

Bull Symbolism in Ancient Iraqi Thought

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The symbolism of the bull occupied a great place in ancient Iraqi thought. This status was made clear by its appearance on the artistic remnants since the Alliance era (5th millennium BC), with the forms of rattles and pottery drawings mentioned on its head or its horns, which I think gives the idea of the beginning of the bull in religious beliefs. The bull's paintings and sculptures have also appeared on various artistic productions of the civilizational roles of Mesopotamia and throughout the ages, and in all parts of the northern and southern countries. The paintings of the bull also appeared on stone and bone, pottery doll models, milk and even musical instruments (Lyre), as well as on cylindrical and flat seals, and clay figurines (winged bulls). This symbolism was manifested as representing religious situations, rituals and religious rites and different rituals including the symbol of power, fertility, reproduction, great gods, a symbol of divinity, wisdom, balance and protection from evil spirits, and other symbols like those in the ancient Iraqi mythology.

Key words: *Symbolism, Ancient, Strength, Fertility, Reproduction and Protection*

Introduction

The importance of this study is that it reflects the perception of the ancient Iraqi man and his senses toward sacred things through religious symbols that are considered a reflection. It remained for the upper reality that man cannot grasp, so this study aims to highlight the symbolism of the bull in ancient Iraqi in terms of rituals, beliefs and connotations that are associated with this symbolism of strength, fertility, and protection, and divinity. We have followed the analytical scientific method based on the study of drawings and statues of the bull in the artistic scenes, pottery, the development, analysis of symbols of those scenes, meanings and indications that the ancient man wanted to deliver.

The research was divided into five key points covering all aspects of the research. The first point revolved around the symbolism of the animal in ancient Iraqi thought, the second bull included a symbol of strength, fertility and protection, the third revolved around a bull symbol of the great gods and a symbol of deity, the fourth point focused on the symbolism of the bull in ancient Iraqi mythology and artistic scenes that represented sacrifices of sacrifices, sacrifices and musical instruments. The fifth and final point was the symbols of the winged bull with a human head (Lamasu) and its functions and implications.

We have relied on a group of Arab and foreign sources, the most important of which are: the old customary art of Tharwat Okasha, and art in ancient Iraq, the first part by Antoine Mortecat, and Ishtar and the tragedy of Tammuz by Fadel Abdul Wahid Ali, and winged bull symbol of Assyrian greatness to rule Bashir al-Aswad, as well as CDA for Jermy Black and Symbols of the Gods in Mesopotamia a. Art for Van Buren other references are presented in the search margins. Through this study we have come to a conclusion mentioned at the end of the research and it may be successful in achieving the objectives of the research.

First: Animal Symbolism in Ancient Iraqi Thought

The ancient man was able to surround himself with a halo of symbols that bear certain connotations and meanings, and these symbols were derived from his environment and culture in which he lived, and then these symbols reflect a visual image of human thinking towards nature and the dominant power, whether religious or secular. Religious symbols however are of particular importance, because religion and symbols were interactively related to the existence of countless things outside human consciousness (Philip, 1992).

Thus, the symbol means the form that indicates something, which has a stand-alone presence and replaces the language of intimation (Mohsen, 1996) and is instead a picture or a statue or sign indicating the meaning of the symbol (Marsalia, 1979). Ibn Manzur has known the symbol (Symbol) linguistically as a hidden tongue vote like a whisper, a sign and a gesture. Al-Razi (Mohammed Abi Bakr Abdul Qader, 1983) defined it as the reference and suggestion of lips and eyebrow. The code, by definition, is defined as “the object, expression or response activity that replaces another and becomes a substitute for it”. (Mourad, 1971)

The fear of the unknown led to respect for all forces that affect and surround him. Animals were one of those influential forces, and the relationship between humans in Mesopotamia and animals date back to ancient times (Ahmed Amin Salim, 1992). This is proved by the drawings and inscriptions that decorated the ceilings of the caves, where man took pictures of these animals in many scenes symbolising many religious meanings and the magic represents the meanings of the conflict between good and evil (Mitford, 1997).



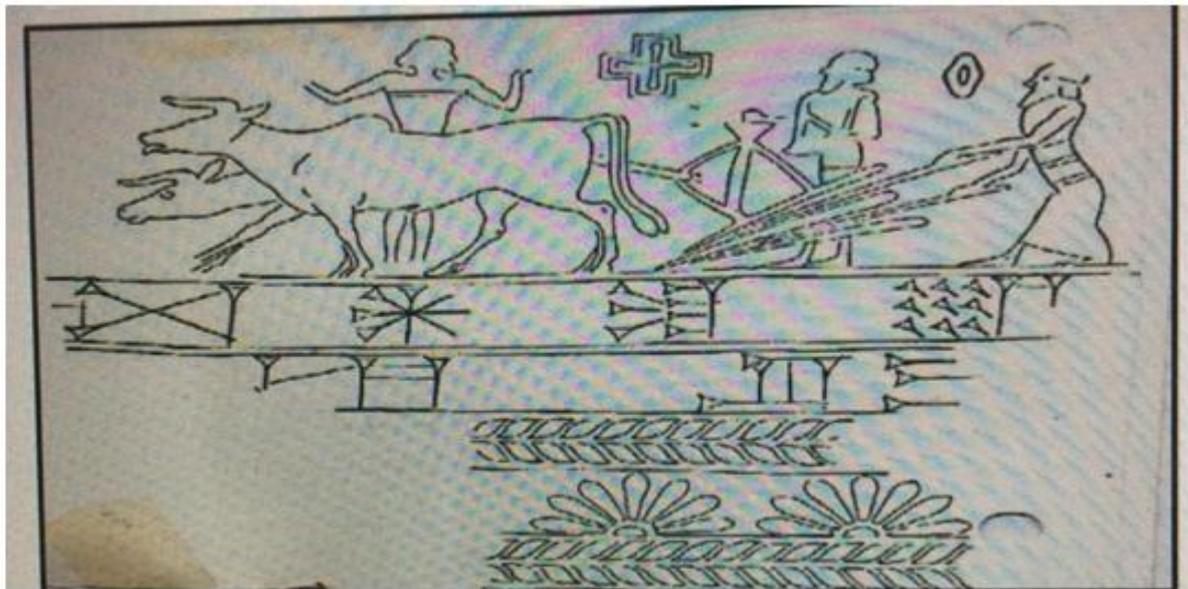
He took the animals from his companion in the tasks of living and asked for protection from some, and avoided others for its ferocity and brutality. The importance of the animal was reflected on the ancient human religious life and became a symbol of religion and intellect (King, 1995). Animals played an important role in the religion of the civilization of Mesopotamia. There are animal spirits and spiritual animals have served as communication between gods and humans (Breniquet, 2002).

The symbolic importance of animals is that they have accompanied man since his presence on the surface of the earth. They were at times feared and then avoided in many ways either magical or symbolic by drawing them on the walls of caves and at the same time used them as a source of food and a means of movement and assistance in agricultural work. In the case of domestication the human being of these animals began to share his life in various directions, accompanied by his daily journey and his work (Hikmat Bashir Al-Aswad, 2011).

The bull is one of the animals that have been domesticated in Mesopotamia since the time of Jarmo (8th millennium BC) and it has been proved by the many remnants in this village. The bull has a great and varied status in the civilization of Mesopotamia at the human level and at the symbolic level because it represents different religious ritual situations (Braid wood, 1960).

The first purpose of the domestication was to obtain food, whereas its meat was one of the favourite meats in the sacrifices to many gods. Its meat is deprived on some occasions, especially held for the gods of death and the underworld (Erichical), (Saja Muayad Abd Al-Latif, 1997). The use of bull in agricultural tillage, including dragged the carriages and appeared on the artistic remains as the only animal that saddled and allowed the man to ride on its back, in addition to its use for ploughing. I found many inscriptions painted on the process of ploughing by bulls, most of which date back to the Sumerian and Babylonian era, the oldest of these inscriptions is of three people and one bull (Harry Sachs, 1999).

Figure 1. The old Iraqi laws have enacted laws with severe penalties



It is stated in the law (Lit Ishtar) to impose fines on anyone who harms the bull in varying amounts between one third of the value of the bull if the damage was accompanied by flesh or back, and a quarter of the value is damage to the eye, breaking the horn or hitting the tail, The bull also has Hammurabi's laws that set wages for bulls in the fields (Amer Suleiman, 1979).

Hence, it can be said that the old Iraqi thought was inspired by the symbols of the surrounding environment and translated into illustrated forms that carry many meanings and concepts, such as forms of bulls, fish, snakes, and lions. An idea of the personification of the gods in human and animal bodies, or sometimes a combination between the two, the gods take immortal symbols expressing fertility, development, reproduction, power and greatness (Zuhair Sahib, 2008).

Second: The Bull is the Symbol of Strength, Fertility, Reproduction and Protection

The importance of the bull in ancient Iraqi thought lies in the fact that it is the matrimonial consort of the cow. This is evident in the belief that it is considered one of the religious symbols of fertility and reproduction. This means that the doctrine of fertility was not limited to the mother gods but was complemented by the god of fertility as the masculine element in nature (Black and Green, 1998). The presence of stone pendants made in the form of a bull head and bull as well as the paintings depicting the head of the bull on the pottery in the era of Halaf is likely that of the inhabitants of prehistoric times in Mesopotamia as they took the bull as a symbol of the masculine element, and made him the counterpart of the mother gods,

which it was already becoming in the historical times as one of the titles of a god Fertile Demozi (Dumuzi, 2005) - July (Fadel Abdul Wahid Ali, 1986).

The bull entered into the titles of multiple gods as a symbol of power and fertility, it also falls within the titles of the god Anlil (Albero, 2003), which was called the great wild bull (Baal heaven). The god of the moon was nicknamed "the small, powerful bull of the sky", and the Sumerians portrayed a bull whose rays emerged as a symbol of the sun god and his power (Mariam Omran Musa, 1996). One of the best symbols of the god of Tammuz was the god of fertility. Sometimes the bull appears alone and is a symbol of the gods Inana (Ishtar) mother gods.

As a symbol of power, it is often observed the bodies of bulls with a black head representing a mythical animal in the gates of temples or holy scenes that suggest power, and protection of the gods have often featured in scenes of the conflict of bull and lion. This conflict represents the cosmic constellations symbolised by animals, or maybe a struggle against disease, a struggle of good with evil (Mahmoud Amenhour, 2009).

Figure 2. The prevailing of bull's head shape



The pottery of the beginning of historical times along with amulets that took the form of the bull or his head only, was enough to protect the person as it pushes evil from him and it is difficult to catch the bearer, and may transfer power to the owner (John Oates, 1982).

It is clear to us that the bull is one of the important animals in Mesopotamia, especially the wild bull, which was highly appreciated at the time because of its superior physical strength, magnitude, ferocity and wide eyes is thus a symbol of power, and emerged bull's head and drawings through excavations conducted in a number of houses and temples whereas the gods are seen standing in the pillars of the temple, while the horns of the bull have worked stereotypically to express their regenerative power or the power of God and to highlight its importance and its horns as a symbol of the power of creation of life or an expression of fertility and reproduction (Barning and Cashford, 1991).

Third: The Bull is a symbol of gods and divinity

We mentioned earlier that the bull has given as a symbol to many great gods, including the god Anu - Enlil - the god Sin and the deity shtar, which was a symbol of many of the gods as well, the god Narkal, god of the underworld and war, hunger and desolation, was symbolised by the bull and called the great wild bull, as well as the semi-god Enlil king of the gods. The strong bull in the mountain, and the head of the bull, represented on the coloured pottery of prehistoric times was thought to symbolise the god of the storm. The bull has usually been associated with the god of lightning and thunder the god (Edad) since the ancient Babylonian era (2004). - 1594 BC) where such a god standing on the bull and holding his hand ax (See Figure 3). One of the most notable works was of the god Anu who was the creation of the "bull of heaven" at the request of the gods Inana-Ishtar. The horned head was derived from the horns of the brutal bull (Bos Primigenius), which was later used as a symbol of gods and deity (Ibid).

Figure 3. Notable works of the Sumerian language



This symbol was called in the Sumerian language (Ki.luš) or (Ki.Dur) and the exile of the throne or chair, corresponding to the Akkadian language (Šubtu) (Abdullah Hasan Jabbar, 2015).

Vibrio shape or knot with pods (Fig. 4). The paired crown continued to be used as a distinctive symbol of deity on artistic scenes and as a symbol of the machine (Anu) and the god (Enlil). (Ibid).

Figure 4. The paired crown continued to be used as a distinctive symbol of deity



The paired crown also appeared in the form of a long crown placed on a deck encircled with pairs of horns ranging from three to seven centuries upward, and this symbol was visible on the border stones. The stones of the border of King Nebuchadnezzar I (Hassan Najafi, 1982) consists of six fields where are noted in the second field three forms of the crown.

The crown from the third millennium BC was used as a distinctive symbol of the gods on artistic scenes and continued to be used until the symbol of the horned hat became a symbol of the gods of triangular bones (Anu - Anlil - Anki). The horn symbol was placed on the royal obelisks, including the obelisk of the Assyrian king (Assyria Nasser II Pal 883 - 859 BC) to symbolise the god Assyria, the national god of the Assyrians. It also put on the amulets and necklaces worn by the Assyrian kings, especially at times of religious celebrations and holidays. The Assyrian king (Esarhaddon 681-668 BC) ordered the creation of a luxurious red gold hat with gemstones and horns as a symbol of the sovereignty of the god Ashur (Van Buren, 1939). After the horned crown developed in artistic scenes from the hat or knot to the long crown with multiple pairs of horns, the three-horned headdress appeared in two obelisks characterised by the Assyrian king (Sennacherib 704-681 BC) where the crown was looked like a fish head and was decorated with three pairs of horns. The

wearing of the crown, helmet or headdress qarun was considered a characteristic of the gods and symbols, and the wearing of the crown paired with one pair of horns up to seven pairs was considered a sign of divinity (Tariq Mazloun, 1985).

Fourth: The Symbolism of the Bull in the Myths and Composite Art Scenes

The image and paintings of the bull were associated with the legendary heroes of ancient Iraqi mythology, literary texts and epics. It was depicted alongside them on the monument that records their works. The bull used a weapon in the dispute between Ishtar and Kalakamesh in the story of the legendary celestial bull, and Kalakamesh was able to kill him only after the help of his friend Enkidu. Therefore, the Assyrian kings did not celebrate the killing of an animal other than the "brutal bull". This operation was known as the "hunting of the royal bull". The victory was over the brutal bull as a major event in human life in ancient Iraq because it impressed him.

It is a mythical creatures composite that depicted a human head and the trunk of a man with the horns of a bull and the legs of a bull what is called in the myths. They considered this creature to be the gatekeepers of palaces and temples, and was the first appearance in the fighting scenes on cylindrical seals from the era of the dawn of dynasties (2800 BC) in the second millennium BC - the Akkadian era, the bull man appeared to be a bomber of two men who he believed represented both Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

Figure 5. The ancient Babylonian era and this creature as a follower of the sun god (Otto)



Then it appeared in the ancient Babylonian era as a follower of the sun god Otto and helps him carry the flag. In the Assyrian era, the man may see the bull with the winged sun disk. (Figure 5).

It is worth mentioning that the name of the bull man Kusarikku and its translation is bull bison which means that it is one of the composite creatures contained in a Sumerian mythology the god Nunnurta knocked it down in the sea, or it is one of the animals of Tiamh. The representation of the bull man was invented to represent the image of horror of the Bison's lateral bull in the mythical vision (Hikmat Bashir Al-Aswad, 2011).

The bull of heaven, which is a mythical monster in a face of man, symbolised drought, despair, and muscular strength that is more destructive. It has been found on cylindrical seals and symbolises drought as a cosmic problem and not just a weapon used in the dispute between Ishtar and Gilgamesh. The scene represents a god who kills the bull, who appears behind him at the other end, a second god standing on a winged dragon and holding a sceptre in his hand. In the middle of the scene a god takes rain from the sky with his raised hands (Issa Salman and Salim Taha al-Tikriti).

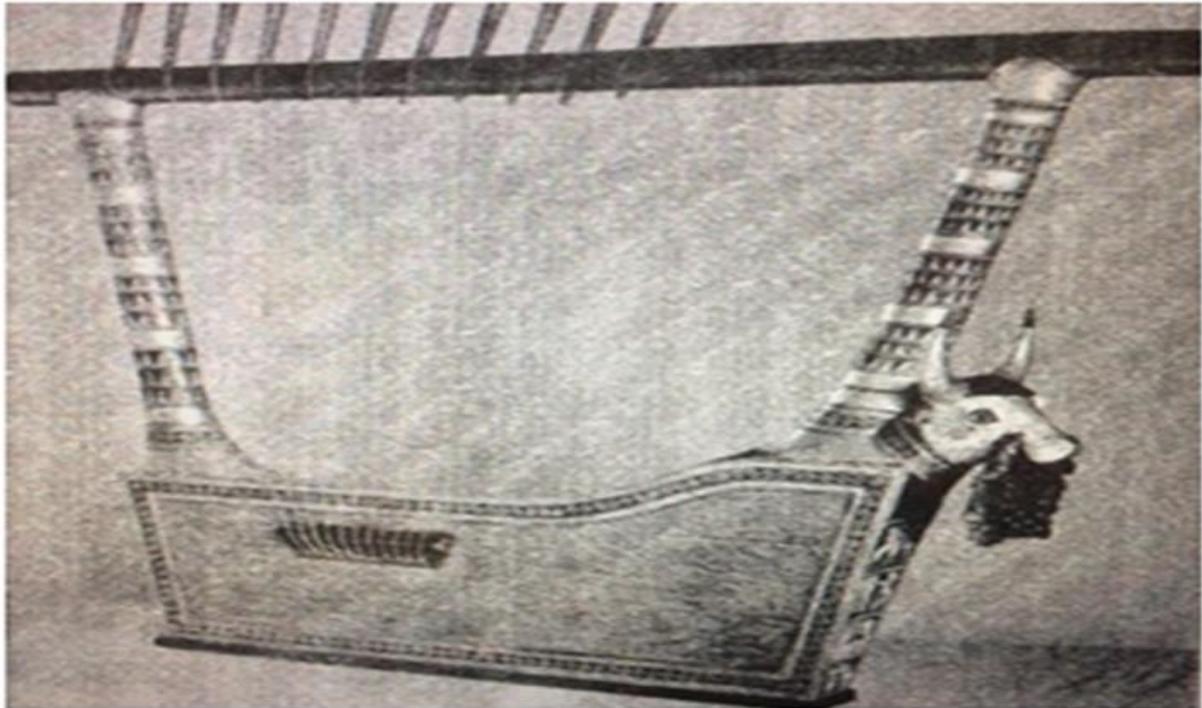
The sky bull was known as the Sumerian term GU.AN.NA and its Akadei synonym (aleiu) (Jermy Black, 2000), and through this designation it is believed that this animal is linked to its existence with the god of heaven Anu, who was created before him to destroy the city of Warka under the pressure of his daughter Ishtar, who wanted to avenge Kalakamsh because of his insult to her, under the same pressure God also created Anu the sky bull, which caused extensive destruction but was then killed by Gilgamesh with the help of his friend, this is what angered Ishtar (Sanders, 1975).

Since the wild bull in Mesopotamia was regarded as sanctification and venerate, it was one of the most common animals worshipers offered to the temple as offerings to the gods. Certain rituals in which the bull was involved appeared as an element of sacrifice offered to the gods. At the time of Prince Kodia, governor of the city of Lech (2144 - 2124 BC) a sculpture of a convex bull and a ram was found in the path position, they were part of a procession of sacrifice. The bull was one of the animals sacrificed on New Year's Day, and on the fifth day and at the evening in particular, where the king participates in these rituals, ceremonials, offer sacrifices and offerings. In this weather, a white bull was preferred and presented as an offering because they believe that it will cleanse them of sins and Iniquities (Ibid).

The cuneiform texts show that the process of offering sacrifices to the gods, especially when the offering was a bull or cow, was accompanied by playing the harp so that their melodies can alleviate the bellowing of a bull or cow while slaughtering them, so there was a connection between the slaughter of an ox offering, the harp and the playing. This led the

Sumerians to decorate the precursors of their harps with the head of a bull or cow (Fig. 6). The most important characteristic of the Sumerian harp is its relationship to the bull, as its sound box was made in the form of a bull (Subhi Anwar Rashid, 1988).

Figure 6. The Sumerian harp is its relationship to the bull



Fifth: Symbolism of the Winged Bull with Human Head

The human-headed winged bulls are known by the name of Lamassu in Akkadian, and the Sumerian name is Lama . Since the dawn of the early dynasties appeared in the complex of the gods of the city of Lech as a small Sumerian gods who served as intercession and worship became more popular during the ancient Babylonian era, and the idea of using winged bulls as legendary composite animals as the protector of the gates of cities and temples since the era in the dynasties and began with special models of the gods (Lama) and was a statue of a bull with a human head from the city of Lech, a symbol of these gods. This is the beginning of an idea that was later used in the gates of Assyrian palaces and temples. The winged bull appeared in the medieval Assyrian period (15th century BC) as a garrison spirit that guarded the gates of temples, palaces and cities and evicted them from evil. In this covenant appeared names such as (Lamassu - Lamassu - Shido - Sedu - Aldlamo - Aladlammu).

The first to find the winged bull is the archaeologist Henry Layard in 1886, and continued archaeological excavations have been uncovered more than one hundred statues of a winged

bull with human heads are known from among the remains of the Assyrian capitals to become a symbol of modern Assyrian power, including about 43 winged bull in the capital Nineveh two were discovered at the Narkal Gate, and 40 statues of the remains of King Sennacherib's palace, the complex bulls were clearly and distinctively decorated with the palaces of the most important Assyrian kings, as well as the gates of the Assyrian capitals.

Especially the part between the legs and the lower abdomen, included the name and the king characteristics with a geographical summary of his conquests, as mentioned by some Assyrian kings such as Sargon II Sennacherib and Esarhaddon in their writings how they were made of white stone forms of these bulls winged to the right and left doors, the human-headed winged bulls that have been uncovered in the capitals (Kalkho, Shrokin, and Nineveh) are more complete with His Excellency (Shrokbad) (Lucken Bill, 1927).

These bulls were placed in pairs with an outward orientation. We see them upright on the pillars of the door. The statues of these legendary composite animals carry many symbols and have many functions. They represent in the Assyrian beliefs the spirit of protection from enemies, diseases and evils, therefore placed on the gates of the city walls and palaces and temples to tighten control of the outlets that threaten them (Yousef Habi, 1980).

On the other hand, they represent an architectural artistic pillar. These guarding statues serve an architectural purpose: to carry the arch of the entrance to the gate, as well as being aesthetic extravagance and cultural well-being demonstrating the capacity of the ambition of the old Iraqi man and the intensity of his attachment to life. However, it is also an important historical document which contains a lot of information, texts and royal writings of the most important and famous kings of the Assyrian Empire regarding their urban works, and their military campaigns, titles and attributes, and their divine justice and mandate, and the location of their palaces and capitals (Tariq Abdul Wahab Mazloun and Ali Mohammed Mahdi, 1986).

This is in addition to being the greatest media in the ancient Near East to show the might and greatness of the Assyrian Empire, the greatness of its kings, their power, their might and their conquests. These statues also showed and affirmed the principle of spirituality and vitality, which are characteristics of the religious thought of ancient Iraqis because the soul when becomes Lamasso, this means that the universe is not rigid or empty, but that nature is full of vitality.

As for the symbols carried by this legendary composite animal in his statues, the presence of the winged bull statues at the entrances of the royal palaces of the Assyrian capitals was twofold so he achieved the principle of symmetry in Assyrian architecture and at the same time became more than one sign and symbol (Figure 7). Everything was a symbol of an

element of life, carrying a human face as a spirit of protection with authority and clearly symbolises a benevolent and beneficial force that defends and defends those who believe in its superior abilities (Qasim Muhammad Ali, 1983).

Figure 7. The principle of symmetry in Assyrian architecture and at the same time



The human head that was placed in the bull symbolised reason, wisdom and eloquence of opinion, as well as symbolising the king because it carries the horned crown which is the center of man's power and the greatness of the gods and the symbol of divinity.

The power of the eagle is the king of the heavens, which we see as a dominant force in the sky, controlling the atmosphere. It is thus related to the king and the gods in the sky. It represents fertility and reproduction because of it is a cow mate, it is a symbol of the masculine element in nature, and the claws were the claws of the lion, which is a symbol of the power of the sovereignty of the Assyrian Empire. Assad's claws symbolise ferocity, part of the political propaganda that the Assyrians have employed to bring terror and terror into the hearts of their enemies.

The tail was a fish tail that symbolised the power in water and wisdom as well as the fish as an important element for the food of both humans and gods (Qasim Muhammad Ali, 1983).

On this basis, the symbols of the winged bull with a human head have combined the atmosphere, heaven, the earth and the water in one form, thus bringing together the symbols of the three gods representing these natural elements, that is, the symbols of the first divine Trinity were collected in a civilization the ancient Mesopotamia, consisting of Anu - God of Heaven - Enlil - God of air - Enki - God of the earth and lower water (Qasim Muhammad

Ali, 1983). It thus confined the universe by controlling its atmosphere and elements, in the sky a strong eagle, and on the ground a predatory lion and in the water fish with its tail and scales.

Conclusion

Through this study, a number of results were reached, the most important of which are:

1. The symbolism of the bull in the ancient Iraqi thought, is rooted in prehistoric times, when his paintings appeared on the walls of caves and caves, and then evolved in historical times to appear on coloured pottery and amulets and spells as a symbol of protection, and took a broader appearance in the art scenes to show the symbols of power greatness, fertility, reproduction, exorcism, intimidation of enemies, as well as their aesthetic and decorative function.
2. The ancient Iraqi man to take symbols, especially animal symbols, to denote the meanings of life vitality and strength, and bass, and protection and guard the gates of cities and temples, became its imagination creativity in creating double and complex forms of these animals to combine all the symbols of the universe and its elements.
3. The bull, especially the brutal bull played an important role in the legendary side, and the ancient literary remnants, because of its qualities of strength, ferocity, predation, insight and vitality. It appeared with mythological characters and complex creatures embodied many ideas, meanings and symbols, most importantly the struggle between good and evil.
4. The symbolism of the winged bull with a human head combines all manifestations of strength from human wisdom and equilibrium (the head), the strength and stability of the bull (the body), the speed of the eagle and its dominance (the wings). These sculptures elicit the idea and symbolism of the search for absolute perfection, in addition to the symbols of sacredness, divinity, and priestly function. The creativity of the old Iraqi man in his art.



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