



**TURKISH TEXTILES DESCRIBED IN PAINTINGS BY
MILITARY PAINTER HALİL PAŞA**

**ASKER RESSAM HALİL PAŞA’NIN TABLolarında
TASVİRLenen TÜRK TEKSTİLLERİ**

*Ahmet AYTAÇ**
*Özlem KAYA***

Abstract

During the Ottoman Empire, which was established in Anatolia after the Seljuks, many developments were made in the name of art for 600 years. Especially thanks to the Ottoman Empire's value to the artist and art, very good works have been produced in many fields. In addition to branches such as calligraphy, illumination, miniature and marbling, fabrics, carpets and rugs, which attract the attention of the whole world in the field of textile, were also woven. The art of weaving experienced its brightest period in terms of weaving technique, color and pattern in the Ottoman Empire. It is understood that weaving, which continued to be produced traditionally in Ottoman cities, continued its existence as an important cultural element and sector. The clothes of the Ottoman sultans kept after their death and the qualities of the fabrics used in the palace convey very important information at the point of understanding the importance of weaving. The diversity and richness of the weavings and textiles produced in many documents belonging to the period can be clearly seen. In this context, this rich weaving and textile diversity has taken an important place in Turkish culture.

Especially this rich variety of weaving and textiles has been painted by many painters in almost every period and has gained an important place in terms of conveying information about their periods.

* Assist. Prof. Dr., Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, TURKEY, aytac@adu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-5424-4607

** Assist. Prof. Dr., Hitit University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Design and Architecture TURKEY ozlemkaya@hitit.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-8572-6577

In this study, some of Halil Pasha's paintings in which he displayed an objective and objective approach with a realistic style, some of which are in an orientalist style, are discussed as subject. In the study, will focus on Halil Pasha's life, his understanding of art and the textiles and clothing he depicted in some of his paintings. The textiles and clothes in the paintings were discussed in terms of characteristics such as color, pattern, and texture.

Key Words: Textile, weaving arts, clothing, painting, carpet.

Özet

Selçuklulardan sonra Anadolu'da kurulan Osmanlı Devleti döneminde 600 yıl boyunca sanat adına pek çok gelişme kaydedilmiştir. Özellikle Osmanlı Devleti'nin sanatçıya ve sanata verdiği değer sayesinde pek çok alanda çok iyi eserler ortaya konmuştur. Hat, tezhip, minyatür, ebru gibi dalların yanı sıra tekstil alanında da tüm dünyanın ilgisini çeken kumaşlar, halılar, kilimler dokunmuştur. Dokumacılık sanatı Osmanlı'da dokuma tekniği, renk, desen açısından en parlak dönemini yaşamıştır. Osmanlı şehirlerinde geleneksel olarak üretimi sürekli devam eden dokumacılığın önemli bir kültür ögesi ve sektör olarak varlığını sürdürdüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Osmanlı sultanlarının öldükten sonra saklanan kıyafetleri, sarayda kullanılan kumaşların nitelikleri dokumacılığın öneminin anlaşılması noktasında oldukça önemli bilgiler aktarmaktadır. Döneme ait birçok belgede üretilen dokumaların, tekstillerin çeşitliliği ve zenginliği net bir şekilde görülebilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu zengin dokuma ve tekstil çeşitliliği Türk kültüründe önemli bir yer tutmuştur.

Özellikle bu zengin dokuma ve tekstil çeşitliliği birçok ressam tarafından hemen hemen her dönem resmedilmiş ve dönemlerine ait bilgiler aktarması noktasında önemli bir yer edinmiştir.

Bu araştırmada Halil Paşa'nın birkaçı oryantalist tarzda olan gerçekçi bir üslup ile objektif ve nesnel bir yaklaşım sergilediği bazı tabloları konu olarak ele alınmıştır. Makalede Halil Paşa'nın hayatı, sanat anlayışı ve bazı tablolarında tasvirlediği tekstiller ve giysiler üzerinde durulacaktır. Tablolardaki giysiler ve tekstiller renk, desen, doku gibi özellikler bakımından ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tekstil, dokuma sanatı, giysi, resim, halı

Introduction

The Ottoman Empire, which was established in Anatolia at the end of the 13th century following the Seljuk Empire, has taken its place in history as one of the biggest states of the Turkish-Islamic civilization shaped by justice and tolerance. Art has been important for 600 years in the economic prosperity, peace, culture and civilization developed within the empire.

In the field of art, magnificent works have been produced in different fields for centuries. Acting on the principle of monotheism (uniqueness of the creator) of the Islamic belief, the Ottoman period Turkish artist developed a style based on contemplation and produced works in many art fields.

Especially in the textile art, besides weaving for matting such as carpets and rugs, it has also produced many different techniques and materials in terms of fabric. Due to the easy supply of herbal dye and the possibility of weaving everywhere in Anatolia, weaving has become the tradition of many regions, and it has produced magnificent productions for centuries for various purposes such as floor mat, load cover, cedar carpet, tapestry, saddle bag, mafra, seed apron in daily life (Faroghi, 1980, Rosamund, 2002: 48, Kılıçarslan and Etikan 2018: 383). The dimensions of the clothes, all kinds of tools and various equipment were naturally designed according to the body size of the society (Kaya and Özok 2017: 311), which were unique to the Ottomans and changed from period to period. The understanding and aesthetic values of the period were also taken into consideration in weaving produced for both fabric and matting or other functional areas of use (Gekas, 2007).

On the occasion of the carpets that the knights brought with them on the return of the Crusades, Europe was introduced to Turkish textiles. Following this, Turkish carpets gained a place in Europe and even gained fame for other reasons such as commercial commodities or diplomatic gifts. So much so that “The empty walls of Protestant, Lutheran and Calvinist churches in Hungary were decorated with Turkish carpets. Wearing a Turkish rug on the catafalque during funerals was also customary” (Batari, 2004: 74). After the 15th century in the Balkans and Europe, there was an extreme demand for Turkish carpet. For example, it is known that those who cannot buy Turkish carpets in Italy try to reach this privilege, even by renting. A Turkish rug hanging from the balcony was a symbol of wealth and nobility (Rosamond, 2005: 126-156). Along with this, Renaissance painters cannot remain indifferent to this reputation of the Turkish carpet. Carpets reminiscent of the patterns of Seljuk and Ottoman carpets in the second half of the XV. century is seen in the paintings of some painters in Europe, such as Italian, Flemish, German, etc. (Yetkin, 1964: 206-222). It is also known that weavings as plain weaving or carpet in 14th century paintings are depicted in paintings (Aytaç, 2009: 249). In the

following centuries, it is seen that orientalist painters followed this trend. It is seen that the painters have almost started a race to make paintings with Turkish carpet depictions and imaginary fiction, which disdain eastern art with a bit of prejudice.

During the Ottoman period, magnificent works were created not only in textiles but also in arts such as calligraphy and marbling, and works that could be considered the peak in miniature were produced. As a result of a perception such as a ban on painting by Islam, interest in painting, which was not popular until the last centuries when miniature was popular, naturally increased with the influence of western art, and painters who were educated in Europe on various occasions have also grown.

The modernization of educational institutions that started with Mühendishâne-i Bahrî-i Hümayun was followed by Mühendishâne-i Berrî-i Hümayun, which was founded in 1795 during the reign of Sultan Selim III (Demirel, 2012: 509). In the Ottoman Empire, painting teaching and painting lessons were first included in the curriculum of Mühendishâne-i Berrî-i Hümayûn (1793-1794), which was established in the period of Selim III (Tansuğ, 1983: 217). Painting lessons in the programs of engineering centers are arranged with a focus on drawing and perspective in line with military needs as content. Courses were given by foreign teachers. The aim of the painting lessons given in military schools; To train officers who can draw technical drawings and sketches related to military service, and to equip candidate engineers and architects with basic information on map, perspective and shadow light differences (İnaç, 2016: 17). The first Turkish artists to paint Western style are military school students (Papila 2008: 120). Especially Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayun and the Military School are the institutions where the works of the first painters of our painting art were produced as the pioneers (Başaran, 2014: 33-34). In this period, those who were sent to Europe for painting education for the first time were the pioneers of Turkish art under the influence of the West, and they played an important role in the adoption of Western painting art with their exhibitions since the second half of the 19th century (Pekmezci, 2003: 14).

The developments in painting that started in this way continued in some other schools. This interest in the art of painting in the Ottoman Empire enabled it to be adopted and developed in a short time.

Since the Renaissance, it is known that such an understanding of depicting Turkish textile products in paintings is common in Europe. However, the understanding of depicting Turkish textiles in their paintings was seen from time to time by military painters.

1. METHOD

The research is structured as a general survey model. In the research, case studies based on general survey model and case studies were used together by making use of the knowledge in the resources.

In the research, the paintings depicting Turkish weavings belonging to the artist were accessed from the internet. This research has been given based on literature review, comparison, observation, analogy, written and visual sources.

In this study, Halil Pasha's life, his understanding of art and the textiles and clothes he depicted in some of his paintings are emphasized. The textiles and clothes in the determined paintings were handled and evaluated in terms of characteristics such as color, pattern, and texture.

2. LIFE AND ARTIST PERSONALITY OF HALIL PASHA

Artist's Life

He is the son of Ferik Selim Pasha, Commander of Mekatib-i Military schools (Terzi 1993). He was born in 1857 in Beylerbeyi district of Istanbul. He is the child of a family of Rhodes origin. He graduated from Mühendishane-i Berrî-i Hümâyûn (today's Istanbul Technical University). He was assigned to the palace as soon as he graduated ([http1](#)).



Image 1. *Halil Pasha (Özyiğit, 2013: 103)*

According to what he told in an interview held while he was alive; Halil Pasha, who entered the Military Engineering Department in 1285 (1868-69), joined Sultan Abdulaziz (1861-1876) as soon as he graduated in 1289 (1872/1873). The artist points out the existence of painters who were painting in the palace in those years, and gives the information that these artists were only busy with painting. Halil Pasha, on the subject of Sultan Abdulaziz's curiosity and talent for painting, tells us that he understands the painting very well, and he even comes to the painters from time to time and prepared the first sketches of some of the paintings. The artist, who resides in the Pasha Department of Dolmabahçe Palace with other assistants, goes to the Polish painter (Stanislaw) Chlebowski (1835-1884) and other painters and watches him painting.

Halil Pasha, who complained about the inadequacy of painting lessons, which he received from Haji Mahmud Bey, a painting teacher in the Faculty of Engineering (Mühendishane-i Askeriye), and did not go beyond copying the stone-printed models made in Europe, develops his interest in painting by following the techniques of these painters every day (Özyiğit, 2013: 100).

He also worked as an art teacher in military high schools. As a result of his persistent requests, his father sent him to Paris for painting education. He worked in the workshop of famous orientalist painter Jean-Léon Gérôme, where he stayed for eight years. After returning home, he worked as an art teacher in military schools. He received the

title of "Pasha" when he was appointed as an art teacher to the Military Academy in 1906. However, two years later, on the basis of a law enacted with the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy, he left the army and turned to painting when his rank was reduced to colonel. Müfide Kadri, who made history as the first female painting teacher, was among the students of Halil Pasha, who gave painting lessons to students who are interested in art. Halil Pasha, who taught at Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Alisi, the first fine arts school in the country, was the director of the school in 1917-1918. He took young painters, who came back from France, where they went for art education, after the outbreak of World War I and called the 1914 Generation, to this school, and enabled painting with a new understanding. In the last years of his life, he was the guest of Abbas Halim Pasha in Egypt. Halil Pasha, who spent his last years painting, was recognized as "the artist who put the painting in Egyptian palaces". He died in the mansion where he was born in 1939 in Beylerbeyi, Istanbul ([http1](http://)).

Art of the Artist

The art of Halil Pasha, one of the important figures in Turkey of the Impressionism movement, which we can define as "a way to describe the emotions it evokes rather than directly depicting and analyzing an object", which emerged in France at the end of the 19th century, is divided into two main periods. The first is the classical and realist style works he produced with the effect of the art education he received in Paris. He received an award in a contest he participated in Paris with the *Lady in Gloves (Madam X)*, one of his works of this kind. The second one is the works he produced under the influence of impressionism in which he emphasized the shadows of the mansions and boats in Istanbul after his return.

3. PAINTINGS DEPICTING TURKISH WEAVING

First Example: The work of 41x33 cm, dated 1939, in the Sakıp Sabancı Museum is an oil painting on canvas. The main theme is the depiction of a woman painting seated on a sofa in a traditional Turkish room. There is a stove and a censer made of glass on the back of the easel, and a coffee table with paints on the left side of the woman (Photo 2).



Image 2. *Painter Girl* (<http2>)

In this painting, where a young woman is seen painting in a traditional Turkish room, this young lady sitting on the sofa and working on the canvas wears a red patterned jacket with an uncovered head and a pleated skirt in a loose lilac-purple tone. In this state, this young lady is in a look that we can call modern. Halil Pasha draws attention to the place of women in the developing society in the Ottoman Empire with this painting.

On the wall to the right is a dark blue rug depiction with a perception evoked by the pattern structure. From the outside to the inside, there are two lozenge-shaped cores surrounded by brick-colored, black, white and red contours. A small framed picture is also hung on the weaving. On the floor, a dark blue floor carpet with a red repeat motif, a smaller Hereke (the name given to the carpet in the Hereke region) carpet-style weaving with red floral decoration with green water on it.

Second Example: The painting in a private collection is 41x33 cm in measures and is an oil painting on canvas. It resembles a room of a classical Bosphorus mansion. A woman figure writing a letter on her knee can be seen on a sofa placed in front of a window by the wall surrounded by pillows. To the left of the figure is a window facing the sea, and a framed calligraphy plate hanging on the wall behind it. There is a carpet that is crossed over the cedar and its tip hangs towards the ground and a small case with mother-of-pearl embroidered on it. A

glass goblet containing roses and an ink bowl is placed on the case (Photo 3).



Image 3. *Letter* (<http3>)

Sitting by the window in the painting, the figure of a woman writing a letter on her lap is wearing a gray-toned cap and a skirt of bright fabric with thick longitudinal stripes. On the head of the female figure, there is a headscarf with bow details in light tones. The cap worn on the figure of the woman who writes a letter is fastened with a stand-up collar and a single button on the front collar.

On the carpet suspended from cedar to the floor, there are lozenge and fringe motifs on the white inner and outer small border, while there are star-shaped chest motifs on the large red border. The middle composition area has no pattern and is green in color. It is not possible to comment on the region since the carpet depiction is not clearly presented by the painter.

Third Example: An oil on canvas painting in a private collection is 106x104 cm in measures. The painting depicts a woman wearing a red thick fabric jacket and an old inner skirt, and a red scarf on her feet. In front of the figure, there is a grill (like a stove) with embers on the floor and a pitcher on it. A coffee pot, drinking coffee cup, coffee grinder and a coffee pot are pictured on the floor. It is understood from the wall paint that the color tones of the background changed, that the place belongs to an old house (Photo 4).



Image 4. *Old Slave* (<http4>)

Halil Pasha, who painted more portraits, has a special place in some of the entensor and nature arrangements. In an entensor painting he made in 1891, an old woman figure in a red cardigan stretched her hands towards the grill. Other object details such as the clothes, posture of the woman in the painting and the skillful processing of the metal objects in the painting created a realistic composition. The same color tones of the veil on the head of the woman, the cardigan and slippers she wears provide a balance.

Under the grill, a plain rug can be seen in the form of transverse stripes, also called palaz (a plain weave type) in Anatolia. Under the rug, there is another weave in which the dark-blue floored eyebrows, which are presumably a carpet, are lined up in rapport. It is a rug depiction known as "çırpı (a plain weave) rug" seen in almost every weaving region in Central Anatolia.

Fourth Example: The work, which is an oil painting on canvas, was made by the painter in 1908 and measures 70x100 cm. It is a depiction of a caravanserai garden in the last period of the Ottoman Empire. Caravanserais are generally built on trade routes as a necessity of being a social state, and are state-built buildings where passengers and caravans will stay and all needs of the arrivals are met free of charge (Photo 5).



Image 5. *Carpets in the Caravanserai Courtyard* (<http5>)

In Halil Pasha's painting named "Carpets in the Caravanserai Courtyard", more architectural elements appear. In the painting where four people perform different jobs at certain points of the inn, space is highlighted instead of figures. There are three male and one female figures in the garden. The male figure sitting on the left side has a cone on his head, a colored aba on it and a red belt on his waist. The figure sitting on the ground wears a fez, some blue top and light trousers on it. The standing male figure wore a long lilac-purple dress. The standing female figure wears a white headscarf on her head. She is depicted wearing a red dress, an inner skirt and a dark belt around the waist.

The painting depicts an arched entrance door and a section from a caravanserai garden with columns inside. There is a standing woman pulling water from the well, and a standing man with a towel in his hand. There are two male figures sitting on both ends of a hill in the garden. Various weavings are seen on the ground. Both of the seated figures are probably carpet repairmen. Since the weavings laid out in the garden are not clearly depicted by the painter, it is not possible to come to a conclusion about the pattern features and the region they belong to. However, the weaving, which is laid on the connecting iron between the columns, resembles a weaving called "hekberli (a motif name)" rug, which is frequently used in regions such as Konya Karapınar and Aydın Çine in terms of its pattern.

4. CONCLUSION

Halil Pasha, who we can call the first representative of the understanding of Impressionism in Turkey, concentrated on the attitude of color and light and tried to understand the visual reasons of this approach. Halil Pasha, who works mostly in landscaping, has a unique style that he developed with an impressionist effect. The paintings reveal that he has a deep knowledge of anatomy. Halil Pasha, who is understood to be an important figure painter, is a well-known member of the military painters' generation.

In three of the paintings discussed in the article, the number of figures is one and the figures are female, in the fourth, three of the four figures are male and one female.

It is seen that the clothes of the figures in the four paintings examined are daily clothes and are quite colorful. Although the model features and fabric structures of the clothes are not well understood, they provide us with information about the clothes of the period. The clothes of a woman working at home or working outside can be seen on the paintings. In addition, what working men wore during that period is also depicted in the paintings.

The understanding of depicting Turkish carpets in paintings, which started with Renaissance painters, was also continued by orientalist painters. It is known that orientalist painters and travelers often depict out of imagination the places they have never traveled or the interiors they have never seen even though they have traveled, with a fiction that will create negative judgments.

On the other hand, in some of the paintings discussed in this article, there are pictures that Halil Pasha handled with an orientalist point of view, but which are very realistic. With the objective approach of Halil Pasha, Turkish culture has been tried to find proof in the pictures.

In addition, the carpets depicted in the paintings were not depicted with a real approach, and their motif and pattern features were not addressed clearly. Therefore, while the weaving depictions in the paintings named Painter Girl and Old Slave partially fit local characters, in others the painter did not go into much detail.

It is understood that two of the most distinctive weavings depicted in four paintings are carpets and the other two are rugs. Since the depictions of one carpet and two rugs are prominent, it can be said that

the Hereke carpet and the Konya Hotamış or Aydın rug and the Central Anatolian Çırpı (a plain weave) rug. Due to the unclear depiction of the other weaving, it is not possible to determine the region.

It is noteworthy that the habit of depicting Turkish weavings, which is frequently depicted in the paintings of Renaissance and orientalist painters, is also included in the works of Halil Pasha, an important representative of the military painters' generation.

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