

The Mural painting in Mesopotamia

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الملخص

ففي الجزء الاول تناول البحث دراسة تاريخية عامة عن حضارة بلاد الرافدين من طبيعة الارض وموقعها الجغرافي و أصل اكتشاف الرسم الجداري و في الجزء الثاني دراسة مستفيضة عن اهم السمات الشكلية التي تضمنتها مواضيع الرسم الجداري في بلاد الرافدين ، وفي الجزء الثالث من البحث شمل البحث على دراسة الدلالات الفكرية التي احتواها الرسم الجاري والغاية منه ، أما في الجزء الرابع تم تحليل جدارية الفتك بأحد الاسرى لتبيان ما احتوته من سمات شكلية ودلالات فكرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : — الرسم ، بلاد الرافدين ، الرسم الجداري .

Abstract

In the first section, it deals with a general historical study on the civilization of Mesopotamia, from the nature of the land, its geographical location, and the origin of discovering the mural painting. while the second section An extensive study of the most important formal features included in the subjects of mural painting in Mesopotamia, , and also the study included the intellectual semantics which contained in the mural and its purpose, Finally, the research dealt with the analysis of a mural of lethality in one of the prisoners to show what it contained of formal features and intellectual connotations.

key words: drawing, Mesopotamia,Mural painting.

Introduction

mural painting is one of the important arts of drawing, that accompanied man since his existence, and this Kind of painting also contributed to decorat large and important areas of the that walls in the city of (Barsib), which is located in northern Iraq.

Therefore, the tools, techniques, and purposes of this type of art developed in the Mesopotamian civilization, and it occupied a large area in the most important cultural center, which is Mesopotamian civilization ,Therefore, the researcher found need to study these murals .And find what are the most important reasons and technical characteristics that contributed to the maturation of the intellectual, heritage and cultural side through the necessity of conducting a technical study dealing with the modalities and subjects and the mechanism of their employment by answering the following questions:

1. What are the intellectual contents Included in the mural painting in Mesopotamia?
2. What are the factors that led to the destruction of a large number of Mesopotamian mural paintings?
3. What are the cultural and aesthetic motives that contributed to the preference for this type of art?

On the other hand, it is considered one of the studies that deals with distinctive artistic experiences in the art of mural painting throughout the history, It sheds The light on an important historical stage of the civilization (Rafidain Valley) with its formal features and intellectual connotations, It is an addition to knowledge of art and a tributary for the specialists.

The research aim is to shed light on the characteristics and characteristics of mural art in the Mesopotamian civilization, As well as of the research aim to reveal the drawing confined between the third millennium BC. AD

and the end of the first millennium BC. m, alone spatial and objective in Mesopotamia.

(1) A brief history of Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia is the oldest civilization, where the Tigris and Euphrates originate from the mountains of Armenia, At first, they are very close to each other, and then they diverge when they enter the land of Iraq today (. F. Dyakov S. Kofa Leaf, p. 81).

This country has enjoyed geographical advantages that made it one of the most stable countries in the world in economic terms,(This country was known as Mesopotamian plastic arts because the first agricultural villages were established in it, which resulted in four different civilizations in their cultural products: Hassounah, Samarra, Halfa, and Al-Ubaid), It was affected by the economic situation that led to the flourishing of these arts, which reflected the social and religious thought of the Mesopotamian community (Sahib, Zuhair, , 2019, p. 9).

This was helped by the early knowledge of agriculture and industry, which was classified as one of the oldest civilizations known to man,(This is the ideal geographical background that prepared for the first man of Iraq the natural habitats and the appropriate environmental conditions, which enabled him to progress rapidly in the field of urbanization after his settlement and residence in the first agricultural villages), This man was unique in his kind and in his skills in stone industries in his early ages, whether he lived in the caves of the mountains, or frequented the terraces of the upper rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) (Bahnam Abu Al-Souf, 1980, p. 116).

In continuity with his agricultural and industrial activities, ancient man used some arts, and this was the result of meeting his daily life needs, including architecture, pottery and other crafts.

Natural phenomena led to the burial and damage of some monuments Including the murals drawing which was found in early of history, as in Figure (1), (2)



Figure1



figure 2

The archaeological finds show us a previous knowledge and experience of man in the field of mural painting dating back to prehistoric times (Old Stone Age). Where (the first beginnings refer to the simplicity of the mural painting left by the cave as it was no more than numerous curved lines that were arranged in random, confused positions to compose shapes whose nature is difficult to predict, The cave artist may have drawn lines on the ground with a piece of tree branches or with one of his stone tools used in his daily life, lines in spontaneous ways preserved in his imagination and painted on the floors of the walls.

(2) Features formality

The Mesopotamian artist transformed everything he saw into art forms that had distinct formal features, He expressed it in his own ways to generate for us a rich civilization inferred through its arts "Primitive man never knows an inanimate world. For this very reason he does not (personally) diagnose inanimate objects" (Frankfurt et al., 1980, p. 16.).

The murals which was found in the ancient Mesopotamian cities were marked with special features that reflect the Mesopotamian thought in that period resulting from its cumulative mental treasury due to the external influences that were pressuring it, These stressors may be social or spiritual, Which led to the emergence of formal features stemming from the artist's awareness and intentionality in the mechanisms of showing the image, which were based on what is social and spiritual, so it appears in the form of creativity (Barrow, Andrey, 1980, p. 116).

And when he found the interest of the individual and the old artist in mural paintings, that reflects the extent of their importance to him, "driven by his intuition, applying to nature his experience of human society, explaining it in a societal way"((Frankfurt et al., 1980,p.156).

also (all the murals painting are attributed to the ancient Babylonian and (Assyrian) era, Which was found in the palace of King (Zimri-Yalam) located in the city of (Mari) Tal Hariri, near the village of Albu Kamal on the Iraqi-Syrian border, where it represented in the museum of Fine arts and dates back to the Eighteenth century BC.(. Sahib, Zuhair, , 2016, p. 681).

These arts varied, including mural painting or mural photography. Painting was the basis of every plastic art work, whether it was a drawing, a sculpture, an engraving on stone slabs, or inscriptions on cylinder seals (and such a close contact with nature, we now see glimpses of daily life, which although it is from Before is completely missing in the Sumerian depiction, but it has appeared in the era of Isin-La Rassa, and in the era of Hammurabi) (. Barrow, Andrey, 1979, p. 347).

These formal features carry with them many intellectual connotations that were nothing but an explanation of the Mesopotamian mentality represented by the artist through its representation in his works, (Art has its own peculiarity and its own character in the modern Assyrian era, when the themes of wars, hunting and other royal affairs emerged from the scenes that adorned the palaces of kings.

Such as the siege of cities, the demolition of fortresses, the displacement of the population, the market of prisoners and mutilation with them, and other things in which we can read the development of combat methods, war machines and weapons) as in the following figures (3) (4).



Figure 3



figure 4

(Analysis)

This made the Assyrian artist's thought recede with a basic idea, to limit his art to representing the king and serving the palace, in addition to some other life matters that pressured him. And the artist's care for the drawings reveals the extent of his awareness of preserving them from atmospheric influences, In addition to maintaining its formal system based on its narrative narration in conveying the majestic image of the king with the gods, it has(The Mesopotamian artist sought murals configurations, To close the two sides of the painting and focus on the center where the dialogue between the king and his idol was confined to some degree of secrecy, So the celebration began with a kind of stillness. To honor the gods by their vice on earth, The visual surfaces were characterized by flatness, as the artist was absent from the perspective or the third dimension in their drawings, as he represented the forms close to the sight with the same sizes as the forms far from the sight themselves, as they were not natural forms but symbolic images extracted from natural forms, it paint (the gods, the king, and the common people in idiomatic bodies figures , in which the side position of the painting was installed in the frontal position of the eyes, and the "explin" and thus the figurative forms gradually moved towards abstraction, as they entered in the work a very wide range.

(3) Intellectual semantics

Artistic topics varied in Mesopotamia, in the ancient stages of history, despite their differences in formal and objective formulations and intellectual connotations.” Our speculative thought is the least solidly organized form. Meditation is an intuitive method of realization, almost as close to vision, but this does not mean that it is just a free mind wandering. Ignoring reality or trying to evade its problems, Intellectual contemplation transcends artistry, expressing a strong will, placing its ideas in forms determined by doctrine, thought, politics, and the power of the king. "(Frankfurt et al., Pre-philosophy,1980,p16) This art is determinedly directed, and submissively shaped. We feel that he committed to the task of glorifying the king, and representing him as a supreme man. All his works are miracles of courage and the art of running state affairs, that is reason we find transition and solidity in royal images. Because the king ends up being a mere model of a form, and the living model is mixed in its function, and he loses all the elements of his personality.” This is the social reality to which these civilized cities were subject by combining what is intellectual with what is realistic, so the artist dispenses with his personality to serve the state policy represented by the personality of the king, “People considered only the forces that aroused awe and awe in them as full citizens in the universe, so he called them gods, and they alone have political rights and the ability to political influence.”(Frankfurt et al.,1980,p.158).There were many aspects of the representation of the gods in the diversity of their forms, which were loaded with intellectual connotations, for each representative form carried a specific pattern of its own, and that the gods did not appear in their form, but were represented by symbols such as animals, The Mesopotamian artist used certain primitive materials in preparing his murals and implemented them using his own techniques. As the technique, according to Heidegger, “It is that artistic, mental, and manual production For a group of means that are used for practical purposes, Which man uses in his work to complete his powers and abilities, and in

order to meet those needs that appear in the context of his social conditions and his special historical stage” (Ibrahim, Ahmed , pg. 97). In this sense any artwork needs tools that help the artist express the idea so that he can embody it himself, and among these tools are the drawing materials that are considered, They are considered "the basic materials that the ancient man used in his artistic works, as well as the machines and tools he made and how they were used in the implementation of his artistic productions, such as drawings and sculptures. Most of these materials were simple materials that he obtained from nature, and he made some modifications on them in order to make them Valid for carrying out his artistic works” (Sahib, Zuhair, Hamid Nafal, 2011, p. 13).

The color raw materials played a prominent role in the arts of ancient Mesopotamia, so one was preferred over the other, each according to its importance and need, accompanied by the availability of the necessary natural materials. (The ancient man resorted to searching for suitable pigments, and this led him to find at least two mineral ores, namely yellow ocher and hydrated iron oxide (limonite), red ocher or red iron oxide (hematite), which is generally known as the goldsmith’s red, both of which are iron ores, while malachite (Malachite) or blue copper carbonate from copper ores) (Hodges, Henry, 1988, p. 55). It was “stereo paste paint or earthen pigment, . There were two noticeable styles, the first of which was distinguished by the outline of the borders in black, before the application of colors, second was distinguished by red borders that were emphasized here and there in the main points with black margins. Black, red and blue were the only colors used. As for green and yellow, they were not present at all.” (Barrow, Andrey, , 1980, p.297). Thus, the Mesopotamian artist, through his use of these colors, expressed to us the extent of his mental ability based on experimentation through his discovery of oxides, the method of mixing them, their proportions, and the places where they were found in the surrounding natural materials, and coloring them through his own technical methods.

Work name: - (Destruction of a Prisoner)

Year of implementation: - (eighth century BC)

Dimensions: - None



Figure 5

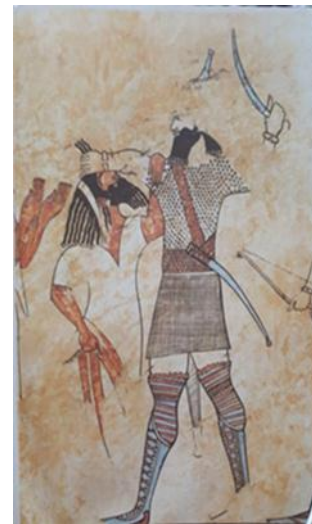


figure 6

In this mural, the painter depicted a scene from the military and war conflicts that were taking place in the Assyrian country (Parsib Hill), on a mortar of clay mixed with straw well, then the characters of the scene were drawn in black with soft brushes that may be made of horse hair, A number of warriors were represented in the mural who were taking prisoners and torturing them who were affiliated with the enemy soldiers after they were overthrown. With weapons that consist of swords, bows and a purse in which arrows are collected, they wear funnel-shaped helmets of the metal type, painted blue The soldiers wore a kind of short skirt resembling a netted skirt, and striped rolls of red and blue ocher balloons, with blue boots tightly draped over their legs, and white shirts above them, circles might have been metallic mesh-shaped shields, They were distinguished by short black hair for the shoulder and black beards. They took the prisoners and were tied with ropes, Then one of the soldiers grabbed the black hair of a prisoner with his left hand and raised his right hand in which he carried a small sword. In order to kill the captive, He may pull a cart with his right hand or carry a heavy object.

Behind the soldiers, two figures appeared, showing details of one's face, while the other raised her hand in supplication. Most likely, they were female captives that brought from the spoils of war. Each of them wore long, loose white clothes and decorated with tassels and ornaments with A shawl with which they covered their heads, filling the shapes with colors in a flat in one color tone, the view of the mural's shape was lost, as the people far from the viewing angle were the same size as the people close to it, pictures of the chest in front with a side head and front eyes, hands and two legs in a side position, in addition to drawing a right thumb for both hands.

A number of parts of the mural were lost as a result of weather conditions from moisture due to groundwater, and because of the succession of wars as a result of military conflicts, and because of the drying of the fatty substance that binds the colors, which causes them to be scraped for any simple reason. The Mesopotamian artist also installed the parts of the gods' body to make them more effective and give them a mythical significance to mix in them the qualities that the earthly possesses to give them to the being compound metaphysician.



Figure 6 Guardian Angel (744-626 BC)

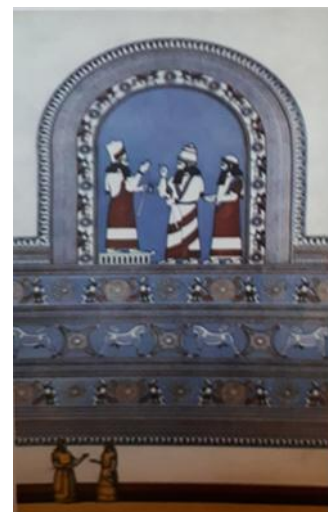


figure 7

As it was known about Assyria, it documented military and religious conflicts and some daily activities known to the Assyrian community. This mural was represented in terms of its shape as one of the wars that were taking place in Assyria and documenting the prisoners' market. As in Figure (7), which represents a religious devotional scene.

Some parts of the murals were lost due to the military conflicts that were taking place between the city-states and also the groundwater that the earth preserved, which caused the walls to become damp which make it fatty binder and dry due to the salinity of the soil.

Results

1 The life of the Mesopotamian artist limited to life before death Which made them represent this in his drawings to record and document religious, daily, political and military events.

2 Variation in the number of cultural achievements from mural painting in the civilization of Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley due to geographical conditions, weather influences and military conflicts led to the damage of large numbers of them, especially the groundwater that causes soil salinity in Mesopotamia.

3 The Mesopotamian artist had a special vision that made him analyze and re-install the forms in there artistic forms, as they installed the form of the god from a human head and an animal body.

4- The artist of Mesopotamia lost the perspective in his representation of human forms, where the chest was in front of them, the legs were sideways, the hands were sideways, the face was sideways, and the eyes were frontal.

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