



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Material Entanglements: Stone, Skin, and Reciprocal Construction at Persepolis

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Abstract

At Persepolis, meaning is constructed both through the generation of productive categorical slippages and through the juxtaposition of material affordances. In reliefs across the site, stone takes on the guise of metal, skin, fur, and leather, even as these depicted materials themselves compositionally mimic the embroidered fabrics depicted upon king, subject, and structure alike. This transmutation of forms elides distinctions in material makeup, creating a cohesive whole from disparate parts in a manner that itself doubles the inclusive iteration of empire articulated in inscriptions and reiterated in the form and adornment of the site as a whole.

With its focus on such material entanglements, this paper argues that the site's interest in materials and their effects serves in part to highlight the question of making, and through this, the active role that subjects take in constructing both the empire and the king. Taking the depicted king as a hybrid subject, a subject that is created through the action of multiple makers, the paper suggests that through hairstyles and embroidery, in the forge and in the quarry, both individuals and the empire are crafted by others, that king and subject alike are bound together by bonds of mutual making.

Keywords

dress, Achaemenid, Persepolis, fabric, materiality

Session

4. The materiality of inscribed and figurative objects

Type of paper

Oral presentation