

## A Re-discovered Naked Man of the Uruk Period

Elena Rova (Venezia)

*For Gernot, with gratitude and  
with fond memories of the “old  
times” in Tell Karrana*

In a short contribution, Gernot Wilhelm discussed the theme of “kultische Nacktheit” in the Uruk period (Wilhelm 2001). It is therefore a pleasure for me to offer him this paper, whose aim is to draw scholars’ attention on a recently re-discovered work of Uruk-period art representing a naked figure<sup>1</sup>.

The figure is a 30 cm high<sup>2</sup> statuette of porous calcareous stone<sup>3</sup> of whitish colour (the surface is presently light beige-yellowish, but this is probably due to the presence of a patina of post-depositional origin), representing a standing male figure in frontal position (Fig. 1). Its preservation is remarkable: it is complete and unbroken, except for a modern break which cuts it approximately into two halves at the level of the waist<sup>4</sup>. The whole surface is slightly worn and some incised details are nearly obliterated by wear; a few protruding areas (e. g. the nose and the lips) have partially chipped off.

The body is strictly symmetrical in all details. There is a remarkable contrast, in the style of the figure, between the upper and the lower part of the body: while the former (the bust and especially the head), is well modelled, rich in details, and on the whole of rather naturalistic appearance both in the frontal, as well as in the side and

---

<sup>1</sup> The statuette was published in Gambino, Rova 2005, which contains a detailed description, in Italian language, of the artefact and of the history of its discovery, as well as a thorough discussion of its chronology, style and possible function.

<sup>2</sup> The overall dimensions of the statuette are the following: height: 30.0 cm; max width (at the elbows): 9.8 cm; max thickness (at the feet): 6.7 cm. The head is 7.2 cm high and 6.0 cm wide (including the beard).

<sup>3</sup> According to mineralogical-petrographic analyses carried out by prof. Dario Visonà of Padova University, the stone is bioclastic calcarenite.

<sup>4</sup> A letter by a 19<sup>th</sup> century collector, Dr. Antonio Fabris (see *infra*) informs us that the break had occurred in the house of a previous owner, Sante Zennaro, whose wife let the statuette fall, and that he had it repaired.

back views, the latter appears as a squared rough-hewn block of stone, on which the genitals stand out as the only accurately rendered detail.

The legs are thick and squared; they are separated, on the front as well as on the back, only by an incised line; the feet are massive and unrealistically thick, but four light incisions on their tip mark the toes. This summary treatment of body volumes is not lacking in vigour: see, e. g. how, in the side view, it emphasises the powerful muscles of the figure.

The arms, with clenched fists separated by a narrow space, are tightly bent under the chest, on which a light depression marks the position of sternum, and the pectoral muscles appear in low relief. On both hands, the fingers are rendered by means of light incisions. The waist is unnaturally high, nearly indistinguishable on the front, but underscored, on the back, by two deep grooves.

The head is spherical in shape, and rests directly on the shoulders. The face is framed by a flat, crescent-shaped beard, which, in the front view at least, masks the absence of the neck. The head is covered by what appears as a hemispherical cap, but may actually represent a relief band holding the figure's hair. Similar to contemporary monuments representing the so-called "priest-king", the hair may have been rolled in a bun at the back of the head, although this detail is not explicitly represented on our specimen. The face is broad, with slightly swollen cheeks and a small chin; the nose, unfortunately damaged on its tip, is prominent; the mouth is fleshy, and the almond-shaped eyes have a slightly bulging profile. In spite of the geometric stylisation of its details, the head achieves a pleasant effect of moderate naturalism both in the front, as well as in the side view.

The back of the figure is definitely coarser in its appearance, but not completely flat and devoid of details, as if the figure had not been exclusively meant for a front view.

In spite of the fact that the object had been intentionally smoothed and that its surface is rather worn in addition, at selected spots one can still see faint traces that can provide information on its manufacturing techniques. After the block of stone had been rough-hewn, arms, legs and the main details of the head were at first deeply hollowed in the soft stone by means of a pointed tool, and then accurately finished. Traces of the original tool are visible, e. g., as deep parallel incisions in-between the legs, on both sides of the figure (Fig. 2, a). The eyes, the ears and other details were first delimited by an incision, and successively underscored by a light relief, while fingers and toes were simply incised with a fine-pointed tool. Groups of very faint sub-parallel striations, like those which are visible on the back (Fig. 2, b) and on the left calf are probably traces of the final smoothing process.

The statuette, previously unpublished, was found, quite accidentally, by dott. Claudia Gambino while processing and cataloguing a group of miscellaneous archaeological artefacts, mainly of Egyptian origin, stored in the reserve collections of the Museo Civico Archeologico of Padova, which had been donated to the museum by a number of local collectors during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century A. D.

The original documents attached to the museum's acquisition procedures allowed for a rather precise reconstruction of the recent history of the statuette, which entered the local museum on June the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1876. A letter by the donor, Dr. Antonio Fabris (a medical doctor who died in Padova in the following year), reports that he had received it on September the 6<sup>th</sup>, 1872 as a present by a colleague and old friend of him, Dr. Sante Zennaro, who had been working for ca thirty years in Constantinople / Istanbul<sup>5</sup>. The latter, in its turn, had received the statuette in 1860 from another Italian medical doctor, "Henry, Bolognese", who was stationed in Basra and had allegedly "found and collected it amid the ruins of Nineveh"<sup>6</sup>.

The figure is an almost exact *replica* of three well-known statuettes, two of which are exhibited at the *Département des Antiquités Orientales* of the Louvre Museum in Paris<sup>7</sup> (Figs. 3, 4), and the third that belongs to the *Archäologische Sammlung* of Zurich University<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 5). The four specimens differ from each other only in minimal variations in dimensions, proportions and technical details (the Zurich statuette, e. g., is smaller, of more elongated proportions and of more accurate finishing than the remaining ones, while Louvre, AO 5719, shows a somehow less accurate manufacture)<sup>9</sup>.

According to the catalogue entries<sup>10</sup>, the Louvre figures were already in possession of the Museum in 1869, at the time of its first inventory. It is probable that they were acquired at the same time, possibly with the collection of Mesopotamian antiquities assembled by the French consul at Baghdad, Pacifique Delaporte, who is known to have excavated a Seleucid tomb in Babylon around 1863 (Tallon 1999). The Zurich figure was donated to the local *Antiquarische Gesellschaft* by a Swiss merchant, Julius Weber-Locher, who had resided in Baghdad, from 1860 to 1868, as a representative of the *Schweizerische Exportgesellschaft*. In 1863 this was shipped to Zurich with a number of miscellaneous antiquities collected during his trips across the country; subsequently, he also shipped fourteen Neo-Assyrian reliefs found during excavations he carried out at the Assyrian capital of Nimrud<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> According to sources collected by Yesim Isil Ulman of Istanbul University, Sante Zennaro was a well-known figure in 19<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul (see Gambino, Rova 2005, 11 f.). More in general, on Italian medical doctors in the Ottoman Empire, cf. Ulman 2008.

<sup>6</sup> In spite of repeated queries, it was not possible to find any independent confirmation about the presence of this figure in the territories of the Ottoman Empire; on the other hand, his very name is uncertain (is "Bolognese" his surname, or does it refer to his origin: "from Bologna"?).

<sup>7</sup> The Louvre statuettes (AO 5718 and AO 5719) have never been officially published, but have often been illustrated in general works about the arts of the ancient Near East (e. g., Moortgat 1967, 15 f., pls. 6, 7; Hrouda 1971, 85-86, fig. 11a, b; Spycket 1981, 29, pl. 20a, b; Amiet 1994, figs. 226, 250; Caubet, Pouysseur, 2001, figs. on pp. 46-47).

<sup>8</sup> The Zurich statuette (Inv. 1942) has been the object of a short monographic study by Maya Müller (1976), to which we refer for earlier literature. Like the previous one, it has been often illustrated in general works on ancient Near Eastern arts (among others, Moortgat 1967, 15-16, footnotes 19-20; pls. 8-10; Orthmann 1975, 22, pl. 11a, b; Moortgat-Correns 1989, 36-37, figs. 2, 3, 4 on p. 35; Aruz, Wallenfels 2003, 38, n. 8).

<sup>9</sup> For a systematic comparison of the four specimens features, see Rova, Gambino 2005, 17-24.

<sup>10</sup> A. Caubet, personal communication.

<sup>11</sup> For further details on Julius Weber-Locher and his activities in the Near East, see Müller 1976, 6, fn. 1; Gambino, Rova 2005, 23, fn. 35.

Interestingly enough, all four objects appear to have been acquired, in somehow unclear circumstances, between the late fifties and the early sixties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by individuals who were based in the territory of present-day Iraq and who subsequently transferred them to Europe. The hypothesis that all of them might be forgeries can be confidently excluded, since no original from which they might have been copied was known at the time of their discovery. It is however rather strange that, after more than one and half century and in spite of intense archaeological excavations in Iraq, no other similar objects have come to the light. It could be theoretically possible that we are dealing with one original and three *replicas*, made by local forgers shortly after its discovery. This seems rather improbable, however, due to the presence of comparable traces of manufacture on different specimens, and of a similar rendering of some specific details, like, e. g., the slightly swollen eyelids, which appear on contemporary works of art from archaeological excavations as well. In any case, the authenticity of the Paris and Zurich specimens and their dating in the Uruk period have never been questioned since, around 1960, a number of convincing parallels for them have been published from the German excavations at Uruk-Warka (Lenzen 1960, see also Hrouda 1971). An intriguing hypothesis, on the other hand, may be that the four figures belong to a single find, which was successively dispersed among different dealers and/or buyers.

According to Dr. Fabris' letter, the Padova statuette would have been found "amidst the ruins of Nineveh". This is not in itself impossible, since, as we know, Uruk period occupation is attested at the site of ancient Nineveh, on the mound of Kuyunjik<sup>12</sup>. There are, however, enough good reasons to doubt the reliability of this third-hand information. First of all, the letter might have referred not to the mound of Kuyunjik, but to that of Nimrud (ancient Kalkhu), which had been erroneously identified with Nineveh by A. H. Layard<sup>13</sup>, where no Uruk-period occupation is known until now<sup>14</sup>. Secondly, although the southern Uruk culture is presently well attested in Northern Mesopotamia as elsewhere, all the closest iconographic parallels for our figures come, as we will see, from Southern Mesopotamia and more specifically from the site of Uruk. Finally, the fact that the individuals (Dr. Henry, Bolognese, Julius-Weber Locher, and Pacifique Delaporte), who we tentatively connected with the four statuettes, are all known to have been present in southern Iraq at approximately the time of their first appearance could lend support to the hypothesis of a southern origin.

<sup>12</sup> Besides large amounts of Uruk pottery, the mound of Kuyunjik yielded some seal impressions in southern Uruk style (Collon, Reade 1982, 33-41). On Uruk occupation at Nineveh, see especially Gut 1995, *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly enough, the same mistake is present in the documentation referring to the Assyrian reliefs transferred to Zürich by Julius Weber-Locher (see Müller 1976, 6).

<sup>14</sup> In the framework of the wide diffusion of Layard's exceptional discoveries among the cultured European audience of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Curtis, Reade 1995, 9-14, 210-221), the reference to Nineveh in Dr. Fabris' letter may thus be explained either as a simple misunderstanding, or even as an intentional attempt, by one of the statuette's successive owners, to "ennoble" its origin.

As already pointed out by various scholars<sup>15</sup>, the most precise parallel to the four statuettes, as far as subject and posture are concerned, is the fragmentary alabaster torso of the so-called *kleiner König* from Uruk (Fig. 6)<sup>16</sup>. This was found in 1957 / 58 inside a pottery jar of the Jemdet Nasr period under a Seleucid wall in the *Steinstift-tempel* area<sup>17</sup>. The only significant difference in iconography lies in the fact that the *kleiner König* is not naked, but wears a smooth, heavy belted skirt, since all the remaining ones (e. g. in the shape and rendering of the figure's beard) can be easily explained in terms of stylistic variation and/or superior quality of manufacture of the Uruk specimen. The attire and hair-style of the Uruk torso allow it to be identified with the so-called "priest-king", a figure that is often portrayed in the arts of the Uruk / Jemdet Nasr periods and is generally assumed to represent the city ruler<sup>18</sup>.

Broadly comparable are also some fragments of stone figurines from different Uruk / Jemdet Nasr contexts at Uruk, which represent naked individuals, both male and female, in frontal position<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 7). These have more elongated proportions and are executed in a more cursory style than our statuettes, but belong to the same general type, as shown by the characteristic position of the arms and by the schematic treatment of the lower part of the body. Somehow similar in the peculiar rendering of the body volumes (cf. especially the side view) is also an acephalous female figure in yellowish-greenish alabaster (Fig. 8), which was found in the area of Eanna amidst the remains of a group of kilns of the late Jemdet Nasr period<sup>20</sup>.

More generally, both the iconography and style of the four statuettes find a large number of comparisons in the small plastic, relief and glyptic arts of the Uruk / Jemdet Nasr periods, as known both from excavations in Mesopotamia and Elam, as well as from the antiquities market<sup>21</sup>; their attribution to this period is thus beyond doubt and need not be discussed again. This is nonetheless a long period (more than half a millennium from the Middle Uruk / LC 3-4 to the Jemdet Nasr / post LC 5 period, according to the chronological table in Rothman 2001), so that an attempt at a more precise chronological attribution within this lapse of time is certainly justified. The finds from Uruk / Warka are not very helpful in this respect, since most of them, as well known, were not found in primary contexts, but in large debris layers and artificial fill of the Jemdet Nasr period covering the underlying Late Uruk period structures, which cannot provide much more than a *terminus ante quem*.

<sup>15</sup> To begin with, Lenzen 1960, 39-40 and Moortgat 1967, 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> Becker 1993, 75, pls. 55-57, n. 693, with earlier literature.

<sup>17</sup> On the circumstances of its discovery, see esp. Hrouda 1970, 34-35; a photo of the finding spot is reproduced in Invernizzi 1992, 179, fig. 220.

<sup>18</sup> On the "priest-king" and its iconography, see, among others, Moortgat 1967, 16 ff.; Amiet 1980, 77, 87-88, 202-204; Schmandt-Besserat 1993, 201-219; Wilhelm 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Becker 1993, 76, pl. 61, nos. 941-944, with earlier literature.

<sup>20</sup> Becker 1993, 75, pl. 60, n. 939, with earlier literature. On the circumstances of its discovery, see also Hrouda 1970, 40.

<sup>21</sup> Some of these are discussed in Gambino, Rova 2005, 29-31.

For a number of these finds, scholars have repeatedly put forward the hypothesis, on the basis of their style and iconography<sup>22</sup>, that they actually belong to the Uruk period. Among these are the Paris and Zurich statuettes, for which Hrouda (1970, 44), Hansen (in Orthmann 1975, 22) and Behm-Blancke (1979, 64-65) all propose a date in the Late Uruk period, and specifically to an early phase of the latter, due to the presence in them of a number of archaic features (the rigidly geometric shapes, the paucity of incised details and decorations, etc.).

This hypothesis seems fully justified, and we think it can be supported and further specified by recent research concerning the chronological development of the Uruk cylinder seal glyptic between the Middle and the Late Uruk period as reconstructed on the basis of well stratified finds from Uruk settlements located in the "peripheral" areas of present-day Iran, Syria and Turkey.

According to the sequence of glyptic styles proposed by H. Pittman (2001), the earlier Middle Uruk (LC 3) glyptic would be characterised by heavy drilled figures (so-called "baggy style"). This "baggy" style would be followed, by the later Middle Uruk (LC 4) period, by a style in which the drilled forms are smoothed with a graver, which shows large, fully sculptural figures of elongated proportions with few carefully rendered anatomical details (Fig. 9). To the same period belongs the earliest, though rare evidence for the "priest-king" figures (*ibid.*, 429). This style seems to persist until the beginning of the Late Uruk (LC 5) phase, as attested by a number of impressions attributed to level Eanna V at Uruk (Boehmer 1999, 3-33) (Fig. 10).

The human figures on the impressions of this late Middle / early Late Uruk phase appear to show specific similarities with our figurines. These concern the elongated proportions, the plastic but still somehow heavy and stylised shapes of the naked figures (as can especially be seen in the profile view of the lower part of the body), and, finally, the presence of a small number of details marked by heavy incisions<sup>23</sup>. We can therefore suggest, as a working hypothesis, that the four statuettes belong to this chronological stage, the plastic art of which is still virtually unknown.

Another open question concerns the identity of the portrayed figures and the original function of the statuettes. These have been discussed by several authors, and summarised, among others, by Wilhelm himself in the above mentioned contribution (2001, 279-281). As we anticipated, the figures' beard and hair-style broadly correspond to those of the so-called "priest-king" of the Uruk period<sup>24</sup>. We can therefore easily share the previous scholars' opinion that we are dealing with representations of the city ruler<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> See, e. g., Hrouda 1970, with earlier literature.

<sup>23</sup> These features contrast with those of the later Late Uruk impressions (see e. g., Pittman 2001, figs. 11.24, 11.25), which show squatter figures characterised by a larger number of details rendered by means of thinner and less deep incisions.

<sup>24</sup> As we explained elsewhere (Gambino, Rova 2005, 35-36), these are not absolutely identical in all images that have been identified with the "priest-king", but we share the common opinion that the variety in details should be explained by chronological and stylistic diversity rather than by differences in meaning.

<sup>25</sup> Among others, Moortgat 1967, 15; Spycket 1981, 29; Schmandt-Besserat 1993; Wilhelm 2001.

To the arguments put forward by the previous scholars, we can add only that the figures' physical features (massive, muscular body structure, wide breast, strong arms, broad face and large eyes) significantly correspond to those that, as demonstrated in a ground-breaking contribution by I. Winter (1989), in later Mesopotamian texts and figurative arts symbolically represent the qualities of the ideal ruler<sup>26</sup>.

As to the function of the statuettes, since what sets them apart from most other representations of the "priest-king" is their nakedness, the question is inextricably connected with the meaning to be attributed to nakedness in this specific context. In fact, male nudity in Near Eastern art can have different, contrasting meanings, but is usually not an attribute of the ruler, who tends to be portrayed with the *insigna* connected to his role. Nudity tends to be reserved for the following categories of figures: heroes of supernatural nature, deceased persons, prisoners and dead enemies, worshippers and particularly libators<sup>27</sup>. All of these possibilities have been considered for the Paris and Zurich statuettes by earlier scholars<sup>28</sup>, most of whom came to the conclusion that these probably portrayed the priest-king "performing a ritual in cultic nudity" (Schmandt-Besserat 2001, 209; Wilhelm 2001, 479). The possibility that they were representations of dead kings, put forward by A. Spycket (1981, 29) in particular, has been considered with a certain scepticism<sup>29</sup>.

The new Padova specimen does not bring, in itself, any new data in this respect since, like for the remaining ones, its precise context is unknown. We feel entitled, however, to add a few additional considerations to the arguments that have been put forward already in the discussion. First of all, we can observe that the use of nudity in the late Middle Uruk / early Late Uruk seal imagery is apparently more widespread than later on, and includes figures that are difficult to include in the above mentioned categories<sup>30</sup>. Its presence may therefore be connected with chronology rather than with a specific meaning.

In addition, if our hypothesis that the four statuettes had originally been found together has some likelihood, it may contribute to the question of their function in slightly different terms. On the other hand, it would add a further question to be explained,

<sup>26</sup> For some somehow similar remarks, see already Schmandt-Besserat 1993, esp. 202, 211. The remark by this author (*ibid.*, 213) that the figure's position with the fist clenched against his chest may have a symbolic meaning is also relevant in this context, as is the reference to mythical beings portrayed in the same position (*ibid.*, fig. 12).

<sup>27</sup> For nudity in ancient Mesopotamian sources, besides the literature mentioned in Wilhelm 2001, 479-480, fn. 14, see also Bahrani 2001, 57-69.

<sup>28</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the question, the reader is referred to Wilhelm 2001, 479-482; Gambino, Rova 2005, 38-43.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Wilhelm 2001, 481: "Die Annahme, es handle sich um verstorbene Herrscher...dürfen wir für wenig überzeugend halten".

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, the soldiers torturing prisoners in the impressions in Fig. 10, or the figure fighting a lion in front of a temple in Fig. 9, bottom right.

namely under what circumstances would four different rulers have been portrayed together and not only one, as is generally the case on contemporary works of art<sup>31</sup>.

The possibility that the statuettes might belong to a group of prisoners, like the fragmentary figures found in the area of the Anu Ziggurat<sup>32</sup>, which apparently represent the tri-dimensional version of the prisoners so often depicted in contemporary glyptic<sup>33</sup>, seems to be rejected, on the ground that the latter are always clearly bound and, furthermore, in sitting, squatting or crouching positions, which are emblematic of their humiliation. The position of our figures, on the contrary, conveys rather a feeling of power and majesty<sup>34</sup>.

A second possibility is that we are confronted with a group of votive statues originally exposed in a temple, like the famous worshippers group from the Abu Temple at Tell Asmar<sup>35</sup>, as are known from many Mesopotamian sites of the Early Dynastic period. In this case, they could have been deposited at different times, and therefore represent different, successive rulers. The later worshippers' figures are, however, normally dressed, and their attitude (especially the position of the arms) is different from that of our statuettes; furthermore, in spite of the presence of a number of buildings of the Uruk period that have been interpreted as temples, none of them has hitherto yielded comparable finds.

A third hypothesis is that the figures may come from a cemetery, and may have originally been deposited inside graves. The circumstances of recovery of the *kleiner König* and of the other naked figurines from Uruk<sup>36</sup>, which represent their closest parallels, though quite unclear, are not incompatible with an origin of these from disturbed graves of the Uruk period. Admittedly, we know of no similar figures from contemporary burial contexts; it must be highlighted, however, that the number of excavated graves of the Uruk period is very limited, and they do not seem to be representative of the burial customs of the period, which are, therefore, virtually unknown to us.

On the contrary, there are significant similarities, in the general iconography and attitude, between our statuettes and the much earlier alabaster figurines from the Samarra period graves at Tell as-Sawwan<sup>37</sup> (Fig. 11, a, b), as well as with the terracotta figurines from the Obeid-period graves at Eridu, Tell el-Obeid at Ur<sup>38</sup> (Fig. 11, c, d). In particular, all these figurines are naked, and the position of their arms and hands seems

<sup>31</sup> This is the case for glyptic, where the "priest-king" is portrayed either alone, or accompanied by figures of clearly lower rank (soldiers, prisoners, officers). Exceptions could be the so-called "hunt stele" (Becker 1993, 57-58, pls. 36-38, n. 783; this is, however, generally interpreted as representing the ruler in two successive moments of the action), and a few unclear seal impressions (Boehmer 1999, figs. 107b, 124c) which may represent dead or imprisoned enemy kings.

<sup>32</sup> Becker, 1993, 73-77, pls. 58, 62-65, nos. 937-938, 945-952, with earlier literature.

<sup>33</sup> On the theme of prisoners in the Uruk glyptic, see esp. Brandes 1979, 117-173; Boehmer 1999, 20-26, figs. 15-19.

<sup>34</sup> For similar remarks, see already Wilhelm 2001, 481; Schmandt-Besserat 2001, 212.

<sup>35</sup> Frankfort 1970, 31-34, pls. 26-31.

<sup>36</sup> See *supra*, fn. 17, 20.

<sup>37</sup> Ippoliti Strika 1976.

<sup>38</sup> Invernizzi 1992, 112-113, figs. 148-150.

very similar to that of our examples. If both these elements would be interpreted as alluding to a state of death, the similarity of our statuettes with the figures of prisoners noticed by different authors could be explained by the recurrent association, in Near Eastern art and texts, between defeat and death<sup>39</sup>. We may further speculate that there may even be an intentional visual association here, between the dead king and such superhuman figures, heroes, and hybrid beings, which are often portrayed in "heroic nudity", e. g. in a "master of animal" attitude, in contemporary glyptic and relief<sup>40</sup>. Finally, the hypothesis that our figures represented dead rulers would solve the difficulty caused by their very number.

To sum up, we think that there are sufficient reasons to consider, besides the most current interpretation of the statuettes as rulers in "cultic nudity", an alternative interpretation as dead, possibly "heroicised" rulers. Be that as it may, the re-discovery of the statuette of the Museo Civico Archeologico of Padova represents a welcome addition to the small corpus of works of the formative phase of Mesopotamian art, a period that occupies a crucial position, as we have shown, in the elaboration of the iconographic expressions of the "ideology of royalty".

#### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following persons: dott. Girolamo Zampieri, curator of the Museo Civico Archeologico of Padova, for entrusting the publication of the statuette to us; prof. Dario Visonà and prof. Cristina Stefani (Università degli Studi di Padova), for analysing its material, drs. A. Caubet and Françoise Demange (Musée du Louvre, Paris), dr. Elena Mango (Archäologische Sammlung der Universität Zürich), for providing graphic documents and information about the specimens belonging to these collections; prof. Yesim Isil Ulman (Istanbul University), for her researches about the life of the statuette's previous owners, prof. David I. Owen, for revising the English text, and, last but not least, dott. Claudia Gambino, who discovered the statuette and carried out most of the relevant archival researches.

#### Bibliography

- Amiet, P.  
1994 *L'arte antica del Vicino Oriente*, Cernusco sul Naviglio.  
Aruz, J., Wallenfels, R. (eds.)  
2003 *Art of the First Cities. The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*, New York, New Haven, London.

<sup>39</sup> Besides Spycket 1981, 29, with criticism by Wilhelm 2001, 480-481, fn. 16, see especially Bahrani 2001, 59-65.

<sup>40</sup> We refer, e. g. to the figures illustrated in Fig. 9, left. For interesting remarks, albeit in a different context and with different conclusions, on the connections between these heroic figures and death, see also Winkelmann 2003, 580, 615-616; for the position in particular, also Schmandt-Besserat 2001, 212.

- Bahrani, Z.  
2001 *Women of Babylon. Gender and Representation in Mesopotamia*, London, New York.
- Becker, A.  
1993 *Uruk. Kleinfunde I. Stein* (AUWE 6), Mainz am Rhein.
- Boehmer, R.M.  
1999 *Uruk. Früheste Siegelabrollungen* (AUWE 24), Mainz am Rhein.
- Brandes, M.A.  
1979 *Siegelabrollungen aus den archaischen Bauschichten in Uruk-Warka* (FAOS 3), Wiesbaden.
- Caubet, A., Pouyssegur, P.  
2001 *Assiro-babilonesi e le civiltà del Vicino Oriente*, Santarcangelo di Romagna.
- Collon, D., Reade, J.  
1982 „Archaic Nineveh“, BaM 14, 33-41.
- Curtis, J. E., Reade, J. E. (eds.)  
1995 *Art and Empire. Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum*, London.
- Gambino, C., Rova, E.  
2005 „Riscoperta nelle collezioni del Museo Civico Archeologico una statuette mesopotamica della metà del IV millennio a. C.“, *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova* 94, 6-53.
- Frankfort, H.  
1970 *Arte e architettura dell'Antico Oriente*, Torino.
- Gut, R. V.  
1995 *Das prähistorische Ninive. Zur relativen Chronologie der frühen Nordmesopotamien* (BaF 19), Mainz am Rhein.
- Hrouda, B.  
1970 „Zur Datierung frühsumerischer Bildwerke aus Uruk-Warka“, BaM 5, 33-44.  
1971 *Vorderasien I. Mesopotamien, Babylonien, Iran und Anatolien*, München.
- Invernizzi, A.  
1992 *Dal Tigri all'Eufrate. Vol I. Sumeri ed Accadi*, Firenze.
- Ippoliti Strika, F.  
1976 „Le statuette di alabastro di Tell es-Sawwan (metà del VI millennio a. C.)“, *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, 36, 1-29.

- Lenzen, H.J.  
1960 „Die Kleinfunde“, in H. J. Lenzen et. al., UVB 16, 37-42.
- Moortgat, A.  
1967 *Die Kunst des alten Mesopotamien. Die klassische Kunst Vorderasiens*, Berlin.
- Moortgat-Correns, U.  
1989 *La Mesopotamia*, Torino.
- Müller, M.  
1976 *Frühgeschichtlicher Fürst aus dem Iraq* (Zürcher Archäologische Hefte 1), Zürich.
- Orthmann, W.  
1975 *Der Alte Orient* (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 14), Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Wien.
- Pittman, H.  
2001 „Mesopotamian Interregional Relations Reflected through Glyptic Evidence in the Late Chalcolithic 1-5 Periods“, in M. S. Rothman (ed.), *Uruk Mesopotamia & its Neighbors in the Era of State Formation*, Santa Fe, Oxford, 403-443.
- Rothman, M. S. (ed.)  
2001 *Uruk Mesopotamia & its Neighbors in the Era of State Formation*, Santa Fe, Oxford.
- Spycket, A.  
1981 *La statuaire du Proche-Orient Ancien* (Handbuch der Orientalistik VII, I.2.B.2), Leiden-Köln.
- Tallon, F.  
1999 „Les rubis d'Ishtar: étude archéologique“, in A. Caubet (ed.), *Cornaline et pierres précieuses: la Méditerranée, de l'Antiquité à l'Islam*, Paris, 229-243.
- Ulman, Y.I.  
2008 „Portraits of Italians in Health Affairs in 19th century: Dr. Castaldi, Pharmacist A. Calleja, Midwife Messani“, in M. Galletti (ed.), *Medici, missionari, musicisti e militari italiani attivi in Persia, Impero Ottomano ed Egitto* (Oriente Moderno LXXXVIII, n.s. 6-2008, Roma Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino), 135-149.
- Wilhelm, G.  
2001 Der „Mann im Netzrock“ und kultische Nacktheit, in J.-W. Meyer, M. Novák, A. Pruß (Hgg.), *Beiträge zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie Winfried Orthmann gewidmet*, Frankfurt am Main, 478-483.



Winkelmann, S.

2003

„Berliner Schlangenbecken, Trichterbecher und Cincinnati-Mann: verkaufte Schlüsselobjekte der altorientalischen Archäologie?“, in R. Dittmann, Ch. Eder, B. Jacobs (eds.), *Altertumswissenschaften im Dialog. Festschrift für Wolfram Nagel zur Vollendung seines 80. Lebensjahres* (AOAT 306), Münster, 567-678.

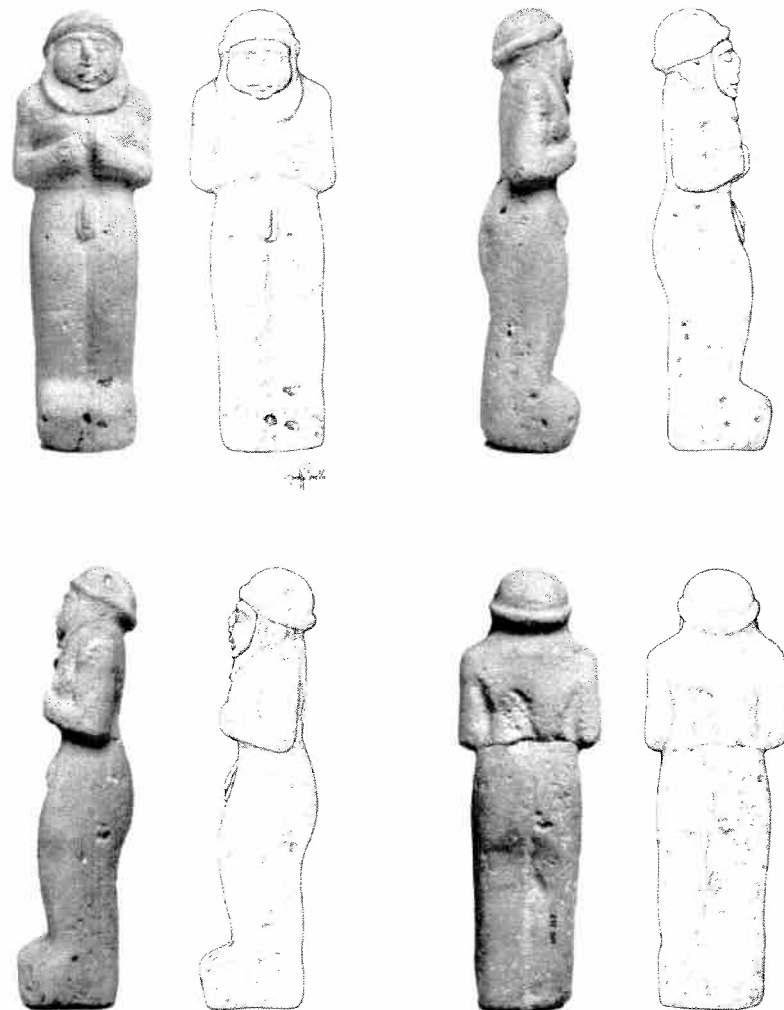


Fig. 1) The statuette of the Museo Civico Archeologico di Padova (foto Gabinetto Fotografico dei Musei Civici, Padova, drawing by G. Penello).

Research Archives-Director's Library  
The Oriental Institute  
The University of Chicago

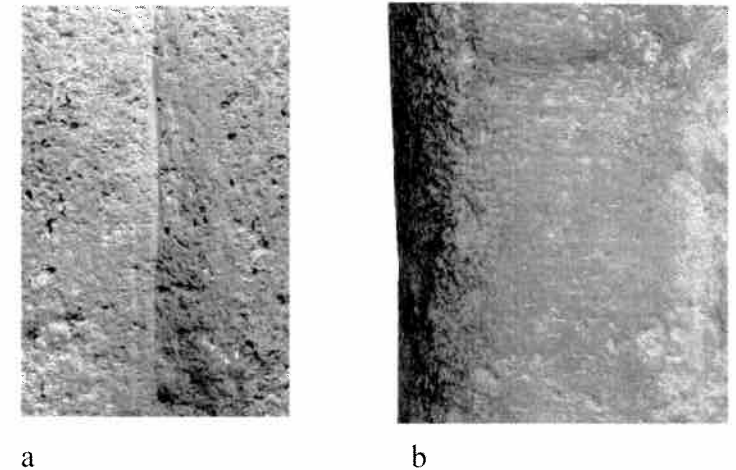


Fig. 2) Details of the legs (a) and of the back (b) with traces of manufacture.

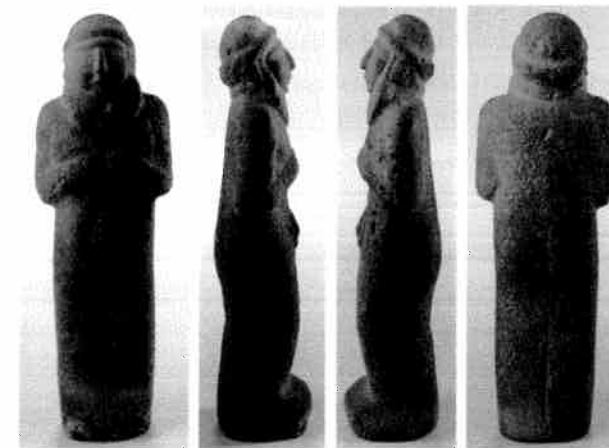


Fig. 3) The Louvre statuette AO 5718. © LOUVRE, Dist RMN – Raphael Chipault.

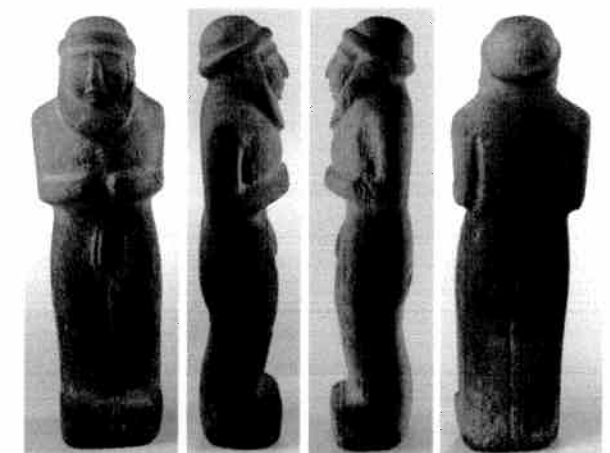


Fig. 4) The Louvre statuette AO 5719. © LOUVRE, Dist RMN – Raphael Chipault.

Research Archives-Director's Library  
The Oriental Institute  
The University of Chicago



Fig. 5) The statuette Inv. 1942 of the Archäologische Sammlung of Zurich University (photo Silvia Hertig, Archäologisches Institut der Universität Zürich).

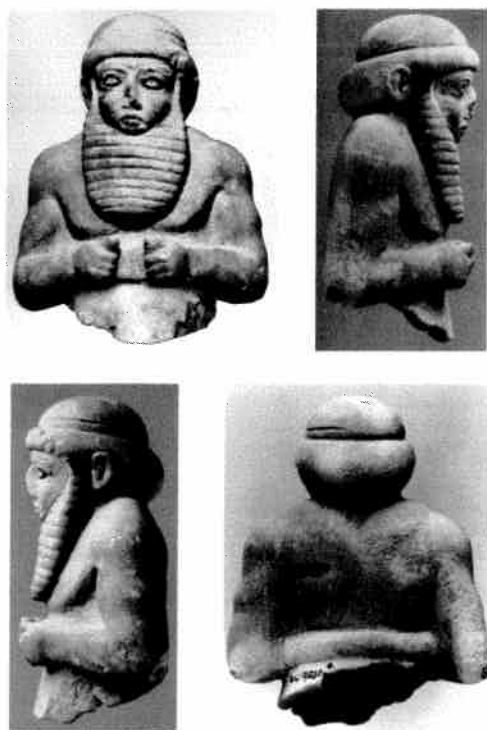


Fig. 6) The so-called *Kleiner König* from Uruk. From Becker 1993, pls. 55-57.

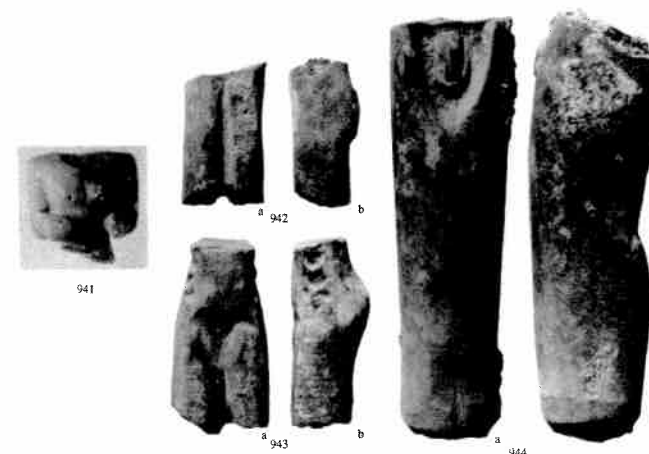


Fig. 7) Fragments of naked figurines from Uruk. From Becker 1993, pl. 61, nos. 941-944.

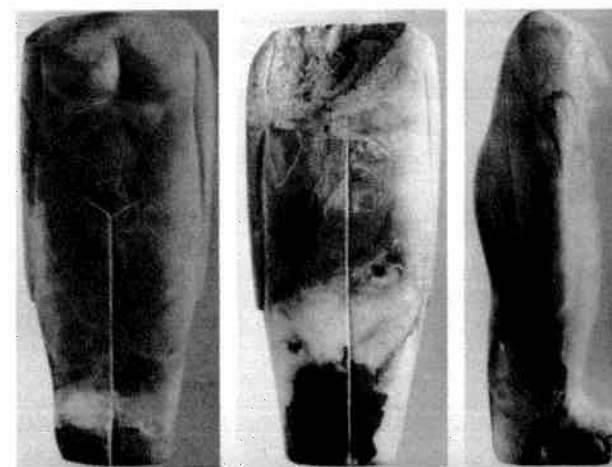


Fig. 8) Acephalous female figure in alabaster from Uruk. From Becker 1993, pl. 60.



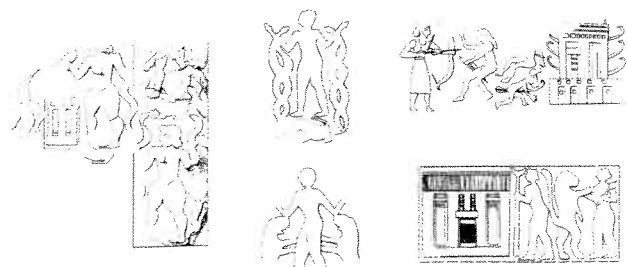


Fig. 9) Seal impressions of the late Middle Uruk (LC 4)/early Late Uruk (LC 5) period from Uruk, Susa and Choga Mish. From Pittman 2001, figs. 11.15, 11.16, 11.17.

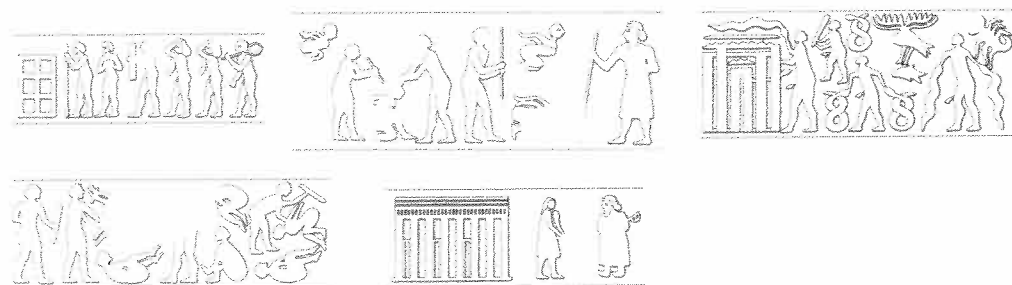


Fig. 10) Seal impressions from Eanna level V at Uruk. From Boehmer 1999, pl. 7, n. 2, pl. 12, n. 3, pl. 20, n. 5, pl. 35, n. 10, pl. 41, n. 13.

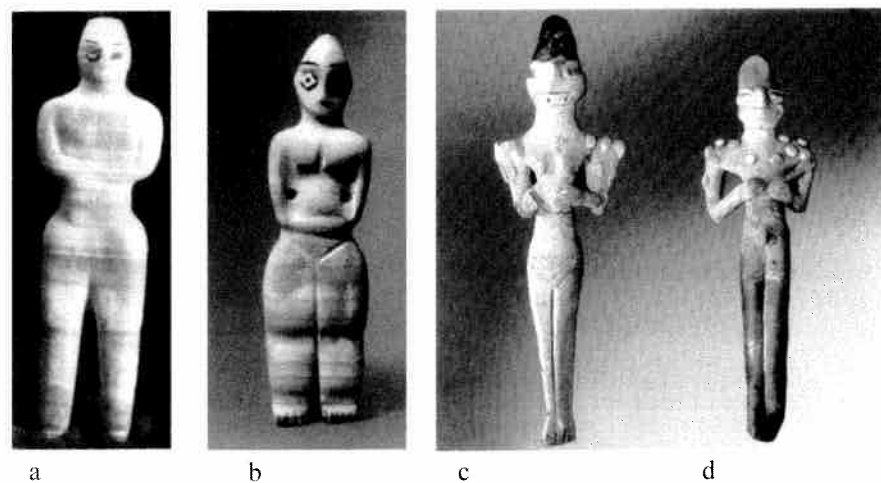


Fig. 11) Funerary figurines of the Samarra (a, b) and Ubaid periods (c, d). From Amiet 1994, fig. 174; Invernizzi 1992, 193-194.