THE ORIGINS OF THE ART OF ANATOLIAN - TURKISH CARPET WEAVING / ANADOLU - TÜRK HALI SANATININ KAYNAKLARI

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Abstract

Carpet which is one of the Turkish cultural products emerged in Central Asia with the Turks and came to Europe through the Silk Road since the old times and gained great importance there. In the Köktürks period in Central Asia since the spread of silk weaving in Roman lands, the interest to Turkish weaving increased gradually. When Turks migrated to Anatolia they brought their knowledge on carpet weaving from Central Asia together. According to the accounts of the 13th century travelers, carpets were not only weaving products in Anatolia but also became the major export products. Today the presence of Seljukian carpets in India and the Ottoman ones in European countries confirms this.

Turks stayed connected with the Central Asian Turkish carpet weaving traditions regarding material, dye, technique, motifs and types used. Although most of the designs in today’s Anatolian carpets are based on the traditions of both Anatolian Seljukian and Ottoman carpet weaving, they have the characteristics of the Central Asian Turkish carpets. These motifs which came to West from East by the Silk Road despite some slight differences in their designs still have some similarities with the designs of the Turkish States and communities of today’s Central Asia from the perspective of their symbolic meanings.

Key words: Central Asia, Turk, Carpet, Weaving, Silk weaving, Tradition, Culture.

Özet

Türk kültür ürünlerinden biri olan halı, Orta Asya’da, Türklerle birlikte ortaya çıkmış, daha ilk çağlardan itibaren, ipek yolu vasatasıyla, Avrupa’ya taşınmasıyla, büyük bir önem kazanmıştır.


Anahtar kelimeler: Orta Asya, Türk, Halı, Dokuma, ipekli dokuma, Gelenek, Kültür

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I-INTRODUCTION

The knotted carpet emerged in Central Asia where Turks lived and spread to the whole world. In the same centuries, it has been inferred from the findings that besides carpets, Turks also knew about the plain woven fabrics (Flat Weaves) and the felt art and decorated their tents and houses with them. According to sources, carpet was not only a covering or an ornament but also a cover of the throne for the Turks who lived in Central Asia as relative communities and in Turkish states. So carpets had been woven from the ancient eras. In the 7th and 8th centuries, carpets were woven in Turkish countries Türkiye, Öğuzilleri, Biha, Uygur and Hazar. It has been found out from the Chinese sources that carpets were woven in the city called Hoten in the 7th century. In Türkiye carpets of felt were also woven. The carpets that the Uygur kaghs of the Orhun region sent to Chinese emperors were of this kind of weavings as well. We know that carpets were woven in east Türkiye in the Uygur period (8th and 9th centuries). Weaving of carpet and fabrics was widespread in the Kük-Türk period. At that time they were dominating the lands extending from Central Asia to the Black Sea and had the control of the Silk Road. By means of the pact with the Byzantines (568), silk-cloth entered the Byzantine country and continued to Europe and continued down to Spain. In a Chinese tale from the Kük-Türk era it has been narrated that during the feast of the Kük-Türk or Kangüli Tribes, they laid out woollen carpets on the meadows. According to some sources in the first centuries, the city called P'ing-Liang its former name Ho-hsi and called as Gesi - geesi among Turkish in Kan-su state in the west part of the East China was an important cultural center. P'ing-Liang was very close to a known carpet center in Central Asia. In a city neighbour in the east to Gesi (P'ing-Liang) a tribe which the Chinese called T'u-yü-hun and thought to be Turkish were weaving carpets and selling them to both East and West. In East Türkiye (745-911) The Koço district which was the capital of Uigurs was the production center of rugs and carpets. E. Esin notes that, "most of the old remains of knotted carpets and rugs were found in the ruins of houses and caravansaries which had Uigur and Turkish letters all around them. In the picture of gentleman and lady, carpets were depicted, too. A Von Gabain determined small carpets that were used as bodhimandal (a figure representing inscription and the palace of 1. This article has been presented as a paper, entitled "The Adventure of The Art of Anatolian - Turkish Carpets" in a three day regional workshop on Preservation of Images of Carpets as Sustainable Open Resources (PICASOR), held from 30 November to 2 December 2004 in the Azerbaijan State Museum of Carpet in the framework of UNESCO's Digital Silk Roads Project. The Turkish version of the paper was published as "Anadolu-Türk Halı Sanatının Kaynakları," Gift to Asst. Prof. Dr. Lale Bulut, Publications of Ege University – Faculty of Literature, Number V/1, Bornova-Izmir, April 2005, pp. 80-103. The English version is being published here for the first time.
God or the universe) in Uigur. This determination is very significant in understanding of the symbolic meanings of the patterns in the Turkish carpets. There were also big carpets in Uigur culture. They are of interest with their huge but plain patterns. Le Coq, searched symbolic meanings in the patterns of these carpets as well.19

According to some of the sources, in the first quarter of the 8th century, gorgeous carpets were woven in Buhara and also in the neighborhood. This city sustained its fame in carpet weaving till the 10th century. The geographers of the age mentioned the carpets, prayer rugs and other coverlets among the appreciated goods20 of Buhara. " Carpets were woven in Darzenli town which was subjected to Çağaniyan in the Maveraç'ń-nehr territory, Aran (Karabağ) and in the East Anatolia.21 It is said that in the 8th and 11th centuries during the Uigur age, in the East Türkistan carpets were woven22, Uygur women were carved on the walls in an Uygur Buddhist temple near Köço in the 9th-12th centuries as they were described on knotted carpets. In the same age, Bargari, Arciç, Nahçvan, Bitlis (Anatolia) and Khoy were not only crowded cities but also vital developed trade centers. In these places high quality zili weavings were made.23

From the Chinese sources we learn that carpets were woven in the Öğuz Elleri region which was in the west part of Türkistan and the Khazar Sea, and from the Dede Korkut Öğuznameleri we learn that in the Arshaks period before Islam in 51-428 and after it Öğuz/Türkmen people wove carpets and used them in the ceremonies.24

The first important finding in the Turkish Carpet Art is Pazırk Carpet which was found by a Russian archeologist C. İ. Rudenko in Siberia between the years 1947-49. It was discovered in V. Pazırk Kurganı (a chamber grave). Today it is exhibited in Leningrad Ermitaj museum.25 It is thought to be woven by Asian Huns in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.26

Before the Pazırk carpet was discovered, some carpet pieces were found in the excavations of a Buddhist temple (stupa) in Lop-nor and in the Lou-lań well grave in East Türkistan between the years of 1906 and 1908.27 The carpets that were dated with 3rd and 6th centuries are exhibited in Yeni Delhi in India and in London at British Museum. Some carpet pieces were found in Kızıl temple near Kća/ Kća city by A. Von Le Coq in Turfan district in 1913. These were from the Kögılı Türk era in 5th and 6th B.C. Today they are exhibited in Berlin.

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10. F. Sümer, op. cit., p. 45.
Islamic Works Museum. These were knotted woolen pieces weaved over alternative warps. In addition to geometric patterns, dragon figures are noticed in their ornamentations, as well18.

The carpets from Abbasi period were also of great importance for Turkish carpet art. One of the two carpets written in kufi dated as 817/818 A.D. found in the excavations organized by C. J. Lamm in Fustat (old Cairo) is in the Kahire Arap Museum today. Two examples other than these carpets are dated as 9th century19. One of them is exhibited in the Gothenburg Röhss Museum in Sweden and the other in the Stockholm National Museum20. Both carpets were likely to have been woven in Samarra by the Turkish or have been brought to Samarra after it had been woven in Asia by the Turkish.

The other significant instances in the Turkish Carpet Art were found in Fustat by C. J. Lamm. They are known to be made up of about 100 parts. Only twenty nine of them were brought to Sweden by Lamm and published with their pictures and patterns. Among them, the carpets belonged to Anatolian Seljucks and Beyliks age are also available. The majority of them were taken to Benaki Museum in Athens and Stockholm National Museum and some interesting samples were brought to New York Metropolitan Museum. The ones taken to Athens disappeared some time later. They were woolen and woven with single knotting technique and their patterns were in geometrical characters21. The ones brought to Metropolitan are said to indicate more developed technique when compared to the Abbasi samples. It is also stated that they were probably woven in the Aksitler or Tulunlular period after the fall of Abbasies22.

Although Seljuk Empire which had extended its boundaries from Anatolia to Syria, Iran and Iraq in the 13th century, which had lots of masterpieces in architecture, unfortunately its carpet and flat weaves examples did not reach today's world. According to sources it is because when the Mongols conquered the Turkish lands they plundered these miniatures, carpets and textile products which were less resistable than architectural buildings23. Only the carpet images that are registered in the Makamat Miniature with the number 2916 in the Esat Efendi Library in The Suleymaniya Mosque.

Turkish carpet art continued its development with the conquest of Anatolia by the Turkish in 1071. Anatolian-Turkish carpet art originated from Central Asia. The Turkish brought their carpet tradition with themselves when they came to Anatolia from Central Asia. After giving some information about West Anatolia in the book called Kitab bast u'lzar fi ttül ve'l arz, Ibn Said says the following: ...There are Turkman mountains and Turkman state in the western part of this region. Türkmen people who are from the Turkish race conquered the Greek land during the Seljuks period. They often go to their coasts and attack them and sell the children they captivated to islamic merchants. These people weaved Turkman carpets called "el busut-Turkmaniyye".

20. O. Aslanapa- Y. Duru, op. Cit, p. 57
21. O. Aslanapa- Y. Duru, op. cit, p. 57
The carpets are sold all over the world (el-meclubetü ile’l-bilad). In the north of Antalya, there are Togula (Tonguzlu? - Denizli) mountains. Turkmans who are called Uch live on these mountains. They are said to have 200,000 tents. When Ibn Said tells about Aksaray, he mentions “beautiful woolen carpets are manufactured in this city”24.

According to Marco Polo who is known to have passed through Anatolia said that “the best carpets in the world have been woven in Anatolia”25. Among the weaving centers, such as Konya, Kayseri, Kirşehir and Aksaray are mentioned.

İbn Batuta who traveled throughout Anatolia in the beginning of 14th century, expresses Aksaray as one of the most magnificent and prosperous cities of Anatolia and “...carpets known by the name of Aksaray are woven with sheep wool in this city. They are unique in the world. Therefore, these carpets are sent to Syria, Iraq, Egypt, India, China and Turkish countries”26. Carpets found in Fustat dated from Seljuk and Beylikler era and the ones found recently in India dated from Seljuk prove this fact27. Sources inform that in the beginning of the 14th century, İlkan Batuta found not only the carpets very good but also the cotton fabrics, bordures of which woven with golden threads very durable and of quality28.

We know that there are 23 carpets remained from Anadolu Seljuk era. The first eight samples were found in Konya Alaeddin Mosque. They were discovered by F.R. Martin from Sweden with the help of Loytdved from Denmark in 1905 and they are now at Turkish and Islamic Works Museum in Istanbul. Before F. R. Martin published the carpets, Frederich Sarre who obtained the pictures of the carpets from Loytdved published three of them without seeing them before. On the other hand, F. R. Martin published them in volumes in 190829. The first one was the text and the second one was composed of pictures. Seven carpets found in Fustat are also accepted to be Seljukian carpets30. In 1930, three carpets were found in Beişhir Esrefoğlu Mosque by R. M. Riestal31. Recently, five more carpets were discovered32 in Tibet. Depending on these, we have been getting some ideas about Anatolian Seljuk carpet art (Photo.1).

After the fall of the Seljukian Empire, carpets and Flat Weaves were continued to be woven during the period of Bayliks. Animal patterns were utilized in the carpets. For this reason, this era is also known as Animal Patterned Anatolian Carpets. At first, the carpets were thought to belong to the Renaissance period, but after having been discovered the new samples from Bayliks period in Anatolia, it was brought to light that the previous ones thought

to have been from Seljukian period turned out to be from 14th and 15th centuries. Among the famous examples the Cocked Carpet which is at Konya Etnografya Museum today is the same sample that is found in Marby village in Sweden and is known as Marby carpet or Ming carpet among the carpet dealers (Photo.2).

The most outstanding ones from the ten of the Bayliks period were Ottomans and Karamanoğulları in the 14th century. Karamanoğulları that supposed itself as the heir of Seljuk Empire congratulated Ottoman ruler Murat I for his victory in the Balkans and since it was a custom, they sent four huge and five small carpets in addition to other gifts. These were named as Qali-i Qaramani (Karaman carpet) and the place they were woven wasn’t known precisely. Nevertheless, Karaman and its neighborhood is like a warehouse of carpets for Anatolia today.

In addition to other cultural fields, Osmanlı Beyliği maintained the same traditions of the Seljuckians in carpet weaving. According to the sources the tribe of Osman Bey, the founder of Ottoman Empire lived in the tents with his tribe in Söğüt and Domanic in the 13th century was also weaving carpets. When Osman Bey was coming back from the plateau, he used to send such presents as cheese, carpets, rugs, and newborn sheep to the Tekfur of Bilezik. He also used to bring lots of carpets, rugs and sheep when he was invited to weddings of their neighbour Byzantine Tekfur. Dulgadurh Turkmans that first lived in Maraş-Elbistan and then in Yozgat which is called Boz Ok wove carpets as well. Akkoyunlu rulers adorned their tents with plenty of carpets and rugs, too.

We recognize the 15th and 16th century early Ottoman Period carpets from the works of European painters as we do for the 15th century Anatolian carpets. These carpets were classified in four groups each having its own characteristics. In that period carpets were exported to European countries due to their requests and they were very admirable. It was probably for that reason that painters used Turkish carpets as a background element in their paintings. Particularly the carpets used in the Hans Holbein’s pictures are known as Holbein carpets even 2nd part of them are used in Lorenzo Lotto’s pictures.

In the 15th and 16th early Ottoman period carpets, in the first and second group the carpets the Fields are divided into squares with octagon shapes in them and between them there are parallelograms arranged in sliding axises as their characteristics (Photo.3). The carpets which were thought to have been woven in the vicinity of Ushak were made with wool and Turkish knotting technique. In the third and fourth group examples, the Field of carpets are divided into two, three or four equal squares. In each square, octagon shapes were placed. In them eight angled stars, plant patterns, sometimes only animals or animals fighting with each

34. F. Sümer, Anadolu'da Türk Halçılığı'na Dair En Eski Tarihi Kayıtlar, pp. 49-50.
35. F. Sümer, op. cit, p. 49.
other were placed. There were mostly decorated kufi writings in the side borders. These carpets accepted to have been woven in Bergama in İzmir resembles 14th-15th century Bayliks period carpets in terms of their compositions.

The carpets similar to third group are also seen in Ayvacık and Ezine (Çanakkale) in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are called as çarkih or elekli among people today. The carpets similar to the fourth group with small differences are seen in Ezine and Ayvacık. Today, the carpets known as altun tabak among people are available in village mosques in the places mentioned above (Photo.4).

In the early Ottoman period in 15th and 16th centuries, the other carpet group we meet were Geometrically Patterned or Changally Carpets. These carpets also misnamed as the carpets seen in the pictures of Fleming painters. These are seen especially in the paintings of Jan Van Eyck and his student Petrus Christus and Hans Memling. In the paintings of Jan Van Eyck and his student Petrus Christus carpets ornamented with parallelogram motifs are famous. These carpets which octagonal stars with bands gathers in a parallelogram plan and filled with octagonal stars in the center are similar to the Geometrically Designed Anatolian Carpets. The carpets we come across in Hans Memling’s paintings are divided into squares like the ones in the first and second groups of the Early Ottoman Period carpets. Parallelogram and octagonal designs are used in these carpets too. The inner and outer sections are ornamented with curls.

The samples known as Changally in Anatolia have been accepted as the pioneer of Caucasian carpets with dragon. These carpets are known to have been used in terms of their plan in Azerbaycan till 19th century and exported to Europe from East Anatolia probably over Black Sea. The sources mention that these carpets originated from East Anatolia or Caucasia. However today they are still woven in Central Anatolia and also in West Anatolia.

The other carpet group of the 15th and 16th centuries which was woven in Anatolia known by the names of foreign painters is C. Crivelli carpets. Geometrical plans were dominant in these carpets which we originally have to classify them as geometrically designed. Animal patterns are seen to have been used as it was in the 15th century. One of them is known to be at İparmüşezeti Müzeum in Budapest and a few of them found in the vicinity of Sivrihisar (Eskişehir).

In the 16th century Ottoman period, Anatolian-Turk carpets reached its golden age. Ottoman state became an empire. It was very rich. They were named as Classical Ottoman period carpets. In the consequence of the relationships with Iran and Egypt, two kinds of carpet group emerged: Saray carpets and Uşak carpets. After Mercidabuk and Ridaniye wars (1516-1517), many artists were brought into Anatolia during Yavuz Sultan Selim era in the 16th century. When Yavuz Sultan Selim passed away, his son Kanuni depending on the po-

37. Ş.Yetkin, Türk Halı Sanati, pp.73-74.  
40. About Crivelli Carpets, F. Baltar, Ottoman Turkish Carpets, Budapest, 1994, pp.15, 95.  
litics of that time released and send back about 600 dealers and outstanding people who were brought from Egypt to Istanbul by his father were released and sent back to their countries. He also let Iranian dealers and artists who were brought to Anatolia after Çalıhan wars to go back to their country. According to the sources, a lot of artists were available at the palace as well. They are known to have produced China, ceramics, fabrics and carpet ornaments for the palace. These ornaments are understood to have been improved according to 16th century adornment art.

Until the silk trade superiority passed to Iran in 17th century, **Osmanlı Empire** continued the samples woven with silk about one century. Unlike Anatolian carpets, they were emerged all of a sudden. Nonetheless, the palace environs who wanted to continue to live like courtiers kept weaving carpets with silk especially in **Manisa, Uşak** and **Gördes, Kula and Milas** from the 17th century to the middle of 18th and exported them to Europe with the name of **Smyrna (İzmir)** carpets.

**Uşak carpets** were woven with wool and by Turkish knotting technique. They are divided into two groups according to their designs: **Madalyonlu Uşak** (carpets with medallions) and **Yıldızlı Uşak** (carpets with stars). In the Anatolian-Turk carpet art history, center-medallion was deployed for the first time. These carpets didn’t appear as a result of traditional development but they were woven by orders. On the other hand, they were very common in **Iran** and **Memlük** carpets. As it wasn’t adapted by the public in the first place, it appeared in the beginning of the 16th century and completed its progress in the middle of the same century. **Yıldızlı Uşak** carpets began its development in the middle of the 16th century and continued by the 18th century. They had eight-armed star-shaped small center and below and above this there were slided axises, star-like and parallelogram patterns.

In the 17th century carpets with dragon motifs were emerged in Uşak. The field of the carpets were divided into squares or parallelograms. These were adorned with Chinese cloud patterns. The corners of the squares or the sides of parallelograms were filled with Chinese cloud patterns. The borders of the carpets, however, were adorned with Chinese patterns again.

In the 17th century **Uşak carpets** went through renaissance. At that time **Beyaz Zeminli** (white-ground) or **Post Zeminli** (sheepskin-ground) Uşak carpets group were appeared. In these carpets the color of the field was usually white. On the other hand, in their patterns, three-sliced, tiger-skin appearance and bird-formed shapes were observed. The fields of the carpets which have tiger-skin appearance patterns was adorned with lip shapes. The same pattern that was used on the robes of **Ottoman** rulers was transferred to the carpets. This pattern most probably symbolized the tiger-like strength of the ruler. In some samples, there were cat-dog trace patterns (three-sliced pattern) among the other ones.

The samples which looked like a real animal skin were also called as sheepskin-patterned carpets. There were animal-like patterns on the field of them. The inside of them were adorned with spots.

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45. Red and purple was used as Field color as well.
These carpets are accepted to have been appeared prior to 16th century and continued their progress throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. The weaving centers of the carpets are unknown. Their famous examples belonged to Konya and its surroundings.

In the samples known as 

Kuşlu carpets (the carpet with bird) there were patterns resembling birds on the fields. In fact there were no birds. The field was adorned with large leaves. The leaves binding flowers together were seems like birds. Therefore, they were called Kuşlu carpets. The pattern filled the the whole surface of the carpets with eternity feeling. In the side bordures, Chinese cloud patterns took place.

In addition to these, there were other carpet centers as well. Since the regions of them weren't known in Anatolia, Transilvanya Carpets were named as Yörük carpets. Today they are at Hungary Museums and known as Erdelyi Carpets.

II- THE EVALUATION AND THE RESULT

In Anatolian carpets and flat weaves weavings, mostly geometrical and plant patterns; the object, animal and plant descriptions and the patterns depending on the customs and religious symbols are used. In addition to them, the rod patterns with different colors, oil lamp patterns and some religious and symbolic-meaning-carrying symbols are seen as well.

The patterns that were seen in Anatolia-Turkish carpets were also employed during Beylikler (Emirates) and Osmanlı (Ottoman) era and with little differences, they have reached to today. For instance, it is a Seljuk pattern acquired from Pazırık carpet via Central Asia customs that the field of the carpets and fields weaves are divided into squares or parallelograms. The patterns used in the side bordures of the carpets (similar to kufi writings) are known as ok in Çanakkale region. Side ornaments remained from Seljuk period are still woven among the public with the name of kılıf. According to adornment, the letter elf (I) resembles to niche (Photo.5).

Although there is a long time between the eras, in terms of Turk carpet art history the most important side of the Beylikler period carpets are bearing the resemblances to Central Asia carpet art. The similar resemblances are seen in the carpets not only in the capital Samerra in Abbasid state but also in the carpets of Fustat which belonged to Great Seljuk and Anatolian Seljuk Empire. Such carpets remained from Seljuk can be seen anywhere today. Particularly more samples can be seen in the west part of Anatolia. The samples adorned with animal shapes are still woven in Manisa and Aksaray today. The animal patterns are called as enik (puppy) or inek (cow) (Photo. 6).

Among the geometrical ornaments, one of the most popular pattern in Anatolia is the star adornment made up of eight and four arms. The similar ornament named as star-cross combination in Anatolia is also encountered in Turkmen carpets and in the architecture of Kirghiz and Cossacks and called as four armed. This pattern tells about “beyond the physics and helping to reinforce the spiritual feelings at mosques and holy places” according to sources.

Amid the plant patterns, mostly tulip, carnation, rose, violet and valerian are seen in Anatolian carpets. Tulip is of great interest among them. It is one of the rare plants in Anatolia. It carries the name of a period called Lâle period during Ottoman Empire. According to a belief among the public, ”the tulip word resembles to İsm-i Celal (God) in old letters and Allah name carries the same letters “elîf, lam” with lâle. For that reason, the tulip is thought to have been very popular then.

The tree of life is one of the most employed patterns in Anatolia-Turk carpets and flat weaves. Tree is a sacred plant amid the Turk. Especially juniper and beech are regarded more holy. In Shaman belief while the spirit of the dead body raises to the sky, the tree also escorts it with the birds. The each branch of the tree symbolizes the layers of the sky. During the Islamic period the same pattern symbolizes the religious order, mentions the sources involved (Photo.7).

The lake or center pattern used in Anatolia carpets is also seen in Turkish Republics. The carpets woven in these countries get their names in terms of their lake (center) shapes and known by these names. According to the old belief of Turkmen people, mountains are the places where the Gods wander. The round shapes are the symbol of the sky. In other terms, the sky expresses comprehensive meanings such as the divine kingdom, orbit, sphere, country and the kinds of plants. Therefore the geometrical patterns and lake shape in the carpets represent holy mandala. The lake pattern is considered to be the main thing in the carpet and expresses a holy meaning. Square, octagon and parallelogram-shaped lake is a general feature in Middle Asia Turk carpets.

One of the most common deployed patterns in Anatolia is the star. Especially it is widespread in Seljuk carpets. In the vicinity of Aksaray villages, by praying the stars, it is believed to heal the illnesses. In Sındırçı neighborhood, each of the star represents the yörük tent.

Human pattern is not seen in Anatolia carpets and flat weaves. The figure named as elibe-linde resemble human. Since the Seljuk period, elibe-linde pattern has frequently been seen in all periods. The human pattern has been woven in the borders of the Seljuk carpets as it was in the sample of Beyşehir Esrefoğlu Mosque. It can be described very similar to its real state as in the Fustat carpets from Beylikler period. The ornament elibe-linde, called by different names in different regions such as kız, aman kız, tarak, kazan and kulu, is seen almost everywhere in Anatolia. It is regarded as abundance (Photo.8).

Among the limbs of human, hand and foot are momentous. In the Anatolian folk culture hand is the sign of luck and look. Mother Fatma’s hand is Pençe-i Ali Aba. Namely, it is good
for the bad looks and ill-luck. Also, the fingers of a hand symbolize the five conditions of Islam and sometimes they symbolize five people in Islam; Hz. Muhammed, Ali, Fatma, Hasan and Hüseyin. In some carpets like in Taşpinar (Aksaray), hand is woven with three fingers. In this condition, it symbolizes two people in Islam; Allah, Muhammed, Ali. Sometimes, hand can be composed of six fingers, then it means that the carpet is protected from ill-lucks (Photo.9).

Amid the bird patterns, particularly eagle figure is of great significance. The eagle is accepted as holy in Middle Asia belief and it is also known as the symbol of power-strength in all cultures and in Turkish mythology. There are lots of samples especially in Great Seljuk period ceramics. In Anatolia-Turkish art ceramics are widely seen with the instruments like stone, mineral, rug and fabrics and we come across its Middle Asia meanings and woven like its real samples.

Peacock is also widely noticed in carpets and flat weaves. It is mostly recognized from its long and colored tail. It is fascinating owing to its gorgeous colors. Peacock has been considered as the symbol of heaven not only in the past but also today.

In the Islamic era, the birds like dove and pigeon are also accepted as holy ones. Especially dove is thought to be holy since it protected Hz. Muhammed during Hicret (migration) from Mekke to Medine. It has been thought as the symbol of the heaven at all the times.

Scorpion figure is one of the most woven patterns in carpets and also in flat weaves. Similar to the carpets named as Antalya-Düşемaht, it is both a name of a pattern and also known as “the carpet with scorpion”. Among the folk, scorpion is believed to have protected the carpet (Photo.10).

As in all cultures, lion is known as the symbol of strength and power. Since Middle Asia, it has been seen in most of all Anatolian carpets. Similar to the carpets in Kirşehir, the pattern in which the lions looking at each other as if they were going to be taken photos is still woven (Photo.11).

The dog pattern is mostly known as köpek or kocabas. Even though the dog is called with bad names such as it among the folk, in Mogul and Turkish mythology, it is accepted as holy and loyal animal52. In Kor’an is called as Keb and El Kitmiyr53. Therefore it is regarded as holy (Photo.12).

The sheep is an important animal during the times you live on plateaus. The sheep pattern is frequently met in carpets and in flat weaves. Moreover, it is a holy animal in Middle Asia belief. It is a name of some Turkish tribes such as Ak-Koyunlu and Kara-Koyunlu. Also, it is a stamp of Yiva Tribe from the Oğuz (Gagauz) Turks. Therefore it can be seen as a grave stone in the weavings54.

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52. B. Ögel, Türk Mitolojisi-I (Kaynaklar ve Açıklamalar ile Destanlar), Ankara, 1993, pp. 561-68.
53. About the dog verse of the Kor’an, look at, Kehf Sura (18) verse, 9-21; Faatır Sura (35), verse.13.
The dragon figure is known to have passed from Middle Asia art to Antolian-Turkish art. It is accepted as the symbol of abundance, health and healing symbol. This pattern is mostly used in Gördes, Kula, Kırsızlı, Kayseri and Niğde carpets and flat weaves.

The cloud pattern is thought to have been improved from the figures on the porcelains of the Ottoman rulers sent as present from China in the 16th century and have gotten Chinese Cloud name. This pattern is still woven in Yunudağ (Bergama) carpets with the name of Karrabulut (Photo.13-14).

Particularly in the 16th and 17th centuries, the ornaments called as çintemani-çintamani, pars beneği and üç top are widespread in the Ottoman period carpet and weavings. They are three round figures standing side by side and also lip like figures. They can be seen together and also separate in the weavings. They are the symbol of abundance, power and strength in Turkish art. Today it is known as dog trace or cat trace. According to the sources, round figures symbolize mandala for the Turkmen people. Mandala pattern carrying the great meanings such as sphere, country, vastness and the kinds of plants symbolizes pendi göl in Turkmen carpets.

The patterns about camels are known as deve, deve tabani (the sole of the camel) or deve boynu (the neck of the camel). In the early dated carpets, it is depicted in stylized form. In the 19th century samples, it is woven as katar (herd). In the döşemealtı carpets, it is woven as it is sitting in the side border. In the flat weaves, like in Yozgat vicinities, it is depicted as flat (s), with the name of boynu eğri (deve boynu). Similar samples are available in the other weaving centers in Middle Anatolia and in the weavings made in Toroslar (Tauruses) (Photo.15).

Turtle and lizard are also utilized in the weavings such as rugs. They are particularly seen in the rugs of Kula, Selendi (Manisa) and Kütahya. They are woven in the geometrical figure similar to elibelinde pattern. They come from the Central Asia to Anatolia. In Anatolia this pattern has been said to be used against ill-looks. In the Şaman belief, they are accepted to have symbolized the universe. Tonyukuk Monuments are the most magnificent examples of them. Gök Türk people also regarded them as holy. Turtle is still said to be holy among Mongol people.

Donkey and horse figures are described similar to elibelinde pattern and as parallelograms. In Shaman belief horse is the guide of the spirits of the dead. In Oğuzlar, the horse is buried with its owner and it is thought to take him to the heaven. Horse is a life style for the Turkish. For all these reasons, horse is accepted as holy.

56. Maya Cumramyazova, Türkmen Halası Evrenin Minyatürdeki Modelidir, pp. 143-147.
In Anatolia oil lamp figures are woven on the seccade (praying weaving). According to the sources, oil lamp symbolizes the divine light. In the Qu’ran, oil lamp is resembled to glass globe. It can be used by itself or with the ibrik (kettle), tree of life and bunches of flowers. In Islam belief, ibrik symbolizes body cleaning, tree of life symbolizes eternal life and heaven and a bunch of flowers in the mihrap (niche) recess symbolizes bag-ı irem.

Consequently, it is a custom to weave carpet and flat weaves in Anatolia. It has continued since the Middle Asia period. The same tradition is seen among the other Turkish States.

Thanks to the Silk Road, Turkish carpets have spread to all over the world and given great inspiration to painters in China, India and Europe. It still carries on its characteristic today.

In terms of the equipment, colors, technique and pattern used in the carpets and flat weaves, there are great similarities between the Anatolia and the Turkish States in Asia. However there are some differences in some patterns. Nevertheless, the meanings are the same. The tradition in the Turkish carpets and weavings indicate the richness of Turkish culture from the Middle Asia.

III- REFERENCE

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Photo 7 – Carpet with camel saddle, between XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, Eskil-Aksaray, Ulu Mosque, b.deniz. 1984.

Photo 8 – Carpet of Somya, border (kenarsuyu), a human motif, mid of XXth century, Arısmà (Aksaray) Village Mosque, b. deniz. 1979.

Photo 9 – Rug with Fingers (Parmaklı), a motif of hand, Selendi (Manisa), b. deniz. 1985.


Photo 2 – “Carpet with Rooster”, between XIVth and XVth centuries, the Museum of Konya-Koyunoğlu, (archives of Gönül Öney)

Photo 4 – Carpet of Golden Plate (Altıntabak), XVIIIth century, Ayvacık (Çanakkale)- Burgaz Village Mosque, 130 x 186 cm. b.deniz. 1990.

Photo 5 – Prayer Rug, between XVIIIth and XIXth centuries, Ereğli (Konya) Ulu Mosque, b.deniz. 1985.

Photo 6 – A Rug with Whelp, motif of whelp, detail, beginning of XXth century, Aksaray-Milletbahcesi Mosque, 400 x165 cm. b.deniz.1982.
Photo 11 – Carpet for pray, beginning of XXth century, Sivas, b.deniz. 1988.

Photo 12 – Carpet for cushion, a motif of dog, beginning of XXth century, Arsama (Aksaray), b. deniz, 1979.

Photo 13 – Carpet of Karabulut, between XVIIIth and XXth centuries, Villages of Yunddag (Izmir), b.deniz, 1985.

Photo 15. Carpet of Karabulut, detail, a motif of camel, between XVIIIth and XIXth centuries, villages of Yunudağ (İzmir), b.deniz, 1985.