

MERSİN TOROS MUSEUM YÖRÜK WEAVINGS

MERSİN TOROSLAR MÜZESİ YÖRÜK DOKUMALARI

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Abstract

Yörük weavings have an important place in Anatolian history and culture. In Anatolian geography, people who migrate according to climatic conditions to feed their animals and accept this mobility as a lifestyle are called Yörük. Sacks, sackcloths, saddles, floor mats and bags made with carpets, rugs, cicim, zili and sumakh techniques woven by nomads form a wide product repertoire. Such items have a number of physical features peculiar to Anatolian peoples. These features are more pronounced among nomadic groups who live their lives as semi-sedentary beings. Yörüks raise sheep and goats to earn a living and meet their needs. Due to the high density of Yörük settlement in Mersin region, the motif, color and composition features found in weavings are very rich. The *Toros Yörük Museum*, located in *Toros* district, is a museum that carries the artworks of the Yörük culture to future generations. The aim of this study is to examine the plain weaves found in the *Toros Yörük Museum* in terms of technique, material, color, composition and size, and to emphasize its importance in the context of Anatolian Turkish culture.

Keywords: Plain Weavings, Mersin, Toros Yörük Museum, Yörüks.

Öz

Yörük dokumalarının Anadolu tarihi ve kültüründe önemli bir yeri vardır. Anadolu coğrafyasında, hayvanlarını beslemek için iklim koşullarına göre göç eden ve bu hareketliliği bir yaşam tarzı olarak kabul eden insan topluluklarına Yörük adı verilmektedir. Yörüklerin dokudukları halı, kilim, cicim, zili ve sumakh teknikleri ile yapılan çuvallar, çullar, eyerler, yer yağlıları ve çantalar geniş bir ürün repertuarını oluştururlar. Bu tür eşyalar, Anadolu halklarına özgü bir dizi fiziksel özelliğe sahiptir. Bu özellik, daha çok yarı yerleşik varlıklar olarak hayatlarını yaşayan göçebe gruplar arasında belirgindir. Yörükler, koyun ve keçi gibi küçükbaş hayvanları, geçimlerini sağlamak ve kendi ihtiyaçlarını gidermek için yetiştirirler. Mersin yöresinde Yörük yerleşiminin yoğun olmasından dolayı dokumalarda bulunan motif, renk ve kompozisyon özellikleri çok zengindir. Toros ilçesinde bulunan Toroslar Yörük Müzesi de Yörük kültürünün sanat eserlerini gelecek kuşaklara taşıyan bir müzedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Toroslar Yörük Müzesi'nde tespit edilen düz dokumaları teknik, malzeme, renk, kompozisyon ve boyut açısından incelemek ve Anadolu Türk kültürü bağlamında önemini vurgulamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Düz dokuma, Mersin, Toroslar Yörük Müzesi, Yörük.

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1. Introduction

Mersin is a big city and port on the Mediterranean coast in southern Turkey. It is an intercity part of the Adana-Mersin Metropolitan Area and is located in the western part of Cukurova, a geographical, economic and cultural region.

Kizzuvatna is the oldest known name of Mersin region. Excavations and researches in the region revealed that the first settlements were in the 7th millennium BC. Archaeological excavations in Gözlükule Tumulus and Yumuktepe show that Mersin region is a very important historical and prehistoric center. The first settlements in Gözlükule started in the Neolithic Period. The 33 settlement layers in Gözlükule indicate that there has been a constant settlement in that area until today. The site contains artifacts of a mixed economy of farming and animal husbandry.

Given the environmental conditions of the Mersin region the area support sedentary life based on a mixed economy of agriculture and animal husbandry. These groups dealing with animal husbandry need a cool climate and wide pastures. Yörüks maintain their lifestyle, culture and livelihood despite technological advances.

Weaving is one of most important activities of semi-nomadic people. Wool and goat hair are the raw materials employed for weaving in Mersin region. In region, mustard yellow from acorn tree, green from valonia oak and brown color from onion skin are obtained (Ata, interview:2018). Since natural dyes are produced from nature's materials, these color combinations vary according to access and location.

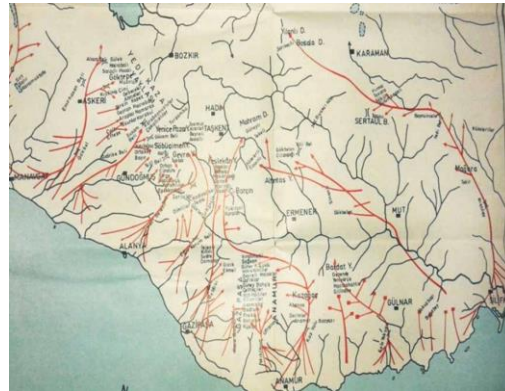


Figure 1. Migratory routes of Mersin district (Yörüks Workshop, 8 May 2015).

Yörüks in Mersin go to Dumbelek plateau in the second week of May and return to Mersin at the end of September (Figure 1). Some Yörük groups go to the plateaus in the Toros mountains or to the Konya plain. These migration routes are based on data from 17th century Ottoman records and archaeological remains. (Marchese, 1995a:213-232; 1995b:75-86; Cribb, 2004). The most important job for men in the plateau is grazing animals. Women, on the other hand, make cheese and yoghurt and take care of their children despite the difficult conditions of life on the plateau. In their spare time, they are weaving on Istar looms for use in hair-covered haircloth tents (Figure 2).

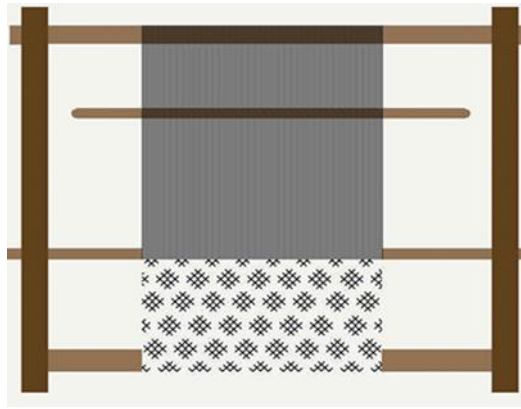


Figure 2. Istar Vertical Loom (Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The subject of the present study is plain weavings belonging to the Yörüks in the *Toros* Museum. Nine of the plain weavings purchased by the museum and donated to the museum by the local people is chosen as samples. Traditional weaving, which transferred the artistic talent and creativity of Yörüks from generation to generation, has been forgotten in recent years. It is very important to compile and document the weaving samples of the *Toros* culture as a source for future studies and not to forget these weaving types. The aim of this study is to examine the material, technique, color, pattern and composition features of the weavings in the *Toros* Museum and to document this information within the scope of cultural heritage. In fact, at this point, direct comparison of samples with similar designs about Yörük weavings can produce any objective data. Essentially every tribe, that hand weaves beautiful weavings uses specific sizes, colours and motifs that are unique to their area or group. Therefore handmade textiles

reflect the identity and nationality of ethnic groups. In fact, direct comparison of samples with similar designs related to Yörük weavings can produce all kinds of objective data at this point. Starting from the simplest forms, these textiles are symbols of tribal identity, the most basic usage elements of prestige and the most detailed works of decorative beauty.

1.2. Method of the Study

The qualitative research method, a method that uses data collection modalities such as interviews, observation, and document analysis, and follows a process to present perceptions and events in the natural environment in a realistic and holistic approach, is used in this study. Therefore, the *Toros* Museum was visited in March 2018 and a total of nine plain weaving samples were found in the museum. These weavings were examined in detail in terms of their material, technique, colour, motif and composition, photographed and documented with drawings. In order to learn the names of the motifs in the weavings, interviews were held with the Yörüks working in the museum and municipality of *Toros* district.

2. Toros Museum Yörük Weavings

In weavings in *Toros* museum, the goat hairs used in warp and weft are mostly natural black. The pattern thread of the weavings is wool yarn. The purpose of using goat hair in warps and scarves is to take precautions against harmful animals such as scorpions in the tent. Looking at the history of traditional weaving, it is seen that the use of goat hair as well as sheep wool is quite common in Yörük weaving (Genç ve Okca, 2017: 99). The weavings in the *Toros* museum are woven in zili, cicim and rug techniques and they were named as sackcloth in the region. Sackcloth is rough weaving made of goat hair and laid on the ground to protect in the tent from the cold. In Mersin region, the warp yarn is called *çözün* and the weft threads are called *argaç*. These products, which are obtained by donation and purchasing in the *Toros* Museum, were generally made for use as floor covering. The motifs used in the weavings are motifs *bıtırak, eğri su, sığır sidiği, ayak, eğri su, akrepli, göz, elma, yıldız, muska and eğer kaşı*. It has been possible to reach only nine pieces plain weaves, since the *Toros* Museum is newly established. In these weavings, geometric, symbolic, vegetable and animal motifs are used that reflect the inner world of the *Toros* Yörüks.

Anatolian geography has been the cradle of many civilizations in the historical process. Therefore, Anatolia has a rich weaving culture with its geopolitical location, belief systems and traditions. It is seen that Yörük and Turkmen groups have a great influence on this. These communities are engaged in animal husbandry for their livelihood and benefit from the meat, milk and wool of the animals they feed. Therefore, they have produced woven products in order to meet their needs in traditional hand looms by dyeing the wool they obtained from their animals with plants found in the rich nature of Anatolia.



Figure 3. Mor Gulak (Purple Ear) Zili (Floor mat), 20th Century, 101 cm x 135 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The weaving seen in figure 3 is 101 cm x 135 cm. This is a sample woven in the region and has been obtained by the museum through purchase. This weaving is called the *Mor Gulak* (Purple Ear) (Ata, Interview:2018). Goat hair and wool were used for weaving. The Purple Ear motif used on the base of the weaving is arranged along the ground according to the eternity principle. The border of the weaving is surrounded by the *Eğri Su* motif (MEGSB, 1985:47). The colors used in weaving are yellow, orange, green, pink, light blue, red, white and black (Figure 3). It was woven with woven *kilim*, *cicim* and *zili* techniques.

Zili is complementary weft weaving technique and a type of floating weaving commonly used for tents, cushions, sacks and mats. It has an embossed appearance that covers the entire surface of the material with a unique effect that runs parallel to the warps. This in technique extra colored pattern threads are wrapped around warps, usually in a ratio of 2: 1, 3: 1 or 5: 1.

Kilim is actually an item used to meet the needs of people and it is a Turkish word; that is, it refers to the weaving technique. "Tapestry weave" and "flat-weaving" are the closest terms to describe it. In kilim weaving, in certain areas where the patterns are found, colored pattern yarns pass under and over the warps, go to the pattern row of another color and return from there. Thus, different colored pattern yarns move between warps, between their own pattern areas, forming a motif.

In the *Cicim* technique, the weft, warp and colored threads that make up the ground are mostly threads of the same thickness and color, but the pattern threads that make up the motifs are thicker. These pattern yarns give the weaving an embossed look.

In figure 3 the *Yörev Farda* motif (*Deveboynu-Kaydırma*) the motif serves as a contour by surrounding the purple ear pattern (Figure 3). This motif, known as *guilloche* in architecture, is known among the Anatolian people by different names such as *deve boynu / Çakmacık* (Uşak-Eşme), *Aşşık* (Kırıkkale), *Kırma-Akıtma* (Mersin), *kaydırma* (Sivas, Manisa) and *Kertik* (Tunceli Şavak Turkmens) (Görgünay, 2001:209). At the beginning and end of the weaving, there are woven *Ayak* (Foot)/*At gözü* motifs (Figure 3) with *cicim* technique (Onuk et al. 1998:34).

The weaving in figure 4 is a Single-Mihrab prayer rug woven in the region. The weaving measures 104 cm x 164 cm and was made with the *zili* and *cicim* technique. In prayer rugs, the *Mihrab* is the most important part of decoration. At the same time the *Mihrab* is an architectural element in the form of a hollow on the walls of Mosques, Masjids and Tombs that determine the direction of the Kaaba. The word *Mihrab* in Arabic means the most honored place, a place where a person prostrates. Clove (*Karanfil*) motifs seen inside the *Mihrab* symbolize heaven and earthly beauties, nature and fertility (Figure 4). It also expresses the purity of love. Clove motifs are used as a popular motif in carpets and fabrics. The clove motif, which was used in the composition of Ottoman silk fabrics between the 15th and 17th centuries, is also seen in tile art and illuminated manuscript. *Ayak* (Foot) (Figure 4) motifs woven with

cicim technique are placed at the beginning and end of the weaving (Onuk ve Akpınarlı, 2011:84-93). The border surrounding the floor of the weaving is ornamented with the motif of *Akrepli* (Figure 4) (Ata, Interview:2018). Goat hair and wool were used for weaving. The colors used in weaving are pink, dark blue, green, turquoise and cream



Figure 4. Zili Prayer Weaving, 20th Century, 104 cm x 164 cm, Toros Museum
(Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The weaving in figure 5 is 95 cm x 130 cm in size and has been woven with the zili technique. The floor of the weaving is made up of hexagons placed diagonally. Flower motifs are placed inside these hexagons (Figure 5). The colors used in weaving are claret red, dark pink, turquoise, white, orange and grey.



Figure 5. Zili (Floor mat), 20th Century, 95 cm x 130 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The weaving in figure 6 is 160 cm x 242 cm. This weaving has been named as *Palan* and *Direkli* (Dulkadir, Interview:2018). Palan weaving is locally called sackcloth but it is used as a floor mat. The weaving was obtained by purchase. It is woven with the weaving *zili* technique. Hexagons surrounded by eye motifs are arranged diagonally on the floor of the weaving according to the principle of infinity (Figure 6). Elma motifs (Onuk et al. 1998:26; Akdağ, 2010:36), which are also used in Seljuk carpets, were placed in hexagons. Some weavers in the region called this motif as *Nazlıcık*. The *heykel* (*devetabanı*) placed in the *Gols* is a motif that is frequently used in Anatolia carpets and plain weavings. In weaving the border is surrounded by *Eğri Su* (Figure 6) motif (MEGSB, 1985:34). This motif is named as waterway and *zig-zag* in various regions of Anatolia. Flower motifs were placed in the areas outside the hexagons. The local name for a different variation of the flower (*çiçek*) motif in the region is *Armutlu* (Figure 6) shaped. The colors used in weaving are tile red, orange, white, yellow, blue, black, light green and dark pink.



Figure 6. *Palan and Direkli Zili* (Floor mat), 20th Century, 160 cm x 242 cm, *Toros Museum* (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The weaving in figure 7 is 174 cm x 303 cm in size and has been woven with the *Zili* technique. It is a weaving obtained by the Museum through donation. In this sample, the floor of the weave is composed of octagons arranged diagonally according to the principle of infinity. *Satranc* motifs (Ata, interview:2018) were placed inside the octagons (Figure 7). In bordur is seen *Eğri su* motif (Figure 7). The colors used in weaving are pink, white, black, dark blue, yellow, orange and claret red.

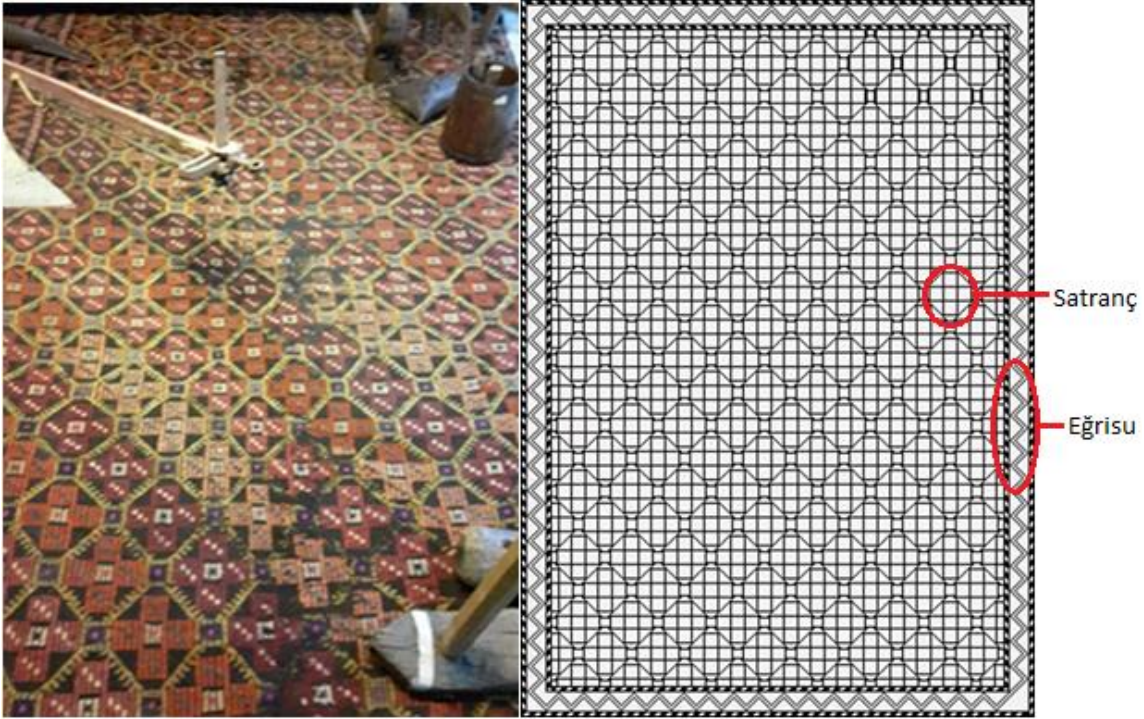


Figure 7. Satraç (Chess) Zili (Ata, Interview: 2018, Floor mat), 20th Century, 174 cm x 303 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The sample in figure 8 measures 74 cm x 164 cm. It is woven with woven rug and *cicim* technique. In this sample, the *Menemenci Bitırağı* (cocklebur) motifs are arranged diagonally according to the principle of infinity. This motif is named as *Pul* motif in *Çanakkale* nomad weavings (Öz ve Okca, 2018:225). *Bitırak* is a plant that grows in the fields, which sticks to people and animals. The *Menemenci Bitırağı* (Figure 8) motif has been stylized and used in all handicrafts in Anatolia (MEGSB, 1985:47). Anatolian people who believe that the *bitırak* thorns ward off the evil eye, have used it as an amulet (Erbek, 2002:108). The colors used in weaving are black, white, green, blue, pink, dark blue, purple and red.



Figure 8. Cicim weaving (Floor mat), 20th Century, 74 cm x 164 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).



Figure 9. Mor Gulak (Purple ear) Zili (Floor mat), 20th century, 114 cm x 184 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The *zili* weaving seen in figure 9 is 114 cm x 184 cm. The weaving was purchased by the museum. The name of this weaving is the *Mor Gulak zili*, as in the sample in figure 3. Two borders are seen in the weaving. *Muska* (amulet) motif stands out on the first border (Figure 9). The *muska* can be defined as an evil force from malevolent glances that harm people, animals, and objects (Marchese, 2003:35). In second border (Figure 9) *Eğer kaşı* motif is seen (Onuk ve Akpınarlı, 2011:93). The colors used in weaving are pink, yellow, dark blue, light green, blue, grey, orange and red.

The *zili* weaving seen in figure 10 is 85 cm x 130 cm. The weaving was obtained by purchase. The hexagons, which are placed according to the infinity principle in the weaving, are arranged in a diagonal manner throughout the weaving. The name of this weaving is *Kadın bastı/ Tabakalı zili* (Dulkadir ve Karabulut, interview:2018) (Figure 10). The colors used in weaving are pink, yellow, blue, green, red, white and black.



Figure 10. Kadın Bastı/Tabakalı Zili (Dulkadir ve Karabulut, interview:2018) (Drawing: Elif Aksoy) 20th century, 85 cm x 130 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).



Figure 11. Kelebekli/Yelekli Zili (Floor mat), 20th century, 150 cm x 160 cm, Toros Museum (Photo and Drawing: Elif Aksoy).

The *Kelebekli* (MEGSB, 1985:36) weaving, woven as a floor mat in figure 11, is 150 cm x 160 cm in size. The weaving was obtained by purchase. On the border of the weaving, the *eğri su* motif (MEGSB, 1985:34) is seen. *Kelebek* motifs are placed inside the hexagons in the weaving. The Star motif is a frequently used motif in local weavings (Figure 11). This motif symbolizes the universe and happiness (Erbek, 2002:86). The colors used in weaving are pink, blue, green, red, white, black and orange.

3. Conclusion

What gives a country, nation or community a sense of national identity is its cultural heritage. Culture is a way of living and thinking. Although many cultures share common beliefs, each group's culture has unique characteristics that set it apart from others.

Plain weavings have been produced and used in Anatolia for centuries. These weavings are cultural tools a unique for of material culture that transfer the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions of the culture to which they belong from generation to generation. The motifs in the weavings are symbols that express emotion, thought, and desire. Anatolian women created a silent language of speech by giving meaning to the objects they see in their environment. This symbolic expression has become a common language and silent communication tool for women living in various regions of Anatolia.

Yörüks generally live in the foothills of the *Toros* Mountains, around *Mersin* and *Antalya*, around *İzmir*, *Aydın*, *Denizli*, *Afyon*, in the Aegean coasts, and in the villages of *Tekirdağ*, *Çanakkale* and *Edirne* in the Rumeli region. Considering the similarities and interactions in their weavings, even though Yörük communities live in different regions, they have the same culture and tradition.

The plain weavings in *Toros* Museum have been obtained through purchase and donation. These weavings, which are unique examples of Yörük culture, reflect not only the art but also the lifestyle and ethnographic features of that culture. Considering the current life of Yörüks, it is seen that weaving activities are not carried out as much as before and weaving culture is gradually replaced by ready-made products.

On the borders of these weavings, generally *eğri su* and *ayak (foot)* motifs are seen. Weavers called their weavings as *mor gulak*, *meneg (benek)*, *satranç*, *kadın bastı*, *eşek dişi*, *serpmeli*, *göbekli*, *dillikli*, *cingilli*, *çamlıca güllü*, *melek*, *yelekli ve palan*. As mentioned above, the weavings in the region were named by the weavers not with the name of the region but with the name of the pattern. Geometric, symbolic and floral motifs are used in the weavings in the *Toros* Museum. Motif, color and composition features in Mersin region are quite rich in terms of weaving. Reflecting the feelings and thoughts of the weaver, these motifs also describe her lifestyle and geography. Each of these weavings is different from each other in their special designs, symbolism and dimensions; these features are inherited from mother to daughter, and therefore the same patterns, symbols and beautiful shades have been used in these weavings for centuries. The reinterpretation of these motifs according to today's aesthetic and artistic understanding and their application to new works of art will be a major contribution to the promotion of Yörük culture and art.

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