THE EVALUATION OF THE WORDS
TÜRK-ETRAK, KÜRD-EKRAD
AS THE APPEAR IN THE OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS

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The various words and terms used in the Ottoman archival documents most of the times have connotations that differ from their actual meaning. One, therefore, should use such words and terms that are vital for making research on the social life in the Ottoman Empire carefully. Otherwise grave mistakes can not be avoided in carrying out such researches.

The words of this type such as Türk and its plural Etrak and Kürd and its plural Ekrad used in various figurative meanings in the Ottoman documents. One often comes across the words mentioned above in the Ottoman archival documents, in particular in the Tahrir Defters that have very important statistical information, and in the kanunnames. I hope our evaluation on these words will set an example for researches on other similar terms and words.

We already know that the non-tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman society termed "askeri". The Tahrir Defters fully recorded the most important source of income for the state treasury namely the tax-paying "re'aya", regardless of their belief or ethnic origin. These Defters also recorded the heads of the households as well as the non-married adult males along with their fathers' names, their professions and trades, the names of the city or town, quarter, or village they live in, their products and the taxes they pay on them, their ethnic origin and religion, whether they were nomads or settled. We also find information on the vakıfs and the architectural monuments in these Defters. Therefore, it is vital that anyone carrying out research on the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire should consult these Defters. However, the researcher, for the sake of a sound research, must pay a great attention to the various terms and in particular the local usage's when using these Tahrir Defters that also include local terminology.
The word "Türk" or its plural "Etrak" as mentioned above most of the time used figuratively with connotation that differed from its actual meaning. For instance in the kanunname of Mehmet, the Conqueror1, the word "Türk" in the phrase " Eğer bireğü hamr içse, Türk veya şehirli olsa ..." means villager or nomad rather than indicating ethnic origin while the word "şehirli" means the local. Otherwise, the phrase should have run as "...Türk veya gayr-i Muslim olsa..." (Turk or non-Muslim) or "...köyli ve şehirli olsa..." (villager or townsman). Likewise when the captives called "Pençik oğlanı" were selected for the Jannissary corps the phrase "Bunları Türk’e virelim. Hem Müslüman olsunlar, hem Türkçe öğrensinler" was used2. The phrase "Türk’e verilmeli..." (to be given to a Turk), used here as well as in the Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan, likewise mean a villager or a nomad and not a townsman3. We also find the term "Türk" used as adjective for some villages. For instance the village of Halilu of the Kuzuçan nahiyede recorded in the 1518 Tahrir Defter of the sancağ of Çemişgezek added with the word "Türk". Also the term "İslami Türk" used after Kergah, one of the villages of the nahiyede of Keban again in the sancağ of Çemişgezek. Likewise the villages of Ribat and Haydi defined with the word "Etrak"4 (See Appendix I). Also in these phrases the words Türk and Etrak have no ethnic connotation. We never come across such terms, although there are many Turkish and Turkoman tribes and towns in the region. The Ottoman scribes had never described the Turkish elements with the word "Türk" while they had always referred to the non-Muslims with their ethnic identity such as Ermeni (Armenian), Rum (Greek), Yahudi (Jew), and Sûryani (Syriac). Ethnically the word "Türk" included within the phrase "...re'aya ki müslümanlardır...". It is only when the terms "reaya-yı Etrak" and "reaya-yı zimmi" used together, that appear in the sancağ kanunnames, the word Etrak may have the ethnic connotation. In fact the the terms "reaya-yı Etrak" and "reaya-yı zimmi" used together in the kanunname of the sancağ of Sis in referring to the collection of "resm-i hane"5 (See Appendix II). Here the term "reaya-yı Etrak" refers to the Muslims while "reaya-yı zimmi" refers to the non-Muslims

1 See Ö.L. Barkan, XV ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Ziraat Ekonomisinin Hukuki ve Mali Esasları, Istanbul 1943, p. 387.
3 See Süleymaniye Esad Efendi Library, nu. 2068, 5b.
4 See BA, TD. nu. 64, p. 783.
5 See BA, Tahrir Defteri (TD), nu. 69, p. 664; TD, nu. 450, p. 838; TD, nu. 178, p. 3.
that includes Greeks, Armenians, Jews and other non-Muslim ethnic groups. Likewise such terms used in the kanunnames of the province of Çukurabad\(^6\) and the sancak of Özer\(^7\) have exactly the same connotations (See Appendix III).

The term "Ekrad zulmü" in "Vilayet-i mezburede sabıka Ekrad zulmünden nice reaya perakende olup...", the phrase recorded in the 1541 kanunname of Çemşıgezek, mean the atrocity of the nomads rather than that of the Kurds\(^8\) (See Appendix IV). In fact the state considered these atrocious acts committed against the settled people and the harms done to their crops by the nomads due to the lack of central authority in the XVIth and XVIIIth centuries as a great injustice committed against the settled people. Therefore, the Ottoman government imposed on these tribes who were responsible from such acts, forced settlements in the areas, outside Anatolia, such as in Cyprus, Syria and Rakka\(^9\). Also the term "Ekrad adeti" in "vilayet-i mezburede alınan Ekrad adeti...", the phrase recorded in the 1566 kanunname of Çemşıgezek, used in place of "resm-i hane"\(^10\). This fact is fully clear from the phrase "Vilayet-i mezburede şimdiye değin alıngelen Ekrad adeti ki resm-i hane deyi..." recorded in the kanunname of Bitlis province\(^11\). Likewise the term "Kürdistan hükmünde" in "Ve vilayet-i mezbure şimdiye değin Kürdistan hükmünde olup, defter ahvalin bilmedikleri ecilden..."\(^12\), the phrase recorded in Çemşıgezek kanunname, refers to geographical location rather than political, and therefore means "mountainous area, an area that the government cannot reach". We do know that this area formerly was under the administration of Akkoyunlus, descendants of Bayındır line of Oğuz. The Ottomans carried out several surveys in the region after it had passed into their hands. Tur Ali Bey, the Beg of Siverek, first mentioned as "Akkoyunlu" in one of these registers, recorded several years later as "Ekrad

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\(^{6}\) BA, TD, nu. 998, p. 302.

\(^{7}\) BA, TD, nu. 1023, p. 1.

\(^{8}\) BA, TD, nu. 213, pp. 17-18.

\(^{9}\) For further details see Cengiz Orhonlu, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aşiretleri İskân Teşebbüsü, Istanbul 1963; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İskân Sıyaseti ve Aşiretlerin Yerleşmesi, Ankara 1991.

\(^{10}\) See Tapu-Kadastro Kuyǔş-ı Kadıme Archive, TD, nu. 106, pp. 2-3.

\(^{11}\) See Tapu-Kadastro Kuyǔş-ı Kadıme Archive, TD, nu. 109, p. 1; also see Ö.L.Barkan, Kanunlar, p. 192.

\(^{12}\) Tapu-Kadastro Kuyũş-ı Kadıme Archive, TD, nu. 164, p. 2.
Indeed in the province of Diyarbekir today many people who think of themselves as of Kurdish origin claim that the Akkoyunlu state was a Kurdish one.

One of the best examples that the term Ekrad and Kürd do not refer to an ethnic origin is the term "Ekrad-i Döğerli" used for a group of people that had lived in the province of Urfa and who were actually the descendant of Döğer, one of the tribes of twenty-four Oğuz clans (See Appendix V). Here the word Ekrad, just like the word Etrak must mean nomads. Döğer tribe together with its marks cited within the list of Oğuz clans by Reşidüddin, Kasgarlı Mahmud and Yazıcıoğlu. Likewise it is a fact that the "Kürd Atu" clan of Bertuz tribe is purely of Turkish origin and has no other ethnic background despite the epithet "Kürd" (See Appendix VI). We do come across the epithet "Kürd" used before or after the names of Turkish tribes, but we have no clear explanation for their usage in such a way. "Kürd Mihmadlu" clan of Dulkadirid Dokuç (= Beşanlı) tribe is one of the good examples for such a usage (See Appendix VII). The same clan had a sub-branch called "Küçük Kürd Mihmadlu". Likewise İzzeddinli clan, so named after their Kethüda İzzeddin Bey, recorded in some documents as "Ekrad-ı İzzeddınlı" despite the fact they mentioned as Bozulus Turkoman in the sources (See Appendix VIII). The main reason

16 See Nejat Göyünç, "Türk-Kürd ilişkileri Hakkında", p. 66.
17 Tapu-Kadastro Kuyası Kadime Archive, TD, nr. 965, p. 165a; also see, Mühimme Defteri, nr. 99, p. 54, decree 186.
18 For further details on this subject see Nejat Göyünç, "XVI. Yüzyılda Doğu ve Güney-Doğu Anadolu'da Yönetim ve Nüfus", Türk Kültürü Dergisi, nr. 370, Ankara 1994, pp. 85-86.
19 Cemî'ü'l-tevârîh, ed. Berezin, Petersburg 1858, pp. 32-38.
22 BA, TD, nr. 402, p. 321.
23 BA, TD, nr. 402, pp. 219-220, 274.
24 The inhabitants of Halife village of Kızılağaç town in the province of Edirne - when they were asked to pay taxes as the descendents of İzzeddinli clan of Bozulus Turkoman from Karaman- they declared that their forefathers were from Bozulus Turkoman and that they had been residing in this place for eighty year and had paid their taxes (BA, Çevdet catalogue, Dahişle section, nr. 6425).
25 See Ruznamçe, p. 27. Also it was recorded as "Cemaati Hâlidli, tâbi-i Gerger. an Ekrad-i İzzeddin Bey" in the Tahrir Defter (See BA, TD, nr. 123, p. 442).
for this is that İzzeddin Bey was the beg of the sancak of Ekrad \(^{24}\) (See Appendix IX). A group of these people in particular called "Taife-i Ekrad-i Okçu İzzeddinli" for they charged with making arrows, but on the other hand they defined as "Türkmen Ekrad". Likewise the nomadic tribe so called "Kabail-i Rışvan" or "Ekrad-i Rışvan", who pass the summer and winter traveling in an area that stretches from Aleppo to Kastamonu, also named "Türkmen Ekrad" \(^{25}\). Here also the word Ekrad does not have an ethnic connotation for we find in the sources the use of both "Ekrad-i Türkmenan" and "Türkman-i Ekrad" \(^{26}\) (See Appendix X). Literary these two terms would mean Torkoman Kurds or Kurdoman Turks respectively and this would bring to our mind the understanding of Turkocised Kurd or Kurdicised Turks. However, such an interpretation would be a grave mistake, because the use of these two words together in this way is impossible. Therefore, here also the word Ekrad must mean nomad or mountaineer. Even the Bektaşlı tribe of Karaisalı in Çukurova called "Türkman Ekrad" \(^{27}\). Here also the word Ekrad must mean nomad or mountaineer. We also come across two clans named Karaca Kürd \(^{28}\) and Kürd Mehmedli\(^{29}\), descendants of Boyunu İncelÜ Türkoman tribe, partly living in Kırşehir and partly in Nevşehir and its villages (See Appendix XI). Both of these groups still live in Kırşehir and Nevşehir provinces. Apart from these there were Kürd Hasan-oğulları clan\(^{30}\) of Bozulus Türkoman settled in Belenli-burun pass (derbend) in the province of Karaman in 1760, and Kürd Tekedu (?) clan of Danişmand Türkoman settled in Kütahya had no other ethnic origin than Turkish despite the fact they had epithet Kurd \(^{31}\) (See Appendix XII). When the Ottomans defeated before the walls of Vienna in 1683, they started recruiting auxiliary forces from various tribes including the Türkoman tribes of Yeni-il and Aleppo. There were among these Türkoman tribes one clan

\(^{24}\) In the sources with regard to this usage we come across the following phrase: "Kabail-i Rışvan, tahi-i Kahta an reşây-ı İzzeddin Bey. Mirlivâ-i Ekrad" (BA, TD, nu. 123, p. 441).

\(^{25}\) See BA, TD, nu. 71, p. 252-253; TD, nu. 123, p. 428.

\(^{26}\) Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-i Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 997, p. 344.

\(^{27}\) Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-i Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 114, p. 171a (1572).

\(^{28}\) See BA, Maliyeden Müdevver Defters (MAD), nu. 8458, p. 306, year 1126; also see Yusuf Halaçoğlu, XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İskân Siyaseti ve Aşiretlerin Yerleştirilmesi, Ankara 1991, pp. 74-76.

\(^{29}\) Yusuf Halaçoğlu, idem, p. 76; also see Ahmed Refik, Anadolu'da Türk Aşiretleri, İstanbul 1930, p. 77.

\(^{30}\) See MAD, nu. 9956, p. 33.

\(^{31}\) MAD, nu. 8458, p. 248.
called "Kılıçlı Kürd" 32 (See Appendix XIII) and yet another settled in Hama and Homs called "Ekrad-ı Kılıçlı" 33 (See Appendix XIV). Likewise there were "Kara Kürd", "Kürd Mehmedlu" and "Şerbetli Kürdül" clans within the Danışmand Turkomans settled around Aydın-Denizli 34 (See Appendix XV).

We already know that the best organized group in Anatolia as a tribe (il veya ulus) was Kara koyunlu ulusu, Bozulus and Kara ulus. Of these Kara ulus described in a different way in the kanunname of Bozulus and as it is clear from the phrase: "Kara ulus tayfesi Ekrad ve müteferrik tayfe olup koyunları sayılmalı oldukda..." 35 given the connotation Ekrad. No doubt the term Ekrad here also used to mean mountaineer or nomad. The Lek clan 36 recorded within the Bozulus Turkoman tribe in the Tahrir Defter number 200 carried out during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, the Legislator, and referred to as of Turkoman tribe in the phrase "Havass-ı hümâyünundan Lek-Vanik nam Türkman tayfesi arzuhal sunup askeri-islam için, bunlardan beş katar deve ve beşyüz re's koyun sürsat ferman olunma..." recorded in a Mühimme document dated 30 July 1610 37. However, the same tribe referred to as "Ekrad ve Yürük tayfesinden Lek cemaati..." in another Mühimme document dated 19 March 1611 38. Also the term "Lekvanik Ekrad" 39 used in another document dated January 1713. We find name of the begs such as Malkoç Bey, Deniz-oğlu, and Kızıl Koyunlu Halil Kethuda among the names of the tribal-chiefs of the same clan recorded in a Mühimme document dated 1690 40. Likewise the term "Türkman ve Ekraddan Receblü Afsar cemaati..." used for the clan Receblü Afsar which there is no doubt is a Turkoman tribe 41. Also during the process of recruiting soldiers for the army in 1690 a side note "Vesair Rum'dan olan

32 See BA, Mühimme Defter (MD), nu. 99, p. 50-52, decree 186; also see Ahmed Refik, idem, p. 86.
33 See BA, MD, nu. 104, p. 112, decree 521; also see Ahmed Refik, idem, p. 107.
34 See BA, MD, nu. 102, p. 208, decree 803; also see Ahmed Refik, idem, p. 104.
35 See Ömer L. Barkan, XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ziraat Ekonomisinin Hukuki ve Mali Esasları, Kanunlar, İstanbul 1943, p. 140.
36 See BA, TD, nu. 200, p. 958.
37 See Ahmed Refik, idem, p. 64.
38 On being recorded as an Ekrad tribes that were part of the Kilis mukata'a see BA, MD, nu. 99, p. 48, decree 186; also see Ahmed Refik, idem, pp. 64-65.
39 Ahmed Refik, idem, pp. 145-146.
40 MD, nu. 99, p. 54, decree 186.
41 Ahmed Refik, idem, p. 145.
Ekrad taifeleri ve Çorum kürdü ihtiyaçları" was recorded for the Badılı (=Beydili) tribal-chiefs of Turkomans of Yeni-il and Aleppo. The word Ekrad and Kürd used together here shows the similarity with the phrase "Türk veya şehirli olsa" as pointed out at the outset of this article. In fact it is very clear that from these last examples that the term Ekrad used to mean nomad and that in particular the words Turkmen, Kürd and Ekrad have no ethnic connotation whatsoever.

The explanations given above are not only applicable to the words Türk-Etrak, Kürd-Ekrad but also some other words recorded in the Ottoman documents. For instance we find the ever often used Turkish names such as Durak, Evran, Küçük, Hızır, Aşık, Uğurlu, Emir, Bali, Çoban, Umur, Koçi, Sefer, Selman and Arslan among the Gebran (Christian) names recorded under Kazabad nahiye of Tokat province in the Tahrir Defter dated 961 A.H./ 1554/ A.D. and numbered 287. These most probably were the Christian Turks brought from Rumelia during the era of Byzantine Empire (See Appendix XVII). Likewise the Christian groups such as Greeks, Syriac, and Nastorians living in South-Eastern Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia all recorded as "cema’at-i Eramine". Simeon, the Polish in his book of travels also points out that all the non-Muslims recorded as eramine although they were not all Armenians.

In conclusion, it is incumbent on the researches of history to interpret carefully, the terms and words—similar to the few examples given above—that had stemmed from the state's administrative system and understanding, as well as the local terminology in the Ottoman State. The Ottoman State founded a society fit to its system and administrative understanding without giving any damage to its structure. It is clear, therefore, from what has been written above, that the word Ekrad does not mean Kurds whatsoever and that such a consideration would be a grave mistake. We can only reach the true science of history and philosophy of history through considering such

42 MD, nu. 99, p. 56, decree 186.
43 See BA, TD, nu. 287, p. 317-318.
45 Polonyalı Siemon, Polonyalı Simeon'un Seyahatnamesi, 1608-1619, ed. Hrand Andreasyan, İstanbul 1964, p. 89.
matters. We also believe that the social, ethnic and cultural structure of Anatolia can only be determined and solved in this way.
Ek. I - BA, TD, nr. 64, s. 783.
Appendix I - BA, TD, nr. 64, p. 783.
Ek II - TD, nr. 69, s. 664.
Appendix II - TD, nr. 69, p. 664.
Ek. II - TD, nr. 178, s. 3-4.
Appendix II - TD, nr. 178, pp. 3-4.
Ek. III - TD, nr. 1023, s. 1-2.
Appendix III - TD, nr. 1023, pp. 1-2.
(Ek. III’un devamı)
(Continuation of Appendix III)
Ek. IV - BA, TD, nr. 213, s. 17-18.
Appendix IV - BA, TD, no. 213, pp. 17-18.
(Ek. IV'ün devamı)

(Continuation of Appendix IV)
Ek. V - MD, nr. 99, s. 54, hüküm 186.
Appendix V - MD, nr. 99, p. 54, decree 186.
Ek. VI - BA, TD, nr. 402, s. 321.
Appendix VI - BA, TD, no. 402, p. 321.
Ek. VII - TD, nr. 402, s. 219-220, 273-274.
Appendix VII - TD, nr. 402, pp. 219-220, 273-274.
(Ek. VII'nin devamı)
(Continuation of Appendix VII)
Ek IX - BA, TD, nr. 123, s. 441-442.
Ek. XI - BA, MAD, nr. 8458, s. 306.
Appendix XI - BA, MAD, nr. 8458, p. 306.
Ek. XII - BA, MAD, nr. 8458, s. 248.
Appendix XII - BA, MAD, nu. 8458, p. 248.
Ek. XIV - BA, MD, nr. 104, s. 112, hüküm 521.
Appendix XIV - BA, MD, nu. 104, p. 112, decree 521.
Ek. XV - BA, MD, nr. 102, s. 208-209, hüküm 803.
Appendix XV - BA, MD, nu. 102, pp. 208-209, decree 803.
Ek. XVI - BA, TD, nr. 200, s. 957-958.
Appendix XVI - BA, TD, nu. 200, pp. 957-958.
Ek XVI - BA, TD, nr. 200, s. 917-918.
Appendix XVI - BA, TD, nu. 200, pp. 917-918.
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Ek. XVII - BA, TD, nr. 287, s. 317-318.
Appendix XVII - BA, TD, nu. 287, pp. 317-318.