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Pastoralité in eastern Turkey

Chronicles of the Kurdish shepherds between tribal logic, nationalisms and heritage

Michaël Thevenin

EDITOR'S NOTE

Translation: Sarah Mallet

- 1 *Pastoralité* is an emerging concept in the French pastoralist circles: it is trying to establish itself by confronting the needs and expectations of the pastoral actors outside its original framework. While it was seen as a void to fill in the Northern Alps, it is perceived with suspicion by some pastoral workers from southern France for whom *pastoralité* is only the last Alpine embodiment of “the heritage obsession” (Jeudy, 2001). We hope, that with a study on the pastoral practices of the Kurdish population of Turkey, we can take part in the delocalisation process of this concept, and thus analyse its relevance in the context of extensive farming in Anatolia, which is particularly emblematic as our field of inquiry is the northern area of the ancient Fertile Crescent, the birthplace of sheep farming (Vine, 2004). *Pastoralité*, understood as “the character, the essence of what is pastoral” (Calmettes, Cournil and Turquin, forthcoming), should naturally echo this situation, something to which we will come back ultimately.
- 2 Discussing the Kurdish population first requires terminological clarifications. Until 1930, there was a broad consensus on defining who was Kurdish: tribes “of eastern Asia Minor and the Zagros, settled or nomadic and who did not speak Turkish or Arabic or Persian. Were included among the Kurds, not just those who spoke Kurdish in the strict sense, but also those who spoke Zaza, the Guaraní, Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims, and followers of various heterodox sects of the region” (Van Bruinessen, 1994). Were excluded from this group “non-tribal peasants and urban dwellers living in the same area”. However, after the massacres of the Armenian population the establishment of the Turkish nation-state and Kurdish nationalism, Kurdishness, commonly admitted today¹ as the “sense of belonging to a community wider than tribal, linguistic or

religious group entities” (Bozarslan 1997, p. 99), now includes villagers and urban dwellers, sedentary and nomadic communities dispersed on geographical area divided between four countries where Kurds are the majority (Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran) making the Kurds “the largest people without a country in the world”.

- 3 This article will base its analysis on pastoral activity as it is now at the east of the Euphrates, and as we have observed it², and according to the ethnic distribution of Kurmanci or zazaphones populations and Kurdish ethnic groups or likened to Kurds in Turkey as it was defined by X. of Planhol in 1959 and taken over by M. Bazin and S. Tapia in 2012 (Turkish tribes at the west of the river and Kurdish tribes at the east). We will try to show its diversity by focusing on high-pasture shelters³ and then compare this diversity to the politics of enhancement and conservation being currently implemented which is one heritage institutionalisation. Is the heritage institutionalisation of the pastoral practices of the Kurdish population possible or even relevant in the Anatolian context? As a conclusion, we will discuss *Pastoralité* by referring to the representations that are derived from it. What does it represent for these farmers, for the Turkish State and for the proponents of Kurdishness, and what can it ultimately teach us? If it turns into an identity concept, does it not become irrelevant?

Diversity of pastoral practice: the example of high altitude shelters

- 4 On the high mountain pastures of the Kurdish farmers in Turkey, there are two different types of camps with their respective variations/versions, which often coexist: the summer pasture hamlet on the one hand and the nomadic or semi-sedentary campsite on the other hand, which is located at higher elevations or more isolated areas. These two types of temporary occupations are related to which pastoral systems have been adopted.
- 5 The summer hamlet (and its variation the tribal summer hamlet) is occupied by tribal farmers (*Hormek, Ertusî, Peniyaniçî...*) or not, who come from the neighbouring mountain villages and practice either a short and horizontal or local and vertical transhumance. These hamlets distinguish themselves by an impressive array of homes revealing each family's history. These homes range from simple solid constructions (dry-stone or sun-dried mud-brick low walls, covered with a frame redone every year, with a nylon cover or traditional velum of goat-hair, with or without a simple structure), to the tents used by seasonal workers in the cotton fields in the Urfa region, shaped as a semi-open umbrella, composed of a central mast on which rests a white plasticized cotton canvas or to large modern camping tents with metal frames (Thevenin, 2011). There is a demarcation in the north with the summer hamlets of Turkish-speaking villagers (in the regions of Sarikamis, Ardahan, the north-west of Kars or the Çildir Lake). In these hamlets the dwellings are more sustainable constructions: timber structures, flat stone roofs, strengthened stone walls whitewashed on the inside, earthmoving works inside... (personal observations, ongoing study).
- 6 Tribal camp (and its variation, the family tribal camp) is the habitat of semi-sedentary farmers (*Karahan, Shawak...*) nomadic or seminomadic (*Beritan, Alikan, Mehmedi, Soran, Dudiran...*) practicing vertical and regional transhumance (see the map). These camps

may contain several families from the same village or a single extended family. In the north-western part of the area we are studying, the seasonal tent prevails in semi-sedentary tribal camps. The black tent was only observed in the Beritan tribe, which is not only the only attested nomadic tribe (some families live under the tent all year long) but also the only tribe which embraces being nomad in this area with the Kejan (we will get back to this). However, these campsites are quite heterogeneous and mix versions of modern tents (sometimes with the Turkish Red Crescent tents) with black tents.

Map 1. The three areas of transhumance sheep among Kurdish pastors and their direction in Eastern Turkey

Credits: Michael Thevenin

- 7 The black tent was the norm in Kurdish nomadic populations into the 80s (Feilberg 1944; Beşikçi, 1969 Cribb, 1991). It differed from those of its neighbours Yörük (Bazin, 1987) by the presence of wattle made of reeds (*çit*) joined to each other, forming the outer vertical walls of the tents, but especially by the existence of several central masts of same height, maintained by the tension of the awning, aligned in rows of pairs along the longitudinal axis, each pair comprising an inclined mast and one or several masts mounted vertically (see Document 1, 2 and 3), and the top of the masts coming out from the canvas (Kren, 1994). The absence of a unique central mast gives its characteristic outline to the Kurdish black tent of Anatolia⁴.

Document 1. Common structure of the black tent of the nomads and the semi-nomads of the Kurdish from the regions of Van and Hakkari in Turkey (side view)

Credits: Michael Thevenin

Document 2. Common structure of the black tent of the nomads and the semi-nomads of the Kurdish from the region of Van and Hakkari in Turkey (top view)

Credits: Michael Thevenin

Document 3. Common structure of the black tent of the nomads and the semi-nomads of the Kurdish from the region of Van and Hakkari in Turkey (top view)

Credits: Michael Thevenin

- 8 To the inter-ethnic differences, one needs to add a sub-ethnic and tribal difference. For example, the black tent of the Kurdish nomads of Turkey is not the same as the ones of the Kurdish nomads located further south in Iraq (Feilberg, 1944 and personal observations in the district of Rania in Iraqi Kurdistan which are the subject of an ongoing study). In Anatolia the black tent also varies locally according to the high mountain pastures. Even though a common structure seems reproduced without distinction (pairs central mast, vertical and inclined, lined up in rows - no raising posts at each corner of the velum - tops of masts rising from the canvas) we can still see differences ...in the width of the strips forming the piece of canvas, the rope system, the opening of the tent (on one side or closed on the four sides) and in the positioning of the entrance in case of a total closing of the tent (at the centre or on the side). This should not come as a surprise. The *Kurdish black tent* in Turkey was, under this name, probably never unique or durable, each tribe and family adapting it to their own needs (technical and identitary) and not according to the feeling of belonging to a same "kurdicity". However, with their neighbours Yörük and Bakhtyari (Digard, 1981) for example, major distinctions exist (mast coming out from the velum and absence of a rod at the top) which tends towards a community of style in the Kurd sphere of Kurmandji and Sorani which can be identified by its external outlines rather than by interior similarities.
- 9 For instance, contrary to the regions of Igdir and Agri where goat hair velum is still predominantly used and combined with nylon (ongoing study), in the region of Lake Van and Hakkari, goat hair velum was completely abandoned in the past twenty years in favour of urban fabric. The common structure has been preserved so far, with or

without *cit*. Thus, in certain families of the Alikan tribe, which describes itself as nomads (although they are only semi-nomads) and moving in summer towards the north of Lake Van, the traditional awning has been gradually replaced by an aggregate of heterogeneous cloth lined with nylon canvas creating real “mosaics” tents (Thevenin, 2011). However, these cloths are keeping with the spirit tradition: with this aggregate system, only the worn parts of the velum are replaced and the mosaic joining still requires intense sewing activity in the winter. The generalisation of these tents, which might be seen as advanced sophistication (considering the aesthetic research in the choice of fabrics used and the technical nature of the sewing), seems to be happening only in this tribe at this point (see photo 1).

Photo 1. Alikan mosaics tent

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- 10 The high pasture shelters of Kurdish populations therefore have a wide range of variations, depending first on the pastoral system adopted (whether they are nomadic or semi-sedentary villagers practising short and regional or vertical and horizontal transhumance), then on the community (tribe, village), and finally on the family needs.

Reasons for this diversity

- 11 This diversity can be explained by two global phenomena acting like two superimposed geological strata, influenced by an orogeny that is not only historical, but also social and identitary.
- 12 The first substrate was created by geographical and ecological conditions that have shaped an agro-pastoral, subsistence-based economy with an extensive practice of mountain transhumance. The arrival of nomadic Turks in the tenth century introduced long-distance travel (De Planhol, 1959) that was gradually incorporated into existing Kurdish practices. So, for eight hundred years at least, nomadic herders, semi-

sedentary pastoralists and villagers cohabited, thus creating separate pastoral identities.

- 13 The second substrate was added to the first during the twentieth century with the founding of the Turkish nation-state and the emergence of Kurdish nationalism. We have suggested elsewhere (Thevenin, 2011) that this substrate has not only maintained but also accentuated the diversity thanks to four identified phenomena that we will not develop here: a process of “ re-tribalisation” (Van Bruinessen, 2000) and “ identity fragmentation”⁵ (Massicard, 2012) of the Kurdish society, a “dichotomy between centre and periphery” which is specific to modern Turkey⁶ (Massicard, 2008), and finally the issues surrounding pastures.
- 14 This last point is especially true for farmers.
- 15 Three facts changed the situation during the 20th century: the appropriation by the Kurds of new territories formerly owned by the Armenian people before their genocide (adjoining villages and high mountain pastures), the increase of the amount of lands devoted to agriculture in the plains after the Second World War, the closing of many high mountain pastures due to combats between the Turkish army and the PKK (nationalist Kurdish guerrilla considered as a terrorist group by Turkey, The EU and The United States) at the end of the century. These three processes have lead to the forced or opportunistic settlement of the nomads, the decrease of the amount of overwintering meadows devoted to agriculture and to the obligation of having to look for new high mountain pastures, the transhumant farmers having either abandoned their nomadic practice, strictly speaking, or having diversified it, creating therefore new opportunities. Finally, the arrival of new materials, such as nylon or plasticized cotton, went with this process by facilitating the means of a return to the high mountain pastures while improving at the same time the living conditions⁷.
- 16 Thus, we are witnessing an impossible standardisation of Kurdish pastoralism in eastern Turkey as C. Scalbert-Yucel (2006) had already noticed in his studies on the Kurmanji language (which is the predominant Kurdish language in Turkey). On the contrary, to take up the concept developed by B. James (2011) about the Kurdish people in the Middle Ages, we see the effect of an “in-between” syndrome so to speak, and which now put settled agricultural communities in a position between the state and Kurdish nationalism, creating a real ghost state which can only maintain these communities by emphasising their diversity and thus re-creating the traditional relationship between the nomadic farmers, along with their culture of tribal logic, and the sedentary forces of the State that surround or encompass them.

Is heritage institutionalisation possible?

- 17 In this context, would a heritage institutionalisation, understood as a process carried by a state, a political project and a community recognising itself as such, be possible or even relevant for the Kurds in Turkey? It creates a patrimonial system of representations that might make sense to define an Anatolian *pastoralité*. To try to answer, we will rely on the example of the Beritan tribe, mentioned previously, by comparing its process of representation with that of the Sarikeçili Yörük tribe, and also on the recent heritage institutionalisation of *Dengbêjî* the traditional Kurdish song, the first case of Kurdish cultural enhancement in Turkey.

- 18 The Beritan are considered as “one of the oldest nomadic tribes of southeast Anatolia” (Balıkcı, 2000) and “the Turkey’s biggest nomad group” (Pacal, 1996). It is composed of 50,000 members, distributed in about 1,500 families. This is the only nomadic tribe, along with the Kajan, met on the “tribal diagonal” (Aurenche, Bazin and Sadler, 1997) and that benefits from a showcase that has no equivalent in other nomadic Kurdish tribes (articles, website Internet, Facebook accounts, stores with their name, farm cooperative). Thirty years ago, it had 350,000 sheep and thousands of camels. In 1956, the government banned their access to its traditional winter pastures around Ceylanpinar, which were redistributed for agriculture. Subsequently, as a result of the war against the PKK, the Gap project (dams on the Euphrates) and the economic isolation of the area, the herd fell to 25,000 animals in 1996. A process of impoverishment started as families could no longer meet their needs. The Turkish State built villages around Diyarbakir to house and help them settle down, but the houses proved frail. The state also intervened on camps by bringing modern tents from the Turkish Red Crescent. The corporation of Beritan breeders (*Beritan Asireti Kooperatifi*) seems to have been born at this time in order to represent the tribe and help the community cope (Pacal, 1996). On their logo (see photo 2), we find a whole collection of “mnemonic objects” (Fliche 2007) representing nomadism and its tradition of vertical transhumance in Anatolia: the black tent, but without its wattle made of reeds; the complementary nature of mountain and plain, a shepherd in traditional baggy trousers (*selwer*) playing the oblique flute (*kaval*), two identifiable breeds of sheep (the *Akkaraman* and *Moorkaraman*) and finally the tribal reference “*Beritan Asireti*” (“tribe” in Turkish). More surprisingly perhaps, a seasonal tent is also present (maybe in this is evidence of the “aggregation spirit”?), recalling the reality of Beritan campsites.

Photo 2. Beritan logo

- 19 These choices of representation deserve our attention. If the nomadic identity is clearly promoted there – is there a distinct reference to Kurdishness? Mountain nomadism is

not a Kurdish characteristic feature in Anatolia. Yörük nomadism, as represented by the Sarikeçili tribe, is identical. Regarding the *kaval*, it seems that Yörük might even have been the source of its diffusion and it remains in the Anatolian popular imagery the instrument of the shepherd. The use of the Turkish term *asireti* has no specific ethnic implications. Tribalism, whether Turkish or Kurdish, has been recognised in the Turkish Republic among the researchers and the media since the eighties at least. The case of the two breeds of sheep is already more relevant. These two races alone represent more than 65% of the Turkish stock (Gürsoy, 2005) and therefore should not be attributed to a specific ethnic group. However BC Yalcin believes the Beritan to be farmers with herds composed solely of Moorkaraman (1986) which is no longer the case today; the Sarikeçili are goat herders, and the other Kurdish nomadic tribes mentioned all herd a singular and recognisable race of sheep, the Ivessi (Yalcin, 1986), not shown in the Beritan logo. Thus, the presence of these two breeds of sheep could be a tribal and ethnic recognition by default.

- 20 To truly see a Kurdish differentiation, we must look at the shepherd's tent and hat. The black tent of the nomadic farmers from Kurdish Anatolia is well represented here, although it is in its Beritan form. Headgear resemble more the Bedouin *keffiyeh* than the Anatolian fez, and this can be explained by the prestige given to Arab origins, true or alleged, of the tribe in the Kurdish kinship system (Vega, 1994; Bruinessen Van, 1978). Indeed, the latter is constructed on the Arab system and differentiates itself from the marriage and *alla turca* (Gokalp, 1989).
- 21 The Sarikeçili are a tribe from the Yörük ethnic group, a semi-nomadic pastoral Turkish people that is one of the oldest in Turkey and claims to have pure Turkish origins as the heirs of the Seldjoukides conquerors from the Oghouz tribes who came to Turkey in the 11th century (Encyclopaedia Universalis). However, the Sarikeçili communities have drawn the attention of both Turkish politicians and the media in recent years. For instance, on several occasions, the *Hurriyet Daily News* reported their difficulties in pursuing their traditional way of life. The tribe is presented as "Turkey's Most Famous nomadic group" (Van Herpen, 2011), "the last nomadic Turkish tribe of Anatolia", "the only group to represent Turkish migration in Central Asia" (Ocak, 2011). In 2011, thanks to a new law debated in the Turkish parliament, permission to graze their goats in woodlands reserved for this occasion was granted. The main problem of this tribe was how to «feed their flock when they crossed forests protected by the laws of the Office of Water and Forests.» We also learnt that "an application will be made to Unesco for the Sarikeçili to be put under immediate protection" (idem). How the people "who have virtually lost its organization and traditional politicians" (Salzman, 1983, p. 145) has been able to obtain such political and media attention? The newspaper gives us an initial response in an article published in July 2011. Indeed, we find that to preserve their culture, an association of nomadic Turks tribes was created in 2001. Later in 2005 the group became a confederation (*Toroslar Yörük Turkmen Federasyonu*). Today, it counts 420 branches throughout Turkey with a workforce of over one million people (Van Herpen, 2011).
- 22 Thus both Beritan and Sarikeçili tribes show the resistance of nomadic, agricultural communities of people facing the "encirclement policy" practiced by the state (Salzman, 1983). But unlike the Beritan for which Kurdishness is expressed through the tribe, the Sarikeçili added political weight gained through the voluntary extension of the tribal sphere to the ethnic group Yörük, which has allowed them to mobilise the

state and enter within the sphere of UNESCO concerns. Thus the “largest nomadic tribe of Turkey and one of the oldest” received prefabricated villages of poor quality (Balıkcı, 2000) and modern tents from the Turkish Red Crescent, while the “last nomadic and most famous Turkish tribe in Anatolia” will perhaps benefit from protection by Unesco. On one side a local response aimed at standardisation, while on the other side, we witness a national response aiming to preserve a certain particularism. Between these two answers, there is a century of conflict and management of the Kurdish problem, but also twenty years of evolution of the Turkish State, which went from Jacobean obsession with national unity towards a recognition of cultural diversity of Turkey (when it can’t standardise it), influenced by the opening of the country to tourism and its growing interest in its heritage. However, can this opening include today cultural practices that are specifically Kurdish?

The recent heritage institutionalisation the *Dengbêjî*

- 23 This first project involving Turkish Ministry in the valorisation of an aspect of Kurdish culture was unimaginable ten years ago. *Dengbêjî* is the practice of “singing without musical accompaniment [...] reciting novels and epics” (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009). The *Dengbej* is the one who performs these songs in a professional way. In many ways, the *dengbêjî* and pastoralism share a common cause as the shepherd and the *Dengbej* carry an image of being characters subservient to the tribe, stripped of their attributes by the different ideologies at play. The shepherd is described in the first modern Kurdish novel “The Kurdish shepherd” by Erebe Şemo (1989), as someone who after an initiatory journey becomes a fighter for the Bolshevik revolutionary cause. The mountain is the background to this story and also becomes the place of resistance and guerrilla, of rural romanticism (Scalbert-Yücel, 2011) and of Kurdish national fraternity. Thus, the shepherd and the mountain are both involved in the hagiography of the revolutionary Kurdish nationalism that permeates Kurdishness. The institutionalisation *Dengbêjî* as part of the national heritage was only possible with an apolitical version of the practice, offering an “innocent tradition” acceptable for Kurdish nationalism with its vision of a revolutionary culture but also for the Turkish state that would not accept traditional songs of regional identity. Thus, “the conditions that define the practice and art of *Dengbêjî*, such as the context of the utterance and the transmission from a master, have disappeared. The *Dengbêjs* became symbolic, they have become a heritage” (Scalbert - Yücel, 2009).” (Scalbert - Yücel, 2009).
- 24 As R. Jaubert, al- Dbiyat and B. Geyer already demonstrated for Syria in 2010, the heritage of agricultural practices in a Turkish context requires to be questioned just as much. That of the Kurdish shepherds seems to have almost disappeared in Turkey, especially if it remains affiliated with the tribe. The Turkish State could also find an interest in this heritage, albeit a limited one as it would not be unifying, but the vigilance or even the censorship PKK can exercise will oppose Ankara if the Turkish State showed any hint of trying to impose an archaic and divisive vision of Kurdish society, which would somehow be favoured by heritage politics.
- 25 However, is this heritage *cul-de-sac* damaging to the farmers? Indeed, is the preservation of heritage an end in itself? In this respect, the example of the *Sarikeçili* raises several questions. Is saving only a part of the pastoral mountain triptych (plains, transhumance, high altitude pastures) a sufficient response to the territorial challenges

of transhumant pastoralism? Second, is giving rights to a tribe and setting them in a role far beyond the framework of its cultural identity compatible with the moving aspects of tribal phenomenon (Dawod, 2004)? Then how can we define the specifications of Anatolian nomadism, with its mnemonic objects defined by the constricting Unesco heritage protocol without excluding, or without creating new internal margins and without reducing the range of possibilities? For example, the diversity of Kurdish farmers' practices enables them to adapt and thrive on a territory in motion. Imposing a protocol to a nomadic tribe would prevent not only its ability to adapt, but also its natural transformation, their mutation that is a factor of life and regeneration. On the other hand, for these farmers, it is not about focusing on sheep and goats products that are already widely recognised and appreciated by Turkish consumers, nor to make domestic breeds known to the public, or even attracting tourists to the mountain pastures, Yayla tourism (pastures in Turkish) already being part of a spontaneous tradition in Turkey (Bazin and Tapia, 2012).

- 26 Finally, the tribes have the ability to integrate politics with different voices. Indeed, depending on how the politics play out, political alliances can take many forms in this region – the report of tribal votes in elections (Kaya, 2002), affiliation with the *Koruçu*⁸ (Dorronsoro, 2006) or the *Hemsehrî*⁹ (Massicard, 2005), who support the PKK - and every family, tribe or town accesses politics, sometimes forcibly, according to the protection or benefits that it is supposed to provide.
- 27 The cultural heritage, if it is presented as an additional lever for influencing governance in Western countries could instead launch a process of depoliticisation ultimately destroying the traditional trading system, and thus the spirit “of between” that characterises the nomadic pastoralist communities. Rather than the preferential heritage institutionalisation, it might be better to find a common cause beyond ethnic particularities while accommodating them, as they are now unavoidable. The Turkish and Kurdish nationalism have tried it with mixed success for transhumant Anatolian pastoralism, the tribe remaining above all the safety shield against geopolitical conflict and globalisation, and a still political weight in Turkish democracy.

***Pastoralité* in Turkey?**

- 28 By this brief overview of the issues around the pastoral practices of the Kurdish population in Turkey, we have proposed three visions of what could be *pastoralité* in its Anatolian version: the way of the breeders, that of the heritage paradigm, or the nationalism that shaped them both. We will add our vision as a synthesis of these three approaches to find a definition of Anatolian *pastoralité*: it could be seen as a mobilised community resisting state policies, whether state policies are real or imaginary. In this respect, it could be assimilated with conventional constructions of identity and tribe nationalism, and within this framework, the concept of *pastoralité* would be a kind of pastoral nationalism, that is to say an “exclusionary” construction, defining what is pastoral and what is not, thus creating its own “shepherd’s hagiography”, living his strength as an act of Genesis being constantly replayed. Resistance being only a reactive adaptation and not prompted by a specific individual natural logic, it only offers a “low resilience” dependent on what creates it, unlike the “strong resilience” which is characterised by an ability of foresight and anticipation (Lallau Cantoni, 2010). If the concept of *pastoralité* were considered thus, it would offer nothing more than an

identity ideology, which might be universal but also carries as many different identities as there are actors. We could even attend a “Balkanisation” of the pastoralité and would become another “Tower of Babel”.

- 29 This approach does not seem satisfactory. In our opinion, Turkish *pastoralité* provides a glimpse into another structure, underlying that expressed above, which would have the advantage of not being an anthropo-centric or chrono-centered approach, and could offer a different, diachronic universality. This underlying structure is primarily a “pastoral field” (Duteurtre and Faye, 2009), thousands of years old, encompassing whatever perennial or specific forms that they can take through time, and secondly, resilience, low or strong, which provides its maintenance and finally a processing capacity that ensures its continuity. We bring to debate this definition that would equate *pastoralité* with the ability of a territory to host, maintain and transform pastoral practices and the communities that implement them. It would be intrinsic to the territory to govern the range of its development potential (whether be it of economic, social and environmental) value. It would give us a useful mean of assessing, in the North as in the South, whatever the economic context of these territories and the interest aroused by urban imagination. One could speak of the *pastoralité* “quotient” of a territory. As a universal concept, it would provide Turkey with a consensus on the Anatolian consensus, beyond identities.

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NOTES

1. From the external point of view of many scholars and journalists, but also from an internal point of view, whether through Kurdish nationalism where it originated, or through Turkish policy regarding the Kurdish region (Massicard, 2008).

2. This article is based on a field study conducted among 18 tribes, 40 camps and 8 summer hamlets, 4 villages, made during 10 trips in the eastern Anatolia between 2005 and 2014, an average of about 15 days each, between April and September, in the context of extensive and prospective investigation.

3. The diversity of practices and pastoral systems have been described elsewhere (Thevenin, 2011).

4. For lack of space here, I will skip a comparison on the layout of the interior space.
 5. It is both intra- ethnic (Alevi claim – Muslim religious community representing one fifth of the Turkish population – Zaza – linguistic community near the Kurdish languages), but also generational (Dorronsoro, 2002) – Tribal and / or patriarchal claims are made by elders while the younger generation lean more towards nationalism.
 6. Absence of policy at regional level.
 7. Many thanks to Anne-Marie Brisebarre for having dropped a hint about this obvious fact.
 8. Village militias set up by the state to locally fight against the PKK.
 9. Association from natives of the regions installed in major urban centres with important political weight.
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ABSTRACTS

In this article, we will confront the pastoral practices of the Kurdish populations in eastern Turkey, which is a very ancient culture, to the heritage process in order to try to establish a *pastoralité*, a concept emerging in the French academic circles.

Pastoral practices in eastern Turkey are characterised, like high mountains (pasture) shelters, by a great diversity due to geographical, historical and social contexts, but also to the recent establishment of the Turkish nation-state and Kurdish nationalism, the most striking trait of which is the persistence of tribal allegiance. We are witnessing an impossible standardisation of these practices and a heritage institutionalisation, although one that remains hypothetical considering how the different forces in presence play out.

Stuck between three settings of representation - that of pastoral communities, those of Turkish or Kurdish nationalisms and those inherent to the internal logic of the heritage institutionalisation - pastoralism in the Anatolian East could be understood as a *pastoralité* defined as a resisting community, the territory being itself an actor of this resistance. In this form, the *pastoralité* would be an identity construction. We would like to offer another reading, closer to a tool than to an ideology, and which can encompass both the geopolitical complexity of the Turkish land and what is at stake for the French: *pastoralité* could firstly be a pastoral concept and a resilience as well as a transformation field.

INDEX

Keywords: pastoralism, Kurdish tribe, heritage institutionalisation, Pastoralité, Eastern Turkey

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