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Editorial

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Now running in its seventh year, *Kurdish Studies* has established itself as the leading venue for the publication of innovative, cutting-edge research on Kurdish history, politics, culture and society. As ongoing political developments continue to keep the Kurdish regions in the limelight of global attention, well-researched, thoroughly documented and in-depth analyses of Kurdish issues have seen an increasing demand. In this context, *Kurdish Studies* continues to make a vital contribution to both public and scholarly conversations – a contribution that does not fail to be recognised. According to Scopus scores, our journal is now positioned among the top publications within the History category of the Arts and Humanities, ranking 170 out of 1138 (84th percentile). In Cultural Studies, we stand at rank 193 out of 890 (78th percentile). As much as we know of the potential fallacies of measuring quality through quantitative means, these international scholarly rankings attest to the fact that *Kurdish Studies* has successfully established itself at the top of its field and plays a key role in ongoing academic debate.

This year's second issue of *Kurdish Studies* brings to you yet another collection of thought-provoking pieces of original scholarship. Gerald Maclean provides us with a literary history of British literary accounts of Kurds and Kurdistan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. British travellers encountered Kurds either in and around Aleppo, seat of the Levant Company since the late 1500s, or when they travelled towards the Iranian realms further east. Placing British accounts alongside contemporary Kurdish and Iranian chronicles, Maclean demonstrates that, far from accurate documentation, these accounts “alternated between description and fabrication.”

Allan Hassaniyan investigates a similar geography, though within the context of contemporary fragmentation by national borders. While cross-border kinship practices have been an important feature of Kurdish identity in

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defiance of political boundaries, Hassaniyan finds this practice to be declining. Collaboration of Kurdish political movement members with their respective nation-states has impeded Kurdish solidarity. His analysis of the interaction between the Iraqi and Iranian Kurdish movements between the 1960s and the 1990s shows how the Kurdish movement in Iran has been particularly disadvantaged as a result of failed cross-border cooperation.

Our third article shifts the focus from Iran to Iraq. Samme Dick examines the recent turn to Zoroastrianism amongst a growing number of Kurds living in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq within the context of ongoing political and social transformations in the region. He finds the popularity of Zoroastrianism to be linked to shifting forms of Kurdish self-identification, particularly vis-à-vis the violent image of Islam propagated in the region by ISIS. Taking into account the legislative change as much as political context, this article gives us vivid insight into the malleability of religious and ethnic identity markers.

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