“DEATH” SYMBOLISM IN TURKISH WEAVINGS

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Abstract

The fact of “death” has been reflected in many weavings such as carpet, kilim, jejim, zili, soumak as both motifs and drawing compositions formed by gathering of motifs, and as possessions such as “weavings made and kept for burial” in Turkey. Carpets and kilims are produced to meet not only the physical needs of people but also their psychological expectations. When the emotions could not have been spoken and were to be expressed in a silent way, motifs were gathered in different colors and techniques and magnificent weavings came into existence. Each one of the motifs of the carpets and kilims has been weaved for thousands of years and has become the art of our ancestors. In this article, we have studied the fact of “death” which is reflected into Turkish weavings under the headlines of “motifs that directly symbolize death”, “motifs related to death” and “weavings made and kept for burial”. The research concluded that the motifs which directly symbolized death were bird, ram, sheep, horse, knife, cypress, chest, poppy, leaf, earring, deer, ewer, centipede, yel egdi (wind curved). In addition, information was gathered about the tradition of a special weaving, “made and kept for burial”, and examples were given for the specifications in regions such as Isparta, Kula, Afyon, and Denizli, where this tradition still continues.

Key Words: symbolism, weaving, carpet, kilim, Turkish art, motif, death
INTRODUCTION

People all around the world have depicted their belief symbols on stone, soil, mine, ceramics and weavings for centuries. By the act of putting these beliefs into visual materials, objects that have been evaluated within the human–culture–civilization–art relation appeared.

Death is the last phase of the transition phases in human life such as birth, growth and marriage and it is a common art theme among many cultures. Turkish culture has a strong background of beliefs, customs, traditions and ethical principles that evolve around the death. This has been reflected to weavings such as carpet, kilim, jejim, zili, soumak as both motifs and design compositions that are formed by the gathering of motifs.

Carpets and kilims have been produced to meet the physical needs of human beings as well as psychological expectations, from the very beginning. Weavings not only showed the talent of the weaver, but also conveyed their messages regarding life, their beloved ones and events. Each motif of the carpets and kilims has been woven for thousands of years and has become the art of our ancestors. When unspoken emotions were to be expressed, motifs were gathered in different colors and techniques, and magnificent weavings came into existence. Even the colors had various symbolic meanings. Red has been the symbol of love while green, blue, black and yellow have symbolized desire, nobility, mourning and soil (thus fertility), respectively. Today, the carpets and kilims that are woven with different methods in different regions keep on being the language of Anatolia with color and motif differentiation from region to region (Gunyol 2001).

MOTIFS THAT SYMBOLIZE DEATH DIRECTLY

In Anatolia, while death is feared and to be protected against, it is also greeted with great maturity and strength. For that reason, in the weavings of our different regions, death has been symbolized by different motifs symbolizing the pain that it gives, readiness to face it or the desire of keeping it away from the beloved ones.

The Motif of Bird

The most attractive motif which symbolizes death in weavings is the motif of “bird” (ERBEK 2002, 190). For example, the motif of “lover bird” which is used for Hakkari kilims and soumaks symbolizes fleetness that is the mortality of human beings. This motif symbolizes also happiness, gaiety and love but also the sprit of somebody died. Bird motif combined with women calls for longing and expectation of some news.
Together with might and power, it also represents death. It is seen in the stylized form in lüleper kilims (*Figure 1a, b-2a,b*) (Anonymous 2004).

*Figure 1a, b. Hakkari soumak with the motif of lover bird (Filiz Olmez -Special Collection)*

According to the Anatolian beliefs, on Turkish carpets and kilims, many different bird species were used to symbolize various meanings. The birds such as owl and black crow mean bad luck while doves, pigeons and nightingales symbolize good luck. In the later case, the figure of bird is the symbol of happiness, power and strength, delight and love.

The bird is the imperial symbol of various settlements in Anatolia. It is known that eagles and other predatory birds are the symbol of rulers and chieftains in Gokturk and Uighur epochs. There are some signs that these birds are their protecting souls or their legal symbols. For example, a white falcon is seen as the essence of chieftain soul. An eagle is also the essence of being a chieftain and the protecting soul in the head sculpture of Kultigin (Kazar 2003).

Birds also refer to divine messengers and a long life. The phoenix fighting against the dragon announces spring (Anonymous 2006a). According to a legend, the phoenix brought
the herb that gave soma, which was the elixir, to Anatolia. This bird which is a legend hero has red and golden plume and talks to the heaven. When nearing the end of its life, it sets its nest made from spring tree branches on fire and burns itself so a new phoenix comes into the world. By this legend, it symbolizes reincarnation and immortality.

In Sufism, the bird symbolizes the soul that is relieved from the body and the material heaviness of the world as it is not seen by eye (Arseven 2002).

In Shamanism, it is believed that when a man dies, his soul gets out of the body in the form of a bird and enters into another body. Likewise, in Buddhism the soul reincarnates in a different body when the original body dies. This is often used in the epics of the Alevi and Bektashi dervishes. For example; when Ahmed Yesevi sent Hadji Bektash to Anatolia, he came “in the pants of a pigeon”. The message given here is that Horasan saints are not warriors, they are pacifist people. They are the ones who address to the heart and soul of the people and so they come in the pants of a pigeon (Ocak 2001).

The bird motifs that reverberate to the weavings from the beliefs, legends and daily life forms are the main part of the design. For example, the main designs of the kilims of Tekirdag-Sarkoy in the Istanbul Vakiflar Carpet and Kilim Museum belonging to 19th century and the kilims of Giresun-Sebinkarahisar in the Ankara Ethnography Museum belonging to 18th century are constituted of various stylized bird motifs (Figure 3a, b). Likewise, the bird figure is one of the indispensable motifs of Konya kilims. “Crane convoy” used in Eber kilims of Isparta region may be given as an example (The Catalog Of Anatolian Kilims 1995, 197).

Marby carpet is one of the oldest carpets on which a bird motif was used (Yetkin 1991, 20) (Figure 3). Istanbul and Konya Museums have many beautiful examples of “Usak
Carpets with Birds” which have been studied within the class of Usak carpets with white background (Aslanapa 2005, 187) (Figure 4a, b).

Figure 4a, b. Usak Carpet with bird (Aslanapa 2005, 187)

The Motifs of Ram, Sheep and Horse

Ram, sheep and horse are the symbols of death, as well as many other things in Turkish art and culture. Ram is also a symbol that offers protection from death. Motifs like sheep and head of ram are the ones that have been passed to carpets from gravestone ornaments (Deniz 2000, 190; Coruhlu 2002).

Sheep and horse motifs exist in Seljuk epoch carpets which were transferred to Istanbul Vakiflar Carpet and Kilim Museum from Divrigi Ulu Mosque. The motifs derived from ram and sheep are the main components of Afyon-Emirdag, Konya, Kars, Malatya, Gaziantep and Balikesir kilims, Hakkari soumaks, Sivas jejims, Elazig, Dosemealti, Kars, Kutahya-Simav carpets.

The Motif of Knife

Knife expresses the ritual of sacrifice, revenge and death. It also expresses cutting and putting an end, as the sword and khanjar (a traditional Ottoman dagger) do. This might mean getting rid of the bad habits that one has or reaching to the preferred ones. For this reason, as it is the symbol of death, it is also the symbol of martyrdom (Coruhlu 2002). The “khanjar leaf” motif used in Classic Ottoman epoch carpets and named after its resemblance to khanjar, the motifs of “bückirli water” (water with saw), “saw jag” and “ax edge” that are used as edge water are examples of this kind (Deniz 2000, 139).
The Motif of Cypress

Another symbol of death is the motif of cypress and is transferred to weavings from gravestones. In addition, it can also symbolize beauty and eternity with its green color that never fades and with its charming smell. It is the stable motif of the life tree as a result of its long life and therefore symbolizes immortality. The cult of tree comes from the oldest epochs of humanity. In Kirsehir, Kula and Gordes carpets, one encounters the motif of cypress tree (Figure 5a, b-6a, b).

Figure 5a, b. Kirsehir carpet with motifs of cypress tree (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1995, 0540)

Figure 6a, b. Kula carpet with motifs of cypress tree (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0194)

The Kula carpets on which the motifs of cypress tree, rose and house are used together are known with the name of “carpet with cemetery” (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0194). Motif of cypress tree also can be seen in Konya-Kecimuhsine jejims (Figure 7a, b) (Hull & Wyhowska 2000, 118).
The Motif of Chest

This motif generally symbolizes the trousseau of a young girl. As the objects in the chest are designated to be used in the house of the husband, the expectations and hopes of a young girl are reflected in the pieces that she weaves, knits, and over which she embroiders. The laceworks, needle laces that she knits, the carpets, kilims that she weaves from the beginning of her childhood to bring to the house of the man (husband) are the symbol of her happy tomorrows. The motif of chest is stylized as rectangle and square on the carpets. However, the motif of chest symbolizes death on the weavings woven at Canakkale, Yuntdagi, Kula, and Toros mountains. It is also widely used on the kilims and carpets of Malatya region (Figure 8a, b) (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1995, 0598).

The Motifs of Poppy and Earring

The motif of poppy symbolizes the magic power and eternal sleep (Anonymous 2006b). It was used in a carpet that was woven in the 18th century which is now in exhibition...
in *Konya Museum* (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0151). The motif of earring, however, symbolizes death in the *Bardız kilims* (Kushan 1986, 20). A *Gaziantep* carpet which belongs to 19th century and has been exhibited in *Elazığ Museum* also has the motif of earring, symbolizing death (*Figure 9a, b*) (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1995, 0530).

*Figure 9a, b.* *Gaziantep carpet with earring motif* (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1995, 0530)

**The Motifs of Leaf**

Leaf is a motif that is related to both life and death. It is believed that a person dies with every falling leaf and a person is born with every new leaf. It also symbolizes the immortality of the spirit (Anonymous 2006b). Two examples are the leaf motifs at the broad borders of the *Konya* carpets belonging to 19th century which have been exhibited in *Antalya Museum* and the ones belonging to 18th century which have been exhibited in the *Museum of Turkish Islamic Arts*. In addition, the wide palm tree leaves at the starry *Usak* carpet’s medallion belonging to 17th century which has been exhibited in the *Newyork Metropolitan Museum* is another example. Finally, the plane leaves used for the *Gaziantep* carpet’s broad borders belonging to 18th century which has been exhibited in *Ankara Ethnography Museum* symbolize garden of heaven (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0199).

**The Motif of Deer**

The anthropologist and archaeologist researcher named *Ester Jacobson* states in his researches about Siberian nations that the deer symbolizes death and life in the *pre-Iskits* epoch (Ocak 2001). The deer motif used at the *Ladik* carpets symbolizes death. On the weavings, the deer motif has the characteristic of a guide.

**The Motifs of Centipede and Yel Egdi**

The centipede motif used at the *jejims* and the *yel egdi* motif used at the kilims woven in *Denizli Uzunpınar* region symbolize death and bad luck.
The Motif of Ewer

The motif of ewer represents the holy water that sanctifies human beings. Besides this, it also represents pregnancy, beginning of life and the basic element of life which is water. Ewer motifs are the ones that are used in Mucur and Gordes carpets (Figure 10a, b).

The ewer motifs that are given symmetry on both sides of the mihrab at the prayer rugs of Mucur belonging to 18th century is the most beautiful examples of this kind (Aslanapa 2005, 273-275). The ewer motif that is used in the carpets of Isparta that are woven and kept for burial and the ewer motifs that are used in Isparta-Kuyucak kilims symbolize death.

MOTIFS RELATED TO DEATH

Main motifs developed in Turkish weavings concerning death are the ones that symbolize the facts of “life after death”, “immortality and eternity”, “reincarnation”, “heaven”, “protection against the malice that may cause to death”.

The Motifs of Charm, Amulet and Burr

The evil eye is assumed as a fatal, devastating psychological power which is believed to exist in the eyes of people who are supernatural, damaging, and destroying. They particularly give harm to children, bring illness, disability or at least make people unhappy, and are therefore the enemy of happiness. It is believed that some men have a power in their glances, and those glances provoke or unlock, injury, malice and even death (Ornek 2000, 132). “Charm” on the other hand is believed to be a talisman that is believed to have a magical and religious power to protect the owner from dangerous external factors. To be protected from evil, different types of charms are used, and are generally carried on the shoulder, neck, inside and outside the house and cradle (Erbek 2002, 190). The motifs of
charms and amulets are seen as an eye, generally on the carpets, by embroidering a white point inside the blue or in the form of a triangle. At the carpets of Turcoman and Yuruks, there is a protecting characteristic made for the desire of protecting the weaver and user against the evil eye. The motifs of charms and amulets are often seen in the kilims of Balıkesir-Yuncu, in the jejims of Kutahya, Mersin, Afyon-Emirdag, and in the carpets of Van and Kars.

Burr is a cotton-like plant that sticks on the clothes of people and on the hairs of animals. The Anatolian people, who believe that the thorns over burr banish the evil eye, used it as a motif of amulet. On the other hand, the idiom of “like Burr”, which also means “full of flowers”, caused it to be used on the flour bags as a symbol of abundance. The motif of burr can be seen frequently in Mersin-Yuruk jejims and zilis, Mugla, Bodrum, Adana, Karatepe kilims and Kutahya, Konya, and Tokat carpets (Erbek 2002, 190).

The Motifs of Hook and Cross

The crosses and various hook types are frequently used in Turkish carpets to protect people. The motif of the hook has been used both to overcome the effect of the evil eye and as a bridge between the concepts of female and male. It symbolizes the actions that gather opposite and different concepts, such as female-male, mountain-valley, sea-wave, and death-life. They are the motifs which are frequently used at Nigde-Bor zilis, Afyon-Alanyurt jejims, Konya, Malatya, Bingol, Kars kilims, Konya-Beysehir, Elazig, Kars, Kirsehir-Mucur carpets and Kars soumaks (Erbek 2002, 191). The motif of cross is constituted by the interception of two lines; one is horizontal, the other one is vertical. Because of the shape of the cross that shows four different ways, it is believed that it divides the evil eye into four pieces and throws them into four different places. This is a commonly used symbol in Anatolia and has been depicted in Milas, Usak, Dosemealti, Kars and Kutahya carpets as well as Sivas, Eskisehir, Konya kilims.

The Motif of Eye

The eye that is the organ of visual perception is used for the symbol of intellectual perception as well. The motifs of eye come out from the belief that the human eye is the best protector against the evil eye. This is the most certain measure against the eye which is the committer of the harmful and fatal glances called as the evil eye and it is symbolized by the point of eye put at the middle of holy blue color. The motif of eye varies according to the region but generally is embroidered in a geometrical way. The eye is indicated by a triangle,
rectangle, square, rhombus or a rhombus that is divided into four by a cross, sometimes by a point that is embroidered below a pointed eyebrow and sometimes inside of a square.

The motif of eye is a motif that is used in Afyon soumak and Konya, Eskişehir, Balıkesir-Yuncu, Cankırı, Aydın kilims, Antalya-Dosemealti carpets.

**The Motifs of Hand, Finger, Comb and the Number of Five**

The number five that expresses the fingers of a hand is a precaution against the evil eye. They are seen in different shapes in the carpets such as five borders, a hand with five fingers or as five points. The motifs of hand, finger and a comb containing five points represent that the fingers protect (the weaver or the user) from the evil eye. The motif of hand gathers fruitfulness and good luck. At the same time, this motif has a holy meaning as it symbolizes the hand of the sister of the Prophet Muhammad. The motif of comb is generally used in relation with marriage and birth. This motif signifies protecting the will of marriage and birth against the evil eye. They are the motifs that are used at plane weavings such as kilims, jejims of many regions and carpets of Kars and Erzincan.

**The Motifs of Water Route, Water of Life and Glass**

*The water route* emphasizes the importance of water in human life. In Anatolia, water is the life itself. Water, what Anatolia woman is to another, has also become a motif in their weavings. The water of life or *ab-i hayat*, which is what it is called in the Anatolia folk tales, is a magical elixir that renders human being immortal, turns the elders to young people and makes them powerful and turns ugly girls into “Miss Worlds”. “Water route” is used is used as borders in carpets which are also called “water”, or at nacres. Water which is assumed to be an indispensable source of life is holy and the motifs of water and glass represent immortality. They are the motifs used at the weavings of kilims, jejims and zilis in many regions of Anatolia and carpets of Kars, Gaziantep and Yagıbedir.

**The Motif of Scorpion**

Scorpion is an animal that can be met almost at any region that is mountainous, dry or humid and against which Anatolian people need to protect themselves. The motif of scorpion represents the soul of devil symbolically. According to a fable, the scorpion says: “*I am neither a natural soul, nor devil. I am a creature that brings death to anyone who touches me. I have two corns and a tail that I toss about to right and left. The names of my corns are cruelty and hatred and my tail is a hook. I give birth only once. Fecundity, which is the symbol of fruitfulness, is the sign of death for me.***
The scorpion waits with its tail which is always apparent and one end with a marsupium full of poison that is ready to inject death to the one who touches it. Therefore, it is the symbol of bad intentions and causeless fight.

South Eastern Anatolia can have a very hot and dry climate and scorpions and similar animals exist there abundantly. Thus, deaths occur frequently because of being poisoned. Anatolian people have been using the motif of scorpion on their weavings as a way to be protected against the scorpion that can give harm to them. These motifs are frequently used at the background or as outer border ornaments. Additionally, kilim has a surface that scorpion can hardly walk over because of its knotty texture. This way the weaving is believed to offer double protection as it prevents the scorpion to reach the owner (Erbek 2002, 191).

An Avshar woman whose five children died consecutively expresses her pain by putting five mihrab motifs with the head of scorpion at the mihrab parts of the prayer kilims (Durul 1983, 75-79). The motif of scorpion is the characteristic motif of Dosemealtı carpets as well.

**The Motif of Life Tree**

The motif of life tree symbolizes continuous development and change in the large meaning of life in shamanism (OCAK 2001). It gathers the three elements of the universe, underground via its roots that go under the soil, earth via its lower branches and body, heaven via its upper branches that rise up to the sky. It provides the communication between earth and heaven. Life tree is also characterized as “tree of soul” at Anatolian motifs. It is widely used on the gravestones in Anatolia. In the 17th century examples of Ladik carpets, mihrab was decorated with the motifs of life tree (*Figure 11a, b*) (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1995, 0563).

*Figure 11a, b. Ladik carpet decorated with the motifs of life tree (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1995, 0563)*
This motif is the sign of searching immortality and the hope of the existence of life after death. The birds that are seen in the weavings of many regions are the life birds that are going to fly when their time comes. Soul is synonymous with spirit. It is also the symbol of immortality in the carpets of Hakkari (Anonymous 2004). When the motifs of bird, dragon and life tree are used together in the carpets of some regions like Gaziantep, they express the continuity of soul and immortality.

**The Motifs of Wolf Trace and Wolf Mouth**

They are the motifs that are woven by nomads by the aim of protection from the predators they meet in the nature. People use this motif to be protected from wolfs and wild animals. During the prehistoric times, people believed that making figures of wild animals or imitating them was necessary to be protected against them. This motif which exists in the weavings of many regions is more often used in the carpets of Mersin-Mut region.

**The Motif of Ram Horn**

The motif of ram horn is the symbol of power, strength, health and happiness, sustenance and protection of male fertility. The weavings that are decorated only by ram horns are symbolizing the world of men rather then women. The spiral view of ram horn from profile symbolizes the route that soul draws while going to eternity. Moreover, as this motif also symbolizes the sacrificial animals, by weaving them in the carpets it is hoped that the merit will be ever lasting (Erbek 2002, 191).

**The Motifs of Stars and Lotus (Stars with 5, 6, 8, 12 Corners)**

The six cornered star which expresses the secrets concerning human also symbolizes the secrets concerning universe. The twelve cornered star has symbolized Venus on the ornaments and even on the coins of Seljuks-Ottomans. Venus is the symbol of goodness and renewed life. The eight cornered star on the other hand symbolizes the life line that goes from birth till death. “The flower of lotus” is a symbol life and death, one within the other (Coruhlu 1989:157-168). The motif of eight cornered star gave its name to “Usak carpets with stars” (Yetkin 1991, 93).

**The Motif of Fortune’s Wheel**

Different meanings have been given to some very old motifs in different times. The motif of fortune’s wheel is one of these motifs and its origin goes to the centuries B.C. As it symbolized four gods of wind at one time, it has symbolized eternity, rotating world, revolving fate, the wheels of destiny and recently love as well. They are used in kilims of
different regions and in the carpets of Bergama (Figure 12a, b) (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0118).

![Figure 12a, b. 18th century Bergama carpet with motif of fortune’s wheel (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0118)](image)

**The Motifs of Flint and Arrow**

The motif of flint is a motif that is woven to protect the house, family and the beloved ones against the malices like death and separation that prevents happiness (Anonymous 2006b) The “motif of flint” has been used as a symbol of protection in the carpets of Konya-Karapınar belonging to 18th century and carpets of Konya belonging to 19th century (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0145). The motif of arrow is the symbol of bravery and fearlessness, challenging dangers and death. The women who weave this design to their carpets try to express that their husbands are powerful. The motif of arrow is the characteristic symbol of Yuntdagi weavings.

**The Motif of Serpent**

According to the myths, the serpent who is the symbol of reincarnation, immortality and eternity as it molts every year is also an animal that taught human beings many useful herbs and plants but at the same time prevented human beings from finding and eating the herb of immortality. The serpent that is the symbol of health is also the indispensable incumbent caretaker of the life tree. It indicates reincarnation and eternity. The motif of the serpent is the characteristic motif of Taskale carpets. Additionally, it was put at one corner of the large border of Milas carpets belonging to 19th century that depicts the theme of heaven (The Catalog Of Turkish Carpets 1998, 0132). The motif of serpent was used at the borders of Konya kilims belonging to 19th century and in the kilims of Hatay-Reyhanli and Icel-Mut (The Catalog Of Anatolian Kilims 1995, 170).
The Motifs of Mosque and Turbeh

These motifs are the ones that are seen at the borders of Yahyali carpets and that symbolize the weavers’ love of God, and her wish of goodness and health from God and her wish of heaven at her eternal voyage that is after death (Figure 13a, b, c, d). Turbeh motifs are also seen in Gordes carpets as basic motif with several tree motifs (Figure 14a, b).

Figure 13a, b, c, d. Turbeh motifs seen in Yahyali carpets (Olmez 1999)

Figure 14a, b. Turbeh motifs seen in Gordes carpets (Stone 2004, 66)

The Motif of Turtle

Turtle was used at the lower parts of the columns on the Tonyukuk monuments, and it is a motif that comes from Shaman traditions and used against the evil eye in our ethnography (Diyarbekirli 1972, 55). The turtle indicates long life and death (Coruhlu 1993, 15).

The motif of turtle which is also known as “tortoise” is presented in a geometrical form which looks like the motif of elibelinde. The motif of turtle is used in the kilims of Kula, Manisa-Selendi, and Kutahya region kilims and Karakecili kilims (Onuk&Akpinarli 1995, 20; Deniz 2000, 196).
The Motifs of Dragon (Grifon)

The practice of using the dragon motif in the Anatolian weavings comes from ancient times. The motif of dragon has been used as the symbol of immortality, watchman, protection and cure in the culture of Eastern Turkistan, Central Asia, Sumer, Hittite, Frig, Urartu, Helen, Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Islam, Seljuks and Ottoman. The dragon (grifon) that is believed to be present anywhere, can survive in any climate and region. It is the holy and the imaginary animal of the sea, sky, mountain and the forest. It is also a symbol of power, strength and might as a result of its supernatural appearance and its ability of scattering flames from its mouth (multiheaded, multilegged, multitalled). The dragon is a mythological animal that has legs resembling the lion’s, a tail resembling the serpent’s, and powerful wings. The dragon is the master of air and water. It is believed that the fly of dragon and phoenix brings fruitful spring rains. The dragon that is believed to be a huge serpent is the protector of magical objects such as treasures and life tree. The dragon is a popular animal in Turkish culture and civilizations. It was first mentioned in the Gilgames Epic which is one of the Sumerian legends after its eating the herb of immortality. Asklepios was also appeared as the double-headed serpent and it distributed cure. It appeared at caravanserais and fountains, it is the symbol of eternal life, eternity and happiness. The stick of Prophet Moses took the shape of dragon and showed the miracle of God to people and people are demanded to learn from their mistakes. The serpent who ate the herb of life took place at the myths and symbols because of its eternal life poison and as a cure against chronic diseases, as a result of being exaggerated by the imagination of people (Bayram 1996).

The most important ones of the carpets with the motif of dragon are the numerous Seljukian epoch carpets that are sent to Istanbul Vakıflar Carpet and Kilim Museum. The Usak carpets with Dragon appeared in the XVII. century (Yetkin 1991, 21).

The inside part of the “chest” part, which is called as such, of the carpets of Kirşehir carpets are decorated by the motifs of “double-headed dragon” that lies down as a “lying S”. Moreover; the motifs of dragon are seen at the kilims of Kayseri, Erzurum, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Sivas, Balıkesir, Manisa (Figures 15a, b).
CONCLUSION

The symbolical meanings and contents of the motifs that are used in Anatolian weavings support and complement each other. There is perfect coherence and integrity between them. The symbolical narration of motifs has reached our time over many centuries without losing the deep meanings in their content. As this type of humane concepts and symbols gain importance, the weavings of carpet and kilims preserve their traditional continuity.

The fact of death has also taken its place symbolically within the motifs used in the weavings. The motifs of bird, ram, sheep, horse, knife, cypress, chest, poppy, leaf, earring, deer, ewer, centipede, yel egdî that have different symbolical meanings are put in the weavings of some regions especially to symbolize death. These motifs come together in carpets, kilims, jejims, zilis and soumaks with other different motifs and show themselves in the design compositions which have various tales.

Additionally, there are motifs symbolizing the concepts related to death such as “life after death”, “immortality”, “reincarnation”, “heaven”, and “protection from the malicious actions that might end with death”. Some of these motifs are the motifs of charm and amulet, burr, hook and the cross, dragon, eagle, eye, hand, finger, comb, bandeau, water route, scorpion, tree of life, trace of wolf, horn of a ram, mosque, turbeh, flint, arrow, fortune’s wheel. They also have a deep-seated past as they nestle different meanings and symbols together and are the motifs which decorate most of the Turkish weavings. For example, the composition of bird, dragon, star and the tree of life motifs stands for continuity of the soul and immortality in West Anatolia carpets. Birds on the tree of life symbolize life and soul.
Dragon is the animal guarding the tree of life. The star is used to indicate the eternity of the tree of life.

The irrevocable fact of nature, that death, attracts attention by rebounding as a starting, not as an end, to the weavings. The motifs and designs that symbolize death will last as long as the Anatolian and Turkish people exist.
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