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The "Man-Bull" and the «Master of Animals» in Mesopotamia and in Iran

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Abstract

The Mesopotamian mythology represents a variation of monsters and hybrids. Among them, the fantastic creatures in the composition of the animal and the man are very important; it is about the "man-animal". What attracts our interest; it is the composite creature, the "man-bull", because of its diverse aspect, as well as its symbolic characteristic.

On the other hand, we notice one of the very practical figures and very renowned, "Master of animals", it is appreciated as much as all the Mesopotamian regions represented it in their arts.

Problematic: what types of the "man-bull" had most importance in Mesopotamia? Which is the relationship enters the "man-bull" and "Master of animals"? What physical evolution arose during the transformation of the "man-bull" to "Master of animals"?

Hypothesis: there is doubtless a narrow relation enters the "man-bull" and "Master of animals ", as regards the symbolizing character to be able to it and their appearances in vertical position. Mesopotamia represents a particular character of the real or fantastic animals, which spread towards the other parts of the country; it is about the representation of animals in vertical shape.

Keywords: Master of animal, Bull-man, Mesopotamia, Iran, creatures fabulous.

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Introduction

The mythologies of the ancient Middle East present numerous imaginary animals, and geniuses or devils having animal appearances, in particular, numerous hybrids. (Black, 1998:135)

In reality, there is no certain evidence showing that we had never worshipped animal divinities in the ancient Middle East. The civilizations of historic periods worshipped only gods and anthropomorphist goddesses.

We find all the same animals allied to divinities, which are occasionally applied for symbolization: we talk about "animals-symbols", or "animals-attributes". (Collond, 1984: 83-85).

The Mesopotamian mythology represents a variation of hybrids, composite creatures and monsters, such as the griffin, the “man-bull”, the “man-scorpion”, the "winged lion", the "winged ibex", Imdugud, Pazuzu, Anzu, the dragon, etc.

The Monster and the Hybrid

Monsters are not only a pure product of the imagination of the man, but can be also regarded as products of the accidents of nature, such as born malformations, distortions caused by an illness or the amputations which touch mankind as much as animals.

In the history of civilization and in the thought of the people, there is a number of these presentations which change forms given by nature, are replaced entirely or partly, blend and isolate, and extend and shrink. These are productive, more rude and refined and acquire monstrosity, synthetic living beings, abstractions, new creations in the bottom and in form, starting point of which is surely in the field of the physical observation of represented forms, but the final product of which, however, is to be considered as existing only in human fancy, as being imaginary.

In the pure abstractions, all human reports get lost- this is not the case for the hybrid, fantastic certainly; however, it is often rooted in nature, that is to say, in reality and recognizable human traits are always assigned to them. Angels and demons, demons and good geniuses, giants and dwarfs, dragons vomiting fire and winged horses carrying heroes are all hybrids which are pictured. (Mode, 1977: 7-8).

The most ancient figurative evidence for monsters and hybrids appears in Mesopotamia.

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The fantastic Mesopotamian faces have a comparatively stable appearance, which make us think that these do not correspond to the unreliable and ephemeral living beings, but definitely to the "necessary" monsters .(Danrey, 2004:365).

The reality and imagination think.To understand the emergence of these faces better, we were interested in the limits of our competences- in the general functioning process of perception and creative imagination. (Belisle, 1984: 210).

The Monsters were often linked to demons by more generic terms or genius supernatural characters, which were not translated out of necessity by a monstrous appearance. (Danrey: 370).

The bestiary conceived in the Near East in proto-historical epochs was known as a broad ring in every Mediterranean.

The manufacture of monsters implicates dissociation and a reconstruction of the elements of the real. This act of denaturalization, to which the artist devotes himself, constitutes an aesthetic game as much as symbolic.

Represented from V th millennium before Christ, monsters appear in the oriental close imagination in mass grave epoch in the evolution of civilization.

In Mesopotamia as in Greece, there appear numerous composite living beings which can be seen in both mythological texts and artworks; for instance, the most famous of them are Gorgon's heads, Griffons, Chimeras, Bulls androcephales and Centaurs. (Dumas-Reungoat, 2009:15).

The combinations can gather human and animal anatomic elements or only clean elements for different animals. So, two groups are shaped: one with human-dominant featured faces in vertical station, the other one in animal-dominant featured presentations in horizontal station.

In the south of Mesopotamia, in Sumer, the first figurative creations were found which are in complete human or animal forms, and, only sporadically, we see animals moving in upright position.

Fig 1. Seal found in Susa. (AMIET 1966 : pl. 6, fig. 119A, dessin P. Amiet).

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At the same time, we indicate under the pre-dynastic name, in neighboring Elam, a border Iranian territory of Sumer, in which appear demons' faces on the head of animal and, from there appear however already on top of that big number on the stamps of Susa, they appear have entered the figurative type of Sumer as such, where they can find them in number growing for the proto-dynasty period. (Mode, ibid: 56).

The "Man-Bull"

The combination of the "man-bull" (which is of our interest) belongs to the group of the faces drawn in vertical position. This position is one of the remarkable Mesopotamians' characteristics. Numerous faces of monsters and hybrids are observed with this feature. Certain faces of this type of hybrid were shown: a man with often long and aggressive horns, a human torso with horns and legs and with the hoofs of a bull …

The most ancient listed evidence goes back to the 8th millennium BC: it is about a figure with the horn of an ibex or of a goat illustrated on the surface of the fragments of ceramics found in Susa.

This motif will enjoy a deep success during the entire 4th millennium BC in Elam and in above Mesopotamia. These figures in which they horns are drawn at the level of the skull remain however very close to human presentations adorned with a head-dress and a horn with makes the observer confused (Fig.1). (Danry, ibid: 366).

In effect, the stamps of period proto-dynasty in Mesopotamia already show such "men-bulls" in a composite form with numerous variations.

Here exist bulls drawn with human features with faces almost similar to human face, however crowned with horns (as watchers), human bodies with the heads of a bull and, finally, bulls represented with pure animal aspects, however in a human attitude, that is to say, in vertical station. (Mode, ibid: 34).

The epic poem of Gilgamesh introduced *Enkidou* to us; the ' "man-bull", whose body was covered with long hairs, who passed with the gazelles and drank with beef.

The man-bull *Enkidou*, described in the epic poem of Gilgamesh, is a mythical face created by Gods as the companion of Gilgamesh, to realize with this one of heroic actions. More ever, we can conclude myths and figurative parallels of the ancient Mesopotamian culture since Sumerian period, but more distinctly still for the

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periods Babylonian and Assyrian subsequent, when winged men and other composite faces in human traits represented force of protective minds which they indicate under the sacred title of "*Cherub*", word deriving from the Acadian " Karabou" = to pray, to bless. (Rosenberg, 1967: 16).

Fig 2. The "Man-bull", Panels of molded bricks, the middle of XII th c. B.D., Place of Apadana, Susa, H.:1,355 m; W.: 0,375 m. Museum of Louvre. (www.louvre.fr)

The Ancient Mesopotamian Art decorated with these scenes: Gilgamesh's images which demonstrate the fight with all kinds of animals. (Ghirshman, 2009: 106).

A scene constituted by the panels of molds bricks, found in Susa, represents remarkable examples of the ' "man-animal" figures (fig.2). These panels were intended to decorate the facade of the outside temple on the hill of Susa.

This monument, dedicated in the royal worship of the dynasty of *Shutrukkides*, was financed by the kings of the same dynasty. The Men-bulls protecting a palm were substituted with goddesses Lama which was considered to be the protective godhead.

The man-bull represented on these panels is typically in the Near East style and it is frequently pointed out in Mesopotamia: A "man-bull" in the body of the bull (hoofs, legs and tail), but having the arms, torso and head of the man.

This man with one stiff rather than long bore looks directly at the visitor, by keeping the sacred plant. Under the head, there are two pointed forms, which resemble horns. But they are behind the head; that is why they look like the ears of the animals.

A group constituted by a man-bull protecting a palm is replaced by a Lama

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with a goddess. The man-bull, traditional security guard of the door in temples, alloys human genius and force.

In the proto-dynasty period and especially during the period of Akkad, that is to say in the second half of the third millennium, in Mesopotamia, the entirety of types of demons is created in a lasting manner in picture.

Sporadically, the Gods with human face also have the traits of animals, such as wings, horns, or they arrive at associations with elements, water and fire, with branches and in forms resembling the mountain. The men-bulls exceed other faces in number, but men – from a distance lions and men-birds often appear more since then.

Fig 3. The "Man-bull" and the "Man-lion", Orthostates of Kargamis, 1050-850 B,C, Archeology Museum, Ankara.

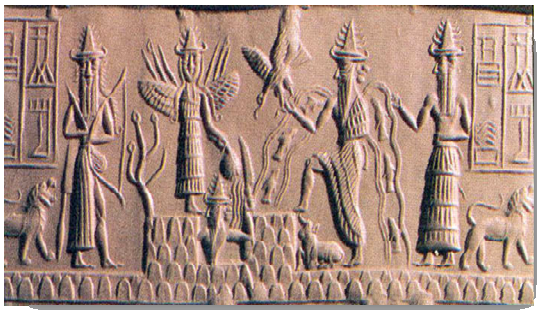

Fig 4. The "Man bull" and the goddess, seal of Akkad, 2500 B.C.

One of the earlier scenes depicts a figure traditionally known as the nude hero together with a bull-man.

An Early Dynastic II seal is made from the core of a very large marine shell. The provenance of this seal is not known, but it closely reassembles the seals found at the site of *Tell Fara* in the southern Iraq dating back to about 2700 BC. A hero, naked just having a belt and an elaborate headdress, grasps the halters of two bulls in a gesture of protection.

The wiper port of a bull-man's body is human, but with the horns and ears of a bull; from the waist down its body resembles that of a bull. This form generally is shown frontally, form a popular motif on later seals. (Collon, 1995: 71-72).

The full-faces of the nude hero, the bull-man and the human-headed bull are almost always depicted in all periods, and, during at least one thousand years, this was also

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the case for the goddess, Inanna/Ishtar (fig.4). (Ibid: 76)

In Elam, and in Mesopotamia, the most ancient men-bulls often have a body of bull, but they move in the upright position.

Bulls and lions in quasi-human pose are figured among the fabulous beasts of the so-called "*Proto-Elamite*" (early third Millennium BC) glyptic art of the south-western Iran. They have been interpreted as the personification of the elementary principle of word order.

The figure of the "bull-man", with human head torso but taurine horns, lower body and legs, first appeared in the second phase of the Early Dynastic Period, when the creature was commonly seen on the cylinder seals. He is usually shown in profile, with a single visible horn projecting forward, although, from those rarer bodies above the waist (but not below it) he is shown in a frontal view and was intended to be double-horned. (Black & Greem, 2003:48).

The bull's horns in the head [of the Master of Animals] (God- Celeste) is a symbol of the celestial and divine force. Ackerman believe that the Man [the Master of animals]… has a crown of horn's bull in her head; because the bull is generally a symbol of the divine force and, even in the more ancient temps, it was a source of extraterrestrial force. These creatures' humans or semi-humans… are ugly and hideous, and in the first phase, its forces are in a hideous way. (Pope, 2008: 24-25)

In the art of Babylonian and Kassite periods as well as in contests, the bull-man appears as an attendant of the sun god Samas (Utu). The bull-man is also found in the art of the Achaemenid period.

In Mesopotamia and in neighboring civilizations, the crown of horn converse not only the decoration of the head of the Gods with human appearance, but also that of the sovereigns of this world.

However, it is more lik the face of centaur, in broader sense, determined by the bulls with human face wich, in our work, were relied among the men-animals, because of their often raised attitude, and also because we have already found ancient Mesopotamian in art, in the proto-dynasty period. (Mode, 1977: 80).

The "Master of Animals"

In Chalcolithique (7th –4th millenniums), The art of the Iranian cultures of this period

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(Tape Sialk III, Susa I, Tape Hissar) is particularly carried towards animal presentations: especially goat, as well as bulls (or zebus), birds, feline, snakes, etc.

In the 5th and 4th millennium, stamps carried numerous presentations of animals, and they depicted the appearance of hybrid animals in artistic presentations.

The face of the «master of animals», a man controlling general two animals with the arms became a very spreadly artistic motive.

One of the privileged animal presentations of the artists of proto-Elamian civilization since the high epochs up to the fall of Elam is the snake, which seems to represent the underground World, and is linked to the two big Elamian godhead of the IIth millennium, *Inshushinak* and *Napirisha*. The «master of animals», from Iran proto-historic, is besides the generally represented controlling snakes.

The art of pre-Elam of the 5th millennium BC will be principally characterized by the painted pottery, tombs and houses of Susa, of which numerous specimens were delivered. The dinnerware will be decorated, with notable numerous beakers, with motives representing stylized animals in most cases.

Fig 5. Idol, Bronze, Ages of the Iron II- III (900-700 B.C.), Rietberg Museum, Zürich.

Fig 6. Idol « Master of animals », Bronze, Ages of the Iron II (1000-800/750 B.C.), Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Munich.

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The art of Susa will also produce cachets for sealing the goods passing in transit by the city. They will be adorned with various motives, notably with the face of the "Master of animals" (supernatural figures with man's body and the head of ibex) and with the snake representing underground water in Elamite religion, who can be linked to the master of animals. These faces, exits of the hilly country encircling Susiane, were intended to represent the force of Nature. (Deshairs, 2005:28)

The artistic models of Luristan are characterized by stylized human and animal forms, often combined to create the fantastic living beings.

The humans, birds, snakes, the horses and feline kinds, and several kinds of nanny goats are the main components.

Plant elements are mostly used in «tree a capacity of life», as motives of border or as motives of fulfillment between main iconography.

Available obviousness points out a chronological evolution of simple naturalist topics in more complicated and more fantastic creations.

The art of Luristan represents a big collection of the faces of the masters of animals with different features:

- The man in vertical form is fond of the hands of the real or fantastic animals.
- The "man-bull" in vertical form, keeping the necks of the animals in the hands (fig. 5).
- The "man-bull" in the body of the bull with a human head turned down toward the corner (fig.8).

In certain cases, the "man-bull" are pictures in female form, for instance a pin shows a figure in the attitude of the master of animals, she is probably a female master, and her notable breast and her hairs underline her womanhood (fig. 7).

The third model of the master of animals is composed of a body of the bull which carries a human head on the back (fig. 8).

Thrown by two wild animals which it dominates, the figure registers the iconographic tradition of the «master of animals».

The incarnation of this bit is very complicated, a strange composition of certain beings: a human head (rather female than masculine owing to its hair) of a horned man-bull, with a long adorned neck and encircled with rings, established on the back of a similar body of the bull.

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Two animals in the aspect of the griffon without wing were fixed and at the back of the body in the front, so that we determine three heads at the same time on a body: two heads of the griffon and one of the man-bull (fig.8).

Fig 7. Master of animals, Luristan, 9th-7th B.C., h. 16 cm.

It can be a new incarnation and particular personification of the « master of animals » made by the craftsmen of the Luristan, more ugly and more monstrous.

However, we can determine another type of the master of animals who can be more terrible and more dreadful than the

precedent ones. It is a monster composed of two interlaced real or wonderful animals.

Fig 8. Mors, Bronze, Ages of the Iron II -III (1000-700 B.C.), Archeology Museum, Francfort-sur-le-Main

A bigger plate is in the Museum of Louvre, in which the decoration differs very much. The inferior party misses; she is high near 61 cm. His edges are folded to fit together the case on which it was fixed thanks to small holes. As usual, the decor is willing in registers, separated by bands of big rounded-up points. The decor is carried out in pushed back, relief pronounced enough, and supplemented by engraved traits.

The second and fourth register (fig.9) carries almost identical subjects, complex inspiration. Two leonine monsters are confronted there, and the necks interlace

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two or three times. The hind limbs have conservatories of rapacious; the thigh carries a helical ornament in a way disintegrated, but it certainly resembles the star or the curvilinear crucifix numerous examples of which they know.

It does not seem suspicious to us that ornament put on the shoulder has the arranged shines of the original in the aircraft propeller, which they notice on the real animals.

Fig 9. The Master of Animals, Bronze Plate , Luristan, II th B.C.

The fur of the belly of monsters, treaty in parallel bands, is delimited by a slanting band; between monsters tomb, a kind of similar "pendant" in their tail which stands, long and barely bent.

The previous party of the necks is covered with a slanting cross-ruling. The head is hard angled, with a face norm,

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broadly opened. The mane forms as a crest which persists above the eye in a unique horn. The previous members are human beings, doubles of narrow wings in the broad feathers. They seize each, by a later leg, a hanging held ibex, hanging one's head, and the body of which is twisted, so the previous members are turned to the outside.

These strange faces introduce incontestable affinity with those who decorate the beaker in electrum of Louvre which comes certainly from Iran of the North and can be reached with vases found in Marlik.

The monsters which think there represented have two heads of the lion and their conservatories of rapacious are interlaced in accordance with a tradition certified first on Syrian cylinders of XVIIIth- XVIIth century, then on Mitannians cylinders. (Amiet, 1974:243-251).

This face of the interlaced monsters was appreciated in the world of Ancient Iranians. A beaker found by Marlik is decorated with this monster as the « master of animals ».

The high beakers, in the cup-shaped walls and in the lightly exuberant foundation, were always adorned with a simple or double edging twist. Of unknown provenance, the vase introduced here resembles these beakers in its form and its decor. On the perimeter of the vase represent a monster in three resumptions, in the opened face, which holds a hanging gazelle by its tail in each of her legs (fig.9).

This monster with two heads is a composite being: the head and a part of the body belong to a feline (leopard or panther) with spotted fur, which is endowed with wings and has human hands and arms.

Besides, lower limb resemble wrapped-around snakes and carry scales, but they end in conservatories of rapacious.

Every type of epidermis animal is carved in another way, with a big thoroughness in details: circles checked off for the feline, lines of oval plates for the snake, lozenge cross-ruling for the conservatories of the bird, rafters and hatchings for his wings, hatchings more gripped for the fur of the gazelles.

The personality of this hybrid monster is not very clear: it appears as a being dominating weaker kinds than him, in the position of a master of Animals. The bicephalie of the monster and its position of the master of animals is net borrowing in the medio-Assyrian of the XIVth century before Christ, certifying that the craftsmen

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of the nomadic culture of Marlik were in contact with big empires contemporary to Mesopotamians.

The combination of the monster is very remarkable: a party of the man, a bird and a feline. In spite of this rather wildlife combination (the head, wings, legs and labels), we can differentiate a female figure shown by face with arms, breasts, who is produced incidentally or deliberately. It seems that this aspect was intentionally made (fig.10).

They can specify three shapes at the same time: upper part of an animal (leopard), the middle part of a man and the bottom part of a bird.

Fig 10. The monsters interlace, Goblet decorated with Master of Animals, Grasping Gazelles, XIV th - XII th B.C., Marlik, Museum of Louvre. (www.louvre.fr)

The manner of the trait of the interlaced legs is very close in style Mesopotamian, in other words, Mesopotamians characteristics.

This beaker in electrum decorated with a mythological battle belongs to the funeral furniture deposited in a burial of the graveyard of Marlik.

The topic of the master of animals is dear to the oriental populations; this living being takes commonly the appearance of a hybrid monster with fantastic charectristics which dominates more gentle animals. He expresses himself across the gap between

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the triumphant monster and the gazelles here.

This stage represents the battle of the humanity against the force of nature, chaos. The taste for the physical transformation of the mythological figures explains different qualities (celestial and of the Earth) which they allocated to the heroes.

Conclusion

The mythology and the art of Mesopotamia are full of composite and imaginary creatures. The combination of the man and the animal, the "man-animal" was a figure known in Mesopotamia.

In this group, the "man-bull" becomes a more important character for representing the potency. Different types of the combination of the man-bull can be determined, for instance Lamassou, but what attracts our interest more is the "man-bull" in the upright position. It is about a monster with human aspect, a being that stands on two feet or two legs.

This "man-bull" can be composed of different combinations of the man and the bull, from simple to complicated forms: man with horns of a bull, man with the head of a bull, man with the torso of a bull, bull on legs backsides (the human aspect) with the human head, etc.

The domain of the man-bull develops in Mesopotamia, Elam, Susa. They differentiate the first faces of the man-bull on the stamps of Susa, therefore we can say that the presentation of the animal in vertical is a Susian subject or Mesopotamian, who fans out up to other regions (and we can also determine their application in that way in the Achaemenids art, in silver and as handles of vases).

The art of Susa and Mesopotamia show real animals or composite living beings in upright position. This way of presentation is in the art of Lurstan and Marlik.

The man bull in the vertical position is transformed into the "Master of animals ", a hybrid having the hands of the animals or monsters. The face of the «master of animals», a man or a man-bull controlling general two animals with the arms, becomes a very spreadly artistic motive.

However, the "master of animals" is still a man or a man-bull; they see fantastic and wonderful faces which replace them in the art of Luristan and Marlik.

We can point out the relation between the "man-bull" and the "Master of animals"

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and their figurative evolution in three stages:

1-The man-bull in vertical form

2-The man-bull in the form of the "Master of animals"

3- The "Master of animals" in forms of other wonderful living beings, but always in the vertical position.

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"انسان-گاو" و "ارباب حیوانات" در بین النهرین و ایران

علیرضا طاهری[1]

تاریخ دریافت: ۹۰/۸/۳ تاریخ پذیرش: ۹۱/۷/۲۶

علم الاساطیر بین النهرین گونه های فراوانی از هیولاها و موجودات ترکیبی خلق کرده است. از میان آنها موجودات تخیلی با ترکیب حیوان و انسان از اهمیت خاصی برخوردار است، ترکیبی که "انسان-حیوان" می‌توان نام گذاشت. آنچه در این مقاله نظر ما را جلب کرده، موجود ترکیبی به نام "انسان-گاو" است و این به دلیل تنوع طرح و نمایش های گوناگون و شخصیت اسطوره ای و نمادین اوست.

از سوی دیگر، موجودی دیگر که در افسانه ها و داستان های اساطیری و همچنین انواع هنر خود را معرفی نموده موجودی اساطیری و تخیلی مشهور به " ارباب حیوانات " است که در همه جای بین النهرین و در هنر آنها به نمایش در آمده است.

سوالات: چه گونه ای از "انسان-گاو" از اهمیت بیشتری در هنر بین النهرین برخوردار بوده است؟ چه ارتباطی بین "انسان-گاو" و " ارباب حیوانات" وجود دارد؟ سیر تحول فیزیکی گذار "انسان-گاو" به "ارباب حیوانات" چگونه است؟

فرضیات: بدون شک ارتباط تنگاتنگی مابین "انسان-گاو" و "ارباب حیوانات" وجود دارد، یکی از آنها حالت نمایش خاص بین النهرینی یعنی نمایش عمودی و ایستادن بر روی دوپا است. بین النهرین شخصیت های خارق العاده ای از حیوانات واقعی و تخیلی خلق کرده که به سرزمین های دیگر نیز وارد شده و تغییر شکل داده اند.

واژگان کلیدی: انسان، گاو، ارباب حیوانات، بین النهرین، ایران، اسطوره

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[1]. دانشیار دانشکده هنر و معماری دانشگاه سیستان و بلوچستان.