



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Bridging Worlds: Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Mannaeen Kingdom

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Abstract

The Mannaeen Kingdom, a local polity in northwestern Iran during the early first millennium BC, had significant interactions with the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Most information about these relations has come from historical texts, with limited contributions from archaeology. This article seeks to address that by exploring cultural connections between the Mannaeans and Assyrians through archaeological evidence, specifically burial objects and architectural remains, focusing on glazed bricks.

Glazed bricks were a key artistic medium in the Mannaeen cultural sphere, prominently used in religious structures such as the Qal'eh Temple. The motifs on these bricks, aside from their visual appeal, depict narrative scenes with spiritual significance. A comparison of these motifs shows that, while influenced by Assyrian designs, they were produced within a distinctive local tradition in the Mannaeen region.

The content of these motifs, along with other cultural materials, points to the "worship of the sacred tree," a religious belief that involved rituals like purification, libation, and sacrifice. These practices aimed at "giving life to humans," "fertilizing the land," and "renewing life after death." This belief, rooted in Assyria, was later adopted by the Mannaeans, as demonstrated by the archaeological evidence reviewed in this study.

Keywords

Mannaeen Kingdom, Glazed bricks , Religious belief , Interactions , Neo-Assyria

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