

TRADITIONAL WOMEN'S APPARELS OF BULGARIAN IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN ESKIŞEHİR¹

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Abstract

As part of culture, clothing is a phenomenon which develops with humanity, which is specific to communities, being shaped according to their taste, and reflecting the community's living conditions and lifestyles. The Turks who emigrated changed their clothing to adapt to the geographical and physical features as well as the living conditions at the places they migrated to, and through being influenced by the people in their region. Bulgaria is one of the countries to which great emigrations from the Ottoman empire took place. Having lived together for many years, the Turks and the Bulgarians were influenced by each other in clothing culture just as in every other field. These migrations, which took place intensively from time to time, are still continuing.

This research aims to reveal the traditional women's apparels of immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir and the characteristics of their apparel. Historical and review methods were used in the research. From the sources reached using the survey form prepared as data collection tool, apparels reflecting general characteristics of the traditional women's apparels of the immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir were examined.

Key Words: Clothing Culture, Sociologic Phenomenon, Clothing History

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1. Introduction

Being a part of culture, clothing changes according to the living conditions, lifestyles and the influences of values and ethical codes of communities. All communities have different apparels distinguishing them from each other, complete with complementary ornamental techniques and accessories.

Clothing has been an important necessity since the dawn of mankind. This necessity is shaped by social and individual belief, social mores, educational level, age, traditional values, climate, seasons and form of government (Salman, 2007: 25).

One of the most vivid documents of cultures, clothing has varied throughout history with the influence of lifestyle and living conditions, producing traditional apparels as a result (Kılınç and Yıldırım, 2008: 19).

While international fashion has been adopted by many countries throughout the world, traditional clothing that has its roots in the history of nation is now merely kept alive in rural areas, and otherwise exhibited in museums as examples of cultural heritage (Çivitci, 2008: 146; Özel, 1992: 11). The trend in the Ottoman empire towards Westernization in the 1850s has been influential in many areas, including clothing (Altınay, Yüceer;1992:90). Undergoing great changes as a result of this Westernization, traditional Turkish apparels have been delegated to being worn only at weddings in some areas, while in others, they have all but disappeared completely.

Throughout history, there have been great differences among Turkish apparels, occasioned by the place they originated, whether that place was an area of immigration, the changing structure of society and the stages of development. However, generally the most widely used elements of traditional Turkish clothing include headdresses, embroidered frocks (bindallı), shalwars, vests and jackets buttoned in the front, kaftans, feraces and aprons (Erden, 1999).

After the industrial revolution and with the increasing inclusion of women in work outside of the home, the fashion phenomenon begun to spread quickly in all strata of society. Since fashion has become an important part of modern life, traditional clothing, one of the most important elements of traditional culture, is no longer valued as much as in the past, which has placed these traditional apparels in danger of disappearing completely, although they are so important as to be part of a society's cultural heritage. A review of the literature about Turkish clothing culture made it clear that the women's apparels of Turkish people who migrated to Eskişehir from Bulgaria had not been scientifically studied before, which was effective in determining the subject of the research. This research will be instrumental in the documentation of traditional clothing belonging to our cultural heritage, and it is thought that it will also support research in cultural history regarding clothing.

The city of Eskişehir and the Traditional Women's Apparels Belonging to Immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir

Eskişehir, one of the most important cities of Turkey, boasts a history beginning around BC 3000. Since then, the city has been a settlement in the Hittite, Phrygian, Lydian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Anatolian Selchuk and Ottoman periods (Toprak and İznik; 2009:49). The founding of modern-day Eskişehir can be pinpointed as the settling of Turkmens, emigrating to Anatolia after the collapse of the Selchuk empire, on the slopes of a hill overlooking what is now Odunpazarı and the Porsuk valley. Forming the outermost point

of the Anatolian Selchuk empire, Eskişehir also witnessed the founding of the Ottoman empire (Doğru; 2005:36). In WWI, moving the Ottoman government to Eskişehir temporarily and making the city the center of the Ottoman Empire was debated. An important location in the Turkish War of Liberation, Eskişehir went down in history as the location of the İnönü battles (Sarıkoyuncu, Önder and Erşan; 2002:6). Travelers to the city in the early nineteenth century described the place as being backward and desolate. However, the city revived when it became a junction point on the Baghdad-Berlin railway finished in 1894, and with the influx of Tatar, Nogai, Abkhaz and Circassian immigrants from the Crimea and the Caucasus, from the beginning of the 1768-1774 Ottoman-Russian War onwards, and with the settling of immigrants from the Balkans following the 1877-1878 Ottoman-Russian War, known as the 93 War in Turkey (Güneş, Yakut; 2007:37). Having lived in a cosmopolitan environment since the nineteenth century, the settlers still continue life in harmony, aware of and respectful of their differences, and continue their traditions.

An examination of traditional Anatolian clothing from a cultural point of view shows that they show similarities due to all being Turkish apparels, but show marked differences among each other due to the influences of geographic conditions and dissimilar cultures. Customs, traditions and mores surrounding birth, marriage and death, the three man turning points in Anatolian life, are very influential in perpetuating clothing culture. In Eskişehir, where many different cultures coexist, the population is known for being loyal to tradition. Using every opportunity to revive their traditions, the people of Eskişehir keep their traditional apparels alive by wearing them to weddings and other festivities (Şener; 2006:232).

Today, traditional apparels used for special occasions are all but forgotten. The aim of this study is to protect these apparels from oblivion and document them, so that our traditions and traditional clothing can be available for generations to come.

The next section of this study will deal with the material and the method used for the research on traditional women's apparels of immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir.

2. Method

The aim of this study is to research the traditional clothing culture of immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir, examine traditional women's apparels to identify their general characteristics, and to contribute to the documentation of these apparels, losing their use value in daily life as time passes, as historical and cultural clothing.

The methods used in this study are the historical method, used in studying events and phenomena from the past, or the study of a problem's link to the past (Kaptan, 1988: 53), and the review method, a research method aiming to describe a situation from the past or the present in its natural state (Karasar, 2008: 77).

To gather the research data, written sources, newspapers and magazines belonging to the time periods related to the research, encyclopedia and books on history and the history of clothing were reviewed, and people who witnessed the immigration from Bulgaria to Eskişehir were interviewed.

The research environment of the study is comprised of traditional women's apparels belonging to immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir. The sample consists of visual documents found in written sources in the review, and one elmasiye (sateen), one telli and one kutnu that were accessed.

In order to gather data on the subject, a structured observation form developed by the researchers was used, comprising the type of clothing, the material used, the color of the apparel, the decoration technique, the sewing technique and the stitch cleanup technique. After the data gathering process, the data obtained through the observation form were analyzed, transferred to tables without taking into account the apparel type variable, and interpreted.

3. Findings – Interpretation

This section contains the data obtained as result of the research aiming to examine visuals showing 13 apparels and traditional women's apparels of immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir and to determine the attributes of the apparels.



Apparel 1



Apparel 2



Apparel 3



Apparel 4



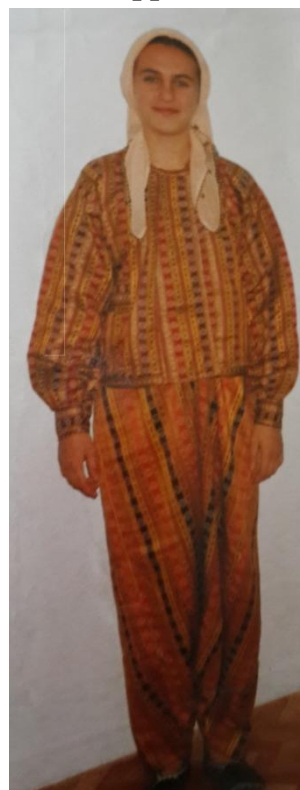
Apparel 5



Apparel 6



Apparel 7



Apparel 8



Apparel 9


Apparel 10
Apparel 11
Apparel 12
Apparel 13
Table 1. Distribution of Apparels Comprising the Sample Group According to Apparel Type

Apparels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total		
														F	%	
Bindallı	X	X	X												3	23,07
Elmasiye (Sateen)					X	X									2	15,38
Wedding Dress				X			X								2	15,38
Kutnu								X							1	7,69
Telli									X	X	X	X	X		5	38,46
Total															13	100

n=13

Table 1 shows that 38,46 % of the sample group consisting of apparels belonging to immigrant women from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir are telli, 23,07 % of the group are bindallı, 15,38 % are elmasiye (sateen), 15,38 % are wedding gowns, and 7,69 % are kutnu sets. The telli, comprising the majority of the sample group, is made of material women with metal wires and consists of two pieces, a shalwar and a blouse. Generally, most of the apparels are two-piece sets consisting of shalwar and blouse. The shalwar used by Turks is an important apparel, also used by immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir. It appears that the owners of these apparels maintained the attributes of Turkish material culture in spite of spending many years in Bulgaria, except for the seat of the shalwar hanging a little lower due

to nature conditions and the shalwar itself being cut wider than the examples used in Anatolia, the latter presumably being due to better economic conditions owing to the more fertile land.

The blouses usually have shirt collars and normal double layers, as well as cuffs. The shalwars among the apparels belonging to immigrant women from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir have low seats (10 cm above the ankle) and are cut out of 3.5 meters of material. Generally all apparels have simple patterns. The blouses have yokes or princess seams. The shalwar consists of four simple pieces: two each of the leg and waistband pieces.

Table 2. Examination of the Apparels as to Their Material, Color, Decoration Technique, Sewing Technique and Stitch Cleanup Technique

Apparels Attributes		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1 1	1 2	1 3	Total	
		f	%													
Material	Velvet	X	X	X											3	23,07
	Satin				X			X							2	15,38
	Sateen					X	X								2	15,38
	Kutnu								X						1	7,69
	Telli									X	X	X	X	X	5	38,46
Color	Burgundy		X	X	X										3	23,07
	Blue										X				1	7,69
	Navy	X													1	7,69
	White							X						X	2	15,38
	Red					X	X								2	15,38
	Yellow								X				X		2	15,38
	Grey									X					1	7,69
	Pale Red													X	1	7,69
Stitch Cleanup Technique	Sheeting								X						1	7,69
	Double Straight Stitch									X	X	X	X	X	5	38,46
	English Stitch				X	X	X	X							4	30,76
	Overcast Stitch	X	X	X											3	23,07
Sewing Technique	Machine Stitch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	12	92,30
	Hand Stitch								X						1	7,69
Decoration Technique	Pleat	X				X	X					X		X	5	38,46
	Hand Sewing								X						1	7,69
	Embroidery		X					X							2	15,38
	Skip-stitch	X		X				X							3	23,07

n=9

A review of Table 2 showing the materials, colors, decoration techniques, sewing techniques and stitch cleanup techniques of the apparels belonging to immigrant women from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir shows that the *telli* material is used most often, and the colors red, white and burgundy are the most popular. As for the decoration techniques of the apparels, pleat, skip-stitch, embroidery and hand sewing stitches were found to have been used. The sewing technique used most often, with only one exception, was machine stitch, while among the stitch cleanup techniques, double straight stitch and English stitch were used most often. A general look at the apparels reveals that colorful and luxuriant materials were preferred rather than simple ones, which leads to the thought that the intention behind the choice of material was to attract attention. It is interesting, however, that very little embroidery was used in the decoration of the apparels. The Maraş or Antep style embroidery used all over Anatolia is not found in the apparels that are the subject of this study. Only two apparels featured embroidery, and those were machine-stitched. *Kutnu* material, used all over Anatolia, is found in our sample. Since this material is used by all Turks, owners of the apparels that are the subject of this study are similar to Anatolia also in this respect.

4. Conclusion

With the advances in technology and the changes in human lifestyles, societies are rapidly moving away from traditional culture, preferring to use products and apparels more practical in daily life. Apparels left by one generation to the next as material culture are thus left unused and relegated to museum pieces. With their long and varied history, Turks have not only influenced all the areas they lived in, from Central Asia to Europe, but they have also been influenced by the cultures in which they have found themselves. Apparels contain information regarding the lifestyles of societies, their values and forms of government.

Differences among apparels, within societies and even within social groups, have always existed. Eskişehir is a historical settlement, the host to many ancient cultures and civilizations. Traditional clothing, bearing the traces of community life, has an important place in traditional culture. However, there are important deficiencies as far as the research and detailed examination of traditional cultures living in Eskişehir are concerned.

In this study begun to partly remedy this deficiency, traditional women's apparels belonging to immigrants from Bulgaria living in Eskişehir were examined, their general attributes were defined, and the apparels were documented so as to prevent their disappearance in time.

In the study, the most common type of apparel was found to be the shalwar. The most commonly used material was found to be *telli*, and the most popular colors were burgundy, red and white. An examination of the decoration techniques of the apparels revealed that pleat, skip-stitch, embroidery and hand sewing stitches were used. The sewing technique used most often was machine stitch, while among the stitch cleanup techniques, double straight stitch and English stitch were used most often.

All immigrants from the Balkans, including those living in Eskişehir, are known as vibrant, amiable people, and these attributes can also be seen in their traditional apparels. It has been surmised that apparels were cut wide to provide freedom of movement, that bright, colorful and glossy fabrics were used because the apparels, usually worn at weddings, would make the movements look more harmonious, and that patterns and material were chosen to be in harmony.

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