

**HOW DEEP IS OUR BOND WITH NONHUMAN ANIMALS?****ANTHROZOOLOGICAL FINDINGS IN PASTORAL SOCIETIES OF DERİK,  
SOUTHEAST TURKEY****Abu Bakar SIDDIQ**

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Antropoloji Bölümü

**Abstract:** Humans have long engaged with nonhuman animals since the beginning of their journey on the planet Earth. Both human and nonhuman species are co-existing and sharing the world forming multi-dimensional relationships. Although the non-humans are hunted, manipulated, domesticated, consumed and sometimes go extinct by humans, they are also respected, worshiped, symbolized, conserved as well as adored in human societies. For a long time, different academic disciplines have considered the nonhuman animals in a utilitarian approach, considering them as objects for humanity. Therefore, the intangible aspects of emotional (affection & trust) and relational bonds between humans and nonhumans have been commonly unrecognized. However, rapid growing interests are seen on the study of human and non-human animal relationships in contemporary academic discourses, resulted through various approaches of Anthrozoology, an emerging field of Anthropological science. Southeast Anatolia is an important area for pastoralism, agriculture and

domestic herds. Animals are considered as fundamental component in every society in this region as well as almost 70% of herd animals in Turkey are grown here. Archaeological evidences also suggest a very long relationship between human and nonhuman animals in this region since the beginning of animal domestication in Early Neolithic period. Therefore, this region is considered as an ideal place in search for the positive relationships between human and nonhuman species. Through exploratory case studies, this field research is aimed to observe humans' affections and emotions for non-humans in pastoral villages of Southeast Anatolia.

**Key words:** Human-nonhuman bonds, Anthrozoology, Anthropology, Southeast Anatolia.

### İNSANDIŞILARLA BAĞIMIZ NE KADAR DERİN? GÜNEYDOĞU ANADOLU DERİK'TEKİ PASTORAL TOPLUMLARDAN ANTROZOOLOİK BULGULAR

**Özet:** İnsanlar dünyadaki yolculuğunun başlangıcından beri uzunca bir süre insandışı hayvanlarla ilişki içindedir. Hem insan hem de insandışı türlerle birlikte bulunur ve birbirleriyle çok boyutlu ilişkiler kurarak dünyayı paylaşmaktadırlar. Bir taraftan insandışılar, insanlar tarafından avlanır, manipüle edilir, evcilleştirilir, tüketilir ve yok edilir. Diğer taraftan ise insandışılar insanlar tarafından kendilerine saygı gösterilir, ibadet edilir, sembolize edilir, korunur ve sevilir. Uzun zamandır farklı akademik disiplinler insandışı hayvanları insanlar için var olan bir nesne olarak gödüler ve sadece yarar sağlayan birer meta olarak değerdiler. Bu nedenle, insanlar ve insandışı hayvanlar arasındaki duygusal (sevgi ve güven) ve ilişkisel bağların maddi olmayan görünüşleri yaygın olarak fark edilmemiştir. Ancak, antropoloji biliminin bir alanı olarak ortaya çıkan antrozoolojinin çeşitli yaklaşımlar göstermesiyle çağdaş akademik söylemlerde insan ve insan-dışılar arasındaki ilişkiler üzerine hızlı bir şekilde ilginin arttığı görülmektedir. Güneydoğu Anadolu, pastoralizm, tarım ve evcil sürüler için önemli bir bölgedir. Hayvanlar, bu bölgedeki her toplumda temel unsur olarak görülüyor ve bunun yanı sıra Türkiye'deki hayvan sürülerinin yaklaşık % 70'i Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu bölgelerinde yetiştirilmektedir. Erken Neolitik Çağ'da evcilleştirmenin başlangıcından beri arkeolojik kanıtlar, insan ve insandışı hayvanlar arasında çok uzun bir ilişkinin bu bölgelerde var olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, insan ve insandışı hayvanlar arasındaki pozitif ilişkilerin araştırılması için bu bölgeler dünyadaki en uygun yerler arasında kabul edilmektedir. Vaka

çalışmalarından verileri toplayarak yapılan bu alan araştırması Güneydoğu Anadolu'daki pastoral köylerde insanların insandışı hayvanlara duydukları sevgiyi ve onlara karşı sahip oldukları duyguları gözlemlene amacını gütmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İnsan-insandışı ilişkileri, Antrozooloji, Antropoloji, Güneydoğu Anadolu.

### Introduction

Non-human animals have been used as everyday food source of human while at the same time they are laying in human graves and burials accompanying them through the long way of afterlife. Human have been ensuring protein source and other survivals of their societies from domestic animals by pastoral practice since prehistory. Pastoralism has been the most important occupation in Southeast Anatolia (Turkey) since the Neolithic period. SE Anatolia, that is the upper most and central part of Fertile Crescent, is considered one of the centres where the first domestication occurred. Several archaeological researches indicate that Southeast and Central Anatolia played key roles in the emergence and spread of the earliest pastoral economies. The origins of domestication, and therefore pastoralism, can be traced back to the Neolithic period in parts of the Fertile Crescent (Bellwood & Oxenham, 2008; Zeder, 2008) and in the Central Anatolia (Özbaşaran, 2011) around 11000 years ago (Hammer & Arbuckle, 2016). People started to domesticate some animals (e.g. sheep, goats, cattle and pigs) instead of hunting in this period. Archaeozoological evidences show that the domestication of sheep, goats and pigs occurred alongside of hunting and cultivating activities in early Neolithic villages that transformed previous life ways in Southeast Anatolia.

Although many development projects from government, current industrial production system, agricultural practice with modern technology, and large scale enclosed animal farming have caused reduce of traditional pastoral practices in Southeast Turkey, there are many societies that are completely depended on animal rising. Alongside of nomadic pastoralist groups, there are mainly three other types of pastoralism (i.e. Transhumance pastoralism, Agropastoralism, and Semi-agropastoralism) observed in Southeast Anatolia (Siddiq, 2017). Pastoralist families are found as the richest in the villages of Southeast Anatolia. Livestock, mainly of

caprine, wool, mohair, milk, and different types of dairy products are the sources of profound amount of money. Alongside of their village tradition and religious practice, these pastoral people in SE Anatolia have unique ways of lifestyle and cultural practices related to their profession. Therefore, the region is still a crucial place to study the pastoralism and human-animal relationships in pastoral cultures.

Unfortunately, few research attempts have yet been taken in the region regarding pastoral societies in Southeast Anatolia; and almost no research have yet found done on the emotional bonds between human and the domestic animals in the region. This field study, is therefore, attempted to gather information on the feelings, sympathies, memories and viewpoints of pastoralists and other rural inhabitants about the domesticated animals in Southeast Anatolia. Aiming to observe the emotional relationships between humans and their herd animals, research have been carried out in pastoral and agricultural villages of Derik district of Mardin province, Southeast Anatolia.

### **Environmental Background of Pastoralism in South East Anatolia**

The Southeast Turkey is the uppermost part of Ancient Mesopotamia. It is currently bordered by the Turkish Mediterranean region to the west, the Eastern Anatolia region to the north, and Syria and Iraq to the south and southeast. This area stands on the southern slopes of a broad highland and extensive limestone plateaus with an average elevation of around 1052 metres. The collision of Arabian Plate with Eurasia (Keskin, 2007) perhaps created these Highlands around 10 million years ago. Many archaeological sites in Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Batman, as well as other areas of Euphrates and Tigris plains in the region confirm the human occupations even in Palaeolithic period.

Present-day Southeast Anatolia is a semi-humid area in the continental climate zone experiencing very hot summers and cold winters with occasional snow. It is also amongst the areas with an average highest wind speed in Turkey (Sensoy, *et al.* 2008). Although short-term drought is not uncommon, profound sunlight and seasonal rain have transformed Southeast Anatolia as a perfect pastoral ground. People also produce wheat, barley, corn, sesame and some seasonal fruits beside pastoralism. Anatolia contains at least seven environmental zones (Sagona&Zimansky, 2009: 2) that differ broadly in their topography, seasonal vegetation, and water sources, and therefore also in their pastoral potential.

Southeast Anatolia has long tradition of pastoral practices since the earliest period of animal domestication. Pastoralism in the region is deeply influenced by the Southeast Anatolian plains of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. These rivers transverse these plains, forming alluvial plains in some areas and cutting steep gorges in others. Sets of low, rolling hills and one rugged volcanic massif (Karacadağ) separate the plains in terms of both geography and vegetations (Zohary, 1973: 181). Almost all precipitation (annual mean 500-600 mm) falls as rain during the winter and spring (Hammer & Arbuckle, 2016), encouraging the growth of vegetation in uncultivated areas and providing rich pastures especially from March to May.

### **The Development of Pastoralism in Southeast Anatolia**

Early evidence of intensive control over sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs comes from some remarkable archaeological sites such as Gürcütepe, NevalıÇori (Loschet *et al.*, 2006; Peters *et al.*, 2013), AkarçayTepe (Özbaşaran&Duru, 2011), Çayönü (Hongoet *et al.*, 2004, 2009), and CaferHöyük, in Southeast Turkey. Isotope data also provide some of the earliest evidence for animal husbandry in this region. During this time, animals are seen to be fed the cultivated crops by humans for the first time. However, the domestication of animals and pastoralism in Anatolia did not happen suddenly or in short period, instead, the development of early livestock economies took place over several millennia with an enormous amount of local-and regional-scale variation. Cultivator-herder communities likely experienced a variety of logistical and social difficulties during the domestication process (Arbuckle & Atici, 2013) and early attempts at pastoral practices in around 10,000 years ago. People were still practicing hunting subsistence along with the domestic herds. In Anatolia and Levant, post-domestication archaeological assemblages show the evidences of hunted animals, including small carnivores, equids, deer, gazelle, wild sheep and goat and hare through 9th millennium to 7500 BC. In this early stage of domestication, people obtained the meat only 40 to 45% from domesticated animals. However, over the next 500 years domestic caprines, cattle and pig become dominant in human food (Vigne & Helmer, 2007) in Southeast Anatolia. In early pastoral practice during 9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, sheep and goats comprise only 12-15% of total animal remains in archaeological settlements of southeast Anatolia. However, it became over 50% within a millennium by widespread pastoralism across the Fertile Crescent (Peters, *et al.* 2013).

There is a long tradition of historical and anthropological thought emphasizing that traditional Near Eastern societies were characterized by separate, distinctive agricultural and nomadic components. However, evidences indicate that the earliest systems of control over the movement, feeding, and breeding of sheep, goats, pigs and cattle developed within communities of settled cultivators (Hammer & Arbuckle, 2016) by the mid of 9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC in southeast Anatolia. Furthermore, these systems were very different from present-day pastoralism (Siddiq, 2017).

Archaeozoological data further suggest that secondary products such as milk and fibre were used during late eighth and seventh millennia BC (Vigne & Helmer, 2007) in Anatolia. The identification of dung deposits within settlements such as Çayönü in Diyarbakir, indicate that animals were frequently penned onsite (Brochier, 1993). Archaeological site such as Gritille, a mound located on the right bank of the Euphrates River in Adıyaman, occupied between 8000-6500 BC (Stein, 1987; Meiggs, 2010: 277), suggests that there was not long-distance mobility (nomadic pastoralism) in Neolithic Southeast Anatolia. Instead, Neolithic pastoralism was mostly connected to permanent settlements. However, the idea of animal controlling was spread through several wave migrations, re-migrations as well as cultural exchanges in following periods (Siddiq, 2016). As a result, the early form of pastoralism has reached to the present-day forms facing many cultural changes and environmental characteristics. Evidence from archaeological sites such as Girikihacıyan (McArdle, 1990) shows that sheep and goats were the focus of the pastoral economy in more arid regions in southeast Anatolian Halaf cultural area, while cattle increase in importance in more moisture sites such as Çavi Tarlası and Domuztepe (Kansa *et al.*, 2009) where cattle represent 20-35% of the faunal remains.

During the Late Chalcolithic, lowland Southeast Anatolia had dramatic social changes in response to the rise of state-level societies in greater Mesopotamia (Rothman, 2004) that were accompanied by intensive pastoralism of small ruminants, and not common in other parts of Anatolia. In the fourth millennium BC, people were practicing pastoralism with a mixture of animals including caprines (sheep and goat), cattle, and pigs. This situation continued in Southeast Anatolia until around 1000 AD.

In the Byzantine period, various forms of pastoral transhumance were practiced, including migrations between lowland villages and upland fortified sites. Mobility was involving with temporary seasonal camps, and pasturing animals on

marshland during the winter and spending the summers in highlands. Muslim nomadic tribes from Arabia and Central Asia arrived in Anatolia in around first millennia AD. The most important changes to mobile pastoralism in Anatolia were made by the Seljuks, Mongols, and other Turkic nomadic groups from the Central Asian steppes. Their choice of herd animals was according to religious identity. Therefore, pig herding started to decrease dramatically from Southeast Turkey as the number of Muslims living in Anatolia increased over time. The Kurdish tribes were surrounded by and interspersed with the Türkmen groups in this time. Some of these Kurds were also mobile pastoralists. Kurdish tribes that were living on the edge of the plain of Muş (Sinclair, 2001: 162), were able to migrate to summer pastures in the mountains above the plain. In Ottoman period, the natures of herding and pastoral practices in Southeast Anatolia were more commercialized in comparison to central and western Anatolia. Ottomans needed to supply their growing urban populations with meat and other animal products. Pastoralists in Southeast Anatolia (İnalçık, 1994: 161) supplied livestock to all of the major sixteenth century Ottoman cities including İstanbul, Aleppo, Damascus, and Jerusalem.

### **Material and Methods**

Fieldworks were the data source of this study. Household interview, personal interview, individual case study and especially interviewing old and every experienced shepherd were amongst the significant field approaches. Moreover, some cases were well studied to understand children's involvement with their family herd. Qualitative research methodology has been applied to understand the emotional bonds between human and their domesticated animals. The main objective of this research was to measure the emotional level of various social groups, mainly of pastoral groups, for the domestic animals in Southeast Anatolia. It was evaluated throughout the ideas, viewpoints, activities and behaviours of full-time and part-time shepherds, pastoral families, agro-pastoral families and those who are not directly involve in animal herding. Moreover, identifying different agents of recent changes in pastoral communities as well as recording different aspects of interactions between human and other animals was also a focus of this study. Considering these objectives, fieldworks have been carried out in a pastoral village named as Söğütözü, an agro-pastoral village named as Tepebağ and a transhumance pastoral camp site settled in Çakköyü village in Derik district of Mardin province, Southeast Turkey. The transhumance pastoralist families originally live in Buzlugüzel village, Varto district in Müş province or Southeast Turkey, and usually

travel in Derik for annual winter graze of their animals avoiding harsh cold in their homeland. Alongside of family interviews, exploratory cases have been recorded from 13 shepherds, all of them are 65 to 98 year old. Individual interviews have been taken from 109 individuals including children.

### Result and Discussion

People in the study area have been seen heavily depended on herds and other domestic animals for regular needs and financial support. Beside the material benefits, they are also seen emotionally attached with their animals as well as there are animal related intangible facts in their culture that are impossible to ignore. Selling and butchering the animals from their herd is a regular task for in Southeast Anatolia. People care for their animals mostly to earn money and they consider them as annual source of income. Therefore, it is common selling animals especially in late autumn before crisis the food in the winter. However, many people have found not willing or unwanted to sell their animals even they are bound to for their economic support. Many are found saddened and broken heartened after selling their animals although they accept that this is a natural process and different animal species have different roles to serve in the world. People are sometimes found necessarily sacrifice their favourite animals, although they never forget them and feel empty for long time.

For example, Abdurrahman Sun, a 98 year old shepherd in Söğütözü village has spent over 85 years of his life with animals, especially sheep and goat. He stated that he likes his animals more than his children. He still takes care of herd and many of them are his favourite. Abdurrahman Sun presents necklaces of semi-precious stones to his favourite sheep and goats like he gives his daughters. He thinks sheep should be beside his grave after his death. He still, especially, misses one of his many favourite animals, a black goat named 'Rakkan'. He spent a lot of time and has many memories with Rakkan. She was a true family member, and Abdurrahman stated that, he will never forget her. Rakkan was sick, he had no option to kill her and distribute her meat to all the neighbours. Everybody ate Rakkan's meat but Abdurrahman could not even see or touch it. He even cried many days after losing Rakkan. While telling about Rakkan, 98 year old Abdurrahman's eyes were full of tears. 'Boz' was a horse, was another friend of Abdurrahman Sun. He still misses the horse very much that served him more than 11 years. He gave the horse to his friend who fled to Siryawhile having risk to be murdered. Although, he sacrificed one of his



best animal friends for his human friend, he still misses his horse very much. Abdurrahman thinks that, according to his 85 year experience with farm animals, nonhuman animals sometimes show stronger emotions than humans. Moreover, they can be, sometimes, wiser than human and there is only difference that they cannot talk like us.

Some people are observed with emotional and moving memories with their animals. Some people felt very sad after butchering their favourite animals that they still regret for their work even after 35 to 40 years. Many people (both men and women) could not sleep well after they had to sell their favourite sheep or goat. In the study area, some people even dream their favourite sheep or goat after many years. For instance, Abdullah Çelik, a 71 year old and very pleasant faced shepherd from Tepebağ village was expressing his feelings for his white horse in his young age that he had been taken care of since it was born. The horse was his very close companion most of the time. Once, the horse was bitten by a poisonous snake that resulted a dangerous wound. After few days, worms started to grow in the wound and so as the insect attack. Disturbance of worms and insects was too severe and painful that Abdullah apply poisoning the wound. However, this did not reduce the pain; rather it eventually killed the horse. Abdullah Çelik was devastated and cried a lot for over a week after losing his beloved friend. Telling that he still misses him very much, his eyes were full of tears while describing the death of his horse.

Injured animals also have been found keeping deep emotional marks on their owners mind. For example, 63 years old Haşim Doğan from Söğütözü village described about a wolf attack on his herd. One of his sheep was attacked by wolves and when he reached the spot, its neck had already detached by them. The picture of detached headed sheep and blood on the field set so deep mark on Haşim's heart that he still remembers the scene every time he sees any injured sheep.

Long-term attachment is likely to help forming deeper relationships between people and animals. For example, Şer was the most favourite animal and also the best friend of Hayrettin Çelik. Şer gave him best service in his life as he still loves him as his brother and far better than his human best friend. Şer also saved him many times from wolf attack. Şer and Hayrettin stayed out many nights with their herd. In some year they stay out of home around 5 to 6 months in whole spring and summer raising their herd. Şer lived with Hayrettin 12 years until its death and never made a mistake. However, one day because of his over tempred mind, he shouted and

misbehaved his dog. Therefore, Şer did not come home around 4 days and stayed very sad. Hayrettin still regret for his misbehaviour to Şer.

Animals are mostly being treated as like family members of the house. In all families, women start their day by cleaning the barn and feeding their animals before breakfast. It is likely to be a usual work routine for any agricultural or pastoral family, however, many women are found doing this with sympathetic priorities. Many have been found doing this because animals provide them food and money and therefore they must have their priority first. On the other hand, exceptional physical features or behaviours are observed to be the most effective criteria for being favourite one among other herd animals. Some animals become very favourite to their owners because of their capacity to be leader in the herd as well as (mostly for sheep and goat) understanding their human owner when gets angry or sad. Some female have found sing lullaby for their favourite animals in the late evening. Many shepherds make their animals, especially sheep and goat, listening to music while grazing. Those shepherds claim that listening to music makes their animals calm and more submissive.

It has been shown that giving name and treating with more personal touch can increase milk production (Bertenshaw&Rowlinson, 2009) of domestic animals. However, there is no significance difference of milk production or animal health by the naming process has been found from in the study area. People usually treat all of their animals with personal touch and love. It is found that people usually name their animals only when certain animal and their owner/their children already have formed an emotional bond. Present research and study in other parts of SE Anatolia (Siddiq, 2017) indicate that people usually name their animals according to their gender and mostly after human names, and sometimes even after their own children.

Except religious use, some traditional rituals have been observed in the study area. Every year on the first day of spring, people mix some special soil with salt and feed their herds. Later they milk the animals, make cheese from it and distribute among neighbours. They also sacrificed a sheep or goat and present to their neighbours and other villagers. There are 3 sacred places in Tepebağ village. People often take their herds and especially their beloved animals to these sacred places on the first day of spring to protect them from evil.

Play is the activity most characteristic to children, and across cultures children devote most of their time for it. Significance of play for children's development is well accepted. In the study area, children have found with a view that they have more companionship and play support from domestic animals than their school friends, siblings or parents. It is usually that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers respond with highest interest to unfamiliar live animals compared to unfamiliar adult humans (Ricard & Allard, 1992). In the study area 87% of preschool children spend half of their day time with lambs and dogs. It is seen that even the animals expect for the children during their usual play time. However, many children, especially teens, can help but making very funny and sometimes little dangerous things with their silent friends. For example, couple of years ago a gang of teenagers made smoking habit to a camel. They made her to be used to smoke twice a day for long period of time until it was sold to another village.

Young people are found sometimes comparatively less tolerant to their animals than the older individuals and children. For example, 32 years old Hayrettin Çelik from Tepebağ had a donkey and it was suffered from rabbis. Gradually its behavior changed with the affected disease and it started to attack and bite people, and even him and his wife. One day he got very angry and shot his donkey to death. However, soon he found himself in deep regret to be rude to his donkey who served him for long time. Hayrettin Çelik still regret for his dirty work and the face of his donkey still appears in front of eyes when he sees any medium size healthy donkey around him.

However, emotional attachments with domestic animals are not seen equal to people even with experience or same age group. For example, ŞehmuzBaşaran, a 92 year old shepherd from Söğütözü village has been spending his time with his herds since he was 10 years old and think that animals do not have emotion for human as well as they are the created of Allah (god) as human food. He likes and cares his animals a lot as because they supply economical and nutritional support for his family. Although he still feels very unhappy if he does not see his animals for a day, he said that he does not feel any emotional attachment or personal bond with any individual animal. There are also some community problems observed in the study area relating to the share of pastures and abusing of neighbouring animal. Examples from Söğütözü village have shown that people have fight for these issues and sometimes there can be even case of murder.

### Conclusion

People who are attached with domestic animals for a long period of time are mostly observed having deep emotional bond with animals comparing to those who do not practice pastoralism. However, 17% of pastoralists in the study are found caring their herds as objects of financial and functional value. Children between 4 to 11 years, males group older than 55-60 years, and females group older than 35 have been observed having most emotional relationship and deeper sympathy for domestic animals. However, among all, older people of over 60 years in both male and female groups are found with the deepest emotion for domestic animals. On the other hand, religious reasoning is acting one of the most important factors for shaping the level of emotional bond, people's mental effect and everyday life. Therefore, even knowing that they will miss their animals, people find reasons to sell or kill one of their favourite ones as because they accept that different animal has different roles in the world such as prey and predators.

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