

# Aesthetic And Semantic Dimensions of Scenes of The Goddess Ishtar on Babylonian Pottery Panels

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## ABSTRACT

The current research focused on studying (the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of scenes of the goddess Ishtar on Babylonian pottery tablets), through which the Babylonian artist was able to display his skills and abilities, which enable him to depict the form of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) in line with the status of the gods in the understanding of ancient Mesopotamian man. The research included four chapters. In the first chapter, we discussed the research problem, passing through the aim of the research (identifying the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of the scenes of the goddess Ishtar on Babylonian pottery tablets) and according to the time period (1595-2006 BC) of the ancient Babylonian era, and analyzing models Illustrated pottery slabs representing various scenes of the goddess Ishtar, as well as defining the terms to which the research was presented. The second chapter was devoted to the theoretical framework, which included two sections. The first section dealt with the most important characteristics of the goddess Ishtar and its symbols. The second topic included an extension of the pottery slabs that appeared in the Babylonian era and their most important pottery contents and connotations. As for the third chapter, it included the research procedures through which the research community of (8) pottery plates was identified. The descriptive approach and the method of analyzing the content of pottery plates were adopted and used in analyzing the research sample of (3) artifacts that came in line with the goal of the research in Standing on the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of scenes of the goddess Ishtar in ancient Iraqi art while the fourth chapter is devoted to a review of the results, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions.

**Keywords:** aesthetic and semantic dimensions, scenes, goddess Ishtar.

## Introduction: Methodological Framework

**First / the research problem:** the goddess Ishtar had an important place among the gods, being one of the most important goddesses that were worshiped in ancient Iraq. She is the goddess of love, beauty, sex, and the goddess of war and battles. For the female jealous, sensitive, loving, self-confident, confident in getting what she wants, stubborn adventure, sassy of the tongue, and she is the owner of sanctity despite everything she does that suggests her nature and inclinations. At the same time, she is the cruel anger, which knows no end to her anger when provoked, subdues

her enemies, but is nevertheless prone to failure and tends to the way of a weak woman when defeats are inflicted, so she finds nothing to deal with except weeping and tears. Ishtar collected the aspects of a woman's personality with its positives and negatives, as it embodies all the characteristics of strong and weak women, thus expressing the meanings of human life clearly and through its embodiment on various scenes of Mesopotamian arts, including pottery panels, which reflected important aesthetic, religious and spiritual connotations that contributed to the development of the level of The religious concepts of the ancient man in Mesopotamia, as pottery panels were considered one of the most important sculptural arts that flourished in the

ancient Babylonian era, which is considered one of the most prominent historical eras, especially in terms of civilization and economics. The so-called sciences of mathematics, medicine, and astrology, which arose from real astronomy, and art in the ancient Babylonian era was a reflection of the development that the Mesopotamian society followed with its arts and cultures, and the artist of this era was able to mix the traditional artistic methods of Mesopotamia civilization with a new artistic style, called (Old Babylonian art), which is one of the means expressing the civilization of this era, and one of the arts that became famous in this era is the art of pottery panels, which varied in form. Its sights and scenes, which had religious and magical significance and importance, especially for people who used to master them and believed in them, as each subject depicted on the clay tablet had a specific meaning, and it became an indispensable part of their needs and requirements of life and in various religious, social and economic fields. The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) combined these contradictory traits in her personality, and as embodied in the ancient Iraqi art, she is the goddess of love, beauty, eroticism and intense femininity, and at the same time a goddess of wars and battles and a love of bloodshed and destruction. Therefore, the problem of the current research can be formulated in the following question: What are the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of the scenes of the goddess Ishtar on the Babylonian pottery panels?

**Second / the importance of research and the need for it:** 1- This study is the first study to the extent of the researcher's knowledge to know the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of the goddess Ishtar on the scenes of the Babylonian pottery panels. 2- The research shows the position of the goddess Ishtar in the art and thought of man in ancient Iraq, and his sanctification of her, through her depiction on the scenes of pottery panels. 3- The current research allows researchers to conduct similar studies for other deities depicted on pottery tablets. 4- The current research provides the libraries with a modest scientific and technical effort by getting to know the results of the research.

**Third, the aim of the research:** The current research aims to identify the aesthetic and

semantic dimensions of the scenes of the goddess Ishtar on Babylonian pottery tablets.

**Fourth / limits of research:** 1- Objective limits: a study of the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of scenes of the goddess Ishtar on Babylonian clay tablets. 2- Spatial boundaries: Iraq and the ancient Babylonian era. Time limits: (2006 - 1595 BC).

#### **Fifth, definition of terms**

- First - the linguistic dimension: Distance is in contrast to proximity, and according to the ancients it is an extension between the two things, and the theologians made distance an imposed extension or in itself a fit to be occupied by the body (1). Dimensions are derived from the most common duration and distance (2). Dimensions (plural) are singular (dimension), which is vision and firmness (3).
- Idiomatically distance: It is a real quantity that is determined either by itself or with other quantities (4), and it is also the amplitude of the range and the distance (5).
- Secondly, beauty as a language: Camel - Jamal: Good manners and manners, he is beautiful and she is beautiful. Jamal: You look beautiful. Embellishment: to decorate and improve. Make it beautiful, make it beautiful. Beauty: beauty (6).
- Idiomatically beauty: At Saliba, beauty is synonymous with goodness, which is proportionality of the members, balance in forms, and harmony in movements.
- Thirdly, semantics: It was mentioned in (Mukhtar Al-Sahah): "The evidence is that which is inferred, and the evidence is also indicative, and he (he) has led him on the path" (8). And (Ibn Manzur) defined it by saying: "He pointed it to something; he indicated evidence and indication, so he pointed it to him and pointed it to him." The signifier and the plural are evidence and evidence, and the noun is the signifier or signifier (9).
- Idiomatically signify: Al-Jurjani defined it as "the fact that a thing is in a state in which knowledge requires knowledge of something else, and the thing is the first is the signifier and the second is the signified" (10) and Palmer defined it as "the technical word used to refer to the study of meaning,

and since meaning is part of language, meaning is part of linguistics” (11).

- Fourth - Language scenes: Whoever witnesses or sees: So-and-so testified against so-called truth, then he is a witness and a witness, and witnessing is: inspection i.e. his presence, he is a witness, and the people are witnesses, i.e. his presence and he is a source, and he also witnessed likewise and witnessed. He bowed and bowed and bore witness to him with such testimony, i.e. he did what he had of the testimony, so he is a witness, and the gathering is a witness like a friend, companion, traveler and traveler. And the martyr and the witness, the crowd is martyrs, and I witnessed him as such, so he testified against him, i.e. he became a witness against him. And he witnessed the command and victory as a testimony, for he is a witness from a people who witnessed, Sibawayh narrated it, and in a hadith of Imam Ali (peace be upon him): (And your witness against your nation on the Day of Resurrection) meaning: your witness (12).
- Idiomatically seen: The testimony of a person proving a specific fact that he himself witnessed or heard of, and the testimony is evidence of the present and the past, ancient and modern documents, and a kind of testimony (13) and the testimony is definitive news, and he was generous, and he was calm, and he testified as he heard, witnesses who attended him, so he is a witness. Witnesses testified about the conquest and witnessed it, i.e. saw it. Witness it: bring it, and witness it: attend the people (14).

## Literature review

### I. The goddess Ishtar in the civilization of Mesopotamia

- **First: Names and titles:** The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) is the goddess of love, beauty, sex and war. She was known in the Sumerian language as (INNNANA) and this name was taken from (NIN.AN,NA) which means the lady of heaven (15), and was known in the Akkadian language as (Ishtar) (16), and her lineage was shrouded in mystery, as she was considered in many sources a daughter of the god (Anu-an), and another considered her the daughter of the moon god (Nana-Sin) and she appears as a

sister to the god (Enlil) sometimes (17), while other sources attribute her to her. Another is that she is a daughter of the god (Enlil) and she was also considered a daughter of the god (Enki) (18), and the most famous pair of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) is the god (Dumuzi / Tammuz), whose romance many legends were woven around her, whose end was on her hand (19). Some texts promised the two gods (Chara and Lulatam) of her sons, yet she was nevertheless portrayed in other texts as a young girl rather than a wife and mother (20). Continuing the first clay figurines since prehistoric times as the Mother Goddess which expresses the function of female motherhood that perpetuates the continuity of the life cycle in nature. (Inanna / Ishtar) is the goddess woman, which means the fertility of heaven and earth, man and animals (21), so it is mentioned in the legend of Ishtar's descent to the underworld, that after her descent to that dark world, the gods in heaven, humans and all other creatures began to realize that something bad has befallen The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar), which in turn stopped the manifestations of life and renewal (22). At the same time, and despite the attributing to her the attribute of fertility and reproduction, she represented the attribute of anger and cruelty, which nothing can stop her by itself (23), and this is what we seek when she asked her father, the god (Anu-An), the god of heaven, to create for her the bull of heaven. To bring him down to the ground, and terrify the humans represented in the character (Gilgamesh), and according to what came in the famous epic of Gilgamesh (24). (Chocalituda), (Inanna / Ishtar) appeared as a girl with a dreamy tendency, but with that she is poorly managed and behaves like any weak woman when something happens to her. The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) expressed the seductive and instinctive female, and the owner of intense femininity (26), and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia made the goddess Ishtar a living embodiment of all the mental stages and instinctive fluctuations that a woman goes through in her life, from the period of adolescence that is characterized by features and data Psychological and organic, passing through the stage of maturity and marriage, then the stage of widowhood (27). (Inanna / Ishtar) assumed other functions in addition to her first main core function as the goddess of love and fertilized sexual flirtation. It has it when they fight (29), as we read: “Ishtar, make

attack and engagement twist like a jump rope, make the confrontation of armies unite, lead the battle like a puppet game” (30). Also, several titles were attributed to the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar), including (priestess of the god Anu) and (queen of divine laws), as she exercised the function of granting kingship to the rulers of Sumer before he wrested it from the god (Enlil) in the ancient Sumerian era according to the oldest written inscriptions (31). In the translated cuneiform text, we read excerpts of a hymn sung by one of the priestesses, as she says: Lady of the Divine Laws; woman is the giver of a life that is adorned with majesty; Beloved of heaven and earth, priestess of the god Anu; The one with the great charms fascinated by the crown; Giver of life worthy of the high priestess; My lady, you are the guardian of the divine laws; You are the one who raised the divine laws; And you suspended the divine laws in your chest (32) She was also called the strong cow of the sky, and she was also called the beloved wife of the god (Demozi / Tammuz) (33), and the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was also called the goddess of mercy for her assistance to pregnant women during the childbearing period, and the ancient Iraqis believed that the absence of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) at the moment of birth makes the process impossible and the fetus may be exposed to death (34). The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was worshiped in ancient Iraq at all times, and the center of her worship was in the city of Warka, and her temple was known as the House of Heaven (E-AN-NA) (35). The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) occupied a position of great importance in the religion of the Sumerians (36), which means that the worship of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was known from a very early time (37). But after the entry of the Jazari tribes into Mesopotamia, the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) became her own distinct personality from the rest of the gods, especially female deities (38), as she had a special status in the Akkadian era and became the goddess of the empire throughout the era of the Akkadian Empire (2371-2240 BC). m) (39) The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) held a high status in the ancient Babylonian era (2004-1595 BC) (40), and her position increased among the Assyrians due to the many wars waged by their kings (41). The worship of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) spread to the Greeks as (Aphrodite) and to the Romans under the name of the goddess (Venus), who emerged from the foam of the sea and attached her work to the functions of love,

beauty and procreation as well (42). Even the pharaohs of Egypt had blessed its effectiveness (43), as its name was mentioned more than once in the diplomatic letters discovered from Tell el-Amarna, which date back to the beginning of the fifteenth century and the middle of the fourteenth century BC. M (44). The ancient Iraqis symbolized some of the goddesses by numbers, and her number was (15), which is half of the number (30) assigned to her father, the god (Nina-Sin), the god of the moon (45).

- **Second: its symbols:** 1- **bundle of reeds:** The bundle of reeds, (the column) with a hooked end in an annular manner, from which hangs a wavy stripe (46) (Fig. 1) as it is considered a symbol of it, and it is very similar to the pictorial sign in antiquity in which its name is written (47), and perhaps this is the reason why some Researchers associate this symbol with the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar), and some researchers have gone to another opinion indicating that the bundle of reeds with an annular end represented the pillar of the hut door, and that the ribbon hanging from it represented a curtain or mat as a screen covering the door of the hut in which the marriage of the goddess (Inanna) took place. / Ishtar) by the god (Demozi / July) in the fertility rites (48), while another opinion indicates that it represents the palm tree, and it was considered a religious symbol (49) as it lived in the house of the bunches of dates, so she was known in the past as the Lady of the bunches of dates (50), This symbol has been used since the era similar to the book (Warka - Jumdat Nasr) on the utensils and cylinder seals, and did not appear in the later ages, but took to symbolize the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) with other symbols (51). 2- **The eight star:** It is one of the planets of our solar system, and the eight-pointed star that was depicted in the artistic scenes symbolized the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) (Fig. 2) and its appearance was associated with the crescent, the symbol of the god (Nana - Sin), the god of the moon, and with the sun disk a symbol The god (Ato-Shamash) is the sun god (52) on most of the artistic scenes, and according to the genealogical lists of the gods, she is the daughter of the moon god, and her brother is the sun god. The gods gave it the name (Ishtar), meaning the brightest star among the stars (Venus) and its astronomical name (Dilbat) (53), and the mention of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was associated in cuneiform texts with some terms such as (Hud) meaning morning

because she was called the morning star The radioactive, as its name appears with the term (Sig) meaning evening, perhaps because of its connection to the sacred marriage, whose ceremonies take place next in the evening (54).

3- **The rose:** (Inanna / Ishtar) was often symbolized by the rose, or the flower in the past. The Warka era, and its appearance was associated with the shapes of animals emerging from the hut, which symbolized the column (Inanna / Ishtar) as well (56), and the rose appeared on the seals since the Warka era in the form of four almond-shaped leaves connected to the center, which is a small, middle circle (57).

4- **The eight star inside a disc:** This symbol was more common on artistic scenes, and it was formed by an eight star within a disk, and this symbol was transformed into (Fig. 4) (58), from the shape or symbol of the rose in ancient times, which was a symbol of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) (59). The scrutiny of this symbol clearly indicates that there is a slight difference between the shape of the rose and the shape of the star inside the disk, and it appears with other symbols inside the disk of the sun or the crescent (60).

5- **The human form of the goddess:** The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was embodied in some artistic scenes, starting from the Akkadian era, in her human form and as a goddess of war (61). (Fig. 5).

6- **Naked adjective:** This trait has had its significance since ancient times (Fig. 6) (63), and in its role is linked to the idea of fertility (64), as a group of dolls were found at the site of Jarmo (sixth millennium BC) (65) of which are pregnant women who are characterized by excessive obesity. In the buttocks, and similar models were found in other sites dating back to the later stages (66), as researchers believe that these later models represented the first deities that the ancient Iraqis worshiped in prehistoric times and who were related to the productive forces of the earth and its fertility. The ancient Iraqis called her (Mother Goddess) (67), and she continued to be sanctified during the historical ages of the Warka era, Jemdat Nasr, the ancient Sumerian era and the Akkadian era (68), so we see her standing (naked) and she often supports her breasts with both hands (69). (Fig. 7).

7- **The lion:** The lion represents a symbol of strength, fear, terror and death, and for this reason it was taken as a symbol for some gods, as it was considered the earthly symbol of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar), because she is the goddess of war and leads battles during

adversity and adversity, as she is terrifying, frightening and deadly like a lion in battles (70). The name of the lion was mentioned in the Sumerian language with the formula (UR-MAH), and its equivalent in the Akkadian language singular (NESU) (71). And death because it is a source of permanent danger to man and his animals, which was an important source in his economic life (73) (Fig. 8).

## 2. pottery panels and their contents and indications

Sculpture, which is prominent sculptures, executed from clay and sculpted by hand or mold, and burned with fire to harden. Or the high relief, whose forms are very protruding from the surface (high relief) (74), and a kind of artistic skill, the beauty of lines, and clarification of details are embodied in it (75), and the oldest appearance of pottery panels in Mesopotamia, as seen by some researchers It dates back to the Akkadian period (2371-2230 BC), through some models that were found through archaeological excavations in one of the sites dating back to this era (76), while other researchers believe that the oldest appearance of it is in the period of The rule of (Gudea) (2290-2255 BC), or in the modern Sumerian period (Newsumerian period) (2112-2006 BC), in reference to the pottery tablets that were found in the city of Ur (77), Its appearance spread widely in the Old Babylonian period (2004-1595 BC), and its spread continued until the present Assyrian period. Death (New Assyrian period) (911-612 BC). AD), and the New Babylonian Period (627-539 BC) (78). Pottery tablets have been found in temples, on vows benches, on the floors of temple rooms, on the streets, in residential houses (particularly in rooms that may be places of worship) and on the roof of the strata (79). Finding them in these places often gives them a religious specificity, especially those found in temples, as they may be votive gifts presented by the worshiper to the god and the temple (80). Or perhaps on the contrary, it may be sold to visitors to the temple, especially if it bears a scene of a certain god or goddess who play a role in protecting its owner and sustaining his life (81), not to mention that it is a kind of help that a person requests from his own god (82). There are also those who believe that these panels were used to decorate private places of worship in residential homes by hanging them on the walls (83).

Some researchers believe that the tablets are a talisman or a shield (84), as they are effective in some way in alternative magic (85), as a form is made for a person on the tablet and through the principle of analogy or influence indirectly, this tablet affects the purpose of what a person seeks (86), and this is what led some researchers to say that these tablets are intentionally broken to destroy a magical force (87). Also, these tablets, being an amulet, are buried in the foundations of temples and residential homes to protect the place from evil spirits and diseases (88).

Magical significance and importance, especially for the people who used to buy them and believe in them, as each topic is depicted on the tablet a specific signification. It is used as a talisman to protect the place and expel evil spirits from it, especially since most of them are found buried in the foundations and floors of doorsteps (90) or they may be installed on the sides of the walls of the temple door (91). She represents the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) as the goddess of love and beauty (92), and some of them see her as a priestess or a devotee (93), and she may represent the human need for a model woman (94), while some see that the panels of naked women and sexual scenes aim to Increasing the attractiveness of women, which is an aid in sexual life and ensuring fertility and childbearing (95), and some researchers indicate that tablets depicting animal scenes serve as offerings to the gods in order to draw closer to them (96). The idea of pottery panels with their various themes was transferred to neighboring countries such as Syria (97) and Elam (Susa) (98), and the influence of the subject and artistic style, especially the Babylonian, clearly appears on them, and this is evidence of the influence of these areas on the ideas and beliefs of the ancient Iraqis.

**Theoretical framework indicators:** 1- The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) appeared in different scenes in ancient Iraq according to her distinguished position. Venus). 2- The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was represented in the art of Mesopotamia since the Warka era in a symbolic form in the form of a bundle of reeds (column) with a hooked end. 3- The goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was represented in later ages in the form of an eight-star or a rose in her human form, and she was armed with arms. 4- Among the artistic productions in which the goddess (Inanna /

Ishtar) appeared were pottery panels, which were popular in the ancient Babylonian era (1595-2006 BC). 5- Pottery tablets are of religious importance, as they were considered votive gifts presented to the gods or the temple, or a talisman or a guard that would be effective in alternative magic or a burial talisman in the foundations of temples and residential homes. Thus, it has achieved a wide spread in various places in Mesopotamia. 6- The character of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) was represented as having contradictory qualities in her personality, and as embodied by the ancient Iraqi art, she is the goddess of love, beauty, sexual excitement and the owner of intense femininity, and at the same time a goddess of wars and battles and a love of bloodshed and destruction.

## Methodology

**First / the research community:** the researcher was able to obtain a research community of (8) unpublished pottery artifacts from the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad related to the scenes of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) in ancient Iraqi art, and models were deliberately selected and the rest were excluded in accordance with the theme current search.

**Second / Research sample:** The research sample was limited to the study of (3) pottery models and the research sample was chosen according to the following justifications: 1- The topics of the research sample carried semantic and aesthetic dimensions to allow the researcher to achieve her goal. 2- The selected models represent their characteristics in a large proportion.

**Third / the research tool:** The researcher relied on the indicators of the theoretical framework to build the analysis tool. The search tool represented the sources, references and periodicals related to the topic of the research (aesthetic and semantic dimensions of scenes of the goddess Ishtar on Babylonian pottery tablets), visiting the Iraqi Museum, selecting unpublished artifacts and interviewing specialists in the field of archeology.

**Fourth / Research Methodology:** In her current study, the researcher relied on the analytical descriptive approach of the research

sample. In terms of their accurate description and analysis of pottery slabs through the effectiveness of aesthetic indications, in line with the objective of the current research. To

arrive at the desired results from the analysis process that the researcher followed in her analysis of the pottery slabs in the research sample.

#### Fifthly, samples analysis:

Model No. (1)

Pottery Tablet: Scene of the Goddess (Inanna/Ishtar)

Museum number: 7203 - AD. p / confiscation

Material: proud clay

Clay color: red

Sculpture Style: Relief Sculpture

Dimensions: 9cm length x 7.5cm width x 1cm thickness

Al-Adiya: The Iraqi Museum

Era: Old Babylonian



A rectangular pottery tablet, broken, perforated and missing parts. The tablet depicts a scene of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) in a standing position and in the front view, as the upper part represented by the upper extremities, chest and abdomen was executed in the front view, and the lower part represented by the legs and feet is in the side view. The goddess wears the horned crown on her head, a symbol of divinity in Mesopotamia, which is decorated with three pairs of thick horns. Long, short-sleeved, reaching full feet, fixed in the middle with a wide belt, decorated with vertical stripes, and open in the front revealing her left leg extending forward and placed on the back of a lion crouching in front of her, and her left hand, bent in front of her chest, holds an arc and a small dagger, while her right hand is outstretched straight down. She carried with her a large sword with the tip of the blade facing down, which is a symbol of peace, security and tranquility. It is noted that the lower part of the board was damaged due to a superficial fracture

in it, and two full sleeves appeared behind her shoulders. With arrows, the lion crouching in front of it was executed in a side view, with its mouth open, revealing its fangs, and it is the symbol of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) and her strength. The depiction of the goddess (Inanna/Ishtar) as a young girl carrying weapons was motivated by the belief in her combat function as the goddess of war and to encourage and urge the fighters into battle, believing that these sculptures possessed the power of the goddess they represented, and perhaps the fighters carried these sculptures with them so that they could acquire the strength of this goddess and to draw from her the determination and determination to continue fighting in the battle, from here the idea crystallizes that the goddess Ishtar appears whenever life is destroyed by the cruelty of battle, she creates a new life, as she is the goddess of love and beauty in the time of peace and the goddess of war and destruction in the time of war.

Model No. (2)

Pottery Tablet: Scene of the Goddess (Inanna/Ishtar)

Museum number: 17137-NA / confiscation

Material: proud clay

Clay color: yellow layer

Sculpture style: Relief Sculpture

Dimensions: 5.9 cm length x 5.2 cm width x 1 cm thickness

Al-Adiya: The Iraqi Museum

Era: Old Babylonian



SC.1:1 



 2 C.M

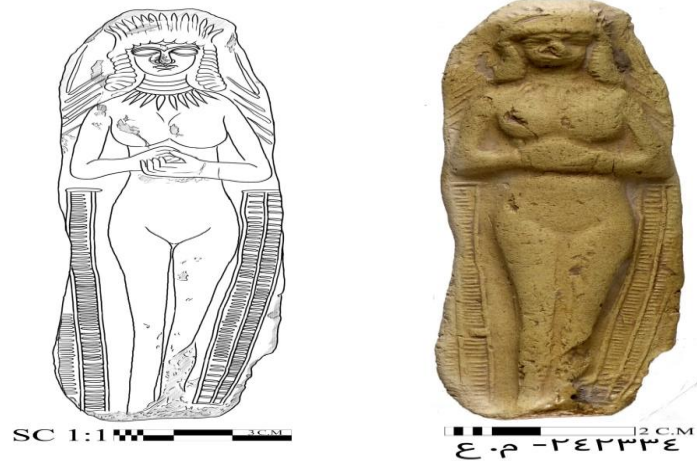
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An oval pottery panel, missing the lower half of it, depicts a scene of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) sitting on a lion in the front view. The goddess wears the horned crown and is decorated with four pairs of thick horns. The shape, and its almond-shaped eyes topped by knotted eyebrows, the nose thin and straight, and the mouth closed with two thin lips, the Mesopotamian artist wanted from behind that to show the characteristics of feminine beauty that, with its softness and tenderness, overcame the lion's predatory instinct and tamed that power and turned it into meekness and intimacy that made the most cruel predatory animals fall prostrate. And it is pliable under the prestige of its beauty and majesty, which the Mesopotamian artist struggled to show these aesthetic and semantic dimensions through building a visual text that includes realistic and symbolic abstract shapes represented by star shapes surrounding the goddess Ishtar to give the visual text the indication of the lady of heaven and at the same time she spread her presence on earth in the significance of the lion a symbol of a king. Predation and power in the

land, where the lion represents a symbol of strength, fear, terror and death, as it is a permanent danger to man and his animals. This visual text may be consistent with the linguistic text. For a translator from the cuneiform writing, as mentioned in the hymn, which says what it means: The woman who gives life, who is adorned with majesty, beloved of heaven and earth, the priestess of the god Anu, who has great ornaments fascinated by the crown. In view of this sacred position that the goddess Ishtar enjoyed, this artistic achievement showed that its significance as a heavenly deity was associated with the brightest planets, which is the planet Venus, as it was called the morning and evening star (Venus) with pride and vigor. The ancient Iraqi artist was able to highlight, with high skill and accurate treatment, the details of the parts of the body, in order to create compatibility between the aesthetic and semantic dimensions. She is the Lady of the divine laws that bestow power and kingship to rulers, the Lady of morning and evening, of the first place, the shining star and the brightest among the stars.



Model No. (3)  
 Pottery Tablet: Scene (The Naked Woman)  
 Museum number: 242334-m. P /  
 Resolution (70) for the year (2021)  
 Material: proud clay  
 Clay color: yellow  
 Sculpture style: Relief Sculpture  
 Dimensions: 9.5 cm long x 2 cm wide  
 x 1.2 cm thick  
 Al-Adiya: The Iraqi Museum  
 Era: Old Babylonian



A pottery plate engraved with a mold, approximately rectangular in shape with a curved top, with a small crack at the bottom of the plate, which led to the loss of part of the feet, but it did not affect the artwork of the executed scene. The scene depicts a woman standing in a frontal position with intertwined hands and placed under the chest. She is depicted naked, proportional to the body and with attached legs. She was represented with a small, round and prominent chest. Her hair was styled in two hanging tufts to rest on the shoulders. The woman's face was depicted in a chunky shape with broad and almond eyes, topped by knotted eyebrows, and a large nose. Relatively wide and wide in front, a mouth covered with thin lips, and her neck was decorated with a necklace consisting of three necklaces, from which longitudinal beads emerge covering her neck and part of the chest horizontal area. The idea of representing naked women on clay tablets is inspired by the worship of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar), the goddess of love and beauty, a source of temptation and sex at the same time, as well as a symbol of fertility and fulfillment of the desire for marriage, pregnancy and childbirth. In terms of aesthetics, the representation of the nude female in a frontal view and a beautiful and graceful body with a focus on the charms of her femininity may want it to be an exciting sexual form, the purpose of which is to ignite the sexual process in order to achieve fertility and reproduction, and for this reason came its association with the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) as the goddess of fertility And reproduction, and we notice clearly the artist's adoption of the decorative tendency, which was clearly

manifested by adding an aesthetic element by decorating the neck of a naked woman with beautiful necklaces, and by defining the female member with diagonal lines and grooves that surround the panel from all sides.

### Results and conclusions

**Results:** After analyzing the research sample, the researcher reached the following results:

- 1- Pottery panels are of great importance and this was demonstrated through the themes and artistic contents that were executed on the panels, which had a great impact on the life of the ancient Iraqi man.
- 2- The reason for the appearance of pottery panels in general is the human need and desire for the protection and security that these panels provide as a personal talisman of both religious and magical characteristics, showing the beliefs of the bearer and protecting him from harm or evil.
- 3- The abundance of pottery panels, especially in the ancient Babylonian era, and their spread in all Iraqi cities and neighboring countries such as Syria and Iran, gave them great importance as they reflected the extent of their influence on people's religious beliefs, as well as the transmission of the ancient Babylonian artistic and civilizational features.
- 4- We can discern from the scenes of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) executed on the clay tablets the extent of man's faith and fear of the gods that control the course of things and all aspects of normal life.
- 5- These panels reflected the sculptor's simulation of the natural form of the

goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) by showing realism in her human form.

- 6- Although the artist of this era followed the realistic method in executing the scenes of the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar), we find a serious attempt by him to reach the ideal form in depicting the human body, and this is evident in the representation of the naked female, as the ancient artist made her a symbol of beauty. The ideal that characterizes women, and this indicates that the Babylonian artist possessed a fine taste and great ability in the process of expressing realism whose events stemmed from the truth.

**Conclusions:** The researcher concludes from the above:

- 1- Diversity of artistic subjects executed on pottery panels in the ancient Babylonian era.
- 2- The pottery panels in the ancient Babylonian era were characterized as having intellectual, political, social, religious and artistic connotations according to the data of that era.
- 3- The pottery panels on which the figures of naked women were carved reflected the relationship between her and the goddess (Inanna / Ishtar) as a symbol of fertility and a goddess of love and beauty.

### Recommendations

In light of the results and conclusions reached by the researcher, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Issuing publications (implications), pamphlets, and magazines concerned with various artworks in Mesopotamia, which carry with it many religious beliefs, rituals and rituals, and other aspects of the daily life of Mesopotamians.
- 2- Spreading cultural awareness in the community and introducing it to the importance of its cultural heritage through holding cultural seminars and visiting archaeological sites and the need to preserve them.
- 3- Creating a new generation that possesses a patriotic sense and aesthetic awareness that realizes the value and importance of these artworks throughout the ages, with the religious, political and social topics and implications they presented.

### Suggestions

The researcher suggests conducting a study on:

- 1- Symbolic connotations in the Babylonian pottery puppet scenes.

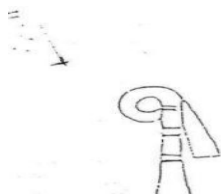
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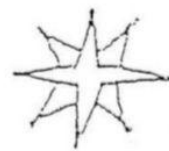
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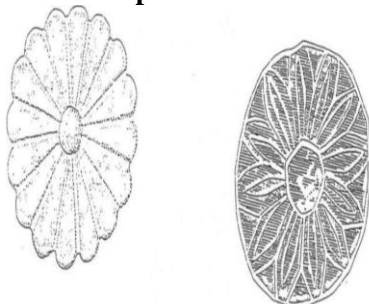
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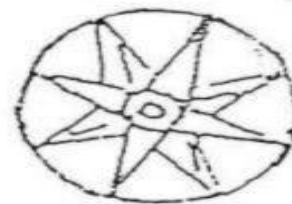
**(Fig. 1) Source: Vanburen, Symbols of the God in Mesopotamian Art.**



**(Fig. 2) Source: Vanburen, Symbols**



**(Fig. 3) Source: Black&Green Demons**



**(Fig. 4) Source: Vanburen, Symbols**

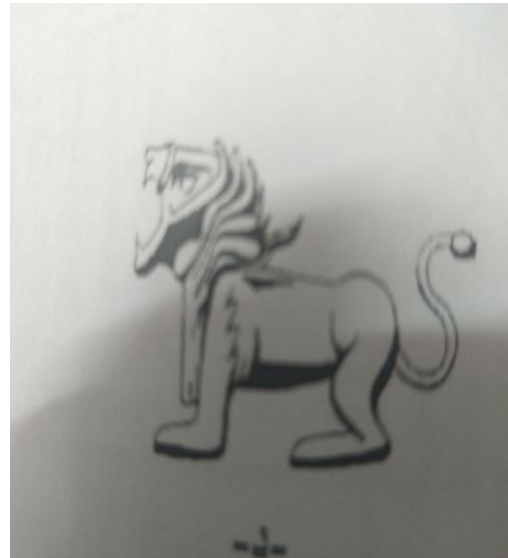


**(Fig. 5) Source: Ibrahim, Hala Karim: Religious themes in cylinder seals from the Warka era.**



**(Fig. 7) Source: Wrede, N., Uruk von Ubaid-bis Altbabylonische Zeit, (Zabern, 2003 p. 275, Taf:82a**

**(Fig. 6) Source: Benzel, J., Art of the Ancient Near East, (New York, 2010) p. 11, Fig:2.**



**(Fig. 8) Source: Ibrahim, Hala Karim: Religious subjects in cylinder seals from the Warka era.**