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Abstract:

This article has chosen the historiography of Ottoman nomads for its subject for two main reasons, both with significant implications for the study of history especially when concerned with the Eurasian continent. Nomads of recent history are quite understudied, which is a unique case in itself, considering the constant vibrant historical research into the last few centuries. This means we are at the unique stage of being able to see a discourse born, and can still affect historical methods and interpretative traditions for they are in the formative stage - something that cannot be said for most areas of study. Taking nomadism as a model means that inferences and conclusions of this article can, to an extent, inform and be extrapolated towards wider Eurasian history - where nomads play a significant role throughout the ages. The article
notes the tendency of both observers and Ottoman government records to emphasize tension and conflict between nomadic and sedentary society and the Orientalist assumption that tribal societies are not simply different in outlook but backward and primitive. The Author contrasts the initial value of nomad support and traditions in establishing the early Ottoman state with the persistent attempts to sedentarize and therefore control nomads, which continued to the end of the empire. The article shows how more recent research has evolved into emphasising the economic value of nomads to state and society. It finally stresses the major historiographical problem of having accounts which give only the sedentary and essentially Western side of the story, largely negative but sometimes overly romanticised. The Author argues that Togan’s suggestion of comparison with nomad societies in Central Asia would be more fruitful in understanding Ottoman nomads than reliance on sedentary opinion.

**Key Words:** nomadism, Ottoman, Central Asia, Eurasia, historiography, methodology.

The Ottoman Empire had jurisdiction over many areas geographically suited for housing large nomadic populations throughout its existence. Being widespread over the Islamic world, majority populations in some regions and having an ancient history, which continues into today, nomads are quite important in regards to the relationship of Islam and the West and for internal events within the Islamic World. High elevations, steppes and deserts not suited for agriculture would all be inhabited by many different tribes.¹ The definition of nomad used here will be a paraphrased of one formulated by anthropologists Rada and Neville Dyson-Hudson: nomads are those who are dependent on livestock, live in environments with marked seasonality and who choose to move their herds to pasturage rather than bringing them fodder.² That is not to say this definition encompasses all nomads or their activities but it is appropriate as a generalisation for the nomads this article is concerned with. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the diversity of nomadic populations


and lifestyles makes them difficult to generalise and study, therefore it makes sense to concentrate geographically and chronologically. Anatolia and the surrounding areas with reference to further afield for illustration seems to be the logical choice as that was the core of the Ottoman Empire. The region was also a cultural cross-roads in many ways, not only in terms of confession. Furthermore, most nomads in this area broadly match the above definition. The nineteenth century in particular produced more accounts of nomads written by European observers and government records than preceding periods, therefore making it prudent to pay attention to historiography and discourse from then onwards. The first section will concentrate on the state of historiography and its trends, the second will discuss the sources and methodology, while statements discussing the limitations of the topic will permeate the research where necessary.

A short summary of the background and a generalised impression of nomadic tribes in the Islamic World will illustrate the roots out of which the current historiography sprung from. The proportion of nomadic population to sedentary varied across the empire, at its peak nomadic population could reach 70% of a given administrative region, although recently such statistics have been challenged with significantly lower figures proposed by Hutteroth of not more than a quarter in areas in South Anatolia and further into the Arabian Peninsula. These figures are best used in illustration of arguments as estimates since on top of common statistical errors it was in nomadic interest not to be taken account of for tax reasons among others, therefore the likelihood is that real numbers are higher than official ones by a considerable margin. Irons argues nomadism in some areas, especially in his area of research in Iran, was a form of political adaptation against the sedentary state institutions. If it is assumed that in many areas this holds true, then the aforementioned statistics are unreliable indeed. In terms of administration nomadic populations were notoriously impossible to control, especially by a settled government. They would avoid registers and tax, raid caravan routes and resort to force, most often during commercial disputes. During large migrations, the militarised tribes usually had the upper hand over settled populations and would often raid

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5Ibid., p. 640.
villages, especially earlier in the period, contributing to general ill-feeling.\textsuperscript{6} It is this sort of behaviour and political adaptation for their own ends the travelling tribes are famous for, the militaristic, primitive character is well highlighted from the first primary sources to recent secondary literature. The Ottoman thinker Ibn Khaldun wrote that a competent ruler should coerce and convince nomads to obey, on the event of failing the "civilisation...would be wiped out".\textsuperscript{7} The destructive, consuming nature of nomads is well popularised and dominates early historiography. Recently these perceptions have been challenged, especially with better access to data and reassessment of written sources.\textsuperscript{8} This is not to say that settled populations did not have reason to dislike nomadic presence, but constant highlighting of grievance obscures the extensive past of peaceful, mutually beneficial co-existence. If original questionable western observations and aforementioned Ottoman sources are taken on face value, the historical community and wider society would lose understanding of very large part of Ottoman history. It should also be noted that the above summary is a generalisation, in the way that by far not all accounts and subsequent interpretations were negative towards the nomadic population. In fact very many western contemporaries felt that underestimating nomadic civilisation was detrimental to the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{9} Travel writers often romanticised their stay with noble 'desert knights',\textsuperscript{10} highlighting their free institutions,\textsuperscript{11} juxtaposing them to Porte (a term for Ottoman government in Istanbul) tyranny,\textsuperscript{12} or linking them to


\textsuperscript{7} Shields, 'Sheep, Nomads and Merchants in Nineteenth-Century Mosul', p. 775.

\textsuperscript{8} Hutteroth, 'Ecology of the Ottoman Lands', p. 17.


\textsuperscript{12} Gould, 'Lords or Bandits?', p. 485.
myths of Robin Hood type heroes or "Efe" as they were referred to in Ottoman mythology.13

The State of Historiography in Terms of Discourse, Volume of Research and Focus

"Historians dislike nomads",14 is a phrase the historian Rudi Paul Lindner is famous for. To Lindner it was natural for sedentary peoples to misunderstand travelling ones, perceiving them as a threat and a burden.15 The nomads, as the old argument went, did not leave enough sources, especially not written ones, therefore lacking self-definition, had to be defined by historians using the available rather derogatory sources or official manuscripts that systematically missed out nomadic presence.16 Therefore nomads were portrayed as at best neutral or irrelevant and at worst destabilising to the majority of the population. While this principle holds true for many primary writers and older historic literature, the recent historiographical trend is that of wide reassessment. The use of the existing limited pool of sources in new ways and concentration on local history has aided this change.17 Answering the following questions illustrates the main historiographical trends and similarities or differences across works: How have perceptions of Ottoman nomads changed and what are the main factors affecting discourse? What are the prevalent opinions and trends in recent secondary historical works? To what extent have the nomads been researched and what is the focus on?

In terms of discourse, the publication of Said’s Orientalism prompted analysis of past discourse and an evolution of interpretations towards the Middle East, by highlighting to Western historians the problems and patterns within Western historiography towards the Middle East. Edward Said criticised Occidental discourse in regards to the Islamic world in particular. The theory is that, being an

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15 Ibid., p. 689.

16 Ibid., p. 690.

17 Hutteroth, 'Ecology of the Ottoman Lands', p. 17.
expression of colonial dominance and teleological Eurocentric views about civilisation, Western European observers have systematically, not necessarily always consciously, used western terms and institutions to describe something that is completely incompatible to the society studied.\textsuperscript{18} This practice perpetuated stereotypes of barbarism, backwardness and Occidental dominance geopolitical because the incompatibility of institutional concepts was blamed upon the inherent characteristics of the peoples being studied.\textsuperscript{19} In terms of nomads, Orientalist language perpetuates above mentioned stereotypes and awareness of this phenomenon helps draw more constructive and deeper inferences from the sources, which are saturated with Orientalist language not only from Western observers but also from the local sedentary observers. As opposed to the beginning of the twentieth century and previously, it is currently assumed that the negative subjective words often used to describe nomadic tribes in primary literature should not be taken literally. Even in official texts of British intelligence of the First World War, Rawlinson was rather derogatory towards local Circassian tribes (some of whom were at least semi-nomadic) while calling Tatars he met "bloodthirsty animals" among other similar terms.\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, as Gokay points out such descriptions were rather common during the period and fit the discourse of his generation and should certainly not be taken in the same meaning as if someone said that now.\textsuperscript{21} Making inferences from such text in regards to daily life and economics is difficult for historians and contributes to the complexity of forming a coherent historical narrative because the value judgement component dominates over the informative part of the description. Discounting what we would refer to as primary sources, secondary literature shows a trend of increasingly being aware of orientalist tendencies of the past and trying to contextualise language to improve historical narrative. Combined with the gradual decay of the modernisation versus backwardness paradigm of the early 20th century historians are viewing the Middle East increasingly less in European terms.\textsuperscript{22}


\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., pp. 7-9.

\textsuperscript{20}Gökay, Bülent, 'The Illicit Adventures Of Rawlinson British Intelligence in the Final Phase of the Ottoman Empire', \textit{The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations}, Vol. 23, No. 0, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 98.

\textsuperscript{22}Shields, 'Sheep, Nomads and Merchants in Nineteenth-Century Mosul', p. 733.
historical, anthropological and ethnographical publications is moving towards viewing the nomads more as producers and actors on the 'centre stage' as opposed to obscure bandits as they were viewed in the past, using increasingly fewer European words and definitions instead conceptually translating Turkish terms.

Another suggestion for how historians could discuss the Islamic world of the Ottoman Empire which would pay more attention to nomadic groups is using inner Asian historical approaches and language. Isenbike Togan in 1991 proposed the approach of using Central Asian steppe definitions and concepts in regards to the Ottoman Empire. She argued that comparisons to European and wider Islamic history made up the bulk of an extensive historiography on the Islamic Ottoman Empire while the Central Asian and Eurasian heritage of the dynasty and thereby the state was largely ignored. According to Togan, the steppe was viewed as an alternative social system to the other sedentary institutional frameworks from the works of Lattimore in 1940. Looking at the Ottoman dynasty from this perspective and in comparison to the Mongolian Empire or the Yuan dynasty in China could bring about a completely different perspective. In this way, instead of being the 'sick man of Europe' the Ottoman Empire and dynasty would stand out in terms of geopolitical dominance and longevity when compared to the other ephemeral steppe empires. This approach would direct research much more towards the nomadic elements of Ottoman society. It would emphasise the effect of steppe heritage on the Islamic world as governed by the Ottoman dynasty. For example, during the formative period the Ottoman Empire was famous for its policy of inclusion and accommodation of various tribes, which was similar to the Yuan and later the Qing dynasties who too employed tribal soldiers. Similarly Mongol Empires generally lacked manpower to have direct control over areas and had to devise strategies of accommodation and internalisation of various interests. In the Ottoman Empire this policy had the official

23 Ibid., p. 774.
25 Ibid., p. 190.
26 Ibid., p. 186.
27 Ibid., p. 190.
name of Istimalet. Togan also proposed using nomadic terms to describe the tribes and hence provide a clearer picture than attempting to adapt European concepts which would cause ambiguity. Linguistic nuances aside, perhaps this steppe based approach could be the next advance in historiography of nomadic elements in the Islamic world, especially in relation to the sedentary West and how the two perceived one another. It could bridge the empathy problem which Lindner discusses because no longer would nomads in Asia Minor be considered from the sedentary perspective. These suggestions, however, have not been prominent outside of Togan's work.

In terms of volume of research, a near universal complaint in recent historical literature is lament over lack of focused research and access to relevant sources. From Linder to Khoury the relative lack of study is well noted. A sentence at least noting that the nomadic populations of the Anatolia are understudied is usually present towards the beginning of articles. The popular local government sources also directed historiography well into the 1970s towards the tumultuous rebellions and battles in Ottoman provinces during the seventeenth and ensuing centuries. In addition it was popular to discuss the Near East in terms of decline versus the West or modernisation, both approaches missed out the decreasing and mundane roles of the nomads. The result of this state of affairs is that new reinterpretations almost always cite the same base articles repeatedly as there are few new type works which focus on local history where nomads were more prevalent in the late stages of the Ottoman Empire. If an article touches upon derebeys (feudal type robber barons inhabiting Cilicia in south-eastern Anatolia) it will be sure to cite Gould's discussion of them. For studies of general trends and nomadic history, Linder's works are very often cited. There is a small pool of focused research to base arguments on. Since there are dominant works for researching Ottoman nomads, their arguments

29Togan, 'Ottoman History by Inner Asian Norms', p. 187.
30Khoury, 'The Ottoman centre versus provincial power-holders', pp. 136-138.
31Rudi Paul Lindner, Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia, (Abingdon, 1997), pp. 105-106.
and ideas have relatively more influence on other historians than important works in more researched topics. Therefore, without necessarily planning to, the foundational texts direct historiography along a certain path. It may be argued that the trend for treating the nomadic population with respect in historical literature started with Inalcik, a rather prominent Turkish historian, arguing that contrary to primary accounts the nomads formed 'an integral part of sedentary society'.34 Considering the comprehensive and voluminous nature of his research on the Ottoman empire and the Islamic world, Inalcik's works are widely cited and therefore likely to have influenced discourse contributing to a fashion of downplaying the often violent and economically destructive nature of some nomadic communities. Nevertheless there is ample evidence both written and otherwise of nomadic excess and arbitrary cruelty. Going back to Gould, hements villagers in Cilicia surprising Ottoman troops in 1865 by not having prices for goods as they expected the soldiers to simply requisition them in the way the Derebeys had always done.35 Such incidents show what the sedentary-nomadic relationship was like in some areas of the empire but the chances are that analyses of such cases would not fall into the recent stock of research. Without taking a side it is important to note subtle influences on historiography.

The volume of research about nomads in the Islamic world increases as one reads further back earlier into history. Articles concerned with the formation of the Ottoman Empire in particular, discuss nomads often from various sides. Generally these references and discussions are in terms of dynastic legitimacy. The Ottoman dynasty was of tribal origin and during its formative years had to outcompete other powerful nomadic beys (chiefs). Part of its strategy was tracing its origin to the ancient Oguz dynasty,36 which would command authority and respect. Early Ottoman dynastic struggle in steppe traditional and Islamic terms is well researched and debated in Ottoman academic texts and by later Western historians. For the periods during which nomadic tribes played a vital role in geopolitical fluctuations it was logical that they were a permanent fixture in historiography for it is

34HalilInalcik, An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire: Volume One 1300-1600 (Cambridge, 1994), p. 37.

35Gould, 'Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia', pp. 497-498.

the actions surrounding the centre of power that historians tend to focus on. The exact nature of figures available supports this argument. Noteworthy statistical data and figures with political implications are kept throughout history while everyday matters wither away. This is evident in Fleet’s work, she has exact prices for slaves and cattle after the Seljuk capture of Hancin, for example five sheep costing 5 dirhems and a horse costing up to 1000 gold pieces on the Ottoman side, considering the origin of these is quite ancient and that they are more exact than ones for the nineteenth century the inference of their relatively higher importance can be made.  

As the Ottoman dynasty consolidated and sedentarised the nomadic significance in military and geopolitical terms faded. Especially with gunpowder slowly making cavalry obsolete, they became increasingly less studied and fewer direct documents about nomads were recorded.

The diversity of nomadic tribes, their movement patterns, culture and economic activities allows for historians to focus on a large range of issues, few producing generalist works. The particularities of tribes were also affected by the geographical properties of a given area; tribes in smaller, more fertile areas were more hierarchical and moved less than desert ones. But no matter the particularity of a given tribe it had to coexist with sedentary populations. Therefore it is the discussion of nomadic-sedentary relations that permeates most research. This relationship took up a significant part of history as a whole, constant rural Ottoman government effort, and was the focus of a large proportion of available sources. If an area had a nomadic population, its relationship to the sedentary peoples would be recorded in some way. This trend flows naturally from two contrasting societies inhabiting same space. The available sources point in this direction too as the written sources are mostly settled governments noting their struggles in administering ephemeral tribes. Especially during the ‘Tanzimat’ period of modernising and centralising reforms in the mid-nineteenth century the Porte was often preoccupied with trying to sedentarise Anatolian herdsmen, with varying success. The interests of local power elites and tribesmen


39 Ibid., p. 481.

40 Ibid., p. 471.
fluctuated constantly therefore providing a dynamic balance between coercion and accommodation in policy towards the travellers. This gives a rich body of evidence and space for research. The state was heavily occupied with trying to limit the influence of the usually autonomous nomadic tribes, especially those around certain lifeline transport links like Derebeys.\textsuperscript{41} The policies pursued by the Porte towards rural areas carried geopolitical significance as the result of the Sultan succeeding could have been a strengthening of the empire and consolidation of power against rebellious internal elements. Therefore many Western observers were on the side of the nomads. Slade, a travel writer, argued that the autonomous tribes were one of the important checks on Sultanic power and helped decrease 'tyranny'.\textsuperscript{42} Hamilton and others noted the break from the past and the mass violence from government troops.\textsuperscript{43} The Europeans, from the available sources, were aware that strengthening of the Ottoman Empire would be detrimental to them. The large number of sedentarisation campaigns provided accessible conventional style written sources, often in English, in the form of diplomatic notes, letters and personal accounts. In this way the sources directed the research by discussing certain aspects, such as sedentarisation and tribe-government relations. This is not to say that historians solely deal with internal city-tribe relations, but simply the mass of material pulls research towards itself. The issue of sedentarisation is one of the most debated in late nomadic history, with historians disagreeing mostly over the effectiveness of Ottoman policy. Gould mentions the way Derebeys were bribed with official positions to keep them at peace with varying success but always high expense.\textsuperscript{44} Koksal comprehensively covers the dynamic mixture of coercion and mediation policies the state employed in its sedentarisation efforts.\textsuperscript{45} Irons on the other hand, studies Yomut Turkmen in Northern Iran looking at nomadism from their perspective and as political

\textsuperscript{41}Gould, 'Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia', p. 501.

\textsuperscript{42}Adolphus Slade, Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc., and of a Cruize in the Black Sea, with the Capitan Pasha, in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831 And of a Cruize in the Black Sea, with the Capitan Pasha, in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831, (Cambridge, 2011) (Original Publication Year: 1832), p. 215.

\textsuperscript{43}Koksal, 'Coercion and Mediation', p. 477.

\textsuperscript{44}Gould, 'Lords or Bandits? The Derebeys of Cilicia', p. 498.

\textsuperscript{45}Koksal, 'Coercion and Mediation', pp. 471-487.
adaptation. While most see sedentarisation as necessary, Shields cites the dismay of local merchants in Mosul at Tanzimat reforms which by destabilising the tribes decreased the volume of wool produced thereby their decreasing profits. Generally, historians tend to paint a picture of the state leading the initiative, the nomads being a reactionary element, which is the way primary literature portrays the events.

The main debate overall tends to focus on 'To what extent?' questions. To what extent nomads were involved with city merchants and the national economy as producers of animal goods for international export is discussed by Shields. The nature of the questions posed in the majority of cases does not make for confrontational debate as in other more defined historical issues but rather work at deciphering the state of affairs from the limited available sources and writing towards a coherent narrative. Perhaps this lack of debate in the traditional sense is because those not interested or disagreeing with nomads being important in Islamic history simply do not write on the topic, while on the other hand historians like Lindner who contend that nomadic history is of utmost importance for the Islamic world write extensively. The nature of the topic of late Ottoman nomads may create an environment where only one side of the significance debate is visible in historiography.

**Primary Sources: Nature, Availability, Value, Effect on Historiography**

The problems historians are posed by the available sources have their effect on historiography. They can direct research and understanding their limitations can shed light on why nomads have been interpreted in secondary literature the way they have. There are three main types of source to be dealt with, written Western and Ottoman materials and archaeological or physical. Within the written category, there are numerous subgroups, the major ones being Ottoman government sources and Western, mostly English, travel accounts. The subsets of sources are to a large extent distinct from one another and often articles will concentrate on one of the three kinds of sources.

In regards to text written during the nineteenth century, linguistic problems strike when analysing both Ottoman and Western materials.

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46Irons, 'Nomadism as a political adaptation', p.635.

47Shields, 'Sheep, Nomads and Merchants in Nineteenth-Century Mosul', p. 779.

48Ibid., p. 777.
Words are often difficult to contextualise and the 'wrong' words are used for various aspects of nomadic tribes and life. There are two aspects of highest importance. Firstly, many primary sources could obscure the fact that they are discussing nomads. The problem of mis-definition or erroneous description probably strikes mostly Western accounts, for it is not mentioned in discussions of Ottoman writing and travel accounts such as that by Herzog and Motika discussing Ottoman travellers in the non-Anatolian Islamic world. Most foreigners whose accounts are relied upon by historians did not know local languages, and if they did, mostly not fluently, neither did the Ottomans pay much attention to which European was visiting them, often calling British 'Franks' being used to French and Venetian merchants. Even officials made these mistakes, the French consul in Mosul described wool trade in 1862 referring to the nomadic herders as 'Arabs'. Shields argues that although while some were Arabic in the ethnic sense, the name did not reflect their way of life and economic activities, which could only be inferred from context. Shields deciphered that he meant to say nomads because the name 'Arab' was used in the context of herds returning to upper Mesopotamia seasonally in Spring, which are indicators of a nomadic lifestyle. Had this inference not been so easily possible, the reference of the source would have been lost to scholarship. This example illustrates the problem posed to historians carrying out primary research. On the other hand, the Hungarian explorer Vambery, who was fluent in a number of Turkic languages and well versed in steppe tribal structures, has not so far had many complaints of misrepresentation of nomads raised against his works. Perhaps the illusive and nebulous nature of the topic contributes to historians being in broad agreement with one another on most points.

Secondly, the way nomads are generalised in primary texts make it difficult to decipher nuances. It was assumed during the nineteenth century that tribal names such as Yourouk denote ethnological


50 Shields, 'Sheep, Nomads and Merchants in Nineteenth-Century Mosul', p. 777.

51 Ibid., p. 777.

52 Ibid., p. 778.

significance. Hasluck, as early as 1921, developed a strong argument to suggest that such names describe either cultural or lifestyle characteristics of tribes, which was a definite brake from the generalising past. Historians are increasingly more careful about using tribal names. The common name Turcoman continues to be very overused to cover a much larger number of tribes than it does among nomads and Turks themselves but unfortunately there is no other appropriate name to use in reference to Anatolian travelling tribes from Central Asia. Writing nomads of course does get rather repetitive and is too general. A lack of clear classification poses linguistic difficulties which may be the reason for a large number of historical articles mentioning the names of prominent chiefs or their activities without discussing the names of the tribes themselves or their structures. The complexity goes far, some tribal names even have been shown to be caste signifiers of primary occupation, like Takhtadji meaning the "woodcutters". Without knowing the language and context the significance of such nuances is lost. Koksal notes that while travel writers and official observers from Western Europe did discuss tribal issues, they very rarely referred to the tribes by name, obscuring the issues of classification and of understanding tribal structures further. Official Ottoman sources do not help by categorising provincial power holders with the general term Ayan, originally signifying a fluid social position thereby placing a very large number of people in the same bracket. In Khoury's words, this variety of definition 'believe any scholarly attempts to generalise about them [Ayans]' . It can be argued that historiography being at the stage of trying to collect information and decipher references leaves little room for argument between historians.

Such basic problems of translation make the study of personal culture within tribes such as individual religion very difficult. In regards to the individual tribes the debate seems to have been between


55Ibid., pp. 314-316.

56Ibid., p. 311.

57Ibid., p. 311.


59Ibid., p. 152.
archaeologists and anthropologists versus orientalists. The first party holds that many heterodox nomadic tribes in Anatolia were converted Christians and more or less aboriginal.\(^{60}\) The second, originally spearheaded by the Hungarian academic Vambery, argues that the tribes were a mix of Islam and Tengriism\(^{61}\), a Central Asian pagan religion. Orientalists argue that most Anatolian nomads migrated from Central Asian plains to Asia Minor. Surprisingly, there is relatively little focused research into tribal religious and cultural practices of Anatolian nomads. Non-English primary sources cover such aspects relatively well. Only Vambery goes into some depth regarding tribal religion and the particular nature of their Islam in English. Indeed his disguise while travelling was a dervish. One of the episodes which Vambery describes in some detail is the excitement with which the nomads he met near the Caspian Sea built their first stone mosque of out rocks from a wall left by Alexander the Great and with no foundation blocks.\(^{62}\) The Ottoman explorer, Mehmed Emin, too, discusses Central Asian nomadic culture in comparison to the settled Ottoman values of the time, noting the liberal nature of nomadic family policy and praising the tribal women for their ability to socially interact with men, unlike their Ottoman counterparts: "The women are not idle, veiled and savage (vahsi) like ours here, but quite free."\(^{63}\) Considering the availability of such details the absence of focused research among mainstream historians is unexpected. The comparisons that Emin writes about, too, could provide many valuable inferences about Ottoman society as a whole.

A significant minority of scholarship on Ottoman nomads in the 19th century is devoted to discussing travel literature and it is often the case that entire articles would be dedicated to the genre very popular in the period. There are three major problems in assessing travel literature. Firstly, each writer will have their underlying agenda and personal beliefs affecting their perceptions and what they concentrate on. This is true for all written sources but particularly troublesome for travel literature when combined with the other problems of the sources. Travel literature was written to sell, therefore it had to capture the reader's attention by

\(^{60}\)Hasluck, 'Heterodox Tribes of Asia Minor', p. 311.

\(^{61}\)Ibid., p. 313-315.


\(^{63}\)Herzog and Motika, 'Orientalism "alla turca"', p. 184.
portraying the events covered as dramatically and outlandishly as possible. This artistic liberty places immediate doubt on them as sources. Historiography tends to not discuss this obvious point perhaps because of its basic nature. Secondly, the more subtle influence is that accounts often carried the political message which would please their audience. By the mid-nineteenth century it was widely accepted that the Ottoman state was the 'sick man of Europe', therefore it would not be surprising if observations were influenced by confirmation bias.\textsuperscript{64} English texts such as Kinglake's Eothen would exaggerate faults and 'find evidence for [Ottoman collapse's] imminence.\textsuperscript{65} It comes as no surprise that British observers and ambassadors would highlight the rampant unruliness of Anatolian plains, especially in areas controlled by the de facto independent Derebeys. In fact within Derebeybeylik, due to their militarised nature, life was very disciplined, especially in comparison to the wider Ottoman Empire,\textsuperscript{66} adding to the contrast and therefore feeding into the overall interpretation. As a result, writers such as Slade wanted to paint those rebelling against the Ottoman Sultan in a positive way,\textsuperscript{67} therefore writing for the imperial British interest and confirming the assumptions of many of his readers. It is instinctive to be reassured about one's own condition if it is compared to the worse condition of someone else, it could be this factor that prompted travellers to write about the negative aspects of the Near East, thereby reassuring their readership of 'armchair explorers'.\textsuperscript{68} He described tribal leaders as 'oases in the desert' who would have many noble characteristics.\textsuperscript{69} Discussions of particular prominent writers occur frequently within historiography as does the acknowledgement of their beliefs. Thirdly, a reliability problem is the retrospective nature of the writing. As Ursinus points out most travel accounts would be written after the expedition, based on notes and memory.\textsuperscript{70} Compounded with this factor is the nature of human

\textsuperscript{64}Allan Cunningham, 'The Sick Man of Europe and the British Physician', \textit{Middle Eastern Studies}, 17:2 (2006), p. 150.

\textsuperscript{65}Ibid., p.149.

\textsuperscript{66}Ibid., p. 159.

\textsuperscript{67}Slade, \textit{Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc.}, p. 216.


\textsuperscript{69}Slade, \textit{Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, etc.}, p. 216.

memory and new impressions. Personal accounts of events are snapshot sources. Usually one remembers a snapshot of a moment that caused strong emotion - daily routine is rarely recorded in memory. For example, William Burckhardt Barker describes with meticulous detail the show execution of a slave by the Derebey Kutchuk Ali, missing out most other aspects of his existence and calling the Bey a 'monster' and 'bandit'. A gruesome execution with the purpose of hanging the body in a cage to scare an incoming caravan is a memorable moment, therefore written about in detail, the sale of wool to merchants or reaching a settlement with government officials over keeping peace in the area are moments, which in contrast to the former are boring, therefore likely to remain without mention. Therefore, it is the exciting parts of voyages which were written down being completely unrepresentative of nomadic life and thereby distorting historiography towards concentrating on the garish moments, portraying the nomads with a spotlight rather than an overall illustration. This too would have pushed contemporary historiography and portrayals of nomads in the Islamic world towards an Orientalist opinion in Said's terms. The extent to which the portrayal of the Islamic world in such texts is taken as close to factual is debated in subsequent historiography. Historians criticise the use of travel literature to infer historically valuable points about the period, however, due to it being widespread and comprehensible travel literature is widely referred to in historical works.

Ottoman travel writing and orientalism from settled Ottomans towards their less economically and geopolitically developed Muslim subjects is written about less than Western travel literature. It was however a popular genre among Turkish language works of the late empire. Of course as Ursinus points out, the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century had a much smaller volume of publications compared to the West, therefore in absolute terms the number of Turkish works is miniscule, many travel accounts published in newspapers with low numbers of copies. The Ottoman explorers who travelled to the Muslim areas beyond the settled areas of Western Anatolia had a distinct Orientalist opinion of the locals in the 'Muslim outback'.

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72 Ursinus, 'Ottoman Travels and Travel Accounts from an Earlier Age of Globalization', p. 134.

73 Herzog and Motika, 'Orientalism "alla turca"', p. 141.
mentioned that they wrote anything about nomads in Anatolia itself, perhaps because the core region was so close to the readers that it was not worth discussing its population. Interestingly in regards to the other areas Ottoman writers had an explicit feeling of a civilising mission, that they were destined to modernise the other Islamic areas in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. According to Ahmed Midhat the other Muslims needed Ottoman 'guidance in matters of progress and innovation'. Ottoman origin literature and Western travel accounts are much more widely available than the rarely published Turkish travel writers, this could be the result of the language barrier. Either way is another area to be researched, with their statements and evidence not yet having a full effect on historiography.

Historians agree that Local Ottoman government sources were a reflection of interests and strategies of regional power elites, thereby obscuring the lives of peasants and nomads. And yet since they are widespread and the only sources which provide statistics and accounts of routine life or court cases, government sources are used almost universally. Most historians do not approach Ottoman official statistics with confidence, noting their unreliable nature. Non-Ottoman government sources for Anatolian nomads are hard to come by and pose their own linguistic barriers. As Gokay points out military intelligence and diplomatic cables have been ignored or unavailable to historians, taking away a large proportion of the potential source pool. On the other hand as Maggiolini explains, the constant European interventions in the Ottoman Balkan domains and the Christian tribes there mean that Balkan nomads are very well accounted for by European government sources. Constant geopolitical contests among the Great Powers in that area have produced extensive historiography, dwarfing research about Anatolian nomads of the same period with regard to debate and volume. This illustrates how the world-systems and modernisation approaches discussed earlier held sway over the

74Ibid., p. 142.
75Hutteroth, 'Ecology of the Ottoman Lands', p. 17.
76Bülent Gökay, 'The Illicit Adventures Of Rawlinson British Intelligence in the Final Phase of the Ottoman Empire', The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations, Vol. 23, No. 0, p. 89.
historical tradition towards the Islamic World from the Western point of view.

Materially, there were many comments on the relatively poor state of nomadic households vis-a-vis their settled counterparts in the same part of the world, which have recently been challenged by studying existing tribes and reassessing archaeological data. The orthodox archaeological theory still authoritative today was formulated well by Childe in 1936; pastoralists would not leave any traces for posterity as what they use is mostly leather and wood vessels, which 'as a rule have no chance of surviving. Due to space and weight constraints travelling tribes do have fewer heavy articles overall. A reassessment of previous conclusions has been carried out by the Archaeologist Cribb. He states that despite settlers and nomads in a given area of Anatolia having similar levels of wealth and material articles, nomadic sites would have more non-perishable permanent structures and less perishable moveable ones. They would take what they need with them leaving behind mostly stone or otherwise immovable objects. In this way sites previously labelled as villages could be sites where tribes stopped for a period of time before continuing migration. In terms of possessions in the yurts, they are found often hidden in compact storage until needed or under rugs on the sides, so it is easy to assume poverty, as Stark says only the 'most dedicated' observer would notice the full extent of nomadic wealth as the result of efficient use of possessions and storage. English language archaeological historiography in regards to nomads in general is rather underdeveloped in terms of the extent of research, with only Cribb's book being in wide access and dedicated to the topic of nomads. If Cribb's work is carried on there could be much value in continuing to map out nomadic presence in Anatolia, with a high likelihood of the existence of evidence either ignored, mislabelled or undiscovered due to aforementioned factors. It is not surprising that with the current approach towards nomadic archaeology historians do not often refer to material sources, preferring written ones.

 Improvement of Research Through Reform of Methodology


79Ibid., p. 65.

80Ibid., p. 69 and p. 80.

81Ibid., p. 74.
The overall picture is that of relatively limited research with little serious disagreement between historians. Considering the value produced for the Ottoman Empire by their nomadic populations and their contributions to state development, this is rather surprising. As mentioned, the various tribes facilitated the successful formation of the empire to begin with, subsequently forming the core of the Ottoman military until the introduction of gunpowder. Nomadic tribesmen provided beasts of burden and transport infrastructure for the empire as a whole until introduction of new motor and rail technologies. Perhaps the reason for the current state of historiography is as Lindner and Togan suggested - the employment of the sedentary approach. Exploring the steppe heritage of the Ottoman Empire through inner Asian norms could provide a reformed discourse and therefore redirect research into a broader reassessment of existing source material. New source material is there for research too, and could influence subsequent historiography. For example, a limited number of articles refer to oral histories of individual tribes, which while difficult to cite or corroborate, were one of the main ways of leaving history for posterity by tribal elders. Irons, alone, mentions explicitly field studies among Iranian nomads in the 1960s which employed oral histories.\footnote{Irons, "Nomadism as a political adaptation", pp. 635-636.} Perhaps increasing the use of oral histories of remaining tribes in combination with wider reassessment of physical and written data may broaden historiography and direct it towards new conclusions. The state of debate in current historiography is perhaps at the stage of collecting a coherent narrative from available information. Therefore, not yet being at the stage where debates rage about why and how historical processes took place, at least that is the picture in regards to Anatolian nomads of the nineteenth century.
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