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**West Anatolian Carpet Designs:
The Effect of Carpet Trade between Ottoman Empire and Great Britain**

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In this paper, we are interested in explaining the carpet trade between Ottoman Empire and Great Britain, and focusing on the question in what ways this relation had an effect on 19th century West Anatolian carpet weaving from the aspects of color, motif and composition. It is as well another point that the effect which occurred as a result of this trade interrelation created an issue: While native producer weaves her own carpets for daily use, this production had also been effected by the same element in terms of colors and patterns applied. West Anatolian carpet weaving had continued as a home industry among the villagers till the middle of 19th century and the change in local carpets showed an increase throughout that century. As the carpet exportation to Europe and America had increased, there emanated a clear distinction about the features of traditional local carpets in terms of raw material, dyestuff, color, motif and composition. In some areas, they started to weave carpets in the sense of the patterns brought from Europe. In this paper, we refer to the differentiation that existed in West Anatolian traditional carpets from the aspect of motif and composition characteristics. Thus, we intend to clarify this change by demonstrating samples of carpets held by the families who live in and around İzmir.¹

According to the information from certain resources, we understand that Anatolian carpets had been exported to Europe 600 years onwards. Formerly, these carpets had reached Venice via Chios Island and İzmir Harbour, then to the South part of Europe and following the West Coast to Great Britain. These carpets which were produced in Turkey and which had been subject of a wide commercial network had been exported to Europe during 18th and 19th centuries. They were mostly woven in Western Anatolia carpet-weaving centers such as Bergama, Usak, Gordes, Selendi, Kula, Demirci and Milas.

International trade gained importance as a result of the authority that the Ottoman Empire constituted during 15th and 16th centuries over a large area. However, together with the progression of capitalism in Europe in 17th and 18th centuries, there emerged new forms of foreign trade. Parallel to this situation, İzmir had become the most

¹ Dokuz Eylül University, Department of Traditional Turkish Arts has completed a project about this subject. Project Name: Documentation of Turkish Carpets Held by the Private Collections and the Families who Live in and around İzmir and Formation of a Design Archive. Project Coordinator: İsmailOztürk, Project Team: Elvan Anmac, Nuray Yılmaz, Oznur Aydın, Oya Sipahioglu, Gonca Karavar. It is known that some of the families who live at the centers of carpet production in and around İzmir possess unique Turkish carpets as well as some of the private collections possess the same materials. As these carpets are passed on by one generation to another, the information they hold is destructed and the value they have disappears. This project was aimed to document these kind of valuable carpets in terms of their region, technique, material, design and composition, which are held by the families and private collectors.

significant center for foreign trade of Anatolia during the Ottoman reign. As Europe turned his face to Levant² in order to meet the increasing necessity of food and raw material and the transfer of English and French Consulates from Chios to Izmir³ had been a turning point for the city of Izmir. Furthermore, advantages that the Ottoman government offered to Izmir played an effective role. Towards the middle of 17th century, as the war between Safavids and Ottomans came to an end, the trade road had slid to Izmir in Anatolia.

Facts such as the explosion of production, technological developments and fast transportation vehicles which were results of the industrial revolution caused the economical relations between the world states to ascend at high levels during 19th century. As a result of the trade agreements⁴ signed in 1838 and 1861, the enforcements such as investments of foreign capital and foreign debt in the fields of transportation, communication, trade and industry had put the Ottoman Empire into the center of world's capitalist order in the second half of the 19th century. Within this period, the foreign relations intensified in Izmir and the city became the most important center of economy for West Anatolia and Mediterranean.

Yet, till the Trade Agreement of Balta Limanı signed in 1838, foreigners were forbidden to make commerce in Ottoman lands. English tradesmen made use of Greek and Armenian commission merchants in the course of commerce till that period, and right after the prohibition abolished they began to enter the market without these commission agents. However, because they could not get well-organized in the rural areas, they continued to receive help from the same agents.

It was the second half of the 19th century that English tradesmen made an attempt to draw into the West Anatolian carpet production. It was after this date that West Anatolian carpet weaving had gone under the control of English firms as it was under the control of Ottoman tradesmen who commissioned local weavers to weave carpets until the beginning of 1860s. Nevertheless, except the commercial carpets which were woven on

² After the English tradesmen got the opportunity to make commerce in Eastern provinces under their flag, a group of English tradesmen applied to Queen Elizabeth I. and had the permission to make commerce in the Ottoman Empire for seven years; since then the "Turkey Company" was established in 11 September 1581. It was around this date that another English company was active in Venice. These two companies, which were more or less making commerce of the same products, came together under the name of "Levant Company" in 7 January 1592. (For further information, pls. see Nimet Akdes Kurat, *Türk İngiliz Munasebetlerinin Başlangıcı ve Gelişmesi* (The Beginning and Development of Turkish – English Relations), Ankara (1953): 41-43). The "Levant Company" of France was established in 1666. Because these firms possessed the commerce monopoly, the marinas that they chose became trade centers of the region. (see İlhan Tekeli, "Ege Bölgesindeki Yerleşme Sisteminin 19. Yüzyıldaki Dönüşümü" (The Transformation of Establishment System in Aegean Region During 19th Century), *Uc Izmir, Istanbul* (1992): 127.

³ Izmir had begun to take the place of Chios and become the most important trade marina of Aegean Region at the beginning of 17th century. (see Suraiya Faroqi, *Osmanlı'da Kentler ve Kentliler* (Cities and Citizens in the Ottomans), *Istanbul* (1994): 144.

⁴ For the agreements signed in 1838 and 1861, see Mubahat Kutukoglu, *Osmanlı İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri, 1838-1850* (Economical Relations between Ottomans and England, 1838-50), 1-152.

order, the weaving of dowry⁵ carpets also continued after 1860s. P. De Andrea Co., Habif and Polako, T. A. Spartali Co., these English firms produced carpets by providing yarns and patterns especially in Usak⁶ and around from the beginning of 1864. The middle of 1880s was the time when West Anatolian carpet weaving had gone under the control of firms called P. De Andrea Co., Habif and Polako, T. A. Spartali Co., G. P. and J. Baker, Sdney La Fontaine and Sykes Co.; and these were the firms to establish the company of The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers. Then, they started to check all the stages⁷ of process from the spinning of yarns to the exportation of carpets.

English tradesmen were the first to practice the “putting-out system” which was one of the initial phases of Industrial Revolution in Europe and they did not make much investment in this field during 19th century. This system which did not require excessive and continuous investment had kept English tradesmen’s interests at high profits. In 1884, as the carpet weaving in West Anatolia was 155.000 m², it was then, that rose up to 367.876 m² in 1893 as a result of English tradesmen’s strict control on the weaving business. In Table 1 and 2, you may see the condition of West Anatolian carpet weaving at the end of 19th century and at the beginning of 20th century:

⁵ Dowry carpets hold symbols that express individual emotions along with the cultural values of the society they belong to. From this point of view, they are extremely special carpets and never thought to be sold for commercial purposes. These carpets are woven by young girls for their own dowry. They are also transferred from mother to daughter or given to the wife of the son, accordingly these carpets could survive to present day. For further information pls. see Ismail Ozturk, “Ege Bolgesi Haliciliginin Demirci ve Gordes Orneginde Halk Bilimsel Acidan Incelenmesi” (Study of Carpet-Weaving of the Aegean Region within the Example of Demirci and Gordes), *III. Milletlerarasi Turk Folklor Kongresi Bildirileri*, Ankara (1987): 321.

⁶ In that period, English tradesmen had kept an eye on West Anatolian carpet weaving very closely. The value that they had given to the West Anatolian carpets could be better understood by this example: “There happened a big fire in Usak in 1895. When the news arrived at London Stock Exchange of Carpets, the prices of Usak carpets had gone up to four times higher. In order to get rid of that situation immediately and to reconstruct the city, civil engineers and a high amount of money had been sent from London. According to the statements of the engineers, it was promised that the city of Usak would become a small specimen of Paris. However, the adverse thoughts of that day’s merchants could not be well understood, and as a result of this disagreement, today’s Usak had been built up by Turkish engineers” (Gungor Isiksacan, 12).

⁷ In many carpet weaving regions of West Anatolia, English tradesmen had put the villagers under pressure about the issue of using chemical dyestuff. In 1888, the use of aniline dye was forbidden in Aydin, and instead of this, the use of vegetal dyestuff was enforced. However, the prohibition was abolished in a very short term along with the complaints of English tradesmen, whose interests were threatened (Orhan Kurmus, 147).

Table 1
The Carpet Weaving in West Anatolia in 1890 and Its Value

Place of Production	Amount of Production (m ²)	Value (in frank)
Uşak	250.900	3.896.000
Gördes	56.000	1.127.000
Kula	35.400	862.000
Demirci	25.000	529.000
TOTAL	367.300	6.414.000

Reference: Paul Lindau, "1900'lerde İzmir" (İzmir in 1900s), Turk Dunyasi Arastirmalari,issue:30, October 1985, pp. 167.

Table 2
The Amount and Value of Carpet Exportation Between 1885-1913 from İzmir

Year	Production (tons)	Value (Million Kurus)
1897/1898	640	16.0
1901/1902	1.240	31.2
1910/1911	2.016	73.5
1911/1912	1.584	66.3
1913/1914	2.000	73.7

Reference: Vedat Eldem, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İktisadi Sartlari Hakkında Bir Tetkik (A Study on the Economical Context of Ottoman Empire), Ankara (1994): 87.

At the beginning of 20th century, an Austrian firm (Keun and partners) which had noticed English tradesmen gaining high profits from the West Anatolian carpet production despite the reduced production quality opened a carpet weaving atelier in Usak. Following this, in a very short time, Turks and minorities opened 15 carpet firms with little capitals. As soon as six English firms⁸ got aware that they were about to lose their monopolistic status, they got together to sign the establishment contract of The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers in 25th of February 1907. Soon after that, they started to work actually in 1st of January 1908. The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers constituted atelers in İzmir, Sivas, Burdur, Isparta, Hacin, Urla, Maras and Kirkagac, and opened agencies in Demirci, Akhisar, Sivrihisar, Niğde, Kula,

⁸ P.De Andrea Co.,G.P.veJ. Baker, Habif ve Polaka, Sydney La Fontaine, T.A. Spartalı Co., Sykes Co.. (pls. see İsmail Öztürk-Elvan Anmac, "Yabancı Sermayenin Batı Anadolu Halıcılığına Girişi, Etkileri ve Günümüzdeki Uzantıları" (The Entry, Effect and Extensions of Foreign Capital at West Anatolian Carpet Weaving", Türkiye'deki El Sanatları Gelenegi ve Çağdaş Sanatlar İçindeki Yeri Sempozyumu Bildirileri, Ankara (1997): 27.

Kutahya, Simav, Manisa, Gordes, Usak, Denizli, Milas, Aksehir and Sille. The little firms could not compete with The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers as they were in control of all the processes from purchasing and storage of the fleece to providing access for the carpets to the market of Europe and America. Eventually, these little firms were out of dyestuff, they went bankrupt and in a very short time their quantity in number fell down from fifteen to seven.

Table 3 shows the value and destination of carpets exported from West Anatolia before the First World War:

Table 3
The Value of Carpets Exported from Izmir Before First World War

Destination Country	Value of Carpets (in Ottoman Lira)
Great Britain	311.349,50
France	96.401,00
Austria	53.610,00
America	17.401,00
Egypt	12.580,00
Various countries such as Germany,Italy,Romania	20.496,80
TOTAL	511.838,30

Reference: Turgut Alp, "Vilayet Haliciligina Bir Nazar-1" (View on County Carpet Weaving), Halka Dogru Mecmuasi, Year:1, Issue:2, İzmir (1919): 12.-14.

In 1890, firms which brought patterns from Great Britain well-matched to the taste of Europeans, made them weaved in West Anatolia; however, they continued to produce fine quality carpets primarily in Kula and in some other places that had traditional motifs which were sold to very high prices.

As a result of the increase in handmade carpet exportation, the hand woven yarns could not meet the need. For this reason, from the beginning of 20th century, they began to establish wool yarn mills⁹ in West Anatolian Region.

From the third quarter of 19th century, there occurred a change in pattern and composition along with the use of dyestuff in the commercial carpets produced in West

⁹ Bicakcizade Biraderler and Yarn Company of Mehmet Zeki (Foundation:1905), Usak; Blaklar Yarn Company, Izmir; Hamzazadeler ve Surekasi, Yarn and Serge Manufactory (Foundation: 1910), Usak; Yarn Company of Kozineri Lui, Izmir; Yilancizade Biraderler ve Surekasi, Serge Manufactory (Foundation: 1910), Usak. There companies other than those: Uhuvvet Otoman Carpet Inc. Co., İstanbul-Yedikule; Izmit Textile Goods, Yarn Company Izmit; The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers, Binkoy Company, Bandirma-Binkoy; Feshane Fabrika-i Humayunu, Istanbul-Defterdar; Ottoman Goat Fabrics and Serge Manufactory, Izmir; Karamursel, Felt and Serge Manufactory (Foundation: 1892), Karamursel; Company of Numune-i Terakki Komandit, Yarn and Serge Manufactory, Bursa. (For further information pls. see Gunduz Okcun, 129-130.)

Anatolia. Long before the Industrial Revolution in 18th century, the handmade carpets were a part of interior designs of elite palaces and cathedrals of Europe. After the Industrial Revolution, working class who had enriched their economical situation showed great interest in handmade carpets as they were signs of richness and nobility. English tradesmen immediately made use of this situation and they started to produce low cost carpets with the patterns that European working class could enjoy. Patterns of this kind were produced by European artists peculiar to their own motif and composition style in arts. Therefore, Baroque, Iranian, Caucasian, Afghan, Indian and Chinese figures had broadly entered the West Anatolian carpet weaving from the end of 19th century onwards. Besides, in this period, the catalogues of machine made carpets were brought from Europe. These patterns were adapted to the composition of handmade carpets in design offices. At the same time, whenever in need of pattern, motifs of handmade embroideries made by the locals had adapted on carpets as new patterns. On the other hand, the production of patterns, which were derived from the machine made carpets that were substantially criticized and had not been demanded in the market, gradually diminished. Addition to all, in the following years, local motifs were interpreted and offered to European taste. The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers that had been in act in 1908, produced degenerated carpets by disarranging the local motifs as well as producing carpets with foreign patterns. This application of The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers that had been subject to an article published in 1919 in *Halka Dogru Magazine* is as follows:

The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers supplied all the details of the oldest and the most valuable carpets of East as well as Turkish and Iranian carpets from the paintings of oil on canvas which held by the European museums. They made a classification by putting the similar ones in order such as Milas, Usak, Bergama, Gordes, Kula, Kurdish and Iranian, and then they constituted a pattern atelier that was consisted of professional craftsman who were also got paid. Here in this atelier, the craftsman form new samples of new patterns that are in balance with each other by taking one part from each variant pattern such as a niche of a mosque from the Gordes variant, a mid flower from the Bergama variant, another mid flower from the Usak variant, etc.

The carpet weaving bears the spirit, beauty and taste of East, so as the spirit of craftsman require the same feelings to diversify it in many ways; though it is not rational and natural for a craftsman to be in need of those spiritual feelings which could only come from inside. It is a pity that I have not seen a single Turkish carpet designer in the design atelier of The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers. If one of those craftsmen who work for this atelier had been grown up in the place where carpet weaving arose, he could have transmitted the national sense and other tastes properly on the carpet and so as the carpet could reach an ultimate beauty.

Between the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, carpets belonging to Ladik, Kirsehir, Mucur, Gordes and Bergama had been woven in Kula by the enterprise of English firms. As a result of this, the regional motifs which were used in this carpets had been used by many Kula carpets woven after this period. A parallel situation is also remarkable in Gordes. Within the same period, English firms produced both traditional carpets of Gordes and West and Central Anatolian carpets in Gordes. Besides, they created a new form of Gordes type by adding motifs of European taste. This group of carpets is called Cakiroglu, Mecidi and Kayme.

At the end of 19th century, some handmade carpets were being woven in various carpet centers of West Anatolia in respect of the European's own pattern and color taste. It is clear that, although there were carpets woven for a limited population that kept their traditional character; the excessive amount of carpets were woven at low costs for a greater population of European people according to their level of aesthetic taste. Till that period, weavers produced their carpets by looking at the back weave of a carpet or by using a carpet called "sample carpet." (A sample carpet is formed by the combination of borders, corners and mid-points from different regional carpets. The weaver chooses the one that she likes as she weaves the carpet). The patterns of these carpets had only been designed by the taste of the weaver. However, the patterns of the carpets which were produced commercially and exported abroad had been only woven according to the demand of the client. This process had been accomplished by a series of act: first, the carpet's colored drawing which were to be woven had been sent from Europe, then, this drawing was given to an experienced weaver to be woven as a model. After this weaving process, these model carpets' reverses were being used to produce new carpets. Such carpets were exported to Europe and America from Izmir Harbor by the name "Smyrna Carpets."

The activities of The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers that had the authority of commitment on West Anatolian carpet weaving for years came to an end by 1934. Even though the firm's action had ended by 1934, today, we could still watch the effects of their activities on West Anatolian carpet designs. The weavers have begun to use the motifs, they used to produce for the carpet merchants, in the carpets they have woven for themselves.

The firm called Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers animated the trade in West Anatolia throughout that period. Carpets had become first among a limited number of products exported from the Ottoman Empire. Carpet patterns were documented in chequered papers in the design offices established in Izmir. Many patterns that had been used in carpet weaving regions survived with this kind of documentation. Moreover, with the use of chequered paper, new types of regional carpets emerged, drawing attention to the design factor. Today, the organization, systematic work flow, and the use of qualified personnel continue to affect levels of productivity, as these remain operative among many of the carpet firms in Izmir.

In conclusion, it can be said that West Anatolian carpet-weaving, which saw progress under Ottoman merchants until the 1860s, came under the control of English firms early in 1864. The English firms, which gained profits from the exportation of carpets, tried to monopolize and demolish the market system in order to gain even more profits. In 1908, as a result of this attitude, the English firm called The Amalgamated Oriental Carpet Manufacturers commenced its business activities. Right before that, in order to prevent this foreign firm from being monopolistic, and to protect the carpet producers' rights, the "National Usak Carpet Firms" was established in 1907; it was the first firm to use the word "national" in West Anatolia. However, this "national firm" was not able to cope with the enormous capital of the English firm. At the beginning of 20th century, this firm held the control of West Anatolian carpet trade. Today, part of the motifs from the traditional carpets which were started to be used by the effect of foreign firms, are still in use along with the regional motifs woven by the local weavers.



*Gordes (left), symmetric knot, 125x172cm, 26x30 knots/d.
Gordes (right), symmetric knot, 132x159cm, 30x40 knots per/dm.*



*Kula (left), symmetric knot, 113x153cm, 22x32 knots/dm.
Denizli-Cal (right), symmetric knot, 81x155cm, 24x31 knots/dm.*



West Anatolia, symmetric knot, 76x121cm



Pile carpet from Kula, symmetric knot, 182 x 120cm.

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