

**Some thoughts on the religious role of Ibex  
in Ancient Near East  
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**Abstract** <sup>(1)</sup>

This paper surveys one of the longest lived and most widespread images of the Ancient Near East that is the ibex. The Paper discusses the appearance of ibex in ancient Near Eastern art in some selected scenes and sculptures related to fertility, fecundity and death: on rock art, pottery, cylinder seals and reliefs. The ibex depicted as swastika symbol on some Samarran ware in 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. which symbolizes the four corners of universe, wind and infinite circle. It is represented as a religious motif in a composition of two wild goats about a tree which symbolizes tree of life or tree of cosmic. The ibex was associated with a sacred ritual dedicated to ensure rainy season to provide plentiful harvest, so it was connected with storm gods. Multiple interpretations and opinions handled its appearance. The paper identifies the various forms in which it was portrayed. This paper aims to shed light on the significance and religious symbolism of the Ibex as a symbol of rebirth, new life and rejuvenation.

**Key words:** Ibex, Dumuzi, Fertility, Rain, Tree of Life, Swastika.

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## بعض الآراء حول الدور الديني للوعل في الشرق الأدنى القديم

### الملخص

تستعرض هذه الورقة واحد من أطول عمرا وأكثر الصور انتشارا في الشرق الأدنى القديم. تتناول الورقة ظهور الوعل في فن الشرق الأدنى القديم في بعض المناظر والمنحوتات المختارة التي تتعلق بالخصوبة وكثرة الولادة والموت: في الفن الصخري، والفخار، والأختام الأسطوانية، والنقوش. صور الوعل كرمز سواسيتكا على الأواني من سامراء في الألف السادس ق. م. والذي يرمز إلى الجهات الأربعة للكون والرياح والدائرة اللامتناهية، كما صور في كعنصر ديني في مجموعة مركبة من وعلين يحيطان بشجرة ترمز إلى شجرة الحياة أو شجرة الكون. وارتبط الوعل بطقس مقدس مكرس لضمان فصل ممطر وحصاد وفير، ولذلك ارتبط بآلهة العواصف. وتعددت التفسيرات والآراء حول ظهوره. وتحدد الورقة الأشكال المختلفة التي صور بها، وتهدف الورقة إلى إلقاء الضوء حول المغزى والرمزية الدينية للوعل كرمز لإعادة الميلاد والحياة وتجديد الشباب.

## I. Introduction

No development has had a greater effect on human history than the introduction of domesticated plants and animals <sup>1</sup>. Humans and animals have a long history of relations in ancient Near East thousands of rock drawings, reliefs and sculptures show this interaction since prehistory. Zoologists believe that the wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*) is the ancestor of probably all domestic goats *Capra hircus* <sup>2</sup>, there are two subspecies in the region. The Persian Wild Goat (*C.a. aegagrus*) (Fig.1), which occurs over much of Iran and in Turkey. <sup>3</sup> The Sindh Wild Goat (*C.a. blythi*= Turkman wild goat) is only known from north-east Iran adjacent to Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Males of both subspecies are characterized by a long black beard and very long, scimitar-shaped horns that may reach length greater than 1,3m. <sup>4</sup> Some authorities believe that the ibex of northeastern Africa and Arabia the Nubian ibex (*Capra ibex nubiana*) (Fig.2) is a distinct species. Others consider it to be a subspecies of the ibex that occur across Eurasia. It is large and goat-like. <sup>5</sup>



Fig. 1- *Capra aegagrus* /Bezoar ibex/wild goat  
<http://www.vercon.sci.eg/indexUI/uploaded/Elghanamproduction12/Image/pic9.jpg>



Fig. 2- *Capra ibex nubiana* / Nubian ibex  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nubian\\_ibex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nubian_ibex)

## II- The caprines and the ancient Near Easterners:

The ancient Near Easterners invested certain members of the animal world especially non-domesticated animals, with divine attributes; moreover, gods and goddesses could manifest themselves in animal guise; such as in the ancient Egyptian Religion <sup>6</sup>. The caprines (ibex and goat) played a significant role in the Egyptian economy, which had a deep effect on religion. The Nubian ibex and goat have been attested in ancient Near East since ancient times. In Near Eastern art, the capra appears in many scenes: on rock art, pottery, cylinder seals, paintings, and border stones (Kuduru). The prevalence and endurance of this horned animal symbol, in ancient art, suggest that it played a major role, strong enough to spread across time into many regions, and mythologies. The dwellers of ancient Near East were obsessed with the ibex as demonstrated in thousands of rock engravings and drawings found in the Near Eastern deserts <sup>7</sup> recording presynaptic images and hunting scenes of the desert wild animals such as; lions, hares and ibexes and emphasizing on the latter. Neolithic rock carvings (10,000-4000) B.C. at Kilwa (near Jordan-Saudi Arabian border) (Fig. 3) transmitting their infatuation with the animal <sup>8</sup>. Choosing to represent a hunting scene of two ibexes in the painted tomb of Hierakonpolis (Naqada IIC, 3500-3300 B.C.) and on the palette of Hierakonpolis (3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C.- Ashmolean museum E.3924 ) <sup>9</sup> has demonstrated the importance of this practice and ritual to be selected and figured on the tomb walls of probably a chieftain. It is important to notice that the male ibex is often represented in the hunting scenes and this phenomenon exceeds Egyptian art, and the urge to represent men hunting male ibex to symbolize their manhood and courage confronting this agile and swift animal has survived during dynastic era.

Fig. 3- Kilwa rock engraving depicting an over exaggerated ibex with long beard and horns, and a small person standing on its back and raising his arms probably as a sign of veneration  
D., Kirkbride, op.cit., pl. XVI



### III- Fertility (fecundity-pregnancy) and rejuvenation (rebirth-youth)

There is considerable evidence that prehistoric people associated the moon with the female principle, the lunar cycle being linked to menstruation and from that to all things concerning the reproductive proprieties of the female. The Moon's repeated cycles -the waxing and then waning and then brief death before the cycle is repeated- were taken as symbolic of the Earth's annual Winter's death and then Spring revival which can reflect Man's eternal cycle : Life to Death then Rebirth<sup>10</sup> .So the lives of ancient peoples seem to have pivoted around seasonal observations of death and regeneration<sup>11</sup> . Since 20,000 B.C. some notches were made by prehistoric man on batons in different regions in Europe associating an ibex with some markings interpreted as recordings of springtime and lunar calendar; such as on the baton from Cueto de La Mina (Fig.4) (Spain-12,000 B.C.) two incised ibex skulls, horns, four plants and notches are depicted<sup>12</sup>, or these markings were created by a prehistoric woman to track her cycles depending on lunar calendar<sup>13</sup>, in both cases there is a connection between an ibex and the moon. We find the bison horn in the hands of Venus Laussel (province Dordogne - southwestern France) (Fig.5) and the female puts her hand on her belly and looks at the horn, which symbolizes the idea of fertilization and reproduction<sup>14</sup>, while some believe that on the horn are three lines that symbolize the lunar cycles in the year, and with the other hand indicating her stomach and genital organ to symbolize the relationship between the moon and the woman's menstrual cycle<sup>15</sup>.



Fig. 4-Ibex head and notches indicating springtime or lunar calendar Cueto de la Mina baton,12,000B.C. A.,Marshack, op.cit.,Fig.103a.



Fig. 5- Venus Laussel-25,000 B.C. <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/70/Venus-de-Laussel-vue-generale->

In the earliest phase of Mesopotamia and Elamite civilization, we find pictures of large capridae or ovidae, above all ibexes in the lowest stratum of Persepolis carrying in variants either a solar emblem(the Sun or a large pointed star or a flying eagle symbolizing the Sun or a circle, a rectangle or a lozenge, which are filled with checkerboard pattern, with wave-line or with a stylized plant or tree (Susa I, Persepolis I, Bakun A)<sup>16</sup>. It is notable that an ibex decoration (4500B.C.) ,with a series of vertical triangular motifs alternate with wavy lines, has appeared on a large jar from Tepe Giyan (5000B.C.-grave 122) (Fig. 6) and child's bones were found inside it<sup>17</sup> . So probably in the mountain of Upper Mesopotamia the majestic horns of ibex were seen as symbol of the moon's crescent with its repeated heavenly journey ,the painted ibex horns on the previous child's burial urn could have meant "Life Everlasting"<sup>18</sup> ,this funerary custom is repeated in ibex-painted bowl which contained the bones of newborn or an embryo (Fig.13 )and hundreds of ibex adorned pottery or shreds were found in grave sites dated from the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium which may reveal the association of ibex with the dead<sup>19</sup>. On a cup from Hissar IB (Iran)(Fig.7 )<sup>20</sup> a single horn crescent ibex is depicted with an astronomical symbol ,perhaps the moon- at its center and drops falling from the ibex probably symbolize seed of life being sown<sup>21</sup> or we might interpret them as link between sky and earth and the ibex plays an intermediary role to connect them together.

The relationship between ibex, death and the wishful thinking of rebirth is better figured and linked in Ancient Egypt where we see with clarity the fusion between the ibex, death, fertility and rebirth in these examples:

1- Tutankhamun's alabaster boat (Fig.8 ),which has a box in the shape of a coffin and a canopy , has a prow and stern in the shape of an ibex head , C. Deroches Noblecourt indicates that the front and back are in the form of a "*Capra aegagrus*" "a wild goat"<sup>22</sup> which is not endemic to Egypt

compared to the Nubian ibex nubiana, which is endemic to Egypt Since the earliest times<sup>23</sup>. L. Keimer and J. Quaegebeur believe that the alabaster boat was a New Year's gift<sup>24</sup>.

2- A scene of a boat in Hathor Chapel (Deir el-Bahari temple -18<sup>th</sup> dynasty) depicts a boat which has a prow in the shape of a head of an ibex (Fig.9).



Fig.6 - Ibex decorating a jar used as an urn to child's bones-  
Tepe Giyan-5000 B.C.-Iran-

G.,Contenau&R.,Ghirshman, op.cit.,pl. 35



Fig.7- Ibex with astronomical symbol (the moon?)

Tepe Hissar IB -4200 B.C.-Iran-

E.,Schmidt, op.cit., Fig. 35



Fig.8 - Tutankhamun' alabaster boat

<http://cityzenart.blogspot.com/2011/02/king-Tutankhamuns-tomb-and-treasures.html>

3- The term " ab niAw "an ibex horn" in the Greek period means "a year"<sup>(25)</sup>, and this can be explained by the fact that the word *rnpt*, the sign M4 in Gardner, which is a branch of a palm tree that has been reproduced in the form of a capra horn with protrusions<sup>26</sup> and this appears on Tutankhamun's sarcophagus, where his wife offers him two palm branches linked to the symbols of life and authority, the Jubilee feast and eternity<sup>27</sup>. Perhaps these protrusions are reminiscent of the annual rings that indicate the age of the animal. The word "rnp" means "rejuvenate, renew", also the rear of the boat of Ra in Nefer Renbet's Book of the Dead (Brussels Museum) (Fig.10) and the boat of the Moon God Thoth end with a stern in the form of a large capra horn.

4- L. Keimer mentions that the coincidence between ibex horns and the idea of regeneration dates to the New Kingdom<sup>28</sup>, so he thinks that the ibex heads in Tutankhamun's boat refer to the idea of regeneration of life and rebirth<sup>29</sup>.

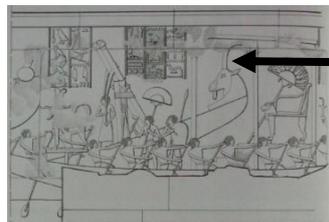


Fig.9-Stern of a divine boat in the form of ibex head-Hathor chapel-Deir el Bahri temple  
E.,Naville, op.cit.,pl.LXXXVIII-LXXXIX



Fig.10- Stern of the solar ship in the form of an ibex horn-19th dynasty-  
Brussel Museum E 5043  
J.,Quaegebeur op.cit.,fig.18

The association of the ibex and fertility appears also in a scene dates to the era of Amenhotep III (New Kingdom), where an ibex walks next to god Habi (the symbol of fertility of the Nile) and the artist tied four ducks hanging from his hooked horns<sup>30</sup>. It seems that the ancient Egyptian considered the ibex as a symbol of the renewal of life and this is evident in an artefact (Saite period?) that depicts a woman behind her back is a child and between her hands on her thighs is a small ibex with his legs folded, as it promises to renew life(Fig.11)<sup>31</sup>. It might have been a votive statue to get pregnant or for giving birth to a child after waiting for a long time.



Fig. 11- A woman holding an ibex couchant on her thighs and a child represented behind her back-Fitzwilliam Museum E. 269a/1939 -Cambridge N.,Cherpion, op.cit.,Fig.74

#### IV- Rain (invoking prayer to bring rain from the sky) and wind

Water is the source of life for all living creatures worldwide and in all ages. Since dawn of history man has noticed its importance and is worried of its scarcity especially if he depends on rain. In ancient societies practiced religious ritual to guarantee the continuity of rain. The connection of the ibex with rain dates to prehistory and ancient Near Eastern artefacts display it. On a pottery bowl from Susa(4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.) two mirrored scenes are depicted(Fig.12) representing an ibex with treelike horns and a dog on its back and another dog and a bird behind him, all are standing on top of a comb which could symbolize a rain-giving cloud or symbolizing the shaggy coat which the ibex grow in winter to help it survive the high mountain climate .In mid- twentieth century the comb is used as symbol on men’s tombstones in the middle west of Iran so the ibex was a sign of death (winter ),also annual appearance of the horns of ibex announce the arrival of winter <sup>32</sup>.

In Mesopotamia ,the connection between capra and prayer for rain was implied in Akitu festival which means “rains are close to earth” <sup>33</sup>by practicing a magical ritual to guarantee rainy season and plentiful harvest during which sheep wool and goats hair were cut “buqūmu” inside the temple <sup>34</sup>.The ibex appeared and used as swastika symbol on some Samarran ware in 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. (Figs.13,14),which symbolize the four corners of universe , wind and infinite circle .The ibex served as symbol of fertility , as animals with big horns were venerated as the emblem of male fertility <sup>35</sup>. It is also possible that ibex’s and goat’ beard and horns could have symbolized the magical power to move wind to gather rain clouds and make them rain, exactly like the belief in the power of woman’s hair to fulfill magically the same purpose when the



Fig.12- Bowl decorated with an ibex and dogs standing on a comb ? symbolizing rain cloud or ibex shaggy goat ?  
A.,Pope &P.,Ackerman 1938:pl.3c

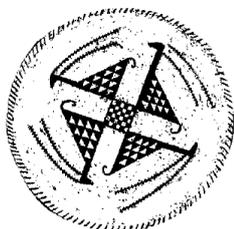


Fig. 13-Four capras with elongated horns to simulate hair



Fig14-. Swastika in the center surrounded by fish

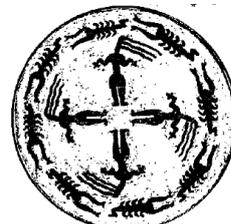
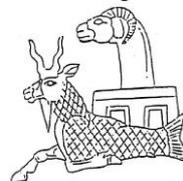


Fig. 15-Four women with long hair dancing in a circle

of women  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Samarra\\_bowl.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Samarra_bowl.jpg)  
<http://aratta.wordpress.com/2015/03>  
 E.,Herzfeld, op.cit.,Abb. 23; S.Liyodop.cit.,Figs. 41-42

Fig.16-Symbol on a Late Kassite boundary stone-  
 Reign of Marduk-apal-iddina I  
 J.,Roger, op.cit.,fig.3



stood in circle dancing and moving their hair in the air (Fig.15). The code of magic which was used is the principle of similarity. The Sumerian deities were mostly associated with fertility and animal husbandry, but the Akkadian deities were predominately astral, representing Sun, moon and stars. From 2300B.C. onwards, many seals showed divine figures including those which became the zodiac as well as bulls, lions and other animals including capra. Ea (Enki), the beneficent god of earth and life, who dwelt in the abyssal waters, was shown with two streams running from his hands or shoulders<sup>36</sup> and one of his sacred symbols was goat fish ram's head standard, besides turtle and ram's head staff<sup>37</sup>(Fig.16). So the ibex was interpreted as a symbol of Anu (the sky god) and Sin (the moon god)<sup>38</sup>.

Both south Arabian storm gods 'Aṭṭar and Ta'lab were associated with the ibex<sup>39</sup>. This belief is confirmed and expressed in older hunt ritual dating to 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. ,in a Sabaeen inscription (CIH547) mentioning the punishment of the god 'Aṭṭar to a tribe by preventing them from rain because they did not perform for him ibex hunt in a proper way<sup>40</sup>, which could refer to dedication of the firstling of the sacrificed hunted ibexes to their deities, although it is not attested in relation to hunting in south Arabian inscriptions<sup>41</sup>. A pair of ibex horns cast in copper found in a small Nabataean temple (1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE) built on the summit of Mount Serbal (southern Sinai)(Fig.17). It seems that the ibex represented the chief Nabataean god Dushara, "that of the Shara Mountains"<sup>42</sup>, that brings rain from the sky, like the Arabian deity 'Aṭṭar and Canaanite Ba'al<sup>43</sup>, and other mountain-storm god.

Fig.17 -A pair of ibex horns found in Napatean Temple  
U.,Avner,L.,Horwitz&W.,Horowitz,op.cit.,S1 Fig.6



The traditional rituals of hunting ibex to invoke rain were practiced in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in different regions ;for example in Iraq a male dancer, whose costume included a goat beard, performed a Kurdish rain ritual and another Yazidi rain ritual dedicated to Malek Ta'uz(King Tamuz) whose symbol was a goat or an ibex. This ritual refers to an older tradition dedicated to the death and resurrection of the Mesopotamian god Dumuzi/Tamuz. In Yemen (Hadramawt) hunting rituals associated with the ibex have been preserved from pre-Islamic period until today<sup>44</sup>. Men practiced ibex hunting preceded by celebrating for several days to ensure successful and plentiful hunt and followed by the hunters singing songs and reading verses and reenacting episodes from the hunt raising ibex head on top of their heads (Fig.18), hundreds of people sharing the meat of the hunted ibex although no direct economic benefit was derived from these hunts, a spiritual leader(a mansab) said:

"if we did not hunt (ibex) the rain would not come to us"<sup>45</sup>.

So the Hadrami hunt is not only a social ritual but it also seems to have a religious purpose, given that a successful hunt is thought to ensure rain and success in hunting ibex ensures prosperity for a whole year<sup>46</sup>. So hunting animals include ibex for 'Aṭṭar was in principle, istisqā (استسقاء) prayers for rain and fertility<sup>47</sup>.

One of the ibex habits is living in high mountains and to descend to valleys to drink, besides his marvelous ability to foretell where it is going to rain and follow it. The ibex has a high sexual ability, so a domesticated he-goat is sufficient to mate with 150 she-goats for two or three months, but this ability does not last for more than three to four years<sup>48</sup>. It was believed in the old days that to express the fertility of a man by drawing the shape of a he-goat and not a bull because the bull could not mate with a cow before it reached one year old, while the he-goat could mate with she-goat when it had seven days after birth and released an



Fig.18 -A ritual celebrating a successful hunt of  
ibexes-by raising hunted ibex horns  
Hadramout-Yemen  
W., Ingrams, op.cit.,fig.1

empty fluid of sperm while it matures sexually before all the other animals<sup>49</sup>. So may be these are the practical reasons for which ancient societies connected it with rain and boats to guide the way of the living and of the dead to the right place for a safe journey.

## V- Ibex as symbol of life and death in hunting scenes

Animals were central to the life of the people in Near East functioning as sources of food, raw materials, transport, royal hunt, hunt for sport and as important religious symbols<sup>50</sup>. As the ibex tends to live in extremely rough and mountainous terrain, it is traditionally considered to be one of the most difficult game animals to hunt. The exploitation of wild game remained a central activity in some regions of the Near East through the ages. Hunting was practiced by both individuals and groups. Since prehistory we find the ibex represented and hunted<sup>51</sup>. The ritual hunt in Ancient Yemen has been much studied and discussed by scholars<sup>52</sup>. A hunting scene relief comes from the temple of Banat 'Ad in the Yemeni Jawf (8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) (Fig. 19). It shows a group of men hunting rows of ibex, gazelle and onager using bows, arrows and a net (the square-pattern cross-hatching of the panel's background)<sup>53</sup>. The ritual hunt may be religious or social or a combination of both.

In Negev rock art, the ibex is depicted upright as a symbol of being alive and upside-down as a symbol of being dead, may represent a cycle of life and death, possibly a dying and resurrected god such as Osiris in Egypt, Dumuzi in Mesopotamia, and Ba'al in Canaan and Adonis in Greece<sup>54</sup>, so the ibex is a symbol of renewal and rejuvenation. The cycle refers to the change of seasons, which affects the mountain and desert societies. In summer (in July), the month of death of the god Dumuzi, vegetation is parched and water sources are scarce animals and humans are stressed. In Winter

(in December), Dumuzi returns from the underworld bringing rain that revives the vegetation and restores nourishment to animals and humans<sup>55</sup>; in other scenes, ibex are shown hunted by arches.

This idea of death and resurrection cycle is depicted in a rock engraving from southern Arabia, representing vertically two mirrored ibex symbolizing life and death and a horizontal line separating them may be representing the surface. The same iconographic symbol, using a divine figure instead, is represented on an Akkadian seal impression (1700 B.C.) showing the mirrored standing between senior deities and beside them an ibex (life) and a dog (death) (Fig. 20)<sup>56</sup> Dumuzi. However, in few scenes ibex is represented protected from its attackers; such as a scene from Iran (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C) depicting a hunter saving an ibex by shooting at a lioness attacking it (Fig. 21)<sup>57</sup>.

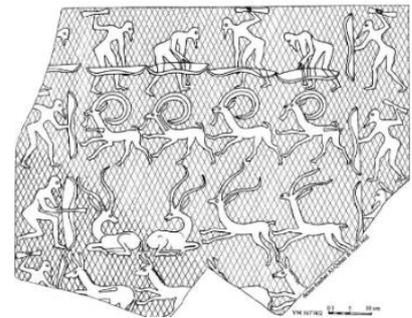


Fig.19- Men hunting ibexes, gazelles and onagers  
M.,Maraqten, op.cit.,Fig. 4



Fig. 20- An ibex and a dog,  
a god represented alive and dead  
W.,Ward, op.cit.,No,1160



Fig. 21- A hunter (hero/king?) shooting a lioness  
attacking an ibex- 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.-Persepolis  
M.,Root, op.cit.,Fig.182

It is noteworthy that the capra was one of the sacred animals of Dumuzi because he was the shepherd who took care of sheep and goats, also the Ibex constellation made a heliacal appearance in the sky in December and disappeared in June synchronized with the revival and death of the Mesopotamian deity and with the change of the seasons<sup>58</sup>.

Several Sabaic inscriptions point out the religious motivation of hunting practices in Ancient Yemen which was to guarantee continued life and fertility by the Sabaean rulers primarily in relation to the South Arabian supreme deity and provider of rain 'Attar and possibly to his spouse Kirwam ,probably the goddess of hunting, also the ibex was sacrificed to the sun -goddess <sup>59</sup> .Some scholars interpret ibex hunting based on ritual -social explanation suggesting the ibex hunt to an initiation event from adolescence to adulthood <sup>60</sup> .

## VI- The ibex and Tree of life

It is noteworthy in some patterns a composition of an ibex with the tree of life is depicted <sup>61</sup> (Figs.22,23)<sup>62</sup>, which is one of the longest lived and most widespread images of the ancient Near East and Eastern Mediterranean depicted as a composition of two wild goats (capras) placed about a tree, referred to as a sacred tree which is a date palm tree or conifers <sup>63</sup>.It had originated in Iran in the Susiana Plain then many cultures in Near East used it so it may have been transmitted as part of a mountain culture linking the peoples from Susa across the Diyala region and into Syria from at least the fourth through to end the second millennium B.C.<sup>64</sup> It was distributed throughout the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean from Elam in the East through Babylonia, Assyria and to Palestine, Cyprus and Egypt and west to mainland Greece <sup>65</sup>.Cyprus imported it in the Late Middle Cypriot period and by the Late bronze Age it became more popular in Cyprus than in Iran<sup>66</sup>.They were sometimes depicted rampant rearing up on their hind legs with forelegs in the air or against the tree , statant (standing with all four legs on the ground) or couchant (lying down )poses .Sometimes such as in Baghouz four ibexes revolve a tree in the center of the bowl and the tree may represent the Tree of Life or Cosmic Tree <sup>67</sup>.In Egypt in Late Bronze Age , the tree was replaced by a Lotus Flower in New Kingdom <sup>68</sup> and the lotus flower was symbol of rebirth .



Fig. 22-Two ibexes and a Tree of Life  
P.,Amiet ,op.cit.,illus.537,pl.34



Fig. 23-Four ibexes surround a Tree of Life  
R.,Braidwood and others ,op.cit.,Fig.268

## **Conclusion:**

1- This study included some examples of ibex in context of fertility and astronomical symbols in Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Egypt. The relationship between ibex, the moon and fertility appeared at least since prehistory (20.000B.C.) in European culture (France, Spain) and in ancient Near since 10,000 BC. at least onwards; such as at Kilwa (near Jordan-Saudi Arabian border), in the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. depicted in Tepe Giyan and Tepe Hissar (Iran) and also appeared in on Samarran ware (Iraq) in 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C., represented extensively in ancient Egyptian sculptures and reliefs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C., on many rock engravings in occupied Palestine dating back to the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. and in Yemen .

2- In general the study indicated that ibex horns were perceived as living iconographic of the crescent and as they grow they take the shape of full moon. Women related that concept with their menstruation using the lunar calendar to keep track of their menstruation and consequently with their ability to get pregnant. Therefore, the ibex was considered as a symbol of fecundity. It is not intended by the species of ibex only as their horns, but the gene of their wonderful energy and ability to survive, which extends to their offspring which makes it a wonderful iconographic symbol for both men and women who want to have energetic children.

3-The Study clarified that the ibex was venerated and considered as a symbol of rebirth and rejuvenation, so the shape of prow and stern of divine and funerary boats have been depicted in the form of an ibex head or horn to lead the deceased in the afterlife, symbolizing its ability to climb the desert paths, ensuring a safe journey to the other world in peace, and indicating the right way to gods.

4- The researcher concluded that discovering some infant's bones in urns decorated with ibex images, may indicate its use as a symbol of life and rebirth. It was the sacred animal for Dumuzi whose resurrection from death was the example hopped to be followed by the dwellers of Mesopotamia.

5- The study concluded that since prehistory it was considered and connected with swastika symbol and in a ritual dedicated to invoke rain and bringing rain from the sky by gathering rain clouds and affecting the direction of wind by its unseen and magical powers (horns-beard-ability to predict time and location of rain) to ensure fruitful harvest.

6- The study showed that the rain invoking ritual had been practiced in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in different regions; such as, in Iraq and Yemen.

7- The study explained that the ibex, as a mountain animal, is the best candidate to represent the main aspect of storm gods: Ea (Enki), Ba'al , 'Aṭtar and Dushara , in addition to its scimitar horns , reflected the features of both Osiris and Dumuzi and astral gods : Anu (sky) and Sin (moon) .

8-The study ended with demonstrating the composition of two wild goats (capras) placed about a tree of life perceived as a symbol of life.

## **Abbreviations**

CAD,The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago ,Chicago .

JNES,Journal of Near Eastern Studies, Chicago .

PEQ,Palestine Exploration Quarterly,London.

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