

PART II*

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Age Groups¹

In the eyes of the village community, boys reaching the age of 14 to 15 or those who are specially mature at 12, 13, after reaching puberty, have the right to be considered youths. They are excused for their wild acts because this is accepted as part of their youth. They are generally not permitted to be present at gatherings of the elders and it is undesirable to keep company with bad characters. They must plough the fields and cut wood. They are permitted to leave the village to find work and to earn their livings and in fact are advised to do this so that they may marry as soon as possible. Early marriages are preferred. The reason for this is to save them from being morally spoilt. Formerly, neighbours used to feel this responsibility for young men as much as his parents. Neighbours would often interfere in this matter informing that such and such a young man was behaving strangely. Then the village elders would call the young man's father and advise him to arrange a marriage as soon as possible. The father would then do this.

In this village, stages of maturity are considered in connection with the male only. Social ranks are also only conferred on the men. Circumcision is one of the rites and practices which mark the end of childhood. This is because circumcision is counted as the first step towards manhood. The neighbors and relatives, talking to the circumcised children say "Now you have become a youth, you are no

* Continuation of the previous study (part I) and revision of the same part of the study of Hal.

¹ Sürüfing, Paul has also treated upon this subject in his works 1965, after the author of this article has worked on this in 1926 and published it in 1979.

longer a child". This shows how much connection there is between this ceremony and maturity. Circumcision is considered to mature the child mentally and physically, although there is no definite age for it.

A youth is only accepted as a man after he has completed his military service and married. That is to say in the native way of speaking "now he has the right to talk". There are groupings which are assigned to men and based on age groups in the village community: such as council of the elders and young bachelors group. Boys above the age of 12 and 13 are not considered children any longer but they are not yet admitted to the council of elders or to the young bachelors group. They do however take part in wedding ceremonies. The first of the age groupings observed in the village is the council of elders. This is based on the similarity of age. Only the old men are included in this council. Their function or business is to settle village matters, religious questions and to have pleasant discussions among themselves. Even the young men cannot enter this gathering. Formerly, this rule used to be very strict. Recently, this rule has been relaxed a bit: serious married young men have been allowed to join in this council. During the meetings of this group, apart from discussions, religious and historical books are read aloud. For example "Sureti Nebi, Battal Gazi etc."

This group meets mainly in winter. Every year an "Aga" (1) of the community builds and furnishes a special room for the gathering. Every meeting of the year takes place in this room. The peculiarity of this group was that it used to be confide to men above 40 years of age. Today as we mentioned above, young married men are admitted to this gathering but they are not however allowed to take part in discussions. They must quietly and with their arms respectfully folded listening to their elders.

Here, there are also bachelor's groups; but these groupings are based mainly on recreational pursuits. The young men at these meetings sing and play games, especially the traditional "ring game". They cook "gomlech" (They roll the dough, onions are fried with small pieces of lamb meat, then a sheet of dough is taken and covered with the onion and meat mixture; the dough is then folded up and put between two thin tin sheets and charcoal is placed on top before cooking.)

There are no special groups for either the mature women or the young girls, although they have some free time in the evenings. After all the work of the day is done, it is not considered good for them to go walking about. In spite of this, the women are able to visit each other. The most important task of the young bachelors is to provide games and sport displays for special feast days (Bayram). Formerly, they were not allowed to have these displays. It is remembered that one aga once in fact forbade this kind of gathering. The reason for this prohibition was that it was feared that the young men would be morally spoilt, i.e. that they would take to gambling and quarreling. Among the games that the young men play, the following are the most famous ones: "Halay"¹, "Kil"², Zeybek (special variety of zeybek found only in this region) and "Zaza dik halays"³. Besides these, there are a few others such as "Serhoş Makamı"⁴, "Three Steps", "Garacor Halays", "Eşim Aman Halayı" and "Supurgeli Halays". Formerly, the favored game of the young men was "Cirit": this was played during wedding ceremonies, after the bride descended from the horse, to the accompaniment of drum beats. Cirit was also played on Fridays. Through lack of space, though, it was performed in the surrounding villages such as Enguzek, Asvan. (today, the cirit is still being played everywhere in villages such as Asvan for example). Formerly wrestling was much practiced in Hal and was in fact a speciality of this village. Nowadays this sport is almost forgotten.

The Relations Between Neighbours

Although the system of kinship is one of the stabilizing factors in marriage and in other aspects of community life, neighbourship (locality) is also an important element of stability in the life of the village people. For example, if a woman's husband has left the village for work, the neighbors would cut the trees in her orchard for her; whenever any special food is prepared, or collected (honey, winery products etc.) a small portion is distributed among the neighbours. Neighbours

¹ Halay: the players stand in a line holding hands. The one at the top of the line gives steps and the others follow to the accompaniment of drums and flutes.

² This dance is played in pairs.

³ This dance is a left over from the Zaza.

⁴ The drunkard's tune.

also play a great role and exercise a great influence on family life and also in the community life in settling disputes and misunderstandings. Neighbours never seem to bear grudges against one another: there is no record of friendships having been permanently broken through quarrels. When they quarrel, they may stop speaking to each other for one or two days, but never more than this. Village people settle all their affairs, even the most complicated, at the village gatherings. We must bear in mind the fact that the majority of them are related to each other and the important part that this plays in helping them to solve their problems. Practically no cases are taken to court, all matters being settled in the village¹. The older neighbors have much influence and many rights in interfering with the children's education. Formerly, the older people of the community would call any youth who had done wrong and give him and his father this advice: "your behavior is not good, if you don't improve your ways, next time we will punish you". Unfortunately, in the last few years, this influence has much decreased. In any village operations, (in the building of a fountain or the digging of a well) there is a feeling of cooperation and this is very strong indeed. One can always see this in the daily work of the village. I have myself observed that each person has a special feeling of responsibility in any communal work; even in the feeding of the workmen, for example, each person takes his part, preparing the food in rotation. I was able to record a custom which has become a tradition, called "Harmancalk" illustrating this feeling. After the harvest had been gathered at each threshing floor, a certain portion used to be set aside to be distributed among the neighbours. Today, however this custom seems almost to have been forgotten due to the decreasing amount of land under cultivation. In fact, there is nowadays almost no cultivable land left. Hal has a great reputation for this feeling of cooperation; to such a degree, in fact that, the surrounding villagers sometimes even ask the villagers of Hal to help them and as far as possible this help is always given.

Sexual Division of Labor

The work done by women: house work; preparation and cooking of food; watering of gardens and orchards; cutting corn, supplying clo-

¹ Only one man was once imprisoned for 18 years.

ver and plants to animals in winter; collecting firewood for winter in springtime, the gathering of firewood from especially distant places (up to 5-8 hours walk from the village) which they transport home on their backs. This load of wood is called "Palak" in the local dialect; the carrying of wheat to the mills to be ground and the bringing back of the flour to their village; the cooking of vineyard products¹ and mulberries. In addition to all this, women have the job of shaking the mulberry bushes² and fetching water³ for the house from the river (even at night, women can go to fetch water without fear of any harm coming to them). One can see husbandless women cutting their own trees. Hooping too, is considered part of a woman's work. Carrying stones for construction work⁴ (both the foundation stones and the building ones) and the cementing of walls are among the women's duties (every few years, each house is cemented and white washed; the roof is flattened with a stone roller called "Lo" in the local dialect). The men are proud to tell that all the stones used in the village were carried by their wives. It is remembered that on one occasion a woman carried by herself a stone that it took 8 men to lift. The smallest stone carried by these women weighs 25-30 kilos. Because of this hard work, 80% of the women have gynecological abnormalities, (this was told by midwives who still use the old, traditional treatments)⁵. Apart from this heavy work, women are burdened with certain other duties because of their physiological characteristics: to be a partner to their husband; childbirth and bringing up the children.

Men's field of work: Almost all administrative and religious work⁶ is done by men here: the grinding of wheat; if the mill is outside the village, wheat is carried there by men instead of women. Only single woman carry it on their pack-animals. The shaking of the walnut trees is done by men, because this is a dangerous job.

1 In the local dialect, these are called "polaraz and postil."

2 In the local dialect, this is called "yigalamak".

3 Men never go to fetch water.

4 This work is done only for themselves and for their neighbours.

5 Very recently, women have started to go to the town for medical treatment.

6 Women can never perform religious functions, because it is forbidden by Islamic law.

Magic and witchcraft are generally practiced by men especially by the "Hodjas". Although some women are quite well educated in religious fields, they don't usually take part in magic or religious ceremonies.

Status of Women

A woman's wishes are never taken into account in this village. There is even no thought that they may ever be tired. The village men believe that their women can withstand any hardship. There is an prevalent idea that the work must be done whether the wife lives or dies doing it. In the eyes of the men, woman is just a field in which the male seeds grow. This thought inevitably leads to the woman being given a secondary status in society. This fact must be taken into consideration as one of the characteristics of a patrilineal system.

As we mentioned above, every kind of heavy work is done by woman; even the slaughtering of animals is done if their husbands are away, though this is in fact against religious rule. When it is necessary, a woman also cuts trees. In the distribution of property, the woman's share is almost not taken into consideration and most women don't dare to ask their brothers for their rightful share. In married life, when one partner wrongs the other, usually the punishment for the woman is a beating; for the man, it is just the criticism of relatives and a warning. We have to emphasize the fact that in this village women are still beaten. There is an old saying, still popular, that "the devil makes his nest in a woman's head". It is necessary to beat the woman in order to destroy this nest. Only the husband has the right to beat his wife; in-laws can almost never do this (very few cases have been recorded). Wife-beating seems to be a right given to men since the earliest times.

To summarize, so far the facts that we have recorded about the field of work of women and the men's opinion of and behavior to them, it is clear that the women are not in the position of being "The cherished sex". In spite of this, there are some favorable aspects to the woman's position: for instance, the gradual decrease in polygamy is greatly in woman's favor, because it shows a growing awareness of woman's rights in married life. This decrease and near disappea-

rance of polygamy, especially in "Republican time", does not only show the favorable woman's situation from legal but also sociological and psychological point of view.

Finally, to me, the existence of a reciprocal system between wife and husband regarding the tasks and rights over the marriage and the responsibilities of the household tasks as well as family's production indicates a subordinate position of the women when it is compared with their husbands. The women in this community do not play too less important role than men do. Because women here still have a certain kind of feminine influence and resulting from the satisfactions in the community life.

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