

Metaphysical connotations in modern Assyrian cylinder seals

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ABSTRACT

The tagged research dealt with (the metaphysical signs in the modern Assyrian cylinder seals), by studying the metaphysical signs in the cylinder seals of the modern Assyrian era. Metaphysical Signs in Modern Assyrian Cylindrical Seals.” Then the researchers finished the aforementioned chapter by defining the terms that have a direct relationship to the title of the research and its objectives.) By reviewing the symbolic connotations as a concept in ancient metaphysical thought, while the second topic was concerned with (the aesthetics of the art of cylinder seals in the Mesopotamian civilization). This topic included the modern Assyrian arts and the impact of metaphysical symbolic connotations in the arts of that era. As for the third chapter, it was concerned with monitoring the research community. By adopting the descriptive analytical approach for the purpose of analyzing it according to the indicators adopted by the researchers, and samples of it were chosen in an intentional way. It reached (2) cylinder seals that covered the limits of the research. As for the fourth chapter, it contained the results of the research

Keywords: denotation, symbol, metaphysics, cylinder seal

Research problem:

The Assyrians in this era of military power reached a large amount. King Adad-Nirari II (911-891 BC. M) is the one who saved Assyria after its setback, and that is why he corrected this era (911-612 BC). A modern designation that lasted until the end of the Assyrian political entity after the fall of Nineveh in the year 612 BC. That is, it lasted about three centuries. The researchers divided this era into two distinct roles, in both of which a major empire was formed. The year 745 BC, it would have lasted about a century and a half (911-744 BC), and nine kings ruled in it from the rule of Adad-Nirani II to the rule of "Thoglothplizer" III (744-727 BC) and occupied the second empire: from 745 to 612 BC. M and the most famous of those who ruled the Sargonian dynasty (Baqir, p. 548).

Visual texts usually belong to the mythological thought of Mesopotamia, and these texts enable the reader to read them twice in the light of this thought. It would deal with the symbol, and tell a deeper story that expressed the conscience and feeling of the person who created it

(Adonis, p. 15). The symbol emerges according to a newly created system similar to a subject extracted from a personalized sign that has a fixed identity that does not change by repetition of the form or the renewal of its representation (Hauser, p. 23), As a usual phenomenon, it was transformed by a change in the motivated mentality into a new hidden system in the expressive form of nature, and it was abstraction with aesthetic values that serve the artistic purpose (Al Said, p. 23). The seals of this era dealt with religious topics, as the British Museum includes a group of the most beautiful seals of that era, which was characterized by the treatment of religious and mythological topics. The strangeness (Okasha, pg. 472).

From the foregoing, the research problem appears through the following question: - What are the metaphysical connotations in the modern Assyrian cylinder seals? And how did the Assyrian artist embody the connotations?

Second - Importance and Need for Research:

The importance of the current research is reflected in the intellectual, conceptual and symbolic concept it deals with for metaphysical connotations related to the ancient Iraqi arts, including the modern Assyrian cylinder seals. In addition to learning about the culture of the ancient Iraqi society, and hence the importance of the current research with the following: 1- This is a virgin study that humbly examines a topic that investigates the metaphysical connotations of modern Assyrian cylinder seals. 2- The importance of revealing the metaphysical connotations of the modern Assyrian cylinder seals in the field of art education and historical studies.

Third - The goal of research:

The current research aims to: Know the metaphysical connotations in the modern Assyrian cylinder seals.

Fourth - Research Limits:

The current research is determined by the following:

1. Objective limits: metaphysical connotations in (modern Assyrian cylinder seals).
2. Temporal limits: The current research is determined in the modern Assyrian era (911-612 BC).
3. Spatial boundaries: Study of the modern Assyrian cylinder seals.

Fifth- Define the terms:

Signs:

- Language: known by (Ibn Manzur) in his book (Lisan al-Arab): "He indicates a thing, he indicates evidence and significance. So he pointed it to him, and he indicated it, and he indicated it, and the combination is evidence and evidence, and the noun is denoting or denoting" (Ibn Manzur, p. 1006).

- Idiomatically: The science of semantics is a knowledge of it that determines the conditions that make the symbol imply the meaning (Ayachi, p. 25).

Avatar:

Linguistically: “a hidden vote with the tongue like a whisper, which is by moving the lips with words that are not understood by the wording, which is a sign and gesture with the eyes, eyebrows and lips” (Ibn Manzur, p. 1223).

- **Idiomatically:** “a visible reference to something that is not visible in general, such as an idea or an attribute” (Myers, p. 54).

- **Metaphysics (language):**

Invisibility:

- Linguistically: And he saw it as a pun: he concealed it like and he showed it, and the news: he put it behind him, and about that: he wanted it, and he showed someone else, and from him his sight: he pushed it. And hidden: Cover (Al-Fayrouzabadi, p. 399).

Idiomatically: metaphysics means all supernatural things, such as magic, ghosts, spirits, life after death... and other things (Al-Saadi, electronic).

Procedural meta-symbolism: it is the totality of meanings and ideas that can be read in the products of modern Assyrian cylinder seals and the implicit figurative units they contain that can be interpreted according to the prevailing intellectual and ideological data at that time

Chapter II:

references to metaphysical connotations of modern Assyrian art.

The Mesopotamian artist was able, through some of his artworks, including the Warka votive vessel Figure (1), to “construct his subject in an architectural construction, revealing (the infinity) moving with an ascending system on the surface of the vessel, to complicate the connection and approximate, between the systems of the heavenly and earthly intellectual relations. Before the birth of a pioneer Ideal Philosophy (Plato) For more than two thousand five hundred years, Mesopotamian intellectual philosophy was able to establish a system for the philosophy of cosmic forces, by classifying it into ideal, eternal, supreme, and transient, earthly forces. This is represented in the system of pictorial construction of the scene, when the surface of the vessel was divided into a number of horizontal bands, according to precise engineering calculations, which led to the formation of a temporal and spatial (scenario) to narrate the narration and sequence of events, starting from the earth to the sky, and from nature to beyond nature. The scene in its content was like (a ziggurat) linking the sky with the world of the earth” (Saheb, electronic) .

The metaphysical connotations are characterized by the strength of the reference basis in them and the extent of their links to religious, magical, subconscious, mythical and superstitious landmarks. Aesthetics, ethnology and history to seek to study the arts, including Mesopotamia, and to know its intellectual references (Wadi, pp. 142-143).

Man has probably combined the fertility of the land and its agricultural production in Jarmo with the fertilization of the female by the male organ, which explains to us those forms with strange metaphysical ideas made of clay and pottery in the form of that organ (Phallus), and many examples have been found in Iraq and the Near East (Baqir, p. 225). It is noted that “the emergence of symbolic thinking is what makes social life possible and necessary.” In marriage, we find that the subject and tool of communication are of the same nature (women and men). and its agricultural output - as Language is a set of operations aimed at ensuring the type of communication between individuals and groups. However, (Lévi-Strauss) does not refer social life to language, “but he refers it to the conditions of symbolic thinking. The basis of symbolic thinking is the unconscious construction of the human soul (Jafar, pp. 33-34). The discovery of copper and mining among men and the discovery of its role in procreation led to a male reversal in the form (2), in the Mesopotamian society, the role of women was marginalized, the city and temples arose, the man became the leader of society and the leader of the gods, and the woman became his subordinate, and the “Father God” appeared in Figure (3), As a symbol of the air and rain, while the woman remained as a subject for childbearing and family care (Al-Majidi, electronic) It is clear from the woman's head that it resembles the head of a lizard (or a lizard), metaphysical forms borrowed from the environment of the Iraqi marsh.

Some of the flat seals in Jemdet Nasr, in the Wilayat Hill, which is located in Wasit Governorate, carried shapes that represent a naked woman in a state of childbearing, as a symbol of growth, renewal and fertility. Magical spells or amulets for protection, and as we know that a woman’s lack of pregnancy may constitute an obstacle to her in the concept of patriarchal society, which exposes her to neglect, so those seals represented formal magic (similarity produces similar) Especially for barren women in the hope of having children (Salman, pg. 160). Figure (4).” The symbol contains a literal sign as well as a much greater range of meaning, implication and emotion, all of which are not written down. The symbol often merges into the higher pattern, or the expression of Various cosmic instinctive motifs, and patterns of human behavior and belief come charged with a primitive emotional impetus” (a group of researchers, p. 6).



Figure (4)

Figure (3)

Figure (2)

Figure (1)

the aesthetics of the art of cylinder seals in the Mesopotamian civilization.

The emergence of the cylinder seal is considered by some researchers as the "direct origin" of writing in Mesopotamia. In other words, the appearance of the cylinder seal and the engraved images and symbols on it is an important incentive for its use of pictorial signs to express specific meanings, which is the form that writing took in its oldest known stages. It must be understood that the appearance of the Sumerian writing in the role of Warka (specifically in

the third phase of it), does not mean that the Sumerian language was not circulated before this period, i.e. in the previous role of the slaves (Ali, pp. 29-30). Although some researchers assert that it did not appear in slaves. The seals are among the important sources that reveal important aspects of knowledge from the civilization of Mesopotamia, as they were engraved with various themes of scenes related to “religious beliefs, themes of myths, images of gods and their symbols, and events immortalized in literature” (Baqir, p. 267).

In some seals, there are figures of complex mythical animals that represent a symbol of the flying deity "Amdukud, Zu, or Nankersu, the eagle with a lion's head" in the middle of two goats. Figure (5). The pictorial abstraction has led to reductions in form that were not seen before in the art of the Near East, as happened in the creatures of the Near East. A vehicle that was made of dissimilar natural elements with the intent of symbolizing a supernatural power (Mottkart, vol. 1, p. 94).

The material evidence, especially from the clay figures, indicated that the life of the Akkadian leader king is miraculous and mysterious, and this character was framed with powers that exceed the level of ordinary humans, and their seals were characterized by two characteristics of the seals of the end of the Warka era, which are the traditional method and the educational method, but they differed with them in that they did not To the third style, which is the ornate decoration, and the Akkadian artist neglected the value of the imaginative and decorative style from what it was in the era of the dawn of dynasties Their tastes for their artworks changed, so they moved from the form of polyphonic lines to the new artistic method in the expressive style and moved from the method of the interlock model to the method of groups to obtain continuity. The scenes of battle in the Akkadian era usually included three groups or two or one group of disputants, and the group was not less than four Common Creatures (a selection of Iraqi researchers, p. 231-234) Figure (6-7). The naked hero, or human bull, whose face is surrounded by rings in this seal, tries to save an animal from the evil of the lion's predation.



Figure (7) Figure (6) Figure (5)

The political renaissance of Assyria was clearly reflected in the artifacts left of us from the editions of seals that were used on the legal documents of that era that were found in Assyria. Certainly - as well as relief and painting - the same Assyrian artistic developments in terms of subjects and style, The Seal of Ashur-Nirari II 1424-1418 BC goes in line with the political position of the Kingdom of Assyria at that time, for it is through arranging its multiple figures of humans, animals and fabricated creatures on the surface as a whole that reflects a tendency to divide the pictured space into vertically successive rows, and to place contradictory groups side by side, which are Features that do not exist in the Mitani seals (Okasha, pg. 413).

The embodiment of the doctrine of the natural spirituality of the king and the concept of his comprehensive myth through winged figures with human faces, we realize the importance and nature of (Iamsu), that magical guardian animal entrusted with preventing evil spirits from infiltrating the sacred hall, as the holy king with his symbol of life, that symbol that appears in a ritualistic way, to the essence of the Assyrian concept of ownership (Mottkart, vol. 2, p. 371). The seals in the modern Assyrian era dealt with religious topics, as the British Museum includes a group of the most beautiful seals of that era, which was characterized by dealing with religious and mythological topics. These inscriptions depict some symbols that carry multiple connotations of intractable concepts. The artist was interested in highlighting the details with great skill, some of which represent characters symbolizing the jinn with multiple wings that evoke strangeness (Okasha, pg. 472) Figure (8). The precise engraving on the stone contains a mixture of realism and mythical imagination, so we see the sniper facing the lions to eliminate them, as they represent an evil that must be eradicated. It spreads fear among the meek animals, and the artist addressed this idea and reformulated it more than once in different ways that are predominantly imaginative (Okasha, pg. 522). Figure (9).



Figure (9)



Figure (8)

model (1)

- Title of work: The King performs his ritual duties before the Tree of Life
- Material: stone
- Height: 2.5cm×3.5cm
- Date of work: the eighth century BC - Nimrud

Al-Adiya: Figure (452) Okasha, p. 531



Work analysis :

A design for a seal defining the transition process from the Middle Assyrian era to the modern Assyrian era and we see kings and mythical beings in front of the sacred tree of life with a bird-like symbol of an Assyrian god.

The artwork is one of the works of interest to the Mesopotamian community, as it carries important symbols that represent obsessions and metaphysical ideas that generally control their lives, and among these important symbols is a bird-like symbol of an Assyrian god standing behind the king, who in turn stands in front of an important symbol representing the tree of life while performing his ritual duties. On earth as a representative of the gods, this winged hybrid bird may symbolize Satan or monsters with heads resembling the heads of eagles and mythical

human bodies carrying large wings Some of them were found buried under the floors of houses, referring to the purposes of protection from evil, as they are similar forms that pay the owner of the house the evil that comes from the same legendary being, so that these forms took their place in the art of drawing and painting in the last Assyrian phase, including the modern Assyrian era, and we note the symbol of the god of Assyria, which is A bird on a tree with its wings and wearing a crown on its head, may be blessed to perform this ritual, which cannot take place without the presence of the Assyrian deity, who is believed to be the official deity of Ashur, from which the Assyrians took their name, two wavy lines hang from the sides of the god Assyria covering the tree of life from the top to the middle, and each of the two kings holds in one hand the end of this line that ends with the symbol of kingship that the king carries as a substitute for the scepter in ancient Babylon, which is the symbol of the god Adad and represents The Thunderbolt The Assyrians have always associated the deity with the animal symbolizing it.

model (2)

Work title: A seal depicting a kneeling man holding a winged disk in his hands above his head

- Material: stone

- Height: 2.5cm×3.5cm

- Date of work: the eighth century BC



Al-Adiya: The British Museum, St. (432), Okasha, p. 517.

Work analysis :

The seal contains two mythical figures, in the middle of them is a kneeling man carrying a winged disk above his head. There are inscriptions in the middle showing the subject of the seal, as the kneeling man separates from the two mythical figures a wavy line descending down from both sides.

The Assyrian artist was able to symbolize his forms in a way that calls for attention, as he repeatedly employed mythical forms on both sides of the seal, where a fabricated creature stands that may represent a metaphysical form believed by the Assyrians, such as jinn and goblins, which distinguished their presence in such works, and they represent the upper world that completely controls the world of the earth. In the hands of every genie appears the two tools of purification among the Assyrians, which are represented by the pail (the bucket) and the cornice (the pine cone), while the purified water pours down from both sides of the kneeling man carrying the sun disk on his head. Which symbolizes the upper world and the sky, where water flows from both ends, which refers to the rains or the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where the Mesopotamians believed through his metaphysical thought that the gods are in the highest, and they are in it before the sky is, and thus the sky pours its water on the earth thirsting for fertilization until it blooms Thus, he achieves the union of the upper (spiritual) with the earthly (material), and this union is the secret of life and its justification. All of them are metaphysical

symbolic indications gathered in the cylinder seal, and they represent a broad metaphysical thought that shines on the land of Assyria and its kings, and it may embody these two honest guards who were assigned by the god of the sun to run the earth and cleanse it from dirt with purifying water, because the Assyrians are accustomed to these mythical forms as in (Lamsu).

The winged bull that they used to put in the doors of their temples and palaces as an important message aimed at intimidating their enemies. This message comes from the belief that every god has the animal that represents him on the surface of the earth, and he was entrusted with guarding the buildings so that the forces of evil do not penetrate into them, where the wing represents the flying factor that characterizes It has hidden forces as it descends to the earth at any time you wish. The wings are symbols of power and control. The Assyrian used them in their metaphysical forms as an important element in imposing his control through them on the earth, through embodying the natural spiritual belief of the king and the concept of his comprehensive legend through winged figures with human faces.

research results

1- The modern Assyrian sculptor used symbolic connotations represented by the wings that reveal when he was affected by flight and an attempt to reveal the upper world that includes mythical creatures.

2- The symbol of the god Assyria prevailed on the sculptures of cylinder seals in the modern Assyrian era as the protector of the earth and the bringer of fertility and reproduction in conjunction with its appearance with the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates.

3- In most of his works, the Assyrian artist put a documentation of his works, represented by cuneiform writing on both sides of the seal or in the upper section.

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