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FROM TRADITION TO THE FUTURE**



Evaluation of Rumi Motifs in the Tile Decorations of the Rüstem Paşa Camii

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Abstract

In Turkish ornamental art, the **rumi** motif emerged as one of the fundamental components of the decorative tradition that developed from Central Asia onward; it became formally distinct during the Anatolian Seljuk period and reached a mature compositional understanding in the Ottoman classical era. Particularly in 16th-century Ottoman tile art, rumi evolved into one of the principal structural elements of design, assuming a decisive role within decorative programs through its adaptability to architectural surfaces and its formal diversity.

This study aims to examine the types of rumi motifs, their constituent elements, drawing characteristics, and their functional role within compositions through the example of the tile decorations of Rüstem Paşa Camii. Within the scope of the research, the tile ornaments of the mosque were systematically analyzed; the types of rumi motifs, design schemes, color preferences, and their relationships with architectural units were evaluated in detail.

The analysis revealed the use of various rumi types, including plain rumi, *hurde* rumi, decorated rumi, interlaced (*sarıлма*) rumi, and serrated (*dendanlı*) rumi. The findings indicate that plain rumi motifs constitute the most frequently used group throughout the structure, followed by *hurde* rumi, while decorated rumi motifs were employed to a limited extent. Interlaced rumi

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motifs were identified in only a single composition, used together with serrated rumi elements; additionally, different drawing variations of *sencide* rumi were documented.

An examination of the architectural distribution of rumi motifs demonstrates their intensive use from the outer portico to the prayer hall, including the mihrab façade, minbar canopy, wall panels, arch spandrels, and pendentives. The presence of rumi motifs in approximately 80% of the mosque's sections indicates that rumi was positioned as the principal motif within the overall decorative program. Analyses conducted through vector-based drawings further reveal that rumi motifs were composed in a balanced and harmonious unity with *hatayi*, *penç*, and cloud motifs.

By presenting the level attained by the rumi tradition—transmitted from Central Asian and Seljuk periods—during the Ottoman classical era through the tile decorations of the Rüstem Paşa Mosque, this study aims to contribute analytical and documentary data to the understanding of design principles in Turkish tile art.

Keywords: *Elements of Rumi, Rumi Motif, Rüstem Paşa Camii, Types of Rumi*
