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Some of the Weavings Used in Turkish Bath in the Context of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Hand weaving has a very old history in Anatolia. In addition to carpet and rugs, almost in every region it could be possible to see local weavings. Some of the weavings perished and others still continue to exist. These weavings which have to be evaluated as intangible cultural heritage have been protected by the geographical indication suspended license in order to protect them from losing their unique properties.

Changes in the dynamics of tourism with the improvements in technology and the emergence of alternative forms of tourism, have increased the importance of local and touristic products. Turkish Bath has always been a topic of interest for tourists. Besides, hand crafted products such as copper bath bowl, clogs, soap, marble basin, and woven loincloth (peştamal) and sacre the other products complementing the tradition. In Turkish baths, both females and males uses loincloths for covering up and drying the body, sac is used to clean the skin. In some regions of Turkey, bath loincloth (peştamal) and sac weaving still continues. Nowadays with the increase of interest to baths, the interest to loincloths also rises. These weavings which have been found authentic by the domestic and foreign tourists, started to be used as daily clothing in rural areas and used as covering in the city centers. Besides, they are also used on beaches, saunas and SPAs in order to cover and dry the body.

In this study, the current situation of traditional weavings such as loincloth and sacs were analyzed in terms of their properties and current situation. The analyzed loincloths chosen from the bath museums in Ankara, and some photographs that belong to these loincloths are presented in the study.

Keywords: Turkish bath, cultural heritage, traditional weaving, loincloth (peştamal)

1. Introduction

In ancient cultures, people who decorated their temples with gods and goddesses, who believed that seas, lakes and rivers were full of water fairies have formed varying cultures regarding bathing, cleaning and cleansing. Most advanced bathhouses in terms of architecture and luxury provided are the Roman, Greek and Byzantine baths.¹ It can be argued that origins of the Turkish Bath go back to Roman and Byzantine Baths, and, if went further back, Anatolian Bronze Age civilizations and the love and culture of water on Anatolia. Bathes in Anatolia have obtained a very different cultural meaning with the concept of Turkish Bath.² Object used in Turkish Bath are the best components reflecting the richness and aesthetics of Turkish Bath culture. Kuruçay stated that, especially after Tanzimat reform era, bath utilities gained ethnographical treasure status. And bath textiles primarily silk loincloths, aprons, and also embroidered parcels, lace decorated towels, and other bath objects such as bronze stills, bath dippers, copper bowls, rose water flasks, pearl inlaid clog, marked soaps, and ivory carved combs had their aesthetical properties come to attention.³

In this study, some features of the Turkish bath, Turkish bathing tradition, the Turkish bath paintings of painters, past and present situation of loincloth which is the most important Turkish bath textile are explained.

2. Turkish Bath Tradition

Architectural studies have shown that, Turkish baths consists of several square-plan and domed units including undressing area, hot area, cold area and furnace.⁴ The largest area in Turkish Baths is the undressing area. This area, where sofas lay atop a stone or wooden terrace, is reached by stairs. Niches were constructed under the sofas and the walls behind the sofas to store bath objects and clothes. And a pool with a fountain exists in the middle of the place.⁵ Cold area, sometimes called lukewarm area, is the place where low marble sofas around walls. Hot area is the most important part of Turkish Bath and it consists of iwans and private khalwas around a domed central place. Small bathing cells without doors, located in the corners of the place are called khalwas. And remaining bathing areas amidst the cells are called iwans. Wall sides of bathing cells are surrounded by marble sofas. Hot and cold water bath basins are placed atop the sofas. In the middle of the hot area, a central massaging platform, called "göbektaşı" which is sized according to the size of the place, and used for massaging and resting exists. Lighting is

¹ Tefrik Cem Yaman, "Türk Hamamının Mekansal Kurgusu 'İstanbul Hamamları,'" (masters thesis, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İç Mimarlık Anabilim / Anasanat Dalı, 2010).

² Fikret K. Yegül, "Anadolu Su Kültürü: Türk Hamamları ve Yıkınma Geleneğinin Kökleri ve Geleceği," *Anatolia* (2009), 99-118.

³ Akif Kuruçay, *İstanbul'un 100 Hamamı* (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür A.Ş. Yayınları, 2011).

⁴ Günsel Renda, "Ressam Gözüyle Osmanlı Hamamı" in the *Anadolu Medeniyetlerinde Hamam Kültürü: Mimari, Tarih ve İmgelem*. Ed. Ergin, Nina (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012):369-403.

⁵ Önge Y., 18. Mimarbaşı Koca Sinan'ın Yaşadığı Çağ ve Eserleri (İstanbul: T.C. Başbakanlık Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, 1998); Tefrik Cem Yaman, "Türk Hamamının Mekansal Kurgusu 'İstanbul Hamamları,'" (master' thesis, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İç Mimarlık Anabilim / Anasanat Dalı, 2010).

provided by small windows on domes called “elephant eyes”.⁶ The area called furnace, is also called firebox. In this place with separate entry, there is the fuel tank and plumbing.⁷

Turkish Baths are categorized into two, namely, single function and dual function bathhouses. Dual function baths are constructed in city centers for the purpose that both men and women can use them simultaneously. Single function baths are usually placed in low-population areas or areas distant from cities which serve men on particular days of the week and women on remaining days.⁸ Kuruçay stated that, in the old İstanbul, it can be understood from the color of the loincloth hanged on the door of the bath that that day was reserved for men or women.⁹

Bath tradition has carried major socio-cultural significance in Anatolia. Person coming in to the bathhouse is welcomed in the bath square, is shown to the room they will use, and their loincloth is readied in their room. Client wears the loincloth in their room and then they are lead inside along with the masseur or bath attendant who will serve them. Then the place of the client on central massaging platform – göbekaşı- is prepared with ground cloth. Before the bath, client lies on the platform for at least 20 minutes to sweat and the body is prepared for sac. After this, the client is lead to the basin for sac rubbing followed by bubble bathing. When done, client is lead back to the platform for massaging. For all of these stages, loincloth is used.¹⁰ Loincloth continues its importance as a bath textile with differing areas of use like it had historically.

Nowadays, cities where Turkish Bath traditions are kept alive includes İstanbul, Bursa, Erzurum, Afyon, Elazığ, Sivas, Edirne, Tokat. Researches show that historical bathhouses have been kept alive in Konya as well, with their customs and traditions and bathing culture. In Sivas, families keep the traditions of bride baths, forty baths, and puerperal baths.¹¹ In Erzurum, despite some bath traditions disappeared, traditions of bride baths, puerperal baths and half-forty baths still continue.¹²

Sengulhamam and Karacabeyhamam are still serving today in the historical provincial baths of Ankara. These baths are still used on special occasions such as the bridal bath, puerpera bath. Domestic and foreign tourists who come to Ankara want to use these baths in the historical atmosphere.

It is known that the touristic programs have Hamam museums in the districts of Beypazarı and Ayaş in Ankara province. Tools, textiles used in Turkish baths are exhibited in the Hamam museums. Photographs of loincloth, clog (nalın), basin (kurna), copper bowls from Ankara Beypazarı Turkish Bath Museum are presented below (Figure 1).

⁶ Tevfik Cem Yaman, “Türk Hamamının Mekansal Kurgusu 'İstanbul Hamamları.’”

⁷ Önge Y, 18. Mimarbaşı Koca Sinan'ın Yaşadığı Çağ ve Eserleri.

⁸ Düriye Bozok, “Türk Hamamı ve Geleneklerinin Turizmde Uygulanışı: Bursa Merkez İlçede Bir Araştırma” *Balıkesir Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (2005), 62-86.; Tevfik Cem Yaman, “Türk Hamamının Mekansal Kurgusu 'İstanbul Hamamları,’” (master’ thesis, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İç Mimarlık Anabilim / Anasanat Dalı, 2010).

⁹ Akif Kuruçay, *İstanbul'un 100 Hamamı*.

¹⁰ Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ankara Tarihi Hamamları ve Hamam Kültürü (Ankara: Araştırma Raporu, 2014).

¹¹ Faruk Büyüktanır, “Geçmişten Günümüze Sivas'ta Hamam Kültürü,” (master's thesis, Cumhuriyet University Institute of Social Sciences Department of Turkish Language and Literature Folklore Sivas, 2009).

¹² Sahure Çınar, “Erzurum'da Hamam Mimarisi ve Hamam Kültürü,” (masters thesis, Atatürk University Institute of Social Sciences Department of Art History, 2010).



Figure 1. Ankara Beypazarı Turkish Bath Museum

A large number of objects are used in the Turkish bath. Copper bowl, soap box, ivory carved combs, pearl inlaid clog, heel stone, marked soaps and some textiles are some of these objects. The most important clothing in the Turkish bath is the loincloth. It is known that the loincloth weavings are used as clothing materials besides its used in the bath.

3. The Most Important Turkish Bath Textile: Loincloth (Peştamal)

Loincloth weavings are divided into three, namely, tradesmen, clothing and bath loincloths. Loincloth has been accepted as a mascot, license and luck charm by tradesmen and artisans for centuries in Anatolia. Candle makers, halva makers, cooks and barbers tied them around their waists on the job. It is noted that red striped and plaid weavings are common.¹³

Loincloth use in Turkey takes different forms in different times. At first, loincloth was a primary cover and clothing. Especially in Turkish people in the Ottoman Empire, loincloth took the place of a protective apron over regular clothing and symbolized the servants in palaces (Figure 2). They were used in bathhouses similarly to their original purpose and they became items of vanity and ornament. It became a social uniform, as an apron of working public and tradesmen, and as the clothing of poor people with the second part that is wrapped around the head.¹⁴

¹³ Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Türk Giyim Kuşam Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Sümerbank Kültür Yayınları 1, 1967).

¹⁴ Şahin Yüksel Yağan, *Türk El Dokumacılığı* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1978).



Figure 2. Servant's loincloth¹⁵

Known as the first modern standard of the world, “standard” which was realized by Turks and accepted as one of the cornerstones of development, where products are priced and required punishment systems take place to assure the continuity of quality. Kanunname-i İhtisab-ı Bursa was created with decrees during the reign of Bayezid II. (1447-1512). In Kanunname-i İhtisab-I Bursa, there is information regarding cloths and loincloths. Due to complaints of tradesmen, especially bathhouse attendants about tightness and shortness warp count and dyes of loincloths were standardized.¹⁶

İnalçık (2008) stated that, loincloths have types of silk and cotton and only cotton. Egyptian and Thessaloniki loincloths have luxurious and expensive varieties and they contain silk and silk edges.¹⁷

Wife of the British Ambassador Sir Edward Wortley Montagu, Lady Montagu, who visited Ottoman cities including Edirne and İstanbul, attended a bride bath in İstanbul at the beginning of 18th Century. What impressed Lady Montagu the most was; a group of young girls, wrapped in silk loincloths, singing and dancing in warm, steamy halls of the bathhouse, in a riot of colors shining down from domes and reflecting off shiny marbles and clear pools, and with sounds of water pouring out of bath basins.¹⁸ While Turkish baths are considered as a tradition to be hidden by Turkish painters, western painters painted the hamam topic in orientalist paintings with finer details.¹⁹

Turkish Bath also interested western painters. Since 16th Century, many paintings were created by many European painters depicting women in baths. Turkish Bath became a topic of interest among 18th and 19th Century European artists, especially among 19th Century orientalist artists. Paintings depicting the use of loincloth are included in this study. “Young girl and her servant in front of the basin” by Jean Paptise Van Mour (1671-1737) is in the Figure 3.

¹⁵ Osman Hamdi Bey and Marie de Launa, 1873 Yılında Türkiye'de Halk Giysileri (Elbise-I Osmaniyye), trans. Erol Üyepazarıcı (İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi. Aksoy Matbaacılık, 1999).

¹⁶ Turkish Standards Institute, “ Kanunname-i İhtisab-ı Bursa. Sultan II.Beyazid tarafından yürürlüğe konulan dünyanın bugünkü manda ilk standardı” (Standard, 1995).

¹⁷ Halil İnalçık, Türkiye Tekstil Tarihi Üzerine Araştırmalar (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008).

¹⁸ Halsband R., The Complete Letters of Lady MARRY W. Montagu, I-II (1708-1720) (Oxford University Press, 1965).

¹⁹ Semih Büyükkol and Zuhâl Arda, “Türk kültüründe hamam geleneği ve resim sanatına yansımaları,” *İdil* (2016): 2047-2062.



Figure 3. Young girl and her servant in front of the basin (J. B. Van Mour)²⁰

Jean Jacques Francois Le Barbier (1738-1826) depicting women bathhouse in the Figure 4.



Figure 4. A female Turkish bath or hammam (J. J. F. le Barbier)²¹

²⁰J. B. Van Mour, Young girl and her servant in front of the basin, April 8, 2016, <http://eng.travelogues.gr/item.php?view=42971>.

²¹J. J. F. le Barbier, A female Turkish bath or hammam, March 29, 2016, <http://www.constantinople-historical-fine-arts-emporium.com/index.php/galleries/gallery-1>.

Camille Rogier (1810-1896) painting named "A family in women's bathhouse" is in Figure 5.



Figure 5. *A family in women's bathhouse* (C. Rogier)²²

Fausto Zonaro, using photographs taken by his spouse (1845-1929) created many paintings depicting women's bathhouse. Paintings of Zonaro named "Bathing" and "Rest After a Bath" are shown in Figure 6, 7.



Figure 6. *Bathing* (F. Zonaro)²³



Figure 7. *Rest After a bath* (F. Zonaro)²⁴

²²C. Rogier, *A family in women's bathhouse*, June 28, 2016, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1105532/la-turquie-entree-au-bain-lithograph-camille-rogier/>.

²³F. Zonaro, *Bathing*, April 18, 2016, <http://docplayer.biz.tr/10606557-On-kapak-fausto-zonaro-1854-1929-hamam-uclemesi-yikanis-dan-detay-arka-kapak.html>.

More details can be seen in these paintings about Turkish hamam culture. It is possible to get about the color and pattern characteristics of the textiles used in Turkish bath.

4. Loincloth Use in the Present

Today, the uses of loincloth in Turkish bath still continue. Aprons have taken the place of tradesmen's loincloths. Especially in the regions where weaving has been done in the past, it is found to be used as a clothing loom. Women living in rural areas are still out of the house by covering their heads and hips. Elderly women living in Buldan county use one of them to cover the skirt and the other to cover the head and body (Figure 8).



Figure 8 .Loincloth as skirt, woman's outwear, Buldan-Denizli, 2015 (southwest of Turkey)

In the study by Atalayer (1980), it is stated that loincloths woven in Buldan-Denizli in Turkey are divided into three, namely, bath, tradesmen and clothing loincloths. And these loincloths are striped silk or cotton weavings. As examples of bath loincloths, Antalya and Milas loincloths were given. Loincloths are categorized by usage and region such as; Mozer loincloth (Uşak, Alaşehir, Buldan, Kütahya, Manisa) Selanik (Thessaloniki) loincloth (Eskişehir), Şekerci and Ankara loincloth (Ankara), Has (Bride) loincloth (Buldan, Aydın), Ödemiş loincloth (İzmir).²⁵

Önlü (2010) stated that loincloths woven in Buldan take names such as silk pure loincloth (Buldan – Denizli), Sarıbey loincloth (Aydın), Ödemiş-Tire loincloth (İzmir) Agadige loincloth and they were used in the past by women when they went out by tying them around their waists over their clothes.²⁶

²⁴F. Zonaro, Rest After a bath ,April 18,2016, <http://docplayer.biz.tr/10606557-On-kapak-fausto-zonaro-1854-1929-hamam-uclemesi-yikanis-dan-detay-arka-kapak.html>.

²⁵ Günay Atalayer, "Buldan Dokumaları," (National Applied Fine Arts College Proficiency in Arts Thesis (Unprinted), 1980).

²⁶ Nesrin, Önlü, "Ege Bölgesi El Dokuma Kaynakları," *Sanat Atatürk Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi Dergisi* (2010): 47-60.

Bath loincloths are divided into to:men and women. Men wear bath loinclots around the waist of their naked body. Women wear lointcloths from their armpits. Therefore women lointcloths are wider than men loincloths.²⁷ Atalayer (1980) notes the technical properties of a loincloth woven in Buldan as 82cm width, 120cm length, 13.2 per cm warp density and 16 per cm weft density.²⁸

In the study of thirty loincloths woven in Buldan, Erdoğan (1996) notes that weavings have $81,73 \pm 1,33$ cm width, $130,79 \pm 1,64$ cm length, $62,96 \pm 0,98$ per 5 cm warp density, $70,69 \pm 1,32$ per 5 cm weft density. It is stated that fiber types of warp and weft are cotton, weaving type is plain weave.²⁹

Comba (2007) determined that there are two types of loincloth, namely, bath loincloth and outing loincloth. In bath loincloths, four colors, white, red, black and yellow, are used. In outing loincloth, checkers over white base and other elective patterns are used, and they are plain woven. Loincloth sizes are usually 90x180cm, 180x230cm and 160x200cm. Warp density is 18 per cm and weft density is 18.5 per cm. Fiber type is determined as warp and weft cotton (Figure 9).³⁰



Figure 9. Bath loincloth, Merzifon, 2015

Yağan (1978) stated that, loincloths woven in Black Sea region are used as clothing and they are categorized into two as Dolay (wraparound) loincloth and Baş (head) loincloth (two types: large and scissored).³¹ Yağan (1978) points out that due to aprons being worn around the waist, they are named Dolay (wraparound), and they are striped.³² They are plain woven and cotton warp and weft. Yağan (1978) states that scissored loincloths are called “Çeşan” because they technically resemble Kashani loincloths brought from Kashan – Iran during the silk apron period in which loincloth was fashionable.³³

In loincloths used in the Black Sea Region, due to the rainy climate, dirty colors are preferred. Red and white are usually used in Trabzon. In Rize; wraparound loincloths consists of two colors and one of the pattern lines is black. Popularly used colors are green-black, black-purple, black-

²⁷ Osman Hamdi Bey and Marie de Launa, 1873 Yılında Türkiye'de Halk Giysileri (Elbise-i Osmaniyye).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Zeynep, Erdoğan, “Buldan Dokumacılığı ve İlçesinde Üretilen Düz Dokumaların Bazı Özellikleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma,” (PhD diss., Ankara Üniversitesi Ev Ekonomisi Yüksekokulu Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, 1996).

³⁰ Esra, Comba, “Merzifon Dokumacılığı,” (master's degree without thesis, Ankara University Institute of Science and Technology, 2007).

³¹ Turkish Standards Institute, “Kanunname-i İhtisab-ı Bursa. Sultan II.Beyazid tarafından yürürlüğe konulan dünyanın bugünkü manda ilk standardı.”

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

pink, black-blue and black-cream. In Samsun, black and red colors are dominant. In Burdur, purple-green-black and dark blue-red-white color combinations are seen. Loincloths used in Ankara are light purple and white. In Denizli (Buldan), yellow, blue, red, orange, green, cream and purple colors are seen in the loincloths woven. Bath loincloths are cream, yellow and blue over checkered red.³⁴

In the past, weaving existed in many centers in Turkey. In some of those centers, weaving no longer exists, however, In cities such as Kastamonu, Denizli, Merzifon, Hatay, Rize, Trabzon and Sinop, weaving is still continued. Today, projects are undertaken to vitalize weaving which is tried to be kept alive in some centers. Especially by institutions interested in handicrafts such as Public Education Centers and municipalities practice loincloth weaving.

It is known that in Turkey, bath loincloths are woven using handlooms or by powered looms in Denizli (Buldan), Merzifon, Kastamonu, Trabzon and Rize in Black Sea Region, and İzmir (Ödemiş).

Another textile used in Turkish Bath is bath purse. It is known mohair, goat fiber, silk and synthetic warp and weft yarns used for bath purse which woven in Turkey. Mohair yarn is used for warp and weft yarns of bath purse. Bath purse is essential in Turkish bath tradition, and still used to remove the old skin from the pores after perspiring to open the blocked pores, and to eliminate roughness.

The weavers who live in Ovacık village- Çankırı make sashes and bath purse from mohair yarn at handloom in their homes and their homes and sell these in turn.³⁵

Loincloths woven in Buldan are used to dry or cover on beaches, in saunas and baths. They are also used as decoration in houses as tablecloths.³⁶

Use of clothing loincloth has decreased due to developing technology and development of ready-made clothing, development of fashion sense and change of attire variety especially in city centers. Loincloths used to cover are no longer used outside rural regions. Loincloth use is very popular especially in all-inclusive service hotels' beaches, baths and saunas. This is due to two reasons. First is that expense of towel washing and drying for hotel towel use is more than those of loincloths. Second is to create a unique authentic value with the use of loincloths as a cultural value in order to attract tourists' attention. Bamboo loincloth use became widespread as an alternative to cotton hand woven loincloths. Bamboo loincloths are woven in Babadağ County of Denizli and it is known that besides loincloths, bathrobes are also manufactured.

Loincloths, as part of cultural heritage, besides their use in bathhouses, are preferred as clothing items (tying around head or waist, shirt, tie, muffler, hair band) by folk dancing groups outside

³⁴ Turkish Standards Institute, "Kanunname-i İhtisab-ı Bursa. Sultan II.Beyazid tarafından yürürlüğe konulan dünyanın bugünkü manda ilk standardı."

³⁵ Sema, Tağı and Zeynep Erdoğan, "The adventure of mohair in Anatolia," *Folk Life* (2014): 49-61.

³⁶ Burcu, Yılmaz, "Peştamal Dokumalar," (Ankara Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü Ev Ekonomisi (El Sanatları) Anabilim Dalı, 2011).

rural areas, because folk dancing is a value which has a strong ability to represent the region and its culture.

5. Conclusion

It is observed that cultural studies in Turkey are concentrated on. Especially it is determined that intangible cultural heritage studies are just as important as tangible cultural heritage. With this approach, study and documentation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage together is very important in terms of passing the information on to the next generation.

Bathing tradition in Turkey is continued with the use of bath textile products (loincloth, towel, bath purse etc.) and handicrafts items (copper bowls, clog, soap, etc.).

Bath loincloths vary from region to region according to their colors and their areas of use. Despite their use has decreased, they are still cultural values. They are used as accessories and decoration. In order to maintain traditionalism, this tradition is kept alive and studies are conducted in this topic.

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