

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**A STUDY ON DOOR MOTIFS
IN MEDINA TUNISIA
(12TH -19TH CENTURY):
MOTIF DESIGNS AND MEANINGS**

ABDELAZIZ GATTOUFI

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of the requirements for the degree of
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulation of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Student : Abdelaziz Gattoufi

Student I.D. No. : 2011786783

Program : Master of Art and Design

Faculty : Faculty of Art and Design

Title : A study on door motifs in Medina Tunisia
(12th -19th century): motif designs and meanings

Signature of Student : 

Date : November 2015

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyse and understand the traditional doors motifs in Tunisia. Through time this treasured heritage is becoming endangered. In conjunction, this study is aimed to explore and identify the application of motifs and decorated elements on doors especially in Medina of Tunis. The objective of this study is to identify the types of traditional doors motifs and decorated elements. Besides that it is also to determine the symbolic interpretation and the philosophy of the motifs on doors. This research use qualitative methodology in which it was conducted by reviewing the literature on the topic, observation and interviews. Data was also obtained by collecting samples and traditional motifs of each artwork. Traditional doors were observed through a significant change; especially in terms of design where doors motifs are no longer applied. The collected motifs were shown to be an effective way of documenting the Tunisian national treasure of traditional doors motifs in each creation of arts before its extinction.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Islamic doors design was influenced by Islamic art history and heritage (Besim S. Hakim, 1994), Tunisian doors motifs design is the direct result of a pure art and design work (Besim S. Hakim, 1994). This is listed in the world heritage convention by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (UNESCO) entitled Medina of Tunis. According to Shimmel (1984) the art of North Africa is not as well studied as it should be. The Almoravid and Almohad dynasties are characterized by a tendency toward austerity during the time of the Hafsid dynasties developed significant, architecture, and a painted and sculpted woodwork, it was often poorly understood. Today Muslims have all these potentials in their culture, yet they still follow the global market without having an effect on it. There is a serious need for the Islamic market to set their own trend for their own use and also to present their strong culture globally. This research is a study on motifs found on Tunisian traditional doors between the period of eleven and nineteen centuries to recognize the physical and spiritual values of those designs. Thus, these cultural values may be better understood and can serve as a reference for designers. These days, many countries are concerned about culture where the tradition and thought are putting spurs to the promotion of more value-added culture artefact, the development of individual, cultural aspect contents and the growth of the national images. This study attempts to analyse and understand the traditional culture and heritage of Tunisian traditional doors motifs.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

From the Literature review and historical accounts/documentation there is strong significance and meaning in the case of design elements and motifs in traditional Tunisian doors. This needs to be examined for better understanding of this rich cultural heritage. Today in Tunisia, there is a lack of documentation in terms of looking at the design elements and motifs, and understanding its heritage and significance for the Tunisian culture (Shimmel, 1984).