

THE EVOLUTION OF DECORATION IN TURKISH ÇİNİ ART

Famous traveller Evliya Çelebi mentioned Çini in his book "Seyahatname", reporting about the beauty and unicity of the Çini articles manufactured by local Kütahya artists in 17th century. Historically the ceramic manufacturers have been producing work in Kütahya since the Phrygian period and continued with çini-ceramic works made with red paste material in the last half of the 14th century. In the late half of the 16th century, Iznik çini art reached its brightest period. In the years after however, İznik manufacturers were severely damaged since they lost the support of the palace and the production of Çini almost ceased to stand.

Initially, Kütahya çinis were produced to meet the needs of the local people and with a more modest quality level compared to the Iznik çinis that were produced. As a result of this situation, the designs of the motifs were arranged and formed with more density. The Çini products were filled with dense motifs and patterns to hide the mistakes and dull background color. In this way; they aimed to mask the quality deficiencies that occur in the çini bisques, the glazes and the colors with intensive pattern designs. The need for intensive pattern designs is one of the most basic features that reflect the characteristic structure of Kütahya çinis. The solution, which emerged as a necessity, was to enrich the motif and pattern designs and increase the aesthetic qualities.

One of the most important problems that the çini producers are facing is; the motifs and designs that directly affect the sale of Çinis are not rich and sufficient in quality and quantity. Therefore, the production of Çinis that are decorated with similar motifs and designs threaten the domestic and foreign markets. Re-interpretation of Çini motifs and patterns went from a contemporary perspective without straying away from the original; it is important to save the Kütahya Çini art which has been going on for hundreds of years from repetition and copies, and to determine a new route in its original line. For these reasons, there is a need for real artists who have internalized the characteristics of Kütahya Çini art.