



## Traces of Yörük Culture at Mersin Institute of Maturity: Reflections of Cultural Richness in Handicrafts

Mersin Olgunlaşma Enstitüsünde Yörük İzleri: El Sanatlarında Kültürel Zenginliğin Yansımaları

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### Abstract

Culture encompasses the entirety of a society's material and spiritual values, passed down as collective memory from one generation to the next. One of the key ways this heritage is preserved is through traditional Turkish handicrafts, with Yörük culture playing a significant role in this preservation. Originating from Central Asia and settling in Anatolia, some Yörüks adopted a sedentary lifestyle while others continued their nomadic traditions. Today, the number of Yörüks practicing a nomadic lifestyle has greatly diminished. To keep Yörük art alive, it needs to be integrated into modern life by combining it with new products. It is essential to support individuals and organizations that are committed to preserving this heritage. This study aims to showcase Yörük art and motifs through products created at the Mersin Maturity Institute. Items with Yörük influences were selected from various artistic fields. The transfer of motifs and craftsmanship, central to Yörük culture, was based on insights from master artisans at the institute. This research examined the technical details, colors, usage areas, and cultural relevance of the products. Our qualitative study is crucial for preserving and passing on Yörük culture, art, and motifs to future generations.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Yörük culture, Mersin Maturity Institute, Handicrafts, Motifs, Design.

### Öz

Kültür, bir toplumun maddi ve manevi değerlerinin bütünüdür ve bu değerler, kuşaktan kuşağa aktarılan toplumsal hafızanın ürünüdür. Bu mirasın en önemli aktarım yollarından biri de geleneksel Türk el sanatlarıdır. Türk el sanatlarının önemli bir kısmını Yörük kültürü ve el sanatları oluşturur. Orta Asya'dan Anadolu'ya gelen Yörüklerin bir kısmı yerleşik hayata geçmiş, bir kısmı ise göçebe yaşam tarzını sürdürmüştür. Günümüzde göçebe yaşam tarzını sürdüren Yörüklerin sayısı oldukça azalmıştır. Yörük sanatının günümüzde yaşatılabilmesi için modern hayatla birleştirilerek yeni ürünlerle sunulması gerekmektedir. Bu alanda çalışan kişi, kurum ve kuruluşların tanıtılması ve desteklenmesi önem arz etmektedir. Bu çalışma, Mersin Olgunlaşma Enstitüsü'nde üretilen ürünler aracılığıyla Yörük sanatını ve motiflerini tanıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Yörük izleri taşıyan ürünler, çeşitli sanat dallarından seçilmiştir. Yörük kültürünün bir parçası olan motiflerin ve ürünlerin aktarımı, enstitüdeki usta öğreticilerden alınan bilgiler doğrultusunda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu ürünlerin kullanım alanları, teknik özellikleri, renkleri ve Yörük kültürüyle olan bağları incelenmiştir. Nitel araştırmamız, Yörük kültürü, sanatı ve motiflerinin gelecek nesillere aktarılması açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır.

**Keywords:** Yörük kültürü, Mersin Olgunlaşma Enstitüsü, El sanatları, Motifler, Tasarım.

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## Introduction

The history of the Turks, originating from Central Asia, includes a migration story extending to Anatolia. In the agriculturally unproductive lands of Central Asia, the Turks, who relied on animal husbandry, migrated to the fertile soils of Anatolia. Some settled into a sedentary lifestyle engaging in agriculture, while others continued their nomadic life, moving according to seasons to protect, feed, and get productivity from their animals. When the Oghuz Turks, an important branch of the Turks, migrated from Central Asia to Anatolia and adopted a sedentary lifestyle, they were called "Turkmens." Those who maintained their nomadic way of life were named "Yörüks" (Karkin & Oyan, 2015: 272). In other words, the Yörüks, who are not considered a different ethnic group, are Turkmen communities belonging to the Oghuz tribes with a highland culture, preserving their socio-cultural structure over time. If a distinction is to be made between the Turkmen and the Yörüks, it relates to their nomadic lifestyle and engagement in animal husbandry (Ak, 2015: 5; Gelekçi, 2004: 16).

Various opinions have been put forward regarding the etymology of the term "Yörük," and numerous definitions have been made concerning its meaning and origin. "Yörük" has been described as walking, unable to stay in one place, sedentary-nomadic, and nomadic (Karagöl, 2019: 18). The concept of "Yörük" first appears in Anatolia in the work "Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk" by Yazıcıoğlu Ali, who lived in the 15th century. It is also known that the term "Yörük" is encountered in the "Fatih Kanunnameleri" (Laws of the Conqueror). The use of the term "Yürük" instead of "Yörük" has also found its place etymologically (Aksoy, 2001: 83). According to another source, it means walking, marching to battle, and tent people. In Anatolian vernacular, this naming is known to signify a brave warrior, someone who walks well, a quick-footed person, abundant livestock, and fields yielding good crops, among other meanings (Demir & Bakar, 2014: 113).

The term "Yörük," which has various meanings and interpretations, is believed to have originated from the word "yarık," meaning walking, as found in the "Kutadgu Bilig." However, it also conveys meanings related to attitude, lifestyle, and livelihood. In ancient Turkic epics, the term "Yörük" is suggested to refer to soldiers who pay taxes, participate in expeditions, and have the right to settle, entirely belonging to the commander or the imperial army (Uslu, 2015:24). In Western sources, "Yörük" is referred to as "Nomad," but the Nomads do not have a distinct tradition or art of their own. In this respect, there are significant differences between the Yörük culture and the Nomads (Erden, 1994: 139-141).

The Yörük culture carries a tradition deeply rooted in animal husbandry and the products derived from it. Particularly in the Mediterranean and Rumelia regions, where Yörüks still live as nomads, animals are essential for their sustenance, shelter, and the production of necessary items for life. They predominantly engage in small livestock farming since managing and controlling their herds during migration is easier (Akça, 2016: 236). Depending on the region and the type of animals they raise, Yörüks have adopted various group names. While there are groups, such as those referred to by names like Karakeçili, Akkeçili, and Karatekeli, that are gradually moving away from their traditional way of life, there are also Yörük communities like the Sarikeçili Yörüks in Mersin, who continue to live a nomadic lifestyle, staying true to their traditions and way of life (Koç, 2021: 170).

Yörüks, living a nomadic life, have met their shelter needs through felt and hair obtained from animals. For Yörüks, who weave their tents from felt and hair, these materials are of vital importance as they do not let the cold of the ground and the impermeable during winter.

On the other hand, the tent is not only a necessity but also a cultural element for the Yörüks. According to Yörük beliefs, the tent is considered highly sacred and blessed, hence it is believed that scarcity and barrenness will not come upon them (Sarı, 2021: 14).

Yörüks obtain their nutrition from animal products as well. Utilizing the meat and milk of the small livestock they raise, Yörüks nourish themselves with natural products such as butter, yogurt, and cheese (Akça, 2016: 236). For storing the food they produce, they use woven items like bags, saddlebags, and sacks made from the hair and felt obtained from animals (Atlıhan, 1993: 106). Their migratory food habits and the woven products suitable for storing and transporting these foods have bestowed upon the Yörüks a distinctive cultural characteristic.

Additionally, the living conditions of the Yörüks have enabled them to produce products that reflect their cultural and artistic values in fields such as leatherworking, felting, and woodworking. The importance they attach to handicrafts and the meanings they imbue them with have endowed Yörük art in Anatolia with distinctive features.

### Yörük Handicrafts

Research and excavations have revealed that the oldest artistic traces belonging to the Turks date back to around 4,000 B.C. Objects such as carpets, woven fabrics, and small artifacts related to handicrafts found in burial chambers called Kurgans demonstrate that handicrafts have a deeply rooted history in Turkish culture (Aslanapa, 1987: 9; Diyarbakirli, 1984: 1-8). Additionally, excavations conducted in the Altai Mountains of Mongolia, where a 1,500-year-old mummy was buried, have unearthed well-preserved items like clothing, bags, and saddles, indicating the existence of sedentary-nomadic communities.



Figure 1. Rudenko, Frozen Tombs Of Siberia the Pazyryk Burials of Iron Age Horsemen



Figure 2. A 1500-year-old bag found in Mongolia.

The lifestyle culture acquired by the Turks from Central Asia is adapted to the steppe life and revolves around animal husbandry. To protect themselves from the cold of the steppe, they have produced textiles, household items, and clothing using the hair and skin of animals. Tents, rugs, saddlebags, bags, kilims, and carpets woven from felt, wool, and hair; garments

made in various forms from hats to socks, shirts to trousers, coats to skirts and belts using various materials like wool, felt, and leather; and household items made from wood, copper, and iron are among the findings. Additionally, all these products feature distinctive Turkish techniques, decorations, and motifs (Narşap, 2023: 125).

The Yörüks have produced the textiles they heavily used in their living spaces from past to present using different techniques and materials. The looms and raw materials used have emerged based on necessity. In this context, the looms commonly used in Yörük textiles are the 'istar' and 'çulfalık' looms. Additionally, although the 'kolon' and 'çarpana' looms are less commonly used today, they are traditional Yörük looms (Kundak, 1998: 10).

The 'istar' loom is a convenient loom for the Yörüks to weave items such as carpets, kilims, saddlebags, sacks, and prayer rugs, made from wool and hair that they use in their daily lives, suitable for nomadic life due to its easy portability (Eröz, 1991: 181; Öter, 2019: 129). Today, the Yörüks refer to this loom as a "kirkitle loom" (Kundak, 1998: 10).

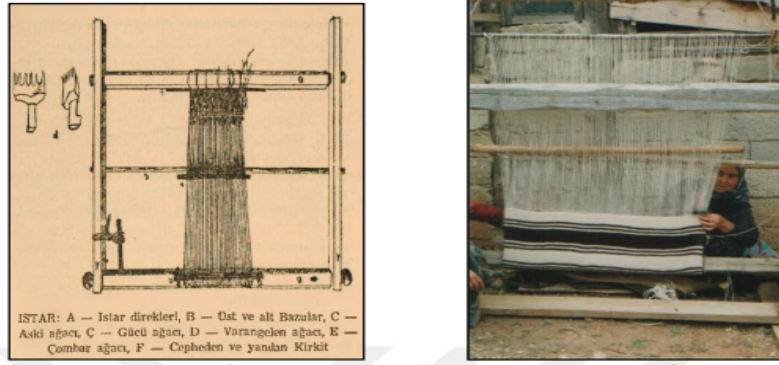


Figure 3. Istar Loom and Weaving.

On the 'çulfalık' loom, fabrics are mainly woven for innerwear and short jackets with loose sleeves. The 'çulfalık' loom can weave both cotton and woolen products. Because the smoothest fabrics are woven with this tool (Eröz, 1991: 184; Öter, 2019: 130; Cin, 2004: 154) it is also known colloquially as the "traditional loom" (Kundak, 1998: 10).

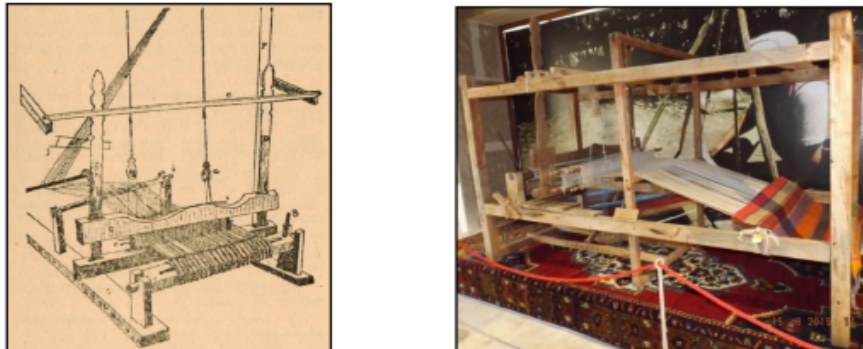


Figure 4. Çulfalık Loom and Weaving.

The looms known as "kon" or "kolon/kolan" are rare types of looms used by nomadic Yörüks and in old villages. Generally, Yörüks weave their tents on the "kon" loom. The straps, reins, and harnesses used for transportation by horses and donkeys are also woven on this loom,



using goat hair. In Central Anatolia, it is known as "dolak," while in Southern Anatolia, it is known as "yer ıstarı" (Eröz, 1991: 186; Cin, 2004: 154). Another type of loom, the "çarpana" loom, is a more advanced version of the "kolon" loom. It is used to produce patterned and colored products (Eröz, 1991: 187).

In Yörük culture, weaving has evolved based on various factors. As Yörüks lead a sedentary-nomadic lifestyle, it is understood that the items they use must be easily transportable and practical. Weavings used for carrying items, covering them, storing food products, and personal belongings are highly important to them. Additionally, protecting against the moisture and cold of the ground is a vital necessity when it comes to tents, and this has played a role in the development of Yörük weaving. Within this context, we can classify Yörük weaving into three main categories:

1- Tent weaving

2- Covers and rugs: Carpets and flat weavings (kilim, cicim, zili, sumak)

3- Weavings used for transportation: Saddlebags, bags, saddlecloths, sacks, 'çarpana', and 'kolon' weaving.

Considering that the primary raw materials used in all these textiles are wool and hair, which is natural given that the Yörüks are engaged in small ruminant husbandry (Akan, 2016: 41).



Figure 5. A Yörük tent made from goat hair.

Tent and carpet weaving, which are essential for protection against harsh winter conditions and cold, are of vital importance for the Yörüks. The tents made with wool and felt have gained a cultural significance with the emblems and motifs of the Yörük communities. Throughout history, Yörük carpets and kilims, whose value has been recognized, have become increasingly important, especially since the Middle Ages, and have been exported to other countries (Akça, 2016: 239; Öter, 2019: 128-129). Additionally, the Aksaray carpets and kilims woven by Yörük women in the 14th century have been in demand in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, India, and China (Ak, 2017: 239, 316-317). Weaving became significant during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, and with the Republic, interest in carpets and kilims increased significantly.

However, as of 1990, this art has begun to decline, and decreases in production have been observed over time (Öter, 2019: 128-129). Today, Yörüks call this loom "wire woven loom".

Different weaving techniques such as carpet, kilim, cicim, zili, and sumak have emerged in woven carpets or flat weavings and have been used according to the area of need. Especially in the Mersin region, it has been observed that kilim, cicim, zili, and sumak techniques are extensively used (Kundak, 1998: 10; Deniz, 2010: 53; Karagöl, 2019: 55). Kilim weaving, a commonly used weaving technique, is defined as the weft thread passing over and under the warp threads in specific areas where motifs are located, continuing to the border of another motif and then returning from there. In cicim, zili, kilim, and sumak weavings, the weft thread is used to compress the pattern thread. Cicim is a type of weaving used in pattern threads other than the weft and warp threads; zili is known as a weaving type applied using three or more threads. Yörük communities, inspired by nature, have colored the threads known as plain weaving by using the mentioned techniques to create products such as sacks, saddlebags, pouches, bags, carpets, and kilims (Onuk & Akpınarlı, 2011: 85-86; Karagöl, 2019: 56). They used various natural dyes to color these products. After collecting different colored herbs, plant roots, and flowers from nature, they boiled them to obtain natural dyes of various colors, dipping wool material into them to color them. This process is known as root dyeing. Similarly, using various plant and fruit peels, natural dyes were obtained using the same technique, and the weaving material was completed with this root dyeing process (Ekentok, 2022: 82-83).

In Yörük culture, colors are not only an aesthetic element but also a reflection of social identity, belief, and the relationship with nature. Particularly, the meanings carried by the colors red, blue, green, and yellow are visible in many areas, from daily life to ceremonial attire. Red generally represents life, power, and protective energy; it is frequently seen in wedding dresses, children's clothing, and motifs used to ward off the evil eye. Blue symbolizes the sky and infinity; its use as an amulet against the evil eye is particularly noteworthy. Green expresses the connection with nature and fertility; it has become a respected color, often associated with religious beliefs. Yellow represents the sun, light, and sometimes transience; it appears as a complementary color in textiles and headpieces. These colors are not only a visual richness but also carriers of cultural memory (Tatar & Harmanci, 2025: 103-112).

It is understood that the looms, products, motifs, and colors used by the Yörüks in weaving have varied, diversified, or decreased over time depending on the products they produce. Additionally, it is known that the Yörüks were not only engaged in weaving but also in felting, another handicraft of the Yörüks, which holds an important place. It is known that they used felt extensively in the tents where they met their shelter needs. Additionally, products such as 'aba' and horse saddle pads are also made from felt material (Eröz, 1991: 187).

Based on the lifestyle of the Yörüks, the household items they used were made of durable, unbreakable, and easily portable materials. In this context, everyday items were produced from copper, iron, wood, or leather. It is known that each tribe had its own blacksmith in ancient times; however, blacksmithing has been considered an important and sacred craft,

especially by the Turks. Although the traces of blacksmithing in Yörük art are not easily noticeable, it is known that there was a tribal blacksmith in the Yellibel region near Ermenek (Eröz, 1991: 191-193).

Another handicraft that emerged in Yörük life, where animal husbandry is prominent, is leatherworking. Leatherworking in the Yörüks was done in two different methods: tanning and tawing. The Yörüks produced items such as hides, bags, saddlebags, water skins, and buckets from animals such as sheep, goats, and cattle, and mainly used them as kitchen utensils inside the tent.

In their lives, the Yörüks processed natural materials found in nature and used them functionally in their daily lives. Another evolving handicraft in Yörük culture is woodworking. Wood is one of the materials used by the Yörüks to make household items. They make products such as breadboards (senik), dough troughs, cups (testi), small pots (boduç), water pitchers, ladles, and quail cages from wood. Additionally, it is known that they made wooden frames representing the skeletons of tents named 'topak ev' and 'derim ev' besides cutting wood and logs (Eröz, 1991: 193).

Due to their lifestyle and culture, the Yörüks have created their own art with motifs woven into products such as tents, carpets, kilims, clothing, and kitchen utensils. In the artworks produced by the Yörüks, animal motifs are often observed alongside floral, geometric, and symbolic motifs. For example, in the Sarıkeçili Yörük weavings in the Mersin region, it has been determined that there are 191 different motifs. Symbolic motifs such as 'pitrak' (clover), star, 'eğri su' (curved water), 'parmak' (finger), 'burnu eğri' (crooked nose); floral motifs such as flower, rose, carnation; animal motifs such as bird, ram's horn; geometric motifs such as diamond, triangle, square, pentagon, hexagon, octagon, zigzag; and objective motifs such as beads, comb, chest are frequently used as decorative elements (Onuk & Akpınarlı, 2011: 90; Kundak, 1998: 49-54). The motifs each have different meanings and symbols, representing the daily lives, traditions, beliefs, and emblems of the Yörük tribes they belong to. Motifs are also used as a cultural communication tool (Akça, 2016: 240).

Especially in Yörük carpet and kilim weavings, the motifs used convey the weaver's thoughts, remembrance, and emotions with their different symbolic meanings. They have reflected these expressions in their art based on nature and legends. For example, the 'elibeline' motif, frequently used in Turkish carpets and kilims, symbolizes femininity, fertility, abundance, and prosperity; the ram's horn motif symbolizes strength, courage, and masculinity; the 'bukağı' motif represents family unity; the 'pitrak' motif symbolizes protection from the evil eye; finger, hand, comb motifs represent power and authority; the eye motif symbolizes visual awareness; the amulet motif represents protection from the evil eye and malevolence (Kundak, 1998: 49-54; Kar, 2022: 112).

The traditional craftsmanship and emotions created by the Yörüks, especially in the art of weaving, are one of the rare art forms that have remained unchanged and have reached the present day. However, they are also facing the risk of disappearance. Therefore, individuals

and institutions that study, preserve, and pass on Yörük art are important for transferring the cultural memory of Turkish society and for preserving and perpetuating traditional handicrafts. Although the number of institutions performing this task in our country is quite limited, the Maturity Institutes stand out as the foremost institutions fulfilling this mission.

### **Maturity Institutes and Mersin Maturity Institute**

The first Maturity Institute was established in Istanbul in 1945, aiming to meet the academic and vocational needs of students graduating from Girls' Institutes in the early years of the Republic. Named after the concept of "maturity in the profession," these institutions aimed to enhance the professional skills, knowledge, manners, and tastes of graduates from girls' institutes or women's vocational schools, as well as to foster their entrepreneurial abilities and develop their capacity to earn a living through their professions (Kır Şimşek, 2019: 50-54). Expanding their scope of work without deviating from their fundamental purpose, Maturity Institutes, now numbering 30, promote, showcase, and popularize the miracle of Turkish art. Maturity Institutes offer courses and produce various items in disciplines such as embroidery, handicrafts, home management and nutrition, clothing, ready-made knitting, leather clothing, fashion garment design, painting, ceramics, tilework, illumination, miniature, furniture design, glass art, skincare and beauty, hairdressing, jewelry making and design, child development, research, promotion, and marketing. Maturity Institutes serve as institutions where modern and traditional elements converge to produce distinguished products, and where art and education come together under the same roof, with the mission of preserving Turkish clothing and handicraft traditions for the future (Akın, 2011: 46).

Mersin Maturity Institute, on the other hand, commenced its activities in the 2010-2011 academic year. Initially focusing on education and production activities in the fields of handicrafts technology and garment production technology, the institution later expanded its scope by introducing art design, food and beverage services, and traditional handicrafts, totaling 5 fields and 17 workshops associated with these fields. While aiming to provide education to all individuals interested in lifelong learning and to research and develop traditional Turkish clothing and handicrafts, the institution also seeks to equip its students and masters with the ability to use appropriate technology for art, acquire vocational skills, and blend tradition with modernity to create contemporary designs (İşbilir, Sönmeztürk, Göçer, 2022: 204). In addition to these objectives, Mersin Maturity Institute continuously conducts activities to introduce and disseminate Turkish culture, art, and motifs specific to the region where it is located. Mersin, especially, is a region dominated by Yörük culture, and Yörük culture and motifs hold a significant place in the institute's activities. Field trips, observations, and research conducted in the Toros Mountains, where Yörük lifestyle still persists, serve as the main source for the institute's Yörük-themed products. Additionally, the majority of the masters working at the institute are Yörük, which greatly enriches the institute's work related to Yörük culture and themes.



### Yörük-Themed Products at Mersin Maturity Institute

With the mission of researching, producing and revitalizing the handicrafts of Mersin districts and villages, Mersin Maturity Institute designs products that reflect the culture and art of the region in different workshops. Yörük handicrafts and culture are at the forefront of these efforts. Especially noteworthy is the institution's enrichment of Yörük culture with various art forms, with weaving being prominent among them. The Mersin Maturity Institute has produced a variety of products in decorative handicrafts, weaving, needlework, clothing, and ceramics with a Yörük theme. The most prominent feature of these products is their reflection of Yörük culture and motifs. The material for this study consists of products found at the Mersin Maturity Institute that bear traces of Yörük art. Limited to a total of 10 products, the primary objective of the study is to prevent the forgetting of Yörük art and motifs. Furthermore, it aims to emphasize the importance of individuals and institutions working to transmit these motifs, which are reflections of cultural memory, and to contribute to the revival of Yörük culture and art on a scientific basis.

In this part of our study, the products examined with a Yörük theme at the Mersin Maturity Institute will be presented. For this purpose, figure graphs of the products were taken, and the motifs were drawn. Descriptions of these products, the Yörük motifs they carry, fabric or weaving characteristics, areas of use, colors, and technical information about the products are provided below the figure graphs and drawings. Information about the products was obtained from master craftsmen working in the workshops. Interviews were conducted with Mehmet Ulus, master instructor from the ceramic workshop; Filiz Şahin, master instructor from the weaving workshop and Esin Taşdemir from the design workshop. Some of the information obtained from the interviews, particularly regarding art, technique, or fabric names, is provided as footnotes.



Figure 6. Ram's Horn Motif Ceramic Pitcher and Rom Horn Motif's Figure.

**Figure: 6**

**Product Name:** Ceramic Jug

**Production Year:** 2023

**Product details:** Shaped, painted and fired in the ceramic work shop, the jug is shaped using the sausage technique and the ram's horn motif is placed on the body with the ceramic relief technique. Thus, a tactile protruding effect was created on the jug. The ceramic slip was used for coloring. Red, light brown, blue, gray and black colors were used. The glazed firing was applied after ceramic biscuit firing (Ulus, Oral interview, 15.03.2024, MOE). Blue and red are colors with symbolic meaning in Turkish art. It is known that blue represents "sky" and red represents sovereignty, and in this respect, it is one of the colors frequently used in Yörük handicrafts.



Figure 7. Hands on Hips Table and Hands on Table Motif's Figure.

#### Figure: 7

**Product Name:** Hands on Hips Table

**Production Year:** 2020

**Product information:** On the ground of the painting, a linen fabric with countable strands, embroidered with the Susma technique, was used. The process was started with muline yarn formed by twisting yarns of different colors together. Cream, mustard, navy blue, blue, red, red and gray colors were used in the painting in which the motifs of the waterway and the hand on the waist were embroidered. Suyolu and eli belinde motifs are the two motifs that make up the Yörük theme of the painting. Hands on hips motif is one of the motifs used in Yörük art, especially in weavings. The motif, which is one of the symbols of femininity, is one of the ways in which luck, fertility, fortune, peace and happiness are expressed as symbols. The waterway motif is one of the important motifs used from Central Asia to the present day. It is known that water represents life and re-creation and is frequently used as a border motif in Yörük woven carpets, rugs and saddlebags (Taşdemir, Oral interview, 10.01.2014.MOE).



Figure 8. Tablet Woven Pillowcase and Raport of Motif.

**Figure: 8**

**Product Name:** Tablet Weaving Pillowcase

**Production Year:** 2021

**Product details:** The cushion cover, which is decorated with tablet weaving, tassels and mirrors, is woven on a rag foot loom and cut and shaped in a square form. Blue and burgundy colors, tassels and batik stripes are used on the cream ground rag foot weaving. Tassels, which are frequently seen in Yörük clothes and belongings, are used in the sense of being privileged (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE). So much so that, in the Gülnar district of Mersin, where Mersin Yörüks live, the idiom "To be a goat with tassels" is an idiom that has entered the vocabulary of the region, especially in the village of Kuskan, although it has not been recorded (Çolak, 2008: 193). The mirror used in decoration symbolizes the sanctity of Mother Umay in Turkish mythology and her descent to the earth in the form of a bird (Ergun, 2010: 279). In this respect, it is one of the ornamental elements in the handicrafts of Yörüks.

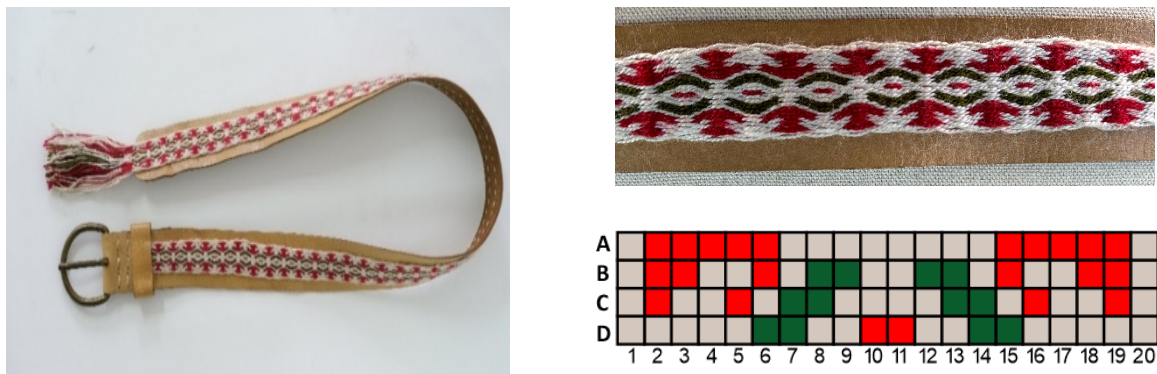


Figure 9. Tablet Woven Belt and Raport of Motif.

**Figure: 9**

**Product Name:** Tablet Weaving Belt

**Production Year:** 2022

**Product details:** The tablet weaving belt weaved using red, green and white is made suitable for daily use. The tablet weaving, which is hand stitched on a leather belt, has found a place in everyday life thanks to the designer's modern interpretation (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE). In fact, the area of use of çarpana weaving is quite limited today. In this respect, tablet weavings woven at Mersin Maturity Institute have an important function in the transmission of our traditional handicrafts.



Figure 10. Sarıkeçi Yörük Costume and Waterway Motif Apron.

## Figure: 10

**Product Name:** Sarıkeçi Yörük Costume

**Costume Production Year:** 2019

**Product Information:** This work is a traditional costume inspired by the attire worn by Sarıkeçili Yörük women living in the Mersin region. The colors, garment pieces, motifs, headgear, belts, and decorations are traditional elements of the Sarıkeçili women. The design consists of six pieces: göynek (shirt), şalvar (trousers), üç etek (uc eteks), peşkir (waistcloth), apron, and headgear. The collar edge of the göynek is adorned with crochet; the sleeve cuffs are finished with piping and buttons. The şalvar, typical of Sarıkeçili Yörüks, has wide legs and no pockets. The peşkir wrapped around the waist is woven on a plain weave loom using the plain weave technique; the apron is woven using the kilim weaving technique on a heddle loom, featuring the waterway motif. The üç etek is made with kutnu fabric, utilizing piping and button stitching techniques, and is embellished with wool tassels, ivory, and beads. The headgear comprises chiffon fabric wrapped around the head and is decorated with aromatic plants and beads. Technically, the decorative elements are handmade using ready-made materials, while the main pieces are machine-sewn. Predominantly featuring red and purple,



this work is connected to the meanings attributed to colors by the Yörüks. Although the Yörüks use all colors of nature, red is traditionally used in bridal and groom costumes, a practice that continues today, albeit rarely. Brides wear red clothing and a red veil, while grooms wear red şalvar and vests. Purple represents love among the Yörüks, which is why Yörük women also use purple and its shades in their clothing (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE; Taşdemir, Oral Interview, 18.03.2024, MOE).



Figure 11. Dilikli Çul and Star Motif and Pear Motif Patterned.

**Figure: 11**

**Product Name:** Motifed Rug

**Year of Production:** 2023

**Product Details:** The ground part of the rug features a star motif, with a pear motif used at the tips of the star motif. The narrow border of the rug is adorned with a flowing motif, and the short sides of the wide border are decorated with a waterway motif. The base color is navy blue; the pattern threads are white, red, pink, gray, green, dark purple, burgundy, yellow, and blue. The rug, made on a kirkit weaving loom using the zili weave technique, has wool for the weft, warp, and pattern threads. The Mersin Nomads refer to this type of motif and weaving, produced as a floor covering, as "dilikli çul" (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE).





Figure 12. Woven Pouf and Farda Motif's Figure.

### Figure: 12

**Product Name:** Woven Pouf

**Year of Production:** 2022

**Product Details:** The farda motif is one of the commonly used decorations in Yörük weaving art. This motif, preferred in rugs woven to cover household items by the nomadic Yörüks, is also frequently used by Yörüks living in the Anamur region of Mersin. The product, applied to the pouf, a common feature in modern home designs, is designed to prevent traditional weaving and motifs from being forgotten. The edges of the pouf, made with the farda kilim weaving technique, feature hook and comb motifs, and the colors black, red, gray, cream, and green are used. One of the characteristics of the farda kilim is its vibrant colors. Accordingly, the weaving is done in a multicolored fashion. Cotton yarn is used for the weft, warp, and pattern threads in the weaving, which is made on a loom with kirkıt (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE).

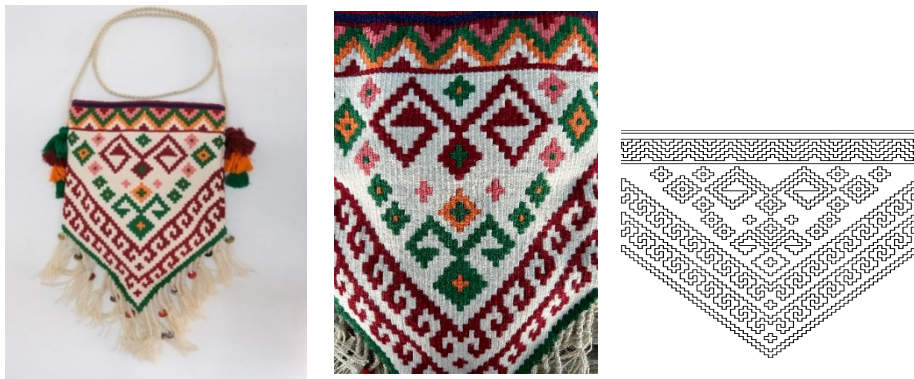


Figure 13. Yörük Bag and Hands on Hips, Ram horn, Eye, Hook Motif's Figure.

### Figure: 13

**Product Name:** Motifed Yörük Bag

**Year of Production:** 2023

**Product Details:** The bag is a traditional household item used by the Yörüks to protect their food from climatic conditions and keep it fresh. It is one of the practical necessities created by the nomadic lifestyle. In the past, these bags were found in every Yörük household, but today, their production and use have decreased due to the transition to a settled lifestyle. The weaving shown in Figure (13) features common Yörük motifs such as "eli belinde" (hands on hips), ram's horn, and eye motifs on the ground. The lower part of the bag features a hook motif, while the mouth part has a waterway motif. The woven bag, dominated by green, orange, pink, cream, and red colors, is decorated with tassels and beads. Made on a loom with kirkit using the kilim weaving technique, the bag is woven in two pieces and sewn together by hand. This bag, woven at the Mersin Maturity Institute, is designed to create a traditional ambiance in homes while maintaining its functional feature for food storage (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE).



Figure 14. Yörük Prayer Rug and Purple Ear, Colorful Bead, Waterway, Little Frog Motif 's Figure.

#### Figüre: 14

**Product Name:** Yörük Prayer Rug

**Year of Production:** 2022

**Product Details:** Among the Yörüks living in Tarsus and its surroundings in Mersin, prayer rugs made using the zili and cicim weaving techniques are quite commonly used. They are specially decorated with various motifs that change according to the weaver or region, such as "mor kulak" (purple ear), "eğer kaşlı" (saddle eyebrow), "insanlı" (human figure), and "topaklı" (lump). While Mersin Yörük prayer rugs resemble those woven in different regions of Anatolia, it is known that there are local differences in their names. The prayer rug examined at the Mersin Maturity Institute is woven similarly to a prayer rug previously made by the Sarıkeçili Yörüks in the region. The zili weave uses geometric decorations in the form of triangles and parallelograms, with the ground featuring the "mor kulak" motif and enriched with the "ala boncuk" (colorful bead) motif. The long sides of the prayer rug are adorned with a waterway motif, while one short side features the "kurbağcık" (little frog) motif and the other short side

the "kuşgözü" (bird's eye) motif. The cicim weaving technique is used on both short sides. The prayer rug, woven on a loom with kirkit, uses wool yarn for both the warp and weft threads. Since the yarns used in the weaving were not dyed with natural dyes, the rug has a duller appearance compared to the sampled rug. The colors used in the weaving are navy blue, sea green, brown, white, yellow, red, green, and black. The zili weaving technique, once frequently used in Yörük culture, is now less preferred due to its difficulty and the decline of the nomadic Yörük lifestyle. Therefore, it is considered a valuable handicraft that is important to preserve for the future (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE).



Figure 15. Yörük Bag and Scorpion, Earring, Burr, Bead Motif's Figure.

### Figure: 15

**Product Name:** Yörük Bag

**Year of Production:** 2022

**Product Details:** Inspired by the Yörüks' appreciation for the arts of weaving and leatherworking, the Yörük motif bag is created by combining natural leather and hand weaving using hand leather stitching techniques. The bag, woven on a plain weave loom using the kilim weaving technique, has cotton for the warp and polyester for the weft. The weaving features motifs such as scorpions, earrings, beads, burrs, and geometric shapes, and utilizes shades of red, blue, white, brown, and green, which are frequently used in Yörük weavings. Designed to be used as an electronic device or document bag, the product adds a traditional touch to modern life's necessities (Şahin, Oral Interview, 10.03.2024, MOE).



## Result

This study examines products produced at the Mersin Maturity Institute that bear traces of Yörük culture and art. A total of 10 products, including ceramics, clothing, embroidery, home and clothing accessories, bags, rugs, and prayer rugs, are the focus of this study.

When examining the technical features of different products such as weaving, ceramics, leather, clothing, and embroidery in this study: relief in ceramics; zili, kilim, plain weave, and tablet weaving in textiles; susma in embroidery; hand stitching in leather; and both machine and hand- stitching techniques in clothing have been identified. The looms used in weaving are identified as kirkitli, çulfalık, and tablet weaving looms.

Common motifs used by the Yörüks are evident in all the products. The products feature geometric, symbolic, animal, plant, and object motifs, with the ram's horn motif appearing in figures (6) and (13); the "eli belinde" motif in figures (7) and (13); the waterway motif in figures (7), (10), (11), (13), and (14); star, pear, and spill motifs in figure (11); the "farda" motif in figure (12); the eye and hook motif in figure (13); the purple ear, bird's eye, spotted bead, and frog motif in figure (14); and the scorpion, earring, burdock, and bead motifs in figure (15). It has been observed that the waterway motif is generally used as an edge decoration. It is noted that motifs frequently used in Yörük weavings, such as "eli belinde," ram's horn, "farda," star, purple ear, and scorpion, are also used as main motifs in Yörük-themed products at the Mersin Maturity Institute.

Considering the meanings of colors in Yörük culture, it is known that red, blue, and green have been frequently used in social life and state-related works from past to present. The examined products come in various colors and shades, with red, green, blue, and their shades being the most frequently used, while brown, purple, and their shades are the least used.

In the woven products examined, wool and cotton threads are generally used. However, it has been identified that synthetic thread, such as polyester, as seen in figure (15), is also used. It has been noted that root dye is not used, which is why the threads do not have the original vibrant colors. Additionally, tassels and beads, which have been used as decorative elements by Turks since Central Asia, are still used today. Tassels and beads can be seen as decorative elements in figures (8), (10), and (13).

The colors, motifs, and decorative elements of the 10 products examined at the Mersin Maturity Institute reflect Yörük culture. The technical features and raw materials are harmonized with traditional methods to be compatible with modern industry and production.

Yörük culture was brought from Central Asia to Anatolia, along with distinctive motifs, techniques, and decorations. These cultural and artistic distinctive features are considered a heritage left by previous generations to the new generations. Today, one of the places where this heritage is transferred is educational institutions. The Mersin Maturity Institute, as a formal educational institution, is one of the institutions that consciously produce knowledge and outputs in terms of transferring cultural heritage. The wide age range of students and

masters working in the workshops at the institution strengthens its role in transmitting cultural heritage. Moreover, promoting the mission and vision of Maturity Institutes to the public, informing the public about the functioning and services of the institutes, and thus increasing their recognition will help to systematically transfer cultural heritage to children, young people, and adults.

In conclusion, the products emerging from the workshops of the Mersin Maturity Institute, which systematically and regularly strive to transmit and regard Yörük culture and handicrafts as cultural heritage, are valuable archives and significant cultural pieces. Achieving the purpose and entirety of these pieces is possible through scientific examination; their systematic preservation and sustenance can be achieved through their introduction to new generations.

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## Internet Resources

Url-1: <https://sozluk.gov.tr/> (Date of access: 10.02.2024).

Url-2:

[https://megep.meb.gov.tr/mte\\_program\\_modul/moduller\\_pdf/Y%C3%B6r%C3%BCk%20Hal%C4%B1s%C4%B1%20Desenleri.pdf](https://megep.meb.gov.tr/mte_program_modul/moduller_pdf/Y%C3%B6r%C3%BCk%20Hal%C4%B1s%C4%B1%20Desenleri.pdf) (Date of access: 15.10.2023).

## Visual References

Figure 1. <https://tr.wikipedia.org/> (Date of Access: 13.12.2023).

Figure 2. <https://arkeofili.com/?p=13080> (Date of Access: 17.12.2023).

Figure 3. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/269479> (Date of Access: 17.12.2023).

## References Persons

KK-1: Filiz Şahin, Diyarbakır 1978, Associate degree, qualified instructor (Date of interview: 10.03.2023 ).

KK-2: Mehmet Ulus, Mersin 1985, Bachelor’s degree, qualified instructor (Date of Interview: 15.03.2023).

KK-3: Esin Taşdemir, Mersin 1984, Bachelor’s degree, qualified instructor (Date of Interview: 18.03.2023).

## ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE RESEARCH

In this study, all rules specified in the “Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions” were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, “Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics”, were performed.

### Ethics committee permission information

Name of the ethics review board: Mersin University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee

Date of the ethics review decision: 05.03.2024

Number of the ethics review document: Decision number 45.