

Das Graduiertenkolleg 1876
„Frühe Konzepte von Mensch und Natur:
Universalität, Spezifität, Tradierung“

lädt ein zum Vortrag

Monkeys in Aegean Image and Imagination

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(Yale University)

From earliest times, exotic flora and fauna appear regularly in the art of the ancient Near East and Aegean. Elephants, giraffes, lions, bears, and other animals make their way from lands near and far to royal menageries and courts, while seeds and seedlings of many species enrich botanical gardens. Texts describe the efforts to obtain exotica and extol their economic, political, and intellectual virtues.

In this talk, I focus on monkeys, for their human/animal bonds afford unique opportunities for deepening our understanding of the roles of exotica in ancient image and imagination. My particular concern is with the African vervets and guenons shown in Aegean Bronze Age art.

Dozens of these creatures engage in animal and human activities in landscapes, gardens, and formal settings. Aegean painters faithfully recorded their distinctive forehead fringe of white fur, but colored their bodies blue. Why blue? I would argue that there are three interconnected reasons for this choice, which shed light on the critical roles monkeys played in Aegean ritual and belief. Furthermore, the dappled markings on the vervet faces in Beta 6 at Thera take us in an intriguing direction, which in turn leads to consideration of the apparently intimate connections between monkeys and saffron production.

As a springboard for the group discussion following, my lecture concludes with a brief look at monkeys seen elsewhere in the Bronze Age world, and then I shall cast my net more widely to touch on simians in European art, from those in medieval and Renaissance paintings to the singeries of Huet and Chantilly.

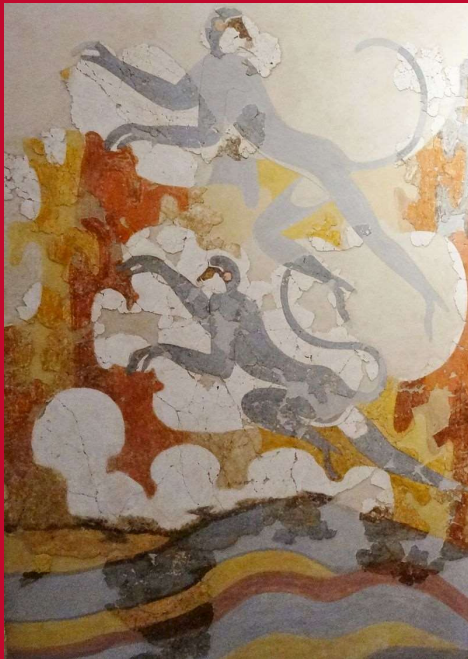
Donnerstag, den 7. Januar 2016, 18:15 Uhr

Hegelstr. 59, Raum 00-309

Interessenten sind herzlich willkommen!

T. Pommerening

J. Althoff



BILDNACHWEIS:
Prähistorisches Museum Thira Blaue Affen
(Wikimedia Commons).

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