

Our Carpet: Transformation from Global Commodity to Local Tradition

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to illustrate—through the example of a carpet producing village in the southwestern part of the Republic of Turkey—a historic and ongoing process in which a heterogeneous cultural element originating from others settles into a community and becomes that community's "own tradition.". This paper is based on data collected through anthropological field research conducted mainly in 2005-2006. The Milas region in Muğla prefecture in southwestern Turkey is known as one of the prominent traditional carpet production areas. Village women in the area still continue domestic carpet production to this day. The women of Karacahisar Village in Milas produce both typical Milas-style carpets common in all the villages in the region, as well as floral design carpets that are completely different from the others and not found anywhere else. The design originated in a carpet workshop for export that was opened by Jews in the village around the beginning of the 20th century. Through the examination of the present state of production and use, it is shown that the villagers give special cultural importance to the floral design carpets as "a tradition of our village." I shall discuss about how the floral design carpet introduced to the village from outside has become an important cultural resource for them because of its heterogeneity. The villagers utilize it to represent themselves externally as well as to display social and economic prestige internally. Thus the floral carpet, the introduction of which was originally driven by the market economy, is now recognized as a very unpopular commodity, but paradoxically enough, serves important roles of maintaining the villagers' customs and traditional techniques of carpet production today.

Key words: tradition, custom, market economy, carpet, Turkey

1. Introduction: “Cultural Resource-ness” of Unpopular Commodities

Turkish carpets are and undoubtedly have been cultural resources. They have been consumed by Westerners who have desired precious, exotic handmade items for centuries. As tourism and the market economy in Turkey developed in the 1980's, the presence of Turkish carpets in the souvenir market drastically expanded. This kind of utilization of cultural resources combined with interests of capitalism, is already a common story seen everywhere in the world. Furthermore, they are not only commodities as cultural goods aimed at cultural others, but also one of the resources of identity politics, such as being claimed to represent the unity or continuity of Turk-ness among the Turkic countries (for example, see Bekir 2001 ; Türkmen 2000). This type of utilization of cultural resources has also prevailed all around the world, especially around the boundaries of ethnicities or nations.

However, in this paper, from the interest of sustainable development of local handicraft production, I would like to shed light on a very inward-facing phenomena observed in a local region. I will describe the historical background of Turkish carpets and one of the traditional production areas, then focus on a village where there was a direct contact with Western capital in carpet production more than a hundred years ago. By examining their present situation of carpet production and consumption in the village, I shall discuss how the carpet design introduced to the village from those outsiders has become embedded into their culture. This phenomenon could also be reasonably analyzed as “invention of tradition,” as Hobsbawm (1983) pointed out, being coincided with the period when he suggested that possibly most traditions were invented in history.

But also by examining this phenomenon as “cultural resource” instead, I try to cast new light on the potentiality of present-day unpopular commodities that are easily dismissed.

2. Historical Background: Turkish Carpet as Popular Commodity in Europe

Turkish hand-woven wool carpets have been exported to the West since at least the

15th century. They have long fascinated people living in far different contexts than that of their scene of production. We can see when and how Westerners appreciated Turkish or Anatolian carpets by looking at many paintings from the Italian Renaissance, Flanders and the Netherlands painted between the 13th and 17th centuries. Through those paintings and various kinds of historical documentations such as old fragmentary trading reports and letters between some Royals or high status politicians, we can know how precious those “Oriental carpets” used to be and what showy items they were for the privileged as a symbol of wealth (Mack 2001, Quataert 1993, Aslanapa 1988).

As mass production and mass consumption progressed in Europe after the industrial revolution, oriental carpets (i.e. at that time mostly Anatolian and Persian carpets) became popular among the newly powered gentries or emerging upper-middle class. Thus the demand for Turkish carpets was on the rise, especially in the latter half of 19th century, and to supply those demands from overseas, European capitalists introduced factory production systems inside of the Ottoman Empire by establishing large factories and workshops of carpets and their materials. Most of the European commercial companies at that time were of British, French and Italian capital, whereas those who played actual roles for them domestically were Greek, Jewish and Armenian citizens of the empire (Sakamoto 2003). The Oriental Carpet Manufacturers Ltd. (hereafter OCM), was founded by six Western commercial companies being merged in 1908 in Izmir, a large port on the west coast of Turkey. OCM grew its production and trade in astonishing speed as a monopolistic enterprise at that time. Just before WW I in 1913, the company occupied a 90% share of the carpets that were exported from the port of Izmir, which used to be the main exporting port for all of Anatolia (Sönmez 1998). Thus, because of the boost of demand in Europe, large amounts of Western capital flew into the Ottoman Empire and then these companies started to manage the production and distribution directly: promoting mechanization and standardization to develop their productivity and efficiency.

3. How the Village Met the Western Others

3.1 Tracing the trade of the Milas carpet

Milas region, in the southwestern part of Turkey (see Figure1) has historically been one of the traditional carpet production areas. It has also been involved in the carpet trade in Europe for centuries as I described above. For example, among the several-hundred-year-old carpets seen at the protestant churches and museums in the Transylvanian Region in Romania, some are reasonably assumed to be Milas carpets from the characteristics of their motifs (Frances 2007:39). The churches are on the old trading route from the Black Sea to Western Europe, where Armenian merchants used to be active in trading.

Even though large-scale carpet factories or workshops were not built in this region either by the Ottoman Empire or foreign capitalists, the Milas carpet had been known and exported to European countries though the hands of the carpet dealers in Milas, Izmir and Istanbul.



Figure 1 Maps of Turkey and Milas Region

3.2 Karacahisar Village and the encounter of its floral carpet

Then what is the present situation of the carpet production in the Milas region? In the triangular zone between the town of Milas, the resort town of Bodrum and the small beach retreat town of Ören, many female villagers are still producing carpets at their homes. The common and main income sources of the villages in this region are commercial production of olives for oil, seasonal paid work in resort towns nearby and carpet production.

Like some other carpets from different regions, there are certain identical designs and motifs characteristic to Milas carpets. Among them are the color combinations of light and vivid yellow, deep burgundy red and moss green, arrangement of special motifs of animal footprints or plant elements in a couple of layers of rectangular frames.

I remember I was so shocked and confused when I saw at a carpet shop in Milas that a completely different kind of carpet was being displayed right next to the typical Milas carpets (see Figure 2). They looked obviously “out of place” to me, because of their white color as a base color and curvy floral designs in the center with four corners (see Figure 3 and 4). The shopkeeper told me that they are called Karacahisar *tipi* or *göbekli halı*, and woven in Karacahisar Village. Why do Karacahisar villagers produce such “out of place” carpets?

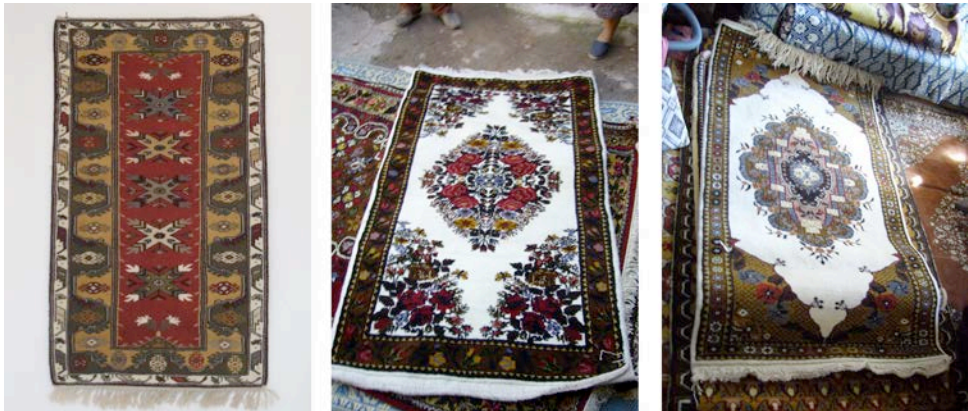


Figure 2 A typical Milas design carpet (left) Figure 3 and 4 Floral design carpets of Karacahisar (middle and right) Photographed by the author in 2006.

Karacahisar Village is located about 22 kilometers south of Milas town. The village was formed on the plateau surrounded by Kara Mountain and Asar Mountain. It is a fairly big village compared to other villages in the area, with a population of 672 (in 2012). Even before the opening of an automobile road to the village in the 1970s, the village was on a transportation route for mules or camel caravans in the area. According to some literatures collected in Milas, a carpet workshop of OCM was built in the village in 1896. Until 1919 when the workshop was closed, village women from almost all of the households were working as paid workers to weave carpets for them (Anmaç 1994). Another source says, “with the workshop built in Karacahisar Village, market-oriented carpet making started [in this region] (Taşkıran 2004:136).” We can learn some more details from Mr. and Ms. Akarca, who edited a local history of Milas.

Around 1896, a company established around that year introduced dyeing artisans and a designer named Harlambo as well as 45 carpet looms. This led the carpet industry in Karacahisar to a totally different direction (Akarca 1954:41).

This “totally different direction” means market-oriented production of a new kind of carpet. The most obvious trait of this Karacahisar carpet introduced by outsiders from the market world is its floral design..

When I stayed in the village for a while doing fieldwork in 2006, I met many villagers talking about the Karacahisar carpet so proudly calling it the “carpet of our village (*bizim köyümüzün halı*),” adding the comment of its alien origin in a very natural way. I happened to become acquainted with a descendent family of the designer who was working at the workshop referred in the literatures. Below is a reconstruction of a part of the interview with the third generation descendent, Mr. Ahmet Kozak (male, 77 years-old in 2006).

[Text in parenthesis are the original words spoken by the interviewee and text in square brackets are author’s notes]

In the end of the 19th century, Jews (*Yahudiler*) came to our village with looms and

built a carpet workshop. Many of the village women would go there from the morning to evening and acquired money for the numbers of knots each person had woven each day.

There came a man from Athens, a Greek, in either 1910 or 1912, from a carpet factory in Uşak, and started working at the workshop of our village. He first went from Athens to Uşak, then came to Milas. He was not a co-owner with the Jews of the workshop, but must have been hired either by them or the company in Uşak as either a designer, engineer or artisan.

He was so enthusiastic in drawing designs of carpets, in dyeing yarns on his own, weaving his own designs to make new pattern-sample carpets (*örnek*) one after another. He was our grandfather.

[A portion of the interview is partially omitted here.]

The looms of the Jewish workshop were destroyed shortly before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey by the village young men who could not stand the situation where foreigners were trying to defeat Turkey, or where the European great powers were becoming more and more powerful. The Jews left the village. Then the looms left behind were brought to village houses and so were the pattern samples. Village women have been weaving those patterns secretly in each home avoiding to show the patterns to each other. Of course, this is a competition.

Sometime after 1919 when the incident was over, the designer converted to a Muslim and became a Turk (*Türkleşmiş*) in his early 40s, then married a village girl. His Turkish name was Mehmet Mahir after his conversion. He had only a son, no others.

[Interviewed at his home on November 17, 2006.]

As far as I know, there are no detailed written records other than this about the process of the workshop's establishment and closing. The generations who experienced the period have long been deceased, and of course Mr. Kozak's talk was something he heard from others. But still, from the consistency with those fragmental records of the local history books and with some materials being succeeded in the family such as pattern samples or color samples, I shall infer that his story's reliability is reasonably high.

3.3 Dealing with the outsiders

The carpet workshop built by Jews had introduced many novel experiences and things to the village. In relation to the discussion point of the paper, here I would like to focus on two points: the relationships between the outsiders and the villagers and the things the workshop left behind.

First and foremost it is worth mentioning that for more than twenty years, people other than Turkish Muslims had lived in the village and had contact with the villagers. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a considerable number of Jewish and Greek “infidels (from the majority, Muslims’ point of view)” had lived in the town of Milas, engaging primarily in handicraft industry and commerce, and also making up the majority of carpet middlemen who traveled to the villages (Tüfekçi 2005:30-41). Therefore when Jews arrived in the village bringing looms, it is likely that the villagers had already been aware of their existence in the region. That said, rather than happening to see one by chance now and again, the continual coexistence of living in the same village and working in the same place was certainly ground-breaking for everyday village life. With the sudden appearance of industrial capital in the village, the Jews became the “employers” of the women of the village,. It is remarkable because even now very few men allow their daughters or wives to work outside of the house without supervision of male family members. The testimony that women worked at the workshop as it continued for more than 20 years can infer that the Jews and the Greek were fairly accepted by the Sunni Muslim villagers until the wave of nationalism arrived.

3.4 Things the workshop left behind

There were various things that the workshop brought into the village, specifically, artificial dyes, factory made threads and complex floral designs (see Figure 5). The first two were under the control of and supplied by the workshop management side, therefore they had no direct effect on the carpets of Karacahisar after the Jews left the village. However, the floral designs happened to be perpetuated among the villagers by the dispersion of the individual samples to each household.



Figure 5 One of the original floral carpet design samples by the designer, Mehmet Mahir. Photographed by the author in 2006.

What sort of attitude then did the villagers at the time have towards the floral designs, which were totally different from the existing traditional Milas-style motifs? Even after villagers attacked and destroyed the looms at the workshop, they did not discard nor destroy the floral design samples. On the contrary, each of the samples, each of which was different from the rest, was taken home to a different household, where the women kept

weaving the designs without showing the samples to anyone outside of their household, as Mr. Kozak said. I could safely assume that in spite of the circumstances at the time that fostered a climate of hatred for things originating from the outer world, ironically, the villagers embraced a positive emotion for these floral designs created by and for outsiders. Just as the employed designer who made the samples was converted to Islam and stayed among the villagers, the designs also stayed among them and even became rooted deeply into their lives.

4. Embedding Others into “Ours”

What kind of meaning to the present-day villagers does this floral carpet have? In this chapter, first I shall explain the various uses in the village of their carpets in general, then second, analyze the differences in the ways villagers deal with the floral carpets and typical Milas carpets. Lastly, we will focus on the production process of the floral carpets to show how much importance the villagers put on them.

4.1 Unpopular commodity

In spite of their pride for the Karacahisar carpet as being thought of as “our carpet,” the carpet was unpopular as a commodity. I encountered many negative discourses among the local carpet dealers when they talked about the sales of it. Here are some examples.

Carpet Dealer A

“Yes, those are the Karacahisar carpets. They are no good. Hard to sell. I purchased them thinking that there should be a variety of tastes among consumers, but it was not right. This is such dead stock, I haven’t been able to sell them for 12 or 13 years! Now I have six Karacahisar carpets in stock, but I will not buy any to replace them when I sell one or two. I sometimes go to the village for business, but I never spend time to look at white carpets. The reason why they are unpopular? Hmm, someone said they should get dirty easily for its base color is white, milky white. But I think people who want to buy a carpet in Milas want a typical Milas design, not the floral market-oriented (*pazara yönelik*) one.”

[On November 14th, 2006 at a carpet shop in Milas]

Karacahisar Villager B (female, in her fifties)

[Sitting on her floral carpet at her home, stroking its surface] “It is more laborious–look, it has a more complicated design, but still the white carpet is our carpet. When our daughters marry out, it is essential as a dowry item. We will prepare some even for our sons. Don’t you think it is beautiful? But they are hard to sell. I cannot understand it. Why do dealers say they cannot buy these more laborious ones for higher prices than the Milas design ones of the same size? A dealer who came yesterday just left when he saw me taking out a white carpet even before hearing the price. This one is hand spun, with natural dyes, and completely white and very carefully woven. [But no one wants to buy it.]

[On December 10, 2006 at her home]

4.2 Various uses of carpets in the village life

At present, people in Karacahisar Village produce and consume both types of carpets of the floral design and of the typical Milas design. Although people in the village complain about the sales of their floral carpets saying, “it is not popular” or “dealers do not offer reasonable prices for the labor,” they do not stop weaving floral carpets with more complicated patterns. The reason why they keep weaving the “unpopular” ones cannot be understood only as for the purpose of selling them. We should shed light on, instead, the local consumption process within the village. Therefore I will first of all summarize the various uses and characteristics of consumption of their own carpets in general in the village.

Carpets are commodities as well as essential items for village daily life. As for the usages, they can be separated into five categories; a) a means of acquiring cash, b) a means of stocking wealth, c) daily utensils, d) dowry items and e) donation items for the village mosque.

a) a means of acquiring cash

As is commonly the case, hand woven carpets can be sold as commodities. Every week several carpet dealers come to Karacahisar Village from not only Milas, but also the prefectural capital of Muğla and Izmir to look for good deals. The going price in 2006 for a village carpet hand spun and naturally dyed was around 185YTL per square meter. For the villagers, carpets are not a reliable regular source of a household income, but they share the common sense that carpets are valuable enough in the market that they can sell whenever they need cash.

b) a means of stocking wealth

As carpets can always be sold for cash, in other words, have commoditability, to keep them at home means to stock wealth. Villagers can sell carpets at home to the dealers regularly coming to the village. This is a very reasonable way of stocking wealth, for withdrawing cash from a bank account or exchanging gold jewelry for cash requires them to go all the way to the town of Milas, which costs time and money. Furthermore, during

periods of inflation¹, carpets are more advantageous to keep than cash.

c) daily utensils

Carpets are necessities of life in Turkey. Especially in village areas where people maintain the floor-sitting life style, house floors are all covered with carpets. This is also the case in Karacahisar Village. In the dry summer season, they spread carpets evenly in the open air, such as on the rooftops or on the balcony when they sit in a circle for chatting or sleeping outside. Today in the village, some households purchase machine-made carpets and use them at home around cooking or dining areas, but still they cover other parts of the house with their own handmade carpets.

d) dowry items (*çeyiz*)

The customs of dowry remain deeply rooted in Turkish society in both cities and villages alike. Dowry items are customarily displayed to the public in the process of marriage. There is a well-known saying in Turkish “*kız beşikte çeyiz sandıkta,*” which literally means “a daughter is in the baby bed, her dowry is in her bridal chest.”

In Milas, this dowry tradition is so strong that all items that are to be found in a household, such as furniture, electric appliances, table wares, house linens, decorative handmade lace goods, and so on, should be prepared as dowry by the bride’s side. Carpets have always been important as a dowry item. On the ceremonial dowry moving day, I heard many dialogues among the audience in the village, evaluating the quality and quantity of dowry carpets. Some said, “look at the mountain of dowry carpets! The girl and her mother seemed to never spend even a moment sitting around doing nothing” while another said, “they are definitely a rich and hardworking family. They could manage to prepare such luxurious electric appliances and furniture without selling carpets.” When a girl marries out, dowry items including carpets leave a bride’s parental home in plain sight of all the villagers in what becomes a highly ceremonial moving day (see Figure 6),

1. In practice, even in Karacahisar, it is not very common to prepare *ölümlük* before the death of a person. In more common cases, close relatives of the dead chose “an appropriate one for the person” among their carpet stock at home.



Figure 6 Dowry carpets being moved out of a bride's house to her marital home in a village in the Milas Region. Photographed by the author in 2005.

complete with hired musicians, and finally become the furnishings of the new marital home. As dowry is comprised of items that always exist in the public view, its growth becomes motivated by a sense of competition. In short, one of the characteristics about dowry is ostentation of the social and economic prestige of a bride's parental/marital families. Thus, hand-woven carpets in Milas villages are one of the core items that present

the hard-working character and dexterity of the girl and her mother as well as the household's economic situation.

e) donation items for the village mosque (*ölümlük*)

There is a widespread custom seen around Anatolia that when a person dies, people put a carpet or a flat-woven kilim on the body wrapped with white cloth, *kefen*, in the funeral succession to the grave. The carpet or kilim is to be donated to the village mosque by a male close relative of the dead. This is thought to be good manners (*sevap*) to honor God. The donated textile is to belong to the mosque and to be spread on the floor of it, never to be sold. This custom is not maintained much anymore in the Milas region. But at least a carpet or kilim is used to cover the body in village areas. The body goes to the grave, being followed by males of the village while the female villagers say farewell to the dead by standing along the street leading to the grave. In Karacahisar, after burying the body in the grave, it is common to donate the carpet to the village mosque unless they have some reason not to do so. This custom and also carpets used for it are both called *ölümlük*, which means, things for death.

At the point of research in 2006, I counted 28 donated carpets on the surface of the first floor of the mosque in Karacahisar (see Figure 7). Interestingly enough, the custom of *ölümlük* had almost completely come to an end in the region by 2006 except in

Karacahisar. The reason is not clear, but I can point out that the period in which the custom declined coincided with the period that the Turkish hand-woven carpet market boomed in the 1980s and 1990s. On top of that, there happened to be at least three robbery incidents at village mosques in the region in 2004-2005, when donated carpets were stolen. As a result, the mosque of another famous carpet weaving village sent the donated carpets back to each of the donors' households and stopped receiving any more. But even after the incidents, Karacahisar people just started locking the mosque and kept the custom.



Figure 7: Donated carpets on the floor of the Karacahisar village mosque. Photographed by the author in 2006.

A widow woman C in her seventies explained about her *ölümlük* while she was showing it² to me.

“*Ölümlük* is my final garment for me in this world when I die. So it should be of my favorite pattern, spun by my own hand, woven by me I thought. This is my *ölümlük*, I wove this very slowly and quietly on my own after I once stopped weaving in my fifties because I had physical difficulty weaving. But I decided to weave again for the last piece, the *ölümlük*. I was 57 years old back then. Isn't it a wonderful pattern? I like this pattern very much. I am satisfied with the color combination for it became harmonious. When I look at it, I feel so peaceful. When I die and go to the grave,

2. The article was by Giacinto, Adam. 2011. “A Qualitative History of “Cultural Resource” Management” on the the web site of anthropologies, a collaborative online project. URL:<http://www.anthropologiesproject.org/2011/05/qualitative-history-of-cultural.html> (Viewed on 02/02/2015)

everybody will see this carpet on me, then after that, at the mosque. When people go to the mosque to pray, they will find my carpet and say how nice Grandma C's carpet is. This kind of imagination makes me calm. I always tell my sons to use this as *ölümlük* for sure.

Thus *ölümlük* is a carpet, which is to be used in the funeral and then donated to the mosque. We can understand from her talk that this is not only a religious custom but something strongly related to social prestige.

As I illustrate above, carpets have various meanings for the villagers who produce carpets by themselves. A carpet can be not only a commodity or way of stocking wealth, but also their own daily utensil and a good to show their prestige.

4.3 Attachment and devotion to the floral carpet

In this sub-chapter, I shall examine how people differentiate the floral carpets and the other typical Milas-design carpets in their process of production and consumption. Table 1 shows the total numbers of both the floral-type carpets and the typical Milas-style carpets found in 30 houses in Karacahisar village and on the floor of the village mosque, indicating the percentage of these carpets made of hand-spun threads. This table includes hand-woven carpets only (the machine-woven carpets are excluded). There is not a large number of samples, but among these certain tendencies can be seen.

Firstly, I can point out a remarkable tendency that people are likely to choose a floral design carpet for their *ölümlük*. Secondly, from the comparison of the bottom percentages of the each column, they tend to use hand spun and naturally dyed yarns for floral design carpets more often than for the Milas-style carpets. For the latter, people seem to prefer to use ready-made machine-spun yarn. How can we analyze these tendencies?

Table 1 Breakdown of the hand-woven carpets found on the floor of the village mosque and in 30 households in Karacahisar

	Floral Design		Milas Design		Ratio of Floral Design	Total
	hand-spun	factory-spun	hand-spun	factory-spun		
Dowry	35		44		44%	79
	27 (77%)	8 (23%)	20 (45%)	24 (55%)		
Ölümlük	18		6		75%	24
	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)		
Others	82		103		44%	185
	43 (52%)	39 (48%)	18 (14%)	85 (86%)		
Total	135		153		47%	288

*Data was collected in July 2009, except on those in the mosque, which was collected in November 2006.

** *Others* are the carpets that were being used or in stock at home without any particular purpose at the moment.

I have pointed out that *özümlük* is not only driven by religious reasons but also by their wish to be seen or remembered in a special way. Compared to the Milas design carpets, floral carpets have more suitable characteristics to realize this wish for their patterns are different from one household to another. According to Mr. Kozak, the floral pattern samples were distributed to many households and women had woven each of the patterns without showing them to others outside of their own households. Presently, in practice, they usually do not weave the exact same pattern as on an original sample, but use a rather simplified one (see and compare Figure 3 and 4). But still, even now people in Karacahisar village consistently weave carpets only within each household, unlike other villages in the region where people weave carpets by labor exchange between households sharing their patterns. In Karacahisar, the loom of a house is permanently set in a room in the deep end of a house even in the hottest season, while in other villages people move their looms to an outside veranda or porch where they can enjoy the breeze and chat with neighbors (see Photo 8). As Karacahisar people's unit of carpet production is exclusive to a household, even deformed floral patterns vary between each household. This is contrasted to the other type of carpet, the Milas-style one, which have patterns of motifs and compositions in common among multiple households and even among multiple

villages.

Of course villagers cannot identify and connect all of the patterns to a certain household, but recognize those of relatives and neighbors. Each floral design becomes suitable as a form of identification and remembrance of the deceased in the situation where a person is in the mosque in the presence of many different people's *ölümlük*. On the other hand, the designs of the Milas carpet are too standardized and shared too widely to choose as effective means of representing a person.

Furthermore, there is a tendency to use hand-spun and plant-dyed yarns for floral design carpets rather than for Milas-design carpets. Some explanation is necessary about the thread spinning here. The threads used for carpets in Karacahisar village are of two kinds: hand-spun thread and factory machine-spun thread. Hand-spun thread requires much more time and money than machine-spun thread. Villagers have to buy unpurified wool (for 1YTL/kg = approximately 82 yen in 2006), then ask a workshop in the village to wash with hot water and detergent to get rid of fat and dirt, then to card them for 2.5YTL/kg. The next step, spinning, requires time and patience, but it is also possible to ask old veteran villagers to spin for 5YTL/kg. Even to this point, it costs 8.5 YTL/kg. After that, it is necessary to dye the thread with natural dye plants for a week or two. If you simply buy factory-made readily colored thread, it would cost 5-5.5YTL/kg. It is costly and troublesome to use hand-spun and plant-dyed thread for making carpets. As a reasonable consequence, most of the villagers in the Milas region have given up hand-spun thread since the 1980s and there are only a few women over sixty who still know how to spin wool, with exceptional cases in Karacahisar Village, where many in their early forties maintain the technique making their daughter's dowry.

Why do they cling to this troublesome old way? There are people who do not like to use factory made threads. While some say they cannot stand the machinery oil smell of those threads or the hard texture of the yarn, others say that using readily made thread means "escaping to ease (*kolaya kaçmak*).” Many mothers of girls addressed that it is shameful to use readily made thread, for it is not genuine material, which is especially never acceptable for a dowry carpet. Weaving carpets itself is already troublesome, but using hand-spun wool with natural dye is even more troublesome. Precisely because it is too troublesome, they share the tendency of choosing hand-spun thread for dowry carpets

as a symbol of hard work and dexterity, or for *ölümlük*, which are to be shown to the public. As I already mentioned, for dowry or *ölümlük*, they prefer to choose floral design carpets for their heterogeneity. Consequently, the floral design carpets are more likely to have more traditional and more troublesome techniques than Milas-style carpets. For the Karacahisar people, both choosing to make floral-design carpets and using hand-spun thread are their manner of expressing their strong devotedness and attachment to the particular carpet that is their own.

The villagers' incidental encounter to others from the world of market economy about a century ago left many effects and changes in the village. Among them, though they are not popular in the market, floral carpets serve important roles of maintaining the villagers' customs and the traditional techniques of carpet production today.

5. Discussion: Floral Carpet as Cultural Resource

The floral carpets of Karacahisar Village, in the Milas region, one of the famous traditional carpet production areas, have been embedded in their cultural tradition, even though they originated from market-oriented others. Their heterogeneity enables the villagers to utilize them as their cultural resource. Externally, they have become a way of self-representation, or a source of identity, as the design is quite different from the typical Milas designs. Internally, on the other hand, they contain a special cultural factor as a tool of displaying a household's (or a person's) social economic pride. As a result, the floral carpets, which are unpopular as a commodity because their lack of an Oriental or tribal appearance, are supported to maintain the customs or traditional production techniques. Compared with other villages where people have discarded both *ölümlük* customs and the hand-spinning process in carpet production, Karacahisar's exceptionality behind its floral carpets become significant.

When culture is turned into a resource, as the Japanese anthropologist Moriyama emphasized, it is important to be aware of four questions relating to *who*; *who* makes *whose* culture a resource as *whose* culture to *whom* (Moriyama 2007: 84-86). According to these questions, the floral carpets have experienced many phases as cultural resources, switching those *whos*. I do not examine every single phase here, but in the present phase,

we can answer that *the Karacahisar villagers* make *Westerner's* culture a resource as *their own* culture to *themselves*. When people discuss cultural resources, or more precisely, on making culture into resources to utilize them, cases are most likely to be “to outside others,” and tend to focalize the direct or obvious economical or political benefit of “themselves” (i.e. the locals in various levels, such as the community, the local or national government and the residents in the governed area). However, when we try to define the term cultural resources, the definition becomes much broader and abstract. As Adam Giacinto (2011) inferred, in his article titled *A Qualitative History of “Cultural Resource” Management*, a common respondent definition of the term cultural resource is as follows: *A cultural resource is a physical or intangible, built or natural, aspect of the environment, that holds cultural significance for a group or an individual.*

There is nothing more capricious than market trend or tourists' tastes. Unfortunately, most of the Turkish carpet production areas have long been exhausted by the capriciousness of the market. I hope this paper would somewhat support wider, longer and more various visions of cultural resources rather than those aiming at a shortsighted benefit.

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