurds in Syria have been estimated to constitute between 8 and 10 per cent of the Syrian population. Of these approximately 200,000 are stateless following a 1962 census in which Kurds had to prove that they had lived in Syria at least since 1945 or be stripped of their Syrian citizenship. See, for instance 'Syria: the Silenced Kurds', *Human Rights Watch Report,* 8, 4 (1996).

[40] See Emma Jørum, 'Mapping the National Territory. Syrian Policies towards Hatay/Liwa' iskandarunah and the Golan Heights', paper presented at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, Anchorage, AK, 6-9 November 2003.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

IN SEARCH OF DRACULA

OR, CULTURES IN DIALOGUE

Lars Kleberg

In *Dracula*, Bram Stoker's famous Victorian horror novel, the young British lawyer Jonathan Harker sets out on a journey eastward. When the hero crosses the Danube and enters Transylvania in order to finalise a contract with a local count on the purchase of a piece of real estate in London, he notes a number of disquieting details. He finds himself in a strange, ambiguous region 'just on the border of three states', inhabited by 'four different nationalities' where five different languages are spoken (Stoker 1979: 9-10). Young Mr Harker has actually entered on two parallel journeys, the goals of which he is not aware. The first journey leads to a castle, where he encounters a rich and eccentric customer who is also the upholder of ancient vampirism, Count Dracula. The meaning of this journey slowly reveals itself to the hero. The implications of the other journey, Harker could not possibly imagine: as a narrator he is taking part in what only a hundred years later would acquire its proper name: the construction of Eastern Europe.

Does Eastern Europe really exist? The question may seem strange, and the answer self-evident. But if we agree that Eastern Europe exists, and that thereby the distinction between Eastern and Western Europe – as well as that between Europe and non-Europe – exists, we also have to agree that this distinction was not created by God or Nature. It was invented by people. And because it was invented by people, it is based on certain presuppositions of cultural difference, hierarchy, power, etc. which can be defined and analysed.

In contemporary cultural studies this kind of analysis, often called constructivist, has expanded widely in the aftermath of Edward Said's pioneering *Orientalism* (1978). This chapter aims to discuss the possibilities for such a constructivist analysis of the concept of Eastern

Europe, its advantages and limitations, and then to confront it with another model of analysis, which can be called the dialogical.

Constructivist analysis shows how a culture becomes itself and acquires power by defining itself in opposition to the Other, by projecting distinctions and hierarchies, by exclusion and inclusion. It is well suited to, and has been used widely in, studies of subordinated or 'subaltern' cultures – in feminist, post-colonial, etc. studies. In *Orientalism* Edward Said thus proposed that 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience' and that

> Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (Said 1978: 3).

The other model of cultural interpretation which we want to discuss here, the dialogical, asks questions about the interplay between cultures in a different way from the constructivist one. Inspired by the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of text, ideology and culture, it focuses not so much on questions of domination and power as on those of understanding and self-understanding in the representation of the Other. According to Bakhtin, any culture becomes a culture, acquires a language, so to say, only through mutual exchange with other cultures and their representations of it. In this perspective, 'exotopy' or 'outsideness', i.e. the point of view from outside, is not a disadvantage but a powerful motor in the development of a culture as well as of each individual. Thanks to mediators like Julia Kristeva and Tzvetan Todorov, Bakhtin's works – especially his seminal books on Rabelais and Dostoyevsky – have become widely influential in contemporary Western literary criticism and cultural studies. At a higher level of abstraction, implying larger textual units as 'national styles' or whole national cultures, comparative literature and anthropology have only recently begun to respond to Bakhtin's dialogism and his provocative proposals for research.

On the other hand, interesting applications of the constructivist approach, following the example of Said's *Orientalism*, have been introduced in the study of Slavic cultures (Todorova 1997). The most prominent example so far of constructivism in Eastern European and Slavic studies is probably Larry Wolff's widely discussed *Inventing Eastern Europe*. This is a richly documented and thought-provoking study of how Western European intellectuals, from the Enlightenment and onwards, have constructed the image of Eastern Europe, at the same time defining their own and the West's superiority over the East. This construction,

Wolff argues, had far-reaching consequences up to and during the Cold War period. Only the fall of the of the Berlin Wall in 1989 finally made it both possible and necessary to analyse critically the history of this construction, by means of which Eastern Europe has been separated from the West as darkness is separated from light. Before the Enlightenment, or in fact before Russia, as a consequence of the Great Northern War of 1700-18, took over Sweden's leading role in Northern Europe, there was no clear distinction in political or cultural geography between Western and Eastern Europe (Wolff 1994: 89-94, 156-157). The fundamental conceptual divide in Europe had traditionally been between the South and the North, i. e. between Romans and Germans, between civilisation and barbarism. In the eighteenth century, according to Wolff, this situation was fundamentally changed:

> [...] it was the intellectual work of the Enlightenment to bring about that modern reorientation of the continent which produced Western Europe and Eastern Europe. Poland and Russia would be mentally detached from Sweden and Denmark, and associated instead [as they had not been before – L.K.] with Hungary and Bohemia, the Balkan lands of Ottoman Europe, and even the Crimea and the Black Sea. [...] The Enlightenment had to invent Western Europe and Eastern Europe together, as complementary concepts, defining each other by opposition and adjacency. (Wolff 1994: 5).

According to Wolff, eighteenth-century travellers from the West – French, English, later also German – were essential to the establishing of the new intellectual division of Europe. As a matter of fact, many of the works presented as travelogues were by no means so novel, but drew heavily on earlier descriptions of Russia and the East, primarily on von Herberstein's famous work of 1549. What changed radically in the early eighteenth century, according to Wolff, was, on the one hand, the 90 degree turn of the main axis of opposition in Europe from North/South to East/West, and on the other hand, the enormous expansion of literature on Eastern Europe and Russia produced in the West, from travelogues to historical and geographical studies to fictional travels as found in Casanova's *The History of My Life*, Raspe's *The Singular Adventures of Baron Münchausen*, or Marquis de Sade's *History of Juliette*.

A striking feature at almost all the travelogues and descriptions of Eastern Europe is the image of ambiguity. These nations – from Poland, through the Baltic lands, to Russia, and southwards down to Bohemia, Hungary, Dalmatia, Transylvania and the Balkans, only now united under the common name of 'Eastern Europe' – are all situated somewhere in between and disquietingly, not to say monstrously, mixed. Eastern Europe is not part of 'real' Europe, but also does not belong to Asia; it is not located at the antipodes of civilisation, down in the depths of barbarism, but rather unstably situated somewhere on the scale between

civilisation and barbarism. The landscape which the travellers find in Eastern Europe is strange (for a person coming from England or France): vast, almost uninhabited steppes, endless forests, or wild mountains, usually covered in fog. The languages spoken are numerous, 'strange', and of unclear origin. The inhabitants might look European, but they are nevertheless as different as Asians or Africans. The common people are stricken by illness, especially by repellent skin diseases, and are all dressed in sheepskins – half men, half animals. The use of corporal punishment is paramount, and the sexual practices are described as brutal, bordering on the non-human. The aristocrats of Eastern Europe, on the other hand – be they in Warsaw, in a castle in Lithuania, or in St Petersburg – might look almost like their Western counterparts, and dress like them; but this actually means that they are as if disguised, and even more ambiguous than the common people.[1]

Eastern Europe was thus essentially defined as *somewhere in between*, a fact that aroused suspicion in many observers and statesmen. In 1784, the new British ambassador to St Petersburg, Count de Ségur, on his way to Russia through Poland, visited Frederick the Great in Potsdam. The king ironically remarked that Poland was a strange country: 'a free land where the people is enslaved, a republic with a king, a vast country almost without population [where] the women are truly the men' (Wolff 1994: 18).

Neither European nor Asian; similar on the surface but different in their hearts; partly civilised, partly barbarian; seductive and repulsive at the same time: the dangerous ambiguity was to become the common denominator of all more or less imaginative descriptions of the people inhabiting Eastern Europe. The Enlightenment's construction of the borderline between the West and the 'other Europe', according to Larry Wolff, ends logically in Winston Churchill's famous Fulton speech of 1946 which, maybe in a self-fulfilling prophecy, announced that an 'iron curtain' was dividing Europe into two parts. The construction was revived for the last time on a large scale by Milan Kundera in his often-quoted essay 'Un Occident kidnappé' – only with the difference that Kundera insisted on moving the cultural border between West and East further east, thus reclaiming Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary for the light and separating Central Europe from the dark abyss of the Russian/Soviet empire (Kundera 1983; on the debate over Kundera's thesis, see Schöpflin and Wood 1989).

What Larry Wolff's analysis of the constructed representation of Eastern Europe discloses is the Western self-image of superiority, and the borders within it. A rereading of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, a book which surprisingly enough is not mentioned in Wolff's study, only confirms this image. Stoker was obviously well read in the travel descriptions of the kind Wolff refers to. When young Mr Harker in

Dracula changes the last train for horse and carriage, he passes through a landscape where the horizon is strangely broken, 'whether with trees or hills I know not, for it is so far off that big things and little are mixed' (Stoker 1979: 14). People are dressed in strange folk costume and the inevitable sheepskins, and they certainly have terrible skin diseases.

With the help of Wolff's analysis we can see that in *Dracula* we are not only in Transylvania, but in the constructed image of Eastern Europe. From this perspective, the ambiguous vampire, Count Dracula, reveals himself as a symbol firmly situated in the Eastern European register. But Stoker's Dracula not only resides in Transylvania. He manages to make his way to England, where he threatens to spread his terrible madness, especially among weak young English women. Dracula's vampirism has more often than not been interpreted in terms of ambiguous sexuality, an elementary force which threatens to undermine the norms ruling our libido and to spread its rebellious 'message' like a contagious disease (Byron 1999; Janion 2002). However, one should also remember that Dracula, thanks to his enormous fortunes in pure gold brought from Transylvania, threatens to disrupt the entire London stock market. In the political climate of the late twentieth century, the novel *Dracula* – and an endless number of films based on it – has functioned effectively within the frame work of the general myth of the Eastern European peril, including Soviet communism (which obviously was not to hand when Stoker wrote his book). Even today, *Dracula* continues to serve as a powerful vessel for Western prejudice about Eastern Europe, inspiring ever new myths of the threat of 'Eastern contamination', including post-communist infiltration, the AIDS epidemic and Russian mafia operations on the international stock market. In cultural terms, and from the perspective of the literary construction or invention of Eastern Europe, *Dracula* can thus be seen as a matrix metaphor for the Western image of Eastern Europe's alleged resistance to modernisation. When the Count is finally driven back to where he belongs, and annihilated with great violence, it is carried out significantly by nothing less than a joint expedition of British capitalists and a Dutch scientist.

Our rereading of Bram Stoker's novel suggests both the possibilities and the limitations of a constructivist analysis; here, the enlightened travellers' invention of Eastern Europe has come to an end, and can easily be summarised. The invention of the threatening East European Other sometimes has less to do with a concrete geographical and cultural reality than with our – Western, 'civilised', or simply human – need to find objects on to which we can project our anxiety, our fear of the irrational inside ourselves (so vast and incomprehensible compared with our concrete everyday life). But once the constructivist analysis has exposed the ethnocentrism and shown how the construction of the Other serves its obscure (or all too obvious) purposes in the imperial

motherland, what more remains than to repeat the operation on new source material? And what have we learned about Eastern Europe? Little, or almost nothing of course; and the constructivist analysis actually never promises us a different, more 'true' image of the Other (Said 1995: 3). At the same time as our own – academic – culture appears enlightened in its critical self-reflectedness, the Other, the other culture, remains strangely closed to us. The constructivist analysis in this sense carries enlightenment, but communicates no other voice than its monological own.

Can the voice of the Other, then, actually reach us, can it be understood? Or, as Caryl Emerson poses the question to contemporary cultural studies:

> Can one culture study another culture that is radically different from it? Can cultures genuinely learn from one another – and if so, on what basis – or can they only exploit and assimilate, that is, interact solely in terms of dominance and power? (Emerson 1996: 107).

Emerson sees three possible approaches that can be adopted in relation to another culture. First, there is the naïve idea of total translatability between cultures, which is based on the presupposition that 'all that is needed is good will [...] and the patience to seek out the necessary equivalents' and which can often be found in political science and diplomacy. The benefits of such a position may be a certain universalism and ecumenism, but its dark sides 'lead us to cultural imperialism and to a stupefying naïveté about the genuine multiplicity of the world'. The second approach is the opposite of the first. It assumes that cultures are so untranslatable that, in order to understand a foreign culture, the best we can do is 'to try to become what they are' – an illusory path, which makes us pretend to be what, with our experience, we cannot be. But there is a third approach, Emerson says, which is more complicated and demanding than the two opposite 'total' variants, one which presupposes understanding from a self-reflected outside position. The basic arguments for such an 'outsideness' are elaborated in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin (to the translation and interpretation of which Emerson has made important contributions). Emerson writes:

> As categories to organize our thinking about culture, "sameness" and "difference" ['total translatability' and 'total untranslatability' – L. K.] carry within themselves no genuine positive potential. Bakhtin would insist that to be a competent student of another culture, one must remain outside it, but outside in a particular way: one must become an outsider equipped with some – not all, but some – insider skills. These skills will come about only if first one lovingly accepts one's own particular personality and placement in the world. (Emerson 1996: 109).

According to Bakhtin, it is only from a position of responsibility for one's own uniqueness that one can enter into contact or dialogue with any unique Other – person, text, or culture. 'Outsideness' in relation to a foreign culture is thus not an obstacle, as is often taken for granted, but, on the contrary, a precondition for creative understanding:

> In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that a foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly (but not maximally fully, because there will be cultures that see and understand even more). A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures. We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects, new semantic depths. Without *one's own* questions one cannot creatively understand anything other or foreign (but, of course, the question must be serious and sincere). Such dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched. (Bakhtin 1986: 7).

Such understanding of the importance of outsideness is far from self-evident in contemporary cultural studies. Instead, the approach which proclaims that 'we should be that which we study' has gained wide currency. According to this doctrine, we should first and foremost study ourselves – women in Women's Studies, African Americans in African American Studies, hispanics in Hispanic Studies, etc. – since only my own 'I' can know how I feel and experience the world. Caryl Emerson recommends us instead to listen to the voice of Bakhtin, coming from the temporal and spatial 'outside' of Russia of the 1920s and 30s:

> Bakhtin would say, on the contrary, that we would learn more and better about ourselves if we set out to study the 'non-I', something in the world that we were especially outside of […] The last thing we should do is cluster together with those who share our attributes and complaints, and we should avoid studying whatever it was we were born as. Rather, we should study that which we can work toward, what we can be born into. (Emerson 1996: 110-11).

Bakhtin's emphasis on outsideness, non-coincidence, and love of difference as prerequisites for creative understanding has puzzled certain theoreticians of cultural studies and sometimes produced obvious misinterpretations (Hirschkop and Shepherd 1989; cf. Emerson 1996: 118-20). His absolute indifference to questions of power has especially provoked Western readers, including Edward Said. Quite unjustly, Said discards Bakhtin's philosophy of dialogue as just one of numerous academic variations on the concept of 'interlocutor' which suggest 'the calm as well as the antiseptic, controlled quality of a thought-experiment' (Said 1989: 210). If one actually wants to contextualise Bakhtin's thought,

it is not the air-conditioned atmosphere of American academic seminars that comes to one's mind but rather that fact that Bakhtin throughout his whole life (1895-1975) in Soviet Russia was a solitary – marginalised, exiled, crippled – who never saw the major part of his own texts published.

Since the travellers of the Enlightenment elaborated the image of the dangerous and ambivalent Eastern Europe, and Bram Stoker metaphorically transformed and hyperbolised it in *Dracula* a century ago, many reports have been written on Eastern Europe 'under Western eyes' (Malia 1999). The objectifying 'orientalistic' approach continued to be felt throughout the twentieth century, with adaptation to the political circumstances of the Cold War; this is especially true of diplomats' reports and memoirs. On the other hand, the political tourism of sympathisers who consciously or unconsciously have suppressed their own point of view 'for the other's sake' – or, more specifically, for another political ideology's sake – is a phenomenon of the last century which deserves special study (Caute 1988; Malia 1999).[2] Here, however, we would like to point out a third kind of traveller, who has neither looked for the Other in order to confirm his own superior identity nor tried to forget themselves in order to become mere 'voices' of the other.

'One looks for what one lacks', says the Swedish novelist and critic Agneta Pleijel in a discussion of the role played by modern Polish literature in her own culture. Swedish literature, and especially Swedish poetry, has suffered from an abstract understanding of man's metaphysical isolation, which Pleijel sees as complementary to the political pragmatism ruling in society: 'The political sphere is often so flat that poetry is forced out into the far outskirts, preferably into the uninhabited.' Through contact with Polish literature, Pleijel says, she gained an awareness of 'features of my own country and its ways of thinking and writing which I don't think I would have managed without'. One looks for what one lacks. Or, as Bakhtin says, entering into dialogue with a foreign culture, we seek in it answers to our own questions. The meaning of Swedish culture has become clearer in the confrontation with the Other, in this case the Polish Other:

> In them [poets like Zbigniew Herbert and Wisława Szymborska L.K.] one finds an acuity of attitude, an urge to scrutinize morals and systems of thought, an awareness of the individual and the individual's responsibility[...]and a very concrete defence for human values, which is unusual in Swedish or Scandinavian poetry.[...]
>
> My theory of the complementary tells me that the history of Swedish power during the twentieth century has not favoured clear-cut distinction and disagreement. Many poets have – quite naturally – stood on the side of power. The strong pragmatism of power, its good efficiency, its seemingly good bureaucracy, have forced poets into realms where the benevolent but somewhat sticky hands of power have not reached: out into nature or into the soul.[...]But also here, for

> natural reasons, it is soft. The abrupt changes of Polish history and the
> impossibility of speaking without getting into conflict with power have favoured a
> harsher diction and taking a clearer stand. (Pleijel 1999: 13, my translation, L.K.).

Pleijel's dialogue with the other culture began without actual travelling, through reading the works of translators. But many have started by making the sometimes laborious journey to Eastern Europe in order to find what is lacking in their own culture. In 1960, Eugenio Barba, a young Italian student interested in stage design and theatre direction, with experience of hitch-hiking and various trades, decided to go to Poland and to study. The direct impulse for this decision, Barba recalls in his reflections on his Polish apprenticeship, was Andrzej Wajda's film *Ashes and Diamonds* (Barba 1999: 15). The purpose of going to Poland was to find what Barba felt was absent in the Western European theatre of those days: spiritual devotion, strong contrasts, expressive form. What he found in Poland, however, was not a ready model of culture which could easily be adopted or translated into his own categories. The encounter with Poland led to a total re-evaluation of everything that the young Italian left-wing student had learnt and accepted. Reality was different from what the facades promised, and first impressions gave way to a disillusion in which all previous theories, both political and theatrical, dissolved:

> Everything which had previously fascinated me about socialist Poland had now
> become a ground for criticism. The theatres were crowded because the workers
> were obliged to go there. The interest in poets whose books were selling like hot
> cakes was proof that freedom was only attainable through literary fiction.
> Privileges for artists were proof of the discrimination and the unjust conditions in
> which the workers lived: Poland was a prison, where you could neither have a
> passport nor travel abroad as could citizens in capitalist Europe. The secret police
> were omnipresent and the friendliness of a girl could conceal the interest of an
> informer. (Barba 1999: 25).

But behind the facades, Barba found not only oppression, bureaucracy and discrimination. There was also – in spite of, or in strange interdependence with, the grim reality – a spirit of cultural and personal devotion among Polish artists, who did not hesitate about the mission of their work. Barba's description of his journey into this Poland – through the 'ashes' to the 'diamonds', to paraphrase the title of Wajda's film[3] – is a fascinating example of someone's crossing the border into another culture and exposing himself to its influence. After a period of introduction to the dynamic cultural scene in Warsaw, Barba became acquainted with the director Jerzy Grotowski in the little provincial town of Opole, and became his apprentice for almost two years. Grotowski, who was to become a legendary guru of the independent, or 'third theatre' movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, was still neither

well known nor particularly appreciated in Polish theatrical circles. Barba took part in the experimental work on the development of actors' psychophysical skills and in the preparation of productions which would make Grotowski's 'poor' theatre famous in the West, such as *Akropolis* (after Wyspiański) and *Doctor Faustus* (after Marlowe). The journey into Poland also became a journey into the unknown:

> I myself did not understand everything that happened in the work. But sometimes, in *Akropolis*, while watching a scene with its contrasting rhythms or its cruel details, my vision became double and an invisible veil of tears turned my gaze inwards, towards a secret and unknown part of myself. (Barba 1999: 35).

In due time, political circumstances forced Barba to leave Poland and become the prophet of Grotowski's theatrical New Testament in the West. Barba's fascinating testimony, many years afterwards, of the journey into Polish culture and his apprenticeship with the still unknown director in Opole can, of course, be seen as part of the final conversion of Grotowski into a mythical founder, and of Barba as his true follower. But the concrete description of the Polish adventure, of the difficulties in entering into another culture and at the same time into a completely new artistic vision, and finally of understanding the necessity of finding oneself in encounter with the foreign, makes Barba's travelogue a highly valuable document of cultural dialogue. Here, the implications of Mikhail Bakhtin's demand for 'outsideness' as a pre-condition for understanding are shown in a multitude of aspects.

Although Bakhtin's dialogical thought does not respond easily to some of the questions of contemporary cultural studies, or offers questions as answers, it offers a productive framework for any reflection on cultural difference and exchange. Barba's travelogue-memoir demonstrates this in a text which contains little theoretical reflection on its own position. It is, however, also possible to apply a dialogical approach in working with historical sources, as has been shown by Tzvetan Todorov in his now classic work on the Spanish colonisation of Mexico, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*. In the epilogue to the book Todorov explains how he tried to evade both the danger of naïve siding with the Other (cf. Emerson's approach of 'total intranslatability') and that of transforming the Other to an easily manipulated object (cf. Emerson's 'total translatability'):

> I have tried to avoid two extremes. The first is the temptation to reproduce the voices of these figures 'as they really are'; to try to do away with my own presence 'for the other's sake'. The second is to subjugate the other to myself, to make him into a marionette of which I pull the strings. Between the two, I have sought not a terrain of compromise, but the path of dialogue. (Todorov 1984b: 250).

With obvious reference to Bakhtin, Todorov argues for 'a dialogue in which no one has the last word, in which neither voice is reduced to the status of a simple object, and in which we gain advantage from our externality to the other'. In an essay about French travelogues from Bulgaria, Todorov discusses the further implications of such an approach. Anticipating later studies of the construction of Eastern Europe, Todorov discusses the possibilities and limits of understanding. It is not uncommon to travel and see what you expect to see, as did the French visitors to Bulgaria. Neither is it difficult to observe how documents of such travels reveal more about the culture of the observer than about the Other. To understand, one must take a step outside one's own horizon and its one-sidedness, and expose it to the point of view of the Other. Such experience, Todorov concludes, can be based on travelling but can also be achieved in an internal dialogue with another culture. What is necessary is, as the émigré always has been forced to do, to see oneself as well as the Other from a double perspective:

> It is not sufficient to be another to see: because from his point of view, the other is a self, and all the others are barbarians. Exotopia should be lived from the inside; it is the discovery within the very core of culture of the difference between *my* culture and *the* culture, between *my* values and *the* values. You can make this discovery all by yourself, without ever leaving your place of birth, through a progressive but never complete estrangement from your original group. You can make it through the other, but in this you also have to go through a questioning of yourself, which is the only way to assure that your look on the other is both patient and attentive. It is, on the whole, the exiled, internally or abroad, who puts all the chances on his side[...]*C'est en somme l'exilé, de l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur, qui met toutes les chances de son côté* [...] (Todorov 1984c: 384).

Notes:

[1] Cf. Lotman 1984: 231-6 on the Westernisation of Russian aristocratic life during the period of Peter the Great, which, on the one hand accelerated the alienation of the aristocracy from the peasantry, and on the other hand, introduced a 'theatricalisation' of the life of the aristocracy which applied different manners, clothing, etc. in the city of St Petersburg and in their country estates.

[2] Certainly many of the best travelogues and reports from other cultures, in spite of the author's or reporter's explicit ambition to just 'give voice' to the Other, are still read today, thanks to the presence of a 'double view' in the text, an interest in the light which the Other throws on the reporter's own culture. Classical examples of the report genre, different but all with a more or less audible 'second voice', are Sergej Tret'jakov's *A Chinese Testament: The*

Autobiography of Tan Shih-hua (1930, English transl. 1934, 1978), Oscar Lewis'
The Children of Sanchez (1961), and Studs Terkel's *Division Street* (1967).
[3] Actually, Wajda's film, and Jerzy Andrzejewski's novel on which it was based,
had taken the title from a poem by the Polish romantic poet Cyprian Norwid –
just another example of the vitality and topicality of the great romantic poets in
post-war Poland which Barba points out.

WHOSE BORDERS?
SOME EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL AFTERTHOUGHTS

Inga Brandell

The nation-state border, as it is perceived and used by individuals and collectives in the Near and Middle East, constitutes the common focus of the case studies presented in this book. Since the end of the Cold War there has actually been a substantial increase in 'border studies' and general interest in borders. This volume and the research project that carried it forward are part of this trend. The first period of intense interest in border issues, up to the Second World War, had as its frame of reference the political conflicts over existing boundaries, and the debate and struggle over nation and territory. In contrast, the 'new' European border studies from the 1960s onwards, eschewed, according to Strassoldo, legal and geographical perspectives and focussed more on integration, socio-economics and the problems of border people (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 8).[1] It is less easy, however, to tell what is the common frame of reference of the post-Cold War research interest as regards borders and boundaries.

In the concluding chapter of Migdal's volume on boundaries and belonging, Béatrice Hibou offers though a characterisation in the following terms: 'Recent scholarship on borders is a manifestation of the recognition that boundaries are central sites, or privileged spaces of observation of fluid and moving forms and of the continuous formation of social and political practices, as well as state practices' (Hibou 2004: 353). This is close to formulations by Donnan and Wilson advocating for contemporary border studies a focus on border people, 'their related ethnic and national identities, in terms of their roles in networks and institutions of politics and power', which in turn means 'marrying the study of territory and the state with the investigation of process and agency in and beyond borders' (Donnan and Wilson 1999: 62). For these

authors boundaries and borders are both privileged viewpoints for the study of larger processes, and central sites for their occurring.

At a more factual level, recently published border studies often situate themselves in the intersection of the problematisation – or even 'deconstruction' – of the nation and the nation-state, and the current studies in terms of globalisation.[2] Probably they are forerunners of a more general questioning of the political form of the nation-state in the era of globalisation, something which is largely anticipated in the studies of the European Union and more rarely, beyond it.

The cases presented and discussed in the present book, with their consistent focus on the nation-state border and the international boundaries, put forth the changing and varied uses and meanings given to them by individuals and socio-political actors, the discourses and policies surrounding their maintenance and legitimation. Here the nation-state border is not, or not solely, the point of observation of processes in societies and states; it is not, or not only, studied because of the border-populations and their particular situation created by the concomitant densification of the presence of the state and the conditions of *heterotopy*. The international boundary and the nation-state border are here *the* actual problem.

As formulated in the introductory chapter, the overriding question of this volume could by consequence be divided into two; first, whether people and institutions in various parts of the world relate in significantly different ways to the nation-state border as a result of diverging historical experiences and contemporary conditions; and secondly, if this is so, whether the concepts and theories produced by the Western historical experience could be used to address the nation-state border in other contexts. The cases and analyses presented in the preceding chapters thus constitute inputs both to a reflection on current Middle Eastern polities and societies and the frontiers between them, and to the more general debate on the territorial nation-state and its borders. Without repeating what has already been elaborated in the preceding chapters, certain lines of argument will be pursued further here and certain cautious conclusions drawn, with the purpose also of opening the discussion to new questions and further research.

Discourses and Practices

The discourses and practices observed and discussed in the different chapters of this volume emerge from the four different categories of actors identified in the introductory chapter: the Turkish foreign policy-makers and the editors of the Syrian geography in the chapters by Lundgren and Rooke are *state* or *government actors*, the journalists and authors from Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria approached by Micallef,

Jørum and Rooke are *intellectuals* in the broad sense. The Aleppo traders in Rabo's chapter and the Syrian businessmen followed by Picard are *non-state economic actors*. The latter are, however, at the same time *migrants*. The Turkish Cypriots in the chapter by Claire and Etienne Copeaux in turn, belong to several categories, but are approached here primarily as *forced migrants*. The view that all these people have of the nation-state borders, and how they use them differ substantially, between as well as within the different categories. This is why it seems pertinent to keep in mind the question of 'whose borders', which is also the title of this chapter.

Furthermore, the borders in question in this book are several. By consequence, the findings presented in the preceding chapters can lay the ground for comparison at several levels: between actors, between borders studied and between time periods. Similarly, it allows for comparisons between the borders studied here and other nation-state borders, particularly those that inform most of the literature. A systematic comparison goes beyond the scope of this chapter, and the discussion that follows will hence move between the levels and their possible combinations.

Nation-state Borders and Territory in the Near East

Two seemingly contradictory conclusions can be drawn from the work presented in this volume. Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Cyprus clearly show that the territorial nation-state with its boundaries has taken root in the region and is there to stay for the foreseeable future. The 'slavery of the frontiers', as Baduel names the phenomenon (Baduel 1989b: 5), is definitely established, the 'unmixing of people', as Kasaba quotes Brubaker's characterisation of the post-imperial time after the First World War (Kasaba 2004: 28, Brubaker 1997), is still pursued; institutional and ideological differences between the nations are continuously created and sustained, sometimes even by the very same people who transgress the boundary; and national elites are enforced. The early impact and resilience of the national boundaries drawn in the wake of the First World War can be proven with the case of Muhammad Kurd Ali. As Rooke reports, he did not accept the boundaries as drawn by the Mandatory power in its treaty with Turkey, but still, in his description of Syria, refrained from including places beyond those actual boundaries.

Simultaneously, however, every boundary and large portions of different territories are contested or contestable at every moment. Not only is the inviolability of international boundaries not upheld, as in the case of the Turkish presence in northern Iraq or the international interventions in Iraq; not only are international boundaries not recognised, as by Syria in the case of Hatay/Iskanderuna, or totally conflictual as in the case of Cyprus. But any boundary and any portion of

territory can, due to political conjuncture, be thrown into the debate and become a cause of conflict. In the early period, *Khitat al-Shām* respected the boundary with Turkey, but certainly not the boundaries between the Mandates. And as Picard reminds us, both the initial separation of Syria and Lebanon, and the inclusion within Lebanon of certain areas of the old wilaya of Damascus surfaced during the Lebanese civil war, and continue to 'nourish a political controversy to this day' (p. 76). This goes even for the Turkish context, where territorial issues although *milli dava* – questions not for discussion – were brought up by the Turkish-Cypriot vote in favour of the reunification of Cyprus, or the cautious questioning of the history of Hatay that Micallef reports, and prove that some territories and boundaries will – at least – have their history rewritten.

Whatever the background of the regional nation-state projects preceding the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, it is clear, as Jørum stresses, that a majority of the boundaries in the region were drawn by the great powers of the time, Great Britain and France. This explains more than anything else the ease with which they can be discussed and contested. The case with Turkey, as has been extensively discussed in preceding chapters, is, of course, different, since here the bounding of the territory is, on the contrary, made part of the myth of the autonomous foundation of the nation by Kemal Atatürk and his followers. But the background is not only mythical, as recalled by Hinnebusch. Turkey is one of the countries in the region that has inherited 'more clear features of the nation-state model', including a more distinct national identity (Hinnebusch 2005: 153).[3]

Another point concerns the territory of which there is not *one* understanding. The Syrian businessmen have a 'a networked definition of space', and the other Syrian actors' perception of it resembles more one of these 'archipelagos' that Appadurai uses as a metaphor to describe people's relation to space in the era of globalisation. This includes even *Khitat al-Shām*, although its very purpose was to describe the national territory. It remains to discuss, of course, if institution building has since then homogenised the territory from the point of view of the state and its citizens. Has the territory in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and the 'Turkish Republic of Cyprus' become filled with those equal, not overlapping, and contiguous, institutional and judiciary units that Nordman described as the central process of the territorialisation, in his case, of France (1998)? Or does the territory, on the contrary, also from this perspective, remain an 'archipelago'?

The Extremism of the Nation-state Boundary

One effect of the strong presence of the nation-state principle and the weak presence of the territorial principle in the region is the creation of a

kind of extreme boundary. The fate of the inhabitants of Cyprus and the territorial organisation of the island, with its multiple boundaries and limits constitute an example of this. At a socio-political level it is the effect of the encounter between two incompatible social and political models that corresponds to a 'territorialisation of the millets' as Claire Mauss-Copeaux and Etienne Copeaux put it. The millet, a communal religious-ethnic organisation of the population and in particular the basis of the political order in the Ottoman Empire, was not territorial and the different millets were to a varied extent intermingled in the territory. Further, as recalled by Reşat Kasaba, the millets were already 'the product of the state's attempts at distinguishing and institutionalizing its own rule'; beyond the state and the communal leaders the boundaries of the groups 'remained amorphous and as such they defied easy categorization (Kasaba 2004: 48). A deeper delving into the Hatay/Iskanderuna case would show the great uncertainties at the level of individuals and families surrounding the counting and identification of the various religious or linguistic groups in the late 1930s. And in Cyprus, as described by the Copeaux, it was not easy to tell who was a Greek and who was a Turk.

The case of Cyprus is in any case one of the most intense clashes and interpenetrations between modern territorial nationalism and the preceding communalism-cum-imperial political organisation, bringing to the fore an extreme, and at the same time deeply contested, boundary. This kind of situation develops, it seems, when each side is equipped with a concept and a strong vision of the territorial nation-state. Perhaps the latter part of the Armenian tragedy can also be read as the result of such a clash between two populations whose leaders, at least, conceived of political values and culture only in terms of nation and territory. The paradoxical effect of this difficult 'unmixing' of people is, as stressed by the Copeaux, that the allegedly secular Republic of Turkey – unwillingly or not – reintroduced religious affiliation as a national identity marker, in Cyprus, but also in mainland Turkey.

But Cyprus is not the only current case where the territorial principle of modern nationalism encloses populations within extreme borders. The wall and fences constructed by the Israeli government since 2002 to close off the Palestinian territories is another example. While the purpose is to prevent violent actions on Israeli territory by Palestinians, they represent an acknowledgment of the impossibility of establishing and maintaining the principle of a bounded national territory in a situation of such mutual interpenetration and dependence. Like the wall between East and West Germany, it constitutes recognition of the impossibility – illegitimacy or lack of acceptance – of a national territorial and ideological project. In such a situation, even if people have not moved at all, or have not moved far, a diasporic mentality develops and the territorial boundary contributes to the creation of a *before* and an *after*, it becomes related to the initial

catastrophe which constitutes diasporic mentality and community.[4] If there is a lack of possible projections into a different future, the before and after takes on a growing importance. Divided cities, such as the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia, Beirut during the civil war, Jerusalem and Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina, become the symbols of the coinciding ruptures in space and time.

As mentioned by Bertrand Badie, a fierce critic of the political importance attributed to identity questions, this introduction of the territorial and national principles in the region has had a great impact on another scattered people, the Kurds. In a perhaps less tragic and so far less extreme but still decisive way, their many relations with different places, histories, traditions and cultures, and neighbours, have had to be subsumed and interlocked in a continuous and bounded territory, the imagined future Kurdistan (Badie 1995: 95).

When, on the other hand, the territorial side of modern nationalism is less strong, as the cases from Syria studied in this book seem to indicate, the boundary can over time take on more divergent meanings, and give a little more margin for adaptation, different uses and interpretation, and not represent such a definite closure in space and time, such a definite negation of the possible recognition of different and mixed identities. Not only did the territory seem to be an 'absent dimension' for the early Arab nationalists in the Mashrek, as formulated by Hamdani,[5] and confirmed in this volume by Rooke's study, but the contours of the nation were explicitly non-religious, with everyone – all Christians from the different churches, all Muslims, Sunnis and Shias and others – being able to join in a common Arabness.

This opposition between a territorial and implicit or explicit religious national identity on the one hand, and a loose relation to territory and an ideological national identity on the other – Turkey and Syria and other Arab countries – will not be taken too far. Variations over time and diversity within society are large, and, as Elizabeth Picard claims, ideology in contemporary Syria is loosing its importance and communalism gaining also at the political level. A common trend in the region in the last few decades has also been the equation of nation and religion, as shown by the evolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, or, for that sake, the imaginary vision of the divide between Lebanon and Syria as being one between a Christian and a Muslim state, which is of course not at all the reality. But still, if language and religion are made to coincide as national markers, they will not in the Arab-dominated part of the region permit a correspondence between territory and national identity – and thus not as *extreme* boundaries as found in Cyprus and in Israel/Palestine.

The Difficulty of the Nation-state Boundary

However, even when the principle of the sovereign territorial nation-state is definitely and forcefully established, as in the case of Turkey, the problems are far from solved. Lucien Fèbvre, the French historian mentioned in the introductory chapter, stated that the national border did not really count before the *militarisation* of the nation, which in Europe happened with the establishment of general military service.[6] In one way, then, the Turkish border counted from the very beginning. The territorial boundaries of the new Republic were defined as the lines corresponding to the positions of the Turkish army in the armistice agreements, which were obtained through the mobilisation of the remaining Ottoman army and a mobilised and armed population. But, this territorial division also included Arabs and Kurds, each part of other national projects, and in the former case responsible for having fought with the enemies against the Turkish army, and in the latter for not respecting Turkey's borders.

Both in the case of Northern Iraq, with its mostly Kurdish population, and in the case of Hatay, with its partly Arab population, the borders are contested; or rather they could at any time become contested. The absolute principle of respect for territorial and political sovereignty, as claimed by the Turkish state, is not enough when conditions on the ground do not correspond to principles of nationality, or when the inhabitants or neighbouring states harbour, or could harbour, other national projects concerning the same territories. In spite of all the wars of the twentieth century, in spite of all the refugees who came and went, in spite of the organised exchange of populations, even the most consistently enforced national project in the region (together with Israel), and all its reforms with a view to creating a 'horizontal fraternity', cannot yet consider the question of its borders as settled.[7] On the other hand, as described by Micallef and referred to in the introduction of this volume, the presence of state institutions in Hatay and the use of them by parts of the population, together with the changes in 'regional configuration' and the ensuing relative opening of the boundary to Syria after 1998, are indications of the boundary becoming less contested, less politicised. Even so, the Turkish-Syrian border is still far from approaching this state of 'naturalness' that, according to Fernand Braudel, characterises old boundaries.[8] So far Syria has not officially recognised the location of the portion of the boundary concerning Hatay/Iskanderuna.

This brings us back to Lucien Fèbvre, and his statement quoted in the Introduction. He wrote that 'it is not by beginning with the boundary itself that it can be studied, it is by starting with the state' (Fèbvre 1962: 16-17). Fèbvre was referring to a long historical perspective, not simply to the European nation-states of his time. The constructivist approach framing Lundgren's study of Turkish foreign policy could be used to

develop a typology of different contemporary boundaries in the region and elsewhere based on how they are upheld and reproduced in actions and discourses by the foreign-policy makers. This would only follow the acknowledgment that, even within a relatively unified international system built on the assumption of sovereign territorial nation-states, all states are not the same and as a consequence not all boundaries are the same – in the political and military sense, as specified by Fèbvre. This difference between states and societies, their institutions of power, and hence relation to the territory, can be conceptualised, with Michel Foucault, as differing 'governmentality', an argument continued below.

State Frontiers, Nation Borders

We cannot do without the 'Western concepts', but we can differentiate and contextualise. This is the solution proposed by Eisenstadt in a discussion about how to analyse societies – Muslim in his case – on their own terms (Eisenstadt 2002), and, of course, this is what has taken place in the preceding chapters of this volume. An important aspect of this is to question the conflation of concepts, as Eisenstadt does and in a similar context also Brown in a recent contribution (Brown 2002). Eisenstadt refers to the necessity to keep apart the notions of civil society and public sphere, while Brown discusses how constitutionalism must be divorced from ideas about liberalism and pluralism when analysing Arab constitutions. In both cases the aim is to elaborate instruments for an analytically more fruitful approach. In the context of the present book the conflation of concepts concerns first of all the concept of nation-state, both as such and in its position as an attribute to border and boundary.

It has already been mentioned in the introductory chapter that a multidisciplinary research endeavour such as this entails a scrutiny of the different disciplines and the construction of their objects of study. Concepts common to social and human sciences, like nation-state, are in different disciplines articulated with other concepts and empirical references in a way that is specific to each discipline. The encounter between disciplines makes it possible to clarify both the conflation and the specific and empirical load of the concepts, as well as their linkages to other concepts in respective discipline. Here, both nation and state as concepts are charged with varying history and references. A first step is then to separate their different components, and in this case it means proposing a distinction between on the one hand state frontiers, or state boundaries, and on the other nation borders.

To enhance comparison, but also the understanding of different societies and their modes of modernity and post-modernity, it is not sufficient to disaggregate the conflated concepts. These concepts, 'universals' as Foucault defines them, must be questioned with respect to

their archaeology not only in their original setting, but also in other particular settings. Furthermore, close observation of what people do and what they say, as undertaken in the preceding chapters here, highlight a need for other concepts beyond the ones offered by European history. Some such concepts have been introduced or used in the preceding chapters and we will return to them below. It would seem that the parallel increase of empirical studies of modernity and nation-state in other parts of the world than Europe, and the works on European history and its 'universals' undertaken by Foucault and many others, open up for an encounter between 'particularised universals' and other 'universals' that can no longer be dismissed as just 'particulars'. Adding to this possibility is the publication of many studies of material in other languages, as in the case of this volume in Arabic and Turkish, which brings with them their own concepts. Translation is no more one way.[9]

State Boundaries and 'Family'

The evidence brought forward by the different chapters in this book present consistent differences at many levels between the boundaries and borders surrounding Turkey and the boundaries and borders surrounding Syria. The fact that these boundaries are in part the same brings us back to the extreme case of Cyprus where the boundaries are consistently politicised and differently viewed by the two parties, by the one as an international boundary denoting sovereignty and by the other as an illegal line of demarcation created by military occupation, which still is the case also with the Israeli-Palestinian 'boundary'. With the important exception of Hatay/Iskanderuna, most of the boundary in the Turkish-Syrian case, as in the Turkish-Iraqi case, is officially regarded in the same way, as an internationally and bilaterally recognised boundary of political and territorial sovereignty.[10] Clearly, what stands out as differences between the two countries, like, for example, the irredentist claim for a Greater Syria as compared with Turkey's recurrent reference to the inviolability of the frontiers, are not necessarily valid. The cases chosen for this volume on the Syrian and Turkish sides respectively are not directly comparable. More official Syrian material and less from Turkey might have diminished the apparent differences, as would perhaps more empirical Turkish material from social groups close to those in Rabo's and Picard's studies. Jørum's reading of the Syrian government's mouthpiece, *Tishreen*, points in the direction of less difference if comparisons were to be made between the same types of actors. The official Syrian standpoint resembles the Turkish one, not claiming territory and even refraining from bringing up the Hatay/Iskanderuna-question.

Leaving aside the problem of validity in the comparison, it should, however, be clear that the Syrian case studies highlight very interesting

material at the level of individuals and groups, and their relation to the state boundaries as well as their use of them. After giving a detailed account of the many different trans-boundary linkages of the traders she has followed, and noting that every urban Syrian has family members abroad, Rabo sums up her findings. Her informants are, at one and the same time 'firmly rooted and deterritorialised', and she is able to distinguish as of significance for them: their *limited homeland* (watan),[11] the place of their daily life, the *political homeland* of Syria, and finally, the *extended homeland* of their many family histories and thereby links with other locations in the world. The limited homeland even exists during extended stays abroad, when they live in an 'Aleppo away from Aleppo', as confirmed by the information in Picard's chapter on how Syrians of different origin settled in different parts of Beirut.

The French historian Daniel Nordman states that it is clear from historical evidence that people have consistently referred to their *pagus* – village – and to the central political power on which they depended, while references to the national territory come only as a result of education and in particular of the exposure to maps (Nordman 2000). And, of course, he refers to modern state-territorial maps, not to the ancient ones, which were descriptions of, where to go and what to do, 'parcours' and not 'cartes' as discussed by Michel de Certeau (Certeau 1990: 177-78). Rooke shows that the modern maps of the nation in contemporary Syria are still many and remain a subject of debate. The political homeland, Syria, writes Rabo, from which her informants cannot without difficulty escape, even into exile or as migrants, is essentially described as a constraint. Not once, she continues, did these traders admit that they and their markets were 'protected by the Syrian state' (Rabo p. 69).

The past and present 'family histories', which in Rabo's account are the basis for the extended homeland her traders refer to, are of course also present in Picard's study. Not only do these extended families straddle the Syro-Lebanese boundary once the exodus took place in the 1960s, but the boundary-transgressing family histories and family strategies seem to be a constant, although adapting to changing regional conditions and domestic policy, and to the changes in the relationship between domestic and international policy of the relevant states. She gives striking examples of current successful strategies – or simply practices – which permit the continued 'straddling' of the boundary between the two countries. As in the cases of individual traders studied by Rabo, these links with international or regional locations outside the boundaries as a result of family histories, cover not only the two neighbouring countries of Syria and Lebanon. Other countries in the region have been or are involved, as of course are all those more distant places referred to by both Picard's and Rabo's informants.

Ottomanism as a Political Ideology or a Way of Living?

In his study of the discourses over the Syrian boundaries, Rooke makes a comparison between the vision of the Syrian nation, its territory and inhabitants as presented by the author Muhammad Kurd Ali in the 1920s, and the political ideology of 'ottomanism'. They are similar in many ways, he claims: both argue 'for the necessity of a unified administrative language that should be taught to all subjects, and both promote an identity based on patriotism and individual equality regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation'. He characterises both these ideologies as a form of 'centralism through language [that] is aimed at warding off separatism and politicisation of ethnicity' (p. 132). This centralising and egalitarian 'ottomanism' is promoted by intellectuals and perhaps taken over later on by those who control the state and nation-building in crucial phases of Turkish and Syrian history. It is, however, at total variance to the references of Elizabeth Picard in her chapter, when she also uses the notion of ottomanism.

She states very clearly, in fact, that, when introducing the concept she is *not* referring to ottomanism as the nationalist movement that spread throughout the Empire in the early twentieth century, which is precisely what Rooke is referring to. In the context of Picard's study ottomanism is taken in its 'anthropological (and somehow a-historical) dimension'. She describes how constant flows of exchanges of all kinds during the centuries of Ottoman rule, in contradiction with 'territorialisation and the stabilisation of identities and belongings', had as an effect that sociabilities developed on a regional level, that families were spread over several cities and individual mobility was encouraged. Even after the creation of the nation-states, ottomanism, understood in this precise way, 'offered an implicit but still efficient reference for modern actors of the Near East when dealing with their economic and political environment' (p. 78).

The choice of the term can, of course be discussed further. It is interesting however, but quite justified, that both authors reach for references to the long common history and integration into the Ottoman Empire. Both Rooke, in his discussion of the early statements concerning the Syrian nation, and Picard, in her analytical investigation, move far beyond historical references, and for the latter demonstrate the common, boundary-transgressing, heritage, adapted and transformed, but still efficient. The chapter also points to the fact that the networking beyond state boundaries, initially sustained mostly among the upper classes, later became a practice of a new bourgeoisie originating in the lower middle classes. Both Rabo and Picard further stress the fact that the local economies are not only, or even primarily, inscribed in regional networks. They are part of transregional linkages, as regards finance, trade in goods as well as the mobility of professionals. They are global and local at one

and the same time, which corresponds to the concept of *glocalisation* coined by Appadurai.

We do not know, however, which dimensions of ottomanism, as Picard summarises it, if any, are involved with the extended homeland Rabo is referring to when she notes the 'eagerness' with which Syrians, in general, cross their state boundaries, as well as gives examples among the traders of both trade and personal connections with remote places in the world, far beyond the *Ottoman* homeland. Nor do we know if some of these dimensions are also to be found in other Turkish material than what is presented here, or if the militarisation of the nation, as Fèbvre puts it, 'the horizontal fraternity' and its institutions, as Micallef describes it, have definitely had the upper hand. What we do know, however, is that there is reason to believe that two models co-exist in the region, and that paradoxically it might be that the seemingly more modern one, the territorial nation-state with its institutions and social foundations, is less efficient in taking advantage of the new globalised era. We also know, in spite of the material presented being not totally comparable, that visions of state boundaries and their use diverge very definitely between, on the one hand, the official view, be it expressed by representatives of the state or the geographers – 'the priesthood of the nation' – or by intellectuals and journalists in the national literature and press, and on the other hand, the views as expressed among the 'unofficials', Syrian businessmen and traders, or local population in Hatay and Cyprus, or for that sake local politicians in Hatay.

Finally, but significantly, we know from the contributions by Lundgren, Jørum and Micallef, that both those who argue clearly in terms of a territorial nation-state and boundaries as the marks of sovereignty, together with those who disregard boundaries and sometimes long for another unity, *all* Arabs or indeed Turks, totally ignore the very real existence of the claim, objective and subjective, for a modern Kurdish territorial nation-state. The existence of this issue is systematically denied and not brought up, although it directly concerns both Turkey and Syria. This is the case also when it can hardly be avoided, as during the Öcalan crisis or in connection with the Turkish military interventions in northern Iraq.

Straddlers and States: Whose Borders?

Several of the chapters in this book touch upon the relationship between the current globalisation and the relative ease with which some of the people studied here refer to space in terms of regional or even international networks. When it comes to state actors, foreign-policy-makers for example, they have had to acknowledge that communities are divided by the current boundaries, leading them in some cases to take on

the role of 'protector' of what they determine as 'their' national minorities on the other side of the boundary, as Turkey does when referring to the Turcomans in the northern part of Iraq. Put in other words, the new version of ottomanism discussed earlier has been favoured by globalisation, while globalisation requires the existence of regional and inter-regional extended homelands, and the concomitant capacity for further international networking. For state actors this seems by necessity to weaken and complicate the earlier neat perception of the respective nationals, and introduce a relation also to people beyond the state boundary and citizens of another state.

As demonstrated by the studies in this book, ottomanism has made it possible for actors in the Near Eastern context to evolve outside the huge organisations constituted by transnational companies or state-backed trading houses, which in other continents have been the prime actors in economic globalisation. Globalisation in this form, however, demands a de-ideologisation of the national boundary, and perhaps a return to a reinforced communal identity for the individual. At the same time, it implies a reconsideration of the nationalist ideology which has so coloured the whole of the last century, and which is still heavily drawn upon, not least when confronting the international powers.

On the other hand, since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and for that matter since the attack on the USA in September 2001, there is again strong external pressure on the states in the region to control their territories, their citizens and their boundaries, and also to remain militarily within their own boundaries. The withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2004-05, following a common French-US initiative in the UN, the exclusion of Turkish troops from northern Iraq, the pressure on Syria to hinder passages to and from Iraq and control the desert lands between the two countries and their related inhabitants, the demand for disarmament of the Lebanese Hizballah forces, and the pressure on the Palestinian authorities to control and disarm their population – all this, if successful, will strengthen relations between, on the one hand, the respective territories and their inhabitants and, on the other, the central military and political institutions. In conflict with the trend linked to globalisation described above, which seemingly returns the boundaries in the region to the time of the Ottoman Empire when they were connecting people and merchandise, it will instead enforce the borders as the separation between people. This would mean, in the first place, a further strengthening of the 'weak military spirit, even its absence'[12] which was put forward in the 1930s as the main reason for the lack of 'national sentiment' in the Arab population. Secondly, it would also mean an evolution of 'governmentality' in the case of Syria, and other Arab countries as well, away from patrimonialism and clientelism, differentiation and fragmentation, towards either the communalism-cum-

force exercised during the Empire as well as the Mandate, drawing up one group against the other, or else the creation of the mobilised 'horizontal – military and democratic? – fraternity' that characterises the modern nation.

Needless to say, neither of these scenarios is to the taste of the individuals and groups belonging to the categories of non-state economic actors and migrants present in this book, nor compatible with their ongoing participation in the movements of the global economy and society. Nor, for that matter, are they compatible with the cautious departure from militant kemalism that characterises the contemporary changes in Turkish politics. The ongoing direct foreign involvement might, of course, reinforce also in Turkey a more nationalist – and kemalist – trend once again, as might the complicated relation to the European Union. However, a future integration of this country with the Union would again introduce into the region a boundary that connects people and merchandise. It is worth noting that some of Rabo's informants believed that the ongoing negotiations between Syria and the European Union aimed at a Syrian membership.

Memory and Translation

The resurrection of ottomanism under the favourable conditions created by globalisation and liberalisation does not only mean changes in practices and in the mood of exercising power. It also means a revisiting of one's history, or as put elsewhere in this book, a confrontation with one's memory.

Memory is, in fact, central to several of the chapters here, as when the Turkish Cypriots are described as having 'unsuccessfully tried to forget' for three decades, or when Micallef can show how the memories of actors as regards events at the birth of Hatay, are used half a century later to comment on contemporary events in quite different settings. National narratives, individual and collective stories regarding the boundaries and their meanings will need to be retold, and will be retold. The state boundary as an alleged nation-state border is resilient, in this region as elsewhere, not least because of its importance to those who are here categorised as state actors and intellectuals. The history of its invention is not definite, however, and it will remain to be corrected, used and adapted in the future.

How, under these conditions can one progress beyond the momentous and the particular? The restoration of the distinction between state and nation was proposed earlier as one step towards an understanding beyond the specific empirical observation; a further 'archaeology' of these concepts, as well as other 'universals', as another. As shown by the cases presented, there is evidently no 'total translatability' between the meanings

of the nation-state boundary and of its uses in the context studied here, and its meanings and uses in the European context, or any other context. History, language, social organisation, 'governmentality' and what some call 'culture' make a difference. The chapters in this book move along a continuum with, at one end, an effort to use general categories and concepts – total translatability – and, at the other, the exotopic position of the informed outsider who is prepared to forge new concepts for a new and different social, political and cultural setting. Todorov, as quoted by Kleberg, talks about the necessary questioning of oneself as the only guarantee of the capacity to look and listen to someone else with attention and patience. In the context of this book the questioning of oneself would refer to a rather laborious deconstruction of the concept and reality of nation-state boundaries in Europe, not related in this volume but underlying most of its chapters. It is to be hoped that the reader will have found expressions of that deconstruction in this book, as well as a patient and attentive look at what boundaries – state frontiers and nation borders – can mean in the modern and contemporary Near East. To put the question about whose borders in the Near or the Middle East raises the same question elsewhere.

Notes:

[1] Donnan and Wilson are quoting Strassoldo (1989: 383-4).

[2] Good examples of this are the volumes written or edited by Donnan and Wilson, perhaps because they join an anthropological perspective and an intense interest in state, nation and nationalism.

[3] In his discussion of the 'divergence with the Westphalian model' Hinnebusch refers to Weulersse (1946: 79-83) and to Harik (1987: 19-46). He agrees with Harik that distinct historical experiences lay the ground for many of the contemporary nation-states, but questions the existence of a situation where distinct 'national identities differentiate them from their neighbours', the exception from this being the three cases characterised by substantial peasantries, Egypt, Iran and Turkey.

[4] See Robin Cohen, Global Diasporas. An Introduction (Seattle, 1997).

[5] Quoted by J-P Baduel in his important contribution (1989a: 159) from Kh. Hamdani article 'La dimension absente du nationalisme arabe: le territoire', Hérodote 46 (1987), pp. 159-67.

[6] In his article 'Frontière: le mot et la notion', 1962 [1928], discussed also by Baduel (1989a: 143).

[7] However, the study of another Turkish boundary, the north-western one, point in the direction of a confirmation, even after the opening of the boundary, of the

cohesion within the boundaries. See Chris Hann and Ildikó Bellér-Hann, in Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, *Border Identities* (Cambridge, 1998).

[8] As quoted by Anderson (1996: 36).

[9] On the other hand, one has to acknowledge with Béatrice Hibou, that specially at the level of international organisations and contemporary international politics there is a steady flow of new concepts, presented as universals but in fact emerging from particular histories and contexts (Hibou 2004: 344).

[10] The boundary is of course contested by part of the Kurdish national movement, for which the boundary between Turkey and Iraq can only be a temporary division of Kurdistan and in no way a definite international boundary of sovereignty. The different Kurdish actors, however, in Iraq for example, refrain in their contacts with Turkey from stating such positions.

[11] Here with other connotations than when used, as shown by Rooke, p. 127, with reference to the territorial state.

[12] Murrīt Boutros Ghāli as quoted by Baduel (1989a: 160) from Anwar Abdel-Malek, *Anthologie de la littérature arabe contemporaine. Les essais* (Paris, 1965) where Boutros Ghāli's text is reprinted (pp. 228-34).

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