



**DICTIONARY
OF
PAGAN
RELIGIONS**

Harry E. Wedeck and Wade Baskin



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Dictionary of Pagan Religions

by
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“The world is not divided into good Christians and bad pagans, but into good people and bad people. And God knows there are few enough of them, in either rank.”

—*Dagobert D. Runes*

In Biblical phraseology, pagans were described as ‘the nations,’ as ‘the gentiles,’ that is, ‘the heathens.’ In the early Christian period, during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, the Church Fathers, among them Tertullian, Lactantius, and St. Jerome, used the Latin term *ethnici*—derived from the Greek *ethnos*, a nation, *ethnicoi*, heathens—to denote pagans.

It should here be noted, however, that pagan philosophy and pagan theological speculation as represented, for instance, by the Neoplatonist Plotinus and his pupil Porphyry, often coincided, in many respects, with Christian thought, and that it was not difficult, or rare, to convert from paganism to Christianity. As an instance, it is not yet certain whether the philosopher Boethius was a complete Christian or whether he retained pagan concepts in his philosophical expositions. For pagan philosophy, notably among the Greek and Latin writers of the fifth century, elaborated, by dialectical argumentation, the same themes that involved Christian metaphysical and theological issues. And ultimately, there was a confrontation between pagan philosophy and Christian doctrine. The latter became the established and triumphant faith. Paganism, however, did not die out completely with the rise and expansion of Christianity. It went underground to a large extent, retaining its hold for several centuries in the form of mystery cults, in the Mediterranean littoral, in Egypt, Syria, Persia, Northern and Eastern Europe. Despite the slow disintegration of pagan beliefs and practices, rites and ceremonials and liturgies, pagan concepts and certain vestigial traditions persisted far into the Middle Ages. They did not pass into total oblivion or historical obscurity. They were absorbed in many directions and incorporated into modern philosophical and religious systems.

In the context of this book, the terms of reference relate to the less known religious cults of the ancient world, including the mystery cults of Egypt, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean area, as well as to cults which have evolved in other parts of the world.

In addition to names, relevant items have been included relating to religious systems, temple sites, ancient religious texts, and similar matter.

H. E. V.

A

AAHLA In Egyptian religion, one of the divisions of the Ament, or lower regions. The word means 'field of peace.'

AARU In Egyptian religion, the abode of the blessed dead. The celestial field, encircled by an iron wall, is covered with wheat. The dead are represented as gleaning this wheat, which is the symbol of Karma, the law of retribution.

AATS In Egyptian religion, the fourteen or fifteen Aats or domains constituted the Elysian Field. Each Aat was presided over by a different deity.

ABADDON The Hebrew name of the angel of the bottomless pit or the destroying angel, called Apollyon in Greek. Medieval demonographers regarded him as the causer of wars.

ABADIR In the Punic language, this name denotes *mighty father*. This title was bestowed by the Carthaginians on their principal deities.

ABARIS A mythical hyperborean priest of Apollo said to have been endowed with the gift of prophecy.

ABASTOR In classical mythology, the name of one of the horses of Pluto, god of the underworld.

ABATUR In Gnosticism, the father of the Demiurgus, corresponding to the third Logos in the esoteric teachings of antiquity.

ABBA AMONA In the Cabala, the occult names of the two higher Sephiroth of the upper triad. Sephira or Kether stands at the apex or head of the Sephirothal Tree. The Hebrew words mean 'Father-Mother.'

ABELLION In Celtic mythology, a divinity who was identified with the Roman god Apollo.

ABERIDES In classical mythology, a variant name for the ancient Roman god Saturn.

ABHISEKA A term used by Buddhists for the tenth stage of perfection. It is also used to designate the ceremonial bathing in sacred waters as practiced by many Hindus.

ABLANATHANALBA In Gnosticism, a term similar to 'Abracadabra.' It reads the same from either end and was used as a charm in Egypt. It may mean 'thou art a father to us.'

ABO TANI According to one legend preserved by the Apa Tanis, a primitive tribe of the eastern Himalayas, the first man was Abo Tani. He was created by Hilo.

ABODE OF GODS In Norse religion, the abode of the gods was made from the head of the giant

Ymir.

ABORIGINAL SOCIETIES Among Australian aborigines, men are grouped, with regard to birth locality, and so on, into 'societies.' These societies maintain certain cults associated with totemism.

ABORIGINES Australian aborigines conceive that human beings, in groups, are linked to a particular species of animal such as the kangaroo, the iguana, the emu, or to a phenomenon such as rain. The species form the totems of each human group.

ABRACADABRA A symbolic word first used in a medical treatise by Samonicus. It is supposed to be a corruption of the sacred Gnostic term 'Abraxas,' a magic formula meaning 'Hurt me not.' It was attached to an amulet and worn on the breast.

(ABRASAX) ABRAXAS Variant of *abraxas*, a symbolic word traced back to Basilides of Alexandria who used it as a title for the divinity. In Greek numeration, the seven letters total 365, the days of the solar year, which represents a cycle of divine action.

ABRAXAS This mystic term was in vogue among the Gnostic sect that was founded by Basilides in the second century A.D. In Greek numerology Abraxas denoted the number 365, the number of days in a year. Also, this was the sum total of the spirits who emanated from God.

Among occultists the word Abraxas, engraved on stones or gems, was held to have a mystic significance.

ABSU In Chaldean mysticism, the name for Space, the dwelling place of Ab, the Father or Head of the Source of the Waters of Knowledge.

ABSYRTUS In Greek and Roman mythology, a brother of Medea, who killed him and cut his body into pieces in order to detain their father as she fled from Colchis.

ABYDOS The ancient holy city of Osiris, god of the dead. It lies two hundred miles north of Luxor and was the sanctuary of an even older mortuary god before Osiris came to dwell there. King Amenhotep III delighted to honor the place, and people came from all over Egypt to lay their bones in its sanctified ground, hoping thereby to win greater glory in the next world. The exact location of the tomb of Osiris was known to the devout.

ABYSS In Egyptian religion, the Abyss was a descriptive name for the underworld of the dead. In Babylonian thought it was the primeval chaos from which the universe evolved. In Gnosticism it was personified as the first principle of the infinite deity.

ABZU In Sumerian religion, the watery abyss that is the abode of the god Enki, the Lord of Wisdom.

ACAVISR In Etruscan religion, a deity whose functions were subsidiary to those of the major divinities.

ACCA LARENTIA An ancient Italic deity. She was worshipped as the protectress of crops. A festival in her honor was held on December 23.

ACERSECOMES In Greek religion, a descriptive term applied to the god Apollo. It denotes the uncouth hair on the head of the deity.

ACESTES The son of the Sicilian river god Crimisus.

ACHELOUS In Greek religion, a river god. In Etruscan art, he is represented as a bull with a human face. In popular belief, swift, foaming water is often identified with horses or bulls. The Etruscans used masks of Achelous to protect from evil the objects or buildings they adorned.

ACHERON In Greek mythology, Acheron was one of the rivers of Hades. It is mentioned by Homer in his epic poetry.

ACHORUS Among the inhabitants of ancient Cyrene, the god of flies. Sacrifices were made to the god for deliverance from the insects.

ACMON In Greek mythology, a deity who existed before the creation of heaven.

ACNA She is the moon goddess of the Mayas.

ACOSMISM A type of pantheism which denies the existence of the universe as distinct from the Absolute.

ACRATOPOTES In classical mythology, a name applied to the god Bacchus.

In Greek, the expression means *a drinker of sheer wine*.

ACRATUS In Greek mythology, a deity worshipped by the Athenians.

ADAD In Babylonian mythology, a god of wind and storm, known also as Ramman and, earlier in Palestine and Syria, as Hadad. The ancient storm god of the Amorites.

ADAM KADMON In the Cabala, the Archetypal Man or Humanity. It is the manifested Logos.

ADAPA In Babylonian mythology, this deity is associated with Ea, who endowed him with wisdom. Adapa was offered bread and water of life by the gods. Summoned before Anu, the sky god, he refused to accept the offer and lost the attribute of immortality.

ADDEPHAGIA In classical mythology, the goddess of gluttony. She received special worship from the Sicilians.

ADITI In Vedic Hinduism, an abstract goddess whose name signifies 'boundlessness.'

ADITYAS In Hinduism, a group of gods, all sons of Aditi. The most important of them is Varuna, and the other eleven are his personified attributes: Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Daksa, Amas, Dhatar, Indra, Vivasvant, Martanda, Surya, and Vishnu.

ADONIS In Greek legend, a youth who was loved by Aphrodite but whom he repulsed. He was killed by a boar during a hunt and his death was deeply lamented by Aphrodite. Although he was required to descend into the kingdom of the dead, he was permitted to return to the upper earth in spring and summer, to live with Aphrodite. His story symbolized a vegetation myth, and his rebirth corresponds to the myth of Ishtar and her lover Tammuz, the Babylonian god of vegetation.

Adonis was annually reborn amidst great jubilation on the part of his votaries, especially at Alexandria.

He is represented on Etruscan mirrors and vases; also on murals at Pompeii.

ADOREA A Roman goddess who was identified with Victory.

AEACUS In Greek mythology, a son of Zeus and the nymph Aegina, and the father of Telamon and Peleus. Famed for his justice and piety on earth, he was made one of the three judges in Hades.

ÆGÆON In Greek religion, a marine God living under the Aegean Sea. The name given by men 'him whom the gods called Briareus.' See Briareus.

ÆGIOCHUS A descriptive epithet applied to Jupiter as having been raised by the she-goat Amalthea.

ÆGIPAN In classical mythology, the god Pan, represented with goat feet.

ÆGOPHAGA In classical mythology, a variant name for Aphrodite, to whom a goat was sacrificed.

ÆLLO One of the three Harpies, feared by the Greeks.

ÆLURUS In Egyptian mythology, the cat-god. He is represented as a human figure with a cat's head.

ÆMOCHARES (HAEMOCHARES) This Greek expression means 'rejoicing in blood.' In classical mythology, it is a descriptive name, applied to the Roman war god Mars.

AEOLUS In Greek religion, the god who binds and looses the winds. The king of Aeolia, the inventor of sails and a great astronomer, was deified by posterity as the king of storms and winds.

AEON Among the Phoenicians, a deity that personified the passage of time.

AERUSCUTORES In the Phrygian cult of Cybele, these were her priests, the Galli, who went begging in public, ringing hand bells to invite donations.

AESCULANUS A Roman deity who presided over copper coinage.

AESCULAPIUS In Roman religion, the god of medicine. He was called the Soter (Savior) who raised the dead to life. His worship was introduced into Rome in the third century B.C. in response to an oracle promising relief from the plague.

AESIR In Norse mythology, Aesir meant the entire entourage in the Nordic pantheon, including the supreme god Odin. Their dwelling place was the city of Asgard, where the gods reveled in luxury.

AESMA In Zoroastrianism, Aesma was the evil spirit of anger that inspired vengeance.

AESYMNETES In classical mythology, a descriptive name of Bacchus, the god of wine. In Greek the word means a judge or arbiter (as, for instance, at a symposium).

ETOLIAN CULTS The deities of Aetolia included Apollo, Artemis, and Athena. The cult center of Artemis was Calydon. Apollo too was associated with Calydon, while Athena was worshipped notably at Pleuron. Other cults prevalent in Aetolia were those of Dionysus and of Atargatis (Aphrodite).

AFRICAN RELIGIONS All African religions are monotheistic in the sense that they recognize one High God as the creator of all things and the source of whatever order exists in the world. Many of the religions of Africa are polytheistic in the sense that man is separated from his maker by large numbers of gods, spirits, or ancestors. They tend to be tribal religions in the sense that the social structure is reflected in tribal beliefs. Prayer, which is likely to stress innocence of any evil intention and requests for good health and well-being, is found in all African religions. Sacrifices, usually goats or chickens, are intended not so much to cleanse as to establish communication between man and god. Throughout the continent, the sanctity of all life is primary.

Ritual plays an important role in African life. Religion is viewed as a set of goals, a frame of reference involving man and god, and a set of rituals for achieving specific goals. Religious rites mark christenings, weddings, burials, initiations, the seasons, and related factors such as planting, harvesting, rain-making, hunting, fishing, crime and punishment, war and peace. There are no idols or priests (with rare exceptions), no religious doctrines or theologies. In their attempts to cope with the crises of life, many Africans rely on witch-doctors, magic, superstition, tabus, and fetishes or charms. The universal belief in spirits or ghosts and a primitive animism is shared, despite differences in language, cultural level, and political development, by vast numbers of

Negroes, Bantus, Hottentots, and Bushmen.

~~The supreme god is generally assumed to have created a world without regard to good or evil, then to have withdrawn from it, leaving its operation dependent on spiritual energy supplied by human effort. The degree of his withdrawal varies with tribes, but the system he created is assumed to be mechanically or organically perfect. Ancestral spirits and godlings representing different aspects of the supreme god link man to his maker. Evil enters the perfect system through human selfishness or through a trickster who perverts all the rules. Only a trickster, or fate as he is often called, can explain disaster in the absence of selfishness.~~

When disaster strikes, a diviner may be able to detect the device used to provoke it or to identify its author—a neglected spirit who is punishing a descendant for the faults of the group or a witch who is simply venting his envy. Divination brings to light the ritual that must be performed to correct a misfortune. All ritual involves establishing communication between the world of men and the spirit world. Sacrifice and prayer are the two main components of most rituals, but lesser elements may include magical gesture, special implements, and distinctive items of apparel.

AFTERLIFE Among the Greeks and Romans and Egyptians in particular, there was a universal though indeterminate belief in survival after death. A primitive concept was that the dead live on in their tombs and require human sustenance. In the earliest Greek records, the Homeric epics, the belief was that the dead have their abode in a dark and grim realm. In this respect, the dead require no sustenance from the living and inspired no fear.

Another concept, also in Homer, placed certain heroes, exempted from death, in the Isles of the Blessed. In the sixth century B.C the Eleusinian Mysteries, involving the cult of Demeter, promised their votaries a happy fate after death. In mystery cults in general, the concept of metempsychosis was maintained, and happiness would be achieved by those who in this life had led a pure existence.

The cults also of Dionysus, Sabazius, Attis, and Isis similarly offered assurance of a happy life after death. The dead were conceived as inhabiting an underground realm or being transferred to celestial regions.

AGATHOS DAEMON In Greek religion, a god to whom a libation was offered after each meal.

AGDISTIS This is an aspect of Cybele, who was called Agdistis at Pessinus. The cult of Agdistis, who was primarily androgynous, extended into many areas of Anatolia, Egypt, and Attica.

AGELASTUS A descriptive name of Pluto, god of the underworld in classical mythology. There was no joy in his grim dominion: hence his epithet, which in Greek means 'gloomy,' 'not laughing.'

AGENONA A Roman goddess of industry.

AGLAUROS A Greek mystery cult that was observed in Athens. It was celebrated in honor of the deity Aglauros.

AGLIBOLUS and MALACHBELUS Ancient Syrian divinities. They are represented as youths before a temple, separated from each other by a pine tree.

AGNI HOTRI In Aryan religion, the priests who served the god of fire.

AGONIUS A Roman god who presided over business affairs.

AGRAI In Greek religion, initiation into the Lesser Mysteries at Agrai had to precede initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries.

AGRICULTURAL RITES In pagan religions, agricultural rites were performed in order to win the favor of the gods. The basic need was to secure abundant harvests. The rituals included dancing around the fields, sprinkling the ground with sacrificial blood, sometimes human blood. Cattle were also offered to the deities who presided over the productivity of the earth. Phallic ceremonies were in vogue, as symbolic of fertility. Incantations, invocations to the chthonic deities were regular features of the vegetation cults. In addition, suppliants marched in procession through the fields while prayers were offered to the divinities in charge of the growing, ripening and mature crops. Rain ceremonies especially were elaborate. They included magic formulas, thunderous music, and ultimately, joyful dancing and feasting.

All such vegetation cults, despite ethnic and geographical variations, were fundamentally identical. They sought the beneficent cooperation of the powerful, unseen forces of nature.

AGRICULTURE The discovery of agriculture and animal husbandry had a profound effect on the evolution of primitive religion. In the ancient Near East, divine triads consisting of father, mother and son were known and worshipped with the aid of a shrine and rites as early as the sixth millennium B.C. Religion became more complex as the mythology and cultic symbolism associated with the gods of fertility evolved in the direction of the crystallized form exemplified in the Adonis-Attis-Osiris cycle of the third millennium.

AGRIPPA VON NETTESHEIM Henry Cornelius von Nettesheim (1486-1535) made religion an amalgam of Cabalistic mysticism, Neo-Platonism, and Christianity. He distinguished himself as a soldier, physician, and student of the occult. He traveled widely, lectured in Italy on Hermes Trismegistus, and wrote *The Occult Philosophy*, a defense of magic in which he tried to synthesize occult lore with the natural sciences.

AGROTES A Phoenician deity, equated with Dagon. He is represented as being borne in a chariot during his festivals.

AGRUERUS An ancient Phoenician god, equivalent to Saturn.

AHIMSA A Hindu doctrine stressing the oneness and sacredness of all life. The doctrine is held by different religious groups in India, but most strictly by the Jains.

AHONE In Algonquian religion, the great god who ruled the world but did not require sacrifice.

AHPUCH In Maya religion, the chief of the gods of darkness. His opponent was Chac, the rain god.

AHRIMAN In Zoroastrian religion, the Spirit of Evil, in perpetual conflict with the supreme deity Ahura Mazda. Ahriman is also called Angra Mainyu. Six archdemons always attend him.

AHU In Egyptian religion, the great god of the West. He is an obscure deity, later identified as an aspect of Osiris.

In Zoroastrian religion, the word designates the Spiritual Lord and Master who works with the Ratu or Prophet to protect the Creation.

AHURA MAZDA In the Zoroastrian religion Ahura Mazda, which means Lord of Knowledge, was the beneficent Spirit of Good, leader of the powers of light. His other name was Ormuzd. He acted in opposition to the Spirit of Evil, Ahriman, who was in control of the forces of darkness.

AIJ TAION The supreme deity of the Yakut, a Turkish tribe of northeastern Siberia.

AIJE Among the Bororos of Brazil, a mythical monster associated with the deep waters.

AIN-IOR A Chaldean word naming the divine substance or unique 'self-existent.'

AINUS This dwindling race inhabits the Northern islands of Japan and Eastern Siberia. Their ceremonies are, as in the case of the old classical cults and the religions of the Near East, aimed at winning control over the natural phenomena. For sustenance, they need rain and sun, fire and the produce of the earth. For these purposes they use magic incantations, spells, amulets to divert the influences of evil spirits that may cause destruction, famine, disease. They also use rites, of an apotropaic nature, to ensure the safety of their swamps. The Ainus regard the bear, that is, a food animal, fire, and crops as having an inner power, and they consider them with a kind of religious awe. Otherwise, there is no formal priesthood among the Ainus, and temple worship is unknown.

AION In the Mithraic cult, he is a deity who is represented as a human figure with a lion's head. Identified with Cronos, Aion is a time symbol.

AIR GODS These gods, in pagan religions, are associated with weather phenomena, especially wind, thunder and lightning, rain, storms.

In Egypt, the air god was Shu. In Greek and Roman mythology, Boreas was the anthropomorphic wind god. In Greece the winds were called 'Snatchers,' because they were regarded as malefic. In the Assyro-Babylonian religion, Adad or Rammon was the storm god.

AITA The Etruscan word for Hades.

AIUS LOCUTIUS A variant name for Aius Loquens. He was the divine 'sayer and speaker' who warned the Romans of the approach of their enemies, the Gauls.

AIUS LOQUENS Latin expression, meaning 'a speaking voice.' A deity whose utterance announced that Rome would be attacked by the Gauls. When the oracle proved true, an altar was set up in his honor.

AJA A Sanskrit term meaning 'unborn' or 'uncreated' and used as an epithet of many of the primordial gods. It is used in theosophy with reference to the first Logos.

AJITAS A Sanskrit word used by the occultists to designate one of the twelve great gods incarnated in each Manvantara.

AJIVIKAS A sect of Hinduism established by Gosala Mankhali-putta in the sixth century B.C. Similar to Jainism, it differed in certain practices and in its rigorous doctrine of determinism. The sect is now extinct.

AKAR In Egyptian religion, the proper name of that division of the infernal regions corresponding to Hell.

AKASA A Sanskrit word designating one of the five elements of the Sankhya philosophy, variously identified as space, ether, or sky. In theosophy, the primordial substance from which radiates the First Logos, or expressed thought. It is the power which lies latent at the bottom of every magical operation, the alkahest of the alchemists.

AKER In Egyptian religion, the dual lion-god. He presided over the course of the sun through the night sky.

AKHENATON The Egyptian pharaoh credited with the distinction of having founded the world's first monotheistic religion was born about 1370 B.C and named for his father, Amenhotep ('Amon is satisfied'). He renounced Amon-Ra, king of gods, who was the ancient provincial god of Thebes, changed his own name to Akhenaton ('it is well with Aton'), moved the court to a site today known as Tell el Amarna, built a new city called Akhetaton, and forbade the worship of the old gods of Egypt. Aton had been associated in earlier times with the orb of the sun and had become a minor god. In the thinking of Akhenaton, he may have been worthy of worship as the spirit of animation.

and creation.

AKIBA In the Cabala, the only one of the four Tanaim who entered and succeeded in getting himself initiated into the Garden of Delight.

AKKADIAN-CHALDEAN INSCRIPTIONS The Royal Library of Nineveh possessed Akkadian inscriptions of the Assyrian king Sargon II, the earliest of which are in the form of a list of directions for performing exorcism against sickness, plague, demons, and evil of all kinds.

AKKADIANS A Semitic race that inhabited Babylonia and absorbed many of the ceremonies, rituals, and religious concepts of the Babylonians.

AKO MANA In Zoroastrian religion, Evil Mind, or the collective evil minds of men who are under the influence of the Druj.

AKUPARA In Hindu mythology, the symbolical turtle on which the earth is said to rest.

ALAGARUS The second divine king of Babylonia. He was appointed the 'Shepherd of the people' and reigned ten Sari (36,000) years). See Sumerian King List.

AL-AIT A Phoenician word naming the god of fire, an ancient and very mystic figure in Coptic occultism.

ALBIGENSES A sect which arose in Italy and southern France in the eleventh century. Also called New Manichaeans and Cathari, they were Manichaean in theology and taught the theory of the transmigration of souls of the unperfected. They were almost exterminated by the Inquisition.

ALBIORIX Also called Teutates. He was a Celtic divinity, king of the universe and god of war.

ALBUNEA In Roman mythology, a Sibyl or priestess associated with a dream oracle that was near a waterfall.

ALCHEMY The forerunner of chemistry seems to have originated in Alexandria during the first century A.D. when the practical art of metallurgy developed by the Egyptians was fused with the philosophical speculations of Greek philosophy and the mysticism of the middle eastern religions. The Egyptians regarded Hermes Trismegistus as the source of all knowledge and the father of the hermetic art of alchemy. From Egypt alchemy spread to Greece, Italy, the Mohammedan world, Spain, and the rest of Europe. The earliest Chinese treatise on alchemy dates from the second century A.D. and is intimately tied to Taoism.

Although in the beginning alchemy was a practical series of chemical operations based on the accepted theory of nature and matter, the mystically minded soon developed alchemical ideas and stressed divine revelation, the search for the divine elixir, and the secret of immortality. The pseudo science reached its zenith in the Middle Ages, when learned men like Roger Bacon believed in the transmutation of base metals into gold.

History records that more than one imposter was put to death for failing to produce the philosopher's stone.

ALCIS A Teutonic divinity, identified with the Roman Castor, or sometimes his twin Pollux.

ALCYONE In Greek mythology, the daughter of Aeolus and wife of Ceyx. In grief for her dead husband, who had drowned as he was journeying to consult the oracle, she threw herself into the sea. Out of compassion the gods changed them into kingfishers. The female is said to lay her egg on the sea and to keep it calm during the seven days that precede and follow the winter solstice. Also, *Halcyone*.

ALEMONA A Roman goddess who presided over infants before birth.

ALETHAE In Phoenician religion, those who worship the god of fire. They are the same as the Kabiri or divine Titans. As the seven emanations of Agruerus (Saturn), the Alethae are connected with many primitive divinities of fire, sun, and storm.

ALEXANDRIA The temple of Isis at Alexandria was destroyed c. 391 A.D.

ALFHEIM In Norse mythology, this was the abode of the elves.

ALGALOA In the Hawaiian religion, he is the sky god.

ALI ILLAHIJA An Asiatic sect that practices the orgiastic rites associated with the ancient cult of Anahita.

ALKAHEST In alchemy, the universal solvent. In mysticism, the Higher Self which fuses with matter to make gold and restores all compound things such as the human body and its attributes to their primeval essence.

ALLATU In Assyro-Babylonian religion, the goddess of the Nether Regions, the abode of the dead. She was the consort of Bel and afterward of Nergal.

ALL FOOLS' DAY The first day of April, when practical jokes are perpetrated on credulous victims. It has its origin in the Celtic cult of Arianrhod.

ALL HALLOW'S EVE (HALLOWEEN) A festival of Druidic origin. It takes place on October 31 on the evening preceding All Saints' Day. The merrymaking and pranks which today are associated with the event are rooted in supernatural beliefs. According to Druidic traditions, Saman, the Lord of Death, was supposed at this time to summon the souls of evil men who had been condemned to inhabit animal bodies. Witches, demons, and the spirits of the dead were supposed to assemble on this night.

ALMADEL A treatise on Theurgia or White Magic by an unknown medieval writer.

ALMON A Roman river god.

ALRAUNE In Teutonic mythology, a female demon.

ALRUNES In Teutonic mythology, the gods of the household.

ALSVIDUR In Norse mythology, one of the horses yoked to the chariot of the sun.

ALTARS Among American Indians, the altar, in religious ceremonies, was of various forms. It might be the skull of a large animal, or a heap of rocks. Some altars were directed toward a particular cardinal point.

At the altars supplications were made for rain, a plentiful harvest, good hunting.

AMALTHEA In Greek mythology, the she-goat that nursed Zeus. Her horns flowed with nectar and ambrosia.

AMAN In ancient Egyptian religion, Aman was the Devourer of the Dead.

AMATERASU In Japanese religion, the principal deity of Shinto, ancestress of the imperial house and the sun goddess.

AMATHAOUNTA An Egyptian goddess of the sea.

AMA-USHUMGAL-ANNA In late Sumerian liturgies, the name given to Tammuz. The word means 'The Mother Python of Heaven.'

AMBA RELIGION The flexible system of the Amba tribesmen of Uganda embraces many deities and rituals. The world of the Amba contains not only human beings but a host of supernatural spirits, divided into two categories: ancestors and gods. Most of a man's ritual activities are concerned with the ancestors, particularly those centering on death. The underworld is assumed to be much like the world of the living, and ancestors are seen as individuals who must be continually pacified. Shrines are erected to deified humans and to nonhuman gods. Tribesmen pay a priest to enlist the support of one of four lineage gods in ridding themselves of an enemy. Any individual who belongs to the lineage of one of these gods may make use of his services.

AMENT In Egyptian religion Ament was the land of the dead. It was conceived as a dark region resounding with lamentation, where souls of the wicked remained everlastingly. In his diurnal course, Ra the sun god passed through Ament. The conception of Ament is remarkably similar to the Roman view of the underworld as depicted by the poet Vergil.

AMENTI In Egyptian religion, Ament was the dwelling of four presiding spirits, the Amenti. The souls entering the subterranean realm of the sun's descent is conducted by Anubis into the hall of Osiri

is judged by the 42 judges, and passes on to Aaru or is condemned to torment. The four genii, ~~the children of Horus, are the man-headed Amseti (south), the dog-headed Hapi (north), the ape-headed Tuamutef (east), and the hawk-headed Kebhsenuf (west).~~

AMESHA SPENTAS In the Zoroastrian religion, these were Holy Immortals who were the angel attendants on Ahura Mazda. They were also known as Amshaspands.

AMIDA (AMITABHA) In the teachings of the Japanese sect called Jodo (Pure Land), he is worshipped as the Lord of Boundless Light.

AMIDISM In China, the cult of Amitabha, which holds out to its followers the promise of rebirth in paradise. In Japan, a doctrine of Buddhism, formulated by the sect called Jodo (Pure Land), which teaches that salvation is attained through faith in Amida, the Lord of Boundless Light.

AMITAYUS In Tibetan Buddhism, he is The Boundless, The Everlasting Life. His image is venerated.

AMM In Arabian religion, the god of the moon, known also as Sin, Wadd, and Ilumquh.

AMMIT In Egyptian religion, Ammit was the Eater of the Dead. He eats men's hearts after they have been weighed in the hall of judgment and found wanting. Ammit is depicted as part crocodile, part hippopotamus, and part lion.

AMMON An Egyptian deity originally associated with the city of Thebes. Identified with the Roman Jupiter. Alexander the Great, according to tradition, on visiting his shrine, was accorded the title of Son of Ammon.

There was an oracle of Ammon in his temple situated in the Libyan desert.

AMMONTUS SACCAS An Alexandrian philosopher who lived between the second and third centuries A.D. He broke with Christianity because he was unable to find in it any superiority over the older religions.

AMM-UT Devourer of souls 'not true of voice.' See Ammit.

AMORITES A group of western Semites who worshipped Amurru. Their most prominent figure was Hammurabi, king of Babylon.

AMRITA In Hinduism, the elixir of life and food of the gods which confers immortality on men.

AMURRU In Assyro-Babylonian religion, he was the god of the Amorites, a group of western Semites.

AN In Egyptian religion, an aspect of Ra, the sun god.

AN ~~The Sumerian god who, as father of all the gods, corresponds to the Greek Zeus. He is the god of the heavens. From the primal arose heaven, An. The earth was controlled by Enlil, who was also god of the winds and the air. He was the offspring of An and Ki, who was originally Earth.~~

ANA (ANU) In Celtic religion, the mother of the ancient Irish gods.

ANAGAMIN In Buddhism, one who is no longer to be reborn into the world of desire.

ANAHITA A Persian goddess associated with the fertilizing waters. Her cult ranged over Cappadocia, Armenia, Lydia, and Pontus. Sacred prostitution, performed by the temple attendants known as hierodouloi, was a feature of her worship. In Lydia Anahita was identified with Cybele and Artemis. Under this aspect she was known as Mater Artemis or Artemis Anahita, or the Persian Artemis. Her sacred animal was the bull and the sacrifice of bulls, the taurobolium, was a feature of her cult. Anahita itself means 'the unsullied.'

ANALECTS These are the sayings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius and his followers. The Analects were written down on the basis of the traditions preserved by these followers.

ANALOGETICISTS The disciples of Ammonius Saccas, so called because they interpreted all sacred myths and mysteries by a principle of analogy and correspondence now found in the Cabalistic system and in eastern schools of esoteric philosophy.

ANANTA-SESHA In Hindu mythology, the Serpent of Eternity, couch of Vishnu, and symbol of infinite time in space.

ANATH A Canaanite goddess. She was called 'The Virgin' and was the sister of Baal. In Egypt, she was regarded as a war goddess.

ANATOLIAN RELIGION In ancient Anatolian religion, the principal feature was the Mother Goddess and her young male consort. Together they symbolized productivity. The consort was identified in his various aspects with a corresponding Greek deity. In her Asian territory, the goddess was dominant. Among the native deities were Cybele, her lover Attis, Ma, Wanax.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP A form of worship found among the Romans, the Egyptians, and the Chinese, as well as among many primitive peoples in Africa and Asia and such advanced peoples as the Japanese. The importance of having sons is stressed in all societies practicing ancestor worship since it must be performed by a male descendant. The worship of a common ancestor is one of the bonds linking members of a clan.

ANDANIAN CULT A Greek mystery cult whose observances honored a number of deities.

ANDATE Also called Andraste. Among the ancient Britons, the goddess of victory. In a consecrated grove war captives were immolated in her honor.

ANDHRIMNU In Norse mythology, he daily prepared the board named Sahrimnu for the banquet of the gods in Valhalla.

ANDOUGNI A creator god among the Canadian Indians. It is said that the Indians have no form of prayer for addressing him.

ANGAKOK Among the Eskimos, a priestly class whose members have the right to cohabit with women and to enjoy other advantages by exploiting the fears of ordinary men and women.

ANGERONA An obscure Roman goddess. She is represented as holding a finger in her mouth. Possibly she is the goddess of silence.

ANGERONIA A Roman goddess who removed mental anguish.

ANGITIA An Italic goddess of serpents. She was worshipped by the Marsians of central Italy. She was also the goddess of healing.

ANGRA MAINYU In Zoroastrianism, the evil spirit or god.

ANGURBODA In Norse mythology, a giant ogress. She and her husband Loki were the parents of Fenris the wolf, Hel, the goddess of the underworld, and the serpent Ioermungandr.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY Animal husbandry and agriculture were practiced in the Near East during the Middle Stone Age. The introduction of these practices changed profoundly the religion of the people, adding to its complexity. As early as the sixth millennium B.C, divine triads, consisting of a father, mother, and son, were worshipped. Shrines and rites became a part of the religious life of the people.

ANIMAL SACRIFICES In Greek religion, particular animals were sacrificed to the gods. Poseidon was offered horses. Swine were sacrificed to Demeter. Hecate, the goddess of the Nether Region, favored dogs. To Dionysus and Apollo goats were immolated.

ANIMAL WORSHIP In many ancient religions animals were viewed as superior beings if they manifested marked strength or intelligence or cunning. At some stage they became related to the gods themselves and acquired sanctity. They were held sacred and granted divine honors. Prayers were offered to them in specially dedicated temples. Among such divine animals were the bull, Apis, the cat, the serpent, the crocodile, and certain birds, such as the ibis and the bennu. They were held in reverence among the Egyptians. The gods, though anthropomorphic in form, manifested their animal incarnation by having animals as associates. Worship of animals is termed zoolatry.

ANIMATISM The belief that objects are alive and may be outlets of personal or impersonal power. See Mana.

ANIMISM The belief in spirits of nature; also the view that persons and objects are animated by such spirits. This belief is common in many primitive pagan religions.

ANINGAHK Among the Eskimos, the moon deity, the hunter.

ANITO Among the Bontoc Igorot, the spirit of a dead person capable of causing sickness and death.

ANKH In Egyptian religion, a symbol of a cross surmounted by a loop. It represented life triumphing over death.

ANNA PERENNA A Roman goddess of the New Year. Her feast was very popular and was celebrated joyously on March 15. Anciently, March 15 was the first day in the Roman calendar.

ANNAPURNA In Hinduism, the goddess of plenty, a popular form of Devi, especially in Bengal. Annapurna is one of the names of Kali, the female aspect of Siva.

ANNUNAKI In Babylonian religion, the judges of the dead. They lived in the underworld. Sumerian name: Anunnaki.

ANSHAR The mingling of Apsu and Tiamat, according to the Epic of Gilgamesh, produced first Lahmu and Lahamu, then Anshar and Kishar. Anshar was the father of the sky god, Anu.

In the Akkadian myth of creation, one of a second set of twins born to Apsu and Tiamat. From Anshar's union with Kishar, the other twin, came Anu, a son who is depicted as the yoke of the wagon star, thought to be Polaris.

ANTEROS In Greek mythology, the god of mutual love. He is the brother of Eros (Cupido).

ANTHESTERIA In ancient Greek religion, a three-day festival of flowers held in Athens in honor of Dionysus. Among the participants were slaves.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM The tendency to ascribe human characteristics to things not human. It appears as a phase of nature worship in the development of religions.

ANTHROPOPATHISM The tendency to attribute human feelings to things not human. Some writers consider it to be a factor in the evolution of notions of demons, spirits, and nature gods.

ANTUM In Sumerian mythology, she is the wife of the principal god An, and may be identified with Zeus' consort Hera.

ANU In Babylonian religion, one of the supreme triad, which also included Ea and Bel. Anu was designated as god of the heavens.

ANUBIS A very ancient Egyptian god, son of Isis and Osiris. He presided over funeral rites. He was represented with a male body and a jackal's head. Among the Greeks and Romans he was identified with the three-headed dog of Hades named Cerberus. In the judgment hall of the gods, Anubis presided over the weighing of human souls.

ANUKIT In Egyptian religion, a goddess, consort of Khnemu. A member of the triad of Elephantine she is depicted as wearing a feather crown.

ANUM A variant name for Anu, the Assyro-Babylonian god of the heavens.

ANUNIT In Babylonian religion, a goddess of war.

ANUNNAKI In the Sumerian religion, they were the children of An, the heaven—god. They were the great gods who in the Lower Regions acted as judges of the dead.

ANURADHAPURA Founded in 437 B.C, the town was the capital of Ceylon for four centuries and was one of the world's main Buddhist centers. There one may still see an ancient bo tree, said to be the oldest living historical tree. Because of the self-reproductive powers of the species, it may be the descendant of the bo tree planted there by Tissa (Deva-nampiyatissa), a Sinhalese king converted to Buddhism by Mahinda, the son of Emperor Asoka, a devout Indian Buddhist. To commemorate his conversion, Tissa and his followers erected many temples and shrines.

ANWYL In Celtic mythology, Anwyl was the world that was inhabited by the dead. This expression corresponds with the Homeric Greek Hades.

APAM NAPAT In the Zoroastrian sacred writings, a mysterious being corresponding to the Fohat of the occultists. It is both a Vedic and an Avestian name meaning 'the Son of the Waters.'

APAP (APOPHIS) The symbolical Serpent of Evil. In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, the Solar Boat carries the divine slayers of Apap. As matter left soulless and to itself, Apap is called 'Devourer of Souls.' On many monuments Horus, helped by a number of dog-headed gods, is shown killing Apap. See Apep.

APA TANIS A primitive tribe living in the Himalayas. The Apa Tanis believe that two powerful gods, Kilo and Kiru, dwell on the earth and influence the general welfare of men. They ascribe the creation of the world to Chadun and that of the sky to his female counterpart, Didun. A second myth ascribes the task of creation to three female deities, Ui-Tango, Ni-Ngurre, and Nguntre; and to their male counterparts, Ei Karte, Rup Karte, and Ain Karte. The origin of man is associated with the term Hilo, which may refer to a specific deity or a number of gods.

APE In the religion of the pre-Christian inhabitants of Hawaii, the ape had particular significance. The plucking and eating of this plant, which resembles the taro, was forbidden by Ra'i Ra'i and his divine consort, Tane. The legendary account of the behavior of the first human beings in the Garden of Sunshine in the Land of the Mu is much like the story of the Garden of Eden.

APEP In Egyptian religion, a monster serpent, the principal one among a group of such monsters that obstructed the passage of Ra, the sun god, on his way from darkness to light. Although the serpent was daily crushed and destroyed, it revived daily, having been endowed with immortality. See Apap.

APHAEA A Greek goddess who was worshipped at Aegina. The ruins of her temple are still in existence. She was worshipped with Britomartis.

APHRODITE (VENUS) In classical legend, the goddess of love, beauty, fertility.

Representations of the goddess, both robed and in the nude, were very numerous in antiquity. She appears on pottery, jars, and other artifacts, and there were sculptures of her by Praxiteles, Phidias, and Scopas.

APIA The earth, worshipped by the Lydians as a deity.

APIS The sacred bull of Egypt, the symbol of fertility. He is represented with a solar disc between his horns. In his temple of the Apeum, at Memphis, his worship attracted throngs. Apis was credited with oracular powers, and his birthday was celebrated as an important festival. On his death, a new Apis immediately succeeded him.

At Memphis, Apis was regarded as the body of the god Ptah.

APIT (APET) In Egyptian religion, she is the hippopotamus-goddess. See Thoeris.

APOCRYPHON IOHANNIS The Secret Book of John. This is a treatise, recently discovered, that belongs in the corpus of the Gnostic writings of Egypt.

APOLLO The Greek god of the sun, prophecy, medicine. He is also Phoebus, the bright. In a sinister sense, Apollo also brought pestilence and destruction. His insignia are the lyre, the bow, and the laurel. The principal festival in his honor was celebrated in Athens, in May.

Among the Romans, Apollo became principally the god of oracles and prophecies.

APOPHEIS An Egyptian deity whose overthrow produced creation. He is the serpent-enemy of Ra, the sun god. He is represented as a crocodile: often, too, as a coiling serpent trying to destroy Ra. He defeats him daily. See Apap.

APORRHETA Secret instructions in esoteric matters given during the Egyptian and Grecian Mysteries.

APOTROPAISM A defensive or protective form of magic. By means of incantations, spells, rituals, and amulets apotropaic magic aims to ward off malefic forces or spirits that might prove harmful.

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