

## **The Desert, the Sown and the Middle Ground: Nomads of Anatolia in 17th century**

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This paper explores Ottoman state-nomad relations in the second half of 17th century in Anatolia. Ottoman nomads, perennial subject of academic interest, drew commentaries by Early Modern orientalist/travelers and modern historians alike. Although the academic discourse has moved away from essentialist approaches and binary representations, Ottoman sedentarization policy of the time still poses an important question. The lack of continuous Mühimme registers and the unprecedented scale of sedentarization compels further research and speculation. This paper seeks to examine how state officials, nomadic tribes and local people interacted with each other; what might have prompted the change in policy, and how sudden and unprecedented this policy change was. Mostly unpublished Şikayet Defterleri, which are as important as Mühimme registers but underutilized especially in the context of Ottoman nomads, and recently published Ottoman travel accounts are the main primary sources of this study. The paper argues that nomads' relation with their social and natural environment did go through significant reorientation at the end of the 17th century, but their social complexity negates sweeping generalizations.