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II. ULUSLARARASI SELÇUK-EFES DEVECİLİK KÜLTÜRÜ VE DEVE GÜREŞLERİ SEMPOZYUMU

I.CİLT • SOSYAL BİLİMLER

SECOND INTERNATIONAL SELÇUK-EPHESUS SYMPOSIUM ON CULTURE OF CAMEL-DEALING AND CAMEL WRESTLING

VOLUME I • SOCIAL SCIENCE



Editörler

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Devrim ERTÜRK
Uzm. Arkeolog Özgür GÖKDEMİR

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ADOPTION AND ABANDON OF CAMEL CULTURE IN SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA

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Abstract

Camels are exotic animals in Anatolia. Except the Palaeolithic site of Karain Cave, no pre-Bronze Age archaeological site reveals any camel remains so far in Anatolia. However, domestic camel became common and very significant in the Early Imperial as well as in the Roman and Byzantine Anatolia. Southeast Anatolian region, being the corridor between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, always played key roles since the early stage of the spread of camel culture in rest of Anatolia. Moreover, from the Bronze Age to nineteenth century onwards, camel pastoralism was very lucrative in Southeast Anatolia mainly because of trade, transport and warfare. While camel culture was gradually abandoned in rest of the Anatolia in the beginning of twentieth century, camels still remained as an important socio-cultural part of pastoral groups in Southeast Anatolia until last 30 years. In the light of archaeozoologic, ethnohistoric and ethnozoological data, this review is aimed to illustrate a glimpse of camel culture in Southeast Anatolia throughout different cultural periods in the region.

Keywords: Camel culture, Archaeology; Zooarchaeology; Ethnohistory; Southeast Anatolia

GÜNEYDOĞU ANADOLU'DAKİ DEVE KÜLTÜRÜNÜN BENİMSENMESİ VE DEVE KÜLTÜRÜNDE VAZGEÇİLMESİ

Öz

Deve, Anadolu'da egzotik bir türdür. Karain Mağarası'nın Paleolitik kalıntıları hariç, Anadolu'daki Tunç Çağının öncesinde hiç bir arkeolojik alanda deve kalıntısı tespit edilmemiştir. Bununla birlikte, evcil develerin beslenmesi Erken İmparatorlukta ve daha sonra Anadolu'daki Roma ve Bizans döneminde yaygınlaşmış ve çok önemli hale gelmiştir. Anadolu ve Mezopotamya arasındaki koridor olan Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi, Anadolu'nun diğer bölgelerinde deve kültürünün yayılmasının başlangıcından beri daima önemli oynamıştır. Dahası, Tunç Çağı'ndan on dokuzuncu yüzyıla kadar deve pastorallığı, esas olarak ticaret, ulaşım ve savaşlarda kullanımı dolayısıyla Güneydoğu Anadolu'da çok işlevseldi. Yirminci yüzyılın başında Anadolu'nun diğer bölgelerinde deve kültürü yavaş yavaş yok olurken, develer Güneydoğu Anadolu'daki pastoral grupların hayatlarında önemli bir sosyo-kültürel özellik olarak son otuz yıla kadar görülmekteydi. Arkeozoolojik, etnosistorik ve etno-zoolojik veriler ışığında, bu çalışma Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi'ndeki farklı kültürel dönemler boyunca deve kültürüne bir bakış açısı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Deve kültürü; Arkeoloji; Zooarkeoloji; Etnotarih; Güneydoğu Anadolu

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INTRODUCTION

Camel domestication occurred about 7000 years after the first animal domestication (caprine and pig) in Anatolia and the Near East. However, following the domestication of camel in the beginning of 3rd millennium BC (Kuzmina, 2015; Almathen *et al.*, 2016), the socio-economic importance of camel increased at different levels. Camels were heavily used in the whole West, Central and East Asian caravan routes and replaced all types of previously used wheel and draft transport. Following that, camels gradually became the main utility for the military control in entire Afro-Eurasian arid zones. In Anatolia, camels are exotic animals. Except the camel bones from Palaeolithic Karain Cave in Antalya (Deniz & Taşkiran, 1990), no prehistoric sites before Bronze Age has shown any camel remains so far in Anatolia. However, because of the political and commercial connection with Mesopotamia and Central Asia, camels instantly became a common pack animal as well as important source of animal products in Anatolia since the early stage of their domestication.

Presently the Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*) associated with the Turkic and Mongol nomads of West and Central Asia, and the dromedary camel (*Camelus dromedarius*) is symbolized with the nomads of North Africa and Arabia. The domestication of these two species of camels occurred separately by the third millennium BC. The domestication of the Bactrian camel occurred in Central Asia (Kuzmina, 2015), and later spread towards Anatolia and Mesopotamia. The domestication of dromedary camel occurred in Southeast Arabia (Almathen *et al.*, 2016) and later spread across the West Asia and North Africa. Consequently, practices of camel caravan trade and camel pastoralism become very common in Eastern Mediterranean as well as Anatolia during the Iron Age. The black obelisk of the Assyrian king (Potts, 2004) depicting two camels in line, held by ropes and driven by sticks is perhaps the best representation of widespread practice of camel culture in West Asia during this time.

Albeit some suggest it on the Iranian plateau in earlier period (e.g. Potts, 2004: 153-161), the hybridization of camel by crossing these two species probably first begun in Southeast Anatolia around the second century BC and spread all across of West and Central Asia (Bulliet, 1975: 167-168). Archaeological evidences show that the importance of domestic camels gradually increased in Southeast as well as Anatolia as a whole in the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic period (e.g. De Cupere, 1994; Hongo, 1997; De Cupere, 2001;

Berthon & Mashkour, 2008; Silitlibolaz, 2009; Eger, 2010; Onar et al., 2010; Onar *et al.*, 2013; Charles, 2013; Kanz *et al.*, 2014). During the Ottoman period, camel pastoralism highly increased specially in Southeast Anatolia mainly because of trade, transport and warfare (detail in: Usta, 2016). While camel pastoralism was abandoned in most part of Anatolia following the introduction of motor transport in the beginning of the last century, camels still remained being a major socio-cultural part among settled Arabs and Kurds as well as nomadic pastoral groups such as Beritan in Southeast Anatolia until last 30 years. However, camel culture suddenly disappeared in the region. In this context, this research is aimed to illustrate the beginning and chronological development of camel pastoralism and camel culture in Southeast Anatolia. It is further attempted to present a glimpse on the questions of how and why camel culture became and remained popular in Southeast Anatolia until recent past.

CAMEL IN PREHISTORIC SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA

There are at least 9 Palaeolithic sites have been excavated in Southeast Anatolia¹. These are Biçme Cave, Dülük habitation site, Dülük Büyük Cave, Dülük Siginagi rock shelter, and Sarkli Cave in Gaziantep provincial district of Gaziantep; Sehzade Höyük in Nizip district, Gaziantep; Biris Mezarligi and Sögüt Tarlasi-1 in Bozova district of Sanliurfa; and Sehremuz in Samsat district of Adiyaman. Along with the faunal remains from these Palaeolithic sites, the most notable Southeast Anatolian Epi-Palaeolithic settlement Kortik Tepe, located in Bismil district of Diyarbakir, also provided significant amount of faunal remains. Unfortunately none of the Palaeolithic and Epi-Palaeolithic fauna from these sites provide any remains of family Camelidae. Therefore, with the light of the evidence discovered so far, it can zooarchaeologically be explained that camel was not available in Palaeolithic Southeast Anatolia. However, camel is evident in neighbouring Southern Anatolia during Lower Palaeolithic Karain Cave (Deniz & Taşkıran, 1990: 80) which was occupied by Homo Neanderthal about 200,000 years ago. At least 5 remains belong to camel (*Camelus sp.*) among the Pleistocene faunal evidences of the Karain Cave. Being deeply attached with Eastern Mediterranean and especially Southern Anatolia, therefore, the connection between Karain Cave and Southeast Anatolia is inevitable during Palaeolithic period. Hence the camel remains in Karain Cave open up the possibility of presence of camel

¹ See detail in: <http://www.tayproject.org/TAYages.fm>

in Palaeolithic Southeast Anatolia, albeit this issue requires a specific and detail study. On the other hand, it can be certain that camels were totally absent all across the Anatolia during the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene period as because no camel bones or camel related evidence has found so far in any part of Anatolia while the evidence of horse, donkey along with other ungulate species are very rich. It is worth to mention that wild camels were present in southern Arabian Peninsula during Neolithic, however, they were most probably not available for Eastern Mediterranean and Anatolian Neolithic hunters.

CAMEL IN PROTOHISTORIC SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA

Camels were widely used as pack animals throughout different phases of Mesopotamian civilization. Both dromedary (*Camelus dromedarius*) and Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*) have also been domesticated during this time period. While some scholars (Uerpmann & Uerpmann, 2002; Heide, 2010) claim that the dromedary was not fully domesticated prior to the Iron Age (of around twelfth century BC), the earliest sound witnesses of domesticated dromedary camel come from some southeast Arabian coastal settlements. Particularly, about 200 camel bones from the early third millennium BC site of Umm an-Nar in Abu Dhabi (Hoch, 1977) shows an emphasis on juveniles, suggesting a developing stage of dromedary domestication. The DNA analyses of samples retrieved from ancient and modern camel remains (Almathen *et al.*, 2016), also suggests the beginning of the domestication of dromedary camel in the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula during third millennium BC. Archaeological findings at Turkmenistan and Bactria also attribute the domestication of Bactrian camel to the fourth to third millennium BC. Domesticated camel bones have been found at Anau (Kuzmina, 2015: 67), a farming settlements in Southern Turkmenistan, are dated to be latter half of fourth to first half of the third millennium BC.

Escaping the long period of Epi-Palaeolithic and Neolithic period, on the other hand, camels have also appeared in Anatolia during Bronze Age. These camels were likely maintained in human controlled or probably were domestic camels that brought in Anatolia by imperial powers i.e. Akkadian and Assyrian Empires. Achemhöyük (Arbuckle, 2013; Gürgör, 2017: 137) and Kavuşan Höyük (Berthon, 2013) are the two significant Bronze Age settlements in Anatolia where the remains of domestic camel have been recorded (Fig. 01). Among them, the Early Bronze Age settlement of Achemhöyük is located in Central Anatolia

(Merkez district of Aksaray province) whereas Kavuşan Höyük is located in Southeast Anatolia (Bismil district of Diyarbakır province). In addition, there must have been significant connection between Southeast and Central Anatolia during Bronze Age since Acemhöyük was an Assyrian trading colony in this time. Therefore, it is thinkable that Southeast Anatolians were practicing a large scale of camel culture along with other Mesopotamian and Anatolian regions under early imperial powers.

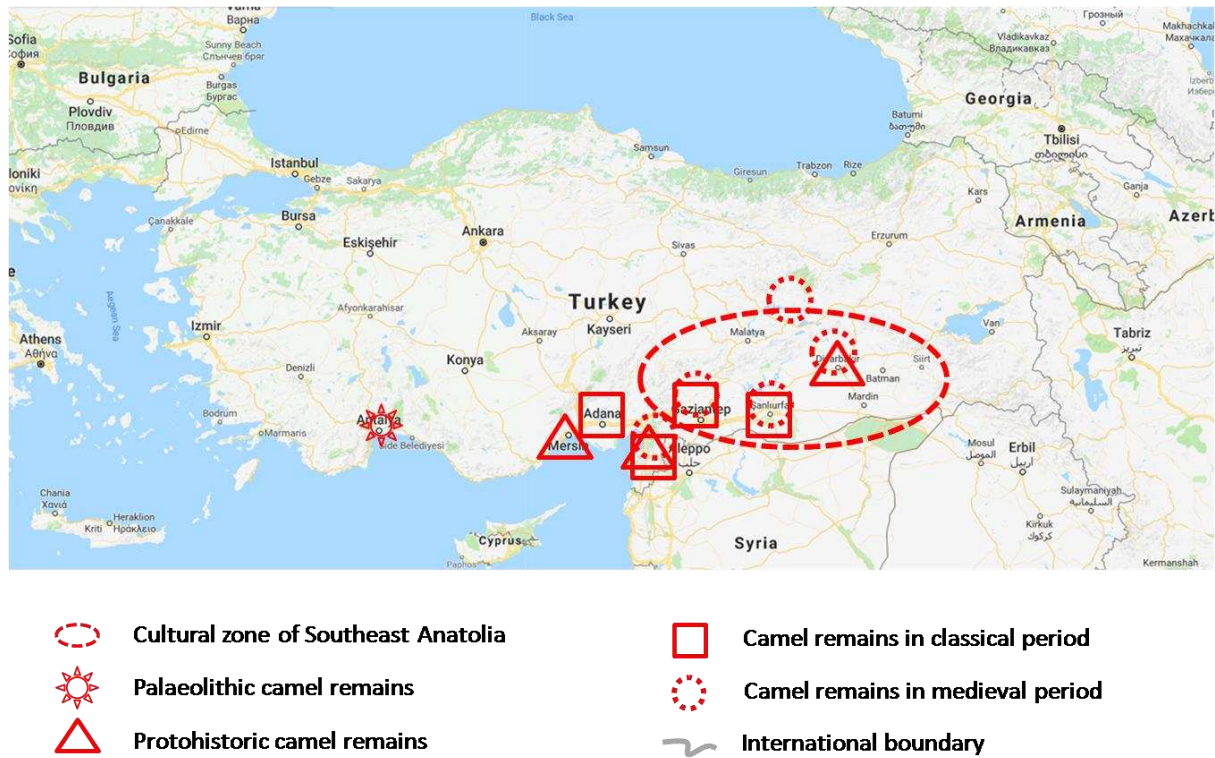


Figure 01: Camel remains from Southeast Anatolia and adjacent archaeological records

Throughout the Iron Age, practices of camel caravan and camel riding probably become very common in Eastern Mediterranean as well as in Anatolia. The black obelisk of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) depicting two camels in line held by ropes and driven by sticks (Potts, 2004) is a strong evidence for the popularity of camel culture in West Asia during this time. On the other hand, camel remains from the mound of Kilise Tepe (Baker, 2008) in Mersin (the site was the western limit of the Assyrian empire); Büyüktepe (Howell-Meurs, 2001) in Demirözü district of Bayburt; Tell Atchana (Çakırlar & Rossel, 2010) in Reyhanli district of Hatay; and Lidar Höyük (Kussinger, 1988 after Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014) in Bozova district of Sanliurfa province indicate the widespread practice of camel culture in at least north, south and especially in Southeast Anatolia during this time.

CAMEL IN CLASSIC PERIOD

Camel caravan, camel pastoralism and even camel breeding become very common in various part of Anatolia during the classical period. At least ten prominent archaeological sites of this period with camel remains illustrate the wide picture of camel culture throughout Anatolia. These sites are Sardis (Deniz *et al.*, 1965) in Salihli district of Manisa; Millet (Peters, 1993) in Didim district of Aydın; Troy (Fabis, 1996 after Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014) in Merkez district of Çanakkale; Sagalassos (De Cupere, 1994; De Cupere, 2001: 65-66) in Aglasun district of Burdur; Sirkeli Höyük in Ceyhan district of Adana; Zeugma (Charles, 2013) in Nizip district of Gaziantep; Kinet Höyük in Dörtyol district of Hatay; Hassek Höyük in Siverek district of Şanlıurfa; and Lidar Höyük (Kussinger, 1988 after Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014) in Bozova district of Sanliurfa; and Apamea in Şanlıurfa provincial city (Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014: 246-247). Among these ten sites, six (i.e. Sirkeli Höyük, Kinet Höyük, Zeugma, Hassek Höyük, Lidar Höyük and Apamea) are located within and adjacent cultural zone of Southeast Anatolia (Fig. 01). This is a very significant indicator that the region was probably the key centre for camel breeding and camel caravan during this time.

In West Anatolia, Sardis was the capital of Lydia in seventh century BC, and took its position among the important cities of the Persian Empire later in sixth century BC. Along with other prominent West Anatolian centres, Sardis, Troy and Sagalassos were also the notable business and cultural centres in the Roman Empire as well as later period. On the other hand, the site Zeugma was a very large metropolis and business hub during classical period. Founded as a Greek settlement in third century BC, this city, along with some other prominent cities such as Lidar Höyük and Apamea, remained prominent especially for commercial activities throughout the Roman period and until seventh and eighth century AD mainly because of Silk Road (see detail: Kennedy, 1998). Owing to trade activities, the city created and supplied large number of soldiers in the region. Recent archaeological studies in the site revealed the evidence of a large customs facility, considerable border trade, the density of transportation, and the communication network once established in the region. The site Sirkeli Höyük is adjacent to Southeast Anatolia, and it was a key centre during classical period. The strategic importance of the most vital historical route from Cilicia (present day Çukurova region in Turkey) to Syria and Iraq perhaps draw the importance of this site in consideration of camel caravan and camel rising throughout the region. In this way, camel remains from archaeological sites of this period clearly indicate that camels were key means

of trade and transport all across Anatolia and Southeast Anatolia was in the vital position for camel caravan route and become the prominent camel supplier in Anatolia. It is also reported (Bulliet, 1975: 167-168) that for the first time, the Southeast Anatolians started the hybridization of camel with Bactrian and dromedary camels around the second century BC.

CAMEL IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

During the medieval period, camel pastoralism increased rapidly in Anatolia as the camels gain considerable commercial importance and military preference. Camel culture was widely practiced at least in West, South, and Southeast Anatolia under the Byzantine Empire. Providing significant number of camel remains, at least five important archaeological sites of Byzantine occupation in different parts of Anatolia support this idea. These settlements are Yenikapı (Onar *et al.*, 2010) in Fatih district of Istanbul, Sagalassos (De Cupere, 2001) in Ağlasun district Burdur, Kadıkalesi (Gürgör, 2017: 297; Onar *et al.*, 2013) in Kuşadası district of Aydın, Amorium (Silitlibolaz, 2009) in Emirdag district of Afyonkarahisar, and Tilbeşar (Berthon & Mashkour, 2008) in Oğuzeli district of Gaziantep province.

While the site Yenikapı was the second largest harbour in Byzantine capital Constantinople (Onar *et al.*, 2010), the site of Kadıkalesi attracted the attention of many powers competing for domination over the Aegean Sea during the Byzantine period. It also became an important trading station as well as a busy harbour in West Anatolia (Mercangöz & Inanan, 2010). On the other hand, founded in the Hellenistic period, the site of Amorium was flourished under the Byzantine Empire. It was active on the Byzantine military road from Constantinople to Cilicia (present day Çukurova region of Turkey) and become a protector for international trade. The site Tilbeşar was a large fortress site in Southeast Anatolia since Early Bronze Age (Berthon & Mashkour, 2008). Located in Oğuzeli district of Gaziantep province, the site definitely was an important centre along with Zeugma and Lidar Höyük during Byzantine period.

As like Byzantine Empire, camel culture also very important from West, Central, South, to Southeast and East Anatolia under the Selçuk and early Islamic occupations. Camel remains of Early Islamic occupation from at least six archaeological settlements i.e. Ephesos/Ayasuluk (Gürgör, 2017: 312; Kanz *et al.*, 2014) in Selçuk district of Izmir, Pergamon (Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014: 246) in Bergama district of Izmir, Kınık Höyük (Gürgör, 2017: 312) in Bor district of Niğde, Hisn-al Tinat (Eger, 2010: 61) in Dörtöl

district of Hatay, Ziyaret Tepe (Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014: 247) in Bismil district of Diyarbakır, and Korucutepe (Boessneck & von d. Driesch, 1974) in Merkez district of Elâzığ province, can be the best witnesses of camel exploitation during this period. Moreover, camel hybridization perhaps gradually became common in Southeast Anatolia during Late Byzantine to Early Islamic period. Remains of Bactrian-Dromedary hybrid camel bone has also been identified (Eger, 2010: 61) along with a young horse burial in the Early Islamic occupation at Hisn-al Tinat. It is also important that Hisn-al Tinat served as the corridor for Anatolia and Syrian plain during Byzantine-Islamic transitional period (Eger, 2010: 49).

During Ottoman period, camel gained widespread socio-cultural and economical value all across Anatolia. Camel remains from archaeological settlement of Acemhöyük (Arbuckle, 2013) in Merkez district of Aksaray, Kaman-Kalehöyük (Hongo, 1997) in Kaman district of Kırşehir, and Lidar Höyük (Kussinger, 1988 after Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014) in Bozova district of Sanliurfa provide significant evidence of camel culture throughout Ottoman Empire. It is noticeably important that herd animals such as sheep, goats, and some cattle from Ottoman period levels at Kaman-Kalehöyük were larger in comparison to individuals from pre-Medieval level. This is explained as an indicator for the improvement of animal breeds in Ottoman period (Hongo, 1997: 290-293). Camel remains from Kaman-Kalehöyük also indicate camel hybridization (Hongo, 1997: 279-81) by crossing the Bactrian and dromedary camels (*Camelus dromedarius*) was widespread in Anatolia during Ottoman period. Camel remains from Lidar Höyük in Sanliurfa also indicate that camel pastoralism and economic value of camel become increasingly important in Southeast Anatolia under Ottoman Empire. Official records (e.g. Usta, 2016) indicate that tribal groups engaged a great variety of transhumance practices during this period. Southeast Anatolians, particularly the Arab tribes herded major portion of camel supply of Ottoman Empire.

DISCUSSION

Because of geographical position Southeast Anatolia became the corridor for international trade and gateway to Mesopotamia and Central Asia for Anatolians. During the Bronze Age, Central Asian and North African people groups as well as Mesopotamian rising city states basically reached central and western parts of Anatolia via Southeast Anatolia. Throughout the Iron Age, Southeast Anatolia became one of the international centres controlled by Assyrians and had potential economic and cultural connection with other parts

of Anatolia as well as whole region of lower Tigris and Euphrates valley. In later period, the Persians, the Greeks, Romans and also the Ottomans used the geographical advantages of Southeast Anatolia and made the region one of their military power houses and most flourished international commercial hubs. Therefore, since the early phase of domestication, camels are found common in archaeological settlements of all periods in Southeast Anatolia (Figure 01). Moreover, very rich data related to camel exploitation at archaeological sites of Southeast Anatolia testify the importance of camel rising and camel culture in the region (Table 01). About twenty two archaeological sites in Anatolia/Turkey have the record of camel remains so far. Among them, about fifteen sites are located within or adjacent region of Southeast Anatolia. This picture clearly shows Southeast Anatolia as the most important region for camels in Anatolia.

Table 01. Camel remains in Southeast Anatolia and adjacent territory

Cultural period	Site	Sub period	Time period	Location
Prehistoric	Karain Cave	Palaeolithic	200,000 BP	Antalya
Protohistoric	Kavuşan Höyük	Bronze Age	14 th -8 th cent BC	Diyarbakır
	Tell Atchana	Iron Age	12 th -7 th cent BC	Hatay
	Kilise Tepe	Iron Age	12 th -6 th cent BC	Mersin
Classical period	Sirkeli Höyük	Iron Age - Hellenistic	10 th -5 th cent BC	Adana
	Kinet Höyük	Hellenistic	8 th - 6 th cent BC	Hatay
	Hassek Höyük	Achaemenid	6 th -3 rd cent BC	Şanlıurfa
	Apamea	Hellenistic	3 rd -1 st cent BC	Şanlıurfa
	Zeugma	Roman	5 th cent AD	Gaziantep
Medieval period	Tilbeşar	Byzantine-Selçuk	11 th -13 th cent AD	Gaziantep
	Hisn-al Tinat	Byzantine-Selçuk	9 th -11 th cent AD	Hatay
	Ziyaret Tepe	Early Islamic	12 th -15 th cent AD	Diyarbakır
	Korucutepe	Selçuk	13 th -14 th cent AD	Elâzığ
	Lidar Höyük	Bronze Age to Ottoman	2 nd millennium BC-16 th cent AD	Şanlıurfa

(Data sources: Baker, 2008; Berthon, 2013; Berthon & Mashkour, 2008; Boessneck & von d. Driesch, 1974; Çakırlar & Berthon, 2014; Çakırlar & Rossel, 2010; Charles, 2013; Deniz & Taşkıran, 1990; Eger, 2010)

Historical sources also present Southeast Anatolia as a very important region for camel herding. Herders, notably the Arab, Turkmen and Kurdish mobile pastoral groups were very important in late classical and early medieval period for the means of animal based food production, trade, administration, and defence. In the early medieval period, camels became the animals of high value along with horses especially in the Byzantine economy. As like Assyrians and Greco-Roman period, camels were mainly used for trade and caravan transportation the Byzantine world. However, alongside of Arab nomads and Parthians in Southeast Anatolia, camel breeding became more widespread across Anatolia with the arrival of the nomadic Turkmens (Usta, 2016: 23). Camels were used to carry the loads for commercial activities across the regional and international ports and harbours in Anatolia.

Throughout Byzantine-Islamic transition and Ottoman Empire, Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, and especially Gaziantep regions in Southeast Anatolia were the major centres for camel caravan related trade and commercial activities, international transportation throughout North Africa, West Asia and Central Asia. During the Ottoman periods, there was an increase in camel herding in Southeast Anatolia between eleventh and eighteenth centuries AD (see detail: Usta, 2016). Consequently, camel pastoralism inevitably favoured in the region from classical period to the medieval period and until the second half of last century. Camel market in Southeast Anatolia was even capable to meet the demand of Syria and Iraq. For example, shepherds in Aleppo were dependent on Urfa for supplying of sheep and camels during the sixteenth century (Usta, 2016: 165). There are records that camel pastoralists often had the scope to incorporate with even government officials and sometimes regional and state powers. For example, the Ottoman central government mostly depended on the Southeast Anatolian pastoral groups for the growing demand of camels and horses in the Ottoman army. Particularly, during the Ottoman military campaign against Safavids in the first half of the seventeenth century, Arab, Kurd and Turkmen nomad groups were the major suppliers of military animals and soldiers (Khoury, 1997; 41).

There is another fact that camel breeders in all over Southern Anatolia generally kept small numbers of Bactrian camels, and later bred with a large numbers of dromedaries which were brought from Mesopotamia. These hybrids were best adapted to the climate in the region. However, as their offspring were degenerate, they were needed to be re-crossed with fresh dromedary and Bactrian camels. Being the transitional zone and corridor between

Southern Anatolia and Mesopotamia, Southeast Anatolia naturally acted as the supplier and played vital role for camel breeding all across the Anatolia.

Apparently, the camel trade was a lucrative business for the camel pastoralists in Southeast Anatolia. However, since camels reproduce less, the camel trade preferable to the pastoralists with a potential income level. Therefore, only the pastoralists who specialized mainly in camel breeding were well capable to coup with the market and state demand. Feeding camels especially in the winter was also very expensive in Southeast Anatolia due to the lack of pasture. In the circumstances, camel breeding required to buy a sufficient amount of barley and straw. Each camel daily required 5 kg barley and 11.5 kg straw in its regular feeding activity (Murphey, 1999: 71). This amount would reach 150 kg barley and 340 kg straw in a month and 1,800 kg barley and 4,080 kg straw in a year. Only for barley, the breeders would need almost 9 dönüms of land to feed a single camel for a year (Usta, 2016: 248). In Southeast Anatolian context, the camel pastoralism would therefore be a very challenging profession. Yet, it is likely that camels and sheep formed the main source of wealth for the pastoral economy in Southeast Anatolia throughout at least classical and later periods. While the demand for wool depending on the textile industry in the city offered the camel breeders a good opportunity of making profit on sheep, camels offered the breeders opportunities of high value and sought for camels in long distance trade, transportation and warfare.

However, following the decline of Ottoman Empire, there was a sharp decline of camel breeding and camel based pastoralism in all over Anatolia. Yet, many families in Southeast Anatolia were keeping camels. Throughout the last century, Southeast Anatolian people commonly used donkeys and sometimes horse for local needs, they mainly maintained camels for two reasons: i) transportation of goods, and ii) long distance travelling. Only recently the use of private car and motor based transportation system become common in remote villages of Southeast Anatolia. Consequently, except some transhumance pastoral groups such as the Beritan in Karacadağ region of Diyarbakır province, people in Southeast Anatolia in general completely abandoned the camel exploitation.

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