

Peace Silk from Hatay – The Story

It is said that the first silk fabric in Anatolian history was woven in Harbiye, Hatay province. Sheikh Yusuf El-Hekim lived in Harbiye, a physician who is also considered a pioneer of weaving. However, silk production, which was widespread in the Ottoman era, was sidelined in the 1930s by cotton production.



In Harbiye in 1997 the Duman family started to revive silk farming and silk weaving. They increased their mulberry trees to 5000 ... 6000 pieces and were thus able to set up their own production of hand-spun silk yarn and hand-woven fabrics and cloths.



Even Emel Duman's grandmother ran a silk breeding and weaving workshop. She took pity on the silkworms that had to die drying in the oven and began just to wait until the caterpillar had completed its transformation into a butterfly and had slipped out of the cocoon. Only then did she reel the fibers as usual. She called them "hole cocoons".

The brown and yellow cocoons were previously native in the Hatay region (Turkey) and Syria. The silkworms were endemic to that area and had been considered extinct for 40 years. The silk farmer Emel Duman has successfully reared the silkworms over many years - accompanied by the University of Hatay - so that these silk fibers in natural colours are now available again for the production of beautiful silk fabrics.

The work of the Duman family thus makes a significant contribution to the preservation of the cultural heritage and biodiversity in the region.

The enterprise with silk breeding, spinning, dyeing and weaving bears the name "Defne & Apollon". Defne is the Turkish spelling of the better-known Daphne, a nymph from Greek mythology. When Apollo, the god of light, healing and spring, mocked the god of love Eros as a bad shooter, he avenged himself by shooting a love arrow with a golden tip on him and one with a leaden tip on Daphne. Apollo fell madly in love with Daphne, while she was hit by an arrow Eros', which did



exactly the opposite, and became unresponsive to that love affair. When Apollon pressed Daphne, she fled. Exhausted from the persecution by Apollo, she implored her father Peneios that he should change her shape. Then her shape froze and she turned into a laurel tree. In Turkish, therefore, the laurel tree is called "defne" and is native to Asia Minor.



And this closes the circle to the present: Emel Duman uses the fruits of the laurel tree to briefly boil the cocoons in hot water. This removes the silk glue (Sericin) and the fibers can be easily reeled from the cocoon.

In the Defne & Apollon workshops, the fibers are spun with hand spindles and woven into yard goods, scarves, stoles and home textiles on hand looms. Shawls and scarves are dyed with vegetable dyes or printed with plants using the Eco Print method.

All textiles are sustainably made from organically grown Peace Silk. Thanks to their ethically and ecologically oriented production, they meet the requirements for real ECO FASHION. The beautiful unique pieces and yard goods are available in our shop www.seidentraum.biz.

