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The Place and Importance of Domestic Animals in Ottoman Family Life in Terms of Islamic Law and Tradition

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Abstract

Studies on family in the Ottoman State are quite limited. Because family-related records, which constitute an important core of the social fabric, do not go beyond the records created for tax purposes. Some data written about the Ottoman family can be found in the Ottoman Sharia Registers and Fatwas. In the Sharia Registers, it is possible to access the types, quantities and prices of animals in Ottoman families in the provisions on inheritance, which are about the sharing of property of the deceased. Thanks to the Sharia Registers that existed in every city in the Ottoman State, it is possible to access the

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records of all animals with economic value. The fatwas, which regulate the social structure for Ottoman Muslims and derive their sources from Hadith and the Quran, also include some provisions regarding animals. Animals also have great benefits in terms of people's survival during natural disasters. In our study, animals in the core of the Ottoman family are examined by taking Islamic elements into account. Important data on pets and animal husbandry in the Ottoman family has been presented to the attention of academics working in this field through archival sources, sharia records, fatwas and travelers' narratives.

Keywords: Animal, Ottoman Family, Fatwa, Sharia Registry, Natural Disasters.

İslam Hukuku ve Geleneği Açısından Osmanlı Aile Hayatında Evcil Hayvanların Yeri ve Önemi

Öz

Osmanlı Devleti'nde aile üzerine yapılan çalışmalar oldukça sınırlıdır. Çünkü sosyal dokunun önemli bir çekirdeğini oluşturan aileye ait kayıtlar vergi amaçlı oluşturulan kayıtların ötesine geçmemektedir. Osmanlı ailesi hakkında yazılmış bazı verilere Osmanlı Şer'iyye Sicilleri ve Fetvalarında rastlamak mümkündür. Şer'iyye Sicillerinde, ölen kişinin mal paylaşımı ile ilgili miras hükümleri kapsamında Osmanlı ailelerindeki hayvanların cinsleri, miktarları ve fiyatlarına ulaşmak mümkündür. Osmanlı Devleti'nin her şehrinde bulunan Şer'iyye Sicilleri sayesinde ekonomik değeri olan tüm hayvanların kayıtlarına bulmak mümkündür. Osmanlı Müslümanları için sosyal yapıyı düzenleyen ve kaynağını Hadis ve Kur'an'dan alan fetvalar, hayvanlarla ilgili bazı hükümler de içermektedir. Hayvanların doğal afetler sırasında insanların hayatta kalması açısından da büyük faydaları vardır. Çalışmamızda Osmanlı ailesinin çekirdeğini oluşturan hayvanlar İslami unsurlar dikkate alınarak incelenmiştir. Osmanlı ailesinde evcil hayvanlar ve hayvancılık konusunda arşiv kaynakları, şeriat sicilleri, fetvalar ve seyyahların anlatımları aracılığıyla bu alanda çalışan akademisyenlerin dikkatine önemli veriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hayvan, Osmanlı Ailesi, Fetva, Şer'iyye Sicili, Doğal Afetler.

Introduction

In the Ottoman Empire, the family was the cornerstone of the social structure. There was a traditional hierarchy in the family and the

position of individuals within the family was defined according to this hierarchical structure. This family frame, which was traditionally patriarchal, was supported by the elements of respect for the elders and service to the elderly in the spiritual structure. It is possible to determine the relationship between family members in the social structure from these advices in the hadiths of our Prophet, especially those covering the elderly and young individuals in the family. In a hadith narrated from Tirmidhi, it is possible to indicate that the hierarchical positioning among family members was made according to age by saying, "He who does not show mercy to our young ones and does not respect our elders is not one of us".¹ In particular, the verses 17/23 of the Surah Al-Isra in the Quran, which constitutes the common law of all Muslims in the Ottoman society, further clarify the nature of individual relationships within the family. According to Surah Al-Isra, 17/23; "Your Lord has commanded you to worship Him and to be good to your parents. If one or both of them grow old with you, do not say 'Alas' to them, do not rebuke them, and speak kind words to both of them." This positioning and network of relationships in the family hierarchy has been sufficiently studied and described by historical documents. However, the positions of domestic animals that share the same space with family members within the family have not been clearly determined. Our study aims to define the interaction and position of domestic animals, which are found to have various benefits in meeting the needs of the family, with family members from a spiritual and traditional perspective. For this purpose, an evaluation will be made regarding the "pets" in the family based on the fatwas containing provisions regarding the social structure in Islam, archive documents and finally the verdicts regarding some animals in the sharia records. For this purpose, an evaluation will be made regarding the "pets" in the family based on the fatwas containing rules regarding the social structure in Islam, archive documents and finally the provisions regarding some animals in the sharia records.

In the Ottoman family nucleus, cats and dogs were accepted as part of the family as pets defined for the common benefit of each household. Cats, which protected the pantry and kitchen against

¹ Abdullah Parlayan, *Sünen –i Tirmizi Tercümesi*, Cilt II, Konya Kitapçılık, 2004, s.49.

rodents such as mice, had the right to access everywhere in the household. In the Islamic tradition about the Prophet and the cat seems to have been familiar to Western travelers to the East by the late fifteenth century. Cats, as a traditionally, are considered clean and kept in homes.²

In every household, there was a guard dog that guarded the door, the garden, and stood up for the household against all kinds of greedy thieves and evil-doers, and its care was done without neglect. Dogs were also beneficial for the husbandry to protect the herd from predators. These pets, which mostly share the family's common kitchen, are fed with leftovers and are fed with bread and bone-like food that is offered to them at the corner of the table along with the household members who are included in the menu at home. For cats, a plate of milk placed next to the table may also be included in this ritual. The home of cats is the house where the family lives, the barn, the basement, the cellar or a corner of a roof. There are some certain hadiths consider dogs to be unclean creatures that Muslims are strictly forbidden to keep in the home. However some hadiths promise a heavenly reward to those who provide water for a thirsty dog. This gesture toward a creature belonging to no one and therefore not a possession to be looked after, has equivalent in Turkish tradition as well.³

Other domestic animals that share the house and outbuildings in the family nucleus are also encountered. These animals are mostly the inhabitants of barns, hives or hencoops located near the house to meet the daily needs of the family. In some regions, barns are built as the ground floor or adjacent room of the house where family members live. This situation is mostly common in regions with harsh continental winters. These shelters, which are heated by the body heat of the animals in the places where the animals are kept, also help to

² Benjamin Arbel, "The Attitude of Muslims to Animals: Renaissance perceptions and beyonds", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.64-65.

³ Catherine Pinguet, "Istanbul's Street dogs at the end of the Ottoman Empire: protection or extermination", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.355.

warm the family members. Or the heat emitted by fireplaces, stoves or barbecues lit for heating purposes in the household helps animals to have a heat source during the harsh winter months. In the hot climate conditions of the Ottoman geography, this type of spatial construction style is relatively unacceptable. In such regions with a mild climate, barns built in a location not too far from the house where the family lives are preferred. Small and large animals such as cows, oxen, sheep, goats, buffalo, camels, horses, mules and donkeys are kept in these barns. These animals were also a state of wealth of nobility within the Turkish tradition.⁴ Again, a hencoop is built in a location not far from the house to house small animals such as chickens, geese, turkeys and ducks. Both the barn and the coop should be made resistant to predators. In addition, a hayloft is built in a location close to the domestic animal shelters defined within this household. Those barns contain animal food materials such as hay, clover, corn stalks and einkorn that large and small cattle will consume throughout the winter. Salt, barley, oats, wheat and millet, which are the grains that animals need, are provided from the household's kitchen pantry for animals that need special care. One of the indispensable animal assets of an Ottoman family is bees. These creatures, which meet the household's sugar needs, are kept in hives made of wood by the householder in a corner of the house's orchard. There are statistical data in the Ottoman archives regarding the domestic animals we defined within the scope of our study. Ottoman sources differs in the description and namely could be classified under the title of Kanunname (Code of Laws), Mühimme (chancery registration), Ahkam and Temmettuat notebooks and etc.⁵ Each of those sources contains exclusive information about the house hold animals but it is simply beyond to deal due to our aim of simple frame to introduce domestic animals within tradition and religious context. Because these animals have an economic value, they are subject to tax. For this reason, a very rich data record was kept by defining how many large and small cattle there were in an Ottoman family, what their values were, and their

⁴ Suraiya Faruqi, "Horses owned by Ottoman officials and notables", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.308-310.

⁵ Suraiya Faruqi, "Introduction", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.14-26.

gender and age. In this hierarchical chain that shared the same space with family members in the Ottoman household and mutually benefited each other, some rights were also defined for animals. These rights were guaranteed by natural necessity, traditional and spiritual motifs.

Household members must definitely provide shelter for pets that live in the same location as family members. This is a natural necessity. In addition, according to Sharia rules, if a lost animal is found, a tax called “yave” is collected from its owner, and for this provision to be applied, the animal must escape from a barn. An animal without a barn is not considered a runaway and if it is found, it belongs to the finder. In this case, owners of large and small cattle must definitely build a barn somewhere near their homes. In addition, the fact that animals left outside are exposed to predatory animal attacks and get sick and die in cold and rainy weather is a natural compelling reason for them to shelter. It is also inevitable for animals without shelter to become “yave” (runaway), that is, they do not become domesticated. Since animals with a certain shelter will head for their shelters when the weather gets dark, it is very difficult for them to get lost. However, animals without shelter, those with inadequate shelter and those who are mistreated in their shelters tend to leave their shelters. In this case, the householder who cannot take care of his animal and mistreats it is penalized and forced to pay an additional tax.⁶

In the Ottoman family nucleus, it was also a natural, traditional and spiritual obligation for the householder to meet the food needs of the domestic animals that were taken care of. In particular, in Ottoman fatwas, the householder was held responsible for the problems that arose regarding animals left hungry. The moral and human responsibility of an animal that was left starving to death was in question. In addition, the death of such domestic animals, which was an economic tax revenue, due to starvation was not legally approved and was subject to penal sanctions. The Ottoman state supported the

⁶ Ottoman Kanunnames were discussed as an master thesis in Mehmet Yavuz Erler, *A Study of the Imperial Decrees (Fermans) and Law Codes (Kanunnames) Concerning the Sultanate Estates around İstanbul with Special Reference to the Share Cropping System*, M.A. Thesis, Manchester 1993 s.63.

family owners who could not provide the winter food of their animals in their households on time with loans in case of necessity. The Security Funds, which would later form the basis of the Ziraat Bank, stand out as an intermediary institution in providing such loans.⁷ The animal suffrages was also seen worthwhile to be recorded in ambassadors' report. British consul in Samsun reports that "The plague which raged in this province in former years has destroyed in some districts nearly all the cattle in 1872-1873."⁸

Another important element that should be mentioned regarding pets in the Ottoman family is the behavior or rather treatment of family members towards these animals. No family member would or could approve of pets being beaten or killed for no reason, just for the purpose of torture. First of all, the killing or mutilation of these creatures, which have economic value, is considered a significant loss to the family budget. Since large and small cattle that are weaned due to mistreatment provide less milk, cheese and yogurt to the markets set up in weekly markets, this decrease in yield causes exorbitant increases in prices. According to traditions and customs, people who kick and beat their horses, donkeys, or dogs that protect their homes are viewed as cruel and brutal by society and are not accepted as respectable people. They are condemned for their bad temper and ill-tempered nature. There is always tension within the family due to this reason. Because family members who devotedly care for these animals, feed them and meet their needs define the mistreatment of these animals, for which they have assumed responsibility and accountability, as disrespect towards them and intervene. Ottoman state care was also worth to mention by referring the evidence on animals within the Ottoman annuals. In the annual belonging to Ankara province state regulates the farmers' husbandry and define how to breed the domestic animals with fine grasses.⁹ It is possible to give more evidence from Ottoman annuals but the limits of the article

⁷ Mehmet Yavuz Erler, "Animals During Disasters", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Edt. Suraiya Faroqhi, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s. 350-400.

⁸ Musa Şaşmaz, *Trade reports of The Trebizond Province on British Documents 1830-1914*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2014, s.503.

⁹ Ankara Vilayet Salnamesi (Annuaire of Ankara), 1311, p.34.

does not broadly offers to criticize all the sources and findings. In spirituality, cruelty towards animals is considered as disrespect towards the Creator who entrusted them to us and who is the creator of us all. Yunus Emre, who says in his poems "I loved the created because of the Creator", mentions the bee and the flower and reminds us that "my mother and father are Allah".

This Ahi Evran tradition, which is also widespread in Ottoman culture, is extremely important and demands that noble people be kind and compassionate, especially towards domestic animals. In rural areas, society warns people who beat their horses, dogs, or in short their pets in public, "Don't be an animal to an animal." This warning is quite meaningful for those with common sense. Because the explanation of this sentence means that this unpleasant treatment carried out in the middle of the street is at the level of "animalism", and in a sense, it is an obvious social condemnation of the action of the person who beats her pet. In Ottoman Islamic law, it is possible to come across fatwas and sharia rulings that specifically deal with domestic animals. Fatwas are especially accepted and valued as the main source of jurisprudence in Ottoman Sharia courts. Ottoman judges were obliged to rule according to these fatwas in cases involving disputes or problems related to animals. Of course, the scholars of the period could not go beyond the creed of the Quran and Sunnah when creating fatwas. Islamic jurisprudence and theology, especially among the Sunni, support the line of the Quran and Sunnah and define and support some special situations specific to domestic animals. The Islamic religion commands to be compassionate and merciful towards domestic animals because they are living beings¹⁰ However, there are also situations where the public interest is taken into consideration. In other words, if they do not cause any harm to society, it is not permissible to sterilize animals. Because as living beings, they have the right to continue their species due to their nature. However, if they increase to a level that harms society, some Islamic scholars allow their sterilization or the improvement of their

¹⁰ Mehmed Sofuoğlu, *Sahih -I Buhari Tercümesi, C I*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul 1987, s. 2190.

offspring.¹¹ The presentation of Islamic society as a positive model in the social sphere, and the reconsideration of animals' intelligence and their place in human society both had their roots in the process of secularization that developed within Western society and culture from the Renaissance onwards.¹²

The commandment defined in the 16/68-69 verses of the Surah An-Nahl in the Quran; "Your Lord commanded the bee: Make homes for yourself from among the mountains and trees and from among the tents that men have made. Then eat of all fruits and follow the paths that your Lord has made easy for you. From their bellies comes out honey of various colors. In it is healing for mankind. Indeed, in that is a sign for those who reflect" must have formed the spiritual basis of the beehives that were frequently placed in orchards in Ottoman households. The command defined in this verse, "Make homes for yourself from among the tents that men have made", in a sense, makes making hives clear to believing Muslims as an area of activity that pleases Allah. It is also possible to witness the implementation of a principle that leaves the provision of shelter for domestic animals to the responsibility of humans. In the Ottoman period, in rural settlements where animal husbandry and farming were practiced, the concepts of "barn" and "hencoop" were structures prepared to provide shelter for animals. In addition, considering the food needs of the animals kept here, there were structures called "hayloft" where the food needs of the animals were stored. In that case, the Ottoman family was going to a settled order structure in the countryside, taking into account not only the household but also the other living things that the household owned. In the archives where documents belonging to the Ottoman State are preserved, it is possible to access data on what kind of opportunities were provided to animals in the Ottoman family. These documents, which focus on animals, are mostly animals owned by the dynasty and its members. This data, which represents and interprets the culture of a country and its most elite social class,

¹¹ Adil Bor, *Kuran'da Hayvan Hakları*, Düşün Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2012, s. 199-200.

¹² Benjamin Arbel, "The Attitude of Muslims to Animals: Renaissance perceptions and beyonds", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.73.

helps to understand the profile of the Ottoman family structure, albeit partially. It contains statistical values regarding the animals in the barn belonging to one of the wives of the Ottoman sultans. This book, which records the types, species, customs and prices of animals, allows us to understand that the sultan's wives also included animals under the dynasty and had them taken care of. In a record we reached from the archive records, it is understood that the "Kadin Efendi/Female Master" owned two Rumelian breed milking cows. It is also stated that she had six pregnant cows. This situation should indicate that the cows produced the milk the family needed and therefore they were included in the family under the dynasty and their care was undertaken. It is understood that the Kadin Efendi owned one bull, two draught oxen, one castrated heifer, five female calves and one male calf. This situation helps to confirm the fact that animals were somehow an indispensable part of daily life in the Ottoman family, even if it was a palace one. In a difference from the Ottoman family in the countryside, the "kadin efendi" had the opportunity to send the animals they owned from their own private stables to the "royal stable of the Porte in İstanbul" where all the animals of the palace were taken care of.¹³

In the Ottoman State, almost every family in rural settlements had some small and large cattle to meet the milk, cheese and yogurt needs of the household. In addition to these livestock, animals used for transportation were also among the indispensable items of the household. In the cases heard in the sharia courts in the Ottoman State, very reliable statistics were kept regarding the types of animals found in Ottoman households and their economic values. Some animal species were also included among some of the items of economic value kept in the Samsun sharia court and passed on to the heirs. Therefore the Samsun whole sharia court registers' files, has exclusively been translated by academicians is the main reason why Samsun individually spotted in this study. In Samsun, in 1868-1869, three pairs of "beef oxen" belonging to Halil bin Halil, registered in the Karadere village population, were sold for 285 kuruş. This figure was

¹³ Head of Turkey State Archives, Ottoman Archive (hereafter as in BOA), TS.MA.a., No. 558-/5.

considered a very high amount. Again, in the same period, a value of 871 kuruş was set for fifty-one sheep and goats owned by a household. Three mares belonging to the same household were worth 230 kuruş. A bull registered to the household was worth 150 kuruş. The “straw household” belonging to the household was worth 945 kuruş. A beehive belonging to Mehmet bin Hüseyin registered to another household was recorded at a value of 30 kuruş. A good breed white mare belonging to Totori veled-i Bıraş, a Sürmeli villager in the Bafra district of Samsun, was worth 300 kuruş.¹⁴ A grey colt belonging to the same person was being sold for 150 kuruş. A mare owned by Totori was valued at 300 kuruş.¹⁵ As can be understood from the relevant historical records, Totori had very high quality mounts and probably needed these transport animals due to both his land and the work he did. These mounts kept in Totori's household were considered part of the household, and the young people of the household had more experience in horse riding than their other neighbors thanks to the horses they owned. In the records kept in the Samsun Sharia Court dated 1878-1881, animals continued to be encountered in every household that was the subject of the case. A male buffalo owned by Anastas, the son of the Greek Papa Lefter, was valued at 100 kuruş, a two-year-old buffalo calf at 1500 kuruş, a female buffalo at 1500 kuruş, and a two-year-old buffalo's dowel at 1600 kuruş. The cart that Anastas probably had pulled with buffalos and priced at 500 kuruş also helps us understand the extent to which animals were an essential part of the Ottoman household core.

In the Şer'iyye Registers examined in Samsun as of 1857, it is possible to reach some data on the animals owned by the Ottoman family. In the Samsun Şer'iyye records, a household included a pair of “buffalo ox”, two cows and a horse team. According to the data we obtained, in the household of Yani Konstantin, who lived in Maden Kabı (Tekkeköy), a district of Samsun, the “camuş oxen/buffalo ox” was valued at 800 kuruş, the horse team, was valued at 600 kuruş and

¹⁴ Mehmet Coşkun, , H-1285-1286 (M.1868-1869) *Tarihli Samsun Şer'iyye Sicil Defteri*, (Yükseklisans Tezi), Ondokuzmayıs Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Nisan 1991, Samsun, s. 3, 7, 10

¹⁵ BOA., TS.MA.a., No. 558-/5.

two cows were valued at 600 kuruş. In the household of Yani, who lived in the Gökçe Pınar village in Maden Kapı, a cow was valued at 150 kuruş, a pair of oxen was valued at 600 kuruş and two horses were valued at 500 kuruş. In addition, there was a hayloft in Yani's household, valued at 300 kuruş. In another estate record, two black oxen owned by Mustafa, the son of Abdullah who came to Samsun as a guest, were sold at auction for 600 kuruş, two for 800 kuruş, two black cows for 300 kuruş and a cart team for 200 kuruş and the proceeds were transferred to state treasure. Animals were also found in the estate of Süleyman, the son of İbrahim, who was understood to have lived in the Şemüslü Village in Samsun as of 1858. In these records, two black oxen were recorded for 700 kuruş, two beef oxen for 300 kuruş, four black cows for 800 kuruş, one lame cow for 150 kuruş, two bulls for 60 kuruş, two bay mares for 300 kuruş and a horse harness belonging to two bay mares for 700 kuruş¹⁶. The records here help us understand that in Samsun, one of the cities of the Ottoman Empire, large cattle lived together with the household in some households. In particular, the fact that the creatures called camız/buffalo cows or oxen were mentioned among the creatures living with the household provides evidence for the existence of these animals in large numbers in the region. It is possible that camız found suitable environments and increased their population in wet and swampy areas such as Bafra, Çarşamba and Terme, which are districts of Samsun, and this allowed the people of Samsun to have these creatures in their households frequently.

In the city of Samsun, animal records registered in the Sharia Courts between 1878 -1881 and included in the Ottoman family structure have preserved their existence. Of course, it is possible to identify these records in the Sharia records kept for different settlements of the Ottoman State. However, in our study, Samsun was determined as the preferred city in the samples in order to create integrity. The fact that Samsun is a coastal town and that it is connected to the depths of Anatolia via the Kızılırmak and Yeşilirmak rivers are among the obvious reasons for this choice. The demographically contained Christian

¹⁶ Osman Keskiner, *Kadı Sicillerinde Samsun*, Cilt. 1, Kültür Yayınları, Samsun 2013. s. 54, 64, 73, 260.

family repertoire of Armenians, Greeks and Orthodox Turks in the city of Samsun and Muslim family repertoire consisting of Circassians, Georgians, Albanians, Bosnians, Kurds, Laz and Turks also brings together different options in terms of our samples. In the estate record of Anastas, the son of Papa Lefter in Samsun in 1878-1881, two oxen were valued at 1000 kuruş, a two-year-old cub was valued at 1500 kuruş, a calf cow was valued at 1500 kuruş, a two-year-old ox was valued at 1600 kuruş and a cart harness was valued at 500 kuruş. These data recorded in the Samsun Sharia Registry lead us to evaluate that animals were also included in the family structure of Christian subjects in the Ottoman Empire. Animals are also included in the inheritance of Bayram, son of Mehmet, from the Kurdish tribe living in Keremçe Village of Samsun. In these records, two oxen were recorded for 2500 kuruş, one donkey that had just given birth was recorded for 376 kuruş, and seven sheep and six goats were recorded for 1560 kuruş. It is highly probable that there is some kind of reading error in these values regarding small cattle. Indeed, when the original text is taken into consideration, a reading error becomes apparent in the records here. In the original text, one sheep is 7 kuruş and one goat is 6 kuruş, and the total value of 120 sheep and goats is calculated as 1560 kuruş. Nevertheless, the record of goats and sheep in a family living in a village in the countryside of Samsun provides evidence that small livestock farming was also done in the coastal town. This means that a Muslim Kurdish peasant in the Ottoman Empire raised a total of 120 goats and sheep in a barn in his household and preferred this as an economic occupation. The family members must have taken care of these animals, which contributed to their economic well-being, as if they were part of their family. It is understood that Emine, the daughter of Gazi Mehmet, who lives in the Hançerli Neighborhood, considered the city center of Samsun, raised geese nearby. The 12 geese owned by Emine were valued at a total of 70 kuruş.¹⁷ As can be understood from the relevant record, poultry were mostly registered under the name of the lady of the house. This situation leads us to claim that in the Ottoman family, the management and care of poultry were done by the ladies of the house.

¹⁷ Bilgehan Şahin, *Samsun Şer'iyye Sicilleri (1878-1881)*, Samsun Kent Müzesi Araştırma Merkezi Yayını, Samsun 2017, s. 16, 135, 137.

Travelers who visited the Ottoman Empire also made some observations about the importance of animals in the Turkish family structure. For example, Pierre Belon says in his Travelogue; “When someone in their close circle gets sick or recovers from a serious illness, the Turks give food to cats and dogs and release caged birds as per their belief.” The traveler also states that there were many cats in the tomb of Suleiman the Magnificent and that these cats were fed and cared for by those who visited the tomb¹⁸ Busbeq, a traveler from the era of Suleiman the Magnificent, also mentions animals in his work; “They do not allow dogs into their homes because they consider them to be dirty animals. Cats have taken their place. They consider cats to be much more moral and to some extent modest and well-mannered animals. They put forward the compassion of Hz. Muhammed towards cats as an example of this way of thinking.”¹⁹ Although the travelers' evaluations of domestic or economically valuable animals in the Ottoman family or neighborhood contain superficial expressions, they help us understand the evaluations of eyewitnesses who were unfamiliar with the culture.

The “fatwa letters” in the Ottoman legal system are important because they form the legal basis of cases that concern Muslims. It is possible to access some data on animals among these fatwas. There are provisions regarding some domestic animals in the fatwas belonging to Ali Efendi. One of these provisions is about how to collect the income obtained from a pair of oxen that a citizen leaves as a trust while going to another city for trade. This provision regulates some provisions regarding the rental fee that should be paid to the owner of a pair of oxen that are left as a trust to a relative or neighbor.²⁰ Among the relevant fatwas, there is the issue of a citizen traveling by horse carriage whose journey is disrupted due to the horse falling into a trap. This situation places the responsibility of the horse losing its health under difficult conditions during the journey on its owner. The

¹⁸ Pierre Belon, *Pierre Belon Seyahatnemesi*, Çev. Hazal Yalın, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2020, s.213, 245

¹⁹ Ogier Ghiselin de Busbeq, *Türk Mektupları, Kanuni Döneminde Bir Elçinin Gözlemleri (1555- 1560)*, Çev. Derin Türkömer, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011. s.124.

²⁰ Büyük Millet Meclisi Kütüphanesi, 1937: 1006, Remiz. K-K-4-a, *Fetava-yı Ali Efendi*, s.242.

provision that the damage caused by the weakness of the horse is compensated by the owner of the horse is in the nature of a warning to horse carriage operators to improve the health conditions of the horses they own. If the horse carriages leave the animals unhealthy and the trip is interrupted for this reason, it is quite remarkable that the customers are asked to complete their trip by hiring another car and the cost incurred in the meantime is paid by the owner of the horse carriage whose horse got sick. This means that the responsibility for the health of domestic animals was placed on their owners and they were made to pay compensation.²¹ In the Ottoman State, horse carriage owners who did not want to pay for such damage under Sharia law must have caused them to constantly monitor the care and health of their horses. Another fatwa directly places the responsibility for a passenger who rents a mule missing the mule and losing his belongings on the tenant who drives the mule. In other words, according to Sharia rules, the mule should follow its nature throughout the journey and not scare the animal, i.e. not mistreat it. Otherwise, the driver who rented the mule was held responsible for the damage caused by the animal becoming restless. In this case, it is possible to evaluate that the driver of the animal was held responsible for the negative attitude and damage that the animals would exhibit as a result of mistreatment of animals in the Ottoman State. Nevertheless domestic animals were also regarded as a remedy for their discards. Animal shits were use some illnesses' treatments. The goat shit was used for a diarrhea. The stomach issues were solved with horse-shit. The fever issue was solved with dark donkeys' shit. The cat and cows' shit were used to get rid of the ants. The mule shit was used as a remedy for coughing.²²

The household animals were also served to the family at the time of disastrous event. It thus can be claimed that live animal stock breed as mohair goats served family members to endure their lives during the draught of Anatolia. The guard dogs protect the family members from

²¹ Büyük Millet Meclisi Kütüphanesi, Eser No. 1937: 1006, Remiz. K-K-4-a, , *Fetava-yı Ali Efendi*, s.239.

²² Halil Erdoğan Cengiz, "Geçmiş Zaman Olurki Hayali cihan Kaka Deyip Geçmemeli", *Tarih ve Toplum Dergisi*, Nisan 1990, C.13, Sayı 76, s 17-19

the attack of starving Wolves at the time of the famine²³ However the pet in the family occasionally caused some troublesome. Ottomans suffer from rabies that caused from a strayed dogs.²⁴ Therefore the dogs were regarded to be better kept under control as a house pet rather than a strayed in order to prevent from the rabies. The locust invasions was also refer to one of the domestic house pet. Starlings trained to catch locusts had become a source of income for some families. These creatures, which could eat locusts several times their weight, were raised and trained by experts called Starling Sheikhs. During the locust invasion, these Starling Sheikhs were assigned to destroy locusts together with the starlings they raised.²⁵ The number of starlings trained to destroy locusts was hundreds, and starling breeding stations were spread throughout the country. Pigeon breeders can also be considered as an important factor in terms of evaluating animals as a family and a part of the family. The pigeons' manure was also a valuable contribution to increasing the productivity of the product in vegetable cultivation. Nevertheless falconry was a traditional habit for hunting bird of prays.²⁶ Ottoman port and especially central Black-Sea was famous for raising such domestic pets, trained to hunt.²⁷ However when the pigeon comes to consideration the tradition has no use to describe but hadiths along with Islamic approaches. In Islam, the dove or pigeon plays a role because of an

²³ Mehmet Yavuz Erler, "Animals During Disasters", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Edt. Suraiya Faroqhi, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010. s.333-353

²⁴ Cihan Özgün, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Son Zamanlarında Bir İletle Yüzleşmek : Devletin Resmi Tutumu Bağlamında Dâû'l-kelb (Kuduz Hastalığı)", *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 2017, Cilt. 32, Sayı 2, ss. 491-529.

²⁵ Suha Oğuz Baytimur, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Çekirge İstilaları ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Hayata Etkileri (1789- 1839)", *Avrasya Uluslararası Araştırmaları Dergisi* Eylül 2020, Cilt 8, Sayı 23, s. 343; Mehmet Yavuz Erler, "Kıbrıs'ta Çekirge İstilas (1845-1869)", *Kastamonu Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2002 C. X., No.1., s.194-195 ; Mehmet Yavuz Erler, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Kuraklık ve Kıtık Olayları (1800-1880)*, Libra Yayınları, İstanbul 2012, s.89-90; Mehmet Yavuz Erler, "Animals During Disasters", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010. s.337-338.

²⁶ Giles Veinstein, "Falconry in the Ottoman Empire of the Mid-sixteenth Century", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.205-218.

²⁷ Mehmet Yavuz Erler, *Osmanlı Devri Orta Karadeniz de Avcı Kuşları (1485-1830)*, *Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol.8, No.22., 2021, s.469-493.

event that occurred during the emigration of the Prophet Muhammed to Medine. The Prophet and his companion hid in a cave in the Hyra Hill to escape their pagan enemies; the entrance a spider wove its web and a dove or pigeon made its nest, so that the Prophet's enemies did not regard the cave as a possible refuge and he and his companion escaped unscathed. Therefore, the dove or pigeon is an honored creature in the Islamic world as well.²⁸

Domestic animals were also regarded during the plague as a pest to carry the disaster. Nukhet Varlık discusses domestic animals existence role during the 16 th century plague events in her book at chapter seven.²⁹

Conclusion

It has been possible to reach some data by considering historical documents on animals in the Ottoman family structure. A significant part of these historical documents draw attention as records kept by the Ottoman bureaucracy. Archive sources on animals that were of financial interest to the Ottoman administration and subject to taxes provide us with statistical records of many domestic and economically valuable animals in the Ottoman family structure. In this way, it has been possible to have information on the types and quantities of animals included in the Ottoman household structure and subject to tax and their value. However, data on the responsibilities of the owners of these economically valuable animals in the Ottoman social structure are mostly defined in religious documents. In addition, provisions that define the positions of living creatures such as cats, dogs and poultry that are not subject to tax within the family, mostly originating from the Islamic religion and sharia, are encountered in fatwas and sharia records. It is possible to state from the data we obtained during our examinations that animals were an indispensable reality in the Ottoman family structure. It should be emphasized that almost all people in the Ottoman State, regardless of their social class,

²⁸ Hanife Koncu, "Doves/Pigeons in Turkish Classical Poetry", *Animals and People in the Ottoman Empire*, Eren Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, s.101.

²⁹ Ozancan Bozkurt, Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World The Ottoman Experience (1347-1600),/Nukhet Varlık, *The Journal of Universal History*, 5(1), s.131.

had animals in their households and took responsibility for the care of these animals. Statistics kept on animals with economic value and subject to tax, in particular, confirm that animals with economic value owned by Ottoman citizens were under the supervision and control of the state. Since these animals generated a type of income for the state, their owners and the households they belonged to were officially recorded. In particular, the application of dividend, or income tax, regarding the transportation and daily work of farm animals prevented these creatures from working excessively, thus in a sense securing their rights under the state. Since an individual who worked his animal excessively would face a high dividend tax in return, he would only have to rent out his farm animal or mount animal if needed. Because the income obtained as a result of the work of these animals was also inspected and taxed. Some data on equity and mercy regarding animals in Ottoman society were also recorded with the fatwas defining religious provisions in the Ottoman sharia. It is possible to state that the expressions regarding the rights and care of animals in the fatwas that constitute the legal basis of the sharia courts also accepted the responsibilities of these creatures sent by Allah to serve His servants as a trust from Allah. It is possible to say that respect and care for these lives entrusted by God in the Ottoman household was accepted as a religious duty on the way to gaining God's approval and was evaluated as respect for the Creator of the created. As a result of our study, a society that respects the rights of animals, which exists in the Turkish-Islamic family tradition, was determined, as Yunus Emre, an ancient Sufi, said, "We loved the created because of the Creator".

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