

# Anatolian motifs





# ANATOLIAN MOTIFS

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(14.11.09., 21:34h)



## MOTIFS RELATED TO BIRTH AND REPRODUCTION

- Hands on Hips - Elibelinde
- Ram's Horn - Kocboynuzu
- Fertility - Bereket
- Hair Band - Sacbagi
- Earrings - Kupe
- Fetter - Bukagi
- Chest - Sandikli
- Love and Unison, Ying-Yang - Ask ve Birleşim
- Star - Yildiz



## MOTIFS SYMBOLIZING LIFE

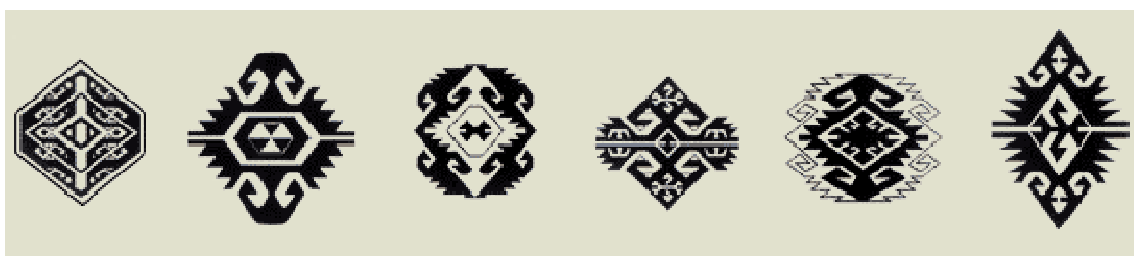
- Essentials of life
  - Running Water - Su Yolu
- Protection of life, land and possessions
  - Burdock - Pitrak
  - Hand, Finger, Comb - El, Parmak, Tarak
  - Amulet, Evil Eye - Muska, Nazarlik
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  - **Dragon - Ejder**
  - **Scorpion - Akrep**
  - **Wolf's Mouth, Wolf's Track, Monster's Feet - Kurt Agzi, Kurt Izi, Canavar Ayagi**
- Motifs related to immortality and Family
  - **Tree of Life - Hayat Agaci**
  - **Family Signs - Im**

#### **MOTIFS RELATED TO DEATH**

- **Bird - Kus**

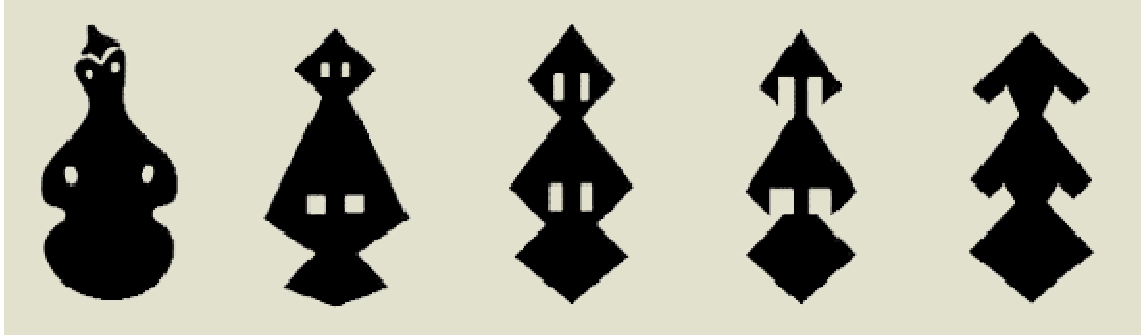
## **MOTIFS RELATED TO BIRTH AND REPRODUCTION**



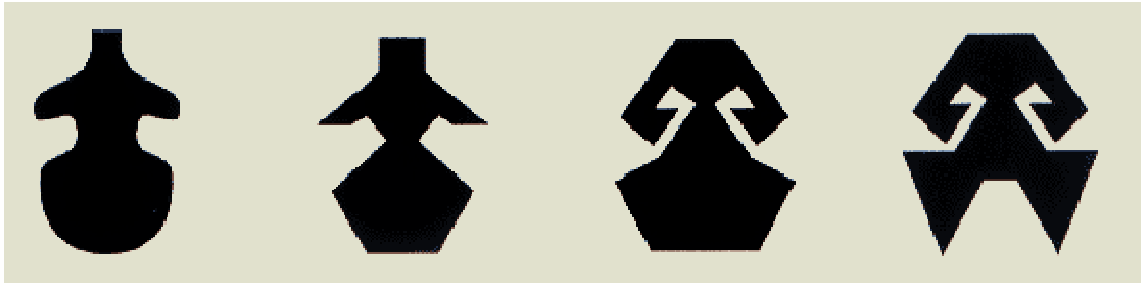
## Hands on Hips - Elibelinde

Although the basic design is a stylized female, this pattern is known by various names in Anatolia. Some of which are *gelin kiz*, *cocuklu kiz*, *aman kiz*, *karadoseme*, *seleser*, *kahkullu kiz*, *cengel*, *sarmal*, *cakmakli*, *eger kasi*, *turna katari*. It is the symbol of motherhood and fertility.

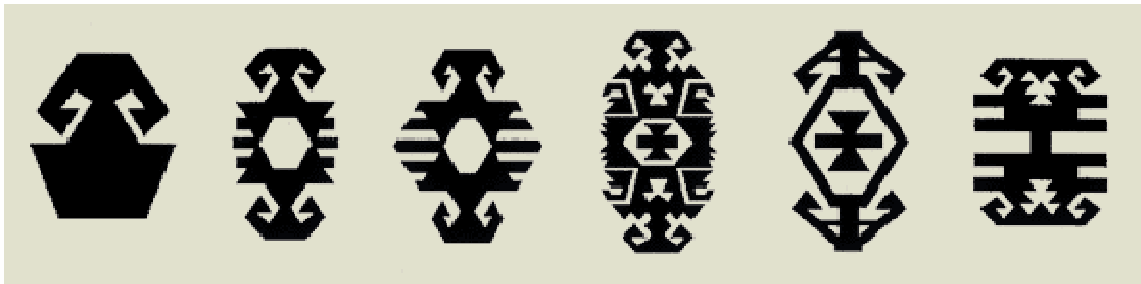
To observe the evolution of the motif we start with a mother goddess statuette of 3000 B.C. found in Ahlatlibel near Ankara. Here are different variations of this form applied on weaving yields.

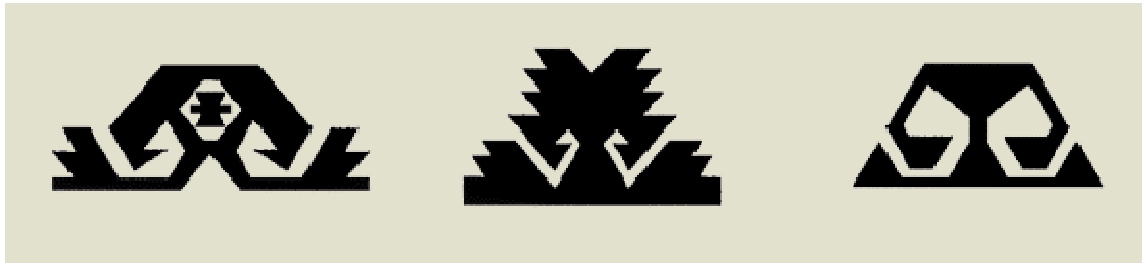


When the same process applied to another mother goddess statue also found in Ahlatlibel, it is observed that the original form has gone through several changes yielding the motifs illustrated below:

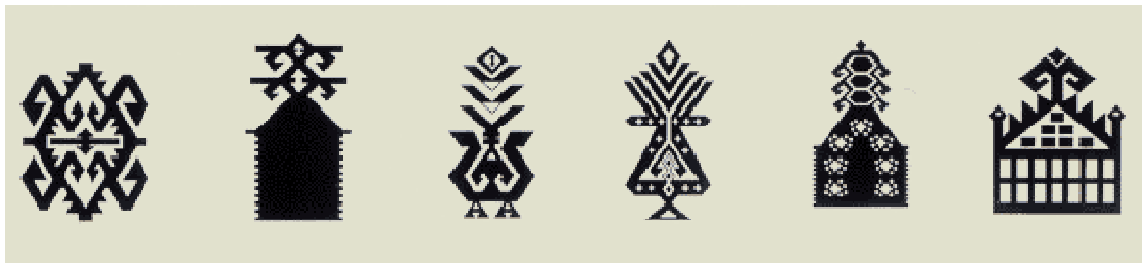
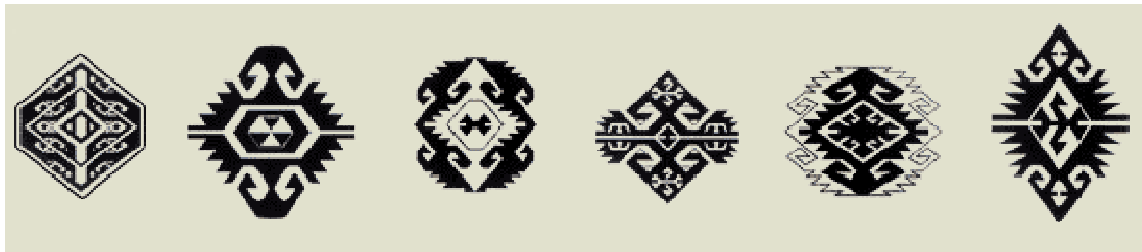


The final form of the motif represented below, can be traced on kilims from Cankiri, Adana, Kayseri, Antalya and Nigde.





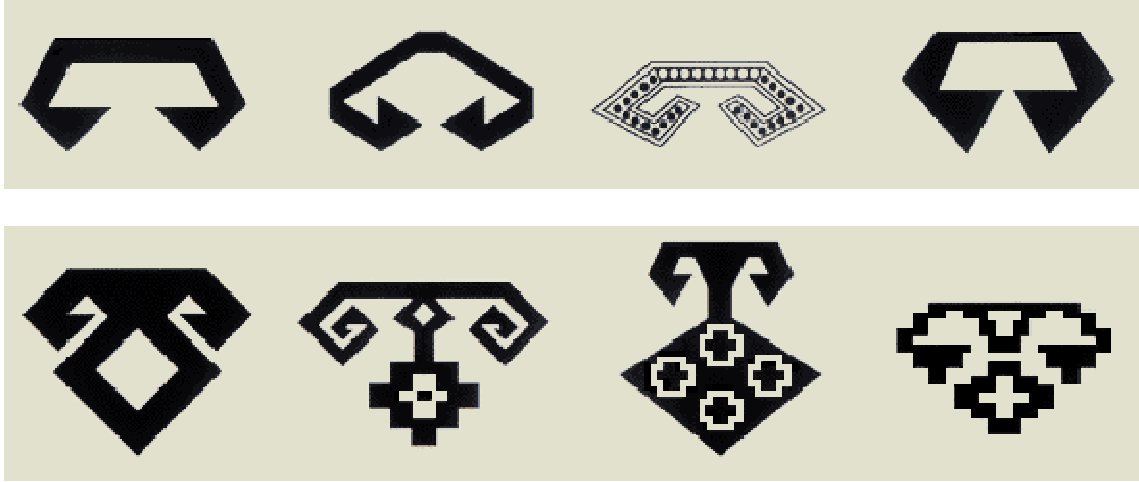
Here are illustrations of various *elibelinde* motifs found on Anatolia weaves:



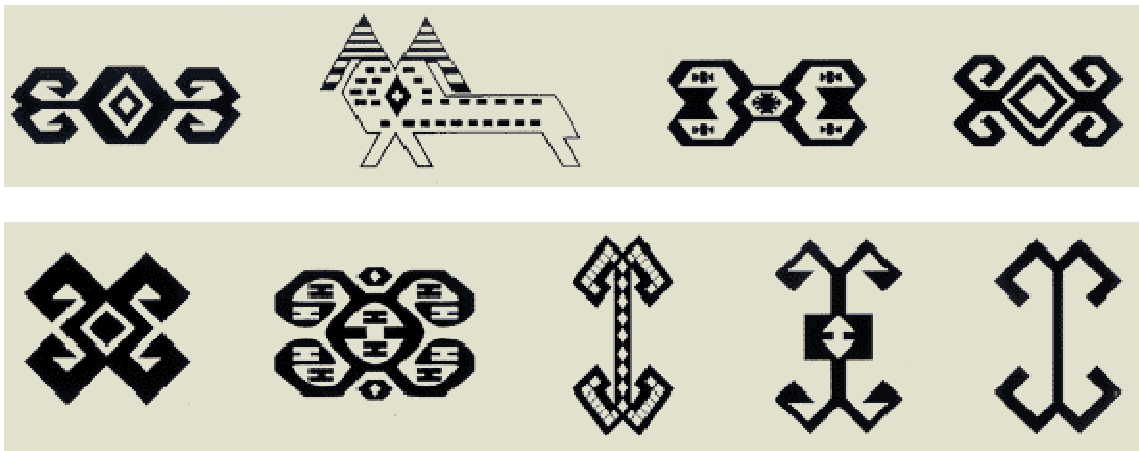
## Ram's Horn - Kocboynuzu

This motif is used as a symbol of fertility, heroism, power and masculinity. It is also called *boynuzlu yanis*, *boynuzlu*, *koclu yanis*, *gozlu koc basi*.

Some examples are motifs taken from a kilim (Afyon), a kilim (Ardahan-Kars), a jijim heybe (Adiyaman), a kilim (Orta-Cankiri), a kilim (Elazig), a rug (Milas-Mugla), a kilim (Konya) and a kilim (Kahramanmaras) as illustrated below:

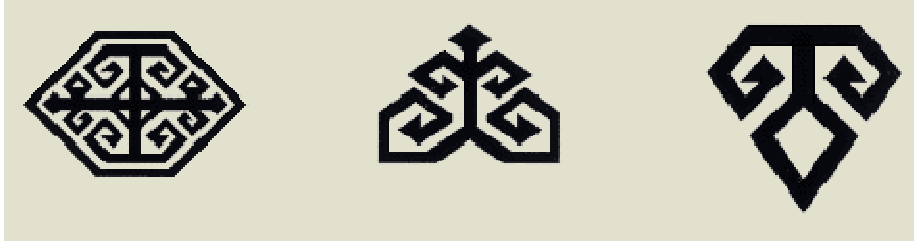


Here are the illustrations of various ram's horn motifs in Anatolian weaves:

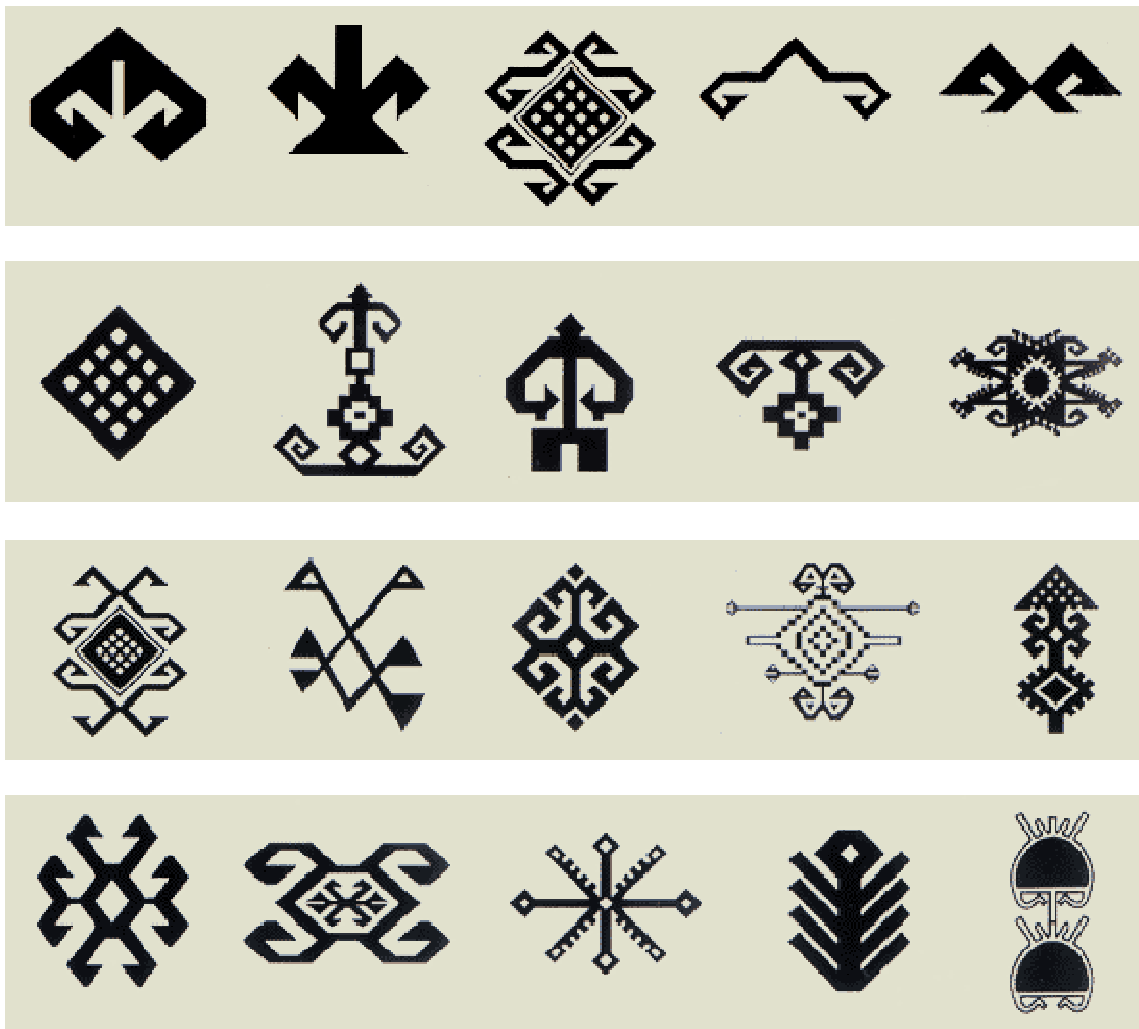


## Fertility - Bereket

Hands on hips and ram's horn motifs used together denote a man and a woman. The fertility pattern is composed of two 'elibelinde' motifs indicating the female and two 'kocboynuzu' motifs indicating the male. The eye motif in the middle of composition is used to protect the family against evil eye.



Variations of fertility motifs of Anatolian origins are presented below:





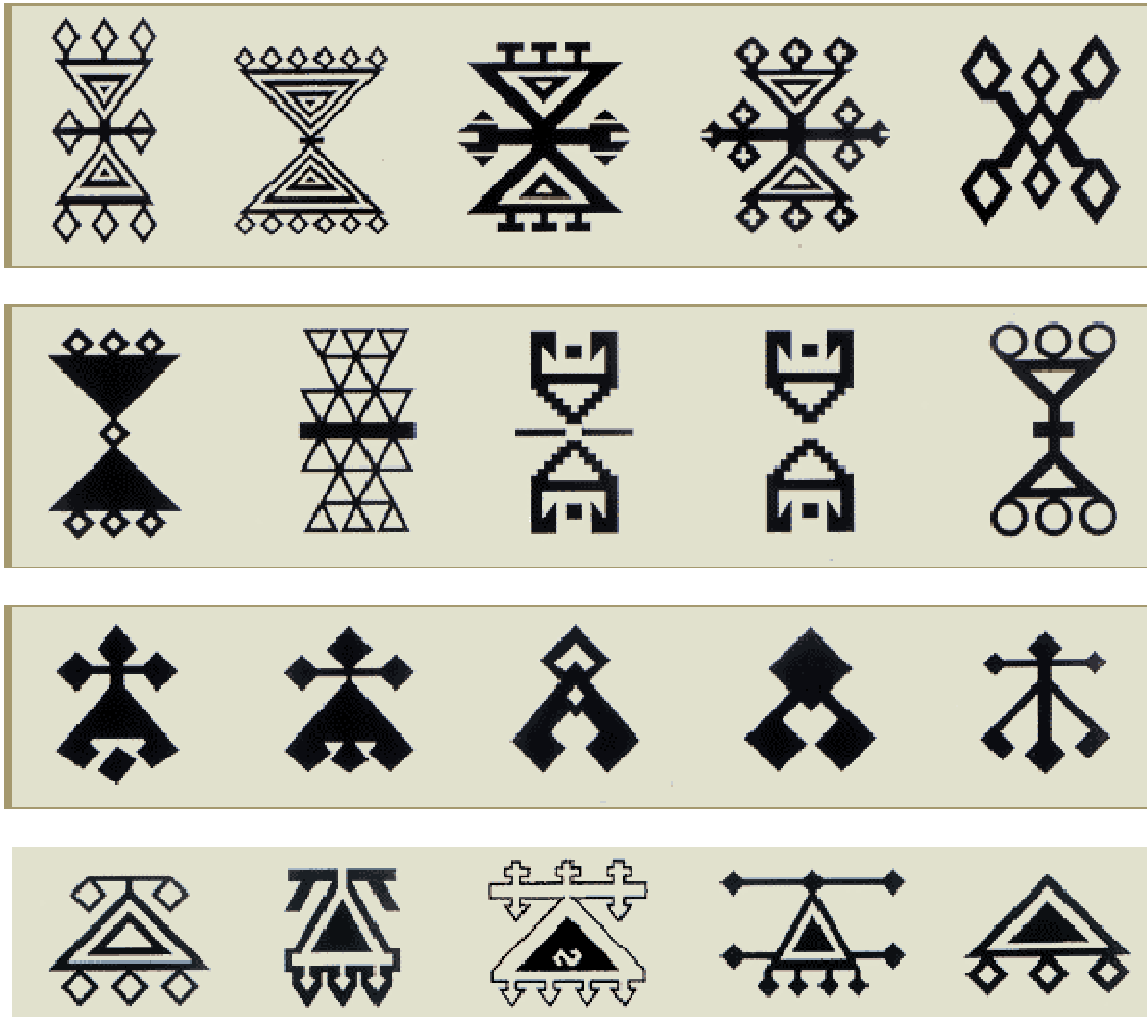
## Hair Band - Sacbagi

Anatolian women express many of their feelings by their hair style. The newly married young women plait their hair and tie threads of different colors at the end of each plait called 'belik'.

Hair band motif indicates the desire to get married. If the woman uses some of her hair in weaving, she is trying to express her desire for immortality.

Hair band, in general, is an ornament used by the bride in the wedding ceremony. Hair bands are made of black cord, wool, doubly twisted silk thread, horse tail as well as beads, sea shells, golden thread and corals.

The type and form of the hair band and the motifs used to represent it changes according to region expressing the weaver's mood as illustrated below:

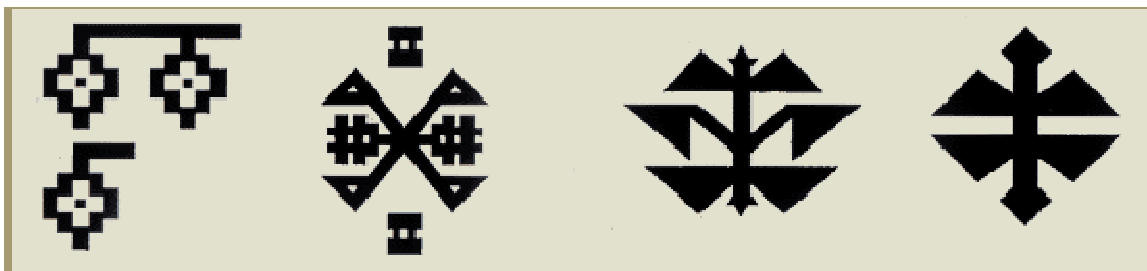
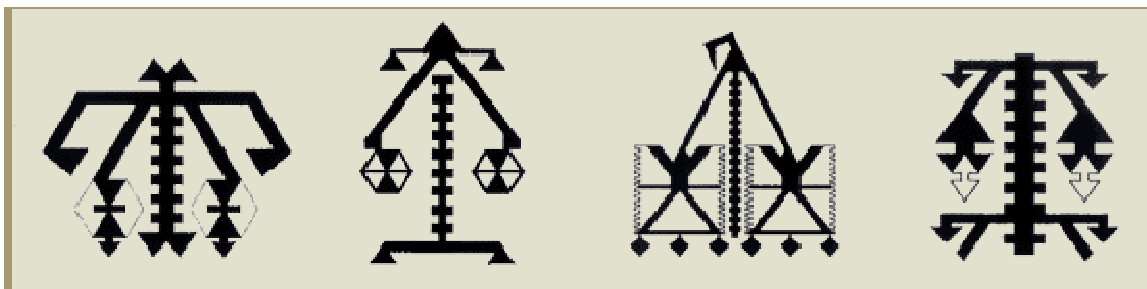
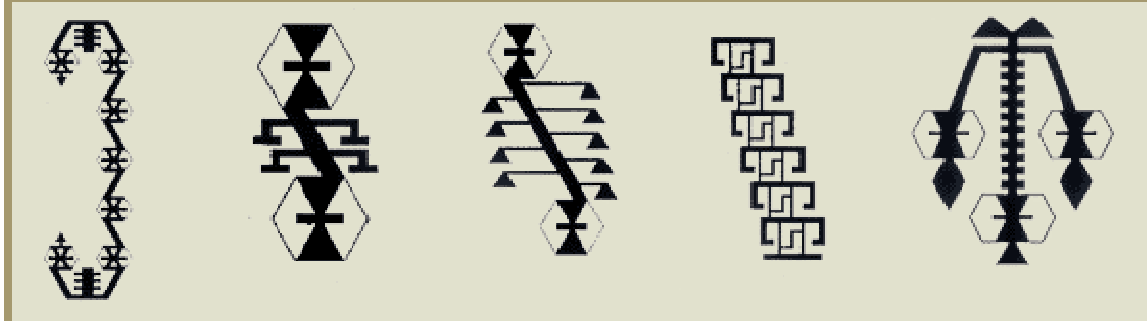


## Earrings - Kupe

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Earrings are indispensable as a wedding present in Anatolia. A girl using this motif is trying to inform her family that she wants to get married.

Earring motifs used in various parts of Anatolia are illustrated below:



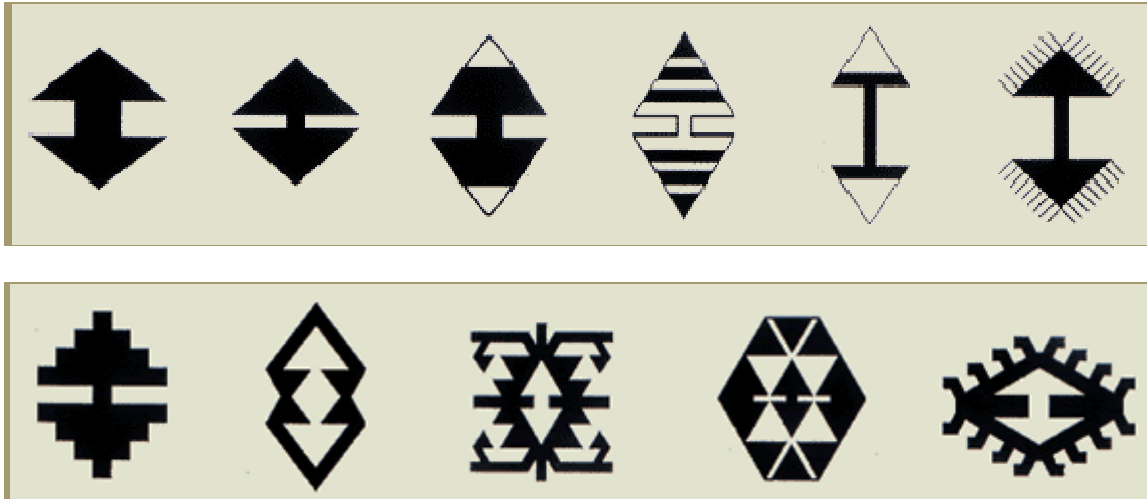
## Fetter - Bukagi

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Fetter is a sort of cuff placed on the front legs of horses to keep them from running away. The cuffs are connected to each other by a chain of 60 centimeters. It is also called 'kostek'.

As used on Anatolian weaves, it symbolizes the continuity of the family union, the devotion of the lovers and the hope that they should always stay together.

Various fetter motifs used in different regions of Anatolia are illustrated below.



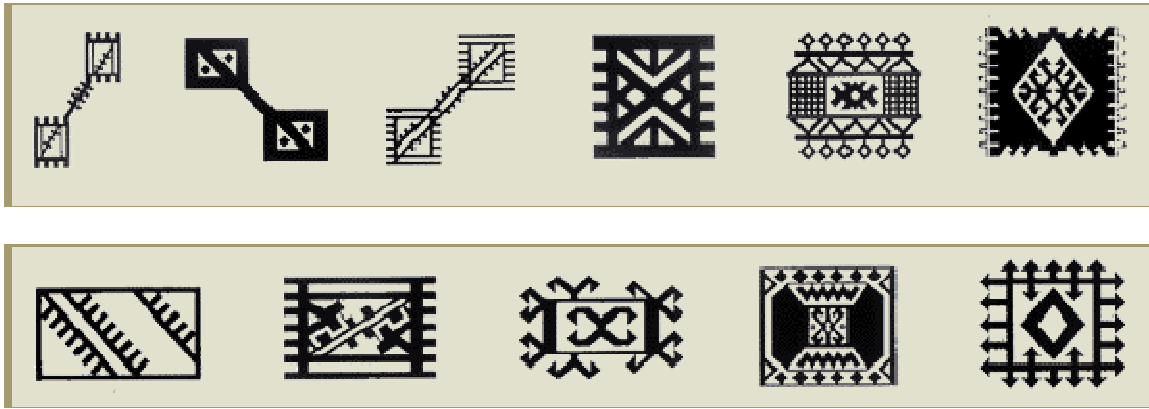
## Chest - Sandikli

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This motif in general, symbolizes the trousseau chest of a young girl. Since the material in this chest is to be used in the husband's house, the expectations and hopes of the young girl are reflected in the pieces she has woven, knitted and embroidered.

Regarding the fact that the motifs carved on the wooden cradles are similar to the ones on the trousseau chests and that jijims having chest motifs are generally used as cradle covers, it can be stated that the motif stands of the desire to getting married and having a child.

*Sandikli* motif is realized by numerous techniques in Anatolia as figured below:





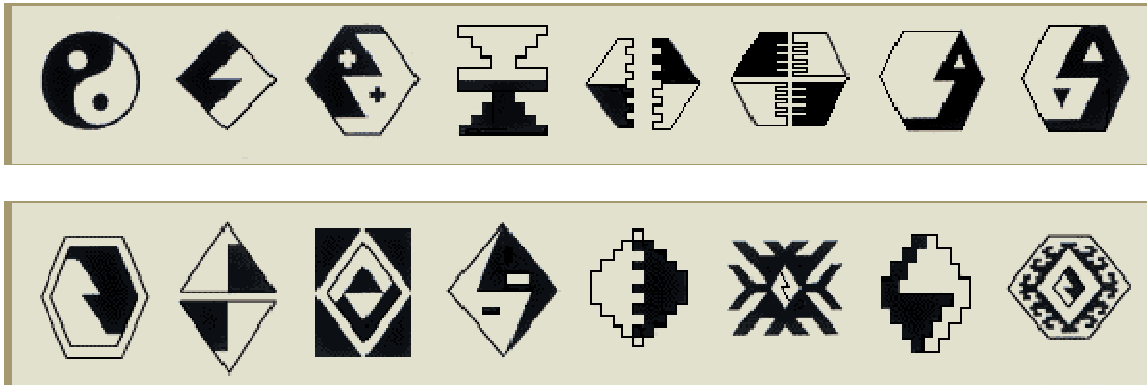
## Love and Unison, Ying-Yang - Ask ve Birlesim

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This is a symbol of dualism, inherited from the Far-East and imported to Anatolia where it suggests the harmony between a man and a woman.

The motif is composed of two opposing colors each having a dot in the color of the other indicating that in nature nothing is pure or free of error. In fact, even numbers, especially two, implies reproduction and fertility according to the Anatolian cultures.

Various examples of the 'Ying-Yang' motif as used on Anatolian weaves are illustrated below:

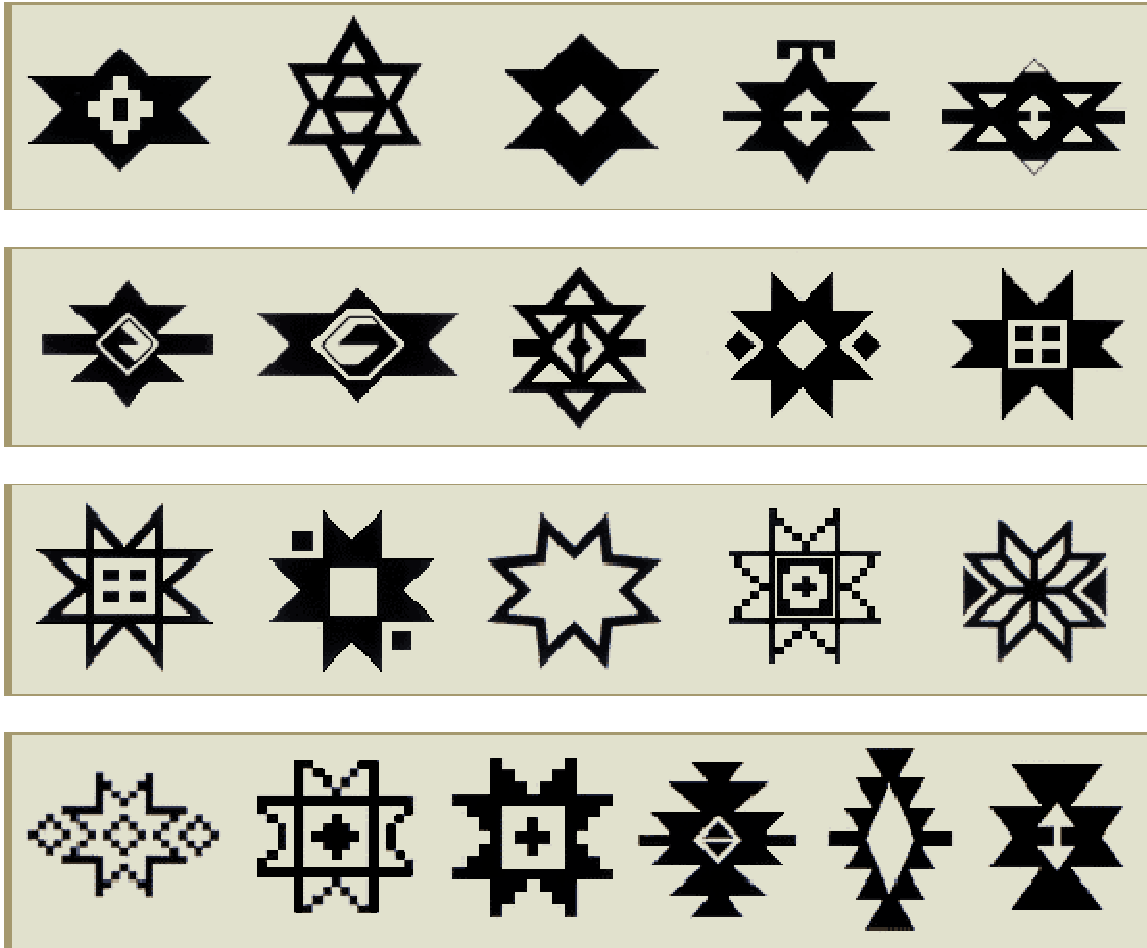


## Star - Yildiz

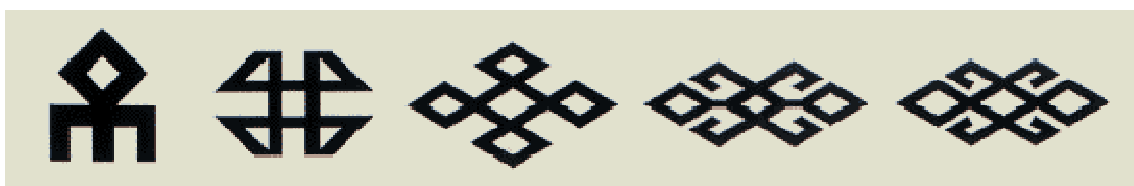
The star motif on an Anatolian weaving generally means happiness and does not imply heaven for which a cloud, a dragon or a phoenix is used in many works including miniatures and other textiles.

The six pointed star generally known as the Solomon's Seal is being used in Anatolia since the time of the Phrygians who lived long before the time of Solomon. Therefore it wouldn't be wrong to deduce that it carries a meaning other than what is implied by 'Solomon's Seal'. Taking into consideration the mother goddess statues where the star symbolizes the womb, it could be said that the motif is related to fertility.

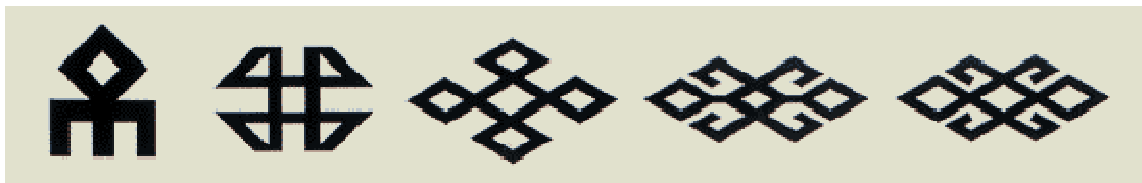
Due to technical difficulties, star motifs having five points are used only on rugs. Usually star motifs have eight or more points as illustrated below:



## MOTIFS SYMBOLIZING LIFE



## ESSENTIALS OF LIFE





## Running Water - Su Yolu

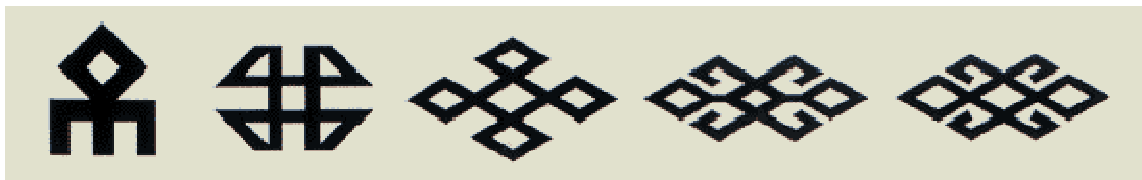
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Since it has a great importance for mankind, the theme of running water is widely used on works of art.

The pattern varies according to the material on which it is applied. When carved on stone, it assumes an angular shape, while it is curvilinear or triangular on weaves as illustrated below:



## **PROTECTION OF LIFE, LAND AND POSSESSIONS**



## Burdock - Pitrak

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Burdock being a plant with burrs which stick to the clothing of people and the hair of animals. It is believed to be capable of warding off the evil eye. On the other hand, the fact that the term "like a burdock" means full of flowers, accounts for the use of this motif on flour bags as a symbol of abundance.

The illustrations below are taken from various burdock motifs used in Anatolia.



## Hand, Finger, Comb - El, Parmak, Tarak

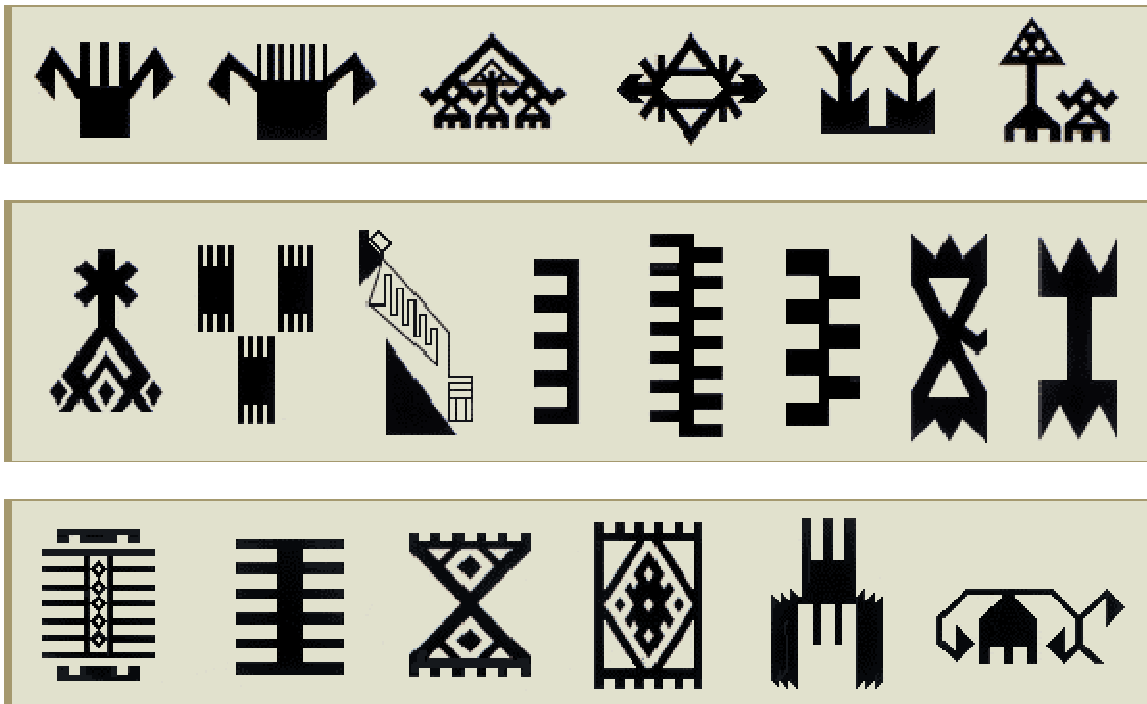
The number of fingers on the hand, which is five, is used as a protection against evil eye.

In Anatolia the concepts of fertility and motherhood which implies birth are closely related. This relation can be traced back to Kybele and Virgin Mary. During the Islamic period it was symbolized by the name of "Mother Fatma" or "Mother Fadime". The motif called "Hand of Mother Fadime" is widely used in Anatolian weaves.

Hand motif is used against spell and evil eye. Similar motifs used on the wall of the altar at Catalhoyuk, and on the bowl found in Hacilar indicate that the use of this theme dates back to very early times.

Comb motif is largely related with marriage and birth. It is used to express the desire for getting married and to protect birth and marriage against evil eye.

Anatolian variations of this group of motifs are illustrated below:





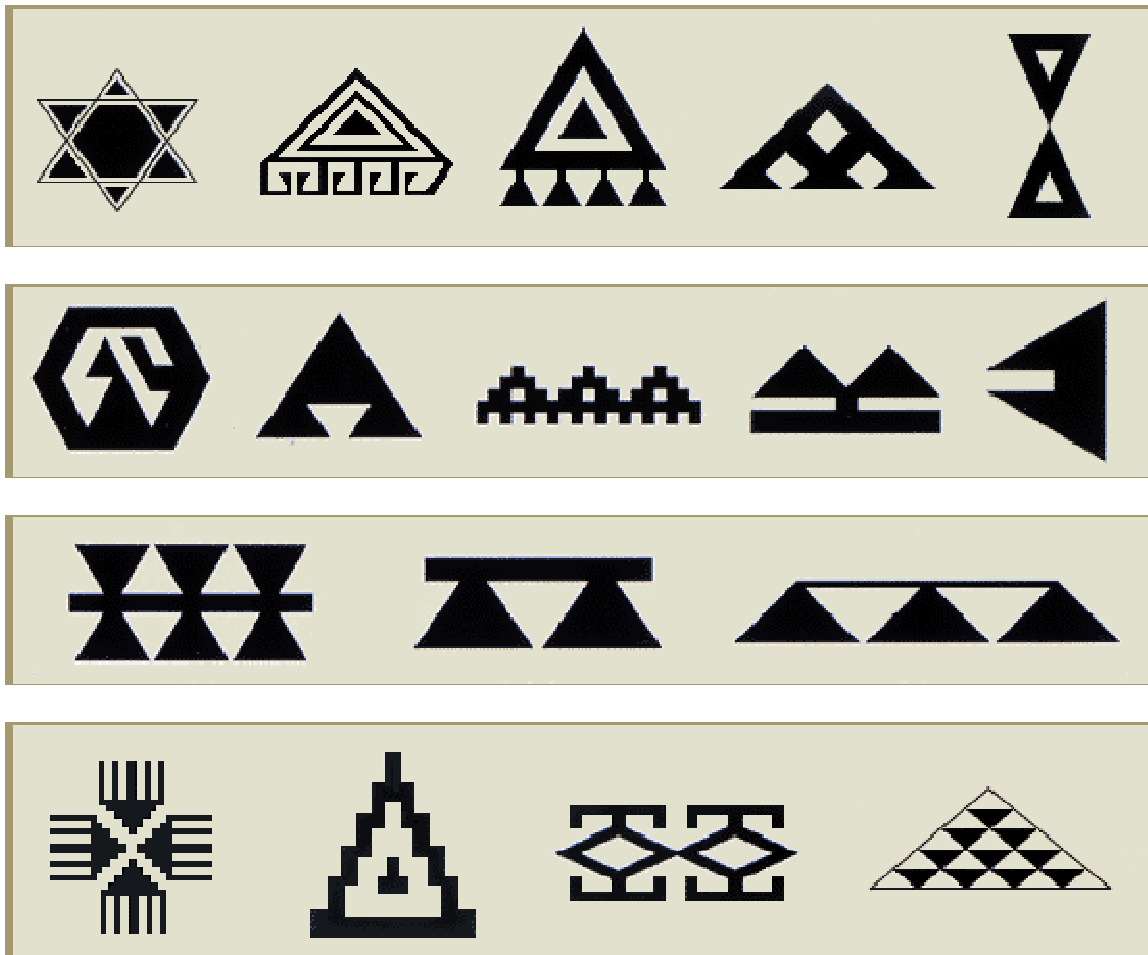
## Amulet, Evil Eye - Muska, Nazarlik

It is believed that some people possess a power in their glance which causes harm, injury, misfortune and even death.

Evil eyes are various objects that reduce the effect of evil glance, thus protecting the ones who carry them. Blue beads, wild mustard, garlic, sea shells, old coins, lead, mercury, the shell of a small turtle, silver and gold '*Masallah*' motifs (inscription of the word meaning 'God save him' on gold or silver) are used with this purpose.

'*Muska*' is a written charm which is believed to have a magical and religious power to protect the possessor from dangerous external factors. It is generally carried in triangular cases.

Various form of amulet and evil eye motifs including the Solomon's Seal which is called a star amulet in Anatolia are illustrated below:



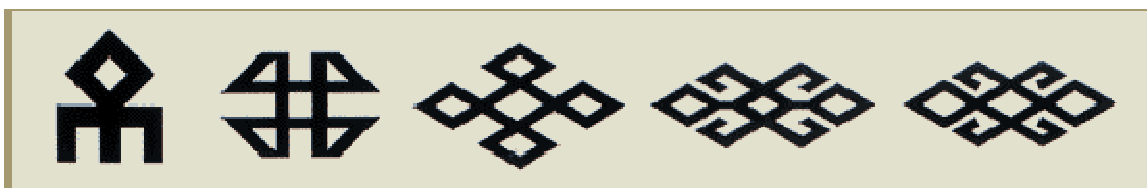
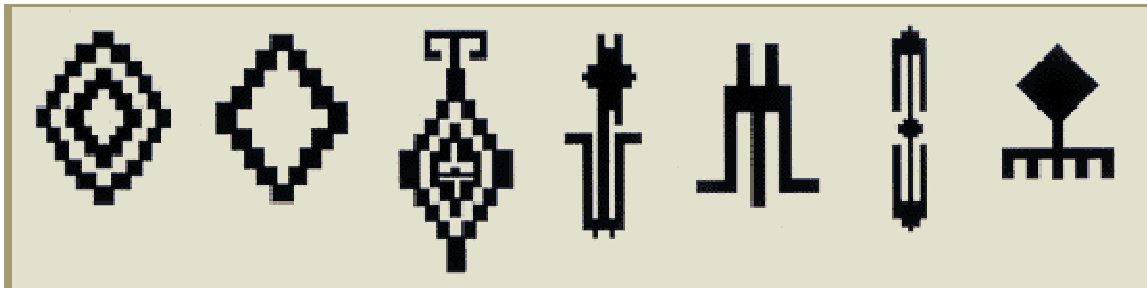
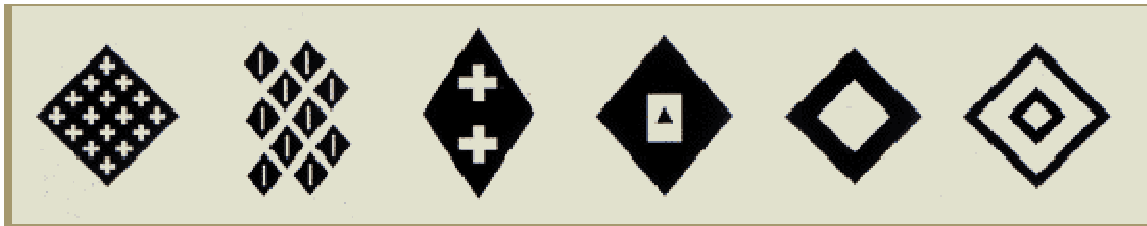
## Eye - Goz

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The source of an evil glance is the human eye. It is believed that the harms it may cause can best be prevented again by a human eye.

A diamond divided into four is quite a common representation of the eye as used on weaves. A triangle is a stylized form of the eye. Some eye motifs are formed of squares and rectangles.

The eye motif used on weaves differ from one region to another. Here are various forms of 'eye' motif:



## Cross - Hac

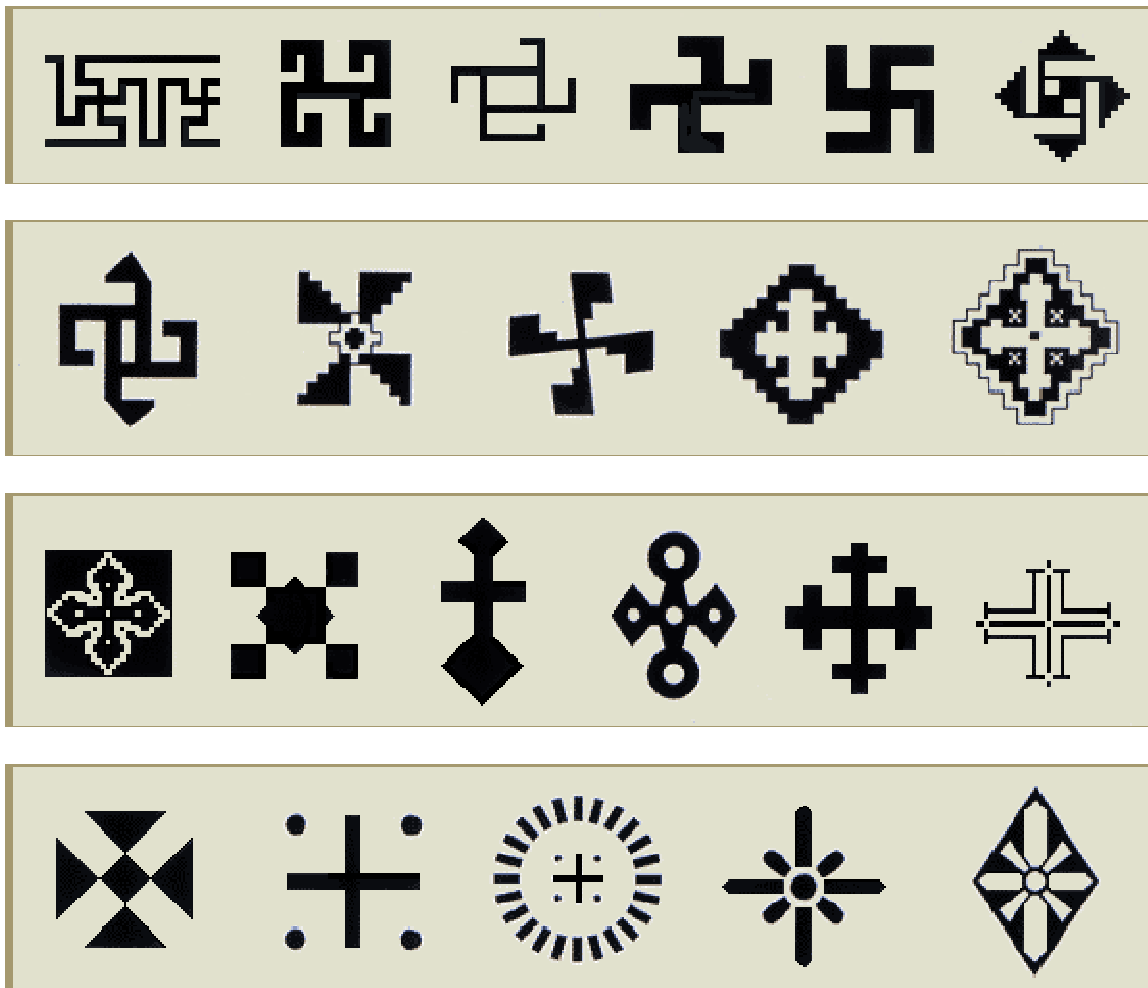
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Another motif used against evil eye is the cross formed of a vertical and horizontal line. According to the Anatolian belief the cross reduces the power of the evil glance by dividing it into four pieces.

The motif dates back far before Christianity. There are crosses in the wall painting of Çatalhoyuk. A variation of the cross, known as swastika is also being used since very early times.

Examples of this motif can be observed in various artifacts produced in Anatolia.

Here are several variations of the cross motif:

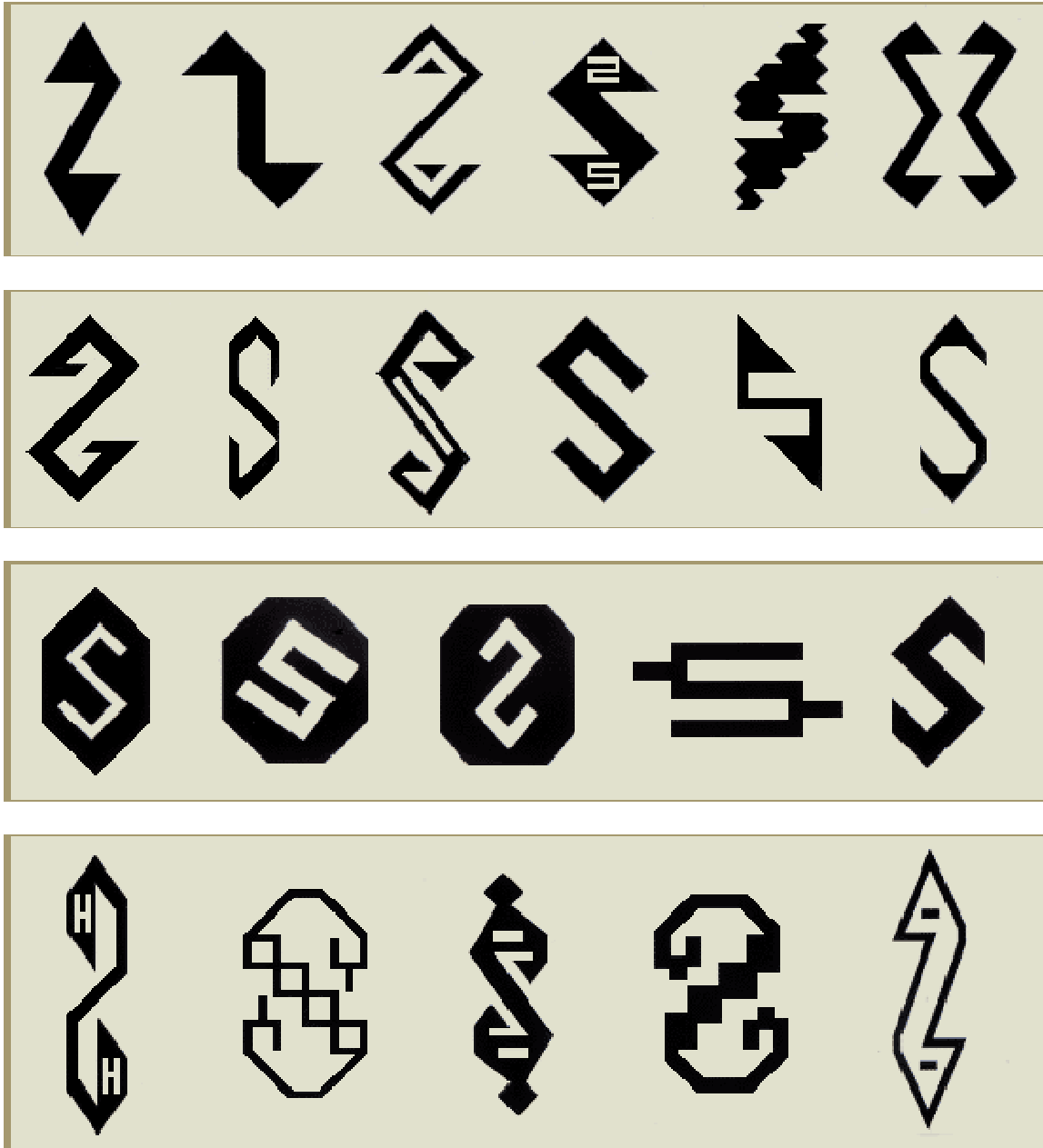


## Hook - Cengel

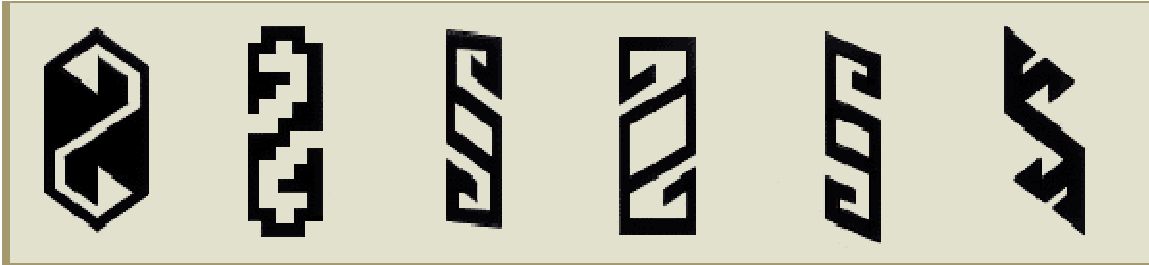
Another Anatolian motif used against evil eye is the hook. It is also called "*cakmak*", "*egri ala*", "*balik*" and "*kucuk kara balik*".

The variation called "*gonul cengeli*" is mostly used on stockings and implies marriage.

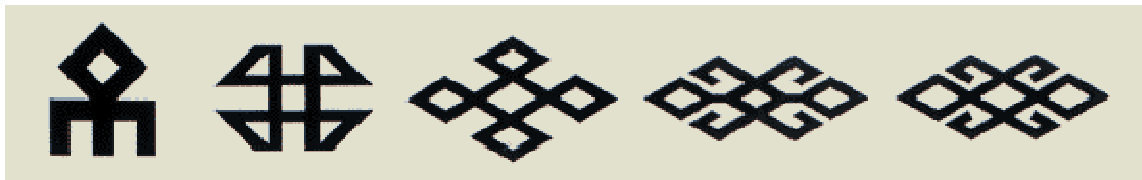
Various applications of this motif are presented in the illustrations below:







## **PROTECTION OF LIFE, LAND AND POSSESSIONS**

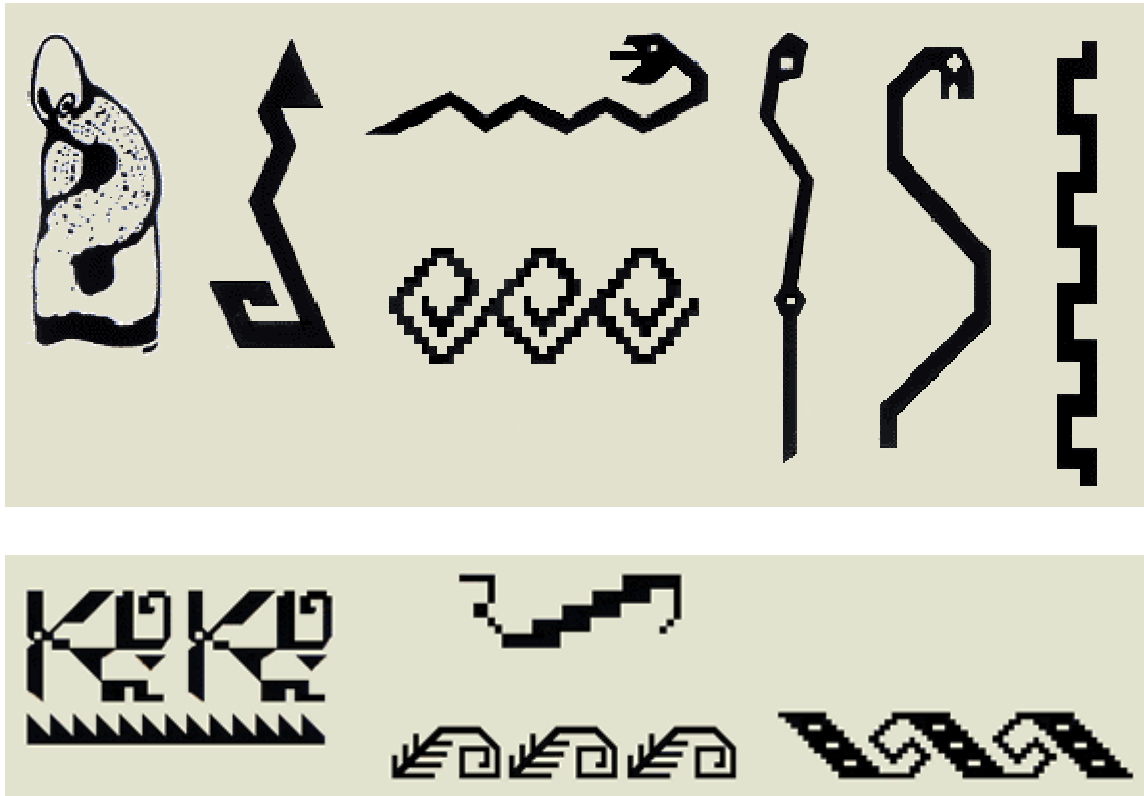


## Snake - Yılan

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The history of mankind is closely related with snakes. All the stories of existence include the theme of a serpent offering Eve the forbidden fruit. Black snake is the symbol of happiness and fertility.

Here are various snake motifs used in Anatolian weaves:



## Dragon - Ejder

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Dragon is a mythological creature whose feet are like the lion's, whose tail is like a snake and who has wings. The Turks of Central Asia stylized the dragon with a beak, wings and a lion's feet. The dragon is the master of air and water. The fight of the dragon and the Phoenix is believed to bring fertile rains of spring.

Therefore, the dragon is stylized as a cloud in many works of art including various weaves, textiles and miniatures.

Dragon, believed to be a great serpent, is the guard of treasures and secret objects as well as the tree of life. For many years people believed that the cause of lunar eclipse was dragon.

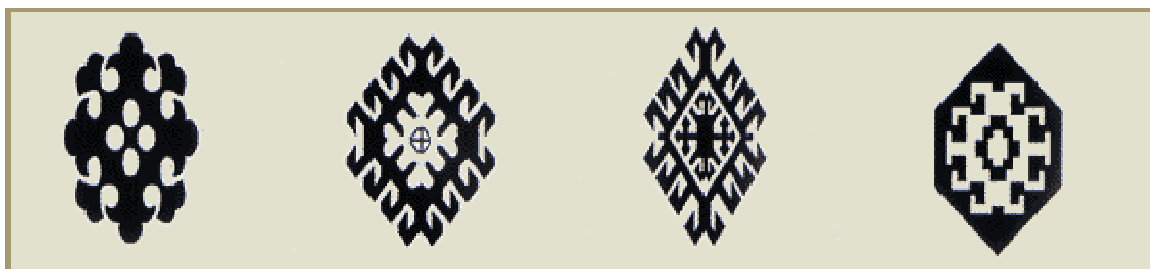
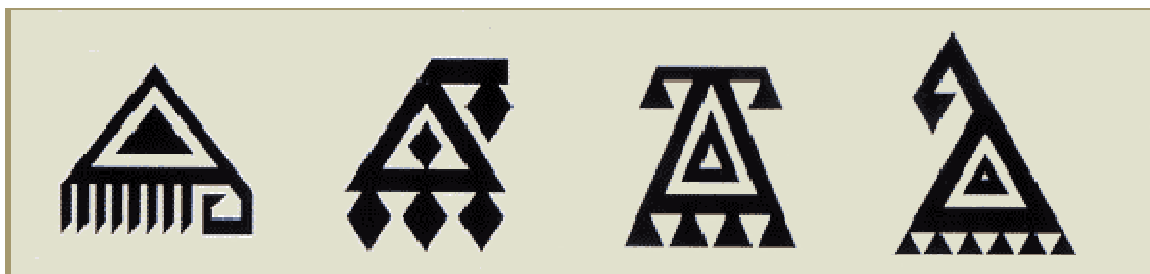
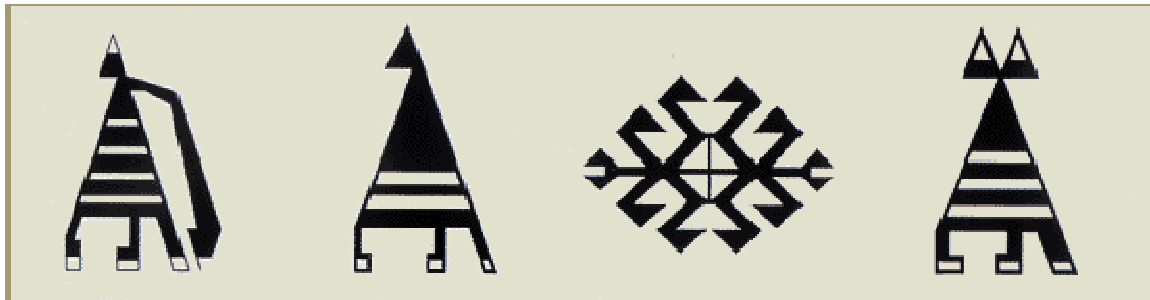
Variations of the motif are presented in the illustrations below:



## Scorpion - Akrep

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Due to their fear of its venom, people used to carry jewelry in the form of a scorpion or decorated with the tail of a scorpion in order to protect themselves against this animal. The scorpion motif used on weaves, illustrated below, seek the same purpose.



## **Wolf's Mouth, Wolf's Track, Monster's Feet - Kurt Agzi, Kurt Izi, Canavar Ayagi**

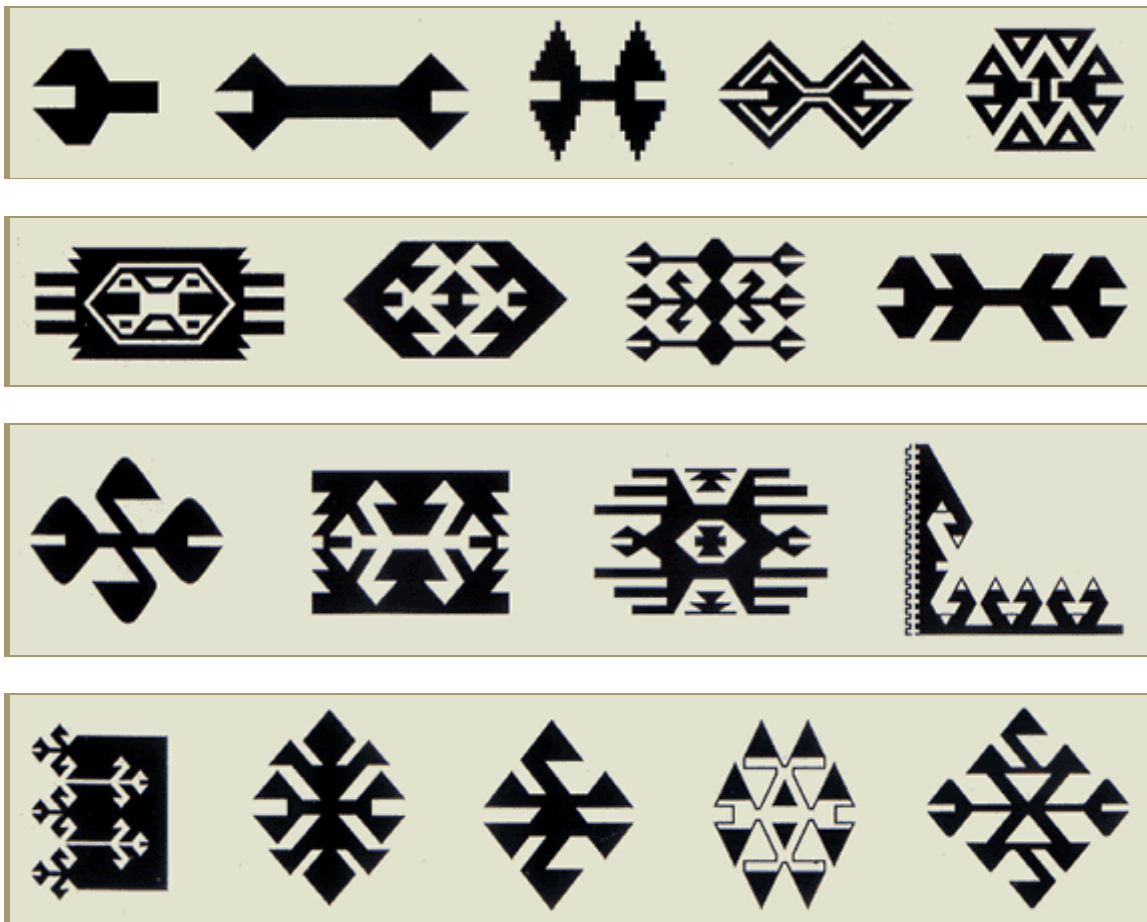
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*Kurt agzi*, also known as dove tail, is a term used in joinery to indicate the triangular fittings connecting the corners of various woodwork. In this context, the motif expresses, like in the fetter motif, the wish for solidarity. But its use on weaves serves a different purpose.

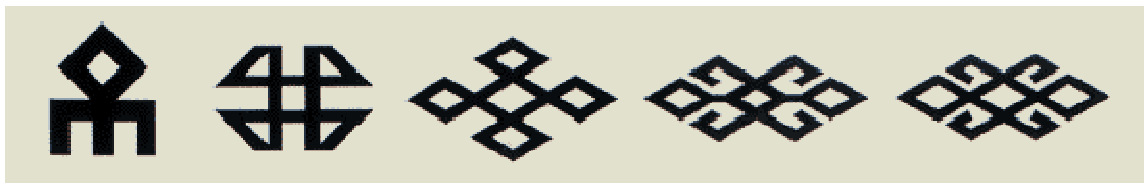
In Anatolia all press comb weaves except rugs are produced by nomad or seminomad tribes whose basic economic activity is cattle breeding, and the primary threat is the attack of wolves. People use those motifs as a means of protection against the wolves. In fact, a kind of sea shell called *calkak* which is used as a protection against evil eye, is called *kurt agzi* in some regions.

In Anatolia, a monster is a legendary creature believed to be a wild, rapacious animal. The word implies a wolf or a snake rather than a dragon or a giant. However, the motif known as the monster's feet obviously symbolizes a dragon.

Variations of the wolf's track motif as used in different artifacts are shown in illustrations below:



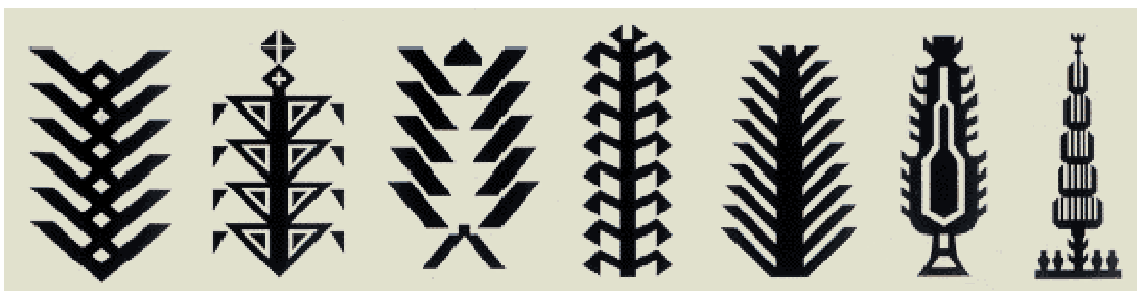
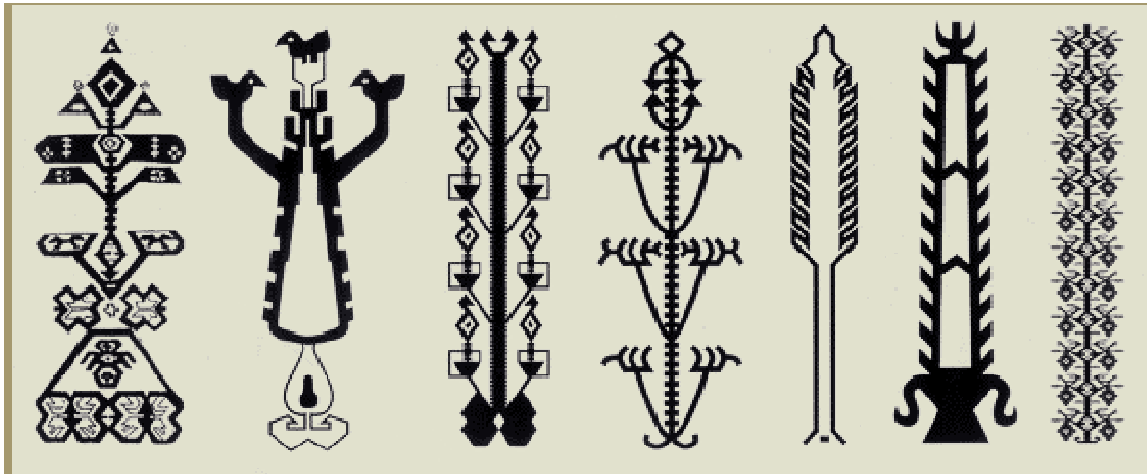
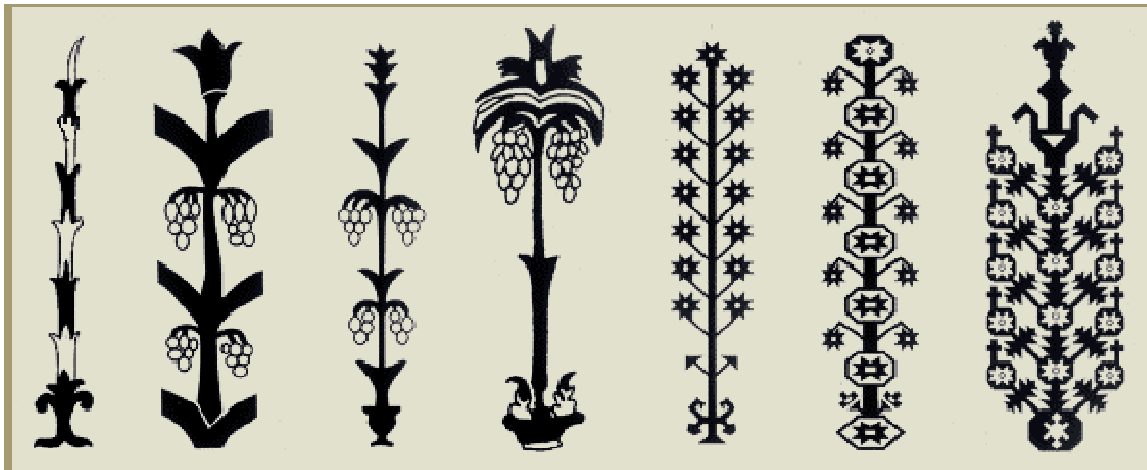
## MOTIFS RELATED TO IMMORTALITY AND FAMILY



## Tree of Life - Hayat Agaci

The tree is the common theme for all religions believing in a single god. Its fruit which is believed to bring immortality, is forbidden to all mortals when the serpent waiting the tree had convinced Eve to eat it. Mankind, unable to eat the fruit of immortality, put all their hopes on the life after death symbolized by a tree of life.

Different cultures have used different plants such as cypress, date, palm, pomegranate, fig, olive, wine, beech and oak to symbolize the tree of life. In Anatolia the prominent figure is a cypress tree. The birds on the tree of life is a widely used theme. They are the birds of life which will fly when the time comes. This theme is also used on the gravestones. Illustrations below display various tree of life motifs in Anatolia:



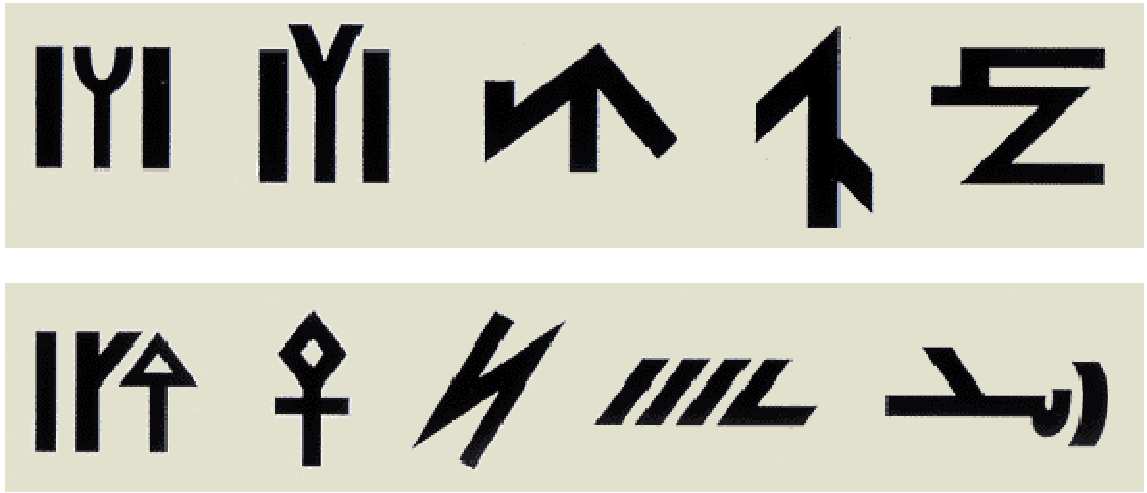


## Family Signs - Im

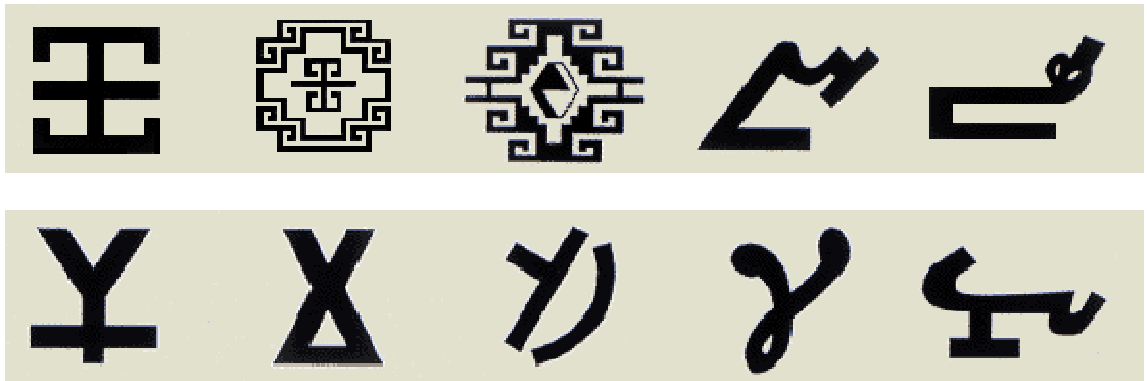
Throughout the history, Turks have used specific figures as a family sign. They have used their mark on their weaves as well as their grave stones.

Mogul historian Residuttin, in his book *Cami-ut Tevarih* and Kasgarli Mahmut in his dictionary *Divanu Lugat-it-Turk* state that each Oguz tribe had a different sign. Those tribes should have continued to use their sign even after migrating to Anatolia, because many of the weaves bear motifs similar to those signs.

Signs of Oguz tribes listed in *Divanu Lugat-it Turk* are illustrated below stand for Tribes Kayi, Salur, Bagduz, Bayat, Avsar, Yazir, Igdir, Eymir, Alayunlu, Becene, Cavuldar and Cepni.



Signs of Oguz tribes as mentioned in *Cami\_ut Tevarih* and illustrated below stand for the Tribes Kayi, Salur, Avsar, Bagduz, Bayat, Yazir, Eymir, Igdir, Alayundlu, Becene, Cavuldar, Cepni, Dudurga, Bayindir, Beydili and Yuva.



## MOTIFS RELATED TO DEATH



## Bird - Kus

In Anatolia there is no other motif carrying so many different meanings than the bird motif. While birds like owls and ravens imply bad luck. Doves, pigeons and nightingales are used to symbolize good luck. Bird is the symbol of happiness, joy and love. It is the soul of dead. It is longing, and expectation of news. It stands for power and strength. It is the imperial symbol of various states founded in Anatolia.

In Çatalhöyük birds resembling eagles and vultures are described as animals attacking human beings. The eagle called Horos in the language of Hittites later assumed a legendary meaning. There is a relief of an eagle with two heads on the sphinxes standing at the two sides of the entrance door of Alacahoyuk. The theme of a double headed eagle holding a couple of hares in its claws was later used on the sign of the Seljukian State.

In his lines "We took off, became birds and flew, Thank God!" mystic poet Yunus Emre is expressing the feeling of getting near to God. He describes death by the words "The bird of life has flown off". Minstrel Karacaoglan states that the bird flying away from off". Minstrel Karacaoglan states that the bird flying away from its cage is death by saying "Life is a bird in its cage".

Various bird motifs used on Anatolian weaves are illustrated below:

