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# EYE AND AMULET MOTIFS IN ANATOLIAN WEAVINGS: THE TRANSFER OF PROTECTIVE SYMBOLISM INTO CONTEMPORARY GARMENT DESIGN

<sup>1</sup>Emine Erdoğan, Kafkas University, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Fine Arts, Kars, Türkiye.

<sup>2</sup>Medine Gazel, Kafkas University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Traditional Turkish Arts Student, Kars, Türkiye.

**Abstract:** *Anatolian weavings constitute significant carriers of cultural memory through their rich pattern diversity and sophisticated symbolic language. Among these, eye and amulet motifs are prominently associated with belief-based meanings such as protection against the evil eye, warding off negative forces, and invoking abundance, while simultaneously functioning as key design elements that establish compositional order, rhythm, and visual balance. This study investigates eye and amulet motifs in Anatolian weavings within the framework of protective symbolism, aiming to examine their formal and conceptual implications in art and design. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study is based on a literature review of carpet, kilim, and flat-woven textile examples, focusing on motif structure, surface organization, color usage, and technical applications. Based on the findings, original surface compositions inspired by these motifs were developed and integrated into contemporary garment design through digital design tools. The results demonstrate that eye and amulet motifs hold considerable potential for sustaining cultural continuity and articulating local identity within contemporary design practices.*

**Keywords:** *Anatolian textiles, eye motif, amulet motif, protective symbolism, contemporary design.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, artistic practices have exhibited considerable diversity across different societies; among these practices, the art of weaving has emerged as a significant reflection of cultural identity through its region-specific technical, motif-based, and compositional characteristics. Anatolia has stood out as one of the principal centers of weaving and textile production throughout history, forming a rich and distinctive cultural heritage through local weaving traditions developed across its diverse geographical regions. These woven textiles embody the lifestyles, aesthetic perceptions, and cultural identities of the regions in which they were produced.

Weaving is regarded as one of the oldest traditional art forms in human history. Archaeological research and excavations have revealed woven artifacts demonstrating that this art was practiced by many societies from early periods and that weaving constitutes one of the earliest artistic fields in historical terms [1]. Turkish weavings, with their deep-rooted history, have been transmitted from generation to generation over centuries and represent important elements of cultural heritage that have survived to the present day. Throughout history, these weavings were produced not only to meet functional needs but also to express aesthetic concerns [2].

Anatolia has historically been an important center of weaving, making substantial contributions to the development of weaving culture at both national and international levels. From past to present, people have produced various types of goods to meet basic needs, among which yarn-based woven products have occupied a central place. However, the sensitivity of woven textiles to environmental factors such as moisture and humidity has prevented many of these artifacts from surviving to the present day. This situation makes it difficult to determine precisely the time and geographical origins of weaving [3].

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author

<sup>2</sup> Second Author

The patterns found on traditional woven surfaces have been examined not only in terms of their physical and formal characteristics but also according to their symbolic and cultural meanings, and have therefore been classified into various groups. Through this approach, patterns have transcended their role as mere decorative elements and have been regarded as powerful means of communication reflecting beliefs, emotions, and social values. In particular, the belief in the evil eye has persisted across many societies throughout history, and symbols developed within this belief system have created a meaning-laden visual language in traditional woven textiles.

The belief in the evil eye, encountered in many cultures worldwide, is considered to have deep roots extending back to early periods of human history. “Bird-shaped beads carved from stone and ivory dating to the Neolithic Age have been found in Egypt, Malta, and Iberia, while axe-shaped amulets dated to the Bronze Age have been discovered in Crete, Lower Egypt, Malta, Northern France, and Britain” [4]. These findings indicate that beliefs concerning the harmful effects of the evil eye and magic date back to early periods and spread across a wide geographical area from West to East. Within this context, symbols formed around the belief in the evil eye have created a meaningful visual expression field in traditional woven products. Eye and evil eye motifs stand out not only for their protective functions but also as important design elements that support rhythm, emphasis, and balance on woven surfaces. “While the eye motif functions as a universal symbol carrying similar protective meanings across different cultures, in Anatolian weavings it has predominantly been stylized into geometric forms, becoming an integral part of the composition. The amulet motif, as a concrete manifestation of belief-based protection, has been represented on woven surfaces through triangular or rectangular forms” [5].

Art and design have varied throughout history depending on different eras and societies, continuously expanding in scope and content alongside social, cultural, and intellectual transformations [6]. In this regard, art and design have played a crucial role in every period of human history as aesthetic means of expressing emotions and thoughts, serving as fundamental tools that make visible and transmit the values, belief systems, and everyday life practices shaping the cultural memory of societies across generations [7].

The eye and amulet motifs, which constitute the main theme of this study, are among the symbols representing life in traditional weavings and are particularly used for protective purposes. Throughout history, the desire to protect oneself—consciously or unconsciously—from negative influences has become a fundamental element of belief systems in many societies; within this framework, the concept of the evil eye and the symbolic expressions developed against it have gained significant importance. Eye and evil eye motifs, as prominent reflections of these beliefs, have been widely used not only in daily life but also in traditional woven artifacts. As emphasized by Koyuncu Okça [8], evil eye beliefs and related motifs employed for protection across nearly all societies throughout history have created a powerful symbolic expression field on traditional woven surfaces, endowing these surfaces with both functional and cultural layers of meaning. In this context, the present study aims to analyze the eye and amulet motifs frequently found in Anatolian weavings from an art and design perspective, focusing on their protective meanings and formal characteristics. These motifs, which hold an important place within Anatolia’s deep-rooted textile tradition, are regarded not merely as decorative elements but as symbolic communication tools reflecting belief systems, cultural values, and collective memory.

Within the scope of the research, a literature review method was employed, examining carpet, kilim, and various flat-woven textile examples to analyze the placement of eye and amulet motifs within compositions, color preferences, and application techniques. In addition, the historical origins, formal characteristics, and regional variations of these motifs—associated with meanings such as protection from the evil eye, avoidance of harm, and wishes for abundance—were analyzed.

Based on the data obtained, the motifs were redrawn and utilized in contemporary garment designs. This design process enabled the reinterpretation of traditional weaving motifs through modern design practices. The findings reveal that eye and amulet motifs in Anatolian weavings function not only as symbolic elements but also as significant design components that create rhythmic order, balance, and visual emphasis.

The research findings demonstrate that protective symbols found in traditional weavings constitute a powerful source capable of offering new perspectives to contemporary art and design fields. Transferring these motifs into modern designs is of great importance in terms of preserving cultural continuity and making local identity visible. In conclusion, the study emphasizes that the protective symbolism inherent in traditional weavings is open to reinterpretation within contemporary art and design contexts and highlights the necessity of integrating this heritage into current design practices.

## **2. THE MEANING, FUNCTION, AND FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EYE AND AMULET MOTIFS**

On woven surfaces, symbolic expressions that convey the emotions and thoughts of the maker—each carrying distinct meanings through their individual forms and arrangements—are defined as motifs. In other words, a motif is a repeatable formal unit that symbolizes a specific meaning, emotion, or idea in traditional or artistic production. Anatolian weaving is regarded not merely as a field of production that fulfills functional needs, but as a multilayered expressive domain in which social values, belief systems, and cultural memory are rendered visibly and tangibly. Traditional woven textiles, beyond their use as everyday objects, function as visual narratives reflecting the lifestyle, aesthetic perception, and intellectual structure of the geographical regions in which they were produced. Through the motifs placed on woven surfaces, the weaver constructs a symbolic language shaped around nature, life, and belief by merging individual experiences with collective memory.

Within the distinctive creative capacity of Anatolian society, numerous motifs and archetypes are found; this richness can be explained by the vital relationship that Turkish society has established with nature since the earliest periods of its existence, a relationship that has been directly reflected on woven surfaces [9]. In this context, motifs gain meaning not only as aesthetic arrangements but also as symbolic indicators of the human–nature relationship and cultural continuity.

Symbolic motifs are defined as visual forms representing an idea or concept, with origins extending back to ancient cultures. These symbols, transmitted from ancient Turkish arts to the present, have gained a universal expressive quality in contemporary art, sometimes through reinterpretation and at other times through direct use [10]. Thus, symbols have become dynamic means of expression that preserve their cultural contexts while being reinterpreted across different periods and disciplines.

Belief-based defense mechanisms developed by humans in response to unknown and uncontrollable forces have formed a distinct symbolic structure within the Anatolian weaving tradition. This structure transforms woven surfaces from mere aesthetic objects into cultural and symbolic fields of expression. As stated, “since the existence of humankind, the effort to name surrounding objects and movements has formed the foundation of symbolic thought; through relationships established with objects and other individuals, humans have produced and learned meaning” [11]. This process has enabled weaving motifs to emerge as elements of a symbolic language and to be transmitted from generation to generation.

The eye motif is among the most frequently preferred symbols in Anatolian weavings for protection against the evil eye. It is believed to possess the power to ward off negative energies, functioning as both a seeing and a protective element. “Stylized through geometric forms and transferred onto woven surfaces, this motif has been expressed

through shapes such as the rhombus, square, cross, and star (Figure 1). Among geometric forms, the triangle represents the most simplified stylization of the eye motif,” and particularly the divided lozenge pattern is one of the most common examples of the eye motif in Anatolian weavings [7]. In the Anatolian weaving tradition, the eye motif is most commonly depicted in the form of a lozenge divided into four sections. However, rather than conveying a fixed and unchanging meaning, this motif interacts with surrounding patterns within the cultural richness of its region, acquiring multilayered and varied symbolic meanings shaped by local beliefs, everyday life practices, and aesthetic sensibilities. “The frequently used ‘cross’ motif is formed by the intersection of two lines extending horizontally and vertically. The motif’s indication of four directions symbolizes the belief that harmful gazes are divided into four parts and dispersed in different directions” [12].

The eye is regarded as the window through which the soul opens outward, representing the connection between an individual’s inner world and notions such as wisdom, conquest, and foresight. Used for the protection of others, the eye is carried as an amulet to ward off negative energies, considered a sacred sign, and holds significant importance in many belief systems. The eye motif is widely employed in figurative ornamentation and appears not only in weaving but also across various art forms such as painting, sculpture, and ceramics. Within the framework of design theories, it is utilized to influence visual perception and to create balance, rhythm, and dynamism within compositions [13]. Responding to the gaze with another gaze has been regarded as the simplest form of resistance; therefore, objects in the shape of an eye—either in their original form or altered in color and shape—have been incorporated into woven textiles as amulet motifs intended to repel the evil eye [8].

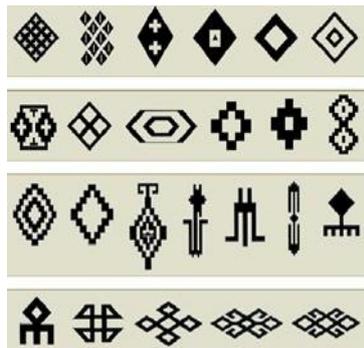


Figure 1. Various eye motifs [14].

Derived from the Arabic word “*nusha*,” the amulet (*muska*) is defined as an object—such as a written paper—believed to contain a religious or magical power and to protect its bearer, wearer, or owner from harmful influences while bringing good fortune [8]. The amulet motif represents the symbolic form, on woven surfaces, of written talismans used for protection against illness, the evil eye, and negative energies. In its most basic form, the amulet is depicted as a triangle, although it appears in various forms across different regions of Anatolia. The amulet is regarded not only as a sacred object believed to protect its bearer but also as a geometric element that strengthens compositional structure in woven textiles. As stated, “the triangle is the most basic form in which the amulet motif appears (Figure 2). Generally symbolized by an equilateral triangle as a geometric form, the amulet motif exhibits considerable regional variation” [8].

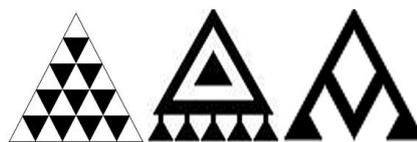


Figure 2. Examples of amulet motifs [8].

The belief in the evil eye (*nazar*) is widely accepted across societies and is generally understood as a phenomenon believed to have negative effects on individuals. Objects used for protection against the evil eye are referred to as *nazarlık*; among these, accessories featuring amulet and eye motifs are the most common. In Anatolian culture, the function of *nazarlık* objects has remained unchanged from past to present, while the materials used in their production have varied over time. As noted, “many individuals carry an object—sometimes as jewelry, sometimes as an amulet—in which they believe for its talismanic and protective power” [15]. In the Qur’an, Allah revealed the Surahs *Al-Falaq* (113) and *An-Nas* (114) [16] as protective prayers, and it is believed that reciting these verses is effective in safeguarding individuals from influences such as the evil eye and magic.

### 3. THE DESIGN LANGUAGE OF EYE AND AMULET MOTIFS ON WOVEN SURFACES

In Anatolian weavings, amulet and evil eye motifs go beyond being merely aesthetic elements; they represent a form of silent communication—beliefs, fears, and the instinct for protection transformed into knots. Amulet- and eye-motif woven textiles produced in Anatolia and used in various interior and exterior spaces have been regarded not only as decorative elements but also as symbolic tools believed to protect homes, rooms, and living spaces from the evil eye and malevolent influences. These motifs, incorporated into weft-faced textiles such as carpets, kilims, *cicim*, and *zili*, make the weaver’s belief system and desire for protection visible on a spatial scale.

The use of eye and amulet motifs varies across different regions of Anatolia in terms of both technical execution and formal characteristics. The material, technique, composition, color, and motif elements that constitute the functional and aesthetic criteria of designs are shaped in accordance with a society’s culture, beliefs, and worldview [17]. In Anatolian weavings, evil eye and amulet motifs are symbolized through triangular forms, inverted and upright placements, interlocking geometric fields, and peripheral arrangements. Positioned within rhythmic repetitions, symmetrical layouts, and central compositions on woven surfaces, these motifs establish aesthetic coherence while simultaneously transforming protective belief into a visual language.

It is believed that the color blue is particularly prominent in eye motifs due to its perceived power to ward off the evil eye, and that when combined with contrasting colors such as red, black, and white, it produces a strong visual impact (Figures 3–4–5). The placement of these motifs in borders, field sections, or central areas of the design can be interpreted as reinforcing both symbolic protection and aesthetic balance.



**Figure 3.** Eye motif positioned at the center of the design [18].



**Figure 4.** Use of blue beads [8].

According to beliefs surrounding the evil eye, human gazes are thought to cause negative effects such as illness, disability, or even death in living beings, while in inanimate objects they may result in damage, breakage, or loss of function. The belief in the evil eye—referred to by earlier societies as *isabet-i ayn*—is today expressed through various phrases such as “being struck by the evil eye” or “receiving a harmful gaze” [19]. The tendency to take precautions against such influences remains strongly prevalent among the people of Anatolia today [7].



**Figure 5.** (a) Zili weaving, (b) Eye motif (Balıkesir-İvrindi) [20].

The zili-technique weaving produced in the İvrindi district of Balıkesir (Figure 5a) is known by the motif name “*dört börek*” (Figure 5b). In this example, eye motifs are prominently used within wide borders [20]. On the woven surface, geometric motifs arranged in vertical bands draw attention. Composed of triangles, lozenges, and segmented geometric forms, this composition reflects the protective and symbolic narrative approach frequently encountered in the Anatolian weaving tradition. In particular, oppositely positioned triangles and lozenge-shaped motifs may be interpreted as stylized forms of the eye and amulet motifs used for protection against the evil eye and malevolent influences. The rhythmic repetition of motifs arranged vertically provides visual balance to the textile while emphasizing the concepts of continuity and order. The combined use of contrasting colors such as red, black, blue, and yellow is also considered an element that reinforces the protective effect of the motifs. In this context, the weaving does not merely present an aesthetic surface arrangement but also constitutes a symbolic narrative field reflecting belief, protection, and cultural memory.



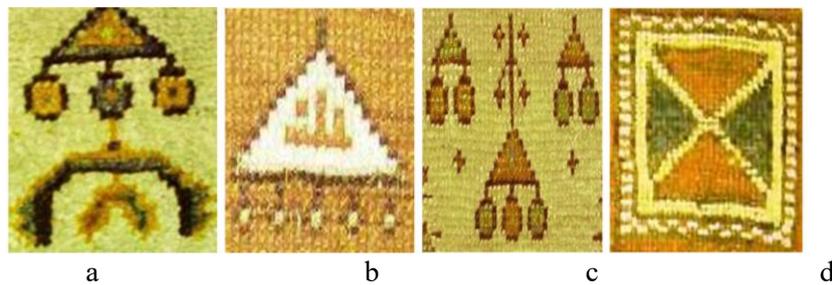
**Figure 6.** (a) Ladik prayer rug, (b) Eye motif [21].

In the Ladik prayer rug depicted in Figure 6, the evil eye (eye) motif reflects the protective symbolism commonly observed in the Anatolian weaving tradition. The placement of the motif at the center of the mihrab, directly beneath the star-flower motif, is not coincidental; rather, this positioning grants the eye motif both spiritual and symbolic centrality. While the eye-shaped geometric motif assumes a protective function against the evil eye and harmful gazes, its presence on a prayer rug used in a devotional context demonstrates the intertwining of belief and the notion of protection. The stylized and abstract nature of the motif aligns with the Islamic art tradition, which avoids figurative representation. The extensions opening toward the right and left symbolize the belief that the eye perceives and neutralizes negative influences coming from all directions. In this respect, the evil eye motif on the Ladik prayer rug is evaluated not merely as an ornamental element, but as a powerful cultural symbol representing faith, protection, and spiritual security.

In folk belief, alongside carrying an evil eye charm to prevent being affected by the evil eye or to ward off misfortune, it is also common in Anatolian tradition to keep a protective amulet containing prayers, verses, or talismanic inscriptions. The amulet, similar to a “*talisman*,” is considered a form of prayer written to protect against illness

and disasters and carried on the body. “Due to the triangular shape of the amulet, it is generally represented in triangular form in woven textiles” [22]. Amulets are typically written on a strip of paper by religious authorities such as sheikhs or hodjas. “Sometimes they are sewn into fabric and hung around the neck with a cord, or stitched onto the inside of a garment. Amulets belonging to wealthy individuals are placed inside triangular silver or gold cases decorated with embossed floral motifs and then worn around the neck” [7].

In Figure 7, the pointed tips of the triangular amulet motifs (Figures 7a–b) serve a function of breaking the direction of negative energy and redirecting it outward. The symmetrical weaving arrangement in the interior fill represents the concept of a “closed and protected space” associated with the amulet. The composition featuring repeated multiple amulet arrangements (Figure 7c) translates into the language of weaving the belief that the evil eye or misfortune may come not from a single direction but from all directions. In the interlocking square and triangle composition (Figure 7d), the square form suggests the creation of a secure area, while the amulet motifs at the center imply a core protective function. Such motifs convey the belief that the amulet protects not only the individual but also the surrounding space and objects.



**Figure 7.** Amulet motifs used in Muğla–Milas weavings [8].

The 15th-century Anatolian carpet shown in Figure 8 reflects the symbolic expressive power and geometric abstraction approach of Ottoman-period carpet art. In terms of composition, motif language, and color usage, the carpet should be regarded not merely as a floor covering but as a visual text conveying meanings related to belief, power, and protection. Two dragon figures are positioned on the carpet ground. At the four corners of the dragons, nested amulet motifs are arranged, while lozenge-shaped eye motifs appear within the bodies of the dragons. In the Anatolian weaving tradition, the dragon is associated with concepts of power, order, and protection, and is symmetrically placed on the carpet surface. This composition strengthens the protective attributes of the dragon through the use of amulet and eye symbols, thereby reflecting a multidirectional symbolic protection against the evil eye and malevolent influences on the woven surface. The work demonstrates the synthesis of Central Asian–origin figurative traditions with the geometric order characteristic of Islamic art in Anatolian weavings. Although figurative representation is not entirely abandoned, it is transformed through intensive stylization into a symbolic form, revealing the distinctive identity of Anatolian carpet art.



**Figure 8.** 15th-century Anatolian carpet (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 1995).

The overall structure of the woven kilim shown in Figure 9 is shaped by a symmetrical arrangement extending from the center outward. The large, overlapping geometric forms located in the central section reflect the concept of a closed and secure space that constitutes the essence of the amulet motif. This central placement symbolizes the belief that the protective power of the amulet spreads throughout the entire surface of the textile. Accordingly, the weaving is evaluated not merely as the representation of a single symbol but as a comprehensive system of protection covering the entire surface. Supported by repetitive geometric elements surrounding it, the central amulet design transforms the textile into a symbolic talismanic surface.



**Figure 9.** Ankara–Haymana kilim [27].

The lozenge-shaped and curvilinear geometric forms located on the front surface of the woven bag used as a wall decoration in Figure 10 are associated with stylized eye motifs. The eye motif is interpreted as a protective element aimed at neutralizing the effect of the evil eye by confronting the gaze—considered the source of harmful influence—with another eye. The central and prominent placement of these motifs is linked to the continuous protective function attributed to the user of the bag or to the space in which it is displayed. In this context, the bag can be defined not only as a functional object but also as a portable talisman woven for protection against the evil eye and harmful forces. The transfer of eye motifs onto the textile surface demonstrates how belief-related symbols are integrated into daily life and how weaving is perceived as a personal means of protection.



**Figure 10.** Woven bag used as wall decoration in Anatolia [2].

#### **4. REFLECTIONS OF EYE AND AMULET MOTIFS IN ART AND DESIGN: GARMENT DESIGN**

The evaluation of Anatolian motifs within contemporary art and design fields not only enables these symbols to engage with modern aesthetics but also ensures the active preservation and continuation of cultural heritage. Traditional motifs, through modern reinterpretations, transform into a global visual language and thus function as significant communication tools that enhance interaction and the exchange of meaning among

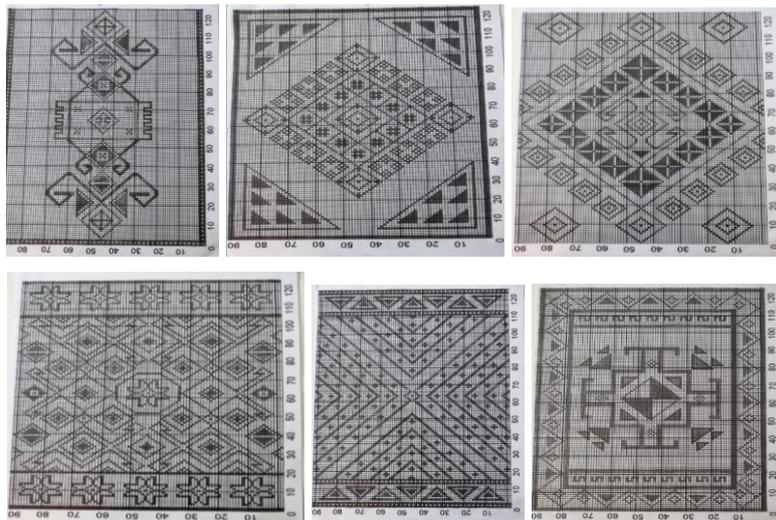
different cultures. As stated, “Artists and craftsmen who integrate traditional Anatolian motifs with contemporary artistic techniques establish a bridge between the past and the present, ensuring the vitality of Anatolian cultural heritage in today’s global world while sustaining cultural values inherited from the past” [23].

In contemporary art practices, traditional motifs are not directly copied by designers; instead, they are addressed through abstraction, fragmentation, and recontextualization. Within this approach, artists focus less on the formal characteristics of motifs and more on their semantic values, producing works that question and render visible concepts such as identity, memory, belonging, and cultural heritage. Consequently, traditional motifs evolve into powerful visual symbols that construct a critical and conceptual bridge between the past and the present. “These motifs, which carry Anatolia’s millennia-old legacy of symbols and colors into the present, contribute to the creation of original and striking compositions in both traditional and modern designs; by referencing the past, they enhance the value of design and provide it with a cultural identity” [24].

In the fields of art and design, traditional motifs are combined with modern aesthetic approaches in disciplines such as textile, fashion, graphic, ceramic, and industrial design. Through digital technologies and contemporary production methods, motifs are enlarged, simplified, and adapted to various surfaces. Particularly in fashion design, the blending of traditional weaving patterns with modern forms and materials enables the translation of local identity into a universal visual language. In this context, the influence of traditional motifs on modern art and design represents a process in which the aesthetic and symbolic meanings of the past are reinterpreted through contemporary modes of expression. This interaction reveals cultural heritage not as a static element confined to the past, but as a living, evolving, and productive resource.

Eye and amulet motifs today are no longer limited to traditional weavings; they are re-examined within modern textile design, fashion, and art practices. Artists and designers address these motifs within a contemporary aesthetic language through innovative surface designs, wearable art objects, and conceptual projects.

At the initial stage of the garment design process, based on the findings obtained, eye and amulet motifs were considered together, and six original composition designs were created on millimetric pattern paper (Figure 11). At this stage, the formal characteristics of the motifs, repetition systems, and surface placements were evaluated in accordance with design principles.



**Figure 11.** Composition studies featuring amulet and eye motifs.

In the second stage, sections suitable for application to garment form were selected from the developed compositions (Figure 12) and reorganized for surface design. During this

phase, the eye and amulet motifs intended for garment design were transferred to a digital environment and drawn using the Texcell software; the dimensions, proportions, and repetition systems of the motifs were restructured to ensure compatibility with the garment surface.



**Figure 12.** Eye and amulet motifs drawn using the Texcell program.

In the third stage, the integration of eye and amulet motifs into contemporary garment design was examined through a digital illustration process. The design phase was carried out using Adobe Illustrator, and the relationship between the symbolic meanings of the motifs and their formal arrangements was explored through an experimental design approach.

Based on the cultural, artistic, and symbolic meanings of the eye and amulet motifs, two original garment designs were planned (Figure 13). The eye motif was associated with concepts of protection, awareness, and metaphysical surveillance, while the amulet motif was addressed in relation to notions of warding off evil, talismanic power, and spiritual security. Within this conceptual framework, the motifs were intended to be transferred onto the garment surface through principles of geometric simplicity, symmetrical arrangement, and repetitive form.

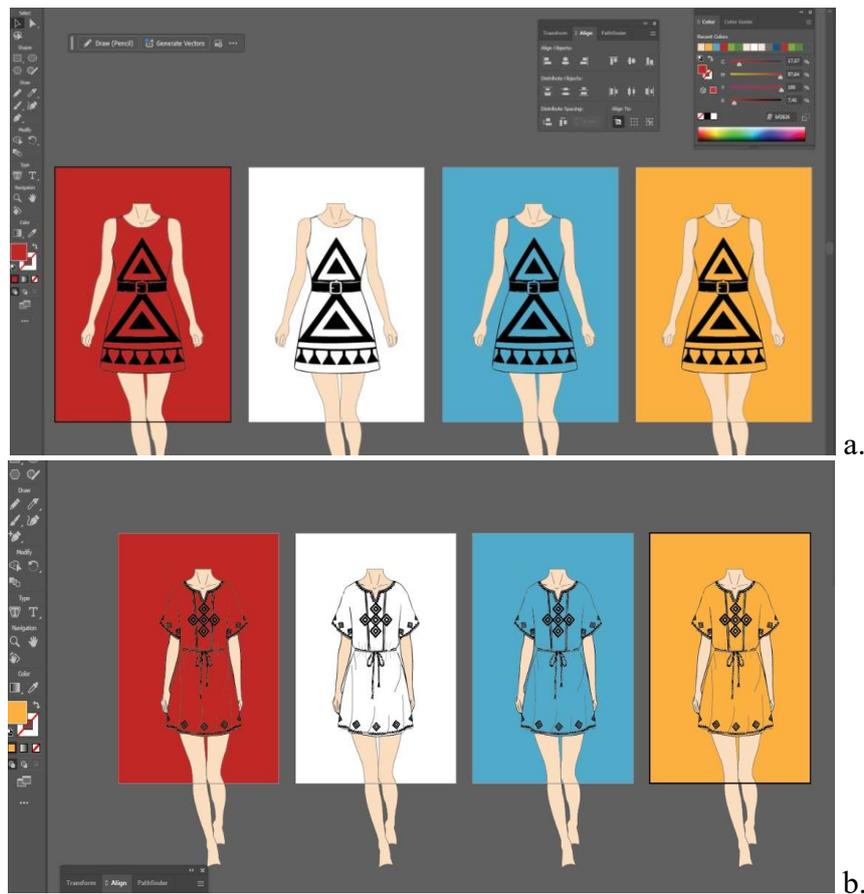
Adobe Illustrator was used to create the garment designs in a digital environment. In order to emphasize the motifs on the garments, the basic silhouette of the female figure was designed in a simple and neutral manner, consistent with anatomical proportions. The garment forms were designed in a comfortable style suitable for everyday wear and defined as straight-cut dress silhouettes, providing a surface conducive to geometric arrangements. The dress form was developed independently from the figure drawing and organized on a separate layer.

During the motif design process, eye and amulet images were interpreted through abstract geometric forms rather than direct figurative representation. Triangular forms were preferred as the fundamental geometric structure symbolizing the amulet, and these forms were layered to emphasize the concept of protective stratification. The motifs were placed symmetrically on the garment surface; rhythmic surface effects were created through repeating triangular arrangements on the upper section and skirt area. This organization aims to reinterpret the traditional and talismanic repetition of motifs through a modern graphic language.

To strengthen the innovative and experimental dimension of the design, various color variations were generated while maintaining the same garment form and motif arrangement; examples were created with red, white, blue, and yellow background colors. Color selections were considered in accordance with the symbolic meanings of the motifs:

- **Red:** associated with energy, strength, and protective power, described as “the element of courage, survival, and life-giving force” [26];
- **White:** purity, neutrality, and timelessness;
- **Blue:** cultural associations with the evil eye and protection;
- **Yellow:** spiritual awakening and visual emphasis.

Through these variations, the perceptual effects of the motifs on different color backgrounds were comparatively evaluated.



**Figure 13.** Garment designs created in Adobe Illustrator: (a) amulet motif and (b) eye motif designs.

During the design process, the figure, garment, motif, and background elements were organized into separate layers; this method enhanced both the controllability of the design and its readability for academic presentation. In the final stage, each color variation was arranged on a separate composition area (artboard), emphasizing the design's suitability for serial production and a collection-based concept.

This digital design application (Figure 13) demonstrates that the traditional symbolic meanings of eye and amulet motifs can be transferred to contemporary garment design through vector illustration. Conducted within the Adobe Illustrator environment, this study is evaluated as an effective method for both experimental and academic production in the reinterpretation of cultural motifs through digital tools.

In the fourth stage, front and back technical drawings of the designs were prepared (Figures 14–15), and the garment featuring the amulet motif (Figure 14) proceeded to the production phase. The study aimed to realize the production of the garment designed in Figures 13a and 14. Although the model was designed in various color alternatives, white cotton fabric was selected for the production process. In the design, the amulet motif was transferred onto the garment surface using a black fabric painting technique, which added originality and distinction to the surface. This approach allowed the garment to be evaluated not merely as a functional object but as a design product carrying cultural and symbolic meanings.



**Figure 14.** Front and back views of the amulet-motif design

**Figure 15.** Front and back views of the eye-motif design

The amulet motifs were drawn onto the cut garment pieces. Paper tape was applied to areas intended to remain white in order to prevent paint from spreading into these regions during the painting process. To avoid uncontrolled diffusion of paint on the highly absorbent cotton fabric, the paint was not excessively diluted; instead, a viscous consistency was preferred (Figure 16).



**Figure 16.** Surface painting processes applied to garment pieces

During the motif application, brushes and textile paints were used with attention to linear clarity and surface integrity. The painting process was carried out in layers to ensure homogeneous penetration into the fabric fibers; short drying intervals were allowed after each layer to balance color intensity. After the painting was completed, the paper tapes were carefully removed, and the visual relationship between motif and ground was examined. In the final stage, a fixation process at an appropriate temperature was applied to increase the durability of the paint during washing and use, thereby strengthening both the durability and aesthetic impact of the amulet motifs achieved through surface painting on cotton fabric.

The high contrast between black and white enhances the visual prominence of the motif, while the simple and timeless aesthetic language ensures harmony within the context of everyday wear (Figure 17). The belt detail positioned at the waist functions as a structural element that balances the surface design and perceptually reinforces the continuity of the motif; meanwhile, the repetition of small amulet forms along the hemline creates a rhythmic surface arrangement that strengthens the overall visual impression of the design. From this perspective, the study emphasizes the potential of reinterpreting a traditional symbol through modern surface design approaches to generate aesthetic, functional, and conceptual value in everyday garment design.



**Figure 17.** Completed garment design after production.

In the final stage, the motifs were integrated with the garment form and silhouette to establish a functional and aesthetic balance. The placement of motifs on the garment—arranged as central, asymmetrical, or rhythmically repeated elements—enhanced the visual impact of the design. Thus, traditional motifs are evaluated as having transcended their role as mere decorative elements in contemporary garment design, becoming fundamental components that render cultural identity visible and add depth of meaning to the design.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The weaving samples examined within the scope of this study reveal that eye and amulet motifs have a widespread, multilayered, and regionally diverse field of use in Anatolia. Beyond their preference as protective symbols, these motifs stand out as powerful visual elements that express belief-based meanings within an aesthetic harmony. Intensively employed in traditional Anatolian weavings and rooted in belief systems, these symbolic motifs reflect socially shared values and cultural memory. In this context, eye and amulet motifs hold significant importance in terms of preserving cultural heritage and transmitting it to future generations.

Within the Anatolian weaving tradition, the eye motif is used for protection against malevolent gazes of unknown origin and time, while the amulet motif is understood to serve a protective function against illnesses and visible or invisible fears. Although both motifs carry similar protective meanings, the differences in their formation and application across regions reveal the richness and diversity of Anatolian weaving art.

This study demonstrates that new design and research areas can be developed through the combined examination of traditional motifs and offers guidance for future academic and artistic studies. Eye and amulet motifs, associated with protection and belief in Anatolian culture, were reinterpreted in line with modern art and design approaches and transformed into original garment designs. While these motifs are generally used individually in traditional weaving and decorative arts, examining them together offers a new and critical perspective within the context of wearable art. Throughout the design process, the symbolic meanings of the motifs were preserved, while a contemporary visual language was established in terms of form, color, and composition.

The integration of eye and amulet motifs onto the garment surface demonstrates that the resulting design transcends its function as a mere clothing item and transforms into an

artistic medium carrying cultural heritage. In this process, the body becomes a site that renders the meanings of the motifs visible and actively displays cultural narratives. The natural, breathable, and sustainable properties of cotton fabric enhance the design's potential for everyday use, while the amulet pattern is positioned as a graphic expressive element on the garment surface through its protective and symbolic meanings.

The sketching, digital pattern development, surface painting, and production processes conducted during the application phase reveal how traditional motifs and modern design approaches can be integrated holistically. Findings obtained from durability and usability tests indicate that the design maintains its aesthetic integrity and is applicable in terms of practical use.

In line with the view that “art should exist not only in exhibition spaces but also in everyday life” [25], this study ultimately presents a strong example of the reinterpretation of eye and amulet motifs within the context of contemporary art and design. The research demonstrates that traditional cultural elements can be integrated into present-day design practices through wearable art, while also providing a conceptual and methodological foundation for future academic and artistic studies.

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