

## THE SURFACE DESIGN OF KERCHIEFS IN EGE UNIVERSITY ETNOGRAPHY MUSEUM'S TEXTILE COLLECTION

EGE ÜNİVERSİTESİ ETNOGRAFYA MÜZESİ TEKSTİL KOLEKSİYONUNDA  
BULUNAN ÇEVRELERİN YÜZEY TASARIMI

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**ABSTRACT:** Çevres (kerchiefs) which Anatolian people commonly use in daily life, are textiles with folded sides ornamented with embroideries. The embroideries and patterns in the surface design of çevres reflect the cultural features and artistic tastes of Turkish society. Çevre is one of cultural heritages whose value will never lessen although it has got far away from its purpose of usage in the past. Even though they have been forgotten in Western parts, çevres are important in terms of the continuation of the tradition, which young girls continue to perform as dowries in some rural parts of Anatolia. Today, çevres are preserved and displayed in domestic and foreign museums in the scope of traditional textiles. Ege University Ethnography Museum is one of the museums having an important role in providing the sustainability of ethnographic products. In the museum, including many textile products, the textiles of Aegean and Balkan regions are mostly displaced. Among these textiles there are çevre examples ornamented with counting work technique. The primary objectives of the study emphasize the importance and place of çevres in Turkish culture. This case study aims to contribute to developing critical awareness. In this context, six of the fifteen çevres in the locker number eight were taken in the scope of research, being examined in terms of their design features.

**Keywords:** Ege University Ethnography Museum, embroidered kerchief, textile design, Anatolia, tradition.

**ÖZ:** Anadolu halkının günlük yaşamda yaygın olarak kullandıkları çevreler, etrafı kıvrılıp oya ve işleme ile süslenmiş tekstillerdir. Çevrelerin yüzey tasarımında yer alan işlemler ve motifler, Türk toplumunun kültürel özelliklerini ve sanatsal zevklerini yansıtmaktadır. Çevre, geçmişteki kullanım amacından uzaklaşmış olsa da değeri eksilmeyecek kültürel miraslarımızdan biridir. Batı bölgelerinde her ne kadar unutulmuş olsa da Anadolu'nun bazı kırsal bölgelerinde genç kızların çeyizlik olarak yapmaya devam ettiği çevreler, geleneğin sürdürülebilmesi açısından önemlidir. Bugün, çevreler geleneksel tekstiller kapsamında yerli ve yabancı müzelerde muhafaza edilmekte ve sergilenmektedir. Etnografik ürünlerin sürdürülebilirliğini sağlamada önemli rol üstlenen müzelerden biri de Ege Üniversitesi Etnografya Müzesi'dir. Birçok tekstil ürünlerini bünyesinde barındıran müzede ağırlıklı olarak Ege ve Balkan bölgelerine ait tekstiller sergilenmektedir. Bu tekstiller arasında hesap işi tekniğiyle işlenmiş çevre örnekleri de mevcuttur. Çalışmanın amacı, çevrelerin Türk kültüründeki yeri ve öneminin altını çizmektir. Alan araştırması, ayrıca eleştirel farkındalığın gelişmesine katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda, müzede sekiz numaralı dolap içerisinde bulunan on beş adet işlemeli çevrenin altısı araştırma kapsamına alınarak tasarım özellikleri yönünden incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ege Üniversitesi Etnografya Müzesi, işlemeli çevre, tekstil tasarım, Anadolu, gelenek.

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## Introduction

Traditional textiles and clothing are the important indications of life styles of societies. Just as textiles have a physical and symbolic function since early ages, they have a function according to personal taste (Önlü, 2004: 85). Women clothing forms a uniformity with the clothes worn on body, head, and feet, and ornaments and accessories. *Çevres (Kerchiefs)* which are a part of this uniformity, have a quite rich variety in terms of patterns, and border ornamentation techniques. *Çevres* are defined as a kerchief with folded borders and ornamented with laces and embroideries (Türkyılmaz and Uzunöz, 2008:26), as a head scarf of a square or square-like form (Özcan, 1994:87) and sometimes as an embroidered large-size handkerchief (Sözen and Tanyeli, 2012:76). "There are very old handkerchiefs which were used as ornaments and also worn on head. They are exhibited today as heirloom. Some of them were embroidered on headscarves. Handkerchief was an important subject in the past for the ladies and young girls, even sultans, their wives and concubines with regards to the embroideries on it" (Sürür, 2010:39-41). Especially in the sources after the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there is information that women use a *çevre* sometimes as a head scarf and sometimes by hanging it on their belts in their wedding and engagement ceremonies (Özçitak, 2014:41). One of the most important factors that make *çevres* important is of course that they are embroidered.

Craftsmen in Turkish society have tried to embroidery patterns with needles and threads on any kind of clothes by interpreting what they seen in nature according to their tastes, thus there appeared *Turkish embroideries* (Sain, 1987:5). Embroideries are known as a work requiring a great deal of effort, conscientiousness and patience. *Hesap işi (Counting work)*, which has an important place among Turkish embroideries, is included in needle techniques performed by counting the weaving threads. The pattern of counting work is drawn on millimetric papers by counting according to the embroidery technique (Özcan, 1994:19). In the Ottoman Period, it can be said that the fabrics weaved in the court ateliers reflected the ornamental features of the period, and even the most brilliant age was experienced in terms of embroidery. Although all of the embroidered patterns reflected the artistic features of the period, textile patterns were exposed to change in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with the influence of the West in terms of both political transformation and artistic and cultural scope. The textiles in question are an important matter of research in terms of introducing our national identity in the global world. The primary objectives of the research were to;

- identify the roles of *çevres* in Turkish textile arts and culture,
- description of the *çevres* in terms of design composition.

In this paper, my approach is how case study research can contribute a more critical awareness. Within this point of view, six of the fifteen *çevres* included in the textile collection in Ege University Ethnography Museum were chosen according to their different ornamental features for searching.

## Method

In this study, qualitative research method is used by conducting a comprehensive literature scan. Museum archives were analyzed as well as literature scanning; interviews were made with museum employees and theoretical background was formed for the study. With the approval taken from the museum, the museum was visited between 20.01.2020 and 30.01.2020 determining the *çevres* techniques, utilized materials, surface design which made up of motifs, patterns and composition schemas. The obtained data were supported photograph taking. In the conclusion, the *çevres* were analyzed and interpreted by author in terms of technical, motifs and design compositions.

### Embroidered *Çevres* in Ege University Ethnography Museum

In recent times, “the museological and anthropological literature has raised fundamental questions about the role of ethnographic museums in the modern world” (Keurs, 1999:68; Shelton, 1997).

Ethnography museums are the museums where various kinds of works and products are exhibited regarding the customs, traditions and clothes and daily life of early civilizations. Ethnography museums in Turkey are institutions which enlighten our rich history and which aims to preserve our material culture. One of these institutions is the Ege University Ethnography Museum in Bornova district of the city of İzmir. The museum which was established in 2010 with the name of ‘Ege University Museum of Balkan and Anatolian Clothes’ changed its name as *Ethnography Museum* in the same year with the application made to The Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The museum has an important role with the rich collection of its in telling the Anatolian and Balkan culture to today’s generation and transmitting it to next generations.

The museum covers 2300 traditional clothing registered in the inventory, and entirely original 3040 textile products and objects composed of various trunks and lockers. Some are displayed in glass showcases and some in glass cabinets (Emre Eroğlu, 2013:12). Among the displayed products there are many clothes and textile materials such as pouches, *bindallıs* (the long robe embroidered dress), bridal gowns, napkins, *oya* (laces), *peşkirs* (cloth or hand towel), pants, knitted socks and vests. Among all textile materials mentioned above, there are also embroidered *çevres* (kerchiefs) used mostly in weddings or special days.

On the surface of *çevres* having attention with plant embroideries mostly, diaphanous fabrics such as muslin or marquisette were preferred. On the weaves, natural color of the fabric like cream/off-white were used; for beadworks counting work technique was preferred. Considering the composition features, there are embroideries in two sides of a *çevre*. Having the main pattern at the center, it is composed of repeating arrangements connected to one another which are ornamented with small patterns on the sides. In the embroideries pastel color tones attract attention; green is

mostly noticed to be used. There are some yellowing parts depending on preserving conditions and time on the fabric surface and there is some wearing out parts on the edges. As can be understood from inventory records besides all these, some of the çevres were brought to the museum by purchase and some by donations.

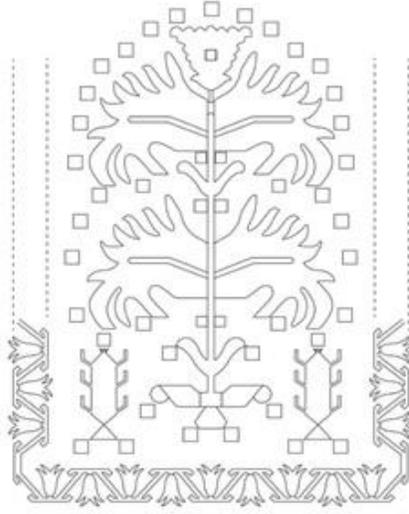
### Findings

The count-work çevres which are in Ege University Ethnography Museum date back to the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries according to inventory records. It is known that çevres are generally presented as gifts or sometimes are used as a belt just as tied onto head or neck as ornaments. The examples of çevres in the museum are made of cotton weaved fabric, and are embroidered head scarfs with patterns on their four corners. On both edges of çevres, there are leaves on a first-straight, then- bias branch from right to left like a border. Embroideries are composed of basic patterns like flowers, leaves, fruit and trees. Stylized from nature, the patterns of hyacinth, curved branches and tree of life are preferred at most. Patterns are arranged as skipping, proper sorting, and directed to the center, from right to left and from left to right.

Patterns were embroidered traditionally on the edges and corners of natural colored- hand weaved çevres with cotton fabrics, whose weave color got dark in the course of time, unifying with the natural colors of the weave thread and aestheticized the çevres (Ulla, 1993:16). Besides general features of çevres, the findings obtained from the samples analyzed within the scope of the research according to the inventory records are given below as a catalogue.



Archive 1: Çevre. (left) Detail (right). 20<sup>th</sup> century. Courtesy of Ege University Ethnography Museum.



Drawing 1: Illustrated by author

*Inventory No:* 01-2014 (311-1)

*Dating of the pieces:* Purchased from antique store in İzmir (01.12.2008)

*Craft origin:* Ottoman Period 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Size:* 162x44cm

*Materials and Tools:* Cotton weaving, *kasnak* (tambour), strecher, needle, *iğnedan* (needle-box), cotton thread, thin silver wire

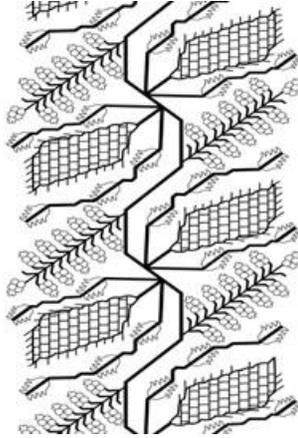
*Techniques:* *Hesap işi* (Counting work)

*Colors:* gold-colored, blue, green, pink

*Design properties:* There is a big-size plantal pattern in the center of the fabric surface. The edges of the pattern are embroidered with spots, using silver purl. There are small the cypress tree motif under and the both sides of the main pattern. The cypress tree which we encounter most often in Turkish arts can be preferred in this sample because it symbolizes immortality and represents life itself (Sevim, Kahraman and Eroz, 2017). There are repetitions of the same pattern under and at the sides of the pattern; a regular edging is embroidered around the pattern with plantal patterns. Some of the design elements are seen to have been used with proportion, pattern repetitions, color harmony and symmetric form order.



Archive 2: Çevre. (left) Detail (right). 20<sup>th</sup> century. Courtesy of Ege University Ethnography Museum.



Drawing 2: Illustrated by author

*Inventory No:* 02-2015 (311-2)

*Dating of the pieces:* Purchased from antique store in İzmir (01.12.2008)

*Craft origin:* Ottoman Period 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Size:* 188x34cm

*Materials and Tools:* Cotton weaving, *kasnak* (tambour), strecher, needle, *iğnedan* (needle-box), cotton thread

*Techniques:* *Hesap işi* (Counting work)

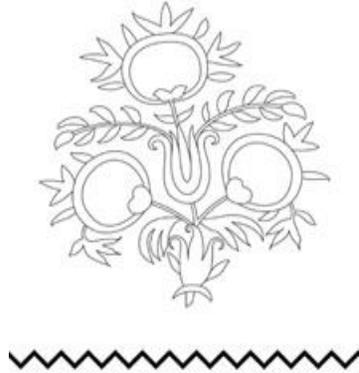
*Colors:* Violet, lilac, pink tones, green tones

*Design properties:* On both edges of the fabric, there are hyacinth patterns and leaves lined up on a zig zag branch linearly. There are very thin

zig zag stitches on the edges of patterns. Under it, the main pattern is repeated symmetrically. This pattern adorned with green-colored leaves in harmony with nature and pink and lilac color hyacinths was made in a realistic way.



Archive 3: Çevre. (left) Detail (right). 20<sup>th</sup> century. Courtesy of Ege University Ethnography Museum.



Drawing 3: Illustrated by author

*Inventory No:* 05-2018 (311-5)

*Dating of the pieces:* Purchased from antique store in İzmir (01.12.2008)

*Craft origin:* Ottoman Period 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Size:* 182x38cm

*Materials and Tools:* Cotton weaving, *kasnak* (tambour), strecher, needle, *iğnedan* (needle-box), cotton thread

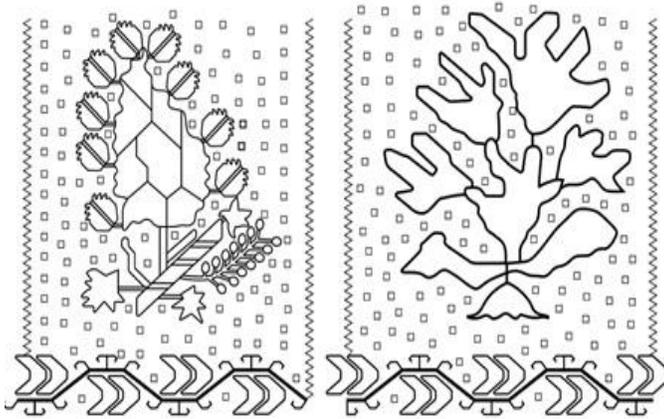
*Techniques:* *Hesap işi* (Counting work)

*Colors:* Light blue, green, violet, pink, grey

*Design properties:* On the surface of the fabric plain and simple leaf patterns and three patterns of pomegranates and on their sides small clove patterns have been embroidered. Below, zig zag border takes the attention, in which white, powder, purple, green and lilac colors were used respectively. The pomegranate motif represents the abundance, immortality, fertility and eternity in Turkish ornamental arts especially Islamic arts (Çoruhlu, 2006: 11; Esin, 2003: 1; Ersoy, 2000: 388; Çağlıtütüncügil, 2013: 79).



Figure 4: Çevre. (left) Detail (right). 20<sup>th</sup> century. Courtesy of Ege University Ethnography Museum.



Drawing 4: Illustrated by author

*Inventory No:* 08-2021 (311-8)

*Dating of the pieces:* Purchased from antique store in İzmir (01.12.2008)

*Craft origin:* Ottoman Period 20<sup>th</sup> century

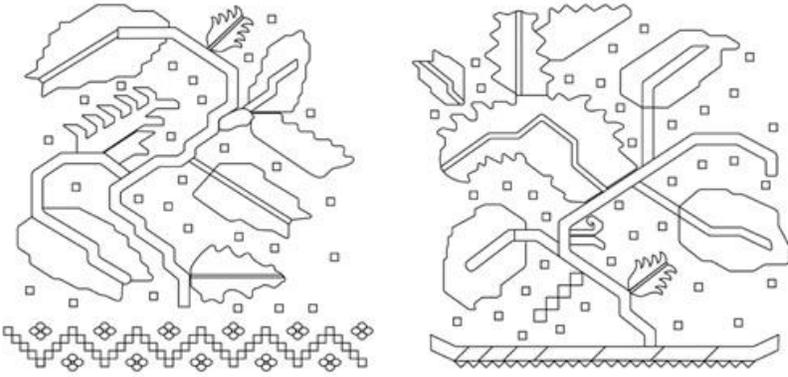
*Size:* 227x35cm

*Materials and Tools:* Cotton weaving, *kasnak* (tambour), strecher, needle, *iğnedan* (needle-box), cotton thread, thin gold wire

*Techniques:* *Hesap işi* (Counting work)

*Colors:* Green tones, violet, blue

*Design properties:* In the sample where large-sized pattern of a leaf was placed on cream color fabric ground, zig zag edging was embroidered at the edges of the pattern and ivy pattern to the below. In the composition of patterns embroidered in a realistic style, the repetitions of the same patterns are seen one under another and side by side; using purple in between leaf patterns colored in green demonetized the pattern. The edges of patterns were rounded up spots with yellow purl, leaving no empty space in the composition.



Archive 5: Çevre. (left) Detail (right). 20<sup>th</sup> century. Courtesy of Ege University Ethnography Museum.



Drawing 5: Illustrated by author

*Inventory No:* 09-2022 (311-9)

*Dating of the pieces:* Purchased from antique store in İzmir (01.12.2008)

*Craft origin:* Ottoman Period 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Size:* 186x39cm

*Materials and Tools:* Cotton weaving, *kasnak* (tambour), strecher, needle, *iğnedan* (needle-box), cotton thread

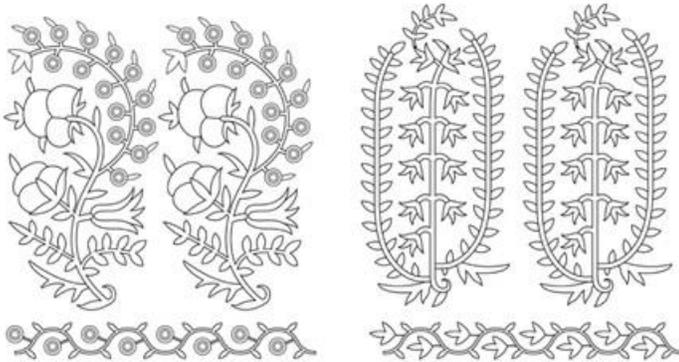
*Techniques:* *Hesap işi* (Counting work)

*Colors:* Brown, lilac, green tones

*Design properties:* At the center of *çevre*, leaf patterns of plant origin were embroidered and between them small size hyacinths were embroidered. There is a zig zag edging under the main pattern; between them, small geometrical shapes were repeated. The composition made of pattern repetitions one under another and side by side was colored in pastel colors, patterns displaying an impression away from realism.



Archive 6: *Çevre*. (left) Detail (right). 20<sup>th</sup> century. Courtesy of Ege University Ethnography Museum.



Drawing 6: Illustrated by author

*Inventory No:* 11-2024 (311-11)

*Dating of the pieces:* Purchased from antique store in İzmir (01.12.2008)

*Craft origin:* Ottoman Period 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Size:* 231x43cm

*Materials and Tools:* Cotton weaving, *kasnak* (tambour), strecher, needle, *iğnedan* (needle-box), cotton thread

*Techniques:* *Hesap işi* (Counting work)

*Colors:* Yellow, blue, green, brown tones

*Design properties:* The pattern embroidered with two flowers side by side and leaf motif is located in the center; below there is an edging in which zig zag branches and small circles are placed. The branches were embroidered with gold-colored purl. On the right, there are flower patterns hanging down on the branch and in the center there is an ivy pattern surrounding the garland-type main pattern. Below the main pattern, zig zag branch with an edging is repeated, having flower pattern in between.

### **Conclusion**

Among Turkish textile arts, the embroideries applied intensively in the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century exist today with modern and traditional techniques.

In general, the raw material of all six embroidered *çevres* searched within the scope of the study is cotton, with no dyeing process and in its natural color and they are local weaves woven in plain weave technique. With the embroideries on *çevres*, silk thread and silver and yellow flat wire is used. In the embroideries, mostly green and its tones, yellow, blue, pink and rarely brown colors were preferred with a multicolor (polychrome) application. A style close to nature is seen in colorization, while some samples went out of the style. In the patterns of the embroideries in which *Hesap İşi* (counting work) technique was used, the motifs were mostly inspired by nature and the interpretation of beauties in nature were transmitted to the fabric with a plain expression. In the embroideries, main patterns are in the center, plants being interpreted stylized without deforming them. In the *çevres* among mostly used plantal motifs there are hyacinths, cloves, flower buds, leaves, branches, stylized plants and pomegranate patterns.

In all samples, there are embroideries on each of the two opposite edges, and the repetition of more than one motif embroidered parallel to edges were placed side by side and one under another. There are some stains and paling of colors on these samples having reached our time depending on the usage or because of preservation conditions

Considering the patterns, techniques, motifs, and the applied colors of embroideries, it is clear that they reflected the socio-economic structure, cultural features, traditions and customs of the local area. It is necessary to spread the museums that have an important role in the transmission of cultural values to next generations and to generalize the researches and introductions to me performed on historical objects included in museums.

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