



Ancient and Modern Polytheistic Religions

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Paganism and Neopaganism

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

Psychological archetypes in Pagan Traditions

- Male archetypes – Warrior, magician, lover, king
- Female archetypes – Lover, mother, huntress, maiden, queen, mystic, sage
- Ethnicity
 - Celtic – Magician. Example - Merlin and King Arthur
 - Germanic/Norse – Warrior (courage, discipline, and the willingness to fight for what matters.) Example – Wagner, The Ring of the Nibelung
 - Wiccan – Woman, mystic

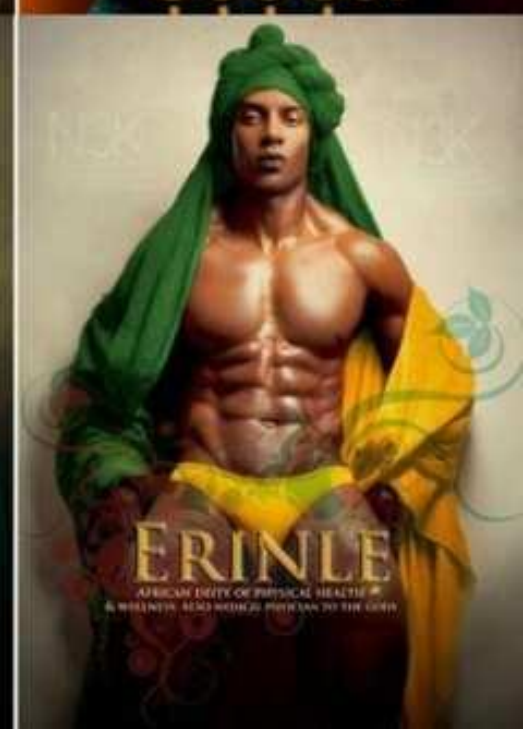
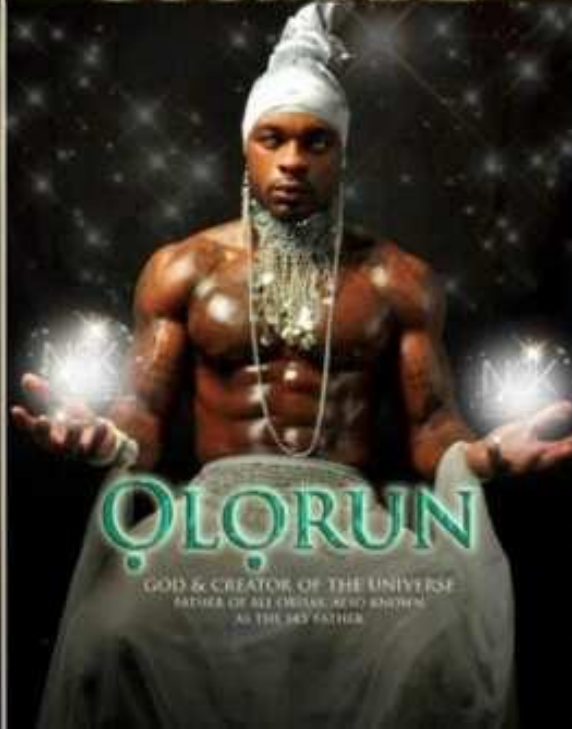
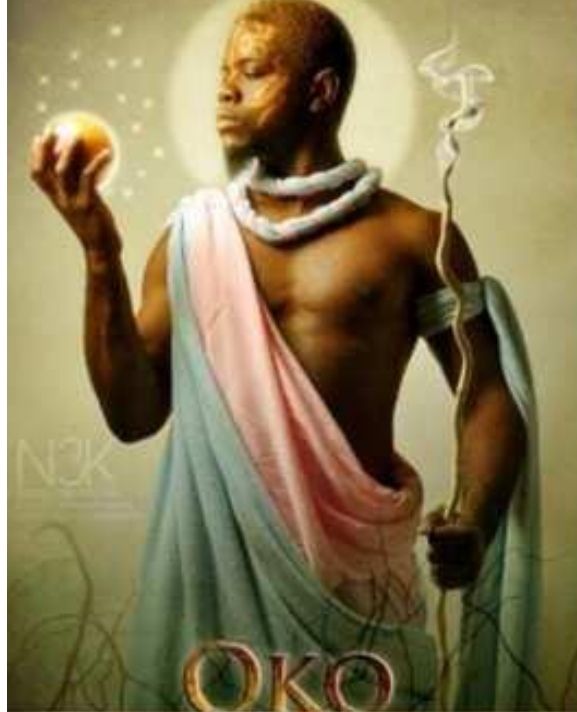
Issues in Neopaganism

- Few or no widely accepted Scriptures
- No vetted clergy. No one who is accepted by the religious establishment can tell others what the religion is about.
- If no one can speak authoritatively for a religious tradition, outsiders, who are often hostile, can define that religious tradition for other outsiders, and even for insiders.
 - The world thinks badly of you
 - You begin to think badly of yourself
- Few adherents means those in the movement are often alone, without the affirmation and the support of others.

African

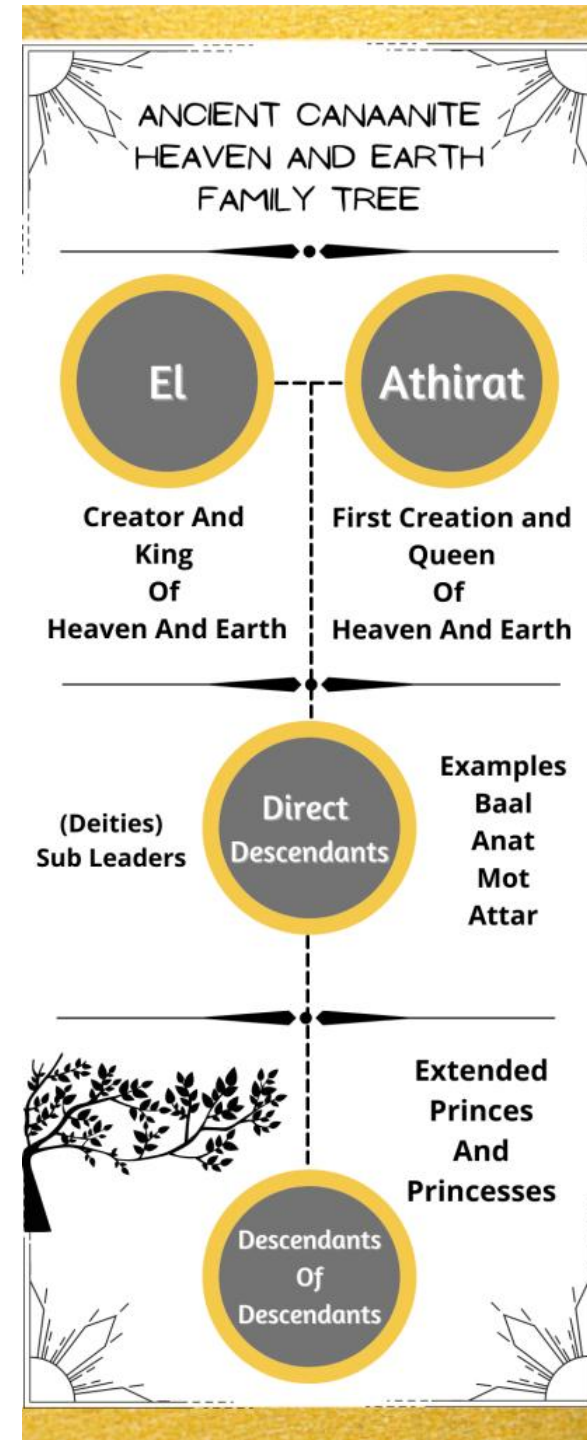
- God – henotheistic, with common belief in one God (monotheism) surrounded by numerous divine spirits and gods (polytheism).
 - Bantu – Yangombi
 - Fon – Nana Buluku
 - Yoruba – Olorun
- Geography – All of Africa but especially south of the Sahara Desert
- Time
 - Begin – Evidence traces it back to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

Yoruba Deities



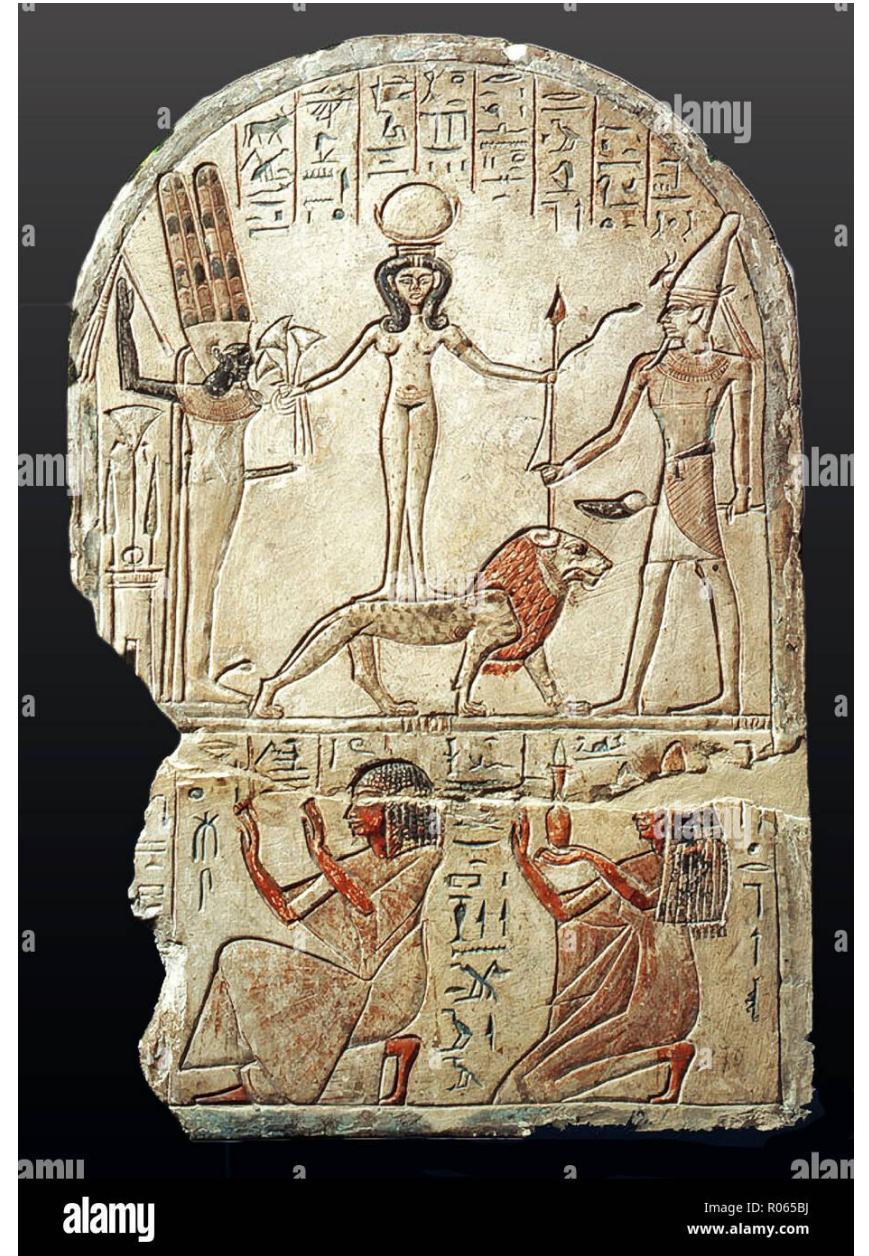
Canaanite/Phoenician

- 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

Norse and Germanic gods



FRIGG



NJORD



HEL



LOKI



IDUN



FREYJA

Germanic - Norse

- God – polytheistic. Odin (supreme deity and ruler of Asgard), Frigg (Odin's wife, sees future), Freyja (seiðr magic), Thor (thunder god, Hammer - Mjöltnir), 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)



Slavic Paganism (1)

- Gods

- Perun (Perkwunos) – principal deity, gives rise to Nordic storm god, Thor. God of thunder, lightning, and war
- Mokosh – goddess, earth, fertility, motherhood, handcrafts, hearth, and faith
- Svarog – like Roman Vulcan and Greek Hephaestus. Sky god, creator of the world, fire, blacksmithing
- Gosvog – sun god, son of Svarog, good fortune, light, and life
- Veles – god of the underworld, cattle, wealth, magic, and poetry, rival of Perun

- Ceremony

- Holy space – priests mark a circle with salt
- Sacrificial loaf of bread – priest's wife offers and burns the rest
- Toasts with a horn of meade and libations poured on to the fire
- Green bough symbolizes summer
- Grain offering poured into a pit and buried

- Sources – Primary, Pskov, Ruthenian, Chronica Slavorum, and Novgorod First Chronicles

Slavic Paganism (2)

- Reincarnation (east) and ancestor worship
- “Double faith” – a mix of Christianity and paganism, dvoeverie
- Much of the religious vocabulary of the Slavs, including vera (loosely translated as "faith", meaning "radiation of knowledge"), svet ("light"), mir ("peace", "agreement of parts", also meaning "world") and rai ("paradise"), is shared with Iranian.
- Eastern Slavs, closer to Aryans, may have had three castes: priests, warriors and farmers

Ethnicity and Influences

- The Kievan Rus came from local Slavs who were conquered by and inbred with Vikings from Scandinavia attacking down the Dneiper River.
- In the mixing, Slavic paganism absorbed elements of Norse and German mythology.
- In the southeast of Ukraine, Iranian culture influenced Slavic paganism.

Foreign Observers on Slavic Paganism

- “They worship rivers, and nymphs, and all sorts of other deities, offer sacrifices to all of them and with the help of these sacrifices they also produce divination” (Procopius of Caesarea)
- “And Vladimir began to reign alone in Kiev. And he placed idols on the hill outside the palace: Perun in wood with a silver head and a gold moustache, and Khors Dazhdbog and Stribog and Simargl and Mokosh. And they offered sacrifices and called them gods, and they took their sons and daughters to them and sacrificed them to the devils. And they profaned the earth with their sacrifices, and Rus’ and that hill were profaned by blood. But God the merciful, who does not wish the death of sinners, on that hill stands today the church of Saint Vasilij, as we will relate later.” (Primary Chronicle)

Slavic Polytheistic and Animistic Symbols

SLAVIC GODS SYMBOLS



KOLOVRAT



PERUN



WELES



MOKOSH



HANDS OF
GOD



DAZHBOZ



SVENTOVIT



LUNULA



ROD



LADA



NEMIZA



CHORS



DEVANA



JAROVIT



JUMIS



BELOBOG



CHERNOBOG



RAROG



STRIBOG



SIMARGL

Conversion to Christianity

- Influence of Byzantium and missionaries to Kyiv in the East
- West Slavs slower to follow Christ
- Forcibly Christianized in the Northern (Baltic) Crusades (12th to 15th centuries)

Slavic Paganism (3)

- Modern reconstruction
 - Slavic Native Faith (Rodnovery, Slavic Neopaganism)
 - Ancient “vedic” religions of Russia in opposition to Abrahamic faiths
 - “We are the children of the gods, not the servants of God.”
- Rodnovers are concerned with the oversaturation of cities and the devastation of the countryside, and they aim at re-establishing harmony between the two environments.
- Emphasis on patriarchy, heterosexuality, traditional family, fidelity and procreation
- Men are seen as innately disposed towards "public" life and abstract thought, while women are seen as better realising themselves in the "private" administration of the family and the resources of the house



Slavic Paganism (4)

- Blame Christianity for transferring personal responsibility into a transcendent future when actions will be judged by God and people either smitten or forgiven for their sins, in fact exempting people from responsibility in the present time.
- Imposing a fake moralism of self-deprecation, self-destruction and suppression of the flesh.
- According to Rodnovers, justice and truth have to be realised in this life, so that "turning the other cheek", waiving agency, and intervention in the things of this world, is considered immoral and equivalent to welcoming wrongness.

Slavic Paganism (5)

- Western liberal society is denounced as a threat to Slavic culture; such as alcohol and drug consumption, various sexual behaviors and miscegenation (inter-race reproduction)
- “Anti-feminist” and “anti-LGBTQ”
- Decentralized and rejecting central authority
- Demographics and stats
 - Adherents – perhaps 100,000 in Ukraine and 1.7 million across all Slavic lands
 - Young adults predominate men>women
 - Higher educated, STEM
- Orantism - movement centered around the cult of Berehynia, linked to Ukrainian national identity, non-violence and resistance to global assimilation

Festival	Date (Julian or Gregorian)	Deity celebrated	Overlapped Christian festival or figure
<u>Yuletide</u> (Koliada)	Winter <u>solstice</u>	Rod – first half Veles – second half	<u>Christmas</u> , <u>Baptism of the Lord</u> , <u>Epiphany</u>
Komoeditsa	Spring <u>equinox</u>	Veles	<u>Shrovetide</u>
Day of Young Shoots	May 2	—N/a	Saints <u>Boris and Gleb</u>
Semik	June 4	Yarilo	<u>Green week</u>
Rusalnaya Week	June 17–23	Simargl	<u>Trinity Sunday</u>
<u>Kupala Night</u> / Kupalo	June 24	—N/a	Saint <u>John the Baptist</u>
Festival of Perun	July 20	Rod—Perun	Saint <u>Elijah</u>
Harvest festivals	July 24 / September 9	Rodzanica—Rodzanicy	<u>Feast of the Transfiguration</u> (August 6) / <u>Birthday of the Mother of God</u> (September 8)
Festival of Mokosh	October 28	Mokosh	<u>Saint Paraskeva's Friday</u>

Military Matters

- Many male adherents to Slavic paganism have perished in the Russo-Ukrainian War. This decreases the male predominance of members.
- The Azov Brigade has been implicated with Slavic neopagan and possibly even neo-Nazism.
 - Builds and worships Slavic pagan idols
- Ideals of defending one's people and land. Associated with protection of Ukraine's cultural heritage.
- Holy war against heretics on both sides
- Will sometimes use runes on uniforms and vehicles for identification and for spiritual meaning

Runes on Russian Equipment



	земля, пропитанная водой, - "мать сыра земля"
	горки
	распаханное поле
	.
	распаханная земля, пропитанная



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

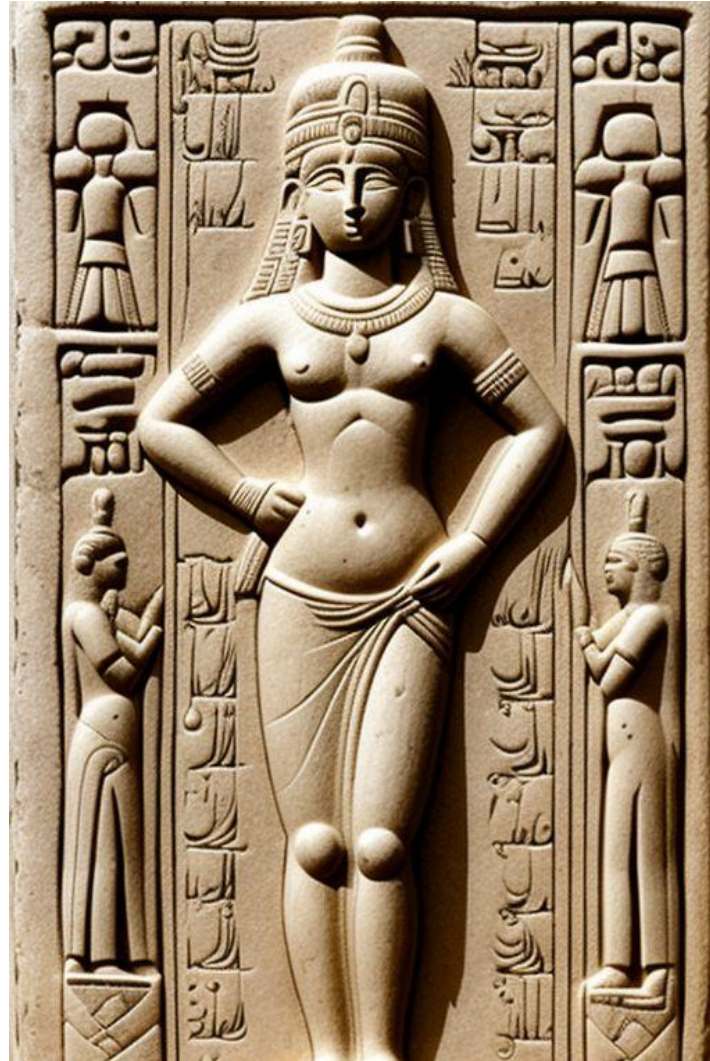
Mesopotamian

- 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
Mullitu



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



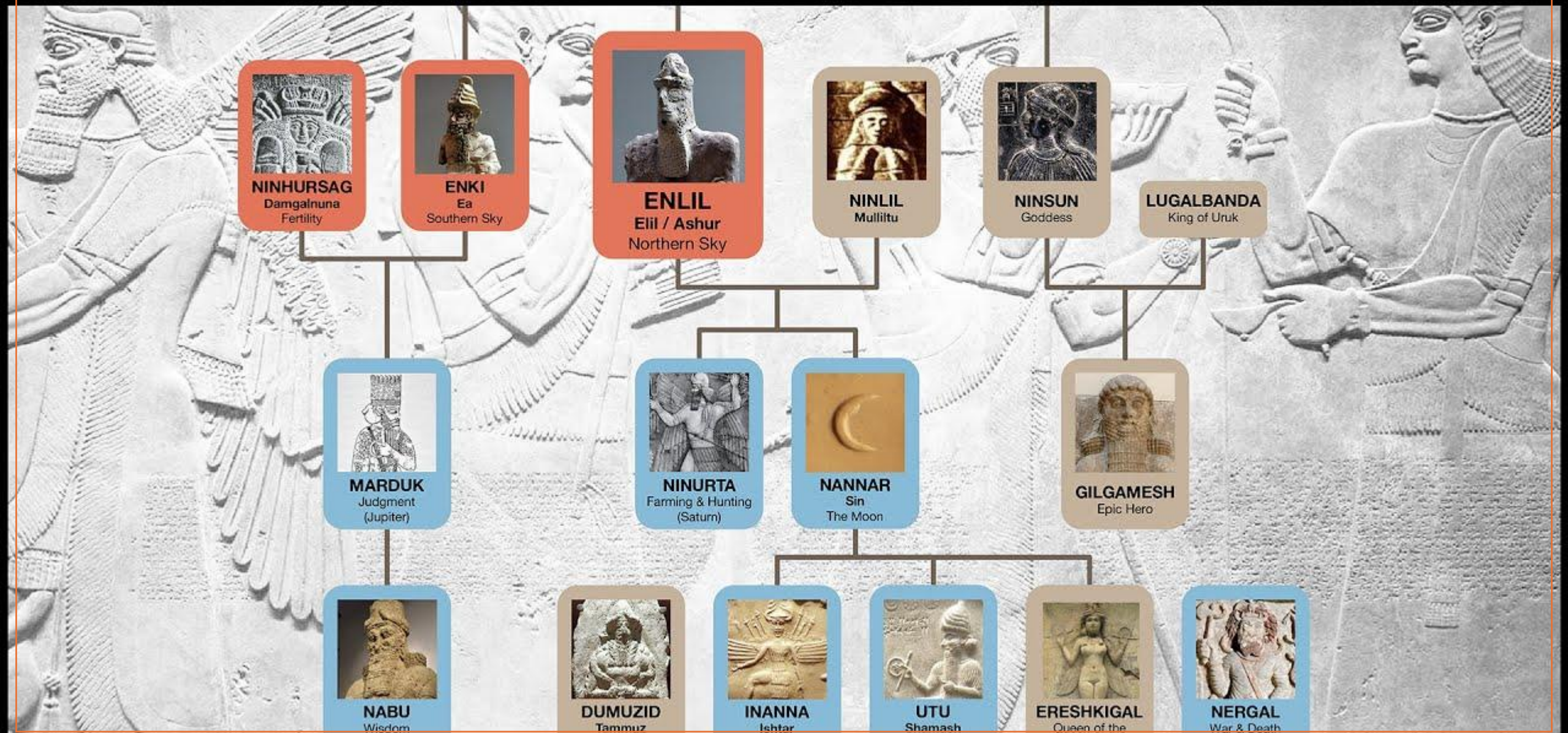
UTU
Shamash



ERESHKIGAL
Queen of the



NERGAL
War & Death



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.

Polytheism Today

- 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)
 - Dieses/Winternight (full moon between 15 to 30 Oct.)



Modern Norse Paganism



Conclusion



Discussion

References

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