

The Ochre Functions in the Prehistory of Ancient Near East, With an Archaeological-Anthropological Approach

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Abstract

Ochre is a common and very valuable pigment and has been used for many thousands of years by many ancient cultures on all continents. Ochre is a term used by Archaeologists to describe the earth's pigments, usually red. In the present study, based on the evidence found, we try to examine the evidence left over the use of Ochre and the uses, reasons (practical or symbolic aspect) of the use of this pigment. Let's look at pigments from the Paleolithic period to the contemporary period. Therefore, the present study seeks to answer questions about the period of time and in which areas the use of ochre has been used? What was the use of Ochre among the people in prehistoric times? From the perspective of an Archaeological-Anthropological approach, what are the properties of Ochre pigments that have been exploited by humans in the long-term?. The research method in this descriptive-analytical study is based on the Archaeological-Anthropological approach. In the present study, we first examined the evidence for the use of Ochre among prehistoric societies in the Ancient Near East and then Ethnographic and Anthropological studies conducted among different communities that use Ochre, so we can explain the reasons for the use of the recent pigment by prehistoric societies. The results of the present study show that, in fact, for a wide range of purposes, including artistic, ceremonial and medicinal purposes, such as painting objects, painting the body, or as a food preservative and wood preservative, repelling insects, skin tanning and used for rituals and burials.

Keywords: Ochre, Prehistory, Usage, Symbol, Near East.

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