

Pułtusk Academy of Humanities



**ACTA ARCHAEOLOGICA PULTUSKIENSIA
Vol. III**

**Studies on Religion:
Seeking Origins and Manifestations of Religion**

Edited by Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska,
& Jadwiga Iwaszczuk

Department of Archaeology and Anthropology

PULTUSK 2011

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Some Remarks on Fantastic Creatures in Urartian Art and their Religious Aspects

The Art of the Urartian Kingdom is mostly known for its excellent bronze objects, which have been subject to systematic analysis for many years. The main focuses have been on the iconographic aspect; some objects also being subjected to chemical as well as physical scrutiny. Urartian artefacts and pieces of art have been in great demand among museums and private collectors. Special attention is given to bronze objects such as: collars, horse's bits, belts, shields, votive plaques, pectorals etc. Many of them were adorned with ornaments, floral decorations, symbolic representations of chariots and gods. Fantastic creatures were also often depicted on the objects. The artefacts selected for the purpose of this analysis are only those that were wrought in metal.

The base of my studies is the key publication by S. Eichler: *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen in der urartäischen Kunst*.¹ This excellent work analysed all Urartian objects, with – beside other figures – fantastic creatures being discussed.

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to systematise hybrid creatures from the artefacts and analyse their plausible association with Urartian religion. In many cases it is difficult to couple the depicted creatures with the Urartian pantheon. Hence, special attention will be given to the association of the fantastic creatures with certain Urartian deities.

It was typical for all religions of the Middle East that gods had creatures or animals as their attributes. A bull, the symbol of power and fertility, was the most popular of these. This animal appeared in all pantheons and was associated with the gods of weather, especially the gods of storms (for example Teshub and Adad). The other typically symbolic animals are the eagle and the horse (i.e. Šamaš) and the lion (i.e. Ishtar or Šiuini). The problem lies not with “normal” animals but with fantastic creatures. It is not usually easy to say whose (of which god) attribute such creatures could have been. In the Urartian case finding a solution to this issue is harder than in other Middle Eastern religions. In some cases similar iconographic features can be found in Mesopotamian art. The Assyrian influence is especially conspicuous. This is not surprising since both states, Urartu and Assyria, although usually hostile, had a strong cultural impact on each other. It was natural that ideas intermingled and that some elements from Assyria can be found on Urartian objects and vice versa.

The main source which I base my interpretations on was the one discovered by Oktay Belli in the ruins of the Anzaf Kale fortresses.² It is a bronze shield with a depiction of the first twelve deities in the Urartian pantheon. Almost all of them (except the main god Haldi, who was shown as a person in a radial solar disc) were shown mounting an animal or fantastic creature ascribed to each deity.

The shield from Anzaf Kale presents an attack of the Urartian gods led by Haldi on the Assyrian troops. All of the fantastic creatures in that scene corresponded with the gods of Urartu. We try below to analyse these representatives of Urartian divine bestiary.

¹ S. EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen in der urartäischen Kunst*, AMI Ergänzungsband 12, Berlin 1984 (hereinafter referred to as: EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*).

² O. BELLI, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999 (hereinafter referred to as: BELLI, *The Anzaf Fortresses*).

After the leading god, Haldi, the next two gods depicted on the shield – Teisheba and Šiuini – were associated with a lion and a bull respectively. The following nine Urartian gods are accompanied by the winged fantastic creatures.

The fourth deity on the shield and the first one depicted with a fantastic beast is Hutuini (**fig. 1**). His creature is pictured with a horned head, lion-like corpus and rare legs of a bird (?) and a scorpion tail. The next god is Turani, whose associated animal is composed of a goat head on a lion-like body and snake-like tail (**fig. 2**). The following god, recognised as Ua, is depicted on a creature, with the head of a fantastic bird of prey (owl?) and scaly body with fish-like tail (**fig. 3**). Behind Ua we see Nalaini, riding on a winged horse similar to the later Greek Pegasus (**fig. 4**).

The next in the procession of the gods depicted on the Anzaf Kale shield is Šebitu – the local deity from the region of Urmiye (**fig. 5**). His sacred animal is a winged bull with a human head and horned helmet with a hook on the top. The god Arsimela followed Šebitu, and is also a deity from the region of Urmiye (**fig. 6**). His accompanying creature has a gryphon head and body with a snake-like tail. The fantastic animal of the next god, Anapša, also has a body of a lion with a tail similar to the former creature (**fig. 7**). However it has a head of a beardless man in a helmet with horns. The eleventh god depicted in the Anzaf Kale shield is Dieduani (**fig. 8**). His sacred creature has a capricorn head with a snake-like tongue and body of a winged lion with a fishtail. The last deity that can be identified on the shield is Šelardi, the god of the Moon (**fig. 9**). Only the front part of his sacred animal is preserved – we can see it is a winged bull with a human head in a high helmet with horns.

The above described deities from the Urartian pantheon can be recognised and named thanks to Meher Kapesi's inscription.³ The divine procession from the Anzaf Kale shield reflects the order of the Urartian pantheon known from the inscription. Moreover, it has given us the possibility of seeing the sacred animals associated with particular gods.

The symbolic depiction of the deities and their sacred animals often occurred in Ancient Middle East art. We also have a lot of examples where the sacred animals or symbols identified with a particular deity appear instead of the deity itself. One of the best-known cases of such representations was found on the façade of the Nabu temple in Chorsabad. Numerous symbols present there were associated with the gods known from the Assyrian (Mesopotamian) pantheon. It is not surprising that a similar solution was used in Urartian art.

When we take a closer look at the fantastic creatures imagined on the Anzaf Kale shield we can observe that wings were their main attribute. All of them had this element as a part of their bodies. It could be a way of emphasising the dynamism of the deities, especially the haste to fight enemies. Wings were also associated with the extraordinary position of the deities who lived in heaven, and who hence needed the winged creatures to move to earth, especially in such dramatic moments when they needed to protect Urartians from Assyrian enemies.

Another popular element of the animal body used in the images of fantastic creatures was a lion-like corpus. Altogether six different animals clearly have these features visible in their shapes. These were creatures associated with: Hutuini, Turani, Ua, Arsimela, Anapša and Dieduani. The lion part accentuated the dignity and power of the creature, since this animal was one of the most respected and dangerous beasts living in the Middle East.

Given the above it is truly amazing that only one of the fantastic creatures had a scorpion tail. Scorpions, similarly to lions, triggered fear among people; moreover, they had a strong chthonian association. The other animal conventionally connected to the underworld was a goat, usually associated with god Turani. One can suppose that a partly scorpion-like creature underlined the chthonian aspect of Hutuini. The scorpion tail could also be a symbol of primitive or primal power. It has to be noted that on Neo-Assyrian seals we can

³ W.F. KÖNIG, *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*, Archiv für Orientforschung 8, Graz 1955-1957.

find similar beasts associated with the god Ninurta, which emphasised the violent aspect of the warrior deity.⁴ Possibly Hutuini also had extraordinary bellicose features.

Furthermore very interesting are two different deities from the Urartian pantheon that had almost the same fantastic creatures as their companions. The god Šebitu, who was a deity from the Urmiye region, and the god of the Moon Šelardi are presented on the *lamassu* – the animal-shaped demon. The only elements differentiating the two creatures are helmets on the heads of each *lamassu*. However, we must remember that the back part with the tail of the beast, belonging to the god Šelardi, is missing.

The god Nalaini and his Pegasus-like creature also deserve a few words of comment. The horse in the Neo-Assyrian tradition was conventionally associated with Šamaš, the god of the Sun.⁵ Following this trail one can suppose that Nalaini may have been a kind of local deity of the Sun worshipped in the region located on the north-eastern shores of the Van Lake.⁶ An alternative interpretation leads to Assyrian influences on the Urartian art and religion. One of the stars in the Andromeda constellation was named “a Horse” by the Assyrians.⁷ The god Nalaini may have been somehow associated with that star, although this idea is perhaps less plausible.

The god Anapša, who was depicted riding a sphinx-like creature, is another deity that has helped us understand the symbolism of the fantastic animals in Urartian religious iconography. Since we have no information regarding any function of Anapša in the pantheon, it is difficult to estimate what kind of deity Anapša actually was. The sphinx was very popular in Anatolian iconography, especially during the Hittite period. It is sufficient to mention the sphinx gates, the most famous object in Alacahöyük, or Hatussas.⁸ Representations of sphinxes were popular in Neo-Hittite monumental architecture, for example in Karatepe or Zincirli.⁹ It seems possible that the origin of Anapša’s creature came from the western Hittite or Neo-Hittite tradition. It is also possible that Anapša was a local deity from the western part of the Urartian Kingdom.

The fantastic animal attributed to the god Arsimela, a local deity of the Urmiye region, is probably borrowed from the Mesopotamian or Hurrian tradition. In Assyrian iconography, the god Adad, besides his sacred bull, was imagined as a fantastic beast quite similar to the one accompanying the god Arsimela.¹⁰ Also the Hurrians knew this kind of creature as the god Tešub’s sacred animal. In my opinion, both sources of the iconography of the Arsimela could be possible, especially given that the region of the Urmiye lake was displayed, indicating strong Assyrian and Hurrian influences. Moreover, if the association of the beast accompanying Arsimela is not accidental, we can assume that this deity played a similar role to Adad or Tešub – the gods of storms and thunder – but on a local scale.

A creature accompanying the god Ua belongs to the same category of beasts. The plastic elaboration is different, but the particular elements are similar. The heads of both animals are comparable to a bird’s head; moreover we can find parts of the corpus of a lion. The remaining parts of the bodies are different, but the figures are still situated in the frame of the lion-bird/dragon(?). Since the god Ua was a local deity of the north-eastern region of the Lake Van, we can suppose he was also a local deity of some weather aspects. Even if

⁴ D. COLLON, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals from the British Museum, Cylinder Seals V, Neo Assyrian and Neo Babylonian Periods*, London 2001, pl. XXIV.

⁵ J. BLACK, A. GREEN, *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, An Illustrated Dictionary*, London 1992 (hereinafter referred to as: BLACK, GREEN, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*), pp. 103-104, 182-184.

⁶ BELLI, *The Anzaf Fortresses*, p. 54.

⁷ BLACK, GREEN, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, pp. 103-104, 182-184.

⁸ E. AKURGAL, *The Hattian and Hittite Civilizations*, Ankara 2001, pp. 146-147.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 225, 230, 253.

¹⁰ BLACK, GREEN, *Gods, Demons and Symbols*, pp. 110-111.

Arsimela and Ua were gods of weather, storms etc it cannot be forgotten that they were local deities only, of lower rank than the god of the weather, Teišeba, depicted on the Anzaf Kale shield in the second position just behind Haldi.

Another beast that accompanied the god Dieduani has a body made from parts of animals such as: lion, bird, snake and ram. It is difficult to ascertain what kind of deity Dieduani was, and which part of Urartian Kingdom this god was originally worshipped.

Many objects known from Urartu were decorated with fantastic creatures' impressions. It should be noted that on the Anzaf Kale shield we can find only nine such beasts that could be tied to individual gods. That is why it is desirable to analyse the other objects of Urartian art that these creatures are also present on.

The first beast depicted on the Anzaf Kale shield that could be linked with the god Hutuini has a scorpion tail as the main element of the body. Similar creatures can be found on four different bronze objects. Two of them are in the Adana Regional Museum.¹¹ One bronze belt with a monster similar to that accompanying Hutuini is exhibited in the Ankara Archaeological Museum.¹² The last presently known object with a fantastic creature of a winged lion's body with a scorpion tail is stored in the Museum of Fine Art in Boston.¹³

The most characteristic element of the body of the second beast from the shield (a companion of the god Turani) is a goat head. On several Urartian artefacts – bronze belts, votive plaques and a pectoral – we can find similar depictions of the fantastic creatures that can be associated with Turani. Two belts are in the Adana Regional Museum collection: one of them was discovered in a grave near Dedeli, located 20 km from Patnos.¹⁴ Moreover, in the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem we find a bronze belt with a goat-head creature depicted; the rest of the body is completely different.¹⁵ From the Munich collection another object is known: a winged fantastic creature with a goat head and bull's body.¹⁶ What is more, a similar beast representation appear on an *ex voto* object mentioned by Eichler.¹⁷ There is also another illustration of a creature of almost identical shape to the goat-head beast from the Anzaf Kale shield. The creature has a goat's head, lion's body and wings; even the tail seems to be similar to the animal accompanying Turani. Unfortunately the provenance of the image remains unknown.¹⁸

Besides the representation from the Anzaf Kale shield we have no certain images of the god Ua and his symbolic creature. It is possible that the cult of Ua was only regional and even during Urartian times the iconography of that deity was not generally widespread and recognised. This might explain the lack of its representations in the main Urartian art. We know of only two objects with representation of a beast similar to a Ua symbolic creature. The first comes from a pectoral published by Kellner.¹⁹ The same scholar also published the second object, a decorated bronze belt.²⁰

¹¹ A. TAŞYÜREK, *The Urartian Belts*, Ankara 1975 (hereinafter referred to as: TAŞYÜREK, *The Urartian Belts*), pp. 42-46, fig. 1, pls 1-8, 17 (inv. no. 1123 and 1362).

¹² EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*, p. 15.

¹³ T. KENDALL, Urartian Art in Boston: Two Bronze Belts and a Mirror, *Boston Museum Bulletin* 75 (1977), pp. 26-55.

¹⁴ TAŞYÜREK, *The Urartian Belts*, fig. 18, pls 47-54 (inv. no. 26.1.1973) and fig. 17, pls 42-46 (inv. no. 1124).

¹⁵ H.J. KELLNER, Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts, [in:] *Urartu a Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E.*, Jerusalem 1991 (hereinafter referred to as: KELLNER, Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts), p. 156.

¹⁶ H.J. KELLNER, Pectorale aus Urartu, *Belleten* 41 (1977), pp. 482-483, pl. 1, (PS 1971).

¹⁷ EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*, p. 20.

¹⁸ R. WARTKE, *Urartu, Das Reich am Ararat*, Mainz am Rhein 1993 (hereinafter referred to as: WARTKE, *Urartu*), p. 129.

¹⁹ KELLNER, *Belleten* 41 (1977), pp. 482-483, pl. 3.

²⁰ KELLNER, Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts, p. 155.

The winged horse is another creature clearly associated with a deity from the Urartian pantheon as an animal attributed to the god Nalaini. The motif of the winged horse and his master is very popular in Urartian art. If we consider the number of currently known representation recognised as the god Nalaini it seems that this deity was far better known than another local deity from the same region, the god Ua. The god Nalaini could be a local deity of the Sun, complementary to Haldi, the main god in the pantheon. This interpretation explains the popularity of Nalaini and his attributed creature in Urartian art.

In the Adana Regional Museum collection we find three bronze belts with the winged horses depicted.²¹

Three other representations of the winged horse from bronze belts can be found on an object discovered nearby Kars in Turkey. One of them is a part of the Hermitage collection.²² Another belt is located in the Ankara Archaeological Museum, and the last artefact was published by Eichler in 1984.²³

The Pegasus-like creatures were engraved on two other objects. The first is a votive plaque discovered in Altintepe.²⁴ The second may be not identical, but a similar beast can be found on a pectoral in Munich.²⁵

The *lamassu* creature accompanying the god Šebitu, a local deity of the Lake Urmiye region, wears a horned helmet with a hook-like top. Strong influences from neighbouring Assyria may be reflected in the iconography of the *lamassu* creature and its association with Šebitu. On the other hand the representations of this deity and his winged bull were almost unknown in the centre region of the Urartian Kingdom i.e. in the region around Lake Van. It cannot be ruled out that our knowledge is too scanty to bring forth another hypothesis.

The winged bull images can be found on three other objects of Urartian art. Two of them are interpreted as side ornaments and were a part of a horse harness. The first can be found in the Munich collection and the second belongs to a private collection from Tokyo.²⁶ The third image of a winged bull comes from on a pectoral from Munich.²⁷

Arsimela is another deity from the Urmiye region. His sacred animal is a bird-headed, winged beast with a lion body. The other images of a similar creature can be found on different artefacts: bronze belts, pectoral, votive plaque, and horse harness. The bronze belts with such animals depicted are present in the Adana Regional Museum²⁸ and in the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem.²⁹ Another bird-headed beast was published by Wartke.³⁰ The three other objects with animals, which could be interpreted as Arsimela beast, were mentioned by Eichler.³¹ The first one was placed on a votive plaque, the second on a horse harness and the last one on a pectoral. Another example of a horse harness with similar

²¹ TAŞYÜREK, *The Urartian Belts*, fig. 18, pls 47-54 (inv. no. 26. 1, 1974), fig. 19, pl. 55 (inv. no. 1346), fig. 1, pls 1-8 (inv. no. 1362).

²² M. VAN LOON, *Urartian Art*, Istanbul 1966 (hereinafter referred to as: VAN LOON, *Urartian Art*), p. 132, fig. 15.

²³ EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*, p. 46.

²⁴ T. ÖZGÜÇ, *Altintepe II, Türk Tarih Kurumu*, ser. 5, no. 27, Ankara 1969, p. 68, fig. 25.1.

²⁵ H.J. KELLNER, Personal Adornments, [in:] *Urartu a Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E.*, Jerusalem 1991, p. 168 (inv. no. PS 1971.1787).

²⁶ U. SEIDL, Horse Trapping, [in:] *Urartu a Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E.*, Jerusalem 1991 (hereinafter referred to as: SEIDL, Horse Trapping), p. 96 (inv. no. PS 1980.6105).

²⁷ H.J. KELLNER, Kopfschmuck oder Brustschmuck? Bemerkungen zu neuen Funden aus Urartu, [in:] *Pro Arte Antiqua: Festschrift für Hedwig Kenner II*, Vienna 1985, pp. 226-227, pl. 13:1-3 (inv. no. PS 1975.3061).

²⁸ TAŞYÜREK, *The Urartian Belts*, fig. 1, pls 1-8 (inv. no. 1362).

²⁹ KELLNER, Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts, p. 156.

³⁰ WARTKE, *Urartu*, p. 129.

³¹ EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*, pp. 20, 24-25, 46, pl. 62.

beasts depicted is known from the above-mentioned side ornament from a Tokyo private collection.³² The last example is one of the best known Urartian pieces of art discovered in Toprakkale. It is a bronze representation of a fantastic creature, which originally was a part of a throne or some other fragment of furniture.³³

Considering the above data we can assume that Arsimela represented by this sacred animal was popular or at least well-known in many regions of the Urartian Kingdom. As opposed to Šebitu, who was a local deity from the Lake Urmiye area, the range of the Arsimela cult seems to have been much wider. Nevertheless, because of insufficient information on the Urartian religion it is premature to estimate the function and prerogatives of Arsimela.

A human head in conical helmet and corpus of a winged lion with a snake tail characterised another fantastic creature from the Anzaf Kale shield, a sacred companion of the god Anapša. There are numerous representations of similar beasts known in Urartian art. The winged creatures with a lion's body and human head can be found on such objects as: bronze belts, votive plaques, horse harness, pectorals, and even, which is very rare among Urartian artefacts, on cylinder seals. A bronze belt with this type of animal depicted on it was discovered in Karmir Blur. The object is now in the Historical Museum of Armenia collection in Yerevan.³⁴ The next two representations are mentioned by Eichler.³⁵ In the same work two votive plaques with similar creatures are mentioned.³⁶

There is also a depiction of the beast on a ferrule shaft (a horse harness element) described in Eichler's work.³⁷ The other shaft is quoted in the Merhav's article.³⁸ Moreover, two representations of the beasts can be found on horse harnesses.³⁹ The animal similar to the sphinx from the Anzaf Kale shield is engraved on a bronze collar from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.⁴⁰ Additionally, there are two pectorals ornamented with "sphinx" images. The first of them was published by Kellner.⁴¹ The second was analysed by Eichler.⁴²

The last but not least object which should be mentioned is a cylinder seal, where lion-like creature with a human bearded head was engraved.⁴³

The eighth deity on the Anzaf Kale shield depicting a fantastic creature is interpreted as Dieduani. The beast accompanying the god is composed of a winged lion body, a fishtail and a capricorn (?) head with snake-like tongue. Similar but not identical creatures can be found on two bronze belts from the Adana Regional Museum.⁴⁴ The third bronze belt is deposited in the Bible Lands Museum.⁴⁵

The most similar, if not identical depiction of the fantastic animal can be observed on the horse harness mentioned above and belonging to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston

³² SEIDL, *Horse Trapping*, p. 96.

³³ WARTKE, *Urartu*, pl. 62.

³⁴ VAN LOON, *Urartian Art*, p. 123, pl. 30b.

³⁵ EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*, pp. 15, 17, pls 2, 6.1.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 23, pl. 20,1.

³⁸ R. MERHAV, Chariot and Horse Fittings, [in:] *Urartu a Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E.*, Jerusalem 1991, p. 72, pl. 21-25.

³⁹ SEIDL, *Horse Trapping*, p. 96.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 94 (inv. no. MFA 1976.5).

⁴¹ KELLNER, *Bulleten* 41 (1977), p. 483, pl. 1.

⁴² EICHLER, *Götter, Genien und Mischwesen*, p. 24, pl. 11.

⁴³ A. TAŞYÜREK, Some Urartian Seals mostly from Adana Regional Museum, *Or. Ant.* 18 (1979), p. 310, pl. 21b.

⁴⁴ TAŞYÜREK, *The Urartian Belts*, no. 18 a, b, c, fig. 17, pl. 42-46; no. 19, fig. 18, pl. 47-54 (inv. no. 1124 and 26.1.1973).

⁴⁵ KELLNER, *Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts*, p. 156.

collection.⁴⁶ Furthermore, some other representations of similar creatures can be found in Wartke's outstanding book.⁴⁷

It should be mentioned that the fantastic creature accompanying Dieduani could sometimes be mistaken with the sacred animal of the god Turani. Both creatures are very similar but Turani's companion has a goat head.

Another *lamassu* creature is the last fantastic animal connected with a deity that appears on the Anzaf Kale shield. Only the front part of the animal is preserved. A horned helmet is the most characteristic feature of the beast. The top of the helmet is strongly bent backwards, what could make us suppose that it was rather made of felt than any other hard materials. The deity, which was interpreted as the one who was riding on such a beast, was Šelardi, the twelfth god mentioned in the Meher Kapisi inscription.

This kind of *lamassu*, which I believe accompanied the god Šelardi, is one of the most enigmatic and rare figures in Urartian art. Similar fantastic animals can be found on two other objects only. Both of them have been mentioned in this text already. The first one is the horse harness analysed by Seidl.⁴⁸ The next object is the bronze belt from the Bible Lands Museum from Jerusalem.⁴⁹ We may wonder if the rare presence of this creature in Urartian art reflects the minor position of the god Šelardi in the pantheon. Possibly, as with the several deities mentioned above, Šelardi was a local deity, worshipped in certain regions only.

As written above, the discovery of the Anzaf Kale shield gave us a very rare possibility of tracing the symbolism and iconography of the Urartian pantheon. Considering the main features of the beasts shown in procession we can try to define them as demons/geniuses associated with the anthropomorphic deities. If so it needs to be emphasised that these creatures must have been subordinated to the anthropomorphic deities.

Demons are usually associated with neutral or positive elements in the Middle Eastern religions or mythologies. Probably only in the god Nergal's cortège nasty and evil demons can be found. Moreover, other evil demons stayed unnamed without any connotation to the deities i.e. a demon who was attacking people on crossroads.

Nevertheless, the demons which were companions of the deities from the Urartian pantheon should have been servants of those gods. They could have played a role of commissioners, messengers and functioned in the name of the deities.

It is possible that the role of the demons' images on the above-mentioned objects was to replace the god who was a patron or a lord of the beast. The main function of the demons depicted on many objects was apothropaic. The fantastic creatures thanks to their ranks and a symbolical connection with deities helped protect not only the objects they were engraved on but especially human beings and their animals from evil things and enemies. Moreover, thanks to this symbolic power an additional religious activity was not necessary since heavenly protection was guaranteed before. In other words some of the objects gained the status of magical ones. Similar objects with depiction of the deities were very often dedicated to the gods by Urartian kings, as for example Sarduri II, but these objects were deposited in temples and became objects of cult.

It is of outmost importance the demons did not need any special rituals or worship. Thus, if on the object a demon associated with a deity from the pantheon was depicted, the power of the deity was "automatically" placed on it and guaranteed by the demon. The icons were to safeguard as behind the demons, depicted on the said objects, a mighty god was hidden.

⁴⁶ SEIDL, *Horse Trapping*, p. 96.

⁴⁷ WARTKE, *Urartu*, p. 129.

⁴⁸ SEIDL, *Horse Trapping*, p. 96.

⁴⁹ KELLNER, *Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts*, p. 156.

It cannot be ruled out that each of the fantastic animals known from Urartian art has a patron in a deity from the pantheon. Unfortunately, now this cannot be supported by strong evidence, which could explain that phenomenon. Our present knowledge makes it possible to show the association with only nine demons and their role as safeguards in the Urartian religion.

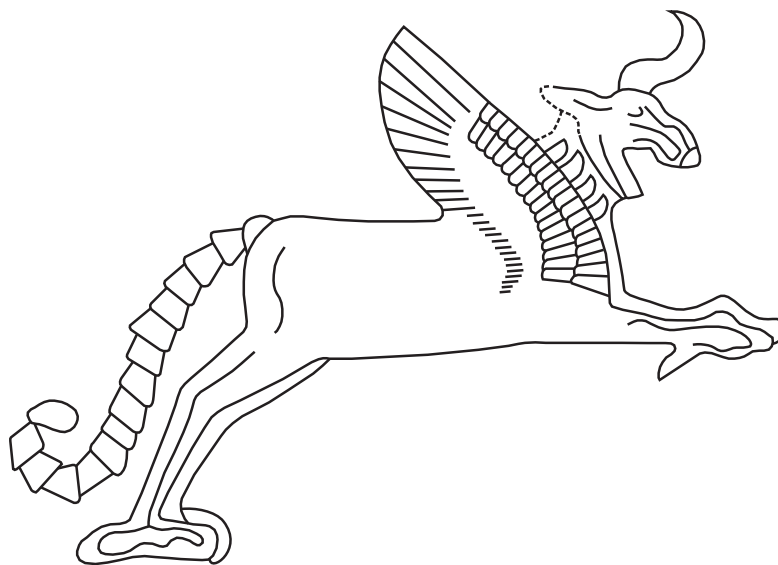


Fig. 14. The creature which accompanies the god Hutuini
(after O. BELL, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 48)

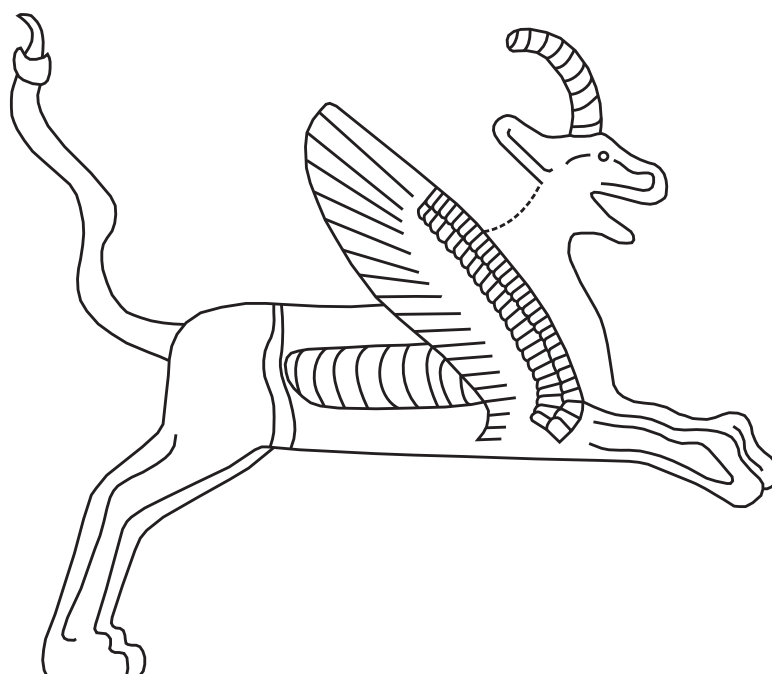


Fig. 15. Turani's creature
(after O. BELL, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 50)

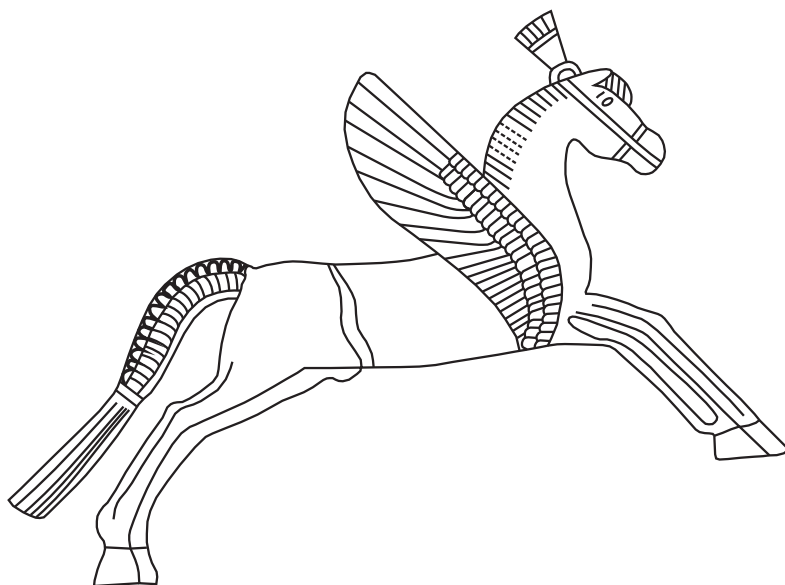


Fig. 16. The god's Ua creature
(after O. BELLI, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 53)

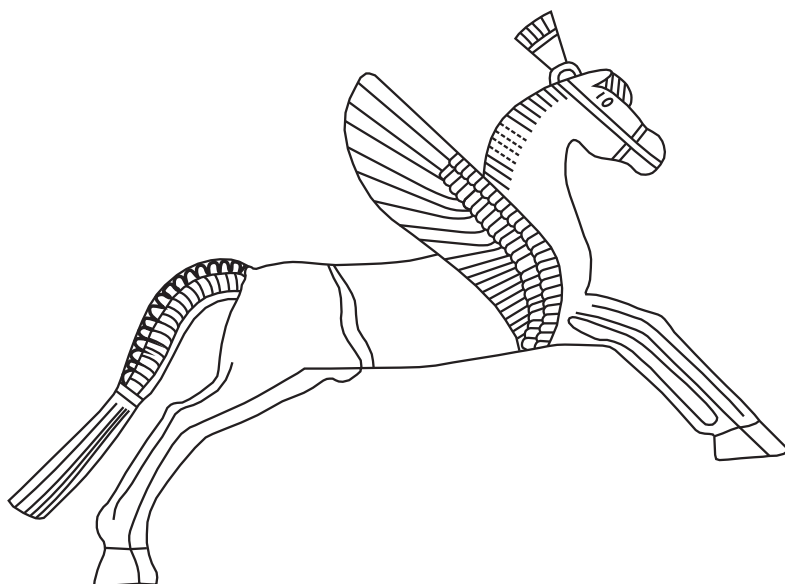


Fig. 17. The fantastic creature belonged to the god Nalaini
(after O. BELLI, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 54)

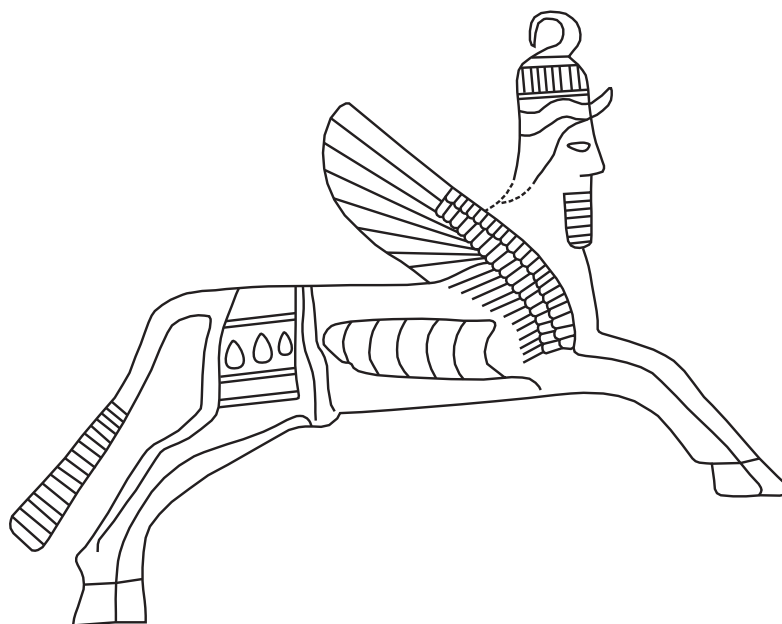


Fig. 18. The god's Šebitu creature
(after O. BELL, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 56)

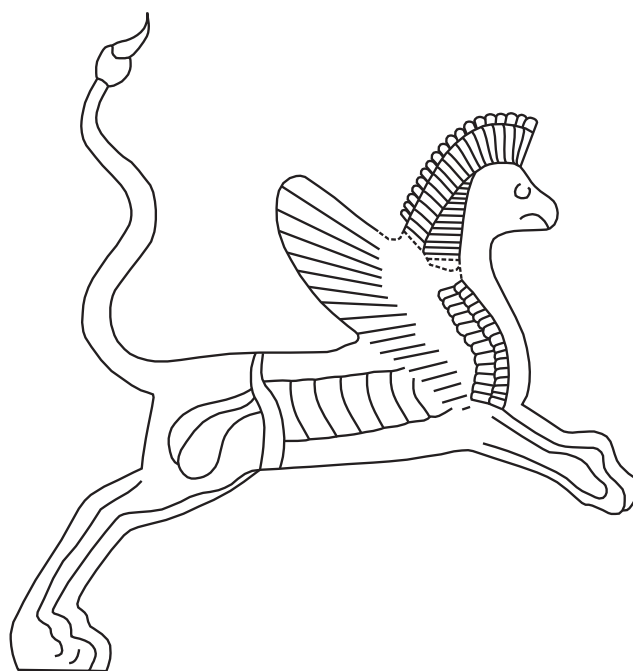


Fig. 19. Arsimela's creature
(after O. BELL, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 59)



Fig. 20. Anapša's fantastic animal
(after O. BELL, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 60)



Fig. 21. The fantastic animal belonged to the god Dieduani
(after O. BELL, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 61)



Fig. 22. The Šelardi's creature
(sfter O. Belli, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, Istanbul 1999, p. 63)

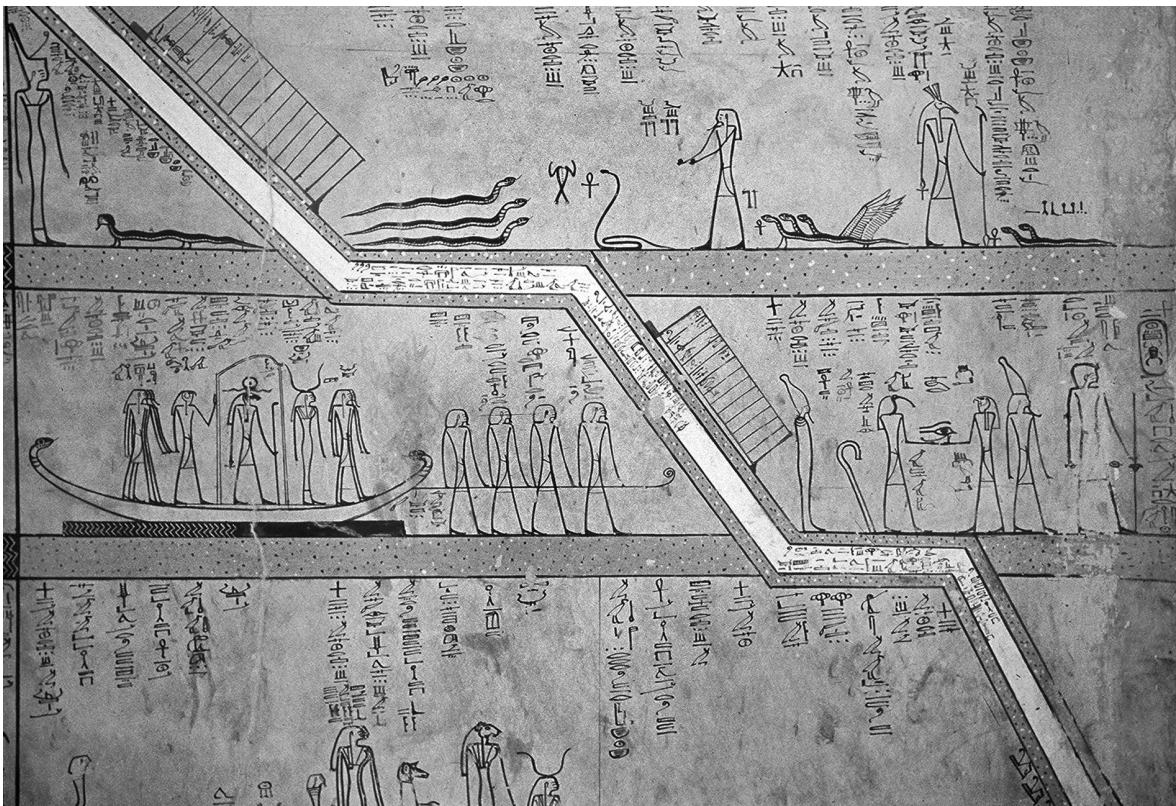


Fig. 23. Scene from the 4th Hour of the *Book of Amduat* in the tomb of Tutmosis III