

# **THE RELATION OF MASTER AND APPRENTICE IN ART OF PAINTING AND ITS PLACE IN TURKISH ART EDUCATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Painting art continued during learning phase with different methods such as learning from a master, watching the master or experiencing; But it has always with a similar system. Rubens, from Renaissance masters; Van Dyck, from Rubens; Jacques Louis from David Antique; After the 19th century, artists interacted extensively with each other or with the past using similar or opposite methods. On the Turkish art of painting towards western understanding, there are important influences such as Realism, Impressionism, Cubism, and the masters in these understandings. In this study, by examples of outstanding workshops and artists in the history of painting, it is emphasized that how and in what way the artists are influenced by masters and contemporaries and the reflection of this effect on art and arts education. In the direction of this goal, similar or separate methods of Turkish Painting were tried to be considered. With such an evaluation, it is aimed to shed light on today's art education and methods by focusing on past art education or learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Painting art has been based on master apprentice relation since its beginning. Even though the traditional workshop education has shown changes in our century, the method of “learning from a master” has always continued in principle. Master apprentice relation has always existed by the nature of many other branches of art and artisanship.

Through the ages, art has gone on in every period either by adding to what it has learned from the previous one or by moving into a different dimension despite oppositions against it. Egyptian art has affected Greek art and Greek art has affected Roman art. Consequently, Uyghur Miniature affected Seljukian Miniature and that affected Ottoman Miniature Art. In short, tradition is always ground on the antecedent one from itself. In the middle age, while with the religious oppressions an idiosyncratic believed world view was being followed, renaissance has created dogmas by acting mostly on Antiquity. Workshop masters are the protagonists of handing down from one generation to another. Masters like Giotto and Masaccio laid significant foundations of training many new grand masters of following generations. Verrocchio is one of the most important of these masters. He was the master of grand masters like Leonardo and Botticelli. Like in many workshops, Verrocchio also engaged on collective production with his students in his atelier. Every apprentice was working on complementing different artworks under the master’s watch. While one was preparing the paint, the other would be drawing the pattern or another one would be dealing with the technical affairs. Another apprentice who became versed within many years would be working with the master on the finishing touches of the painting or the sculpture. One of the finest examples of this collective production is “Baptism of Christ” which was made by Verrocchio and his apprentice, Leonardo. (Picture-1)



Picture -1 Andrea del Verrocchio, Leonardo da Vinci, Baptism of Christ, 1472-73, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

Picture -2 Andrea del Verrocchio, Leonardo da Vinci, Baptism of Christ, Detail

On the right, in the painting which is themed on the baptism of Christ, there are two angels sitting on the left side of the painting while Saint John is baptizing Christ. One of the angels, the one at the back, was painted by Verrocchio and the other angel, in front, by Leonardo. Leonardo was still a young artist when he helped with this painting. He made more distinct reforms than his master and was giving clues on that he was going to continue making in the future with the angel figure he painted. Leonardo's figure is painted with more dramatic and a spiritual feeling to a certain degree than his master's. With the angel's hair, the curves in the movement and the figure's general *kontroposto* standing, Verrocchio's painting came to a dynamic state. Also, the angel figure's forward and front move is set up on creating a triangle with St. John figure.<sup>1</sup>

This painting is both one of the important works which tells us the magnitude of the master apprentice relationship and at the same time, a painting in which we can watch the growth of a great master who improves, changes and renews what he has learned

Rubens is, with no doubt, the one of the best to show us the workshop training and the size of master apprentice relationship. The Baroque master artist is known with many

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<sup>1</sup> Wasserman Jack, (1984), Leonardo Da Vinci, Hanry N. Abrams published,s,48 , New York

masterpieces he made. Rubens, who has an art sense in a wide range, has helped with nurturing several important artists.

Many of the talented Fleming artists were proud of working under his management and thus, learning from him. If there was a new work order from the church, or the king or the prince, Rubens would sometimes draw a colored sketch. (Indeed, ... painting was such a sketch for a larger composition)

To draw the sketch on the canvas was the job of his apprentices' or assistants'. After they were done with all the painting and setting according to their master's sketch, Rubens would take the brush, touch up a face here, brush on a clothing made of silk there or soften poignant contrasts.<sup>2</sup>

A few apprentices of the artist are almost as famous as he is. Van Dyck is in the leading position among them.

“Rubens having a great deal of master assistants helped him afford to take on the numerous orders. Van DYCK who was among the head assistants started working in the workshop in 1617 and worked there for some time. Some figures in the Spear Strike (Picture-3) made in 1620 is thought to be the work of Van DYCK. In a number of his compositions some of the parts were done by just Rubens' assistants and in some of his paintings all the parts were done by his assistants; however Rubens supervised all of them.”<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> GOMBRICH, E.H., (1997), **The Story of Art**, Remzi Bookstore, p,398-400, İstanbul

<sup>3</sup> Eczacıbaşı **Encyclopedia of Art** (1997), YEM Publishing, Volume 3, p.1590, İstanbul

Picture -3 Peter Paul Rubens, The Coup de Lance, 429x311 cm, oil on canvas, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, Belgium

One of the important traits of Rubens separating him from other masters is that in case of a collective production of art he wouldn't hide who made at what rate or what kind of contribution. He didn't conceal the labor done if another person added something on his painting.

One of the most important matters apart from the master apprentice relations in the workshop, is the new world created by an artist outside of the general traits of movements and periods of being followed by the succeeding generations of many important artists. This learning type is not the kind where an artist learns from another one but of learning from his works. In art history, there are countless grand artists continuing Caravaggio's sense of painting, based on from light tones to dark tones figural structure. It is also known as the "Caravaggisti".

His novel use of light generated admiration from his contemporary artists and other artists from following centuries. French artists like Georges de la Tour, especially the Dutch artists in Rome in 17<sup>th</sup> century embraced his style so much that from then on they were called "Caravaggisti" or "Caravaggio cult". Considering that most of the cults come out many years later after the artist or artists create them, it was a really surprising development. While Caravaggio was alive, the Dutchman Carel van Mander published a book named the Italian Artists Living in Rome in Our Day. In this literary work a small chapter was reserved for Caravaggio the young artist. It was noted that there were quite a lot of mimickers of Caravaggio's style among a wide range of artists. <sup>4</sup>



Picture -4 Caravaggio, The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, Oil On Canvas, 107x146.1 cm, 1601, Neus Palais, Postdam



Picture -5 Georges de La Tour, The Newborn Child, Oil on canvas, 76 x 91 cm, Rennes, Musée des Beaux Arts

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<sup>4</sup> Krause Anna-Carola, 2005, **The Story of Painting Art from Renaissance to Present**, Literatur Publishing, p, 35, Almanyia

In fact, many of the grand masters aren't that different from Caravaggio. On art history, they have similar influence more or less. In 1900s, Cezanne's understanding of Geometry and after that cubist world created by Picasso and Post-Cubist following after him. Similarly, all of the Art History is full of this and so on just like Kandinsky's abstract world and the ones he influenced. However, only the master and his apprentice's collective production of artwork creates a different perception of art.

In Traditional Turkish Art, there are quite a number of collective work productions, too. One of the reasons is the close link between the master and the apprentice. Traditional Turkish Art teaching takes many years and has its own tradition. Among these arts, there are special areas like Calligraphy, Tezhip (decorating with gold), Miniature, Ebru (Paper Marbling), Çini (Tile Art). The apprentice works with his/her master on many artworks and can't use his/her signature until she/he gets approval from his/her master. This relationship continues in a certain degree even after the apprentice gets his/her approval and becomes a master. Among traditional arts, the need to mutually complement one another entails writing more than one name under the artwork. For after the calligraphist writes the writing, another artist, the Ebru artist or the Tezhip artist, decorates the sides. Even sometimes the three of calligraphy, Ebru and Tezhip are used all together. Hence, the names of all three artists' should be written under the artwork. Especially in Classical Ottoman Period, these kinds of art acts were organized by institutionalized organizations. Nakkashane and Ehli Hiref Organization were the foremost among them

Written works prepared in Nakkashanes were decorated by the labor of many artisans not just one. Today the written works filling up our museums and libraries were provided in this way. The oldest notebook of the organization named as "Ehli Hiref" (the palace artisan association) working in the Nakkashane is dated to (Hijra)-932/ (Gregorian) 1526. The nakkashes (muralists) who were the one of the most important divisions in this organization weren't only limited to activities related to book art, but they also prepared and applied the patterns of Maden işleri, Çini (Tile Art), Kalemîşi to palace mansions and Sâir buildings. This patterns belonging to the palace nakkashes were sent to the people in charge in the Ottoman States and made sure that they were applied correctly. Even, in case there wasn't a master to engrave at the location the artisan would be sent with the pattern. The style union and cooperation that is seen in Ottoman Art and lasting for centuries was preserved in this way. In every Nakkashane the most skillful and veteran master was chosen as a semakkash and would be responsible for Nakkashane. Nakkashanes can be called as the "practice school". The members of Ehli Hiref Organization would get their salaries once in every three months on daily wages. All the salaries and promotions that all the workers get would be written on the payments' notebook. If the qualified people from the Ehli hiref aren't enough, in return of being paid by the market artisans, masters would be employed to work in the palace when the art creation is hectic. Every artisan working in the Palace

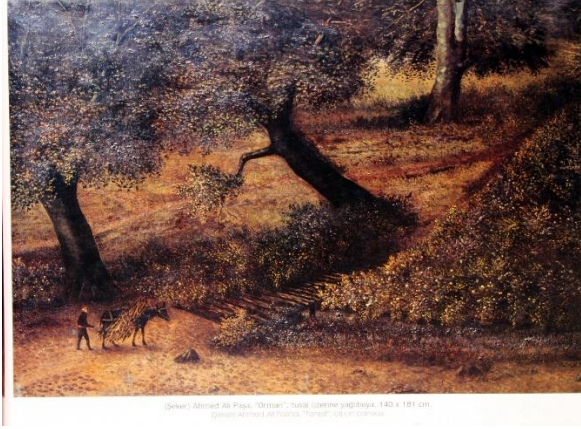
Nakkashhane, whether being connected to the Ehli Hiref or not, had to create an artwork according to the wishes of the management and in their service. However, the palace would show tolerance to acceptable innovations and set free the artisan.<sup>5</sup>

In Ottoman period, acquaintanceship with Western Art was limited with western artists that came to the palace. With the Westernization movements and improvisations of mutual dialogues in art with Europe, students were sent abroad to study painting art. As a result of mutual student exchange agreements Ottoman Empire made with European countries, France being in the first place, many people were sent to different countries to get education in Art. Names like Osman Hamdi, Şeker Ahmet Paşa, Süleyman Seyyit takes the lead among these students. Şeker Ahmet Paşa who was one of these names: *Ahmet Ali Efendi ( Şeker Ahmet Paşa) was known with his serious, peaceful, honorable personality and had worked with academic and official artist like G. Boulanger and L. Gerome in Paris for nearly eight years.*<sup>6</sup> Şeker Ahmet Paşa who got training from two important masters for a long time had added East's immaterial spirit and maybe he painted under some naive effect. It is possible to see his academic skills which he learned from his masters in his own portrait. (Picture -6). His idiosyncratic view of nature can also be discovered from the painting named "Orman (The Forest)" (Picture-7), later on for which John Berger wrote an article on.

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<sup>5</sup> Derman, Çiçek, A General Outlook on Ottoman Tezhip [http://www.obarsiv.com/e\\_voyvoda\\_0607.html](http://www.obarsiv.com/e_voyvoda_0607.html) (Date Accessed: 14.08.2017)

<sup>6</sup> Renda, Günsel-Erol, Turan, Contemporary Turkish Painting Art History since the Beginning to Present, Volume 1, Tıglat Printing House, p,114-115, İstanbul



Picture -6 Şeker Ahmet Paşa; Orman, Oil on Canvas, 140x181 cm, İstanbul Resim Heykel Müzesi

Picture -7 Şeker Ahmet Paşa; Self Portrait, Oil on Canvas, 1880'ler, 118x85 cm, İstanbul Resim Heykel Müzesi

Another name who was an apprentice of Boulanger and Gerome just like Şeker Ahmet Paşa was Osman Hamdi Bey.

Osman Hamdi Bey; who wasn't military-rooted; along with being an artist, he was also an important culture person. Osman Hamdi Bey made many contributions in culture and art circle by his findings from archeological excavations he made, taking the lead on establishing the Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Alisi and many other works.<sup>7</sup>

It is possible to better see his master Derome's doctrines in Osman Hamdi Bey's paintings. The artist, who is a gifted apprentice of Gerome, painted under an orientalist influence but quite realistic Ottoman world in an insider's view. It is possible to say that Osman Hamdi Bey is the person to lay the foundations of Turkish Art Teaching in Western perception. That is because he is the founder of today's Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi (Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University) and Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi is the name of this school when it first opened. The artist who broke new grounds and was active in numerous fields undeniably became one of the most important names in Turkish Art History.

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<sup>7</sup> Tetikci, İsmail, 2010, Nature Human Relationship in Western Understanding Oriented Turkish Painting Art, qualification in art artwork text, MSGSÜ Institute of Social Sciences p.46, İstanbul





Picture -8 Osman Hamdi; Türbede, 1908, Oil on Canvas, 124x93 cm



Picture -9 Jean-Léon Gérôme, Oil on canvas, 54.6 x 62.9 cm, 1884 or earlier

Şeker Ahmet Paşa, Osman Hamdi Bey and Sami Yetik continued the education they got in a way to create a lasting impression in their country. They taught in many places and trained students. Afterwards, many important personas were sent abroad to study in a similar way and when they came back they added what they have learned from their masters and the reflections of the important movements of the period into Turkish Painting. It is possible to mention Çallı Kuşağı, D Grubu, Yeniler Grubu and many associations among these groups. While Çallı Kuşağı Artists were influenced by the effects of impressionism, the artists of D Grubu made artworks under the influence of Geometric or Cubist effect. The truth of one or several movements should be dominant elements on the production of the artist and the characteristics of the education between the Teacher and his student that still continues even today can't be denied.

## **CONCLUSION**

Every new examination on Painting Art History reveals many connections different from one another and art relations about human beings. It can be understood that things that look similar actually have sometimes clean and sometimes hair thin differences. Just like every study on human beings gives the impression as if we are studying an unknown existence that we are facing for the first time. The reason is that, although every human being is the same with certain common factors, actually they are utterly new worlds. Painting art is just like a parallel of this. Every master, every movement exists as long as there are artists continuing their doctrines. Though they all shared the same common ground, they have offered a whole new world to us.

Verrocchio gave education according to his own doctrines. However, Leonardo has opened the doors to a whole new world and that is high Renaissance. In fact, even though they acted on the same art dogmas in principle, Leonardo could add brand new information on what is already in existence.

Traditional Turkish Arts, longstanding with very strict rules and even have corporate rubrics, have always continued by adding on in spite of taking too many years. This Classical Art Teaching all based on rules and workshop system, is actually the most natural reason to the forming of future's and today's art. Since for it to achieve satisfaction or come to the point of repeating itself, it needs artists that accept and continue its doctrines. Every movement or doctrine reaching saturation point gives rise to the birth of a new movement or period denying it before itself. In fact, this togetherness and the oppositions are the Art Education itself. The teacher trains the apprentice or teaches him/her, acknowledges an apprentice or rejects him/her. Just like for a teacher to have apprentices who accept or reject him/her. A similar situation also applies to art movements.

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