



## Abstract

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22012/baf.2016.17>

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### **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?