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## **The concept of symbol in the arts and the problem of communication**

### **Artistic identity through Amazigh symbols**

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#### **Abstract:**

People have adopted symbols as a form of communication between members of societies, as they are used in various folk arts to express their peculiarities that represent their identity and that distinguish them from the rest of the other individuals or societies. North Africans of Berber origin have been known for their use of these symbols, whether in music, singing, or plastic art, as well as traditional crafts to express their artistic and cultural identity

**Keywords:** Symbol, identity, folklore, plastic art, communication

#### **Introduction:**

When we talk about symbols and shapes in art, we are talking about the history of a civilization whose roots extend to ancient times, which is an ancient human heritage passed down through generations, suggesting connotations and meanings, and summarizing the emotions and behavior of individuals, their thoughts, and their beliefs in the language of shapes, inspired by heritage and

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defining the cultural identity of any people. Perceiving and understanding symbols as a visual language is the main factor in communication between civilizations and peoples since ancient times and their continued existence. Man, since his birth, has tried to interpret nature, understand its phenomena, and express his emotions and feelings with a set of forms and symbols that have become the language of communication between peoples and societies and have preserved their essence and heritage despite renewal and innovation.

Symbols, with their various natural, traditional or imaginary sources, are a symbol of human cultures and a means of communication between individuals and civilizations and the prevailing relationships between them.

The symbol has a relationship with identity, which means returning to origin and searching for the essence of truth and existence, the existence of a civilization and peoples existing with their principles, history, customs and traditions. It is one of the most important concepts that is presented in all aspects, politically, socially, culturally, scientifically, and religiously.

Identity in its broad sense includes several places, sometimes on the geographical area and is called “national identity,” and at other times it is a little narrower and is called “membership in a group,” and a third time it is much narrower and is transformed into “self-awareness,” and in this way In this regard, both Michel Foucault and the sociologist Bernard Alhaer pointed out the problem of identity, so the individual “l’homme pluriel” became defined as consisting of a large number of identities, and we also began to talk about “the multiple human being.”“Multiple Human”.

It was stated in the Philosophical Dictionary that “the name identity is not Arabic in origin, but rather some translators were forced to do so. The original is that this name is derived from the letter *rabat*, that is, which indicates to the Arabs the connection of the predicate with the subject in its essence (Salibia Jamil, 1994, p. 529.), and it is a letter that is in their saying “Zayd.” Is it an animal or a human?

Identity is synonymous with the name of unity and existence, it is stated in the Intermediate Dictionary that identity is “the truth about a thing or person that distinguishes it from others. Identity is a card that records the person’s name, nationality, birth, and work, and it is called the personal card.” (Shawqi Deif and others: 2004, p. 998).

Identity has an important role in shaping the personality of the individual and society, and this is what Muhammad Abed Al-Jabri confirms when he saw that “cultural identity is not complete, its specificity is not highlighted, and it is not a complete identity capable of reaching universality unless its reference is embodied in an entity in which three elements coincide: (Muhammad Amin Al-Alam, 1998, p. 11.) the homeland (geography and history), the state.” (the legal embodiment of the unity of the homeland and the nation), and the nation (the spiritual lineage woven by the common culture). From the above, it can be said that identity includes collective symbolic, spiritual, and cultural meanings. It also gives the individual a sense of belonging to the motherland, and creates loyalty and pride in him for belonging to a specific group that differs from other groups. Accordingly, the symbol has been adopted by peoples to express their identity and needs since ancient times, and this use continues to the present time,

due to the symbol's ability to continue and be easily employed in artistic works, as well as the extent of its impact on the recipient.

The problem that we can address in this topic is the following: What is symbolism in the arts? What is communication? To what extent can a symbol contribute to building cultural identity in the arts ?

### **Symbol concept:**

We present the symbol as “a gesture, a sign, and a sign, which indicates something else, and it has two aspects:

(The first) is the signification of abstract meanings on sensory matters, such as the signification of numbers on things... and (the second) is the signification of sensory things on imagined meanings, such as the fox signification of deception, the dog signification of loyalty, the chameleon signification of fickleness, and the scepter signification of kingship... and every word. He took away its meaning and called another metaphor, which is, in a sense, a symbol of it (Salibia Jamil, *The Philosophical Dictionary, Part 1, (Subject: Symbol), Beirut, Lebanon, 1994, p. 620.*)

Man has known the symbol since the ancient Stone Ages, and it was used in hieroglyphic writing four hundred years ago BC, whose letters were shaped like geometric shapes and birds... The inscriptions engraved on the walls of caves are the greatest evidence of this, the majority of which bear symbols for the sun, moon, and fire.

Man lived in a world full of mystery in the various aspects surrounding him, and the symbol was the only way to decipher the mysteries and codes of

this surrounding world. Through these symbols, he tried to connect all the phenomena surrounding him with higher powers, and to symbolize those powers in certain forms, until those symbols became an expression of the mental thought and cultural belief of those peoples and continued to express the identity of the peoples to the present time.

The social environment plays an important role in creating and shaping the symbol. The relationship between a person and his environment is a relationship of give and take, a relationship of integration, in which the individual is an active element who responds to its requirements and a recipient who benefits from its principles and values.

The symbol is one of the components of material heritage and its influence appeared in ancient art as a historical element, whose connotations differ from one place to another according to the environment, cultural or social activity, or the prevailing intellectual belief.

It is an artistic cultural element par excellence due to its ability to spread rapidly and spread cultural, political and social awareness. Andre Lalande confirms this in his famous philosophical encyclopedia that the function of a symbol lies in stimulating certain states of consciousness. In his view, symbols are of two types: mental, specialized in stimulating imaginations and ideas, and emotional, aimed at stimulating various emotions. While the German-American thinker Ernst Cassier believes that the ability to use symbols and communicate through them requires a kind of intelligence and symbolic imagination, as the individual no longer lives in the physical (tangible) world, but rather in a symbolic universe. "Instead of man entering into a direct relationship with the

things themselves, the same with linguistic, artistic, mythological and other symbols” (Daskal, Marcelo, 1987, p. 59).

The nature of the symbol can be summarized in “it is the perception of something that stands in place of something else, replaces it, or represents it, such that the relationship between the two is the relationship of the specific to the general, or the concrete, tangible, to the abstract, and that is considering the symbol as something that has a personal (real) existence, except that it symbolizes A specific idea or meaning, as the dove symbolizes peace, the cross symbolizes Christianity,( Philip Sering, 1992, p. 5) A symbol is everything that takes the place of something else to indicate it, by suggestion or the existence of a relationship between them (the signifier/the signified). this symbolic representation helped various civilizations and peoples reveal the way of human thinking and social behavior of individuals that continued with modern or post-modern artistic trends.

Anthropologists had a great interest in studying symbols to learn about life, cultural thought, and human thinking, which is represented in a complex system of symbols. The French poet Baudelaire described the world as a “forest of symbols.”

These works, including artistic ones, contain many symbols inspired by nature, beliefs, and myths... and are often represented in artistic works, whether religious, social, or cultural, that cannot be understood except with our good understanding of the symbols before us. This also appears in architecture, sculpture, painting, and all The arts are immersed in symbolic representation, and the beauty of these artistic works cannot be felt or perceived in all their

manifestations except through our understanding of the symbols and connotations they contain.

### **Types of symbol in the arts:**

Researchers and critics differed in defining the types and levels of symbols, and they can be summarized in the following types :

#### **The legendary symbol:**

Most literary or artistic works are almost devoid of the contents of Greek and Pharaonic mythology... as artists inspired the topics of their works from the popular heritage of ancient civilizations, their stories, histories, and myths.

Myth is the sacred story related to the creation of the gods, the universe, and the creation of man...in which artists revealed the way of life, creation, and death in ancient civilizations and were creative in shaping it using symbols, colors, and artistic connotations that would bring the truth and the essence of the story closer to the recipient. “We usually find in myths strong human feelings, sensations, perceptions, and attitudes that inform us of man’s philosophy of existence, and his first intellectual attempts, which include a summary of his experiences and past.” ([Sayed Al-Qimni, 2020, p. 21.](#))

Where does he conclude from these experiences his thinking and the way he deals with reality, according to his own logic, values and principles that were formulated in artistic symbols and templates that were passed down through generations and that were modified and renewed according to what suits their era?

The Pharaonic civilization was full of progress in various fields of knowledge, science, literature, and arts. The drawings and inscriptions engraved on tombs and temples are the greatest evidence of that. Anyone who notices these inscriptions knows that the symbol is the emblem of this ancient civilization.

### **Religious symbols:**

Religious topics were among the most important topics that were included in most of the artistic monuments inherited from ancient times. These are the religious rituals engraved on the walls of caves and statues. During the era of the Islamic State, religious symbols developed into calligraphy, Islamic decoration, Quranic verses, mosques, and the Kaaba...

### **Historical symbol:**

Eternal works of art are those creations inspired by the history of peoples and expressed with symbols and connotations that summarize it in historical figures and events that are in line with events in the present. “Historical events and figures are not merely fleeting universal phenomena that end with the end of their real existence. In addition to their comprehensive significance, they are subject to renewal ([Ali Ashry Zayed, 2006, p. 120.](#))”

History constitutes an important source for artists in their reliance on embodying historical figures and facts in their artistic works, whether cinematic or pictorial. Islamic history is considered the essence of artistic productions, and producers and artists paid attention to it and dealt with the biography of



historical figures in various eras. Since man tends to glorify his past by nature, historical elements and symbols attract him in any way. They were, whether political victories, Islamic conquests, or historical figures.

In the Renaissance era, Italian artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci

were interested in representing Greek arts, expressing cultural affiliation, and depicting and sculpting most national victories, political figures, and leaders.

Where the Dutch artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder represented the painting "Meg the Mad", which depicts the events of war and destruction, and the painting "The Massacre of the Innocents", which represents the battle of a Flemish village... Eugène Delacroix is also The themes of his works were inspired by historical events. Among his most important works is the painting "The Massacre of Chios," in which he depicted the massacre committed by the Turks during the War of Independence in Greece.

The Algerian artist Mohamed Rasem also enriched himself with symbols and historical figures in his works. In his famous painting, "Khair ad-Din Babaros," the artist tried to introduce the greatest commanders of the Ottoman fleets in the 16th century.

### **Natural symbols:**

Natural symbols in artistic works vary depending on the cultural and historical affiliation of the creative artist. Man, the son of his environment, expresses the way of creation and death according to his belief, colonialism,

freedom, love and hate... All of these topics are immortalized in artistic paintings full of symbols and visual connotations expressing the past and present Peoples.

Love is a form of natural symbols that artists call upon to express, because it is the relationship that connects family members, friends, or a single community, and continuity cannot be achieved in the absence of love between people. “This crazy love, as Britton calls it, has the habit of destroying the daily routine.” Which society has striven to establish for the individual, means that the happiness or ecstasy that gives life meaning can be found beyond the structure of family, work, and homeland, and when the “beloved,” poetry, and dream are considered as necessary to life as the air that a person breathes, the deification of love becomes a reality.”( [Meter: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, 1973, p. 73](#))

Among the most important elements that symbolize love is the “heart,” which is considered a symbol of love, and we often see it drawn on vehicles, walls, or trees, whether in its simple form or marked with an arrow.

Also among the symbols of love is the “dove,” which expresses love and peace in all parts of the world. The “dove” is also a symbol of love, which is associated with the story of our master Noah, peace and blessings be upon him, at the time of the flood, where he sent the crow to search for safety and peace, but it did not return, and then it rose. By sending the dove, it returned with an olive branch in its beak, so our Master Noah, peace be upon him, realized that the water was full or had receded and the safe shore was approaching, and from that period the dove was associated with the idea of peace and love.

### **Symbol in the plastic arts:**

Peoples adopted symbolism in the arts to understand the past of civilizations and learn about their beliefs and concepts. Symbolism in the arts in its various forms gives the value of artistic works through the merging of images, feelings, ideas and emotions according to special foundations and rules. In the late 1880s (1886), the Symbolism school contributed

At the hands of the French poets - the Symbolist poets - Baudelaire, Paul Verlain, in the development of symbolism in the arts. It was not limited to plastic art only, but included most of the arts and literature (poetry, the play, the story). It also contained several artistic trends that included many artists. Everyone has his own style and way of thinking.

In his study of the psychology of plastic arts, René Huyghe emphasized the fact that “forms have a function that represents sometimes directly the material facts, and sometimes indirectly and with a symbolic value the immaterial facts, and thus the forms have an appearance for the eye, but also a meaning for the mind...” ( Philip Sering, 1992, p. 39).

### **The meanings of shapes and symbols in Amazigh arts:**

Amazigh society is distinguished, like other societies, by its cultural heritage that is passed down (paintings, pottery, weaving, inscriptions, tattoos, jewelry...) generation after generation. This heritage carries many meanings and connotations that express the life that the Amazigh person (the indigenous people of North Africa, Morocco) lived. (Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Ghana, Niger, Libya, Egypt) since ancient times, and the way it adapted and dealt with the phenomena surrounding it.

Amazigh art, with its forms, symbols and colors, created a world unto itself, deriving its roots and aesthetics from the cultural history and ancient Amazigh culture.

Amazigh shapes and symbols embody a set of moral values, social norms and behaviors, and they also convey all the philosophical symbols that express life, love, hope, death...

The Amazigh people innovated in the manufacture of pottery vessels. This handicraft, with high skill and aesthetic values derived from ancient times, was used by the Amazigh peoples for the need for food and decoration, interspersed with geometric shapes and symbols in different colors that suggest the authenticity and culture of their people and their civilizational affiliation.

One of the common beliefs in the pottery industry is a magical belief that one should avoid stepping over clay blocks because it is a bad omen that causes the pottery vessels to warp or break. It also stipulates that pottery makers start making couscous so that it will be a good omen for everyone. They often associate the shape of pottery vessels with women and the earth (the source of fertility), as the round, spherical shape indicates a pregnant woman...

\_ The Amazigh tribes also knew tattoos, which are a form of cultural expression whose artistic and aesthetic value is no less than other cultural forms. Tattooing is “the oldest type of symbolic expression, as it appears to have a relationship with a person’s development of his ‘ego’ consciousness. It marks the transition from a natural state to a cultural state” (Grogard,Catherine; 1992, p. 19).

According to Ibn Khaldun, it is known as a sign, and it is said that “the earth is smelled when it grows some grass.”( [Ibn Manzur, Lisan, without a year, p. 933.](#)) It is symbols and marks placed on the forehead, the back of the hand, the leg, the arm, and other areas of the body. We still notice these symbols among some grandmothers, especially in the villages and countrysides where They show their interest in this valuable heritage.

The Amazigh peoples in the African region as a whole have used it since the earliest times for multiple purposes:

For the purpose of adornment and beauty, most antiquities and “documents obtained from excavations reveal to us the first artificial possibilities for beautifying the body, such as dyeing, deep incision, and tattooing”( [Ben Foughal \(Tatiana\), 1997, p. 21.](#)) This is what we notice widespread in Berber cosmetic items such as jewelry (chains, bracelets, foreheads, anklets...), as well as the decoration of clothes and the method of embroidery inspired by ancient folklore.

Tattooing was also used for the purpose of protection and treatment by relying on healing plant extracts, and it is closely linked to the spiritual dimension in their cultural imagination.

The association of the Amazigh peoples with beliefs and superstitions is the reason for its adoption by some people as a means of determining fate or changing it for the better, and in their view, it is a sedative and an antidote to the evil eye.

The Amazigh tribes adopted tattoos for distinction (discriminatory purpose), and discriminatory tattoos are used to indicate geographical origin, religious or tribal affiliation...” Ancient military armies were known to carry

tattoos indicating the rank of the soldier in his line, as well as his blood group, to facilitate the process of providing first aid. (Hitler's armies during World War II), while in Africa tattoos were a mark imposed by the master on slaves” ( [KHatibi, Abdelkebir, 1986, p. 109](#)).

The forms and symbols of tattoos rely on the two colors green and blue in abundance, and green - the color of peace - is found in the Berber flag and represents earth, nature, plants, and green mountains, all of which are symbols that suggest fertility.

It also symbolizes hope, life, eternity, paradise, and a symbol of all their places of worship and righteous saints, which is what we notice in the dead and the righteous saint. A headband is also placed on the head of the sick in the presence of the righteous saint and the Zarda rituals... it suggests to them goodness, happiness, and contentment and brings calm and stability to the soul. It is a symbol of eternity and absolute worship of the unseen world in Amazigh civilization.

As for the color blue, it is also present in the Amazigh flag. It symbolizes patriotism, the sky, and the relationship to infinity. It also symbolizes fertility, chivalry, dignity, self-esteem, the purity and nobility of feelings and sentiments. It is a distinctive color in the world of the Amazigh human being.

One of the most important traditional Amazigh crafts is the textile industry. It is an ancient handicraft known to humanity for the sake of necessity, then women's hands innovated in it for the sake of adornment and the preservation of popular heritage symbols. The Amazigh carpet did not come by chance, but rather it is a harmonious fabric between what are heritage elements and

mathematical rules in its composition. Homogeneous art, and the Amazigh peoples used fabric in its various forms for daily needs (mattresses, clothes...) and what distinguishes these carpets and clothes are the bright colors that express the Amazigh national identity.

The color yellow was used in various fabrics due to its deep connotations. It is closely linked in their beliefs to the sun. It symbolizes the sands of the Sahara desert and light. Light gives the soul activity and vitality. It is the dominant color in women's clothing and evidence of the harvest season among the Amazigh tribes.

Those wavy lines on the surface of the pottery symbolize the rippling of water, which often indicates life or fertility, and the vertical lines symbolize the snake Figur, which is a sign of immortality, strength, and masculinity...

he parallel lines indicate the eternal conflict (good and evil, love and hate...), while the two intersecting lines (×) indicate that continuity and existence cannot be achieved except with the availability of fertility in the man and the woman in her fertile part (the uterus). Vertical lines represent the symbol of life and God, and they are the first symbols adopted by man in his discovery of the language of expression and communication.

Tattoos or decoration of pottery or textiles also rely on triangles that suggest rigor, the solid and solid inherited base that expresses the cohesive structure and authentic history of society. Triangles also indicate growth and sophistication. "The triangle combines the three constructive forces (wisdom, strength, beauty), and is used as a guard against harmful influences in life. It symbolizes fire and masculinity if it is facing upward, but if the top is down, it

symbolizes water and femininity. The meeting and intersection of the two triangles also indicates the meeting of the sexes and lovers. That is, the relationship between two different worlds.

As for the squares, they suggest to the viewer stability, balance, equality, discipline, sincerity, and safety. They are also evidence of land and home. While the presence of a circle in the shape indicates the rotation, tension, and confusion experienced by the individual or society. It also indicates in some cases the sun and the moon, inspiring love, security, and communication among members of the family or society.

We find it in most cultures, especially Berber arts (carpets, pottery, tattoos, jewelry...), in the form of two inverted triangles that indicate conflict and opposition between spouses on the one hand, and a symbol of fertility on the other hand.

Dots also have their meanings in Amazigh art, which represent lamps or stoves in homes, and are a symbol of light and illumination.

### **1-Symbolic connotations and national identity in Algerian plastic art:**

Algeria has known plastic arts for thousands of years resulting from the mixing and cross-fertilization of most of the civilizations it witnessed in its various eras, such as the inscriptions engraved on walls and caves, the clay statues dating back more than 2,500 years in the city of Bejaia, and the rock drawings at the Tassili N'Ajjer site.

Algeria is rich in a diverse cultural heritage represented in various traditional and popular industries decorated with Berber symbols and geometric shapes (textiles, pottery, jewellery, leather, ceramics, photography...).



Algerian artists, like other artists, adopted symbols to express their national identity, their selves, and their cultural thought inspired by ancient folk heritage in a symbolic language that increased the beauty of these artistic works. The symbolic connotations in Algerian arts are numerous as a result of the multi-ethnic diversity that Algeria knows (Berber symbols, Shawian symbols, Tarqiyya symbols, Arabic symbols...). Each region Although Algerian plastic art was influenced by Western arts (during the period of French colonialism), it preserved its artistic components, and the Algerian artist remained loyal to what his faith imposed on him and dictated to him by his heritage, adhering to his religious privacy, the values of his society, and his moral principles. Despite this peculiarity, the Algerian artist was smart in mixing Islamic arts, local arts, and Western rules, so his works embodied traditional values with abstract and expressive symbols. Symbolism emerged in Algerian plastic art beginning in the 1930s, and during their pursuit of abstract art they were inspired by the rhythm of the Arabic letter (1960). The paintings of the artist Muhammad Khadda were rich in symbols in the introduction to the exhibition held by the artist "Muhammad Khadda" Jean Senac, which is confirmed by the art critic Jean Senac. In the French city of Lyon, "Khuddah's heavy paintings, with their thicknesses and masses, announced the emergence of symbols...the symbol that dates back many centuries, originates from isolated circles and benches, and emanates from the songs of praise." (Sénac, J, , 2000, p. 180).

There are many artistic trends in Algeria and their connotations differ, inspired by popular heritage and expressing the ethnic and tribal affiliation of each artist (Asiakhem, Aksouh, Akmoun, artist Baya, Martinez, Bashir Yeles...).

The emergence of the Osham movement, which was founded in 1967, also played an important role in the development of the symbolic school in Algeria, and its goal was to research and delve deeper into Algerian identity and culture, relying on heritage elements.

The artists of the Osham movement were interested in searching for the local contents and aesthetics of national symbols, returning to the roots of the popular heritage, and highlighting its characteristics in Algerian artistic practices.

Noureddine Taberha - As an example of the Chaouite Amazigh symbols in Algeria, we chose some of the works of the artist Noureddine Taberha, who has Eurasian origins. In his paintings, he mixed art, myth, and mythology. He relied on symbols in most of his paintin In his painting “Spiritual Signatures” (2020 \_ 2021) - Figure 1 - the artist relied on an overlapping series of symbols on a blue background. It is known that the color blue characterizes Amazigh culture and is “the color of transparency that nature offers.”

drawing them from his Amazigh heritage and ancient Algerian culture.



**The first form**

**second form**

As a general appearance, like air, water, and sky, it is considered one of the most abstract colors...and it is considered the color of the search for veiled truth.”( Obaid Cloud, 2013, pp. 81-82) At the top of the painting is a disc bearing a lion’s head, and the significance of the lion in plastic art symbolizes strength, courage, immortality, leadership, and leadership. It also appears in the middle The painting is a reddish-orange circle engraved with Quranic letters derived from Islamic art, symbolizing continuity and renewal.The painting also contains several rectangles and squares that suggest the presence of women performing the ritual of prayer, which is one of the components of Algerian society.

His painting “From the Eurasia Collection,” Figure 2, is also an intense symbolic composition inspired by the artist’s environment and his ancient folk heritage. The first of these symbols is the “symbol of the five,” which

distinguishes most Arab regions and is an indication of protection from envy, evil, and witchcraft. The one contemplating the painting notices the presence of two opposite palms forming two doves, which symbolize peace, love, and security, connected to an upside-down triangle engraved with Qur'anic verses. At the bottom of the painting are dramatic Amazigh inscriptions inside a square. All of these interconnected symbols suggest to us the artist's relationship with his heritage and his strong connection to his faith and his environment. He tried to express this through his work. Highlighting the specificity of local Amazigh art and demonstrating the values and features of the national identity and popular culture of Algerian society

Algerian society is an ancient society that brings together the various regions of Kabyle, Chawi,

## **2-Symbols in traditional crafts (Zarbi)**

Mozabite and Tarqiyya ethnicities...and this, if any, indicates the richness of these regions in customs and traditions, the result of successive civilizations in one region, which results in the richness, diversity and multiplicity of craft activities. Traditional crafts differed in the Algerian regions and tribes (pottery, carpets, etc.) and were of great importance in Algerian society because of their functional, aesthetic, and ideological goals.

In this study, we shed light on weaving, especially the manufacture of carpets, this popular craft that Algeria has known for thousands of years, due to its abundance of raw materials (wool, lint...), and this craft has continued generation after generation.

## **Algeria knew six types of carpets:**

- Al-Amour carpet is widespread in western Algeria.
- Babar's Berber carpet in eastern Algeria
- Zarbata Al-Namamsha and Al-Harakta in eastern Algeria as well.
- Ghardaia carpet in southern Algeria.
- Al-Hanbal carpet in the city of Sidi Bel Abbes, western Algeria.

### **The meanings of symbols in the Amazigh carpet**

Algerian carpets of various types carry symbols, colors and patterns that have their social connotations and deep human dimensions, reflecting the ancient Algerian Berber and Berber folk heritage that preserves its ideas, myths and beliefs. Its names and forms varied depending on its location and purpose.

An example of this is the Babar Berber carpet in eastern Algeria, named after the village in which it is made, located in the Khenchela governorate of the Algerian Aures region, and it is considered one of the most famous types of Algerian wool carpets and the highest in price” ([Babar's Algerian carpet, Monday 11/23/2015, year 38, issue 10106, p. 279..](#))



زربية بابار هي اللوحة التي تحمل أشكالاً ورموزاً تعكس حياة الأسرة والمجتمع الشاوي الأوراسي

**Babar's Algerian carpet, the endangered heritage of Eurasian women,  
Jadour Al Arab newspaper, Monday 11/23/2015**

The symbols and shapes in Babar's carpet carry meanings and connotations that suggest the life and heritage of the Algerian Berbers. Even the Eurasian girl expresses her feelings and thoughts with expressive drawings and shapes. If she wants to get married and is shy in talking to her family about this topic, the textile symbols are her way to do so.

It also relies on shapes and symbols inspired by the reality of Amazigh life. For example, drawing the harbaqa, which is a game played by the elders of the region and played with small stones on the ground and in the open air, as well as drawing the "mushrif," which represents the earrings and jewelry worn by Eurasian women, as well as the drawing of the mihrab that It is a symbol of religiosity..."( [Ibid., n. p.](#))

While we find that the Berber society, which is conservative and emerging on modesty, principles and morals, uses them as a barrier to separate women and men in places and occasions that require it.

Likewise, the Beni Mzab rug has many different names according to the region to which it belongs: The Tanchara rug in Ghardaia Palace was used in the past to refer to the clothes of men or boys who study in Quranic schools. It has authentic Berber shapes and symbols, such as: the comb, the bride, the bride's jewels, the palm tree, and drawings and decorations. It mainly includes geometric shapes such as rhombuses, triangles, straight or curved lines, and shapes symbolizing the traditions of the region that are deeply rooted in history, and some letters are from the Tifinagh script. As for the colors, they consist of red, blue, green, and yellow.( [Bouburnousa Souad Ahmed, 2006, p. 120](#))



**\_The Tanachra carpet for Ghardaia Palace\_**

Yazgin carpet resembles prayer rugs in size and has deep historical connotations in its colors and decoration. The Chibert Nelsh carpet is also a cultural heritage and a cultural record of the Mozabite community.

The Beni Mzab carpet was distinguished by many plant and animal forms and symbols that express the meanings and life of the individual, his way of thinking, his emotions, and his religious and cultural beliefs.

One of the most important symbols found in the Bani Mzab carpet is the “six-pointed star” associated with our Lord David, peace be upon him. Its use dates back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, when a group of Jews lived within the walls of the city of Ghardaia. Through the contact of the Jews with the Bani Mzab and their participation in trade, the Bani Mzab were influenced by them and made the six-pointed star a symbol. One of their symbols and they adopted it in their traditional crafts, and used it in their homes for protection and immunity from all evil, in their belief that it repels envy and magic.

the Mozabite carpet also relied on the representation of myths in its decoration and shapes, such as the representation of the sun god Amun, whose worship was common in Egypt and spread among the Berbers because they believed that he was a symbol of strength and fertility. In addition to the form of the snake Telfasa, the goddess Tanit is the goddess of fertility and birth, and in

various places she symbolizes offspring and reproduction in the Mozabite culture.

The Mozabite carpet also relied on symbols of animal shapes, such as the scorpion to indicate strength, endurance, and patience in desert life, and the symbol of the spider that peoples lived with, which is a symbol of protection from insects and surrounding damage. Every symbol, point, line, color and shape in the Mozabite carpet of various types has its meanings and implications that are linked to the heritage, customs and culture of the Mozabite people and their civilizational affiliation.

### **Conclusion:**

The symbol is one of the oldest forms of communication in circulation, and a means of continuing popular arts and preserving the national and cultural identity of each society.

Amazigh arts are authentic arts stemming from ancient roots, rich in various shapes, symbols and colours, carrying many connotations that suggest national identity, Amazigh culture and the cultural belonging of its people.

The Algerian Amazigh artist excelled in his use of symbols in various literatures and arts (photography, fine art, music...), and traditional crafts (pottery, weaving, jewelry...) to express his reality and record his customs, traditions and heritage.

To preserve this cultural heritage, researchers and critics must rehabilitate these arts and the symbols that make up them, delve into their study, search for symbols that are still unknown, and embody them in various arts, especially with



the development of digital arts that increase the beauty of this authentic folk heritage.

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