

From Tradition to Future-An Elegant Touch to the Soul of Needle and Thread; Point Laces from Bademağacı Town

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Abstract: This study is aiming to have a look at the past and future condition of the needlecraft works still being performed at Bademağacı Town, Döşemealtı district at the province of Antalya. According to the studies on various laces, it is clear that the town went through magnificent eras in terms of needlecraft art. Once being embroidered with delicate touches, point laces used to be the favourite pieces in every girl's dowry, but faced with rapid technology and constant changes in tastes it is going through a stage of disappearing. Even though the Bademağacı point laces are losing their traditional structure, they are still being used in designs and in general, in every part of daily life. Enlivened by the dancing of point needle and yarn in the delicate hands of women, the area of use of point laces has changed overtime, but despite this fact, their value will always be known.

Key words: Antalya • Bademağacı • Dowry • Needlepoint

INTRODUCTION

Rumour has it that the town of Bademağacı has been built in nomad groups at around 1200-1300's, coinciding with the latter stages of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire, by a number of Yoruks named Mahmut, Mustafa, Hasan and Ibrahim. Following the declaration of Republic, it was named Bademköy and then "Bademağacı". The town is located on the Antalya-Burdur motorway, 50 km away from Antalya and 35 km away from district centre. The current permanent population is around 2.000 [1]. Going back a long time in history, point laces became one of the handcrafts that are sliding into oblivion, due to the changing living conditions of recent years. However, they are still being produced and highly popular in Bademağacı town of Döşemealtı /Antalya. There are several almond trees in the town, which is the reason for the name Bademağacı. Almost each year, there are festivals such as "Vine Harvest" and "Almond Day" organized, where housewives are selling their handcraft.

The focal point of this study is point lacing, one of the handcrafts that has survived to this day in Bademağacı town in Döşemealtı /Antalya and which is not widely mentioned in sources. With the purpose of

determining the past and current situation of point lace craft in Bademağacı town, mutual observation and question-answer methods and techniques have been used and the point laces of the town have been reached. We have interviewed people who keep point laces in their dowries and people who utilize point lacing as a means of earning their livelihood. Pictures of these point laces have been taken.

In Turkish dictionary, the term "oya (embroidery/lace)" is described as "lean lace, made by needle, shuttle, crochet or bodkin, generally by using silk thread". Lace is the name given to the beauty that is mesmerizingly being livened up by the dancing point needle and yarn in the delicate hands of ladies [2]. Embroidery is a handcraft aiming to decorate and being decorated and it is also a communication tool used for signalling out messages [3]. According to the resources, point laces, being used as non-verbal communication tools in decorative woman clothing, have been taken to from Anatolia to Greece in 12th century and from there it moved on to Italy and rest of Europe. The point lace samples from the past suggest that point laces and all handcrafts in general in Anatolia had their golden age at the 18th century. As a consequence of the negative effects of the mimicry that has been generated by the misconceived Westism following the

Tanzimat reform era, interest towards point laces waded away rapidly. Based on the outcomes of various studies, the Turkish term “oya (embroidery/lace)” does not have any corresponding words in any other language, it is believed that this hand craft is unique to Turks and especially to Turkish women [3].

Turkish women are artisans, who command the spirit of needle and thread; through their elegance and patience. Coming right through the hearts of Turkish ladies, point laces are masterpieces, uttering the words of incredible beauty. Point laces, with their decorative aspect and dimensional structure, occupy an important place among our handicrafts. Colourful scarves, bundle bags and kerchiefs, decorated with point laces, which have survived to this day, are the result of Turkish women's patience and superior intelligence and they are the most precious pieces of dowry chests. With each knot tied and shaped in the fingertips of women, kerchiefs, scarves, ceremonial cloths and prayer rugs have been decorated. They have also been used on home accessories. While glamourizing chest cloths, tray cloths, beddings and bundle bags, sleeves and collars of clothes and night gowns have been decorated too. Clothes and home accessories decorated by point laces did not only become the point of interest of women but they also became part of men's everyday lives. In the past, point laces were part of everyday life on swashbuckler hats, money pouches, seal pouches, kerchiefs, pocket watch sleeves etc.

Point lace models display similar and different characteristics in many parts of Anatolia. Sometimes the name changes, but sometimes models with different names bear the same message. The motif, colour and composition patterns on these models not only reflected the lifestyle, desires, expectations, sorrows and joys of the community, but they also have the characteristics of historic documents related to social life [4]. It is said that Anatolian women never wore any headscarves without laces, if they were not mourning. When happy, women decorated their head scarves with colourful flowers, but during difficult times, scarves were decorated by peppers.

In the mountain villages of the Taurus Mountains, a point lace knitted by different nuances of green colour indicated the satisfaction of a newlywed bride from her new home and spouse, but if her headscarf had yellow coloured point laces, this meant, this reflected her exasperated and unhappy mental state. On the other hand, a bride with a pepper patterned headscarf was telling that she was not in good terms with her new surroundings [3]. The tool used for point laces as sewing needle in various sizes, while the material was generally silk yarn during the Ottoman era and until 1950-1960 during the Republican

era, but then silk-cotton yarn was used. Despite being very few in numbers, we came across some examples in a number of regions where silk yarn is being used in point laces (Elazığ, Safranbolu, Mudurnu etc.) [3]. The reduction in silk production made it compulsory to use synthetic yarn in point laces. Nowadays in most parts of Anatolia, synthetic yarns are being used for point laces. Technically in point laces, triangular bowknots or square bowknots are being used [3].

Anatolian women reflect their emotions and dreams on colours and laces. Our point laces are being shaped in accordance with the cultural differences and tastes that vary from region to region and they are named after the figures or shapes that they look like. Being kept in the most precious parts of our dowry chests and homes for many centuries, the art of point laces is still popular and performed meticulously.

Scarves with colourful point laces are indispensable pieces of young girls' dowries in the town on Bademağacı and it is part of the tradition. As well as needle lacing, it is known that crochet, bodkin and shuttle laces are also popular in the area. In general, a single dowry should contain at least 10-15 scarves with point laces. The models in the town rich in needle laces, the models are generally traditional, or new models are added to the existing traditional samples. Being in two or three dimensions, these laces are made with synthetic (nylon) threads, conforming to the colour of the scarf and the patterns on the scarf. In earlier times women of Bademağacı used to do their point laces with silk yarn, but in recent times they have switched to nylon threads due to the high prices of silk threads. Lace motifs are generally in two or three colours.



Picture 1: Brides' inner blouse



Picture 2: Loose robe



Picture 3: Groom's kerchief

Being used to decorate the sides of scarves in the town, these laces were once stitched on collar and sleeve corners to embroider clothing (Picture-1). The blouses made for brides were decorated with mountain motifs and spacers have been placed between motifs. In addition, grooms' kerchiefs were also being decorated (Picture-3). Groom kerchiefs used to be decorated by love triangles and rosemary made from silk fabric and silk yarns. In the past, such a kerchief was in every young girl's dowry.

Point laces are being knitted on crepes, ceremonial cloths and various head scarfs in the town. These laces are being directly knitted on the scarf, but sometimes they can also be placed on a chain before being attached on



Picture 4: Bead point lace



Picture 5: Bead point lace



Picture 6: Crepe cloth



Picture 7: Star flower Picture



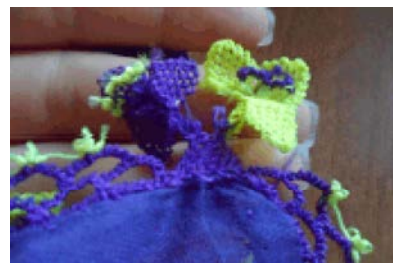
Picture 8: Quince flower



Picture 9: Almond pattern

the scarf. The point laces in below pictures show coloured beads and larger beads. Point laces with beads are not being used for all kinds of head scarfs.

As well as beads, spacers are also used in point laces (Picture-6). Crepe cloth is used to cover the face of the babies. The colour of crepe is blue for boys and red for girls.



Picture 10: Pepper flower



Picture 11: Light pink (Yavruağzı)



Picture 12: Grape cluster



Picture 13: Rose in a vase



Picture 14: Black pepper pattern



Picture 15: Butterfly pattern



Picture 16. Table cloth

Bademağacı point lace models have been named after the entities in nature. The most popular ones are named after plants (starflower (dahlia), quince, almond lace, pepper



Picture 17. Tray cloth

flower, grape cluster, rose in vase, black pepper), figures; (butterfly, spider, cockscomb, rosemary) and geographical formations (mountain pattern).

The embroidery names we have observed in the area are as follows: Dahlia, quince flower, almond, pepper flower, yavruağzı, grape cluster, rose in a vase, black pepper lace, butterfly, spider, cockscomb, rosemary, mountain pattern.

In the area, needle lacing has not been limited to the sides of headscarves, but they can also be seen on table cloths and tray cloths. The lacing tradition that is being taught by mothers to daughters and by elder sisters to younger sisters, is displaying the taste of the local women; who spare time to do it whenever they have spare time outside their works in fields and gardens. Because of being over-used in daily life, laced headscarves become worn-out in about 3-4 years. Because it is so difficult and time consuming to knit a point lace, most of the time the point lace is not thrown out with the worn-out head scarf but rather it is placed onto a new scarf.

CONCLUSION

The Bademağacı point laces that constitute the main theme of the study have been observed to be an old handcraft but still continuing in modern times. As in other hand crafts, point laces did not lose their significance, but in contrary they are also being used for decorative purposes. The number of people doing it has waned because it is time consuming and difficult to do and it does not generate a sufficient level of income. The people knitting point laces in the area are mid-aged and elder, which is an indication that young girls did not learn how to do it and that they are not interested in it. Therefore, we believe that point lacing keeps losing its significance, but at the same time, we are hoping that as long as the dowry tradition continues, point lacing will survive too. It is our biggest wish the point laces made for dowries in many parts of Anatolia are passed on to next generations for many centuries to come and that the best efforts are given for this purpose.

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