

# SOME NOTES ON THE PERSONAL AND PLACE NAMES USED IN THE *SANCAK* OF AMID DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

MEHMET MEHDİ İLHAN

The *sancağ* of Amid (today known as Diyarbakır) has been ruled by the Byzantines, Arabs, Selçukids, Artukids, Ayyubids, Akkoyunlus and Ottomans. Therefore the *sancağ* has been exposed to the cultures of these states. Thus the province had undergone a great cultural impact which can clearly be traced in the personal and place names used in the *sancağ*.

The place and personal names recorded in the 1518 Ottoman cadastral survey of the *sancağ* of Amid are the basis of some pointers made in this article <sup>1</sup>.

The names were classified into ethnic groups in accordance with their meanings. It cannot be denied that most of the place names go back to very old days. However, very few of these names can be traced in the ancient sources. Furthermore, the information traced on these names is inadequate and can only go back few centuries further than the 16th century. To mark the importance of the subject in general I thought it might be fitting here to venture on the meaning of few place names here before I proceed to discuss the place and personal names.

There is no doubt that the name given to the province of Diyarbekir originates from the sub-branch of Rabi'a tribe namely the tribe of Bekr b. Vail who were settled in the area after the Islamic conquest<sup>2</sup>. However,

<sup>1</sup> The place names mentioned in this article can easily be traced in the "Appendices" of my work on the 1518 Ottoman Cadastral Register of the *Sancağ* of Amid entitled *The Sancağ of Amid according to the 1518 Ottoman Cadastral Register* and which will be published soon. For the personal names the transcription of the Register should be referred to. Also for the place names my article entitled "Some notes on the settlements and population of the *sancağ* of Amid according to the 1518 Ottoman cadastral survey" (in *DTCF Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. XIV. Ankara 1983, pp. 415-436 + a map) should be consulted. The facsimiles given at the end of the present article can also serve as a reference to some pointers made.

<sup>2</sup> Art. "Diyarbekir" in *IA*; art. "Diyar-Bakr", in *EI(2)*; *Cheref-Namae on Fastes de La Nation Kourde...*, (I-II, Petersburg, 1868-1875, translated into French by Francois Bernard Charmoy) vol. I, p.140.

the name was given to the province only, and as it is understood from the Ottoman documents the main city (to use the Ottoman term *beylerbeyi sancağı*), today known as Diyarbakır<sup>3</sup>, was called Amid.

The epithet "Kara" was most probably given to the city of Amid after the advent of the Turks and most probably by the Turks themselves<sup>4</sup>. In fact it appears that the Turks have used the epithet "Kara" as a prefix for quite a number of place as well as personal names. Perhaps the black basalt stones found in the region and used on the walls of the city as well as the houses gave another temptation to the Turks to add this epithet as a prefix to the ancient name of the city. Therefore, Kara Amid and Karacadağ may be the product of this temptation, but the village names like Kara Ağaç, Kara Baş, Kara Duş, Kara Göz, Kara Koç, Kara Koyun, Kara Pınar, Kara Viran, Karaca Viran, Kara Hamza, Kara Hisar, Kara Kilise, Kara Musa clearly indicate how much the Turks were found of the epithet "Kara". Furthermore this epithet eliminates the dullness of the single syllables, i.e. Duş: Kara Duş; Göz: Kara Göz.

The area that falls between the river Tigris and walls that surround the city, was completely covered with gardens and orchards until a few years ago<sup>5</sup>. The most famous of these gardens are the Eysel Gardens mentioned in the 1518 *kānunnāme* of the *sancağ* of Amid. These gardens are still called as "Eysel Bahçeleri" by the local inhabitants. According to the famous historian Mateos of Edessa (Urfa) Danialigous (Domestikos)

<sup>3</sup> On how the name Diyarbekr came to be known as Diyarbakır see Şevket Beysan oğlu, *Anıtları ve Kitabeleri ile Diyarbakır Tarihi, Başlangıçtann Akkoyunlulara Kadar*, vol. 1, Ankara 1987, pp.5-23.

<sup>4</sup> In some sources Amid is written as Hamid as a result of a common error. Also in some sources Tygrem, Tigranegert or Tigranopolis is used instead of Amid which I believe is a great error. See *Cheref-Name*, vol. I, pp. 141, 198; Ernst Honigmann, *Bizans Devletinin Doğu Sınırı, Grekçe, arabca, Suryanice ve ermenice kaynakları göre, 363'den 1071'e kadar*, Çev: Prof. Dr. Fikret İşıltan, İstanbul 1970, p.135 n (The original work is entitled *Die Ostgrenze Byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1971 Nach griechischen, arabischen, syrichen armenischen Quellen*, Bruxelles 1935, Imprimerie de Meester XV, 451) Another name given to Amid is Augusta which was fortified by Constantius in 349 A.D., see Honigmann, *idem* p.2; for the fortification of Amid also see L. Hallier, *Untersuchungen über die edenssenische Chronic (Texte u. Untersuchung z. Gesch. d. altchristl. Literatur*, IX, 1), Leipzig 1982, pp. 96-97.; see Urfalı Mateos, *Urfalı Mateos Vakayı-namesi (952-1136) ve Papaz Grigor'un zeyli (1136-1162)*, Trs. Hrant P. Andreeşyan. Notes: Edourd Dulaurer - Prof. M. Halil Yınanç (translator), Ankara 1962, pp.18-19; also see Şevket Beysanoğlu, *idem* pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> This area is still covered with trees and has many gardens and orchards.

Mileh, the famous Roman General, "put up his camp by the river side at a place called Avsal which was only a distance of two arrow shots from city" when he came with his soldiers to besiege Amid in the summer of 973<sup>6</sup>. The place must have been covered with trees since it was convenient for camping in the summer heath of Amid city. Furthermore the gardens must have been of great value, as they are still, for the inhabitants of Amid since the name given to them has not changed for centuries and has been subject to the local folk songs<sup>7</sup>.

We do not have much information about the *nāhiyes* of the *sancağ* of Amid regarding to when they were founded, but we can say that their history stretches back at least few centuries beyond the sixteenth century. We know that the *nāhiye* of Hini (Hani, Heni, Hyny) was an important fortress in about 928 A.D.<sup>8</sup>. I also believe that Ribat was founded as a frontier fortress sometimes after the Islamic conquest of Diyarbekr province. However, I cannot claim that I have any knowledge on the origin of the *nāhiye* called Başka, meaning "the other" in Turkish, and the *nahiye* called Esma, meaning "exalted" in Arabic. I also could not trace the whereabouts of the *nahiye* of Çaykiran and I am not certain whether my reading is correct. Furthermore there is no doubt that the *nāhiye* recorded in the 1518 register as Tilek Ören is no other than the place known as Tilgoran today. Tilgoran, although known by this name since the beginning of the 12th century, we find that it is spelled in the history books as-Tilkuran, Tell Gavran and even Choulkouran<sup>9</sup>.

The word "til" or "tell" can either mean a hill or a mound. We find quite a number of village names with epithet "til" in the 1518 Ottoman cadastral survey of the *sancağ* of Amid. The village names like Til 'Aloy, Til Gazi, Til Taban are typical examples. Almost all such villages recorded in the 1518 survey were inhabited by the Muslims and the ones that we could locate such as Til 'Aloy we find were situated on a mound

<sup>6</sup> See *Urfalı Mateos Vakayi-namesi*, p.19; also see Honigmann, *idem* p.96 where it is stated that Domestikos (Mleh) was defeated by Abu'l-Kasım Hibat Allah at Avsal in front of the gates of Amid in 973.

<sup>7</sup> The folk song "Eysel bahçesinden indim aşağı" (I strolled down the Eysel garden) by Celal Güzelses —the deceased *muezzin* of the Grand Mosque of Diyarbakır, who was born in 1900 and died on 2 February 1959— is still popular among the inhabitants.

<sup>8</sup> See Honigmann, *idem* p.40; cf. Beysanoğlu, *idem* p.25.

<sup>9</sup> *Urfalı Mateos Vakayi-namesi*, p.242; Honigmann, *idem* p.138n.

or a hill. It is believed that the villages which have epithet "til" with their names were founded on the ancient ruins<sup>10</sup>.

In the 1518 register about six hundred place names were recorded. I do not believe that these place names which are mostly of small villages and pastures could be traced in the historical sources unless they have been witness to an important historical event. Of course the cadastral surveys have to be kept outside this claim. Therefore, it becomes obvious how important the cadastral surveys are for the study of place names. I would like to emphasise here as I have done above that I will classify the place names, found in the 1518 cadastral register, into the ethnic groups in accordance with their lexical names and then make some pointers. Also when we tabulate the data we can clearly see the dominant ethnic groups in the province. Although the epithet like "islâmiye" refers to the religious grouping, it is almost impossible to establish the ethnicity of a village with an Arabic or Persian name since the use of such names is very common among the Turks. However, the data tabulated below can give us a rough idea how far the province had undergone the influence of different ethnic groups.

Table 1 :

THE ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF PLACE NAMES IN THE SAN-  
CAĞ OF AMİD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR LEXICAL MEAN-  
INGS

	<u>In number</u>	<u>In percentage</u>
Total Place Names :	594	
The lexical meaning fully or partially unde- termined place names:	104	17.50 %
Lexically Arabic-Turkish-Persian com- pound place names :	104	17.50 %
Arabic place names :	153	25.75 %
Turkish place names :	167	28.11 %
Persian place names :	50	8.41 %
Non-Muslim place names :	16	2.69 %

<sup>10</sup> See William C. Brice, *South-West Asia*, London 1966, pp.93-94.

When we study the table we can clearly see that the Turkish place names with 28.11 % come at the top of the list where as the non-Muslim place names with 2.69 % come at the bottom of the list. Of course the Muslim place names as a total are far above the non-Muslim place names. These percentages may give us a general idea, but they are not clear-cut figures of the ethnic distribution in the *sancağ*. However, it is very likely that the non-Muslim place names were about 3 % as indicated on the table above. This claim can be supported by further evidence as follows: Let us tabulate the distribution of the population in the *sancağ* of Amid according to the 1518 Ottoman Cadastral Survey<sup>11</sup>:

Table 2:

POPULATION OF THE *SANCAĞ* OF AMID IN 1518(without unregistered *askeri* figures are found by  $hâne \times 5.5 + mücerreds$ )

	Total	Muslims	Christians	Jews
A. (12)	13.260	7.118	5.985	157
VA.	27.625	25.471	2.154	—
NA.	16.511	13.211	3.300	—
Tl.	57.395	45.799	11.439	157

Table 3 :

POPULATION OF THE *SANCAĞ* OF AMID IN 1518(with 10 % *askeri*)

	Total	Muslims	Christians	Jews
A. (12)	14.586	8.444	5.985	157
VA.	30.388	28.238	2.154	—
AN.	12.162	14.862	3.300	—
Tl.	63.135	51.539	11.439	157

<sup>11</sup> I have taken a more or less arbitrary multiplier of 5.5 for the *hâne* entries to arrive at the figures given in the population tables. My reasons for choosing this figure depends on my personal observation of the villages for a period of twenty years. On this subject, however, see T.H. Hollingsworth, *Historical Demography*, London 1969, pp.117 ff.

Table 4:

## POPULATION OF THE SANCAK OF AMID IN 1518

(without unregistered *askeri* figures in %)

	Total	Muslims	Christians	Jews
A. (12)	13.260	54 %	45 %	1 %
VA.	27.627	92 %	8 %	—
NA.	16.511	80 %	20 %	—
Tl.	57.355	79.8 %	19.93 %	0.27 %

Table 5 :

## POPULATION OF THE SANCAK OF AMID IN 1518

(10 % *askeri* added to the figures — figures in %)

	Total	Muslims	Christians	Jews
A. (12)	14.586	58 %	41 %	1 %
VA.	30.388	93 %	7 %	—
NA.	18.162	82 %	18 %	—
Tl.	63.135	81.63 %	18.12 %	0.25 %

At first glance the total population distribution outlined in the tables does not conform with the ethnic distribution of place names outlined in the first table, but when we examine the tables very carefully and bear in mind that the 81.42 % of the non-Muslims live either in the city of Amid or in the *nāhiye*-centres and only 18.57 % live in the villages, and that the percentage of non-Muslims living in the villages is only 8 % compared to the percentage of Muslims living in the villages, then we could say that the non-Muslim place names were roughly 3 % as pointed above. This point can further be supported by the fact that there were some villages bearing Turkish names such as Çaruhi, Haçek, Narin and Satı Kendi and some others bearing Arabic names such as Hacı İsa, Haris, Kadı Süfla,

Kasimi and Sultan were wholly or partially inhabited by non-Muslims. However, it may be significant to point out here that non-Muslims living in such villages were mostly using the names derived from Arabic or Turkish origin.

The villages of the *sancağ* of Amid can be classified and tabulated into the following religious groupings.

Table 6 :

VILLAGES OF THE *SANCAĞ* OF AMID IN 1518

	Total	Muslim villages in %	Non-Muslim villages in %
A. (12)	280	95.71 %	4.29 %
NA.	190	81.05 %	18.95 %
Tl.	470	89.79 %	10.21 %

The reason behind the fact that the percentage of non-Muslim<sup>13</sup> villages going up from 2.69 % to 10.21 % is that the 124 uninhabited pastures were not included in the latter calculations.

It may be worthwhile to point out here that of the non-Muslim place names Grigoros was spelled as Ciricorus and Peros as Permos in the register. Also the village of Ovanes is indicated as being (better) known by the name Fahri.

Some of the Persian names are Persianised from Arabic names. For instance the name Cemuk (جموك = Cemek) is derived from Cuma'ali and Selmo is derived from Selman. Both of these place names are distorted

<sup>12</sup> The abbreviations used in these tables are as follows:

A. = Amid

VA. = The villages of Amid

NA. = The *nahiyes* of Amid and their villages

Tl. = Total

<sup>13</sup> In the 1518 Ottoman Cadastral Survey of the *Sancağ* of Amid all the non-Muslims are indicated as Christians whether member of Nestorian or Greek church, see my work *The Sancağ of Amid according to the 1518 Ottoman Cadastral Register* (to be published soon). Also see infra.

forms derived from Arabic via Persian and used by the local inhabitants. Another group of Persian place names are the Arabic or Persian names with the suffix "ân". Davudiyan, Gaziyan, Manikan, Mansuriyan, Mıkriyan and Seyran are some of the examples. This suffix "ân" gives the names the plural status. Therefore Davudiyan means the Davudies <sup>14</sup>.

It is perhaps worthwhile mentioning that we came across some mystical names such as Derviş, Kalender and some names compound with "Şah" such as Cihanşa and Şahi amongst the Persian place names. The village names such as Haçdadi meaning "Blessed by the Cross" and Hirbedi meaning a "Zoroastrian Priest" are also of great importance to mention here.

The place names in Arabic are generally derived from personal names such as 'Ala'addin, 'Arab Maksud, Fatime Hatun, Hacı Osman, Şeyh Nasır 'Arab, and Ya'kub. In some cases the Arabic names are descriptive that is they give us a general idea about the geographical characteristic of the places. For instance the villages of Akimi and Deşti were most probably dry and barren where as the villages of Re'su'l-'ayn, Asari and Cevzi were most probably founded by wells or springs and were surrounded with vineyards and orchards.

The Turkish place names also gave us some ideas about the geographic characteristics of the villages and the usage of such place names appears to be very common throughout Turkey. Ağ Pınar, Çamurlu, Çift Depesi, Degirmenli, Depe Kendi, Depelu, Kamışlı, Panbuklu Depesi, Sögütlü are only few examples to be mentioned here. The place names such as Boğa Dutan, Keçi Burci, Köpeklu, Kurbağalu, Kuş-Toğan, Kuzu, Tavşan Bölüğü, Tavşan Depesi are the relics of the fact that Turks have always been found of the animals since the old days. It is also striking to note that the personal names recorded under these villages are of pure Turkish names used since the old days. Aydoğmuş, Aydın, Aytoğan, Köpek, Sevindük, Türemiş, Yaramış are very clearcut examples.

The Turkish-Arabic or Turkish-Persian compound names are greater in number than the Arabic-Persian compound names. There are 73 such names in our *defter*. When we add these 73 Turkish-Arabic and Turkish-

<sup>14</sup> The suffix "ân" is used in Persian to make the nouns plural, see Dr. M. Cevad Mashkur, *Dusturname der Sarf u Nahv Zebani Farisi*, Tehran 1966, p.293; also see *Lugatname-i dehhuda*, Tehran 1325, vol. 1, p.188.



Persian compound names together with six other lexically unidentified Turkish compound names to the pure Turkish names, the number of Turkish place names goes upto 246 which would mean 41.41 % of the total place names in the *sancağ* of Amid.

It is possible that the villages like Kilisecik, Patrik and Deyr-i Beşir were originally inhabited by the Christians and then as they moved out to the cities they were replaced by the Turks. Beside this possibility it is very likely that the inhabitants of a village like Ovanes were the Christian Turks. Because the village of Ovanes was originally known as Fahri (Ovanes el-meşhur be Fahri), a Turkish name and the first household entry under this village is "Ovanes b. Fahro".

Infact as we examine the Christian villages and the entries under these villages we can clearly see that all non-Muslims, with the exception of few Jews who lived in the city of Amid, were registered as such. No doubt there were Nestorians, Jacobites, Greeks and the members of some other churches and sects among these Christians. We only occasionally recognise members of such sects from their names. For instance it is very possible that the non-Muslims bearing Persian names were members of the Nestorian Church. However, the problem is more complex than this. About half of the Christian names are either of Arabic origin such as Ya'kub, or of any other non-Muslim origin such as Ohan (اوھان)<sup>15</sup> and its variants. Some non-Muslim forms of names are derived from Arabic, Persian or Turkish such as Ezekil (ازہ کل), Atavellah (اطاواللہ), Belaş, (Kızıl non-Muslim form Kzal, pronounced as Ghazal<sup>16</sup>, and Reşa (perhaps from a local usage of Reşideddin, pronounced by non Muslims as Raşav)<sup>17</sup>. The remaining non-Muslim names are pure Turkish<sup>18</sup>, Arabic, Persian or Syriac such as 'Abdullah, Rema (perhaps a local usage of Ramazan),

<sup>15</sup> See Adjarian, *Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names*, 5 vols., Erevan 1942, vol. 3, p.537; I am grateful to Prof. Dowsett of Oxford University who helped me a great deal in reading the non-Muslim names recorded in the 1518 Ottoman Cadastral Survey of the *Sancağ* of Amid.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, vol.3, p.143.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, vol. 4, p.311.

<sup>18</sup> According to R.C. Jennings ("Urban Population in Anatolia in the Sixteenth Century: a Study of Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya, Trabzon and Erzurum" in *IJMES*, vol VII, 1976, p.28), in Kayseri for instance, "the zimmiis used a motley variety of Christian and Turkish names, indicating a heavy Turkish cultural influence.."

Dilşad, 'Iso and Ebger <sup>19</sup>. To add to these difficulties some of the Christians bear qualifying epithets such as Türki, Kara-koyunlu, Artuk and Arabo.

About two thousand different names have been used in the 1518 register. Most of these names such as 'Abdullah, 'Abdurrahman, 'Ali and Nureddin are purely Arabic personal names and it is very difficult to determine which ethnic groups have used them. However, we find that these Arabic names have also been used in different forms such as 'Abdo, 'Abdin, 'Abdul, Bedro, Behadin, and Behayin. There is also no evidence that the persons using the names compound with "Şah" such as Arabşa, Devletşa, Mehmedşa, Şah Duvel, and Şah Emir were of Iranian origin.

There were also pure Turkish names such as Satılmış, Bulmuş, Bunamış, Oğlan, Yitilmiş, Oktay, Okan, Kutlu Toğmuş, Gökoğlan, Gündoğmuş and Ilalmış used in the *defter*. Even a non-Muslim household was bearing the epithet Kara Koyunlu (= Taniel Karakoyunlu).

The name Tanrıverdi (Godgiven) was employed in many different forms such as Hudadad, Hudabahş, Hudaverdi, Yezdanbahş, Yezdanvermiş, Calapverdi, Tangrivirmiş, and Tangriviren.

Although the complex ethnic and religious structure of the region comes to open from the study of these place and personal names, the ethnic changes that took place in the region during the sixteenth century can only be clarified through a thorough study of the place and personal names in the 1540 cadastral register and then a comparison between the two. Also these names can throw a further light on Turkish Language and therefore they deserve a study by the philologists and linguists.

<sup>19</sup> H. Hubschmann, *Armenische Grammatik, part 1: Armenische Etymologie*, Leipzig 1897, p.288; this name which is originally Assyrian is used by the Armenians as well.