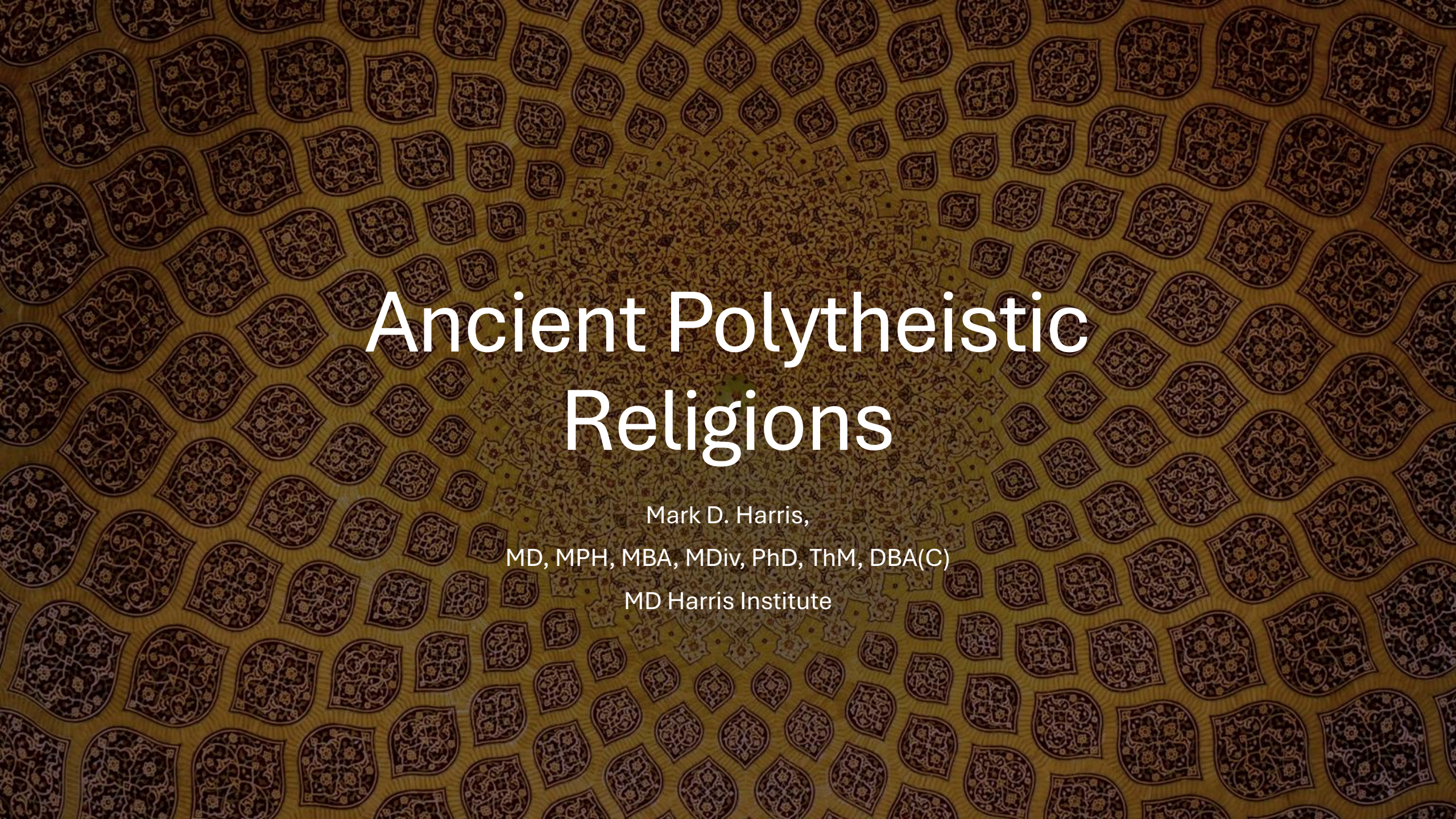




Ancient Polytheistic Religions

Mark D. Harris,

MD, MPH, MBA, MDiv, PhD, ThM, DBA(C)

MD Harris Institute

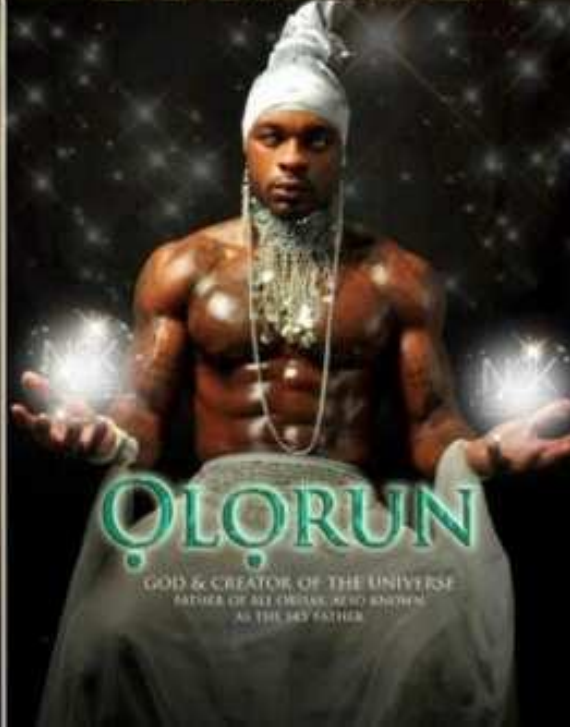
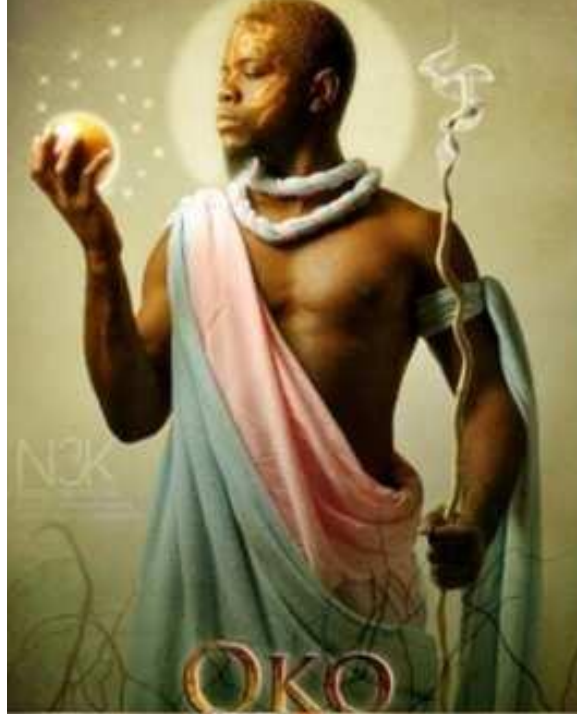
Civilizations

- African
- Assyrian/Babylonian
- Canaanite
- Germanic
- Norse
- Roman

African

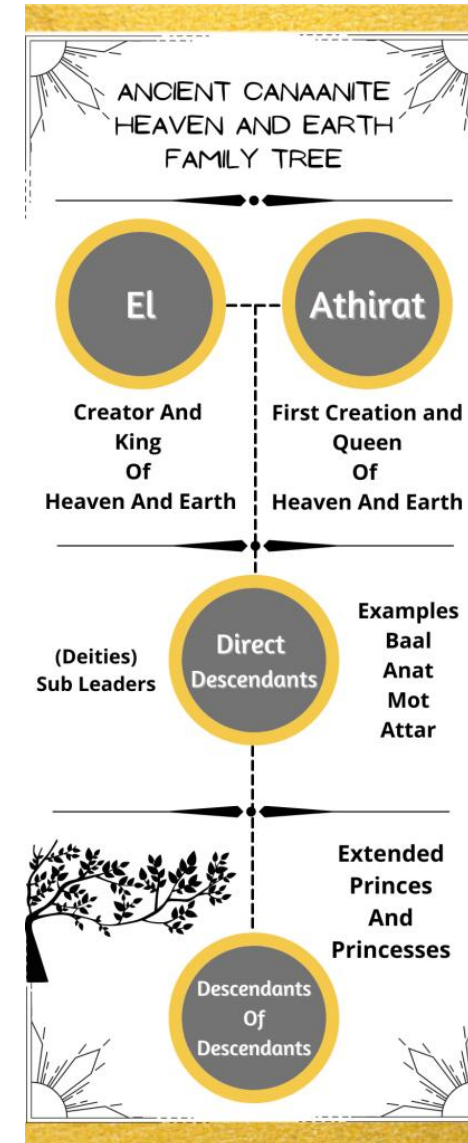
- God – henotheistic, with common belief in one God (monotheism) surrounded by numerous divine spirits and gods (polytheism).
 - Bantu – Yangombi
 - Fon – Nana Buluku
 - Yoruba – Olorun
- Geography – All of Africa but especially south of the Sahara Desert
- Time
 - Begin – Evidence traces it back to 1500 BC
 - End – Still present, though mixed with Christian and Muslim elements

Yoruba Deities



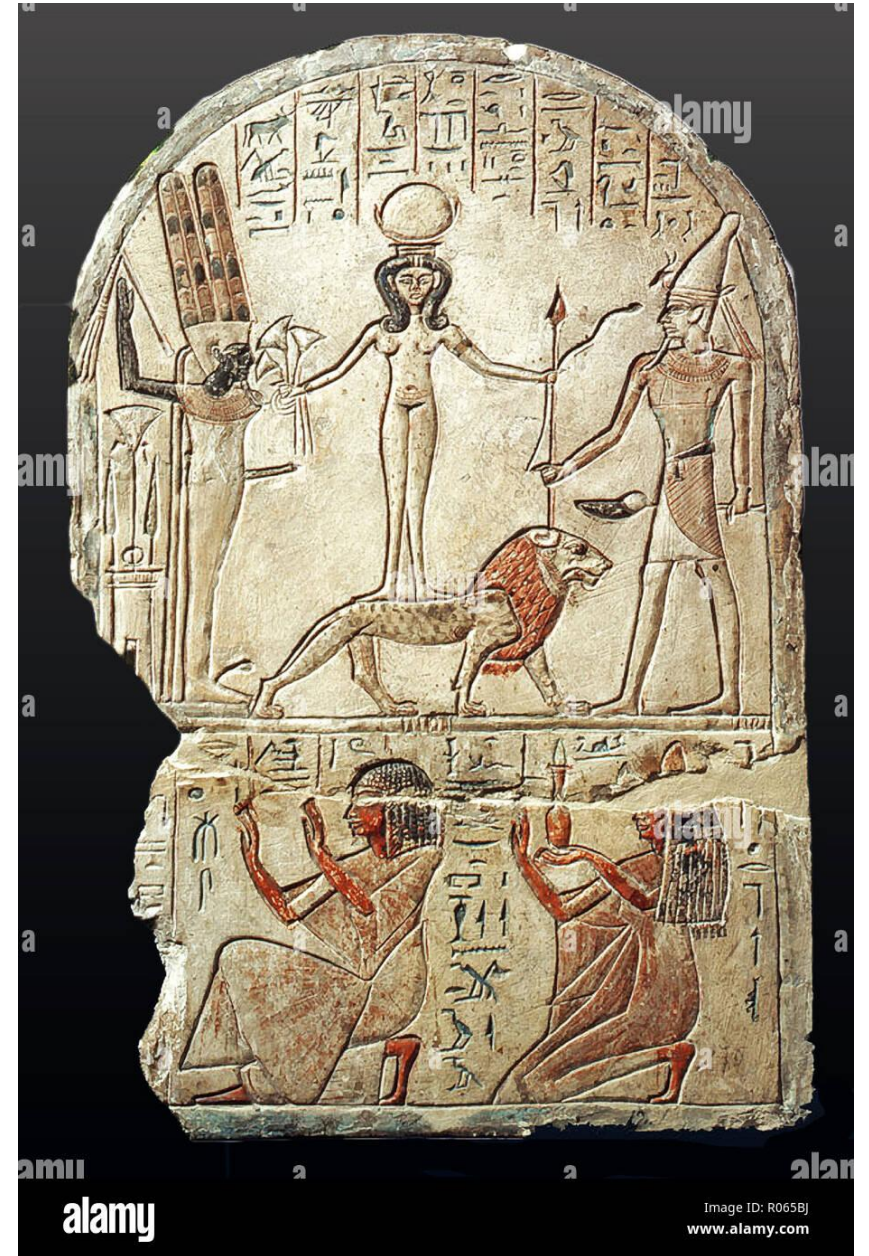
Canaanite/Phoenician

- God – polytheistic
 - Baal (storm god) – head of the pantheon
 - Ashtareth (consort) - goddess of fertility, love, and beauty
 - Melqart – king of the underworld
- Geography – Levant, including western Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria
- Time
 - Begin – 1400-1200 BC, migration of the sea peoples
 - End – 300s BC, Alexander the Great



Canaanite Sex Goddess - Asherah

Note similarities to Egyptian pantheon





ODIN



THOR



BALDR



HEIMDALL



SIF



FREYR



FRIGG



NJORD



HEL



LOKI



IDUN



FREYJA

Norse and Germanic gods

Germanic - Norse

- God – polytheistic. Odin (supreme deity and ruler of Asgard), Frigg (Odin's wife, sees future), Freyja (seiðr magic), Thor (thunder god, Hammer - Mjölnir), Loki – Trickster god
- Creation - All beings live in Nine Worlds that center around the cosmological tree Yggdrasil.
- Scripture – Prose Edda, Poetic Edda, the Sagas, Galdrabók grimoire, Roman texts (Commentaries on Gallic War, Germania)
- Afterlife – heroes go to Valhalla (place), soldiers to Folkvangr (place), sailors to Ran (goddess), and virgins to Gefjon (goddess). Hel is the general destination

Norse 9 Worlds

- Asgard (Realm of the Aesir)
- Vanaheim (Realm of the Vanir gods)
- Svartalfheim (Nidavellir) (Realm of dwarfs)
- Midgard (Realm of humans)
- Alfheim (Realm of the Bright Elves)
- Jotunheim (Realm of the giants)
- Muspelheim (Realm of fire)
- Niflheim (Realm of Ice)
- Hel (Helheim)



Greco-Roman

- God – polytheistic, mysticism, occultism, and mystery religions
 - Zeus (Jupiter)
 - Poseidon (Neptune)
 - Ares (Mars)
 - Hades (Pluto)
- Geography – Greater Greece and eventually the whole Roman Empire
- Time
 - Begin 1000 BC
 - AD 391 – Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.



ZEUS | JUPITER



GERA | JUNO



POSEIDON | NEPTUNE



HADES | PLUTO



DEMETER | CERES



APOLLO | PHOEBUS



NIKE | VICTORIA

Greco-Roman gods



HESTIA | VESTA



DIONYSUS | BACCHUS



THEMIS | JUSTISE



APHRODITE | VENUS



HEPHAESTUS | VULCAN



HEKATE | TRIVIA



ARES | MARS



ARTEMIS | DIANA



ATHENA | MINERVA



HYMENAIOS | HYMEN



HELIOS | SOL



EROS | CUPID



PERSEPHONE | PROSERPINA



HERMES | MERCURY



PAN | FAUNUS

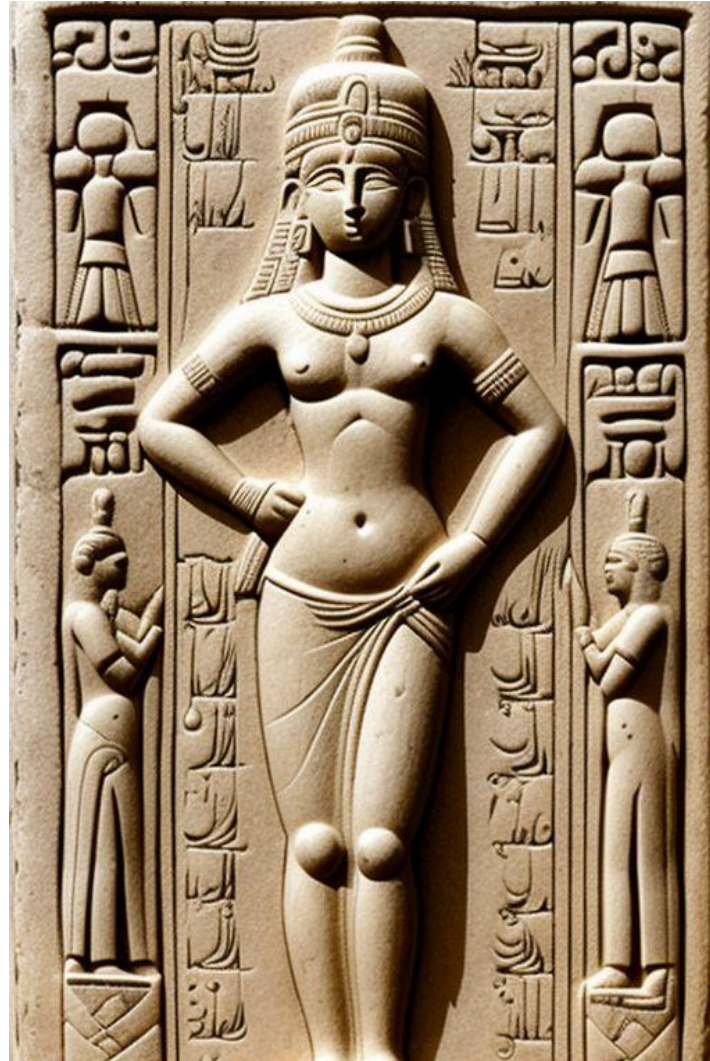
Mesopotamian

- Assyrian

- Main deity – Asshur
- Consort - Asherah
- Capital - Ninevah

- Babylonian

- Main deity – Marduk
- Consort - Sarpanit
- Capital – Babylon
- Other deities – Tiamat (evil dragon goddess, Anu (god of heaven)
- 1800s to 300s BC (Alexander the Great)



Ishtar and
Tiamat

Mesopotamian Gods Family Tree



NINHURSAG
Damgalnuna
Fertility



ENKI
Ea
Southern Sky



ENLIL
Eilil / Ashur
Northern Sky



NINLIL
Mulliltu



NINSUN
Goddess

LUGALBANDA
King of Uruk



MARDUK
Judgment
(Jupiter)



NINURTA
Farming & Hunting
(Saturn)



NANNAR
Sin
The Moon



GILGAMESH
Epic Hero



NABU
Wisdom



DUMUZID
Tammuz



INANNA
Ishtar



UTU
Shamash

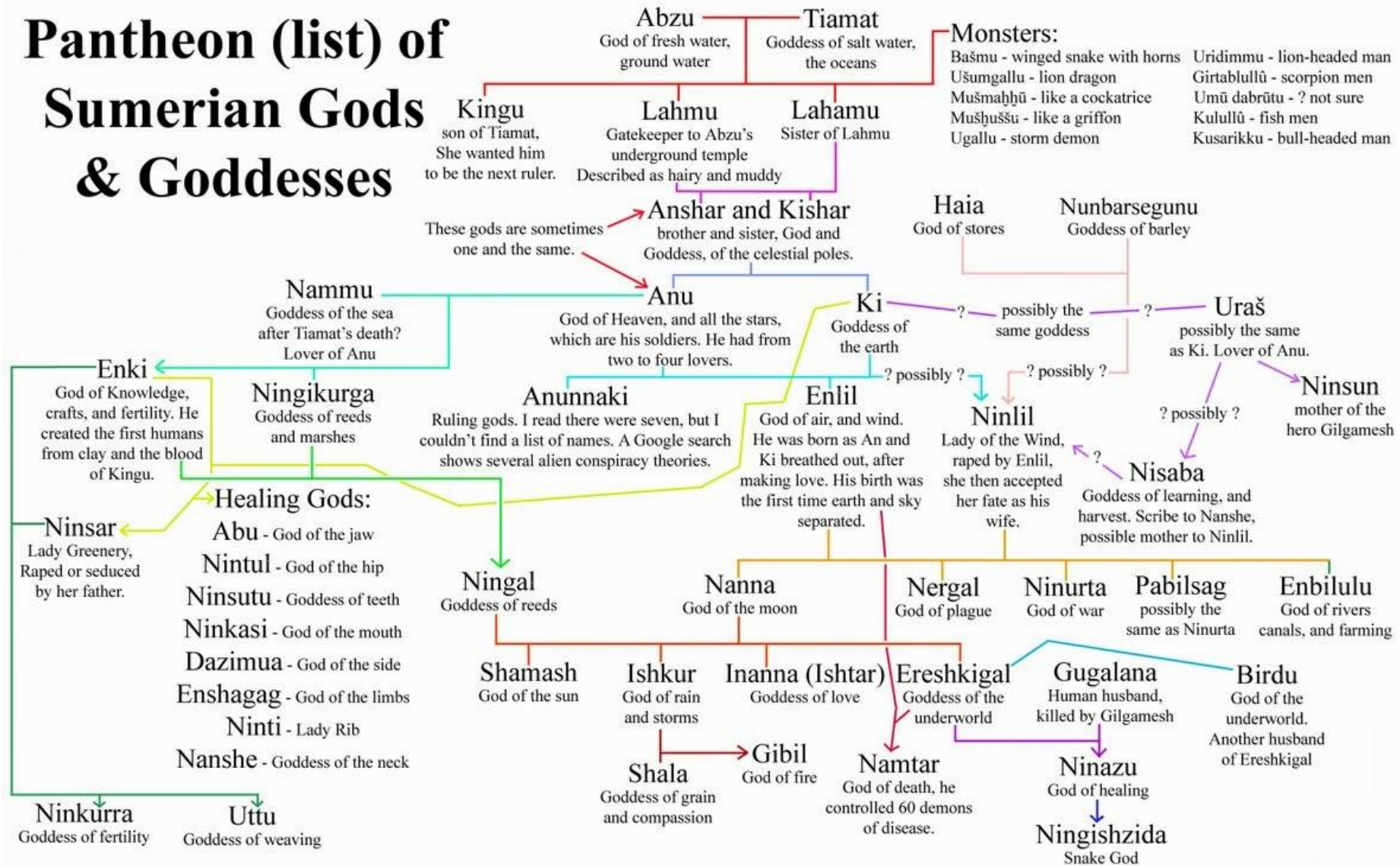


ERESHKIGAL
Queen of the



NERGAL
War & Death

Pantheon (list) of Sumerian Gods & Goddesses



Polytheism Today

SYMBOLS OF ODIN

Odin, the All-Father god of Norse mythology, is associated with several symbols. These symbols represent Odin and his connections to war, the dead, poetry, wisdom and knowledge among others.



GUNGNIR

Also called the Spear of Odin, Gungnir is a mighty spear and Odin's most powerful weapon. It was crafted by the skilled dwarves and given to Odin by Loki.

VALKNUT

Valknut means *knot of those fallen in battle*, connected to Odin due to his association with the dead and war. This is a popular symbol for tattoos, representing strength, reincarnation, a warrior's life and death and Odin's power.





PAIR OF RAVENS

The two ravens, known as Huginn and Muninn act as Odin's messengers and informants. Ravens symbolize the mental power and wisdom of Odin. He is sometimes called the Raven God.

TRIPLE HORN OF ODIN

Associated with the Mead of Poetry, owned by Odin, the triple horn symbolizes knowledge, wisdom, and poetic inspiration.





PAIR OF WOLVES

Odin is commonly depicted with two wolves, his constant companions, Freki and Geri. Wolves are associated with strength, power, daring, bravery and loyalty to the pack.

symbolsage.com

- Germanic paganism
- Odinism
 - Yule (21 Dec “mothernight, winter solstis” to 1 Jan)
 - Disting/Disabot (31 Jan to 1 Feb)
 - Ostara (21 Mar) – Spring equinox
 - Maitag/Merry Moon (30 Apr to 1 May)
 - Midsummer (21 Jun)
 - Loaf-Feast/Freyfaxi (31 Jul to 1 Aug)
 - Fallfest/Winter Finding (21 Sep)
 - Dienes/Winternight (full moon between 15 to 30 Oct.



Modern Norse Paganism

Conclusion

Discussion

References

- H. Wayne House, Charts of World Religions, Zondervan, 2006