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The sung home : narrative, morality, and the Kurdish nation

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The Sung Home - Wendelmoet Hamelink

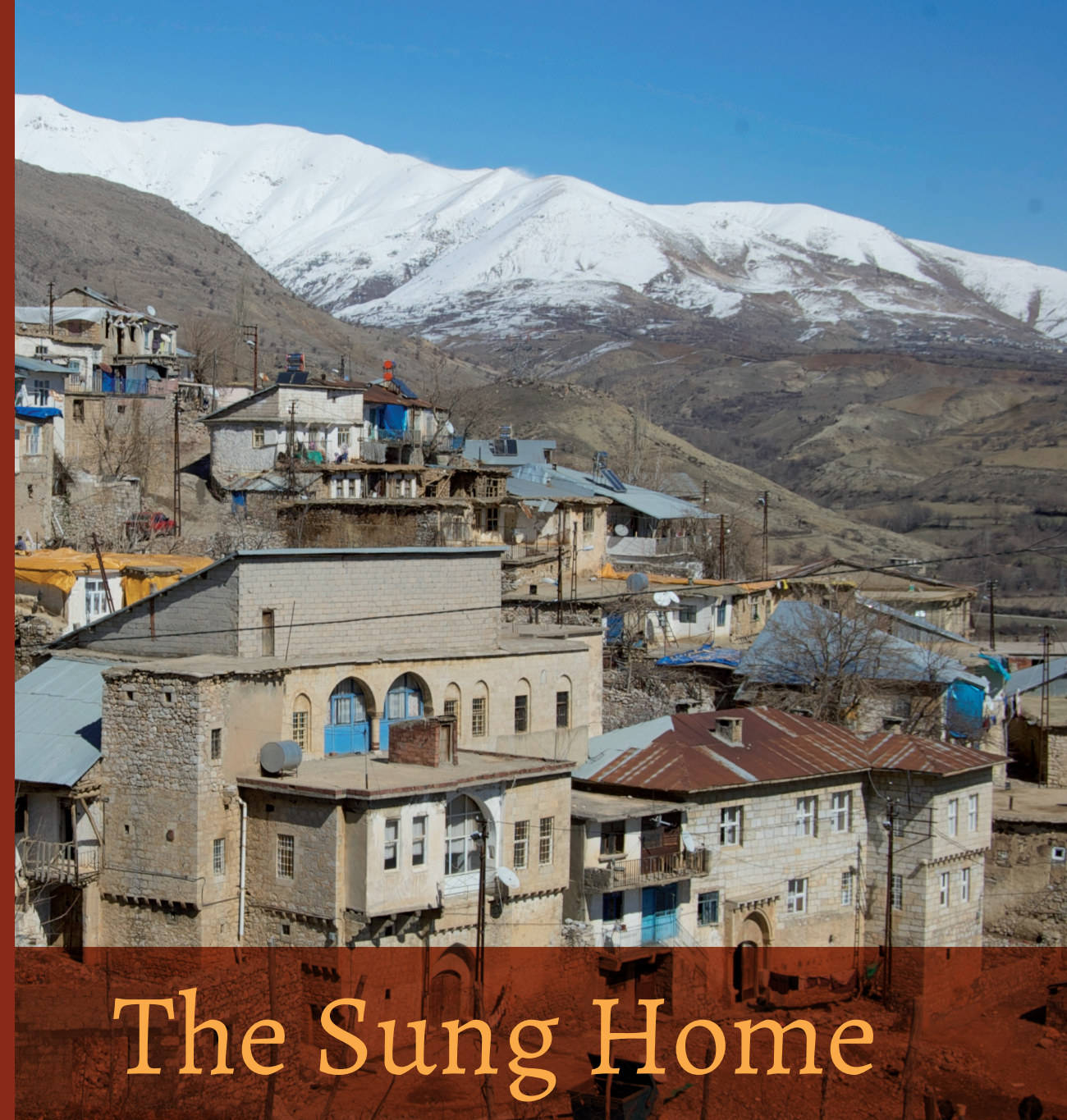
Kurdish dengbêjs are singer-poets who are trained in singing and telling stories they learned from their masters. For a long time, the dengbêjs and their art were suppressed and forgotten, and only recently did they return into public life. Today the dengbêjs see themselves, and are presented by others, as guardians of Kurdish history and culture. This vision tells much about recent socio-political developments and should be understood in the context of the evolving story of Kurdish nationalism. The dengbêjs and their songs create a tangible Kurdish past, a Kurdish geography, a place of belonging and nostalgia, set within the landscape of Turkey and the surrounding (nation-)states.

Since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the political landscape of the Kurdistan region was marked by conflict and turmoil that greatly affected the lives of millions of people. The songs and personal stories of the dengbêjs, and the negotiation about what it means to be a dengbêj today, reflect this difficult history. From a theoretical perspective, the dissertation gives an ethnographic account of narrative, in which the variety of narratives circulating in a society at a particular time and place are presented, discussed and analyzed. The narratives do not only tell us a story about Kurdish society in Turkey, but also about the larger global stories of modernity, nationalism, and Orientalism, which gives this study a wider relevance.

NARRATIVE, MORALITY, AND THE KURDISH NATION

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Wendelmoet Hamelink 2014



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