

Preface by the Series Editor

The 11th volume of the OREA series addresses ‘Human Iconography and Symbolic Meaning in Near Eastern Prehistory’ and represents the outcome of a workshop held on 28th and 29th of April 2016 at the International Congress on the ‘Archaeology of the Ancient Near East’. The 10th anniversary conference of the ICAANE (International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East) took place from 25th to 29th of April in Vienna and was hosted and organised by the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. While the general proceedings of the sections were published by the Harrassowitz Publishing House in 2018, the experts’ workshops appear as separate volumes of the OREA series which are generously supported by the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

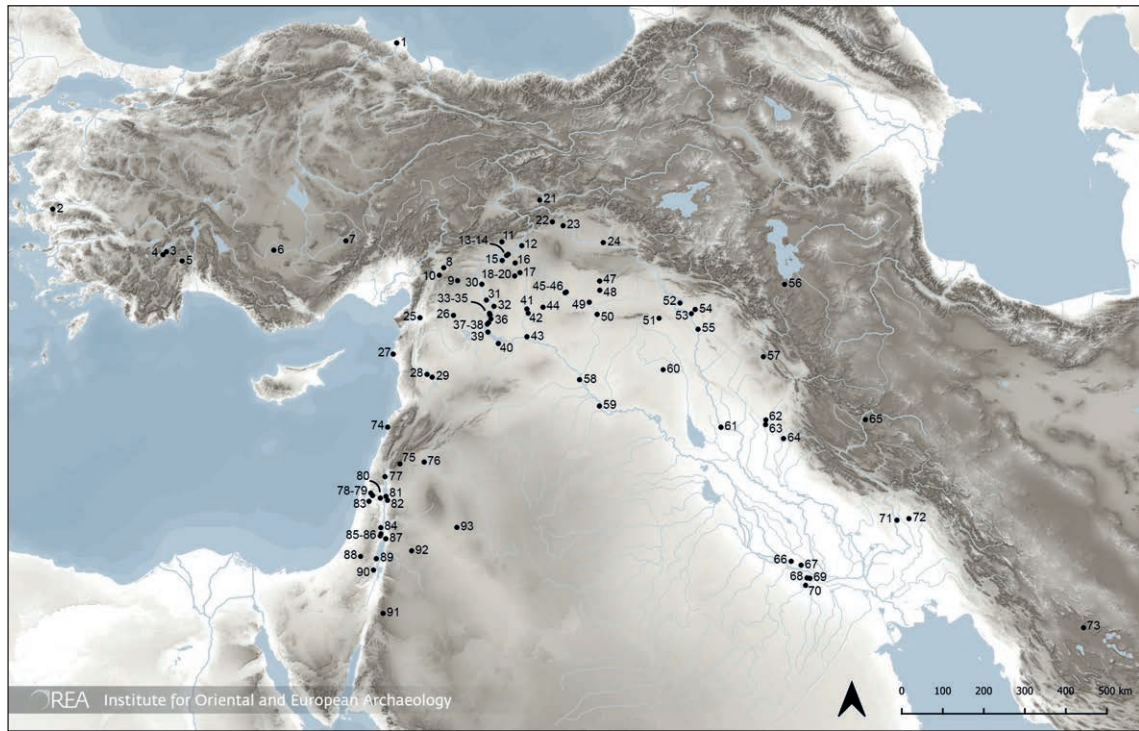
The present volume is edited for our internationally peer-reviewed series by Jörg Becker, Claudia Beuger and Bernd Müller-Neuhof who also initiated and organised the workshop about ‘Human Iconography and Symbolic Meaning in Near Eastern Prehistory’. The editors brought together 18 authors for 12 contributions focussing on a topic that will be of considerable interest to many archaeologists concerned with prehistory not only in the Fertile Crescent but also in other world regions. The subject of human self-reflection and the symbolism of prehistoric art have always been fascinating fields in research but have been lifted to new levels since Göbekli Tepe and other monumentalised Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites in South-west Asia have been detected. The whole new world of a complex symbolism of sculptures, reliefs and depicted pillars opens the window onto past societies and their beliefs, magical practices as well as ritual and cognitive behaviours. Despite all obvious difficulties in dealing with these numinous meta-spheres and symbolic meanings in illiterate societies, the time seems right to benefit scientifically from the value of the massively increased amount of archaeological evidence in the Near East. The editors aim to use the new data to go beyond the well-established and long-debated aspects of fertility and divine representations by applying several well-thought-out strategies.

The *longue durée* approach of the collected articles demonstrates the changing of the people’s cognitive behaviour represented in self-reflection, physical self-awareness, burial practices and ancestral veneration to mention but a few of the discussed aspects. The discussions cover the time-span from the first sedentary groups in the Natufien to food-producing economies in the PPN to surplus-producing economies in the Ubaid horizon and offer the reader a broad spectrum with clear changes of practices, habits, signs and narratives over about 8000 years of human depictions. Most of the papers additionally focus on the contextualisation of the archaeological evidence as a methodological approach including treatments, deposition, spatial conditions, state of preservations, intention and others. And finally, the editors also point to the interdisciplinarity necessary for dealing with these topics in future, partially fulfilled in this volume. The collection of articles is organised into the three main topics of physical anthropology and mortuary practices, self-perception and self-expression of the human and finally symbolism and iconography to help the reader through this complex world of human iconography in past societies. It can hardly be surprising that the analyses of some of the most spectacular new evidence of prehistoric imagery of the famous sites in South-west Asia do not offer clear answers at the present stage of research. However, the authors have provided new data, contexts and thoughts and therefore vividly fulfilled the editors’ aims for this volume by going beyond the long-established interpretations.

My sincere thanks for financial support for the 10th ICAANE conference go to several Austrian and international institutions which are the following: The Austrian Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, the University of Vienna, the City of Vienna, the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF), the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), the Austrian Orient Society Hammer-Purgstall and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. I would

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Barbara Horejs
Director of the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology
Vienna, 5 July 2019



1. İıkiztepe; 2. Uluçak; 3. Kuruçay; 4. Hacılar; 5. Höyücek; 6. Çatalhöyük; 7. Köşk Höyük; 8. Domuztepe; 9. Gaziantep; 10. Sakçagözü; 11. Kilisik; 12. Çavi Tarlası; 13. Nevalı Çori; 14. Gritille; 15. Lidar Höyük; 16. Titriş Höyük 17. Göbekli Tepe; 18. Şanlıurfa; 19. Yeni Mahalle; 20. Kazane Höyük; 21. Tülintepe; 22. Çayönü Tepesi; 23. Girikihacıyan; 24. Körtik Tepe; 25. Tell Kurdu; 26. Tell Qaramel; 27. Ras Shamra; 28. Shir; 29. Hama; 30. Fıstıklı Höyük; 31. Tell ‘Abr 3; 32. Tell Kosak Shamali; 33. Tell Halula; 34. Jerf el-Ahmar; 35. Dja’de el-Mughara; 36. Tell Banat; 37. Shams ed-Din; 38. Tell Cheikh Hassan; 39. Mureybet; 40. Tell Abu Hureyra; 41. Tell Sabi Abyad; 42. Khirbet esh-Shenef; 43. Tell Zeidan; 44. Tell Tawila; 45. Tell Fakhariyah; 46. Tell Halaf; 47. Tell Aqab; 48. Chagar Bazar; 49. Tell Kashkashok; 50. Tell Umm Qseir; 51. Yarim Tepe; 52. Kharabeh Shattani; 53. Tell Arpachiyah; 54. Tepe Gawra; 55. Nimrud; 56. Hajji Firuz; 57. Jarmo; 58. Tell Bouqras; 59. Mari; 60. Umm Dabaghiyah; 61. Tell es-Sawwan; 62. Tell Hassan; 63. Tell Songor; 64. Choga Mami; 65. Ganj Dareh; 66. Uruk; 67. Tell el-Oueili; 68. Tell el-Ubaid; 69. Ur; 70. Eridu; 71. Susa; 72. Choga Mish; 73. Tall-e Bakun; 74. Byblos; 75. Tell Ramad; 76. Tell Aswad; 77. Beisamoun; 78. Yiftahel; 79. Kfar Ha’Horesh; 80. Munhata; 81. Sha’ar Hagolan; 83. Meggido; 82. el-Hammeh; 84. Gilgal; 85. Cave of the Warrior; 86. Jericho; 87. Teleilat Ghassul; 88. Horvat Duma; 89. Nahal Mishmar; 90. Nahal Hemar Cave; 91. Basta; 92. ‘Ain Ghazal; 93. Dhuweila (map: M. Börner/OREA)