



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

To be or not to be (buried) an Assyrian Communal and Individual Identity in Neo-Assyrian Burials of the Empire

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Abstract

The Neo-Assyrian empire denotes a period of territorial expansion and thus an amalgamation of different cultural identities. Out of these, a Neo-Assyrian identity gradually evolved, defined by a common language, a highest god and king as well as civil rights and duties according to the written sources. But how was communal and individual identity expressed and performed through material culture?

In the course of a dissertational study, tombs and graves from all over the Neo-Assyrian empire have been examined on this question since burials are an exemplary platform to negotiate between the individual identity of the deceased and the identity of its community involved in the funerary procedures. Identity is here understood as an intricate nexus of intersecting identity traits such as age, gender, kinship, social roles, etc. A holistic approach to space, architecture, bodies and grave good assemblages of Neo-Assyrian burials enabled a qualitative, contextual and comparative analysis of a materially expressed individual and communal identity. The contribution will present the major results of the study including the typical Neo-Assyrian funerary set and an induction of the rituals involved as well as regional differences in burial practices of the empire.

Keywords

identity, Neo-Assyria, Burial, Intersectionality, Mortuary practice

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