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PhD Dissertation – Abstract

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PhD in History (Pre-Classical Ancient Near-East) – 33rd cycle (a.a. 2017/2018)

Anthropomorphic figurines, statuettes and jewelry from Urkesh
An archaeological and historical study

Doctoral thesis focusing on the anthropomorphic figurines, statuettes and plaques discovered in Urkesh and pertaining to the third and second millennium BC. The research offers an archaeological study of the artifacts in question, focusing on their descriptive attributes, their stratigraphical and archaeological context and their typological classification, where all this data is used as a steppingstone towards an analytical study of their meaning and function.

In addition to presenting and analyzing the anthropomorphic representations found in Tell Mozan's excavations, this research opens another window into Urkesh society, by presenting and analyzing the jewelry items found on the site itself and the ones represented on the anthropomorphic clay figurines, as they indicated and emphasized furthermore the importance of these representation, and the great significance that jewelry held for the ancients.

My intention in this research goes beyond adding new information in terms of the archaeological record and the field of material culture studies. My intentions were to investigate these artifacts in relationship to the Hurrian culture as a whole. This cultural frame was greatly considered in the interpretation of these finds. The geographical, political, and cultural aspects of Hurrian Urkesh are intertwined elements that shaped the city and helped in shaping the perception behind the production of artifacts. This cohesiveness gave rise to a distinct civilization, a distinctiveness that is reflected in much of the material culture previously studied. Through this study, I wanted to explore the effect that the Hurrian ethnicity and identity had on this type of material culture and how much restraints and freedoms this ethnic affiliation had imposed on the perception of the artists and craftsperson, and how clearly it is reflected in the art of anthropomorphic representation and jewelry making.

The final results of this work conclude that we might be able to trace some regional patterns in this type of material culture, without being able to conclusively identify an indigenous style, at least not until more items of this type are discovered in Urkesh.

The thesis consists of three parts, 16 chapters, two catalogs and one appendix as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Urkesh: Historical background
3. Major structural components
4. Chronology

Part one. Human figurines

5. Introduction
6. Context
7. Production techniques
8. Comparative analysis

Part two. Jewelry

9. The jewelry items of Urkesh: detailed analysis
10. Jewelry items in specific contexts
11. Comparative analysis

Part three. Historical analysis

12. Interpretive analysis of figurines
13. Function of figurines
14. Function and significance of jewelry
15. The perception of Beauty
16. Social identity

Catalogs

17. Anthropomorphic figurines
18. Jewelry

Bibliography

Appendix

List of illustrations

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