



14th International Congress on the Archaeology
of the Ancient Near East

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Representations of the Triangle in Inlay in Mesopotamia during the Early Bronze Age: Is it purely an Aesthetic Motif?

MAROKE-BARBAR H. 1*

¹ University Lumie Lyon2, Lyon, France

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Among the various decorative patterns used in inlay during the early Bronze Age, the triangle, a geometric element frequently employed by Mesopotamian artisans, stands out. This motif adorns a multitude of objects, such as vases, figurative friezes, or statues of animals. However, this pattern has not been specifically studied, as some details remain hidden in a general classification. Triangular inlays show a remarkable variety of presentations when they are still attached to their support. The combination of patterns and colors can create shapes and generate new styles. Occasionally, empty or damaged sockets suggest the former presence of triangles and induce questioning about their disappearance, whether due to intentional removal or natural degradation. Beyond its simple geometric shape, the triangle can symbolize the connection between the material and spiritual worlds, as a reflection of the various ideas of a specific time or place. With its three vertices, the triangle directs the viewer's gaze and enables endless decorative possibilities, demonstrating its unique capacity to organize compositions, alone or with other shapes, such as squares. By doing so, it conveys ideas and influences visual perception. This distinctive versatility continues to inspire and fascinate artisans, as even the simplest forms can generate boundless creativity.

Keywords

inlay, triangle, Mesopotamia, symbol, decorative motif

Session

4. The materiality of inscribed and figurative objects

Type of paper

Oral presentation