RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

a guide

SARAH ILES JOHNSTON

general editor

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Introduction

Sarah Iles Johnston

When Croesus, the king of Lydia, was debating about whether to attack the Persian Empire, he decided to seek advice from the gods. Being a cautious man, however, he decided first to determine which source of divine advice was the most reliable. He sent envoys to each of the famous oracles in the ancient world (which happened to be in Greece and Libya) and instructed them to ask the gods what he was doing in faraway Lydia one hundred days after the envoys had left his court. He then devised an activity that he was confident no one could guess: he boiled the meat of a tortoise and the flesh of a rabbit together in a bronze cauldron, covered by a bronze lid. When the envoys returned with written records of what each oracle's god had said, Croesus discovered that only two of them—Delphic Apollo and Amphiaraus—had correctly described his strange culinary experiment. He proceeded to make enormously rich offerings to Apollo (and lesser offerings to Amphiaraus, whose oracle was not as prestigious) and then asked Apollo's advice. Upon receiving it, Croesus attacked Persia (Herodotus 1.46ff).

Croesus's experiment serves as an apt parable for this Guide because it is one of the earliest examples of what might be called religious comparison shopping: rather than simply asking his own experts to obtain the gods' advice, Croesus checked out all the divine resources within his reach and staked his future on the one that looked best. The general concept should be familiar enough to readers who live in America or western Europe, where religious plurality offers a spectrum of deities, practices, and beliefs to which one might pledge allegiance. Our immediate environments (in sad contrast to more distant parts of our world, including some where Croesus once walked) offer us easy access to numerous variations of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, as well as a plethora of newer religions such as Wicca and Scientology. Some of these are imports from other cultures; others are combinations of previously existing religions.

Only relatively recently, however, have scholars recognized the extent to

Rabbinic Judaism

Second Temple Judaism came to a disastrous end in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries CE in the course of three revolts against Roman rule. The first, in 66–70 CE, ended in the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, the great unifying symbol of Judaism, which has never been rebuilt. The second, in the years 115–18 CE, took place in Egypt and ended in the virtual annihilation of the Jewish community there. The third, in 132–35 CE, led by Bar Kochba, whom some people took for a messiah, was something of an aftershock. Any hopes that Jews might have had of regaining their independence had been dashed decisively in the earlier revolts.

The survival of Judaism as a religious way of life was due primarily to groups of rabbis in Galilee and Babylonia who devoted themselves to the study and elaboration of the scriptures. They accepted a limited canon of writings, which we now know as the Hebrew Bible. (This canon may have been held by the Pharisees before 70 CE, but the first references to a fixed number of writings come from the last decade of the 1st century CE.) The rabbinic canon included no apocalyptic writings except the Book of Daniel, although some others, such as the books of Enoch and Jubilees, appear to have enjoyed authority with the Dead Sea sect. Neither did the rabbis preserve numerous writings that survived in Greek and Latin translations and are now found in the Apocrypha, although some, such as 1 Maccabees and the Book of Ben Sira, were originally composed in Hebrew. Much of the religious diversity that characterized Second Temple Judaism was lost and survived only in translations preserved by Christians or in the scrolls hidden in caves by the Dead Sea.

The deliberations of the rabbis were eventually codified in the Mishnah (late 2nd century CE) and in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, some centuries later. These are primarily legal expositions of the Torah, but they are not legalistic in the narrow sense. They preserve the debates among the rabbis and often include dissenting opinions. The kind of religion they represent has been well described as "covenantal nomism": the law is understood in the context of the whole relationship between God and Israel, not just as a measuring stick for individual performance. While rabbinic Judaism always has its starting point in the Torah, there is plenty of room for imagination and for the preservation of tradition in the biblical commentaries or midrashim, compiled between the 4th and 12th centuries CE. Even the mythological traditions associated with apocalyptic literature survived and reappear centuries later in the midrashim and in the mystical literature (Hekhalot). The main achievement of rabbinic Judaism, however, was to construct a body of commentary on the Torah that defined Judaism as a way of life that has endured down to the present day.

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Anatolia: Hittites

David P. Wright

Hittite religion is a blend of diverse cultural streams. While it includes features from the immigrant Indo-European peoples linguistically attested by the Hittite language, its main foundation consists of Hattian traditions, that is, of the people living in central Anatolia prior to the arrival of the Indo-Europeans. Furthermore, over time, it adopted beliefs and practices from Hurrian (the people of north Mesopotamia and Syria) as well as Akkado-Sumerian and Syrian religion. This amalgam is richly attested in the thousands of documents found at Bogazköy, Turkey, the site of Hattusha, the ancient Hittite capital. A large percentage of the six hundred plus individual works discovered pertain directly or indirectly to religious matters. The relevant genres include myths, hymns, prayers, festival prescriptions, rituals, divination texts, treaties, cultic inventories, and other administrative texts. Most of the texts date to the latest period of Hittite history (the Hittite Empire or New Kingdom, ca. 1350–1200 BCE), though there are many texts from the earlier periods (the so-called Middle Kingdom, ca. 1400–1350; and the Old Kingdom, ca. 1650–1400). This allows scholars to determine with some confidence the development of religious ideas and institutions. The textual evidence is complemented by archeological data, including the remains of temples, pictorial reliefs (especially at the Yazılıkaya shrine), seals, divine statues and symbols, and cult objects.

The Hittite pantheon grew in complexity over time, owing to the contributions from various cultural traditions. The Hittites were aware of the ethnic origin of their deities and provided them at times with worship in their native languages (Hattic, Hurrian, Luwian, Palaic, and Akkadian). The Hattian basis of the religious system is seen in the Old Hittite pantheon, which retained many Hattian deities. These include a storm-god (Taru), a sun-goddess (the "Sun-goddess of Arinna," later identified as Wurusemu), a sun-god (Estan), Inar (Hittite Inara), Telipinu (a vegetation-god), Halmasuit (a throne-goddess), Wurunkatte (a war-god), plus many other, lesser deities. The storm-god (called

the Storm-god of Hatti) and the sun-goddess of Arinna presided as a divine pair over the pantheon. The prominence of a sun-goddess may be partly a reflection of a long-standing Anatolian tradition of a female fertility-goddess or mother-goddess, which is attested four millennia earlier at Çatal Höyük (south central Anatolia) and in the 1st millennium in Phrygia and Lycia. One early Hittite god was Sius, god of heaven and light, a term later used as the general Hittite word for god. This is cognate with Indo-European **diēu-s*, which is found in the Greek word *Zeus* and Latin *deus* (god).

The Hittite pantheon grew by the addition of Hurrian as well as Mesopotamian deities (sometimes in Hurrian guise), especially starting around 1400 BCE (the time of Tudkhaliya II and his wife Nikkalmati, whose name is Hurrian) and mainly as a result of the campaigns of Shuppiluliuma I (ca. 1344–1322) into southern lands under Hurrian influence, including Syria. The main imported Hurrian gods included Teshub (the chief storm-god), Hepat (consort of Teshub), Kumarbi (a grain and fertility deity, also associated with the underworld), Sauska (a Hurrian Ishtar), and Simegi (sun-god). Hurrianized Mesopotamian gods who entered the pantheon include Ea, Damkina, Anu, and Enlil. In many cases borrowing was syncretistic. For example, Teshub was equated with the Storm-god of Hatti and Hepat with the sun-goddess of Arinna. Pudukhepa, wife of Hattushili III (ca. 1267–1237) and a priestess from the Hurrian-influenced land of Kizzuwatna, south of the Hittite homeland, explicitly makes the latter identification at the beginning of a prayer: "O Sun-goddess of Arinna, you are queen of all the lands. In the land of Hatti you go by the name of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, but in the land which you made cedar, you go by the name Hepat" (*CTH* 384; KUB 21.27 1.3–6; cf. *ANET* 393).

Treaties from the time of Shuppiluliuma I onward provide the most extensive list of deities and reflect a tendency toward theological systematization. The treaties show a fixed order in the deities, starting with the sun-god of heaven and the Sun-goddess of Arinna. These are followed by various storm-gods of various cult centers (e.g., Hattusha, Nerik, Samuha), followed in turn by various other groups of gods, including Babylonian gods, local deities, netherworld deities, and natural phenomena (mountains, rivers, springs). Despite the move toward a systematic listing of the gods, it was not complete. Some significant deities are missing, including the chief Storm-god of Hatti, whom one might expect to appear at the top of the list in association with the sun-goddess of Arinna. The inclusion of local pantheons in such lists shows that their maintenance was partly responsible for the multiplication of the Hittite gods. From about this time in Hittite history we begin to see the concept of "the thousand gods of Hatti," an indication of the compound nature of the pantheon (the actual number of known divine names is just over six hundred). The complexity of the Hittite pantheon at this period can be seen in the Prayer of Muwattalli II (ca. 1295–1272; *CTH* 381; cf. Singer 1996), which contains the longest list of deities in any single text (140 gods). Further systematization of the pantheon came with the development of male and female series *(kalutis)*, mainly employed in the distribution of offerings. This bifurcated series is visu-

ally attested in the parade of deities carved into rock walls of the main chamber of the Yazılıkaya shrine. The reliefs date from the time of Tudkhaliya IV (ca. 1227–1209) and reflect the highly Hurrianized form of Hittite religion. The female gods are led by Hepat, and the male gods by Teshub. These two chief deities meet face to face.

Just as the pantheon derives in large part from Hattian and Hurrian sources, so too Hittite myths mainly derive from these two cultural sources, though there is a handful of myths with Hittite origins (the Tale of Kanes and Zalpa and the Tale of Appu). Both Hattian and Hurrian myths are, in general, concerned with negative and positive effects of deities on the cosmos. But they otherwise have distinct characteristics. The Hattian myths are generally simple and less artistic than the Hurrian myths, and they have connections with ritual performances or festivals. These include the Illuyanka myth, which is connected with the spring *purulli* festival. One version of this story tells how Inara, with the help of a human named Hupasiya, defeats a serpent who had defeated the storm-god. Many other myths deal with the disappearance of deities, such as Telipinu, the storm-god, the sun-god, and the moon-god. These myths are generally part of a ritual scheme in which offerings are made, often with the accompaniment of magical motifs and techniques, in order to find, appease, and return the deities. The mythical portions of these texts often describe the destructive effects of the gods' disappearance upon the land and the felicitous consequences of their return.

The Hurrian myths became part of Hittite culture mainly as part of the influx of Hurrian religious ideas from the Middle Kingdom and afterward. These are more artistic in character than the Hattian myths and are called songs. The Kumarbi Cycle of tales includes the Song of Kumarbi (also known as the Theogony or Kingship in Heaven), Song of the god LAMMA, Song of Silver, Song of Hedammu, and Song of Ullikummi. These myths describe the struggle for divine kingship between Kumarbi and Teshub, whom Kumarbi gave birth to as the result of biting off and swallowing the testicles of Anu, his older royal adversary. The stories are similar to the Ugaritic cycle of Baal myths, which describes Baal's struggle for divine power, and the Akkadian *Enuma Elish*, which describes Marduk's struggle for supremacy among the Babylonian gods. Indeed, Hurrian tradition appears indebted to Mesopotamian tradition for the idea of a theogony with successive generations of gods. Another myth-related text is the Song of Release, which exists in Hittite translation alongside the Hurrian (the Hurrian text may go back to a Syrian original). It begins with praise of Teshub, Allani (in Hittite called the sun-goddess of the underworld), and the Syrian goddess Ishhara. It also contains a series of ethical parables in the wisdom genre, a description of a feast for Teshub in the underworld, and Teshub's ordering the release of debts in Ebla (related to the Mesopotamian and biblical custom of releasing debts).

The gods were represented by images or by symbols, such as standing stones. Their images and symbols were generally housed in numerous temples throughout the kingdom. Temples were not just religious institutions, but integral

parts of the economy because they employed a large number of people and held land. Temples contained storerooms for foods, valuables, and archived documents. In the capital city Hattusha several temples, large and small, have been discovered. The largest is devoted to the storm-god and contains a dual chamber for him and his consort the Sun-goddess of Arinna. Being the abode of the deities, the temples were to be kept pure. Priests, including the king during festivals, and other visitors were required to purify themselves before entering the sacred precincts. Certain animals could pollute the temple. For example, the Instructions for Temple Officials warn, "For you, let the place of broken bread be swept and sprinkled [i.e., purified]. Let not a pig or dog cross the threshold!" (*CTH* 264; KUB 13.4 3.59–60; cf. *ANET* 207–10). A bit later it warns kitchen personnel: "If the implements of wood and implements of fired clay which you hold—if a pig or dog ever approach [them], but the kitchen official does not throw them away [and] he gives to the god to eat from an unclean [vessel], then to him the gods will give excrement and urine to eat and drink" (3.64–68). Guards were posted to keep out such animals and unauthorized individuals.

A unique type of shrine is found at Yazılıkaya, three-quarters of a mile northeast of Bogazköy. It operated as a sanctuary from before the Old Kingdom and may have been considered sacred in part because of a spring that flowed there. It gained particular prominence late in Hittite history under Tudkhaliya IV. The area consists basically of a rocky structure with crevices or open-air passages between rock walls. A temple was built in front of this natural maze. Reliefs carved on the walls of the passageways celebrate the gods as well as, implicitly, Tudkhaliya's kingship (his figure is found three times in the sculptures). The purpose of this shrine is not known, although it may have been used in the annual festivals. Some suggest that it was used specifically in new year ceremonies or that it was the mortuary temple of Tudkhaliya.

Offerings were mainly made to the gods at temples. These consisted of foods, for example, meats, breads, grain preparations, honey, oil, fermented drinks. As in most cases throughout the ancient Near East, offerings were a meal presented to the deities, to thank and praise them, to induce them to perform certain actions for the offerer's benefit, or to appease their wrath. This system operated on the analogy of feasting and offering gifts to a political superior to elicit his or her favor. The Instructions to Temple Officials make this metaphor clear: "Are the minds of man and the gods somehow different? No! Even here [in regard to their respective meals]? No! The[ir] minds are the same. When a servant stands up before his master he is washed and wears clean clothing, [then] either he gives him [the master] [something] to eat, or he gives him something to drink. Then when he, his master, eats [and] drinks, he is relieved in his mind" (KUB 13 1.21–26; *ANET* 207).

Killing the animal and manipulating its blood were generally unimportant in Hittite sacrifice, as opposed to biblical custom. Theories of sacrifice that focus on the killing of the animal as the central act or even a significant act therefore do not seem to help explain its meaning among the Hittites. Nevertheless,

blood was occasionally offered to chthonic deities. Blood was also used for purification, such as to cleanse a temple and divine image (*CTH* 481; KUB 29.4 4.38–40) and apparently a new birth stool (*CTH* 476; KBo 5.1 1.25–26).

Festivals were occasions when offerings were made in great number. The importance of festivals can be partly seen in their making up the largest group of texts discovered at Bogazköy. Unfortunately we do not have a text that lays out the liturgical calendar systematically. The texts generally describe individual festivals. The main festivals were the AN.TAḪ.ŠUM (Festival of the Crocus Plant) in the spring and the *nutarriyashas* (Festival of Haste [?]) in the autumn. The former lasted thirty-eight days, and the latter lasted more than twenty-one. Other major festivals include the *purulli* (in the spring), the KI.LAM (season unknown, perhaps autumn), and the *(h)isuwas* (a late addition to the liturgy from Hurrian influence). The king, as chief priest, presided in the main festivals. Part of his responsibility included making procession to various local shrines at which ceremonies were held, as well as traveling to the several shrines in various cities to make offerings to the local gods. While the king's attention to cultic matters may appear to us to have been excessive, the purpose of the festivals was no doubt political in nature. By maintaining the various cults in the kingdom, the king shored up the unity of the kingdom and engendered support for his rule. Apart from offerings, festivals included purification rites to ensure the fitness of the king and other participants. They were also occasions for entertainment, including music and even competitive races and other athletic events. All of these activities helped secure the gods' attention, continuing presence, and favor.

The Hittite corpus contains a rather large number of rituals performed as occasion required. Several of these come from the later period and are of Hurrian and Luwian (another Indo-European people closely related to the Hittites) origin, mediated via the southern Luwian-populated province of Kizzuwatna, near Syria. The patients treated in these rites ranged from the king, queen, and the royal house down to unspecified individuals. Some of these rites were performed at the main transitions in life: birth, puberty, and death. Others sought to remove evils of various sorts, including uncleanness *(papratar)*, sorcery *(alwanzatar)*, curse *(hurtais)*, oath *(lingais)*, blood/murder *(eshar)*, evil tongue *(idalus lalas)*, sin *(wastul)*, plague, various sicknesses and infirmities, and also malevolent supernatural beings (including the ghosts of the dead).

Various means, usually symbolic, were used to remove these evils. Evils may be transferred to other objects or entities, and these may then be further disposed of or sent away in scapegoat fashion, sometimes with the accompanying notion that they are being banished to the underworld. According to one text, when a plague breaks out after a battle, one is to dress a foreign prisoner in the Hittite king's clothing and send the prisoner back to the enemy country as an "offering" to the attacking deity, to divert wrath from the Hittite country. The king or his representative says to the prisoner: "If some male god of the enemy land has caused this plague, behold, to him I have given the decorated man as a substitute. At his head this o[ne is gr]eat, at the heart this one is great, at the

member this o[ne is gre]at. You, male god, be appeased with th[is dec]orated man. But to the king, the [leaders], the ar[my, and the] land of Hatti, tur[n yourself fai]thfully. . . . Let this prisoner b[ear] the plague and carry [it] ba[ck into the land of the enemy]" (*CTH* 407; KBo 15.1 1.14–21). Evils may also be placed on animals, providing interesting parallels to the biblical scapegoat ritual (Lev. 16). Other means of getting rid of evil include concretizing the evils by representing them with colored threads, certain types of clothing, or other objects. When these are removed, the evil is removed. The evils may also be purged by ritual "detergents," that is, by water, wine, clay, plants, flours, salt, blood, fire, and various mixtures.

An almost ubiquitous feature of Hittite ritual, found to some extent in other Near Eastern ritual, is the use of analogy. For example, in the ritual of Anniwiyani, which is performed to attract and appease a protecting deity, nine pebbles are heated. Anniwiyani, the female practitioner (the Old Woman), cools them off by pouring beer on them, saying: "Just as these have quenched their thirst, so you, protective god . . . , quench your thirst. For you let anger, wrath, and animosity vanish" (*CTH* 393 4.1–4). The analogy need not be dramatically enacted in every case. It may involve only reference to a natural or empirical fact that is brought to bear on the patient's situation. Analogy may be used not just to remedy evils, but also to impart blessing. An Old Woman ritual practitioner, Tunnawiya, grabs hold of the horn of a cow and says: "Sun-god, my lord, just as this cow is fertile, and [is] in a fertile pen, and keeps filling the pen with bulls [and] cows, indeed, in the same way may the offerer be fertile! May she in the same way fill [her] house with sons [and] daughters" (*CTH* 409; KUB 7.53 4.8–13).

The maintenance of the many temples and the performance of the several-day and multiday festivals required an elaborate body of temple personnel. Functionally and conceptually, the highest priestly figure was the king, who presided at the main festivals and was responsible otherwise for maintaining good relations with the gods and securing their favor for the people and land at large. The primary priest was the ^{LÚ}SANGA (priest). Other priestly functionaries included the ^{LÚ}GUDU$_{12}$ ([anointed] priest) and the priestess ^{MUNUS}AMA.DINGIR (mother of the god). In addition, many cultic functionaries served at the temple: cooks, cupbearers, people who set out offerings, musicians, singers, people who cleaned, and those who cared for temple animals. The rituals of crisis performed for individuals employed a different set of practitioners. The performers of these rites are often mentioned by name. Often the performer is a female designated with the title "Old Woman" (perhaps meaning "Wise Woman"; Sumerian ^{MUNUS}U.GI = Hittite *hasawas*). Other participants in such rites include the ^{LÚ}A.ZU (physician), the ^{LÚ}HAL (seer), and the ^{LÚ}MUŠEN.DÙ (observer of birds).

Rituals of crisis may also include incantations and prayers. These spoken elements are relatively brief. The Hittite corpus also contains several texts that consist of lengthy prayers, sometimes with accompanying ritual description or prescription (*CTH* 371–89). These texts are virtually all spoken by the king or other members of the royal family and mostly date from the New King-

dom (e.g., the prayers by Queen Pudukhepa and King Muwattalli II). Another group of informative prayers is the Plague Prayers of Murshili II (ca. 1321–1295). In one prayer, the king petitions the gods to alleviate a plague that had been raging in the land since the end of the reign of his father, Shuppiluliuma I. He speaks of how his previous prayers for healing were ineffectual. He consequently inquired by oracle to find out why the gods were angry, the presupposition being that the plague was the result of divine anger. The oracles determined that offerings to a certain god had not been properly made and that a treaty oath made to the Storm-god of Hatti had been broken. Murshili promised to make proper offerings to appease the various deities angered. In addition to prayer texts, Hittite vocabulary contained its own terms for types of prayers, found in colophons or in the body of the texts themselves: *mugawar*, a petition for the god to attend to the plight of the one praying, often with an evocation ritual to attract the deity; *arkuwar*, a prayer defending against charges of wrongdoing; *walliyatar*, a hymn or prayer of praise; and *wekuwar*, a request or petition. The different genres may be mixed in any given prayer.

While humans spoke to the gods directly, the gods made their will known indirectly. A chief method was through dreams. These could come unexpectedly or be prepared for ritually or requested from the deities. In the prayer of Murshili II to relieve the plague, he asks the storm-god to send him a dream advising him of any other satisfaction he must provide to insure that he is making proper amends. External phenomena were also thought to convey the will of the gods. Heavenly occurrences, the behavior of birds or water snakes, birth defects, the drift of incense smoke, the disposition of oil on water, and the physical character of the liver, heart, gall bladder, and intestines of animals were examined and interpreted to discover divine intent. The Hittites also used a lot oracle (the KIN oracle), which may have been used in a gamelike fashion, to reveal the divine mind. As they did with respect to other cultural features, the Hittites borrowed some of their oracular techniques from the Mesopotamian world via Hurrian influence and even had their own editions of Babylonian divination texts. Since the divination techniques generally produced yes/no answers, the Hittites employed a series of oracular inquiries in order to arrive at a specific answer to a question. A good example of this is found in the text that recounts how Murshili II overcame the effects of a disability (perhaps a stroke) that resulted in his not being able to speak easily. After a dream, which may have aggravated his condition, he consulted a series of oracles to determine what he should do. The first oracle indicated that the storm-god of Manuzziya was responsible. A second oracle determined that he should give this god a substitute ox. A third oracle indicated that he should send the offering to the town of Kummanni, located just south of the main land of Hatti (*CTH* 486; see translation by Gary Beckman in Frantz-Szabó 1995: 2010).

Finally, most of what we know about the Hittite view of death concerns the king and royal family. At death the king "became a god," that is, a *sius*. This may mean that he became identified in some way, or entered into association with, the Indo-European deity Sius. One text preserves a fourteen-day funerary rite for the king (*CTH* 450; Otten 18–91; detailed summary in Haas 1995:

2024–27). The text begins by stating the circumstance for the ritual: "When a great calamity [lit., sin, *šalliš waštaiš*] occurs in Hattusha." This calamity is the king's death. On the third day the king is apparently cremated, a custom probably of Hurrian origin. On the sixth day his burned bones, which had earlier been wrapped in linen, were taken to a mausoleum or tomb called the "stone house." Offerings were presented to the deceased king and to the gods at various points. Other performances appear to symbolically outfit the dead with what he needs in the next life and to appease any anger he may have toward those who remain alive. The conception seems to be that life after death continues in a way similar to life during mortality. It is not entirely clear whether the ghost of the deceased was thought to live in the netherworld, the area under the physical earth. The netherworld figured significantly in the Hittite cosmological picture. Caves, springs, dug pits, and tombs provided passageways to the underworld. The sun traversed the sky during the day and crossed the underworld at night and therefore was the chief god of the netherworld. The netherworld (or the deep sea) was also conceptually the place where impurities were banished through elimination rituals. The ghosts of the kings could have resided here. Some have suggested that their habitation was in the west, where the sun entered the underworld.

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Iran

William Malandra and Michael Stausberg

In antiquity the Iranian cultural sphere extended over a large part of western Asia, far exceeding the borders of the modern state. It included the modern states of Iran, Afghanistan, western regions of Pakistan, the "republics" of the old Soviet central Asia, and areas within the Caucuses—all of them places where related dialects of the common Iranian language group were spoken and where many cultural and religious institutions were shared. Other peripheral areas came under strong Iranian influence at various times. Median, Persian, and Parthian dynasties extended their empires westward into the ancient Near East, the eastern Mediterranean, and Egypt and northward into Azerbaijan and Armenia. Commerce encouraged the expansion of Iranians along the trade routes to China. The Iranians living within such geographic diversity were not a monolithic people. The languages they spoke, although related, were often quite distinct from one another. For example, the Iranian Scythians (Saka) in central Asia spoke languages and carried out ways of life far different than Iranians living in the southwest on the borders of Mesopotamia.

Any historical study is limited by the nature and extent of the sources. This means that there are often long temporal and broad geographical gaps. There are subjects about which we would like to know more or at least something; yet the sources may be silent. Because we cannot interrogate the creators of the source material, we are frequently in the dark as to what something means. As one example, much of the collection of sacred poetry composed by Zarathustra is so obscure in its language and conceptual framework that we cannot always achieve a secure understanding of what the prophet wished to communicate. As another example, although we have the rich iconography of Achaemenid imperial art, no verbal testimony links an icon to its symbolic referent. While art and architectural remains provide some source material for religion, by far the most important sources are literary. Among the latter may be distinguished indigenous Iranian sources and foreign ones. The latter are predominantly Greek and Latin, with occasional references in Aramaic, Hebrew,

Arad shrine in many respects, although we must depend on textual descriptions such as 1 Kings 6–7 to reconstruct it. Like the Arad sanctuary, Solomon's temple followed a well-known west Asian architectural pattern (the "long house"), although one that was quite different from the "broad room" at Arad. Other architecturally similar temples have been found through excavation (e.g., at Tell Tayinat, in northern Syria).

The Jerusalem temple was entered on one short side and consisted of three rooms, the innermost of which was the holy of holies. In the Jerusalem temple, YHWH's presence was not marked by a simple stele as at Arad, but by the ark of the covenant, upon which YHWH was believed to be enthroned. This object sat in the holy of holies. As was the case at Arad, the altar for burnt offerings was located in a courtyard, while incense altars were placed within the temple itself. It is probable that the Jerusalem sanctuary had two courts, rather than the single courtyard found at Arad. The outer court would have been the locus for the assembly and activity of worshipers; the inner court for priestly service.

The temple of Solomon was destroyed in 587 or 586 BCE by the Babylonians. A second (and apparently less impressive) temple was built at the same place during the period between 520 and 515. This sanctuary complex, reconstructed by Herod the Great in the late 1st century BCE, stood until 70 CE, when it was destroyed by the Romans. The Herodian temple, in contrast to its predecessors, added separate courts for women and aliens (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.417–19).

The synagogue (from Greek *synagōgē* [place of assembly]) emerges as an important institution in Jewish religious and communal life during the period of the Second Temple. Although the origins of the synagogue as an institution remain unclear, an institution called the "place of prayer" *(proseuchē)* is first mentioned in Greek inscriptions from 3rd-century BCE Egypt. Eventually, synagogues would be found throughout much of the Mediterranean world and west Asia at sites such as Jerusalem, Masada, and Meiron in Palestine, Dura in Syria, and Sardis in Asia Minor. Dedicatory and other inscriptions in languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, as well as mosaics and other forms of artistic decoration, characterize many of the ancient synagogues that have been excavated. Evidence, both textual and archeological, suggests that ancient synagogues had many functions, although the reading and interpretation of scripture appear to have been of primary importance.

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Anatolia

Sacred Times

We are very poorly informed about Hittite conceptions of time and even about the particulars of the basic calendrical system. We can say that each day included a night, itself divided into three watches, that thirty days comprised a month (lit., moon [*arma-*]), and that a year contained twelve months. The year was made up of four seasons: spring *(ḫamešḫa-),* summer (BURU$_x$*-ant-*), autumn *(zena-),* and winter *(gimmant-),* which were not, however, precisely defined chronological units tied to the procession of the equinox. It seems that, in early times, the Anatolian year began in the autumn, but by the period of the Hittite Empire (14th–13th centuries BCE), the Hittites followed the Babylonians in starting the annual round with the coming of spring. We do not know how the people and administrators of Hatti referred to the days and months (by name or by ordinal number?) or by what means they designated individual years.

More generally, the temporal spectrum encompassed the past *(karūiliyatt-),* the present (*kinuntarriyala-* or *nanuntarri-*), and the future (*appašiwatt-* [lit., after-day]). Events recounted in mythological narrative, which had occurred in the primeval past, set the pattern for the cosmos of the present and thus partook of a certain contemporaneousness. On the other hand, an eschatological conception may lie behind the wish of a Hittite magician that evil influences be bottled up until the day "when the former [divine] kings return to take account of the customary behavior of the land" (Mastigga ritual, CTH 404; ANET 351b).

In practical terms, the only sacred times that we can discuss for Hittite Anatolia are those hours, days, or weeks devoted to the worship of individual deities by the holders of particular cultic posts. For the most part, available written sources report or prescribe the activities of the members of the royal household and their servants, activities that included the performance of the state cult. Very little is known about the religious life of the common person, so we can hardly speak of national holidays or communal celebrations, which may well have existed and have exerted some influence upon the temporal perceptions and quotidian behavior of the general populace. For instance, the texts tell us that priests who officiated in the temple were required to observe standards of ritual purity while on duty. Did other people in Hatti correspondingly dress in a particular way or avoid certain foods at the time when a major festival was in progress? We simply do not know the answer.

Furthermore, even the incomplete information that we have recovered concerning official religion makes it clear that ceremonial schedules were by no means stan-

The great gallery of the Hittite rock sanctuary at Yazılıkaya, chamber A. Teshub and Hepat face each other on the back wall, right of center. *The Art Archive/Dagli Orti (A)*

dardized for all gods and goddesses. The cultic calendar followed for a particular deity might also vary considerably among his or her sites of worship in various towns.

But there can be no doubt that festivals (EZEN) constituted the core of the state religion of Hatti. In a time of crisis, King Murshili II (mid-14th century) supported his request for divine assistance with the reminder to a god that "only in Hatti do you have festivals: the monthly festival and annual festivals, [in particular] the festivals of winter, spring, and summer, as well as those of Invocation and Bloody Sacrifice" (Prayer to Telipinu, CTH 377; ANET 397a; Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, 54–56). Indeed, most Hittite divinities enjoyed such rites at regular intervals—monthly, yearly, seasonally—or in connection with particular agricultural activities. Nearly one hundred different festivals are attested by name in Hittite cuneiform texts, several dozen of which were performed in the capital alone.

Since in theory the Hittite king's authority stemmed from his position as chief priest of all the gods, he was required to make occasional visits to the shrines of those deities whose cult centers lay outside Hattusha, his usual residence. By the time of the empire, these duties had been amalgamated into two annual cultic progresses made by the royal family through the heart of Hittite territory in Anatolia. The Crocus (AN.TAḪ.ŠUM) Festival lasted around forty days in the spring, and the Festival of Haste *(nuntarriyašḫa-)* stretched over at least fifty days in the autumn.

The preeminent festivals during Hatti's final centuries were the New Year festival, the yearly festival, the monthly festival, the *purulli* festival (a complex of New Year rites held in the town of Nerik), the *(ḫ)išuwa* festival (meaning of term unknown), and the festival of the Gate Building (in which the agricultural produce of various central Anatolian cities was displayed for the monarch). Also to be noted are the festivals of the Cutting of Grapes, Grain Pile, Thunder, Rain, Grove, Stag, Hearth, Torch, Invocation, Baetyl (Divine Stele), and Pure Priest. Other festivals derived their designations from particular towns or geographic entities.

Although we are seldom able to place these rites chronologically, for the ancients it was imperative that they be carried out at the proper time. A text regulating the duties of temple employees threatens dire consequences: "If you do not perform the festivals at the [correct] time for the festivals—if you perform the festival of spring in the autumn or the festival of autumn in the spring" (Temple Officials Instructions, CTH 264; ANET 208b; Hallo, *Context of Scripture*, 1.217–221).

Sacred Places

A sacred space is a location in which contact berween the human and the divine is focused and often even unavoidable. One is therefore well advised to enter such an area only when he or she is seeking to serve or communicate with a deity—and to maintain the required state of purity while doing so. Sacred space is thus distinguished from ordinary, or profane, localities, where communication with the parahuman is more intermittent and difficult to achieve. Sacred places might be constructed by humans, as with temples, shrines, or mausoleums, or they may be inherently sacred because the

A relief in the great gallery at Yazılıkaya, chamber B. *The Art Archive/Dagli Orti (A)*

gods themselves chose to frequent them. That both fabricated and natural sacred spaces were important in Hittite Anatolia is shown by a passage in a prayer of King Muwattalli II (late 14th century), who pledges to make amends if "some mountain or a constructed shrine—a holy place—has been abused" (Prayer to Teshub, CTH 382; Singer, Hittite Prayers, 84, obv. 32–39).

The erection of a new temple called for special ceremonies to demarcate the newly sacralized structure from the surrounding profane world. To the accompaniment of prayers, the Hittite priests deposited objects of precious metals and other costly goods beneath the building's foundations and sacrificed numerous cattle and sheep for the gods. Materials employed in the temple's construction had been chosen with care and with the blessing of the deities in whose charge they had been produced. When the edifice was fit for occupancy, the divine proprietor was ceremonially transported to the new dwelling in the physical form of an image or symbol or invisibly drawn there along convergent magical paths strewn with delectable foodstuffs.

The ravages of war and time have left little trace of Hittite buildings beyond their foundations, and very few religious objects that might have signaled the presence of a temple have been found in their original locations. We must therefore identify Anatolian sacred architecture on the basis of characteristic structural elements. Sometimes temples may also be recognized because special materials, such as an unusual type of stone, had been employed in their construction. Fortunately for the archeologist, major Hittite temples display a standardized layout: a gate structure *(ḫilammar)* led to a large enclosed courtyard *(ḫila-)* open to the sky, where a small freestanding structure for purification rites was frequently located. At the rear of the courtyard a pillared hall fronted the cella or cult room. This cella was always situated along an outside wall of the temple complex so that light might enter through large windows; orientation toward a cardinal point was seemingly irrelevant to the builders. Entrance to the cult room was through a doorway located near a corner. Entering the cella, the worshiper had to turn ninety degrees to the left or right in order to face the deity. That is, the plan of Hittite temples afforded "bent-axis," rather than direct, access to the inner sanctum.

Some excavated cellae preserve a stone pedestal, on which the divine image presumably once stood, and most contain traces of one or more shallow pilasters *(šarḫulli-* pilasters), whose presence was a defining characteristic of Hittite sanctuaries. From written sources we learn that other, more portable temple furnishings might include a throne, an altar or offering table, a brazier, various cultic utensils, and of course an image or other representation of the deity.

The most impressive Hittite religious building recovered in the excavations at Bogazköy is Temple I of the

Procession of women. Relief from Carchemish, 1050–850 BCE. Ankara, Museum of Archaeology. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

Lower City, the largest single structure to be found in the Hittite capital. This giant construction featured two cult rooms, one for each member of the divine pair at the head of the pantheon—the Storm-god of Hatti and the sun-goddess of the city of Arinna. The temple itself was just one part of an immense precinct that housed its own workshop area and storage facilities, befitting the role of the Hittite temple as an economic entity as well as a religious establishment. Within the multitudinous rooms of the annex to Temple I were located at least six small chapels, presumably dedicated to minor deities in the entourage of the storm-god and sun-goddess. These cult rooms were less regular in plan than the full-fledged sanctuaries, but they reveal their function nonetheless through the placement of the distinctive *šarḫulli*.

Although all known Hittite religious structures save Temple I contain but one cella, textual evidence shows that more than one deity was worshiped in most temples. Since the usual Hittite expression for temple, *šiunaš per* (lit., house of the deity; Sumerographic É.DINGIR), could denote a single room within a complex, an independent structure, or an extensive building tract, it is difficult to determine from most contexts just how large a home was enjoyed by a particular god or goddess. Because the Hittite pantheon was very extensive, many lesser deities no doubt had to be satisfied with service within a small chapel or even within a cult room primarily dedicated to a more prominent figure. The terms *šinapši-* and *karimni-* seem to be synonymous words for temple rather than designations of special types of religious buildings.

Not only was the temple as a whole sanctified, but many of its constituent parts were also "[holy] places." Thus elements such as the window, the door bolt, and the hearth could receive their own offerings in the course of a ritual. It remains unclear whether these architectural components were held to be sacred in themselves or were merely thought to be efficient conduits to the divine proprietor(s) of the sanctuary.

Temple I and all other cultic structures thus far discovered at Bogazköy date from the empire period. Indeed, most of them seem to be roughly contemporaneous and to have been constructed in the course of an ambitious building program carried out by King Tudkhaliya IV (late 13th century) that obliterated all earlier edifices in the area, religious or secular. Thus it is particularly unfortunate that the cella of the Old Hittite temple excavated at Inandik near Ankara (early 16th century) was not preserved, for its examination would have given us useful information on the development of classical Hittite religious architecture prior to its final century.

Recent exploration of the extensive Upper City at Hattusha reveals that this area was not a residential quarter as archeologists long believed, but rather contained a significant number of small freestanding temples. It may now be recognized that Tudkhaliya's construction efforts turned his capital into a city of the gods, accommodating at least thirty temples of varying size. Where the bulk of the city's population, whose labor supported these pious establishments, resided in this era is not yet clear.

Another impressive sacred place that must be attributed to Tudkhaliya, at least in its final form, is the rock

Procession and meeting of Hittite gods Teshub and Hepat, with mythological animals, from Yazılıkaya. Plaster cast, Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin. *Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York*

sanctuary of Yazılıkaya (Turkish meaning "Inscribed Rock"), located several kilometers outside Bogazköy. For this shrine, the Hittite builders adapted a natural rock outcropping so as to form a complex of several cultic chambers open to the stars. In front of the natural entrance to the cluster of rock faces they erected a structure analogous to the usual temple gate building, and their sculptors carved a large number of bas-reliefs, primarily of deities, upon the expansive rock surfaces themselves.

The most significant of these visual compositions comprises two divine processions, one depicting the most prominent gods of the empire period and the other the goddesses—more than sixty figures in all. These parades converge upon a panel in larger format presenting the meeting of the storm-god and the sun-goddess. The bigger chamber A, on whose walls this magnificent sculptural program is carved, was in all probability the scene of an annual New Year celebration similar to that carried out in the extramural *Akitu* house of Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities. The smaller chamber B at Yazılıkaya is almost certainly the mausoleum, or "stone house" (É.NA$_4$), of Tudkhaliya IV. In this passage the deceased ruler would have received the offerings due him in his mortuary cult, in which he was treated as a minor deity.

Such mausoleums were probably built for all Hittite great kings, at least for those of the empire period, but we know of only one other possible site of such a structure, namely Gavur Kalesi (Turkish meaning "Fortress of the Infidel"), located southwest of Ankara. On and around this rock outcropping, the spotty remains of a modest walled precinct, which probably constituted the stone house, are set within a larger circumvallation, and a relief on the living rock depicts two striding gods approaching a seated goddess. It must be admitted, however, that neither here nor at Yazılıkaya—nor indeed anywhere else—has the final resting place of a Hittite monarch been conclusively identified.

Other sacred structures mentioned in the Hittite texts include the *ḫešta* house (a shrine for the worship of chthonic deities and divinized ancestors, perhaps identical to Sumerian É.GIDIM [house of the dead]) and the purification hut *(tarnu-)*, in which the royal couple performed their ablutions and changed into ritually pure garments before entering the inner sancta of the temples, and the bathhouse.

Natural features such as mountains, rivers, and springs were by their very nature sacred in Hittite Anatolia, as shown by their inclusion among the deities summoned to witness treaties. While some mountains might themselves be personified as divinities, they could also be the location for the worship of other deities, particularly manifestations of the storm-god. In some cults a small shrine on the lower slopes of a mountain was coupled with a more substantial temple at a higher elevation.

The term *ḫegur* (rocky peak) designated the stone outcroppings so characteristic of the Cappadocian and central Anatolian landscape. A stone house or mausoleum might be built upon or within a *ḫegur*, but such crags were holy places even prior to human construction and consecration. Within mountainous terrain, rock carvings could be the focus of cult, as with the scene of the royal couple worshiping their gods at Fraktin in Cappadocia and the image of King Muwattalli II at Sirkeli in Cilicia. Religious activity at these localities is

indicated by the presence in the nearby stone of shallow cup-marks that once served as the recipients of libations.

In Hatti an outdoor cult site was customarily marked by a stele *(ḫuwaši-)*, which might be sculpted or aniconic. Texts reveal that such stelae could be erected in groves, in the open countryside, within the passage of a rock outcropping, just outside the gate of a city, or even inside a cult room in place of an anthropomorphic image.

In parallelism with their special reverence for the storm-god, the Hittites attributed a special numinosity to water, the element essential for the increase of both crops and herds. Religious installations were often constructed at sacred springs. The most spectacular of these is that at Eflatun Pınar in Pisidia, where a good portion of the Anatolian pantheon is presented in an assemblage of sculpted blocks rising from the pool at the wellhead. Within Hattusha were situated several large artificial pools or basins, whose cultic function is evidenced by the recovery from them of miniature votive pottery and other ritual artifacts.

The bank of a river, the site of the creation of humans in primeval times, was an ideal location for communication with chthonic forces and was therefore a favored spot for the performance of purification rituals. Furthermore, clay dug from the riverside was held to have magical properties. Finally, those places where watercourses disappeared underground into the limestone landscape of central Anatolia were thought to be entrances to the underworld and were therefore sacred.

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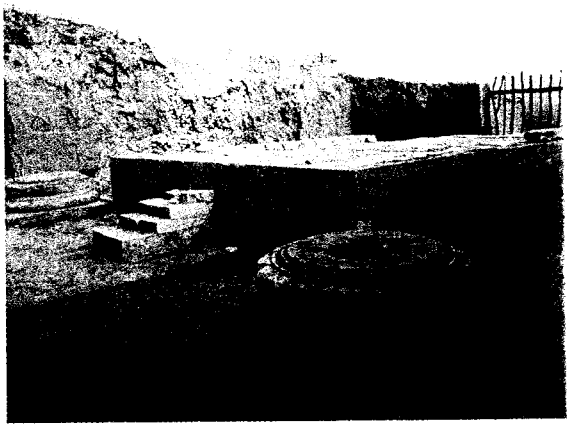
Iran

Much of what we know about Zoroastrianism in ancient Iran is preserved in the living tradition of today. This section combines documented textual history from antiquity with what contemporary Zoroastrians see as their ancient history, especially as it lives within their temple liturgies and public ceremonies.



Fire altar in a Zoroastrian temple complex, Surkh Kotal, Afghanistan, 2nd century CE. *Borromeo/Art Resource, New York*

Specific times and places designated as sacred by Zoroastrians first need to be understood within a theological context that regards the space-time continuum itself as sacred. Time, in Zoroastrian thought, is conceived of as both infinite and finite, and the distinction between them is often expressed in spatial terms. Space, similarly, has two fundamental dimensions, the invisible and visible, which are inextricably tied to the two conceptions of time.

Infinite time (Avestan *zruvan akarana*) is eternal duration, undivided into past and future, without beginning or end. As pure duration, it is absolute time, a time that endures forever without change. As such, time is the eternity of Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom, or Wise Lord; Pahlavi Ohrmazd) and defines his unlimited (Pahlavi *akanāraq*) nature: boundless, infinite, and eternal wisdom. Infinite time is also the source of finite time. Finite time (Avestan *zruvan dareghō-khvadhāta*) is the first creature fashioned by Ahura Mazda and is a "segment" of infinite time. The essence of finite time is transient duration and can be divided into future and past. It is the time in which cosmic history begins, unfolds, and reaches its culmination. Finite space-time, in other words, is the good creation of Ohrmazd, sacred in its origins and also the instrument of a sacred purpose.

Of the two fundamental conceptions of space, the invisible (Pahlavi *mēnōg*) realm has ontological priority over the visible (Pahlavi *gētīg*). The *mēnōg* realm is invisible to the physical eye, but accessible to the eye of the mind and human spirit. It consists primarily of the universal ordering principles of all material existence, that is, the universal archetypes of Righteousness, Health, Life, Dominion, Good Mind, and Devotion. Although these Bountiful Immortals are metaphysically

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The center of Hittite state religion was the king. His religious obligations were the most important responsibilities of his kingship and were the foundation of the entire system of royal ideology. His daily schedule—indeed, his whole life—was determined by his religious duties. He and the queen were the highest priest and priestess of the national deity (the Storm-god of Hatti in the earlier period and the sun-goddess of the city of Arinna later), and as such they were in charge of ensuring that humanity worshiped the gods properly. (A significant royal title under the Hittite New Kingdom was "priest of the sun-goddess of the city of Arinna and all the gods.") Moreover, the Hittite king was often identified with the sun-god. He was addressed with the title "my/his sun-god" (usually rendered in translation as "my/his majesty") and was often depicted on reliefs in a ceremonial outfit that the sun-god also wore.

Most of the major state festivals required not only the king's and queen's presence, but their performance of parts of the festivals (although their participation could also, at times, be simply passive). Hittite King Murshili II went so far as to postpone an important military campaign to celebrate a festival in honor of the goddess Lelwani, censuring his father for having previously neglected the cultic calendar and thereby caused difficulties concerning his own accession to the throne.

The Hittite king also made sure that the gods—or rather their temples—got a share of the booty from military operations and from the regular distribution of livestock, foodstuffs, and other products. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to separate the king's concern for the temples from other types of state business that are documented in the records of the royal archives. Furthermore, according to Hittite texts, the king was not the proprietor of the land of Hatti but rather a steward, appointed and protected by the gods. In addition to serving as the gods' steward, the king represented humankind before the gods. Thus the king acted as an intermediary between the sphere of the gods and that of human beings, maintaining harmonious relations between the two.

Being in such close contact with the gods, the person of the king was subject to special standards of purity. This is well attested by regulations for palace personnel. For instance, the water carriers were instructed to be very careful with the drinking water that was presented to the king. They had to strain it, ensuring that it was not contaminated by the hair of others, for example. Purity was similarly an important consideration for everyone who served the gods, including priests and other temple officials. This included the modification of even their personal lives. For instance, in order to maintain their purity, priests were forbidden to spend the night at home with their wives and family: they had to return to the temple before the gates were closed for the night (celibacy in the strictest sense, however, was not required of priests). Priests' and attendants' daily personal care, such as cleansing or removal of body hair and fingernails, was also of great importance:

> Let those who make the daily [sacrificial] bread be clean. Let them be washed and trimmed. Let [their] hair and finger[nails] be trimmed. Let them be clothed in clean garments. . . . When the servant stands before his master, he [is] washed. He has clothed [himself] in clean [clothes]. He gives him [his master] either to eat or to drink. Since the master eats and drinks, [in] his spirit he [is] relaxed. He is favorably inclined toward him [the servant]. . . . If the servant at some point angers his master, either they kill him, or they injure his nose, eyes, [and] ears. If ever he dies, he does not die alone. His family [is] also included with him. If, however, someone angers the mind of a god, does the god seek it [revenge] only from him alone? Does he not seek it from his wife, [his children,] his descendants, his family, his male and female servants, his cattle, his sheep, and his grain? He utterly destroys him with everything. (Instructions for Temple Officials 217–221)

Temple personnel lived so close to the gods that their behavior could affect the attitude of the gods toward the temple and ultimately toward the whole state. Thus, their purity was a matter of national significance. The purity of the temple itself was also an important national concern. Everything that entered the temple—performers of rituals, cult utensils, and offerings—had to be ritually pure; sacrificial animals had to be in good condition (sometimes virginal animals were required).

The queen was the highest priestess of the national deity. She is portrayed alongside the king on reliefs, presenting offerings to the gods. The queen remained queen until death, often overlapping with her son's reign if her husband, the king, died before she did. Thus the office of queen, termed Tawananna, was inherited separately from that of king. In her role as Tawananna, the queen had certain religious responsibilities, primarily that of controlling funds and resources of temples and religious endowments. The Hittite religious calendar also included certain ceremonies that were performed by only a prince.

In addition to the king and the queen, the Hittite state maintained a well-organized religious administration, directed by the official priesthood or the temple personnel. Several terms refer to such persons (including the rather generic phrases "men [or women] of the temple," "servants of the temple," and "lords of the temple"), and it is not yet possible for scholars to distinguish each particular functions. Exacerbating this problem is the sheer number of temple personnel and the variation in their titles and functions from temple to temple and from period to period. We do know, however, that priests and assistants were perceived as a dif-

ferentiated group with a strict hierarchy. The highest religious official (following the king and the queen) was the so-called ^{LÚ}SANGA (Hittite *sankunni-*), conventionally translated "priest." He was administratively responsible for the performance of festivals and in charge of a deity's daily routine, as well as of implements used in cult. His religious duties and activities also included participating in various rituals and offerings, performing purification ceremonies, conversing with the deity, reciting, and singing. The texts also mention a priestess who was his counterpart, called ^{MUNUS}SANGA, as well as a DUMU SANGA (novice or junior priest[?]). Still more difficult to translate is ^{LÚ}GUDU$_{12}$; it literally indicates an "anointed" person, but this does not tell us much. Other Hittite texts mention ^{LÚ}*tazzelli-* and ^{LÚ}*hamina-*; the meaning of the first is unknown, but the latter is most probably the official in charge of storehouses. Another type of priest, ^{LÚ}*pauli-*, had mostly purificatory functions.

The chief priests of temples in major cities were mostly of royal descent, younger brothers or second sons of the king, who were not eligible to succeed to the throne. Priests were exempted from certain duties, such as paying taxes or performing forced labor. On the occasion of great festivals they had the privilege of receiving food and new implements. Local, more minor priests, on the other hand, were not of noble descent and occupied a relatively low rank in Hittite society.

Priestesses were rarer than priests and were usually associated with the cults of female deities. The texts mention, for instance, an important priestess with a somewhat obscure title, ^{MUNUS}AMA.DINGIR-LIM, an ideographic rendering of Hittite *šiuanzanni-* (lit., mother of a god). The high rank of both the *sankunni-* and the *šiuanzanni-* is manifested by the king and queen often applying these titles to themselves. Many texts also mention an "old woman" or "wise woman" (^{MUNUS}SU.GI), whose existence distinguishes Anatolia from other countries of the Near East. The Old Hittite texts place her among the palace personnel. She was mainly engaged in divination, as well as in magical proceedings. (Personnel called the "man of the storm-god" and "woman of the storm-god" also carried out various magical rituals, mainly those concerned with purification.)

In addition to celebrating festivals alongside of the king and queen, the priests and priestesses also carried out offerings to the gods and thus directly approached divinities (i.e., divinities' cultic images or attributes) in their sacred chambers. In doing so, the priests and priestesses were unique, for other people could not come so close to the gods.

The staff required to run the major temples in Boğazköy and other large cities also included augurs and other diviners, scribes (including scribes who worked on wood as opposed to clay), seers or incantation priests, magicians and exorcists, various types of singers and musicians, dancers and ritual reciters, as well as many others with occupations that were more secular in nature and who had rather subordinate tasks: kitchen personnel, literally "masters of dishes" (cooks, bakers, brewers, "men of the table," cupbearers, water carriers), "men of the spear" (serving as a kind of temple guard), garekeepers, courtyard washers, barbers, leather workers, porters, and other artisans (carpenters, goldsmiths, silversmiths, stonecutters, engravers, weavers), herders for the temple flocks and herds, and farmers who cultivated the temple lands. Even the smallest local temples required a minimum staff of two or three.

Various supervisors oversaw the work of laborers, ranging in size from a few persons to several hundred, depending on the assigned task. Usually this was of an agricultural character: plowing and sowing the temple's lands, harvesting the crops and transporting the grain to the temple's storehouses, constructing and regularly maintaining irrigation systems. They derived the major portion of their own and their families' sustenance from the temple. Large areas of the temple's lands also were worked by community members who owed services to the temple. In addition, there was a huge group of full-time, permanent dependents of the temple household, who came from the impoverished elements within the local population, including widows and children with no other means of support, orphans, captives of war or deportees, as well as the crippled. These people relied entirely on rations allocated by the temple for their service.

The participation of musicians, singers, dancers, or other performers (jugglers, acrobats, comedians, the "wolf-man," the "bear-man," the "sword eater") was required in most cultic ceremonies, since the offerings to gods and the communal meal were usually accompanied by music or other entertainments. Festival texts often prescribe singers from a certain place, such as, for instance, singers from Kanesh (modern Kültepe) or Babylon, or singers who would perform in Hurrian or Hattian. Recitations or litanies were conducted by several cultic professionals, such as ^{LÚ}ALAN.ZU, ^{LÚ}*palwatalla-*, or ^{LÚ}*kita-*. The liturgy consisted of not only recitations, but also some ritual movements such as running, bowing, kneeling down, or kissing.

There were also well-defined offices for the administration of offerings and libations to the gods, which were a significant part of cultic ceremonies. The "cupbearer" oversaw the libations of wine and beer, whereas the "men of the table" saw that the appropriate altars or offering tables were provided in a timely manner. Cooks and bakers supplied the foodstuff for offerings. The cooks also sometimes participated directly in the ceremonies by butchering or carrying the sacrificial animals, while the bakers baked the sacrificial loaves.

The texts also mention a functionary of a rather obscure nature, called ^{LÚ}*tahrula-* (barber, shearer[?]), who participated in festivals by pouring out libations and

supplying bread offerings, as well as by carrying out other cultic activities. Other temple functionaries included those who swept up crumbs after bread was offered or supplied various garments for use in rites, as well as attendants (male or female) who cared for various parts of the temple or cultic objects.

Other female cult functionaries attested in Hittite texts are the *ḫazqara-*women, *zintuḫi-*women, and *katra-*women (whose professions are not very clear), prostitutes or harlots, young ladies or virgins, and female exorcists, criers, singers, musicians, and many others.

Finally, in Hittite society, certain military commanders (e.g., "the chief of the royal bodyguard") or local administrators ("provincial governors") also played important, although sometimes unclear, cultic roles. They accompanied the king and queen during cultic ceremonies, but were neither engaged in the cult proper nor listed in enumeration of temple personnel.

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Iran

Owing both to its broad geographic limits and to its long history in antiquity, Iran produced various sorts of religious personnel, some confined to specific periods and/or places, some universal. While Zarathustra was both a *zaotar* and a *mathran*, the latter function seems not to have survived much beyond his lifetime; the former continues to this day. The *magi*, initially a Median priestly caste, became the universal priesthood through the fortunes of empire.

Zarathustra performed two priestly functions. As a sacrificial officiant he was the presiding priest, called the *zaoθr* (who pours the libations; cf. Vedic *hótar*). This was a traditional office inherited from Indo-Iranian times and passed on from generation to generation down to the present day. As a visionary skilled in the art of poetic composition, he was a *mathran* (composer of hymns [*mathra*]; cf. Vedic *mántu*). In contrast to the office of *zaotar*, which could be transmitted from father to son, the art of the *mathran* could be learned by only a few intellectually gifted boys. Like the men, and a few women, who created the hymns of the Vedas, Zarathustra inherited a poetic repertory, some of it with Indo-European origins. The structurally complicated, often enigmatic, yet profound Gathas (songs), which are traditionally credited to Zarathustra, are all the more marvelous to us because they were composed without the knowledge of writing. In these hymns, Zarathustra mentions rival priests, *kavis* (cf. Vedic *kaví*), *karapans*, and *usigs* (cf. Vedic *uśíg*), about whom we know almost nothing except that they were connected with worship of the Daevas and the attendant brutalization of the Cow.

In the eclectic Zoroastrianism of the Avesta, the general term for priest, as well as for a member of the priestly caste, is *aθaurvan*. Although the meaning of the term is uncertain, *aθaurvan* is the same word as Old Indic *átharvan*, a class of priests especially connected with the god Agni (Fire) and Soma. The *zaotar* was the chief officiant at the daily *haoma* ritual, the *yasna*. Initially the *zaotar* was assisted by other priestly functionaries, but by Sasanid times just the *rōd* (the priest who officiated at the *yasna* ritual) and his assistant, the *raspig*, were sufficient to perform the *yasna*. Education was administered under another class of priests called *āθrapan* (masters of instruction) (Middle Persian *hērbed*). Practitioners of occult sciences were generally considered to be in league with Druj (Lie); sorcerers (*yāna*), witches (*pairikā*), and soothsayers (*kaēna*, *kaγāda*) are mentioned in the texts, but little is known about them.

In the ancient world, the best-known Iranian religious practitioners were the *magi* (Old Iranian *maguš*) who were widely held to possess occult knowledge and magical powers. The Greek historian Herodotus identified them as one of the Median tribes. As the priestly caste, they served both Medes and Persians, presiding at sacrifices where they recited theogonies, probably hymns similar to those of the Rig Veda and of the Yashts, in praise of the gods. Herodotos also remarked that they took great pride in killing creeping animals (1.140), a well-known practice in Zoroastrianism of killing *xrafstras* (noxious creatures). They wielded considerable political power and may sometimes have come into conflict with the rulers, although Herodotus's account of the annual *magophonia* (slaying of the magi) may be inaccurate (3.76–79). Whenever it was during the Achaemenid period that Zoroastrianism became the predominant religion of the empire, the magi took over the ecclesiastical leadership and preserved the so-called Good Religion after the Macedonian conquest through the Arsacid and Sasanid periods.

Although their name appears nowhere in the extant Avesta, indicating that they were unknown in eastern Iran, the term *mowbed* is the common designation of a priest in Middle Persian and Parthian. Under the Sasanids, the *mowbedān mowbed* (priest of priests) was the head of the state religion paralleling the *šāhān šāh* (King of Kings). Prominent among the Sasanid chief priests was Kirder, who held power during much of the 3rd century and was probably responsible for the untimely death of Mani, his rival at the court of Shapur I. During the Sasanid period, another grouping of priests,

though one ecumenical yeshivah did exist there, at Tiberias.

The curriculum and methods of instruction were similar in both types of school. The Hebrew Bible continued to be studied, as in the lower educational levels, but more attention was paid to studying a body of oral tradition that Judah the Patriarch codified in the Mishnah around 210 CE. Great stress was placed on memorizing and repeating. The schools were financed by private donations from supporters and patrons. In theory, this meant that students from any social background could attend, but it is likely that most were from well-to-do families. The schools trained judges *(dayyānîm)* who could act as arbitrators in intracommunal disputes. But they also formed and molded their students. While at the school, the students lived a communal life, and they emerged from it imbued with the rabbinic worldview and values, which they then expected to impart to their fellow Jews.

Synagogues. One Jewish tradition carries the institution of the synagogue back to the Babylonian exile, but the earliest clear evidence for the existence of a synagogue dates from Egypt, from the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BCE). In the succeeding centuries, synagogues proliferated throughout the whole Jewish world, including Palestine. They existed before the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, but after the destruction they became the sole focus of religious life for the majority of Jews. The role of the synagogue evolved, but from the earliest times it seems to have served as a place of prayer and for reading the Torah. It was never a place of sacrifice. The worshipers prayed toward Jerusalem, at times that notionally coincided with the times of sacrifice in the temple.

The synagogue seems to have been controlled by local grandees, who were able to defray the synagogue's expenses. Their patronage was rewarded by honorific inscriptions or titles such as *archisynagōgos* (leader of the synagogue). The synagogue was not in origin a rabbinic institution. A rabbi was not needed to officiate at its services (nor was a priest): any adult male of the congregation could lead, provided he was competent. From the late 1st century CE, the rabbis made a concerted effort to gain control of the synagogues, beginning with Palestine and later extending into the Diaspora. They convinced their supporters to introduce distinctively rabbinic forms of the standard synagogue prayers (such as the Amidah); they advocated the public reading of the Torah in Hebrew, even in Greek-speaking synagogues; and they claimed that the Palestinian rabbinate alone had the authority to determine the calendar and so fix when the festivals were to be celebrated. Their idea that all Israel, worldwide, should celebrate the festivals at the same time, in the same way, strongly promoted the notion that Israel was one people, united, of course, under the rabbinic aegis.

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Anatolia

When trying to reconstruct the administrative structure of Hittite religious organizations, we have to employ mainly the results of archeological excavations of ancient Anatolian settlements, as well as the Hittite economic and religious records, which, unfortunately, furnish only isolated episodes of their history. These records are represented in fragments of cuneiform texts recovered from only a few sites, mostly from central Anatolia. They provide a very uneven coverage of the recorded history of religious establishments (mostly of the later, empire period). Moreover, these texts deal primarily with rites and ceremonies performed within the precincts of a religious institution and do not document the entire range of economic and religious activities involving a specific temple during a given period.

Naturally, the temple stood as the central feature of the cult. It was the house of the god. Every city and town of any size within the Hittite domain had at least one temple, which was administered by its priesthood and staffed by cult personnel. They were also under the ultimate control of the king, who was the chief priest of Hatti. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to separate the upkeep of temples from other state business documented in the royal archives. For instance, Tudkhaliya IV organized a voluminous inventory of local cults in northern and central Anatolia. These inventory texts give a detailed account of the property of various temples, description of images of the gods maintained by those temples, and lists of religious personnel. However, only a select number of cities served as the main state cultic centers: Arinna, Nerik, Zippalanda, Shamukha, Khakmish, and Hattusha.

Large territories of land outside the cities were owned by the local temples and cultivated by temple-dependent farmers. The produce from these fields, as well as the temple livestock, supported the temple personnel and administration. The Hittite temples were powerful factors in the ancient Anatolian society and economy. The wealth and resources that they created and controlled, as well as the lives of the personnel responsible for the care of the gods and the livestock that they sustained, were essential for the prosperity and even survival of urban communities.

The vast economic resources and complex administrative organization of temples in the Hittite local communities functioned, first of all, to attend to the needs and comfort of its local patron deity, because his or her presence was conceived to be the most fundamental pre-

requisite for the community's prosperity. The eternal dependence on divine favor created the constant fear that the god might abandon the temple, as well as the community, with disastrous consequences for its members. Therefore, there was a hierarchy of human attendants in temples, whose most important responsibility was to attend duly to the god's needs, which involved the strictly prescribed daily ritual of awakening the deity's statue in the morning, washing, clothing, feeding, and bringing it to the cult platform for the day's duties, and then at night putting it to bed again.

The deities' needs also comprised agricultural commodities and crafted products that were produced and delivered within the framework of the temple household, which usually was autonomous and self-sustaining.

Funding for these complex religious organizations came from the donations of land or groups of people made by the Hittite king and local rulers. There were also other gifts made by them or by members of a community, ranging from precious items, divine images, and cultic objects to livestock. A major source of income for the temples was also the animal and food offerings that the community was mandated to make to the temple on a regular basis during the festivals.

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Iran

In the Achaemenian period, the religious organization was hardly known. Herodotus (1.131–32) informs us that the Persians had no established place for cult and that they offered sacrifices in the open air, without temples, images, or altars. For the western Iranians, the priest was called *magu* (or, as the word came into Greek, *magos,* and thus into our language, *magus*), a term designating a sacerdotal tribe among the Medes, which the Persians were supposed to inherit. The Greeks, who encountered them in Asia Minor, considered them to be magicians. Because the magi held a monopoly of priesthoods, they were considered to be disciples of Zarathustra. But the *magus* is unknown in the Avesta.

Religious hierarchy. Only the Sasanian period (3rd–7th centuries CE) gives a more detailed panorama of the priesthood's hierarchy and organization. The four inscriptions of the great magus Kirder in the 3rd century CE offer a wealth of historical data. This religious man, who was only a simple *herbed* under the reign of King Shapur I—a category of priests lower than the *mowbed*—ascended in his profession remarkably under the successors of that king, becoming *Ohrmazd-mowbed* under kings Ohrmazd I and Vahram I and, under Vahram II, becoming "judge of all empire" and *ayenbed* of the temple of Anahid at Staxr, a kind of keeper of records. He proclaimed himself the renewer of Zoroastrianism in Iran; claimed that on the order of the King of Kings he had built many Vahram fires, the most important category of fire temples; and claimed to have developed the magi attached to these temples. He also claimed, finally, that he had struggled against those who deviated from the "Good Religion" and against competing religions: Manicheism, Christianity, and Buddhism, even in the non-Iranian countries of the empire. There is probably some exaggeration in all of this. The alliance of this religious reformer with the King of Kings might encourage us to believe what we read in the late Pahlavi literature: that religion and kingship were united like two sisters or twins. And yet this idealization, found in later theologians, is probably no more than a literary topos, used to exaggerate the greatness of an empire that had already been destroyed.

A very hierarchized organization developed only in the 5th–6th centuries CE, when the title *Mowbedan Mowbed* was invented according to the pattern of *Shahan Shah* (King of Kings). We can distinguish an officer who served as the supreme chief of the Mazdean church, the "Great *Mowbed*," who could be the *Mowbedan Mowbed*'s substitute, although we know nothing more about his specific function; and further below him were several provincial *Mowbed*s, having jurisdiction over the various regions of the Sasanian Empire. This tripartite hierarchy apparently follows the model of that of the eastern Syrians, who were ruled by the *catholicos* or the patriarch (see Gignoux 1980). (This model can be reconstructed from the Syriac sources.)

Sasanian seal inscriptions provide a lot of information about civil and religious functions, as Gyselen (1989) shows. The *Ohrmazd-mowbed* is attested, as are the provincial *mowbed*s. The *mogan handarzbed* (councilor of the magi) is listed as a member of the high clergy; he could also be a councilor of the court, a councilor of the queen, or have a provincial status, which underlines the importance of his office. This function, however, was not in itself religious but rather chiefly juridical. Among the low clergy, the *herbed* was the highest of the priests during the Parthian period, according to Boyce (1975). There was perhaps also a *herbedan herbed* (director of the teaching priests). Judges were normally charged with judiciary functions, as attested by sentences against Christians who refuse to renounce their faith and to reembrace Mazdaism. Finally, there was a "defender and judge of the poor," attested on seals in sixteen different circumscriptions; this was a religious institution dating back to Khusrau I.

Schools. There were no religious schools for lay-

to ancestors, vestigial biblical evidence survives of other ritual elements of what might have been a widespread cult of the dead in ancient Israel (e.g., the rites of setting up a stele to an ancestor and invoking the ancestor's name, witnessed in 2 Sam. 18.18).

Two types of vow *(neder)* are attested in biblical materials: a voluntary pledge in exchange for nothing on the part of the deity, and a voluntary pledge made to the deity in exchange for the deity's fulfillment of the petitioner's request. The Nazirite vow of Num. 6—an ascetic vow of men and women—is often taken as typical of the former. In this text, the votary abstains from the products of viticulture, corpse contact, and haircutting for the period of the vow. Nothing is asked of YHWH in return. Typical of the latter is Jacob's vow at Bethel in Gen. 28.20–22: in exchange for protection, food, and clothing on his journey, Jacob declares that he will embrace YHWH as his god, establish Bethel as a sanctuary, and pay a regular tithe to YHWH. The typical vow probably consisted of a modest gift in exchange for a favor from the deity and, like all vows, had to be paid eventually. Yet people could vow themselves or their dependents to YHWH, their landed property (including their houses), or their movable property (including livestock). In 1 Sam. 1.11, Hannah vows that if YHWH will provide her with a son, she will commit him for life to YHWH's service in the sanctuary. Vows of women are discussed at length in Num. 30.

In general, the Israelite repertoire of sacrifices, offerings, and vows—including offerings to the dead and child sacrifices—was not unlike what is commonly attested for other Northwest Semitic–speaking peoples such as the population of Ugarit, Arameans, mainland Phoenicians, and Phoenician colonists in the central and western Mediterranean.

Offerings, sacrifices, and votives play a central role in the corpus of classical rabbinic literature. The earliest rabbinic legal collection, the Mishnah (compiled circa 200 CE), contains tractates that focus on animal sacrifices, cereal offerings, firstborn animals, vows, the daily offering, and the observance of the Passover festival, among other topics. This material contains extensive rabbinic discussion and debate, originally preserved orally and antedating 200 CE, concerning sacrificial and votive practice. It is supplemented in the Babylonian Talmud (and, to a lesser extent, in the Jerusalem Talmud) with commentary and elaboration from later generations of rabbis (circa 200–500 CE).

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S.M.O.

Anatolia

Offering or sacrifice may be defined as the rule-governed, ceremonial transfer of a foodstuff or other physical object from an individual or community of humans into the possession of a deity, demon, ghost, or personified numinous entity. The purpose behind this activity is the continued sustenance of the parahuman being in question and/or the securing of his/her goodwill and thereby influence over his/her/its actions. Within the ancient Near East, evidence from the Hittite capital of Bogazköy/Hattusha and other Hittite sites constitutes the single largest body of material available for the study of sacrifice. In accordance with the multicultural nature of Hittite religion, sacrificial practice was not a homogeneous system, but a continuously changing congeries of conceptions and procedures drawn from the Indo-European, Mesopotamian, Hurrian, and indigenous Hattic strata.

The Hittite archives preserve innumerable cuneiform texts describing offering procedures in great detail. The rites considered are of two main types: the periodically celebrated "festivals" (EZEN) of the state cult and the "rituals" (SISKUR) presenting magical procedures to be performed only irregularly, in the event of an emergent problem. Further information may be drawn from administrative lists recording the quantities of livestock or other materials to be offered at particular festivals and the bureaucrat or community responsible for their supply. Scattered passages in texts of other genres, including instructions for temple personnel, prayers, vows, and divination reports, also contribute to our knowledge of Hittite sacrifice.

Those receiving offerings included innumerable gods and goddesses, many known only from their appearance in sacrificial lists. Anthropomorphic deities customarily participated in sacrifice in the form of statues or stelae that represented them. Offerings to divinized mountains and springs and gifts to sacred objects and places, such as the throne and locations in temples (including the four corners, pillars, wall[s], windows, and hearth), were usually delivered directly to the recipient. Kings, queens, and princes attained the status of minor deities upon their deaths, and their ghosts might be allotted modest offerings in the course of their funerary rites and periodically afterward. Demonic forces such as Wishuriant (the Strangler) could also be appeased with appropriate gifts.

In principle, the Hittite king was the chief priest of all of the gods, and accordingly he was the usual sacrificer in ceremonies of the state cult; however, cultic culinary specialists commonly handled the actual slaughter and butchery involved in animal sacrifice. The queen might assist the monarch with an offering or even preside in her own right. A prince could sometimes be delegated to represent the royal house. Religious professionals and palace personnel also performed offerings in the state cult. Responsibility for the poorly documented routine sacrifices in provincial temples and village shrines undoubtedly fell to local officials. In magical rites, various freelance practitioners (e.g., "the old woman" or "the seer") were in charge. The client or patient for whom a

Libation made by king and queen before a bull figure, 1300 BCE. Ankara, Museum of Archaeology. *Hirmer Fotoarchive*

magical rite was carried out might also make simple offerings on his or her own behalf.

The more important gods and goddesses of Hatti received daily offerings of bread and beverages. Thus, temple employees were required to be at their posts "in the morning at the gods' breakfast." Depending on local tradition, various periodic (monthly, yearly) and seasonal festivals (spring, autumn, and others tied to particular agricultural activities), featuring lavish sacrifices, were also dedicated to these divinities. Certainly the cultic calendar of the capital was an elaborate one, including offerings for most, if not all, of the deities honored in Hittite territory. In addition, every spring and autumn the king and members of the royal family performed a procession through the realm, sacrificing to the pantheons of the numerous towns they visited.

Other ceremonies were executed along with their attendant offerings as need arose. These occasions included the (re)construction of sacred buildings, the purification of a defeated army, *rites de passage* such as birth, puberty, and death, personal crises such as impotence, insomnia, family strife, and so on.

Offerings were most often performed in a place set apart from the profane sphere. Monumental buildings or parts thereof—temple, chapel, enclosed courtyard, and palace—were frequent locations for sacrifice in the state cult. In such a setting, the divine image, the altar, and/or an offering table provided the focus of activity.

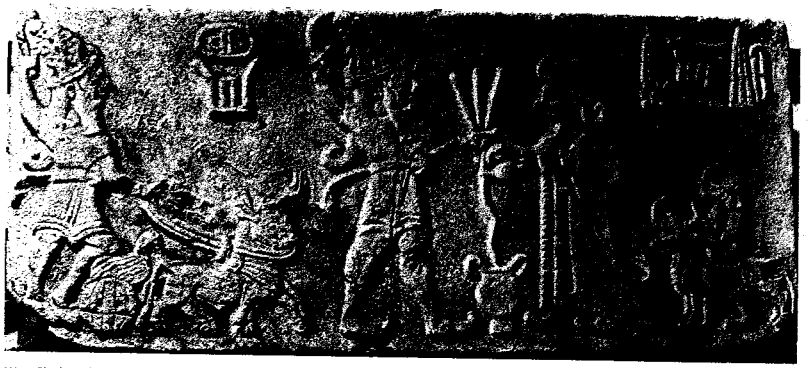
Offerings in magical rites might take place in a special small building reserved for purifications, in an uncultivated place, or at some other location far removed from habitations and agricultural plots—for instance, on a rock outcropping, on a riverbank, at a spring or well, or simply in the open air. Some offerings to chthonic deities required the digging of an artificial offering pit.

Often the texts specify the time of day at which an offering should be given. A rite might be scheduled for the early morning, at midday, or in the afternoon. Evening is frequently specified, occasionally described as "when at night a star twinkles." Nighttime and predawn twilight also are mentioned.

As in Mesopotamia, the gods were believed to be literally dependent upon humans for their sustenance, and food, therefore, was the most common offering: honey, oil, and fruit; processed foods such as flour, ghee, and cheese; and a wide array of baked goods, some of special shape. Potable liquids (wine, beer, milk, etc.) were frequently employed as libations.

Hittite deities enjoyed a diet far richer than that of the ordinary Anatolian peasant, as evidenced most strikingly in their prodigious consumption of meat, sometimes in astounding quantities (in one festival, one thousand sheep and fifty oxen were offered). The usual sacrificial animals in Hatti were those domestic creatures whose meat humans also are most frequently—sheep, goats, and cattle. Wild animals, such as gazelles, stags, bears, boars, and leopards, were only seldom offered. Dogs, swine, and horses were killed only for special purposes, primarily to appease chthonic forces and the dead.

Sacrificial victims had to be "pure," that is, healthy and unblemished. Temple workers were threatened with severe sanctions for substituting their own inferior animals for the prize specimens intended for a deity. On occasion, it was required that a female animal be virgin, and sometimes the victim had to be of the same gender as the offerant. As a general rule, black animals were offered to chthonic gods, and white or light-colored ones to all other divinities. Although eagles and falcons already appear, although infrequently, in early rites, the regular sacrifice of fowl, usually through incineration, was introduced rather late, as part of a Hurro-Luwian cult borrowed from southern Anatolia and Syria. Nonfood items, including silver, precious objects, land holdings, and persons, are mentioned in vows by which an individual promised a gift to the gods in return for divine favor, usually in the form of healing. These pledges



King Shulumeli pouring libation to the weather-god (in conical hat with raised arm). Relief from Malatya, late Hittite period. Ankara, Museum of Archaeology. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

were doubtlessly assigned to temples and their associated economic establishments.

This bewildering variety of Hittite sacrifices can be reduced to five basic types: (1) attraction offerings, in which paths of fruit, sweets, and colored cloth intended to draw in the honored deities were laid out converging on the ritual site; (2) bloodless offerings consisting primarily of baked goods and libations of beer, wine, and so on; (3) animal sacrifice followed by a communal meal; (4) burnt offerings (restricted to ceremonies adopted from Syrian or Cilician sources); and (5) "god drinking." It must be recognized, however, that these ideal types do not reflect any native Hittite terminological distinctions. Only in the 14th and 13th centuries was an elaborate vocabulary borrowed from the Hurrian and Luwian languages to designate types of offering. Some of these numerous terms designate the procedure to be followed (e.g., burnt offering), others the material employed (blood), the purpose of the rite (purification), or the problem to be addressed (sin).

The general principle underlying Hittite offerings was that the material given had to be destroyed, in whole or in part, in order for it to pass over to its recipient in the parahuman world. Thus liquids were poured out (on the ground, offering table, or altar), breads were broken or crumbled, vessels were smashed, and animals were killed. Bearing in mind that any particular rite might show considerable variation and that the scribes frequently omitted mention of one or more features, we may summarize Hittite sacrificial procedure as follows.

The priest or officiant, cultic implements, and the offering itself were ritually purified, after which the offerant washed his hands in water. In the state cult, either of these acts might involve the use of an atomatic substance. If the offering were small in size, it was handed to the offerant; if it were large, he set his hand upon it, thereby establishing his patronage of the ceremony. The offering was made (through breaking, scattering, libating, etc.) by either the officiant or the offerant himself or herself. The sacrifice concluded with the obeisance of the offerant before the deity.

Animal sacrifice was somewhat more complicated. After the initial ritual cleansing, the victim, which might have been decorated with ribbons or objects of precious metal, was driven into the temple or sacrificial location and dedicated to the recipient. A sample of the animal—probably a lock of hair—was conveyed to the deity, after which the beast was driven out once more. The victim was then killed and butchered or dismembered, usually at a location away from the immediate offering site. The animal's death might be accompanied by a joyous shout from the participants. There followed the consumption of the slaughtered beast by the god(s) and worshipers. Divine taste favored fat and those internal organs that were thought to be the seat of life and the emotions—liver and heart above all, but also the gall bladder and kidneys. These entrails were roasted over the flame, chopped, and served to the god on bread. The remainder of the carcass was dismembered, cooked as a stew, and shared by those humans who were present. The skin or hide of the victim became the property of the offerant, the officiant, or the butcher.

Certain rites attributed particular importance to the victim's blood. In these instances, the throat of the animal was slit in the presence of the deity and the stream of blood directed from the neck arteries upward toward the divine statue or symbol or downward into a bowl or a pit. If purification was the purpose of the ceremony, the person or object to be cleansed might be smeared with the blood.

Later Hurro-Luwian burnt offerings were holocausts, with little or nothing remaining for the human participants to enjoy. The victims—most often birds but sometimes also sheep or goats—were incinerated in a portable brazier, optionally accompanied by condiments such as bread crumbs, honey, fruit, flour, salt, and so on.

A practice peculiar to the Hittites was "god-drinking," which was performed only by the king or by the royal couple, often for a long series of divinities in succession. This act is expressed verbally by a grammatical construction in which the divinity is the direct object, and some scholars believe that we must understand this as denoting mystical participation by the royal person(s) in the essence of the god or goddess. Others interpret "god-drinking" as a shorthand expression for "drinking to the honor of" or "toasting" a deity. The matter remains uncertain.

Substitute or "scapegoat" rituals do not belong to the topic of offerings as discussed here, because their purpose was not the bestowal of a gift on a deity, but rather the disposal of impurity, sin, blood guilt, or some other unwanted quality. This goal was accomplished through the transferal of the moral or literal pollution from the patient onto a living carrier, who was then either driven off into the wilderness or killed. The few attestations of human sacrifice found in Hittite texts are to be interpreted in this manner.

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Iran

According to Zoroastrians, the best things in life are to be offered to Ahura Mazda and to the invisible spirit powers of his good creation. These offerings, such as consecrated bread and drink, fruits, sacrificial animals (in ancient times), cooked dishes, and—equally importantly—good thoughts, words, and deeds, express the gratitude felt for the bountiful gifts of life and are offered to the good spirit powers in order to both please and strengthen them.

The meaning and significance of these offerings are best understood within the context of the Zoroastrian worldview. Metaphysically, the temporal-spatial world in which we live includes not only the visible, tangible, empirical world, but also invisible realms of powers and principles that make existence intelligible and sustain us in all our needs. The latter constitute the universal archetypal principles of Life and Health, Dominion, Good Mind, Bountiful Devotion, and Righteousness. Zarathustra referred to these invisible powers as the Bountiful Immortals. The ultimate reality, the source of this goodness, is Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom, or Wise Lord; Pahlavi Ohrmazd).

All the Bountiful Immortals are understood as being intimately associated with an aspect of the material creation. This physical world (Pahlavi *gētīg*) is an extension of, or more accurately, a completion of the spiritual realm *(mēnōg)*. The radiant light of fire, for example, whether the warm fire of the sun, the simple but indispensable fire of the hearth, or the consecrated fire of priestly rituals, is understood to be in essence the living, physical embodiment of the light of Wisdom itself, a spark of the infinite light. In other words, a purified fire is a visible, dynamic presence of the vital energy that animates life itself. As such it is an exemplification, not a mere representation, of the Bountiful Immortal Righteousness, the principle of cosmic order and vitality. Likewise, the archetypal powers of Life and Health are instantiated in plants and water; Bountiful Devotion and Good Mind are manifest in the earth and cattle; and Dominion is evident in the overarching sky, which Zarathustra conceived of as metallic.

Opposed to these creative and sustaining creations of Ahura Mazda are the forces of unrighteousness, falsehood, disorder, arrogance, ill health, and destruction. The source of these powers is the Hostile One (Avestan Angra Mainyu; Pahlavi Ahriman), whose nature is one of deceit and lies. All these powers of decay manifest themselves in the material creation in multiple forms: smoke that diminishes the light of fire, rust that destroys metals, wolves that kill cattle, drought and sterility that destroy the life-giving powers of water and vegetation, and bad thoughts, words, and deeds that plague all human endeavor.

The divine purpose of humanity, consequently, is to combat and defeat these powers of destruction that diminish the powers of life. This is accomplished by purifying the good creation, freeing it from all the negative powers and thereby strengthening and restoring it to its original sacred condition. Anything that is ritually purified and dedicated to the cause of eliminating evil, therefore, is an offering. The fire that has been ritually purified by priests, for example, is an offering of metaphysical import, for it is an actual physical instance of the cosmic order untainted by the counterforces of disorder. In this way a purified fire both strengthens and pleases the powers of Wisdom and helps bring about the time when the whole of creation is rehabilitated.

This is true of all the offerings consecrated in Zoroastrian rituals. The most important daily ritual of offering is the *yasna* liturgy. From beginning to end, this service reveals its creative and sustaining purpose, as each item used in it embodies the presence of its corresponding

at the beginning and/or end of each prayer (although the exact wording is not yet standardized) and the practice of petitionary prayer on weekdays and prayer of praise on the sabbath.

After the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, communal statutory prayer three times a day (morning, late afternoon, and evening) became the norm. A rabbi named Simeon Hapaquli is credited with "arranging" the Eighteen Benedictions "according to [their] order at Yavneh" (Babylonian Talmud, tractates *Berakhot* 28b and *Megillah* 17b). It is much debated by scholars whether this statement means that the benedictions were composed at this time or whether they existed to some extent much earlier and were now standardized, at least in terms of number, topics, and overall framework, although not precise wording. The core of the prayer service came to be the Eighteen Benedictions (Amidah), the recitation of the Shema (the fundamental, monotheistic statement of Judaism; see Deut. 6.4), and a series of blessings surrounding the Shema focusing on the themes of creation, Torah, and redemption. Gradually, poetry in the form of biblical psalms and of new compositions, *piyyutim,* were added to supplement the statutory prayers. The service of prayer was not canonized until the Gaonic period (6th–7th centuries CE), and the earliest copies of the prayer book (the Siddur of Rav Amran) that have survived are from the 9th and 10th centuries.

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Anatolia

The only knowledge we have of Hittite prayers comes from the cuneiform archives of Hattusha, which recorded the official prayers, generally pronounced by a high priest in the name of the king, the queen, or a princess. The majority of them go back to the Hittite Empire and chiefly concern kings Murshili II, Muwattalli II, and Hattushili III and his wife, Pudukhepa. The gods invoked are the great gods, who were venerated as early as the Hatti period, although sometimes one of them is combined with a Hurrian god: the great Weather-god of Hatti (identified with the Hurrian god Teshub), the Sun-goddess of Arinna (identified with the Syro-Hurrian goddess Hepat) and her circle, Telipinu, or the Weather-god of Nerik. There is no trace of any spontaneous prayer or of any prayer that was purely adorative. The pragmatic Hittites turned to the gods, whom they invoked as if they were sublimated kings, when they were in trouble. For instance, the many prayers of Murshili II were motivated by an ongoing plague that was decimating Hatti.

The genuine Hittite prayer is called *arkuwar* (argumentation, plea), a verbal noun that is in origin a legal term and that is loaded with specific religious value; in the end, the nature of all extant Hittite prayers comes down to this concept. The individual who prays presents his or her case to the god (or, often, has scribes present it for him or her); the outcome, happy or not, depends on the quality of the arguments put forward. As such, prayer is properly the work of a specialist. It tends to emphasize the relative freedom of humans, who are not to be crushed by the arbitrary will of the gods. There is, then, a place for the human even in the face of the divine world.

In order to ensure its maximum efficacy, the Hittites inserted the *arkuwar* prayer into a frame consisting of other kinds of prayers. The *mugawar* (a noun derived from the verb *mugai* [to set in motion]) involves magical words and actions that are likely to bring an angry god out of his hostile, sulky state. Prayers were often preceded by a hymn that was intended to win the god's benevolence, that is, a *walliyatar* (a word derived from *walliya* [to strengthen], cf. Latin *valere, validus*), in which the god was praised; these prayers generally were translations or adaptations of Babylonian models. The prayer concluded with a *malduwar* (a noun derived from *mald* [to promise]), a short votive prayer in which an individual promised to present the god with rich offerings if his or her plea was answered favorably. One more type of prayer, the *wekuwar* (a noun derived from *wek* [to ask for insistently], cf. Latin *vocare, vox*), could be short and sometimes attached to the *arkuwar* prayer; in it, one insistently asked the divinity to protect the king and royal family as well as the whole land of the Hittites.

One classical and typical prayer, the second prayer of Murshili II (1321–1295 BCE), asks for help against the plague. Here, he addresses the Weather-god of Hatti, because he thinks that his father, Shuppiluliuma I, has committed a serious crime (lines 20–29):

> Now I present my prayer [*arkuwar*] to the weather-god, my lord, on account of the plague. O weather-god, my lord, listen to me, save me! I remind you: "The bird gets back to his cage so that the cage saves him [a proverb]." Or let us assume that a situation overwhelms a servant. He will then present his defense [*arkuwar*] to his lord. In this case his lord will listen to him and will sort out what makes him anxious. Let us also assume that a servant makes a mistake, but that he confesses his mistake to his lord. In this case, although his lord is entitled to do whatever pleases him, because he [the servant] confesses

his mistake to his lord, the mind of his lord is calmed down and his lord will forgive this servant. Now there! I have confessed the mistake of my father; sincerely, I have done it.

Murshili II then indicates that the gods nevertheless are not satisfied, since the plague still rages. Perhaps the gods are waiting for a new, more specific form of compensation, or perhaps the most serious crime has not yet been discovered. If that is the case, then the gods should let this be known through a dream to the king or by way of an oracle. In line 37, the king becomes insistent: "Now, I present you plea after plea, Weather-god of Hatti, my lord; save me!"

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Iran

Prayers and devotional recitation in Zoroastrianism constitute an integral and continuous act of worship. They connect the believer with the physical and spiritual world in time and space and in the fundamentally cosmological and eschatological outlook of the religion contribute to the fight against evil and thus to the "healing the world" and its ultimate transfiguration at the end of a cycle of twelve millennia. The form, function, and attitude toward prayer reflect the central role and mediating power of the word in this religion. It is encoded in the Zoroastrian rule of conduct, "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds," which in pragmatic terms is a rule of proper thought-speech-act. All prayers, whether private or sacerdotal, are recited in standing position, facing the sacred fire, the sun, or any other source of light; sacerdotal prayers require at least two priests.

For the devotional life the most important reference is the *Khorde Avesta* (Little Avesta), which is the Zoroastrian book of common prayer. It is a varying collection, for both priests and laypersons, of frequently used prayers, hymns, and other devotional texts. The major sets of prayers and devotional recitations may be grouped as follows: (1) the confession of faith *Fravarane,* which significantly includes the renunciation of the Daewas (false gods and demons) and the first phrases of which begin all major recitals and actions: "I profess to be an adherent of Mazda, a Zoroastrian, an opponent of the Daewa, accepting the law of Ahura, praising the Beneficent Immortals, worshiping the Beneficent Immortals"; the sacred-cord prayers, which include a special protective formula against the powers of evil; the confessional formularies *Patet,* both personal and on behalf of others, living or dead; (2) prayers related to life cycles of which cyclical memorial prayers and blessings for the deceased and for the ancient forebears of the religion are an integral part; (3) prayers relating to temporal cycles and dedicated to their tutelary deities, specifically, the prayers during the five daily periods *(Gah);* the five *Niyayeshn* (praises) addressed to the sun, the deity Mithra, the moon, the waters, and the fire, likewise to be recited daily; prayers on the thirty days of the month *(Si-roza);* prayers on the six seasonal festivals *(Gahanbar)* and on the holy days of Nowruz at spring equinox; (4) the *Afrinagan* (blessings), to be recited during the five last holy days of the year at spring equinox, at the six seasonal feasts, and at the beginning and end of summer and in honor of the dead; grace at meals, both in secular and ritual settings; (5) most powerful, the so-called great prayers, in particular the four formulas that frame the Gathas of Zarathustra and thus also frame all secular and ritual acts, characteristically in specific numbers of repetitions and combinations, as is also the case with other formulaic sets and even longer texts.

The basic text of the religion is the Yasna, a liturgy accompanying the Zoroastrian *yasna* ritual, which consists of seventy-two chapters and is performed every morning by two priests in the fire temple. It is a composite text where sections in the Old Iranian language known as Young Avestan symmetrically frame two ancient hymn cycles composed in the language known as Old, or Gathic, Avestan (with a total of twenty-five chapters, Yasna 28–53, with some later additions): (1) the fundamental text of the religion, the Gathas (Songs), attributed to Zarathustra, which constitute a cycle of five sets of speculative hymns of wisdom, formally arranged according to their stanzaic syllabic meter, with a total of seventeen chapters; and (2) the liturgically central text, the *Hapta-hati* (Seven chapters), which itself is framed by the Gathas (inserted after the first Gatha) and is a hymn in stanzaic prose, perhaps composed shortly after the Gathas, in praise of the sacred fire and water and dedicated to Ahura Mazda and the six fundamental principles and divine entities, the Amesha Spentas (Beneficent Immortals). These two texts represent unique developments of specific types of the Indo-Iranian sacrificial hymns and share many basic features with those of the Rig Veda, including the basic dialectic of invocation of the divine beings with an offer of service, presentations of novel praise of their prominent features and deeds, requests of due reward, and much of their rhetoric and phraseology.

In terms of compositional techniques, the Gathas are extremely complex in structure, often enigmatic in diction, and marked by symmetry and chiastic structures on all levels. Most of the seventeen chapters have the form of a "ring composition," and the five Gathas as a whole form a single cycle, in a hierarchic verbal architecture of the "true spoken word," which, marked by significant numerical patterns, functions as the most effective defense and offense. Such structures appear to reflect both the comprehensive perception of the cosmos

Evidence on the beliefs of other Jewish groups in this period is difficult to obtain, but in at least two cases there is evidence of a continuing belief in prophecy. Some early Christian communities seem to have contained prophetic figures and very likely considered both Jesus and John the Baptist to have had prophetic characteristics. These groups also seem to have shared a growing Jewish belief of the period that prophetic inspiration in scripture was not restricted to only the prophetic writings. This belief is seen particularly in Christian interpretations of Psalms as prophecy.

Similarly the Jewish sectarian community at Qumran engaged in the interpretation of scripture as a collection of prophecies concerning its own times. This practice is visible in many of the interpretive works found at Qumran. It is even possible that the sectarians viewed the interpretations themselves as having prophetic authority if in fact they came from the Teacher of Righteousness (the original leader of the sect), who was accorded prophetic status.

While prophecy in various forms seems to have continued after the biblical period, the continued existence of divination is less certain. The rabbis claimed that the Urim and Thummim did not survive the exile, although they disagreed on exactly when the oracles disappeared (Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sotah* 48b). Yet in spite of this claim, rabbinic references to divination suggest that the practice survived in later Jewish communities.

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Anatolia

The Hittites considered their "thousand gods" to be concerned with the affairs of their servants, humans. The gods could see into the hearts of other beings and into the future. As future events were not fixed and immutable, but could be avoided or averted, both gods and humans had many reasons to keep as many lines of communication open as possible.

Humans could speak to gods and lesser spirits directly via prayers or in that mixture of oral and sign language that we often call magical rituals. Many examples of both of these survive. The gods could communicate with humans through a "man of god," presumably an ecstatic prophet, or through a female "seer." Unfortunately no examples of their utterances survive. Gods could also speak to humans through the language of omens. There were many such languages: marks on the liver and other internal organs of sheep, malformed infants, events in the sky, earthquakes, patterns in oil, animal behavior. Gods could also come to people in dreams—either unsolicited dreams or those that occurred while the person incubated under a priest's supervision. Several texts recording requests made by gods or vows made to gods in dreams are preserved. Long before the Hittites were literate, ancient Mesopotamian scholars studied these languages and created vast dictionaries. Many of these were later passed on to the Hittites, often as modified by the Hurrians.

When the Hittites wanted to question their gods by oracle, they typically asked a long series of questions designed to solve a particular problem. Many questions involved an illness suffered by the king. Was a god responsible? If yes, was such and such a god angry? If yes, was this the only god? If no, then a second, third, fourth god, and so on was asked about until the question "Is this all?" got an affirmative answer. In this way in one text a new god was discovered and the questioning then turned to learning what this new god was god of, where he lived, and other relevant details. Having established that a particular god was angry, the questioning proceeded to discover why. Was the god angry at something in his temple? If yes, often members of that temple's staff would be questioned and all sorts of derelictions—festivals unperformed, cult objects broken and left unrepaired, cultic impurity ignored—would be laid before the god who would be asked, "Is this why you are angry?" Again, this type of questioning would go on until a positive answer to the question "Is this all?" was received. Then for each dereliction about which the god was found to be angry, he was asked whether he was angry at the king, at the priest, and so on. Once this was established, it was time for each person to settle accounts with the god or gods. Would fixing the dereliction suffice? If no, would an additional one-shekel penalty suffice? Two? A certain garment? and so on until all problems and payments had been resolved.

Some questions involved getting permission from the deity for cultic changes, others checking the validity and meaning of dreams and unsolicited omens. A series of questions asked where the king should spend the cold Anatolian winter and whether anything terrible would happen to him or his entourage while there (death, sickness, revolt, fire, storm, accidents), and if so, what could be done to avert it ("shall we give sworn instructions to the chariot drivers concerning road accidents?"). Questions asked whether a particular country, person, or ghost would cause trouble. The reliability of tributary kings and of potential officeholders was checked. Sometimes whole army campaigns would be laid out for divine approval. It is interesting to note that these series of questions were meant to find out of which cities, campaigns, or leaders the gods approved and disapproved, thus still leaving it to the king to choose from the approved ones. A single text asks, "Will the grains mature this year?"—which shows that the Hittites were not as

obsessed with fertility as modern scholars of the ancients are.

All of these questions were phrased in a yes-or-no format, and the gods were asked to reply in one of six specific languages. One particularly common language was written by the gods onto the entrails of specially slaughtered sheep. Various lumps and crevasses on the liver and gallbladder and different numbers of turns of the intestine were either favorable or unfavorable. If one of the signs was unfavorable, the answer was unfavorable. A second, rather rare language was read in the behavior of a sheep on the way to slaughter. Both of these languages were learned from the Mesopotamians via the Hurrians and were read by a male diviner-exorcist whose specialty also included the performance of magical rituals. A third language involved reading the movements of a symbolically named water snake across various symbolically named locations in a basin. A fourth was a particularly popular variant of this snake oracle in which a symbolically named token was said to take one or more other symbolically named tokens and deposit them with another symbolically named token. The mechanism of movement is unknown, but a mouse in a box has been suggested. The languages of the snake and the token oracles, both purely Anatolian, were read by a female practitioner, whose job also involved performing magical rituals. A fifth, also Anatolian, divine language was written in the actions (in flight or on the ground) of birds above or on a marked field of viewing. These movements were translated by a male augur.

In oracles involving these five languages, our texts normally describe what has been observed and then give the diviner's interpretation, that is, whether it was positive or negative. A sixth language, which somehow involves shelducks (HURRI birds), was interpreted not by the augur but by the male diviner-exorcist, and in virtually all occasions the texts simply record the positive or negative outcome. One presumes that this last was considered cheaper and slightly less reliable than the other methods of divination. Frequently, important answers would be checked, generally by asking for the same question to be answered in a different divine language.

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Iran

In ancient Iranian divination, prophecy and ecstatic vision were closely related, but few sources describe the actual performances and procedures of divination or prophecy. Zoroastrian texts that bear the mark of myth and legend, together with some short passages from Greco-Roman literature, provide our basic material for information.

Reports by Greek and Roman authors show the magi *(magoi)* in the role of interpreting cosmic signs or dream-visions. Herodotus refers to "interpreters of dreams" *(oneiropoloi)* among the magi as interpreting the dream-visions of Astyages (Herodotus 1.107–8) and also mentions *oneiropoloi* in the service of Cyrus (1.128). Similarly, a dream-vision of Xerxes is explained by the magi (7.19), and they interpret for Xerxes a cosmic portent (7.37). Cicero states explicitly that in Persia it is the magi who perform divinations (*augurantur et divinant; On Divination* 1.41). Referring to Dinon's lost *Persica,* he mentions the magi interpreting a dream-vision of Cyrus (*On Divination* 1.23). Although cast in Greek and Roman terminology, the repeated references to the magi interpreting dreams and making predictions suggest that this priestly group assumed divinatory and prophetic functions in addition to their main roles as sacrificers and transmitters of religious traditions.

Our Zoroastrian sources (mainly the Pahlavi texts) confirm this and convey further aspects of prophecy and divination. Sacrificial rituals seem to have provided the most important context for these phenomena. The Gathas were, from the very beginning, recited within the framework of a sacrifice, which also had an eschatological purpose in preparing the road for the sacrificer's soul (Avestan *uruuan*) to paradise. The sacrificial site was the meeting place between gods and human beings and consequently the appropriate scene for divinatory rituals. Some stanzas suggest that the sacrificer had ecstatic experiences; in the Gathas, the sacrificer is condensed into the figure of Zarathustra. He is qualified as "the knowing one" (*viduuah-;* e.g., Yasna 31.19) and as "possessing the divine word" (*mathran-;* e.g., Yasna 50.6).

From late Achaemenian times onward, the fire temples emerge as the foremost places where both cult and divination were practiced. According to Cicero, the magi gathered in a sanctuary *(fanum)* when seeking the will of the deity (*On Divination* 1.23). In Sasanian tradition, represented by the story of Arda Viraz, the person who is to undergo an ecstatic, divinatory procedure is taken to a fire temple and, once the séance is finished, takes food and drink and performs a religious ceremonial (Arda Wiraz Namag 3.3, 24).

This represents a particular type of divination in which a chosen person is sent on an otherworldly journey that ultimately ends in paradise, where guidance is given by the supreme deity. On returning, the visionary conveys the divine message to the community, which is reassured of the effectiveness of their rituals and of the truth of their beliefs. To prepare for the journey a state of trance is induced by means of a specific technique performed in a ritual context. The essential moment is the drinking of a cup with sacred juice *(hom)* and hen-

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Anatolia

Assimilation and syncretism. The Hittite pantheon formed through a process of territorial expansion and assimilation. On their arrival in Anatolia, the Hittites encountered the indigenous Hattian-speaking peoples, and, as they infiltrated the region, they adopted the gods of their new homeland. In time, the gods of the Indo-European Palaians and Luwians were assimilated as well. The pantheon expanded with the size of the kingdom. All of the deities encountered in the towns and villages who were absorbed into the kingdom were recognized by the Hittite state, and great care was taken to ensure that each deity was worshiped according to proper local tradition. Eventually, the expansion of the Hittite state resulted in the introduction of gods not only from other parts of Anatolia, but also from Syria and Mesopotamia. Because of this ongoing process of assimilation, by the end of the imperial period the Hittite pantheon had developed into a highly complex polytheistic system.

The Hittites worshiped so many deities that they sometimes abbreviated the list to "the thousand gods of Hatti." The actual total known to modern scholars has not yet reached this number but it is still growing, even if many of its deities are completely unknown to us except for their names. The complexity of the Hittite pantheon may be attributed to the Hittite resistance to syncretism; that is, in general, the Hittites tended not to identify their own gods with either foreign or native deities of a similar type. An attempt was made to bring order to this system insofar as the scribes grouped together local deities who showed a common character. For example, all bringers of rain and thunder were designated by the scribes with the same cuneiform sign indicating a storm-god. To this would be appended the city of origin, to distinguish them; thus, the storm-gods of Nerik, Zippalanda, Halpa, and Arinna are attested. We know, however, that the gods were worshiped individually because they appear side by side in the texts as separate entities.

This systematization of the pantheon sometimes renders it difficult to tell which deity is meant by a generic designation—the sign for Tutelary Deity LAMMA could refer to any number of deities, including Zithariya, Hapantaliya, and Inara—and often the original names of the deities are entirely lost. We owe the many cases where the original names of the gods do survive to the Hittites, who, in an attempt to please the gods, sometimes addressed them in their native tongues, thus allowing us better to trace their cultural point of origin. For example, the Sun-god of Heaven in Hittite is called Isanu, but in Hurrian is worshiped as Simegi, in Luwian as Tiwat, in Palaic as Tiwaz, in Hattian as Estan, and in Akkadian as Shamash.

Ultimately, a sort of syncretism was achieved within the official pantheon by creating a divine family, at the head of which were the Sun-goddess of Arinna (Hurrian Hepat) and the Storm-god of Hatti (Hurrian Teshub), with their son, the Storm-god of Nerik (Hurrian Sarruma). The reliefs carved into the rock sanctuary at Yazılıkaya (end of the 13th century BCE), where a total of seventy-one divine figures are represented, reveal the syncretism of the Hittite and Hurrian gods in their official and final form. But this syncretism was artificial, manufactured at the state level as a means of promoting the Hurrian element within the empire. In spite of these efforts, however, at no point was an established divine hierarchy ever attempted on a wide scale. The local cults were left to worship and develop as they pleased.

Nature and function. The myths reveal that the gods of the Hittites were conceived of in human terms. They required sustenance, exhibited a range of emotions, and were negatively affected by the acts of other gods—if one god failed to perform his or her divine duties, all suffered. In the cult they were subject to a schedule probably not unlike that of a royal personage: they slept, arose, dressed, dined, enjoyed entertainments, and held court. The gods were neither omniscient nor omnipotent but made mistakes and were capable of being deceived. Still, they possessed wisdom and power that were far above that of humans. The level of wisdom and power varied widely, depending on each deity's status within the pantheon, which itself often depended on the importance of the natural phenomenon that that deity represented.

Each deity had his or her own role and function in the cosmos, which was usually tied directly to natural phenomena and reflected the agrarian interests of the population. Most important were the storm-gods, who brought the rain and winds that fertilized the crops. Heavenly deities of both genders (sun, moon) were also prominent. Deities of grain (Hattic Kait, Hittite Halki), vineyards, and orchards were directly responsible for the prosperity of the crops (Palaic Zaparwa). There were also gods of wildlife, gods of war and pestilence, and personal protective deities, who often served as intermediaries to the other gods on behalf of their mortal charges. A king could claim a major deity as his personal god. Thus King Hattushili attributes his good fortune to the intervention of Ishtar, Tudkhaliya represents himself in the arms of his personal god, Sarruma, on his seals and at the rock sanctuary Yazılıkaya, and Muwattalli composes an elaborate prayer to his god, the *pihassassi* storm-god. The mother-goddesses were responsible for the creation of humanity and for birth in general, while the goddesses of fate determined human destiny. Other groups of gods, some of inchoate character, are attested, including the Heptad (the "Seven") and the primordial (underworld) deities. Finally, god lists in

King Warpalawa standing before a fertility-god carrying grapes in one hand and grain stalks in the other; stele from Ivriz (near Tarsus), 8th century BCE. Archaeological Museum, Istanbul. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

the treaties often end by listing in generic fashion the mountains, rivers, streams, heaven and earth, winds, and clouds, and in most cases we never learn their individual names.

The pantheon. The evidence does not suggest a well-defined divine hierarchy, although in the treaties of the imperial period there is a fixed sequence in the lists of divine witnesses, with primacy of place given to the more important gods. Similarly, the processions of gods at Yazılıkaya impose an order on the pantheon. The myths, in which otherwise minor deities (Telipinu, Inara, and Kumarbi) play more important roles than the cultic documents would lead us to expect, do not support these hierarchies and thus reflect separate local or ethnic traditions.

The supreme male deity of the Hittite pantheon, the Storm-god of Hatti (Hittite Tarhunt) was an Indo-European import, later identified with the Hurrian Teshub. In Hurrian tradition the divine bulls Serri and Hurri drew his wagon. The Storm-god of Hatti shared the Great Temple at Hattusha with the supreme goddess of the land, the Sun-goddess of Arinna. Assimilated into the pantheon from the native Hattian tradition, the Sun-goddess was the special protector of the kingship. Her Hattic name is Wurusemu, later identified with the Hurrian Hepat. Their sons, the Storm-gods of Nerik and Zippalanda, their daughter Mezzulla, and their granddaughter Zintuhi completed the divine first family in the Old Kingdom. During the imperial period, the Storm-god of Nerik came to be identified with Hurrian Sarruma, a minor mountain deity, as the only son of Hepat and Teshub, and his importance tied in part to his personal relationship to King Tudkhaliya IV.

According to the mythological texts, Telipinu and Inara are also important in the Old Kingdom pantheon. Inara is the daughter of the storm-god and the protective deity of Hattusha. She is a goddess of the hunt and wild animals. Some scholars identify her with Hattian Teteshapi, whose name means "Great Goddess." Telipinu, a lesser storm-god and god of cultivation, is also the son of the storm-god and the main protagonist in the so-called Telipinu myth, which is the best preserved of the numerous "missing deity" myths. Kamrusepa also figures prominently in Anatolian mythology, as a figure associated with magic, while Hannahanna, the "grandmother," is consulted by the other gods for her wisdom. Her special animal is the bee, symbol of hearth and home.

Istanu, the Sun-god of heaven, held a high status in the pantheon from the Old Kingdom on and was the all-seeing dispenser of justice to humans and animals. In this respect, the Hittite king was his earthly counterpart and was often identified with him both in costume and in his title, "My Sun." Because of his judicial powers, Istanu is most frequently invoked in prayers and hymns of praise that seek some kind of legal recognition or justification. Although not the supreme deity of the land, as the dispenser of justice he is given priority in the canonical treaty god lists.

Mesopotamian imports of the imperial period include Ishtar (Hurrian Sausga), who gained much popularity in Anatolia at the end of the Bronze Age (due perhaps to her patronage of Queen Pudukhepa and King Hattushili), when many local deities began to appear with her name. Her role in Anatolia as the goddess of both love and war mirrors her role in Mesopotamia. In god lists, she is accompanied by her handmaids, Ninatta and Kulitta. From Syria comes Ishhara, whose epithet, "Queen of the Oath," identifies her primary role as divine witness to treaties and vows. She might have been

King Tudkhaliya IV under the protection of the god Sarruma; rock carving from Yazılıkaya, 1220 BCE. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

considered an effective enforcer of these, since she seems to have been associated with both sickness and healing; in one text, diseases are called the "children of Ishhara."

The Hittites seem to have picked up the concept of the tutelary, or protective, deity from both the Hattian and Mesopotamian traditions. The Tutelary Deity (written with the Sumerogram LAMMA) has numerous manifestations identified by geographic and other epithets. This deity is particularly popular in Hittite reliefs, where he is shown standing on a hart and holding a weapon in one hand and a bird of prey and a hare in the other.

The underworld was also populated with deities. In early tradition, these included Hittite Lelwani (king [later lady] of the underworld) and Hattian Isdustaya and Papaya, the Fates who spin the years. The Sun-goddess of the Earth headed the pantheon that dwelled within the earth in later Hittite tradition. An avatar of the Sun-goddess of Arinna, she represented the sun's course during the hours of the night. Her underworld nature, perhaps a result of her syncretism with Hurrian Allani, who guarded the gate that separates the underworld from the upper earth, is attested by invocations directed to her in rituals performed for the dead. She conveyed the spirits of the dead to the underworld, and her worship involved placing offerings and sacrifices in the ground. With her, in the regions beneath the earth, lived the primordial ("inferior") gods, who were twelve in number according to the canonical lists of divine witnesses in the treaties (in rituals their numbers vary from five to fifteen). Their role was to judge the cause of an evil and remove it to the underworld.

Demons and lesser deities. The Hittites did not have a separate word to identify lesser deities or demons, although divine status was bestowed on many supernatural entities who clearly were not counted among the great gods. In addition to the divine mountains, springs, rivers, and the sea (Arinna), whose lack of individuality in the texts suggest their lesser status, imaginary creatures are attested in both art (sphinxes, bovine-headed demons, and winged bird-headed genii) and texts, and in rare instances sacred animals of a more familiar earthly type also held supernatural status. Among the imaginary creatures, the *awiti* animal is listed in cultic inventory texts, particularly in association with Ishtar, and this creature has tentatively been identified with the winged feline that appears with the same goddess in the iconography. The *dammašara* creatures appear, among other places, in the mythological story of Kessi. In a dream, the hero encounters snakes (*elliyanka-*) and *dammašara-* at a gate. They are thought to be either sphinxes or bovine-headed monsters, in either case probably corresponding to creatures known from the iconography.

Both examples of sacred animals with divine status stem from Hurrian tradition. The bulls of the storm-god, Serri and Hurri, not only were considered divine, but received offerings. Eagles were the messengers of the gods who dwelled in the heavens and a main communicative link between king and god. But only in the cult of the Hurrian deity Manuziya, within the context of the *hisuwas* festival, are cult images of the divinized eagles, Esuen and Eribuski, manipulated.

Abstract concepts. In a few cases, abstractions might be divinized. Halmasuitta was a female personification of the throne, and her cult is attested at Hattusha. She appears in the Anitta Text as a symbol of the crown (in this case, Anitta), into whose hands Hattusha is delivered. In a ritual for the foundation of a new palace, she delivers to the king the insignias of power (KUB 29.1 1.23–24). Siwatt, a deity whose name means "propitious day," is a euphemism for the day of death. This deity comes from Hattic tradition and appears mainly in the funerary rituals. So important was the pit as a channel of communication between the upper and lower worlds that it was itself considered divine and was counted among the primordial underworld-gods.

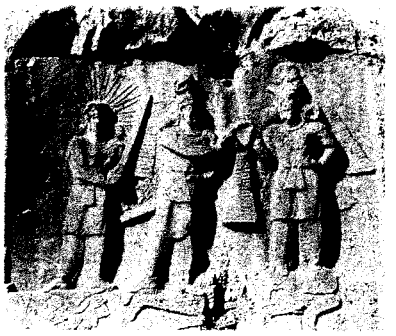
BIBL.: Alfonso Archi, "The Names of the Primeval Gods," *Orientalia* 59.2 (1990): 114–29. Gary M. Beckman, "The Religion of the Hittites," *Biblical Archaeologist* 52.2–3 (1989): 98–108. Ben H. L. van Gessel, *Onomasticon of the Hittite Pantheon* (2 vols.; Leiden, 1998); Volkert Haas, *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion* (Leiden, 1994); Gregory McMahon, "Theology, Priests, and Worship in Hittite Anatolia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson et al.; New York, 1995), 3.1981–95. Itamar Singer, "'The Thousand Gods of Hatti': The Limits of an Expanding Pantheon," *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994): 81–102. B.J.C.

Iran

Although a few deities are revealed exclusively outside the Zoroastrian tradition, a great deal of what we know about the divine and demonic entities who populated the Iranian cosmos is mediated through Zoroastrian sources. Nevertheless, it is possible, in many cases, to distinguish pre-Zoroastrian or non-Zoroastrian concepts of deity from strictly Zoroastrian innovations. As in most cultures of the world, deities themselves are sometimes inseparable from abstract concepts that they personify, sometimes not obviously associated with a concept, and sometimes simply the bare concept without flesh and blood. For example, Mithra is a real flesh-and-blood god who travels about in a chariot, his great bronze mace in hand, as he seeks out violators of covenants. At the same time his name means "covenant," that is, he is in some way the personification of the concept of an important social institution. One can contrast Tishtrya, the star Sirius, who has a rich mythology, with Mah, the moon, who is hardly distinguishable from the heavenly body itself. Further, we encounter, especially in liturgies, deities such as Saoka (Ptofit) who is identified by only a few colorless epithets. As in Vedic tradition, the two deities essential to the cult, Atar and Haoma, are personifications of the element fire and the divine drink respectively.

A striking aspect of the Iranian pantheon is its radical partition into two general categories of deity, a partition based on the fundamental ethical and cosmic dualism of the Truth (*asa*; Old Persian *arta*) and the Lie (*druj*; Old Persian *drauga*). In terms of gods, demons, and personified powers, the dualism is expressed through the terms *ahura* and *daêwa* (Old Persian *daiwa*); the former belonging to the Truth, the latter to the Lie. This dichotomy ran so deep that even the lexicon embeds a dualistic doubling of ahuric and daiwic words, nominal and verbal. The reasons for such a division of the pantheon are not altogether clear, although ritual, particularly sacrificial practices, may be at the root. In ancient India we find an inversion, namely, that after the early period of the Rig Veda, the *asura*s became demonized while the *deva*s retained their status as "good" deities; and in the ritual literature the two groups are frequently found in contention over control of the sacrifice. In the Avesta the common word for deity is, however, *yazata* (worthy of worship), in the Achaemenid inscriptions *baga*.

At the head of the ahuric pantheon stood Ahura Mazda, whose name can be taken to mean either "Wise Lord" or "Lord Wisdom." He was a creator-god in the sense that he established the world order in accord with the principle of Cosmic Order/Truth (*arta*, *asa*). There was also a demiurge, Warstar (Craftsman; Avestan Thsorestar), whose creative function Zarathustra assigned to Spenta Mainyu (Beneficent Spirit). Because of his intimate connection with Truth, Ahura Mazda was the source of Zarathustra's revelations. In this respect he is comparable to the Vedic god Varuna; but unlike Varuna, the judicial role was assumed by Rasnu (Judge), along with the bellicose Mithra. One may speculate on the basis of a few references that Ahura Mazda was paired with the earth-goddess, Spenta Armaiti. In the religiopolitical ideology of the Achaemenids, Ahura Mazda is magnified as the great god, the creator, who not only established heaven and earth, but also established the legitimate rule of the king, who in turn established order on the earth by overcoming the rebellious forces of the Lie.



Relief showing the creator-deity Ahura Mazda granting a king a diadem of sovereignty while Mithra protects the king's back; 4th century CE, from Taq-i-Bostan, Iran. *Archive J. K. Choksy*

Iranian traditions show a tendency to transform older mythological motifs in a program of dynastic history which merges the legendary with the historical. The primordial twin, Yemo, reflected in various Indo-European traditions, becomes Yima, the first king who ruled during a golden age. He was overthrown by the serpent (in later traditions a dragon) demon Azi Dahaka. In the Vedic hymns the Indo-Iranian serpent appears as the anticosmic monster Ahi Vrtra, whom Indra slew in order to complete the creation of the world. After a period of misrule, Azi Dahaka was in turn overthrown by the hero Raetaona, who has his origins in a shadowy Indo-Iranian deity Trita (the Third). These and the Kayanid Dynasty that follows receive their power from the goddess Aredwi Sura Anahita. She was a favorite of Artaxerxes and so strong was her association with royal power that she appears on Sasanid investiture rock reliefs and even survives into the Islamic period as the Sahrbanu of Persian romances. Legitimacy and power were also vouchsafed through the possession of the

before the herd was transferred from the winter to the summer pasture (cf. the staff and sandals in 12.11), the Passover sacrifice retained a clearly apotropaic function: the sheep's blood smeared on the lintel and on the two doorposts of the entrance to each house was intended to protect the family against a child-killing demon.

In addition to the practices already described, families had to observe several taboos, such as the weekly day of rest for the domestic animals and slaves (Exod. 23.12) and allowing fields to lie fallow every seventh year (23.10–11). Behind this stands an age-old human awareness that complete exploitation of nature endangers the power of blessing and fertility.

Family cult and official cult came into contact during the offering of first fruits. On the one hand, these sacrifices of the year's first produce were firmly related to the family's agricultural prosperity and thus its economy; on the other hand, the first fruits of barley and wheat were offered during the main annual feasts, the period between the feast of Unleavened Bread and the feast of Weeks (see Sacred Times and Places). Before the 7th century, the former was probably the only occasion on which the families commemorated a date of Israel's official history, the exodus (Exod. 23.15; 34.18). Family piety was based on nature rather than on the "salvation history" of Israel.

Beginning with Josiah's reform in 622 BCE, several efforts were made to link family religion more closely to Israel's official religion. The Passover ritual was withdrawn from the family cult; it became a pilgrimage feast celebrated in the central sanctuary and focused on the historical event of exodus (Deut. 16.1–8). During every offering of the first fruits, the father had to recite Israel's official "salvation history" (Deut. 26). The worship of any other god than YHWH was strictly forbidden. Family members are even told to kill relatives who worship other gods (13.6–11 [= 13.7–12 Hebrew]).

When the official institutions collapsed in 587 BCE, the Judean families became the main tradents of Israelite religion during the Babylonian exile. New or reformed family rites and customs such as circumcision, observation of the sabbath, and dietary rules now became clearly defined signs of identity, which enabled Judaism to survive the crisis.

BIBL.: R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster, 1994), esp. 25–39, 94–103. Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). R.A.

Anatolia

In Hittite society, religious practices of the common people, that is, "popular religion," were performed without any official intermediary, in contrast to state religion, whose deities were venerated in the capital and served by the official priesthood. In other words, private

Worshiper standing before a seated Anatolian deity, 1300 BCE. Ankara, Museum of Archaeology. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

rituals are to be distinguished from royal festivals in that they were not performed at regular intervals by official priests and temple attendants, but only in certain circumstances to deal with specific problems. Also, they were not intended for the good of the state, but rather for the good of individuals.

These rituals have come down to us thanks to Hittite King Tudkhaliya IV, who set out to collect them from all over the Hittite domain and to keep a record of them in the Hittite state archives. The greater part of these rituals dealt with individuals possessing enough wealth to afford all the expense that a ritual entailed. However, we may assume that the common people also performed such rituals, but in simpler and more modest ways.

Rituals were employed to address a variety of disturbances, encompassing all aspects of the life of an individual or family, such as building a new house, illness and death, impotence, birth, family quarrels, ceremonies against curses and witchcraft, summoning absent deities, and so on. These rituals were similar to medical prescriptions, and each was a specific formula credited to a particular person, often from some distant part of the Hittite Empire.

Naturally, rituals were used in rites of passage such as birth, puberty, and death. Various Hittite texts describe rituals for obtaining fertility or for curing a specific ailment such as impotency, barrenness, or repeated miscarriages. Other rites and incantations were performed during the course of a pregnancy to avert evil spells or to prepare a woman for childbirth or during the birth itself.

The Hittites also performed purification rituals for the mother and baby, as well as propitiatory rites to secure a favorable destiny for the newborn and instate its

proper sexual identity. The texts mention a ceremony that occurred in the third or fourth month of the baby's life, celebrating the reentry of the mother and the first entry of the baby into the community.

Little is known otherwise about family and individual religion. We can imagine, however, that individuals employed prayers to some extent similar to royal prayers and that they believed in an afterlife (see also Illness and Other Crises).

BIBL.: Gabriella Frantz-Szabó, "Hittite Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson et al.; New York: Scribner, 1995), 3.2007–19. O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (London: Penguin, 1990). Fiorella Imparati, "Private Life among the Hittites," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Jack M. Sasson et al.; New York: Scribner, 1995), 1.571–86. H.H.

Iran

Centrality of the individual in Iranian religiosity has ancient roots. In the Gathas or songs of the devotional poet Zarathustra (2nd millennium BCE), each individual bears responsibility for choosing between order and chaos, good and evil: "Between these two, the wise choose rightly, not so the unwise" (Yasna 30.3). Those individuals who "chose rightly" were regarded as righteous persons who would "approach you, O Ahura Mazda, with good thought" (28.2). In time, the notion of choice as to how life was to be lived gained cosmogonical dimensions with people—both individually and collectively—finding representation as troops in a universal conflict between the forces of creation and destruction: "Ahura Mazda deliberated with the perceptions and immortal souls of humanity . . . [saying], 'Incarnate you can battle with evil and vanquish it.' . . . [Humans] agreed to enter the material world to become perfect and immortal in the final body at eternity" (*Bundahishn* 3.23–24). Similarly, the notion that each person needed to focus actively on religious issues was acknowledged by followers of the prophet Mani (216–ca. 276 CE): "If, in the material world, an individual does not perceive . . . good, evil, and the mixture of these . . . the thought to come to righteousness would not reach that individual" (M 91).

In early Iranian culture, each individual (Avestan *mareta* [mortal], Old Persian *martiya*, Middle Persian *mard*) could be affiliated through kinship and alliance within spatial settings to a household unit (Old Avestan *demāna/nmāna*, Old Persian *taumā*, Middle Persian *mān, tōm/tōmag*), a village or settlement (Avestan *vis/vīs*, Old Persian *vith*, Middle Persian *wis/wīs*), a territory or tribal region (Avestan *shaithra, zana/zantu*, Old Persian **zana/zantu*, Middle Persian *zanag/zand*), and a district, province, or country (Avestan *dahiu*, Old Persian *dahyu*, Middle Persian *deh/dēh*). Each individual could be associated within social settings to an extended family (Avestan **x***aētu*, Old Persian **uvāitu*, Middle Persian *xwēshīh*), a community or neighborhood (Avestan *verezēna*, Old Persian *vardana*, Middle Persian *wālan*), and a cohort (Avestan *airiiaman*, Old Persian **ariyaman*, Middle Persian *ērman*). Each person also would belong to a variety of social classes—initially farmers and pastoralists (Avestan *vāstriia*, Middle Persian *wāstaryōsh*), priests (Avestan *zaotar, āthrauuan*, Old Persian *magu, magush*, Middle Persian *mog/mow, mogmard/mowbed*), and warriors (Avestan *raθaēshtar*, Middle Persian *artēshtār*); later slaves, pastoralists, farmers, artisans, mercantile families, scribes, free men and women, lower noble families, priestly families, feudal noble families, and ruling families.

The social hierarchy was ratified by religion through attribution to divine will as a central aspect of the corporeal manifestation of order or righteousness (Avestan *asha*, Old Persian *arta*, Middle Persian *ardā*) and recorded in religious texts. Thus transgression of class boundaries by individuals and families—through actions as diverse as marriage ties and occupation changes—technically was regarded as violation of doctrinal tenets and, correspondingly, religio-secular law (Shkand Gumānīg Wizār 1.11–30), although social mobility proved unavoidable in practice.

Those social structures' impact crossed sectarian boundaries. So each Zoroastrian, Jew, and Christian in Iran had affiliations of kinship, alliance, and class. Individuals and families following Manicheism and Buddhism, while having ties of kinship and alliance, were cut off from the class hierarchy by being labeled heretics (Middle Persian *zandīk*) and idolaters (Middle Persian *butparist, uzdēsparist*) respectively. Manicheans replaced the regular Iranian social order with a sectarian one comprising hearers (or auditors) and elect including elders, bishops, and teachers (M 36). Men and women could belong to all five classes. Elect individuals were expected to practice celibacy, monasticism, and proselytism because they had "abjured the whole world" including secular careers and pleasures (M 8251 I). Their home was the monastery, their family comprised other bearers of faith (Middle Persian *dēndārān*), and each individual elect depended on "a hearer who brings alms" (M 221). Laypersons or hearers could live within family units but were urged to disavow that social arrangement in favor of an austere life focusing on the spirit (M 49 I; M 5794 II).

At the levels of the individual and the family, all Mazda worshipers or Zoroastrians shared certain basic practices. The origin of initiation into the sectarian community is unclear but probably became standard by late Achaemenian and early Parthian times, around the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE. During the ceremony, which symbolizes advent to adulthood, acceptance of religio-legal responsibilities, and spiritual rebirth, each child would be vested with a cord (Avestan *aiwiiānghana*, Middle Persian *kustīg*) around the waist and an undershirt (Middle Persian *shabīg*). Failing to

Womb?" *Immanuel* 11 (1980): 46–55. W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* (New York, 1998). S.A.

Anatolia

Although ritual texts are relatively plentiful among Hittite documents, activities specifically designed to mark the passage from one stage of life to another are scarcely mentioned. We can assume that many elements that went into the enactment of such rites replicated activities known from surviving festival and ritual texts that have other purposes. However, the psychological and social impacts of such rituals are not preserved and cannot be reconstructed.

Among the few pieces of Hittite evidence is a single ritual that testifies, perhaps, to a rite of initiation into manhood. The EZEN *haššumaš* (festival of potency/procreation) describes a ceremony that takes place in a tavern or an inn (an *arzana* building). In this establishment, the Hittite prince sits and eats with twelve prostitutes. Later, the temple priests, who are overseeing the operation, consecrate him and make him lie down. They place loaves of bread around him and pour out beer in a circle around him. The priests then bring in the twelve prostitutes—at which point the tablet ends. We infer that the prince had sexual intercourse with the women, but the significance of these events and the age and identity of the prince are not revealed.

Pregnancy could be marked by a special festival celebrated in honor of the mother-goddesses, although the details of this festival and information as to whether it was celebrated for every woman who became pregnant or only for those whose social status warranted the expense is not preserved. After the birth of a child, apart from the requisite rituals to purify mother and child, there were rituals to secure the mother's continuing fertility and a happy fate for the child. A ceremony of reentry into the community was performed for mother and child after three months for a boy and four for a girl, although, again, details of the rite are lacking.

Marriage, too, was marked by ceremony, although no marriage ceremonies are preserved in the textual sources. The existing evidence of preparations for arranged political marriages does not tell us about the practices of the population at large. However, two Old Hittite relief vases found in the vicinities of Inandik and Bitik may depict such ceremonies. In one scene on the former vase, a bride(?) is led by her father(?) in a procession. Musicians, acrobats, and an animal sacrifice are all depicted as components of the festivities. The top tier of the vase also depicts two performers in an act perhaps meant to induce fertility in the newlyweds. In one preserved scene on the Bitik vase, the bride and groom are seated on a marriage bed as the husband raises his hand to remove the bride's veil.

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Iran

A recurrent problem in the study of ancient Iranian religion is that we are seriously limited in many areas by the paucity of the sources. This is especially true with respect to what we know about rites of passage. Although there is a wealth of information about death and funerary practices, surprisingly little is recorded concerning birth, initiation, marriage, and aging. There does exist fairly extensive documentation of an ethnographic nature for rites of passage performed within the last two hundred years by the surviving Zoroastrian communities of Iran and India. These accounts are highly interesting, and the practices described are, in some of their details, undoubtedly of great antiquity, for these details can be checked against scattered references in the Pahlavi books of late antiquity or in the surviving Avesta itself. As one might expect, during the millennium that effectively separates the two branches of Zoroastrianism (Iranian and Indian), many changes in the performance of ritual evidently took place. Parsi ritual differs from Iranians, but one must assume that neither tradition remained static. There is a universal human propensity to believe that in the good old days there was strict and authentic observance; only now have customs been changed or compromised. The truth is that, while rituals are conservative, they do change over time, whether that time is the present or any point one might choose in the past. Further, except in times of strict, centralized ecclesiastic control, there undoubtedly was always variation from place to place. This is to suggest that the witness of modern observers helps locate a type of ritual in a live context, yet it can serve as only a rough guide to what little remains to us from antiquity.

Although Iranian tradition does not present tight schema of life's stages and their transitional rituals such as we find in the ancient Indian *dharmaśāstra*s and *gṛhasūtra*s, we can identify rituals for birth, initiation, and marriage.

Birth. While childbirth is mentioned as the particular concern of the goddess Aredwi Sura Anahita (Yasht 5.2), there is no real information about rituals pertaining to birth as a rite of passage. The legend of Zarathustra's birth as narrated at Denkard 7.2 (an important Pahlavi text dating to the 9th century CE) recounts many miraculous events involving the creation of the fetus in his mother's womb, her pregnancy, and the delivery. Owing to Zarathustra's nature as the archetypal human, there may be material here that reflects ritual practice. Particularly suggestive is that Zarathustra's

prophets provide prognoses (2 Kings 8.8) and intercede on behalf of the patient (5.11).

Shrines of YHWH were probably another significant legitimate option in the preexilic period. In 1 Sam. 1 Hannah visited the temple at Shiloh to help reverse her infertility. Second Kings 18.4 indicates that, prior to Hezekiah, the bronze serpent made by Moses as a therapeutic device (Num. 21.6–9) was involved in acceptable therapeutic rituals in the temple of Jerusalem. Metal serpents, such as those found in or near shrines at Timna, Tell Mevorakh, and Hazor in the Late Bronze Age, may have been involved in therapeutic rituals and/or used as amulets.

The centralization of the cult in Jerusalem and the reforms attributed to Hezekiah (715–687 BCE) and Josiah (640–609 BCE) wrought significant changes, even if only in theory, in the health-care system. Shrines that may have formerly functioned as therapeutic centers were destroyed. By the postexilic period the Priestly Code, which may be viewed as a manual on public health that centralizes in the priesthood the power to define illness and health for an entire community, severely restricted access to the temple for the chronically ill (e.g., lepers in Lev. 13–14; cf. 2 Sam. 5.8 on the blind and the lame). Such restrictions are intimately related to a system of purity laws that encompasses, but is not limited to, issues of illness and health. Nonetheless, such laws could serve to remove socioeconomically burdensome populations from society. In effect, the Priestly Code minimizes state responsibility for the chronically ill, leaving the eradication of illness for a future utopia (Ezek. 47.12; Isa. 35.5–6). However, thanksgiving or "well-being" offerings (Lev. 7.11–36) after an illness were probably always acceptable and economically advantageous for the temple.

Relative to the Priestly Code, the community responsible for *Miqṣat Ma'asê ha-Tôrâ* (Some Precepts of the Torah), the Temple Scroll, and other Qumran texts expanded the restrictions for lepers, the blind, and the lame. The Dead Sea Scrolls (2nd–1st centuries BCE) also provide evidence for the laying on of hands (*Genesis Apocryphon* 20.28–29) and the forgiveness of sins in healing *(Prayer of Nabonidus)*.

By the late Second Temple period there occurred a wide legitimation of the *rōpĕ'îm* (cf. Sir. 38; 2nd century BCE), but various types of folk healers and midwives (see Exod. 1.15–21) may actually have been the most common health-care consultants through the end of the Second Temple period.

By the 1st century, various Jewish sects, including the one that became known as Christianity, attempted to reform traditional Jewish health-care practices and addressed problems of health care (e.g., fees and geographical accessibility) found in the Greco-Roman world. Greco-Roman health-care practices also became increasingly acceptable in rabbinic tradition.

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Anatolia

The principal concerns of the people who lived on the Anatolian plateau in the Late Bronze Age were those that accompanied an agrarian lifestyle, namely, maintaining the health and fertility of their herds, crops, and themselves. The individual problems and challenges best attested in the Hittite corpus tend also to reflect this focus. The full range of concerns for which we have evidence includes illness, impurity, family discord, bad years (agriculturally?) and infertility of the fields, sorcery and other criminal offenses (perjury, physical injury), birth, human fertility, and impotence. Rituals also addressed crises that affected the community as a whole, such as plague, military defeat, bad omens, building rites, and cultic events, which included attracting absent deities, erecting divine images, and correcting offenses against the gods.

When misfortune befell an individual, at least within the royal family, he or she had recourse to prayer. One royal relation, Kantuzili, prays for relief from his suffering: "Because of sickness, my house has now become a house of anguish, and because of anguish, my soul is flowing to another place. . . . Now my sickness and anguish have become too much for me. I must declare it to you, my god" (KUB 30.10 2.14–17). Pudukhepa vowed to bestow gifts on the goddess Lelwani if she would give health and long life to her husband, King Hattushili. Other such vows are made to excuse a variety of cultic infringements.

Most frequently, however, problems were solved by means of rituals tailored to address specific situations. The documents that record these rituals were more-or-less standardized in their format, beginning with an introduction identifying the professional practitioner and his or her place of origin. This was followed by a statement of the problem and a list of ingredients *(materia magica)* that would be used to address the problem. Finally, the ritual recipe itself was written out in detail. These ritual prescriptions must have been used over and over again, judging by their existence in several copies (although always retaining the identity of the original author).

They reveal that the primary means of treating problems included analogic magic, transference (contagion), and substitution. In the course of a given ritual, any combination of these elements might be employed, repeated, or embellished to achieve the desired end.

Analogic (sympathetic) magic combines ritual action with an incantation that links that action to the desired outcome. For example, male impotence could be cured by restoring a man's masculinity by taking from him the attributes of a woman (spindle, distaff) that he has been given and then restoring to him the attributes of a man

(bow, arrows). Indeed, the threat of femininity in curse formulas was considered to be an effective preventative against disloyalty among the troops and was incorporated into the Hittite soldier's oath: "He who transgresses these oaths and takes part in evil against the king, queen, and princes, may these oath deities make [that] man [into] a woman. May they make his troops women. Let them put a scarf on them. Let them break the bows, arrows, and weapons in their hands, and let them place the distaff and spindle in their hands [instead]" (KBo 6.34 2.46–3.1). The actions embedded in the incantation are carried out in reality as the words are recited. Such incantations are one of the simplest and most common components of Hittite ritual and, some have argued, its key concept. The vehicle of the analogy might be an animal, human, god, plant, foodstuff or other substance, or natural process. The images used were ones that would have been familiar to the participants. Thus the anger of the deity Telipinu is dissipated with the following words and accompanying actions: "Telipinu is wrathful. His soul and [his] figure were stifled [like] kindling. As they have burned this kindling, let the displeasure, wrath, [perceived] offense, and anger of Telipinu likewise burn. As [malt] is meager [in fertility], and one does not take it to the field to use as seed, nor does one make it into bread, [nor] does one place [it] in the storehouse, so let the displeasure, [wrath], [perceived] offense, and anger of Telipinu likewise become meager [in effect]" (KUB 17.10 3.13–20; trans. Beckman 1999: 524).

Analogic magic could employ the same object in different ways. Thus, as symbols of fecundity, pigs were manipulated to ensure the productivity both of the fields (KUB 43.23 rev. 19'–22', 57'–58; KUB 12.44 3.16–19) and of women (Bogazköy tablet 3617 1.4'–17' with duplicates; KUB 36.83 1.3–7; 4.5–9). In the former instance, the female sexual parts of the sacrificed animal might be buried in the field whose productivity was sought while the requisite incantation was recited. In the latter, a woman seeking to become pregnant would be made to stand over a live pig (sow?) in order to absorb its powers of procreation.

Many techniques were used to transfer an affliction from the patient to another object. These included waving an object or animal over the patient, touching or rubbing the patient with an animal or power-laden substance such as bread, meal, honey, or mud, or causing the patient to pass through the severed parts of animals or through a gate made of hawthorne (which had the ability to scrape off and retain the malignancy). To extract illness from an individual, the old woman Tunnawiya arranges the twelve body parts of a ram against the patient's twelve body parts, top to bottom: "Head is arranged against head. Throat is arranged against throat. Ear is arrang[ed] against ear. . . . Fi[nger] against finger likewise. . . . [Foot] against foot likewise" and so on. Tunnawiya reveals the purpose of this rite: "I have arranged for his twelve body parts. Right now the body parts of the ram are claiming the sickness of the body parts of this mortal" (KUB 55.20 + KUB 9.4 + Bogazköy tablet 7125 + Bogazköy tablet 8057 2.1–22). Or if the situation calls for purifying a sacred space: "They 'wave' the temple of the storm-god, the temple of Hepat, and all the temples of the gods with an eagle, a falcon, a *hapupi* bird, a shelduck, and a *hušti* stone. They [then] purify [them] with consecrated water" (KUB 30.31 4.36–40 + KUB 32.114 rev 4'–8').

The concept of substitution was also important. In such a rite, a human or animal (both live animals or models fashioned from clay or dough were acceptable), took the place of the patient so that the evil or impurity accrued to it, freeing the patient from its damaging effects. For the substitution to be effective, the material first had to be identified with the person to be purified. The old woman Mashtigga does this orally while presenting the sheep to the offerants: "Here is a substitute for you; let it be a substitute for your bodies" (Mashtigga Ritual, CTH 404; ANET 350–351). Alternatively, when Murshili II undergoes a ritual treatment for his aphasia, he places his hand on the ox that would serve as the carrier. Once the identification was complete, the impurity was "downloaded" to the carrier (Hittite *nakkušši-*) or substitute (Hittite *tarpalli-*). For example, in Pulisa's ritual to end a plague within the army, a ram and ewe are adorned with wreaths made from colored strands of wool that have been pulled from the mouth of the king—the wreaths being symbolic of the illness afflicting the troops. On the other hand, in Mashtigga's ritual, the patients simply spit into the mouth of the substitute sheep. Once the evil is fully transferred, the carrier *(nakkušši-)* is sent away, while the substitute *(tarpalli-)* is destroyed (usually through burning or burial or both). The purification is thus complete.

To ensure that the gods continued to attend to their human charges, it was sometimes necessary to perform elaborate rituals of attraction to draw them to the festivities being held in their honor. In addition to laying out honey, wine, milk, butter, and other irresistible offerings, paths would be drawn with colorful textiles and branches to attract the gods and assist them in finding their way. These efforts were supplemented by incantations summoning the gods: "[If you are in Nineveh] then come from Nineveh. If you are [in] R[imussi, then come from Rimussi]. . . . If [you are] in the rivers and streams [then come from there]. . . . If you are with the Sun-goddess of the Earth and the Primor[dial Gods] then come from those. Come away from these countries" (KUB 15.35 + KBo 2.9 1.23–24, 40, 43–45).

The use of amulets to prevent illness or misfortune must have been widespread, but such objects are difficult to identify among the finds recovered from ancient Hattusha and other Hittite-period sites in Anatolia. Common amulets probably consisted of unworked natural materials, such as agate, used to ward off the Evil Eye. In addition, small figurines of deities

and demons made from gold, silver, bronze, ivory, rock crystal, and other precious materials have been found in quantity and may have been used to protect spaces from malign influences. Further, rituals describe the use of animal-shaped models of clay, wax, or dough used as apotropaic devices. In Huwarlu's ritual, for example, a tallow figure of a puppy is placed on a door latch to ward off evil from approaching the king and queen.

Magic and medicine were not separate categories in Hittite thought or practice, and purely medical approaches to physical ailments are rare. Hittite medical texts attest to treatments for disorders of the eyes, intestine, throat, and mouth, among other things, and medical cures included the use of honey, wine or beer, plants, animal substances, and minerals. But more often we see treatments that combine magical and medical means or that are purely magical. For example, Hebatarakki uses dung therapy to nullify the effects of sorcery. She mixes dog excrement with barley flour to make a dough. She then places two figurines of a duck made from this dough on the patient's shoulders and, as she knocks the figures off the patient's shoulders, recites the incantation, "I have removed [the demon] Agalmari from you. I have pushed [the demon] Annamiluli from your head. I have extinguished fire from your head and ignited it in the sorcerer's head. I have driven away the stench of the dog from you, but the dog's excrement, the dog's flesh, and the dog's bones, I. . . ." (KUB 24.14 1.18–24).

It is difficult to trace precisely the origins of the elements of Hittite magic ritual. Many of the practices attested in the Hittite texts originated not with the Hittites themselves but with the Hattians (who preceded them in Anatolia), the Luwians, the Hurrians (whose influence was felt most strongly in southeastern Anatolia), and with Mesopotamia. But the Hittite ritual practitioner, whether an old woman, physician, bird observer, or exorcist, was skilled at weaving these disparate elements into a variety of ritual tapestries designed to address any situation and to provide the individual with a level of protection against an uncertain world.

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Iran

Iranian society during antiquity regarded illness and other crises as having demonic origins. The notion went back to Zoroastrian or Mazdean cosmogonical beliefs that Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, the evil spirit *par excellence*, had introduced all calamities including death into the material world as a means of afflicting pain, suffering, and nonexistence upon Ahura Mazda's foremost creation—humans (Vendidad 21.2; *Bundahishn* 1a.1–21). A female ghoul named Jahika or Jeh was thought to assist in spreading such chaos, as she allegedly had done during the murder of the mythic first androgyne Gayo Maretan or Gayomard (*Bundahishn* 4.1–28). Zoroastrian clerics concluded that "all creations are mirrored in humans who are [in] Ahura Mazda's likeness" (Denkard 321). So, the existential problem was compounded by a theological one. If illness and death, as manifestations of Angra Mainyu's chaos, could eliminate humans, who were the reflection of the high god's order, then could not Ahura Mazda also be dissipated? Death thus represented the location of gravest danger, potentially the moment of absolute disorder. Not surprisingly, epidemics such as bubonic plague, which entered Iran and took a heavy toll in lives, were demonized as harbingers of apocalyptic events.

The advent of empires ruled by Iranian dynasties brought both doctors and medical knowledge from many countries into Iran. Democedes, a physician of the Pythagorean school of Croton, served King Darius I and Queen Atossa (whom he cured of a breast ulcer) around 522–513 BCE, according to Herodotus (3.125–37). Udjahorresne, a priest of Neith at Sais, was another court physician for the Achaemenians under Cambyses II (530–522 BCE) and Darius I. He also served as an advisor, as did Democedes subsequently. Combining medicine (Middle Persian *bizeshkīh*) with other forms of learning continued—for example, Borzuya or Burzoy, who hailed from Nishapur, rose to legendary status as a physician and translator. Medical training and research, supposedly based upon Hippocratic traditions, especially by Christian physicians bearing names such as John and Gabriel, took place at Gondeshapur under the Sasanian regime—as recorded by later Muslim writers, drawing upon earlier records. Symposiums on medical issues occurred under royal patronage. Iranians practiced medicine of the knife (Avestan *karetō.baēšhaza*), or surgery, and of plants (Avestan *urvarō.baēšhaza*), or pharmacology. Medicines (Middle Persian *darmān*) were used by persons who had access to trained physicians. For example, a short Sogdian-language fragment preserves prescriptions for aphrodisiacs and purgatives. Herbal remedies (Pahlavi *dārūg*) also were widespread.

In Iranian myth, however, the first healer was said to be the legendary Thrita, to whom healing plants supposedly had been presented by Ahura Mazda. Using those items, Thrita cast off fever, pain, and death (Vendidad 20.1–10). Thrita often was amalgamated with another legendary figure, Thraetaona or Fredon (Faridun), who likewise was praised as a healer of the body and the soul (Yasht 13.131). Thus despite advances in medical knowledge under the Achaemenians, Parthians, and Sasanians, popular belief held that illness and other crises should be vigorously countered using both medicinal and religious means because healing (Avestan *baēšhaza*,

lated it to the Greek idea of immortality of the soul, but he was correct in placing the emphasis on immortality rather than on resurrection.

The Qumran community buried its dead in individual graves, with the head to the south and the feet to the north. There were no family tombs, and this has been taken to lend support to the view that the lifestyle was celibate. But any attempt to deduce anything from the Qumran cemetery is put in question by the discovery of a huge Nabatean cemetery across the Dead Sea in Jordan, at Khirbet Qazone. This cemetery also has individual (shaft) graves, and the bodies are oriented north-south, like those at Qumran. The graves at Khirbet Qazone are clearly identified as Nabatean, not only by the location but also by the grave goods that were found, which include depictions of the Nabatean god Dushara. The discovery at Khirbet Qazone raises fresh questions about the cemetery at Qumran—specifically the possibility that it may have been a regional cemetery in the Nabatean style rather than a reflection of distinctively Essene beliefs about the afterlife.

Immortality of the soul. The apocalyptic idea of angelic afterlife was adapted in another way in the Hellenistic Diaspora. The Wisdom of Solomon, written in Alexandria early in the Roman era, is clearly acquainted with apocalyptic judgment scenes (see Wis. 5.4–5). But while the Wisdom of Solomon uses the apocalyptic judgment scene as a rhetorical device, it actually subscribes to a Greek idea of immortality, informed by the Platonic tradition: "God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity" (2.23 NRSV). The soul, then, is created immortal. In this life, "a perishable body weighs down the soul" (9.15) but the soul that is devoted to wisdom can gain immortality. There is no question here of resurrection of the body. This essentially Platonic idea of the immortal soul was shared by philosophically sophisticated Jews, such as Philo of Alexandria. Not all Diaspora Jews were as refined philosophically as Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon. The great majority of Jewish epitaphs from Greco-Roman Egypt simply express grief that a loved one has been snatched away to Hades. Some reject any hope for life after death. Only a few express any kind of belief in an afterlife.

Beliefs in later Judaism. It is difficult to say how widely accepted ideas of reward and punishment after death were in Judaism around the turn of the era. The Pharisees allegedly accepted belief in resurrection; the Sadducees did not. The evidence of Jewish epitaphs in this period is ambiguous. A few centuries later, belief in resurrection is well attested in the epitaphs from Beth Shearim, where a huge necropolis dates to the 2nd through 4th centuries CE. The majority of epitaphs from the turn of the era, however, simply wish the dead person peace.

By the end of the 1st century, there is evidence of more systematic reflection on the fate of the individual after death, in the apocalypses of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. These try to synthesize the various traditions about life after death, combining bodily resurrection and angelic transformation as two stages in a process. Other apocalypses from the same period *(3 Baruch, 2 Enoch)* ignore the general resurrection and take the form of ascents of the visionary through the heavens.

Resurrection of the dead is affirmed strongly in rabbinic Judaism. The central prayer of the daily Jewish liturgy, the Amidah, contains the benediction "Blessed art you, O Lord, who revives the dead." According to the Mishnah, tractate *Sanhedrin* 10.1–2, "All Israel has a share in the world to come." But it adds: "And these are the ones who have no portion in the world to come: he who says there is no resurrection of the dead . . ."

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Anatolia

Given the exclusively royal focus of the Hittite tablet collections of the 2nd millennium BCE (ca. 1650–1180), next to nothing is known about the average Hittite person's beliefs concerning death and the afterlife. What little we do know comes from archeology. The cemeteries excavated from the Hittite period convey a fairly uniform picture: inhumation and cremation were practiced simultaneously, and the funeral complexes contain no gifts of any great value. The most valuable depositions consist of bovines and equids—in their entirety or heads only—that sometimes accompany the dead. They were animals in the prime of their lives, constituting considerable movable wealth.

The situation concerning our knowledge of royal funerary practices is completely the opposite. One of the most extensive Hittite text compositions concerns a funerary ritual for the Hittite king and queen. It was known by its incipit: "When in Hattusha a royal loss occurs, that is, either a king or queen becomes a god" (a fate shared by kings and queens exclusively). The ritual lasted for fourteen days and was a rite of passage in the sense that its goal was to ensure that the inevitable transition would not endanger the country's stability and prosperity, which were embodied by the king. The composition consists of four separate series: a scenario

giving a detailed prescription of who should do what where and when; a script with the text of prayers to be spoken with brief directions; a ration list with the materials needed each day; and a summary characterizing each day in a single line. The scenario originally comprised between 3,000 and 3,500 lines of text, half of which can be reconstructed with some confidence. The composition can be dated around 1400 BCE with certainty, but may well be older.

The body of the deceased was cremated on the night of the first day of the ritual. Then, at dawn, the pyre was quenched with several liquids. Women collected the remains of the bones, which were then dipped in oil, wrapped in cloth, and brought to the actual tomb or "Stone House." There they would be laid out on a bed. That same day, a wooden effigy was made of the deceased: a seated male with weapons in his hands for a king, a seated female with spinning gear for a queen. Eyes and mouth were indicated with gold plaques or inlays. The rest of the second day through the sixth day was filled with offerings that aimed at reconciliation. The latter were probably directed at the powers of the netherworld, the most important of whom was the Sun-goddess of the Earth. The royal body seems to have gone initially to the Stone House, and texts suggest that the king was escorted out from there by his mother.

The seventh through thirteenth days after death were devoted to rituals concerning particular spheres of life, such as agriculture, viticulture, and animal husbandry, including hunting. For example, among the numerous acts performed, a chunk of sod was cut off and presented to the sun-god for the benefit of the deceased, a plow was used and then burned, a grapevine was brought to the table of the deceased, and some ducks were caught and burned. The seventh day itself probably centered on the theme of kingship, considering the use of "fine oil" and "[royal] robes," which recall the ceremony in which a Hittite king was anointed. The thirteenth day was called the day "of the *lahhanzana* birds," probably some kind of ducks, but the purpose of this day's ritual remains obscure. No text of the fourteenth day has been preserved.

The pattern of days seven through thirteen is generally the same. In the morning the effigy was brought out of the Stone House, given food and drink, put on a cart, and brought to a place where the day's ritual was carried out. All the while, the effigy sat on the cart, perhaps reflecting the king's custom of going out on a chariot or cart and, for instance, pronouncing judgments or holding audiences from there. The effigy was then taken down from the cart for inclusion in a meal of all participants and finally transported back to the Stone House, accompanied by wailing women. The focus of each day—the sphere on which it centered—was symbolized by various objects that were subsequently burned. These objects were often inlaid with precious stones and metals that were removed before being thrown into the fire. The valuables were finally brought to the Stone House, while the remaining objects' ashes went to "the place where the heads of horses and oxen have been burned." Although the background of this ritual remains unclear, it does recall the heads of equids and bovines deposited along with inhumations and cremations found at Hittite cemeteries. Fire being an appropriate means of transporting things to another existence, the deceased would be able to enjoy the fruits of agriculture and other things that had been burned in his or her afterlife. More important, however, by securing these objects for the deceased, the survivors invoked his or her benevolence and, as a consequence, guaranteed the continued prosperity of the land and its people.

The logistics of the ritual were complex: scores of participants are mentioned, all of whom needed to be directed and fed. Hundreds of oxen and sheep were slaughtered, and enormous amounts of produce, beverages, and baked goods were prepared. The rituals had been committed to writing, which ensured that, whenever a royal death occurred, the relevant texts could immediately be retrieved from the tablet, and the memory of those who had participated in the last funeral rites would not have to be relied upon. The texts enabled participants to carry out the ritual correctly down to the smallest detail. This is not to say, however, that over the centuries, the texts and therefore the ritual did not undergo modifications, reflecting past experiences or changes in beliefs.

From archeology, in contrast, we learn very little. No obviously royal tombs have ever been identified, and perhaps they are not likely to be. What we would expect to find, left over from the fourteen-day ritual, are the ashes, bones, and valuables that had collected during the second part of the rites, but so far such a complex has not survived the ages. From texts we know that Hittite kings and queens were not necessarily buried in the capital Hattusha and that, like Egyptian royalty, they sometimes started planning and building their tombs already during their lives, at great expense. Rocky outcrops (called *hegur* houses) seem to have been the preferred spots to build a Stone House. Two such places are identified in Hattusha: in the very center of the Upper City was the *hegur* of King Tudkhaliya IV (ca. 1240–1210 BCE), while Room B at the rock sanctuary Yazılıkaya just outside the city walls likely served a funerary purpose, judging from the reliefs that decorate it. That the latter is clearly associated with King Tudkhaliya IV as well, however, presents a problem, as individuals did not have double tombs.

In the end, the deceased became part of the ancestor cult. Images were set up in the temples and became the object of regular offerings and devotion. The souls of the dead lived on and could be contacted. However, those same souls, if not properly treated, could also exert a negative influence from beyond their world, into that of the living.

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Iran

For the ancient Iranians, humans were etymologically mortal (Old Persian *martiya*), and humanity also was called "mortal seed" (Middle Persian *mardōm*). The name of the first man, Gayomard, was explained as "the mortal life." These various words denote the importance granted in Iran to the mortal aspect of the human being. But the first human also was named Yima; that is, he was the first sovereign and the "king of the dead," for he built a *vara* (dwelling place) for the dead. Thus, death is the state at which all humans arrive, in contrast to the gods, who never die. According to Kellens (2000), the kingdom in which Yima received the souls of the departed and where he built a *var*, that is, the underground shelter in which he protected the living from a very murderous winter, hearken back to the same motif: a universe enclosed by clay walls, like the closed space of the tomb.

Those ancient Iranians who practiced burial thought that the dead lived miserably under the earth and, according to Herodotus, that each person had to pay for a better life underground by the sacrifice of living creatures; thus, Xerxes' wife would have buried alive fourteen noble Persian children in order to propitiate the underground god Yima on Xerxes' behalf. The relationship of Yima, who is described as "bright," with the sun may reflect another funerary ritual, in which corpses were exposed to sunlight and allowed to be consumed by dogs and the birds; this ritual was popularized during the Sasanian period (224–632 CE). By the Achaemenian period, one's experiences after death are correlated with one's life: the one who has been just will enjoy bliss in the next world as well as in this world. Xerxes proclaims:

> If you think: "May I be happy while alive and may I become blessed when dead!" then behave according to the law which Ahura Mazda established and worship Ahura Mazda according to truth, with barsom in the hands, he will both be happy while alive and blessed when dead.

More than six centuries later, the great magus Kirdir affirms exactly the same doctrine:

> He who sees this inscription [= Naqsh-e Rajab 13–22] and reads it, may he be generous and truthful toward the gods and the lords and his own soul, as I have been, so that this osseous body of his may have fame and prosperity, and that osseous soul of his may have blessedness. . . . He who does well and practices good deeds, may his osseous soul . . . have blessedness like I, Kirdir had.

Moreover we find in the Avesta, in the Vendidad 5.61–62, a very similar thought:

> If these Mazdayasnians . . . liver this departed one, then neither will he be a follower of order [while] alive, nor will he partake of the Best Being [when] dead.

This doctrine is optimistic inasmuch as belief in another life is clearly affirmed, but one can obtain it only if one respects Asha (order) established by gods and the power of kings; moreover, one must respect Truth, as well, by rejecting Lie.

Journey of the soul after death. After death, the undying soul *(ruwān)* lies close to the body for three days and nights, during which a ritual must be accomplished and all that is terribly polluting must be kept away from the corpse. Then the soul undertakes its journey to the world beyond and follows the right path that leads to paradise. It is helped by its *daēnā*, the immortal soul that comes to meet it in the shape of a seductive maiden if the man was just, but in the shape of a hideous old woman, if the man was destined to damnation *(druwand)*. The right way, mentioned by Darius the Great (died 486 BCE) as well as in the Gathas of Zarathustra (Yasna 53), leads to the Bridge of the Piler, which is guarded by two dogs accompanying the *daēnā*. The bridge is, in all Mazdean traditions, the critical point of access to paradise. Before the bridge is assembled the court of the gods, composed of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, Vaiiu, Mithra, Sraosha, and Rasnu, weigh the merits of the departed soul on golden scales and decide whether to grant it the right to cross the bridge. The bridge becomes larger for the just, but as narrow and as sharp as a sword blade for the damned, who cannot cross it and fall irretrievably into hell.

Extraterrestrial journeys. Iranians sought to know what was after death. They could undertake "shamanistic" practices, as attested in the Book of Arda Viraz (9th century CE) and in the description of a vision of the world beyond narrated by the magus Kirdir (perhaps end of the 3rd century CE), who relates in his rock inscriptions

vant the Branch. . . . And I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day" (Zech. 3.8–9). However, it is God, and not God's servant, the Branch, who removes the guilt.

Yet, there are two cases where a human can atone for others by his own death or suffering. The first case is the expiatory death of the high priest in Num. 35. According to this law, a person who killed someone unintentionally should flee to a city of refuge and "must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; but after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession" (35.28). Thus the death of the high priest serves here as an expiatory act for this slayer. The high priest atones for the whole community in his life. His death (i.e., probably his natural death) also has expiatory significance.

The other example is the suffering servant in Second Isaiah. The servant is a humiliated figure: "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53.3). It is said of the servant: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . . We have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (53.4–6). It is an old debate whether the servant is a unique person or a collective figure. In any case, it is clear that we have here the phenomenon of vicarious suffering that atones for sins. It is important to note that the servant does not appear here as a redeemer or savior of the Israelite nation in the political sense. He is not going to fight against the nations or to liberate Israel from captivity. He is passive: "Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter" (53.7).

The notion of a Messiah or a savior who atones for his people appears for the first time in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the composition known as the Damascus Document we read: "And this is the explication of the rules by which they shall be governed until the rise of the anointed of Aaron and Israel, and he will atone for their iniquity better than through meal and sin offerings" (Damascus Document 14.18–19 and 4Q266 frag. 10 1.12–13). Thus, according to this text, the expiatory force of the Messiah is stronger than that of sacrifice. Yet, it is not said here by what means the Messiah will atone. In another scroll, the Hodayot or Thanksgiving Hymns, there is a unique psalm known as the Self-Glorification Hymn. The speaker of this hymn describes himself as the suffering servant: "[And who] has been despised like [me? And who] has been rejected of man like me? . . . [And who] compares with m[e in enduring evil]?" (4QH^c ftags. 1–2). In the following hymn is a lively description of the time of salvation that includes the saying "iniquity ends" (4QH^a frag. 7 2.6). Is it possible that the end of iniquity is connected with the suffering servant figure, the speaker of the first hymn?

Finally, in the document known as Pesher Melchizedek, we meet the divine redeemer Melchizedek. Like the high priest of Lev. 16, he expiates for his people at the eschatological Day of Atonement. The metaphor used for the eschatological atonement is taken from the laws of the seventh and the Jubilee years in the Pentateuch (Lev. 25.10; Deut. 15.1): "And liberty shall be proclaimed to them, to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities" (11QMelchizedek 2.6).

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Anatolia

"Sins," whether committed willfully or accidentally, aroused the displeasure of the divine and could manifest themselves in pollution or impurity adhering to an individual. Sources of accidental or unwillful impurity included sorcery, stumbling upon an unclean object or location, or unknowingly transgressing a taboo. The maintenance of ritual purity was particularly important for those working within and around the temple precincts, but even for the average individual, potential ritual defilement, stemming from several unavoidable sources, had to be reckoned with. Once pollution had accrued to the individual, from whatever direction it may have come, it had to be dealt with by magico-ritual means.

The incomplete nature of the texts makes a reconstruction of purity rules difficult. Where there is better evidence, as in the categories of birth and pregnancy, we see clear purity-related restrictions on behavior. Elsewhere we may assume that bodily emissions were probably defiling to some extent, and certainly to differing extents depending upon who one was (and how often one came into contact with the gods). But by taking the proper measures, matters of bodily defilement could be controlled with minimal fuss. Much information is undoubtedly lacking; it is clear, however, that failure to maintain these purity rules was one way of willfully bringing trouble upon oneself.

Some texts indicate that sexual intercourse was considered defiling, but also that ritual washing in the morning after intercourse occurred was sufficient to nullify its defiling effects (KUB 15.36 1.11–13 with duplicates; KUB 13.4 3.68–74 with duplicates). Death was the penalty for failing to cleanse oneself after sex and prior to entering the sanctuary of the god. The emission of semen itself is never singled out, however, as the defiling element, as in the Hebrew Bible.

Military rituals designed to purify the army do not indicate that the purification is for uncleanness acquited through contact with blood. Nor is the blood of sacrificial victims treated in any special way. The ritual for the relocation of the Goddess of the Night uses blood to purify the statue and cella of the deity (KUB 29.4 4.28–40). The same meaning applies to the blood used in a purificatory birth ritual to counter a bad omen (KBo 5.1 1.25–27). However, in ritual incantations, blood is listed among other evils to be eliminated. The blood in such cases should probably be taken as referring to murder or bloodshed, so that the blood itself is not the defiling element, but the evil act it represents. There is no indication that the Hittites feared menstruation or imbued it with any supernatural significance. Nor is there any evidence that they required a complex set of purificatory rituals to cleanse the woman or anyone with whom she had had contact. Such rituals may well have existed, but if they did, evidence of them is lacking.

A festival marking the onset of a pregnancy is known to have been conducted, as were monthly rites during the pregnancy in honor of the mother-goddesses. Purificatory rites and offerings for and by the woman were performed as well. Dietary and sexual restrictions were incumbent upon the expectant mother. The sexual restrictions, however, did not apply, it appears, until the seventh month of the pregnancy (KBo 17.65 obverse 5). One birth ritual indicates that while the husband may continue to live with his wife during her pregnancy, they must eat using separate utensils and at separate tables (KBo 17.65 obverse 20–23 with duplicates). The husband also had to undergo some purificatory measures according to this text.

Directly following the birth, an incantation was spoken to remove evil from the newborn and to draw blessings upon it. Purificatory rites for the mother and the child are attested, the latter sometimes involving washing the mouth of the child. Further purificatory rites were performed periodically during the days and months following the birth. The birth was followed by a period of ritual separation of the mother and child from the community. A ceremonial reentry took place three months after the birth for a boy child and four months for a girl. There is no evidence of a midwife's association with birth causing her to be defiled in any extranormal way. The scribes could have omitted mention of such defilement, and purification after performing a birth ritual could have been automatic and assumed.

The act of spitting in ritual contexts served to purify the body and to pollute that to which it became attached. Spittle (Hittite *išḫalli*) was therefore frequently used in purificatory rituals. Spittle was also an effective counter to sorcery, nullifying its effects. It is difficult to say whether the spittle was unclean because the person it came from was unclean or because all bodily emissions were considered unclean.

Dung and urine were a common source of filth in towns, to the extent that the image is used in a magic incantation (KBo 10.45 4.37–41). But there is no indication of personal defilement through contact with or production of feces and urine. Urine is used in ritual magic, although toward what effect is not clear. A passage from the Instructions for the Temple Personnel tells us that eating excrement and drinking urine was an unpleasant prospect, but not that ritual defilement was in any way forthcoming (KUB 13.4 3.64–68).

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Iran

Iranian religions in antiquity represented purity (Avestan *yaozhdāh*, Middle Persian *yōẖdarīh*) as a notion fundamental to individual and collective existence—in corporeal and spiritual terms—because of its perceived centrality in averting chaos. For ancient Iranians, purity was connected to righteousness and consequently to holiness as a manifestation of order, distinguished from pollution, falsehood, and sin, which were thought to epitomize disorder.

Zarathustra, the devotional poet whose followers established Mazda worship or Zoroastrianism as the major faith of ancient Iran, personified this dichotomy in a pair of primal entities called Spenta Mainyu, the holy spirit or hypostasis of Ahura Mazda (or Ohrmazd the wise lord), and Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, the destructive or evil spirit. He labeled them the "better one and the worse one," "the holier one . . . and the evil one" (Yasna 30.3; 45.2). Zoroastrian or Mazdean doctrine in late antiquity separated order (Avestan *asha*, Old Persian *arta*, Middle Persian *ard*, also comprehended as good or the truth, from chaos (Avestan *drug, druj*, Old Persian *draugа*, Middle Persian *druz*), also comprehended as evil or the lie. Eventually, Ahura Mazda came to be regarded as the absolutely righteous creator—a pure, rational, and omniscient deity—who did not, indeed could not, produce any form of disorder (Shkand Gumānīg Wizār 8.101–10). As a consequence, all events that disturbed order were seen as pollution (Avestan *irimant*, Middle Persian *rēmanīh*), hence sinful (Avestan *vīnas*, Middle Persian *wināh/wīnāh* [to be destroyed]—necessitating penance (Avestan *paitita*, Middle Persian *petīt*) and repentance (Middle Persian *pashēmānīh*) so that absolution occurred with the person's soul turning away from evil.

Bad thoughts (Avestan *dushmata*, Middle Persian *dushmat*), bad words (Avestan *duzhūxta*, Middle Persian *dushūxt*), and bad deeds (Avestan *duzhvarshta*, Middle Persian *dushxwarsht*)—including impious ideas, lies, and harmful actions—were seen as increasing chaos. The far-reaching negative consequences of nega-

which are based on parenetic persuasion as opposed to threat of sanctions, were scarcely implemented in Persian and Hellenistic times. The first attested Jubilee was in 164/163 BCE, while Jewish documents of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE as well as the New Testament consider the taking of interest to be a normal procedure.

Parallel to and partially in dialogue with Hellenistic philosophy, postexilic wisdom literature deals with the problems of happiness and innocence. The divine speeches in Job emphasize the role of God as creator and the superiority of God over the powers of chaos that find their expression in innocent suffering. The attempt to mediate between the absolute superiority of God, expressed in mythical terms, and the individual experience of suffering in the fairy-tale-like epilogue to Job is not convincing, since this solution can be made null and void by the opposite experience.

The Book of Qoheleth (3rd century BCE) undermines the association between conduct and happiness that is typical of a synthetic view of life. In dialogue with contemporary Hellenistic philosophy, it teaches that happiness cannot be understood as independence with respect to all external goods (the Epicurean ideal of *ataraxia* [imperturbability]), but rather that these should be understood as gracious gifts of the creator, God, and therefore not bound to the moral behavior of the human recipient.

Ben Sira introduces the thought that the doing of the good deed itself constitutes happiness (Sir. 10.22, 24) and thus approaches Stoic thinking. Only apocalyptic literature and its understanding of the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12.1–3) can answer the question about the successful life of those who did not receive just treatment in their existence on earth.

Hellenistic, Greek-speaking Judaism walked the narrow path between the preservation of the Jewish identity and assimilation to an alien environment. For this purpose, the Torah was reinterpreted, and, at the same time, its ethical superiority over Hellenistic philosophy was asserted by Aristobulus, a philosopher who wrote in Alexandria in the 2nd century BCE. The roughly contemporary Letter of Aristeas takes the Torah as a *nomos,* whose goal is the happy life, thereby assimilating the Torah to Hellenistic categories of thought. This development becomes clear when one considers the reinterpretation of the Hebrew term *ṣĕdāqâ* (loyalty to the community) by the Greek word *dikaiosynē* (in the sense of just distribution) and of the Hebrew word *bĕrît* (covenant) by the Greek word *diathēkē* (testament), taken from the Egyptian-Hellenistic laws of inheritance. In the final speeches of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Torah is interpreted as moral code, and the Stoic ethos and the biblical *tôrôt* are identified in an ascetic lifestyle. The Wisdom of Solomon follows the Stoa in interpreting the Torah as a manifestation of the order of creation that can be grasped by human reason.

In contrast to Hellenistic Judaism, rabbinic Judaism struggles only indirectly with contemporary philosophical ethics. In light of the Mosaic Torah and its status as a criterion for all ethics, natural law is only of very limited importance. Rational explanation of the commandments is not considered normative in light of the revealed character of the Torah (Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin* 21b). Also, the hierarchical ordering and systematizing of ethics, on the basis of a principle such as love of the neighbor, is alien to rabbinic Judaism (*Sifra* 2.4 on Lev. 19.18). Sanctity of life, charitable deeds, and the protection of human life are the basic rabbinic values in individual ethics.

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Anatolia

The land of Hatti belonged to the gods; the king was merely their steward. The sun-god was god of justice and of kingship, and the king, who dressed in the sun-god's regalia, was the head of the system of justice on earth and was directly responsible to the sun-god for the quality of justice he dispensed as ruler and judge. King Khattushili I deposed a crown prince because "he was cold. He was heartless. He did not shed tears. . . . If he shows no sympathy when commanded by the king, how then can he show sympathy on his own toward Hattusha?" Anecdotes from the reign of Khattushili I bearing moral lessons were collected during the reign of his successor, perhaps for this young king's instruction. Khattushili himself, as well as his successors, often used history to illustrate the consequences of morality or immorality.

There are also many texts instructing officials in correct behavior, sometimes moral and sometimes strictly bureaucratic. The king's provincial governors and officers doubled as circuit court judges. In the king's instructions to them they are told to investigate cases thoroughly, not to take bribes, not to make the case of a superior win or one of an inferior lose, to pay particular attention to widows and the powerless, and to satisfy the litigants. It was also up to the governor to keep his eyes on war captives resettled in localities and to provide them with temporary tax breaks and the wherewithal to start a new life. Locally, justice was in the hands of the town or village elders, whose decisions could be appealed upward.

As part of his duty to justice, the king compiled tablets collecting some two hundred laws, which were modified by successive rulers. These discuss homicide, assault, abduction, theft, arson, contracts, land tenure,

abuses of hired animals and property, sorcery and damage due to magical pollution, rejection of a royal verdict, marriage, inheritance, sexual offenses, commodity prices, wages, and rents.

The most serious offenses seen in the Hittite laws are offenses against the gods. These would be tried before the king or the governor, and, depending on the custom of the locality, the guilty would be executed or banished. One of these is the crime of *ḫurkel*, illicit sexual relations with one's mother, daughter, son, sister-in-law, mother-in-law, female cousin, brother's wife while one's brother is living, stepmother while one's father is living, knowingly with free sisters and their mother, and with a cow or sheep. These rules are clearly a reflection of the society's aversion to such practices. Interestingly, sex with a horse or mule was not *ḫurkel*, but made one permanently impure. Although apparently not *ḫurkel*, the rape of a woman, in such a circumstance that her struggle could not be heard, was a capital offense for the man, while anything that happened in her house was assumed to be consensual and a capital offense for her. A husband could, of course, kill his wife and her lover caught *in flagrante delicto*, but he could not ask the king to kill one and not the other.

Someone who caused an innocent person to be executed would in turn be executed. In earliest times, if anyone sowed seed on a field that had already been sown, the sower was torn apart by two teams of oxen, which were then themselves killed. Already early on, however, this baroque penalty was reduced to a sacrifice of three sheep and a reconsecration of the field, in line with other reductions in legal penalties. Such reforms also eliminated fines, so that penalties paid by criminals all compensated the victim or his or her heirs. Members of a temple staff (Instructions for Temple Officials; cf. *ANET* 207–10) were warned that "he who embezzles from a god, dies" and "whoever commits or allows a misdeed during his watch dies and cannot be pardoned." But since texts that describe such things actually happening do not mention an execution, the gods presumably were expected to exact the penalty themselves (as other sections of the same text make clear).

In early days, at least, malfeasance in office could result in execution. Losers in dynastic struggles sometimes wound up assassinated or executed, but some kings emphasized that this was wrong and they instead internally exiled their defeated opponents and gave them a house and ample food and drink to live on. Extradited political refugees were also not to be executed.

The laws stipulated that a monetary payment be given to the heirs of murder victims, as was the case with many other crimes, but the heirs also had the right to demand the culprit's death. The most serious form of homicide was killing a merchant for the merchant's goods, followed by killing someone during a quarrel and accidental killing. Shedding blood was an offense against the gods, as well as against humanity, and the gods could be expected to exact their own revenge, particularly if a ritual of expiation of bloodshed was not performed. Causing a woman to miscarry required a ten-shekel payment (equivalent to ten sheep) if she was near term, but five shekels if it was her fifth month. If someone injured and temporarily incapacitated a person, the guilty person had to pay the victim for the assault, provide a substitute to work the land until the victim recovered, and also pay the medical bills. If someone kept another alive during a famine, the individual who had been sustained, if a free person, had to give his or her savior a person by way of compensation; if the sustained individual were a slave, he or she had to pay his or her savior ten shekels.

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Iran

Ethics or moral values (Avestan *pantay*; compare Old Persian *pathi*, Middle Persian *pand*) and law (Avestan and Old Persian *dâta*, Middle Persian *dâd*) were entwined with religious and secular notions of how people should live their lives—individually and communally—in the empires of ancient Iran. Ethical codes and legal stipulations would be viewed as means of ensuring that individuals "do not stray from the correct path" and that "the mightier not strike, not destroy, the weak" causing social chaos, as noted by the Achaemenian King of Kings Darius I (522–486 BCE) in royal inscriptions (Naqsh-e Rostam a.58–60 and Susa e.39–41, respectively). The influence of Mazdaism or Zoroastrianism on the development of ethics and law in Iran during antiquity is not surprising. Words attributed to the devotional poet Zarathustra refer to "truth and good thought" (Yasna 28.10–11). Ethics and law fell under "the rules that Mazda has laid down for good behavior" (30.11) for facilitating discrimination between order and chaos, good and evil, during daily life—thereby ensuring that faithful observers attained the best existence after death. But Zoroastrianism was not the only influence on the development of ethics and law among the early Iranians. Morals and legal injunctions also were assimilated from the Elamites, with whom the Iranians coexisted, and eventually absorbed, in the 1st millennium BCE, and from the Jewish community in the postexilic period.

Greek notions of reason as a precondition for a moral

its penetration of humans; the divine spark and its residence in human mental capacity; the significance of analogy; and the divine being made manifest in many attributes. Most surprisingly, one hears that God did not create death, which sprang from the devil's envy, and that the soul is immortal. Here, too, one discovers other peripheral teachings within Jewish literature of the Bible: a mystical inclination, natural theology, and ridicule of idolatry (explained as a way of venerating officials, expressing grief over a lost loved one, or a form of aesthetics).

The gnomic spectrum of wisdom, with precedents in Proverbs and Sirach, is taken up by Pseudo-Phocylides (early 1st century CE), who emphasizes Hellenistic virtues, the afterlife, and monotheism. Above all, he spiritualizes ritual, explaining the various actions mandated in the Torah as a means of purifying the soul. The best-known religious teacher of his day, the Alexandrian Philo, represents the other end of the spectrum: philosophical reflection. Probably a product of Greek-style education in the gymnasium, as well as a member of the upper class, Philo emphasized the Logos as an intermediate reality between the giver of Torah and the created universe. He understood the literal level of the biblical text in terms of allegorical prefigurement; the stories about Abraham, Jacob, Esau, Sarah, and others represent virtues rather than mere events on the historical level. Even the sabbath, in his view, is properly observed when devoted to the study of philosophy. With the aid of the divine Logos, the worshiper endeavored to ascend mystically, becoming like God.

To some extent, two figures of the 2nd century BCE, Ben Sira and Aristobulus, paved the way for such speculation by identifying the Torah with wisdom, denying any conflict between the truth revealed at Sinai and that discovered by use of reason. Nevertheless, not even Philo believed in autonomous reason; in some sense, all knowledge was understood as divine gift, a complement of the human capacity for reasoning.

Rabbinic Judaism, as well as other forms of Judaism such as that attested at Qumran, continued to reflect on divine justice in light of life's anomalies and on the afterlife (denied in Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, and Sirach, but affirmed frequently in later texts, e.g., Dan. 12.2; 2 Macc. 7; *2 Esdras; 1 Enoch* 37–71 [= Similitudes of Enoch]; and 4Q Instruction; see also Death, the Afterlife, and Other Last Things). The Pharisaic rabbis expended much energy on devising hermeneutical principles for interpreting classical but troublesome texts and carried on a tradition of natural theology (as did the convert to Christianity, Paul, in Romans). At the same time, an oral tradition in rabbinic literature offers a vital link to a revered past.

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J.L.C.

Anatolia

Among the Hittites, the human-divine relationship was one of servant and master. Human ambition could achieve no greater purpose than to serve the gods well, as a good servant served a master. Such a servant could hope to enjoy a life free of illness and hardship. Humans and deities also depended on one another for survival. The gods needed the sustenance provided by humans in daily cult. At the same time, humans were dependent on the beneficence of the deities, who controlled the forces of nature that ensured agricultural bounty and the growth of the herds. Thus King Murshili II (1321–1295 BCE) reminds the gods: "These few bakers of offering bread and libation bearers who [are still here]—if they perish [of the plague], no one will any longer give you offering bread or libation" (Beckman 1997: 157). The series of compositions known as the "missing deity" myths included ritual tools for coping with deities who failed to maintain their role in this symbiosis adequately (see also Myth and Sacred Narratives). If a deity left his or her post out of anger or confusion, the natural world could not function. But a ritual, performed by a human practitioner in the guise of the goddess of magic, Kamrushepa, was effective in restoring the deity to his or her place in the cosmos, and, with him or her, the cosmic balance, as in this instance from the Disappearance of Telipinu: "The mist released the windows. The smoke released the house. The altars were in harmony again with the gods. . . . Then the mother looked after her child. The sheep looked after her lamb. The cow looked after her calf. And Telipinu too [looked after] the king and queen and took account of them in respect to life, vigor, and longevity" (Hoffner 1998: 17–18).

Other than myth, humans had recourse to various forms of communication with the divine realm. Prayers form a distinct genre in Hittite literature and indicate a personal relationship with the gods, at least for the royal family. Communal meals with a deity in his or her temple also served to strengthen the bond between gods and humans. And when direct answers were needed to direct questions, oracles could be sought by various means. Thus Murshili writes in one of his prayers, asking for abeyance of a plague, "[Let the matter on account of which] people have been dying [in Khatti either be established through oracle], or [let me see] it [in a dream, or let a prophet] . . . speak [of it]" (Beckman 1997: 157).

Within official Hittite state theology, the king held a central place as intermediary between the mortal and

the divine realms. While everyone had access to the gods through local places of worship, the king was the focal point of the state religion, serving to represent humankind before the gods and, as chief priest, being responsible on behalf of humankind for maintaining proper service to the gods. Thus, the worlds of gods and humans met in the person of the king. The king was identified to an extent with the sun-god, and both the king and queen had a special relationship with the Sun-goddess of Arinna, supreme goddess of the land.

Hittite priests received instruction in the proper maintenance of the cult and in proper conduct befitting their status within the temple hierarchy. But their education, so far as we know, did not include scribal training. The recording, preservation, and dissemination of sacred knowledge and tradition appears to have depended instead on the scribes attached to the palace and/or temples, many of whom were imported from Mesopotamia. Thus, sacred knowledge was in no way a monopoly of the temple priesthood, and the lack of scribal training within the priesthood may help to explain why theological discussions, in our sense of that term, are absent from the surviving religious documents.

No single divinity embodied goodness, and by the same token, neither was there a divinity who epitomized or explained the existence of evil. As one half of a cosmic duality, evil had no place in Hittite thought. The gods ruled by *para ḫandatar*, a concept that embodied divine justice as well as the power to impose it. By this attribute, the gods protected deserving humans—especially kings—from misfortune. Evil, or what might today be called "negative energy," had many sources in Hittite theology, including malicious gossip, murder, impurity, curse, threat, and sin. When bad things happened to good people, the cause was sought either in some accidental sin or transgression on the part of the afflicted individual or in the form of a sorcerer, demon, or angry deity.

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Iran

It is well known that it was the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz who coined the modern term *theodicy* (French *théodicée*) in order to refer to his theory of God's justification in view of (or in spite of) the physical and moral evil in this world. Leibniz's *Essais de théodicée* were published in 1710. It may be less well known, however, that Leibniz's theory ultimately was a reaction to ancient Iranian religion and its fountainhead, Zarathustra. As a matter of fact, the *Essais* grew out of conversations that Leibniz held with the electress Sophie Charlotte in Berlin during the summer of 1702. These conversations were about the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* that the Calvinist Pierre Bayle, who was living as a refugee in Rotterdam, had first published in 1697. A revised and enlarged second edition was published in 1702.

Far from being a simple dictionary, however, Bayle's *Dictionnaire* contained many articles that were perceived as highly provocative and that stimulated some of the major philosophical debates of the 18th century. One of these articles was dedicated to the "disgraceful sect" of the Manicheans. Here, Bayle declared that the Manichean doctrine of two primeval beings, a good and a bad one, was almost impossible to refute by rational arguments alone. In order to illustrate this point, in a famous note to the article, Bayle set up an imaginary debate between the monist Melissus (a student of the Greek philosopher Parmenides) and Zarathustra, whom Bayle regarded as a pre-Manichean champion of the doctrine of two principles (which later, in the course of the debate around Bayle's article, came to be referred to as dualism). Bayle shows that neither Melissus nor Zarathustra would ultimately succeed in convincing his counterpart—that dualism, in other words, is irrefutable by rational means alone. Leibniz, in turn, tried to banish that dangerous thought by developing a metaphysical optimism that was able, he hoped, to vindicate the grace, wisdom, and justice of God.

In contrast to that, the Oxford orientalist Thomas Hyde, in what was the first-ever history of ancient Iranian religion, published in 1700 (i.e., shortly after the first edition of Bayle's *Dictionnaire*), tried to put Zarathustra and ancient Iranian religion in a different light altogether. Hyde argued that Zarathustra was a former student of a Hebrew prophet who sought to return ancient Iranian religion to its pristine "orthodoxy" (i.e., monotheism). Thus, in Hyde's scheme, ancient Iranian religion was some sort of a duplicate of the Jewish tradition. No wonder, then, that Hyde's Zarathustra was able to predict the birth of the Messiah.

Ever since these early stages, the question of dualism has been one of the hot issues of the modern scholarly debate about Zoroastrianism. While there certainly is a good dose of dualism already in the Gathas, the ancient hymns that many scholars attribute to Zarathustra, the idea that this dualism was the conscious answer of a philosopher-prophet (i.e., Zarathustra) who had pondered over the problem of evil seems somewhat far-fetched and out of focus from a historical point of view. However, available sources confirm that in a much later phase, when Zoroastrianism was facing the theologies of Judaism, Christianity, and—later even more impor-

antimonarchic traditions in the Books of Samuel. On the one hand, a royal theology developed in support of the Davidic Dynasty as the means of mediation between YHWH and Israel. This ideology was concretized as a special covenant with David. The concomitant practice was obedience to the state and celebration of its religious efficacy. On the other hand, the tribal ideology and practice of covenants that resisted concentration and legitimation of power in state rule held sway among Israelites who resisted state power. This resistance to the state on religious grounds is evident in many prophets and in the final shape of the Deuteronomistic history in Deuteronomy through Kings.

The overriding perspective of the Hebrew Bible subordinates politics to religion, but the reasons for this subordination and the precise modes of subordination varied considerably over the centuries. The initiating impulse to privilege religion over politics seems to have risen from the clash between tribalism and state rule in which an established state religion stood in tension with local and regional forms of worship. These tensions were exacerbated by state policies that threatened the economic and social integrity and welfare of the very people who resisted the royal religious cult and ideology. When a realistic assessment is made of the conduct of the Israelite states, they appear to have been little different religiously or politically from other states in their environment. All of them buttressed state rule with religious cult and ideology, and all of them permitted diverse forms of religion as long as they did not entail political rebellion. Devotees of the cult of YHWH throughout the monarchic era employed many practices that the Deuteronomic reform attempted to prohibit in the late 7th century but that were not eliminated until the Judahite restoration from the late 6th century onward.

The decisive impulse in subordinating politics to religion was the colonial circumstances in which the Hebrew Bible was compiled and edited in its final form. In that context, Judahites had no sovereign political power, being subject to Persian and Hellenistic empires. Their colonial plight was a result of the failure of native Israelite political institutions to protect them from the great empires. Reluctantly accepting submission to foreign powers, the principal energy of Judahites was invested in culture and religion as the secure foundation for social cohesion and group identity. Their backward look over the long history of ancient Israel downplayed the role of the state, which, from their perspective, had been successful only when it followed the form of Yahwism that they themselves now practiced and that they understood to have been in force from ancient times—even though their preexilic forebears had repeatedly and wilfully violated the obligatory laws. This accounts for the treatment of the era of Moses as the golden age of Israelite life, from which stemmed the authentic regime of law and covenant and which alone could secure the community's survival. The law of Moses, in its various literary embodiments, became the incontestable lifeline of Israel, which Israelite state rule had nearly severed. Nonetheless, how that body of diverse laws was to be applied to contemporary religious and sociopolitical practice remained a matter of continuing dispute.

Although political activism was sharply circumscribed, there were strong impulses in restored Judah to hope for, and perhaps eventually to attain, political sovereignty in which religion could be given the fullest possible expression. This impulse lay behind the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids and the two uprisings against Rome. The success of the Maccabean revolt in preserving traditional religion did not issue in long-term political success. The ensuing Hasmonean Dynasty, while officially Yahwistic, was seen by many Judahites as religiously apostate and socially repressive, to such an extent that Rome was at first welcomed as a relief from their own rulers. All too soon, however, Roman rule stirred discontent, and two exhausting revolts against Rome proved to be failures. At that point, rabbinic Judaism was able to save the day, strengthening and regularizing community life by means of a mode of casuistic interpretation of the laws of Moses that updated their relevance to the new conditions. Rabbinic Judaism was highly successful in developing an apolitical, text-centered form of religion, with synagogue and rabbi-sage replacing temple and priest. In shaping the scriptural canon, apocalyptic writings that might legitimate further rebellions against Rome, Parthia, or the Sasanian Empire were discouraged. The Messiah became an otherworldy figure not to be identified with a human deliverer. Nevertheless, a restricted exercise of politics found necessary expression in the office of the patriarch (titular head of the Palestinian Jewish community) and the office of the exilarch (the comparable leader of the Babylonian Jewish community).

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Anatolia

Although the Hittite king was the chief political officer of the kingdom, many of his duties were in the religious sphere. Of particular importance was his relationship to the gods. In a fashion that parallels later Old Testament practice, the Hittite king was anointed with oil, given royal robes, crowned, and addressed with royal titles. The king was invested by the gods with powers of almost mythical proportions: "His body they made of tin,

His head of lion with eagle eyes and lion teeth." To his subjects who addressed him as "My Sun," he was the representative of the sun-god on earth. Great kingship in Hittite Anatolia was thus a derived theocracy. It was bestowed on the ruler by the "Gods of Kingship," that is, the two supreme gods of the pantheon, the storm-god and the sun-goddess.

The relation of the king to the gods could be expressed in different ways: he was either their governor, their priest, or their adopted child. The idea underlying the first image is that the gods entrusted "their" land to the king in much the same way as the Hittite king would hand part of his empire to a governor or vassal. Within the state religion, the ruler was also the highest priest of those same gods, and this priesthood was synonymous with kingship. Secular and religious power were in the same hands, therefore. In the third metaphor—that of the child—the king's originally human nature was not denied, but at an early stage in his life the gods "selected" the future ruler for kingship and "raised" him. The latter two metaphors are combined by King Muwattalli II (1295–1274 BCE) in his prayer to the assembly of gods: "I was a mortal while my father was priest to the Sun-goddess of Arinna and to all the gods. My father begat me but the Storm-god of Lightning took me from my mother, raised me, and made me priest to the Sun-goddess of Arinna and all the gods by putting me in kingship over Hatti-land." The human nature of the king is also implied in the expression used for a king's (or queen's) death: "becoming a god." Another image used for the king—this time expressing his relationship to his people—is that of shepherd (this image is well known from Mesopotamia as well). It is only occasionally found in Hittite texts but may be more prominent iconographically insofar as the image of the king as the sun-god often includes the so-called *lituus* (Hittite *kalmuš*), if the latter can be equated with a shepherd's crooked staff.

The special position of the king as both a political and a religious person is reflected by the emphasis that the texts place on his purity. His person was surrounded with the utmost care by personnel imbued with the importance of this. Defilement of the royal person could have implications for the entire country, as the land's fertility and prosperity were directly contingent on that of the ruler. The same concept underlies the extensive royal funerary ritual, which seems to be focused almost exclusively on agricultural aspects. References to the king as the supreme military commander, on the other hand, seem to be missing in funerary ritual. The manner in which pollution of the royal person could have repercussions for the country is exemplified by the link that Murshili II eventually made between his father's misdeeds and the epidemic that occurred during his (i.e., Murshili II's), reign.

Royal iconography emphasizes two main themes, each of which expresses the king's closeness to the divine world. The king and the sun-god are often portrayed identically, wearing a long robe and a tight-fitting cap and carrying the *lituus*. Alternatively, the king can be portrayed in more warriorlike attire: bare-breasted, wearing a pointed helmet and a short kilt and girdle from which a sword hangs down, and carrying other weapons. The helmet can even include "horns of divinity," as known from Mesopotamian iconography. When portrayed in this way, the king resembled all gods (except for the sun-god), but foremost the storm-god.

The ideology seems to have been fully developed already during the Old Hittite period (ca. 1650–1500). Most of the texts dealing with kingship date from that time and were regularly copied down to the very end of the empire in the early 12th century. A possible change in the royal ideology may have occurred during the second half of the 13th century during the reign of Tudkhaliya IV (ca. 1240–1210 BCE), but it may have been the result of developments introduced earlier. It may have been Muwattalli II who broke with a consistently aniconic tradition. This change could stand in relation to religious reforms during his reign. He is the first king of whom lifelike images are attested both on sealings and rock reliefs. Although there are in general no Hittite reliefs that can be dated prior to Muwattalli with certainty, there is a long tradition of royal seals from the Old Kingdom onward, up to and including Muwattalli II's father Murshili II (ca. 1318–1295 BCE), which lack iconic portrayals. The observed modeling of the king's image after divine examples may have led to a growing identification of the ruler with the gods, culminating in Tudkhaliya's demand for offerings to his person during his lifetime. The expansion of Hattusha attributable to him, the renaming of the city as "Hattusha-Tudkhaliya-city," and his use of the title "King of the Universe" are fully concomitant with such a development. Another phenomenon that existed before Muwattalli II but which became more prominent in his reign and gained in importance afterward is that of the patron deity. His father Murshili II had special reverence for the Sun-goddess of Arinna but the devotion shown by Muwattalli to the Storm-god of Lightning was unparalleled. It is likely to have been the reason for moving the residence from Hattusha to the as-yet-unknown site of Tarhuntasa in south-central Anatolia, where he established a new capital fully dedicated to this deity. This trend is sometimes considered a step toward henotheism.

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ably be connected with the core of the Book of Deuteronomy. By centralizing all sacrificial cult in the temple at Jerusalem, it effected the closure of the local sanctuaries (Deut. 12), which still existed after Hezekiah's reform and the Assyrian invasions. Their traditional cult installations, the sacred pillar and sacred pole, were officially forbidden (16.21–22). Because of this, most family cult, which traditionally was carried out at the hill shrines, became impossible. The families had to come to Jerusalem when they wanted to celebrate their ceremonial meals or to fulfill their vows. Deuteronomy allowed profane slaughtering of animals outside Jerusalem (12.15–16, 21–24). Thus the effect of controlling all cultic activities in the country was a far-reaching secularization of daily life.

In order to integrate family religion into the official religion of YHWH, the reformers created new rituals for it: dedicating his first fruits in Jerusalem, the father had to confess Israel's official salvation history (Deut. 26). The Passover feast, which had traditionally been celebrated by families at home, was redesigned as a pilgrimage feast, which the families should celebrate now in the central sanctuary, together with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in order to commemorate the exodus (16.1–8).

The reformers tried hard to make sure that no god other than YHWH was venerated on all levels of society. Every prophet or dreamer who recommended the worship of another god to the people in order to ward off a certain danger had to be put to death, even if his prophecies proved to have been correct (Deut. 12.32–13.5 [= 13.1–6 Hebrew]). If a relative encouraged someone to venerate another god, one was obliged to institute legal proceedings against that relative (13.6–11 [= 13.7–12 Hebrew]). If a whole Judean settlement was led astray to worship other gods, it was to be banned and burned (13.12–19 [= 13.13–18 Hebrew]). Thus the Deuteronomic reformers wanted to establish an effective religious control over all the society. To avoid abuses, they required careful investigations and restricted sentences of death to cases proven by the testimony of two or three witnesses (17.2–7).

Even the king was subordinated to YHWH's Torah (Deut. 17.14–20). Practically speaking, control was to be the responsibility of local judges and elders; in difficult cases, a new supreme court, consisting of priests and officers, would declare the final verdict (17.8–13). Moreover, the reformers introduced a new idea of covenant, modeled on political vassal treaties and understood as mutual self-commitment of YHWH and his people. This was a quasi-juridical form of religious self-commitment, which again internalized religious control. Everybody who belonged to the covenant was obliged to live up to the Torah of Moses voluntarily.

Under the reign of Josiah, the covenant probably became the constitution of the Judean state (2 Kings 23.1–3) for a short time (622–609 BCE). But even when the reform failed after Josiah's death and the Judean state broke down, the covenant became the basis of the communal self-control that formed the characteristic shape of Judaism.

Postexilic Judaism. The situation during the postexilic period can be illustrated by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Both Ezra and Nehemiah carried out reforms in Jerusalem under the authorization of the Persian king. Nehemiah's reform is dated to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (445–444 BCE). Ezra's is dated to the seventh year of Artaxerxes, which could refer either to the reign of Artaxerxes I or II, and so either to 458 or 398 BCE. The later date is more plausible. In any case, both reformers seem to have encountered similar problems. Nehemiah obliged the people to make "a firm agreement in writing" (9.38 NRSV [= 10.1 Hebrew]), promising to refrain from intermarriage and to observe the law in all its details. When Ezra came to Jerusalem, he was shocked to find that Judean men had married women from "the peoples of the lands" (9.2). He assembled the people in heavy rain and demanded that they divorce their foreign wives and send them away. Only a few people opposed him. The rest sent the women away with their children and made sacrifices to atone for their guilt (Ezra 10). The high priests who ruled Jerusalem during the Hellenistic period, however, do not seem to have been so strict in their observance of the law. There was widespread acceptance of Hellenistic customs during the years preceding the Maccabean revolt (168–164 BCE).

During the Hellenistic period, Jews who wanted to ensure strict observance of the law formed their own sectarian communities. The community known to us from the Dead Sea Scrolls (probably the Essenes) had its own procedures for admission, discipline, and expulsion. We know that this community had some problems with the rulers of the day (the Hasmonean kings), but the sect was not suppressed. The Pharisees had their own separate rules and regulations. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Pharisaic view of Judaism prevailed. Yet it is apparent that the rabbinic authorities did not impose a uniform theology. One of the characteristics of the rabbinic writings is that they record debates among the rabbis and preserve dissenting opinions.

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Anatolia

Given the exclusively royal focus of our corpus of Hittite texts and the predominantly official (i.e., royal, religious, or administrative) character of the archeological complexes found so far, one might easily arrive at the conclusion that religion in Anatolia was completely controlled by the state. The overwhelming majority of com-

positions belong to straightforward religious genres such as festivals, rituals, or oracles, while other, not primarily religious, texts nonetheless show a strong religious preoccupation. All sites excavated are dominated by temples accompanied by buildings of an administrative or palatial nature. Architectural structures, on the other hand, that qualify as houses are few and far between.

The Hittite state was controlled by the extended royal family, headed by the king and queen. Many, if not all, key positions—whether military, judicial, economic/administrative, or religious—were in the hands of family members, including in-laws. There is no evidence for an independent priestly class. The king and queen served as high priest and high priestess; kingship, indeed, was synonymous with priesthood. The extent to which religion was centralized is illustrated by religious compositions found in provincial centers having turned out to be largely the same as those from the capital. Hittite kings traveled the country performing religious duties in the towns they visited. Under King Tudkhaliya IV (ca. 1240–1210 BCE) a nationwide inventory of cults—sometimes described as a reorganization of cults—was undertaken. Officials were sent out to assess the temples and their cults throughout the empire. They reported back to the capital and appropriate measures then were taken, ranging from simple repairs of a leaking roof or a broken statue to changes in the cult itself. Moreover, this undertaking was not the first of its kind in Hittite history.

State taxes were likewise often levied for religious purposes. The logistics of state festivals were enormous, with large numbers of people gathering and huge quantities of foods required. The yearly cult provision of the important center of Tarhuntasa in the south, for instance, amounted to two hundred oxen and one thousand sheep. The city itself was exempted from providing this so that the burden of paying fell upon other communities.

In what might be called a very practical and politically motivated approach, state religion was very open in that it easily incorporated foreign deities of annexed territories into its pantheon. They were often assimilated to an already-known Anatolian god or added as a special hypostasis to a certain type of divinity. This combination of syncretism and incorporation led to the famous "thousand gods of Hatti" regularly invoked in the texts. As a consequence, the Hittite pantheon, with its mix of indigenous Hattic, Anatolian (Hittite-Luwian), Hurrian, and Mesopotamian (Sumerian and Assyrian-Babylonian) deities, faithfully reflects the empire's expansion and all the influences to which it had at some time been subjected. Similarly, the existence of deities worshiped by foreign powers was acknowledged, and in treaties the gods of both parties were called upon as witnesses. All of this is not to say that the Hittites had no sense of their own, Hittite gods, as opposed to foreign gods. The earliest Hittite deity attested in the text of Anitta, an 18th- or 17th-century pre-Hittite ruler, and a text that is one of the oldest Hittite texts, was simply called "Our God" and contrasted with the Hattic Halmasuit as "their god." That same text, however, gives us the first example of the typical attitude of incorporating foreign deities when Anitta built Halmasuit her own temple in Nesha, the main Hittite city prior to Hattusha. What has been called a characteristic leaning toward a kind of cultural "cosmopolitanism" is thus attested from the very start of our documentation.

So far, the extent to which the Hittite state controlled religion may seem total. On the other hand, the anxieties that many texts convey also suggest that religion often controlled the state and its ruling class, dictating their conduct and perhaps their decisions considerably. Evidence for heresies and persecution seems to be lacking. This may be taken as an argument that popular beliefs and religious practices—assuming they existed—did not seriously run counter to the official creed or were simply condoned. Alternatively, it might point to the ruling class's very powerful grip over society as a whole. The lack of information concerning religion beyond the court circles does not allow a certain answer. In oracles we find occasional examples of manipulation. In such cases, the state did use religion as a pretext to get what it wanted all along. The only thing possibly hinting at popular practices and the state's reaction to them is the explicit prohibition in the Hittite laws of unauthorized use of magic.

Finally, one should be careful not to overinterpret the official character of the sources or the preponderance of religious texts among them. They might give an overly religious impression of life in the Hittite ruling circles. In the genre most closely reflecting the daily life of the empire's administration, that, is, the letters exchanged between the king and his officials and among the officials themselves, gods or religious topics do not seem to play a role of any great importance. The gods' role there is largely restricted to anonymous ("may the gods protect you") formulas of good wishes.

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Iran

Among the civilizations of the ancient world, religion played a central role in the internal control of their populations and external control against the incursion of foreign elements thought to challenge the internal structures of societies. Although scoffers and atheists could be found in ancient civilizations, the modern concept of secularism was never a factor in the exercise of religious

ancient Israel and Mesopotamia are cited, revitalized, and even expanded with bold vigor; and on the other, newer themes are presented or invented, based on oral traditions otherwise unknown and on remarkable transformations of a host of biblical elements. Both tracks are aided by the phenomenon of a canonical corpus of sacred scripture. Its many topics and language were sifted and spliced to create new mythic forms and formulations, even as its words and images provide the authoritative anchor for independent developments or innovations. The linkage between the myths and the biblical text is a characteristic feature of rabbinic myths in their present form. Whether such links are matters of primary exegesis or secondary justification, their net effect is to give scripture new mythic dimensions.

The foundational events of the Pentateuch are of preeminent significance for rabbinic myth. The creation account in Gen. 1 is central and provides the setting for integrating pertinent mythic units from other parts of scripture, as well as traditions that survived orally (with many verbal and thematic continuities with ancient Near Eastern materials). Particularly notable are various accounts of a divine battle between the creator-god and a personified sea (cf. Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Baba Bathra* 74b–75a and Tanhuma [ed. Buber], tractate *Huggat* 1), although it is equally notable that such combats do not constitute a theomachy prior to the establishment of cosmic order but a rebellion of the waters in the course of the divine acts of creation—resisting the command to gather in certain areas, and the like. In some of these texts, the rebellious waters of Tehom were either suppressed or sealed over and lie below such sacred sites as the temple in Jerusalem. Among other mythic accounts of world origins found in rabbinic sources, one may mention the case of God throwing a stone into the watery deep (cf. Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Yoma* 54b).

The exodus from Egypt provides another foundational moment for rabbinic myth. Of particular dramatic moment are accounts of how God himself sympathetically participated in the servitude of the people (making brickwork in heaven) and was also liberated with the nation. These teachings provide poignant and powerful images of God's providential involvement with Israel's history and are linked to scriptural passages by bold exegetical elements (cf. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Bo* 14). Other myths portray the participation of God in several national exiles and promise his return with the people's redemption (ibid.). Different dramas even portray God as binding his own arm behind him for the duration of the exile, in sympathy with Israel's travail, and his liberation of his arm during the occasion of Israel's salvation. Such texts are bold and graphic and also linked to scriptural proofs (cf. *Pesiqta de-Rab Kahana* 17.5). In these instances, and many others, myth and history are complexly and boldly intertwined.

Temple traditions also have marked mythic resonances and include features of an erotic nature, echoing traditions about a sacred marriage in Mesopotamian myths—although these rabbinic cases are based on biblical proofs (Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Yoma* 54a). Other mythic traditions deal with the withdrawal of the Shekinah heavenward, after the destruction of the shrine, or its various travails and travels with Israel into the Babylonian exile. These myths were also recited in liturgical poetry, thus ensuring their occurrence within the ancient synagogue. In this way, as well, old rabbinic theology was suffused with the dramatic imagery of myth. There was therefore no gap between the features of biblical myth and their multiform elaborations in medieval sources, but rather an unbroken tradition of Jewish mythmaking and mythic theology.

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Anatolia

When discussing Hittite myth, rather than thinking in terms of "a tradition," we need to think about "traditions," for there were, as a matter of fact, two traditions that went into creating what we now call Hittite myth: an Anatolian (Hattic) tradition and another, foreign tradition—essentially Hurrian, but drawing on Babylonian myths as well. We also need to remember that Hittite myths were not merely narrated as stories; some myths were recited and enacted at important festivals in the hope that, by reminding the gods of how they had put an end to some disorder or calamity in mythic times, the myths would motivate the gods to act in similar ways again and benefit current worshipers. Cuneiform tablets relating Hittite myths were found in the library archives at Hattusha, the capital of the Hittite Empire: they generally date to the 13th century BCE but are copies made from more ancient documents, which were themselves translations or adaptations of Hattian, Hurrian, or Babylonian stories.

Anatolian myths. These very ancient stories were gradually adopted by the Indo-European migrants into central Anatolia. They are generally linked to the cycle of the seasons or to exceptional happenings in nature.

The myth of the dragon Illuyanka, associated with the spring festival, evokes the combat between a dragon and the weather-god, which probably symbolized the struggle between the forces of the reawakening nature and the sterile forces of winter. The goddess Inara, a Hattian divinity who protects the living forces of nature, invites the dragon to come up from his hole, gives him too much to drink and to eat, and binds him, once he is drunk, with a rope; she then hands him over to the

weather-god, who kills him. Inara is helped in these tasks by a mortal, Hupasiya, whom she eventually locks up in a house and forbids to look out of the window, in order that he might not see his wife and children. Hupasiya disobeys Inara, and in her fury, Inara destroys the house. The myth thus emphasizes both that the gods need human help and that the gods are loath to allow humans freedom.

A second, but fragmentary, version of this myth says that the defeated weather-god recovered magically and slew the dragon as well as a son who had been born to the weather-god and a mortal woman because that son had married the dragon's daughter. In its general outline, if not in all its details, the story reminds one of the struggle between Zeus and the giant, dragonlike Typhon in Greek myth.

The theme of the missing god is typically Anatolian, although it is also found in other Mediterranean cultures: an irritated god has disappeared and has to be coaxed out of his bad mood and sulkiness, with the help of a *mugawar* prayer so that the disorder his disappearance has caused may end.

The most famous of these myths, as found in three parallel versions, is that of Telipinu, the great Hattian god of vegetation, son of the weather-god. Having departed in a fit of rage and hidden in a marsh, Telipinu sits, his whereabouts unknown to the other gods. They seek him unsuccessfully for a long time. When they do eventually find him, Telipinu refuses to move. Only the magician-goddess Kamrusepa can soothe Telipinu and placate his anger. The myth is, among other things, seasonal and etiological, linked to the return of spring. The same narrative scheme applies to stories that narrate the disappearance of a weather-god, of the sun (a solar eclipse), of the moon (a lunar eclipse), of Inara, of the goddesses Anzili and Zurki, or of another god particularly venerated by a Hittite queen.

We must also mention a myth that narrates the adventures of Telipinu and the ocean's daughter, which unfortunately exists only in a fragmentary state. We glimpse Telipinu trying to bring the sun-god of the sky back from the bottom of the ocean. The sun is accompanied, when he returns, by the daughter of the ocean, whom Telipinu marries. This myth probably emphasizes the connection between the fertilizing water born of the ocean and the fertility of nature.

Foreign myths. Hittite myths that are of an essentially Hurrian origin have reached us thanks to Hittite translations found on tablets in Hattusha. These texts evince what can genuinely be described as a theology, characterized by the combination of important Sumerian gods and beliefs with religious thought as it was developing among the Hurrians in northern Syria. Two great mythical stories, Kingdom in Heaven and the Song of Ullikummi, stand out, both of which concern Kumarbi and seek to establish the predominance of Teshub, the great Hurrian weather-god, who was victorious over Kumarbi and became king of the gods (as expressed by his Hurrian epithet, *šarri* [king]). This god served as the model of the ideal ruler—pugnacious and triumphant, surrounded by a court of gods.

The establishment of Teshub as the chief god occurs within the context of a theogony that tells of several successive divine reigns, each lasting nine years. In the penultimate reign, Kumarbi, the father of the gods, is dethroned by his son, Teshub. The part of the theogony that is called Kingdom in Heaven also includes allusions to the story of the origin of the world, which unquestionably display the marks of Sumero-Babylonian sources. We also discern within it the atmosphere of the royal courts; each rebellion that occurs in heaven makes one think of rebellion by a member of the (earthly) king's entourage and the king's subsequent dethronement. The following extract provides an example: "Long ago, in ancient times, Alalu was king in heaven. As long as Alalu sat on the divine throne, the mighty Anu, the first among the gods, stood before him, bowed down at his feet, and handed him the cup to drink. Alalu reigned in heaven for nine years. In the ninth year, Anu made war on Alalu and conquered him." Alalu fled, and for nine years Anu, too, held the throne from which Kumarbi, a sort of cupbearer, drove him. In the struggle, Kumarbi bit off Anu's genitals and swallowed them; from Kumarbi three gods subsequently were born: the Tigris river, Tashmishu (the vizier of the weather-god), and Teshub, the weather-god who was to eventually dethrone his father.

The Song of Ullikummi relates Kumarbi's attempt to recover his throne. With that aim in view, Kumarbi fathers a stone monster, Ullikummi, whom he places on the shoulder of Upelluri, the Atlas of Hurrian myth, who stands in the midst of the sea. Ullikummi grows so fast and huge that he reaches the vault of heaven and consequently the dwellings of the sun and of Teshub, which fills these two gods with dread and anger. When he sees the sun-god coming, Tashmishu says to Teshub: "Why does the sun come? . . . It must be a very grave matter, foreboding a hard battle, an uproar in the heavens as well as hunger and death on earth?" The weather-god then replied to Tashmishu: "Let them set up a chair for the sun! Let them lay out a table for his eating!" A long discussion (a part of which is unfortunately lost) takes place between the two great gods, both of whom are nervous and in despair; but, feeling somewhat reassured, the sun returns to his celestial dwelling. Moved by Teshub's dejection, the goddess Ishtar of Nineveh offers her help; she decides to seduce the stone monster, but being deaf and blind, the monster remains insensible to the goddess's maneuvers. Teshub eventually begins to fight against Ullikummi, but cannot defeat the stone monster, who continues to grow; the same thing happens to seventy other gods who are fighting under the command of Ashtabi the Hurrian war-god. Finally Ea, the god of wisdom, intervenes. After pointing out that the monster whom Kumarbi had fathered would cause the destruction of humanity and thus deprive the gods of efficient servants, Ea learns from ancient gods how he can disable Ullikummi, namely by cutting off his feet. And so, with this information, Teshub eventually can both eliminate Ullikummi and get the better of Kumarbi.

The Song of the Dragon Hedammu is another interesting Hurrian myth, but unfortunately we have only sixteen fragments of it. The dragon was born from Kumarbi and the sea. Several passages relate dialogues between Shaushka of Nineveh and Hedammu. Other fragments (both Hittite and Hurrian) concern Kessi the hunter and his beautiful wife. Kessi has several dreams, which his mother interprets for him.

The Myth of Appu deserves some attention. The archaisms of the Hittite text that we possess lead us to assume an archetype dating from the Old Kingdom, which was itself an adaptation of a Hurrian text or a Hurrian tradition. Judging from the fragments we have, the myth constituted a reflection upon the fate of humanity: Appu, although rich, is not happy, for he has no child. The sun-god advises him to have intercourse with his wife, who then bears him two sons: first a son named Wrong, and later a son named Right. The myth analyzes the sons' difficult coexistence, as well as the "justice" of the god who punishes Wrong for his bad behavior toward his brother (when the two brothers divided the estate after Appu's death, Wrong kept a very good cow for himself and left a barren one for Right).

I should also mention, although only briefly, some purely foreign myths, of which our Hittite texts are probably translations: the famous Mesopotamian myth of Gilgamesh, that of Atrahasis about the creation of humanity, and also the fragments of the Canaanite myth of Ashertu, with dialogues between Ashertu, her husband, and the god Baal. That the Hittites made translations of these stories shows how open they were to outside religious influences.

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Iran

Iran, as a region, is defined by borders that have fluctuated over time. For most of its history, it was more than a region: it was notionally an empire, meant to be ruled by a king of kings. Such a notion of a cohesive Iranian empire was predicated on a cohesive Iranian narrative tradition that is still evident in a monumental masterpiece of classical Persian poetry, the Book of Kings or *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, produced in the early 11th century CE. The roots of this narrative tradition go back to pre-Islamic times and far beyond, even into prehistoric times.

From the standpoint of prehistoric times, as reflected in the oldest narratives we may call Iranian, that is, in a collection of sacred texts known as the Avesta, there already exists a notion of Iran as an empire. For example, the first book of a subset of the Avesta known as the Vendidad contains a catalogue of regions described as accepting, one after another, the teachings of Zarathustra, and the names of these regions correspond to the names of provinces in historical phases of imperial rule (Ariana, Sugdiana, Margiana, Bactriana, etc.).

The collective sense of identity that constitutes this so-called empire can be analyzed linguistically as well as narratologically. The notional Iran of all attested Iranian-speaking populations amounts to a linguistic as well as cultural—not to say national—grouping. The vast family of Iranian languages (Avestan, Old Persian, Parthian, Pahlavi, New Persian, Sogdian, Bactrian, and the list continues) is a subset of what linguists know as the Indo-Iranian family of languages, which in turn is a subset of an overall linguistic grouping known as Indo-European. The category of Indo-Iranian is especially important for understanding Iranian narrative traditions, since the earliest forms of Iranian narrative, as attested in the Avesta, are evidently cognate with the correspondingly earliest forms of Indic narrative, as attested in a body of sacred texts known as the Vedas (Rig Veda, Atharva Veda, and so on). Even the self-identification of the speakers of these earliest phases of Iranian and Indic languages is cognate: in their respective sacred texts, both linguistic groups refer to themselves as Aryans (not to be confused with the modern political usage). In fact, the name Iran is derived from the root form of Aryan.

On the basis of comparing Iranian narrative traditions as attested in the Avesta with the Indic narrative traditions of the Vedas, it is possible to reconstruct a shared Indo-Iranian heritage of narratives, especially sacred narratives, which in turn are linked to rituals. In other words, the myth-ritual complex of Avestan traditions is cognate with that of Vedic traditions. What is cognate in Iranian and Indic cultures doubtless extends to other forms of verbal art, but the fact remains that the most evident point of comparison is sacred narrative.

Granted, if one compares Iranian narrative traditions with those of other cultures beyond the Indo-Iranian linguistic grouping, it is easy to find alternative points of comparison. For example, one can find "epic" features in the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi if one compares it with the Greek epic the *Iliad*. A figure such as Rostam in the *Shahnameh* is readily comparable with Achilles in the *Iliad*: both characters are represented as superior to the kings who outrank them, and yet both ultimately uphold the kingship of men whom they would otherwise resist.

Still, the clearest evidence for distinctly Iranian elements in the *Shahnameh* is its heritage of sacred—even priestly—narrative, centering on the theme of a cohesive empire of moral righteousness founded on sacred principles that predate the time frame of Islam.

preexilic Israelite religion as essentially analogous to the neighboring cultures of Iron Age Palestine. The main difficulties in this debate are our inability to date precisely most of the biblical texts and to substantiate any of the four positions with unambiguous archeological evidence.

While possibly related to an old West Semitic tradition of stone worship, aniconism may have become more explicit following the loss of anthropomorphic statuary and other objects such as the ark in the wake of the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests. Exiled priests such as Ezekiel could no longer relate to the cult of their central sanctuary. As a consequence, new concepts of divine presence were developed, which concentrated on purely symbolical presence such as the "glory" or "name" of YHWH. The image-ban texts in the Torah apparently do not antedate the Babylonian exile; consequently, they should be explained against the peculiar background of the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. We know that after the exile, Deuteronomistic and Priestly theologians radically disconnected YHWH from all other deities of the region and even from traditional concepts of YHWH himself, which were now reviled as Baal worship. In this situation, the image ban effectively contributed to the strength of exclusive Yahwism.

Implementation of biblical and Jewish aniconism. The aniconic nature of the postexilic temple in Jerusalem is assured around 300 BCE by Hecataeus (reported by Diodorus 40.3). Late Hellenistic descriptions of Second Temple inventory mention the menorah, a table, and an incense altar as the most basic furniture of the holy of holies. After the loss of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jewish synagogue worship focused increasingly on the Torah scroll in ways reminiscent of the treatment that other religions reserved for cultic images. Rabbinic tractates (especially *Avodah Zarah* [lit., idolatry]) discuss how aniconic worship of YHWH alone could be observed in a non-Jewish environment. Excavated synagogues of late antiquity show that the interpretation of the biblical image ban could vary according to sociocultural context. The 3rd-century CE mural paintings of the Diaspora synagogue of Dura Europos on the Euphrates or the 4th- to 6th-century CE mosaic floors of synagogues in Byzantine Palestine depict scenes from the Bible and even the "pagan" zodiac featuring anthropomorphic Helios (the sun) in its very center. These images may have been understood as merely symbolic pictures without any inherently sacred character.

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Anatolia

Most of the information we possess concerning Hittite religion is drawn from textual sources, from the thousands of cuneiform tablets excavated at the capital city Hattusha. Among these texts we find hymns, prayers, detailed descriptions of ceremonies, and some cultic inventories containing descriptions of the divine images housed in temples and shrines. For example:

> The Storm-god of Likḫzina [as worshiped in the town of] Tiliura: The divine image is a wooden bull rhyton, standing on all fours, plated with silver; its head and breast are plated with gold. Its height is one span; beneath it is a socle. King Murshili donated a silver beaker, eight shekels in weight, to the Storm-god of Likḫzina. Ten bronze sun-disks have been nailed onto the offering table of the Storm-god [of Likḫzina]. We have built a new temple for him. (KUB 38.3 1.1–6.)

As indicated in this excerpt, the three-dimensional earthly representation of a god or goddess was often made in whole or in part of precious metals. Few objects of such valuable material have survived, but there are some exceptions to the general fate of plunder and melting down for reuse. Three silver rhyta—a bull protome (fig. 178—all figures come from Bittel 1976), a stag protome (fig. 169), and a "fist"—not only provide vivid confirmation of the occasional theriomorphic rendering of Hittite deities, but each of the latter two objects is also decorated with a frieze depicting a scene of worship. Ceramic libation vessels in animal shapes (figs. 156–66) should also be mentioned here. Small (10–20 cm) bronze anthropomorphic figurines (figs. 147, 149, 175, 262, 263) may be actual cult images from minor shrines, while tiny pendants of gold, silver, or electrum (figs. 167, 168, 170, 171, 173, 179, 180) give us an idea of the likely appearance of the lost statues from great temples.

The most impressive artistic renderings of Hittite divinities, however, are those done in relief sculpture, both on the living rock as at İmamkulu (fig. 203), Fraktin (figs. 196, 198), and the rock sanctuary of Yazılıkaya (figs. 232–241, 249–254) and on stelae (figs. 207, 230, 247, 264) or orthostats, the last particularly numerous at Alaca Höyük (figs. 212–227). The cosmological scene at Eflatun Pınar, composed of blocks carved in low relief (fig. 257), is especially noteworthy. The use of orthostats would assume great importance in the Neo-Hittite culture of the 1st millennium (figs. 276–318), as exemplified most charmingly in a depiction of the battle of the storm-god with the serpent, an event well known from Hittite mythology (fig. 279).

Stone sculpture in the round—or nearly so—is known

Relief of a Hittite god in martial dress, with a pointed helmet, carrying an ax and sword. From the King's Gate, Hattusha, 13th century BCE. Ankara, Museum of Archaeology. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

chiefly for guardian figures in gate complexes (figs. 209–211, 258–261, 265–268). Theriomorphic column and statue bases are frequently found at Neo-Hittite sites (figs. 282, 303, 307).

Seals and seal impressions are another important source of Hittite religious imagery. The stamp seals characteristic of Hittite glyptic normally have space enough for the depiction of only a single god (figs. 185, 186, 193), but some large royal seals could accommodate a scene of a monarch in the embrace of his patron deity (figs. 191, 192). The long continuous design produced by the rolling of the much less common cylinder seal might picture two or more deities (figs. 182, 183) or even depict a religious ceremony (fig. 155) or mythological scene (fig. 152).

Presenting similar compositional possibilities is the relief vase, on which one—or more often several—bands of painted appliqué figures around the upper portion of the large vessel show scenes of worship. Well-preserved jars of this type are known from Bitik (figs. 140, 144), İnandik, and Hüseyindede Tepe, and fragments of such vessels have been excavated at Boğazköy and Alisar. The frieze is thus an important organizational element in surviving Hittite religious art, appearing on rhyta, cylinder seals, and relief ceramics and in the galleries of Yazılıkaya.

A comparison of these decorative bands with the motifs on cylinder seals in use in the Assyrian trading colonies in Anatolia from the period immediately preceding the establishment of the Hittite state leaves little doubt that the basic elements of Hittite religious iconography were borrowed from Syria and ultimately from Mesopotamia. This is seen particularly in the rendering of anthropomorphic figures in a combination of profile and frontal view, as well as the convention by which a personage's divinity is indicated by the presence of one or more pairs of horns. As for work in three dimensions, many of the small bronze statuettes of Hittite deities—particularly those of the "striding god" type—are practically indistinguishable from those found throughout the Levant in the Late Bronze Age.

A native Anatolian contribution, however, is the alternate representation of certain gods in theriomorphic and anthropomorphic form, a practice already attested in earlier local iconography (Alaca Höyük, Kanes). Thus the storm-god may appear as a bull, and the Tutelary Deity as a stag. It is also clear from both textual and artistic material that cultic implements in the shape of these animals, and the beasts themselves as sacrificial victims, were central to the worship of these particular gods.

Several deities enjoy an established standard iconography. For instance, the sun-god is inevitably dressed in a skullcap and long robe and bears a winged sun-disk upon his head. The storm-god wears a pointed hat and short kilt with a dagger tucked into his belt and often brandishes a mace and/or forked lightning bolt. The similarly clad Tutelary Deity shoulders a bow or less frequently a crook. Most divinities, however, are undifferentiated visually, although they may sometimes be distinguished, as in the procession at Yazılıkaya, by accompanying hieroglyphic writings of their names. In particular, each goddess (save the bigendered Sawusga) is depicted in the same voluminous mantle and long skirt, with a cowl, or later a high cylindrical *polos,* upon her head.

Finally, the friezes on ceramic and silver vessels complement textual descriptions of Hittite worship. Here we see the deities honored by libation or animal sacrifice, while being entertained with music, acrobatics, and other athletic activities, including bull jumping.

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Sphinx with both a human head and a lion's head. Relief from Carchemish, late Hittite period. Ankara, Museum of Archaeology. *Hirmer Fotoarchiv*

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Iran

The sacred fire is a major symbol of the religious insights of the Zoroastrian tradition. Another icon, the winged disk, also has come to be regarded by many as an important Zoroastrian emblem. All other major visual presentations, other than the image of Zarathustra himself, are significant liturgically and must be understood in their ritual contexts.

The visual image of a winged disk dates back to times and cultures prior to the Achaemenian Dynasty. In the palace complex begun by Darius at Persepolis in the 6th century BCE, on the edge of the Marv Dasht, are many carved images of a winged disk, often with a bird tail beneath it and two undulating appendages. Sometimes a male figure stands within the circle, with robe and kingly crown, his right hand raised in benediction and his left holding a ring. This image possibly represents the Avestan *khvarenah,* "the divine grace sought after by men to bring them long life, power and prosperity" (Boyce 1982: 103). A figure in the winged circle may symbolize the royal *khvarenah,* the divine power that attends each ruler and his dynasty. Contemporary Zoroastrians view this winged-disk figure as symbolic of the guardian spirits (Avestan *fravashi*) of the souls of the living and the dead. It is often displayed over entrances to fire temples, worn around the neck as a talisman, and more generally is used as a symbol of the Zoroastrian tradition.

Likewise, representations of the sacred fire and other liturgically significant items, including images of priests themselves, are important visual symbols of this tradition. A stone carving from Dascylion, the capital of the Achaemenian satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia (late 6th or early 5th century BCE), depicts two Zoroastrian priests (magi) attentively standing side by side and each holding a long *barsom* (a bundle of twigs or metal wires) and performing what appears to be a ceremony for the spirits of the dead. Each is costumed in tunic and trousers with a sleeved mantle and a head covering. In the treasury at Persepolis pestles and mortars have been found, and at the tomb of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam is a depiction in stone of a burning fire in a fire holder atop a raised base.

It is at this point, however, that a further distinction regarding the nature of visual representations in this tradition needs to be made. A stone image of a sacred fire may appear on the facade of a fire temple, but inside the fire temple resides a living fire, the focal point of ritual performance. The real art works of this tradition, it can be argued, are to be found in the celebration of the rituals themselves because the liturgies have an aesthetic dimension of their own. We can refer to them as major visual presentations of the tradition.

The great Fires of Victory (Pahlavi *ātash wahrām*) consecrated in temple sanctuaries, for example, are theologically understood as exemplifications of the infinite light of Ahura Mazda and physically visible instantiations of the animating principle of life itself (see color plate). Like the priests who constantly attend to them, these fires are thought of as warriors combating the dark forces of decay, deceit, ignorance, and death and thus serve as icons of the good creation's victory over the forces of evil.

Likewise, each individual fire ignited in a temple's rit-

was considerably more diverse and pluriform than we had earlier thought and that the histories of the formation and the transmission of the biblical text and of the canonical process, leading up to differing Jewish and Christian canons, was more complex. Instead of there having been a normative Judaism and otherwise heterodox sects that produced the so-called Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, early Judaism was highly diverse ever since the postexilic period when Jewish communities scattered widely. But the one concept that unified all forms of Judaism was scripture and tradition, or Torah in its broadest meaning.

The Pentateuch and the prophetic corpus were probably set, in the form we know them if not in their content, by the end of the 5th century BCE. In addition, collections of stories, psalms, and wisdom literature would have been read and reread, as well as a very Priestly review of the old history (in Chronicles). But the third part of the Tanak would not be stabilized in the form we have inherited until after the Bar Kochba disaster toward the middle of the 2nd century CE. The statement of the Jewish historian Josephus in the late 1st century CE that there were twenty-two books in the Jewish Bible may have been a first attempt to fix the number of books, which was still in flux.

What we once called canonization of the Hebrew Bible was actually a process of use and reuse of such literature in the widespread Jewish communities during the Persian and Greco-Roman periods. That which was picked up again and again and then shared with other communities, because of its relevance and helpfulness to the needs of those communities, would eventually have moved onto a sort of tenure-track toward inclusion in the canons of rabbinic and Christian Judaism.

The eventual stabilization of the prophetic corpus in the Persian period, and even of the writings that make up the third part of the canon in the Greco-Roman period, was probably a result of the survival (i.e., repeated use) of the most widely accepted literature, those stories that sustained a people living under foreign domination, in tenuous and threatening conditions.

But the canonical process of repetition and adaptation of early traditions actually started well back in preexilic experience. The biblical literature that is most clearly datable—the prophetic books—indicates that the prophet whose name the book bore often cited and alluded to earlier traditions in an authoritative way, with the aim of supporting his arguments concerning God's intentions in the public events of his time; and they did so in surprising and memorable ways. The students and editors of these prophets adapted what they had said so as to apply it to their later time, and some of it was incorporated into the newer text itself. In fact, there is hardly any biblical literature, no matter how early or late in date, that does not build on earlier tradition or literature.

Israel's early tradents seemed particularly adept at borrowing the wisdom of its neighbors and adapting it to address community needs. The story of the flood in Gen. 6–9 is similar to the earliest Mesopotamian flood stories. Many of Israel's laws were adapted from the laws of its neighbors in the ancient Near East, but Israel differed in how it presented God's relation to those laws. The gods of others might grant authority to the laws developed by a human such as Shamshi-Adad or Hammurabi, but in the Bible, in contrast, God is presented as a legislator himself, who gave the laws to Moses. The Temple Scroll from cave 11 at Qumran would press the hermeneutic case further, suggesting that God legislated directly without the mediation of Moses.

Many early traditions in preexilic biblical literature functioned authoritatively in the same manner that canonical written literature would function in later times. The canonical process had thus begun well before a canon in the full sense of the word was developed. Indeed, the Torah that Ezra brought back with him from exile in Babylonia (Neh. 8) undoubtedly functioned for communities in early Judaism much as it would later, when the Jewish canon was closed. And as is clear from Qumran literature, much of the prophetic corpus functioned in the same way. In fact, when the third section was added and the Jewish canon closed, the literature in the canon continued to function very much as early authoritative traditions, homegrown and borrowed, had functioned in preexilic times.

It is true, however, that the closing of the canon had the effect of attaching greater importance to the actual words in the written text. (Tradition could be formulated in various ways.) The focus thereby shifted somewhat from the ancient messages of biblical literature to the sanctity of the words themselves, which were being more accurately copied in the transmission of the text. Beginning in the 2nd century BCE, we begin to find biblical commentaries: the peshatim (which were primarily commentaries on prophetic texts) in the Dead Sea Scrolls and allegorical commentaries in Greek-speaking Judaism. These commentaries examine every word of the text and often play with different meanings. This process is carried much further in the midrashic commentaries of rabbinic Judaism, composed between the 4th and 12th centuries CE. But the canonical process of adaptation to ever-changing conditions, faced by the communities that found their identity and their *raison d'être* in scripture, hardly changed at all; and it continues to function in much the same way in the heirs of those communities today.

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Anatolia

Strictly speaking, there are no sacred texts in Hittite Anatolia, since Hittite religion was not a revealed one and because there was no "religion of the book" in the Hittite world. Reflecting upon the world in which he lived, *homo Hethaeus* built up his own conception of the heavenly realm mainly based on those of the Near Eastern, especially Syrian, culture. When we speak of "sacred texts" in the Hittite world, therefore, we ought to focus instead on three categories of texts that are related to religious practices: myths, texts connected with magical rituals, and texts connected with festivals. Myths are treated elsewhere in this volume and will therefore not be discussed here. The two other categories have much in common, but the festival texts assume an official character and are linked to the calendar: festivals occur at set dates, at which time a god comes to earth to visit the inhabitants of a town or a country. The activities at festivals are performed scrupulously according to certain rules, which are inspired by royal protocol, since the god is a sort of "super king." In contrast, the performance of magical rituals is dictated by circumstances (generally difficult situations that a community or an individual faces); the antiquity of their practices guarantees their efficacy. As luck would have it, excavations, chiefly at Hattusha, turned up libraries and "sacristies" of temples that are full of texts for both magical rituals and festivals, written on clay tablets that subsequently were burnt. These serve as venerable testimonies of Hittite religious practice.

Festival texts. The timing of great festivals is linked to seasons and agricultural work: it usually also presupposes the presence of the king or the royal couple. Two great festivals going back to early antiquity are especially important: the spring festival (AN.TAḪ.ŠUM [Crocus festival]) and the autumn festival (*muntarriyashas* [festival of Haste]). The first festival lasted at least twenty-one days, and the second not fewer than thirty-eight. Both consisted of a kind of royal pilgrimage through the principal towns of Hatti. Texts from tablets specify the detail of the ceremonies to be performed in each town, providing a rich resource of information about ancient Anatolian liturgies. They describe the cult, the way of honoring the gods—they are a veritable handbook of "how to care for the gods." They also reflect on royal protocol, describing how to sacralize the "master of the ritual," the offerings, and the liturgical objects, how to make the gods come into their temple and then welcome and honor them, especially by means of a sacred feast at which the gods are offered food and libations and which the king and queen attend dressed in special ceremonial clothes. The presence of the king and queen, their activities, and their dress reflect the royal protocol. During the ceremonies, a group of dignitaries surrounded the king or the queen, all of whom had first undergone ritualized washing, since purity was a prerequisite of contact with the sacred. By way of illustration, we give here an excerpt from the ceremonies in the temple of the war-god, on the 16th day of the Crocus festival (*CTH* 612; cf. *ANET* 358–61):

> Before the king and queen proceed to the temple of the war-god, the jongleurs, the narrator, and the criers proceed thereto and take their places. Then, the king and queen go to the temple of the war-god; the king reaches the portico, and at that time a dancer turns around once. The king and queen take their places in the court of the temple of the war-god. The chief of the guard holds the coat of the priest of the protector-god of nature, and, on the other hand, the priest of the protector-god of nature holds the perfumed lotion. Two palace sons bring the king and queen water for their hands. The king and queen wash their hands. The chief of the palace sons gives [them] a cloth so that they can dry their hands. The priest of the protector-god of nature presents to the king perfumed lotion; the king covers himself with it. The chief of the palace sons presents the cloth of the golden sceptre to the king; the king washes his hands. A palace son takes the perfumed lotion back from the priest of the protector-god of nature. The priest of the protector-god of nature bows before the king. The palace son presents the perfumed lotion to the queen; the queen covers herself with it. The palace son gives back the perfumed lotion to the priest of the protector-god of nature. The chief of the palace sons gives the cloth of the golden sceptre to the queen; the queen washes her hands.

Magical rituals. Most rituals pertain to magic and therefore aim at remedying some abnormality, including sickness. For the Hittites as for other peoples of the ancient Near East, all sicknesses and anomalies were the results of offenses, either one's own or inherited. In order to achieve healing, the magicians used healing rituals against fever, plague, women's sterility, or impotence. Many of these texts originate from Kizzuwatna (Cilicia). They are grouped under three types: (1) transfer rituals, where the evil is transferred into a substitute, which is then physically eliminated or sent into the steppe or a neighboring country (i.e., a scapegoat); (2) rituals of sympathetic magic based on analogy and meant to focus the attention of the concerned god on the positive response expected from him; and (3) rituals of purification of impure persons, buildings, and things, consisting in purificatory baths, temple aspersions, or distempering of the idol.

Appeasing rituals aimed at calming the irritation of a god as well as putting an end to the hostility between inhabitants of a country or between members of a family, especially father and son. The ritual of the Comanian priestess Mastigga against family quarrels is significant. Also very revealing are the rituals aiming at appeasing infernal forces, particularly the ritual concerning the Sun-goddess of the Earth in which the king and the queen evoke and pacify infernal forces by making offerings into a hole. We can put in the same category the *mugawar* rituals, which consisted of coaxing the god out of his bad mood and bringing him out of the place where he was in hiding.

Evocative rituals consisted of enticing the god from

one of the places where he was likely to reside (heaven, sea, depths of the earth) into a town, especially a temple. Several methods were used: a priest would call from the roof of the temple, or a red or bright thread would be string along a way that the god would have to follow. The ritual of the "marking out of the ways" is very typical in this respect.

Execratory rituals aimed at calling down curses upon an enemy or a dishonest person. Meteorological rituals are typical of ancient Anatolia: they describe the ritual actions performed by the king when he heard the thunder considered to be a message of the weather-god: the offerings are black (bread, sheep, or oxen), and the libations are poured out of a black vase. Building and consecration rituals were performed at palaces and temples.

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Iran

The religious history of Iran illustrates the necessity to distinguish between sacred texts, sacred writings (scripture), and canonicity. Unfortunately, in much historical writing, these categories have been mixed up and confused. Not all religious texts were written down, and while the medium of writing may in one instance be used to enhance the sacred character of a text, in another instance one observes a reluctance to commit sacred texts to writing.

For a very long period, the religious traditions of ancient Iran were transmitted orally. The text commonly thought to be the oldest document in an Iranian language, the so-called Gathas (hymns), is considered to be the core of ancient sacred traditions. Comprising five hymns of varying lengths, consisting of a total of seventeen chapters, the Gathas represent a very advanced form of priestly, ritual, or (some would claim) mystical poetry. This makes them extremely difficult to translate, let alone to interpret. Tradition claims that they were composed by or revealed to Spitama Zarathustra. While this is unlikely (the Gathas are normally dated by scholars to about 1000 BCE and Zarathustra to about 600), it remains safe to say that Zarathustra is the key figure among the people mentioned in the Gathas. Most scholars agree that the Gathas originated somewhere east of the country nowadays known as Iran.

At a certain period of time, about which it is impossible to be specific, the Gathas became part of a text known as Yasna (sacrificial liturgy). The Yasna also incorporates some other hymns and sacred literature, such as manthric utterances. (The name of a ritual still celebrated by current Zoroastrian priests in India is *yasna*.) In the course of the *yasna* ritual, the text of the Yasna is recited.

The Yasna is part of what is known as the Avesta, a collection of texts composed in the Avestan language(s) and written in the Avestan script. All of these texts, including a treatise mostly pertaining to legal issues, are used either in priestly ceremonies or by laypeople in their prayers. It is unclear whether Avestan has ever been used as a "secular" language. The manuscript tradition is very late; the oldest Avestan manuscript is from the late 13th century CE. Not all Avestan texts have been preserved, and it is difficult to detect how much material has been lost. Later Islamic notions of a "sacred book" and modern printing techniques have contributed to changes in the perception and practical usage of the Avestan texts among Zoroastrians.

From the perspective of those performing a ritual, it may be less important to understand the texts recited in a ritual context than to perform them in an appropriate manner. In addition to the correct posture of the body, great care was taken to control intonation and pronunciation during recitation. Probably, the invention of the Avestan script, usually dated between the 4th and 6th centuries CE, was closely associated with this. The Avestan alphabet, which is based on Aramaic, is highly evolved from a phonetic standpoint. With its fifty-three letters (among them sixteen denoting vowels), it provides an excellent tool for transmitting specific requirements for pronunciation. Therefore, it provides a means of controlling a major feature of ritual practice. This trait distinguishes the Avestan script from other scripts that originated at roughly the same time and in the same cultural area, such as the Manichean, Georgian, and Armenian alphabets, all of which were aimed more at spreading religious ideas and texts among the people than at preserving priestly ritual instructions.

Probably, Avestan texts began to be translated into neighboring languages from an early period. However, only fragments of such early translations are preserved. At a later date, possibly already by the 3rd century CE, most, if not all, Avestan texts had been translated into Middle Persian. The texts and translations are provided with interspersed commentaries on the Avestan texts. Moreover, a new body of religious scripture developed, the so-called Pahlavi books (roughly 9th and 10th centuries CE). Some of these books claim to preserve ancient and authentic materials.

The commentaries on these texts, usually referred to as Zand, were a very sensitive issue. As commentaries could carry the seeds of religious dissidence and nonconformism—called heterodoxy by the establishment—religious and political authorities tried to keep the commentaries firmly under control; it is not by chance that the heretics were referred to as Zandik or Zandiq in Middle and New Persian respectively. The "heretics" *par excellence* were the Manicheans. This may have to do with their fondness for commenting on other religions' scriptures and thereby providing Manichean interpretations, which they claimed were authentic, rediscovered meanings. On the other hand, the Manicheans also had sacred texts of their own in different languages.

A final point often overlooked is that some Iranian kings, beginning with Darius the Great (reigned 522–486 BCE), made inscriptions at "sacred places," adding a religious dimension to their political decisions and positions.

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Greece

Greek religion drew its strength from three inherent characteristics: its polytheism, a rich and complex pantheon with a large number of diverse gods; its ritualism, a culture of religious performance based on the scrupulous observance of a plethora of cults, festivals, and time-honored rites; and its regionalism, a broad and heterogeneous geographical base ranging from Sicily and Magna Graecia to the shores of the Black Sea. In stark contrast with the monotheistic "religions of the book," Greek religion survived for as long as it did without a canon of sacred scriptures, without a central religious authority, and without a belief system supported by authoritative texts and a cadre of professional exegetes to interpret them.

Egyptians were buried with the Book of the Dead and Romans consulted the Sibylline Books. Unlike its polytheistic neighbors, Greece did not produce a single sacred text of comparable rank. Yet religious texts of various kinds existed in abundance, from the representations of gods and rituals in high literature to cultic records on stone, even if none attained canonical status. The absence of such a canon suggests that writing was not essential to Greek religion and that written texts were extraneous to its core. Despite the widespread availability of writing, Greece remained largely an oral culture until the end of the classical age. In the early Hellenistic period, between 300 and 250 BCE, the classification of written texts and canonicity went hand in hand in the library of Alexandria. But the canon of "classical" Greek authors produced by Alexandrian scholars was based on the established genres of poetry and prose; it did not include sacred texts as a category.

That Greek religion lacked a canon, a clergy, and a spiritual center hardly comes as a surprise. Throughout its history, ancient Greece was a loose conglomerate of sovereign city-states, whose religious traditions and practices varied considerably from one place to another. Despite its Panhellenic tendencies, Greek religion retained a distinctly local and regional character. This is particularly true for the nexus between writing and religion. Texts used exclusively for religious purposes or in the context of religious institutions—such as cult regulations, sacrificial calendars, temple inventories, statutes of religious associations, oracles, and records of divine epiphanies and healing miracles—were recorded for local constituencies and did not circulate widely. More than four hundred of these texts survive; the vast majority existed in single copies on stone and never attained Panhellenic prominence. They document the practical side of Greek religion—the performance of ritual, the organization of festivals, the administration of public and private cults, and the behavior of religious groups.

One such text, a cult regulation from Selinus in Sicily, prescribes the following sacrificial ritual (*SEG* 43.630, B 12–13; ca. 430 BCE): "Whenever a sacrifice to the *elasteros* is required, perform the sacrifice as one sacrifices to the immortals. But [the sacrificer] must slaughter [the victim so that its blood flows] into the earth." As is often the case, the authority behind this regulation remains anonymous. The high level of ritual expertise points to a person or group—"those who make a craft out of rites" (Derveni Papyrus 20.3–4)—steeped in sacrificial lore that was ordinarily transmitted orally. Because texts of this type address matters of cult and ritual in a prescriptive manner, they have been collected twice in modern times under the generic title "sacred laws" (Latinized as *leges sacrae*). The underlying Greek term *hieros nomos* (sacred law or sacred custom) is attested in Plato, Demosthenes, and Hellenistic inscriptions, where it refers to a variety of cult-related texts and does not reflect a consistent category or concept. The modern classification implies, falsely, that a concept of "sacred laws" converging on "sacred texts" existed. In fact, for the Greeks, *hieros* (sacred) designated anything related to religion and the gods; it functioned as the antonym of "profane." Thus, the *hieroi nomoi* were considered sacred not in and of themselves, but because they dealt with sacred lore.

Another candidate for sacred-text status is Homer, whose poems have been called "the Bible of the Greeks." The Greeks had many books *(biblioi)* but no Bible. Yet Homer is indeed a special case. His role in the formation of Greek culture from around 700 BCE to late antiquity was pivotal. Does his preoccupation with gods and rituals make him an authority in matters of religion? The historian Herodotus certainly thought so. In his comparison of Greek and Egyptian gods he considers both Homer and Hesiod instrumental in the formation of the Greek pantheon: "It was only the day before yesterday, so to speak, that the Greeks came to know whence each of the gods originated, whether all of them existed always, and what they were like in their visible forms. For I reckon that Homer and Hesiod lived no more than four hundred years before my time. They are the poets who composed a theogony for the Greeks and gave the gods their epithets, assigned them their honors