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Henna Ritual Clothing in Anatolia from Past to Present:

An Evaluation on *Bindalli*

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INTRODUCTION

The unification of two people's lives in Anatolia is celebrated with ceremonies that can be described as a series of entertainment. Marriage ceremonies shaped around various rituals and practices are considered as an important part of Anatolian traditions from the Ottoman era to the present day and can be evaluated within the scope of intangible cultural heritage with these features. Henna ritual also constitutes an important part of marriage ceremonies. Henna nights are organized prior to marriage, first of all, folk songs are sung to make the bride, who is separated from her mother and father, cry then the bride says “I will both cry and go”; friends and guests have fun while dancing to the entertaining music. In a henna night, the bride wears a traditional henna dress. The symbolic meanings of the materials, colors, motifs and ornaments used in henna clothes increase the cultural importance of these clothes. It is seen that these garments made of silk, velvet or satin fabric are used in wedding ceremonies in Anatolia and are decorated with patterns created using glitter, pearls and sequins, and accessories such as headwear, belts and buckles that are used to complete the clothes. It is seen that henna entertainment, which is a tradition that has been forgotten especially in cities due to the changes in daily life practices, has regained its old importance in social life with the effects of the cultural production system in recent years. Continuing the henna night ritual is important in terms of preserving the intangible cultural heritage. In this study, henna clothing, which is an important indicator of the henna ritual that can be considered within the scope of intangible cultural heritage, was analyzed with semiotic method using examples from the past and present. Traditional henna clothes show regional differences in terms of model, cut, fabric and ornaments.

In this study, *bindalli* clothing element belonging to Ankara Beypazari region was selected as the material of analysis and the characteristics of *bindalli* clothing and accessories belonging to Ankara Beypazari region were explained with written sources and samples of Ankara Ethnographic Museum. Information about current *bindalli* clothing is also provided.

Ritual Concept and Its Cultural Function

Rituals, which are an expression of social activity and interaction, transform participants from one status to another by moving them within the symbolic space, and with these features, they are defined as expressive-impressive and emotional activities consisting of sacraments, rites, ceremonies and similar behavior patterns repeated over time. Ritual, as a standardized and repetitive symbolic behavior, can be considered as an emotional tool that emphasizes group consciousness and unity rather than individuality, and a link that connects the past to

the present for the transfer of new knowledge and experiences.¹ A collective unification is achieved through the words, symbols, gestures and mimics used during the ritual. Additionally, a sense of sacred commitment occurs among group members through the means of collective unification.² Thus, besides being a social phenomenon, rituals should be considered in relation with the emotional worlds of those involved in the ritual, demonstrating group consciousness and unity. In order to fulfill certain social needs in regular rituals, the individual is prepared for certain transition periods of life. The events that make up the transitions in the life cycle, which are valid for almost every society, turn into a form of ritualistic action.³

In his work on rituals, Collins states that in terms of ritual participants, the physical presence of two or more people in the same space affects each other.⁴ Ritual participants can focus on each other through common objects, symbols, activities, and communication and they also become aware of the common points they focus on. Thus, participants can share and convey their shared mood and experiences.⁵ Therefore, a sense of group solidarity and group membership can be considered first as outputs for ritual participants. Collective unification is achieved through common symbols, gestures, mimics, and objects shared in the ritual.

Looking at the concept of ritual in general and considering its different varieties, it is possible to say that it fulfills a social function regardless of its purpose.⁶ A ritual that initially served a religious purpose may later serve a social purpose. In that regard, faith plays a fundamental role in fulfilling a social function, from a sense of partnership to solidarity. Regular rituals, collective ceremonies, preparatory activities for the main transition areas of life and collective actions have a functionality that serves to rebuild the social structure over and over again.

Rituals that are repeated in harmony contribute to the consolidation of the participants' idea of togetherness. Rituals, which have a collective character by their nature, hold the group together, strengthen solidarity and reinforce the collective consciousness of the community. Rituals, on the one hand, contribute to social integration; on the other hand, reveal the difference of the community or group they represent from other societies. Therefore, whatever the purpose of rituals, it is beneficial in the formation and increase of group consciousness of the individual.⁷

The ritual offers ready-made patterns about the behaviors of the individual in society, preventing him from pursuing new pursuits in every situation and strengthening his commitment to the past with an emotional bond. Giddens suggests that the connection of rituals with the past can be explained through tradition. According to Giddens, tradition is

¹ N.M.T. Schuyt, J.M. Schuijt, "Rituals and rules: about magic in consultancy" *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 11, No. 5 (1998), 399-406.

² Karaman, K. Ritüellerin toplumsal etkileri (Social effects of rituals). *SDU Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 21, (2010), 227-236 [in Turkish]

³ Murtezaoglu, S. Kültürel belleğin ritüel yoluyla kuruluşu (Establishment of cultural memory through ritual), *Motif*, 5(9), 344-350 (2012) [in Turkish]

⁴ R. Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 2004.

⁵ Collins, 49.

⁶ Murtezaoglu

⁷ Cohen, A. P. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Tavistock Publications, (1985)

preserved by formulated belief and ritual.⁸ In this sense, rituals are of great importance in the transfer of traditions from generation to generation.

Transition/entry rituals are activities that enable transition of an individual from one status to another. Such rituals indicate social acceptance of transition or entry to another status. Birth, death and marriage rituals can be considered as examples of transition rituals.

Although the way of their performance varies, marriage and related rituals are a part of the whole of traditions passed down from generation to generation. Marriage ceremonies shaped around various rituals and practices are considered an important part of Anatolian traditions from the Ottoman period to the present day and can be evaluated within the scope of intangible cultural heritage with these features.

Henna Ritual and Importance of *Bindalli*

The unification of two people's lives in Anatolia is celebrated with ceremonies that can be described as a series of entertainment. Henna ritual also constitutes an important part of marriage ceremonies. The henna ritual, which is among the rituals and practices from the Ottomans to the present day, is based on the tradition of lamenting.⁹ Henna nights are organized prior to marriage. First, folk songs are sung to make the bride who is separated from her mother and father cry, then the bride who claims “I will both cry and go” have fun with her guests and friends while dancing to entertaining music. In addition to this entertainment, the bride and sometimes the groom are hennaed at henna nights. This ritual is based on the belief that the bride and groom are sacrificed to each other.

At the henna night, the bride wears a traditional henna dress called *bindalli*. The symbolic meanings of the materials, colors, motifs and ornaments used in henna clothes increase the cultural importance of these clothes. *Bindalli* clothes worn in henna nights were a sign of wealth and dignity in the Ottoman period.¹⁰ The most commonly used ones at weddings and henna nights are red colored ones. At the beginning of the 19th century, with the effect of Parisian fashion, the change in wedding dresses was also seen in the Ottoman Empire and the models of henna dresses began to change.¹¹ With this effect, the palace and its surroundings started to prefer fluffy, tulle or satin dresses for henna nights instead of caftans and *bindalli*.

While the color white started to dominate the wedding dresses with the effect of Parisian fashion in the palace, the *bindalli* and caftans worn in henna nights in Anatolia continued to be used in red. Additionally, it is seen that these garments made of silk, velvet or satin fabric are used in wedding ceremonies in Anatolia and are decorated with patterns created using glitter, pearls and sequins, and accessories such as headwear, belts and buckles are used to complete the clothes. Especially in marriage ceremonies and henna rituals, all of the materials, motifs, and ornaments used in bridal clothing have various symbolic values and

⁸ A. Giddens, *Living in a Post-Traditional Society*, in *Reflexive Modernization*, Editors: Ulrich Beck; Anthony Giddens; Scott Lash. (UK: Polity Press.), 1994.

⁹ Değer, Z. İ. Kültür Endüstrisinin Geleneksel Kına Giyiminde “Kaftan”ı Popülerleştirmesi Üzerindeki Rolü (The role of the cultural industry in popularizing “Kaftan” in traditional henna clothing), 9. Milletlerarası Türk Halk Bilimi Kongresi Bildiri Kitabı, 369-377, (2019) [in Turkish]

¹⁰ Görünür, L., Ögel, S. Osmanlı kaftanları ile entarilerinin farkları ve kullanışları (Differences and uses of Ottoman kaftans and entari), İTÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 3(1), 59-68, (2006) [in Turkish]

¹¹ Değer

cultural significance separately or as a whole.¹² For example, in the Ottoman period, caftans were made with expensive fabrics such as *kemha*, *diba*, and *seraser*. At the same time, these caftans featured motifs such as the sun, the moon, leopard stripes and tulips embroidered with silk thread made of gold and silver. Each element of the caftans, from their fabrics to their motifs and colors, has a distinct meaning and has been an indicator of the reputation and splendor of the wearer.

***Bindalli* within the Frame of Traditional Transformation**

It is seen that henna entertainment, which is a tradition that has been forgotten especially in cities due to the changes in daily life practices, has regained its old importance in social life with the effects of the cultural production system in recent years. Rituals both reflect changing social relations and are intertwined with consumption objects and popular culture elements of the cultural production system.¹³ Especially television series and movies have a great effect on the recall of traditional rituals. Fashion sector is one of the main sectors that make up the cultural economy.¹⁴ The henna night ritual is important in terms of preserving and maintaining the intangible cultural heritage. The intangible cultural heritage continues to exist within the tangible cultural heritage. At this point, it becomes important to examine how the intangible cultural heritage adapts to changing contexts and transforms itself.

METHOD

This study used basically a descriptive survey model which is based on review of literature about *bindalli* that constitutes henna ritual and a significant part of thereof. In this study, *bindalli* clothing element belonging to Ankara Beypazari region was determined as the material of analysis and the characteristics of *bindalli* clothing and accessories belonging to Ankara Beypazari region were explained with written sources and samples of Ankara Ethnographic Museum. Furthermore, current henna night wear styles have been presented with the information and photos given.

FINDINGS

This section comprises the parts of *Bindalli* and clothing features and henna ritual clothing.

***Bindalli* and clothing features**

In the current Turkish Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, it is mostly described as a garment or cover with embossed branches, leaves, and flowers embroidered with metal thread on purple velvet.¹⁵

¹² N. Kumaş-Şenol, Giresun İli Gelin Giysilerinin Değişim Süreci Üzerine Bir Araştırma (A research on the process of changing bride clothes in Giresun province), Master's Thesis, Gazi University, Ankara (2014) [in Turkish]

¹³ Yıldırım Önk, Ü, Gökaliler, E. Yerli dizilerde geçiş ritüelleri: kına gecesi örneği (Rites of passage in domestic series: The case of the henna night). *Folklor/Edebiyat*, 26(103), 671-690 (2020) [in Turkish]

¹⁴ N. Özdemir, Kültür ekonomisi ve endüstrileri ile kültürel miras yönetimi ilişkisi, Kültür Ekonomisi ve Yönetimi (Relationship between cultural economy and industries and cultural heritage management), Ankara: Hacettepe Yayınları (2012) [in Turkish]

¹⁵ <https://sozluk.gov.tr/>, Oct. 12th, 2020

Çelebilik and Çengel, report that Bindalli dresses which take their name from embroideries with a rich composition consisting of plant motifs, spread from Istanbul to Anatolia, and in many regions including Safranbolu, and these clothes had an important place among traditional women's clothing in 19th and 20th century and these were used as dresses in engagement, henna and wedding ceremonies.¹⁶

Yakar ve Yakar reports Bindalli as kaftans or dresses, usually embroidered with embossed motifs with metal thread on purple or dark burgundy velvet.¹⁷

Arli and Yanar describe Bindalli as dresses, shalwar, üç etek (three skirts), cover in which various motifs (plants, writings, objects, geometric patterns) are embroidered using metal thread and Dival work on velvet.¹⁸

Barışta describes Bindalli as a garment made of velvet and atlas fabrics, embroidered with metal and metal twisted yarns, usually with long sleeves and long skirts down to the ankle, one piece dress without any partition on the waist or two-piece clothing like skirt and jacket.¹⁹

Koçu²⁰ and Özen²¹ describe Bindalli as an old fabric name. Silk fabrics and velvets are embroidered with gold thread and large leaves, branches. Koçu²² reports that this fabric is used generally for entari (loose robe) and mintan (chainse) both for women and men, it is known that especially artisan young men were wearing bindallı in the past.

Bindalli is usually referred to as bindalli clothing and is called by some researchers as a style where plant, object and geometric motifs embroidered with Dival work technique with tinsel threads on velvet, atlas, taffeta fabrics. The most important features of Dival work technique can be summarized as embroidered motifs of plants, objects, geometric designs on velvet – atlas – tafetta fabrics using metal yarns, sequins, and similar tools (tırtıl-pul- kurt).

Bindalli clothing and bindalli cover photos in the Ethnographic Museum of Ankara are presented below (Figure 1, 2).

¹⁶ G. Çelebilik, Çengel, A. Karabük ili Safranbolu ilçesi Kaymakamlar Müze evinde bulunan Bindallı elbiseler (Bindallı garments in Kaymakamlar Museum House in Safranbolu district of Karabük), Art-e Sanat Dergisi, 11 (21), 171-209, (2018) [in Turkish]

¹⁷ E. Yakar, E.B. Yakar, Maraş İşi Sim Sırma ve Bindallı'lar (Maraş work metal threads and Bindallıs). Kahramanmaraş Belediyesi. Halim Ofset, Kahramanmaraş (2011) [in Turkish]

¹⁸ M. Arlı, Yanar, A. Beypazarı geleneksel kadın giyimlerinden iki öge: gümüş kuşak, bindallı (Two traditional women clothing examples from Beypazarı: silver belt and bindallı). II. Uluslararası Türkiye-Ukrayna İlişkileri ve Türk Sanatı Sempozyumu, Bildiriler. Halk Kültürü Araştırmaları Kurumu. Lazer Yayınları Ankara, 18-26, (2010) [in Turkish]

¹⁹ H. Ö. Barışta, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Dönemi Türk İşlemeleri (Turkish embroideries in Ottoman period). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları: 2342, (1999) [in Turkish]

²⁰ R. E. Koçu, Türk Giyim Kuşam ve Süslenme Sözlüğü (Dictionary of Turkish Costumes). Sümerbank Kültür Yayınları No:1. Başnur Matbaası, Ankara (1969) [in Turkish]

²¹ M.E. Özen, Türkçe'de kumaş adları (fabric names in Turkish). İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi. Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, Sayı:33, 291-340 (1988) [in Turkish]

²² Koçu, 39.

Figure 1,2. Bindalli dresses and covering material in XIXth Century, Ankara Ethnography Museum, 2020

Maraş embroidery technique is known by names such as, Dival work, sim-sırma work (metal thread), cardboard work, compression work as well. In Marash work, it is a single-faced processing where the face and back of the fabric has different appearance. An embroidery tool called cülde is used. The Maraş technique applied by mutual fastening with multi-ply metal thread from the top and waxed yarn from the bottom. The bottom thread is invisible from the top, the top thread is invisible from the bottom. The knots stay among fabric layers. In past cotton, leather, cardboard were used; today cardboard, hard fabric, hard leather are used as filling material.²³

Pattern determination, embroidery cardboard preparation, fabric selection and preparation, engraving of pattern, bonding the engraved pattern to the fabric are the stages before embroidering.²⁴

Baykasoglu and Tez examined the technical characteristics of five works (three bundles, one bedspread, one bag) processed by the Dival work technique in the collection of the Museum of the Faculty of Vocational Education of Gazi University.²⁵

In the study it was determined that green velvet fabric, purple silk velvet fabric, purple fabric, and the blue and, burgundy satin taffeta fabric were used where auxilliary embroidery techniques (sequin fastening technique, sequin fastening technique with kurt, bias winding technique with tırtıl, cord fastening technique), have been used in addition to Dival technique and plant and geometric patterns were used.

Embroidered bindalli baggy trousers, inner blouse and jackets are very important forms of cultural expression for the women of Beypazari. Large floral motifs are surrounded by smaller decorative elements positioned on the front, back, and sleeves of inner blouse. The

²³ H. Köklü, El İşlemeleri (Hand Embroideries). Ya-Pa Yayın Pazarlama Sanayi ve Ticaret A.Ş., İstanbul (2002) [in Turkish]

²⁴ E. Yakar, Yakar, E. B

²⁵ N. Baykasoglu, Tez, E. Gazi Üniversitesi Mesleki Eğitim Fakültesi Müzesinde bulunan Dival işi işlemelerden örnekler (The dival work samples at Gazi University Vocational Education Faculty Museum), Motif, 18 (61), 4-7, (2012) [in Turkish]

bindalli jacket is worn over the blouse and has loose, straight sleeves and is decorated in a similar way to the inner blouse. The trousers or Shalvar are also embroidered all over. Large floral motifs are worked at the sides, and small branched motifs are repeated at intervals on the garments.²⁶

Bindalli clothing is exhibited in the Ethnographic Museum of Ankara. In the museum, three of the bindalli garments, which are women's clothing for special days such as henna night, marriage ceremony, circumcision ceremony, are presented with photographs (Figure 3,4,5,6).

Figure 3,4. Bindalli dresses XIX Century, Ankara Ethnography Museum, 2020

²⁶ F. Yetim, Embroidered Bindallı garments worn by women in the town of Beypazarı, Ankara, Turkey. Folk Life: Journal of Ethnological Studies. Vol. 47, 20-31 (2009).

Figure 5,6. Bindalli clothing (with two pieces, jacket and salvar) XIXth Century, Ankara Ethnography Museum, 2020

Figure 3 shows a one-piece bindalli dress sewn from burgundy colored velvet fabric. It is understood that floral motifs such as branches and leaves are extensively processed in the dress and that Dival work (Maraş work) processing technique of yellow colored metal yarns is used. The cap and a red cover decorated with dival work processing technique on the top of the cap, and the belt can be seen. Red cover is often used in henna night wear. The buckle of the belt is made of yellow metal.

Figure 4 shows two pieces of bindalli clothing consisting of a jacket and skirt made of light pink satin fabric. Flowers, branches, leaves were embroidered with yellow metal threads in Dival work technique. Motifs were heavily observed on the sleeves and front of the garment. The belt is placed with the same fabric and embroidery. The headscarf is light in color and the edges are pinked.

In Figures 5 and 6, bindalli clothing consisting of jackets and shalvars sewn from burgundy colored velvet fabric is seen. It is made with Dival work technique and branches with yellow metal threads and leaves are placed with a different composition. The same color is seen in the fabric and in the embroidered shoes. The headscarf is pinked and red in color. The silver belt was used.

Silver processing is common in Beypazari, after the 1980s, gold processing is also observed. In the region, filigree master İlyas Sarimen made local clothing accessories made of gold and silver. Belt buckles, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings can be included among them. Filigree accessory, called Talisman in the region, is especially used as belt buckles and

pendant tips.²⁷ Cumhuriyet gold coins and gold lira were used in the old examples of The Talisman, which is an important part of women's clothing at wedding ceremonies in Beypazari. Prayers with pen work technique on one face, evil eye verses, the star and crescent symbol on the other face are drawn with filigree technique and floral decorations were included. Filigree technique is used in new examples. In addition, Pearl is an important part of the jewelry of the region^{28,29}. The talisman is a special day wear accessory. From precious metals such as gold and silver, usually in round and pear form, belt buckle with filigree technique of different sizes is found as a necklace (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Silver talisman necklace made with filigree technique, Beypazari-Ankara, 2020

Figure 7 shows a talisman necklace in a silver processing store in Beypazari district. It is a talisman necklace made of fine silver wire with filigree technique, in round form, with inserted pearls and silver chain. Old examples are found in museums.

Current Henna Night Wear

Today, henna night women's clothing is very diverse. Some of women use traditional bindalli clothing as they have seen from their elders, while others prefer new design clothing. It is reported that purchasing or leasing methods are applied. In new clothing, differences are observed in terms of color, fabric, model, and decoration. Photos of two of the new design henna night clothes are presented (Figure 8,9).

²⁷ İ. Kamiloğlu, Geleneksel Gümüş altın telkârî ustası İlyas Sarımen. Uluslararası Geleneksel El Sanatı Ustaları Sempozyumu Bildirileri, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları: 434, Bilimsel Toplanılar Dizisi:57. Grafiker•Ofset Matbaacılık, Ankara, 589-600 (2013) [in Turkish]

²⁸ M. Güler, M. Büyükyazıcı, Osmanlıdan günümüze Beypazari'ndaki gümüş takıların incelenmesi. CIEPO-18 International Committee of Pre-Ottoman Studies Zagreb, Hungary, (2011) Edirne, Türkiye [in Turkish]

²⁹ M. Büyükyazıcı, Ankara kadın takıları (Women clothing accessories in Ankara). 1. Uluslararası Ankara-Kazan ve Çevresi Halk Kültürü Sempozyumu Bildirileri, 6-7 Kasım 2012, Ankara 142-147.

Figure 8, 9. Current henna night clothing, designer Atanur Erkol, Ankara, 2020

In figures 8 and 9, two henna night clothes designed by Erkol are seen. Erkol reports that he uses ready-made materials such as purple, navy blue, red, burgundy, green colors, Satin, taffeta fabrics, and ornamental stones, lace, braid, ribbon, semi-precious stones, tassel, tatting in his clothing designs for henna night.³⁰ He also reports that he placed the applique method of ready-made processing.

It is possible to say that the current women's henna night clothing differs from the old bindalli clothing in terms of model, fabric, processing, material. The old bindalli clothing required laborious and intensive manual labor was replaced by consumer preference, material variety, low prices, etc. for reasons of new design examples.

³⁰ A. Erkol, Oral interview. Costume designer in Ankara. Jan.28th, 2021.

CONCLUSION

From the point of view that culture can be preserved by keeping it alive, it is thought that it is important to examine how henna entertainment clothes and accessories, which have existed in Anatolian culture for centuries, have come from the past to the present, how they have been adapted and changed, in terms of preserving traditional values and sustaining them by passing them on to future generations. Examining and understanding the relationship between culture, ritual and semiotics, the transformation of the *bindalli*, which is a henna entertainment dress, over the years, fulfills the purpose of contributing to the studies of the tradition from different fields.

Fashion plays an important role in the creation of new cultural meanings and in transferring these meanings to users, and it is also possible to spread local values to wider geographies through fashion systems. The existence of an interesting product subject to consumption in cultural production systems can also turn into an economic value through fashion systems and plays an important role in keeping the culture alive. Within this context, the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage in consumption by preserving its value and importance is critical.

In recent years, the fact that *bindalli*-like clothes have been presented with different designs as prom dresses or beachwear that can be worn over swimsuits shows that the area of use has expanded. This can be considered as an example of sustainability. Discussions on this issue can also be sustained within the framework of creativity, being open to innovation, protection of values, and prevention of corruption.

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