



Berber Carpets of Morocco. The Symbols. Origin and Meaning

By Bruno Barbatti

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The top artistic quality of Berber carpets has already been a source of inspiration to artists such as Paul Klee and Le Corbusier. This book reveals a new slant on the origins of Berber carpets and on the sources and meanings of its motifs. Genuine Berber carpets are not the successors of well known Oriental carpets dating from the Islamic era but similarities in knotting techniques and certain motifs point to common roots harking back to the Neolithic period in Asia Minor. Because textiles wear out over time and a sequence of carpets across millennia no longer exists to prove the point, it is here that an author, for the very first time, presents the results of some in-depth, comparative research initiatives. He links the motifs of Berber carpets to rock art symbols and artefacts created by the first human civilizations, demonstrating that Berber carpets employ the same rules when using symbols and shapes and that there is a stunning similarity of correlation even with the characteristics evident during the Upper Palaeolithic period in Europe or the Neolithic Orient with the Mediterranean basin. The Berber carpet can therefore be considered as a definitive, genuine testimony of this archaic world. The book will speak volumes to anyone who is captivated by the origins of art and for whom the deciphering of symbolic language leads to a deeper knowledge and understanding of true meaning.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Bruno Barbatti was born in Zurich in 1926, the son of an architect of Italian and a mother of German origin. He is and feels himself a Swiss. He studied at the universities of Fribourg, Paris (the Sorbonne), Florence and Zurich, where he qualified as a Ph.D (history and German). He married Dominique Abadie, a French woman born in Paris, who later became a writer. For thirty-five years he was a teacher of history and history of art at the High School for Mathematics and Natural Science in Zurich, where he had himself been a pupil. In consequence he combines scientific precision with his artistic sensitivity. During several journeys to Morocco and extended stays in Marrakesh, where his wife was for some years a teacher at the Lycee Mohammed V, he came to appreciate Berber culture. Berber carpets fascinated the couple. In the course of time they acquired, purely for their aesthetic pleasure, numerous pieces which 30 years later have proved to be a choice collection. In 1996 some of them were exhibited at the Museum Bellerive in Zurich. Following the ICOC conference at Marrakesh in 1995, this exhibition sparked the current interest in Berber carpets. Since then the author's inquiring and critical spirit has led him to undertake systematic personal research to determine the origin and meaning of carpet symbolism. The present work is the result. Readers will form their own opinions. However, it is certain, that all amateurs of Berber carpets and lovers of Morocco, as well as those who recognise in symbolism a more profound sense of the reality, will find here pictures, knowledge and vision.

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