



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: Mischwesen on Anatolian-Levantine Orthostats

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Abstract

The recent 'animal turn' in academia has witnessed an increase in studies on human perceptions of animals, and has extended to studies on the role of animals in ancient civilisations, including those of ancient Western Asia. These include studies on animals in general, as well as on individual animals. In comparison to the investigations on 'natural' animals in ancient Western Asia, there have been few studies on 'supernatural' animals – Mischwesen or composite/hybrid creatures. This paper will therefore examine the Mischwesen depicted on the orthostats of late second and early first millennia BCE Anatolian-Levantine sites. These Anatolian-Levantine city-states were multi-linguistic and had many influences from other cultures. The material culture, though, was fairly homogeneous, although exhibiting various influences in both style and subject matter. Comparanda will be drawn from neighbouring peoples, such as the Neo-Assyrians and the Hittites. This will allow for an investigation into both the unique aspects of Anatolian-Levantine Mischwesen, as well as influences from other cultures. This analysis can offer new insights into the Anatolian-Levantine thought-world of the late second and early first millennia BCE.

Keywords

Mischwesen, Anatolia-Levant, orthostats, symbolism, figurative object

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