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## **A Heritage Reflecting The Elegant Culture of The Ottoman Empire; Censer and Rosewater Sprinkler Specimens in Bitlis Ethnography Museum**

**Osmanlı'nın Zarif Kültüründen Kalan Miras; Bitlis Etnografya Müzesi'nden Örneklerle Buhurdan ve Gülabdan**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study to analyze censers and rosewater sprinklers specifically, as well as their development phases within the ethnographic artifacts and at the same time, introduce censer and rosewater sprinklers of Ottoman period as displayed in Bitlis Ethnography Museum. In line with this aim, 5 censer artifacts, 4 rosewater sprinkler artifacts and 1 incense-stick holder exhibited in the museum have been analyzed with respect to the aspects of form, material, technique and ornamentation. Analyzed as catalog form the artifacts examined in this study have also been compared with similar Ottoman specimens exhibited in other museums or collections. It was thus intended to unveil their place with regard to cultural heritage and artistic aspects. To sum up, the result of this study showed that motifs of these artifacts structured with copper and brass metals were created by employing openwork and engrave techniques and such motifs were predominantly visible in the lid and body sections of examined artifacts. Herbal motifs applied in decoration program not only reflect the period when these artifacts were structured, but they also transfer the characteristics of a style today that follows a parallel line with the development route of the art of Turkish mining art style.

**Keywords:** Censer, Rosewater sprinkler, Ottoman Period, Bitlis Ethnography Museum, Fragrance.

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## Öz

Bu çalışmada, etnografik eserler arasında yer alan buhurdan ve gülabdanların Osmanlı dönemindeki gelişmelerinin ele alınmasının yanı sıra Bitlis Etnografya Müzesi'nde yer alan Osmanlı Dönemi buhurdan ve gülabdan örneklerinin tanıtılması amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç kapsamında, müzede bulunan 5 adet buhurdan, 4 adet gülabdan ile 1 adet buhur şamdan form, malzeme, teknik ve süsleme boyutları ile ele alınarak tanıtılmıştır. Katalog şeklinde tanıtımı yapılan eserler diğer müzelerde bulunan Osmanlı Dönemi örnekleriyle karşılaştırılmış ve bunların kültürel miras içerisindeki yeri ve sanatsal boyutu ortaya konmaya çalışılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bakır ve pirinç malzemeden yapılmış olan eserlerin ajur ve kazıma teknikleri ile uygulanan süslemeleri, çoğunlukla kapak ve gövdede yer almaktadır. Bezeme programında uygulanan bitkisel motifler, yalnızca bu eserlerin yapıldıkları dönemi yansıtmakla kalmamakta, aynı zamanda Türk maden sanatının gelişim rotasını izleyen üslup özelliklerini de aktarmaktadırlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Buhurdan, Gülabdan, Osmanlı Dönemi, Bitlis Etnografya Müzesi, Koku.

## I. Introduction

Fragrance is a vital tradition existing in all faiths. In a number of ancient religions, it was an accepted duty to diffuse different scents over the burning fire in any given holy ceremony and in subsequent rituals this practice also adopted a spiritual aspect. Likewise, the very nature of Islamic faith considers fragrance important. This praise has been accentuated as the scent of Heaven in specific sections of the Quran (Uzun 2015: 28). In Muslim faith there is no tradition of burning frankincense, but it has also been claimed that Prophet Mohammad decreed to burn incense to diffuse fragrance inside small mosques (mescid). In the early Islamic age burning incense was a popular practice in mosques and small mosques during Friday and Salat el Eid (*Bayram -Religious Feast*) prayers in particular (Alsıgab 2013: 4). This tradition was later to be abandoned because of the high cost and rarity of incense essence. Currently this tradition is practiced in religious gatherings such as Mawlid (celebration of Prophet Mohammad's birthday) or circumcision festivals.

Many resources underline that Prophet Mohammad frequently burned in incense and put on fragrance before attending mosque for prayer (Bakır 2005: 43). It has also been reported that Caliphate Omar placed a Syrian-work censer embroidered with human-figure reliefs in Mescid-I Nebevviye (Madinah Mosque) (Çam, 1994; 285; Gedük, 2013: 129) The vital meaning of fragrance in all faiths led to the emergence of incense bowls holding these fragrances. In accordance with that statement it is viable to claim that the first censer and rosewater sprinklers appeared.

In different resources, the lexical meaning of the word “*censer*” is reported to derive from Arabic word “*bahur*” (*perfume*) (Alsıgab 2013:17) or a Farsi word (Taşçı 1996: 64; Kuşoğlu 1987, 34); in its lexical meaning censer refers to “a special metal bowl inside of which fragrances and frankincense sticks are burnt” (Sözen-Tanyeli 2010: 61, 62). In its basic form “*frankincense*” refers to a fragrance, but the suffix “*buhur-dan*” integrates the meaning of “*place, bowl, casing*” to the word (Taşçı 1996: 64). Censers not only diffuse fragrance but they also bear certain holy functions. In addition, rosewater sprinkler is a Persian-origin compound word. *Gülab* means rosewater. Rosewater sprinkler signifies the special bowl that rose water is situated into (Taşçı 1996: 64; Kanar 1993: 1143). Rosewater sprinklers are rosewater bowls which used in religious gatherings like mawlids and they have been depicted as bottle-shaped bowls with a tight outlet (mouth-opening) for the purpose of dripping rose water whenever desired and has been made up of glass, ceramic, brass or other metals (Arseven 1947: 665).

In the Ottoman Period, censers constituted a major portion of the wide range of products created by candlestick artisans (Ergin, 2014: 316). Formed in a variety of shapes, censers are mostly structured of gold, silver, copper, brass, porcelain and soil. Censers consist of three sections namely dome, bowl and pedestal.

Certain specimens can also possess a tray (Kuşoğlu 1987: 33; Tunçel, 2005: 51). Being used to prevent the contact of flames while incense burnt inside these trays are termed as “Censer tray” (Rado, 1987: 36). The latest rosewater sprinkler specimens dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century were dominantly structured with gold, silver, copper and porcelain materials. With respect to form; rosewater sprinklers were basically shaped with a large body, roundly-shaped bottom, a thin and long neck. Censers, on the other hand, displayed a wide tray at their bottom and were manifested in the shape of a dome. Some censers with several arms displayed the image of a candleholder (Taşçı 1996: 65). Censers were basically structured as seating on top of triple legs. Below the legs, there was a tray suitable to the structure technique. There were also some censer forms being hung with a chain on three sides. These chains extended around forty to fifty centimeters and were tied to a hoop or a different holder (Kuşoğlu 1987: 34). In the creation of incense born inside the censers aloes, sandalwood, spruce, daily plant, sugar cane, cinnamon, resin, lemon reed and similar plants were commonly used. After combining these plants with different soil forms in a special mixture, the incense was burnt (Alsıgab 2013:4). The most common technique in censer and rosewater sprinklers was forging and open work. In Ottoman age, censer and rosewater sprinklers were mostly used as a set rather than individually.

Similar to other Muslim communities incense was widely used in public domains and private residences in Ottomans. Mosque and tombs are recognized to be the two very significant Ottoman public domains where incense is diffused. In the mosques, prior to Friday Jemaah prayers incense was burnt while performing Quran recitals and sacred rituals such as the celebration of Prophet Mohammad's birth (*Mevlid kandili*) and ratification ceremony of a madrasa student (*icazet töreni*) (AbdulazizBey 2002: 82). In a number of mosques there were also “incense burners, perfumers” (buhurcu) commissioned to prepare the fragrance and purchase the essential raw materials for the burning ceremony. Atik Valide Mosque, Kılıç Ali Pasha Mosque, Rüstem Pasha Mosque and Süleymaniye Mosque are some of the mosques having employed incense burners as official staff (Ergin 2014: 92). Since preparation and service of incense was a costly business, employing an incense burner solely for that purpose has been a symbol of wealth for any given mosque (Ergin 2014: 88).

In Ottoman Period fragrance diffusion turned into a routine activity in the course of time and incense burners became inseparable parts of tombs. Next to the religious-public Ottoman spaces filled with aromatic candles to diffuse nice smells inside, incenses were also burnt in Turkish baths (Tufan 2006: 61). A range of visual resources, such as miniatures, reveal that during Ottoman age incense was burnt at the time of *Surre-iHümâyun* and Enthronement Ceremony (*cülus*) (Uzun 2015: 15). Ottoman community adopted incenses as parts of various ceremonies or their everyday-life rituals. Similarly, incenses were burnt commonly in the houses of Ottoman elite class and during the Tarawih prayer in Ramadan month. Acar (2011: 365) reported that various archives belonging to the age between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries showed that rosewater sprinklers and censers were also accepted kitchen utensils of the Ottoman Palace; and in Topkapı Palace incense was burnt in mid-morning and after dinner time and Turkish coffee alongside with rosewater were served.

With respect to form censers have two types; barbecue-type censer and hanging censer. Hanging censers carried by hand with chains are mostly widespread in churches. Barbecue type censers are fixed to a stabile position and it has a legged or pedestal or sometimes a tray form to burn incense within the censer. The common feature of Ottoman censers is that they were made of two sections as “fire pan” and “cone” and its upper sections were mostly decorated with curved branch motifs known as “Pençberk”, “Ulama” and “Büteadı” (Gedük, 2013: 132).

Generally Ottoman censers exhibit a barbecue type, in the shape of a single-legged seated onto a tray, shape of wineglass and covered by hemisphere-shaped lids. While some lids are covered by a holder (handle), others can have small binges. Barbecue-type censers are composed of a tray, body (fire pan) and

dome sections and the incense burnt inside the fire pan section is diffused to the surrounding air through the lid holes on the censer. To be protected against any potential danger of heated flame spread around it, the body section is secured to the tray via fixed legs or a pedestal (Alsigab 2013: 17).

Censer and rosewater sprinklers at the Ottoman Period were structured from brass, copper, silver, ceramic or gold metals. A number of decoration techniques were used in censer and rosewater sprinklers. In these censers and rosewater sprinklers widely decorated with herbal motifs, Western style became dominant in decoration programs as time passed since that was the case for all the other Ottoman arts as well (Tunçel 2011: 259). The aim in the conjunct use of censer and rosewater sprinkler was to complete the dinner with rosewater and sweet smell (Alsigab 2013: 21). Mostly designed as a set, censer and rosewater sprinklers exhibited similar features, except their difference with respect to form.

Ottoman-period censer and rosewater sprinklers are decorated with motifs that reflect an elegant style. Those with gold, silver, tombac metals have models displaying a wealth of embossment or precious- stone engravement. Ceramic censers and rosewater sprinklers are decorated with colored motifs created under glazed. The richest ornamentation style is evidenced in glass rosewater sprinklers. Their outlets are jointed silver or ribbed glass bottled. On the colorless glass, rosewater sprinklers are decorated with cutting and gilding and add motion while colored and opal glass rosewater sprinklers are embroidered with glaze and gilding (Özgümüş1996:227).

The aim of this study to analyze censers and rosewater sprinklers specifically, as well as their development phases within the ethnographic artifacts and at the same time introduce censer and rosewater sprinklers of Ottoman period as displayed in Bitlis Ethnography Museum. In line with this aim, 5 censer artifacts, 4 rosewater sprinkler artifacts and 1 incense-stick holder exhibited in the museum have been analyzed with respect to the aspects of form, material, technique and ornamentation. Analyzed as catalogue form the artifacts examined in this study have also been compared with similar Ottoman specimens exhibited in other museums or collections. It was thus intended to unveil their place with regards to cultural heritage and artistic aspects.

## II. Censer and Rosewater Sprinkler Specimens Exhibited in Bitlis Ethnography Museum<sup>2</sup>

<p><b>Catalogue No:</b> 1/Museum Inventory No: 2005/17/E <b>Artifact Name:</b> Censer / <b>Image No:</b> 1 <b>Height:</b> 14,5 cm./ <b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 9 cm. <b>Material:</b> Brass <b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum. <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Engrave</p>	 <p><b>Image No:</b> 1<sup>3</sup></p>
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<sup>2</sup> In our Museum opened for service on 13.09.2005, in addition to artifacts (clothes, daily utensils) mirroring local culture of Bitlis, there are a number of sections exhibiting manuscripts and works collected in Bitlis Castle Excavations but now demonstrated in the Museum. In this Museum, a larger section is preserved to exhibit works basically from the Period of Roman, Byzantium, Seljuk's and Ottoman rules.

<sup>3</sup> The images are taken from the Archives of Bitlis Ethnography Museum.

**Depiction:** The lid of this brass censer made up of a pedestal, fire pan and lid is shaped like a bell. On top of the lid, there is a small and flat handle. Lid, body and pedestal are interconnected via a holder “C” curved. On this holder, there are linear ornamentation motifs created by engrave technique. In the section connected to the body there is a stylized dragon head. There are five holes on the lid. Fire pan section shaped in conic form looks like a wineglass. Body gets tighter towards the bottom and pedestal towards the upper section thereby jointing together and connection line of the two parts is covered by a bracelet. There are some grooves on the pedestal.

<p><b>Catalogue No:</b> 2/<b>Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/18/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Censer / <b>Image No:</b> 2  <b>Height:</b> 15,5 cm./ <b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 11 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Brass /<b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Embossing</p>	 <p><b>Image No: 2</b></p>
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**Depiction:** The lid of this brass censer made up of pedestal, fire pan and lid has a funnel form. On top of this lid there is a handle that is seated as two overlapping hoops. One holder interconnects the lid and body sections. On the holder herbal motifs created via embossing technique are visible. In both ends of the handle designed in “C” curve, lids with a stylized dragon form makes the handle appear like a double-headed dragon. There are eight holes on the lid. Fire pan section resembles to a conic-shaped wineglass. Body gets tighter towards the bottom and pedestal towards the up so that body and pedestal sections can connect.

<p><b>Catalogue No:</b> 3/<b>Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/53/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Censer / <b>Image No:</b> 3  <b>Height:</b> 23 cm./<b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 7 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Brass /<b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Open work.</p>	 <p><b>Image No: 3</b></p>
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**Depiction:** The body and lid of this brass censer made up of pedestal, fire pan and lid has a cylinder form and the body gets wider through a ledge towards the pedestal. Onto the lid there is a handle that has its own base. It is most likely that the handle of this artifact was broken. In this cylinder-formed lid there is a

open-work motif. There are leaf motifs created via embossing technique over the part of fire pan which is widening through a ledge towards the pedestal. On the smaller pedestal, there is a linear ornamentation pattern.

<p><b>Catalogue No:</b> 4/<b>Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/54/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Censer / <b>Image No:</b> 4-4a-4b.  <b>Height:</b> 21 cm./<b>Tray Diameter:</b> 21,5 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Copper, Tombac /<b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Openwork, Embossing.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Image No: 4</b></p>
	  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Image No: 4a</b>      <b>Image No: 4b</b></p>

**Depiction:** It is made up of a pedestal, fire pan, lid and tray. On the top section there are vertical-tapped zones, below are stylized leaves that connect panjes and khatais. In the midst of these leaves, there is one passionflower form embroidered with flower petal motifs. Below these motifs there is a frieze bearing “C” curved small-house circles. In the bottommost arrangement, there is another frieze decorated with stylized herbal motifs.

Lid section is embroidered with herbal motifs created via open work technique. Fire pan section together with the pedestal has the shape of a wineglass. It is estimated that the handle and holder were broken. At the outlet of the fire pan that has a copper-glazed tombac surface and at the lower section of the lid there can be seen a frieze exhibiting stylized herbal motifs depicted with one row of embossing technique. Because Ottoman script in the tray is hardly readable, the only sentence visible is “şevketlu kerametlu muhabbetlu Sultan Mahmud Han Gazi hazretleri vakfı hümayun” “donation of the greatest emperor of all the times; the bountiful Sultan Mahmud Han Gazi”.

<p><b>Catalogue No:</b> 5/<b>Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/55/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Censer / <b>Image No:</b> 5  <b>Height:</b> 17 cm./<b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 11 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Brass /<b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> --</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Image No: 5</b></p>
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**Depiction:** This brass censer made up of a pedestal, fire pan and lid has a bell-formed lid on top of which there can be seen a handle with a pine tree shape. Via an "S" formed holder, the lid, body and pedestal sections are interconnected. There are many holes on the lid. Fire pan section is shaped in the form of a wineglass. Body gets tighter towards the bottom and pedestal towards the upper section to join together and connection line of the two parts is covered by a bracelet. There are some grooves on the pedestal.

<p><b>Catalogue No: 6/Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/5/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Rosewater sprinkler / <b>Image No:</b> 6  <b>Height:</b> 19,5 cm./ <b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 5 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Brass /<b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Engrave</p>	 <p><b>Image No: 6</b></p>
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**Depiction:** This brass rosewater sprinkler made up of a hoop pedestal, body and neck sections have a long neck and an onion-shaped body. Neck section and body were created independently and jointed to the original artifact subsequently. On the body there are herbal motifs engraved via engrave method. There is one hole in the dripping outlet (mouth-opening).

<p><b>Catalogue No: 7/Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/10/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Rosewater sprinkler / <b>Image No:</b> 7  <b>Height:</b> 13, 5 cm./<b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 5 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Copper /<b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Engrave</p>	 <p><b>Image No: 7</b></p>
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**Depiction:** This copper rosewater sprinkler made up of a tall pedestal, body and neck sections has a long neck and pear-shaped body. On the body there are herbal motifs engraved via engrave method. There is one hole in the dripping outlet.

**Catalogue No: 8/Museum Inventory No:** 2005/56/E

**Artifact Name:** Rosewater sprinkler / **Image No:** 8-8a

**Height:** 19 cm./**Pedestal Diameter:** 8,5 cm.

**Material:** Copper, Tombac /**Transfer method to the Museum:** Transferred from Ahlat Museum.

**Structure Technique:** Forging

**Ornamentation Technique:** Embossing



**Image No: 8**



**Image No: 8a**

**Depiction:** This copper rosewater sprinkler made up of a tall pedestal, body and neck sections has a long neck and large body form. At the starting point of neck, there is a frieze decorated with stylized lead sets. At the starting point of body there are curved leaves situated on the thin band placed above while on the thick band below there exist a palmet series in differing sizes. Over the body and neck sections, there are friezes depicting herbal motifs engraved via embossing technique. On the thick frieze over the body, there is a secondary frieze incised and it also depicts herbal motifs created via embossing technique. On the upper section of the neck there are grooves. There is one hole on the spilling outlet. Copper-made rosewater sprinkler is covered with tombac. Because Ottoman script in the body section is hardly readable, the only sentence visible is “Şevketlu kerametlu muhabbetlu Sultan Mahmud Han Gazi Hazretleri Vakfı Hümayun” “donation of the greatest emperor of all the times; the bountiful Sultan Mahmud Han Gazi”. It is assumed to be the pair of censer introduced in Catalogue No: 4.

**Catalogue No: 9/Museum Inventory No:** 2005/57/E

**Artifact Name:** Rosewater sprinkler / **Image No:** 9

**Height:** 27 cm./ **Pedestal Diameter:** -- cm.

**Material:** Copper. /**Transfer method to the Museum:** Transferred from Ahlat Museum.

**Structure Technique:** Forging, casting.

**Ornamentation Technique:** Engrave, embossing.



**Image No: 9**

**Depiction:** This copper rosewater sprinkler made up of a tall pedestal, body and neck sections has a long neck and a pear-shaped body. Neck and pedestal sections are structured via casting; body is structured via forging technique. This quadrilateral neck was integrated to the body section subsequently. There is one hole in the spilling outlet. Over the body there are herbal motifs designed via engrave technique. The body is covered with rib-formed vertical-tapped partitions from its larger section towards the pedestal section. On the legged pedestal, there are several decors designed via engrave technique and embossing technique.

<p><b>Catalogue No:</b> 10/<b>Museum Inventory No:</b> 2005/52/E  <b>Artifact Name:</b> Incense-stick holders/<b>Image No:</b> 10  <b>Height:</b> 20,8 cm./ <b>Pedestal Diameter:</b> 8,5 cm.  <b>Material:</b> Brass / <b>Transfer method to the Museum:</b> Transferred from Ahlat Museum.  <b>Structure Technique:</b> Forging.  <b>Ornamentation Technique:</b> Engrave.</p>	 <p><b>Image No: 10</b></p>
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**Depiction:** This brass frankincense candle-holder that has a tall body pedestal, a neck and an outlet section where incense is hung is long-necked and depicts a tulip-shape seated into a flowerpot. There are herbal motifs created via engrave technique on the bell-shaped body. Starting from the pedestal neck section it rises above in the form of a leaved pedicle and turns into the shape of a tulip in which incense is put. To describe such-formed incense candleholders Ergin (2016) said the alluring odor of incense created a lovely harmony with the visual arrangement reminiscent of flower odor. The body is covered with herbal motifs created via engrave technique. Some leaves are broken. Ergin (2016) also stated that such incense candleholder samples are abundant in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, but they were recorded in the inventory of candle-holders only.

### III. Evaluation and Comparison

Within the scope of this research 5 censer artifacts, 4 rosewater sprinkler artifacts and 1 incense-stick holder artifact exhibited in Bitlis Ethnography Museum have been examined with respect to their form, technique, material and ornamentation style (motifs). All of the analyzed artifacts were joined to the inventory after transferring from Ahlat Museum. Artifacts are in good shape in general. With respect to form, the analyzed specimens represent general characteristics of Ottoman-Period censer and rosewater sprinkler artifacts. All of the analyzed censers have been made up of a fire pan, lid and pedestal sections but the censer artifact depicted in Catalogue No 4 also possesses a tray. Specimens in Catalogue No: 1, 2 and 5 have a holder that joints lid and body sections while specimens in Catalogue No: 3 and 4 have no holder. The body section of the censer specimens in Catalogue No: 1, 2 and 5 have a wineglass form and bell-shaped lids. The lids of the artifacts in Catalogue No. 1, 2, 3 and 5 have handles in various shapes and it is estimated that handle of the artifact in Catalogue No: 4 was broken earlier.

Rosewater sprinklers from the Ottoman-period were usually designed in a pear-shaped body form rising above pedestal leg, with a tight and long neck and having a vented nose on the tip of neck to help the

rosewater being poured in the desired level. In a range of museums and collections there are different specimens made up of porcelain, silver, gold, tombac and glass materials and their size mostly varies between 20-30 cm ( Gedük, 2013: 125). Again as regards form, it is seen that rosewater sprinklers are made up of a neck, body and pedestal section. In Catalogue No: 8 and 9, there is a spilling outlet and it is envisaged that spilling outlets of artifacts in Catalogue No 6 and 7 were broken earlier. As seen, neck sections of rosewater sprinklers in Catalogue No. 6 and 9 were independently structured and jointed to the body subsequently while it can be seen that neck and body sections of the artifacts in Catalogue No: 7 and 8 were concurrently structured. It has been acknowledged that generically onion, wide and pear forms are widespread forms in rosewater sprinklers. It is known that in Ottoman-period, other popular forms were onion and bulky shapes for rosewater sprinklers in addition to the ubiquitous pear-shape form. Of all the analyzed rosewater sprinklers, the model in Catalogue No: 6 for instance has an onion shape, specimens in Catalogue No: 7 and 9 represent a pear-shape body and the model in Catalogue No: 8 has a large body form. The only incense-stick holder analyzed in this study is made up of a body, neck and incense holder sections. There are analog intense-stick holders to the intense-stick holder designed as a form of leaves reaching over a tall pedestal and a tulip shape in its opening. The main difference separating intense-stick holders from lightning holders is that in order to function as a handle, its opening is wide enough to hold an incense stick rather than a candle. Nonetheless incense-stick holder specimen in this analysis is recorded as candlestick only in the inventory of Bitlis Ethnography Museum. Tulip-formed candlestick specimen can be seen in Sadberk Hanım Museum. The specimen stated in Bodur's (1987: 110) paper (Image No: 11) bears similar formal characteristics with the incense-stick holder specimens exhibited in Bitlis Museum. The incense-stick holder, shaped as a linear tulip inward nodal connected via casting technique on a bell-formed pedestal, is an artifact dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman period. Compared to the specimen in Bitlis Museum, its opening is wide enough to hold a candle. As regards production materials; of all the analyzed works in this study, 6 artifacts (Catalogue No: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10) are made up of brass material, 2 artifacts (Catalogue No: 7 and 8) from copper and 2 artifacts (Catalogue No: 4 and 5) from tombac-covered copper material. With respect to the employed technique it can be assumed that all of the analyzed artifacts are structured via forging technique except the rosewater sprinkler model in Catalogue No: 9 of which neck is structured via casting technique. As regards the artifacts examined in this study, sections such as holder and pedestal were structured independent of the body but subsequently connected to the body from its splice points via employing jointing techniques such as welding, rivet and soldering. It is seen that in the decoration of the artifacts analyzed within the context of this study, herbal motifs engraved via engrave technique are quite widespread. In the artifacts of Catalogue No: 4 and 8, herbal motifs engraved via embossing technique and in the artwork of no 4 herbal motifs engraved via open work technique can be identified.

Once we compare after an extensive analysis some of the artifacts included within the scope of present research in catalogue order with the identical features of artifacts in different Anatolian regions, it is worth noticing that incense-stick holder specimen analyzed under Catalogue no 10 offers the very same characteristics with the incense-stick holders (Image No: 12) analyzed in the research of Ergin (2014: 76). Besides unlike large-size incense-stick holder models popular among Ottomans, incense-stick holders in smaller size are designed to fire the censers (Çağman, 1983: 256) or hold the incense stick in place of a candle. These censers, stylized as small candlesticks in gold and bronze material, were termed as "*micmer*" (Acar, 2003: 111). Micmer also means sticks shaped as a candle by mixing with amber and a range of fragrant dusts of trees (Gedük, 2013: 132). As in the study of Ergin (2014: 76) and also the incense-stick holder displaying a leaved-tulip body inside which incense stick is embedded and exhibited in Turkish and Islam Arts Museum and the artifact exhibited in Bitlis Ethnography Museum are identical artefacts with respect to form, material, decoration and production technique. Both specimens designed tulip form that were made of brass material. Herbal motifs are in abundance in the decorations of these artifacts of which pedestal section is produced via casting technique while its neck and opening represent forging technique.

The candlesticks possessing the said tulip-shaped neck and holder were pervasively used in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in particular and continued to be popular till the final states of Ottoman art (Çetinaslan, 2016: 345). It is thus viable to date this intense-stick holder to the time period after the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This kind of candlesticks with bell-shaped are the forms that are encountered in the Seljuk period. Similar specimens dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century can be found in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (Image No: 13), Ankara Ethnography Museum (Image No: 14) and Konya Mevlana Museum (Image No: 15).



**Image No: 11**  
**(Bodur,1987:110)**



**Image No: 12**  
**(Ergin,2014:76)**



**Image No: 13**  
**(URL 2)**



**Image No: 14**  
**(URL 2)**



**Image No: 15**  
**(URL 3)**

Besides, the censer specimen in Catalogue No: 4 and 18<sup>th</sup> century-dated tombac censer (Image No. 16) analyzed in Uzun's (2015: 136) work and the one in Topkapı Palace Museum are analogous with respect to form. Of the two artifacts composed of a fire pan, lid, pedestal and tray the fire pan section posits a wineglass shape and lid section is shaped like a dome. Artifacts in identical forms are also exhibited in Sadberk Hanım Museum. Flat tray, half-sphere formed work bearing a dome-shaped lid in Bodur's (1987: 114-115) work and the artifact displayed in the section of 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman period in Bitlis Museum hold identical features (Image No: 17 – 18). Tombac censer (Image No: 19) mentioned in Çağman's (1983: 274) work and dated back to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Topkapı Palace Museum bears identical features with the artifact analyzed within the context of present study. In particular, bowl-formed fire pan and dome-formed and open work ornamented lid section demonstrate the features of the same period. As these identical specimens are examined it is viable to date the work in catalogue 4 to 17<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The specimens of the censer decorated with openwork technique are also seen in the Anatolian Seljuk period. The specimens formed by the merger of two hemispheres in Konya Mevlana Museum (Image No: 20) is important in terms of observing the pioneering of the construction and decoration of the Ottoman Period censer. Another specimen with similar characteristics is seen in the Diyarbakir Archeology and Ethnography Museum.

A specimen of censer with openwork decored and “S” curved legs in Diyarbakır Archeological Museum (Image No: 21) which is dated between 17 and 19th century by Yariş' s (2018: 926) study is similar to specimen of Bitlis Etnography Museum.



**Image No: 16**  
**(Uzun, 2015: 136)**



**Image No: 17**  
**(Bodur, 1987: 114)**



**Image No: 18**  
**(Bodur, 1987:115)**



**Image No: 19**  
**(Çağman, 1983: 274)**



**Image No: 20**  
**(URL 3)**



**Image No: 21**  
**(Yariş, 2018: 926)**

Censer specimens in Catalogue No: 1, 2 and 5 directly overlap with the 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek-period bronze censers (Images No: 22 and 23) with respect to their form, material, technique and decoration style. It exhibits parallel features with bell-shaped lid, glass-shaped fire pan, an elevated pedestal and dragon-formed handles. Only in Greek specimens gripping point of lid had cross figure but the works analyzed within the scope of this study and displayed in Bitlis Museum possessed different shapes in their lid handles. Based on this parallelism it is viable to date the works in Catalogue No: 1, 2 and 5 to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The comparatively-simple decorative style compared to other specimens may be explained with the fact that simple decoration style in these works were visible in more plain spots.



**Image No: 22**  
**(URL 4)**



**Image No: 23**  
**(URL 4)**

As regards rosewater sprinklers analyzed here, the work in Catalogue No: 9 and the rosewater sprinkler (Image No: 24 - 25) with an architectural depiction in Ayhan's (2014: 73) study as exhibited in Muğla

Museum are identical in terms of form and structure technique. Neck sections of both artifacts are structured via casting and body sections are structured via forging technique. At the same time the body sections have a pear-shaped form. Neck sections of the works are quadrilateral and when viewed with their dipping mouth, their form reminds of a minaret shape. Particularly for architecture- depicted rosewater sprinklers, it is safe to assume that mosque figures in the body section represent a mosque and the neck section is illustrative of the mosque minaret. Also, since rose scent is ubiquitously used in mosques it is suggested that these rosewater sprinklers were exclusively designed for mosques. Based on these similarities, rosewater sprinkler specimen in this study can be traced back to the mids of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the 19<sup>th</sup> century- dated rosewater sprinkler specimen (Image No: 26) exhibiting similar features can be visualized Yapi Kredi Bank Collection (Bodur, 1987: 119).



**Image No: 24**  
(Ayhan, 2014: 73)



**Image No: 25**  
(Ayhan, 2014: 73)



**Image No: 26**  
(Bodur, 1987: 119)

Two copper rosewater sprinkler specimens analyzed in this study with their catalogue numbers 6 and 7 draw similarities with rosewater sprinkler specimens of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Ottoman Empire. Identical with respect to form and decoration there are flower motifs designed in engraving technique in the body parts and a pear-shape form is evident. Based on these characteristics, the specimens analyzed in this research can reasonably be dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### IV. Conclusion

The censers used for the fragrance can be considered as a heritage from the Seljuks to the Ottoman Empire. When we look at the censer examples of the Great Seljuk period, it is seen that they are more primitive as a form, but they are quite close to the Ottoman Empire as artistic progress in terms of etching technique and ornamentation. In the specimens of the Great Seljuk period, while the animal elements came to the fore as ornamental elements, the herbal figures are mainly seen in the Ottoman Empire. The specimens from the 11th-12th century Iranian censers found in the Hermitage State Museum (Image No: 27) and the Museum of Azerbaijan (Image No: 28) are censer specimens of the Great Seljuk Period. Similar specimens are exhibited in the Victoria Albert and Louvre Museums (selcuklumirasi.com, 2019). These specimens consist of a half-closed part on the cylindrical body. This piece is in the form of a half dome and has various decorations on it. The Great Seljuks used censers in this form for nearly two centuries.



**Image No: 27 (URL 2)**



**Image No: 28 (URL 3)**

When it comes to the Ottoman Empire, it is seen that forms and ornaments are more developed and more precious mines are used as materials. The censers and rosewater sprinklers made according to the architecture of the place, in accordance to this place again, were created by applying more valuable materials and fine decorations. For example, the censers and rosewater sprinklers used in an ordinary mosque or in the house and the censers and rosewater sprinklers used in the mosques used by the Sultans for worship, and in the large mansions show various differences in terms of material, ornamentation and form. A set of censer and rosewater sprinkler from Süleymaniye Mosque and a censer was signature by II. Abdulhamit, have the characteristics of representing the place where they are used with ornamentation and material. Similar specimens can be seen in the Topkapı Palace Museum (Image No: 29 – 30 - 33) and the Mevlana Museum (Image No: 31 - 32). In the context of the study, it can be said that the specimens used in more modest structures.



**Image No: 29 (URL 5)**



**Image No: 30 (URL 1)**



**Image No: 31 - 32 (URL 3)**



**Image No: 33 (Gedük, 2013:139)**

The forms of censer and rosewater sprinklers analyzed within the context of this study were shaped to meet their intended use. In only one sample there was a tray and all the other censers were composed of a fire pan, lid and pedestal. Body sections of rosewater sprinklers mostly are shaped as an onion, pear or wide body form, the neck sections are tall in general.

In the structuring of artifacts predominant method was forging technique and rivets were opted for in the jointing of sections such as holder with the body. As an ornamentation method engrave technique was the widely-selected option. Once the ornamentation program of analyzed artifacts is examined it becomes evident that herbal motifs were predominantly manifested on the body.

Absence of date-information and place of manufacturing notes on the works and the mobile-nature of artifacts or being designed by artists from dissimilar regions can be provided as the causes regarding the uncertainty of exact date of origin in the analyzed artifacts. In the Ottoman art of mining, once we concurrently analyze the censer and rosewater sprinklers produced between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

and onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it can be feasible to argue that specimens in Bitlis Museum can be, as displayed in their form, structure and ornamentation techniques and decoration program, dated back to the mids of 19<sup>th</sup> century as for the date of manufacturing.

As a common practice in the Ottoman Period, incense burning and rosewater use not only bear value in terms of nice odor but in terms of religious function as well. Particularly in the mosques, diffusing nice odor was highly valued to extol the holiness of the place and the presence of Divine Power (Ergin, 2014: 327). Used as a means to offer divine sayings with a nice odor, censers functioned to release the worshippers from mundane life and ascend them to a spiritual journey. Aside from their holy aspect, censers also maintained a social dimension. Costly censers and censer burners in a number of mosques or tombs were highly valued since they indicated the wealth and high-status of the people living nearby the area of this mosque or tomb. Another validation of the critical place of rosewater in Ottoman lifestyle is that among the precious gifts offered to the sultans, rosewater and special design rosewater sprinklers constituted a notable status. In particular, rosewater sprinklers offered to the sultans were mostly ornamented with jewelry to further boost their allure (Gedük, 2013: 127). Censers and rosewater sprinklers are in the category of important artifacts remaining to the present day in terms of their integrity with the architecture of the place they are used.

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