

تمثالان برونزيان بشريّان غير منشورين من مجموعة الصباح الأثرية، الكويت

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الملخص

تناول الباحث في هذه الدراسة تمثالين بشريين صغيرين لرجل وامرأة مصنوعين من مادة معدنية، ومرصعين بقشرة رقيقة من الذهب على وجه كل منهما، وأخرى من الفضة على حزام إزار كل منهما. وهما متقاربان في الحجم ارتفاعاً. وقد وجد الباحث التمثالين ضمن مقتنيات مجموعة الصباح الأثرية التابعة لدار الآثار الإسلامية التي تقع في مركز اليرموك الثقافي في ضاحية اليرموك بمدينة الكويت.

ورغم أن المواد التي صنع منها التمثالان عادة ما تعود إلى العصر البرونزي (من 3100 إلى 1200 ق.م) عمومًا فإنّ فنيّ مجموعة الصباح الأثرية المتخصصين في لقي العصر البرونزي وصفوا التمثالين وصفًا مبدئيًا، فقدّموا معلومات عامة ونسبية عن مادّة صنعهما، وعن مكان صنعهما وزمانه وقد اقترحوا أن التمثالين يعودان تحديدًا إلى العصر البرونزي المتأخّر فقط (من 1600 إلى 1200 ق.م) زمانًا وسورية الكبرى عمومًا، مكانًا. والباحث هنا أخذ على عاتقه أن يدرس هذا الموضوع دراسة أكثر تفصيلًا، وأن يجري مقارنة دقيقة مع تماثيل معدنية أخرى كان قد عثر عليها من قبل في مناطق جغرافية مجاورة ومماثلة، ودرس باحثون متخصصون بعضها في تماثيل العصر البرونزي. ورغم تعدّد الأمكنة والأزمنة في إطار سورية الكبرى في العصر البرونزي الكامل للتماثيل المعدنية التي عثر عليها إلا أن تماثيل مجموعة جبل لبنان كانت الأكثر شبهًا بتمثالَي الدراسة.

وهدف الباحث هنا من دراسة هذين التمثالين محاولة تحديد زمان صنع التمثالين بدقة أكثر، وهو العصر البرونزي المتأخّر، والمكان هو جبل لبنان في الشطر الجنوبي من دولة لبنان. وتوضيح الغرض من صنعهما، وتوضيح العلاقة بينهما، فضلًا عن علاقتهما بالتماثيل التي قارنها الباحث بهما؛ وذلك بعد التأكد من التحديد الدقيق للمادة التي صنعها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تماثيل برونزية، العصر البرونزي، مجموعة الصباح الأثرية، تماثيل جبل لبنان.

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Two Unpublished Anthropomorphic Bronze Figurines from Al-Sabah Antique Collection, Kuwait

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Abstract

The researcher examined two small human figurines -a man and a woman- made of metal, each with a thin layer of gold on their faces and of silver on their belts. They are similar in size. They were found among the holdings of the Al-Sabah Antique Collection of the House of Islamic Antiquities, located in Al-Yarmouk Cultural Center in Kuwait.

Although the materials from which the two figurines were made are generally attributed primarily to the Bronze Age (3100-1200 BC). In general, the Al-Sabah Antique Collection's technicians, that specialize in Bronze Age findings, provided a preliminary description of these two figurines, suggesting general data about the materials they were made of, and the place and time of their production. They suggested the Late Bronze Age (1600-1200 BC) as a time period and the Levant as a location.

The researcher here undertook a more detailed study and a close comparison with other metal figurines previously found in neighboring geographical areas, some of which had been studied by researchers specializing in Bronze Age figurines.

Despite the variety of places and times within the context of Greater Syria during the entire Bronze Age, it appears that the metal figurines of Mount Lebanon Group resembled the two figurines of this study more than others.

The goal of studying these two figurines is to precisely determine their date of manufacture; the Late Bronze Age, and their location; Mount Lebanon in the southern part of Lebanon. Furthermore, to clarify their purpose, and to clarify their relationship to each other and to those of Mount Lebanon Group, after ensuring the exact identification of the material from which they are made.

Keywords: bronze figurines, Bronze Age, Al-Sabah Antique Collection, figurines of Lebanon Mount.

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I. Introduction

The primary goal of Al-Sabah Antique Collection (SAC) is to contribute to the preservation of the world's archaeological heritage. It includes artifacts of various origins, periods, and sizes, including artifacts dating back to the ancient era, particularly the Bronze Age, and later to the Late Antiquity, collected from various geographical regions. Some of Al-Sabah Antique Collection was subject to careful study, examination, restoration, and classification by highly qualified experts such as a recently published article about an Egyptian offering table dated to Middle Kingdom. (Mahfouz, El-Nouri and Mohammedien 2-10).

When I was on a visit to view the antique collection of SAC, at al-Yarmouk Cultural Center in Kuwait, my attention was drawn to a pair of human figurines. The curators of the SAC had previously provided a clear assessment of the place and time of the manufacture of the two figurines. Nevertheless, it seems important to give a detailed description of them.

A comparative study between the two figurines and other similar figurines. Particularly, a comparison of the materials will be made. On this basis, the researcher will try to reach more accurate results to determine the place and time of their manufacture, and to determine the purpose of their manufacture.

II. General Description

A pair of male and female figurines, not clearly stated if they represent gods or mortals, each of which was made in the round from bronze, wearing loincloth fastened with a rope belt that was made of silver, while both faces are covered with a thin layer of gold. (figs. 2 and 3) Each of them stands upright on its feet facing forward and has long tangs extending from the heels, presumably for insertion into a base.

A - Male Figurine

Its dimensions are (24.8 cm H x 5.6 cm W x 3.99 cm T). It is of a slender form with long legs and short torso, while its forearms are stretched in front of it bent at the elbow, with clenched fists as if holding something, probably two spear-like weapons. (Schorsch, 118, fig. 6-cat. No.24). The loincloth is short that it barely covers the knees and is girdled at the waist with a belt made of silver while the torso appears naked.

The head is relatively large, covered with long thick hair, and parted in half at the top but ending in three braids. The face is broad with a large nose, prominent lips, covered by a thin layer of gold, and a beard that is larger. (The SAC, LNS 1706 M a., fig. 2).

B - Female Figurine

Its dimensions are (22.4 cm H x 5.14 cm W x 3.06 cm T). Its forearms are bent at the elbow and stretched in front of it, but the right arm almost reaches the left one, and both fists are also clinched as if holding something. It is also attired in loincloth, but longer so that it reaches down to its ankles, though the two dangling ends of its silver belt reach down just above its knees. It is also naked above the waist, with rounded small breasts, wearing a necklace, a bangle on the upper part of each arm, and on each leg just above the heel. Its hair is long, thick, parted in half at the top, and ending in three braids, two of the braids fall onto the breasts, and the third is a long pigtail on the back. It also has a relatively large head, with a wide gilded face and a large nose. In addition to the eyebrows, which are marked with lines, it also has another pair of lines on its upper face. (The SAC, LNS 1706 M b. fig. 3).

III. Provenance and Dating

The male figurine of the study resembles the male anthropomorphic figurines of the so-called "Mount Lebanon Group", MLG hereafter. This group goes back in time to the end of the 3rd millennium B.C., i.e., early M.B. Age, as will be shown below. Schorsch (2014) in his elaborated study on the figurines of MLG noted that they had become the focus of interest and attention of European archaeologists since the beginning of the 20th century.

This led the researcher to examine previous studies that have studied the figurines of this group. Most significant among these studies are those of S. Ronzevalle (3-21), H. Seyrig 12-50, H. Seeden 1-15, and D. Schorsch 118.

Seyrig was among the earliest to draw attention to the figurines of this group. He noticed the differences-such as their positions, clothing and nudity- between them and the other figurines in the regions of the eastern Mediterranean, such as those in the Al-'Umq plain Antioch area (Map 2), Beqaa Valley, Byblos of Phoenicia (Map 1), Palestine, and Anatolia. (24).

Seeden made more efforts, in his comprehensive study on Levant figurines, dividing them into 11 groups, among which group no. 2; the MLG which is the one that concerns us. (Seeden 10-15; Canby 110-111; Braun-Holzinger, Andrea 169; 139). The similarity between the male figurines of the study and those in this group is apparent in Seeden's study, as will be established below.

This was followed by a few studies on the same group of figurines, most notably, Deborah Schorsch. She identified 37 figurines in her elaborate study of each one of this group. While one of them was easily found as a forgery, the rest were classified into 23 males and 13 females, all displayed at different museums and private archaeological

collections. Hence, these figurines have attracted the attention of some collectors and interested archaeologists, which has increased the demand and search for them, in a feverish frenzy, without knowing their origins. This has encouraged fraudsters to forge similar works with exquisite craftsmanship and sell fake copies of them on the market. (Schorsch 115-121; website title "Forgery Figure ca 1908" in MET)

It was difficult, at first, to provide accurate information about their origin and time, because none of them was discovered in archaeological context. They were often sold in antique markets at different times and places that lasted more than two and a quarter centuries between 1752 and 1981. (Seyrig 24-25, pl. 10, no. I; Schorsch 115 -116, fig. 1; Caylus 35-36, pl.10)

IV. Analogy Study

The researcher has carefully reviewed male and female figurines of the Levant, Lebanon, and Syria, that may share similarities with the two figurines of the study, including the nude statues of Tell El-Jedidah in the Plain of Antioch (Map 2). (Braidwood and Braidwood 300-315; Marchetti 117-12). The others were found displayed on museum sites on the Internet to compare them with the study's figurines, a comparison that helps us barely define the place and time of the latter. (Map 2) (Braidwood and Braidwood. 300-315; Marchetti 117-112). Other statues are displayed on museum websites for comparison with the study statues, a comparison that hardly helped us determine the place and time of the latter.

But the Bronze Age civilization of the ancient Levant, like its great neighbors Mesopotamia, Egypt, Asia Minor, was not limited to material production alone, but also to spiritual production. They expressed their ideas and beliefs through religious texts and visual arts in sculpture and painting. These included human and non-human figurines made of various materials, including metal, such as copper and bronze. Our topic undoubtedly falls under this type of production.

Seyrig distinguished the figurines of Mt. Lebanon as a group of their own from other two groups in the same country, that date back to the Bronze Age. First, those of Byblos which he described as Phoenician, and secondly those of Baalbek valley (Map 1). He located the MLG figurines in the southern half of Lebanon, in the middle between the western slopes of Mt. Al-Shaikh to the east and the Mediterranean coast to the west, where Jezzine village is centered (Map 1). (Seyrig 47). The latter were focused upon by Schorsch in her study, exhibiting more figurines of the group. She reviewed many figurines of the MLG with their original pictures, some of which were drawn. (Schorsch 144-150)

Analyzing the details of some of the MLG figurines led us to notice many similarities between them and the figurines of the study. It appears that, in general,

they are relatively similar in size. Given the precise information in the Schorsch catalog about the heights of the figurines of the MLG, (Schorsch 144-150) the measurements of the figurines of the study do not deviate from them. Most of men figurines heights varied between 23 cm and 39 cm.

Women's heights vary more but most of them are close to the height of the one in this study, and most have tangs issuing from the heels. None of them wore a headdress, although some look wearing thick hair which makes them as if they were wearing one. (fig. 13-15, 18-19)

A. Males

The analogy between the male figurine of the study and those of MLG is obvious in most of their aspects, namely: the pose of a warrior with athletic body shape features, such as big head, short thin torso, and relatively long limbs; the thick head hair that falls in the pigtail at the back; and some of them with two extra braids forward on the shoulders, similar those of the study.

More details emerge in this similarity between the two statues of the study and the statues of the Mount Lebanon group, such as: the wide face with jutting jaw covered by a large beard, prominent nose, large wide eyes, short eyebrows, the position of the hands and elbows, clenched fists as if they held objects vertically as spears in both fists. The thin legs, the short loincloth tied with a thick rope belt with a pair or two of long ends that dangle down to the knees along the loincloth are also show similarities. In the MLG figurines, only one pair of long rope belt ends like the figurine of the study in figs. 6 and 9-12, but two pairs in figs. 4-5 and 7-8.

However, some slight differences remained, such as the foreheads of some of them being slightly tilted back. One could notice the forehead shapes of the male figurines drawings shown in figs. 4-12, whether they are straight normal or slightly tilted back, fig. 10 is one of them. (Ronzevalle 3-21, pl. 3).

Some have ribs above each other on both sides of the loincloth of some male figurines. (figs. 6, 8-11) Nonetheless, these differences are not considered essential and do not motivate us to distance the male status of the study from this group. However, there are significant differences concerning the materials of the statue manufacturers.

B. Females

The issue of the study's female figurine analogy in comparison to the female figurines in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially those attributed to the MLG, seemed to be more complicated, because, unlike male figurines of the group, they differ from each other in many aspects.

As for the MLG female figurines exhibited by Seyrig and Seeden, which were attributed to the MLG, and which Schorsch later included in her study, they do not resemble each other except in one aspect which is that they are all made of unalloyed copper. (Seyrig 30-31; and Schorsch 144-150). Other than that, they differ from each other in clothing, hairstyle, and use of hands, as I noticed from my analysis of the images of some of the figurines available to me in previous studies.

The first recognized of these was undoubtedly the figurine of Cyluse (fig.13), in which the female appeared with a very large head that was domed by hair and pulled back thickly in long braids. The face was topped with wide eye sockets and ended with a wide jaw, large, closed mouth, and prominent nose. It wore a medium-sized loincloth that reached the mid-calf, but no belt was visible, and therefore no dangling ends. Its torso is bare, and its hands, one of them, reached its opposite breast, while the other reached its abdomen. (fig. 13; Caylus 35-36, pl. 10 (1); Seyrig 24; and Schorsch 116 and 145). These same descriptions apply to both second and third comparative female figurines (fig.14 and 15), one of which is said to be from Kafr Shebaa, (fig. 14; Seyrig, pl. 11, fig. 4) and the other one from Jezzine. (fig. 15; Seyrig 10, fig. 3)

However, this pattern does not apply to all female figurines of the MLG, which are supposed to be from the same place and time. Hence, in the fourth comparative example (fig.16), although the woman bears all the characteristics and features of the three previous examples, it is completely naked, as it does not wear any garment. (fig. 16; Schorsch 117, fig. 4).

The fifth example of the female comparative figurines of MLG, (fig.17) is another one from Jezzine, that wore loincloth started from the waist as do the first three examples but longer, as it reached the heels. It differed from them in the way of using the hands, as it held both breasts, but each hand held the nearby breast without interlacing them. (fig. 17; Seyrig pl. 10, fig. 2).

This movement of the hands is similar to the figurine of the nude women of Tell-Judaïdah (fig.20 and 21), as mentioned above, except that the latter was different in some aspects. First, the material of manufacture was made from bronze and other materials such as copper, gold or silver, unlike those of MLG which were made from unalloyed copper (Braidwood and Braidwood 315, x5105: E and F); second, their bodies are completely nude; and third, the shape of the body and dimensions of its parts, the head and the face are totally different. Even in the grip of the two breasts, the hands differ as they are intertwined in the figurines of Tell-Judaïdah, as each hand holds the opposite breast. (Caylus pl. XII (5); Seyrig 45-6, and pl. XII:5; Braidwood and Braidwood 305-6, 310-312 and 315; and Manchetti, 117-123, and fig. 2:D, E, and F)

However, we see that such clasped hands move of the nude female figurines of Tell el-Judaïdah apply only to one of the figurines in the MLG, which is the sixth

comparative female figurine (fig.18). The woman in this figurine, though not totally naked, is wearing a long loincloth that is fastened with a wide rope belt, with four dangling ends. This makes it most similar to the female figurine of our study, among those of MLG women, besides the two braids hanging forward on the shoulders and the similarity in the size of the head relative to the rest of the body. It is interesting to notice how the heads of the women in the previous comparative figurines are so huge that they almost exceed a third of the total size of the figurine.

Nevertheless, clear differences are observed in this example, such as the presence of two additional dangling ends of the belt, and the extension of all of them beyond the knees down to the end of the loincloth just above the ankles. Also, the shape of the top of the head in the example makes it look as if it is wearing a hat, but perhaps it is just a hairstyle shape. The most notable difference is the orientation of the hands, which was discussed above, in which the female is holding both breasts in an interlocking fashion, similar to the women's figurines of Tell Al-Jadidah.

The seventh comparative female figurine (fig.19) does not resemble the female figurine of the study, except for the proportional size of the head, thick hair tied at the back, long loincloth, and wide rope belt, although its dangling ends are not clearly visible. The hairstyle on the top of the head in this example is like the sixth comparative figurine, and in the placement of at least one hand on the opposite breast. What is exceptional about this figurine compared to all those of the MLG and one of the studies is the position of the other hand as it reaches down and places the palm on the genitals from above the loincloth. (fig. 19; Schorsch fig. 13, 121).

Hence, it is clear here that the female figurines in the MLG are in general not similar to each other, unlike the male figurines in the same group, which are almost identical. The only thing they all have in common is the material of their construction: unalloyed copper.

V. The Issue of Manufacture Material

In the context of comparing the figurines of the study with those of the MLG, it is necessary to point out here the clear differences in the materials of their manufacture. Both figurines of the study were made of bronze, while those of the MLG were all made of unalloyed copper.

It is known that Seyrig 30 had requested a re-examination of some of the figurines in the collection that were available to him, which showed that they were made of unalloyed copper and not bronze. While previous researchers approved this fact, the information that all the figurines of MLG were all made of bronze, was widely accepted, (Ronzevalle 6-7) and later, researchers on this subject have acknowledged this new significant information. (Schorsch 115, 122, 124).

In addition, the faces of both statues of the study were covered with a thin layer of gold, and their belts were made of silver, and none of these two materials were found in any of the MLG comparative statues.

There is no doubt that these clear differences in the material of manufacture between the figurines of the study and those of the MLG are considered fundamental differences, and therefore analogizing between them is fraught with obstacles, but there are no contradictions that would completely hinder such an analogy.

Thus, the great similarity between the male figurines in shapes, sizes, postures of standing, hand movements, and clothing, made this comparison possible, especially since these points of similarity have no equivalent in any of the figurines of the Levant, dating back to the Bronze Age or the era before it. There have been differences of opinion about when these figurines were made. (Ronzevalle 17; Seeden 117).

VI. Conclusions

The Bronze Age (circa 3100–1200 B.C.) in the Levant was characterized by the rise of city-states, intensified long-distance trade, and a vibrant religious culture. Within this context, human-shaped bronze figurines, discovered in ancient Lebanese sites such as Byblos, Sidon, and Tell Kazel, provided critical insights into the religious and artistic practices of the Canaanite peoples. These figurines, typically anthropomorphic in form and cast in bronze using the lost-wax method, were often found in temples, tombs, and domestic shrines, sometimes accompanying burial goods, suggesting their central role in both public rituals and private devotion, serving a funerary function, perhaps to ensure protection or continuity in the afterlife. (Badre 47–78).

In this wide space of place and time the two figurines of the study were located, but there is, of course, a lot of diversity in the details of the human figurines according to the diversity of places and times within the Great Bronze Age in the Levant.

The first thing that was noted about the two figurines under study was the clear similarity between them, indicating that they are related to each other. They appear to have been created together by the same artist and may therefore form a duo, a man and his wife. Despite their different genders, the similarity is evident in their appearance from all angles and in their clothing, except for the biological features between men and women. It is also evident in the three materials used in both: bronze, gold, and silver.

It has been noted here that these two figurines resemble the figurines of what is known as the MLG. The similarity is very clear, especially between the male ones, in many precise details, including clothing and sizes.

As for the female figurines, the similarity is not comprehensive, but this lack of similarity does also apply to all female figurines in the group among themselves. Yet, there are a few common features among them.

The differences between the female figurines were most evident in the way the hands were used and their directions. The way how the female figurine of the study extends its hands, does not agree with any of the female figurines of MLG. Our figurine extends one of its hands forward as if holding something, perhaps a weapon, like men, while the other hand appears to be extended towards the abdomen, but without adhering to it, unlike in the first three female figurines and in the fifth one. Each of these four figurines touches its abdomen with one of its hands as a pregnant woman would. As for the female figurine of the study, its hand does not reach the point of touching. In short, the orientation of its hands together does not resemble any other figurine in the group.

The position of its hands together may indicate that it is carrying an infant, which is also a feminine gesture. It is like the rest of the gestures in the comparative female figurines of the group, such as touching the breasts and abdomen as in most of the female examples and touching the genitals as in the seventh comparative figurine (fig.19). What is common here between the female figurine of the study and those of MLG is the feminine gestures, which undoubtedly express female fertility and its religious sanctification.

Overall, the only significant difference between the two figurines of the study and those of the MLG is in the materials from which they were made. The two figurines of the study are made of bronze, while all those of the MLG were made of unalloyed copper, although bronze was the dominant metal for making human figurines in most parts of the eastern Mediterranean at the time of their manufacture: 2100 B.C., at dawn of M.B. Age, and for several centuries before and after. (Morr and Cattin 4291-4305).

Besides, the maker of the two figurines of the study covered their faces with a thin layer of gold, and the belts of their loincloths with silver, which was also not found in those of the MLG. Despite these clear differences, the two figurines of the study only resemble those made of copper from MLG group.

It is not clear whether this thin layer of gold covering the face represents a mask or was used merely for enhancing the features of the face (figs. 2 and 3). However, the occasional inclusion of precious inlays or gilding further points to their ceremonial or high-status nature. This visual language of bronze figurines functioned not only as religious symbolism but also as an expression of identity, hierarchy, and cosmological order.

The clear differences in material composition between the two figurines examined in this study and those attributed to the MLG raise an important interpretive question: does this distinction reflect a divergence in place? Or in time? Or in both? While the strong similarity in form suggests that these figurines were likely produced within the same geographical sphere as the MLG group—most plausibly in the Mount Lebanon region, particularly around Jezzine (Seyrig 24-25; Schorsch 118)—the variation in material points toward a potentially later date of production. This tension between

formal continuity and material divergence cautions against assuming a shared origin based solely on stylistic resemblance, as such similarities may equally result from processes of imitation or the activity of external workshops adhering to established production traditions.

In this respect, the issue echoes Henri Seyrig's geoeconomic interpretation of the MLG figurines, in which he posited that Mount Lebanon communities engaged in exchange networks with the coastal regions of Lebanon (later Phoenicia), trading timber for imported copper during the early second millennium BCE. According to this model, by the onset of the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1600 BCE), these inland populations maintained a degree of economic autonomy from coastal centers such as Byblos—often associated with the early Phoenicians—whose metallurgical practices were more advanced, particularly in the production of bronze. Seyrig thus explained the exclusive use of copper in earlier MLG figurines of the 20th century BCE as a direct consequence of the absence of tin, and therefore of bronze technology, within that specific regional and chronological context. This case ultimately underscores the complexity of disentangling questions of production, exchange, and technological transmission in the archaeology of the ancient Levant.

For this reason, the study's two bronze figurines may date back to a later time, specifically to the L.B. Age. This reminds us of the time estimated by the technicians of the SAC mentioned above; between 1600 and 1200 B.C., specifically the era known as the L.B. Age. As for the place, it would probably be the same place, as indicated above, due to the obvious similarities between the study's two figurines and those of MLG, in shape that was discussed in detail above as well.

In other words, it seems that these two rare figurines most likely belong to the same region as those of the MLG, but from a later era, at a time when bronze became available in the mountain, along with silver and gold, amid a more active and broader trade exchange activity.

Lastly, it is difficult here to determine what the two have represented at the time they were made. Were they two gods? A king and his wife? A couple from an aristocratic class? Or a human warrior and his wife? Though some scholars interpret similar figurines as votive offerings, representations of deities or ancestors, and ritual symbols of protection or power (Negbi 61), as their recurrence across multiple urban centers points to a common cultural-religious framework in the region, while their stylistic diversity reflects a cultural cross-pollination that combines local creativity with foreign influence.

The stylistic features of this type of figurine are diverse, but they share some distinctive elements. Most of them appear with elongated limbs, abstract facial features, and rigid frontal poses, which were characteristic of Bronze Age Levantine art. (Amiet

204–206). In addition, some of them carried weapons such as daggers or spears, indicating a martial or divine warrior identity. Others were more generalized in form, while some appeared to reflect individualized traits, suggesting they may represent specific gods, kings, or high-ranking officials. The metallurgy involved in producing these bronzes—particularly the use of the *cire perdue* (lost-wax) technique—demonstrated a high degree of technological sophistication. (Badre 103–122).

The interpretation of the two figurines examined in this study as representing a warrior and his wife constitutes the most convincing and methodologically sound hypothesis when the available iconographic and contextual evidence is examined in a comprehensive and nuanced manner. This reading is supported by a combination of significant visual indicators associated with the male figure, most notably his upright and firmly grounded standing position, which conveys a sense of authority and physical presence, as well as his outstretched arms, which appear to express either an intentional gesture of display or a symbolic posture of action, in addition to the presence of weapons held in his hands, a feature that unmistakably points toward a martial identity and reinforces the interpretation of the figure as a warrior.

At the same time, it must be emphasized that this particular posture and configuration are not unique to the figurines under discussion, but rather correspond closely to the standardized representation observed across male figurines attributed to the MLG corpus more broadly, thereby introducing an additional layer of complexity into the interpretive process. Despite the recurrence and apparent conventionalization of this form, earlier studies have not succeeded in providing a sufficiently precise or universally accepted explanation of what these figures were intended to represent, a limitation that can be largely attributed to the complete absence of written legends, inscriptions, or any form of accompanying textual documentation that might otherwise clarify their identity, function, or symbolic significance within their original cultural context.

As a consequence, scholars have been compelled to rely predominantly on formal analysis, comparative typology, and broader archaeological parallels, all of which, while undeniably valuable, remain inherently constrained by a degree of interpretive uncertainty. This lack of explicit textual evidence has therefore made it particularly difficult for researchers to advance beyond cautious and provisional interpretations, ultimately preventing the establishment of definitive conclusions and leaving the question of the meaning and role of these figurines open to continued scholarly debate and critical reassessment.

VII. Figures and Maps



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Ffig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

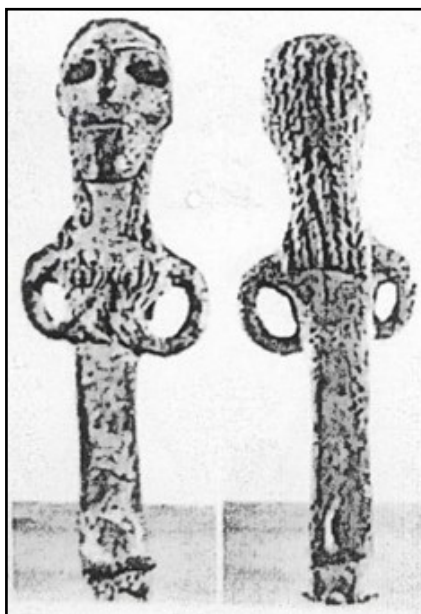


Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



Fig. 20



Fig. 21





Map 2

VIII. Acknowledgement

At the outset, I express my deep appreciation to the curators of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah for accepting my request to study the two figurines, and the technicians who supervised SAC for assisting me to accomplish this paper by providing me access to their material and the opportunity to study and investigate the subject of this paper and providing all related information and technical photos.

IX. Abbreviations

SAC	al-Sabah Antique Collection
E.B. Age	Early Bronze Age
L.B. Age	Late Bronze Age
LNS	Loan Nasser Sabah
M.B. Age	Middle Bronze Age
MET	The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MLG	Mount Lebanon Group

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