

Kars Traditional Caucasian, Ottoman, and Turkmen Women's Clothing and Interactions

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Kars Geleneksel Kafkas, Osmanlı, Türkmen Kadın Giyimleri ve Etkileşimleri*1

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Özet

Yaratılışından günümüze kadar kendi sınırları içinde kalmayıp sürekli yer değiştiren insanoğlu, bu yer değişiklikleri esnasında hem kendi kültürünü gittiği yerlere taşımış hem de yerleştiği coğrafyalarda mevcut olan kültürleri benimsemiştir. Bu durum bazen gelenek veya kültürlerin yok olmasına neden olmuş, bazı durumlarda da farklı kültürel değerlerin kaynaşmasını beraberinde getirmiştir.

Kültürlerin önemli öğeleri arasında yer alan ve kültürel etkileşimlerin izlerini taşıyan geleneksel giysiler, günümüzde artık çoğunlukla müzelerde görülebilmektedir. Kars'ın kültürel değerlerinden olan geleneksel giysiler de birçok medeniyetin izlerini barındıran Kars Müzesi'nin eser koleksiyonları arasında sergilenmektedir. Müze haricinde, yerel halkın sandıklarında ve albümlerinde az da olsa geleneksel giysi örnekleri tespit edilebilmektedir.

Çalışmamız esnasında müze ve alan araştırmaları neticesinde ulaştığımız geleneksel kadın giyim örnekleri; üst bedene giyilenler, alt bedene giyilenler ve tamamlayıcı giysi aksesuarları olmak üzere 3 grup şeklinde ele alınmış; tamamlayıcı giysi aksesuarları da başa giyilenler, ayağa giyilenler ve diğer giysi aksesuarları şeklinde gruplandırılmıştır.

Kültürel mirasımızın bir parçası olan Kars geleneksel kadın giyimlerini gün yüzüne çıkarmaya; tarihi, tipolojik, sanatsal ve kültürel açıdan inceleyip, yazılı ve yazısız kaynaklarla açıklamaya çalıştığımız bu çalışmamızın Kars geleneksel kadın giyimlerinin gelecek kuşaklara aktarılması hususunda hem sanatsal hem de bilimsel belge niteliği taşıyacağına inanılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Giyim, Gelenek, Kültür, Tarih, İpek Yolu.

Abstract

Since its creation to the present, people have never stayed within their own borders but have constantly moved. During this movements, they have taken their culture to where they have gone and also have adopted the cultures of the places where they have settled. This phenomenon has sometimes destroyed some traditions or cultures; other times has caused different cultural values merge.

Traditional clothes, as important elements of cultures and by reflecting the cultural interactions, can only be seen in the museum in our times. Traditional clothes of Kars are exhibited in the collections of Kars Museum where it is possible to see the traces of many civilizations. Except the museums, at times, it is possible to find examples of traditional clothes in the crates and albums of local population.

Samples of traditional women's clothing reached during our research are examined in 3 groups; clothes for upper body and lower body and complimentary accessories. Complimentary accessories are grouped as the head-worn, foot-worn and others.

It is believed that, this research in which we tried to bring the traditional women's clothing that is an element of our cultural heritage to the light and to explain them in the scope of written and unwritten sources will serve as artistic and scientific documents for transmitting this tradition of women's clothing to future generations.

Key Words: Clothing, Tradition, Culture, History, Silk Road.

1 This article is the result of Emine ERDOAN's expertise in art thesis.

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Introduction

Since the beginning of humankind clothing has been influenced by factors including religion, social status, moral value, age, and geographical conditions. Clothing, which varied according to aesthetic characteristics and practices of daily life, differed according to whether it was worn at home, at work, or for special occasions. Most traditional garments, which can be viewed as a reflection of cultural values and way of life, are associated with aspects of daily life, traditions, beliefs, and worldviews. However, the increased accessibility of ready-to-wear due to the development of transportation networks, shifts in living standards and fashions, and the disruption of traditional production practices brought about the extinction of traditional clothing today.

According to Kaşgarlı Mahmut, Kars, noted as a gateway to Anatolia-therefore also known as a “gateway city”-has been home to numerous civilizations, and can mean “an animal made of camel or sheep wool and a beautiful fur made of karsak skin, a steppe fox”, and Sheikh Süleyman from Bukhara explains that Kars means a “shawl, belt, weaving, waist tie, futa, miyambet, karsak, fox” (Doğan, 2018, p. 69). The traditional garments, which are an integral part of the culture of Kars, a city that is generally regarded through cultural, historical, and geopolitical parameters as having an illustrious past, have not been sufficiently investigated.

The Kars Museum, which was established in 1959 by a provincial chamber to preserve and pass on the cultural values of Kars to future generations, and where historical and cultural artefacts from Kars and its environs have been collected and recorded since that time, houses traditional clothing as well as numerous artefacts. Simultaneously, samples of traditional clothing can be found in the crates and photo albums of the local residents. When examining these examples, it is evident that the raw materials for traditional clothing are derived from animals. This can be interpreted as a reflection of the fact that animal husbandry is the primary source of income for the population and also the influence of climatic conditions. Due to the harsh and lengthy winter season, woollen clothing was widely worn. When the weather becomes warmer in the middle of summer and autumn, sheep are sheared, and their wool is collected. Autumn-shorn sheep’s wool is

used for socks and other weavings whereas summer-shorn sheep’s wool is preferred for bed quilts (Dündar and Çetinkaya, 2002: p. 259). Sheep’s skin and wool are used in clothing and are also embroidered as a decorative element into rugs, carpets, and socks, using the name ram horn (koçboynuzu).

The research focuses on traditional Ottoman, Turkmen, and Caucasian women’s clothing discovered in the province of Kars and in the Kars Museum. This study aims to unearth these garments in Kars, where unique traditional clothing has a special place, to examine the garments in depth, to preserve Kars’s traditional women’s clothing and to contribute to the literature and art on the subject. To achieve this objective, field and literature surveys were conducted, and samples obtained during the research and determined from photographs were analysed technically and artistically. Among the goals of this research is to set an example for a cultural carrier, to bring an innovative perspective to the field of art and design, and to introduce the cultural value of the traditional clothing of Kars and make it possible for it to be passed on to future generations.

1. Traditional Women’s Clothing from Kars

Due to its geographical location, Kars, which has been home to numerous ethnic groups throughout its history because of both migrations and wars, is extremely diverse culturally. Although the traditional clothing or individual pieces, which reflect this wealth, are still worn by individuals for weddings, ceremonies, holidays, and other special occasions, and can be seen on some elderly rural residents, these occasions remain extremely rare. The clothes worn at local dances are typically recent copies of the originals. For this reason, the Kars Museum, the chests of the locals, and the samples determined from archival photographs provide the most comprehensive and accurate information regarding Kars traditional clothing.

In accordance with museum and field research, it can be stated that Caucasian and Turkmen (Figure 1) clothing, which also demonstrates Ottoman influence

in the region, rose to prominence. In Turkmen clothing (Figure 2), the predominant style is that of the Oghuz Turks, who are among the Central Asian-migrating Turkish tribes. This style of clothing which during the time it was worn was connected to Kars, is prevalent in the Damal district of Ardahan province.

Locals, particularly women, wore their traditional attire in the highlands (Figure 3), at home and on special occasions, in short, in all aspects of daily life. As a method of protection against the cold weather prevalent in the region, women typically dress in layers, and ornaments embroidered with heavy stone beads predominate. The fact that they carry such layered and heavy clothing is indicative of the local women's strength.

The clothes of married or widowed women, young girls and the elderly, consists of dinge (kofik-slipper-koh) üçetek entari (saya), arkalık, şalvar, iç göynek, gurduşka (vest, fermene, libade), mintane (cepken, salta), puşu, peştamal, döşlük (tor), kolçak, kalageyvala (headscarf), dayra (daire, underwear), önlük, kemer, kolçak, siğil (şakaklık), dulluk ipi, top, zincif, sakaldırık (sakalduruk), keten, yedek, kuşak, gümüş kemer (Caucasian belt), kundura, çapula (a pointed and curved shoe made of coarse leather, yemeni).

The üçetek (three skirts) is the oldest and most well-known piece of Turkish women's clothing (Figures 2 and 3). This garment, which is prevalent throughout Anatolia, is referred to as üçetek entari (three skirt dress) in Kars and its environs. In the past, women wore üçetek in both urban and rural settings. Cotton and woollen fabrics of various hues are used to create üçetek that can be worn in all aspects of daily life and throughout the year. In addition, it is observed that velvet and satin fabrics are preferred for weddings, holidays, and special occasions.

1. 1. Women's Upper Body Clothing

In general, çuha, üçetek entari,(saya, dayra, deyre), köynek (shirt-iç koyneği), cepken, and vests are worn on the upper body. These garments are commonly constructed from woollen broadcloth, velvet, silk, linen, and cotton.

Çuha, which means woollen fabric and is worn as outerwear, is the Ottoman, Caucasian, and Turkmen term for woollen outerwear. Çuha is also

A term used in place of cepken (short jacket) and vest, is referred to as kaftan (caftan) in the inventory list of Ottoman clothing at the Kars Museum. The üçetek entari seen in the clothing of Ottoman, Turkmen, and Caucasian women served as both under and outerwear. The front skirts of the layered and wide üçetek dress worn by the Turkmen (Figure 2) are either left hanging straight or joined by lifting them at the ends. A newly married woman is required to wear at least five gowns, three skirts and a vest (Kırzioğlu, 1991a: p. 278). In the Caucasian style (Figure 1), the garment primarily expands below the waist. Although the form features of the Ottoman style (Figure 4) are comparable to the üçetek of the Turkmen and Caucasian, they differ in their embroidery style and motifs.

A göynek (long shirt) is a garment made primarily of cotton and silk that extends to the knees and has side slits. Mintane (vest, gurduşka) or cepken is worn on it. The vest and cepken are lined and fitted at the waist. It is fastened at the front waist with silver or other ties (Figure 5). There are similar characteristics in Ottoman and Turkmen clothing styles of cepken. With the göynek, Caucasian and Ottoman clothing styles are similar. It usually has a mandarin style or a "V" style collar. Young girls prefer the "V" neckline. This is due to the wearing of a necklace or other jewellery made with gold or silver under the collar. Brides and married women favoured collars with a sheer, mandarin appearance during the winter (İğdir Municipality, 1923: p.122).

1. 2. Women's Lower Body Clothing

The garments worn on the lower body consist of trousers called şalvar (tuman-saltak, fistan) (Figure 6) and the üçetek. The şalvar have a very wide crotch, the legs and waist are elasticized and shirred, reaching up to the ankles. The ankles "...rise above the socks. Colours that contrast between the three-skirt and shalwar are preferred. There are more red, striped, and patterned ones" (Erden et.al., 1999: p. 237). The şalvar can be made of silk, cotton, or other fabrics, however, the same fabric to the üçetek entari is typically preferred.

The şalvar shares similarities in Caucasian, Ottoman, and Turkmen attire. In the clothing of Caucasian, Ottoman, and Turkmen women, üçetek that resemble full-length dresses are also worn on the lower body.

1.3. Women's Complementary Accessoriess

In general, women's supplementary clothing accessories are categorised as worn on the head, worn on the feet, and other garment accessories. In these garments, ornaments such as beads, pearl buttons, gold, silver, and copper, and motifs stand out.

1.3.1. Head Worn

Headdresses and parts generally used on headwear are dinge (kofik, araşkın), vala (kalagey, yaylık, alınlık, leçek), (headscarf), hair ties (dulluk ipi), sakalduruk (sakaldırık, chin pad). There are two types of headdresses worn by women in the region, but both share the same name. The first (Figure 7a) is the headdress worn by Turkmen women, on which accessories such as bead embroidered pediments, vala (headscarf), sakalduruk, etc. are worn. The second one (Figures 7c and 7d) is the type of headwear used in Caucasian clothing, with gold and silver lined on a circle, embroidered with gold, and attached to the vala and linen.

It is the details rather than the overall appearance of women's headpieces that distinguish them from one another. In all headdresses, a dinge (fez) (kofi, kofik)¹ is worn on the head which is then hooped around the edges of the dinge and raised four to five centimetres. Covers made of silk, linen, and tulle are tied on the dinge and decorated with a variety of gold, silver, and beaded embellishments. If the top surface of the tepelik is flat, metals such as silver and copper are applied, coloured beads are embroidered, or the surface is left blank by passing a fabric over it. In Kars and its environs, they are covered with white or coloured headscarves made of linen or silk, called kelağay or more commonly vala.

It has been determined that the headwear, predominantly described as Turkmen in field studies and written sources and primarily known as dinge in Kars, is widely worn. The dinge (Figure 7a) is embellished with beads, silver, and gold, and strings of coloured beads are typically attached to both sides of

the cap's edges, dangling under the chin and in front of the ears.

There are a variety of tying techniques for local headwear, which vary according to age. One of these is the wrapping of different coloured covers (vala) on the dinge in accordance with regional characteristics. A triangular-shaped white linen scarf (Figure 7a) with tassels that is embroidered on both sides with coloured beads is draped over the head. Seniors rarely employ dinge, they wear simpler headgear than younger individuals. They wear short fez, cones, and skullcaps along with woollen çatmas tied to their foreheads. Linen covers are simple and minimally decorative. The attire of middle-aged women is simpler and less ostentatious.

Ottoman headdresses also have a dinge-like fez and are mostly decorated with silver or gold crowns (Figure 7b). Hotoz used in Caucasian and Turkmen headdresses was also used in Ottoman headdresses. Depending on the individual's financial situation, the interiors of the hotoz are adorned with materials such as gold, silver, and embroidery.

1.3.2. Footworn

Women wear yemeni (çapula, iskarpin, kundura), pisi pisi, çarık (shoes) and socks on their feet. Yemeni, which in some regions refers to a head covering, is used in the Kars region for shoes made of coarse leather that are worn on the feet or cover the feet without laces (Figure 8a, 8c). In the region, Yemeni is also known as çarık, iskarpin, and kundura. Pisi pisi is a soft shoe constructed of soft leather, with or without soles. Women today wear the pisi pisi (Figure 8b), which is worn without a sole, during folk dances. A çarık is a shoe with a sole and laces for securing it to the foot.

Socks are typically produced through hand knitting. The primary raw material for socks in the region is wool, and they are handcrafted using five needles. The front surfaces (foot) of the socks are embroidered with motifs from the region's carpets and kilims. These motifs reflect the individual's family, financial situation, and social standing, and ram horns play an important role among these. The herringbone motif (Figure 9) is dominant on the base. There are also plain ones with motifs from the whole or from the end (wrist). Socks are sometimes extended below the kneecap and worn over the şalvar and sometimes under the şalvar.

1 The word "dinge" is Turkish and "kofik" is Persian.

1. 3. 3. Other Garment Accessories

Garment accessories are essential for adorning clothes and gaining respect in a particular region. These accessories consist of a döşlük (göğüslük, tor), kolçak, silver and gold belt, kolan belt and kuşak (kuşak). The tor (göğüslük, döşlük) made in rectangular and square forms, is completely woven from stone beads and mounted on fabric. In clothing and clothing accessories it is one of the ornaments produced by hand using coloured beads (Figure 10) There are buttonholes in the upper and lower corners; from the upper buttonhole to the neck, and from the lower corners to the back, there are ties. These ties secure it at the neck and waist, covering the chest from the neck to the waist with the short edge of the chest piece on top. The underside of the tor is lined, the coloured beads are strung together to form geometric patterns and are embroidered so tightly that the fabric is not visible This is surrounded by strung mother-of-pearl or coloured buttons. The coloured ones are typically worn by the young and married, whereas the plain cloth, black, and dark colours are worn by widows and the elderly.

Young and old alike wear kolçak (Figure 10) that extend from the elbows to the wrists with gathers at both the elbows and wrists. These kolçaks, which are sometimes gathered to the elbows, are used to prevent the arms from becoming dirty while working, particularly when milking animals. In addition, since some of the clothing in the region has three-quarter sleeves, it serves the purpose of further covering the arms. Young people prefer vibrant colours that complement the colours of their clothing, whereas the elderly prefer black and dark colours. The colour of the kolçak typically contrasts with the thin fabric cuff at its wrist. The collar with a contrasting kolçak is known as a zincef. A knot is created in the centre of the wide kolçak by slightly tightening it with a tie (Görgünay, 2008: p. 296).

Although most woven belts (kuşak) and columns (kolan) are made of wool, there are also some made of silk. Belts, which are used as an accessory garment by wrapping around the waist and over outerwear in the region, are commonly found in pastel hues. The girth belt (kolan kemer), which is predominantly used in Turkmen clothing, is a wool belt woven by hand or machine and dominated by the same motifs found on

the region's rugs, carpets, and socks (Figure 11a). The belt is fastened to the outermost portion of the garment by wrapping it around the waist, with the ends hanging from the sides of the waist. The belt's ends are adorned with beads, colourful buttons, and tassels.

Featured in the foreground is motif-adorned beadwork. These beads and buttons utilised in the belt give the belt vitality. The example depicted in Figure 11c, which is an Ottoman silver belt from the nineteenth century, was created by arranging the pieces side by side. At the bottom ends of the arch, ornate circles (cınıl) hang. On a silver plate, the belt buckle is embroidered with floral motifs. Again, on the tip of the belt buckle that hangs just below, there are chain rings with designs within the belt's lower edges. The motifs were created using the techniques of filigree, relief, and granulation.

In belts where techniques such as savat, granulation and embossing are used, the buckles are larger and more ostentatious. The parts of the belt are mostly mounted by threading on the leather.

Wool and wide knits are worn around the waist by the elderly, who favour these materials (Figure 11b). These belts feature motifs like those found on local rugs and carpets. Many elderly people choose dark colours such as black and brown, and the sleeves are typically tasselled. These collars are broad and long so that they may be draped over the shoulders and worn as a shawl. Silk ones are also seen.

Conclusion

In this study, which examines the traditional women's clothing of Kars, the interaction of the elements reflected in the traditional clothing culture of Kars with geographical conditions, belief systems, economic structures, social life, art appreciation, and technologies is discussed.

Most of these garments were made from fabrics woven on looms. Woollen garments were worn due to the cold climate of the province and silken garments were worn due to the province's border status and its historical location on the Silk Road.

According to this research, traditional clothing styles have almost entirely disappeared from everyday life. In

celebrations of special days such as weddings, henna ceremonies, circumcisions, and feasts, ready-made clothing, which is the current fashion, is favoured over traditional attire. Traditional clothing, which is rarely worn in everyday life today, is now almost exclusively restricted to museum exhibits only. Even though it is evident that Caucasian clothing is worn in folk dances, these are examples of clothing that resemble traditional garments in appearance but differ from them in terms of materials, function, and complementary element.s

Due to migration and war, Kars, a city located in a border region which is home to different ethnic groups, has created Caucasian, Turkmen, and Ottoman traditional women's clothing. Examining these three garments together reveals that in addition to their unique characteristics, they also share certain characteristics. Particularly the Ottoman and Caucasian clothing share similarities in terms of shape, ornaments, materials, and function. In terms of decoration and craftsmanship, it can be said that Ottoman clothing is more extravagant.

It is our greatest hope that this study, which was conducted based on data obtained from observations, written and unwritten sources, and interviews, will contribute to the literature, ensuring that the traditional clothes of Kars, which are a part of our cultural values, are preserved, and create a cultural memory that will transmit these values to future generations by serving as a resource for future research.

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Appendix



Figure 1: Turkmen (Left Pair) and Caucasian Clothes (Right Pair) (Öztürkhan, 2019).



Figure 2: Kars, Turkmen Married Women's Dress
(Orta Doğu Video İşletmeleri A.Ş.,1986, s. 97-98).

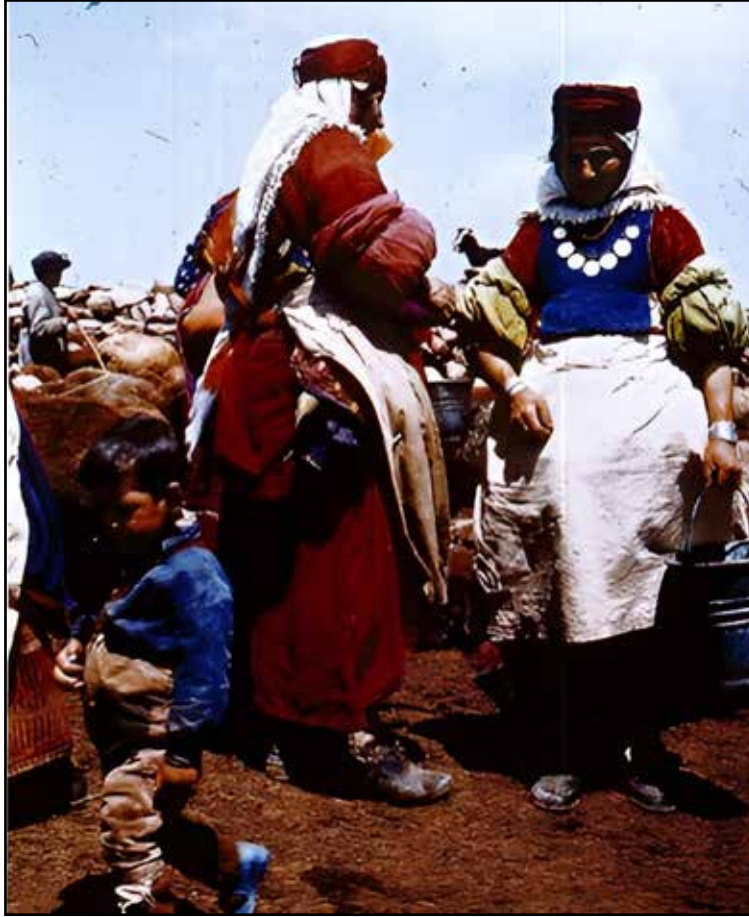


Figure 3: Elderly Women Milking in the Plateau (Görgünay, 2008: p. 304).



Figure 4: 18th century Ottoman Entari (dress) (Top Double) and Kaftan (Lower Double) (Kars Müzesi, 2018.)



Figure 5: Woman dressed in Gönnek and Cepken (Çiftçi, 2015: p.131).

Figure 6: Women's Şalvar (Öztürkhan, 2019).



a. Turkmen Headwear

b. Ottoman Women's Tepelik

c. Caucasian Headwear

Figure 7: Headwear Examples a. Turkmen Headwear (Kırzioğlu, 1991b: p. 425); b. Ottoman Women's Tepelik (Kars Müzesi, 2018); c. Caucasian Headwear (Aydın, 2005: s.78).



a. Yemeni

b. Pisi Pisi

c. Yemeni (Çarık, İskarpın, Kundura)

Figure 8: Shoe Examples, a. Yemeni, b. Pisi pisi (Aydın, 2005:75-80); c. Yemeni (Kars Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2019).



Figure 9: Wool Socks, Front (Top) and Back (Bottom) View (Mert, 2019).



Figure 10: Tor, Kolçak (Ege University Ethnography Museum, 2019).



a. Kolan Kemer (Bel Bağı)



b. Kurşak



c. Silver Belt

Figure 11: Belt and Girdle Examples, a. Kolan Belt (KK2, 2019); b. Kurşak (Kars Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2019); c. Silver Belt (Kars Museum, 2018).