Addressivity and the Monument

Memorials, Publics and the Yezidis of Armenia

Christine Allison

This article examines the relationship between monuments and publics, using Karin Barber's model of how texts interact with publics, which draws on the Bakhtinian notion of addressivity. Two monuments associated with the Yezidi community, Armenia's largest minority, are considered here. Both are of recent construction—one sacred, the shrine at Shamiram, and the other secular, the monument to Cahangir Agha, a hero of the battle of Sardarabad. These are set in the context of former Soviet and Armenian discourses; responses to them vary considerably between different constituencies. Barber's approach highlights the monuments' role in processes of convocation and interpellation which highlight the interplay of speech and nonverbal genres within discourses of memory in general.

What is the relationship between the monument and the public? Nietzsche famously criticized "monumental history" for its display of great deeds in the past which could never be truly reproduced, and which condemn society to fruitless attempts at repetition and stifle new action.[1] For Pierre Nora, true memory or lived tradition has been lost, and "if we were able to live within our memory, we would not have needed to consecrate *lieux de mémoire* in its name."[2] This is directly consistent with the opposition he makes between history (imposed from top-down) and memory (popular and spontaneous) which, though much criticized, has proved highly influential. As James Young shows, this anxiety that the monument somehow removes the obligation to remember actively is very real, and is evident in the creation of "counter-monuments" which place an obligation on the public to remember for themselves.[3] However, my own impression is that the characterization of the monument as working "against active

memory" does not tally with the many well-known instances of reevaluation and reconfiguration of traditional monuments and memorials after regime change. Even Pierre Nora acknowledges that *lieux de mémoire* undergo "an endless recycling of meaning," though for him this ceaseless reinvention of tradition does not constitute true memory.[4] In response to this, one might question where true memory lies: the memory of long-ago events, even among subaltern groups, is almost invariably enshrined in speech genres which have their own generic conventions and demands. The way they are told within a group, be it a family, a gender group, a tribe or a nation, is shaped by dynamics of power. Thus even the memory found in Nora's *milieu de mémoire* is sifted, selected and crafted for group consumption, as are the discourses of national history. As Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn (and others since) have remarked, history and memory need not be qualitatively different, but are both discourses created using different dynamics of power.[5] Monuments, like ballads and family history narratives, are a form of discourse conveying meanings about the past; they tend to be erected by governments and are frequently symbols of hegemony as well as of the events they are designed to commemorate, but it is the circumstances and politics of their creation and, most especially, their reception, which endows much of their meaning. Artificiality, imposition from above and distance from a putative *milieu de mémoire* (wherever that may be said to lie) are no more inherent in the monument than in other commemorative forms of discourse.

Examples from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union suggest that whatever the intentions of governments that erected them, monuments are especially vulnerable to reinterpretation and reconfiguration. Far from stifling memory, they are multivalent elements within its living, evolving discourse. In the Republic of Armenia, discourses of memory display some "typical Soviet" features and some unique ones. In her discussion of the evolution of Armenian memory, Tsypylma Darieva has already shown that monuments, and in particular the genocide memorial at Tsitsenakaberd, are reconfigured and reinterpreted over time.[6] I wish to expand on this theme by considering the relationship of the Yezidis, Armenia's largest minority, with their monuments.

In an attempt to find a conceptual framework which can lead to a relatively nuanced understanding of the way monuments operate within discourse, I have drawn on Karin Barber's work on texts and on how texts

form publics;[7] like Barber, I use the Bakhtinian notion of addressivity. The first part of this article will focus on this theoretical framework. The second part will give some necessary contextualization, since this is the first discussion of any aspect of Caucasian Yezidi discourses of memory in a Western academic publication. Here the Yezidi community will be introduced and its discourses of memory will be set in the Armenian context, considering not only the defining events in the history of modern Armenia and their evolutions through the Soviet and post-Soviet periods but also specifically Yezidi issues such as the discourse on religion. The third section will consider the issue of varying Yezidi publics and their responses to two specific monuments—the religious *ziyaret* of the village of Shamiram (Shemiran)[8] which highlights a schism in the community, and the monument in Yerevan to Cahangir Agha, Yezidi hero of World War I, which evokes questions of Yezidi roles in Armenian space. It will be seen that the monuments are part of "live" discourse and play a role in constituting different publics. Far from being monovalent symbols of hegemony, monuments contribute to the lively spaces of contestation and negotiation not only within Armenia but within the Yezidi community itself.

Monuments, museums and publics

Applying Karin Barber's ideas to the case of monuments, this article will examine how monuments can work, as texts do, in the formation of publics. For the various levels of public involved in the creation of discourse I have found Margaret Mills's discussion of the oral historian Alessandro Portelli's work very stimulating.[9] The arguments advanced here will be based not only on written secondary sources but on data collected during interviews and periods of participant observation on field trips in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Many scholars see monuments as an artefact, an artistic rather than literary production, and are therefore not inclined to treat them as one might treat texts.[10] It would be absurd to deny the materiality of monuments and the attributes associated with this—physical dimensions, aesthetics, visibility, expense—which, as will be seen for both examples discussed later, add many layers of meaning to the monuments' publics. However, I would argue that whilst monuments are (mostly) not made of words,[11]

they do possess many of the attributes of texts—using the term "text" in an anthropological sense, as Karin Barber does. Monuments form part of a discourse of public memory, of representations of the past, which usually foreground wars and heroes; they constitute examples of known forms or "genres" recognizable at public level (e.g. the statue, the obelisk, etc.). For those it addresses, a monument has antecedents, a discursive context within which it can be placed. In the Soviet Union, where the culture of memorialization was constantly at work in the service of the state, this was especially rich and nuanced.

Barber's definition of text (encompassing both written and oral examples) highlights specific features. While citing William Hanks's broad definition of text as "any configuration of signs that is coherently interpretable by some community of users,"[12] she refines it by stressing two crucial elements—the text is constructed (as shown by its derivation from *texere*) and it is somehow marked in a way that renders it detachable from its context and usable elsewhere.[13] Moreover she cites Bakhtin's remark: "if the word 'text' is understood in the broad sense—as any coherent complex of signs—then even the study of art (the study of music, the theory and history of fine arts) deals with texts (works of art)."[14] The monument, whilst not transportable at the physical level, is in some ways like an entextualized piece of discourse. Detachable from its discursive context, it is an object of consideration and discussion in itself.

A crucial part of the significance of the monument lies in its addressivity—the publics who are touched by it in different ways may have a dialogic relationship with it. Its meanings may change over time, as it is linked not only to the event it commemorates but also to the circumstances of its construction. The Soviet-era memorials of Armenia not only commemorate their historical events but also the attitudes and rituals of the time they were built. Whilst I would not wish to strain the vocabulary any further by considering monuments as a Bakhtinian "utterance," I would emphasize this addressivity, the quality of "turning to someone" which for Bakhtin is a "constitutive feature" of the utterance,[15] and which, I would argue, applies to monuments too. It is from this perspective that I wish to consider the monument—a configuration of symbols, a carrier of meanings, a referent to many levels of background knowledge, a unit that may be detached from a discourse and reinserted elsewhere. The monument is a living part of the discourse of the past, not made of words but given life

nonetheless by the meanings and uses ascribed to it, not only by its makers but also by multiple audiences. Barber highlights the text's ability to cross space and transcend time.[16] Whilst the monument cannot accomplish the former in a literal sense (though images and discussions of some monuments do traverse the world), it amply fulfills the latter. When it is created it refers to a specific moment in its past, but subsequent generations tend more and more to conflate its foundation with its defining event. Once a monument is ancient it may become a source of messages not merely about its defining event, but about the whole civilization that erected it, or indeed the intentions of its builders may no longer be understood.

Monuments gain meaning in various ways. One of these is their alignment on the axes of time and place. They may be unveiled on a particular significant date; ceremonies may take place there on subsequent significant dates. They are usually sited in a meaningful location—as James Young felicitously expresses it,

> a monument necessarily transforms an otherwise benign site into part of its content, even as it is absorbed into the site and made part of a larger locale. In this way, a monument becomes a point of reference amid other parts of the landscape, one node among others in a topographical matrix that orients the rememberer and creates symbolic meaning in both the land and our recollections.[17]

Thus in the next section it will be necessary to discuss the landscape of memory, which in Armenia includes man-made features such as battlefields, the home villages of the war dead, and also public squares where the population meets and where other public structures are sited. In Yerevan, there is Republic Square, and the space by the Opera House, key gathering points at restless moments. Also important are sites where a significant monument has been replaced by another, such as the museum and monuments at the foot of Mother Armenia, who towers over the city, having replaced the slightly shorter Stalin. The form also has its own "language"; Soviet-era commemoration featured a number of styles instantly recognizable to the citizens.

The museum, another feature in the landscape of memory, constitutes a subtly different case to the monument. Museums also possess addressivity; individuals and publics may dialogue with them and be inspired by them in many ways. However, in terms of their role within a

larger discourse, they do not have the convenient "textual," "portable" quality of monuments, since they tend to offer whole narratives, some of them in mutual contestation. In this article, discussion about individual and public responses will be in connection with monuments rather than museums. However, it will be necessary to mention two state museums, mirrors of official hegemonic discourse, whose exhibits concern Yezidis. As Patricia Davison says, "museums anchor official memory."[18] In Armenia, the concept of the museum, or *tangaran*, was familiar before the Soviet period, as a sort of treasury housing collections of old or curious objects belonging to churches or bishops.[19] However, during the Soviet period they were closely associated with prestigious state institutions generating scientific knowledge, which in turn conferred power.[20] In Armenia's museums, Soviet-era exhibits have not been totally dismantled but added to, subtracted from, and generally reconfigured. Moreover, there is a public perception of the value of museums in developing public awareness and validation of a community; for example, in 2008 Yezidis from the Aparan area sought funding to place their own small ethnographic museum on a more permanent footing.[21]

In considering addressivity we must consider publics. As Barber notes, one of the premises of Benedict Anderson's notion of "print capitalism" is the existence of a relatively uniform public whose members are roughly interchangeable. In order for the nation to exist, it must be addressed as a community.[22] And as Young states, one of the aims behind the erection of monuments by governments is the fostering of an illusion that the public is uniform and that a common memory exists, and that values and ideals are shared by the entire community.[23] Yet monuments may also reveal painful fractures in society, as Catherine Merridale's raw account of the commemoration of the mass grave at Sandormokh in northwest Russia shows—female relations keening over the newly discovered graves of their loved ones, whilst discomfited officials, their speeches interrupted, looked on.[24] Ethnographic experience shows that, despite the best efforts of resistance movements to unify their adherents' perspectives, bringing coherence to counter-memory may be an enormous task, with numerous social, regional and gender identities making for enormous variations in the way the past is perceived.[25] Through its addressivity, a monument may bind a community with a shared perspective or highlight divisions within it.

The Yezidis of Armenia

The Republic of Armenia is the most ethnically homogenous of the former Soviet Republics. Of its population of roughly 3 million,[26] some 97% claim Armenian identity. The Yezidis, who number in the tens of thousands, currently constitute Armenia's largest minority, followed by ethnic Russians (including some 5,000 Molokans),[27] "Assyrian" Christians, Greeks and others.[28] In marked contrast to neighboring Georgia, Armenia has neither numerically significant ethnic minorities nor autonomous territorial units within its borders.[29] This ethnic homogeneity and relative maturity of Armenian national identity were the major reasons for Armenia's relative political and military coherence by comparison with her neighbors during the crisis of the late 1980s, the acquisition of independence and the Karabagh war.[30] The culture of memory and memorialization reflects this coherence.

Although Armenian nationalism, like others in the region, is a late-nineteenth-century phenomenon, there is a strong communal memory of the kingdoms, heroes and literature of old, which is based on numerous written sources going back to late antiquity. Like their neighbors, Armenians have plenty of myths but many of their memories are demonstrably historical and attested in written sources. Moreover, the communal trauma of the genocide and the presence of a large, prosperous and vocal international diaspora proved to be strong drivers of Armenian feelings of uniqueness during the Soviet period. The crisis over Armenian demands for the restoration of Mountainous Karabagh from Azerbaijan, which began in earnest in 1988, was one of the catalysts of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Yezidis are a Kurmanji (Northern Kurdish)-speaking religious minority whose largest community lives in northern Iraq, where the most holy sites are located.[31] The religion is highly syncretistic and its belief system probably derives from an ancient Iranian faith somewhat akin to Zoroastrianism with many observable elements of Islam (especially Sufism), Christianity, Gnosticism and others, interwoven in a highly complex fashion.[32] The Caucasian community comes from Yezidi sections of the Kurdish tribal confederations who were formerly resident in eastern Anatolia, especially the regions of Kars, Van and Doğubayazit; they came to Armenia in waves, mainly during the Russo-Turkish war of 1828–29 and the massacres of

1915–18 (at the latter date, alongside many Armenian refugees). The Soviet Union, foregrounding "nationality" rather than religious creed as a marker of communities,[33] considered them to be Kurds alongside the Muslim Kurds already in Armenia; after 1926, the Soviet census figures no longer distinguished them, nor did the various works of history, folklore and ethnography produced within the Soviet Union. The folkloric songs and stories broadcast on Radio Yerevan were labeled simply "Kurdish." There were probably some 40–50,000 Kurdish speakers in the Caucasus for most of the Soviet period. The 1959 census listed 59,000 "Kurds" in the USSR, with 26,000 in Armenia.[34]

The overwhelming majority of the Yezidi refugees who had arrived in 1918 were poor and illiterate. Many of the younger generation joined Soviet literacy and education drives with enthusiasm.[35] The Kurdish community, though small, engaged in substantial cultural production (short stories, novels, folklore studies, theater, journalism) and counted members of prestigious professions—doctors, factory supervisors, engineers and others—among their number. The evolution of Kurdish cultural production in general was influenced not only by central Soviet diktats but, more intimately, by Armenian tutelage and preoccupations. The Kurdish creative intelligentsia formed subsections within Armenian institutions.

However, during the upsurge of Armenian nationalism of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was strongly linked to the Karabagh conflict, Kurdish Muslims were presented and perceived as suspect, having much in common with Azeri Turkish Muslims. Almost all of them left Armenia, whilst among the Yezidis a bitter schism developed between those who considered themselves to be of Kurdish nationality and those who saw Kurdishness as implying an Islamic identity and who wished to claim Yezidis as a separate *ethnie* (calling their language not Kurmanji but "Êzdîkî"). The creative intelligentsia for the most part continued to consider themselves Kurdish as during the Soviet period, and some also built links with Kurdish movements from elsewhere, especially from Turkey, during the 1990s.[36] Those belonging to the "Êzdîkî" camp (to use a convenient shorthand) would claim that long-felt and legitimate Yezidi claims to a separate identity had been repressed by the Soviet system; those claiming "Kurdish" origin would say that the situation was a product of the political climate of the Karabagh war.[37] The community became bitterly divided in the early 1990s and reports of human rights

abuses mostly concern violence committed in this period.[38] The situation is now much calmer, though tensions persist, especially on matters such as schooling.[39] Radio programming remains divided between broadcasts in "Êzdîkî" and Kurdish (Kurmanji).

Outside the major towns, Yezidis live in three areas in Armenia; broadly speaking, those of Hoktemberyan (Armavir) profess the "Êzdîkî" identity and have closer links with the Armenian government; those of Aparan profess Kurdish identity and have links with the PKK from Turkey; those of Tallinn seem divided. However, this is a very rough picture which does not account for the complex negotiations of everyday life. Not only are festivals and celebrations organized by one side or the other often attended by those whose "public" allegiance lies elsewhere, but Yezidi citizens may seek help from politicians or notables representing the "other" side if they feel they will have more chance of success.[40] Poverty is a problem on both sides of the schism; like their Armenian neighbors, Yezidis have been hit hard by the economic situation in the South Caucasus over the last twenty years. Most families find themselves scattered over wide distances, with few left in the villages and towns of Armenia and many earning a living in Russia, Ukraine, Siberia or Western Europe.[41] Elders understandably fear for the survival of the community.

Yezidi memories and monuments within Armenia

In the Republic of Armenia, different strands of memorial tradition meet. The culture of memory of the Soviet Union at large, with its monuments, statuary, parades and commemoration days, its "Red" funerals (in the communist spirit) and its "organized forgetting," has left a strong imprint. However there is also a rich and coherent Armenian memorial tradition—the culture of the *khachkar*, of copious lamentation and feasting by ancestral tombs,[42] and of a long-standing Oriental bardic tradition singing the past. Both Soviet and Armenian memorial traditions evoke many meanings. The *khachkar*, for instance, a distinctively Armenian stone cross with a flowering design carved on it, has been used to commemorate the dead for centuries and has complex meanings associated both with death and renewal of life.[43] *Khachkars* are much more traditional for Armenians than statuary representing the human form; nevertheless Armenians are as sensi-

tive to the links between between statues and corpses as are Russians and East Europeans.[44] For instance, the dismantling of the Lenin statue in the square of Yerevan which formerly bore his name (now Republic Square) provoked fears of ill luck, though in the end, as he left on a gun-carriage, he was showered with coins rather than stones, which eased collective anxiety considerably; even so, the pedestal on which he had stood was considered a marked and significant spot.[45] As with many former Soviet peoples, memorials and commemorations in Armenia also arouse much ironic commentary and black humor.

The Yezidis of Armenia are relative newcomers to a land already strongly inscribed with multilayered Armenian memories. The view of Ararat dominates Yerevan; legends tell that many other geographical features are heroes, saints or dragons, metamorphosed into stone.[46] The Yezidis' coreligionists in Iraq have similar mythical narratives attached to local geography, especially near the holy shrine of Lalesh,[47] but the Armenian Yezidis have by necessity forged their links with their Caucasian soil more recently. Nevertheless, despite their strong memories of their former homes in eastern Turkey, they do not envisage a return there.[48] Unlike their Armenian neighbors, the Caucasian Yezidis, descended from semi-nomadic tribes in eastern Anatolia, do not have a strong tradition of commemoration through monuments that predates the Soviet period; the exception to this is their elaborate zoomorphic tombstones, now superseded by pictorial stones after the Armenian fashion.[49] Their sacred sites, which they call *ziyaret*s, are often Armenian sites such as churches, which may themselves be founded on the site of some miracle; others are centered on natural features such as springs or caves. As with the Armenians, graveyards by their villages are a focus for pilgrimage. The new landscape also figures in Yezidi narratives of massacre and migration. Villagers in the Aparan area on Mount Aragats willingly point out where battles and killings happened and where village notables and relations hid in caves from the Ottoman army in 1918.[50] Thus the map of topography is accompanied by the narratives of memory.

In the wider Soviet memory, the defining event was the Great Patriotic War, which inspired numerous commemorations and orientated cultural production toward glorification of the united struggle of the nationalities against the fascist threat. Even now, many of the small villages where Yezidis live have their own war memorials. However, Armenian discourses

of memory had their own trajectory which evolved during the Soviet period; at this point in the early twenty-first century much of the discourse turns on three defining events in particular: the genocide of 1915, called in Armenian *mets yegherrn* or "great slaughter," the battle of Sardarabad (May 1918) and the Karabagh war.[51] The *mets yegherrn* did affect the Yezidis and other non-Muslim populations of eastern Anatolia; however as these events are not associated with Yezidis in Armenian public space, this discussion will focus on the battle of Sardarabad and the Karabagh war.

Merridale notes that in Soviet discourses of memory World War I is in general conspicuous by its absence.[52] Not so in the Caucasus. A key event for modern Armenia, and a focus of intense discussion and emotion since the 1960s, is the battle of Sardarabad and its accompaniments at Bash Aparan (and also Karakilis)[53] during May 1918, when Armenian forces turned aside more numerous Turkish forces, thus securing the future of Transcaucasia.[54] These actions were located at strategic points around the peak of Mount Aragats (Alagyaz). The Turks, whose aim was to secure Transcaucasia by capturing the railway leading to Djulfa in Azerbaijan, engaged in a "pincer movement" from three directions. Two divisions marched southwards from Alexandropol (now Gyumri), by different routes around the peak of Mount Aragats. Another division came from the south, crossing the River Araks. By the time battle was joined at Sardarabad (some twenty miles from Yerevan) only two of the three Turkish divisions had arrived, though even these outnumbered the Armenians and their allies. The third division was still battling with the Armenian General Dro at Bash Aparan, to the east of the peak of Aragats. The Armenians and their allies (to their considerable surprise) were victorious at Sardarabad, but could not afford to rest on their laurels whilst the Turks remained active at Bash Aparan. Therefore, after fighting at Sardarabad, Cahangir Agha, leader of the Yezidis of the Zuqiri tribe, rode immediately with several hundred irregular cavalry to Bash Aparan and successfully reinforced Dro's troops to inflict a decisive defeat on the Turks.[55]

May 1968 saw the celebration of the battle's fiftieth anniversary and the unveiling of a commemorative monument at the site.[56] As with the *mets yegherrn*, this focus on Sardarabad within the Republic of Armenia seems to have been driven in part by discourses of the diaspora. During the 1960s several publications on the subject appeared in Yerevan.[57] The first in-depth study in English, published in 1973 by Jacques Kayaloff,

himself a veteran, is in part a response to the more romanticized retellings of popular Armenian sources.

The Sardarabad monument, consisting of a bell-tower flanked by statues of winged bulls in red volcanic tufa, was designed by Rafael Israelyan (1908–73), famous for bringing Armenian cultural elements—*khachkars*, representations of mythical animals and the like—into Soviet commemorative architecture. The State Museum of Ethnography, also his work, opened in 1978. Its windows look out on the two holy mountains—Ararat, with its memories of Western Armenia (now a part of Turkey),[58] and Aragats, sometimes described as the "protector" of the Armenians because of the shelter it gave in 1918.[59] Two large-scale commemoration events in recent years are linked to the Sardarabad/Bash Aparan battles; the elaborate banquet at Sardarabad held on September 24, 1999, and the "round dance" held round "the protector" Mount Aragats (in which many Yezidis participated) on May 28, 2005.[60]

The Yezidi hero of Sardarabad and Bash Aparan, Cahangir Agha, has the strongest presence of any Yezidi in Armenian public commemorative space. Commemorated in the Sardarabad museum, he has definitively joined the canon of national heroes. There is also a monument in his honor in the town of Aparan; his monument in Yerevan, and the Yezidis' relationship with it, will be discussed in detail below. It is worth giving a brief account of his life and public role here. The son of Khetib Agha, he was born in 1874 in Ottoman Turkey and grew up between Lake Van and the Iranian border. During the early 1900s relations worsened with Kurdish Muslim neighbors;[61] after some notable skirmishes with the Ottoman army and the Hamidiye forces drawn from Kurdish tribes, Cahangir Agha moved his tribe en masse to the Kars area. There they consolidated their links with the Russians, the Armenian forces under their leader Andranik Ozanian and the Kars Yezidis, notably the Heseni, led by Usib Beg, son of Hesen Agha. Before Sardarabad, he had already distinguished himself by blowing up a bridge over the Araks to prevent the Turkish columns from uniting. His role at Bash Aparan is remembered as a great deliverance by inhabitants of the Yezidi villages there, who had been living in that district for generations.[62] After the victory, Cahangir Agha settled there, in the village of Cerceris (Dêrik).

However, the leaders of the Ottoman period did not fare well under communism. Andranik himself had left for the U.S. in 1919.[63] Despite his

excellent contacts amongst members of the Armenian party élite, Cahangir Agha was exiled in 1938. He died in Saratov in 1943.[64] The whereabouts of his grave, calamitously for his family, remain unknown. His name was rarely spoken in public discourse for much of the Soviet period. Khalid Chatoev's standard history of the Kurds of Soviet Armenia mentions Sardarabad in passing, briefly adding that "Yezidi Kurds" fought at Bash Aparan, with no mention of either Cahangir Agha or Usib Beg.[65] Kayaloff's study of Sardarabad does not deal systematically with the irregular troops, though he is mentioned briefly by Afanasyan.[66] However, his public cult has grown during the post-Soviet period. Traditional folkloric songs are again performed commemorating his exploits.[67] Aziz Tamoyan, the doyen of the Êzdîkî movement, lists him among the major Yezidi heroes in his exposition of identity *We Are Yezidi*.[68]

It is hardly surprising that both sides of the Yezidi identity schism foreground the importance of Cahangir Agha. Besides exemplifying traditional Yezidi/Kurdish virtues he is a symbol of friendship between Armenians and Yezidis which is currently much more potent than the "internationalism" and "brotherhood between peoples" invoked in Soviet times.[69] His cult provides a privileged space for Yezidis to affirm their place in the independent, post-Soviet Republic of Armenia, as shown by the responses to his monument in Yerevan, which will be discussed below.

Of lesser significance for Yezidis than the battle of Sardarabad, but still worth noting, is Armenia's third great defining event, the Karabagh war. This remains a source of nationalist rhetoric and continuing tension in Armenia, though its political consequences lie beyond the scope of the present article. Its heroes are commemorated on various sites, including the Sardarabad Museum, which now also houses a museum of the History of the Liberation Struggle of Armenia, containing exhibits outlining the strategy of the Karabagh war.

More notable from the Yezidi point of view is the Museum of Military Defense housed in the base of the statue of Mother Armenia, who has stared out over Yerevan since 1967 from a plinth designed by Israelyan and formerly occupied by Stalin in the Victory Park, where the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier also lies. This Soviet-style statue of a woman holding a sword is twenty-three meters tall.[70] The museum was formerly focused only on the Great Patriotic War but now contains not only a series of non-military exhibits featuring Armenian heroes in general (for example Charles

Aznavour) but also a significant amount of space dedicated to Karabagh. Here a number of Yezidis who fought among both conscripts and officers are listed among the war heroes, and their role has been emphasized in public discourse by those on the "Êzdîkî" side of the identity schism.[71]

Memorialization of these three defining events in Armenia visibly evolved through the twentieth century and became much more evident in the post-Soviet period. In Yezidi literary discourse one can discern similar evolutions reflecting changing contemporary priorities. The Kurdish literary output (which was interrupted between 1937 and the mid-1940s) was dominated in the 1950s and 1960s by stories of war and patriotism.[72] Much of the Soviet ideological emphasis on internationalism now seems inconceivable in the current ethnonationalist climate. The collective traumas of World War I are reflected in various books and articles that include personal reminiscence, such as Ereb Shemo's *Jiyîna Bextewar* (The fortunate life, 1959) and Heciê Cindi's *Hewarî* (Cry for help, 1967), the latter of which drew strongly on the author's oral history interviews with survivors. However, these representations are nuanced according to context. Moreover, the cult of Soviet heroes such as Ferik Polatbegov[73] have waned in the post-Soviet discourse.

In literature of the Soviet period, memories of World War I are placed in an "upwardly mobile" narrative whereby the horrors of the past are contrasted with a prosperous present and a bright future.[74] In conversation, today's Yezidis shape their accounts differently, in narratives of decline from a time when social and cultural spaces, education and healthcare in the villages were provided and work was easy to find, through the period of stagnation, the terrible shortages of the Karabagh war years, to the uncertain existence of today, when maintaining the family presence in the villages is fraught with economic difficulty.[75] However, the closer links developed with Yezidis elsewhere in the post-Soviet period have inspired a flourishing discourse on the Yezidi religion, which has become a key element in Yezidi articulations and performance of identity. The contemporary importance of religious questions is reflected in the Yezidis' relationship with the new monument at Shamiram, to be discussed below.

"Perestroika" policies and the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union opened new possibilities of exploring the history of Yezidism and making contact with coreligionists in Iraq. Publications of sacred texts began in 1993; theories of origin took on a new importance, circulating on both

sides of the "Kurdish"/"Êzdîkî" divide. Those on the Kurdish side with PKK sympathies often favored a Zoroastrian origin, in keeping with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's declaration that Yezidis are Zoroastrians. The "Êzdîkî" Yezidis preferred a more specific origin in India, often citing common symbolism such as the importance of the peacock.[76]

Since scholars and travelers have most often described the forms of Yezidism found in Iraq, these have often been perceived, even amongst Yezidis, as more "authentic" and "correct" than those found elsewhere. John Guest's history represents the reestablishment of contact between Yezidis across the Iron Curtain in the 1980s as a chance for the Caucasian Yezidis to relearn their religion.[77] This view seems to have been influential among Caucasian Yezidis in the 1990s—the first sacred texts to be published as such came from Iraq.[78] Now, however, many Caucasian Yezidis consider their own traditions equally valid and some express the opinion that they preserve the more ancient tradition, whereas the Yezidism found in Iraq is adversely influenced by Islam.[79]

The most prominent commemorative rituals of the Yezidi community today are associated with the dead. Families build the finest tombs they can afford—"our dead have better houses than we do!" an inhabitant of Ortachiya village (Aparan area) ruefully remarked in 2007. Where possible, bodies of those dying in exile are brought home for burial in the village, and family members may travel huge distances to be present. Funerals are often filmed for the benefit of absent family members. Yezidi commemoration at a graveside takes place at a family level on significant dates such as anniversaries, and at a community level annually, on a special day called *roja mezela* (Tombstone Day) where the dead are lamented, feasted and toasted liberally. Graves are generally a *lieu de mémoire* with a high degree of addressivity—Yezidi women make lamentations over them at funerals and on *roja mezela*, speaking directly to the dead. Such lamentation provides a bounded space for them to express emotion over other griefs in their lives, though they use this speech genre on other occasions.[80] Moreover the public context of Tombstone Day demands the expression of specific sentiments. At Ortachiya in 2007 I witnessed an elderly woman lamenting her deceased husband using the accepted language and imagery which is also found in love lyrics,[81] whereas it was common knowledge in the wider family that she had never loved him, since he had abducted her as a young teenager from her family home in Yerevan and forced her to

live in the village. The grave stands for the deceased and is addressed as such, but the cemetery is a space representing ancestors in general. Their praises are sung and toasts made there, even though everyone knows that ancestors predeceasing World War I are buried in Turkey. The graves also embody the link between the Yezidis and this homeland; when the community stops sending its dead back to the ancestral community and sets up its own cemeteries elsewhere (as have the Yezidi communities in the Tula area of Russia), one might say that it has put down roots in the new place. Like monuments, graves harbor a range of meanings for the community at large, for specific groups and for individuals.

Monuments and their publics

For Yezidis, as for many communities, notions of "private" and "public" are complex. Although ideals of behavior and indeed dress are often different according to whether one is in the street or in the home, it does not follow that the home sphere, where one is surrounded by family, gives the individual freedom of expression. Gendered rules of behavior ensure that "in the family, at home" where senior menfolk are present constitutes a different arena for expression from "in the family, at home" where only junior womenfolk are in the house; it is possible that the marital home will always be a type of public space, and the affinal relations always a public. Constraints on gendered behavior often mean that women in particular are limited to certain marked speech genres to express personal feelings.[82]

A word commonly used in the Caucasus for the Yezidi community at large is Êzdîxane (or Êzîdxane) which refers to all Yezidis, regardless of their social and religious rank. Yezidi social interactions are also affected by the caste system. Yezidism has three endogamous castes: *murîd* (laypeople), *sheikh* and *pîr*.[83] A Yezidi of the Caucasus also has a *hosta* (spiritual master), *merebî* (spiritual preceptor) and *bira or xuşka axiretê* (brother or sister of the hereafter). Each of these plays a special role in the life of a Yezidi and specific obligations exist in each of these relationships, often determining the nature of social interactions.[84] Thus, rather than placing "private" and "public" in a binary opposition, it is more reasonable to consider a spectrum of widening publics, each of which may demand specific forms of address and expression. Hence the two monuments discussed below,

which are both recent, well known and much discussed in the community, will be considered in the light of the responses of different individuals and constituencies to them. These responses may vary according to gender, status and religious or political allegiance.

The *Ziyaret* of Shamiram

This monument, inaugurated in 1996 in Shamiram (Ashtarak district), was commissioned by the village head, Hesen Beg (of the clan of the Sardarabad hero Usib Beg), and is referred to not as a *pamiatnik* (the Russian word for monument, which is normally used for such large public constructions) but as either a *ziyaret* (shrine) or a *nîşan* (symbol).[85] In line with the discourses of religious origin emerging in the immediate post-Soviet period, it constitutes an attempt to reproduce the holy site of Lalesh (in Iraq) within an Armenian Yezidi village. It is thus a sort of *pamiatnik*, though not to an event or person, but to a place.

Although sacred texts collected in Iraq place a strong emphasis on the importance of Lalesh, represented as a perfect model of the world sent down from heaven,[86] it is unclear what role it played in the religious life of the Caucasian Yezidis before their migration from Turkey; it was in the 1990s that representations of the distinctive buildings of Lalesh began to circulate. In contrast to the Iraqi Yezidis, who worship at Lalesh and a plethora of smaller shrines of similar architecture,[87] the semi-nomadic ancestors of the Caucasian Yezidis did not make such structures but kept movable shrines, known as *stêr*, in the homes of men of religion. These were sites of the power of the *ocax*—"hearth" or holy lineage—at which blessings, protection or treatment of ailments by members of the lineages, *pîr* or *sheikh*, might be given.[88] Religious life was focused in a localized fashion, on the *stêr*, the *ziyaret* and tombs. Whilst it is possible that the distant origins of some Caucasian Yezidi clans lie in northern Iraq,[89] it is hard to imagine that attending the great autumn festivals of Gathering at Lalesh (located some twenty-five miles northeast of Mosul) was a possibility for most of those living in the Kars, Van and Bayazid areas of Turkey. Whether or not Lalesh was a *lieu de rêve* (as opposed to a *lieu de mémoire*) before the end of the Soviet period, it certainly is so now; images are cherished on both sides of the identity schism, and many aspire to visit it. This trend should be seen in the context of the self-conscious

"globalization" and modernization of Yezidism, which also includes moves to "scripturalize" the religion by publishing the sacred texts, and to standardize certain key beliefs and practices.[90]

As noted previously, Yezidi *ziyarets* in Armenia are usually Armenian shrines or natural features such as springs, which may be sacred to one of the Holy Beings or to a local saint. The Lalesh monument at Shamiram, however, resembles a *pamiatnik* in its construction: a short pillar in red tufa with four faces, of which three feature carvings in relief and the fourth an inscription concerning its foundation. Its design (by the Armenian Avetis Poghosian) reveals much of the ideology behind its construction. The most elaborate face shows a figure dressed as a Zoroastrian priest, holding the ritual mace which is an attribute of Mithra (figure 1).[91] This is said to represent Melek Tawus, the demiurge and principal member of the Yezidi Heptad, who was not traditionally depicted as a human figure.[92] He stands at the top of a set of steps, with a winged disk, surrounded by rays, above his head: this winged figure is the most common symbol of Zoroastrianism (though here, unlike in Zoroastrian iconography, it has an animal head; this is not immediately recognizable as lion, bull or bird, which are the creatures one might expect from Yezidi mythology). The theory that Yezidism was a form of Zoroastrianism long predates PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's espousal of it; it dates back at least to George Percy Badger's book of 1852.[93] It later percolated through to the Yezidi community; Prince Mu'awiyah, a member of the Yezidi Mir's family from Iraq, wrote a book espousing the theory.[94] However, I have not yet discovered any evidence of its existence among the Yezidis of Armenia before the end of the Soviet Union and subsequent contact with the Kurdish movement from Turkey.

Moving clockwise round the monument, the next face features a dedicatory inscription, from Hesen Beg, written in Kurdish in Cyrillic script. On the next face is another winged disk, hovering above a globe clasped in two hands (according to editor of the Kurdish-language newspaper *R'ya Teze*, Emerîkê Serdar [Amarik Sardarian], those of Melek Tawus).[95] The hands emerge from rather snake-like arms which in the lower part of the monument, encircle a book, labeled (in Latin script) "Pirtuka dînê Êzîdiya" (the book of the Yezidi religion).[96] Traditional Yezidism does not have one book but a collection of orally transmitted sacred texts, and this image reflects the "hidden book" myth—the desire to locate some lost

Figure 1: Zoroastrian imagery on the Shamiram monument (photo by author)

scripture, which would not only reveal "secrets" but also place Yezidism on an equal footing with neighboring religions. This myth has been part of the orally transmitted Yezidi tradition for centuries but became more urgent at the end of the twentieth century.[97] The fourth face depicts the shrine of Lalesh, with its distinctive fluted conical spires in relief, the mountains behind[98] and a radiant sun overhead (figure 2).[99]

As one would expect, the "Kurd" side of the schism voiced approval of the *ziyaret*. Its founding inspired enthusiastic articles in *R'ya Teze*, whose editorial team were mostly old-style Soviet intellectuals. The first, by editor Emerîkê Serdar, describes it as a rare piece of good news at a gloomy time for the community, which had never had an opportunity to make such a *ziyaret* since its separation from the ancestral land of Sinjar and Lalesh.[100]

Figure 2: Image of Lalesh on the Shamiram monument (photo by author)

The implication that this need had been strongly felt by the community is clear. Serdar himself spoke at the foundation ceremony, alongside various other members of the creative intelligentsia, Hesen Beg, who endowed it, and the provincial governor. Although he writes enthusiastically, describing the representations of Melek Tawus, Serdar does not mention the religious elements of the ceremony—in keeping with my own conversations with him during the three summers of my fieldwork, where he disavowed any interest in or knowledge of Yezidi religion and ancient history. Despite welcoming something that will enhance its religious life and thus preserve community identity, he takes a secular and modernist position. However, Rizganê Recevi's article on the next year's festival pays more attention to religion.[101] It features a Zoroastrian winged disk with the slogan "good

thoughts, good words, good deeds" and gives the name and lineage of the Yezidi *sheikh* who opened the proceedings. Again, many of the speakers were writers, poets and singers, but special emphasis is placed on those who had come some distance to be there, and a model of the *ziyaret* sent as an offering by Yezidis living outside Armenia.

A contrasting response comes from Sheikh Hasan Hasanian, a high-status resident of Shamiram and partisan of the "Êzdîkî" side, whom I visited at his home in 2005. Unusually, he had traveled to the Yezidi areas of Turkey and Iraq, including Lalesh. An adherent of the Georgian Yezidi Faroyan's theory that the origins of Yezidism lie in Babylon, he specifically singled out the Zoroastrian imagery on the monument, saying "Zoroastrians are from Iran! Yezidis have nothing to do with them!"[102] Nevertheless, like Emerîkê Serdar, he regarded the monument's importance to the community as incontrovertible; he would not criticize it, only saying: "The head of our village had it built, it is a *ziyaret*." Hesen Beg, the village head, though not a member of a religious caste like Sheikh Hasan, is not only a man of influence as a former member of parliament but also the grandson of Usib Beg, linked to Sheikh Hasan's clan by long-standing religious and social ties.

Despite these ideological reservations, however, Yezidis on both sides of the schism participate in the monument's festival day. The 2005 celebration included an address by a member of the "Kurdistan Committee" in Yerevan, linked to the Kurdish movement in Turkey, as well as followers of the "Êzdîkî" leader Aziz Tamoyan.[103] Some indication of such festivities is given in the 2007 documentary film *Zarên Adem* (Children of Adam) by Georgi Parajanov (nephew of the renowned director Sergei Parajanov). Its depiction of the *ziyaret* festival shows music and dancing, the sacrifice of a bullock, the singing of mournful heroic songs, toasting (notably to Melek Tawus as "lord of the people" and "balm for a grieving heart") and feasting. This is interspersed with moments of personal devotions performed by women, and to a lesser extent, men—tapers lit on the monument, on the shelf below the relief of Lalesh (alongside a bottle of vodka for offerings and toasts), and kissing and touching the forehead on the monument.[104] Despite its novelty the monument is treated as a true *ziyaret*.

The Cahangir Agha monument in Yerevan

A very different example is the monument to Cahangir Agha which stands not in a Yezidi village, but in Armenian public space—in a park in the "Masif 2" area of Yerevan, a little outside the center but nonetheless in a densely populated area. It was built with Armenian public funds rather than solely Yezidi or Kurdish money (unlike the monument to him in Aparan which was built by Yezidis) and inaugurated in 2004. A monument to Lord Byron stands in the same park.

Like the Shamiram monument, this is a broad column with reliefs on it, though more roughly hewn in style. To the fore, facing the path, is a bust of the hero himself in relief, alongside some of his comrades, a sword by his side; typically he is shown wearing an astrakhan hat, military uniform and medals. His name is inscribed over the bust, and laurel branches are beneath. The rear of the monument (figure 3) shows a bridge (according to his son, the bridge of Markara, which Cahangir Agha blew up) and two inscriptions: the upper one reads "Hay joghovrdi mets barekam azgout'yamb yezdi zoravar Djahangir Aghayin yerakhtaghitout'yamb" (To the great friend of the Armenian people, the Yezidi leader Cahangir Agha, with gratitude), and the lower is a signature saying "work by Artik and Andranik Kocharian."[105] Above the upper inscription is an image in relief of the Sardarabad monument, a direct reference by one monument to the other. It is noteworthy that the inscription literally says not "the Yezidi leader" but "the Yezidi-by-nationality leader Cahangir Agha." In post-Soviet Armenia Yezidism has become a "nationality" rather than a "religion."

As noted earlier, respect and admiration for Cahangir Agha transcend the identity schism, and whenever it was mentioned to me, Yezidi interlocutors referred to this monument with pride, as a sign of the Armenians' acknowledgment of his importance. Its situation in Yerevan, rather than on one of the battlefields where he fought, is a sign of his high status among non-Yezidis. My host family in Yerevan, who were related to Cahangir Agha's clan, referred to it many times. When I visited it in 2006 to meet his son, I spoke first with the daughter of one of his companions in exile who had been "dekulakized" with Cahangir Agha. She opined that in fact the monument was not worthy of such a great man, who deserved better.

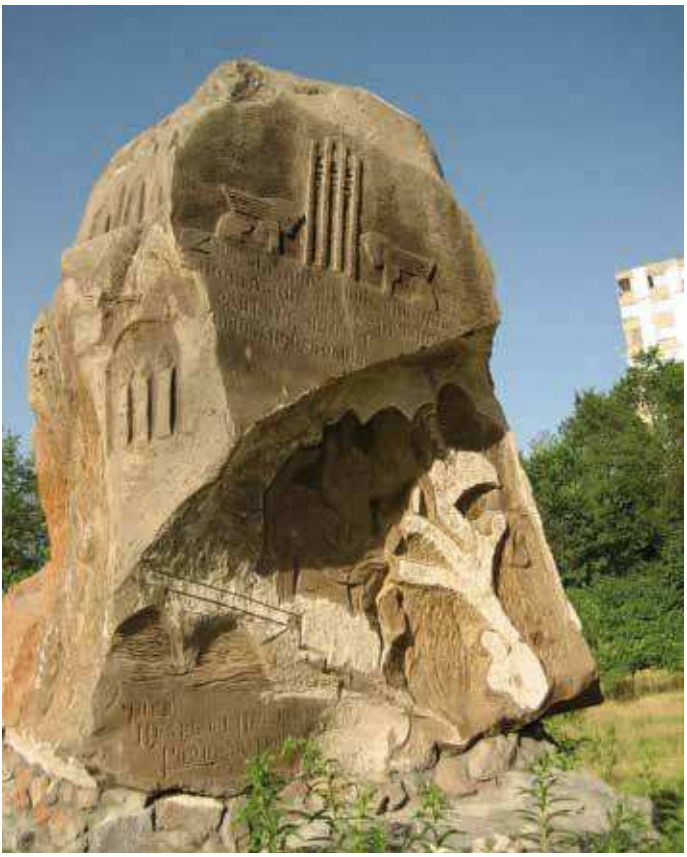

Figure 3: Rear view of Cahangir Agha monument, Yerevan (photo by author)

However, Suren Agha himself, Cahangir Agha's only surviving child, made it clear that his relationship with the monument was both special and very close (figure 4). Many anecdotes concerning Cahangir Agha circulate among his descendants, mostly exemplifying traditional Kurdish manly virtues—his courage, his generosity, his loyalty to his allies such as Andranik and his defense of his own honor and that of his household.[106] However, unlike the other clan members, Suren Agha did not recount anecdotes but gave a public narrative of his father's life—his youth in Turkey, his role at Sardarabad and Bash Aparan, his refusal to leave Armenia with Andranik in 1920 and his deportation and death in Russia. He returned more than once to the importance of the monument for the Yezidi people (*millet*) as a whole, stressing that this was "a great thing for our Yezidi people."

Figure 4: Suren Cahangir Agha stands by his father's monument, Yerevan (photo by author)

All Yezidis were of a common descent, he told me, and he was respected by the Yezidi community (*Êzîdxane*) and returned that respect.

Besides a strong awareness of his public role, Suren Agha showed a less public side of the monument's importance to him. Of Cahangir Agha, he said: "[He] had seven children, four sons and three girls. They're all dead, I'm the only one left. *I never saw my father.*" This last sentence occurs in my interview transcript no less than five times. He was born in 1936 when his father had just gone into exile, and grew up first among his mother's kin, the family of Egid Beg, and then with his elder brother. The paternal absence was a leitmotif of his narrative of his own life. He explained how other members of his father's family had taken those roles

a father would normally take, acknowledging him, raising him in their house and finding a wife for him. He also explained that his father did not have a grave and that he came to the monument every day and saw to it that the place was well kept.

Suren Agha did not speak in detail of the "organized forgetting" of the victims of dekulakization in the Soviet Union.[107] However he hinted at the difficulties by references to the destruction of his father's papers and the impossibility of pursuing his own studies ("I have no education ... you know why. I was born in 1936 and I never saw my father"). Clearly, within the Yezidi community the memory of his father would have been kept honorably. Nevertheless for many years it would not have been possible to express respect for him publicly. In his discourse, we see not so much the conflation of statue with human body, but of monument with family tomb, in the absence of a real grave. He conveys not only the personal pain felt by a son at the loss of his father but also obligations of family honor and an awareness of a wider importance for the Yezidi community within Armenia.

Conclusion

These two examples clearly demonstrate the multivalency and addressivity of the monument; different individuals and groups are seeing different sets of meanings in them and responding to them in different ways. However, there are further observations to be made on their role in the formation of new publics.

Barber makes several interesting points about the ways in which texts may form new publics. She says that oral performances "convene an imagined audience, often exceeding the people actually present, and hail them as a particular kind of listener, offering them a standpoint with which to secure uptake of the utterance." She adds that new genres convoke new audiences or old audiences in new ways.[108] One of her case studies is the first substantial work published in Zulu by a Zulu author. Not only is the authorial speaking position new and somewhat complex, but a new kind of audience—the Zulu reading public, aspiring to new notions of "culture" and "civil society"—is convoked.

I would argue that something analogous is taking place in Shamiram. Firstly, although Armenian Yezidis are familiar with the language of tufa monuments, Caucasian Yezidi sacral architecture is a new, post-Soviet genre. Its convocation of its public is also new: the focus on Lalesh and its dedication to Melek Tawus make it appeal to all Yezidis, but in a new way, unlike that of the more traditional and localized *ziyaret* and *ocax* (hearths of holy lineages) which one might consult or sacrifice to if one had a specific link to them by birth, or a particular problem or wish within their powers to treat. It hints at a formalization of Melek Tawus's paramount status among the Holy Beings, unlike traditional hymns and devotions which tend to focus on a specific figure without enunciating their relationships to the others. Such formalization of status is a move toward a modern Yezidism much more like Christianity or Islam. Also, unlike some more traditional religious sites, this *ziyaret* convokes all Yezidis just by virtue of their being Yezidi. Moreover, it gives pictorial information on an ancient history (Zoroastrianism) hitherto unknown and almost certainly not considered necessary until the recent climate made such myths essential.

The addressivity of the Shamiram monument provokes different responses; some use it for devotions and expressions of reverence for Lalesh and Melek Tawus, others for reflection on the needs of the community or on historical truths. These responses show the divisions in the community—for instance Sheikh Hasan's rather complicated relationship with it seems to illustrate Barber's point, "Audiences are not passive recipients of interpellation; they have the capacity to say whether they will occupy the position of addressee, and if so, what they will bring to it."[109] Unhappy with the Zoroastrian imagery, he is unwilling to engage with it, but still in some ways he feels obliged as a Yezidi to respond to the monument for both social and religious reasons. It is clear that there is some participation from others on the "Êzdîkî" side of the schism in the festivals surrounding the monument.

Also new is the topographical situation of the Shamiram monument; it was not founded there because of any local connection with Lalesh, or with Melek Tawus himself, but rather to enhance the reputation of the village, as a center of pilgrimage and Yezidi identity. There was no Armenian chapel on the site to sanctify it, nor a natural spring, as with a "nature" *ziyaret*. Perhaps we may again draw a comparison with texts: in the exclusively oral environment, texts gain authority from their provenance,

but in a predominantly literate society, this comes from the content of the text itself; similarly, this *ziyaret* draws meaning not from its placing in time and space, nor from the religious authority and connections of its founder, but from its content—the representation of holy Lalesh in particular. It indicates a new way of imagining Yezidism.

The Cahangir Agha monument constitutes a different case. Clearly, it holds different meanings for different publics. For the non-expert Armenian public who walk through the park, it explains his status as a friend to the Armenians. For Yezidis at large it is a symbol of their importance in Armenian history. For some of those who knew the man it is an inadequate reflection of his heroism, and for his son it is a tomb-substitute, a public reflection of family prestige by its size and prominence, a source of comfort and perhaps also a place for private reflection on a personal loss which is clearly felt very keenly.

The frequent references to the monument made by Yezidis in general conversations about the past are rather reminiscent of ways that texts are used in discourse, detached from their immediate context, without necessarily being cited verbatim (key features of the entextualization process). Few of the people referring to the monument claimed to have visited it, but all considered that its existence was a boon to the Yezidi people. This recalls the ways in which some Kurds have spoken to me of the Kurdish novel—the current fruitful output is a source of pride and an index of national development, though few people are actually reading them.[110] Similarly a Yezidi may rejoice in the status the monument brings to the community at large without needing to visit it or study its form and content.

Unlike Shamiram, this is not an example of a new genre. Statues of prominent Kurds were erected during the Soviet period, in the villages. However, its situation in Armenian public space makes it a rare object; there are few statues of non-Armenians in contemporary Yerevan. Cahangir Agha is there because of his links with the Armenian national project; therein lies the ambiguity of its message for Yezidis. Most of his clan are on the "Kurdish" side of the schism; though they think it right and proper that he should be commemorated, there is also no doubt that this monument has links to the discourse of the "Êzdiki" side. It evokes the memorialization practice commemorating Sardarabad—it even has an image of that monument carved on it. Such practices, demonizing the Ottoman Turks as "Black Rūm," are also linked to modern anti-Muslim

politics in Armenia, and thus to the division between Muslim Kurds and Yezidis in Armenia. Moreover, Cahangir Agha is described as being of Yezidi, not Kurdish *nationality*. Thus the monument offers a space for reflection, on the man and his deeds, on the contemporary imagination of Armenian nationhood and of the Yezidis' place in it.

The addressivity of these monuments is clearly demonstrable; they are very much alive in public discourse, provoking varied comments and responses from different individuals and constituencies who interact with them, directly or indirectly, in various ways. They neither prevent people from remembering as they wish nor (despite the best intentions of the Shamiram *ziyaret*'s builders) do they successfully enforce a single view of the past. They are new, however, and whether their addressivity will last remains to be seen.

In conclusion, Barber's analysis of the relationship between texts and publics, and her use of Bakhtin's concept of addressivity, provide a useful model for considering the relationship between monuments and publics. These ideas offer a way of reaching a relatively nuanced understanding of the role of monuments in public discourses about the past. This could play a significant part in detailed analysis of the formation of discourses of memory, which would move beyond general descriptions to analysis of the meanings and interplay of many communication genres.

Notes

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Note on transcription: I have tried to make Kurdish and Armenian words as easily pronounceable as possible without straying too far from accepted transcriptions. For Kurdish, most letters are recognizable to the English speaker, with ç as in English *ch*urch, ş as in shout, *c* as in *j*am, and *x* as in lo*ch*. For Armenian, I have chosen *ts* rather than *c* and used *dj* for *j* as in *j*am. For those whose names

may have alternative versions, I have tried to indicate both at least once to resolve confusion (e.g. Serdar/Sardarian).

1. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, trans. Peter Preuss (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980), 16.

2. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 8.

3. James E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory: Towards a Social Aesthetic of Holocaust Memorials," in Monica Bohm-Duchen, ed., *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art* (Sunderland: Lund Humphries, 1995), 87.

4. Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8, 19.

5. "Collapse the Nature-Culture distinction, as postmodernist criticism has done in various ways, and both memory and history look like heavily constructed narratives, with only institutionally regulated differences between them." Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Introduction," *Representations,* no. 26 (1989): 2.

6. Tsypylma Darieva, "From Silenced to Voiced: Changing Politics of Memory of Loss in Armenia," in Tsypylma Darieva and Thomas Kaschuba, eds., *Representations on the Margins of Europe: Politics and Identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian States* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2007), 75–78.

7. Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

8. For clarity, I have used the "official" name of Shamiram, though Kurdish sources often prefer "Shemiran."

9. Margaret A. Mills, "'Are You Writing Our Book Yet?' War, Culture, Structural Violence, and Oral Historical Representation," in Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison, eds., *Remembering the Past in Iranian Societies* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 165–76.

10. Elena Isayev, "Archaeology ≠ Object as History ≠ Text: Nudging the Special Relationship into the Post-Ironic," *World Archaeology* 38, no. 4 (2006): 599–610.

11. Secret and immaterial monuments raise fascinating questions about addressivity and publics, which are unfortunately beyond the scope of this article, cf. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," 78–80.

12. William F. Hanks, "Text and Textuality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18 (1989): 95.

13. Barber, *Anthropology of Texts*, 22.

14. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 103.

15. "The various forms this addressivity assumes and the various concepts of the addressee are constitutive, definitive features of various speech genres." Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 99, cited by Barber, *Anthropology of Texts*, 138.

16. Ibid., 28.

17. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," 84.

18. Patricia Davison, "Museums and the Re-shaping of Memory," in Gerard Corsane, ed., *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: an Introductory Reader* (London and New York, Routledge, 2005), 186.

19. Levon Abrahamian, *Armenian Identity in a Changing World* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2006), 305–6.

20. For a view of the knowledge/power relationship in the Soviet republics which differs from Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, see Laura Adams, *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 14.

21. This was led by the district nurse of Alagyaz, a Yezidi village, Aparan district.

22. Barber, *Anthropology of Texts*, 142.

23. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," 84.

24. Catherine Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Russia* (London: Granta, 2000), 7–8.

25. A case in point is the Kurdish movement in Turkey, which often overrides constituent groups' concerns in its labors to produce a national narrative which can compete with the Kemalist model.

26. According to CIA online country profile, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html (accessed October 6, 2011).

27. This figure is given in Onnik Krikorian's report on Molokans and minority education, for UNICEF (http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/reallives_3574.html, accessed July 8, 2011). Molokans are a Russian group whose communities were exiled to the Caucasus in the eighteenth century for their dissent with the Russian Orthodox Church. As with the Yezidis there are issues concerning their integration into Armenia's education system.

28. During the Soviet period, more Russians lived in Armenia and also substantial numbers of Muslim Kurds and Azeris.

29. Even before the 1926 census, Georgians were insisting on being classified as a *natsional'nost* (nationality) rather than a *narodnost'* (people). See Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 116.

30. Edmund Herzig, *The New Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), 1–23.

31. Kurmanji is a Kurdish dialect spoken in Turkey, the northernmost parts of Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan, Syria, the Caucasus and Khorasan. See Geoffrey

Haig and Yaron Matras, "Kurdish Linguistics: A Brief Overview," *STUF* 55, no. 1 (2002): 3–14.

32. Two striking features of Yezidism are its belief in the reincarnation of the Seven Holy Beings (who serve God) and the importance of purity, which is expressed in a social order of endogamous castes and many taboos concerning food, dress and personal habits. See Philip G. Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism: Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition* (Lewiston, NY, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1995); research at the University of Goettingen continues into the ancient Western Iranian cultic tradition which seems to underlie both Yezidism and Ahl-e Haqq religion.

33. However, the issue of religion was not disregarded. For the travails of those attempting to define the terms of the 1926 Soviet census, see Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 108–23. Confessional group and mother tongue (itself not easy to define) were seen as important elements of nationality (both *natsional'nost'* and *narodnost'*) at this point.

34. Daniel Müller, "The Kurds and the Kurdish Language in Soviet Azerbaijan according to the All-Union Census of December 17, 1926 (A Contribution to the History of the So-called 'Red Kurdistan,'" *Journal of Kurdish Studies* 3 (2000): 61–84; Khalid M. Chatoev, *Kurdy Sovetskoi Armenii: Istoricheskii ocherk (1920–1940)* (The Kurds of Soviet Armenia: A historical outline [1920–1940]) (Erevan: Nauka, 1965), 9; Tat'iana Fedorovna Aristova, *Kurdy Zakavkaz'ia* (The Kurds of the Caucasus) (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 19.

35. Yezidism traditionally placed a taboo on literacy for all but one sheikhly clan; however, even in the nineteenth century some were educated (for example the Heseni leader Usib Beg).

36. Whilst it is true to say that most of the intelligentsia were on the "Kurd" side, and that the leaders of the "Êzdîkî" side were in general less educated, the "'Kurd" side included many non-intellectuals.

37. Julie Flint, *The Kurds of Azerbaijan and Armenia* (London: Kurdish Human Rights Project, 1998), 77–83.

38. For an account of the murder of Yezidi "pro-Kurd" pediatrician Seid Iboyan by his wife, see Gina Lennox, *Fire, Snow and Honey: Voices from Kurdistan* (Rushcutters Bay, NSW: Halstead, 2001), 418–23. Yezidis also participated in celebrating the capture in 1992 of the (still disputed) Lachin corridor between Amernia and Mountainous Karabagh, after the ethnic cleansing of its partly Kurdish population.

39. In 2008, I was told that schoolbooks in "Êzdîkî" designed by senior members of the "Êzdîkî" side of the community had been rejected by the schools in the Aparan district, who continued to use Soviet-era learning materials in Latin and Cyrillic scripts.

40. The nephew of a Yezidi friend, whose family was firmly entrenched on the "Kurd" side, had not hesitated to approach Aziz Tamoyan, leader of the "Êzdîkî" movement (again, my term—he called his organization the World Council of Yezidis), for support in a dispute with a neighbor. He had duly received it; it was explained to me that despite his political opinions Tamoyan was a good and conscientious advocate in such matters (personal conversation, summer 2006).

41. For a map showing Yezidi settlement across the former Soviet Union, see Khanna Omarkhali, *Iezidizm: Iz glubiny tysiacheletii* (Yezidism: From the depths of the millenium) (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University Omarkhali, 2005).

42. These practices, traditional in Russia, were regarded as superstitious by official Soviet culture. See Merridale, *Night of Stone*, 94, for the innovation brought by "Red" funerals.

43. Abrahamian, *Armenian Identity*, 301.

44. Cf. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1999), 12.

45. See Abrahamian's engaging description of the debates surrounding the removal of the statue. He also notes that in Siberia, captains of ships on the Yenisei diverted their courses to avoid a submerged marble Stalin. *Armenian Identity*, 283, 292.

46. Ibid., 274.

47. Noteworthy descriptions include: Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains: With an Account of a Visit to the Chaldæan Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil-Worshippers; and an Inquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians* (London: John Murray, 1849); Cecil John Edmonds, *A Pilgrimage to Lalish* (London**:** Royal Asiatic Society, 1967). For an architectural survey, see Birgül Açıkyıldız, *The Yezidis: The History of a Community, Culture and Religion* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

48. See Estelle Amy de la Bretèque, "La Passion du tragique: Paroles melodisées chez les Yézidis d'Arménie" (Ph.D. diss., Université Paris X Nanterre, 2010), 266–67, for the nostalgia expressed by Yezidis for the former homeland, with no real intention to return.

49. For a discussion of these zoomorphic tombstones see Açıkyıldız, *The Yezidis*, 183–95.

50. Fieldwork in Ortachiya village, summer 2005, 2006, 2007.

51. Darieva identifies a "silent" period, when the Soviet policy of not acknowledging the Armenian genocide was in force. This changed during the 1950s, partly due to the Soviet "Thaw" and partly to the influence of the global Armenian diaspora. Soviet historians became "more outspoken" about historical issues

potentially offensive to the Republic of Turkey after 1952, when Turkey definitively declared its Cold War allegiance by joining NATO; see Jacques Kayaloff, *The Battle of Sardarabad* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973), 80. Darieva describes how the discourse then moved through a period of popular protest to a "voiced" phase, reaching a decisive point with the construction of the genocide monument at Tsitsenakaberd in 1967. In the post-Soviet period its configuration has been interpreted in new ways; see Darieva, "From Silenced to Voiced," 75–78.

52. Merridale, *Night of Stone*, 123–25.

53. Most relevant for the Yezidis are Sardarabad and Bash Aparan; thus I omit Karakilis here.

54 After the October Revolution and the subsequent withdrawal of the Russians from Kars, remnants of the Russian army in the area regrouped to form new Caucasian units and resist the Turkish advance. Some partisan groups fought alongside them. Serge Afanasyan, *La victoire de Sardarabad, Arménie (mai 1918)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985) 17–23.

55. For a general account of Sardarabad from military sources, see Kayaloff, *Sardarabad*. For Bash Aparan, see Afanasyan, *Victoire*, 61–62.

56. Ibid., 13.

57. Including a novel and an article in *Vestnik*, the journal of Yerevan State University. The battle was mentioned in general works about the Caucasus front, memoirs and diaspora publications; see Kayaloff, *Sardarabad*, 23, 25, 34, 61–67.

58. The mountain remains a symbol within Armenia and in the diaspora, with many institutions both cultural and touristic named after it. Importantly for Kurds, it is also the site of a joint Armeno-Kurdish rebellion against the Republic of Turkey in 1927–30.

59. There is also a substantial monument at Bash Aparan with three sections, one commemorating those who perished in 1915, the second the heroes of Sardarabad and Bash Aparan, and the third the dead of the Great Patriotic War. Opened in 1979, it is also made of red tufa and designed by Israelyan. However it makes no mention of individuals and is not the site of commemorative ritual and sacrality to the same extent as Sardarabad; hence I do not discuss it further in this article.

60. For the banquet's organization, its sacral topography and its cyclical views of history, see Ashot Voskanian, "The Staging of Politics and the 'folklorization' of Political Discourse," in Darieva and Kaschuba, *Representations on the Margins*, 330–32. For the "top-down" organization of the round dance, the huge public participation and the monument raised to it, see Levon Abrahamian, "Dancing Around the Mountain: Armenian Identity Through Rites of Solidarity," in Bruce Grant and Lale Yalçin-Heckmann, eds., *Caucasus Paradigms: Anthropologies, Histories and the Making of a World Area* (Halle**:** Lit Verlag, 2007), 169–72.

61. These tensions were aggravated by Ottoman government manipulations, and not long before his death around 1904–6, Khetib Agha had Cahangir sell all the tribe's carefully garnered assets (both goods and beasts) for weapons and horses to arm the men effectively; see Eskerê Boyik, *Êzdiyati, Fermanên reş, Mîrzikê Zaza* (Yezidism, Black Decrees, Mirzike Zaza) (Oldenburg: n.p., 2006), 5.

62. According to Yezidi sources, the villagers offered no resistance to the Turkish army but about seventy men were massacred in cold blood in Camûşvan (now Alagyaz) alone, whilst those who could sought sanctuary in the clefts of the mountain. Meanwhile their goods were plundered (ibid., 11); also my own interviews with villagers of Ortachiya, summer 2005; interview with Ferida Heciyê Cindî, summer 2006).

63. Andranik died in Fresno, California in 1927, and was buried in Père-Lachaise cemetery, Paris, in 1928, but his remains were reinterred in Armenia in 2000.

64. Khanna Omarkhali, "On the Structure of the Yezidi Clan and Tribal System and Its Terminology among the Yezidis of the Caucasus," *Journal of Kurdish Studies* 6 (2008): 111.

65. Chatoev, *Kurdy*, 30.

66. Afanasyan, *La Victoire*, 47, 61.

67. Amy de la Bretèque, "La Passion," 292–94.

68. Aziz Tamoyan, *Menk' Êzdî Enk'* (We are Yezidi) (Yerevan, 2001), 61–62.

69. *R'ya T'eze*, the Kurdish-language newspaper published in Yerevan, contains various articles profiling heroes of non-Kurdish nationality, including Azeris. The issue of October 3, 1970, contains several pages devoted to the fiftieth anniversary of the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan.

70. The removal of Stalin in the early 1960s aroused little comment, beyond dark humor at the death of a soldier killed accidentally in the dismantling; also the Mother Armenia image here (designed by Ara Harutyunyan) is atypical, since she is more usually represented by Armenians as mourning the lost lands of Western Armenia (Abrahamian, *Armenian Identity*, 282, 292 n. 31).

71. See, for example, Tamoyan, *Menk' Êzdî Enk'*.

72. Lucine Japharova-Brutti, "Littérature kurde de la période soviétique (années 1930–1990)" (Ph.D. diss., INALCO Paris, 2001), 131–32.

73. Aka Fyodor Lytkin, a Bolshevik born of a Yezidi father and Russian mother, who died not long after the October revolution and later had a village named after him.

74. The epilogue of Hecie Cindi's novel *Hewarî* published in 1967, where the narrator looks back on a traumatic past from a prosperous present, exemplifies this very well

75. Of the areas traditionally inhabited by Yezidis, the Hoktemberyan/Armavir plain provides good conditions for market gardening, especially the cultivation

of fruit trees. Higher up, Tallin lacks water in some places, and Aparan has poor land and a very short growing season. Both of these areas are suitable for pasture but animal husbandry is not profitable due to market conditions (interviews in Hatsashen [Tallin district], 2005; Ortachiya [Aparan district], 2005, 2006, 2007).

76. For example, Aziz Tamoyan, interview with P. G. Kreyenbroek, Yerevan 2004. In 2005 I also observed the popularity of this theory.

77. John S. Guest, *Survival among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), 202.

78. "Pir Dewresh," *Du'a u Drozgê Êzîdiya* (Yezidi prayers, private and public) (Yerevan: n.p., 1993). The Soviet Kurdish folklorists, Ordixan and Celilê Celil, Yezidis themselves, had published some Yezidi sacred texts as part of a wider folklore collection, *Zargotina K'urda* (Kurdish oral tradition) (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), but there was no exegesis and they were not presented differently from other genres.

79. I have also heard the converse from Iraqi Yezidis, that the Caucasian Yezidis are influenced by living alongside Armenians. This mutual preoccupation with purity and pollution has long been an important part of Yezidism but is now also found in most nationalist discourses of the area.

80. Amy de la Bretèque, "La Passion," 223–46, 283–314.

81. Christine Allison, *The Yezidi Oral Tradition in Iraqi Kurdistan* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), 191–95.

82. For example, the Arabic *ghinnawa* described in Lila Abu Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1986); the Paxto *tapos* described in Benedicte Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women: "The Misfortunes Which Have Befallen Me"* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1992). For an account of dilemmas presented by such constraints for long-term work on the oral history of an Afghan family, see Mills, "'Are You Writing Our Book Yet?'"

83. See Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, 131.

84. See Omarkhali, "Clan and Tribal System," 117. These are known as the "five duties." However the ideal model functions imperfectly in many instances, due to the shortage of locally available *sheikhs* and *pîrs* in Armenia. Many Yezidis have recourse to a *sheikh* or *pîr* who is not their own by birth.

85. Emerikê Serdar (Amarik Sardarian) mentioned a similar object in the Apsheron area, built by Yezidis and Muslims together, and another built by Yezidis in Tbilisi (Robert Langer, personal communication). Neither Dr. Langer nor I have been able to substantiate this.

86. Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism*, 174, 189.

87. Each of these is sacred to a specific figure and set in a meaningful location; some are mausoleums, others simpler shrines. See Açıkyıldız, *The Yezidis*, 131–76.

88. For a general description of the *stêr* see, for example, Amy de la Bretèque, "La Passion," 261–66.

89. Some Caucasian Yezidi clans have names in common with Yezidis of the Jebel Sinjar, a mountain lying on the Iraqi side of the border with Syria. Oral tradition within families of the *sheikh* and *pîr* castes also recounts origins in Sinjar, though rarely with much supporting detail (personal conversation with Khanna Omarkhali, 2005).

90. In the past, Yezidis did not feel it necessary to have a set of key beliefs and practices to which everyone should adhere, but this has come about within the last 20 years among Iraqi, Turkish and Caucasian Yezidis. See Eszter Spät, "Changes in the Oral Tradition of the Yezidis of Iraqi Kurdistan," *Journal of Kurdish Studies* 5 (2003–2004): 73–82; Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Khalil Jindi Rashow, *God and Sheikh Adi Are Perfect: Sacred Poems and Religious Narratives from the Yezidi Tradition* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005); Philip G. Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism in Europe: Different Generations Speak about Their Religion* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009).

91. This mace or *gorz* was carried by priests at their investiture. Overall the figure bears a strong resemblance to that of Mithra at Taq-e-Bustan, though the latter is shown in profile (Philip Kreyenbroek, personal communication, 2011).

92. Emerikê Serdar, "Zyaret li Şamiramê" (A *ziyaret* at Shamiram), *R'ya T'eze*, November 13, 1996, 4.

93. Victoria Arakelova, "Ezidskii panteon" (The Yezidi pantheon) (Ph.D. diss., Yerevan State University, 2002), suggests this may be due to possible Zoroastrian rhetoric among 'Adawiyya Sufis.

94. Emir Mu'awiya Chol, *To Us Spoke Zarathustra* (Paris: n.p., 1983).

95. Serdar, "Zyaret li Şamiramê"

96. According to Serdar, ibid.," this is a *mishur*—traditionally a book in which members of the *pîr* caste kept details of their murids.

97. For stories of the "hidden book" including a remark by one Yezidi from Germany linking its imminent revelation to the liberation of Kurdistan, see Kreyenbroek, *Different Generations*, 93, 136, 152.

98. According to Serdar, this represents Mount Sinjar—this is geographically inaccurate as Sinjar, also home to many Yezidis, is located on the Iraqi border with Syria, but Sinjar's importance in the discourse is worth noting.

99. Yezidis face the sun when they pray and Sheikh Shems (Sheikh Sun) is one of the Heptad.

100. Although Sinjar and Lalesh are distant from each other, few Yezidis from Armenia were aware of this in 1996 and their conflation within an ancestral territory is not surprising.

101. Rzganê Recevî, "Çûne ber Zyaretê" (They went to the *Ziyaret*), *R'ya T'eze*, October 15, 1997. The festival took place on September 25, a date of no intrinsic significance according to Emerikê Serdar, but a convenient moment after harvest has been gathered in. See Robert Langer, "The Struggle over Yezidi/Kurdish Identity in Post-Soviet Armenia," paper presented at the conference "Yezidism in Transition: Communities at Home and in the Diaspora," Frankfurt a. M., 2007.

102. He also added: "Zarathustra is not our prophet, nor is he one of our Angels [Holy Beings, members of the Heptad]" (interview, Shamiram, July 2005). Sheikh Hasan's description of Yezidi history was characterized by an emphasis on the oppression of Yezidis by Kurds. (In my experience those on the "Kurd" side place a greater emphasis on the role of the Ottoman government or armed forces in stirring up conflict between Yezidis and Kurdish Muslims.) He saw the Kurds as being mostly made up of Yezidis converted (often by force) to Islam, showing that Kurds come from Yezidis, and not vice versa.

103. Emerîkê Serdar also mentioned some "religious" speakers who advocated that Yezidi women should cover their heads (Robert Langer, personal communication; also see Langer, "The Struggle").

104. One elderly lady is shown kissing the steps beneath the "Melek Tawus" figure, consistent with practice among Yezidis and Christians across the region. Sacred thresholds are not walked on but may be kissed, as may their doorposts.

105. *Gorts Artik yev Andranik Kochariannerі*. I am grateful to Vahe Boyajian for the translation of the inscriptions.

106. For a characterization of the *camêr* as "gentleman," showing generosity, dignity and courtesy, see Denise L. Sweetnam, *Kurdish Culture: A Cross-Cultural Guide* (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2004), 24.

107. Cf. Merridale, *Night of Stone*, 222–27.

108. Barber, *Anthropology of Texts*, 138.

109. Ibid., 174.

110. Christine Allison, "Memory and the Kurmanji Novel: Contemporary Turkey and Soviet Armenia," in Kreyenbroek and Allison, eds., *Remembering the Past in Iranian Societies*, 189–218.