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FELT PRODUCTION AT THE VILLAGE OF ÇATKÖY[1]
An Ethnoarchaeological Examination

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Material objects provide immediate information about human culture – production methodologies, artifact distribution on a site or in a region, and general information about social and environmental adaptation to name a few. In order to understand such concerns cultural anthropology and ethnography are necessary disciplines in the study of the past since they share a common goal – to explain patterns of human behavior in material culture (Takaoğlu 2004 and 2005 and Ember and Ember 1973). Hopkins (2004: 41) clearly states this point – "… to address specific questions of contemporary behavior... in order to elucidate the processes of material culture production, use, discard, and preservation… [which] allows an interpretation of the material remains which constitute the present day archaeological record in terms of past patterns of behavior".

There are, however, differences between archaeology and cultural anthropology. In a traditional archaeological culture, artifacts, no matter how we define them, are detached from a living culture by time and only appear as a remnant of past lire ways. Since human behavior is reflected in material culture (Cribb 1991: 4 ff and Schiffer 1976), common ground exists between archaeology and anthropology (Redford 1998). Hopkins (2004: 41) again makes this clear in that there is an inherent link between the two – "one starts with archaeological research interests, goes to ethnographic data for formulation and/or testing hypotheses, models and/or theories about these interests, and then returns to the archaeological record to implement the understanding gained from the ethnographic data". Yakar (2004: 7) supports this view: "… the reconstruction of the social and economic organization of ancient… communities… can be better achieved by studying and interpreting the relevant material culture… recovered from their respective settlement using local and regional ethnographic records." Such views, however, are valid only when there is a clearly defined archaeological question that can be enhanced by ethnographic observation. Unfortunately, limited survival of artifacts and the functional parameters of material objects observed in a living context may not be evident in an archaeological culture (Cribb 1991 and Marchese 2005, 2005a, 2001, 1995, and 1994).

[1] Çatköy is situated east of Karaman at the edge of the Konya plain near Ayrancı in the northwestern Toros mountains at an approximate elevation of 2000 meters. Three kin related villages exist above the modern Ayrancı *barajı* in the Musa Dağı-Orta Torosları region where seasonal streams and rivers have cut the landscape with deep troughs and ravines. Above the channels, which are prone to flash flooding, the mountain zones are either barren or possess thin top soil. Dry farming is difficult and the arid environment offers little additional vegetation for animal husbandry. It is only in he deeper gorges that water, arable soil, and adequate vegetation are available in order to sustain sedentary and semi-sedentary habitation (Figs. 1 and 2). For a more detailed discussion see Marchese (2005 and 2005a).

If we broaden our definition of *artifact* to include human diet, preparation and / or exploitation of food sources, land use, etc., some general observations can be stated for those strategies which focus on intensive hunting and gathering techniques, the herding and management of animals, and the exploitation of limited agricultural resources (Stein 1998: 182-209 and Diler 2004: 55 ff).

Ethnoarchaeology: a definition[2]

A definition of ethnoarchaeology is necessary in order to clarify the nature of archaeology in an ethnographic context. Yakar (2004: 14) provides a working definition – the nature of ethnography and its association with archaeology "… is to provide a tentative reconstruction of the nature of human societies whose material culture remains are the outcome of their activities, skills, needs, and spiritual beliefs." Although Yakar offers a precise view of archaeology and ethnography as integrated disciplines, he adds little to Taylor's (1948) statement that archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing at all! Although not without controversy, Taylor's (1948: 43) comment was, and still is, important, especially for those who emphasize a more anthropological approach to archaeology – "… that archaeology is no more than a method and a set of specialized techniques for recovering cultural information." In this manner an archaeological culture should not be divorced from the living context of anthropology and ethnography, that is archaeology and ethnoarchaeology are methods of studying people and cultures. Hopkins (2004: 39) offers further support for this view in that "… divorcing of archaeological remains from an investigation of the people who created them, has resulted in a comparative neglect of the ethnographic or human side of the discipline. The ethnoarchaeological approach attempts to bridge the gap between material and behavioral aspects of antiquity and to draw material culture studies back towards analysis of underlying patterns of human behavior."

An archaeological problem

Modernization has transformed many parts of the Mediterranean. This is especially evident in Turkey. Surveys in and around ancient Caria, Lycia, and Cilicia, (Carpenter and Boyd 1977, Marchese 1986, 1989, 1992, 1992a, 1994, 1994a, and 1996, Konecny 1998, and Rauh 1998) have produced a wealth of data, including the identification of previously unknown watch towers, fortified sections of ancient roads, economic processing locations (especially olive oil and wine production), and in some cases the ancient remains of nomadic encampments and/or seasonal occupational sites (Carpenter and Boyd 1977, Cribb 1991, and Diler 2004: 55 ff). Archaeological surveys, however, have not addressed deeper issues of observed human behavior and culture that

[2] For a more detailed discussion see Takaoğlu (2004 and 2005).

still survive in rural Anatolia (Marchese 2005, 2005a, 2001, 1995, 1994, and 1991). Takaoğlu (2004: 27) points out the failure of previous archaeological enterprises – "… the study of pastoralism or pastoral nomads is one of the most neglected fields in Anatolian ethnoarchaeology… 'the need that more ethnoarchaeological investigations must be carried out on pastoralism before this way of life is completely gone out of the ethnographic record of the Near East.'" Yakar (2004: 4 and 9) adds that "… Anatolia is still quite rich in providing… ethnographic models pertaining to traditional modes of agriculture, animal husbandry, and herding. In addition, settlement patterns of rural communities in topographically and climatically different habitats provides for wide-ranging socio-economic models that can be of paramount importance to understand the choice of similar habitats since prehistoric and proto-historic times" (2004: 4) and that "… although in modern Turkey large tribal organizations no longer exist, the smaller dispersed tribal groups and large village communities living in the less industrialized parts of the country have succeeded in preserving not only cultural features of their ethnic identities, but also many of the deeply rooted forms of social organization and subsistence strategies." Although Yakar argues that such groups should be defined as "marginal, living at the edge of civilization", their impact on sedentary societies, many of which are kin related, is not to be minimized since such groups offer specializations that are no longer available or only partially evident in village-based economies.

In order to put a physical face on the aforementioned comments this paper will touch on a limited examination of a specific category of material culture, the manufacture and use of felt in the village of Çatköy. Hopkins (2004: 42) points out that "… modern data relating to aspects of demography, social organization, and economic strategies, and utilizing such data to explain patterning in material culture, both ancient and modern…" has relevance in understanding the basic components that make up an archaeological culture. In this manner the village of Çatköy provides an excellent case-study in order to clarify the traditional manufacturing techniques in felt production and the functional use of the product in an observed, living context.

Ethnographic observation: village profile and an archaeological link

Turkish villages arguably can be interpreted as an extension of nomadic encampments that have attained a higher level of permanence beyond seasonal habitation (Cribb 1991). Although a variety of definitions can be stated for what constitutes a village, Hopkins (2004: 47 ff) offers a rudimentary explanation that is easily understood – "… [the] contemporary village… consist[s] of dwellings for human occupation, shelters for animals; storerooms; access to water; fields and pastures; public or communal areas… the bulk of shelter and subsistence needs are produced within the village itself" and "… as with the archaeological record at most sites, the vast bulk of ancient material that survives *'in situ'* is the architectural remains. Stone, mud-brick… domestic architecture elucidate the minutiae of daily life experiences… items of material culture which contribute to our understanding of ancient resources include space for fishing nets, grinding stones for processing grains, heating and cooking facilities, and craft items for working with wool

and leather… animal husbandry is the most important economic activity undertaken by modern villagers, … in terms of ideology and social value, if not purely financial measures" (2004: 43-44). This "archaeology of the house" as Yakar states (2004: 7) "… formed an economic production unit even if they might have been part of an extended family." External influences, however, alter villages and, consequently, "it is not possible to find a village that shares a physical and social environment, a technology, and a demography with a medieval Islamic village, let alone a prehistoric one" (Hopkins 2004: 42). Although we should not expect villages to be static, there are factors that limit or retard development, as Hopkins (2004: 42) again states "… villagers live a life that is constrained by similar elements to those faced by those [ancient] occupants… who dwelt here throughout antiquity… a rugged, mountainous terrain… harsh climate…, and pastoral economy, with a traditional technology utilizing local resources remains in place. Stone houses, dung-fired clay bread ovens, subsistence pastoralism and agriculture, ceramic cooking vessels and wooden agricultural implements are all contemporary, visible reminders of a long history of self-sufficiency in these remote mountains."

The village of Çatköy was examined as if it was an archaeological culture fixed in time in order to understand the function and use of artifact classes, the use of space, the storage of surplus, the manufacture of physical objects – mostly utilitarian, and the general economic parameters that influenced community life. Due to limitations in the environment, animal husbandry is an essential element in the village economic system. Mixed herds of sheep and goat provide a variety of foodstuffs – meat, cheese, and milk as well as wool and hair. In this manner animal husbandry supplements a more marginal agrarian system that is prone to crop failure. The exploitation of a sheep/goat economy, however, should be viewed as a managerial economic structure since selective culling of the herd and the size of the herd are dictated by environmental conditions and human managerial skill.

Of the three villages named Çatköy, the primary village was examined in 2004. The remaining two, although kin related, were not. These lay to the east of the primary village at a distance of ten to twelve kilometers. The village was constructed of stone with limited use of wood and was laid out in a linear pattern, primarily situated along two crossing paths below the crest of nearby mountains. The location of the village was determined by easy access to water, primarily supplied by a number of natural springs. The site was also well-sheltered from cold winds. Çatköy is surrounded by abandoned ancient animal pens of rubble masonry (and long since re-used wood and brush) with no visibly associated village in the immediate vicinity. These were probably the residual features of semi-nomadic groups who migrated through the region as early as the 16th century.[3] The village contained approximately 100 houses, most of which were two story

[3] The inhabitants of Çatköy stated that they "were *recent* immigrants from 'Arapistan' and settled in the region in the early to mid 19th century" as part of the Ottoman government's relocation polities. The elders of the village insisted that they were not from the Toros mountains or eastern Anatolia. They had, however, intermarried with both Türkmen and scattered *yörük* groups, primarily Sarıkeçili. Much of the traditional clothing was still worn by the older women of the

structures, multi-room living quarters on the top level with storage areas below. On both levels and in every structure examined felt floor coverings and an assortment of felt pads were used in the living areas in order to insulate the upper floor from cold and dampness in winter and summer as well as placed on earthen floors in the lower level in order to protect stored essentials, especially grain, from damage by moisture. Although a unique form of material culture that leaves no trace in an archaeological context; felt was produced in substantial quantity in order to meet family needs (Figs. 4 and 5).

Although much of the material culture in the village reflected animal husbandry as the sustaining economic system; it is in the manufacture of felt objects that makes the village unique. Felt production was common in antiquity and no doubt pre-dates weaving and possibly a limited assortment of other fiber based products. This would be especially evident in those colder climes of the ancient Near East, especially in the natural habitat zones of sheep and goat in the Zagros mountains and in eastern Anatolia. Warm and durable, felt provides a soft cushion for bedding, floor covering as well as padding for animals and humans. Lighter weight felt was also common for human apparel, especially in those areas where wool production was exceptional in antiquity such as northwestern and western Anatolia. Used along with skins, spun fiber, and fleece, felt possesses a number of advantages over competing products. It is wind proof, water proof, and retains heat better than fleece and woven cloth. The making of felt is less labor intensive than woven goods produced on either a vertical or horizontal loom. Its functional value may also be higher due to its warmth in winter and its ability to absorb moisture in summer. Depending on the density of the felt, heavier types are less capable of being made in large dimensions due to their excessive weight. In general felt based material objects are durable and can withstand heavy wear over the course of continuous use (Glassie 1993).

Felt production at Çatköy was integral to family needs with no apparent division of labor employed since men as well as women were involved. Sheep were sheared twice a year – in June or late Spring and in August and/or September or early Fall. After shearing, the wool is washed, cleaned, and its fiber separated and fluffed by hand prior to re-compressing into felt. Dimensions are determined by place of use and/or function with those items produced for the home measuring 3.5 x 1.75 meters for large areas and 1 x 2 and 1.5 x 1.75 meters for either personal use or smaller areas. The smaller pieces were used for either floor covering between rooms, for bedding, and as apparel, the latter employed as a wrap on the body in case of muscle injury. Such pieces helped retain body heat on the area of injury. The best wool was from immature sheep or yearlings sheared in September. This was used for bedding as well as floor covering while lesser or coarser quality obtained from older sheep during the first shearing in May and June was employed in the lower level as a clean surface for the storage of commodities, especially foodstuffs. When limited quantities of wool were produced from the second shearing, it

village. Headdress and other garments suggest social affiliation with groups from central Asia, the Caucasus mountains, and the Yuntdağ region of northwestern Anatolia (Marchese 2005a and Reinisch 1985) (Fig. 3).

was mixed with the coarser wool from the first. If insufficient amounts of wool were obtained from either shearing, felt was not produced by the family for that year. It was stored until the following year.

One person could fluff between two to four kilograms of wool in a day with five kilograms of fluffed wool being produced by 20 sheep. Decoration was unique since only natural colored wool – black, brown, and white – was used. Designs were geometric as well as floral. Designs were part of the general vocabulary of patterning that appeared in limited ceramic assemblages and other elements of material culture. It can be assumed that in antiquity bold geometric patterning on ceramic assemblages (Tekkök 2004) were duplicated on wool and linen based objects as well. In the felt examples at Çatköy motifs had a long life and should be viewed as *traditional* long after similar designs had disappeared in the broader categories of material culture. Interior space of rooms was not cluttered with physical objects denoting a singularity of use or function. In fact, life was inherently lived on the floor of rooms similar to nomadic encampments with perishable objects of wood and fiber used as furnishings. Layering of fiber based objects on the floor provided not only physical comfort but warmth (Marchese 2005, 2005a, 2001, 1995, 1994, and 1991).

Felt may also have been traded or bartered between villages and nomadic groups – payment based on reciprocating hospitality, as a gift between kin based groups, etc. Although numbers varied greatly, the village maintained approximately 8,000 to 10,000 head of sheep and goats, the majority of which were sheep. Although households possessed mixed herds, the majority of villagers preferred sheep due to the value of the wool. One shepherd could manage approximately 500 head. At least 75 households produced felt. Felt production was a family affair – adolescent males and females as well as adults participated in the manufacture of felt objects. Most tasks were performed by children and young adults. Hot water was used for working and rolling the felt and was an adult concern due to safety. To produce a standard dimension 1.5 x 1.75 meter floor covering that was between ten to fifteen centimeters thick took three hours. Dimensions were determined by the size of the area to be covered. Large rooms contained a number of overlapping pieces. When extra wool was available a second layer of felt was added to the previous covering with new production placed on top in order to create a clean surface.

Felt was made in the following manner: (1) the design or pattern was laid out on the floor on top of a cloth, a reed mat, or a felt pad of equal or greater dimension, (2) two layers of fluffed wool, approximately 30 cm. thick compressed into 7 cm. (for a thicker surface additional layers are added) were placed on the mat and lightly pressed in place, (3) hot water (animal fat or soap added as a binder) was applied after which the saturated wool was lightly beaten in place with long flexible wooden sticks, (4) once the desired shape was achieved, the wool was rolled up and compressed by walking on the container, (5) unrolled and patted with hands or with long rolling pins that were also used for making bread, and (6) the fu1ished product was lightly washed, cleaned, and sun dried. In the house of Mustafa Köşşek, 61 (Fig. 6) felt was produced based on family need and how much wool was available, the latter depended on the amount of lamb's wool

collected during the second shearing. Felt pads and blankets were also made for horses as well as donkeys.

Designs, most recently floral, featured a variety of geometric forms – circles, curvilinear and linear patterns reflected conflicting views of Nature and the continuity of life. There was no general consensus of design or format in pattern during the process of making felt. Some patterns continued in use while others dropped out of the collective vocabulary, perhaps no longer empowered as sacred symbols. Since there was no general structure in felt production to inhibit creativity, that is the lack of warp and weft, an infinite number of designs could be created. Patterns, however, may also be divorced from any specific meaning and are purely repetitious with no reason for producing a specific design. As of Mustafa Köşşek's daughter Kıymet stated "I make this because my mother made it".

Material culture in an archaeological context

Outside of the shared architectural schema of the village, the general floor plan of domestic buildings with or without courtyards, and materials employed in house construction, including permanent architectural features, much of the material culture of Çatköy was perishable, especially fiber based products such as felt, a primary element of village material culture. The "archaeology of the house" has to take into consideration a number of issues – how space is defined, the human variables that are evident in the use of space – that is spatial definitions were determined by social factors that were embedded within the family, from the preparation of food, food consumption, receiving guests and family members, to sleep; at each level a different material culture was employed. The majority of the domestic material culture observed at Çatköy leaves little or no physical residue of such life processes. The manufacturing of felt and felt objects are basic elements of human culture in sheep producing regions. It is the simplest way to use wool without the laborious process of spinning and weaving. No elaborate or extensive material culture is needed in order to produce felt for bedding, wraps, pads, or apparel. The product is durable, wind proof, water proof, warm as well as cool. What is needed is space, primarily open areas that can accommodate the process of manufacture. Basic and easily obtainable materials are employed – wooden sticks and any type of container for storing and heating water. The natural color of the wool, white brown, and black, was used at Çatköy. These were arranged in a variety of geometric shapes and floral patterns (Figs. 7-9). Designs were shared in other categories of material culture, especially in locally produced ceramics, wood carving, and engraving. The separation of designs into isolated categories of material culture are immaterial since symbolic patterning indicates communal affiliation, kinship, family, social status and human sexuality and, consequently, are shared across the entire cultural assemblage.

Conclusion

Land use, settlement patterning, and division of labor based on age and gender, are observable in physical locales. Spatial issues, especially those that deal with the maintenance of large herds and, correspondingly, extended families, inscribe on the landscape a specific pattern of communal existence comparable to an archaeological site. As Hopkins (2004: 52) states "… the excavated site is not the same as the functioning site… examination of a functioning community can contribute to our understanding of how material culture moves from being an integral part of a functioning community to its existence as an archaeological assemblage." Excavations can provide the general pattern of human life and gender related activities through artifact analysis (Cribb 1991). Excavations, however, are not the end result in such an examination since ethnographic analysis provides a detailed image of a living culture undergoing continuous change.

The material remains examined in this paper are not just lively expressions of artistic achievement and general aesthetics. They are an integral part of social organization and identity. The material possessions of rudimentary sedentary communities were never meant to survive beyond the course of one generation since their utilitarian nature predicates their employment in the daily ritual of living. At Çatköy felt was widely used in domestic buildings and served a number of functions: (1) in the upper level of structures as floor covering in order to provide warmth, (2) as a covering in the lower level to keep bulk commodities off the damp earthen floor, (3) used as pads and blankets for humans and animals, and (4) as apparel (Fig. 10). The manufacture of felt requires no special tools and those items that are used are either consumed as fuel or serve alternate functions. Designs on felt are part of the interconnected decorative patterns shared in the broad cultural assemblage of the village. No special symbols or patterns were used exclusively for felt.

As stated earlier, Turkish villages arguably can be interpreted as an extension of nomadic encampments. Modern villages consist of domestic architecture, storage areas for surplus goods, animal shelters, usually outside the village as well as public or communal areas. As an economic unit "… the modern village provides an analogy for the possible functioning of the ancient community" (Hopkins 2004: 52). Constraints, however, exist in bath interpreting observable data in nomadic encampments as well as in a rudimentary sedentary setting. Human culture is not immune to change. Response to the environment, more efficient methods of exploitation, adaptation of non-indigenous ideas or production methodologies, new economic markets – regional, sub-regional, and international – impact groups no matter how we define them. The value of ethnographic analysis in an archaeological context is to observe current patterns of human action and reaction in context, bath human as well as natural. In an ethnographic context material culture provides observed patterns of human action and can be employed in an archaeological context if there are comparable cultural features. In this manner ethnography and archaeology have a common goal – to explain human culture in time and space.

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Fig. 1. Barren and arid landscape of the northwestern Toros mountains – Musa Dağı and Orta Toroslar. Elevation is approximately 2000 meters. Seasonal streams and rivers have cut the landscape with deep troughs and ravines. It is only in the deeper ravines that natural springs and wells sustain life.

Fig. 2. Limited dry-farming takes place at the lower elevations and plateaus with crop yields dependent upon available rain and/or snow. Herds forage close to the village where water is available due to natural springs and wells.

Fig. 3. Village headdress indicates social affiliation with groups from central Asia, the Caucasus mountains, and the Yuntdağ region of northwestern Anatolia. Three villages make up Çatköy. Only one produced a unique assortment of felt objects, mostly floor coverings, not duplicated elsewhere in the region. Dwellings are multi-level and are constructed of stone since wood is scarce.

Fig. 4. Each family produces felt for domestic use. Patterns vary from household to household, but are mostly shared among the villagers. In this manner the collective patterning functions as a social marker and visual identifier for the village. Upper level of houses feature layers of thick felt matting. New coverings are placed over previous pads. Since the production of large felt mats is difficult, smaller pieces are produced and placed either end to end or overlapped in order to cover the spatial limits of the room.

Fig. 5 and 6. Interior room in the house of Mustafa Köşşek, 61. Felt pads lay below machine made carpets and pillows placed along the wall. Felt padding prevents moisture and cold from seeping into in the interior space of the room. Felt is also used as a lining or foundation for thin carpets.

Fig. 6

Figs. 7, 8, and 9. A variety of floral patterns appear on felt flooring coverings of various size and shape. Depictions of Nature are quite common. Note Fig. 10 which depicts the high mountains of the region. Floral patterns are supplemented by a variety of geometric patterns, many of which feature substantial open areas in the general scheme. Personal preference and the availability of adequate supplies of colored wool dictate the complexity of the design

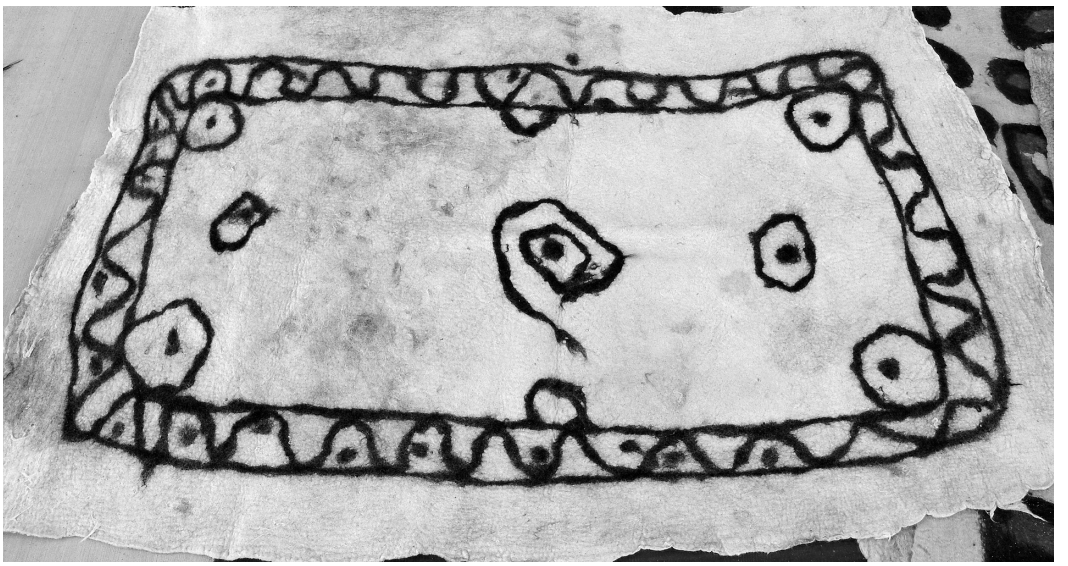

Fig. 8

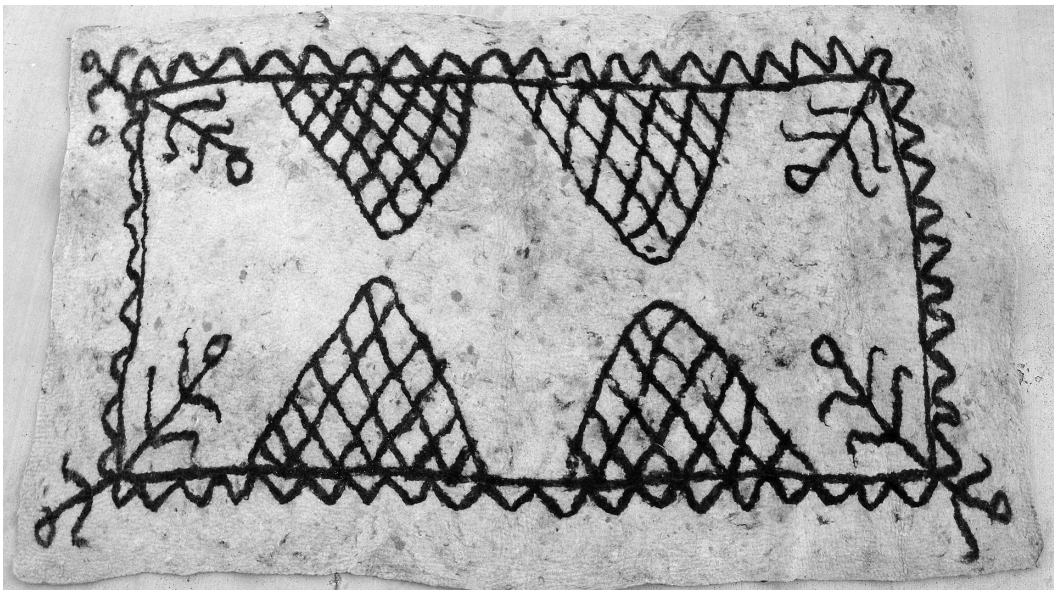

Fig. 9