

ASS1

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Article Review: Ain Ghazal Figure in the Neolithic Era

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HPAH7014 Spaces, Places, and Objects in Ancient Mediterranean Religions

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Abstract

you do not need an abstract for an article review

The purpose of this paper is to analyse an article by Kathryn Walker Tubb to gain an insight into how Ain Ghazal statues were discovered, recovered, and reconstructed. Ain Ghazal is famous for the discovery of statues, which were among the earliest representations of humankind's form. They are perhaps the most phenomenal example of prehistoric art discovered in the pre-pottery Neolithic period. Tubb utilized previous research in explaining how the statues were discovered, recovered, and reconstructed. Tubb's information about the statues adds more insight into Neolithic communication and culture. According to Tubb, developers constructing a highway discovered Ain Ghazal in 1974.

Article Review: Ain Ghazal Figure in the Neolithic era

Tubb's¹ article discusses how statues were discovered in Ain Ghazal – one of the largest, earliest villages in the Near East recovered and reconstructed. It is an archaeological site located

on the outskirts of Amman, the capital city of Jordan. This site dates to the Neolithic period when humankind made one of its most significant advancements: the sustainable domestication of plants

and animals². *Explain why you have chosen this article and how it fits in with your wider research topic for the module*

Few inhabitants initially inhabited the area in roughly 7250BCE. They lived in individual houses, built using field stones covered with lime plaster, mud, and red pigment paintings.

Between 7000-6900 BCE, the town lost approximately ninety percent of its population and went

back to a small farming area³. *Interesting detail but not really necessary in this article review. Better to first present the key findings of the article and to critique these in relation to wider reading*

Tubb starts by explaining how Ain Ghazal statues were discovered. The statues were among the first representations of humankind's form. They are perhaps the most phenomenal

example of prehistoric art discovered in the pre-pottery Neolithic period⁴. By reviewing the

previous research, Tubb found that the developers who were constructing a highway discovered Ain Ghazal in 1974, and the excavation started in 1982 and continued up to the late 1990s. When an access terrace was being made to take off the bulldozer traffic, a large section was cut along the

down, and the red plaster floor was revealed. The Jordanian archaeologist Mohammed Maragat, who this is very descriptive. You should focus on identifying the key arguments being made by Tubb in her article

was in charge at that time reported to the Jordanian Department of Antiquities about the discovery.

According to the article in the early 1980s, the area used for olive cultivation for a long time required further development because Amman was expanded. That was when the decision

¹ Tubb, 2012.

² Kuijt, 2011.

³ Bauer, 2019.

⁴ Simmons, et.al 1988.

was made to undertake the excavation to analyse the nature of the remains. Gary Rollefson carried out the excavation alongside his team. During the excavation, human figures were uncovered, and a total of fifteen busts and fifteen statues were discovered in two caches, and they were separated by about two hundred years⁵.

Background detail - not actually the focus of Tubb's article

The archaeologists discovered many figurines during excavations that dated back to about 6500BC before the discovery of pottery. The majority were small figurines of animals and half of them being aurochs, the wild cattle that were assumed to have been killed. Other figures were pregnant women⁶. The most unique statues were that of human figures, which were composed of lime plaster piled over bundles of reeds, twigs, and other grasses⁷. The figures were short but had large heads and prominent eyes composed of whiter components than the rest of the statue, and they had black pigment outline that surrounded their eyes⁷.

Tubb further explains how the statues were excavated. To reach the statues, the archaeologist dug along the side that was exposed by the bulldozer. The statues were then excavated⁸ out in a scientific laboratory for preservation. The statues were discovered buried carefully in two caches. Furthermore, it was discovered that some of the dead bodies were buried beneath the floors of the houses and that some skulls had faces carved with lime plaster. A study by Rollefson (1986) indicated that the people of Ain Ghazal buried their loved ones on their houses⁹ floors, and others were buried just outside the house. For those buried inside the house, the head was retrieved later, and the skull was then buried in a separate place but still beneath the floor of the house.

⁵ Kuijt, 2011.

⁶ Rollefson, 1986.

⁷ Grissom, 2000.

The article indicates that there were two types of figures, the busts, and the full statues. Some busts have two heads. More effort was placed in the modeling of the head and that the statues had wide-opened eyes with irises outlined with bitumen. According to Tubb, the statues are a representation of women, men, and children. Women were identified with features that resembled breasts with the bellies slightly enlarged, but the genitals are omitted in both females and males. More detail was placed on their faces.

[Cite your sources](#)

Tubb also explains how the statues were designed. According to her, the legs, head, and torsos were formed using different reeds, and the heads were covered with wigs. The statues are tall but not as humans. The tallest statue has a height of about one meter. They are flat with a thickness of about 5 to 10 cm, and they are intended to be only seen from the front. Much emphasis was placed on the head of the statues, and it represented about one-fifth of the figure's overall size. The statues found in the first cache appeared more natural than those found in the second cache. They have arms and a curvilinear body. In addition, the use of paint appeared to be more prevalent than those of the second cache. The figures also in the first cache can be seen as a representation of individuals. Statues found in the second cache are larger, they have no arms, and they are angular. This is also where the introduction of two-headed busts occurred.

According to the article, the backs of the faces were displaced, leaving only the solid plaster standing alone. The torsos also became deformed and locked. The plaster of other larger figures was missing and, in some cases, remained as a veneer. Due to cracking, breakage, and displacement, cleaning had to be done with a lot of caution to prevent further damages. This was achieved by resetting the pieces that were displaced into their original position so that the pieces' reassembling and the recreation of the armature can go on in tandem. After that, the rods were packed with caution into the hollow boxes using cotton wool to avoid clattering against the plaster's

inner surface since they are fragile⁸. The gaps that are left were filled with modern materials, and the fills were then painted to prevent appearing so much obstructive. During shipping, they were put in a wooden box with breakages prevented by filling it with polyurethane foam¹⁰. The individual mounts were also made so that each figure could be studied and exhibited safely.

What makes Tubb's article unique compared to other research done is the use of various additional sources. Her work is built upon previous research. Tubb shows an explicit connection to the existing research. She shows clearly where her information is rooted. She begins by describing what is well known and moves gradually to what has not been well-covered.

Tubb did a great job in explaining how the statues were discovered, recovered, and reconstructed. Tubb's information about the statues adds more insight into Neolithic communication and culture. The meaning of the statues disappeared with the communities who created them, but archaeologists can use them to obtain valuable clues about the Neolithic people. For example, the human figurines that Tubb described can be used to represent the ancestors of the Ain Ghazal people. Archaeologists can utilize her information in the replication of these statues. It helps us to understand better the culture which produced the Ain Ghazal figures. However, Tubb failed to provide sufficient information on how figures were reconstructed and preserved. She did not provide the products used for the treatment, the paintings, and the cleaning process.

Ain Ghazal is among the most significant earliest Neolithic site that needs more investigation on the economic, social, religious development of early life. Further research

⁸ Tubb, 2012.

should also provide the significance of the statues, more information on the reconstruction and conservation, and the aspects of the Neolithic.

You have a clear writing style - you need to focus more on the type of task you have been asked to complete.

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This should only include works that you cite in-text

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FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

56

/100

Instructor

You have completed a lot of background research to contextualise the statuettes, but what you have written reads more like an essay than an article review. Please see the guidance posted on moodle on how to write an article review. The whole point is for you to identify a piece of work that is key for your wider research topic, so you need first to indicate how this article will help you complete your research topic. You should then present a summary of the article's contents - what are the key arguments presented by the author. These you need to critique, in particular thinking about how they will help you to build up a research topic on a specific subject area.

Having read the article, I think it is interesting and certainly a good thing for you to read; however, I am not sure that this is the best article for a critical review. It is very straight forward and factual - there is very little in terms of interpretation for you to get your teeth into. I did ask students to discuss their research topic and choice of reading with me and would probably have advised you away from this particular article.

Overall this is descriptive rather than analytical. You do however, have a clear writing style: but do focus on what it is you have been asked to do!

Reference List: only works cited in-text please.

PAGE 1

PAGE 2

Text Comment. you do not need an abstract for an article review



Comment 1

?

There are numerous much earlier examples from the Upper Palaeolithic in Europe.

Try to avoid making statements which you cannot support.



Comment 2

relevance?

PAGE 3



Comment 3

better to give date (PPNB and calendrical date)

Text Comment. Explain why you have chosen this article and how it fits in with your wider research topic for the module

Text Comment. Interesting detail but not really necessary in this article review. Better to first present the key findings of the article and to critique these in relation to wider reading



Comment 4

first explains



Comment 5

?



Comment 6

avoid value judgements. You can bring this detail in, when you write your object analysis, but here you need to focus specifically on the content of Tubb's article

Text Comment. this is all very descriptive: you should focus on identifying the key arguments being made by Tubb in her article

PAGE 4

Text Comment. Background detail - not actually the focus of Tubb's article



Comment 7

the important point in this article is how we know this - namely the survival of phytoliths



Comment 8

? a block of the matrix containing the statuettes was cut out from the ground and removed from the site - so the statuettes could be safely excavated in laboratory conditions.



Comment 9

I would rephrase this

People are certainly buried beneath the floors of the houses - I don't think we can/should make assumptions as to the relationship and emotions of the individuals involved in these practices!



Comment 10

in

PAGE 5



Cite your sources

Cite your sources

PAGE 6



Comment 11

deomsntrate this

Text Comment. this bit is good and reads like a review

PAGE 7

Text Comment. You have a clear writing style - you need to focus more on the type of task you have been asked to complete.

PAGE 8

Text Comment. This should only include works that you cite in-text

PAGE 9



Comment 12

Tubb, K.W., 2001. The statues of 'Ain Ghazal: discovery, recovery and reconstruction. *Archaeology International*, 5, pp.47-50.



Comment 13

2001

Text Comment. volume number: page numbers