

• Manfred Lurker

3rd
Edition

• The
Routledge
DICTIONARY
of



**Gods
Goddesses
Devils
& Demons**

**Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details**

The Routledge Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons

From classical Greek and Roman mythology to the gods of Eastern Europe and Mesopotamia; from Nordic giants to Islamic jinns and Egyptian monsters, this classic dictionary is packed with descriptions of the figures most worshipped and feared around the world and across time. Fully cross-referenced and with over 100 illustrations, it also features two handy appendices listing the functions and attributes shared by these deities and demons.

Covering over 1800 of the most important gods and demons from around the world, this is the essential resource for anyone interested in comparative religion and the mythology of the ancient and contemporary worlds.

Manfred Lurker was, from 1968 to 1980, editor of the *Bibliography of Symbolism, Iconography and Mythology*. He has published widely on symbolism and the history of religion.

The Routledge Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons

Manfred Lurker

First published in German in 1984
as *Lexicon der Götter und Dämonen*
by Alfred Krämer Verlag, Stuttgart

This translation first published in 1987
by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd

This reissue published 2004
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

“To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge’s
collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk.”

© Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or
reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic,
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented,
including photocopying and recording, or in any information
storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from
the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-64351-8 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-67189-9 (Adobe eReader Format)
ISBN 0-415-34018-7 (Print Edition)

Contents

Preface	vi
Note on transcription and pronunciation	viii
Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons	1
Appendix I: functions, aspects, spheres of competence	210
Appendix II: symbols, attributes, motifs	233
Bibliography	260

Preface

A basic element in all religions is the awareness, both intellectual and emotional, of man's dependence on non-human powers: powers which we conceive as personal, and vis-à-vis which we normally stand in a reciprocal relationship. Gods and demons are the forms taken by these powers, their hypostatizations, as it were, in the shape of light and darkness, sun and moon, fire and water, bird and snake. The divine can reveal itself in all the phenomena of nature, just as the demonic can. But it is not only from without that the numinous presents itself to man: it can arise spontaneously in religious experience as an 'exponent of feeling' (Wilamowitz-Moellendorf), and it can be divined as 'a dark abyss . . . which is not accessible to our reason' (Rudolf Otto). The images generated in the human mind are, then, representative of stages reached in man's understanding and in his knowledge of himself; in a certain sense, indeed, every divine image has traits which identify it as a self-projection of mankind. As ideal beings, the gods are what man would like to be; but they are also what he, in his spatio-temporal imperfection, cannot be.

Every religion has its own conventions and symbols which serve to express the functions, the aspects and the spheres of competence of the members of its pantheon. And this means that the conscious and unconscious nexus of conventions specific to any one religion is hardly, if at all, accessible to believers in another religion, or to those who believe in no religion at all. Thus, even for the ancient Greeks the animal gods of the Egyptians were shocking and revolting. And modern man, proud as he is of his reason and logic, fares no better when he is called upon to recognize an authentic view of God in the often and – in the most literal sense – obscure rites and images of an alien religion.

Above all, we must not fail to recognize that the concepts 'god' and 'demon' are by no means evenly weighted in the various religions. The innumerable deities of Hinduism and Buddhism carry about as much significance as angels or saints do in monotheistic religions. There are mortal gods, gods who die (like Balder and Osiris) and demonic beings whom death cannot touch (for example, the Devas). The borderline between gods and demons is fluid (see Asura, or the Nymphs); and with the Christianization of a people, its erstwhile deities can be devalued to the status of devils (as in the case of Pan or Dabog) or accepted into the corpus of Christian saints (for example, Brigit Köndös). From the largely anonymous mass of spirits, gods and demons are distinguished by being more sharply and individually characterized, as shown, for example in the bestowal of names upon them.

The present reference work offers a conspectus of all the more important supernatural beings who have acquired 'personality' in this sense, both in the pantheons of the

classical cultures and in the world religions of today; and the religious systems of the so-called 'primitive' races are also given their due place. Any attempt at an exhaustive survey of all the names, functions, symbols and attributes in this field was excluded from the outset: the mass of material is such that even several volumes could hardly cope with it. Heroic figures in saga and legend have been included only where this is justified by their subsequent deification: thus, Aeneas and Heraklés are included, while the Celtic King Arthur and the Germanic hero Siegfried are not. The same goes for founders of religions, and for saints: the reader will find Buddha and Lao-zi in these pages, but neither Muhammad nor Zarathustra. Mythological detail has been intentionally cut to a minimum. There is no entry for Christ: for various reasons, adequate treatment of this figure lies outside the scope of the present work. The reader's attention is directed particularly to the two appendices, in which the individual gods and demons are classified from various points of view.

The illustrations serve only to lighten the text, and are not intended to be in any way a scientifically exact iconography. It should be borne in mind that in the case of certain cultures it is hardly possible to find suitable matter for illustrative purposes and that certain peoples and religions have a pronounced antipathy to images and representation of any sort.

Manfred Lurker
Oberkirch, May 1984

Note on transcription and pronunciation

- 1 *Greek and Latin* English forms in general currency are used instead of their Greek or Latin equivalents: thus, Jupiter for Iup(p)iter, Centaurs, Nymphs, etc. Apart from these special cases, Greek and Latin names are taken as in the original German text, with changes in spelling where necessary. Head-words in the original text carry stress-marks based on: H. Hunger, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 6th edn, 1969. These are retained.
- 2 *Sanskrit and Vedic* Standard transcription is used for Sanskrit and Vedic names, based on Macdonell, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, OUP, 1924. The distinction between the dental series: t, d, n, s; the retroflex series: ṭ, ḍ, ṇ, ṣ; and the palatal series: c, j, ñ, ś, has been retained. Here, ṣ and ś are both pronounced as *sh*; ṭ, ḍ, ṇ are the same sounds as are heard in English t, d, n; t, d, n are their continental counterparts (as in Italian); ñ is the Spanish ñ.
- 3 The *sh* sound where it otherwise occurs – particularly in ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian names – is transcribed as š. This letter also represents *sh* in the two Baltic languages, Lithuanian and Latvian. In Yoruba, *sh* is represented by ṣ.
- 4 *Chinese* For Chinese names the modern pinyin romanization has been used, though tone marks have been disregarded; x is something like the *sh* in ship, q is like the *ch* in cheese; p, t, k are heavily aspirated; b, d, g are not voiced.
- 5 Wherever it occurs, ž is pronounced as j in French 'journal'.
- 6 In Aztec and Maya names, c before e and i = s; before a, o, u = k.

A

Aatxe (Basque, 'young bull') Evil spirit in the shape of a bull which, the Basques believe, leaves its cave on stormy nights, and which may often assume human form. Under the name Etsai (i.e. devil) it instructs its devotees in its arts.

Abaddon (Hebrew, 'downfall', 'ruin') In the Old Testament, the word refers to the underworld, the place of destruction (e.g. Job 26: 2; 28: 22). In the Apocalypse, it means the angel of hell, the lord of the plague of locusts (Revelation 9: 7–11). Known in Greek as Apollyon, i.e. destroyer.

Abat(t)ur A mythical figure of the Mandaean. At the last judgment it weighs souls and/or their deeds. The name derives from Persian and is construed as meaning 'bearer of the scales'.

Abellio A Gallic local deity, known from inscriptions in the Garonne valley. He has been interpreted as a god of apple-trees.

Abgal (Apkallu) Seven Sumerian spirits deriving from the Abzu (→ Apsu) and subject to Enki. It is probable that they reflect legendary antediluvian kings. Some of the Abgal are conceived as fish-men.

Abhiyoga Generic name of the servile gods in Jainism; they help the supreme gods (→ Indra) to create rain and darkness.

Abora The supreme being worshipped by the Canary Islanders on the island of Palma. The god sat in heaven and caused the stars to move.

Abraxas



(variants Abrasax, Abraxis) Occult theonym used in Graeco-Oriental gnosticism. In Greek values, the letters add up to 365, corresponding thus to the number of days in the year. The hebdomad of letters was associated with the seven planets. Abraxas stones were used as amulets and usually show the god with the torso and the arms of a man, the head of a cock and serpent legs. In scientific literature he is also known as Angnipede = 'snake-feet'.

Abu Sumerian god of vegetation. According to one tradition he was born from the skull of → Enki, an image of the emergence of plants from the earth's surface.

Abundantia Roman goddess personifying abundance (*abundantia*). She lived on in the Lady Habonde (Abundia) of

French popular belief, who visits people's houses by night bringing prosperity.

Acala 'The Immovable', a divinity in Indian Buddhism. As 'Protector of the Teaching' his image stands before temples to ward off those hostile to the Buddhist doctrine. He has three eyes and six arms, and he grinds his teeth. His weapons include the sword, the thunder-bolt (Vajra), the axe and the noose.

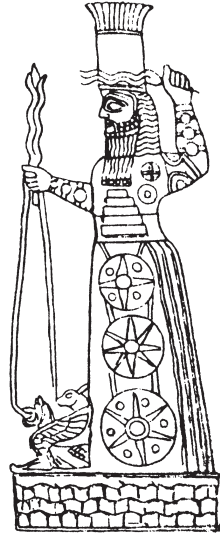
Acaviser → Lasas

Achelóos Greek river-god bearing the same name as the river which runs into the Ionian Sea. The son of → Okeanos and of → Tethys. The myth tells how Achelóos fought the hero Heraklés for possession of the Deinaeira, taking the form first of a snake, then of a bull. He married the muse Melpomene, and the → Sirens were supposed to be his daughters. Under the name Achlae, Achelóos is attested in Etruria from the sixth century BC onwards, and is represented as heavily bearded and with the horns of a bull.

Achilleus (Latin, Achilles) Hero of Greek legend. The young Achilles had been dipped by his mother → Thetis in the water of the Styx to make him invulnerable, but the water did not touch the heel by which she held him (hence 'Achilles' heel'). In the Trojan War he was slain by Paris. Achilleus was venerated as a hero throughout Greece. In the Black Sea area he had divine status, and was known from the Hadrian era onwards by the epithet Pontarchos = ruler of the sea.

Acoran The supreme being, worshipped by the inhabitants of Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands. Temples to him were erected in remote mountain places difficult of access, and these afforded inviolable asylum. A daily offering of milk was made to the god by maidens clad in white leather.

Adad



(in Syria, Hadad) Babylonian god of weather and rain; the name is usually written with the cuneiform character for 'wind'. He was thought of as son of the supreme god → An. His epithets 'Dyke-warden of Heaven' and 'Lord of Abundance' identify him as the beneficent giver. If he withholds the rains, drought and famine ensue. His symbolical animal was the bull, his sign was a cluster of lightning flashes. An ancient hymn describes how heaven and earth rise before the god, who is also called Ramman (= thunder). The illustration (a seal motif) shows him in a robe adorned with astral signs and with a tall hat decorated on top with feathers; in his hand he holds the pincer-shaped bolts of lightning.

Adam(m)as The parental godhead of the Naassenes, a gnostic movement in Phrygia; conceived as a father-mother syzygy, the 'parents of the aeons'.

Adam Kadmon According to the Kabbala (a Jewish mystical movement) the

first man, an emanation of absolute perfection. He is symbolized by the major axis of ten concentric circles, the Sephiroth or ten circles of creation. Thus, Adam Kadmon as primeval man symbolizes the universe. He is androgynous, and is seen in ancient Jewish mysticism as partaking in, or blending with God. The Bahir book (twelfth century) mentions the 'seven holy forms of God', all of which have correspondences in the limbs of the human body. Man thus exhibits the mystic structure of the godhead.

Adam Kasia ('the hidden Adam'), also known as Adam Qadmaia, 'the first Adam'. A god-like form postulated by the Mandaeans, which unites in itself microcosm and macrocosm. This form was regarded as, at one and the same time, the soul of the corporeal Adam and as the soul of every man. Adam Kasia is a redeemer, and is himself redeemed. Cf. in Jewish mysticism, → Adam Kadmon.

Adibuddha ('primeval Buddha') The concept is of a → Buddha who has existed from the beginning of time and who has created, through contemplative development of his Self, the five → Dhyāni-Buddhas. These are the Buddhas of contemplation, which then bring forth the five → Dhyāni-Bodhisattvas, from which the universe arises in a series of self-superseding acts of creation. Adibuddha is thus a kind of primeval or original creator. His epithet is Vajradhara ('bearer of the thunderbolt').

Aditi Indian goddess; her dominion is over the divine ordering of the world, and she is the mother of the → Ādityas. In later tradition she appears as the personification of the earth; her bosom is its navel. The name 'Aditi' really means 'infinity', and the goddess is a form of the Great Mother who embraces all living

and being. She is also a redeemer figure, as she is supposed to free those who believe in her from sickness, need and the stains of sin.

Ādityas 'Progeny of Aditi' (→ Aditi) A Vedic grouping of seven or eight gods; at its head is → Varuṇa, often in association with → Mitra and → Aryaman. Martanda, the eighth son of Aditi, is seen as the divine fore-father of the human race. Like Aditi, the Ādityas were believed to offer salvation from all ills. Post-Vedic literature postulates twelve Ādityas in the role of twelve sun-gods, who are in turn connected with the twelve months of the year.

Adonis Originally a Phoenician-Syrian god (the Semitic word 'adon' means 'master'). He embodies vegetation scorched by the heat of the summer sunshine, and was worshipped in the mystic cults as a god who dies and is resurrected. According to Greek legend, he was born from a myrrh tree, into which his mother had been changed. He was the beautiful lover of → Aphrodīte. When he was killed by a boar while hunting, the goddess caused the Adonis rose to spring up from his blood, and she was able to secure his release from the underworld for six months in the year. The seeds of the so-called Adonis garden grow readily in a bowl or a box, and their blossoming and rapid withering were seen as symbolizing the life and death of the god. Adonis was taken over by the Etruscans under the name of → Atunis.

Adraste (or Andraste = she who is invincible) A goddess of war in ancient Britain, to whom Queen Boudicca (AD 61) had captured Roman women sacrificed. A parallel is found in Gaul where the Vicontii had a goddess of war named Andarta.

Adrásteia ('the inescapable') Originally a Trojan-Phrygian mountain divinity who was also worshipped in Thrace and who appears in Greece from about 400 BC onwards as the guardian of righteousness and the goddess who avenges all wrongs; connected with → Nemesis. Whether there is any common Indo-Germanic connection with the Celtic-British → Adraste is not clear.

Adro A god of the Lugbara people who live on the shores of Lake Albert in East Africa. He lives with his wives and children on earth, preferably in rivers, and he makes himself known to humans in the shape of whirlwinds and grass fires. The celestial aspect of this earthly god is known as Adroa, a divinity in his own right, who created mankind in days gone by, but who now lives at infinite removal from us.

Aegir A north Germanic sea-giant, husband of → Ran. At a carousal for the Aesir (→ As), he had shining gold brought into the hall which was lit up as though by fire. It has been suggested that the gold represents the shimmering of tranquil seas without wind.

Aenéas To begin with, a Greek hero (Greek: Aineias) in the Trojan War, the son of King Anchises and the goddess → Aphrodíte, the mother of the gods from Mount Ida. The saga of his flight from the ruins of Troy became known to the Romans and the Etruscans in the sixth century BC; and soon thereafter he himself was honoured as a *heros*. For the Romans he was the embodiment of the old Roman virtue of *pietas* (piety, reverence for age and tradition) thanks to his having rescued his father (lamed by lightning) and the holy images, and taken them with him on his wanderings. The emperor Augustus believed that his

family was descended from the son of the gods, Aenéas.

Aesculápius The god of healing → Asklepiós, introduced into Rome during a plague in 293 BC. In his capacity as all-healer, he became one of the most popular gods of the early Empire. The emperor Marcus Aurelius had himself depicted as Aesculápius, bearing a caduceus sceptre. In modern times the caduceus has become the symbol of the medical profession.

Aēšma Daēva (*aēšma* = madness) The Parsee demon of lust and anger. His wrath is directed mainly against the cow, which occupies the central place among the creatures. Only by → Saošyant can he be finally overcome.

Aetérnitas For the Romans the personification of eternity, both of the Empire and of the deified emperors. Symbolically represented by the phoenix perpetually arising from the ashes of its own burning, and the snake biting its own tail (Uroboros): both of these illustrating a process which has no beginning and no end.

Afi God of rain and thunderstorms among the Abkhaz people who live in the western Caucasus. His name must not be uttered by women, who call him simply 'the one who is above'.

Agaš (Avestan = 'evil eye') A demon of illness in Iranian religions: primarily a demon of those sins which are committed by means of the eye.

Agathós Daímon A good genius or guardian spirit in ancient Greek mythology. It was often imagined as a winged serpent which hovers invisibly round a man and brings good luck to his home.

Agdistis (Agdítis) A hermaphrodite being in Phrygian mythology. It is

descended from → Papas, made drunk by → Diónysos, and emasculates itself on waking from its drunken stupor. An almond tree grows from its sexual organs, and the fruit of this tree makes the daughter of the river-god → Sangarios pregnant. She gives birth to → Attis. Agdistis, now in its female aspect as a form of the Great Mother (→ Kybéle), falls in love with the beautiful youth Attis; when he is unfaithful to her, she makes him lose his reason.

Agliaia → Charites

Aglibol The moon-god of Palmyra (ancient Syria). He bears the sickle moon on his forehead – at a later date, on his shoulders. The name is sometimes explained as ‘bull of Bol’, which would suggest that the sickle was originally bull’s horns. His cult spread via Greece to Rome.

Agni (etymologically connected with Latin *ignis* = fire) The Vedic god of fire. He carries the sacrificial burnt offering to the gods. There are two or three versions of his birth: on the one hand, he is said to be born from heaven, from the sun or from lightning, but then again he is born from an earthly source, from stone or from water, in which extinguished fire resides. As portrayed, he is reddish in hue, with a long beard and clothed in fire; in his hands he carries flames, a trident and a water-pot. He is said to be mounted on a ram or a male goat. In old texts Agni is described as the ‘bull of the waters’, that is to say, he makes the water pregnant: a symbolical reference to the cosmic process, in which (male) fire enters into (female) water. Agni is an intermediary between mankind and the gods, especially when he appears in the sacrificial fire.

Agnostís Theós (Greek = ‘the unknown god’) It seems that altars to ‘unknown

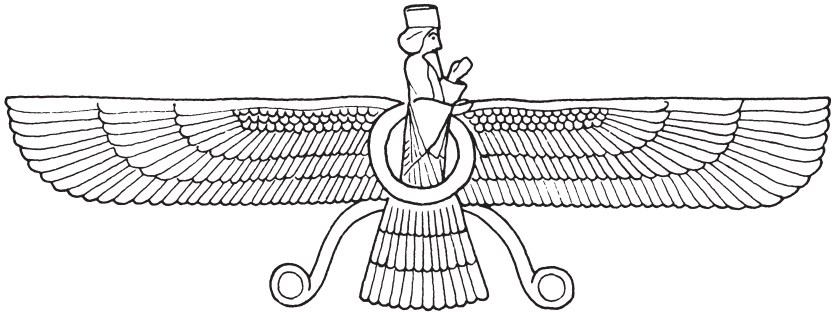
gods’ were set up in Athens. In his address to the men of Athens (Acts of the Apostles 17: 23) Paul uses the singular – ‘To the unknown god’ – but this seems to be a monotheistic adaptation. As far as the history of religion is concerned, there is no doubt that ‘all gods’ (Pantheon) were invoked and worshipped – gods who are not named but who are not nameless. An unknown or anonymous god is also attested in pre-Islamic Arabia, and votive inscriptions from Palmyra (second and third centuries AD) are addressed to him ‘whose name is praised for ever and ever’. His epithets are ‘Lord of the world’ and ‘the good one’.

Ah Bolom Tzacab In scholarly literature known also as god K or as ‘the leaf-nosed god’ because of the leaf-shaped ornament he wears in his nose. He was the Mayan god of agriculture, and was supposed to control rain and thunder.

Ahone The supreme deity of Indians who once lived in the Virginia area. He was so far removed from men, so remote, that they did little to honour him. In this, he differs from → Okeus.

Ahriman Middle Persian and modern Farsi version of the Avestan name Angru Mainyu (‘evil spirit’), the name given by Zarathustra to → Ahura Mazda’s adversary who counters every act of creation with an act of anti-creation. Ahriman is the embodiment of all evil; he inhabits an underground realm of eternal darkness, from which he brings smoke and blackness, sickness and death into the world. His symbolical creature is the snake. At the end of time, he will subside powerless into darkness. In Mithraism and Zervanism Ahriman is venerated as a god; his rituals include the sacrifice of those animals which belong to the powers of evil. Cf. also → Arimanius.

Ahura Mazda



Later Ormazd (old Persian = ‘Lord or wisdom’). The name of the one true God preached by Zarathustra. Originally Ahura Mazda was conceived as ruling over the oppositional pair Spenta Mainyu and Angru Mainyu (→ Ahriman), but later he became conceptually identified with Spenta Mainyu. In the teaching of Zarathustra, light is made visible by Ahura Mazda and serves in his praise. Subsequently the paramount light, the sun, appears as the form of the god, and in the Avesta the sun and the moon are described as his eyes. Over against the world of truth and light which he has created, stands the anti-world of deception and darkness. By means of fire, Ahura Mazda can distinguish good from evil. On Achaemenian seals the god is depicted in a winged ring (the sun or the moon); sometimes his body projects upwards out of the ring. This type of representation was taken over from Assyria (cf. illustration to → Assur).

Ahurani ‘She who belongs to Ahura’, an Old Iranian water-goddess, to whom people prayed for growth, insight and progeny. Libation formed part of the ritual in her honour.

Aiakós A Greek god of the underworld, the son of Zeus and of Aigina. Because of his love of justice he was

appointed judge of the dead. He is first mentioned by name in Plato.

Aíolos (Latin: Aeolus) The son of → Poseidon; in Greek mythology, the progenitor of the Aeolians, directed by → Zeus to rule the winds. It was he who gave Odysseus a bag containing contrary winds to speed the homeward journey.

Aión (Greek = time) The word may refer to an age or epoch in the history of the world, or to the god himself who personifies such an age. He is depicted in human form, entwined in serpents and with the head of a lion. He is often winged and sometimes shown standing in the Zodiac. He figures in the mysteries of Mithras, whose concept of Aion is of Persian origin (→ Zervan). The Lord of Time is also a primeval god (known as Aion to the Manichaeans), and he enters Greek thought in the shape of → Krónos, which in the course of further philosophical speculation, coalesces with its homonym → Chronos.

Airyaman Etymologically related to the Modern Persian *erman* = guest. The Old Iranian god corresponding to the Vedic → Aryaman. To begin with, he was a sort of collective deity whose duties included supervision of such social bonds and contracts as hospitality and marriage.

He is the old Aryan god of marriage, but also appears in literature as a divinely ordained priest and doctor. At the end of time he will fish the souls of those temporarily damned out of hell by means of a net. Eschatologically he may coincide with → Sraoša.

Ai Tojon The creator of light among the Yakuts (in Siberia). He is conceived as a giant, double-headed eagle, which perches on the tip of the world-tree.

Aitu In Samoa, a portmanteau word for the lower order of gods who are called Atua in the Marquesas. Included here are, above all, the various tutelary gods of various families and villages, who appear in the shape of plants or animals. One Aitu known as Fe'e (= cuttlefish, squid) started out as a god of war but gradually took over the role of ruler over the kingdom of the dead. The Aitu often display demonic rather than godly characteristics. The word 'aitu' is also used in Maori, where it means not only 'deity' but also 'sickness' or 'misery'.

Aitvaras A Lithuanian household spirit which appears as a black cat or a black cock. When he flies in the sky he looks like a wavy line. He is a creature of the devil, which persuades the householder to sell his soul for a rich reward.

Aius Locútius (Latin = the speaker) A Roman nonce-god who is supposed to have given a warning of the approach of the Gauls (391 BC).

Ākāśagarbha ('whose origin is the ether') In Indian Buddhism, a → Bodhisattva with the characteristics of a celestial deity. He holds jewels in his hands, and his symbol is the sun. He appears in the Tibetan Books of the Dead as *Nam-mkhai snying-po*, yellowish in colour and furnished with sword and bell

as attributes. In Japan he is known as Kokuzo, and is a personification of supreme knowledge of the absolute void (*śūnyata*).

Aképhalos This is not really a proper name, but rather the designation of a 'headless' being which was regarded as a demon in antiquity. There were many of these: originally beheaded for criminal offences, they became ghosts or acolytes in magic practices. In Hellenistic Egyptian papyri dealing with magic, spells and incantations, the akephalos is even addressed as God; here we may perhaps see the influence of the myth of the dismembered → Osiris.

Aker In ancient Egyptian texts his name is written with the determinant for 'Earth', and the god himself is an embodiment of the earth. He is represented as a narrow strip of land with either a human or a lion's head at the ends; later, this becomes two lions with their backs turned to each other, which bear the hieroglyph of the rising sun. One lion looks towards the west where the sun sets; the other faces east where the sun rises again from the realm of darkness. The two lions and hence the god they represent guard the entrance and the exit of the underworld.

Akerbeltz ('black billy-goat') In Basque popular belief, Akerbeltz is the representative of the god → Mari. In accordance with his name he is depicted as a black billy-goat. People who want their animals to do well turn to him for help. In earlier times, a black billy-goat was kept in the farm-steading to protect the herd from plague and sickness. In the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries he was venerated as a god by witches and wizards; sacrifices were made to him, and dance formed part of the ritual in his honour.

Akongo The supreme god of the Ngombe who live in the Congo area. As creator, he bears the epithet 'he who forms'; that is, it is he who gave the world its shape.

Akṣobhya ('the unshakable') One of the five → Dhyāni-Buddhas: probably an hypostasis of the historical → Gautama Buddha, with reference to his withstanding the (legendary) temptations of the satanic → Māra. Iconographically, he is represented as a Buddha clothed in the habit of a monk, and seated on a sun. He is celestially orientated on the east, and in Tantrism the eye of the Buddha, the element ether and the season of winter are attributed to him. In Tantric iconography he may be given six or eight arms; his main attribute is the *vajra*, the thunderbolt, and he rides on a pair of elephants. Several divinities emanate from Akṣobhya, including → Heruka, → Jambhala, Yamari.

Ala Earth-goddess of the Ibo people in East Nigeria. She represents the earth in its dual aspect – fecundity and death.

Alako A god of the Norwegian gypsies. His original name was Dundra, and he was sent down to earth in human shape by his father, the great God, to reveal their secret law and lore to the gypsies. When this was accomplished he returned to his own realm in the moon, and has ever since been known as Alako. The name is etymologically related to the Finnish word *alakuu* = waning moon.

Alalu The first among the heavenly kings according to the pantheon of the Hurrians who lived in North Syria in the second millennium BC. For nine years he occupied his divine throne before he was overthrown by Anu, the first of the gods. Alalu was called Hypsistos ('the highest') by the Greeks.

Alardi In the popular belief of the Ossetians in the Central Caucasus a spirit who on the one hand causes smallpox and, on the other, protects women. In folksong he is given the epithet 'the winged one'.

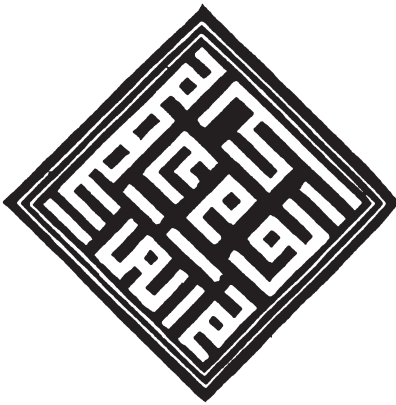
Alaunus A local Celtic name for the god → Mercurius. In the Mannheim area, Mercurius was given the epithet Alannus; near Salzburg, inscriptions have been found giving the form 'sacrum . . . Alounis'.

Albiorix ('King of the World') Epithet, perhaps also a specific form of the Gallic war-god → Teutates.

Alcis A divine pair of brothers in the belief of the East Germanic tribe of the Naharnavali (in Silesia?). According to Tacitus they were worshipped in a sacred grove, and they were never depicted. In the *interpretatio romana* they are identified with the heavenly twins → Castor and Pollux. The etymology of the word Alcis is not clear. It may be connected with the word *alces* which Caesar notes as meaning 'elk', and this would make the Alcis brothers elk or stag gods.

Alisanos (attested also in the form Alisanus) A local god in Gaul, mentioned in inscriptions found in the Côte d'Or. The place-name Alesia may well be connected with him. Attempts have been made to identify him more closely as a mountain-ash god, or god of rowan trees.

Allah (Arabic, *al-ilah* = the God) In the pre-Islamic period, the supreme deity, creator of the earth and giver of water. Interpreted monotheistically by Muhammad as the one true God, to whom it is incumbent upon men to submit (*islām* = submission). Allah is totally and essentially different from all that he has created: hence the prohibition of any



attempt to portray him. The ‘beautiful names’ of God correspond to the epithets which are used to paraphrase Allah in the Qur’an: 99 names are known (hence the 99 beads in the Islamic rosary) but the ‘greatest name’, the name which will complete the hundred, is known to no mortal. In Islamic mysticism (Sufism) Allah is compared to a sun which sends forth its rays; his throne is a sign of his omnipotence and of his remoteness from his creation. Since graphical representation of Allah is forbidden, it is only in calligraphy that he can be spiritually ‘presented’.

Allat (‘the goddess’) Venerated in Central and North Arabia in pre-Islamic times. Herodotus records the Semitic name in the form Alilat. She was particularly revered in Ta’if where an idol to her, a white granite block, stood. She was supposed to be one of the three daughters of → Allah, and was associated with the planet Venus. Certain texts also seem to point to a solar connection.

Allekto → Erinyes

Almaqah Moon-god and tutelary god of the South Arabian kingdom of Saba. Members of the tribe of Saba called themselves ‘the children of Almaqah’. He is

symbolized by a cluster of lightning flashes and a weapon which looks like a slightly bent capital S. His symbolical animal is the bull, and in some texts he is referred to as ‘Lord of the horned goats’.

Aloádes In Greek mythology the giant sons of Aloeus (or of → Poseidon) named Otos and Ephialtes. In their fight against the gods they try to storm Olympus; and they bind the god of war → Arés fast and hold him captive for 13 months. When → Ártemis throws herself between them in the shape of a hind, they kill themselves in their blind lust to hunt down the quarry. It is possible that the Aloades were pre-Hellenic gods, who were casualties in the struggle surrounding the introduction of the new religion of Zeus.

Alp (Alb) Old Norse *alfr*. The original designation of the mythical → Elben. In Germanic mythology, the Albs were unearthly beings, half god half dwarf: and here we may recall Alberich, the king of the dwarfs in the Nibelungensage, famed for his Tarnkappe which conferred invisibility, and the magic belt that gave him strength. In later years, the Albs came to be known as demonic beings which caused sickness and nightmares. In popular superstition the nightmare – a terrifying experience during sleep, followed by an equally terrifying awakening – is explained as induced by a threatening demon (→ Incubus, → Succubus). In Bavaria and Austria, the evil female demons known as Druden take the place of the Albs.

Alpan (also Alpanu, Alpnu) An Etruscan goddess, variously portrayed as winged or unwinged, belonging to the female demons known as → Lasas. She is naked except for a cloak which hardly conceals her body, she is richly bejewelled and wears light sandals. The

evidence strongly suggests that she was a goddess of the art of love, but she also possesses traits that mark her as a goddess of the underworld.

Amaethon A Celtic god of agriculture in Wales, revered as the great ploughman. He belongs to the Welsh family of gods of the Don.

Amáltheia (in Latin Amalthea) A nymph or, in other versions of the story, a she-goat which nourished the infant → Zeus with her milk, and was rewarded by being transferred to the heavens where she figures as Capella (Latin, = goat). A horn broken off from Amáltheia was transformed by Zeus into the cornucopia, the symbol of plenty.

Amaterasu (Japanese = ‘shining from heaven’) The sun-goddess of Shintoism, venerated in the shrine at Ise as the divine progenitor of the Japanese imperial family. Her epithet is Omikami: ‘great and exalted divinity’. The myth tells how she arose together with the moon (god) when the god of heaven Izanagi washed his eyes on his return from the underworld. Angered by the atrocities committed by the storm-god → Susanowo, Amaterasu withdrew to a cave, and all light faded from the earth; but the other gods used a mirror to entice her back again.

Amaunet One of the group of Egyptian gods known as the Ogdoad. She was seen as the Divine Mother presiding at the beginning of time, when she merged with → Neith. In inscriptions she is named as ‘the mother who was the father’; that is to say, she needed no spouse. Within the Ogdoad, → Amun is allotted to her as partner. In the Ptolemaic era she was seen as the embodiment of the life-bringing north wind.

Amenominakanushi (Japanese = Lord of the bright centre of heaven) The supreme heavenly divinity in Shintoism. In contradistinction to → Izanagi, he plays no part in myth, nor is there any record of a shrine or place of worship in his honour. Nevertheless he occupies first place in the list of gods: transcending all of them, he sits alone on a nine-fold layer of clouds (a symbolical reference to the nine heavens).

Amentet Egyptian goddess of the west and of the lands lying in that direction. As the sun sets in the west (symbolizing the entrance to the underworld) Amentet is also the goddess of the necropolis where she receives the dead as they enter the Beyond.

Ameretāt (‘non-death’, ‘life’) In Old Iranian religion, Ameretāt belongs to the circle of Amešva Spentas, where she represents immortality. She is usually mentioned together with → Haurvatāt, whose dominion is over the waters, while Ameretāt rules the plant world. In the Yasna the two goddesses figure as the food and drink of heaven. For the faithful, they represent the reward awaiting them after death. As abstract concepts they are both feminine, but when personified each can take on male gender. In the final sacrifice Ameretāt is united with her earthly symbol, the world of plants.

Ameša Spentas (‘the holy immortals’) In the religion of the Parsees, a collective title for the personifications of abstract concepts who serve → Ahura Mazda as his archangels. Five of the Ameša Spentas may well have arisen from elemental spirits via a process of reinterpretation: Aša (Avestan = truth) is symbolized by fire in the Gathas, Khšathra vairya (‘desired realm’) is the protector of metals, and is often represented as god of war;

→ Armaiti ('compliance, compliant thought/speech') is closely connected with the earth, while → Haurvatāt ('perfection') is associated with water, and Ameretāt ('immortality') with plants. To this original group of five, → Vohu Manah ('sound views') and → Sraoša ('obedience') were added as archangels after Zarathustra. On occasion, → Spenta Mainyu and even Ahura Mazda himself are mentioned as 'holy immortals'.

Amida Japanese form of → Amitābha, a dogmatic development of the eleventh/twelfth centuries. Amida is also given the Sanskrit name Amitāyuh ('immeasurable life'), a reference to the Buddha who possesses the properties of immeasurable light and life. In the Jōdo faith, teaching concerning Amida coalesces with the belief in Jōdo, the Pure Land. Thereafter, simple evocation of the name of Amida Buddha is enough to ensure release, provided belief is deep and genuine.

Amitābha (Sanskrit = immeasurable light; Chinese A-mi-t'ō or O-mi-to) The most popular of the five → Dhyāni-Buddhas. He is enthroned in heaven as lord of the paradisaical land of Sukhavati, entry into which is vouchsafed to all who believe in him. His celestial direction is the west, his element is water and he is associated with the evening twilight. In iconography, he is represented as a red-coloured Buddha, both of his hands lie open in his lap in the pose of meditation. His ceremonial vehicle is a pair of peacocks, and he is symbolized by a lotus or an alms-bowl. The Amitābha cult reached China from India in the fourth – sixth centuries AD, and spread thence to Japan (→ Amida).

Amm The moon-god in pre-Islamic South Arabia. In the kingdom of Qataban

he had the status of a tutelary national god, and the people of Qataban called themselves 'the children of Amm'. His lunar character is indicated by his epithet: 'he who waxes'. In addition, he acts as a weather god, and in this capacity he is symbolized by a cluster of lightning flashes.

Amma The divine creator in the religious system of the Dogon (in Mali). He created the universe in the form of a world-egg which was divided into two placentas: from these, the bi-sexual world arose. According to a different and occult tradition, the god raped the earth, whose sexual organ was an ant-hill.

Ammavaru A mother-goddess of the Telugu, a Dravidian people who live in east-central India. According to the myth, she existed before the coming to being of the four ages, that is, before the creation of the world. From an egg which she laid in the Sea of Milk arose the three gods → Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and → Śiva. She rides on a jackal.

Ammit A female demon who plays a part in the Egyptian Day of Judgment. She was feared as 'devourer of the dead', and she had the head of a crocodile, the torso of a predatory cat and the buttocks of a hippopotamus. This monster lurked near the scales of justice waiting for the verdict to be given, whereupon she devoured the sinner.

Ammon The god of the West Egyptian oasis of Siwa, and of its oracle site (Ammonium) which was celebrated in antiquity. The god was represented as a ram. Ammon is the Greek form of → Amun. After visiting the Siwa oasis, Alexander the Great regarded himself as a son of Zeus-Ammon, much as the Pharaohs were held to be sons of Amun-Re. North African rock drawings showing

the ram bearing the disc of the sun are held to be outliers of the Ammon (Amun) cult.

Amoghapāśa ('unfailing noose') In Mahayana Buddhism, a form of → Avalokiteśvara. He is white in colour, has a face and eight arms, and stands with his feet close together on the moon. His main attribute is the noose (a hypostatization of compassion) with which he lassoes the faithful, much to their benefit.

Amoghasiddhi ('flawless perfection') In Buddhism, one of the five Dhyāni-Buddhas; he is green in colour and assigned to the northerly quarter. His vehicle consists of a pair of Garuḍas (mythological eagle-like birds), and his attribute is a double thunderbolt (*viśvava-jra*). He is associated with the bodily eye, the rainy season and the element of water. In Tantrism he may be represented with three faces and six arms.

Āmor The Roman god of love, corresponding to the Greek → Éros. In Latin poetry Amor is also called Cupido (*cupiditas* = longing, lust, passion). In the Christian Middle Ages, a distinction was made between Amor or Amor Dei (= God) and Cupido (= the devil). In classical art, Amor was represented as a *puer alatus* (winged youth); his attributes are a bow and arrows and/or a torch. The story of Amor and Psyche has been popular since the early Hellenistic period. Here, Psyche, representing the caducity of human life on earth, is awakened by Amor's kiss to life eternal.

Amphitrite A goddess of the sea, possibly pre-Hellenic. In Greek mythology, she is the daughter of → Nereus, and the wife of → Poseidon. Accompanied by Nereids and Tritons she moves over the waters in a vessel made of mussels. It was only in association with Poseidon that she was made an object of worship.

Amun



(‘the hidden one’) In the Pyramid texts he is already mentioned as a primeval god, in association with his wife → Amaunet. In Old Egyptian thought he was the moving agent in the invisible breeze; thus he was venerated as god of the wind and ruler of the air. From the eleventh dynasty onwards he is attested as god of Thebes. Here, he coalesces with the sun-god (→ Re) to become Amun-Re, and, as Thebes increased in power, he became king of the gods and tutelary god of the empire. In his capacity as primeval god of creation he is venerated in the shape of a goose; otherwise, the ram is his sacred animal, a reference to his function as god of fertility. After the fall of Thebes his cult prospered in Ethiopia and among the oasis dwellers (→ Ammon).

An (Anu) In Sumerian the name means ‘above’, ‘heaven’ and is written in the cuneiform character with the same sign as the word for ‘God’ (*dingir*). His consort is variously given as Ki (the earth) or the

goddess Antum. An is the supreme god of the Sumerian pantheon, and the centre of his cult was at Uruk. In the Babylonian period his eminence as god of heaven is still stressed, but his role in religious observance is no longer an important one. In the main he is not favourably disposed towards human beings to whom he sends, for example, the demon → Lamaštu and the goddess of death → Māmitu. Among the Hurrians, Anu was regarded as the successor of → Alalu.

Ana (or Anu) Celtic-Irish goddess of the earth and of fertility. She was said to be the mother of the gods. Two hills near Killarney in Munster are called after her Da Chich Anann: i.e. the two breasts of Ana.

Anahita ('the immaculate') Originally, a Semitic goddess related to → Anath, she was received into the pantheon of the Parsees as a goddess of fertility and of victory. She is pictured as a maiden in a mantle of gleaming gold, with a diadem and jewels. In iconography she wears a high crown, in her left hand she often carries a water-pot (in her capacity as goddess of water) and at her breast she carries a pomegranate blossom. The dove and the peacock are sacred to her. Temple prostitution formed part of her cult. In the Avestan calendar, the tenth day and the eighth month are dedicated to her. In Middle Persian tradition she is called Ardvi Sur, and in Asia Minor she was assimilated to the Great Mother. After the conquest of Babylonia by the Persians some traits of → Ištar as goddess of love and of the planets were transferred to Anahita.

Ananké Greek goddess of fate. As the personification of ineluctable necessity, of inevitability, she is even set above the gods. In Orphic teaching she is incorporeal but

universally present. On occasion she fuses with the figure of → Adrasteia. In her capacity as 'she who guides the worlds', she is portrayed holding a spindle.

Anat(h) To begin with, a Phoenician-Canaanite goddess whose name is interpreted as meaning 'providence' or 'precaution'. She is the maiden sister of → Baal, but also on occasion his spouse. In the Ugarit texts, she wreaks terrible revenge on the god of death → Mot, on behalf of her dead brother. She was taken over by various peoples in Hither Asia as the goddess of nature and life, and contributed something towards the make-up of → Astarte and of → Atargatis. From the Ramessids onwards, Anat was also venerated in Egypt as a goddess of war; in this capacity her attributes include shield, spear and axe, and also a high crown with two ostrich feathers.

Anbay A pre-Islamic god in south Arabia. His name may have been originally a regal plural and may be etymologically connected with the name of the old Mesopotamian god → Nabu ('the harbinger'). Anbay is an oracular god and 'Lord of justice'. In his capacity as 'spokesman' ('harbinger') he acts for the moon-god (→ Amm) who ranks above him in the pantheon.

Anezti (Anedjti) God of the ninth nome of Lower Egypt, from whom → Osiris seems to have borrowed the crook and scourge as symbols of overlordship.

Āngiras (*aṅg* = to say, announce, related to Greek *angelos* = angel) 'The seers descended from the gods' in the Veda and in Hinduism: 'sons of heaven' who by dint of sacrifice achieved immortality and the friendship of → Indra.

Ani Etruscan god. On the bronze liver he is located at the exact north, that is to

say, in the highest heaven. The name Ani may be etymologically connected with that of the Roman god → Janus. Whether two-visaged coins indicate an Etruscan *Ianus bifrons* is not certain: and equally doubtful is the claim that Ani comes from *ianus* ('buttress', 'arched gate') and is therefore connected with a sky-god (arch of heaven).

Anky-Kele The god of the sea in the pantheon of the Chukchi people in north-east Siberia. As lord of the (sea)creatures, and hence of the food supply, he has power of life and death over the human race.

Ánna Perénna An ancient Roman goddess. During the class war between the patricians and the plebeians she is supposed to have saved the latter from famine. She was worshipped in a grove lying to the north of Rome, and every year on 15 March there was a popular open-air festival in her honour. It is possible that Ánna Perénna is a derivation of the Earth Mother.

Anšar and Kišar According to the Babylonian creation epic Enuma Eliš, the third generation of gods and the parents of the sky-god (→ An). The name Anšar is construed as meaning 'totality of heaven' or 'horizon of heaven'; Kišar would then be 'totality of earth' or 'earth horizon'. Similarity in sound led to the Assyrian national god → Assur being identified in the late Assyrian period with Anšar, and promoted to a position of supremacy over all the gods.

Antaíos (in Latin Antaeus) According to Greek myth, the son of → Poseidon and the goddess of the earth → Gaia. The Greek word *antaíos* means 'he who meets'. The giant Antaíos lived in Libya; and everyone whom he met there he challenged to a wrestling match and killed. Herakles finally overcame him by picking him up

from the ground, thereby severing Antaíos' dynamic contact with Mother Earth.

Anubis



Egyptian god of the dead, in the shape of a dog or a jackal; occasionally in human shape with a dog's head. It is not certain what the name means; the meaning 'little dog' has been suggested. At Assiut, Anubis was known by the epithet 'Lord of the cave mouth', i.e. the entrance into the city of the dead. As god of the dead he is 'Lord of the divine hall' and hence in charge of mummification, in which capacity he undertakes the ritual preparation of the corpse and its transfiguration. With the rise of → Osiris, Anubis was demoted *vis-à-vis* the new Lord of the Dead and put in charge of weighing the hearts at the last judgment. The Greeks gave the name Kynopolis to important centres of worship. In the *interpretatio graeca* Anubis was identified with → Hérmes.

Anuket (Greek form Anukis) Egyptian goddess of the Cataract area. Particularly venerated in Elephantine, she was also known as 'mistress of Nubia'. Her sacred animal was the gazelle.

Anunna (Sumerian = ‘those who are of princely seed’) Collective title for the pantheon of a given locality: e.g. the Anunna of Lagaš, or for the gods of heaven and earth. In Akkadian (the language spoken in Babylonia and Assyria) the loan-word Anunnaku denotes the lower gods in contra-distinction to the gods who dwell in heaven (→ Igigi).

Anyigba → Trowo

Apām napāt (‘Grandchild of the waters’) In Old Iranian belief a ‘god found in the water’. He is the giver of water to men, but he also acts in a military capacity. He is the hero who quells rebellious lands. His epithet is ‘owner of swift steeds’. Vedic India had a god of the same name; according to the Rigveda he is golden in appearance and he distributes water. It is possible that → Poseidon as he appears on Bactrian coins is a mutation of the Old Iranian water-god.

Aparājita (‘the unconquered’) Belongs to the → Krodhadevatās of Indian Buddhism. He is white in colour, and decorated with snakes. He has three faces – white, black and red. In pre-Buddhist belief he seems to have figured as leader of the demons, and as such is trampled underfoot by → Bhūtadāmara.

Aparājitā (‘the unconquered one’ (female)) A female deity in Indian Buddhism; she is yellow in colour and has one head and two arms, and is bedecked with jewels. Her countenance arouses terror, and she tramples → Gaṇeśa underfoot. She scatters all devilish beings (→ Māras) and unruly gods like → Brahmā are obliged to hold her sunshade over her head.

Aphrodite Greek goddess of beauty and love, identified by the Romans with



→ Venus. Attempts to derive her name from the Greek word *aphros* = foam, date back to antiquity. On this interpretation, the goddess is ‘she who is born of the foam’; or, as another of her names – Anadyomene – suggests ‘she who arises from the sea’. Her cult is pre-Greek and probably oriental in origin; certain rites associated with her, like the temple prostitution in Corinth, remind us of → Astarte. She was also known as Kypris and as Kythereia after the main shrines in her honour on Cyprus and Kythera. In coastal areas she was revered as Euploia – ‘she who confers a good voyage’. Plato and others make a distinction between the ‘heavenly’ Aphrodite (Urania) and the goddess who ‘belongs to the whole people’ (Pandemos). According to Homer, Aphrodite was the daughter of → Zeus and Dione, married to → Hephaistos but in love with → Arés, a liaison from which → Éros was born. She also loved the beautiful → Adonis. Her attribute was the dove. Her aegis covered fertility in the plant world, and she was venerated in Athens as the goddess of gardens.

Apis (in Egyptian Hapi) Holy bull worshipped in Memphis. He was originally a symbol of fertility, but in the course of time he acquired other characteristics; above all, he came to be identified with the ‘glorious soul’ of → Ptah. After his death, Apis enters the god → Osiris, and the compound Osiris-Apis (in Grecianized form Serapis) is used to denote the ensuing *mixta persona*. Apis became a god of the dead. From the New Kingdom onwards he wears the disc of the sun as a head-dress. Apis-bulls were regarded as holy and were interred in subterranean burial chambers in the so-called Serapeum. Herodotus identifies Apis with → Epaphos.

Aplu An Etruscan god borrowed from the Greek pantheon (→ Apollon), latterly specified as god of thunder and lightning. He is pictured as naked except for a mantle which covers part of his body; on his head is a wreath of laurel and he holds in his hands a staff which usually ends in a laurel twig. The god figures in various myths, but there is no trace of a cult devoted to him.

Apo Katawan ‘Master’ or ‘Father’ Katawan: a god of the Hambal-Aeta, a negrito tribe in the Philippines. Sacrifice is made to him, and people pray to him.

Apóllon A Greek god, probably of Asia Minor origin. He fulfills several functions: as protector of cattle, he keeps wolves away (hence his name of Lykeios); as promoter of agriculture he gets rid of field-mice (Smintheus); and as a stone pillar standing in front of a house he protects both it and its inhabitants (Apollon Agyieus). He is a god of healing (with a snake as attribute) and a god of expiation, whose arrows bring sickness and death. Above all, however, he is the god of oracles, his most celebrated oracular shrines



being Delphi and Delos. The laurel plant is sacred to him. As god of the muses Apollon Musagetes he is often represented with a lyre, and singing and music are in his gift. Finally, from the sixth century onwards he was demonstrably venerated as a sun-god. His epithet Phoebus (‘the bright or pure one’) was originally understood in a purely cultic sense, but it soon acquired ethical connotations. The myth relates how he slew the Python dragon, only a few days after his birth. His parents were → Zeus and → Leto, his twin sister was → Artemis, and his son was the god of healing → Asklepios. Apóllon was the first Greek god to be introduced into Italy (Etruscan → Aplu). Augustus saw him as his personal tutelary god.

Apophis An Egyptian monster, reptilian in nature, which lives in darkness and which threatens the sun-god in his daily journey across the heavens. Apophis is a rebel against divine and cosmic order. It is told in the hymns to the sun how the snake-demon is sliced with knives or pierced by a lance. In the late Egyptian

period, Apophis came to be identified with → Seth.

Apsaras Vedic water-spirits. As heavenly beings they are coupled with the musicians of the world of the gods (→ Gandharvas). They are fond of games of chance, and confer good fortune at the gaming table. According to the Atharvaveda, they can cause madness. It has been suggested that the name derives from Sanskrit *ap* = water and *sar* = to stream.

Apsu (Akkadian; the Sumerian form is Abzu) Personification of the sweet-water ocean lying under the earth, which united with → Tiamat at the beginning of time. According to Sumerian myth, Abzu is the place where the goddess → Nammu formed the first men from clay. The Babylonian creation epic relates how Apsu is slain by the magic weapons of the goddess → Ea. It is in Apsu – that is to say, in the water – that Marduk is finally born.

Aralez The ancient Armenians believed in the existence of these dog-like creatures gifted with supernatural powers. Their specific function was to lick the wounds of those killed or wounded in battle, who then recovered or were resurrected to new life. In the popular mind they were beneficent dog-like spirits who lived in heaven; at an earlier date they may well have been seen as dog-like creatures of a menial order.

Aralo → Aray

Aramazd (from Old Persian → Ahura Mazda) The supreme deity of the ancient Armenians, creator of heaven and earth. He has a son → Mihr, and a daughter → Nana. He was taken over by the pre-Christian Georgians under the name of → Armaz. In the ascendancy of the

Greek pantheon he was identified with → Zeus.

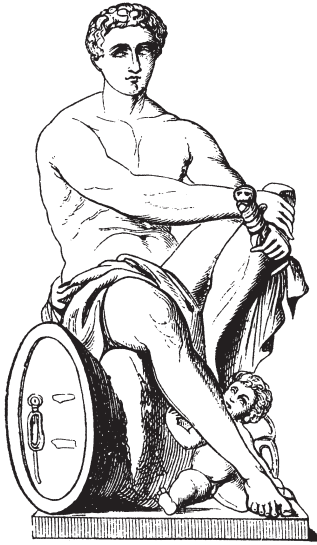
Arapacana A → Bodhisattva, one-faced, red or white in colour and resplendent like the full moon. He sits in meditative pose on a double lotus. In his right hand he wields a sword, in his left he holds a book which he presses to his breast.

Aray (also Ara) Old Armenian god of war, known as ‘the beautiful’. Probably of common Indo-Germanic origin along with → Ares (originally a Thracian god). However, Aray also has certain characteristics of a dying god who rises again, which lends some support to the thesis that this Armenian god was identical with the Hittite god of the countryside who bore the same name. It is possible that this god lives on in Aralo, the Georgian god of agriculture.

Arduinna A local goddess in Gaul, named after the Ardennes. She was a goddess of hunting, and interpreted by the Romans as equivalent to → Diana. Her sacred animal was the boar.

Arebati Mythical sky-god of the Bambuti (Pigmy people on the Ituri in Congo). He is the ruler of the world, who created the first man by kneading his body from clay, covering it with a skin and pouring blood into the vessel thus formed. His epithet *afa* (= father) is to be understood in the same sense.

Arés (accented in Latin on first syllable: Áres) Greek god of war. Etymologically, his name is not entirely clear, but it probably means something like ‘destroyer’ or ‘avenger’. He is accompanied by → Eris (dissension), Enyo (horror) and Phobos (fear). His original homeland was Thrace, and few temples were devoted to him in Hellas. He was not a popular god, and



accordingly he is not often portrayed in Greek art. His parents were → Zeus and → Hera, and his mistress was → Aphrodite. The war-like Amazons were supposed to be his daughters. The Romans identified Arés with their own god → Mars.

Arethusa → Kore-Arethusa

Aretia In Armenian belief, the earth, venerated as holy; spouse of Noah (properly an Old Testament figure), and mother of all living creatures.

Argaulides → Kékrops

Árgos In Greek mythology a many-eyed giant entrusted by → Hera to keep guard on → Io; he was, however, lulled to sleep by → Hérmes and killed. His name has become proverbial for eyes which miss nothing.

Arhat (Sanskrit, 'he who is worthy of reverence') In Buddhism and Jainism a saint, one who has reached the highest stage of perfection possible on earth. In Hinayāna Buddhism, the ideal figure who

has reached the goal of self-deliverance, by means of asceticism and meditation; in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the → Bodhisattva who shows others the way to salvation and sacrifices himself for them, is more highly venerated. Essentially, the Arhat is a human being, but he is endowed with the heavenly eye which he uses to perceive the ebb and flow of beings in the different worlds. In the pantheon of Chinese Buddhism, the Arhats (called in Chinese *lo-han*) form a third class after the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, thus still occupying a higher position than the gods. In Jainism, the Arhats are removed in their perfection from all earthly desires and actions, and they are revered as 'supreme gods'.

Ariádne Originally a Minoan goddess; her Cretan name Aridela means 'she who shines in splendour'. Her death as described in Homer suggests a goddess of vegetation. In the myth, Ariádne is the daughter of the Cretan king → Minos and of → Pasiphae. She uses a ball of wool to help Theseus to find the way out of the mazes of the labyrinth. After her death, Ariádne was led out of the underworld by her husband → Dionysos and taken up to Olympus. Her crown was fixed by → Zeus as a constellation in the heavens (Corona Borealis).

Arimanius (Arimanios) A variant name for the Persian → Ahriman, found in classical writers. According to Herodotus, a god of the underworld, 'kakodaimon' in contrast to the good spirit. Plutarch says he is an embodiment of Hades and the darkness invoked by Persian magi. Later he came to be identified with the Egyptian god → Serapis (as god of the dead) as well.

Arinna Really the name of a Hittite town, after which this goddess was called 'Sun of Arinna'. She was also known as

Ariniddu, after her most important shrine. She is ‘Queen of Heaven and Earth’, she protects the kingdom and assists in its wars. Her cult symbol is the sun disc. She is often identified with the Hurrian goddess of heaven → *Ḫebat*. Husband of both is the weather-god.

Aristaios An ancient Greek peasant god, protector of herds and the original bee-keeper. In Hellas he was ousted from favour by → *Apóllon*, as whose son he was subsequently regarded. In Kyrene (Libya) he continued to be venerated as the son of the goddess of the town.

Arma A Hittite moon-god, corresponding to the Hurrian → *Kušuh*. In hieroglyphic Hittat his determinant is a sickle moon (Lunula). On reliefs he wears the sickle moon on his pointed and horned cap. On his back he has a pair of wings.

Armaiti (also *Aramati*) Personification of ‘compliant speech’ (and thereby corresponding to the Vedic → *Sarasvati*) belonging to the → *Ameša Spentas*. In the *Gathas*, *Armaiti* is closely associated with the earth and offers nourishment to the cow. She is goddess of the earth and hence of fertility, and also of the dead who have ‘gone into’ the earth.

Ármány (Hungarian *ármányos* = cunning, insidious) The gloomy prospect facing the world was personified under this name in the Romantic movement in Hungary. First so used by *Vörösmarty* in 1825.

Armaz The supreme deity in pre-Christian Georgia; corresponds to the Armenian → *Aramazd*. His cult representation is described as clothed in golden armour, with a golden helmet and jewels. In his hand he carries a gleaming sword.

Arsnuphis (also *Harensnuphis*) Greek form of Egyptian divine name meaning

‘the beautiful companion’. He is a Nubian god (‘Foremost of Nubia’) in the sense of the Egyptian → *Šu*; and he is also identified with the Nubian regional god → *Dedun*. He is often represented as a lion.

Arsū One of the most popular gods of Palmyra (ancient North Arabia). He is twin brother of *Azizu* (→ *Azizos*); together they represent the evening and the morning star, and are pictured in Palmyra as riding on camels or on horses.

Ártemis



Greek goddess of the hunt, who can be shown to share in the functions of several other divinities. She is Queen of the wild beasts (*Potnia theron*) in which capacity she can be traced back to the Minoan period. Graphically, she is represented as winged and accompanied by lions, deer and birds. Mainly, however, she appears as the virgin huntress roaming the woods with her attendants, the → *Nymphs*. She can use her arrows – like her brother → *Apóllon* – to send peaceful death or sudden destruction. In anger she is terrible.