Polymorphic iconography common influences or individual features in the Near Eastern perspective

**Topic:** polymorphic iconography in Egyptian religious iconography - special and separate types of mixed, theriomorphic and combined images / icons / forms, always with animal heads, double pairs of wings, phallus, and other magical symbols.

**Archaeological evidence:** images appear on small size flat amulets, papyri fragments (also serving as amulets), bronze statuettes and magical healing statues.

**Textual evidence:** lack of distinctive proper names

**Place:** Egypt, without special area of provenance

**Date:** Late Period (7th – 4th centuries BC), Ptolemaic and Roman Periods (from 4th century BC)

**Important terms:**
Pantheistic as an idea of all-embracing god (*Pantheos*)  
*ba* as an emanation / form / manifestation of a god, significantly associated with the image of the god. The animals were *ba* of gods.  
*bau* - strength, power, good and bad at the same time, affecting the whole world, and humans in particular. With the help of magic *bau* can be manipulated, to ensure people health and success.

**Deities**
*Bes* – Egyptian god – demon, present in magical context, protector of maternity, life, music, safety, with strong solar interpretation, often depicted as a dwarf  
*Tutu* (*Tithoes*) – popular especially as Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt deity; main role was to repel negative powers and to protect people in danger; depicted as sphinx with mixed animal and magical attributes  
*Lamashtu* – female Mesopotamian goddess / demon, who preys on mothers and children, depicted in magical context with animal elements  
*Pazuzu* – male Babylonian and Assyrian demonic god with rather beneficent, magical role, depicted with animal elements  
*Nine-Shaped (Enneamorfos)* – figure present in written Greek Magical Papyri, defined as composed of nine forms, especially of animal origin with magic function and Egyptian genesis

**Key problem:** distribution of polymorphic iconography in other cultures, parallels, influences on the visual level (codification of symbols) and also on the ideological level (magical activity hidden / symbolised in a representation)
Question of the talk: to define potential influences in the Near Eastern perspective - is the polymorphic idea specific to one culture or common to all ancient religious thinking about deities?