

**Jaba, Bazidî, and the Ethnography of Kurds in the 18-19th Century****Necat KESKİN¹ & Abdurrahim ÖZMEN²****Received: Sep 27, 2017 Reviewed: Nov 17, 2017 Accepted: Nov 20, 2017****Abstract**

Kurds are one of the inhabitant people of Middle East and in modern times, in the sense of observer-observed, they have been in relation with the westerners for over two centuries. At the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th century westerners met the language, culture, cultural and social life of Kurds and introduced them to the Europeans. This acquaintance became important with the political change in the area and many powers of that time started to make researches in order to know more about them. The meeting of Alexander Jaba, the Russian Consul in Erzurum, with Kurdish people and culture occurred in such conditions. What differentiates his meeting from that of other orientalisists was what he had done, and his relation with the Kurdish people and culture, especially his relation with Mele Mehmudê Bazidî, his Kurdish teacher and main source of information. What they both have done such as collecting manuscripts, collecting and writing down the songs and folktales, is still very precious for Kurdish Studies and also for Kurdish scholars. Especially, Bazidî's work about Kurdish customs and traditions, *Habits and Customs of Kurds*, was/is valuable work that can be evaluated as ethnography. In this article, the works of Jaba and Mele Mahmudê Bazidî will be discussed in the frame of the ethnography discipline, including emic/etic approaches which are basic for ethnographic fieldwork.

Keywords: Ethnography, Alexander Jaba, Mele Mehmudê Bazidî, Kurds.

Jaba, Bazidî ve Kürtlerin 18-19.yüzyıl Etnografyası**Öz**

Ortadoğu'nun yerli topluluklarından birisi olan Kürtler, modern çağda iki yüzyıldır, gözlemci-gözlenen anlamında, Batılılar ile ilişki halindedirler. 18. yüzyılın sonlarında ve 19. yüzyılın başında batılılar Kürtlerin dil, kültür, kültür ve sosyal hayatıyla tanıştı ve Avrupalılara tanıttı. Bu tanışıklık bölgedeki siyasi değişimle birlikte önemli hale geldi ve dönemin pek çok gücü onlar hakkında daha fazla şey öğrenmek için araştırmalar yapmaya başladılar. Erzurum'daki Rus Konsolosu Alexander Jaba'nın Kürt halkı ve kültürüyle tanışması bu koşullarda gerçekleşti. Onun bu tanışıklığını diğer oryantalistlerden farklı kılan şey, yaptıkları, yaptığı ve Kürt halkı ve kültürüyle, ve özellikle de onun Kürtçe hocalığını yapan ve ana bilgi kaynağını oluşturan Mele Mehmudê Bazidî ile olan ilişkisiydi. El yazmalarının toplanması, şarkı ve hikâyelerin toplanıp yazıya geçirilmesi gibi, her ikisinin de yaptıkları Kürt Araştırmaları ve Kürt bilim adamları için hala çok değerlidir. Özellikle, Bazidî'nin Kürt görenek ve gelenekleri hakkındaki çalışması olan *Kürt Gelenek ve Görenekleri*, etnografi olarak değerlendirilebilecek değerli bir eserdir. Bu çalışmada, Alexander Jaba ve Mele Mahmudê Bazidî'nin çalışmaları etnografik saha çalışması için temel olan emik / etik yaklaşımları içeren etnografya disiplini çerçevesinde tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etnografya, Alexander Jaba, Mele Mehmudê Bazidî, Kürtler.

Recommended citation:

Keskin, N. & Özmen, A. (2018). Jaba, Bazidî, and the Ethnography of Kurds in the 18-19th Century. *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 4 (1), 68 – 84, DOI: [10.21600/ijoks.383378](https://doi.org/10.21600/ijoks.383378)

¹Asst. Prof., Dr., Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Living Languages in Turkey, Kurdish Language and Culture Department necatkeskin@gmail.com

² Asst. Prof., Dr. Dicle University, Department of Sociology baran0304@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

The encounter between Kurds and Europeans can be taken back to 500 years before Christ (B.C.) with the "Anabasis" by Xenophon, and to what Herodotus' writings about the Meds, who are believed to be the ancestors of the Kurds, in Kurdish modern historiography.³

In "modern" times the Kurdish-European encounter began mainly toward the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century⁴, and the accounts written by European travellers, soldiers, missionaries, and politicians at this time that are considered the starting point of Kurdish Studies (Blau 2009). *Grammatica e vocaboloria della lingua Kurda*, by the Italian missionary Maurizio Garzoni (1734-1804), published in 1787; and *Storia della Regione del Kurdistan*, by Giuseppe Campanile (1762-1835), published in 1818 are products from this era (Blau 2009). The latter also consists of customs that Campanile observed.⁵

What they wrote about Kurds and their culture is first-hand information that we use today to better understand the Kurds, their history, culture and language.

Beside westerners, travellers from the east and even Kurds themselves wrote about Kurdish history, culture and language. For this category the most important ones are Sherefkhan Bidlisi, the Kurdish nobleman, politician and writer, and Evliya Çelebi the famous Ottoman traveller. Their writings still constitute valuable "ethnographic" data on Kurds and their history, culture, socio-economic conditions and language in the 16th and 17th century. What Alexandre August Jaba and his "colleague" had done in the middle of 19th century was another valuable "ethnographic" data on Kurds in the late 18th and early 19th century. They shed light on the Kurds' social, economic, and cultural life in that time by their joint work, and besides they also filled the gap in between. They, especially A. Jaba, played a very important role in the development of Kurdish Studies with his collection of which a copy is in Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Living Languages in Turkey.

Europeans showed increased interest in Kurdish culture in the early 20th century. Mark Sykes, Vladimir F. Minorsky, Basil Nikitin's research and reports about Kurds and Kurdish tribes

3 For Xenophon's Anabasis see: Xenophon (1980). Anabasis Books I-IV (With English Translation by Carleton L. Brownson), Harvard University Press: Cambridge; For an example of Kurdish historiography see: Mehrdad R. Izady (1992). The Kurds: A Concise Handbook, London: Tylor & Francis. (Re-published in 2015 by Routledge).

⁴ Before that there were also some western travellers who passed the Kurdish area but what they wrote remains superficial compared to, for example, Bazidî or Çelebi's work. John Baptist Tavernier's travel in 1670s can be a good example of this kind of work. John Baptista Tavernier (1678). The Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier, (translation to English: John Philips), London: Wings Accessed via: https://archive.org/details/sixvoyagesofjohn00tave_0

⁵ For further information see: Joyce Blau (2009). "Kurdish Language II. History of Kurdish Studies", <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kurdish-language-ii-history-of-kurdish-studies>, last accessed in 28.10.2016.

can be evaluated in this frame. But, the first truly "ethnographic" research about Kurds was conducted in the 1940's and 1950's.⁶

However, as mentioned above, writings about Kurds by travellers, politicians, and missionaries can also be classified as "ethnography" depending on the information contained in these accounts. In that respect the "collection of Jaba" with its contents deserve much more of this description. Because, the meeting of Jaba and Bazidî, and their starting work together is a crucial point for Kurdish Studies in general.

So, the main aim of this article is to discuss Alexandre Jaba, and his "colleague" Mele Mehmûdê Bazidî and their two works in terms of "ethnography" and "ethnographer".

In the article both of them will be described as the first ethnographers of Kurdology studies and Mele Mehmûdê Bazidî as the first "Kurdish Ethnographer". We will begin with a discussion of ethnography and its "characteristics" to establish a ground for this article. Then, brief information about their life will be given, and their way of work will be discussed within the frame of ethnography. Therefore the "Collection of Jaba" and Kurdish ethnography in the "collection" will be discussed together with some examples in the frame of their two works; "*Cami'eye Risaleyan û Hikayetan B'zimanê Kurmancî- Collection of Articles and Stories in Kurmancî*"⁷ and the "*Adat û Rusûmatnameyê Ekradiye- Habits and Customs of Kurds*".

What is Ethnography?

Ethnography consists of two words "ethnos" and "graphy" and literally, means "writing about people" (Hufford 2006: 27) or "writing about an ethnic group".

Using ethnography as a "scientific" term is dated back to the 19th century. As Hammersly & Atkinson (2007:1) stated;

"The origins of the term lie in nineteenth-century Western anthropology, where an ethnography was a descriptive account of a community or culture, usually one located outside the West".

This is also means of collecting information about a community's social and cultural life, social organization of community, and also its economy, religion, and politics. That information was coming from travellers and missionaries. Anthropologists took over the role of observing non-Western cultures and established the field of anthropology in the early 20th century.

As a field of learning, ethnography has appeared in the early twentieth century, and used mostly by anthropologist as a research technique to get more accurate data about the people

⁶ Edmund Leach (1940); Fredrik Barth (1953).

⁷ Will be referred to as CASK in this article, from now on.

they were studying. By this field of learning researchers or scholars started to describe the way of life of people, a group or a community by living together with them. By "getting information from inside" ethnography became also one of the key terms of the naturalistic approach.

In the field of ethnography, participant observation is the most important method. This means that ethnographer participate in the normal life of an "ethnos" and "observe" their normal daily life and then write an "ethnography" about them. According to Hammersly & Atkinson (2007:3) ethnographic work;

- 1- Takes place "in the field", studies people's action and accounts in everyday context, not in the created conditions by the researcher.
- 2- Gathers data from a range of sources. But the main source is participant observation, and informal conversations.
- 3- Collects data relatively in an "unstructured" way, not in a fixed and detailed research design.

The ethnographer lives together with the group s/he is working on and creates a written narrative about what s/he has observed, seen, heard in the "ethnic" group or community. The analysis what s/he makes is based on his/her observations.

Bronislaw Malinowski- often regarded as the founder of modern anthropological fieldwork or "ethnography"- stated the aim of ethnographic work as;

"Thus the first and basic ideal of ethnographic field-work is to give a clear and firm outline of the social constitution, and disentangle the laws and regularities of all cultural phenomena from the irrelevances" (Malinowski 2005:8).

It becomes clear that the main focus of ethnography is to get information from inside by participating in the daily life of a group.

"Through participation in the daily life of a group, ethnography recovers knowledge that is implicit as well as explicit. Whether a foreigner to the community under study or a native, the ethnographer brings the perspective of the stranger to the study of social life either by making the strange familiar ("destrangement") or by making the familiar strange ("bestrangement")" (Hufford 2005: 28).

This is a matter of becoming "familiar" with the daily life of a group and also the way of expressing it which also brings the etic/emic discussion in the field. Again with Huffors's words;

"'Etic' refers to the classification of an item within an abstract system that facilitates scholarly discourse, 'emic' to shared understandings that emerge through vernacular use" (Hufford 2005: 28).

From those statements can be concluded that ethnography is rather a consciously done "profession", yet before it evolved into a "profession" and "professional" work, it had already

been done for centuries, as described above. In Urry's words, ethnography "did not occur suddenly", but the methods and techniques of field research developed gradually (Urry, 1990: 35). Some anthropologists started this process with the *Enlightenment*. Additional advancements were made in the 19th century, with the institutional recognition of anthropology as a science in the 1840s (Urry 1990:37).

Beside the "scientific" development of field and term in the 18th century in Europe, a kind of ethnography can be seen in the early ancient Greek time. As Altuntek pointed out; "because of that every starting point has its characteristic perspective, it is better to start this process with voyager Herodots' narratives about Iran, Egypt and Scythian peoples" (Altuntek 2009:22). Born in a small town, Halicarnassus, (now Bodrum, Turkey) Herodot (c. 484-425 B.C) travelled mainly around the Mediterranean Sea such as Asia Minor, Egypt, North Africa, Syria, many part of the Aegean Sea, and also the Black Sea Region.

In his *historia*, Herodotus gives detailed information about those lands and described the way of life of the people whom they visited. Even though his description is considered "biased" and "ethnocentric", they are still a good source of many disciplines such as history, geography, ethnology, mythology, etc. And he is still considered as a "father" of those sciences. The *Geographica* of Strabo, the Greek geographer and philosopher is another early example of ethnography.

From this perspective the contentious "travels" of Marco Polo, can also be considered as one of the old examples of ethnography.⁸ He has been claimed to visit China, Tibet, India, and Persia. Polo, like Herodotus, gives information about daily life of the people whom they visited.⁹

Together with the institutionalization of social sciences, starting in the end of the 18th century and continuing through the 19th century, ethnography or fieldwork also became more professional work, and guidelines had been prepared. Joseph-Marie Degérando, a member of the Société des Observateurs de L'Homme (1799-1804), prepared a guideline, *A Consideration of the Different Methods to be followed in the Observation of Savage People* (1779), for fieldworkers. In this guideline Dégerando wrote that;

"The first means to the proper knowledge of the Savages is to become after a fashion like one of them; and it is by learning their language that we shall become their fellow citizens" (quoted by: Altuntek 2009: 34).

⁸ For an evaluation about Marco Polo's travels see: Peter Jackson (1998). Marco Polo and His Travels.

⁹ For more detail of his travels see: Marco Polo (1914). The Travels of Marco Polo, the Venetian. Accessed via: <https://ia802306.us.archive.org/24/items/marcopolo00polouoft/marcopolo00polouoft.pdf> 19.09.2016

This shows the importance of participation and becoming like one of "them" and this still can be used a motto for any ethnographic research.

After this short explanation and history of ethnography, by what measures and how can we describe Jaba and Bazidî as an ethnographer and their works as an "ethnography"?

Jaba and Bazidis ways of work and ethnography

August Jaba or August Kościesz-Zaba (also known as Alexandre Jaba in Russian)¹⁰ was born in 1801 in Kroslow into an aristocratic Polish family. After studying at the University of Vilna (Vilnius) he continued his study at the Institute of Oriental Languages in St. Petersburg (Paradowska 2016).

He started working in the Consulates of Russia in different places in 1828 and continued it till his retirement. He first worked as a translator because in addition to Polish he could also speak Russian, Turkish, English, French, Persian, and Arabic (Celalî 2016: 19; Alakom 2014: 49). He first worked in the Russian Embassy in Jafa, then in Salonica (in Turkish: Selanik; in Greek: Thessaloniki), and in Smyrna (İzmir in Turkish). In the meantime he was rewarded in 1843 and became an Erzurum Consul of Russia in 1848. He continued his job until his retirement in 1866¹¹ and then he moved again to İzmir and lived there until he died in 1894.¹² The time when Jaba was a Consul in Erzurum was also the time of developing Kurdish Studies in Russia. As Omarkhali & Mossaki (2014) write;

"After Russia started expanding to the Middle East, the country became more interested in the Kurds as they came into contact with each other" which ended up with the appearance of various materials on Kurds in Russia. In Russia, Kurdish Studies developed and became a separate branch of Oriental Studies in the mid-19th century, and Alexandre

¹⁰ There is a dispute over his name. Peter Lerch writes M. Alexandre Jaba in his "preface" for "Adat û Rusûmatnameyê Ekradiye" while Maria Paradowska (1971/2016) and Joanna Bochenska (2015) stated that it was mistakenly written as Alexandre Jaba. On the cover page of the Kurdish part (in Arabic letters) of "Cam'ieya Risaleyan û Hikayetan Bi zimanê Kurmancî" (Collection of Articles and Stories in Kurmancî) is written as *Iskender* (Arabic version of Alexandre) Instead of "August Jaba", and on the French part is written as "M. Alexandre Jaba". See: Mela Mehmûdê Bazidî (ed. by Ziya Avcı) (2010). *Cam'ieya Risaleyan û Hikayetan Bi zimanê Kurmancî*, Diyarbakır: Lîs. This different usage seems to be related to the languages he was using. Here "August Alexandre Jaba" is going to be used as "August" is his first name and "Aleksandre" is the name that is mostly used among Kurds.

¹¹ He served two terms in Erzurum as a Consul. The first term is between 1848-1853 and the second is between 1853-56. Between 1853-56 he was in the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. His interest in Kurdish seems to occur in the second term of service.

¹² For further information about his life see also: Rohat Alakom (2014). "Bir İzmir Levanteni Auguste Jaba", *Kürt Tarihi*, v. 11, pp. 48-55;

Jaba played a prominent role in this development.¹³ Especially in his second term of his service.

When August (Alexandre) Jaba was appointed as a Consul in Erzurum for the second time in 1856, Johannes Albrecht Bernhard Dorn (1805-1881) - known as Boris Andreevic Dorn in Russian-, the director of the Asiatic Museum of Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences, requested him to send them Kurdish texts and manuscripts. As he was interested in manuscripts and had already had a collection of them while he was in İzmir, it shouldn't have been difficult for him. Thus, Jaba with collaboration of Kurdish mollahs (mele) and other religious men collected manuscripts and sent them to the Academy in 1856.

One of the mollahs Jaba was working with was Mele Mehmudê Bazidî. There is still little known about his life. As his name shows he was from Bazid ('Doğu Beyazıt', An Eastern town in nowadays Turkey) and he was Mele (mollah).

Jaba, in one of his letters in 1857, says that "Mehmûd Efendî Bayezîdî who is Kurdish is from Bayezîd". (q. by Peter Lerch 2012).

His education began in his town, Bayezid (probably in one of the Madrasas). He learned Arabic there and then, Persian and Turkish. After staying a while in Tabriz, he returned home and became head of a madrasa there. During this time he visited many Kurdish areas and tribes and became known among them. He was also respected well by Ottoman authorities and he was sent to Bedirkhan Beg and also to Nurullah Beg as a messenger during their uprising to end it.

After the fall of the last *emir* of Bazid he decided to move to Erzurum. His brother lost his life in the war between Russia and Ottoman, in 1853-56. After that his economic situation got worse. That is the time when he met Jaba and became his Kurdish teacher.

He was probably interested in the Kurdish language, history and collecting manuscripts before he moved to Erzurum, but after his meeting with Alexandre August Jaba he started doing much more about it.

August Alexander Jaba was not the only Polish that Mele Mahmudê Bazidî met with. Gültekin (2015: 129) claims that Felician Martin von Zarembo (1794-1874), as a missionary

¹³ For further information on Kurdish Studies in Russia see: K. Omarkhali & N. Mossaki (2014). "A History of Russian Kurdology: With a Brief Literature Overview", in *Weiner Jahrbuch für Kurdische Studien*. Schwerpunkt: Die Geschichte von Kurdische Studien und Kurdologie. Nationale Methodologien und transnationale Verflechtungen, pp. 140-177.

from the Basel Bible Mission Society had been in Bazîd between 26th of May, and 6th of June, 1830, and there he met also Mele Mahmudê Bazidî.¹⁴

The meeting of Jaba and Bazidî is a crucial point for Kurdish studies and together they started doing a very important job for the Kurdish language, history, folklore and ethnography.

As Rûdenko pointed out, if Bazidî and Jaba had not done this job, collecting Kurdish manuscripts, writing about Kurdish tribes, their way of life, folklore and ethnography, it is most probable that those manuscripts would have been lost and we would not have gotten the information.

The way that they were working was as scientific as at that time. Jaba started to learn Kurdish from his teacher, Bazidî, and Bazidî started to do his work more in a "scientific" way. Bazidî was not only Jaba's teacher but also a first-hand source of information which is a crucial point in any "ethnographic" research. Both from the point of view of "outsider" and "insider".

Collection of Jaba

Alexandre August Jaba and Mele Mehmûdê Bazidî had collected and -saved from being lost- many manuscripts and also had written some still important books. He had sent almost all their works to the Academy of Science of St. Petersburg. They remained uncovered until the 1960's when M. R. Rudenko published the title *"About the Hand-Written Kurdish Texts in Leningrad"*.

Some pieces of the collection known as "Collection of Jaba" had already been published and some of them still remained unpublished. On the other hand, Bazidî's *"Tewarixê Cedîdê Kurdistan-Current History of Kurdistan"* is still lost except its preface.

Bazidî's *"Adat û Rusûmatnameyê Ekradiye-Customs and Habits of Kurds From this collection"* (Lîs 2010; Nûbihar 2010); Khanî's *"Mem û Zîn"* (Lîs 2007); Jaba's *"Cami'eye Risaleyan û Hikayetan B'zimanê Kurmancî- Collection of Articles and Stories in Kurmancî"* (Lîs 2010; Avesta 2016); and *Dictionnaire kurde-français* (Avesta 2014) have already been published in Kurdish.

A copy of Jaba's collection from St. Petersburg which consists of more than 50 works is now at the Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Living languages in Turkey. The collection

¹⁴ Mehmet Gültekin in the same place claims also that Zarembo gives interesting information about Kurdish language, ethnography, and beliefs in an article he published after his visiting. According to Gültekin Zarembo also writes about his meeting with Mela Mehmudê Bazidî, and Khani's Nûbihar, and the Kurdish translation of the Old Testament. Unfortunately in Gültekin's comment it is not clear whether Bazidî is translating the Old Testament. Gültekin does not refer to any source to follow either Zarembo's publication or his comment about Mela Mehmudê Bazidî. see: Mehmet Gültekin (2015). On the other hand, Bazidî does not mention anything about Zarembo, but recounts a "story" about a Frenchmen named "Jubir" in the 39th story of CASK.

consists of such work as various "Kurdish Songs"; a "Kurdish alphabet" for children; a "Kurdish grammar" book of Bazidî; Two Mawlıds; copies of Khanî's works such as "Mem û Zînê and "Nûbihar"; "Folk Tales" by Mela Musa Hekarî; Kurdish translations of "Sherefname" by Bazidî; Bazidî's "Habits and Customs of Kurds"; Dictionary of Kurdish-French- Russian and Kurdish-French dialogs by A. Jaba; and works of Feqiyê Teyran, Harisî Bedlîsî, Melayê Bateyî.¹⁵

The works in the collection are very valuable for Kurdish language, literary, history, and ethnography as well. Frankly speaking, the collection itself is an "ethno-graphy" of Kurds and Kurdish literature in the late 18th and mid-19th century. For the collection gives a general picture of Kurdish literature at that time. We also learn from it that Kurdish "intellectuals" had been also interested in their language, history, and also their people's life and worked on those topics.

Kurdish ethnography in the "collection"

First, it should be pointed out that Jaba's collection of manuscripts is an important resource for the study of Kurdish language, history and literature; two published books from this collection are directly related to Kurdish folklore and ethnography. One is "*Cami'eye Risaleyan û Hikayetan B'zimanê Kurmancî- Collection of Articles and Stories in Kurmancî*" and the other is "*Adat û Rusûmatnameyê Ekradiye- Habits and Customs of Kurds*". It is still not clear whether the first one had been written by Bazidî or Jaba because on the cover page is written "*Collection of Articles and Stories in Kurmancî, Arrange and translation to French by Alexander Jaba, the Concul of Russian Emperor in Erzurum*". So, while some say that it was a collection of Jaba, the others say it belonged to Bazidî. That is why there are two publications of the same book in Kurdish in Turkey (Jaba 2016; Bazidî 2014).¹⁶

However, both works give us valuable first-hand information about Kurds, their culture and folklore and constitute fine examples of Kurdish "ethnography" of that time. The first book (CASK) consists of 3 articles and 40 "stories".

In the beginning of CASK Jaba (presumably in collaboration with Bazidî) gives us information about Kurdish tribes and population. This "short" article was current and comprehensive information about Kurdish tribes living in Northern Kurdistan at that time.

¹⁵ A catalog of this collection which will consist of presentation of works is being prepared by Mardin Artuklu University, Institute of Living languages in Turkey. For another work introducing the collection see. Öztürk (2017).

¹⁶ Rohat Alakom (2014: 55) also thinks that it belongs to Jaba himself, and pointed out that publishing under another author's name would cause a disturbance in future, especially in cataloguing them.

The most interesting thing is that there were many Yezidî Kurdish tribes at that time, which shows how prevalent the Yazidi religion was. There was also a "Qizilbash" tribe around Bazîd. Kurdish poets are presented chronologically in the second article and the last one is about "Kurdish grammar". Some of the 40 stories are "true" stories about previous events and can be evaluated in the frame of "oral history" of that time. In this case, Jaba is in the researcher role and Bazidî is the informant who "narrates" the true stories from different parts of Kurdistan region.

The second book, Bazidî's "*Customs and Habits of Kurds*", has many aspects of Kurdish life and also gives us both a wide and a closer picture of that time. Even though the name is "Habits and Customs" there are many other aspects of life, too. We understand from the work that Bazidî had visited many Kurdish regions such as Bohtan, Bahdinan, Soran, and Hekarî. In the work such information as origin of Kurds, their language, social structure of tribes, relations between nomads and settled communities, blood feuds, games and folk dances, beliefs and superstitions, sacred places, the role of religious leaders, relations between Kurdish tribes and the other ethnic and religious groups, and also examples of material culture can be found. As a Mele, Bazidî had read or known the works written before his time such as "Sherefname". As Rudenko writes;

"It is understood from the book that Beyazidî had read Sherefname, and he collected and presented his people's customs, religious beliefs, custom and traditions with a point of view of a writer and an ethnographer" (Rûdenko 1979: i).

The picture he had taken gives us also a possibility to make a comparison of social and cultural life of Kurds between the past and now. However, the main shortcoming of Bazidî's work is the lack of information about the location of the events and traditions he describes. As we know that he had visited many parts of Kurdistan he mostly does not tell where exactly he talks about when he gives information about Kurds or Kurdish tribes.

CASK starts with the origin of Kurds and Bazidî expresses his (and probably common ideas among most of religious scholars of the region) thoughts.¹⁷

Bazidî says that Kurdish tribes have descended from Bedouin Arabs who had left their territories in earlier times and moved and settled to the places they live in now and in Iran and Khorasan's empty borders. Their language was also Arabic in the beginning and it also changed and "became" a language that we called "Kurdish" now, and there was no

¹⁷ The same thoughts can also be seen in Islamic geographers such as Mesudî. As Bazidî was a religious man and had education in Madrasa, he probably read those works or at least knew about them. It looks like Bazidî had the same thoughts. For review of thoughts of Islamic geographers about Kurds, see: Bekir Biçer (2104). "İslâm Coğrafyacılarının Eserlerinde Kürtler Hakkındaki Rivayetler (9. Yüzyıl – 13. Yüzyıl)".

"Kurdistan" of course at the time they came (Bazidî 2010: 47).¹⁸ This description of a group's identity and origin is a description from outside which in ethnography is called "emic" approach. We also get the perception of kinship and lineage relations of this time which can be compared with Ibn-i Khaldun's theory of lineage.

For Bazidî, the names of Kurdish tribe are coming from the progenitor, the ancestor who first settled in what later became "Kurdistan". After this "first" man his "son(s)" got named by their father, which also shows their "patrilineality". For example, Heyderî is the name of those who are descendents of one of the first arrivals, Heyder. Thus the latter ones get the name 'Heyderî' which means "from Heyder". This naming is widespread even now. A man (or a woman) is still known by his father or tribe although they have official "surname'(s)". This is called "bavik" (ancestor) in Kurdish. Each "bavik" is a "segmenter" of a main "tribe", in which Bazidî describes as, "eşîret", "qebile", and "tayfe".

According to Bazidî Kurds regard their "origin" and they respect their Agha's and Umera whom he related their origin to Arabs such as Seyyid, Merwani, Abbasî, Khalidî, and Enesî. This relation can also be seen in Sherefkhan's "Sherefname" which Bazidî had read and also translated into Kurdish.

One thing that we can conclude from the Bazidî's "Habits and Customs of Kurds" is that the Kurds mainly had been living as "nomad" and they were making transhumans between "qışlak" and "yaylak"¹⁹ by changing their places in respect of the seasons. These places and even the group living together are called 'zom' or "zome" (p.51). While they move from "qışlak" and "yaylak" they are ready for everything they might face, and the most probable thing is to fight. And Bazidî many times describes Kurdish tribes with their ability to fight. They have also their territory and they have to protect it from their "enemies", because it is very easy to "cross the border" and steal herds that are their main economical unit (p.57-58-59).

In the work we read that Kurds are aware of affinity and they know certainly about their seven ancestors and can say their name. They also know them even though they are far from each other. They somehow have to know this "information" to also avoid "blood feuds", which also continues in seven-ancestor's time. This is also another aspect of kinship relation and can be seen even today in some Kurdish cultures. It is so important to avoid "blood feuds" so that they don't "kill" anyone, even in a battle. They rob but don't kill, Bazidî wrotes (p.50). But

¹⁸ There are two published books of Bazidî's "Habits and Customs of Kurds" in Turkey, prepared by Jan Dost (2010) and Ziya Avcı. In this paper the book prepared by Ziya Avcı will be used for quotes and references.

¹⁹ Both "qışlak" and "yaylak" are in Turkish and mean sheltered place for winter, and summer pasture, respectively. This suggests interaction of Turkish and Kurdish "nomad" tribes.

they kill even women when it is "necessary", when the victims do something morally sanctioned, such as adultery.

However, in Bazidî's view, women are relatively free in the community and they even fight alongside men against their enemies (p.50). They are as free as western women. They join the meetings and they do all the things related to group tasks, while men are mainly busy with "political" issues, such as war, peace and other social-economic issues. This is also written in the Millingman's traveller's book. The difference between those books is that one is looking from "inside" and the other is from "outside".

On the other hand, as "being free" it is a personal view and dependent on circumstances, both views can be seen as "etic" approach. Some marriage types as Beşikkertme (cradle of rank) and Berdêlî (changing girls mutually for marriage) are two arrangements that limited the "freedom" of course. Women are doing all the housework, men are just for "battle". "Men do nothing hard work except battle" (p.51). In a different place Bazidî says that "if father or brother of a woman decide for whom she is going to married, she cannot resist and has to accept" (p. 54). Women do not get anything from inheritance. However, Kurds are mainly monogamist except some Agha and Sheikhs which is another aspect of "patrilinearity" (p. 59). Another aspect related to women's social situation and also strengthened patriarchy is the "honour killing" which Bazidî mentioned (p.75-76).

We can also extract social relations among Kurds themselves from the book, and these relations can also be compared to today's situation. For example, Bazidî writes, "..Kurds are very revengeful, strong and stubborn. If one has enemy, he always tries to do harm to him, harm him, and they look for hi-jacking or killing each other. (...) they rob each other's herd stealthy" (p. 53).

Kurds even today have similar "characteristics" especially in terms of political and even social aspects. It also can be that they have been living "freely" in their tribal "territory" and want to protect this. It can be evaluated in different ways of course, but it is still interesting to read a similar observation from 200 hundred years ago.

On the other hand, Bazidî revealed relations between "nomads" and "settled communities" in his work. According to Bazidî, Kurdish "nomad" tribes are dominant and make pressure on the "settled" communities. It depends on their way of life and effects on social, and cultural relations between each other. For example, marriages between them were rather rare. According to Bazidî, in "nomad"s thoughts children from "settled" women are going to be "coward"s, and in "settled"s children from "nomad" women are going to be "thief", and "robber".

However, we got from the texts that in the time of Abdulmejid the dominance of Kurdish “nomad” tribes declined in number because of the “new army” and “forced settlement” of Kurdish tribes (p. 79).

There are also some aspects of relations between non-muslim (File- Armenian and Syriacs) and Kurds in the “Habits and Customs of Kurds”. They live together in some villages and their daughters and women dance together in weddings. There are also marriages between them according to Bazidî, but especially marriages of Armenian girls and Kurdish (Muslim) boys, as we see, and girls have to convert their religion and become Muslim. We do not see any contrary cases. They have also celebrated their religious festivals as Bazidî says (p.63-64).²⁰

Another type of relation between Kurds and also the other ethnic and religious groups is *kirivatî* (kirîv: a man carrying the boy when he is being circumcised) which is described a kind of "virtual kinship" in anthropology is also another aspect of Kurdish culture. Even though Bazidî does not mention about where it had been seen, it has been common in Kurdish social and cultural life. By this "kinship", a relation between Kurds and other ethnic and religious groups had been established.

According to Bazidî all Kurds belong to the Şaffî'i sect of Islam, and not even one belongs to any other sects as Hanefî, Malikî or Hanbelî (p.86). As there are some belonging to Hanefî sect in Diyarbakır and around the changes can be seen in time? Kurds respected religious men according to Bazidî. But when he writes about Sheiks, he writes that Sheikhs are much respected among Kurds but then he also tells his opinions that in reality they are not "good man" and they act for "their interests". (Etic/ emic distinction). Conversely, when he talks about "Mullah/Mele", he tells more "good" things compared to "Sheikhs" which reveals the "rivalry"²¹ between "Mele and Sheiks". Sheiks also take the role of “healer”s among Kurds and when someone is sick first they take him/her to Sheikhs and also sacred places as well.

We also see in the text that old people have an important role in the community as they live in an “oral culture” and old people gather the youths around them and tell them what had happened in the past. They also explain and tell the youths the traditions, customs and habits (p.57). “Oral culture” is also sustained in rooms of Agha’s and in winter folk stories,

²⁰ Kurds celebrate Xidirnebi (Prophet Khidr), Qereçerşembe (black Wednesday), Çarşema Sor (Red Wednesday) which are being celebrated also among Yazidis; Hêksor (Easter) is a main religious festival that appeared in Bazidî’s work.

²¹ Even though 'mullah/mele' gets the same education in the madrasa as sheikh does, still the mullah is seen less "sacred" than the sheikh amongst society. That creates a kind of "rivalry" between them. Another subject of rivalry is that being sheiks is many times a patrimonial status, while being mullah is a result of an education process.

anecdotes and happenings in the past are being told there. This is a way of sustaining the existence of community in such communities living in “oral culture”.

Bazidî gives information about beliefs and superstitions among Kurds of that time. For example, they do not fight on Friday and Thursday, and they also believe in the evil eye, and they fear of whom have “blue eyes”. The superstitions they believe in are form their natural surroundings. They give meaning to the happenings around them. (p.56). They also believe in amulets, magic, also evil eye, there are also old women who are experts of magic (sympathetic and contagious, black and dark magic. They also believe in sacred places and make sacrifices there which Bazidî named “vain habits of jahiliye” (p. 64).

Bazidî also describes funeral and mourning customs, marriage rituals and habits, folk dances (govend) and games.²² Some information about music, musician (dengbêj, motreb) and musical instruments (def, dahol, ney, kemançe, -tambourine, drum, reed flute, kemanche-) of that time can be revealed from the work. Also some information about elements of “material culture” of Kurdish tribes of that time such as kinds of “nomad tents” (in Kurdish: Kon), weapons can be seen in the work. As an example, he says that Kurds' tents range from two columns to nine columns according to their status. The poorest ones have two-three columned tents while aghas have the biggest one, nine-columned tents.

CONCLUSION

Bazidî's "Habits and Customs of Kurds" is valuable first-hand field information. It is an authentic picture of the Kurdish culture of his time.

On the other hand, in terms of ethnography it consists of both "etic" and "emic" approaches. Most of his comments are "etic" while some of them are really from an insider which determines "emic" in the field of ethnography.

As for Jaba, his effort to learn Kurdish to understand the Kurdish culture, comprising his lived experience and his collection of manuscripts and oral tales, substantiate his status as "ethnographer". By his worthy works and collectings we can learn about Kurdish culture of the 18th and 19th centuries. He and also Bazidî make a bridge between past and present by his works and collection.

Some of the habits and customs they had described 2 centuries ago could be observed 20-30 years ago and are still recounted by old people in the Kurdish region.

²² Those games in the work are setrenc (chess), dame (draught), şûr û meral (sword and shield), gûstîlk (ring), wishbone (in Turkish: lades, in farsi: yadest) (p.69) and also cirîd (jeered) (p.85).

Coming to the question of by what measure and how we can describe their work as ethnography, and them as ethnographer; it can be answered as follows;

-First, Jaba was doing his "job" consciously whether it was for military or politic purposes, and his job was to describe and have information about "Kurdish" tribes. Knowing that he was already a scholar and had been studying "oriental studies", nothing would be more normal than using his scientific knowledge while he was doing his 'job'. And also knowing that the institutions of ethnology had been founded in the first half of the 18th century, and journals and scientific articles about ethnology, ethnography was published in Europe, we should take account of his awareness of this kind of development about "fieldwork".

-Jaba learned Kurdish to better "understand" the people and their culture, and where he learned from was also one of the best "sources". In such researches "informant" is the most important part to carry out the work, and it seems that Jaba had found the best one.

-Even though he might not have "participated" in community and his first aims might have not be to conduct "ethnographic research" among Kurds, what he collected and transferred to today is worthy to assess as an "ethnography" of Kurds of his time. Because of that, Paradowska (1971/2016) places him in Polish ethnography and says that he has an important place in the history of Polish ethnography.

-Second, it can be concluded that, especially Bazidî, had "participated" in the normal daily life of Kurdish tribes and then written his or "told" what he had been observing. Knowing that he was "mele" (Mullah), it was easy for him to both travel and live among Kurdish tribes and getting information about their socio-economic, political, and cultural life.

Consequently, in addition to his status as one of the prominent Kurdologists among scholars of Kurdish studies, he can also be described as an ethnographer. And if Alexander Jaba is thought to belong to "Polish ethnography", Mele Mahmudê Bazidî can be considered as a "Kurdish ethnographer" of his time and their work brings us the "ethnography of Kurds" of the 18th and 19th century.

REFERENCES

- ALAKOM, Rohat (2104). "Bir İzmir Levanteni: Auguste Jaba", Kürt Tarihi, s.11, ss. 48-55.
- ALTUNTEK, N. Serpil (2009). 'Yerli'nin Bakışı. Etnografya: Kuram ve Yöntem, Ütopya: Ankara

- BARTH, Fredrik (1953). Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan. Universitetets Etnografiske Museum. Bulletin 7. Oslo: Universitetets Etnografiske Museum.
- BAZÎDÎ, Mela Mehmûdê (2010). Adat û Rusûmatnameyê Ekradiye (Amadekar. Ziya Avcı), Lîs: Diyarbakir.
- BİÇER, Bekir (2014). "İslâm Coğrafyacılarının Eserlerinde Kürtler Hakkındaki Rivayetler (9. Yüzyıl – 13. Yüzyıl)". *Tarih Okulu Dergisi* (TOD) Mart 2014 Yıl 7, Sayı XVII, ss. 165-187
- BLAU, Joyce (2009). "Kurdish Language II. History of Kurdish Studies", <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kurdish-language-ii-history-of-kurdish-studies>, last accessed in: 28.10.2016.
- BOCHENSKA, Joanna (2015). "Przedmowa do wydania polskiego", *Fritillaria Kurdica*, vol. 9, pp.7-22.
- CELALÎ, Murad (2016). "Kedkarekî Kurdolojiyê August Jaba", *Nûbihar*, sal. 24, cild.20, hj. 136, rp. 18-25.
- GÜLTEKİN, Mehmet (2015). "Di arşiva Prof. Ferdînan Justî de nameyên Aleksandre Jaba", *Fritillaria Kurdica*, Bulletin of Kurdish Studies, N.9, pp. 129-132.
- HAMMERSLEY, Martyn; ATKINSON, Paul (2007). *Ethnography, Principles in practice*, London: Routledge (Taylor & Francis e-Library).
- HUFFORD, Mary (2005). "[Ethnography](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/faculty/mhufford/Ethnography.pdf)." *Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife*, ed. William M. Clements. London: Greenwood Press. Accessed to: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/faculty/mhufford/Ethnography.pdf>
- IZADY, MEHRDAD R. (1992). *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook*, London: Tylor & Francis. (Re-published in 2015 by Routledge).
- JACKSON, Peter (1998). "Marco Polo and His "Travels", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. 61, No. 1 (1998), pp.82-101.
- LEACH, Edmund (1940). *Social and Economic Organization of the Rowanduz Kurds*, London School of Economics and Political Science: London
- MALINOWSKI, Bronislaw Kasper, (2005). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005. (1922, London: Routledge 1978).
- MARCO POLO (1914). *The Travel of Marco Polo, The Venetian*, London/ New York: J.M. Dent & Sons/ E. P. Dutton & Co. Last Accessed via: <https://ia802306.us.archive.org/24/items/marcopolo00polouoft/marcopolo00polouoft.pdf> 08.06.2017

- OMARKHALI, Khanna & Mossaki, NODAR (2014). "A History of Russian Kurdology: With a Brief Literature Overview", in *Weiner Jahrbuch für Kurdische Studien. Schwerpunkt: Die Geschichte von Kurdische Studien und Kurdologie. Nationale Methodologien und transnationale Verflechtungen*, pp. 140-177.
- ÖZTÜRK, Mustafa (2107), *Koleksiyona Aleksandre Jaba ya Destnivîsên Kurdî (Vekolîn û Saloxdan)*, Diyarbekir: Weşanên Lîs.
- PARADOWSKA, Maria (1971/2016). "Lêkolînek li ser destxeteka Mela Mehmûd Bayezîdî", (Trans. by S.Hirorî), <http://www.kulturname.com/?p=10321> last accessed in: 26.10.2016.
- RÛDENKO, Margarita B. (1979). "Pêşgotin" in *Mela Mehmût Beyazîdî (1963). Adetên Kurdistan* (Ed. Dêlîlê Îzolî), Holland: Den Hag
- URRY, James. (1990). "A History of Field Methods", *Ethnographic Research*, R. F. Allen (ed.), London: Academic Press, 35-61.
- XENEPHON (1980). *Anabasis Books I-IV* (With English Translation by Carleton L. Brownson), Harvard University Press: Cambridge.