A STUDY OF LAPIS LAZULI IN THE FORMATIVE PERIOD OF EGYPTIAN CULTURE

AN APPROACH IN TERMS OF CULTURE CONTACT

Michinori OHSHIRO

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Lapis lazuli was one of the first gem materials used for adornment and as an ornamental stone in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Most of the material used by these ancient civilizations is believed to have originated from the Sar-e-Sang deposit in present-day Badakhshan, Afghanistan (Wyart et al., 1981). Mesopotamia. The earliest archeological evidence for lapis lazuli’s use was traced back to the 5th millennium BC by von Rosen (1990), who recorded the discovery of beads at a cemetery outside the temple walls of Eridu (Sumer) in southern Babylonia (later known as Mesopotamia; now Iraq). These are the oldest western paintings where lapis lazuli has been used as a blue pigment. This paper cites other instances of the use of lapis lazuli in ninth-century paintings and of Egyptian blue in late mediaeval paintings. In studies more closely related to the paintings of Castelseprio from the historical point of view, there is scarce information concerning elemental analysis of late Antique and early Middle Ages paintings. In the work of Gaetani et al. Egyptian blue has been identified positively in a Roman mediaeval fresco of the lower church of San Clemente. The date around the middle of the ninth century A.D. of the mural painting extends by five centuries the previously known period of use of this famous pigment. /// Lapis lazuli Provenance Ancient Egypt Archaeometry µ-PIXE Ionoluminescence. This is a preview of subscription content, log in to check access. Notes. Jarrige JF (1991) Mehrgarh: its place in the development of ancient cultures in Pakistan. In: Janssen M, Mulloy M and Urban G (eds) Forgotten cities on the Indus. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein, pp 41Google Scholar. Law R (2014) Evaluating potential lapis lazuli sources for ancient South Asia using sulfur isotope analysis. In: Lamberg-Karlovsky CC, Genito B (eds) “My life is like the summer rose” Maurizio Tosi e l’archeologia come modo di vivere. Archaeopress, Oxford, pp. 419–429Google Scholar.