Moralizing Supernatural Punishment
Narrative Summaries

Latium
NGA: Latium
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This analytic narrative deals with the city of Rome and environs in the geographical area of Latium. While it does not attempt to capture all the varieties of MSP across the extent of the Roman Empire, the diversity of the Empire was reflected at Rome itself in many ways. Roman religion, taken as a whole, included both official components controlled by the state, and unofficial components. This narrative emphasizes the state-sponsored practices and beliefs, including imported ones. Like most other European and Mediterranean polytheisms, Roman religion involved a relationship of reciprocity with the gods, whereby humans performed required rituals which either elicited divine favor or minimized divine anger. The Romans did not typically distinguish between ritual and ethical norms.

The Regal Period and Early Republic (c. 800–265 BCE)
For Latium during the semi-legendary Regal period there is no direct evidence for MSP, and thus any inferences about its presence or absence must be based on much later legendary and historical material, together with beliefs known to be widely distributed among neighboring peoples. From its very inception, Roman religion was particularly influenced by Etruscan and Greek ideas, so that there is some overlap with these cultures, even if there are also many features we think of as characteristically Roman.

As in Etruscan religion, unusual events called prodigies were understood to be signs of impending crises. Livy (3.10.5-7) records a prodigious earthquake of 461 BC, accompanied by a talking cow and a rain of flesh, which portended a foreign invasion; the earthquake is likely the same one recorded in 464 BC by Greek historians (MacBain 1982: 8). Prodigies often signaled the gods' anger and required elaborate rituals to restore the *pax deorum* or "peace of the gods." The wrath of the gods was unpredictable, yet it was often attributed to human offenses (Levene 1993: 8), especially impiety toward the gods. Occasionally, however, interpersonal transgressions were perceived to require expiation. In 331 BC, for example, a group of matrons was accused of going mad and poisoning the male leadership of the city (Livy 8.18.11). This was interpreted as a prodigy requiring a ritual response. The Roman dependence on divinatory practices to grasp the will of the gods is consistent with their lack of religious doctrines asserting that the gods were benevolent or consistently moralizing. The gods would not necessarily concern themselves with human behavior if not prompted; nor could it be assumed that they would act according to a consistent moral law.

Written sources from the early Republic onwards (see below) testify to the importance of oaths (conditional self-curses) sworn in the names of gods as guarantors and witnesses, and the impiety of oath-breakers. In legal contexts, however, Roman oaths (*sacramenta*) could be secured by a deposit placed in the sanctuary of the guarantor god. In the event that an individual was found to be forsworn, the deposit was forfeited. This model of oath-expiation allowed individuals to forswear themselves while avoiding direct divine punishment (Van Slyke

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2005: 183). Generally, the development of oaths can be seen as a method of "harnessing" the oversight and punishment powers of the gods to enforce human morality (Larson 2021 forthcoming) and may be a common inheritance of peoples speaking Indo-European languages (Haudry 1993, Luján Martínez 1997). Several lines of evidence suggest that oaths were also important to the earliest Romans. According to Polybius (3.25), writing in the second century BCE, Rome's first treaty with Carthage (509 BCE) included an oath invoking Jupiter Lapis "in accordance with an ancient custom" (Calore 2000; Richardson 2010). Many oaths invoking gods are attested among the Greeks of southern Italy, especially toward the end of this period, when our sources become more abundant. Examples include the founding of the Greek colonies of Locri Epizephyrii in the seventh century BCE and Hyele/Elea in the sixth century (Herodotus 1.164–7; for general discussion of Greek oaths, see Sommerstein and Torrance 2014). Among the Etruscans, the god Selvans was a patron of oaths, as demonstrated by his epithet Sanchunus, which is thought to be related to the Latin oath-god Sancus (De Grummond 2006: 149; Jannot 2005: 13, 161). Roman armies were bound by oaths (*sacramenta*) to their commanders (Rüpke 2018: 141), a practice which seems common among Italic peoples. Livy (9.39) states that the Etruscans raised an army (310 BCE) under the Lex Sacrata, which meant they were bound by oaths. The practice of military oaths was also found among the Samnites, an Italic-speaking group like the Romans: Livy (10.38, on a battle of 293 BCE) describes how Samnite recruits were forced to swear that they would not abandon the field; any who refused the oath were immediately killed, beheaded, and, if Livy's account is to be believed, offered as sacrifices to Jupiter (Doberstein 2014: 83–115; Tondo 1963). Given the pervasiveness of oaths among neighboring peoples and throughout the Mediterranean, the institution was likely also established in Latium before the start of the Republic.

The Twelve Tables (c. 450 BCE) constitute the earliest written evidence of MSP for the early Republic. Usually the *mos maiorum* ("practice of the ancestors," referring to ancestral custom in either ritual or ethics) is described as unwritten law, but the Twelve Tables must have reduced some of the *mos maiorum* to writing. Cicero (*De Leg*. 3.31.111= Unplaced Fragment 6 in Lucilius [Twelve Tables] 1938) cites the Twelve Tables to claim that for the ancestors "no law was to be tighter in binding *fides* than a sworn oath." An important early Roman concept that appears in the Tables is the idea of making someone *sacer*, a term which can mean either "sacred" or "accursed." In Table 8.21, it is decreed that a patron who defrauds a client shall be *sacer*. Here, *sacer* means accursed, such that an individual's life is forfeited to the gods. The offense is the breaking of *fides*, an informal "good faith" agreement or a binding contract made within a formal relationship of reciprocity. Similarly, the early Roman *leges regiae* (laws attributed to the kings) declared that the lives of sons who abused their parents and daughters-in-law who mistreated a parent-in-law were forfeited to their parents' gods (Festus, *De verborum significatu* p. 290 s.v. *plorare*). A similar judgment was made regarding persons who defrauded neighbors by moving boundary stones; their lives were forfeit to Jupiter Terminalis, the god of property lines (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.74.3). Certain breaches of *fides* and *pietas*, faith and duty, threatened social order and incurred the penalty of becoming *sacer* (ter Beek 2012: 27-28), because the gods who watched over the Roman state had been offended and these deeds required expiation. In practical terms, a person who became *sacer* lost all protections of the law; he or she could be killed with impunity or

otherwise mistreated. No particular individual was tasked with the punishment, and the exact means was left to the gods (ter Beek 2012: 29), so this form of MSP was not certain.

Livy (1.21) discusses early Roman religion as set forth by the (legendary) King Numa during the period of kings, including the establishment of a cult of the goddess Fides (personifying faithfulness to one's word, promise or pledge). Looking back from the early Principate, Livy paints a nostalgic and idealized picture of an early Rome preoccupied with piety and strict morality:

> …the nation was governed by its regard for promises and oaths, rather than by the dread of laws and penalties … [Numa] also established an annual worship of Faith [fides], to whose chapel he ordered that the flamines should proceed in a two-horse hooded carriage, and should wrap up their arms as far as the fingers before sacrificing, as a sign that faith must be kept, and that even in men's clasped hands her seat is sacred.

For the Romans, proper respect for the gods and proper interpersonal behavior were both integral to *pietas*, the key virtue. *Pietas* included duty to the family, parents, one's patron, and the state, as well as correct ritual observances owed to the gods (Emilie 1944), and the same feelings of moral outrage attended impiety in any of these cases. The gods were the guarantors of the welfare of the state and the continuance of the social order. Thus, crimes which threatened the social order, such as murder and incest, were especially offensive to gods and liable to bring misfortune on the group through violation of the *pax deorum*, the "peace of the gods" (Gaughan 2010: 9, 20). Such crimes required expiation through the ritual and purificatory punishment of offenders. Those who killed their parents, for example, were traditionally sewn up in a sack and cast into water, a procedure recognizable as a form of prodigy expiation (Cloud 1971: 1-18; Gaughan 2010: 85).

Middle and Late Republic (264–31 BCE)
There is more evidence for beliefs about divine punishment and reward from the middle and late Republic than from earlier periods of Rome's history, although many of the available sources are still of later date.

Some literary sources suggest broad divine surveillance of behavior. In Plautus' comedy *Rudens*, dated to 211 BC, the star Arcturus speaks a prologue (1-30) declaring that Jupiter dispatches the stars to watch mortals, "so that we may learn the habits (*mores*), dutifulness (*pietas*) and good-faith (*fides*) of people." Those who bring fraudulent cases to court, deny receipt of money under oath, or perjure themselves in lawsuits can expect to receive a penalty from Jupiter larger than their ill-gotten gains, while those who behave well will be rewarded. Similar views are found in other Plautine plays (e.g. *Captivi* 313-15: "[The god] will reward the deserving and requite the undeserving.") while a character in Terence's *Adelphi* (703-5) suggested that the prayers of good men would be better-heard. These plays are adaptations of Greek originals, yet the impact of these comedies in Rome was considerable, and the assimilation of Greek concepts was a consistent feature of Roman religion throughout its history. On the other hand, the Greeks themselves held varied opinions on the question of divine punishment, and they, like the Romans, tended to limit divine punishment to certain

domains of behavior. According to Liebeschuetz (1979: 39-54), the Roman list included (1) direct affront to a deity such as thieving from the sanctuary or omitting a required rite; (2) violations of *fides*, such as breaking oaths or a wide range of less formal agreements; (3) incest; (4) kin murder, at least from 200 BCE on; and (5) unjust war. For the latter, Liebeschuetz cites Livy 5.21 and 9.1 as cases in which military disaster came as the result of broken *fides*.

Various moral virtues were early on deified and provided with a cult. These included Concordia (social harmony; see e.g. Lobur 2008), Fides (good faith; see e.g. Agoustakis, Buckley and Stocks 2019), Pietas (Thornton 2013), and Pudicitia (usually seen as connected to the goddess Juno), which was "modesty" or the proper feeling of shame at the prospect of dishonor, especially sexual dishonor, for both men and women (Langlands 2006). Concordia had a temple as early as the fourth century BCE, Fides in the third century, and Pietas in the second.

The traditions surrounding Claudia Quinta, a woman of the third century BCE, hint that the gods were thought to reward virtuous conduct. In 204 BCE, the image of the great mother goddess Cybele was brought from Anatolia to Rome. Writing in the early Principate, Ovid (*Fast.* 4.305–26) relates how as the ship was navigated up the Tiber, it was grounded on a bank: a possible sign of divine disapproval. Claudia, who had previously been the subject of "unfair gossip," called on the goddess to bear witness to her chastity by allowing the ship to continue onto dry land (Leach 2007: 4–5). Her prayers were successful, suggesting that Cybele was viewed as concerning herself with ethical norms. However, there is no contemporary written evidence of Claudia Quinta's life. Later sources invoke her example for political goals and likely also embellish the story for narrative effect (Leach 2007).

The identification and expiation of prodigies continued throughout the middle and late Republic, though the Senate seems to have gradually begun to favor bird augury, which was easier for them to control, over unpredictable external reports of prodigies (Rüpke 2018: 152-3). Even during this period, however, prodigies warned of behavior which threatened the social fabric. Cassius Dio (42.26) lists a series of prodigies in 47 BC, which culminated in a group of infants born holding their left hands to their heads. He reports that "from this especially an uprising of inferiors against superiors was both foretold by the soothsayers and expected by the people." Deviant behaviors themselves also continued to be regarded as prodigies requiring expiation. An incident in 42 BC, when a praetor denied a political appointment to a colleague because of a personal quarrel, was interpreted as a prodigy when the praetor died within a year. A late compiler of prodigies, Julius Obsequens, names several other magistrates who suffered the same fate (Obsequens, *Prodigiorum Liber* 70, cited in Rasmussen 2003: 42).

The Epicurean philosopher-poet Lucretius (c. 99–55 BCE) wrote *On the Nature of Things* partly in order to allay fears of death and debunk beliefs surrounding the afterlife, including beliefs in afterlife judgement and punishment which were common in Greek culture by the fifth century BC (Larson 2012: 256-7). In Book 1.104–5, Lucretius suggests that the reader may reject his teachings, "terrorized by the fearsome pronouncements of the prophets (*vatum*; cf. 109)." The term *vates* refers to those who promote traditional religion, both priests and poets. We hear (1.111) that, thanks to these fable-mongers, the people "fear that death brings punishment without end" (*aeternas … poenas in morte*). In Book 3, he alludes to famous mythological punishments of such figures as Tityus and Sisyphus, but insists that these torments belong not to the afterlife but (figuratively) to this life. The living are oppressed by

their own passions and fears, not least by their groundless fear of the gods (3.988–1023), while fear of punishment for evil deeds is a feature of this life, not the next (3.1014-15). Many scholars see the late Republic as a time of religious skepticism, especially among the educated elite, who ridiculed fear of the "pitiless judges" and other afterlife terrors as mere fables (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 1.6.10, 1.21.48). Lucretius' argument both demonstrates this skepticism and suggests that at least some people in his own day believed that their conduct in life might result in consequences after death (Segal 2014: 17-18).

Reflecting more traditional views likely shared by commoners as well as aristocrats, the poetry of the equestrian Catullus alluded to normative beliefs that perjury and breaches of *fides* were punishable by the gods and that the gods assist those whose behavior reflects *pietas* (*Carm*. 30; 64.135; 76.1-6, 19-20).

For his part, Cicero (*Pro Roscio Amerino* 66–67) rationalizes punishment by the Furies "for any impious and criminal act," a popular belief which he says was much represented on the stage. He explains that it is not the Furies but guilt for their own evil deeds which torments the wicked. But in another oration (*In Pisonem* 46), he asserts that while the Furies are not real, tormenting guilt is itself a punishment sent by the gods upon the wicked and impious. Cicero expressed these sentiments in works of forensic oratory, but even allowing him considerable rhetorical license they do likely reflect the presence in his culture of the belief that gods could inflict psychological or material punishment. In a philosophical work on the gods, *De Natura Deorum* (3.82-91), Cicero's interlocutors disagree on whether the gods concern themselves with human transgression; the character Cotta rebuts prevalent Stoic arguments that divine justice was certain and comprehensive.

Pietas continued to be regarded as the most important virtue. In his *De Legibus* (2.15–16), a more scholarly treatise on 'The Laws,' Cicero writes of the importance of teaching the people that the gods are aware of their behavior and of which people practice or fall short of *pietas*. While arguing that such beliefs are plausible in themselves, he focuses particularly on their utility:

> Who will deny that such beliefs are useful when he remembers how often oaths are used to confirm agreements, how important to our well-being is the sanctity of treaties, how many persons are deterred from crime by the fear of divine punishment, and how sacred an association of citizens becomes when the immortal gods are made members of it, either as judges or as witnesses?

Rather than Lucretius' rejection of religion, Cicero's attitude of measured agnosticism or skepticism toward the gods, combined with strong affirmation of the moral utility of traditional belief, is more characteristic of late Republican elites (North 2014: 40).

Roman Principate (31 BCE–284 CE)

As their territory grew, even "the Romans" in Latium quickly become a very multicultural group. With the understanding that Roman culture increasingly encompassed diverse beliefs and practices, we may describe the discourse of elite Roman citizens at this period, which ignores our modern distinction between ritual and ethical transgressions. For example, Livy (1.48) says

that the evil princess Tullia conspired in her husband's murder of her own father, then drove her chariot over her father's corpse:

> … crazed by the avenging spirits of her sister and her former husband, they say that Tullia drove her carriage over her father's corpse, and, herself contaminated and defiled, carried away on her vehicle some of her murdered father's blood to her own and her husband's penates [household gods], whose anger was the cause that the evil beginning of this reign was, at no long date, followed by a similar end.

In this account, the household gods punished Tullia and her husband, the hated King Tarquinius Superbus, by bringing about their downfall and exile. Livy says that the defiling kindred blood which Tullia brought back to the house was the trigger. However, it would be quite wrong to interpret this as saying that the household gods only cared about the ritual offense of pollution: the gods are also outraged by the violation of social norms.

We must be careful not to read Vergil's *Aeneid*, an epic narrative of the voyages of the Trojan hero Aeneas after the Trojan Wars, as an uncomplicated description of either local traditions or state religion, yet this work was wildly popular from its publication onward. At the least, its depiction of afterlife punishments reflects widely distributed Roman attitudes about which types of behavior were considered most deserving of afterlife punishment. The *Aeneid* quickly became a school text (Most 2010: 965), and its contents shaped popular ideas of afterlife punishment for the remainder of the Roman Imperial period.

In *Aeneid* Book 6, Aeneas is guided past Tartarus by the Sibyl, who describes a process of judgment for evildoers:

> Cretan Rhadamanthus holds here his iron sway; he chastises, and hears the tale of guilt, exacting confession of crimes, whenever in the world above any man, rejoicing in vain deceit, has put off atonement for sin until death's late hour (Tr. H. R. Fairclough and G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 1999.)

Vergil's afterlife judgment differs from its Greek models in its similarity to a Roman criminal court, where slaves could be tortured in order to force confessions. Within the confines of Tartarus there are legendary offenders against the gods, like Salmoneus (who imitated Zeus/Jupiter's thunder and asked for worship) or Tityus (who tried to rape Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis) but there are also mundane mortal offenders:

> Here were they who in lifetime hated their brethren, or smote a sire, and entangled a client in wrong; or who brooded in solitude over wealth they had won, nor set aside a portion for their kin – the largest number this; who were slain for adultery; or who followed the standard of treason, and feared not to break allegiance with their lords – all these, immured, await their doom. Seek not to learn that doom, or what form of crime, or fate, overwhelmed them!

More crimes are listed a few lines later:

> This one sold his country for gold, and fastened on her a tyrant lord; he made and unmade laws for a bribe. This forced his daughter's bed and a marriage forbidden.

Abuse of family members or failure to observe family obligation tops the list of crimes, but adultery is also mentioned. For the Romans, this referred strictly to a man's sexual involvement with another man's wife, and Roman law permitted an outraged husband to kill an adulterer caught in the act (Gardner 1995: 127-129). The other main group of offenders comprises those who abuse formal relationships of reciprocity, particularly patrons who defraud the clients who look to them for protection, and slaves or others who ought to be obedient and faithful, but instead rebel or break pledges. Thus, Vergil expands the list of acts regarded as impious enough to merit divine punishment, so that they encompass what were regarded as the greatest threats to familial and social order. Interestingly, Vergil focuses explicitly on males as the ones who merit and receive punishment; in *Aen*. 6.615 he collectively describes those punished as *viros*, "men." This likely reflects the Roman legal system, in which most women were under the authority of a father, a husband, or a male legal guardian. Although women were not exempt from criminal punishment in the Roman system, their status as legal minors implies a presumption that greater responsibility lay with the men who supervised them and had authority to punish them (Gardner 1995). Although most punishments are reserved for those who abuse their power, subordinates who betray their masters (*domini*) are also singled out. The use of the term *dominus* generally refers to slave-master relationships, but by mentioning false pledges of faith (*nec veriti dominorum fallere dextras*), Vergil expands the category to subordinates of higher social rank.

In *Aen*. 6.724-51, Vergil has Anchises, the dead father of Aeneas, describe a cycle of punishment, purification, and ultimately reincarnation for human souls:

> Therefore are they schooled with punishments, and pay penance for bygone sins. Some are hung stretched out to the empty winds; from others the stain of guilt is washed away under swirling floods or burned out by fire till length of days, when time's cycle is complete, has removed the inbred taint and leaves unsoiled the ethereal sense and pure flame of spirit: each of us undergoes his own purgatory.

The prospect of such purging in the afterlife appears to be general to humanity here, though the details differ. After a long period of time, the souls are immersed in the waters of Lethe, wiping their memories clean, and may return this world to inhabit new bodies. Whereas Vergilian images of afterlife torment went on to influence the Christian conception of Hell, these teachings on reincarnation, influenced by Plato and the Pythagoreans, persisted among much smaller elite groups (see below under Late Roman Empire).

Already clear in Republican times, the dichotomy between philosophical and religious ideologies subscribed to by elites and popular ritual practices persisted through the Imperial period (after 27 BCE). Hellenistic philosophical traditions, with their focus on egalitarian and universalizing principles, continued and found a foothold among the upper echelons of Roman society (Colish 1990).

This period saw the rapid development and spread of an Imperial cult, in which offerings were made to the gods on behalf of semi-divine (and later, divine) emperors and their families

(Galinsky 2007: 80-82). In his moralizing work *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, which dates to the reign of Tiberius (AD 14-37), Valerius Maximus treats Tiberius as a god concerned with punishing the wicked and rewarding the virtuous (Valerius *praef.*; Mueller 2002: 12-14). The work as a whole uses examples from Greek and Roman history to demonstrate the role of the gods as guarantors of piety and virtue. The goddess Pudicitia (Chastity), for example, traditionally resided in the hearth of Vesta and the couch of Juno Regina in the Capitoline temple, but Valerius extends her haunts to include "the household gods of Augustus and the most holy marriage bed of Julia [i.e. Julia Augusta, Tiberius' mother Livia]." The goddess Pudicitia and the virtue of chastity continued to be associated with the women of the imperial family over the next century (Mueller 2002: 24-25) While he emphasizes the relationship between piety toward the gods and general moral worth, Valerius' examples of direct divine punishment include only a few instances which pertain to interpersonal ethics rather than what moderns etically describe as purely ritual offenses. Tellingly, the clearest example involves a foreigner: Mithridates of Pontus murdered his guests, offending the gods of hospitality (*hospitalis deos*) and "paid expiation" (*dedit piacula*) when he died a painful death by poison (Valerius *Mem*. 9.2 ext. 3).

During the Second Sophistic, Plutarch adopted a highly moralizing approach to history in his *De Sera Numinis Vindicta* ("On Late Punishments by the Divine Powers") and *Parallel Lives*, regularly insisting upon divine vengeance against evildoers, whether humble or exalted. Humans often function as instruments of divine retribution (Brenk 1977: 256-75). Characteristically, he stretches historical fact to argue that Vespasian's family line was wiped out as divine retribution for his cruelty (*Amatorius* 770d-771d).

In Roman state religion, the emperors themselves and sometimes their family members were substituted as oath-gods (Gradel 2002: 162–4; Katz 2019), so that when people were conducting business involving the state, they would swear an oath invoking the emperor's name. It appears that all Roman emperors were treated this way, and while they were still living, though it is unclear whether the impetus for this change came from the imperial court itself, or was an act instigated by those swearing the oaths. Further, it is unclear how emperors sought to police compliance with oaths taken in their name, or if they even intended to. Since official documentation of these oaths was kept in record offices, the understanding may have been that those swearing would be subject to the state's punishment—rather than divine retribution in this or the next life—if found to have perjured themselves in public records. In summary, during the Principate, gods were "harnessed" for the enforcement of contracts, as in earlier times, and prosocial religious ideas spread further among the literate elites. Civic rituals strengthened the Roman self-image, which included ethical expectations about the rights, duties and "dignity" of each citizen (Schlieter 2014: 655). However, punishing transgressions and rewarding virtue continued to be only a secondary concern of supernatural agents.

Late Roman Empire (284–457 CE)
Many of the religious trends noted in the previous section also apply to the later imperial period, the Dominate, especially before the ascendancy of Christianity from the fourth century CE.

The schools of philosophy popular among the elite evolved and sometimes included speculation on the presence and character of MSP. The Neoplatonists (third to fifth centuries

CE) are generally thought to have accepted reincarnation, because of their belief that Plato taught it. This created the potential for punishment or reward in the next life, at least for those thinkers who held that something of the human personality survived death. More generally, though, the Neoplatonists presented striving toward "the Good" as the ultimate end of human life, not as a means of pleasing divine personages in the hope of reward (Remes 2008: 177–8). Their beliefs were also somewhat esoteric and limited to a small part of the population, though these strands had a significant impact on the evolution of Christian thought by the end of this period (Becker 2011; Kraye 2003). Traditional Greco-Roman depictions of afterlife punishment were also influential on popular Christian understandings of Hell. From the second through the fourth centuries, for example, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, with its typically Greco-Roman description of sinners and corresponding punishments, was treated as scripture among many Christian congregations (Bauckham 1998: 207, Ehrman 2020: 2-4).

The growing popularity of Christianity throughout the Empire during this period strengthened the connection between divine concern and moral/social norms, notions already existing and growing in previous periods, as noted above. Most conversions to the new faith took place between 300 and 450 CE (Galvao-Sobrinho 1995) However, it should be noted that "conversion" was not a simple or one-way process. Many Romans may have nominally converted, but retained many pagan elements in their beliefs or even feigned adherence to Christianity to avoid persecution (Taco Terpstra, pers. comm., January 2020). This period is bracketed by Constantine's Edict of Milan (313 CE), which legalized Christianity as one religion among many, and the official establishment of Christianity as the state religion of Rome at the end of the fourth century (Martin 2014).

Summary

Most histories of Roman religion have little or nothing to say about the gods' role in morality. However, this reflects a lack of scholarly interest in the topic rather than the complete absence of MSP.

A variety of sources indicate that one form of MSP, supernatural enforcement of reciprocity—including keeping oaths, fulfilling promises, and the proscription of patrons cheating clients—was widespread in Iron Age Italy. Commonalities between Indo-European concepts and language suggest that supernatural enforcement of oaths was already present in Indo-European religion, making it possible to infer its presence for Bronze Age Italy as well (since there is no evidence that this cultural element was first lost, then regained in historic periods); this remains speculative, though, until more direct evidence for the beliefs of early Italians can be found. In any case, even when we are on more solid ground in later periods, human morality was still not a primary concern for supernatural agents, who cared more about correct rituals and sacrifices. Furthermore, the scope of punishment was mixed, with either individual transgressors or whole groups targeted for punishment. Finally, there was variation in who subscribed to such beliefs, according to different levels of education and social status.

In early sources, divine punishment is limited to very specific transgressions such as perjury or mistreatment of a parent. This situation begins to change during the third century BCE, with literate elites attributing broader moral concerns to the gods. Also during this period, temples dedicated to deities personifying various virtues, like good faith (Fides) and modesty (Pudicitia), proliferated, perhaps revealing a growing sense of gods as guardians (or guarantors)

of moral values. From the middle Republic we see evidence for a more comprehensive set of moral norms enforced by the gods, while Lucretius attests widespread fear of punishment in the afterlife and Vergil (writing during the Principate) lists a wide variety of punishable crimes as well as rewards for the virtuous. Under the Empire, moralizing authors such as Valerius Maximus and Plutarch continued to associate the gods with interpersonal morality. As a general rule, however, it is fair to say that the main emphasis of Roman religion was on respectful behavior toward the gods, including the performance of rites and sacrifices, rather than adherence to a code of interpersonal norms.

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Paris Basin

NGA: Paris Basin
Contributors: Enrico Cioni, Jennifer Larson

Bell Beaker Period (3200–2000 BCE)

Though the funerary practices of the Bell Beaker people are relatively well studied (see e.g. Clop Garcia 2001: 28-29), these archaeological sources offer no direct evidence for the belief in moralistic punishment or reward on the part of supernatural agents.

Comparisons of oath formulas across a broad range of Indo-European families suggest that belief in MSP against oath-breakers has deep roots in Indo-European culture. Part of this inheritance is the understanding of the oath as a conditional self-curse in which harm will come to the individual perjurer. The common Celtic vocabulary for swearing and oaths is strong evidence that the practice existed in the prehistoric common ancestor of the Celtic languages (John Koch, pers. comm. to Jennifer Larson, 2/2/21; see Koch 1992, Koch and Fernández Palacios 2017, Tovar 1980-2).

While there is limited evidence allowing us to infer at least minimal presence of MSP in the form of punishment for perjury, it is unlikely that MSP was a primary feature of religion in the Paris Basin during this early period, or at any time until the advent of Christianity. Comparatively speaking, no known polytheistic religion of the pre-Christian era in Europe displays primary concern for interpersonal morality. (For a synoptic survey of ancient polytheisms, see e.g. Johnston [ed.] 2004 together with Watts 2013).

Atlantic Bronze Age (2000–1000 BCE)

As noted above, our only evidence for MSP rests on an inference from the common Celtic vocabulary. Haudry (1993) compared oath formulas from a number of Indo-European languages (Old Norse, Russian, Sanskrit and Persian) and found that they share the image of the perjurer

struck by his own weapon. Luján Martínez (1997: 193) argues that "the consecration to the gods of a person who takes an oath" is of Indo-European origin and cites an Irish oath formula implying a deity as guarantor (195). Additionally, Koch (1992: 252) cites a consensus that the pan-Celtic god Lugus was "originally and etymologically the god of the oath." In prehistoric Celtic cultures, both agentic and non-agentic processes appear to have been present. Additionally, such a linguistically embedded practice suggests a broader usage of the oath by commoners as well as elites. Luján Martínez (1997: 193) argues that "the consecration to the gods of a person who takes an oath" is of Indo-European origin and cites an Irish oath formula implying a deity as guarantor (195). Additionally, Koch (1992: 252) cites a consensus that the pan-Celtic god Lugus was "originally and etymologically the god of the oath."

Another candidate for prosocial MSP among Indo-European peoples is the notion that abuse of norms between guests and hosts will be punished (and outstanding hospitality rewarded), but such conclusions are based on a combination of speculative inference and comparative linguistics (Lújan Martínez 1997, 193-196).

Hallstatt (1000–475 BCE)
Most of the evidence for Hallstatt religious beliefs (which appear to have been spread across much of North-Western Europe) and practices dates to the latter half of the period. A small number of sites have yielded artefacts and/or animal remains that appear to have been deliberately deposited, likely for ritual purposes. At Blansko, in the Czech Republic, the Býčí-Skála Cave has been found to contain weapons, vessels, jewelry, tools, horse-riding equipment, the remains of wagons, burnt grain, and a cup made from human skull, as well as the remains of at least forty more humans (Golec 2017). This site appears to have been in use since the Neolithic, though it is also worth noting that the discovery of human remains may well indicate that the cave was mostly used for funerary purposes (Watts 2013: 368). Items interpreted as sacrificial burnt offerings have been found at Farchant, in Bavaria, and Dellingen, in the Black Forest, while apparently deliberate deposits of metalwork have been discovered at a number of watery locations; there is also some possible evidence for a solar cult and a cult of "heroes" (Watts 2013: 368). However, none of the archaeological evidence provides information about the presence or absence of moralistic punishment or reward on the part of supernatural agents. Indeed, it is not even possible to infer with certainty whether the above-listed deposits were intended as offerings to supernatural agents. Here we infer continuity with preceding Bronze Age European and/or succeeding La Tène practices and beliefs.

La Tène Period (475–52 BCE)
Ancient oaths in adjacent cultures of the Mediterranean typically involved either an explicit or implicit threat of this-life punishment, but the certainty of punishment for oathbreaking could be sidestepped in various ways including ambiguous wording or expiation (Sommerstein and Torrance 2014: 247; Van Slyke 2005: 183). Much historical evidence from adjacent cultures (e.g. *Iliad* 3.245-301; Sommerstein and Torrance 2014) points to the ancient use of oaths in treaties, legal proceedings and other activities conducted by elites. Due to the common Indo-European ancestry of the oath practice described above, we infer the same for the Celtic peoples in the Paris Basin.

In his account of his wars in Gaul, Caesar very often describes elite Gauls as taking oaths (e.g. *Bell. Gall.* 1.3, 1.30, 6.12, 7.2). However, we find no textual or archaeological evidence for the belief that the Gallic gods punished other anti-social behaviors. Indeed, it seems that Druids punished most kinds of moral transgressions. Cunliffe (1997, 190) writes that Druids "gave rulings on all religious questions" and acted "as judges in criminal cases and in disputes about boundaries and inheritances": they could enforce their judgements by "ban[ning] the defaulter from taking part in sacrifices [...] and in so doing they cut off the individual from the gods, thus making him unclean and excluded from normal social intercourse: 'no one will go near or speak to them for fear of being contaminated.'"

Moreover, the abundance of apparent offerings in the archaeological record could be interpreted to mean that La Tène gods were thought more likely to favor those who provided them with gifts. Examples include the mass deposit of weapons and shields at the fifth-century BCE Swiss site of La Tène itself, the large metalwork deposit at the Welsh site of Llyn Cerrig Bach, dating to between 500 BCE and 120 CE, and the second-century BCE and first-century CE shields found in the River Witham and the Thames, respectively (Watts 2013: 371). In addition to this, the La Tène people often placed animals and objects in shafts, caves, and other underground locations, likely intending them for fertility deities or deities in charge of the Underworld: such underground offerings have been found in the Vendée region of France (where, for example, an entire four-metre tree was deposited in a large pit), and at Holzhausen in Bavaria (Watts 2013, 378). Finally, the La Tène people would also leave offerings such as wooden figurines and personal items in watery locations and forest shrines (Watts 2013: 378-379). Moreover, possible evidence for human sacrifice at Linz, in Austria, seems to confirm Caesar's claim that the Druids would also offer human victims to the gods in order to "propitiate [their] wrath" (*B. Gall.* 6.16, quoted in Watts 2013, 377). In such cases, the perceived reasons for the gods' wrath, whether arbitrary, due to offenses against themselves, or interpersonal offenses, is unknown.

Both archaeological and textual sources suggest that the La Tène people believed in some form of continued existence after death, though they point to diversity of views about the afterlife. Elite graves normally featured a number of functional items (e.g. plates, cups, toiletries, furniture) suggesting an afterlife similar to daily life (Watts 2013: 383). Caesar wrote (*BG* 6.14, tr. Edwards 1917) that the Druids believed that, at death, one's soul transferred to a new body, though it is possible he was himself simply following the writings of Poseidonius rather than basing this on information he had directly gathered himself (Cunliffe 1997: 208). Moreover, Caesar also wrote (*BG* 6.19) that the Gauls' funerals involved bonfires in which the deceased's possessions were thrown, so that they may accompany them in the afterlife (Watts 2013: 283), which adds a further layer of apparent contradiction. Other Classical authors write that the Druids believed in transmigration of the soul after death, and Valerius Maximus in particular writes that the Gauls think that repaying loans can be postponed to the next life (Diodorus Siculus 5.21-28, Valerius Maximus 2.6.10, Pomponius Mela 3.2.19). None of these sources refers to punishment: indeed, they attribute Celtic lack of fear of death to this belief. While the perceptions of Classical authors may be skewed, what evidence exists points away from the idea that punishments and rewards would be certain. We are inferring the lack of this MSP trait backwards to at least 300 BCE, the approximate date of the earliest known references to the Druids (Diogenes Laertius 1 prologue, citing Aristotle and Sotion), especially as certainty

of moralizing enforcement is absent in neighboring polytheistic cultures such as the Greek and Italic/Roman.

Thus, while MSP appears to have been present in certain limited domains of activity, it is unlikely to have been a principal religious concern. Neither archaeological nor textual sources yield evidence that the La Tène people believed that after death they would be punished or rewarded for their behaviour in life.

Roman Period (52 BCE–486 CE)

A Celtic god *Segomū, *Segomonos is attested for Southwestern France by the first century CE and is thought to be cognate with Roman Semo Sancus, a martial god of oaths and treaties (Weiss 2017). If this theory is accurate, it would imply a prehistoric origin for this deity.

Caesar's conquest of Gaul in the first century BCE led to the rapid blending of Gaulish and Roman divine personas: certain La Tène deities were matched with their Roman equivalents and provided with Roman names and characteristics (Watts 2013: 373). "Romanization" is less often spoken of today, but rather a two-way process of exchange leading to a distinctive new Gallo-Roman religion. Nevertheless, the Romans exercised imperial authority over many aspects of religion in Gaul, and many Imperial cults were imported and propagated by bilingual Gallo-Roman elites (Woolf 218-28). Emperor Augustus banned Druidic practices, and this ban was reinforced by his successors Tiberius and Claudius. By the time of Nero, Suetonius Paulinus, governor of Britain, openly persecuted the few remaining Druids, exiling many onto the island of Anglesey, where he eventually ordered their slaughter. By the end of the first century CE, then, the cultures of the Gaulish tribes had been hybridized with Roman culture, though there were pockets of resistance in regions such as Normandy and the Loire and Seine Valleys in France, and the Cisalpine region of Northern Italy (Watts 2013: 375, 384). For the purposes of this paper, we emphasize the state-sponsored religion when coding the period of the Roman Empire, while acknowledging that Roman practices and beliefs were not necessarily applicable to the full population (for a summary of MSP in Roman religion, see *Mediterranean Basin: Latium*).

Christianity in the post-Roman period (from 487 CE)

Clovis, leader of the Germanic people known as the Franks, and first ruler of the Merovingian Kingdom, converted to Christianity in 508 CE (Wood 1994: 72). By that point, the majority of the population of Gaul was already Christian (Behr 2006).

Summary

Linguistic data suggest that belief in MSP may date to the prehistoric period, but this data informs us only about oath-breakers as targets for punishment. Oaths were likely used by both elites and commoners, and involved this-worldly punishments. At least some pre-Roman afterlife beliefs appear to have included transmigration, but not necessarily as a punishment or reward, while Roman versions of the afterlife (again, not uniform) are more likely to envision some form of MSP. Archaeological evidence from the Bronze Age onward points to gods who are much concerned with the quality of offerings and/or the correct performance of ritual.

Following Roman conquest in the first century BCE, the religion of this NGA quickly becomes hybridized, combining selected Roman features with indigenous ones. It seems highly likely that Gaulish and Roman polytheisms were compatible with respect to MSP, in neither case making it a primary concern, but limiting it to certain domains (such as perjury) or entertaining a variety of afterlife beliefs, some of which included expectations of punishment and reward, while others did not. Gallo-Roman religion was gradually replaced by Christianity, which features the full set of MSP beliefs.

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Iceland

NGA: Iceland

Contributors: Enrico Cioni, Jill Levine

Norse Religion

Norse peoples first settled an uninhabited Iceland from 874-930 CE, in the Viking era (Durrenberger 1992). Our understanding of Norse cosmology mainly derives from myths and sagas recorded by Christian historians in later periods. Indeed, while 13th-century ethnographer Snorri Stuluruson preserved Norse myths in the *Edda* seemingly without heavy-handed editing or commentary, in his Prologue section he "euhemerized the pagan gods (ie. treated their legends as accounts of historical persons)," which is a typical Christian approach to pre-Christian religious narratives (Somerville and McDonald 2013: 57).

Overall, textual evidence suggests that the Norse gods were thought to punish certain kinds of moral transgression, most notably, breaking oaths and offenses against hospitality. In the Eddic poem *Grímnismál*, the god Odin withdraws his protection from King Geirrödr, who was known for being unkind to guests and confirmed his reputation by torturing the god himself when he appeared at his court disguised as a traveler. The withdrawal of Odin's protection causes the king's accidental death by his own sword (Raffield et al. 2019: 11).

The god Ullr was directly associated with oaths and Odin was, among other things, also the god of travelers (Raffield et al. 2019: 8, 10). Indeed, in the Eddic poem *Hávámal*, Odin advises people to refrain from chasing away those seeking shelter, and welcome them as guests instead. It is therefore possible that people who swore oaths or interacted with travelers would feel compelled to abide by the oath and act hospitably, respectively.

Finally, the Norse gods were thought to directly reward bravery and loyalty, as they were believed to welcome those who died in combat in Odin's own halls (Raffield et al. 2019: 11). Moreover, the Eddic poem *Völuspá* describes a region of the afterlife where those guilty of the worst crimes (including murder, the breaking of oaths, and adultery) were tormented (Raffield et al. 2019: 11).

It seems overall more accurate to say that the Norse gods were only occasionally concerned with the proper moral conduct of their worshippers. If these gods ever prescribed a set of codified moral norms, it has not been preserved. The closest thing to a divinely prescribed moral code in Norse culture is the aforementioned *Hávámal*, which does purport to

contain advice from Odin himself: and while Odin does invite hosts to be kind to their guests, he also provides advice as to the most efficient ways to kill an enemy, seduce a woman, or steal someone else's property; he also cautions people from being too trusting of their friends, and reveals that he himself broke an oath he'd sworn to the giant Suttungur. In fact, Norse mythology includes several stories in which the gods commit adultery, incest, and various forms of deceit (Raffield et al. 2019: 13-14).

It is worth noting that mythical allusions in West Norse skaldic poetry and religious iconography from across Scandinavia suggests that Norse mythical traditions were understood by both commoners and elites. Moreover, there were a number of different contexts where elites and commoners gathered for collective worship (on the broad adoption of Norse religion among both elites and commoners, see Nordberg 2018, Nordberg 2019).

The archaeological record does not provide clear evidence of moralizing supernatural punishment. Cremation and grave goods were present in some regions and periods before the spread of Christianity, but the evidence is insufficient to provide further insight in the matter of moralizing beliefs (Somerville and McDonald 2013: 59).

Christianity

Conversion to Christianity in Iceland began around c.1000 CE (Júlíusson and Kristinsson 2017, pers. comm.) at the same time as Norway (under King Olaf II). In 1056 CE, Christianity became the official religion of Iceland, in a "top-down decision" (Júlíusson and Kristinsson 2017, pers. comm.). Somerville and McDonald (2019: 59) hypothesize that some Norse peoples likely practiced Christainity while upholding traditional Norse beliefs. It is also worth noting that later sources claim that Helgi the Lean, one of the first settlers of Iceland (ca. 900 CE), was a Christian but maintained aspects of Norse pagan beliefs (Somerville and McDonald 2019: 59). Christianity is a highly moralizing religion (Angenendt and Riches 2014).

Summary

Norse religion contains MSP elements related to oaths and hospitality. However, Norse gods were fickle and largely amoral, and therefore not particularly interested in rewarding or punishing their worshippers' moral or immoral behaviours, except on rare occasions. In other words, MSP was a secondary concern. Punishment was targeted at individuals. Christianity, a religion with full MSP characteristics, became the official ideology in the region starting from ca. 1000 CE.

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Upper Egypt

NGA: Upper Egypt
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Parts of this narrative are adapted from the chapter on Egypt by Jenny Reddish and J. G. Manning (2019) in *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Naqada I and II (3800–3300 BCE)
Because the earliest example of (proto-)writing dates to the next period (Dynasty 0, about 3300 BC) (Davies and Friedman 1998; Van De Mieroop 2011: 43), it is difficult to make inferences about Egyptian religion during Naqada I and II. Stone and ivory anthropomorphic figurines may have served as representations of deities and served important functions in elite burial. However, it is unclear how much continuity there was between practices surrounding these figurines and later forms of interaction with deities (Harrington 2004). Naqada II iconography includes some motifs that are associated with "religious" ideas in later, Dynastic-period art. Baines (2017: 27-28) notes that images of boats bearing standards on Naqada II pottery show parallels with the standards of deities familiar from the Dynastic pictorial record. Also noteworthy are late Predynastic motifs—such as wild animals and enemies being subdued— that may symbolize the triumph of order over chaos (Hendrickx 2011; Kemp 2006: 92-99). These are perhaps an early glimmering of the concept of *ma'at* (discussed below), which would become so central to Egyptian conceptions of morality, the legitimacy of kingship and the role of the gods.

Wall paintings within Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis, dating to the Naqada II period (c. 3500 BCE), depict boats that some scholars have read as referencing the journey of the dead to the next world (e.g. Bárta 2011: 33-34). Others are sceptical, citing a lack of good evidence for this interpretation (Midant-Reynes 2000; Smith 2017: 22) or proposing alternative views, such as that boats are early embodiments of the cosmic order of the world (Vanhulle 2018). Still, some characteristically Egyptian burial practices, such as wrapping the corpse and orienting the body to the west, are already found in Naqada II contexts (Van De Mieroop 2011: 24; Stevenson 2015), hinting at continuities of belief. Although we cannot discern what precisely Predynastic Egyptians believed awaited them in the next world, it is therefore possible that the concept of judgment after death was gradually emerging during this period (see e.g., Baines 1991: 151; Midant-Reynes 2000; Smith 2017: 22; Van De Mieroop 2011: 24). Whether a belief in supernatural punishment and reward during this life was present, as well as whether such enforcement would be limited to the individual or would affect the entire community (for instance through crop failure or insufficient flooding), is unknown.

Early Dynastic: Dynasties 0, I, II (3300–2686 BCE)
During the Early Dynastic period, there is some evidence of the key elements that characterized later Egyptian religion, such as a range of gods, an emerging divine kingship, and belief in an afterlife (Baines 1995; Stevenson 2015). However, we can be less confident about the precise nature of religion and the relationship between humans and divine during this period due to the scarcity of written sources.

The first attestations of *ma'at*—a broad ethical concept usually translated as "order," "harmony," or "justice"— appeared towards the end of this period, during the Second Dynasty (Bárta and Dulíková 2019: 27-28). We discuss this in more detail in the following section.

Some of the earliest known Egyptian personal names contain references to gods. For example, the names of Early Dynastic queens often contained "Neith" as an element, referring to a powerful warrior goddess (Wilkinson 1999: 252). Religious iconography familiar from the Old Kingdom is already present in the Early Dynastic period: the jackal-headed Anubis appears in First Dynasty royal tomb contexts and on elite grave stelae (243). The early Egyptian pantheon consisted of some localized gods as well as others who were more widely worshipped throughout the Nile Valley. Other supernatural agents within the Early Dynastic cosmos likely included the dead and beings intermediate between gods and humans (Baines 2017: 27, 32).

It is difficult to say what the chief concerns and desires of these entities were. Caches of votive offerings suggest that they were appealed to for protection or relief from misfortune; figurines of children left at a shrine on Elephantine Island may have been left by people appealing for a successful childbirth (Kemp 2006: 116–21). However, the emergence of the ethical concept of *ma'at* by the Second Dynasty at the latest, and the close association of gods in later Egyptian history with the preservation of *ma'at*, suggests that they may also have been active in enforcing human morality and punishing transgressions.

At Abydos and Saqqara, the tombs and mortuary enclosures of royals and the courtly elite contain grave goods suggestive of beliefs in the next world (Wilkinson 1999: 225), but it is unclear whether the concept of judgment after death for one's actions while alive had yet developed. The earliest formalized expressions of belief in *targeted* judgement after death – the individual is judged and rewarded or punished for their own actions only – appear much later, during the New Kingdom-period Book of the Dead (Taylor 2010: 205). In any case, it seems that the appearance of mastabas and stelae during the First Dynasty was concomitant with an increasing concern with the preservation of the body after death and with the emergence of the concept of the *ka*. The *ka* was understood as the vital essence that leaves the body after death but should continue to be nourished with offerings. The importance of this concept was such that the names of many high dignitaries of this period included *ka* (Hemaka, Merka, Sekhemka, etc.). Survival in the afterlife appears thus closely related to a new set of beliefs in which public display of personal reputation, preservation of body and name, and ceremonies honoring the memory of the dead were central (Moreno García 2019: 34-36), probably associated with moral behavior and rightful exercise of duties. It is unknown whether commoners of the period also adopted these beliefs.

Old Kingdom (2686–2150 BCE)

Old Kingdom state religion was centered on the king, who stood at a pivotal position between the realm of deities and that of humans (Baines 1995; de Wit 2011: 199). The gods were thought to take an active interest in human affairs: according to the ruling ideology that had coalesced over the course of the previous millennium, they had appointed the king as the earthly guarantor of *ma'at* (Morris 2010: 216; Silverman 1995, Stevenson 2016). The opposite of *ma'at* was *isfet* (chaos), but it was also contrasted with evil and wrongdoing (Assmann 2006: 176). The early Pharaonic cosmos was thus structured in moral terms, and misfortune and suffering on earth could be interpreted as signs that something was awry in the functioning of the state (Assmann 2001: 3–4).

As well as being a fundamental cosmological principle, *ma'at* served as a moral ideal for everyday social relations (Assmann 2006: 15–17). Biographical texts found in Old Kingdom tombs from the late Fifth Dynasty (c.2400 BCE) onwards attest to the centrality of altruism and refraining from harming others to *ma'at* (Lichtheim 1992: 10–11). Several inscriptions in tombs of officials contain statements that the deceased had "done justice" (i.e. *ma'at*) in his lifetime, going on to deny any misconduct and insist on his generosity to the less fortunate (Lichtheim 1992; Silverman 2000). The Sixth-Dynasty (2345–2181 BCE) official Nfr-sšm-ptḥ (Nefer-seshem-ptah) proclaimed:

> [I have gone from my town,
> [I have descended from my nome,]
> [having done] justice for its lord,
> having contented him with what he loves.
> I spoke the good, I repeated the good,
> [I grasped the right manner,]
> [for I wanted the good] for people.
> I judged two parties so as to content them,
> I saved the weak from one stronger than he as best I could,
> [I spoke truly, I acted justly.]
> [I gave bread to the hungry,] clothes to the naked,
> I landed one who was stranded,
> I buried him who lacked a son,
> I made a boat [for the boatless,]
> [and supported] the orphan.
> I never spoke evil against anyone to a potentate. (Lichtheim 1992: 13–14)

In his tomb inscription, the Sixth-Dynasty official Inti of Deshasha explicitly states the rationale for living in accordance with *ma'at*: "I am one honored by the king; / I am one honored by the great god; / I am a lover of goodness, a hater of crookedness, / doing the right thing is what the god desires" (Lichtheim 1992: 11).

Texts dating from the last quarter of the third millennium onwards suggest that fortune and misfortune in this life may sometimes have been explained as deriving from one's conduct: they raise the possibility that those who were attacked by snakes or crocodiles might learn, after death, that it had been a consequence of improper behavior (John Baines, pers. comm. to Enrico Cioni, December 2020).

The concept of judgment in the next world, most familiar from much later texts like the Book of the Dead, was likely present by the late Old Kingdom (Fifth and Sixth Dynasties) (Baines 1991: 151; Morenz 1975: 86–91). The texts in elite tombs stressing that the deceased followed *ma'at* in life may point to the expectation of reward and/or avoidance of punishment. Assmann (2005: 136) also notes that divine tribunals were treated as a potential (though not inevitable) danger of the journey between this world and the next from at least as early as the Old Kingdom. Some of the late Old Kingdom elite biographical texts suggest that litigation could take place in the afterlife between two deceased people or between the deceased and the living (John Baines, pers. comm. to Enrico Cioni, December 2020). This is a different matter from divine judgement, but one can argue that there is an implied moral content to these litigations.

The evidence at present does not allow us to discern whether the moralizing aspects of the Egyptian religion extended to the general population. Before the New Kingdom, much "practical religion" beyond the rarefied circles of the court and the provincial elite probably centered on responses and remedies to misfortune, for instance through supplicating the dead, venerating ancestors and consulting seers and oracles (Baines 1987: 86–94; Moreno García 2010). In other words, moralizing aspects of popular religion, if present, were probably of secondary importance during this period. An important point is that the gradual emergence of the cult of Osiris and the earliest references (both in texts and scenes) to the journey by boat of the deceased to Abydos, ancestral place of the god, is increasingly attested in the tombs of the elite from 2500 BCE onward. At the same time, officials claimed to do *ma'at* and, in the case of high dignitaries, it was quite common for them to present themselves as "priest of *ma'at*." These changes followed closely a major transformation in the ideology of the ruling elite, in which legitimacy derived formerly from relations of presumed kinship to the king (expressed in titles like "son/daughter of the king of his body") was replaced by new, moral values, based on right behavior, on protection of the humble from abuses and on doing justice (Bárta and Dulíková 2015). Yet the cult of Osiris and its associated beliefs (judgment in the otherworld) were still far from popular. It was rather the local cults (city-gods) that provided a basic identity for most of the population when the monarchy collapsed (about 2150 BCE).

First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate Period (2150–1567 BCE)
Egyptian ideas about the divine underwent a transformation during the First Intermediate Period (2150–2016) and Middle Kingdom (2016–1700). Assmann (2001: 170) argues that for the first time "the question of god (in the singular) was posed," and Egyptian texts grappled with the nature of the creator deity as well as the problem of evil and suffering. The collapse of the Old Kingdom and the political fragmentation of the First Intermediate Period had "called into question the possibility of realizing *maat*" (170). Why did the god who made the world allow it to fall into such chaos? Contemporary texts took different approaches. The *Dialogue of Ipuur and the Lord of All* attacks the creator god (who should be a good shepherd) for neglecting his human "herd" (Parkinson 1997: 185). However, *The Teaching for King Merikare* (perhaps in response to the *Dialogue of Ipuur* [Assmann 2001: 173]) frames death, illness and other catastrophes as righteous punishment by the creator god. "He has killed His enemies and He has destroyed His children / for thinking to make rebellion" (Parkinson 1997: 226). Spell 1130 in the Coffin Texts (a body of spells and prayers found inscribed on coffins from the First

Intermediate Period onwards) speaks in the voice of the creator god. The god claims responsibility for all goodness in the world and implies that the presence of evil is due to human disobedience (John Baines 2019, pers. comm.). "I made every man equal to his fellow, and I forbade them to do wrong, but their hearts disobeyed what I had said" (Faulkner 1978: 167). Such texts show that misfortune in this life (as well as the afterlife) could be interpreted as a consequence of human wrongdoing.

Overall—though doubts are expressed—Middle Kingdom wisdom literature and hymns posit a supreme, beneficent deity who created the world, the other deities and humankind, and continued to intervene by bestowing order and justice here below. Earthly misfortune could be attributed to human immorality and disobedience. The king of the re-established centralized state served as the earthly embodiment of *ma'at*, just as he had in the Old Kingdom. Texts of the period, such as *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* and *The Teaching for King Merikare*, show that far from being infallible or above moral norms, he was also subject to divine punishment if he failed to uphold *ma'at*.

A significant shift during the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom was that the concept of *ma'at* began to be used in a more personal sense and in a broader range of contexts. Written evidence from tombs and funerary monuments makes it clear that living a virtuous, just, and ordered life—that is, a "ma'atian" life—was the responsibility of non-royal elites as well as the upwardly mobile middle classes and perhaps even the poorer members of society. *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* features as its protagonist a small-time farmer and trader who proclaims general morality and has supernatural agency in the background of his thought (Parkinson 1997). Such a text would likely best be set in a context in which ordinary people thought in such a way, fictional and exaggerated though it is. Nevertheless, it is difficult to point to direct evidence for belief in moralizing supernatural punishment among commoners until the New Kingdom.

One school of thought holds that there was a general "democratization of the afterlife" between the late Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom (Wilkinson 2010b: 144). According to this theory, whereas in the Old Kingdom only the king could hope to achieve immortality as a divine being after death, by the Middle Kingdom non-royal elites and minor officials could aspire to the same fate (Callender 2000: 150, 168-69; Wilkinson 2010b: 144). However, the "democratization" theory has recently been criticized for resting on negative evidence for the restriction of a beatified afterlife to the pharaoh in the Old Kingdom (Willems 2014: 124–229; Smith 2017: 166–270). One scholar (Hays 2015: 201-02) points out that the absence of certain ritual texts from non-royal elite tombs may reflect iconographic and textual conventions rather than the tomb owners' beliefs about what would become of them in the afterlife.

Likewise, from the Middle Kingdom there is evidence that even relatively low-ranking people participated in the rites of the god Osiris, which appear in the Old Kingdom sources to be a royal prerogative (Callender 2000: 168-69; Van De Mieroop 2011: 120). It is possible, though, that the lower orders were performing such practices, with the associated hope of immortality, before the Middle Kingdom, but that this was not represented in tomb iconography or inscriptions (John Baines, pers. comm. 2019). The prospect of punishment in the next life for one's unethical behavior certainly looms large in the written and iconographic record for these periods, but Egyptologists are uncertain just how widely held such beliefs were among the general population, and whether punishment and reward for one's ethical conduct

were conceived of as certain. It may be significant that a corpus of documents known as "letters to the dead" (letters presented to deceased relatives to ask for their help in everyday domestic troubles), mostly dating to 2150–2050 BCE and written by people of modest status in the provinces, shows that when injustice occurred, it was the intervention of deceased relatives that was expected to redress it, not the fear of being judged by Osiris (Troche 2018).

New Kingdom (1567-1070 BCE), Third Intermediate Period (1070–525 BCE) and Late Period (1070-525 BCE)

The concept of divine judgement after death was further elaborated and formalized in the New Kingdom through texts like the *Book of Going Forth by Day*, also known as the *Book of the Dead* (specifically chapters 30 and 125). These texts emphasize the importance of refraining from harming others through lists of "negative confessions" to be recited before divine tribunals: "I have not done evil to anyone," "I have not slain the sacred herd" (perhaps referring to humans), and so on (Quirke n.d.). The deceased's heart would also be weighed against a feather, symbolizing *ma'at*, and if found to be too heavy could be devoured by the beast Ammit, a composite being with crocodile, lion and hippopotamus attributes. The *Book of the Dead* shows that punishment or reward after death was now thought to be certain and targeted on the individual.

In the fourteenth century BCE, the pharaoh Akhenaten made a series of drastic religious and political reforms, promoting the sole worship of Aten, "god of light and time" (Assmann 2005: 144), and moving the capital to a new site, now known as Amarna. While the scale and effects of this upheaval cannot be denied, there are plenty of Egyptian precedents for the focus on a single god: both in the Middle Kingdom (see above) and earlier in the New Kingdom. One innovative feature of Amarna religion was that Aten, as a "cosmic energy," lacked "personal and ethical traits"; the role of benevolent, personal god was instead assumed by the deified Akhenaten himself (Assmann 2005: 144–45).

Some scholars believe that after the Amarna experiment was over and the state worship of the old gods restored, there was a flowering of "personal piety"—a more direct and unmediated relationship with the gods—among the general populace. Bussmann (2017: 74) defines personal piety as the expression of "an intimate relationship between a benign god and a human individual." It is true that prayers directed from individuals to the state gods became common in the New Kingdom, often addressing Amun "as one's personal savior and guide, a champion of personal justice, mercy, and benefaction" (Szpakowska 2010: 508). After Akhenaten, letters and prayers more often use expressions like "who places [a certain god] in his heart" (Bussmann 2017: 72). The concept of *ma'at* remained central to New Kingdom religious thought, as well as to the ideology of kingship, but the emphasis was slightly different: individuals were to live in accordance with maatian principles not (or not only) because this would lead to prosperity both before and after death, but because it was the will of the gods (Assmann 1989: 72–75). Abundant evidence also survives from the Third Intermediate Period and the Late Period for pious practice, for instance from mortuary inscriptions (Szpakowska 2010: 515). From the New Kingdom onwards, the use of heart scarabs as grave goods was widespread among both elites and non-elites (Cooney 2008; Vanlathem 2001). These amulets were tied to beliefs surrounding judgment in the afterlife, suggesting an expectation of divine judgment among the general population.

A case could therefore be made that Egyptian religion from the New Kingdom onwards entailed an increasing internalization of moralizing gods, coupled with a stress on ethical self-examination, for elites and non-elites alike. However, debates on the topic of personal piety are complex and long-standing. It is not clear whether the absence of evidence for non-royal or non-elite "piety" in pre-New Kingdom contexts reflects a real lack of interest in such relationships with the divine, or merely shifting representational and textual conventions. With the relaxing of these strict conventions (known as "decorum") over the course of the Dynastic period, a greater range of subjects became socially appropriate. It may be that religious texts from the New Kingdom onwards merely represent beliefs and practices that had hitherto been widespread but unexpressed in official contexts (Baines 2017: 24–25; Baines and Frood 2011). Indeed, Bussmann (2017) points to the wealth of material evidence for devotional practices among the general population, in the form of local shrines and votive offerings, from the third millennium BCE onwards. He believes that the "personal piety" phenomenon of the New Kingdom in fact reflects a loss of intimacy with the gods, produced by the exclusion of local communities from cult activities in official temples (Bussmann 2017: 86).

Persian Period (525-323 BCE)
For more on the Achaemenids and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see Susiana narrative. In Egypt, religious practice and theology remained mostly unchanged under Persian rule, although there is a general dearth of sources for this period (John Baines, pers. comm., 2019; Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2006: 197).

Hellenistic and Roman Periods (323 BCE–300 CE)
The arrival of the Ptolemies brought Hellenistic philosophical schools along with the more 'traditional' worship of Greek deities (Morrison 2010, 758-761). The extent to which these impacted the daily lives of the rural Egyptian population is debatable. During the earlier phases of Ptolemaic rule, a "double society" developed in which Greek and Egyptian communities were subject to different judicial systems, and ethnic Greeks tended to dominate the civic life of the new cities (Manning 2003, 131). Nevertheless, after 200 BCE, social boundaries and identities became more blurred (Vandorpe 2010, 171-173).

The Greek concept of δίκη (justice) overlaps with *ma'at,* but also differs from it in key ways. Both were concerned with ensuring proper conduct and maintaining social order and applied equally to rulers and ruled. However, Greek gods were less concerned with human moral behavior than Egyptian deities, although they were believed to punish injustice, while legal and moral 'rightness' were often intimately linked in the Greek world (Petrovic and Petrovic 2016).

The Hellenistic (and, later, Roman) religious philosophies that arrived in Egypt from the late first millennium BCE onwards did not include precepts encouraging charity or almsgiving (Jennifer Larson 2016, pers. comm.). However, widespread in Graeco-Roman culture was a strong tradition of elites engaging in prosocial acts based on a sense of 'civic duty' (Hoyer 2013; Verboven 2002). Moreover, the better-off Graeco-Macedonian population, for instance officials and veteran soldiers, also engaged in much prosocial activity, spurred on by similar motivations. These civic benefactions carried considerable ideological weight and led to the creation and

maintenance of important infrastructure throughout Egypt, such as roads, bridges, and temples (Fischer-Bovet 2014; Monson 2012).

Evidence for Greek religion in Ptolemaic Egypt is surprisingly slight, suggesting that even Greeks adopted indigenous beliefs without perceiving a conflict between the two traditions (John Baines, pers. comm., Vandorpe 2010). The Ptolemies fostered a dynastic cult of Serapis, a Hellenized version of Osiris-Apis; yet the "Hellenization" of this god was fairly superficial, in that Serapis' cult statue was Greek in style, and received a Greek-style temple (Larson 2016: 345-54). Both native Egyptian and Graeco-Mediterranean culture and religion, the influence of which had grown under the Ptolemies, survived under Roman rule (Frankfurter 1998: 7), and we can reasonably infer that beliefs about moralizing supernatural punishment did too.

Late Antiquity (after 300 CE)
By the Late Antique period, when Egypt formed part of the Eastern Roman Empire, religion and ethics in the province included strands of thought from Christian sects, Judaism, Graeco-Roman paganism, and the ancient beliefs of the Pharaonic age.

After the adoption of Christianity as the Roman Empire's official religion, elite civic-minded prosociality gave way to religiously inspired notions of Christian charity and benefaction: "Modern scholars agree that Christ's command to assist the suffering underlay the development of specialized welfare services in Byzantium. According to Matthew's gospel, Jesus required that Christians feed the hungry, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and care for the sick (Matt. 25: 34-5)" (Miller 2008, missing page number). It is striking that similar exhortations can be found in the Egyptian textual tradition as far back as the third millennium BCE (John Baines, pers. comm. 2019).

After the Islamic conquest (642 CE), Egypt gradually converted to Islam, although it has retained a strong Christian (Coptic) minority to this day. Both Christianity and Islam are strongly moralizing religions (see Angenendt and Riches 2014 and Yaran 2007, respectively).

Summary
They [Egyptians] are religious beyond measure, more than any other people — Herodotus 2.37

Egypt provides us with a striking example of precocious development of MSP (in fact, the earliest among the regions surveyed in these narratives: Amin 2009: 107–9). Human ethical conduct appears to be a primary concern of the gods from the Early Dynastic period. The concept of *ma'at* is first attested in written form in the Second Dynasty but, based on iconographic evidence, was likely present earlier. It encompassed a broad spectrum of aspects of morality, emphasizing order, personal integrity, justice and charity. The king derived legitimacy from his appointment by the gods as upholder of *ma'at*, and texts from the Middle Kingdom onwards show that he could also be subject to moralizing enforcement of his behavior. Punishment and reward by the gods were targeted at individuals (rather than affecting entire communities) from the late Old Kingdom.

There is much uncertainty about how far back in time beyond the Old Kingdom we can infer the presence of various aspects of MSP. There is evidence of belief in the afterlife from the Early Dynastic Period (c.3300 BCE), as well as *ma'at* as a moralizing force.

Belief in judgment in the afterlife developed very early: it is attested in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties and continued throughout the Dynastic sequence. Punishment and reward in this life was also a possibility, again attested from the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties onwards.

From at least the New Kingdom, punishment in the afterlife for misdeeds in life was thought to be quite certain, although at least some Egyptians believed they could escape judgment by purchasing a spell that would prevent their heart from blurting out all their sins. However, evidence does not allow us to determine how broad was the social scope of MSP before the New Kingdom. Certainly, it included rulers and elites, but strong evidence that the moralizing aspects of Egyptian religion extended to the general population is available only from the mid-second millennium BCE onwards, in the form of heart scarabs in graves. Before the New Kingdom, popular religion may have been more concerned with responses and remedies to misfortune.

We conclude that a well-developed form of MSP appeared in Egypt as early as c.2400 BCE (the Old Kingdom's late Fifth and Sixth Dynasties). From the New Kingdom on (after 1600 BCE), Egypt possessed a full set of MSP characteristics. This situation was not changed by the conversion of the majority of population first to Christianity and later to Islam.

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Inland Niger Delta
NGA: Inland Niger Delta
Contributors: Enrico Cioni

This narrative is adapted from the chapter on West Africa by Jenny Reddish (2019) in *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Pre-Islamic Period (c. 2000 BCE–800 CE)
Roderick McIntosh (1998: 5) has argued for the existence of a long-lived 'symbolic reservoir of beliefs' (R. McIntosh and S. McIntosh 1988: 156) in the Inland Niger Delta. In cultural-historical terms, this floodplain acted as the crucible for the admixture of two great traditions that still shape West African societies today: the Soninke from the North of the Inland Delta, and the Malinke from its South (R. McIntosh 1998: 15). Both form part of the still larger Mande-speaking cultural sphere. In McIntosh's view, certain Mande "core rules" of social life and action in the landscape are very old indeed, dating back to the 1st-millennium era of urbanization and prosperity in the region, as well as even farther back, to the Late Stone Age, before the establishment of the Jenné-jeno settlement (R. McIntosh 2000: 159, 167-71).

Extrapolating backwards from historical Mande contexts, R. McIntosh (2000) argues that these rules demanded moral reciprocity both between human individuals and between human communities and the landscape (see also McNaughton 1988: 15-21). Mande concepts of landscape envision a grid underlain by currents of *nyama*, a vital force that is more concentrated in some localities than others (R. McIntosh 1998, 2000; Togola 2000). A particularly durable Mande trope is the *dalimasigi* (knowledge quest), in which a charismatic and skillful individual travels over the *nyama* grid and establishes relations with spirits of the land on behalf of the wider community (R. McIntosh 2005: 139). By placating or subduing these beings, these heroes or heroines can transform potentially dangerous *nyama* and (for example) make certain locations habitable for humans or enable the extraction and working of iron. This worldview is laden with ethical expectations: knowledge quests are undertaken for the common good and not for personal gain, and places of concentrated *nyama* should never be 'monopolized' by individuals or corporations (R. McIntosh 2005: 139-41). The evidence for the prevalence of these ethical expectations in Pre-Islamic West Africa largely consists of the *absence* of evidence for any kind of hierarchical organisation in the archaeological remains of societies that otherwise appear to have been rather complex: most notably, the large, urban site of Jenné-jeno lacks all expected material manifestations of state power, including grand tombs and monuments requiring large-scale mobilization of labour, the use of writing for either bookkeeping, law codes, or royal propaganda, and specialized buildings for administration (S. McIntosh and R. McIntosh 1993).

One could argue then, that prevailing ideology in the Pre-Islamic Niger Inland Delta promoted some form of 'prosociality'. However, it is more difficult to speculate on belief in supernatural agents, and whether or not these may have been thought to reward prosociality or punish behaviours that ran counter to it. Indeed, despite the unusually rich trove of oral traditions preserved by Mande *jeliw* (a hereditary 'caste' of historians, genealogists, and political mediators [R. McIntosh 2000]) and the results of decades of modern archaeological

research in the Niger Inland Delta, the reconstruction of trends in religious values in the region before the introduction of writing remains a fraught task. Our image of the shifting 'symbolic reservoir' will probably always lack temporal resolution. In keeping with the distributed power relations of Middle Niger societies and the importance they ascribed to occult knowledge (McNaughton 1998: 14), it seems likely that the 'ideology' of the Delta had no canonical form promulgated from on high, and that its moral norms and core assumptions about the world often remained unspoken.

Medieval Period (800–1500 CE)
Beginning in 700 CE, Arab and Berber Muslim traders gradually spread Islam South of the Sahara (Levtzion and Pouwels 2000; Webb Jr. 2006: 44). However, we consider the beginning of the region's long period of gradual Islamiation the late 11th century, when the rulers of Wagadu officially converted to Islam to foster commercial ties with Almoravid newcomers (Levtzion and Spaulding 2003: 24-25). In the mid-1320s CE, King Mansa Musa of the Mali Empire made the pilgrimage to Mecca (Lapidus 2002: 402; Sapong 2016). Like other Sahelian kings and 'chiefs' during this period, Musa also brought literate Muslim officials and clerics into the heart of Malian government. Islamic judicial institutions, centers of scholarship, and mosques sprang up across the region, and the development of formal bureaucracies gave Sahelian rulers a greater degree of administrative control over subject populations than had hitherto been possible (Lapidus 2002: 401-09; R. McIntosh 1998: 250). Islam is a highly moralizing religion (Yaran 2007).

However, pre-Islamic beliefs continued to persist even in the Mali Empire: when traveller Ibn Battuta visited this polity later in the fourteenth century, he noted that "the emperor also remained faithful to certain pagan customs" and "unorthodox practices", suggesting that "[a]part from the presence of Arabs and the slight Muslim veneer, what happened at the court of the mansa differed very little from what might have been seen at the courts of non-Muslim kings, for example those of Mossi" (Niane 1984, 152).

Indeed, the aforementioned site of Jenné-jeno, whose final phase of occupation ran from about 900 to 1400 CE, has yielded no evidence for Islamic beliefs or practices. However, it was around the same time that Islam spread through neighbouring polities that Jenné-jeno witnessed the relatively sudden appearance of figurative iconography: specifically, a large corpus of terracotta figurines depicting humans in a variety of poses (kneeling, reclining, embracing other human figures, sitting, riding a horse, standing) and bearing elaborate jewelry, snakes, and/or bulging pustules. Many of these figurines are of unknown context due to looting, but the contexts in which the few that have been found through regular archaeological excavation suggest the possibility of ritual use: hidden in the wall of an iron-smelter's workshop, buried under the floor of a deliberately razed house, placed on what appears to have been an altar, and discarded in a trash heap at the city's periphery after what may have been a deliberate act of mutilation (R. McIntosh 2005: 157-162).

According to Roderick McIntosh (pers. comm.), the figurines may have been worshipped in order to benefit families or people that were part of "corporations" rather than individual families: that is, groups of people who shared the same craft or economic activity, such as ironworking, woodworking, or fishing. It is perhaps possible to reconstruct such rituals on the basis of what we know about twentieth-century West African rituals centered around

sculptures known as boliw (Kedzierska Manzon 2013, 1119-1152). However, there is no evidence that the Jenné-jeno figurines were thought to punish or reward certain behaviours on the basis of a system of morality, nor can such beliefs be inferred on the basis of what is known about boliw worship.

Finally, it is also worth noting that Brooks (1993: 37-38) identifies "landlord-stranger reciprocities" as a pillar of social life in medieval and later West Africa. Both Ibn Battuta in the Mali Empire as well as later European explorers (Jansen 1996a: 122) remarked on these norms, which enabled the free and safe movement of travelers and traders.

It is somewhat difficult to pinpoint the moment when Islam became firmly established in this region. We have chosen the late 15th century as the cut-off point between a period where Islam was gradually established, to one where it was firmly established, at least among rulers and the elites, because by this time Timbuktu had emerged as an important center of Islamic scholarship (Saad 1983: 34-38).

Summary

Overall, the present evidence, both archaeological and ethnographic, does not seem sufficient to infer the presence or absence of belief, in the centuries preceding the advent of Islam, in supernatural entities or forces who monitored intra-human interactions, punishing antisocial behaviors and rewarding prosocial ones. Though Islam reached the region as early as the 8th century CE, we consider the late 11th century as the beginning of a long period of gradual Islamization, which likely lasted until the 15th century, by which time the religion was firmly established, at least among the more powerful social strata.

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Ghanaian Coast

NGA: Ghanaian Coast[2]
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Pre-British Period (1500–1900 CE)
According to the traditional beliefs of the Akan peoples of Ghana, there are multiple gods. People invoked a range of deities and mythical figures including *'Nyame, Asase*, and the mythical ruler of the underworld (Clarke 1930: 438). Some sources write that "all departments

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[2] Because of the drastic changes brought by the slave trade, the presence of Christian missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries, and large-scale urbanization and immigration, it is difficult to generalize about religious beliefs and morality among the inhabitants of the Ghanaian Coast in this period (Rebecca Shumway, pers. comm., February 2021). Note, also, that the "Akan" ethnonym only became established in the late 19th century.

of nature have their specific deities: *Asase* for the earth, the leopard for the forest, a 'creature' for the underworld, *Opo* for the sea, and *'Nyame* for the sky" (Clarke 1930: 438). Some ethnographers have argued that *'Nyame* or *Onyame* was a supreme deity that was already present before the Akan made contact with Christian missionaries (Warren 1986: 25). There were no priests dedicated specifically to the supreme god, although households built shrines to him in their courtyards (Warren 1986: 25). *Onyame* was thought to reside in the sky (Warren 1986: 25). He was a source of authority, as he was "the source of many proverbs, has set pieces in the drum language which allude to him, and is represented in many designs in ancient architecture and metal-casting" (Warren 1986: 25). This god "created all things; he manifests his power through a pantheon of gods, the *abosom*" (Warren 1986: 25). Also known as *Onyakopon*, the creator of the universe was believed to be omniscient and omnipotent, as demonstrated by two of his "praise names": *Brckyirihuade* or "he is the one who knows what is happening in his presence as well as behind his back" and *Nya-amane-kose* or "he is the one to whom if you report (or tell) any need or trouble, he is able to help you", respectively (Danquah 1945: 29). However, some early accounts challenged the idea that *'Nyame* or *Onyakopon* was a supreme deity (Clarke 1930: 469). These accounts argue that *'Nyame* was a sky god, but not a source of laws or moral norms and had little influence on people's conduct and social organization (Clarke 1930: 469). They further argue that he was "not concerned with the daily affairs of men" (Clarke 1930: 469). In the context of these contradictions, note that conversion to Christianity began as early as the eighteenth century CE among the Akan of the Ghanaian coast (R. Shumway, pers. comm., February 15, 2021). Moreover, it is worth noting that Islam was long present in the mainland (Silverman and Owusu-Ansah 1989), though it never achieved the status of dominant ideology. Between the late 19th and mid-20th century, the region was annexed to the British Empire, where the dominant ideology was Christianity, a highly moralizing religion (Angenendt and Riches 2014). The presence of Abrahamic religions may account for the contradictions in different ethnographers' accounts regarding the existence of a supreme being and the extent of his powers.   Less controversially, the Akan also provided offerings to lesser deities, known as *abosom* (Ephirim-Donkor 2018: 2). One important deity was *Asase Yaa*, a female deity associated with earth and fertility (Warren 1986: 26). Some accounts claim that *Asase* and the ruler of the underworld were the same entity (Clarke 1930: 438). Due to the power of *Asase*, the "earth was sacred and dangerous" (Clarke 1930: 438), and as a result, a ruler's stool and his feet were not supposed to touch the ground directly as this was thought to cause misfortune, being played on elephant skin instead (Clarke 1930: 438). An early source likened the various deities to guardian spirits of their respective spheres of influence (Clarke 1930: 448). The same source writes that nature gods had little impact on people's conduct or ideas about social organization (Clarke 1930: 452). It appears that people engaged with them primarily through sacrifice and propitiation. During festivals such as the *Apo* ceremony, people purified the shrines of the gods with water (Clarke 1930: 448). People also consulted *obosom* to relieve misfortunes such as sickness, infertility, and crop failure (Clarke 1930: 448). People also asked local deities to grant their communities health, protection, and fertility (Clarke 1930: 449). However, the rituals dedicated to deities also played a role in social cohesion. During the biggest public festivals, people from different clans came together and chiefs paid their respects to the higher-ranking rulers, which affirmed the political unity of the Ashanti state (Clarke 1930: 449).

In addition to the more powerful deities, people recognized many "lesser spirits which inhabit and animate trees, animals, and charms" (Warren 1986: 25). These spirits could be vindictive and people therefore propitiated them with sacrifices if they encroached on their territory (Warren 1986: 26). For example, woodcutters sacrificed a chicken before felling a tree to avoid retribution (Warren 1986: 26). These rituals also encouraged the newly homeless tree spirit to enter the drums carved from its wood, where they could be "propitiated, tended, and utilized during the drumming" (Warren 1986: 26). Other spiritual powers were thought to inhabit amulets and magical charms (*suman*), which people used to protect themselves from illness, poisoning, and bad luck, but also to kill enemies and harm love rivals (Warren 1986: 26).

Most importantly, people believed in "*nsamanfo* or omnipresent ancestral spirits" (Warren 1986: 25), which some encyclopaedia entries also identify as *Nana* (Gilbert, Lagacé and Skoggard 2000), the most important ones being the ancestors belong to the same matri-clan. Ancestors played an important role in legitimating power and social structure. For example, the heroic deeds of the ruler's ancestors were invoked in praise poems, which were recited by executioners and legitimated the king's authority over commoners (Arhin 1986: 167). Ancestry also legitimated hierarchical differences between the various matrilineages that made up Akan society, some of which were the owners of stools or hereditary leadership titles and were also seen as the the descendants of the first inhabitants of their territory, which conferred them ownership of the same (Arhin 1983: 91p). These ancestors also continued to take an active interest in the goings-on in the land of the living, maintaining kin ties with their surviving relatives (Nketia 1969: 6). Accordingly, people tried to maintain a good relationship with their ancestors (Nketia 1969: 6). For example, people propitiated them with libations and sacrifices before tilling their family lands or when engaging in transactions related to that land (Clarke 1930: 462). However, early sources also note that "the power of the ancestral spirits is operative only upon and through their descendants, the clan" (Clarke 1930: 462p). The close connection between ancestors and their matri-clans is evident in ritual life. For example, only members of the same matri-clan could perform the funeral rites and rituals associated with ancestor worship (Clarke 1930: 462). If the relevant rituals were not conducted properly, the ancestors became angry and retaliated against the living. For example, people normally buried the dead in designated areas where all the members of the lineage were laid to rest. Burying a person alone by the roadside was wrong because their spirit would come back to kill a relative to keep them company in the afterlife (Busia 1951: 42). The relationship between the ancestors and the living may have been symbiotic. For example, an early ethnographer writes that the ancestors were "dependent upon the clan not only for existence in the spirit-world but for reincarnation in this" (Clarke 1930: 463; for further detail on the spirit world see below).

Both gods and ancestors punished certain behaviors. Akan law recognized various serious offences, including (1) murder and suicide; (2) the violation of sexual taboos such as clan incest; (3) offences against chiefs such as assaulting a chief or his entourage, cursing him, or stealing from him; and (4) breaches of oaths such as treason, cowardice in battle, or defying commands sanctioned with chiefly oaths (Busia 1951: 70). These offences had supernatural consequences because they were thought to anger the ancestors. Punishments in this life were meted out to "the offender and the entire society" via "drought, infertility and sicknesses" (Anderson 2013: 167). Both the gods and the ancestors punished "stealing, pre-marital sex,

murder, incest, having sexual intercourse in the bush, adultery and suicide" (Anderson 2013: 167). For example, sexual offences were thought to have "defiled the Earth and offended the gods and the ancestors" (Busia 1951: 71). This brought suffering to the community, and if the crime went unpunished, hunters would fail to catch prey, the crops would fail, and the clans and the order of the world would dissolve into chaos (Busia 1951: 71). To appease the gods and the ancestors, people had to punish the perpetrators, provide sacrifices, and purify the earth (Busia 1951: 71). To this end, the male perpetrator had to provide a sheep for sacrifice at the chief's court before starting the trial (Busia 1951: 72).

As the chiefs were the designated successors of the ancestors, offences against chiefs "were believed to anger the ancestors and alienate them from the community" (Busia 1951: 73). Again, trials needed to start with a sheep sacrifice to appease the ancestors (Busia 1951: 73). In fact, offences against the chief were in some sense also offences against the ancestors, as were breaches of oaths (Busia 1951: 73). Oaths usually referenced some disaster in the past that was preserved in oral tradition, such as the death of an ancestor or defeat in battle (Busia 1951: 75). Mentioning these misfortunes was thought to anger the ancestors and to risk a repetition of the same disaster in the present (Busia 1951: 75). A person who accused another and wanted his case to be tried would swear such an oath, and if the accused also swore an oath to defend their innocence, both were arrested and brought to the chief (Busia 1951: 77). When going to war, military leaders swore that they would not flee the enemy, and that none of their soldiers would (Busia 1951: 77). Breaching this oath was punishable by death (Busia 1951: 77). In other cases, chiefs and elders swore oaths to command people to contribute to cooperative activities such as putting out a fire, assisting in the pursuit of a murderer, or rescuing others from a collapsed building (Busia 1951: 78). Chiefs also used oaths to enforce sexual taboos (Busia 1951: 78).

In other cases, supernatural retribution came from the vengeful spirit of the victim, with the ancestors being involved in a more indirect manner. For example, murder cases were heard in the courts of high-ranking chiefs (Busia 1951: 70). This was done because people "feared that the ghost of a murdered man would disturb the chief until a judicial investigation had been held, and blood exacted for blood" (Busia 1951: 70). Chiefs could prevent supernatural retribution by punishing the murderer (Busia 1951: 70). A similar process was at work in witchcraft, which the gods and ancestors were thought to taboo (Busia 1951: 74). If a person was killed by witchcraft, their ghost would haunt the community until their death was avenged (Busia 1951: 74).

Supernatural retribution could also follow after unintentional or accidental homicides, for example if a hunter accidentally killed a person during a hunting trip (Busia 1951: 71). To avert such an outcome, the hunter had to provide a sheep to be sacrificed on the stool of the chief, and people declared to the spirits that the matter had been investigated and the killing had been unintentional (Busia 1951: 71). They then asked the spirits to prevent this from happening again (Busia 1951: 71). In cases of suicide, it was assumed that the person had committed a grave offence and had killed themselves to evade trial (Busia 1951: 71). People then tried and decapitated the dead body (Busia 1951: 71). This was thought to put things right between the community and the ancestors, and "the evil spirit of the suicide [...] would no longer disturb the living" (Busia 1951: 71). Some deaths were also associated with supernatural retribution. According to one source, these deaths were seen as "punishments for sins"

(Warren 1986: 23), which applied to accidental drownings, leprosy, and death in pregnancy and childbirth (Warren 1986: 23). The latter in particular was "considered an evil, polluting and endangering the entire community" (Warren 1986: 23).

However, not all kinds of supernatural harm had a moralizing component. Some early accounts write that the vengeful spirit of an executed man could return to avenge himself on the executioner and the king, and this was prevented by placing a special kind of charm on his knees (Rattray 1927: 22). Furthermore, ancestors sometimes appeared in dreams and tried to lead the dreamer away to the land of the dead, which could result in the actual death of the person (Rattray 1927: 195). Furthermore, both gods and the ancestors were often slow to address injustices, even when these are particularly egregious, operating on an entirely different time scale than humans. Even the most "hot-headed" deity, Densu, whose reaction to injustices is thought to be swiftest, may only address wrongs after repeated prompting. Moreover, wrong-doers and transgressors may successfully bribe or appease deities and ancestors through offerings and sacrifices (Ephirim-Donkor 2010: 8, 57-58), as we have seen above.

A list of virtuous behaviors that are rewarded by the Akan gods and ancestors could not be found in the available literature, but it seems reasonable to infer that it includes the avoidance of the above-mentioned behaviors. Moreover, proverbs such as "man is not a palm-tree that he should be self-sufficient", "the right arm washes the left arm and the left arm washes the right arm" and "life is mutual aid" (Gyekye 2011) all suggest that they may have rewarded aspects of morality such as fairness and reciprocity.

While there is strong evidence for supernatural retribution in this life, the exact mechanisms of punishment in the afterlife are more ambiguous in the literature. In the first instance, the dead person's soul was "said to have to climb a steep hill [...] and then a ladder to reach God's town" (Debrunner 1961: 10), although the afterlife was previously more like an underworld (see below). People poured water down a dying person's throat to assist them in climbing that hill (Busia 1951: 23). During funeral rites, mourners sang dirges describing the character and accomplishments of the dead person's ancestors (Nketia 1969: 25). One source suggests that this helped the dead person to "find his way to them in the underworld" (Nketia 1969: 25). Once arrived, they would encounter their ancestors (Busia 1951: 23), who "live in very much the same way as they lived on earth" (ibid.; see also Nketia 1969: 6). In other words, the land of the dead, or the spirit world, was essentially a replica of the land of the living (Rattray 1916: 26). Accordingly, mourners presented food to the dead person's body, along with blankets, cloth, and gold-dust, which they would need in the afterlife (Busia 1951: 23). In the past, people also killed some of the members of a chief's entourage so they would serve him in the afterlife (Busia 1951: 23).

However, information about rewards and punishments in the afterlife is contradictory. For example, one late source writes that the soul "has to give an account of himself to his late king who, surrounded by his councillors, sits in court just as he used to do when he was still alive" (Debrunner 1961: 10). 'Sins' were punished by sending the soul back to the land of the living, where it was reincarnated in the person's old matrilineage (Debrunner 1961: 10). The same source suggests that misdeeds could affect people's destiny after reincarnation. One account, citing a missionary's report, tells of an unconverted murderer facing capital punishment (Debrunner 1961: 11). He asked a Christian priest to beg god for forgiveness so

that he would not face another hanging in his next life (Debrunner 1961: 11). This clashes with the claims of earlier ethnographers. According to them, the dead reincarnate in the same matrilineal clan they had been part of in their previous life (Rattray 1927: 318; Clarke 1930: 461p), without mentioning any punitive aspects - this was simply a normal conclusion to the soul's sojourn in the afterlife. Others provide a different version of punishment that is more consistent with these early accounts. They write that, rather than facing judgment by the chief, the dead person "must settle any accounts he has with those who have gone before him" (Nketia 1969: 44). The same source also gives a different account of supernatural retribution, writing that "if he had been particularly wicked in his life time [...] he might not be admitted to the world of spirits; he must hover round houses unable to come back to life or join the dead" (Nketia 1969: 44). This version is also found in another source, which writes that those who lived "less than an ideal life", in a moral sense, are barred from ever reincarnating or becoming an ancestor (Ephirim-Donkor 2010: 15-16).

However, it appears that this fate could also happen to people if "something had gone wrong before his journey or in the course of it" (Nketia 1969: 44), indicating that adverse consequences were also associated with circumstantial factors, in addition to moralistic concerns. This is also evident in the classification of ghosts. Ghosts and ancestor spirits can be divided into three types according to way they had died: these include ghosts of people who had died a good death (*samanpa*), ghosts had never left earth or entered the underworld (*samantwen-twen*), and ghosts of people who had died in a violent way (Warren 1986: 23). Some early ethnographers write that the Akan believed that every person's destiny was preordained from before birth, when the soul comes back to reincarnate in a new body (Rattray 1916: 25p). People sometimes died before their predestined time of death, usually the result of some accident (Rattray 1916: 26). Such people were not able to enter the underworld and had to remain on earth as ghosts (Rattray 1916: 26). Only once their preordained lifespan had run out could they proceed to the spirit world (Rattray 1916: 26). This further confirms that circumstantial factors could influence people's experiences in the afterlife. Additionally, social status may have affected people's entrance to the underworld. Specifically, it appears that the souls of chiefs were received more favourably than those of commoners. If the spirit of a dead chief announced himself at the entrance of the land of the dead, the other spirits would come and carry him inside on their shoulders (Nketia 1969: 44).

Summary

Some ethnographic accounts suggest that, even before the arrival of Christianity in the 18th century CE, the Akan of the Ghanaian Coast believed in a supreme creator god, although this has been disputed by other ethnographers. The Akan pantheon included many deities, ancestors, and lesser spirits whom people propitiated with prayers and sacrifices to maintain good relations with them. However, the ethnographic record also suggests that supernatural entities, especially ancestors, also punished a broad range of moral offences committed between humans. Many punishments were meted out in this life and affected the whole community rather than just the individual transgressor. Not all forms of supernatural retribution were driven by the ancestors directly, as some offences (such as witchcraft and murder) were instead avenged by the angry spirit of the victim. However, supernatural retribution in this life could be avoided if the community punished the transgressor and

appeased the angry spirits and ancestors with the required sacrifices. Furthermore, not all cases of supernatural harm were related to moral conduct between people, and harm could also result from neglecting ritual duties, among other factors. Finally, some ethnographers have reported moralistic punishment in the afterlife, although the exact mechanisms differ between accounts. At the same time, the soul's fate after death was also affected by circumstantial factors with no relation to moral conduct.

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Southern Mesopotamia

NGA: Southern Mesopotamia
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Neolithic (9000–6500 BCE)
Evidence for beliefs about MSP among the inhabitants of Southern Mesopotamia before the Ubaid period is lacking.

Ubaid Period (c.6500–4000 BCE)[3]
The material record of this period offers insight into ritual activities related to temples, burial, and symbolism in southern Mesopotamia, but, due to the absence of written records, religious beliefs remain poorly understood. According to Oates (1978: 117), "only with later farming villages in Sumer itself (some time before 5000 B.C.) do we find unambiguous evidence for the pattern of town and temple so characteristic of later Sumerian and Babylonian society". Oates then goes on to note that the "argument for religious continuity from these 'Ubaid villages to historic times is persuasive", citing Lloyd and Safar (1947: 93-4), Oates (1960: 44-6), and Oates and Oates (1976: 122-32). There is some evidence of earlier farming communities in Sumer, but they left little or no traceable materials (Altaweel et al. 2019).

Charvát (2002: 109-110) notes that the apparent increase in the diversity of burial customs in the Halaf period in northern Mesopotamia (c. 6500–5500 BCE) may indicate "that the particular circumstances of death exercise an influence on the funerary ritual". Nevertheless, he does not go on to suggest that there is any evidence that Halaf-period Mesopotamians believed that particular circumstances of death (or indeed moral conduct in life) also resulted in differential treatment in the afterlife. Similarly, though structures from this period suggest the use of bull horns for altars or other ritual or religious use (Kornienko 2009), which may suggest continuity with symbolism and therefore possibly religious beliefs in later periods (for bulls as symbols in later Mesopotamia, see e.g. Watanabe 2015), the evidence is

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[3] Includes Halaf Period in North Mesopotamia, which transitions to the Ubaid Period *c.* 5300 BCE with the adoption of Southern Mesopotamia influences and cultural features.

too scarce to make confident inferences about the exact beliefs surrounding items such as bull horns at this time.

The Ubaid culture originally referred in a restricted sense to a ceramic tradition of southern Iraq and the communities associated with it, but is now considered by many scholars to expand beyond this core to a "vast Near Eastern interaction zone," including Susiana as well as northern Mesopotamia and southern Anatolia (Carter and Philip 2010: 1–2). Ubaid material culture appeared earliest in southern Mesopotamia, c. 6500 BCE, and spread later to other regions (Carter and Philip 2010: 2). Hole (2010: 228-238) argues that Ubaid-era inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Susiana likely interpreted widespread environmental change in the fifth millennium BCE as "caused by supernatural forces/gods who needed to be supplicated and placated", which led to the "[i]ntensification of ritual", in which "people treated [these supernatural forces/gods] much as they honored their terrestrial leaders, with rituals and gifts". Evidence for this intensification of ritual includes the appearance of seals depicting "humanoids" that Hole interprets as precursors to the figure of the *namash*, "a person who is thought to be endowed with the ability to communicate with, and influence the behavior of, supernatural forces". At sites such as Tepe Gawra and Susa, these seals grow in quantity and in the complexity of their iconography over time, "implying an elaboration of ritual".

Other evidence for ritual intensification includes a series of temples at Eridu, whose remains convincingly suggest continuity with Mesopotamian temples, with the earliest levels dating to the fifth and fourth millennium BCE. This also demonstrates that the concept of gods belonging to a specific place or town, central to later Mesopotamian beliefs, had likely developed by this period (Safar et al. 1981). Moreover, Late Ubaid figurines from Eridu, Ubaid and Ur depict realistic human bodies surmounted by elongated heads with "coffee-bean eyes", which may represent mythical figures or humans wearing (possibly ritual) masks. Also worth noting is the development of architectural elements that would later be incorporated into temples, such as niche and buttress designs (Desset 2014). In south-western Iran, which saw religious developments closely related to those of southern Mesopotamia (Mark Altaweel, pers. comm. to Peter Turchin, September 2019), Susa saw the construction of a great platform. Hole (2010, 238) writes:

> This monument must have been constructed by and for the good of the community, perhaps for all of Susiana. [...] At Susa, leaders determined that only ceremonies of sacrifice and supplication carried out on top of platforms would impress the forces that could not be controlled by secular human effort. An elaborate set of rituals, with participation by numerous individuals under the direction of priests, emerged.

However, by the end of the fifth millennium, structures at the top of the platform were destroyed, and the platform ceased to be used for ritual purposes. Despite this apparent failure, Hole (239) contends that the ritual intensification of the Ubaid "laid the groundwork for later elaborations of religious ritual[...], designed to win the favor of the gods". Overall, then, based on Hole's interpretation, one could argue that Ubaid-era Mesopotamians probably believed that supernatural agents could inflict suffering on humans, and that they could be placated through the construction of monuments, the offer of gifts, and increasingly elaborate

rituals. Hole offers no suggestion that the supernatural agents' actions towards humans were interpreted as in any way moralistic.

Peasnall (2002: 381) confirms that there was likely continuity between the way Mesopotamians interacted with their gods in the Ubaid period and the way they did in later periods: specifically, he notes that the "presence of basic elements such as a cult niche and central offering table that would continue to be important in later temples suggests that the making of propitiatory offerings or sacrifices to important deities was an important ritual even at this early date". Peasnall also notes that burial data is too poor to "infer anything of the belief systems underlying" burial customs, and therefore the "concept of an afterlife" more generally. However, where burials have been found, there is evidence of grave goods, which could be interpreted as offering used in the afterlife, which occurs in later historic periods (Hafez et al. 2011).

Uruk Period (c.4000–3100 BCE)

Early written records from the Middle Uruk onward suggest that offerings remained central to the relationship between humans and gods. The earliest records describing food offerings made to deities date to the Late Uruk period. These records suggest the importance of "the presence of an honored and therefore benevolent deity [...] to a city's viability" and imply a hierarchical but reciprocal relationship according to which "in return for the offerings the deity will bestow blessings" (Cunningham 2013: 41). Offerings are also a key theme in iconographic depictions of ritual worship, such as relief carvings on an alabaster vase found at Uruk, depicting "a procession of ritually naked men advancing in unison holding vessels filled with the fruits of the land" as well as "a clothed man [...] whose naked attendant presents offerings to a female figure, Inana, standing in front of her temple" (Cunningham 2013: 41).

As cities developed, the concept of a chief deity for a city became well established, such as Inanna (Love and War goddess) and Anu (Sky god) for Uruk. Symbols of Utu appear already by the mid- to late fourth millennium, suggesting further developments in the concept of chief gods and deities. Early proto-literate tablets indicate that Utu was already worshiped by this period. Because this god was later associated with the concept of justice (Horowitz 2011: 141), it is possible that this was already the case in this period.

Jemdet Nasr (3100–2900 BCE)

Jemdet Nasr, named after the synonymous southern Mesopotamian tell site, is an archaeological period designated to identify certain ceramic forms and styles with a chronological restriction in southern and northern Mesopotamia. These ceramics had distinct features from assemblages of the Late Uruk and Early Dynastic periods (Matthews 1992). However, it is unlikely these shifts corresponded to major cultural changes. Ritual practice during this period was likely similar with the Uruk Period.

Early Dynastic Period (2900–2350 BCE)

The earliest evidence for attempts at winning the gods' favor through anything other than offerings date to the Early Dynastic Period, beginning with an Early Dynastic II (2750–2600 BCE) inscription written in praise of the deity Nin-Girsu (Cunningham 2013: 47). However, these

inscriptions largely focus on praising the gods and their temples: that is, sources do not indicate that their authors attempted to win the gods' favor by describing particularly moral actions they had performed. For example, an early hymn, known as the Kesh Temple Hymn, "emphasizes [temples'] role in mediating between the human world and the divine domains above and below, describing the temple as embracing heaven and being rooted in the ab-zu" (Cunningham 2013: 48).

The Early Dynastic II has also yielded the earliest written evidence for the belief that the gods chose rulers to steward the gods' patron cities (Cunningham 2013: 45). Mesopotamian rulers began to depict themselves as representatives of the gods, ensuring the upkeep of temples and providing both justice and military protection (Hill 2013).

Written oaths from this period invoke the gods, asking them to punish those who fail to respect the oaths' terms (Cunningham 1997: 45-46).

The law of Urukagina is among the earliest known laws, or perhaps reforms, to address social justice issues (abuse of power, position in society, equality, etc.), and it is dedicated to Ningirsu, an important god of Lagash who is associated with law (among various roles; Foster 1995).

The Instructions of Shuruppak includes instruction on morality. It discusses the role of the night hiding "good" and "evil" and provides instructions on doing good to one's family, love, etc. The text also describes how one might fail morally (e.g., adultery), which could result in undesirable consequences (although does not mention gods enacting punishment specifically). However, this is considered "Wisdom" literature, which might be concerned with more practical advice (Lambert 1996).

Akkadian Empire (2350–2200 BCE)
The Akkadian period has yielded oaths taken in the gods' names (Gelb et al. 1991), suggesting the belief that the gods punished oath-breakers. Moreover, inscriptions, usually located in temples benefitting from royal patronage, continued to claim that kings had been anointed by the gods themselves (Liverani 2013). The Akkadian term *lemnu*, meaning bad or evil, is attested, which denotes evil behavior on the part of either a supernatural agent or a human (Black and Breckwoldt 2012).

Akkadian rulers were the subjects of a textual tradition that emerged after this period. One source indicates that the god Marduk brought famine to Sargon's lands as punishment for a great evil the king had committed (Botsforth 1912). Other sources contrast Sargon and his grandson Naram-Sin as examples of a "good" and a "bad" king, respectively; however, these texts specifically criticize Naram-Sin for his skepticism of oracular messages, something that the texts suggest led to the Akkadian empire's downfall, but which does not constitute a moral failing according to our definition. It is unclear whether any of these texts derive from ones that were written in the Akkadian period itself, though in the first case it is worth noting that Marduk was likely not a prominent member of the Mesopotamian pantheon in the third millennium BCE.

Late Sumerian/Isin-Larsa Period (2100–1830 BCE)

Late Sumerian law codes such as the Laws of Ur-Nammu, Eshnunna, and Lipit-Ishtar usually begin with a fairly standardized prologue that presents the ruler as the enforcer of law on behalf of the gods. For example, in the law code that bears his name (c. 1930 BCE), Lipit-Ishtar boasts that the gods Anu and Enlil chose him for "the princeship of the land in order to establish justice in the lands, to banish complaints, to turn back enmity and rebellion by force of arms, and to bring well-being to the Sumerians and Akkadians" (quoted in Kramer 1956: 57).

In hymns and prayers, "practically all the major deities of the Sumerian pantheon are extolled [...] as lovers of the good and the just, of truth and righteousness" (Kramer 1956: 57). A hymn to the god Enlil included in Kramer (1956: 53-55) describes him as the "lord whose pronouncement is unchangeable, who forever decrees destinies/whose lifted eye scans the lands", and who "does not let the wicked escape" the "meshes" of his "great net." The wicked include "the unrighteous, evil, oppressor, [...] the informer,/the arrogant, the agreement-violator", which suggests a concern for the way people behave towards one another, as well as a particular concern for the virtues of honesty and reciprocity. The reference to the god's "net" also appears to indicate the god was thought to in some way punish transgressors.

Similarly, a hymn to the goddess Nanshe appears to describe her in the act of judging the moral worth of humans as part of a New Year's ceremony. In the translation quoted by Kramer (1956: 58), Nanshe disapproves of those "who transgress the established norms, violate contracts,/who looked with favor on the place of evil, . . .,/who substituted (?) a small weight for a large weight,/who substituted (?) a small measure for a large measure, . . . ,/who having eaten [something not belonging to him] did not say 'I have eaten it',/who having drunk, did not say 'I have drunk it', . . .,/who said 'I would eat that which is forbidden',/ who said 'I would drink that which is forbidden'". Moreover, the hymn notes Nanshe's will "to comfort the orphan, to make disappear the widow". Here, too, besides norms that may be interpreted as regulating the relationship between humans and their gods (i.e. those concerning the consumption of forbidden food or drink), it would seem that Nanshe is above all concerned with enforcing honesty and reciprocity between humans, as well as encouraging humans to care for the vulnerable and avoid theft.

Utu or Shamash, the god of the sun and justice, punished the wicked (Nemet-Nejat 1998) and, perhaps, rewarded the righteous in the afterlife (Kramer 1971).

Overall, however, there is still no evidence that the Sumerians distinguished between the transgressions of humans against other humans and transgressions by humans directed at gods: both were "abomination to the gods" (Lambert 1996 [1963], 4). Moreover, the gods themselves often behaved antisocially toward both humans and other gods (e.g, see *Atrahasis* epic).

From at least the Ur III period onwards (c. 2100–2000 BCE), Mesopotamian thinkers began to grapple with the paradox that, despite the gods' predilection for righteousness, human society remained rife with injustice:

"The most common complaint is virtually about a broken contract. A man served his god faithfully, but did not secure health and prosperity in return. The problem of the righteous sufferer was certainly implicit from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur. An Akkadian name of

this period is Mina-arni, 'What-is-my-guilt?', which implies the line of reasoning: I have suffered: I must have done wrong: What can it be? Suffering necessarily implies guilt." (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 10)

Old Babylonian Period (1830–1530 BCE)
Texts composed in the second millennium BCE point to the widespread belief in "personal" gods, i.e. gods who protected specific individuals from the actions of malevolent supernatural agents, and who were able "to take [their] client's case to the greater gods, and to see that it received attention" (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 7). Though there is some evidence that certain rulers believed themselves to benefit from the protection of personal gods already in the late third millennium, in the second millennium anyone could have one, regardless of social status. However, there is no indication that personal gods rewarded virtuous behaviour and punished transgressions, as sources emphasise that all that was needed to ensure the god's protection was to provide the god with offerings (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 7).

Aside from this, Mesopotamian beliefs regarding punishment and reward by supernatural agents shows continuity with the preceding period. Most notably, the Code of Hammurabi once again cast rulers as the gods' representatives on earth. Specifically, the Code's prologue states that the gods gave Hammurabi power over several major cities in order to "provide justice and appropriate behavior for the people of the land" (vv. 16-19, quoted in Roth 1995: 17). The top third of the stela depicts Shamash, god of the sun and of justice, seated on his throne, with Hammurabi standing in front of him (Roth 1995: 22-23).

Moreover, several texts written throughout the Babylonian Period continued to explore the aforementioned question of the "righteous sufferer". In one, a man asks his personal god what crime he could have possibly committed to justify his misfortunes; another text contains the line, "I have been treated as one who has committed a sin against his god", implying that the speaker believes himself to have been punished for a transgression he was not aware of having committed (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 10).

Kassite Period (1530–1150 BCE)
The question of the "righteous sufferer" continued to occupy the minds of Babylonian thinkers during the period of Kassite rule. The author of the text known as *Ludlul* (full title: *Ludlul bel nemeqi*, "I will praise the lord of wisdom") writes that, when apparently righteous people suffer misfortunes, it must be because they transgressed without realising: this leads the writer to conclude that humans have no intuitive sense of what is right and what is wrong, and that "moral standards must be inverted with the gods as compared with men (n. 34-38)" (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 16). The concept of sin or doing wrong is seen in literature such as the Myth of Adapa (Dalley 2008), although the term seems to derive from the third millennium BCE .

The author of the so-called *Babylonian Theodicy* (likely written around the end of this period) is more concerned with the question of why some men oppress others. The text consists of a dialogue between a righteous sufferer and his friend: the sufferer complains that virtuous and pious behaviours do not guarantee a life of peace and happiness, while his friend argues the opposite; the sufferer also points to the fact that the wicked often prosper. In the end, both men agree that the gods made humans prone to wickedness, which contradicts the

friend's idea that the gods want justice and fairness to reign among humans (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 17).

Several texts written at this time demonstrate a similarly pessimistic view of the relationship between humans and gods, but they may not have represented widespread beliefs. Based on the views stated by the non-suffering friend in the *Babylonian Theodicy*, several hymns, and a text known as the *Counsels of Wisdom*, it seems reasonable to infer that most Mesopotamians at this time still believed that the gods rewarded acts of kindness toward the vulnerable and punished adultery, slander, oppression, and fraud (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 17-18). For example, the Counsels of Wisdom contain the following lines (Lambert 1996 [1963]: 101-103):

57 Do not insult the downtrodden and [. .]
58 Do not sneer at them autocratically.
59 With this a man's god is angry,
60 It is not pleasing to Samas, who will repay him with evil.
61 Give food to eat, beer to drink,
62 Grant what is asked, provide for and honour.
63 In this a man's god takes pleasure,
64 It is pleasing to Samas, who will repay him with favour.

Throughout the second millennium, then, just as in previous periods, most Mesopotamians still believed that the gods (particularly Utu/Shamash) rewarded reciprocity, honesty, and charity, and punished whoever hurt the vulnerable.

Iron Age: Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian Empires (1150–540 BCE)
Lambert (1996 [1963]: 19-20) argues that the period following Kassite rule contributed very little to Mesopotamian ethical thought, writing that "the changes are so slight as to be almost unnoticeable". Even with regards to the Assyrians, he writes that "they were completely under the influence of the Babylonians".

Schneider (2013: 65-66) writes that the clearest depiction of the Mesopotamian afterlife can be found in a text describing the goddess Ishtar's descent into the land of the dead. Two manuscripts of this text were found in the library of Assurbanipal (668 BCE-627 BCE), and an earlier variant was found in Assur; though other texts hint at Mesopotamian notions of the afterlife, they do not coalesce into a "uniform view". It is therefore unclear whether the Assurbanipal and Assur manuscripts represent only the way the afterlife as it was understood at the time of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911 BCE-609 BCE), or whether it points to how Mesopotamians thought of it in earlier times as well. In any case, these manuscripts describe the land of the dead as "a 'dark house', on the road that is 'one-way only', where 'those who enter are deprived of light', 'dirt is their food, clay their bread', they 'live in darkness' and are 'clothed like birds, with feathers' (1:5–10). The door to the place is bolted, and dust has settled upon the bolt (11)". There is no sense that this rather unpleasant realm was reserved for people who had transgressed moral norms, or that people also believed in the existence of a more heavenly place where the souls of the virtuous could go.

Achaemenid, Hellenistic, and Sasanian Periods (540 BCE–640 CE)
Following the conquest of Mesopotamia by Cyrus II, Zoroastrianism played a major role in the region's religious landscape, as the official state religion of the Achaemenid empire (Reddish and Bidmead 2019). For MSP beliefs in Zoroastrianism, see the Susiana narrative.

Texts from Persepolis indicate that "all of the gods" were responsible for the great Persian capital and these gods were representatives of all people of the Achaemenid Empire (Briant 2002: 168). Other gods existed but Ahura Mazda was the god of the Achaemenid rulers. Zoroastrianism survived the period of persecution under the Seleucids and flourished under the Parthians (247 BCE–226 CE) and their successors, the Sasanids (224–651 CE). As with the Achaemenids, our knowledge of the religious situation in Parthian lands is only partial, but it seems that, again as with the Achaemenids, followers of Zoroastrianism coexisted peacefully with those of other religions (Nigosian 1993: 31-32). This seems to have changed under the Sasanians. The first two Sasanian rulers, Ardashir I (224-240 CE) and Shapur I (240-272 CE), are considered the founders of a form of Zoroastrian orthodoxy known as Mazdayasnianism, focused particularly on worship of the high Zoroastrian deity, Ahura Mazda. Mazdayasnianism required the elimination of rival religions. A high priest by the name of Kartir or Karter, for example, left an inscription in which he boasted of the attacks he directed at other religions in the region, including Judaism, Christianity, Mazdakism, Manichaeism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and indeed several sources suggest that Manichaeans and Christians, in particular, were frequent targets of persecution (Nigosian 1993: 32-42). This policy was not consistent, as some periods saw more tolerance.

This was a key time of change in both religious and philosophical thought in West Asia, featuring the emergence of universalizing notions and newly prominent moralizing notions as well. Both Zoroastrianism and Judaism transitioned from polytheism to ditheism and monotheism, respectively, and both came to include MSP, as well eschatological beliefs featuring judgement of the dead. However, the exact timing of these processes is not entirely clear: they likely took place gradually, with the pace of change picking up in the late first millennium BCE. Syncretism was likely a significant factor, and likely resulted from the emergence of large multicultural empires such as that of the Achaemenids. Indeed, in the Achaemenid Empire, the Mesopotamian idea that gods were tied to individual cities was superseded by the notion of deities that transcended specific places. Similarly, though like his Mesopotamian predecessors the Achaemenid ruler was seen as bringing justice to his people on the basis of divine instruction, his people now included people who came from a broad range of cultures, some quite different from the ruler's. This points to the emergence of a universal standard of justice (Altaweel and Squitieri 2018; Budin 2004).

Islamic Period (after 640 CE)
Islam entails the worship of a god for whom human morality is a primary concern. Allah bestows rewards or punishes individual worshippers according to their deeds, both in this life and the next (Yaran 2007).

Summary

The available data is currently insufficient to determine the absence or presence of moralising beliefs in the region in the Neolithic. After that, in the Ubaid and Uruk periods, available evidence suggests that prevailing religious beliefs in the wider region centred around gods who were more concerned with their worshippers' adherence to ritual orthodoxy than the moral quality of their actions. Moralistic texts have survived from the Early Dynastic period, but it remains unclear to what extent they were tied to religious beliefs, as opposed to simply being intended as practical advice. The earliest solid evidence for moralizing beliefs in the region dates to late in the third millennium BCE, when recorded oaths taken in gods' names suggest that, at the very least, the gods were thought to punish those who did not honor contracts. Beginning in the Late Sumerian/Isin-Larsa Period, texts clearly express the belief that the Mesopotamian gods were concerned with the moral quality of human behavior; at the same time, they were equally concerned with ritual orthodoxy, and much literature was written regarding the fact that the righteous were not always rewarded. Moreover, if texts from the 7th century BCE reflect earlier beliefs as well, then Mesopotamian religion did not include belief in MSP after death.

The first highly moralising religion to reach the region was Zoroastrianism, with the Achaemenids, which persisted even in the face of persecution on the part of the Achaemenids' immediate Greek successors, and flourished once more under Parthian and then Sasanid rule. From the seventh century on, the dominant faith in the region has been Islam.

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Susiana

NGA: Susiana
Contributors: Mark Altaweel (section on Elam), Enrico Cioni, Andrea Squitieri, Selin Nugent, Jenny Reddish

Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic (7800–5101 BCE)
Evidence for beliefs about MSP among the inhabitants of Susiana before the late sixth millennium BCE is lacking.

Later Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (5100–2676 BCE)
During these periods, broad similarities in material culture between Susiana and the southern Mesopotamian alluvial plain make it possible to speak in very general terms about likely belief systems.

The Ubaid culture originally referred in a restricted sense to a ceramic tradition of southern Iraq and the communities associated with it but is now considered by many scholars to expand beyond this core to a "vast Near Eastern interaction zone," including Susiana as well as northern Mesopotamia and southern Anatolia (Carter and Philip 2010: 1–2). Ubaid material culture appeared earliest in southern Mesopotamia, c. 6500 BCE, and spread later to other regions (Carter and Philip 2010: 2). In Susiana "Ubaid-like" ceramics were in use from the late

sixth to the late fifth millennium BCE (Hole 2010: 228). Iconographic and archaeological data from the Ubaid period in Southern Mesopotamia strongly suggests belief that gods primarily rewarded those who provided them with correct ritual worship and suitable offerings (Hole 2010: 228–38; Peasnall 2002: 381). All aspects of MSP are inferred absent for this period in Susiana.

Cultural and political contacts with Mesopotamia continued during the fourth millennium after the decline of Ubaid culture. Archaeological remains in Susiana show close connections with the Uruk culture (c. 4000 BCE-3100 BCE) of southern Iraq, even if earlier interpretations of Iranian sites as Uruk colonies (Algaze et al. 1989) are not universally accepted (Alizadeh 2016). Much like the Ubaid period, written evidence of Uruk religion has evidenced the belief that rituals and offerings to the gods were positively rewarded (Cunningham 2013: 41-48). See the Southern Mesopotamia narrative for a discussion of both Ubaid and Uruk religion.

Elamite Period (2675–600 BCE)
NB: This section (up to and including its summary) was directly contributed by Mark Altaweel in September 2019. The only thing worth adding is that texts from Susa dating to the mid-third millennium BCE reveal that the Elamites had a concept of a divine tribunal after death, in which the deceased would be judged by Inshushinak, 'weigher of souls', and his assistants Ishmekarab and Lagamal. However, it is not entirely clear whether the gods judged the dead on the basis of morality, whether everyone was thought to experience this after death, or even which behaviors in life were thought to influence the gods' judgement (Carter 2011, 46, Potts 2004, 172-73, Vallat 1998).

There are many parallels between religion in Elam and southern Mesopotamia. Where specifics are not indicated, we can assume that modes and styles of worship were often similar to Mesopotamia. In prehistoric periods, religious architecture appears, with temple-like features (niches) in places such as Godin Tepe (Desset 2014). Late fourth millennium seals also suggest some of the gods were developing, as iconography shows horned human-animal creatures (Amiet 1971). In historical periods from the late third millennium BCE and through the second millennium BCE, we see gods such as Adad, Ea, Enlil, Erra, Sin, and Shamash (all Mesopotamian in origin) as being referenced and worshiped. However, there are perhaps 200 or more unique gods to Elam, which included south-western Khuzestan and into the Pars plateau and southern Persian Gulf coast. Goddesses, rather than male gods, seem to also be more common in Elam than Mesopotamia (Jahangirfar 2018). Gods such as Inšušinak (Inshushinak), Pinigir and Humban were Elamite in origin and had their chief shrines in specific cities, such as Inšušinak in Susa (Lambert 1976-1980). There is greater 'Elamization' of Elamite religion in the mid-2nd millennium BCE, with more use of Elamite gods rather than Mesopotamian ones, in names and general religious inscriptions. While there are many parallels between southern Mesopotamia and Elam, open air sanctuaries were perhaps more common, including rock-cut reliefs and dedications. One relief shows Naprishia, an important god, seated on a throne with seven lower gods beneath. The symbols of power, rod and disk, are in association with the god (Seidl 1986). Naqš-e Rostam is perhaps the most famous site in Elamite open air worship, where the site's

importance continues into the Achaemenid and later Sasanian periods, as it served as a burial ground for kings.

Temple architecture suggests comparability to Mesopotamia, including the use of ziggurats. This all suggests close parallels between the cultures. From iconography, we know Elamite temple-ziggurats had horned symbols on the top (Aynard 1957). Gods were generally seen as givers and preservers of life and as takers of life at the end. Sacred groves were associated with the place where one who dies passes to the other world; funerary offerings were common as gifts in the afterlife. Vallat (1989) interprets some presentation scenes on cylinder seals as belief in a type of final judgment, which could have been more similar to the idea that develops later in Zoroastrianism. This is not universally agreed upon by scholars and, in fact, afterlife concepts were possibly complex and differed even from city to city or had different gods in relation to the afterlife (Tavernier 2013).

Nevertheless, a concept of some judgment by the gods could be one clear difference from southern Mesopotamia and many other contemporary Bronze-Iron Age religions. It is possible Elamite religion may have been more concerned about how one's life affects the afterlife than Mesopotamia, with gods such as Inšušinak having responsibilities in the afterlife (Nijenhuis 2011). Our word "paradise" does come from the concept of sacred gardens found in Iran, although sacred gardens are also found in Mesopotamian temples. The cult of the dead, generally, does seem to be a major part of Elamite worship. Sacrifice of animals kept the gods happy as well as offerings given. Kingship was an important intermediate position between gods and humans, where kingship was protected by the gods. Oaths, belief in some type of afterlife, which may have been less gloomy than that believed in southern Mesopotamia, and the gods sometimes being fickle were part of general beliefs. Good behavior, or MSP, is suggested from the third millennium BCE and onwards (Steve 1967; Potts 2016; Tavernier 2013).

Early-Middle Bronze Age (ca. 3000-1550 BCE)
Some of the earliest clear references to how Elamite gods were regarded comes from the treaty of Naram-Sin with Hita of Awan, the Akkadian king in the 23rd century BCE, who invoked some forty gods, with thirty-three names preserved (Spycket 1992). Most gods we know of in the third millennium BCE are called Suso-Mesopotamian, reflecting a shared and common culture between Susa and southern Mesopotamia. Similar to Mesopotamia, gods were used in oaths and breaking oaths invited the punishment of the gods. This suggests that this cultural tradition, comparable to Mesopotamia, was evident in Elam. The later Awan dynasty has inscriptions on statues that mention curses of the gods to anyone who defiles the statues, suggesting again the wrath of gods in violating sacred objects. The later Sukkalmah period also showed a mix of Mesopotamian and Susiana gods, where worship was comparable to Mesopotamia and sometimes combined their gods (e.g., Ea) with temples to local gods such as Inšušinak (Carter and Stolper 1984; Potts 2016).

Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 BCE)
During the mid to late second millennium BCE, there was greater Elamization of religions. The site of Dūr-Untaš (Čoḡā Zanbīl) was built and dedicated to Napirisha and Inšušinak. About half

of the gods are now more unique to Elam. Nevertheless, nothing about their worship or dedication suggests major differences from Mesopotamia (Potts 2016).

Iron Age (ca. 1200-600 BCE)

In the Neo-Elamite period, that is the first half of the first millennium BCE, we see some new or lesser-known gods becoming more prominent in the pantheon (e.g., Mālamīr, Šašum at Kesat), which could reflect new migrations to Elam or increased contact with other cultures nearby (Aynard 1957).

Summary (Elamite Period)

Overall, we see a lot of parallels with Southern Mesopotamia in Elam. This is expected as the cultures shared a lot of common elements, ranging in material traditions and practices. However, there could have been some key differences, if Vallat (1998) is to be believed. There might be some evidence for this, but many Elamite texts are not sufficiently understood to make this certain. Overall, however, MSP is suggested through texts dealing with keeping oaths, respecting the gods, and practicing good behavior from the third millennium BC and on. This does not mean it is not evident earlier, as temples to some of the gods had likely developed by the late fourth millennium BCE.

Achaemenid period (539–331 BCE)

NB: the sections on the Achaemenid, Hellenistic, Parthian and Sasanian periods are adapted from the chapter on Iran by Jenny Reddish and Julye Bidmead (2019) in *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Susiana was one of the earliest regions incorporated into the Achaemenid Empire. The Persians who founded the empire in the sixth century BCE were inheritors of an Iranian religion that most likely originated among cattle-keeping pastoralists on the steppes of Central Asia in the second millennium BCE (Boyce 1987; Grenet 2015: 22; Malandra 2005; Skjærvø 2012: 57). Closely related to the religious tradition from which the Sanskrit Vedas emerged, it featured a pantheon of gods, a three-tiered cosmology including a heavenly realm and a land of darkness, and a priesthood responsible for conducting rites of sacrifice (Bryant 2001: 130; Malandra 2005). Several peoples, including the Persians and Medes, appear to have migrated from this north-eastern homeland over the Iranian Plateau, bringing new gods, rituals, and religious ideologies (Boyce 1987; Malandra 2005). However, Iranian religion was not transmitted unchanged: at some point between the mid-second and the mid-first millennium BCE, a prophet known as Zarathustra emerged and began making a number of religious reforms.

Zarathustra did not introduce new gods, but insisted on the supremacy of one deity—Ahura Mazda, the creator god, lord of truth and cosmic order—above all others (Malandra 2005). He claimed to have received visions from Ahura Mazda and taught that two fundamental moral forces structured the universe: *asha* (goodness, order, and truth) and *druj* ("the lie") (Malandra 2005; Armstrong 2006: 8–9). This dualism had not been absent from the ancient Iranian substrate, but it was Zarathustra who turned the opposition between *asha* and *druj* into an all-encompassing cosmic principle (Stausberg and Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina 2015: 9).

Zoroastrian theology included a belief in divine judgment after death for all people; the dead would have to account for their good and evil deeds before they could cross the bridge from this world to the next (Malandra 2005). Those deemed virtuous and true would enjoy eternal life in heaven, while all others would go to the "abyss" (Boyce 1979: 29; Malandra 2005). Ahura Mazda monitored moral behavior and punished and rewarded people accordingly.

The prospect of an imminent apocalypse also loomed large in Zarathustra's teachings, influencing later concepts of the Last Judgment within Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Starnes 2009). According to Zarathustra, the arrival of a future savior figure, the Saoshyant, on Earth would herald a final reckoning and the triumph of Ahura Mazda in battle against Angra Mainyu, the embodiment of evil (Boyce 1979: 29; Malandra 2005; Starnes 2009: 30). In sum, Zoroastrianism can be characterized as a strongly moralizing religion, with a high god whose concern with morality is primary, and a belief in certain, targeted punishment or reward for one's actions.

It should be noted that our understanding of early Zoroastrianism comes overwhelmingly from sacred texts set down after the Islamic conquest, incorporating ancient oral traditions (Skjærvø 2012: 57–60, 2014: 175). These scriptures (the Avesta) and commentaries (Zand) were first codified and written down in the Sasanian period by Zoroastrian priests. Those manuscripts have been lost, however, and the earliest extant sources (with the exception of a limited corpus of royal inscriptions) date to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries CE (Malandra 2005; Skjærvø 2012: 58–60). The gap between the forms of Mazda-worship practiced during the Achaemenid period and the date of the oldest surviving Zoroastrian texts means that any attempt to reconstruct religious ideology during the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, as well as during the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian periods, will always involve some degree of speculation.

Nevertheless, the rulers of the first Persian Empire from Darius the Great (r. 522–486 BCE) onwards were certainly worshipers of Ahura Mazda, the "all-knowing lord" of Zoroastrian belief (Skjærvø 2014: 177–78). It is clear that the Achaemenid inscriptions share the dualistic morality and cosmology of the Avestan texts (Skjærvø 2014: 181). Zoroastrian or "Mazdaist" beliefs and practices were likely also found among non-royal Persians and members of other Iranian-speaking groups (Frye 2002: 81; Gnoli 1993). We have inferred that moralizing aspects of Mazda-worship attested in later sources were also present under the Achaemenids.

Hellenistic period (330–144 BCE)

After his conquest of the Achaemenid Empire, Alexander the Great attempted to suppress Zoroastrianism (Nigosian 1993: 30-31). At the top of the social pyramid, Persian Mazda-worshippers were supplanted by Greek-speaking Macedonians, followers of Hellenistic religious traditions that included moralizing aspects but not to the same degree as Zoroastrianism.

However, Alexander's successors, the Seleucids, demonstrated greater tolerance toward local faiths, and did not impose Greek beliefs on their subjects during this period (Kosmin 2013). For the benefit of Persian audiences, they adopted the trappings of Achaemenid rule, preserving and patronizing Zoroastrian temples and legitimating their rule, in part, by claiming to be favored by the gods, in this case a syncretized amalgam of the Greek and Iranian pantheons. It is, however, a controversial topic among Iranists whether Seleucids directly worshiped any Zoroastrian deities or claimed to rule by the favor and in the service of Ahura

Mazda as the Achaemenids did (Colpe 1983: 825; Strootman 2015). In contrast to Ptolemaic Egypt, where the Greek-speaking elite quickly adopted indigenous Egyptian beliefs and customs, the court culture of the Seleucid Empire was characterized by a "profound Hellenism" (Strootman 2015).

Evidence from elsewhere in the Seleucid Empire points to MSP as an important feature in certain local cults of Asia Minor (see e.g. Petzl 993, Versnel 2002: 63-72, Chaniotis 2004, and Gordon 2004 on the "Confession Inscriptions" of Lydia and Phrygia).

Parthian and Sasanian periods (143 BCE–642 CE)

The Parthian Empire embraced a similarly complex mixture of influences, customs, and religious practices to that under the Seleucids. Parthian rulers presented themselves as "philhellenes"— lovers of Greek culture—in order to curry favor with the substantial Greco-Macedonian population and the Iranian nobility, who had become Hellenized during the Seleucid period (Katouzian 2009: 45). However, they also supported Zoroastrian temples and ritual practices, showing particular reverence for three old Iranian deities: Ahura Mazda, Mithra, and Anahita (45).

Zoroastrianism became the official state religion only under the Sasanians. The founders of the Sasanian Dynasty came from a family of Zoroastrian priests (Daryaee 2012b: 188–89) and under their rule the beliefs and practices of the now-ancient religion became codified and set down in writing, receiving the support of the ruling elite. We know that there was a genre called *andarz*, consisting of tracts on "manners and morals," as well as texts written to advise those in power on principles of good rulership, but, frustratingly, this body of work survives only in the form of echoes in Islamic-period manuscripts (48). Despite scarce written evidence for Parthian religious practice, it is safe to say that Zoroastrianism was patronized by the ruling elites of both the Parthian and Sasanian empires.

Islamic period (643–1925 CE)

With the Arab conquest of the Sasanian Empire, Susiana came under the rule of an elite professing Islam to the exclusion of all other religions. Inhabitants of rural areas and the more strongly Zoroastrian Fars held onto their old religions for some time (Katouzian 2009: 66), but it is clear that by the mid-ninth century CE, the vast majority of the population living on the Iranian Plateau, as well as in most of Mesopotamia and the wider West Asian region, had converted to Islam (Daryaee 2012a: 6). Both traditions are strongly moralizing (Stausberg 2000; Yaran 2007).

Summary

The available data is currently insufficient to determine the absence or presence of moralising beliefs in the region in the Neolithic. After that, in the Ubaid and Uruk periods, available evidence from neighbouring Southern Mesopotamia suggests that prevailing religious beliefs in the wider region centred around gods who were more concerned with their worshippers' adherence to ritual orthodoxy than the moral quality of their actions. There is evidence for belief in divine judgement after death during the subsequent Elamite period, but it remains unclear whether or not such judgement was in any way moralistic; overall, the Elamites likely

shared similar beliefs as their neighbours in Mesopotamia, including elements of MSP. The first highly moralising religion to reach the region was Zoroastrianism, with the Achaemenids, which persisted even in the face of persecution on the part of the Achaemenids' immediate Greek successors, and flourished once more under Parthian and then Sasanid rule. From the seventh century on, the dominant faith in the region has been Islam.

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Konya Plain

NGA: Konya Plain
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Neolithic (9600–6000 BCE)

The southern Anatolian site of Çatalhöyük, which flourished around 7000 BCE, has yielded ample evidence of ritual activity. While the material remains of ritual activities at the site do not clearly indicate whether the site's inhabitants believed in MSP, they do yield possible clues regarding the values promoted by the dominant ideology.

Indeed, Çatalhöyük has yielded much evidence of feasting, as well as cattle horns and crania that were openly displayed in buildings, perhaps as a way of commemorating past feasts. Noting the prevalence of concealed household storage in the preceding era, Bogaard et al. (2009, 664-666) speculate that "communal social cohesion was a key issue for this densely packed settlement, and that extra-household sharing of meat, particularly from cattle, played an important role in its maintenance. Thus, visual celebrations of private stores were socially provocative, but commemorations of communal festivities were desirable (and potentially competitive). Food sharing, rather than storage, thus became the focus of display." This suggests that the dominant ideology promoted certain forms of prosociality.

Moreover, Whitehouse and Hodder (2010, 128-129) describe two houses with wall paintings depicting groups of people teasing and baiting wild animals such as bulls, deer, boars, and a bear. This, combined with the frequent retrieval of the meat-bearing parts of wild bulls in feasting deposits, as well as the occasional discovery of bear claws, a leopard claw, and the talons of wild raptors, seems to suggest "that on rare occasions wild animals and birds were killed, perhaps at times in association with male feats of bravery and strength". Indeed, it is worth noting that hunting wild aurochs also appears to have been an ideologically important activity across much of the Near East and North Africa during the Neolithic. Similar assemblages are documented at the earlier Neolithic site of Musular (Duru & Ozbasaran 2005, 23). This suggests that the dominant ideology promoted certain aspects of bravery as well.

Chalcolithic (6000–3000 BCE)
As in the case of the Neolithic, there is not enough evidence to know whether or not Chalcolithic Anatolian populations believed in MSP, but archaeological data provides clues with regards to the prevailing ideology.

For example, archaeologists have unearthed abundant evidence for large-scale feasts at the Early Chalcolithic site of Kösk, including high concentrations of meat-bearing animal parts in midden deposits likely coinciding with the original location of large roasting pits. Arbuckle (2012, 310) speculates that "the ability to give generously and to be apportioned high quality cuts of meat at public feasting events may have been central mechanisms by which social differences were measured and defined". One could therefore say that the dominant ideology at sites like Kösk promoted prosociality, though it is possible that those who could afford the greatest displays of generosity used this to justify power imbalances in other areas of social life.

Furthermore, pottery vessels dating from this period are often richly decorated, suggesting use in communal feasting (Hayden 1995; Tsuneki 2017). Ceramics with bucrania design were defining symbols of the early Chalcolithic in Anatolia before the Ubaid expansion. Considering the importance of large-scale feasting and the presence of cattle in ritual spaces (e.g. Domuztepe, Tell Kurdu), it seems that there was a strong connection between feasting and animals in ritual (Kansa et al. 2009; Özbal et al. 2004). However, it is unclear how, in turn, these rituals connect to a larger cosmology of belief. In southern Anatolia, the influence of the Uruk culture is apparent, as evidenced by the construction of temples and other structures featuring iconographic depiction of likely deities (Stein et al. 1996).

Early and Middle Bronze Age (3000–1650 BCE)
The Early and Middle Bronze Age saw the expansion of settlement and exchange networks across Anatolia. Like previous periods, however, despite an abundance of material and symbolic evidence of ritual activities, there is no conclusive evidence for underlying beliefs.

Many features of ritual activity during the Neolithic and Chalcolithic share architectural and material similarities with the Early Bronze Age cultures at various archaeological sites across Anatolia. However, this continuity may also be the result of the fragmentary nature of archaeological understanding of this period as well as the fragmentary nature of cultures themselves. One pattern is evident in the site of Beycesultan (Yakar 1974), where ritual spaces exhibit marked shifts in cultic practice. The Early Bronze Age twin shrines at Beycesultan

contain possibly anthropomorphic stelae made of plastered clay, liquid offering vessels or basins, horn-shaped enclosures for the stelae, ritual wooden posts, and altars. These structures also included a storage room and ovens and hearths, possibly used to prepare food. The shared symbolic use of horns echoes the earlier Neolithic and Chalcolithic use of cattle horns. The complexity of these spaces suggests a system of cultic activity directed at placating deities through ritual performances and offering. Use of the shrine continued through the Middle and Late Bronze (overlapping with the Hittite Period), which may suggest a degree of religious continuity. Since it is not possible to clearly delineate the identities of deities or the intention in ritual practices, in large part due to the lack of contemporary texts, we cannot conclusively state if MSP beliefs noted in the Hittite period were already present at this time.

The Hittite Period (1650–1180 BCE)
The Hittite gods not only demanded but were believed to be dependent on offerings of slaughtered animals, food, and drink, as well as festivities in their honor (Collins 2007, 165). Like Mesopotamian gods (see *Mesopotamia*), they were neither all-knowing nor omnipresent, and under certain circumstances they could even be tricked (Bryce 2002, 134; Collins 2007, 174).

However, the Hittites did believe that their gods punished moral transgressions. Indeed, the Hittite concept of *arā*, meaning appropriate or virtuous behaviour, was tied to ideas of divinely bestowed morality (Collins 2013). Its opposite, *natta arā*, may be glossed as "sin", and parallels similar notions in Mesopotamian and Egyptian religious thought--as found, for example, in the Assyro-Babylonian incantatory text known as Šurpu, and the confessions of guilt on stelae dedicated to the gods in New Kingdom Egypt (Assmann 2004; Cranz 2017, 33–35).

During the Hittite New Kingdom (1344–1180 BCE), sins such as theft, murder (particularly the murder of family members), and oath violation (as well as a number of ritual transgressions) were all thought to result in divine punishment through earthly misfortune (Collins 2007, 91, 178-179; Bryce 2002, 139-140). The gods were thought to punish transgressions even when these were unintentional or accidental; if not dealt with properly, the pollution or impurity (*papratar*) resulting from the transgression would pass on from the original transgressor to their descendants (Collins 2007, 178-179). The only way to placate the gods was by identifying the transgression, confessing it to priests, and enacting the necessary rituals and/or offerings (Collins 2007: 91). Intriguingly, the Hittite rites of expiation have much in common with first-millennium Levantine practices, and Feder (2011) posits a common origin, perhaps in Bronze Age Syria, for certain Hittite and later Jewish beliefs about the power of blood to atone for sin and impurity.

By the New Kingdom era, the gods were thought to be "manifest in history" (Collins 2013: 106). For example, Muršili II (r. ca. 1321–1295 CE), interpreting a devastating plague as a sign of the gods' displeasure, sought possible explanations in the conduct of his father Šuppiluliuma I, who had broken a peace treaty with Egypt guaranteed by the Storm God of Ḫatti (Bryce 2002: 140; Singer 2002: 9–10). Gods could also be fickle, so omens were used to interpret their actions. Moral behavior did not guarantee good outcomes for individuals (Bryce 2002).

The Hittites also believed in an afterlife. Similar to Mesopotamia, textual references to the Hittite afterlife are almost entirely negative, depicting a gloomy, sunless world where:

One does not recognize the other. Sisters by the same mother do not recognize each other. Brothers by the same father do not recognize each other. A mother does not recognize her own child. A child does not recognize its own mother. . . . From a fine table they do not eat. From a fine stool they do not eat. From a fine cup they do not drink. They do not eat good food. They do not drink good drink. They eat bits of mud. They drink muddy waters(?). (From the *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*, tr. Hoffner, quoted in Bryce 2002, 181.)

However, though some texts suggest that at least some kings believed the afterlife to be dark and miserable (e.g. Hattusili I and Mursili II), other texts describe an idyllic afterlife reserved exclusively for rulers (Bryce 2002, 181, 183-184). Similarly, archaeological evidence (and, specifically, the types of items that accompanied the dead in their graves) also suggest yet another alternative vision of the afterlife, that suggest that the existence of the dead involved similar activities and occupation as that of the living (Bryce 2002, 180). Still, none of these versions of the afterlife suggest that the Hittites believed that one's fate after death was determined by one's moral conduct in life.

Finally, it is worth noting that Hittite texts from the New Kingdom period tell us very little about the beliefs and religious practice of the majority, non-elite populace (Collins 2013: 96, 104).

Iron Age (1180–560 BCE)

After the disintegration of the Hittite state, sources for reconstructing religion and ideology in Anatolia grow scarcer. The small polities that occupied the South and Southeast of the peninsula during the Early and Middle Iron Age are known as "Neo-Hittite" because they preserved certain aspects of older Hittite culture, especially the iconography and rhetoric of kingship, but the degree of religious continuity after 1200 BCE remains unclear in many cases. In light of the strong evidence for a Luwian cultural orientation for the Neo-Hittite states, it is probable that Luwian religious practices now came to the fore. These included bird augury and certain types of rituals and festivals (Hutter 2003; Mouton and Rutherford 2013). As implied by the alternative name for the Southeastern Anatolian Iron Age kingdoms, the "Syro-Hittite" states, this was also a period in which the various Anatolian traditions underwent further mixing with Northern Syrian and Levantine practices, forming the widely shared religious culture from which a distinctive Jewish theology would emerge over the course of the last millennium BCE. However, within the specific contexts of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms from ca. 1200 to their incorporation into the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the mid-eighth century BCE, clear evidence has yet to emerge of any belief in MSP.

In the mid-eighth century BCE, the Neo-Assyrian Empire incorporated a number of Neo-Hittite Kingdoms, but it did not extend its rule to the rest of the Anatolian peninsula, which was divided between a number of mid- to large-size polities, most notably the Urartian and Phrygian kingdoms.

Overall, iconography and epigraphy suggest that Urartian religion primarily served to bolster royal legitimacy rather than promote proper moral conduct (Smith 2000). The king occupied a divinely legitimated position like the monarchs of both Ḫatti and Mesopotamia (Kravitz 2003, 90–92; Zimansky 1995, 1144). Haldi, the supreme god, was a warlike deity who

supported the king's conquests; both he and the lesser gods required regular animal sacrifices and festivities in their honor (Taffet and Yakar 1998; Zimansky 1995). However, as in the Hittite case, it should be kept in mind that the surviving sources are heavily biased toward elite ideologies.

Phrygian religion is still less well understood than Urartian religion, because of the very small corpus of textual evidence. Written inscriptions and carved images at sacred sites associated with the polity have led scholars to suggest that Phrygian religion was polytheistic, but with a focus on Matar, a "mother goddess" (Roller 2011, 570–72). Indeed, it is widely accepted that the cult of the goddess Kybele (Greek) or Cybele (Latin) in the Graeco-Roman world derived from earlier Phrygian practices (Alvar 2008; Roller 1999). The name of one Midas, possibly the aforementioned historically attested king, is inscribed at one of Matar's sanctuaries, hinting that—whatever the disruptive potential of later ecstatic Greek and Roman rites in her honor—in Phrygia she had close ties to the state and royal power (Joukowsky 1996, 374–78; Roller 1999, 69–70).

The limited evidence we have tells a similar story for the Lydian kingdom, which was socially stratified and ruled by an"absolute"monarch with the aid of a wealthy elite (Joukowsky 1996, 409). Lydian material culture testifies to strong links with the Aegean world (Greenewalt Jr. 1995, 2011), and religious life at Sardis involved the worship of Greek as well as local Anatolian gods (Roosevelt 2009, 80–84). Though current impressions of Lydia are colored by Greek authors' stereotypes of Eastern decadence and tyranny, it must be admitted that, again, there is little evidence of any belief in MSP.

Western Anatolia and Lydia have also yielded evidence for the influence of Greek religion, including the worship of gods such as Artimu, Pldans, Leus, and Baki, all of whom had Greek equivalents (respectively, Artemis, Apollo, Zeus, and Bacchus; see Munn 2006).

Achaemenid Rule (540 BCE-330 BCE)
The Achaemenid period brought the rites and institutions of Zoroastrianism to Anatolia, which survived into the Hellenistic period and beyond. The worship of older gods mostly continued, with likely syncretism (Dusinberre, 2015). Zoroastrian practices in Anatolia are attested in accounts of Greek and Roman historians as well as in archaeological remains, such as the presence of a fire altar at a sanctuary in Hellespontine Phrygia (Hjerrild 1990; Roller 2011, 564-65). Lydia shows particularly clear cultural and religious 'Iranization', although it also retained much of its earlier heritage, and continued to be significantly influenced by Greek religion as well (Dusinberre 2015; Sekunda 1985). For more on the Achaemenids, see the relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Hellenistic Period (330 BCE-90 BCE)
At the beginning of this period various Hellenistic kingdoms vied for territory, and all these kingdoms exhibited hybridized beliefs of Persian, Greek, Celtic and/or Roman origin (Coşkun 2012). Texts such as the "Confessions Inscriptions" of Lydia and Phrygia suggest that local gods mostly punished ritual transgressions (Petzl 1994; Versnel 2002, 63-72; Chaniotis 2004; Gordon 2004). It is also worth noting that Greek mythology includes a number of contradictory representations of the afterlife, some of which depict rewards and punishments for prosocial

behavior (Larson 2016: 257; Pausanias 10.28.2 [Polygnotus' mural of the afterlife], tr. Jones and Ormerod 1918).

Roman Period (64 BCE–400 CE)

Anatolia as a whole gradually came under Roman hegemony and then direct rule from the mid-second to the first centuries BCE. While Greco-Roman deities such as Jupiter, Juno/Hera, and Aphrodite/Venus were worshipped at new temples across Anatolia, Rome itself saw the establishment of cults dedicated to the Phrygian mother goddess Cybele (Fear 1996, 43; MacMullen 1981, 7, 43; Rubin 2008, 65-68). For more on MSP beliefs among the Romans, see relevant section of the Latium narrative.

Eventually, the interconnected and cosmopolitan nature of the post-axial Mediterranean enabled the rapid spread of Christian beliefs and practices. Anatolia, in particular, saw the formation of some of the earliest Christian communities beyond Palestine, and by the mid-third century CE "powerful Jewish and Christian communities" were present even in the mountainous interior (Mitchell 1993, 10).

Late Antiquity and Islamic Period (after c. 400 CE)

The emperor Constantine, ruling from Constantinople, converted to Christianity in 312 CE, though, as noted above, by this point Christianity had already established itself across Anatolia (on the Christianization of the Roman Empire, see Fox 1986, Odahl 2013).

In the eleventh century CE, the Seljuks came to rule over a significant portion of the peninsula (Aktas 2017), establishing Islam as the new dominant ideology. Christianity and Islam are both highly moralizing religions (Angenendt and Riches 2014 and Yaran 2007, respectively).

Summary

The archaeological record of Anatolia has yielded abundant evidence for ritual activity in the prehistoric period: however, though some of this evidence seems to point to the importance of certain moral values (above all, prosociality and bravery), it is at present difficult to say whether religions in these eras featured belief in any form of MSP.

Conversely, evidence for belief in MSP in Hittite religion is fairly strong, especially for the New Kingdom (1344–1180 BCE), at least among the elites. Theft, murder, and oath violation were subject to divine punishment and earthly misfortune. However, the Hittite deities were primarily concerned with the rituals and sacrifices that sustained them, not the moral conduct of their worshippers. Additionally, divine punishment was not inevitable, as the gods were not all-knowing and could be tricked.

During the Iron Age, though there is no direct evidence for MSP beliefs in Urartian, Phrygian, and Lydian religions, syncretism with belief systems such as Zoroastrianism and Greek and Roman religions suggest at least some elements of MSP.

Similar to other regions, Anatolia eventually transitioned to the universal faiths, including Christianity and Islam, both of which feature the full set of MSP traits.

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Yemeni Coastal Plain

NGA: Yemeni Coastal Plain
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Iron Age (1200 BCE–380 CE)

Inscriptions constitute our main source for religious belief in the Arabian peninsula prior to the fourth century CE. These inscriptions consist of short texts through which worshippers petitioned or thanked a specific deity, and/or described an offering made to said deity. This deity is usually named, and often assigned an epithet. In one of these inscriptions, a member of the Amir tribe of northwestern Yemen wrote that he "dedicated to his lord Dhu Samawi in his temple . . . a bronze statuette of a she-camel that Dhu Samawi may grant him the wellbeing of himself and his children as well as the wellbeing and safety of his camel" (Ja 1976: 2956; quoted in Hoyland 2001: 140). Inscriptions like this one demonstrate that ancient Arabs believed they could gain the gods' favor through offerings. However, these inscriptions do not suggest that these gods were thought to punish or reward their worshippers on the basis of a moral code. Rather, divine punishment was usually reserved for worshippers who either failed to fulfill their ritual obligations or infringed on the code of ritual purity (Beeston 1948, Ryckmans 1972 Jamme 1962).

However, there are some indications that the idea of MSP was familiar to the ancient Arabians. Of special interest is an inscription from the Sabaean "federal" temple of Awwam (Korotayev 1996: 122–133) near the Sabaean "capital", Marib, dating to the third century CE, and known as MB 2002 I-28 (Maraqten 2006, Multhoff and Stein 2008). This inscription describes the punishment the deity Almaqah, lord of Awwam, inflicted on the community of Marib:

6 *He (Almaqah) did not grant irrigation to them, before the rainy season of spring, in the second year of 7 Ns²ʾkrb, son of Mʿdkrb, of the family Fḍḥn, and (for that) an amount of 8 insects and the locusts which were in their countries.*

Note that the object of the divine punishment is the entire population of the Marib oasis. Thus, in this case, punishment is not specific to the individual transgressor, but the whole group suffers from drought and insects.

The inscription also contains a clear description of the reasons for punishment:

09 *…that because of*
10 *the sanctuaries of the gods which are being robbed;*
11 *and because of the natives taken away from the city of Mrb; and because of*
12 *anyone who does not perform the religious obligations of ʾlmqh; and because of the transgressors*
13 *and the wrongdoers; and because of the wrong which has been spoken, and because of*
14 *the unirrigated and irrigated crops, which are taken away in the land of Ḥaḍramawt, and therefore*

15 *because of all matters, which are in the heart of ʾlmqh, besides*
16 *these mentioned matters.*

These reasons, then, include failure to perform ritual obligations toward Almaqah. The robbery of sanctuaries belongs to a similar category of human misbehavior, though it is highly remarkable that Almaqah cares for the safety of not only his own temple, but also for the one of sanctuaries of other deities, suggesting perhaps that the deity's altruistic behavior toward other deities was meant to promote altruistic behavior among worshippers. Moreover the inscription also claims that Almaqah had punished Marib for selling enslaved natives of the city to neighboring communities, as well as the sale of local produce, also to outsiders. This demonstrates that Almaqah's intent was thought to also police interpersonal relations among humans, and that the actions just described, which demonstrate lack of loyalty toward one's own polity, were thought to be worthy of punishment. Indeed, it is rather remarkable that the inscription mentions the sale of the natives of Marib to outsiders before the failure to "perform the religious obligations of Almaqah", which directly affected the god.

The inscription goes on explain how atonement may be achieved:

16 *Almaqah ordered the following: everyone who steals from the temples*
17 *of the gods or from the cemetery, his body must pass (he must die);*
18 *who takes away natives out of country, must bring back these men*
19 *and who took them away must lose the purchase price; who does not*
20 *fulfill the obligations of ʾlmqh, he must do that a second time;*
21 *who from the city of Mrb and its valleys does not stay away and retreat from*
22 *transgressors and wrongdoers, his body must pass (he must die); who does not*
23 *initiate a right lawsuit, he must get as a punishment from the kings and Sabaeans and*
24 *the ʾqwln the measure that they view as a punishment for him; who takes away unirrigated*
25 *and irrigated crops in the land of Ḥaḍramawt, he must receive with the (?)*
26 *200 beatings and he must lose the purchase price,*
27 *but if he is a proper man, it is not allowed to beat him, he must pay a fine of*
28 *200,000 pure balaṭ-coins to his lord, the king,*
29 *instead of his beatings.*

Overall, however, since inscriptions like MB 2002 I-28 are a rarity compared to the much more numerous texts where the basis of supernatural punishment was simply a worshipper's failure to fulfill his their ritual obligations, or their infringement of the code of ritual purity, one may suggest that though some ancient Arabian deities monitored human morality, it was likely merely a secondary concern for them.

Hoyland (2001: 140-141) notes that, in Southern Arabia, a tribe's own patron deity "played a vital socio-political role in that their cults served as the focus of a people's cohesion and loyalty and functioned as an expression of communal will and activity". In other words, "it was the cult of the patron deity that allowed the community to function as a coherent entity (as opposed to a mass of discrete localised kinship groups), acting as a sort of social glue". Priests took tithes owed on land and produce in the name of these patron gods, and then redistributed them to benefit the wider community (Korotayev 1996: 60–66). For example, tithes to the god

Sayin were used for public banquets. Some of these tithes also took the form of contributions to public works: for example, the tithe-payers might be requested to help with the construction of town walls. Moreover, some inscriptions claim that cooperation between landlords and tenants was made possible by the fact that they worshipped the same patron deity; others state that Saba military campaigns were undertaken 'for [the god] Almaqah and the Sabaeans'; and fines for a range of different offenses were paid 'to Almaqah and the kings of Saba' (respectively, *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémithique* 1900-68: 3688– 89, 3691– 93, 3945; Jamme 1962: 576; all quoted in Hoyland 2001: 140-141). With regard to Iron Age Arabia more widely, truces were called around the time of major religious celebrations, to allow the safe movement of pilgrims (Hoyland 2001: 161; Korotayev 2003). It may therefore be possible to say that Iron Age Arabian ideology, and specifically Iron Age Arabian deities, promoted some forms of prosociality, though, again, there is almost no evidence for belief in direct moralistic supernatural punishment or reward.

Around 150 CE, Yemen was annexed to the Aksumite Empire. It is not clear whether Aksumite ideology made much of an impact on Yemeni beliefs and practices. Again, however, there does not seem to be any clear evidence for belief in MSP among the Aksumites prior to their conversion to Christianity. The Aksumites' relationship to their gods centred on the sacrifice of livestock (Kobishanov 1981, 396), which suggests that they believed the gods were moved to intervene in mortal lives by expressions of piety rather than by the moral quality of their worshippers' behavior towards other people. However, it is also worth noting that the Aksumites' supreme deity, Mahrem, was likely a god of war (Kobishanov 1981, 221), which might mean that he favored prosociality in the form of loyalty and bravery in the service of the polity.

The Aksum Empire adopted Christianity, a highly moralizing religion (Angenendt and Riches 2014), as its official ideology following King Ezana's conversion in the fourth century CE. It is worth noting, however, that there does not appear to be any evidence that Christianity spread to Yemen at this time; indeed, the region was ruled by Christian Aksum for only a few decades before the rulers of the indigenous Himyarite Kingdom re-established their control over southern Arabia (which they had previously ruled between 270 and 340 CE) (Hitti 2002 [1937]: 60).

Judaic Period (380–570 CE)

Early in his reign, Himyarite king Abikarib As'ad (r. 383– 433) converted to Judaism, also a highly moralizing religion (Rosen 2003). The new religion spread relatively rapidly among his subjects, judging from the fact that, between the fourth and the fifth centuries, references to Iron Age gods in southern Arabia were almost entirely replaced by references to the single god of Judaism, and inscriptions began to include Jewish expressions such as the concluding *slwm*, "peace" (Hoyland 2001, 146-147).

Some time between 525 and 531 CE, the Aksumites again took nominal control of southern Arabia: however, rather than re-annexing the region to their empire, they maintained the Himyarite throne and selected its new occupant, prince Sumyafa' Ašwa', known in Greek as Esiphimaios. Esiphimaios converted to Christianity, and indeed the earliest official Christian inscriptions found in Yemen date to his reign. However, Esiphimaios was soon ousted by his general Abraha, who also refused to submit to Aksumite authority. Judging from his own

inscriptions, Abraha maintained Christianity as the Himyarite Kingdom's official credo, though it is worth noting that the expressions they include share more in common with contemporary Syrian Christian inscriptions than Aksumite ones. Moreover, Abraha's inscriptions consistently refer to Jesus as "God's Messiah" rather than "God's Son", suggesting perhaps an attempt at appeasing the polity's still-significant Jewish population, which must therefore have remained significant (Segovia 2015, 6-9).

Persian Period (570–630 CE)

Between the late sixth and early seventh centuries CE, Arabia was ruled by the Sasanians, who were Zoroastrian. For more on the Sasanids and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see the Susiana narrative. However, it is likely that the brief period of Sasanian rule did not significantly affect the religious landscape of Southern Arabia, especially as the Sasanians ruled through indigenous proxies (Potts 2012).

Islamic Period (after 630 CE)

The Yemen was annexed to the Umayyad Caliphate, an Islamic polity, in the 7th century CE (Al-Mad'aj 1988). Islam, a highly moralizing religion (Yaran 2007), has been the dominant faith in the region ever since.

Summary

Based on inscriptional evidence, it seems reasonable to claim that the enforcement of morality was not a primary concern for deities among the people of the Arabian peninsula before the spread of Judaism, though there is some evidence that some deities monitored some aspects of human morality related to prosociality. The best-studied inscription describing moralistic punishment suggests belief in punishment targeting a broad group rather than specific transgressors, as well as punishment occurring in this life rather than after death.

MSP beliefs most likely took root in the region with the establishment of Judaism in the late 4th century CE. Though the region subsequently came to be ruled by Christian, Zoroastrian, and eventually Islamic polities--both based outside Yemen and local--each of these religions is highly moralizing, meaning that MSP beliefs remained an important component of the official ideology regardless of the rulers' identity.

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Kachi Plain

NGA: Kachi Plain
Contributors: Enrico Cioni

Harappan Period (c. 2500 BCE–1800 BCE)

McIntosh posits that the lack of clear evidence for the use of force as a method for punishing transgressive behavior is a likely indication that the inhabitants of Harappans were largely kept in line through the threat of divine sanction (McIntosh 2008: 393). However, because explicit information on Harappan deities is also lacking—more precisely, what little may be gleaned about Harappan deities entirely derives from iconographic depictions that are open to multiple alternative interpretations (McIntosh 2008: 285-290)—this theory should be seen as highly speculative.

Post-Urban /Pirak (1800 BCE-550 BCE)

Religious beliefs in the region remain difficult to reconstruct for over a millennium after the collapse of the Harappan polity (or polities). The best-studied site, Pirak, was very likely part of a larger assemblage of culturally similar settlements, but, perhaps due to the erosive effects of nearby rivers, only it remains (Jarrige & Enault 1976, 45-46). Evidence for possible religious beliefs largely takes the form of clay figurines, many of which depict women and bulls, and some of which bear traces of ochre, possibly indicating ritual usage (Jarrige 1991). This evidence is insufficient to determine whether or not moralistic beliefs were present at this time.

Achaemenid Empire & Zoroastrianism (550 BCE-330 BCE)

For more on the Achaemenids and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Mauryan Empire & Buddhism (303 BCE-194 BCE)

Though Buddhism had likely already begun to spread to this region in preceding centuries, the first polity to have Buddhism as its dominant ideology to occupy the region is the Mauryan Empire. Buddhism is a highly moralizing religion (Keown 2013).

Greek Rule (193 BCE-95 BCE)

The late first millennium BCE saw the establishment of Hellenistic kingdoms in the region. The elites of these polities were ethnically and culturally mixed. Greek-speaking rulers and inhabitants maintained cultural connections to their ancestral homeland (as evident, for example, in the depiction of Greek gods on coins and temple iconography) (Mairs 2015). However, they also incorporated the symbology of South Asian karmic religions in political display and coinage. In one case, a man with an Indianized Greek name, styled a Greek ambassador, dedicated a pillar to a Hindu god in Prakrit, an Indian language (Wallace 2016: 222). One Indo-Greek king of the second century BCE, Menander, is known for having converted to Buddhism, but this was an exceptional case (210). It is likely that the same sacred sites functioned as foci for multiple religions and ethnic groups, and that sacred figures and concepts from different traditions may have been seen as equivalent (Mairs 2015).
Overall, it appears that Greek religion predominated among the rulers and their partially Hellenized elites (Jennifer Larson, pers. comm., April 2021), and so we have coded for Hellenistic religion on the Kachi Plain during this period. MSP was not the *primary* concern of Greek gods; nor was retribution for one's actions (in this life or the afterlife) certain. Accordingly, we code primary moral concern and certain MSP as transitional from absent to present.

Parthian Empire (95 BCE-21 CE)

For more on the Parthians and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Kushans (81-251 CE)

Though when they first invaded the region they likely shared similar beliefs to the Indo-Iranians of Sogdiana (see relevant section of the Sogdiana narrative), the Kushans likely rapidly adopted the ideology and religion of the local Greek-descended rulers--which, as we have seen, likely included MSP beliefs adopted from South Asian religions. It appears that different Kushan rulers aligned themselves more closely to one of the region's many religions over others: Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises were likely Saivist (i.e. worshippers of the Hindu god Siva), Kanishka likely championed Zoroastrianism (though South Asian religions remained prominent), and Kanishka II privileged Buddhism (though coins from his era depict both Buddha and Zoroastrian and Iranian deities). Given the continued prominence of South Asian religions throughout this era, even considering the overall complexity of the region's religious melange, we have decided to consider this a period where MSP beliefs related to the karma doctrine were present and widespread.

Early Sasanian Empire (251 CE-496 CE)
For more on the Sasanians and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see the relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Hephthalites (496 CE-532 CE)
This is a particularly difficult period to code. Chinese sources suggest that the Hephthalites did not follow Buddhism, instead possibly worshiping Indo-Iranian deities (Litvinsky 1992: 147). Moreover, a Chinese translation of a Buddhist text known as the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* suggests that the Hephthalite ruler Mihirakula persecuted Buddhism (Nattier 1991: 113). However, Hephthalite rule in the subcontinent's Northwest proved to be short-lived, and they were unable to eradicate Buddhism from the region: indeed, travellers' accounts suggest that Buddhism remained the most prominent religion in the area both during and shortly following Hephthalite rule, and indeed the religion flourished in key areas of the Hephthalite domain, most notably Tokharistan (Litvinsky 1992: 147). Moreover, it is worth noting that contemporary travellers' accounts do not mention destruction of Buddhist monuments or other structures on the part of the Hephthalites, or persecution of any kind (Whitfield 2018: 102), which woud be an odd thing to omit. In any case, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* suggests that Mihirakula was Hindu, specifically a devotee of the god Siva (Nattier 1991: 113), meaning that one of the major karmic religions could be considered to have been the dominant ideology during this phase of the Hephthalite polity's history, regardless of their attitude toward Buddhism specifically.

Late Sasanian Empire (532 CE-642 CE)
For more on the Sasanians and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Islamic Period (from 670 CE)
The region was annexed to the Umayyad empire in the late 7th century CE, resulting in its gradual Islamization (MacLean 1989). Indeed, Islam has been the dominant and most widespread ideology in the region since then. Islam is a highly moralizing religion (Yaran 2007).

Summary

Despite tantalizing clues regarding religious beliefs at the time, it remains challenging to infer possible moralizing elements (or lack thereof) in the dominant ideology of the Harappan period. This is even more difficult for the following millennium and a half, considering the much scarcer evidence for ritual and religion.

From the 6th century BCE on, however, the Kachi Plain has been ruled by a succession of polities whose dominant religions have emphasized moralizing supernatural punishment: Zoroastrianism for the Achaemenids, Parthians and Sasanians, Buddhism for Mauryans, Indo-Greeks and Kushans, and possibly Hinduism for the Hephthalites during their brief rule. For the period when Hellenistic kingdoms, known as Indo-Greek, occupied the region, we have coded for Hellenistic religion, which did not include primary moral concern or certain MSP.

Eventually, in the late 7th century CE, the region witnessed the introduction of Islam, another highly moralizing religion, which to this day remains the most widespread in the region.

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Middle Ganga

Contributors: Enrico Cioni, Vesna Wallace (section on Buddhism)[4]

Early Vedic Period (c.1500–500 BCE)

In the Ganges region, social complexity emerged gradually, through a combination of indigenous and foreign elements. It is likely that, in the first half of the second millennium BCE, cattle-herding speakers of Indo-Iranian language(s) from Central Asia settled the Punjab region, and from there spread throughout Northern India, probably through several waves of migration across several centuries. Between 1500 and 500 BCE, these migrating groups introduced new technologies such as the war chariot and domesticates such as the horse. They also adopted agricultural techniques via interaction with indigenous populations. They founded polities, enforced their borders, built cities, established trade relations, and waged war against their neighbours. We know about all these developments from their sacred texts, but, unfortunately, these texts do not clarify the exact processes by which these developments came about. Nor do they shed much light on the emergence of two of the more influential aspects of these Sanskrit-speaking, cattle-herding cultures: a strict social hierarchy in which different groups are divided into hereditary 'castes' with little possibility for intermarriage, and the dominance of the priestly caste, known as Brahmins (Keay 2013: 28-29).

Although Vedic religion was not founded on moralistic principles, it included elements of moralistic supernatural punishment. Ṛta, or the truth, was the principle governing the natural, social, religious, and moral order. In various passages of the Ṛg Veda, the Varuṇa, who personifies a divine authority and is associated with ṛta, justice, and social relations, is an ethical all-knowing god, who foresees all destinies and punishes those who violate the moral order of ṛta, binding them with cords. He can be approached with requests for forgiveness. Invoked along with Varuṇa is the god Mitra, who acts as the judicial side of the two gods' joint governance over morality. Thieme (1960, 307-308) infers that "the couple Mitra and Varuṇa together induce people to make agreements and preserve peace" based on verses such as the following:

"You two, Mitra [and Varuṇa] keep in agreement these people (host and poets, in this case) and lead them together." (RV 5.65.6ab of Ṛṣi Rātrahavya Ātreyaḥ)

"You two, Mitra (and Varuṇa) are of firm peace through vow (you secure peace by seeing to it that vows are kept); you cause people to make mutual agreements through [your] establishment of [truth]." (RV 5.72.2ab of Ṛṣi Bāhuvṛkta Ātreyaḥ)

"Mitra (God Contract), when named, causes people to make mutual arrangements (which establish peace)." (RV 3.59.1a of Ṛṣi Gopavana Saptavadhriḥ)

Moreover, other passages call upon Varuna for moral redemption:

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[4] This narrative also benefited from information on Indo-Iranian religion provided by Peter Sahota.

"Loosen from me sin [aghaḥ] [that is] like a rope; may we partake of the well [khā] of truth [ṛta] from you, Varuṇa." (RV 2.28.5ab Ṛṣi Kūrmo Gārtsamadaḥ; translation by Peter Sahota)

Some of these passages also point to the author's sense of their own moral faults in the eyes of the god, for example:

"Varuṇa, if ever we made a transgression against any person, whether a dear one, or a friend, or a companion, or a brother, or a dependent, or a stranger, please pardon that./If [we] gamblers cheated while playing a dice-game or if [we] committed sin [āgas] knowingly or unknowingly, remove all those as if [they are] loose as well, god! Let us be dear to you, Varuṇa!" (RV 5.85.7–8 of Ṛṣi Atriḥ; translation by Peter Sahota)

Moreover, there are passages suggesting that Varuna monitored human behavior, for example:

 "[The heavenly waters] in whose midst king Varuṇa walks, looking down on the truth and untruth of the people …" (RV 4.16.2cd, quoted in Thieme 1960: 307)

Finally, the Ṛg Veda contains several passages suggesting a belief in moralistic supernatural punishment:

"Sharpen thy strong weapon, Indra, against those without contract ('who do not recognize the sacredness of contracts/ treaties'), who deceive/ betray a contract (concluded between former or potential enemies) [and thereby: God Mitra], a hospitality (the contract existing between guest and host) [and thereby: God Aryaman], agreements (agreed upon by mutual friends), and true speech (in general, or in particular: 'a solemn oath') [and thereby: God Varuṇa]." (RV 10.89.9 of Ṛṣi Reṇuḥ)

"Powerful Indra and Varuṇa, strike down [your] most powerful arrow, your vajra [or lightning] at this one who is malignant, a robber, an enemy to us; towards that one mete out overwhelming strength." (RV 4.41.4 of Ṛṣi Vāmadevo Gautamaḥ; translation by Peter Sahota)

Ṛg Veda (10.10), in a dialogue with his twin sister Yamī, who tries to incite him to commit incest, he rejects the deed, asserting that gods always watch our deeds and will punish the sinful. He chooses to die and departs to the other world.

It is unclear, however, whether people were truly thought to be punished or rewarded based on the moral quality of their actions. No text suggests the belief that punishment or reward could take place during an individual's life. As for the afterlife, it seems that most people were allowed entry into a place of eternal pleasure after their demise. According to the Atharva Veda, only the souls of those guilty of exceptionally heinous crimes (e.g. sorceresses, murderers, and anyone who dared injure a brahmin) are sent to the narakaloka (hell). In later Vedic texts, those guilty of ritual transgressions, such as breaking taboos or failing to correctly perform rituals were deemed worthy of eternal punishment. For example, in the Jaiminīya and Samantha Brāhmaṇas, hell is reserved for those who cut wood or eat animals or plants without

performing the correct sacrifices, while the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa states that those who do not perform the correct ritual before eating an animal may expect that same animal to take its revenge on them in the afterlife (Obeyesekere 1980, 156-158).

The dead go to Yama's court to be judged. After weighing their karma, he sends the soul of the dead either to hell, or back to the world of mortals where it can have another chance to accumulate good karma, or grants it immortality in the celestial realm. Thus, he is not an independent punisher of sins but simply a judge who witnesses the amount of the persons' accumulated bad and good karma and determines a retribution. The notion of karma as a moral force emerged for the first time around the eight century BCE in one of the earliest Upaniṣads, the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, where it is said that a man becomes good through good actions and bad through bad actions.

Buddhism (c. 500 BCE–c.500 CE)
Throughout its history in India, Buddhists argued against the notion of the independent, omnipotent and all-knowing God, or Lord (Īśvara), who is a creator of the world and who punishes or rewards the doers. One of the arguments was that if Īśvara punishes bad deeds or rewards good deeds, he is not an independent agent, his judgement depends on the actions of others. Buddhist theory of codependent origination (pratītyasamutpāda), according to which everything arises and ceases due to multiple causes and conditions, goes against the idea of a single cause to which everything can be traced. Likewise, if Īśvara created the world consisting of the elements of the earth, water, and so on, then he is not an independent creator and he himself has those elements, in which case, he is also subject to change.

Since its inception, Buddhism held the doctrine of karma as relevant to moral causation. Karma has never been understood as a system of punishments and rewards imposed by some external, higher being; and it has not been interpreted in a fatalistic manner either. Although certain actions determine the nature of one's rebirth and life experiences, it does not necessarily mean that all events or experiences are karmically determined. Likewise, a person has the ability to choose whether or not to engage in the wholesome or unwholesome actions. Therefore, as a moral action, be it mental, verbal, or physical, karma is inextricably connected to one's moral choices, or intentions (*cetanā*), which propel one into action; therefore, the mental action is more powerful than verbal and physical actions. Thus, what makes one's action karmically positive or negative is a motivation behind the action. The Buddha actually defined karma as volition. Actions motivated by unwholesome mental states such as greed, envy, hatred are invariably unwholesome, or non-virtuous, and therefore, obstacles to the attainment of liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. In contrast, actions arising from wholesome, mental states are ethically positive and conducive to liberation. The doctrine of karma is concerned not only with the effects that an action has on its agent but also with the effects that it has on others. Hence, wholesome actions should be of benefit to oneself and others and facilitate social harmony. Therefore, one is advised to compare oneself with others to realize that one should not do to others that what one does not wish for oneself.

Hinduism of the Classical and Medieval Periods (c. 500–1200 CE)
Vedic Brahmanism incorporated the notion of karma only very gradually: even the Upanishads, a set of sacred texts likely written not long after the emergence of Buddhism and containing a

number of more or less clear references to karma (e.g. "a man turns into something good by good action and into something bad by bad action", quoted in Bronkhorst 2011: 47-48), still stop short of providing a comprehensive system of recommended ethical behavior, and largely limit serious punishment to behaviors resulting in harm to brahmins (Obeyesekere 1980, 158).

However, by the time Brahmanism had developed into Classical Hinduism, i.e. by the middle of the first century CE, karma had become as significant an element of its doctrine as it was for Buddhism (Shattuck 1999: 29). Indeed, for the purpose of this summary, the Hindu interpretation of karma does not differ significantly from its Buddhist counterpart, outlined above.

The system of morality a Hindu must follow in order to lead a virtuous life is known as dharma. Dharma promotes prosocial ideas such as refraining from harming others through physical violence (ahiṃsā), theft, and dishonesty (Dwivedi 2012, 110-123); conversely, it encourages actions motivated by compassion and/or generosity:

"The householder's business is the maintenance and support of those in the other three stages of life: the students who have not yet entered into the world of work, the retirees who have seen the birth of grand- children and spotted their first gray hairs, and the renunciants, those who have left behind not only the world of work and material possession but who have also left behind family and self-interest for a life focused on spiritual freedom. Householders are the ones with material wealth, and their responsibility, their dharma, is to share it with others." (Eck 2013: 364-365)

With regards to virtues relating to loyalty, dharma promotes respect towards one's kin: "[d]eeply embedded in Hindu notions of marriage is a disposition toward protection" (Courtright 2006, 226-298). Sources do not emphasize loyalty to the state as a key virtue within Hinduism: however, it is worth noting Dundas (2002, 118-119) contrasts Jain anti-militarism with "the possibility, frequently stated in Hinduism, that a warrior who died in battle would be reborn in heaven (Bh 7.9)".

Late Medieval and Modern Periods (1200 CE-1840 CE)
When this region was conquered by the Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century CE, Islam becomes the official cult, at the state level (Habib 2005). The Delhi Sultanate was followed by the Mughals, for whom Islam remained the official cult (Richards 1995). In turn, the Mughals were followed by the British, for whom the dominant religion was Christianity. Both Islam and Christianity feature the full range of MSP beliefs.

Summary
Because archaeological data suggests a radical discontinuity between the Harappan polity (or polities) and the polities that followed, whether or not Harappan beliefs included all or some aspects of moralistic supernatural punishment remains unknown.

By contrast, primary sources such as sacred texts (admittedly compiled at a later date) suggest that Vedic Brahmanism contained elements of moralistic supernatural punishment. Based on these texts, it seems that the gods (not an impersonal force such as karma, which had not yet emerged) monitored the moral quality of people's behavior, but that it was not a

primary concern for them, as punishment was not certain, did not seem to occur in this life, and only a narrow set of transgressions (many of them tied to ritual impropriety) were thought to merit consignment to a hellish afterlife. Texts suggest that the gods targeted punishment or reward at specific individuals, but it remains unclear whether they targeted groups.

With the emergence of the notion of karma and the spread of Buddhism beginning in the late sixth century BCE, Northern India saw the establishment of MSP beliefs, though early karmic punishments seem to have focused largely on ritual transgressions. By the rise of the Mauryan Empire in 324 BCE and the promotion of Buddhist practice by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, the belief in karma as a force punishing moral transgressions becomes prominent (Obeyesekere 1980; Thapar 2003). The resulting ideologies posit that an impersonal supernatural force known as karma regulates moralistic punishment and reward, targeting individuals rather than groups, regardless of their social standing, and inevitably punishing or rewarding them in the next life rather than in this one.

From the 13th century until the mid-20th century, the region was ruled by polities whose dominant ideologies were highly moralizing but developed outside of the subcontinent (Islam, Christianity). Nevertheless, karmic religions, particularly Hinduism, remained widespread among the broader population.

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Deccan Plateau

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Neolithic and Iron Age (3000–300 BCE)

In Central and South India, archaeologists have unearthed plentiful evidence for ritual activity, dating to both the Neolithic (3000–1200 BCE) and the Iron Age (1200–300 BCE). In the Neolithic, large periodic conflagrations of cattle dung that resulted in the so-called "ashmounds" that dot the Central and South Indian landscape today, may have formed part of seasonal fertility festivals (Allchin 1963; Boivin 2004a). Rock art frequency depicting both cattle and male figures with erect penises also suggests a preoccupation with fertility (Boivin 2004b) in this period. Later, in the Iron Age, megalithic monuments were likely associated with mortuary ceremonies (Johansen 2014: 66-67). However, none of the sources suggest that there is any evidence to reconstruct belief in deities or other supernatural agents or forces in the region during these periods, let alone MSP.

Historical Period (after 300 BCE)

Most likely, belief in MSP first came to South India in the third century BCE, when the region became part of the Mauryan Empire, which led to the spread of Buddhism. Indeed, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, many Buddhist monasteries dating from this time were built near the site of Iron Age megalithic mortuary contexts, which suggests a direct transition from Iron Age beliefs to the new religion (Johansen 2014: 71-77).

After the collapse of the Mauryan empire, and following the rise of the Satavahana dynasty, Buddhism remained the dominant ideology in the region: indeed, Satavahana rule coincided with a florescence of Buddhist iconography (Murthy and Ramakrishnan 1978: 25-26). However, the following period, under Vakataka and Gupta rule, saw the rise of another moralizing religion, Hinduism (understood as a revival and adaptation of the Brahamanic ideology that had formed many centuries prior, in the North of the subcontinent, rather than as a de novo creation). Though all three major karmic religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism) received royal patronage in this new era, contemporary sources note that sacred Buddhist sites were neglected and that Buddhist monasteries were normally located outside cities (Keay 2013: 146), while the Jain population of South India largely migrated to the subcontinent's West (Dundas 2002: 115). At the same time, it was under the Gupta that the Puranas were first written and codified, that is, a set of sacred Hindu scriptures including instructions regarding the proper way of living one's life and performing rituals (Shattuck 2001: 41-44). Hinduism has remained the dominant ideology in the region to this day.

For discussion of MSP elements in Hinduism and Buddhism, see the Middle Ganga narrative.

Modern Period (1687 CE-1840 CE)

With Mughal conquest in the 17th century CE, Islam becomes the official cult, at the state level (Richards 1995). The majority of the population continued to practice Hinduism. The Mughals were followed by the British, who were Christian. Both Islam and Christianity feature the full range of MSP beliefs.

Summary
Though relatively little is known about prehistoric beliefs in Central and South India, the concept of MSP likely came to the region in the wake of Mauryan conquest, which facilitated the spread of karmic religions, most notably Buddhism; and even though Buddhism eventually lost its place as the dominant ideology in the region, it was nevertheless replaced by another moralizing religion, Hinduism. Hinduism remained widespread among the broader population even after the region was annexed to Muslim and Christian empires between the late 17th and mid-20th centuries.

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Garo Hills

NGA: Garo Hills
Contributors: Eva Brandl

This narrative was adapted from the chapter on small-scale societies by Eva Brandl (2019) in the *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.
Note on Terminology: 'Garo' is the most frequently used term in the ethnographic literature. However, A'chik is the preferred self-designated term. Therefore, out of respect, we generally prefer "A'chik" instead of "Garo", except for source titles and direct quotations.

A'chik
The *A'chik* are a Sino-Tibetan population inhabiting the Garo Hills area of Northeast India (Meghalaya) and neighbouring plains in Assam and Bangladesh. The 'Garo' label is of colonial origin and refers to a set of groups with distinct dialects and cultural traditions (for a detailed discussion of the emergence of ethnic identity in the region, see Bal 2007). Occupants of this region refer to themselves as *A'chik* or hill men (Roy 1999). At the time much of the ethnographic research we will be referring to was carried out, the hills population subsisted on

slash-and-burn horticulture, cultivating grains such as dry rice and millet along with root crops and vegetables (Roy 1999). They lived in hilltop villages built from bamboo, local wood, and grass (Roy 1999). These villages were of substantial size and surrounded by bamboo palisades for the purpose of defense (Playfair 1909: 40). Each village also had a *nokpante* or men's house, where unmarried boys spent the night and elders congregated to debate matters of common concern, among other functions (Choudhury 1958:12p). Contemporary ethnographers note that, while many A'chik have converted to Christianity, *songsarek* or traditional beliefs and practices are still present, and many of these beliefs probably have pre-colonial roots (see Marak 2005: 5, 17, 111).

A'chik indigenous cosmology included numerous spirit beings or "*mites* [sic]" (Roy 1999), some of which were benevolent and others malevolent (Marak 2005: 21). These beings were associated with forces such as the sun, fertility, strength, thunder, and prosperity (Roy 1999). Some of them possessed a god-like character: "To some of these *mite* the Garo attribute the creation of all the creatures of the world, the control of natural phenomena and the granting of health, wealth and happiness to mankind" (Khaleque 1988: 132). These higher beings coexisted with lesser spirits, who were often malevolent and a frequent cause of illness and misfortune (Khaleque 1988: 132). Spirits were thought to inhabit a wide range of locations including both the village and the jungle, along with trees, streams, road forks, and mountain tops (Burling 1963: 55). Other spirits were thought to live in the sky, water, caves, and bamboo groves (Thomas 1995: 203). As a result, some ethnographers have characterized A'chik beliefs as essentially animistic (Marak 2005: 21). Furthermore, "the stars, the sun and the moon are associated with some spirits and all these spirits are considered immortal" (Thomas 1995: 203). Some sources write that the A'chik also recognized a supreme deity: "Tatara-Rabuga is the creator at whose command the world was made by two lesser spirits, Nostu-Nopantu and Machi" (Thomas 1995: 203; a collection of A'chik folktales can be found in Rongmuthu 1960).

People performed rituals "to secure the goodwill of the benevolent spirits and to avert the ill-will of the malevolent ones" (Thomas 1995: 203; see also Marak 2005: 22). Both good and bad spirits demanded that humans observe certain taboos and rituals, such as respecting dedicated fasting days and food taboos (see Marak 2005: 70). These conventions enabled people to "maintain their peaceful relationship with the supernatural beings which surround them" (Marak 2005: 58). When people appeased the spirits, they would "shower blessings and benefits on people" (Marak 2005: 70). However, if a person failed to maintain this relationship, the spirits would become angry and punish them (Marak 2005: 58): "they believe that sickness, diseases or bad omen falling upon them are due to their trespasses and disobedience against the law of nature and deities" (Marak 2005: 69). This could also result in natural disasters such as crop failures and destructive storms (Marak 2005: 70). For example, "[s]ome crops must not be eaten before a certain ceremony. One doesn't beat drums while the rice is ripening, for to do so might offend the spirits or gods and bring suffering to the transgressor" (Burling 1963:62).

Accordingly, when suffering some misfortune, people performed animal sacrifices and other offerings in order to appease the angry spirits. The symptoms of a sick person were thought to indicate which spirit was responsible, enabling them to select the correct sacrifice to be performed (Marak 2005: 28). During these rituals, knowledgeable men would "offer an egg, a chicken, a pig, or even a cow, depending upon the seriousness of the disease and the demands of the *mite*" (Burling 1963:55) over a makeshift altar of bamboo and leaves, along

with some rice beer (ibid.). Ritual specialists were known as *kamal* (Roy 1999). Some ethnographers have described this office as an "animist priest" (Marak 2005: 45). This position was not hereditary, and merely based on the individual's ability to memorize the relevant incantations, their familiarity with the spirit pantheon, and their ability to perform divination (Marak 2005: 45). In addition, each village had a number of ritual stones or *kosi.* These were cleansed once a year with the blood of a sacrificial animal in a communal ceremony (Marak 1997: 112). A notable ritual still practiced among some A'chik communities is the *Wangala* dance. During this ceremony, *songsarek* families make offerings to deities and deduce omens about the fertility and good fortune of their crops (de Maaker 2013: 231). The village shaman or priest then chants the local creation myth followed by a dance (de Maaker 2013: 231). During mortuary rites, people paid their respects to the dead by "the placing of food for the spirits, the setting up of shrines for the temporary sepulcher of the bones and the creation of Memorial posts" (Thomas 1995: 205p). People believed in the presence of *memang* or ghosts of the dead (Marak 2005: 70). However, it appears that there was no ancestor worship in the strict sense of the term (Thomas 1995: 206). There were some regional differences in spiritual beliefs and rituals practices, although they all shared the same propitiatory goals (Marak 2005: 23). We should note that people's emic notion of religion "is not limited to the sphere of tradition-bound beliefs alone; it is translated into action in their daily lives" (Marak 2005: 22).

However, while there is ample evidence of a rich ritual life, the case for moralistic elements is less clear. Moral values emphasized an ethos of mutual respect and harmony within the community: "a Garo always observes a code of conduct that abhors any act which may injure the feelings of any person in the society and honours those that maintain or restore peace therein" (Marak 2005: 69p). While we have found no evidence of supernatural forces punishing people for emotional harms, supernatural forces were involved in the administration of oaths and ordeals. For example, in some types of oaths, people would swear on meteoric stones, invoking the god of lightning to kill them if they had failed to tell the truth (Playfair 1909: 75). One source confirms that "their mode of attestation on oaths were [sic] very solemn and they were afraid of the consequences of telling lies for fear of retribution at the hands of supernatural power" (Marak 1997: 48). Oaths were also connected to ordeals or painful tests of endurance which were used to determine the truth in disputes and accusations of wrongdoing between villagers. For example, in some cases people poured boiling water over the arm of a person who had been accused of wrongdoing, or two people who had a dispute would perform a diving contest (Burling 1963: 253). If the accused person's skin was burnt, they were considered guilty; and whoever could hold their breath the longest was considered to tell the truth (Burling 1963: 253). In other ordeals of this type, people applied hot iron to the skin (Marak 1997: 50) or tied up a man in the jungle overnight (if he was eaten by a tiger, he was considered to have been guilty) (Marak 1997: 51). Local ritual specialists were involved in the administration of ordeals (Marak 1997: 50). One source suggests that fear of ordeals motivated people to confess to wrongdoing (Marak 1997: 50). Other methods did not involve physical ordeals but followed the same principle. For example, people boiled water over a fire that had been kindled with a specific amount of wood or tied up a chicken outside overnight (Burling 1963: 253). If the pot failed to boil over or if the chicken was not eaten by another animal, the accused person was considered to be innocent (Burling 1963: 253). The use of ordeals declined during the colonial period as colonial authorities banned the most dangerous ones (Marak

1997: 53), but also due to the influence of Christian missionaries, who undermined villagers' confidence in their reliability (Burling 1963: 254). Due to the nature of these ordeals and the manner in which oaths were uttered, it appears that the supernatural enforcement of deception relied on people invoking supernatural forces, and that those forces did not police deception on their own initiative. Furthermore, policing deception was not the primary field of responsibility for higher spirits and deities, at least in the case of the thunder god. Direct enforcement of moral behaviour in this life was limited to one specific offence:

> When the dried fields are burned at the beginning of planting, *Saljong* sees the smoke of the fire and comes to join the people as they worship him in their fields. He supervises them as they fix the boundaries, and he blinds the people if they later move the markers-the only example of supernatural punishment for immoral behavior that I ever heard of (Burling 1963:58).

When it comes to reward and punishment in the afterlife, the picture is mixed. People believed that, after death, the soul would travel to a place called Mangru-Mangram, which was located on a mountaintop named Chikmang (Thomas 1995: 208). This is a place "through which all must pass, the good and the bad alike" (Thomas 1995: 208). The supreme deity Tatara kept souls in the afterlife for some time before sending them back to this world to be reborn (Khaleque 1988: 146). One source claims that a soul residing in the afterlife "receives neither punishment nor reward" (Khaleque 1988: 148), and that the notion of heaven and hell was unknown in traditional religion (ibid.). The same source remarks that an informant told them that moral conduct was primarily rewarded with the praise and respect of other people, and that wrongdoing was punished by relatives (Khaleque 1988: 148). This indicates that the monitoring of moral behaviour was mostly performed by other humans, not spirits. This idea receives support from other ethnographers, who write that the concept of sin, as understood in Christianity, is not present in the indigenous tradition (Marak 2005: 69). However, that previous source also reports that some A'chik believed that, when the soul was reborn, the manner of reincarnation would reflect their conduct in life (Khaleque 1988: 148). Specifically, "[t]hey believe that those, who were morally depraved and wicked, are punished by being born as low animals and those who were good and were regular in their sacrifices are born into noble and wealthy families" (Khaleque 1988: 148). However, the circumstances of a person's death could also affect their fate in the afterlife. For example, people who had been killed by a wild animal would return as that animal (Khaleque 1988: 148). People who had died an unnatural death (for example if they had committed suicide or were killed in an accident) were doomed to become ghosts (*memang*) and haunt the places where they had died (Khaleque 1988: 147). Furthermore, it was believed that souls would attempt to reincarnate in their old families, but that was only possible if the soul recognized their old home (Khaleque 1988: 146). This is why families who had just lost a loved one built a special post in front of their house (Khaleque 1988: 146). It appears that moral conduct had no effect on the soul's ability to find their way home.

Summary

While people sought to maintain an active exchange with the spirits, our sources indicate that this relationship was generally not a moralistic one. Most of the time, misfortune resulted from angering the spirits due to some taboo violation, not from immoral behaviour towards other humans (Burling 1963: 61). The ethnographic record indicates that moralistic enforcement in this life was limited to one specific offence, punished by one specific entity. Furthermore, while supernatural forces were thought to play a role in oaths and ordeals (and thus the punishment of deception), it appears that humans had to invoke these forces for them to become active (rather than policing truth and falsehood on their own initiative). As to punishment in the afterlife, the ethnographic record suggests that A'chik held a range of different opinions: while some believed that moral monitoring was only performed by humans, not spirits, others believed that the soul's rebirth after its sojourn in the afterlife was affected by moral conduct. However, at the same time, the soul's fate was also affected by a range of circumstantial factors with no relation to moral behaviour.

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Cambodian Basin
NGA: Cambodian Basin
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Late Prehistoric Period (c. 200 BCE–500 CE)
Little is known about prevailing ideologies in the Cambodian Basin prior to the arrival of Buddhism and Hinduism. Based on contemporary ethnography, both regarding this specific region and Southeast Asia more broadly, it is possible that already at this time ancestor worship was prevalent (see e.g. Central Java narrative), but, over the last millennium and a half, Hinduism, Buddhism and other belief systems in the region have influenced each other to such an extent (Ang 1988, Pou-Lewitz 2002, Davis 2016: 14-18) that it is difficult to reconstruct religious beliefs in the region prior to the arrival of karmic faiths in the 6th century CE, let alone understandings of morality.

Preclassic Period (500 CE-800 CE)
The Preclassic Period witnessed the gradual introduction of Indian culture generally, and Hinduism and Buddhism specifically, throughout South-East Asia, including in the Cambodian Basin. Though earlier scholarship emphasised the role of Indian migrants in this process (Coedes 1968: 55-56), it is in fact likely that Southeast Asian seafarers also may have encountered the karmic religions in their travels, and brought them to their home lands (Harris 2005: 5).

It is difficult, however, to pinpoint when exactly Buddhism and Hinduism first reached the Cambodian Basin itself. According to the *History of the Southern Qi Dynasty* or *Nan Qi shu*, a report to the Chinese Emperor compiled by Buddhist monk Nàgasena (or Na-kia-sien) some time between 479 and 502 CE, both Hinduism (specifically worship of the god Siva) and Mayahana Buddhism were already established in the region at the time, specifically in the polity known as Funan. Moreover, both Nàgasena and another ambassador sent by Funan to China brought a number of Buddhist items as gifts to the emperor on the part of the ruler of Funan, including ivory stupas and a coral image of the Buddha (Harris 2005: 5-6). However, Nàgasena was an outside observer, and may not have correctly interpreted the extent to which Hindu-Buddhist notions had been incorporated into the official ideology. At the same time, throughout the period under consideration, archaeological and textual evidence does show that the karmic religions became increasingly established, at least among the elites, from portable objects representing Hindu deities (Lavy 2003; Le Thi Lien 2008: 2015) to phallic Saivist statuary known as lingam (Sanderson 2003: 403–09), to Buddhist statuary (Harris 2005: 4). Ultimately, however, MSP was likely not a primary concern within the official ideology before

the 7th century (Noseworthy 2021, pers. comm., February 2021). We therefore consider this period to be one of transition, characterized by the gradual establishment of two highly moralizing religions, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Classic and Postclassic Periods (800 CE–1800 CE)

Jayavarman II (r. c. 802-850 CE) was the first known ruler to claim the Indic royal title of cakravartin, through a Hindu ritual (Wolters 2008: 165, 176). This suggests that, by this point, Hinduism--and therefore its accompanying moralizing beliefs--had become a significant component of official ideology. Indeed, Jayavarman's successors continued the traditions, claiming to be reincarnations of the Hindu gods Visnu or Siva, and building monuments dedicated to these gods (Kulke 1978).

Late Classic Angkor (1200–1327 CE) saw the decline of Hinduism, beginning with the reign of Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–1218 CE), who favoured Mahayana Buddhism (Roveda 2004: 34). Eventually, in the postclassical period (1431-1860 CE), Theravada Buddhism replaced Hinduism as the dominant ideology (Harris 2005: 26-48), but its version of the doctrine of karmic retribution remains highly moralizing (Keown 2013). Indeed, though these changes were certainly significant (the rise of Theravada and decline of Mahayana may even have had something to do with the fall of Angkor and ascendancy of the Thai polity of Ayutthaya; see Fletcher et al. 2017, 282), there is no indication that they were accompanied by changes in beliefs regarding moralistic supernatural punishment. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that, after the shift to Theravada Buddhism, the king came to be seen less as a divine being and more as a particularly exalted person who adhered especially closely to the Buddha's teachings (Harris 2005: 80). In other words, kings were expected to behave righteously, and were rewarded accordingly after death. Indeed, Forest (1991: 216) notes that the bodies of "bad" rulers were not ceremonially cremated, and their spirits were subsequently believed to wander eternally in the world of the "raw dead".

Note, as well, that there has been a significant degree of mixture and mutual influence in Cambodia between Hinduism, Buddhism, and other belief systems (see e.g. Ang 1988, Pou-Lewitz 2002, Davis 2016: 14-18). Popular traditions, in particular, have long been concerned with maintaining harmonious relations with *anak ta* spirits who rule over land, forests, and water, for instance through ceremonies involving offerings of animals and the ritual preparation of meat, musical performance, and communal eating and drinking (Aymonier [1900] 1984). These spirits also reward those who follow the proper conduct that underpins the social and moral order (Århem 2016: 19-20). That such beliefs also shaped state-level official ideology is evident in the fact that inscriptions left by Khmer kings express the latter's recognition of the power of the *anak ta*, while simultaneously claiming to take over some of their spiritual functions (Work 2017).

Summary

It is difficult to date the earliest appearance of MSP beliefs in the Cambodian Basin, but they were likely gradually established as Hinduism and Buddhism took root in the region beginning around the 6th century CE. Hinduism, specifically, became a significant component of the official ideology at least as far back as the 9th century CE, until its eventual replacement by

Buddhism, which started in the 12th-13th centuries CE. Both religions are highly moralizing, but both also mixed with local traditions that, though featuring moralizing elements, are more concerned with holistic interconnectedness than with mechanisms of moralistic punishment and reward.

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Central Java
NGA: Central Java
Contributors: Enrico Cioni

Prehistoric and Protoclassic Period (c. 400 BCE–1 CE)

Little is known about prevailing ideologies in Central Java prior to the arrival of Buddhism and Hinduism. Based on more recent ethnography, Miksic and Goh suggest that early religion in Java revolved around ancestors, who could be invoked "to provide warning of impending disaster, and possible assistance", but were also often seen as "unhappy or vengeful, and had to be propitiated to prevent them from wreaking havoc with the living" (2017: 173). Given the sources' silence on the matter, there appears to be no evidence that supernatural agents were thought to punish or reward their worshippers' behavior towards other humans: rather, the ancestors were primarily concerned that the living worshipped them in the correct manner.

"Ancestor worship" can mean many different practices and beliefs. The Southeast Asian concept of ancestors was very different from that of the Chinese, for instance. The Chinese believed that the spirits of the dead retained their individual consciousness and personality after death, and therefore it was possible to pray directly to one's own ancestors. This practice harmonized with the strong patrilineal Chinese kinship system. In Southeast Asia, it was believed that twelve years after death, the individual soul of the deceased person was reabsorbed into a great Oversoul, from which human souls are temporarily detached during their attachment to a body and for twelve years after death. After reincorporation into the Oversoul no trace of individual consciousness remained with which the living could communicate (Miksic and Goh 2017: 173).

The clearest expression of this belief is found in the *Desawarnana,* a 14th-century poem which describes the *sraddha* ceremony held twelve years after the death of a queen of Majapahit, Java (Miksic and Goh 2017: 246). The term *sraddha* is Sanskrit; in India it denotes a series of ceremonies performed on various occasions, including births and marriages, but also after deaths. In India these rituals were not limited to 12 years; there was no concept of the reabsorption into an Oversoul or the loss of personal existence after death. In Java the *sraddha* was adapted to suit local beliefs.

Protoclassic and Classic Period (1 CE–1500 CE)

Archaeological excavations at Cibuaya, in the northwestern portion of Java, have yielded three Protoclassic images of the Hindu god Visnu: two likely originated in India, and the third may have been imported from Thailand. Likely dating to a later period, remains of a temple have also been unearthed in Batujaya, in West Java; the temple's religious affiliation is suggested by

votive tablets featuring Buddhist motifs that most closely parallel artefacts found in 6th- and 7th-century Thailand, but there is also evidence for a prior history of frequent commerce with India. This temple may have been located within the polity known on contemporary Chinese sources as "Heling" (Miksic and Goh 2017: 218-219).

In Central Java specifically, the earliest known evidence for the establishment of karmic religions is the Canggal inscription, which likely dates to around 732 CE, and which mentions the Hindu gods Visnu and Sri, but particularly praises Siva, asking that he protect and provide success to the reader (Miksic and Goh 2017: 311). As for Buddhism, the earliest known temple in Central Java is the one at Borobudur, which was likely built between 790 and 830 CE, and which featured relief carvings depicting punishments and rewards for various deeds, taken from the Buddhist text known as the *Mahakarmavibhangga*, "The Great Law of Cause and Effect" (Miksic 1990: 65-70). Overall, however, we have opted to consider the 6th century CE as the beginning of Hindu-Buddhism's dominance in the region. As noted elsewhere in this document, both feature belief in karma, an impersonal force by which those who perform more good deeds than bad are rewarded in the afterlife, while those perform more bad deeds than good are punished (Shattuck 2002, Keown 2013, Dwivedi 2012).

Postclassic Period (1500 CE-1800 CE)

Though Islam had by then already reached the shores of Java, key to the island's Islamization was the proclamation of the polity of Demak as an Islamic kingdom in 1479 (Tjandrasasmita 2004: 409-410). Islam is a highly moralizing religion (Yaran 2007), and remains the prevalent religion in Indonesia as a whole to this day (Woodward 2011).

Summary

We infer that religious systems endorsing beliefs in moralizing supernatural concern and punishment were absent during the prehistoric period based on more recent ethnographic information on contemporary ancestor worship in the region.

Most likely, MSP beliefs first came to Java with Hinduism and Buddhism. Even though in Central Java the earliest undisputed evidence for the presence of both dates to the 8th century CE, it is clear that they had already been established on the island for a few centuries before that date.

Hinduism and Buddhism remained prominent religions in the region until the advent of Islam in the 15th century CE. However, all three religions are highly moralizing.

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Kapuas Basin

NGA: Kapuas Basin
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This narrative was adapted from the chapter on small-scale societies by Eva Brandl (2019) in the *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Iban

The *Iban*, also known as Sea Dayak, trace their origins to the Kapuas Basin of Borneo (Sutlive and Beierle 1995). During a series of migrations, they established themselves in other regions, including Sarawak on the Northern coast of the island. They share a Malayo-Polynesian language and form part of the non-Muslim population of the island. In the pre- and early colonial periods, they subsisted on slash-and-burn horticulture, specifically the cultivation of dry rice, which they supplemented with vegetables, root crops, and maize. Hunting, fishing, gathering, and animal husbandry also contributed to their diet (Sutlive and Beierle 1995). The population was scattered across dispersed communities that settled in longhouses built from wooden materials (Sandin & Sather 1980: 10). These settlements functioned as autonomous political units, with no formal authority above them (Freeman 1955: 8).

The Iban pantheon featured numerous types of spirits and higher beings, ranging from animistic beliefs and lesser spirits, often malicious, to benevolent creator gods who inhabit the realm of *panggau libau* in the heavens (Sutlive & Beierle 1995). The highest deities and their servants were thought to rule over this upper world, residing in houses built on top of sacrificial racks (Jensen 1974: 105). Despite their remoteness, the latter were "unseen, ubiquitous presences" (Sutlive & Beierle 1995). Much like humans, many plants and animals were also thought to have souls, in particular dangerous ones and those that served as sources of food (Jensen 1974: 108). The most significant plant spirit was the one associated with rice (*samengat padi*) (Jensen 1974: 109). Some inanimate objects also had spirits, including ceremonial jars (*tajau*), tools associated with the cultivation of rice, and grave goods buried with the deceased (Jensen 1974: 109).

People sought to maintain a good relationship with these spirit beings by performing sacrifices for them. Most commonly, these sacrifices were food offerings named *piring*, "composed of rice cooked in bamboos, cakes, eggs, sweet potatoes, plantains, or other fruit, and sometimes small live chickens" (Gomes 1911: 202). These offerings were presented on a brass plate or a makeshift altar made with sticks and small pieces of wood, and the spirits were thought to come and "eat the soul or spirit of the food" (ibid.). Families sought *lantang*, or the

blessing of the spirits, before clearing farmland (Jensen 1974:165-168). Other offerings were made whenever new residents joined the longhouse community (Howell 1908-10:24-28). Bards or *lemambang* performed incantations during such ceremonies (Sutlive & Beierle 1995). Augurs or *tuai burong* interpreted omens in order to determine whether the spirit world approved of the community's undertakings (Sandin & Sather 1980: xxxviii). Signs for augury were found in the flight of birds and the entrails of pigs which had been slaughtered for festivals (Low & Roth 1892: 136). An early account writes that "after a fowl had been killed, the blood [was] mingled with rice stained yellow with turmeric, and thrown up towards heaven by the chief, who at the same time offered a prayer" (Low & Roth 1892: 136).

However, the relationship between humans and spirits was not confined to seeking good luck or auspicious signs. Spirit forces also responded to moral conduct among humans. This is evident in the Iban notion of *adat*, a body of customary laws that defined the rights and duties of all residents in the longhouse, including matters related to marriage and inheritance (Komanyi 1973:90). These norms, orally transmitted between the generations, also specified how breaches of *adat* should be punished (Sandin & Sather 1980: xiii). The headman of the longhouse was responsible for safeguarding *adat* (Sandin & Sather 1980:3). He also consulted with other members of the community who were knowledgeable about customary law, including ritual experts such as augurs (ibid.). The Iban feared malicious spirits who punished some immoral conduct as determined by *adat* (Sultive and Beierle 1995). Norm violations were not mundane matters. In fact, transgressions were thought to destabilize the world, which could have catastrophic consequences, including disease and crop failure (Jensen 1974: 113). Perpetrators of serious transgressions became *busong* or cursed (Sandin & Sather 1980: xxviii). Conversely, transgressions that caused personal injury to one's peers or damaged their property were thought to harm the victim's soul (Sandin & Sather 1980: xiv). Grave offences such as incest threatened to bring misfortune on the community as a whole. The Iban notion of incest precluded relatives from specific generations (such as the mother's sister) from being legitimate partners in marriage (Sandin 1976: 34-37). Marriages in defiance of this taboo were thought to cause earthquakes and tidal waves (ibid.).

Communities sought to prevent such disasters by performing pig sacrifices and ceremonial baths (ibid.). These were considered necessary to repair relations with the spiritual world. Thus, even though a wrongful act may remain unpunished, a sense of moral disapproval is reinforced by a belief that the culprit will eventually be visited with misfortune as a consequence of his actions. The Iban believe that anyone who successfully cheats another, or escapes punishment for his crimes, even though he might appear to profit temporarily, ultimately suffers supernatural retribution. In addition, a person who refuses to accept a judicial settlement is similarly thought to suffer *busong* (Sandin & Sather 1980: xxviii). However, if an individual is punished by the community and/or the correct rituals are performed, it seems that supernatural retribution could be avoided.

Ethnographic studies show that Iban headmen protected *adat,* and it seems reasonable to claim that headmen were liable to moralizing enforcement (Sandin and Sather 1980: 3). This literature concludes that Iban cosmology encompasses all parts of life (Vinson and Beirele 1995), suggesting that the religion system was adopted by the common people.

Notions of spiritual power and the associated oral traditions were

also involved in articulating normative expectations about gender roles. For example, woven fabrics were imbued with spiritual power. Weaving was a prestigious activity for women, transmitted from mother to daughter, that was thought of as a counterpart to the male domain of warfare (Mashman 1991: 247). These ideas are articulated "in myth, ritual, and oral literature through imagery of fertility, life, love, and sexuality, which are alternative ideals to bravery and warfare but still in the interests of the goals of the community" (Mashman 1991: 247). Woven fabrics were thought to protect people from enemies and bad spirits, to enable contact with the spirit world, and to confer special powers to the wearer (Mashman 1991: 245). Oral traditions about deities, spirits, and ancestors reflected normative aspects of Iban culture and 'prefigured' important activities and obligations in mythical time. In one such tradition, a female deity weaves jackets for her human husband and their son, which give them the power of flight (Mashman 1991: 245). The inspiration for designs was thought to come directly from spirits (Mashman 1991: 247). This is all evident in stories about the origins of head-hunting, which was an important prestige activity for Iban men, the male counterpart of weaving. One legend tells of the daughter of a mythical ancestor who demanded that her suitor bring her a gift worthy of her, otherwise she would not marry him (repeated in Wagner 1972: 132). The suitor goes out hunting and presents her first with a deer and then a monkey, both of which she rejects (Wagner 1972: 132). The young man eventually travels to another territory, kills a man, and brings the head back to her, which she accepts (Wagner 1972: 132).

However, while myths supported normative expectations about Iban society and supernatural forces responded to misdeeds in this life, it appears that there was no retribution in the afterlife. Some sources write that "when a person dies, he crosses 'The Bridge of Anxiety' (*Batang Titi Rawan*) to the opposite state (*Sebayan*)" (Sutlive 1992: 11). Other sources refer to this place as the Bridge of Fright (*Titi Rawan*), "leading across a chasm on the way to the land of the dead" (Graham 1987:174). *Sebayan*, or the world of the dead, was located underground (Jensen 1974: 104). *Sebayan* literally means 'opposite' and is characterized by everything in it being the reverse of the land of the living (Sutlive 1973: 207p). For example, during funeral rites, mourners shuttered the dead person's room in the longhouse, as darkness in the world of living was thought to correspond to light in the world of the dead, and thus to make his *Sebayan* longhouse light (Jensen 1974: 93). Mourners also ate black rice and engaged in displays of misery, which were thought to convey white rice and joy in *Sebayan* (Jensen 1974: 94). The dead person's spirit did not settle into *Sebayan* until all the burial rites had been concluded and until then would return home to search for food (Jensen 1974: 108). The surviving relatives made offerings to appease the departed's spirit, who became angry if they were not fed (Jensen 1974: 108). Some ethnographers write that conditions in *Sebayan* resembled ordinary life, with spirits living in longhouses and cultivating rice (Jensen 1974: 108). Accordingly, the dead person still needed their earthly possessions, and for this reason mourners buried people with their personal possessions and other grave goods (Sandin & Sather 1980: 35). The dead were also for some time dependent on the living, sending a small centipede (*mengalai*) to ask for rice, which the living usually presented in response (Sandin & Sather 1980: 123). People not only provided offerings to their dead relatives, but also to some higher deities associated with *Sebayan*. During festivities such as *gawai antu*, or the festival of the dead, people invited the spirits of the dead and mythical figures associated with *Sebayan* to attend a big feast (Sandin & Sather 1980: 60). The goddess *Indai Billai* was thought to reside in

Sebayan and demanded offerings from people as they were preparing for *gawai antu* celebrations (Sandin & Sather 1980: 123). If people neglected these duties, she would spoil their food and wine (Sandin & Sather 1980: 123).

Other ethnographers write that, having arrived in *Sebayan*, the dead person's spirit spends some time "eating, drinking and revelling with members of the opposite sex" (Sutlive 1973: 208). In this stage, the dead person's spirit "may communicate with persons currently in the phase of 'living'" (Sutlive 1992: 11). Writing in 1866, a missionary noted that *Sebayan* had separate places for people depending on how they had died, such as in warfare or through suicide (Varney 2012). People tattooed themselves so the spirits of people they had known in life would recognize them in *Sebayan* (Varney 2012). Some people were thought to experience hardship in the afterlife, especially those who had died as infants (Varney 2012). But ethnographers also write that traditional afterlife beliefs had no concept of divine punishment as the Iban word for judgment (*pechara*) historically only described court cases, with no bearing on events after death (Varney 2012). Historically, neither were there words approximating heaven and hell (Varney 2012). After some time in *Sebayan*, the spirit journeys "through several river networks, the most important being *Mandai Mati* ('Death'), *Mandai Awai* ('Suffering'), and finally to *Mandai Jenoh* ('Peace')" (Sutlive 1973: 208). Finally, "he changes into dew which nourishes rice and, through some mystical process, is reborn as an Iban" (Sutlive 1992: 11; see also Sutlive 1973: 208).

Ethnographers also note some variation in people's afterlife beliefs, although these do not appear to have a moralistic connotation. For example, some Iban believed that every person had seven *samengat* or souls, and these die one after the other, and the soul only dissolves into dew when the last one has died (Jensen 1974: 108). Others believed in seven stages or divisions within *Sebayan* through which the soul must pass (Jensen 1974: 108). There were also differences between the funerary rites (and associated afterlife beliefs) reported for shamans and those of ordinary people. Ordinary people were buried facing downriver, towards *Mandai Mati* (Sandin & Sather 1980: 35). However, after the death of a shaman, his head was positioned to face upriver, as his soul was thought to journey to the top of Mt Rabong (Sandin & Sather 1980: 35). This mountain was significant in shamanic practices. Oral traditions hold that the first, mythical, shaman was initiated there by the goddess *Ini Inda* (Sandin & Sather 1980: 35).

While it appears that *Sebayan* was not a site of moralistic punishment in the afterlife, it nevertheless played a role in Iban notions of authority. In fact, the two worlds of the living and the dead were seen as complementary (Jensen 1974: 105), and the goings-on in one had implications for the other. During dreams, a person's spirit or *samengat* could leave the body and encounter other spirits (Jensen 1974: 116). As the land of the dead was a land of opposites (see above), nighttime in the land of the living corresponds to daytime in *Sebayan* (Jensen 1974: 104). As a result, spirits were usually encountered at night (Jensen 1974: 104). Stories about dream visits to *Sebayan* legitimated various aspects of Iban culture. For example, according to one oral tradition, a mythical ancestor dreamed that he had visited *Sebayan*, and having seen that the people there were tattooed, introduced tattooing to the Iban (Sandin & Sather 1980: 90). This porous boundary between the world of the living and that of the dead was a source of power, but it could also be dangerous. For example, sometimes a person's spirit could wander off and get lost, which could cause severe illness. Shamans went on spirit

journeys to retrieve the patient's spirit, and sometimes pursued it all the way to the Bridge of Fright (Graham 1987: 37). Shamans performed most of their ceremonies at nighttime, as this was thought to correspond to daytime in the land of the dead (*Sebayan*), and this was considered safer for the shaman (Graham 1987: 49). Some sources claim that the most capable shamans crossed the bridge and travelled all the way to *Sebayan*, although this is disputed by other accounts (see review in Graham 1987: 91p). When retrieving the spirit, shamans performed ecstatic healing ceremonies (Perham 1887: 103). During these, the shaman "calls upon the spirits of the sun and moon; the spirits in heaven and earth, spirits in trees, hills, forests, lowlands, and rivers, to come to his aid" (Perham 1887: 103).

During the colonial period, contact with Christian missionaries gradually reshaped Iban ideas about the afterlife, although traditional beliefs were not displaced entirely. Anglican missionaries were present in Iban territory by 1848 (Varney 2012). Some Iban leaders converted early on (Kedit 1980: 102). However, Christianized communities continued to practice traditional rituals such as pig sacrifices and customary chants performed at funerals (Kedit 1980: 102). By the first half of the 20th century, some Iban communities had begun to incorporate Christian concepts into their afterlife beliefs (Varney 2012). Specifically, Iban adopted the Christian concept of heaven, which the soul was thought to enter after its sojourn in *Sebayan* (Varney 2012). It appears that some Christian Iban began to view the Bridge of Fright as a test for the soul, and if the soul fell off the bridge, they were doomed to return as a ghost, although informants for a recent study did not think that this constituted a divine judgment of the kind seen in Christianity (Varney 2012). Some Christianized Iban continue to provide grave goods, and to believe that the deceased person requires tools and other equipment in the afterlife (Varney 2012). If no grave goods are provided, the deceased person experiences hardship in *Sebayan* and comes back to haunt their surviving relatives (Varney 2012).

Summary

The Iban's interactions with their primary deities and other spirits focused on appeasement through ritual sacrifice. Moreover, there is no evidence that the Iban believed in punishment after death: instead, all souls temporarily entered the land of the dead before returning to earth in the morning dew, although some sources also mention reincarnation. The spirits of the dead could experience suffering in the afterlife, although it appears that this was usually caused by the manner of death or their relatives' failure to present grave goods and the required food offerings, not by moral failings. Furthermore, while the afterlife and the spirit world were a source of power and authority, they were also dangerous. A more Christianized view of the afterlife was only adopted after contact with missionaries. However, the Iban did believe in supernatural agents who could punish or reward people based on the moral quality of their actions, although these were limited to this life. Indeed, the Iban followed a system of customary laws known as *adat*, which defined the rights and duties of all residents in the longhouse, including matters related to marriage and inheritance. Breaking *adat* results in punishment by members of the community, but in some cases, violations resulted in punishment from the supernatural world. These punishments could result in natural disasters and other catastrophes directed at the entire group rather than the individual transgressor.

Intriguingly, and of interest to Norzenzayan's (2013) ideas about supernatural monitoring, many of the immoral acts thought to cause 'cursedness' are covert, like theft, adultery, and other sexual delicts, and may therefore remain undetected or difficult to prove.

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Middle Yellow River Valley
NGA: Middle Yellow River Valley
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Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (5000–1250 BCE)
There is little known about religious beliefs in North China before the introduction of abundant written records in the Late Shang. There might have been human sacrifice in Yangshao, providing possible evidence for belief in an afterlife, but archaeological evidence seems inconclusive (Underhill and Habu 2008: 131). There is more evidence for sacrifice (including human sacrifice) and ritual practices in the succeeding Longshan and Erlitou cultures. Archaeologists have uncovered clearly demarcated ritual areas and sacrificial pits in Longshan settlements like Taosi and Wangchengang and Erlitou settlements like Yanshi (He 2013: 268; Demattè 1999: 126; Reinhart 2015a: 86). Music and feasting possibly accompanied these rituals (Underhill 2001: 159; Reinhart 2016, pers. comm.; Liu 2004: 70). Early forms of script have been unearthed from four Longshan sites (Demattè 1999, 127), and in the Early Shang (Erligang), there were bone fragments and ceramic jars with inscribed characters. These records, however, cannot tell us about the specific tenets of religious practices in this period and whether rituals were undertaken to appease moralizing spirits. Nonetheless, evidence for early spirituality and appeasement of some kind of forces helps lay the foundation for our understanding of late Bronze Age religion.

Late Bronze Age (1250–771 BCE)
Records became abundant during the Late Shang. The Shang worshipped many deities: ancestors of the royal clan; nature spirits, such as River, Mountain, Wind, and the cardinal directions; and a number of other spirit figures from popular myths or local traditions (Eno 1990a). Di (帝), the High God of the Shang, was the god of rain, snow, hail, wind, thunder, and disasters (Keightley 2000: 97). According to the traditional view, Di was the head of the Shang pantheon (but see Eno 1990a and Allan 2007 for alternative interpretations). Shang oracle bones talk about Di summoning natural phenomena to, for example, ruin harvests or call lightning to strike; Di could support or ruin political and military endeavors (Eno 2009: 71). The Shang king acted as an intermediary to appease or influence Di through the correct ritual sacrifices. Eno concludes there is no evidence in the oracle bone records for Di as a moralizing force: "Nowhere in the texts do we see clear indication that the Powers are beneficent …. The Shang rulers seek advance approval for their actions - sometimes, it seems, obsessively - but there is no suggestion that the basis for approval will be anything other than the arbitrary inclinations of the Powers" (Eno 2009: 100). The introduction of the concept of Tian (Heaven, 天) in Western Zhou inscriptions has prompted scholars to question the nature of religious continuity between the Late Shang and Western Zhou. Archaeologist and historian Li Feng notes that the relationship between Di and Tian is a point of debate (Li 2013: 143).

There is some debate whether Di and Tian were anthropomorphic in nature or more similar to non-agentic supernatural forces (Nicols and Logan, 165-6). Nicols and Logan write that many scholars believe Tian was an impersonal force while Di had more direct interest in human affairs, but recent text analyses give more evidence for a general lack of "high gods" in ancient China (165-6). The processes used in these studies, however, have many limitations. Slingerland (2015: 588) describes Tian and Di as anthropomorphic gods: "experiencing anger, sending down punishments, and abandoning immoral followers." However, he further notes Tian and Di punish by sending omens or disasters rather than appearing or speaking directly to

humans (Slingerland 2015: 588). Paper argues that the view of Tian and Di as anthropomorphic deities that reward and punish comes from historical misuse of Western definitions when approaching Chinese cosmology (Paper 2012).

The doctrine of the Mandate of Tian (Tianming, also the Mandate of Heaven) became a central concept in the Western Zhou, making a significant change in the Chinese religious landscape. The Mandate is mentioned in the *Book of Documents* (Shang Shu) by Western Zhou ruler King Cheng (1042-1021 BCE) (Shaughnessy 1999: 314). *The Book of Documents*, like all Chinese classical texts, however, was compiled much later in Chinese history (written at least in the Warring States, while Zuo Zhuan is 4th century BCE). However, the text suggests Zhou elite might have reworked the Shang concept of a high god for their own political purposes. In this, "God [Di] lost his omnipresent power over both human and natural words, a power that was taken over by Heaven [Tian]" (Li 2013: 144). The Mandate of Heaven is also mentioned in the *Classic of Poetry*, another classical Chinese text compiled in the seventh century BCE. The odes in the *Classic of Poetry* were performed in feudal courts and were seen as representative of the culture and values espoused by former Zhou kings (Waley 1987: xxii). The *Classic of Poetry* notes that King Wen of Zhou, founder of the Zhou dynasty and father of the first Zhou emperor, Wu was given the Mandate of Heaven (Waley 1987: 250). The following passage shows the interrelationship between the ruler, Heaven, and Di, and emphasizes that the mandate is passed from father to son:

I
King Wên is on high
Oh, he shines in Heaven!
Chou is an old people,
But its charge is new.
The land of Chou became illustrious,
Blessed by God's charge.
King Wên ascends and descends
On God's left hand, on His right.
II
Very diligent was King Wên,
His high fame does not cease;
He spread his bounties in Chou,
And now in his grandsons and sons,
In his grandsons and sons,
The stem has branched
Into manifold generations,
And all the knights of Chou
Are glorious in their generation.[5]
(trans. Waley 1987: 250)

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[5] The Chinese term Waley translates as "God's charge" corresponds to the Mandate of Heaven, Burton Watson (in de Bary and Bloom, eds. 1999: 38) translates the same term as "God's Mandate."

There is sparse material evidence from the Western Zhou on the Mandate of Heaven. Robert Eno points to a 998 BCE Western Zhou inscription that quotes a ruler named King Kang claiming the Shang had lost the Mandate of Tian because of its king's acceptance of poor behavior like drunkenness and overall bad governance (Eno 2009: 101; Li 2013: 144). As Li explains, "…the last Shang king was denounced as a tyrant who was vicious and paranoid: his officials were indulgent and alcoholic and deserved a total destruction, and the Zhou had the inevitable responsibility to exercise Heaven's punishment" (Li 2013: 143). It seems that Tian took on the "role of ethical guardian, rewarding and punishing according the quality of their stewardship of the state" (Eno 2009: 101). However, the inscription could also be interpreted as critiquing drunkenness at sacrificial rituals involving wine and the inscription could be referring to correct rites and rituals rather than moral behavior. The Western Zhou used the Mandate of Heaven as justification for overthrowing the Shang and therefore as political legitimation. The first Zhou king received I (merit) from Tian, which was earned by subsequent kings through "military and ritual performances as well as through prescribed sacrifices to the earlier Zhou kings." (Cook 2020: 443). When looking at inscriptions dated to the Zhou period, it seems the evidence is strong for a cosmology based on ritual rather than moral behavior.

Additionally, during the Western Zhou only the king had a direct connection to Tian. The royal monopoly on Heaven ended after the fall of the Western Capital in 771 BCE, following which lower-level rulers, such as the Duke of Qin or the ruler of the small state of Xu, began also invoking Heaven (Eno 1990b:26). This "democratization" of Heaven was further developed by the Confucians (see the next section). This is why it is important to critically approach the classical written texts describing Zhou views of Heaven, as they may be projecting their moral concerns back into the past. One passage of the *Classic of Poetry* asserts that those who make ritual sacrifices to Heaven will benefit in life (in this case "The Descendant" has made a ritual sacrifice). In other words, it would appear from this text that supernatural agents are concerned not with moral behavior; rather an emphasis on honoring Heaven and other spirits.

> 161
> The Descendant's crops
> Are thick as thatch, tall as a shaft;
> The Descendant's stacks
> Are high as cliffs, high as hills.
> We shall need thousands of carts,
> Shall need thousands of barns,
> For millet, rice, and spiked millet;
> The labourers are in luck.
> 'Heaven reward you with mighty blessings!
> Long life to you, age unending!'
> (trans. Waley 1987: 170)

Due to a lack of primary evidence about Zhou religion, it is difficult to know how the Mandate functioned in daily religious and court life. A story from the later *Book of Documents* about King Cheng of Zhou, however, suggests the ruler's relationship to Heaven was complicated, and that Heaven, like Di, could be arbitrary in its will. In the text, King Cheng

performs turtle shell divination to ask Heaven whether it would be auspicious to attack his own uncles: "Although the oracles regarding such an attack were auspicious, the king's advisors all urged him to disregard them in the face of the difficulty of the task and the disquietude of the people. The king acknowledged this difficulty and disquietude but refused to go against the apparent will of Heaven (Shaughnessy 1999: 314)." In this specific example, Tian is not a beneficent being and does not act as any form of "moral compass."

Li Feng suggests that the introduction of the Mandate of Heaven changed the relationship between the ruler and the people in that the people were no longer inextricably linked to their ruler or government. The Western Zhou did not slaughter the Shang people in their conquest but incorporated them into their new polity. Li writes, "The subjugated Shang should have no blame for the Zhou because their own kings and ministers caused the removal of the Heaven's Mandate from them. (Li 2013: 144)."

Mark Lewis gives examples from the *Book of Documents* and *The Zuo Tradition (Zuo Zhuan)* in which Tian is evoked by army commanders (note: Lewis also notes that these speeches are probably fiction) (Lewis 1990: 24). In these speeches, army commanders tell their troops they are following the will of Heaven by fighting a particular enemy who has committed crimes. The commanders tell their troops that Heaven will punish them if they do not follow proper conduct in battle, "and in some cases the rewards they will receive if they obey and triumph" (Lewis 1990: 24). These speeches suggest Tian had some kind of directed sense of punishment for immoral behavior and that the will of Heaven could be followed by officials and soldiers who seemed to act as proxies for their ruler. This also appears to be the first appearance of MSP directed at loyalty to the polity.

Much evidence on the Mandate of Heaven in Western Zhou comes from texts compiled in later centuries like the *Book of Documents* and *The Zuo Tradition*, likely written during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods in which scholars promoted a return to Western Zhou political practices. Therefore, the exact tenets of Mandate and the role of Tian in the Late Bronze Age period are sketchy at best.

Iron Age (Eastern Zhou: Spring and Autumn, Warring States: 771–221 BCE)

During the fragmented Spring and Autumn period, no ruler claimed to hold Tian's Mandate. The Mandate was also highly contested during the Warring States period. In these periods of turmoil, Confucius, Mencius, and other Ruist thinkers looked back to Zhou times, nostalgic for the concept of a clearly enforced Mandate (Loewe 2003: 610). This was partially a result of the scholarly trend in the Eastern Zhou period that promoted a return to Western Zhou traditions and governance. The concept of Heaven is pervasive in ideology and scholarship from this period. Mark Edward Lewis writes, "Several of the later chapters of the Shang Shu and Mencius stated that the perceptions of Heaven are those of the people" (Lewis 1990: 236). Lewis argues that Confucius and Mencius connected the concept of Tian directly to the will of the people. According to A.T. Nuyen, modern scholars interpret Mencius' views of Tian differently: a more liberal viewpoint connects Tian to the will of the people, while more conservative scholars see Tian as transcending the will of the people (Nuyen 2013: 113). In a text analysis exercise of pre-Qin texts, Clark and Winslett (2011) found strong associations between Tian and Di and both moralizing and reward/punishment terms. Therefore, the scholarly debate on the role of Tian continues.

Axial Age thinkers in China offered different interpretations of Tian and its Mandate. On one hand, Confucian thought equated the strength of a ruler's army to their adherence to the will of Tian: "Heaven was identified as a moralized nature which reflected the condition of the people, so the strength of the army depended on following the moral principles of Heaven/nature" (Lewis 1990: 236). However, the concept of Tian could extend beyond the ruler: Confucius also believed he was a messenger of Tian and that Tian protected him. In *Analects* 9.5, Confucius does not fear harm at the hands of the people at Kuang, who surrounded his chariot after a case of mistaken identity. The *Analects* quotes him as stating, "If Heaven intended this culture to perish, it would not have given it to those of us who live after King Wen's death. Since Heaven did not intend that this culture should perish, what can the people of Kuang do to me? (*Analects* 9.5, trans. Slingerland 2003: 88)." In addition, for Confucius, the Way of Heaven was linked to the concept of fate: while Heaven demands correct behavior there is little men can do to influence its outcome. This is underlined in a section of *Analects* 14.36: "The Master said, 'Whether or not the Way is to be put into action is a matter of fate. Whether or not the Way is to be discarded is also a matter of fate" (trans. Slingerland 2003: 168). In the accompanying commentary, Confucius' response is interpreted as, "a surety of one's own rectitude and a confidence that Heaven's will shall be done" (ibid.). Nicols and Logan (2017) put Confucius' views on Tian as: "the text represents it as a bundle of contradictions." (165).

In some texts, Confucius saw Tian as a clear source of moral authority that could not be swayed. His disciple Mengzi had a different view. He believed the realm of Tian was beyond the control of humans, but one could actively cultivate the self, which was given by Tian (Adler 2016:166). Mengzi argued that rulers had to understand their own nature to understand Tian, "and that the Mandate of Heaven was equivalent to the support of the people" (Lewis 1990: 236). For Mengzi, then, Tian becomes less of a mystical, all-knowing force and more of a metaphor for responsible and fair governance. In addition, Mengzi cites a section of the *Book of Poetry* that describes how the Mandate of Heaven is not permanently given to one family or dynasty (Loewe 2003: 610).

It is important to note that the concept of Tian as a moralizing agent/force during this period was developed primarily within a restricted group of intellectuals, Ruists (Confucians). In addition, these texts likely only gained influence in later periods. Confucius, for example, could not find a ruler who would put his ideas into practice in his own lifetime (Van Norden 2011: 20). It seems that there was no one clear interpretation of Tian among the intellectual elite, and it is unclear how much impact these philosophies had on different Warring States rulers.

In the non-philosophical thought, in contrast, Tian was often portrayed as an amoral deity, or fate (Eno 1990b). Even some Confucian scholars, like Xunzi, believed that Heaven was not involved in human affairs, and promoted ritual and rule of law over the cult of Tian (Kim 2011: 375). This loss of the moralizing nature of Heaven in non-philosophical thought apparently reflected the chaotic conditions and political fragmentation in China prevailing after the Zhou dynasty was forced to flee the Western Capital in 771 BCE. Eno (1990b: 28) provides many examples and cites Ikeda 1968 for additional ones. A poem dated to soon after the fall of the western capital illustrates this view of Tian (Eno 1990b: 26):

Bright Tian so vast prolongs not its grace,
Hurls misery and famine, beheading the states.
Bright Tian rises awesome, unthinking, unplanning,
Lets the guilty go free; they have paid for their crimes—
And the guiltless must join them, all drowning as one.

This poem demonstrates the concept of more collective punishment in relation to Tian. This concept is also reflected in the *Mozi*, when Mozi (470-391 BCE) describes how Heaven punished the people of Zheng for killing their ruler by giving them "three years of scarcity" (Mz 49/16-20, qtd in Fraser 2016: 210). It seems that early philosophers began to conceptualize Heaven as an entity that could have relationships with individuals or groups, rather than just the ruler.

Warring States thinker Zou Yan (304-240 BCE) viewed dynastic changes through the theory of Five Phases of Change. This theory was later used as political legitimization by the Qin dynasty (Chen 2014: 326). The cycles are based on the five elements of earth, wood, metal, fire, wood, and water. These elements, "form two parallel cycles: the cycle of creation (*sheng* 生) and the cycle of conquest (*ke* 克)" (Chen 2014: 327). In dynastic cycles, the order of elements creates a pattern of destruction: a water element dynasty, for example, would come after a fire element dynasty. Each element is connected to a specific color: yellow, blue, white, red, and black, respectively. Zou Yan connected this thought to the Mandate of Heaven. Chen writes, "Zou Yan claims that the Mandate of Heaven approves the legitimacy of a dynasty by sending self-manifesting auspicious signs in the ritual color that matches the element of the new dynasty (Chen 2014: 328)." Zou Yan claimed the Zhou dynasty was connected to the element of fire and that Heaven sent red crows to the Zhou ancestral temple during King Wen's rule. Starting with the Qin dynasty, the Five Phases of Change were used to legitimize dynastic cycles. The theory was also used to explain the shift of the Mandate of Heaven once it was reincorporated in the Han dynasty (Chen 2014: 328).

Earlier philosophical Daoists (Dao Jia) saw Heaven as a non-judgmental entity. There is little evidence on the life of Chinese philosopher Laozi, who is credited as the father of Daoist philosophy and the author of the *Dao de Jing.* There are various theories on when Laozi lived, ranging from the seventh to fourth century BCE, or if he was a real figure or an historical construct. Most modern scholars do not believe he was the author of the *Dao de Jing* (Chan 2000: 2-3). In the *Dao de Jing,* Heaven and the Dao (or the Way) are interrelated. Hans-Georg Moeller concludes, "...when heaven, as a process, follows the Dao, there will be order. But when it does not, there will be natural catastrophes" (Moeller 44). He adds that the text discourages any actions that might go against Heaven's will, because they will likely fail (ibid. 44). Instead of moralizing behavior, the *Dao de Jing* encourages restraint, suppression of acting for personal gain and non-action (ibid. 48). Laozi's more rationalistic follower Zhuangzi (late 4th century BCE) also believed that Tian was not judgmental and he critiqued Confucian thinkers who saw Heaven as a more punitive force (Chong xii).

Later Daoist religious movements in the Han used ancient Chinese concepts like cosmic resonance theory and the Five Phases of Change to promote moralizing agendas. Cosmic resonance theory, first recorded in the Qin state in the third century BCE was based on the ancient concepts of *ganying* (感应) and yin-yang theory (Meyer, Weller, and Bol n.d.). Yuet-

Kueng Lo dates it to the Han in the chapter "Destiny and Retribution in Early Medieval China [2010]). In both theories, the world was naturally balanced, and it was human behavior that caused disorder and chaos. The concepts of yin and yang must be balanced to keep the universe in order. Both the ruler and people were responsible for maintaining this balance: "All human actions had cosmic repercussions. Yin-oriented actions among men, like the consumption of wine (yin) in the marketplace (also yin), would give distress to the yang element and cause social disturbances" (Hendrischke 2000: 148).

At court, Tian worship was replaced by worship of Tai Yi (Great One) by the end of the Warring States period (Cook 2009: 239). Constance Cook describes Tai Yi as, "an abstract astral power" (239). It is unclear if there is any connection with Tai Yi and individual behavior (Cook 2019).

Chinese traditional thought conceived of a non-punitive world of the dead. This tradition is known as early as the fourth century BCE (Bokenkamp 2007: 34). The dead moved freely and left when they wanted (Zhang 2014: 119). Chinese pre-Buddhist underworld consisted of separate spaces including Yellow Springs, Fengdu, and Mount Tai. In Yellow Springs, the common people worked in a similar manner to their life on Earth. At Mount Tai the dead served in a bureaucracy which ran the underworld (Bokenkamp 2007: 35). Tian determined the fate of a dynasty and could cause chaos that brought suffering to the people, but there seems to be no concept of individualistic punishment by Tian in pre-Buddhist China (apart from the hints in Confucius, as noted above).

In addition, Chinese traditional cosmology featured a pantheon of deities, ancestors, ghosts, and powerful sage-kings, who controlled natural forces. Mu-chou Poo (2009) describes their relationship with the living world as amoral: "When unknown illnesses or natural disasters occurred, as the text suggests, people sought the reasons outside themselves. In other words, personal morality was not considered as having anything to do with these difficulties in life" (Poo 2009: 308). Protection or favor from spirits and ghosts depending on ritual knowledge (Poo 2009: 312). Morality was important when it came to, "various social relations and was important in maintaining the proper operation of the real world (Poo 2009: 313)." Poo points out the Mandate of Heaven, between Tian and the ruler, as an exception to the amoral cosmology.

However, more research is still being done on the role of deities and spirits present throughout Chinese history. In a text analysis, Nicols and Logan (2017) find that while high gods (Tian, Di) are more likely than the low gods to be mentioned in ancient and medieval texts (from the Chinese Text Project, ranging from before 480 BCE to 1279 CE) alongside terms for reward and punishment, sage kings are more likely mentioned alongside such terms than high gods (Nicols and Logan 2017: 175). Nicols et al. (2020) similarly looked for markers of moralizing high gods and broad supernatural punishment in the same body of texts. In their micro-modeling results, sage kings and ancestors had higher collocation to morality-related terms than high gods. "At the 10LR context window, Sage kings had the strongest relation to Punishment, Emperors to Reward, Deities to Cognition, and Ancestors to Religion. Remarkably, the exception is the High gods category, which never had the strongest semantic association with any social-functional category, at either 5LR or 10LR windows" (Nicols et al. 2020: 14). While this kind of text analysis has its limitations overall, it provides interesting possibilities for further research.

Early Imperial (Qin, Eastern Han, Western Han: 221 BCE – 220 CE)

The Qin Dynasty legitimized itself using the concept of the Five Phases of Change (*wu xing*) rather than the Mandate of Heaven, rejecting the idea of a single omnipresent supernatural force (Loewe 2003: 221). The first Qin emperor claimed his ancestor once caught a black dragon, evoking ties to the ritual color black and element of water, which naturally followed the Zhou element of fire (Chen 2014: 329). However, the Mandate of Heaven was not specifically evoked for Qin legitimization. The theory of Five Elements without the Mandate seems to be based purely on omen rather than on moral behavior or judgment by high gods. However, there is evidence that the Qin state evoked the Mandate in the past according to Poo (2014: 133). Poo (2014) argues the Qin inherited the Zhou ritual system. The Qin also looked to past ideological traditions and texts in the creation of a central state (Lewis 2007: 208), and therefore might have been influenced by Confucian or other concepts of a more moralizing Tian. It is unclear which interpretation of Tian was upheld by the Qin.

The Western Han also followed Five Phases of Change theory, but the Mandate of Heaven began to return to the political sphere. In the early Western Han, philosopher and official Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BCE) advocated for a return to Heaven worship, but these were not generally held views (Loewe 2003: 611). According to Michael Loewe, the first official mention of the Mandate of Heaven in the Han dynasty came in 44 BCE in a memorial by then junior official Kuang Heng. In 30 BCE the Western Han state cult officially switched from the Five Elements to the Mandate of Heaven. However, this was followed by several further shifts back and forth. The Mandate of Heaven was only established solidly in the Chinese imperial tradition by Wang Mang in 5 CE. Wang held imperial power since Emperor Ai's death in 1 CE. In 9 CE he overthrew the Western Han and established the short-lived Xin dynasty (ended 23 CE). According to Michael Loewe (2003: 611), "[The Mandate] is cited in the requests made by officials that [Wang] should accede to the imperial throne; it is quoted in a document entitled Fu ming that he circulated on an empire-wide basis immediately after doing so." The Mandate of Heaven was also invoked after Wang Mang's death in 23 CE. The first emperor of the Eastern Han claimed the Mandate as follows: "Wang Mang had bequeathed his successors the means of strengthening their claims to rule the world under the protection of Heaven." While Tian's Mandate became the official cult, the theory of Five Elements was also still occasionally used to legitimize dynastic cycles.

By the late Han, the Mandate of Heaven had evolved. The emperor had to do more than conduct the proper sacrifices and rituals, as he had in ancient times (Ivanhoe 2004: 272). The Mandate now related more closely to the moral behavior of the emperor and his ability to rule. Moral rule was attached to a concept called *de* or virtue and a concern for the welfare of the people. The Mandate of Heaven now gave the Chinese people the right to overthrow a dynasty which no longer acts in their interests: "Heaven showed his displeasure not directly but by omens: by cataclysms and disasters, droughts and inundations, by sudden eclipses, comets, and so on" (von Collani 2014: 179). This description gives the sense of potential collective punishment or suffering for the actions of the emperor.

While the people could suffer collectively under an emperor who had lost Heaven's favor, the concept of individual morality began to develop under the influence of Buddhism. Buddhism was not an official ideology in the Han period, but Buddhist ideas regarding hell

gradually became influential during the Eastern Han (Zhang 2014: 119). These ideas were especially pervasive between the second and seventh centuries (Zhang 2014: 102). Buddhism introduced the idea of a punitive underworld and karmic retribution, because in Buddhist thought individuals are judged for the transgressions they commit during life (see the section on Buddhism). They are reborn in heaven or hell, or as humans, animals, or ghosts on Earth. Chinese thinkers adopted Buddhist concepts of hell but added indigenous elements. In the new concept of hell, the dead are tried in court trials which involve physical torture (Zhang 2014: 121-123).

Religious Daoism (*dao jiao*) sometimes claims loose connections to Daoist philosophy. Its later development is largely an imitation of Buddhist infrastructure but at a tenth of the size. This period saw the rise of two large popular religious Daoist movements. The first organized school, the Way of the Celestial Masters (or the Five Pecks of Rice), appeared in the second half of the second century CE. Another popular movement, Taiping Daoists, who followed the Way of Heavenly Peace, incited the Yellow Turban Rebellion in 184 CE during the Eastern Han. The movement's leader, Zhang Jue, based some of his teachings on the Daoist texts compiled as the *Taiping Jing.* The Yellow Turbans attempted to use ancient concepts outlined above like yin-yang theory and the Five Phases of Change to promote a moralizing social agenda, banning polygamy and female infanticide (Hendrischke 2000: 148-9). These religious movements were outside of the official ideologies of the state.

Medieval (from the fall of Han to Late Tang: 220–907 CE)
In imperial China, the Mandate of Heaven continued to be a way for dynasties to define their legitimacy through traditional Chinese concepts (Holcombe 2011: 60). Barend ter Haar writes that the common people were also fascinated by dynastic transitions and the loss of the Mandate of Heaven, as seen in popular folklore covering, for example, both the rise and eventual fall of the Han (ter Haar 2000: 308). The Mandate created, "the notion of an 'orthodox succession' (a concept dated to the Han) that recast dynastic succession into a unilinear narrative (Rawski 2015: 107)." This, along with the continued use of the Five Phases of Change, allowed non-Han dynasties like the Northern Wei to claim political legitimacy. The concept of Heaven-worship and political legitimacy through a Heavenly force are similar to shamanic beliefs held by Mongols, Manchus, Turks, and other Central Asian cultures (Rawski 1998: 198; see "Mongolia" chapter for more information on MSP in Central Asia). Central Asian dynasties like the Jin, Yuan, and Qing integrated shamanic rituals in their Heaven-worship (ibid., 235).

The use of cosmic resonance theory continued as well. The official Tang preface to *The Book of Changes* describes the need for rulers to act in accordance with Heaven and only make careful changes that did not upset the balance of the universe (Bol 2008: 122). While the Tang also believed the emperor was given the Mandate and therefore the supreme right of rule over his people, cosmic resonance theory could act as a check on the absolute power of the emperor (ibid.). If the emperor did not govern well, Heaven would send natural disasters.

Medieval China was influenced by Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and traditional popular religion. Mahayana Buddhism entered China in the first century CE through contacts with Indian and Central Asian merchants traveling the Silk Route or southern maritime trade routes. It was not a widely espoused state ideology, however, until the Western Jin (265–317 CE) (Knechtges 2010: 183). Buddhism became dominant during the Six Dynasties Period (220-

589 CE) (Xiong 2009: 68) and was adopted as a mass religion during the Tang period (eighth century). While Mahayana Buddhists believe in powerful *bodhisattvas* (those who have reached enlightenment but choose to stay on Earth and help others reach nirvana), they do not seem to act as high moralizing gods. Buddhism promotes a shared universal moral code (see section on *Buddhism*), with an emphasis on karma as a moralizing supernatural force. "Chinese people [understood] Buddhism almost exclusively in terms of its doctrine of karma and transmigration" (Lo 2010: 337).

Before the rise of Buddhism in China, charity was mainly elite private giving within one's lineage (Simon 2013: 60). The first Buddhist hospitals were constructed in the Northern and Southern dynasties period (386–589 CE). By the Tang period, Buddhist monasteries and societies ran hospitals, kitchens and orphanages for the poor, and provided housing for the elderly. Buddhists also gave alms to monasteries and donated private goods including land and in turn, monasteries supported the construction of public works (Benn 2004: 29). Buddhist organizations also constructed large public works including roads and bridges (Simon 2013: 63). Buddhism received state support in the seventh century CE under Tang Empress Wu Zetian, but monasteries were later persecuted by the state in the late Tang.

Religious Daoists attempted to create a more cohesive ideology in the fifth and sixth centuries. This included the compilation of Daoist canon from a diverse set of classical texts. This canon was invented: the ancient authors of these texts would not have identified as part of the same school or religion (Kirkland 2002: 177). Dao Jiao was promoted by the official court in the Northern Wei, but only after the arrival of Buddhism (Xiong 2009: 11). Daoist leaders often served as advisors to the emperor (Kirkland 2004: 145), and Tang emperors generally favored religious Daoism.

Later Imperial (960–1912 CE)

The Northern Song saw the rise of Neo-Confucianism, a more secular and rationalistic version of Confucianism. While the state examinations only included Confucian Classics under the Northern Song, scholars set up large private academies for Neo-Confucian studies (Zhao 2015: 337). State-run institutions began to provide charity and relief in the Northern Song (Simon 2013: 65). Neo-Confucianism continued to influence the court in the succeeding Ming period. These Neo-Confucian elites, however, still held Daoist and Buddhist beliefs. The work of Buddhist charitable halls continued into the late Ming period.

The Mandate of Heaven continued to evolve during the later imperial period. In the Northern Song, Neo-Confucians like Zhu Xi reinterpreted Confucian concepts of Heaven, combining the concepts of the natural order and the moral order of humans. According to Joseph Adler:

> The Neo-Confucians of the Song followed Mencius in thinking of Heaven in mostly naturalistic terms, yet still with a moral dimension. However, both tian and ming were partly reinterpreted: Heaven was the source of the cosmic order (li 理), which comprised both the natural order (tianli 天理) and the moral order (daoli 道理). In the human being, one's nature (xing) was the instantiation of that order. The good nature that Mencius had discussed was now called more

specifically the "nature of Heaven-and-earth" (tiandi zhi xing 天地之性) or the "original nature" (ben xing 本性). (Adler 2016: 167)

This reinterpretation created a more codependent relationship between Heaven, nature, and the people. The Song thinkers questioned the notion of the emperor as the center of the universe, and some officials even believed the Mandate of Heaven was not real (Bol 2008: 125). According to Peter Bol, Song treaties name previous Liao rulers as "sons of Heaven" suggesting that the Song did not believe that there was a single ruler alone mandated by Heaven. Neo-Confucians argued that it was impossible for past rulers to have truly held the mandate of Heaven because "this could be achieved only through learning and the way of learning had been lost for 1,400 years (Bol 2008: 130)."

The Hongwu Emperor (1368–1398 CE), founder of the Ming Dynasty, however, feared liberal interpretation of Mengzi's view of the Mandate of Heaven, that Heaven depends on the will of the people. Hong Wu ordered scholars to delete passages in Mengzi's work that implied the people had the right to exercise Tian's will (Ivanhoe 2004: 272). A quote from Hongwu in 1392 CE suggests that the emperor's virtue is key in keeping the Mandate, and the people follow those who have virtue: "People are the mandate of Heaven. He who has virtue Heaven will give it to him and people will follow. If he does not have [virtue]. Heaven will withdraw [the mandate] and people will leave him" (quoted in Duindam 2016: 50). Hongwu also worried that his successors would lose the Mandate as they had been brought up in imperial luxury (Duindam 2016: 302). The Great Ming Code, drawn up under his rule, was closely linked to the Mandate of Heaven. Yonglin Jiang writes, "In imperial China, as in many other societies, legal culture would not have been considered justified without the intercession of supernatural forces" (Jiang 2011: 180). Shih-shan Henry Tsai writes that in the reign of the Ming Yongle emperor, "…following the teachings of the sages and cultivating virtues within himself were imperative in winning the heavenly mandate, frequent rituals were equally important as outward expressions of his respect for Heaven" (Tsai 2001: 82). This suggests at least some Ming emperors saw a return to an emphasis on a ruler's virtue and ritual behavior as a way to maintain the Mandate rather than the more rationalistic approach espoused by Northern Song intellectuals.

To overcome the image of outside invaders, the early Qing rulers reigned as Confucian emperors. Because their empire was multicultural, they also encouraged the practice of Manchu shamanism and attempted to legitimize themselves as Tibetan Buddhist rulers (Rawski 1998: 199). The Qing practiced tolerance towards Muslims and Uyghurs and funded mosque construction until the nineteenth century (ibid.). Manchu conqueror and father of the first Qing emperor, Nurhaci (1559–1626 CE), believed that Heaven helped him win campaigns against the states of Yehe and Haida. In his "Seven Grievances Against the Ming Dynasty", he declared, "The king of the state of Yehe acted against the Will of Heaven and was punished by Heaven" (translated in Ming 2017: 29). This suggests that Heaven could aid and punish rulers outside of the emperor—a more diffuse Mandate similar to the Song's concept of multiple "sons of Heaven." In a more practical interpretation of the Mandate, Neo-Confucian official Li Guangdi (1642–1718 CE) wrote that the mandate of Heaven is determined by a dynasty's choices and actions, and that a dynasty needs good officials in order to maintain it (Ng 2001: 169-170). Despite changes in the concept of the Mandate, supernatural omens, unrest, corruption, and

natural disasters still seemed to predict the loss of the Mandate of Heaven by the ruling dynasty, as it did in ancient times. In 1811, the appearance of a bright comet inspired the Eight Trigrams Rebellion, showing that the common people still looked to Heaven for signs that the Mandate was shifting, or at least used supernatural omens as an excuse to attempt to overthrow a declining dynasty. A series of subsequent rebellions and foreign defeats further suggested that the Qing dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven (Elleman and Paine 2019: 565) In the declining Late Qing, Empress Dowager Cixi referred to the Mandate of Heaven after the Boxer Rebellion, saying, "China is weak; the only thing we can depend upon is the hearts of the people" (Schoppa 2000: 46), implying that the Mandate partially depended on the will of the people.

Summary

Late Shang (1250–1045 BCE) deities lacked any moralistic aspects. We infer a similar absence of MSP in the preceding periods. The first appearance of MSP is Tian in Western Zhou (1045–771 BCE). However, the primary concern of Western Zhou deities remained with ritual; morality aspects were limited (and rather vague); punishment was uncertain and inflicted on whole groups, rather than individuals; and dealing with Tian was the exclusive domain of the ruler. During Eastern Zhou the concept of Tian was democratized by the Ruists, but this development, at least initially, affected a small segment of literate elites. Furthermore, here was significant variation between different Confucian thinkers on Tian and its Mandate.

The Mandate of Heaven was officially adopted as the state ideology during the Han period. It was explicitly invoked by Wang Mang and endorsed by the first Eastern Han emperor (first century CE). Nevertheless, Tian never evolved into a fully moralizing supernatural force/agent. According to conflicting interpretations, Tian could either punish transgressions directly, or leave enforcement to human agents and punishment could be either individual-focused, or collective. Furthermore, all these MSP aspects apparently affected only the state and the elites; the popular religion in China lacked any moralizing aspects.

The rise of Neo-Confucianism c.1000 CE encouraged the development of a more rationalistic and secular state. Song Dynasty Neo-Confucians suggested the emperor was not the center of the universe and some even denied the Mandate altogether. The first Ming emperor, however, marked a return to a more traditional approach to the Mandate and Heaven-worship. Thus, the interpretation of the Mandate was not consistent in Imperial China and was greatly influenced by shifting court ideologies. By the end of the Qing dynasty, it appears that both ritual behavior and good governance/the will of the people were key in maintaining the Mandate.

Fully developed MSP arrived in China with Buddhism, which started making inroads during the first century CE, first became the official ideology c.300 CE, and became a mass religion during the Tang period (eight century). There are aspects of MSP in Daoism, but it was not a cohesive religion or fully integrated in the state cult until after the introduction of Buddhism.

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Sogdiana
NGA: Sogdiana
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Sarazm (3500–2000 BCE)
The site of Sarazm, in modern Tajikistan, constitutes the earliest evidence of urban society in Sogdiana. Sources do not speculate with regards to possible MSP-related beliefs at this time, but the site has yielded possible evidence for ritual activity that appears to suggest some degree of continuity with succeeding periods. Such evidence includes disk-shaped and rectangular altars with deep holes at the centre that may have been used "for the lighting of a sacred fire" (Isakov 1994: 10).

Andronovo (c. 2000 BCE–1400 BCE)
The Andronovo culture is a blanket designation for the groups of people who inhabited the Kazakh steppe during the Bronze Age (Cunliffe 2015: 142). Archaeological evidence suggests that they practiced mixed farming and stock raising (particularly camels, horses, oxen, and sheep), that their elite warriors rode chariots and held high-ranking positions in society, that key rituals revolved around fire, and that they buried their dead under a kind of tumulus known as a *kurgan*. Together, these things correspond to what has been reconstructed for the Indo-

[6] This narrative also benefited from information on Indo-Iranian religion provided by Peter Sahota.

Iranians based on linguistic data, suggesting that the Andronovans were an Indo-Iranian people (Kuzmina 2007, 238).

No texts have survived from the Indo-Iranian religion. However, because Zoroastrianism and Vedic Hinduism both descended from it, certain aspects of Indo-Iranian religion may be speculatively reconstructed by means of a comparison between the two later religions (Gnoli 2004, 2005). Two sets of sacred texts have proven to be particularly useful in this regard: the Vedas and the Avesta. The Vedas are a collection of hymns likely composed some time between 1500 and 600 BCE (Whaling 2009: 14-16); of these, the most important is the Rigveda. The Avesta is the Zoroastrian sacred text; the general consensus is that its oldest section, the Old Avesta, likely dates to around 1000 BCE (Kellens 1987).

Witzel (2001) writes that the Indo-Iranian people likely preceded both the Rigveda and the Old Avestan by "a few hundred years", and that their "society was governed by a set of strict moral principles, including adherence to truth (satya : *haiϑiia*), oaths (touching or drinking water, *kośam pā*) and other oral agreements between individuals (arya-man : *airiia-man*, especially for marriage and guest friendship) and between tribes (mitra : *miϑra*) which regulated water rights and pasture".

The Indo-Iranians likely believed that their gods rewarded actions inspired by honesty and reciprocity and punished actions that transgressed against these values. We may infer this from the fact that gods are described as doing so in both the Rigveda and the Avesta. Specifically, in the Avesta, the god Mithra is "the protector of those that are faithful to their contracts and [...] the enemy of those who 'belie' their 'contract' or 'contractual word' (*miϑra druj*)" (Thieme 1960: 306-307). As for the Rigveda, Thieme (1960: 309) quotes the following passage:

"Sharpen thy strong weapon, Indra, against those without contract ('who do not recognize the sacredness of contracts/ treaties'), who deceive/ betray a contract (concluded between former or potential enemies) [and thereby: God Mitra], a hospitality (the contract existing between guest and host) [and thereby: God Aryaman], agreements (agreed upon by mutual friends), and true speech (in general, or in particular: 'a solemn oath') [and thereby: God Varuṇa]." (10.89.9)

It is not entirely clear, however, how exactly the gods enforced the principles of honesty or reciprocity; indeed, it is worth noting that, according to Gnoli (2004), Indo-Iranians likely believed in a continued existence after death, but they also likely thought that one's fate after death was determined by one's status in life rather than the moral quality of one's behaviour: specifically, social elites such as priests and warriors were probably thought to go to a kind of heaven after death, while everyone else went to a "grey, shadowy" world that "is neither good nor bad".

The sources consulted are silent with regards to aspects of morality besides honesty or reciprocity.

Early Iron Age (1400–520 BCE)

After Sarazm, the second urban phase in the prehistory of Sogdiana began with the site of Koktepe, which was occupied in two phases before Achaemenid rule: from 1400 BCE to 1000 BCE (Koktepe I), and from 750 BCE to 520 BCE (Koktepe II). Most evidence for ritual and religion

at the site dates to the period of Achaemenid rule and after. However, the discovery of a discoid marble plaque dated to the Bronze Age in a pit in a courtyard area has been interpreted by Rapin (2007: 33) as possibly connected to purification rituals. Moreover, Koktepe II saw the construction of the earliest known monumental architecture at the site, some of which may have had religious functions (Rapin 2007: 34). Sources do not speculate with regards to possible MSP during either phase; however, Rapin (2007: 42) does write that it is not at present possible to attribute any of the evidence for ritual at pre-Achaemenid Koktepe to an early form of Zoroastrianism.

There is evidence for nomadic intrusions (and the subsequent abandonment of the aforementioned monumental architecture) at Koktepe and Sogdiana generally in the sixth century BCE (Rapin 2007: 35). These nomads were likely Scythians. Because the Scythians themselves had no written language, their beliefs may only be reconstructed by piecing together evidence from archaeology, the writings of Classical authors (above all Herodotus), and what is known about better-known Central Asian and Iranian religions. Unfortunately, this means that our knowledge of Scythian religion is rather partial and speculative. Most likely, Scythian religion was polytheistic, and the god of war (identified as "Ares" by Herodotus) was the foremost deity. It likely involved animal and human sacrifice, though the latter may have been reserved for the god of war. Scythian religion likely also provided mythological justification for the existence of a rigid social hierarchy, as well as for the ruler's power over his people, which may have been thought to be sacred (Ivantchik 2018). Given the ideological importance of war and hierarchy, then, it is possible that the Scythian gods were thought to reward certain forms of loyalty to the group (e.g. bravery in battle, obedience to the ruler) and punish their opposite, but, because the sources are silent on the matter, there is no clear evidence for this.

Achaemenid Rule (520 BCE-330 BCE)
For more on the Achaemenids and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see the relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Greek Rule (300 BCE-130 BCE)
Though Alexander persecuted Zoroastrianism following his conquest of the region (Nigosian 1993: 30-31), his successors, the Seleucids demonstrated greater tolerance toward local faiths, and did not impose Greek beliefs on their subjects during this period (Kosmin 2013). After the Seleucids, the Greco-Bactrians presided over a region where multiple highly moralizing religions were prominent, coexisted, and were at least partly incorporated in the official ideology, including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism (Mairs 2015). We are therefore coding the start of this period as a transition from a time when the main moralizing religion in the region was almost stamped out, to the (re-)establishment of moralizing faiths across the area.

Kushan Rule (100 CE-230 CE)
For more on the Kushans and their own religious beliefs as well as those of their subjects, see relevant section of the Kachi Plain narrative.

Sasanid Rule (230 CE-390 CE)

For more on the Sasanids and their practice of Zoroastrianism, see the relevant section of the Susiana narrative.

Kidarite Rule (390 CE-470 CE)

What little is known about Kidarite religion suggests continuity with preceding periods. A local variety of Zoroastrianism known as Mazdaism flourished in Tokharistan, karmic religions prevailed in Gandahara, and Zoroastrianism as officially practiced in the Sasanid period likely persisted as well (Zeimal 1996: 137). The Kidarites themselves considered themselves heirs to the Kushans (ibid.), suggesting perhaps that, like the Kushans, they also promoted all of the above-mentioned highly moralizing religions.

Hephthalite Rule (470 CE-560 CE)

For more on the Hephthalites and their approach to moralizing religions, see the relevant section of the Kachi Plain narrative.

Western Turk Rule (580 CE-630 CE)

The Western Turk Khaganate came to incorporate the religions of its conquered populations into its official ideology (De la Vaissière 2005: 203). Most notably, the Bugut inscription, which dates to the 570s or 580s, and was written in Sogdian, suggests that by this time the Turks had embraced Buddhism (ibid., Golden 1992: 150).

Sogdian City States (600 CE-710 CE)

Zoroastrianism was the dominant religion in Sogdiana at this time (Sims-Williams 2000), though other highly moralizing religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaesi, and Hinduism are also known to have been practiced by Sogdian merchants at the time (Grenet 2007).

Islamic Period (750 CE-1747 CE)

The region was annexed to the Umayyad empire, which led to its gradual Islamization (Bosworth and Bolshakov 1998). Islam is a highly moralizing religion (Yaran 2007).

Summary

Assuming that the identification of Andronovo culture with the Indo-Iranians is correct, we can infer the presence of several MSP elements in this region at least from the Bronze Age (c. 2000 BCE). These elements include supernatural enforcement of honesty and reciprocity (see the Andronovo section above). Beginning with the Achaemenid conquest in the 6th century CE, this region was ruled by a succession of polities whose official ideologies coincided with or likely incorporated elements from highly moralizing religions: usually Zoroastrianism or Buddhism up until Late Antiquity, then Islam from the 8th century on.

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Orkhon Valley

NGA: Orkhon Valley
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Two factors greatly influenced the dynamics of the distribution of world religions among the nomadic people of Inner Asia (for a detailed historiography see: Dashkovsky 2011): the distance between nomadic societies and settled civilizations and the degree of inclusion of the steppe society in the world-system processes. There were several different areas in the Mongolian region with substantial nomadic populations: (1) the nomadic heartland where the Gobi Desert separated the Mongolian steppes from China; (2) Inner Mongolia, where pastoralists and farmers lived side by side; (3) peripheral mountainous, forest-steppe and forest areas (Altai, Tuva, Baikal area). Inner Mongolia was most impacted by world religions imported from settled societies (Nasan Bayar 2014).

Iron Age (500 BCE–300 CE)

The ancient and medieval nomads of Inner Asia were mainly practitioners of shamanism and worshiped the Eternal Heaven (Möngke Tengri/Tenggeri which destines all things from above, including the authority of ruling lineages, and bestows good fortune. Narrative sources on the Hunnu (Xiongnu), Wuhuan, Xianbei, Rouran, and Turks confirm this. In the Xiongnu imperial confederation (209 BCE – 48CE), the political leader (*chanyu* or *shanyu*) is called "the Great Shanyu of Heaven" (Watson 1961: 140). A more detailed form of this title is: "the great Shanyu of Xiongnu born in Heaven and Earth and dedicated to the sun and moon" (Watson 1961: 144). Julian Baldick reconstructs Xiongnu shamanism using a variety of sources, mainly Chinese histories. These sources report that the Xiongnu worshipped Tengri (Heaven), along with the Sun and the Moon, and performed annual sacrifices to the ancestors, heaven and earth, and spirits (Atwood 2004, 595; Baldick 2000: 23-3). The sacrifices included both human and animal sacrifices (Baldick 2000, 22-23).

The Mongolian language-speaking Wuhuan and Xianbei (130-180 CE), the eastern neighbors of the Xiongnu (209 BCE-91 CE), revered "the souls of the dead and spirits, [and] offer[ed] sacrifices to Heaven, Earth, the sun, the moon, stars, constellations, mountains, rivers and the late famous military elders" (Taskin 1984: 64). The Wuhuan and Xianbei practiced sacrificial rituals using cattle and sheep, "whose carcasses are burned at the end of the ceremony" (ibid.).

Early Medieval (300–1125 CE)

The early nomadic empires of Inner Asia were located in the steppe heartland. Their relationship with China was based on distant exploitation. Conquering nomadic empires from the territory now covered by Inner Mongolia (the Northern Wei and Liao) only appeared in the Medieval period (Tamura 1956; Di Cosmo 1990; Barfield 1992; Kradin 2014). Nomadic empires were included in world-system exchanges (Silk road for Turks and Uyghurs [Di Cosmo 1990], Mongolian globalization [Kradin 2013, etc.]). These exchanges resulted in the emergence of urban megapolises where practitioners of several important world religions coexisted (Uyghurs, Khitans, Mongols).

Rouran Khaganate

Similar information on indigenous religious practices can be found in narrative sources about the Rouran Khaganate (4th century–552 CE) (Taskin 1984: 64, 290). According to one report, "In their possession they are able, using witchcraft, to make sacrifices to Heaven and to cause wind with snow" (Taskin 1984: 240). Chinese sources tell us a bit about Rouran Buddhism, but it is unknown how pervasive Buddhism was in this period. In 511 CE, the Rouran sent a Buddhist monk and priest to China to present a Buddhist image to the emperor (Kyzlasov 1996: 317). A Chinese source tells a story about shamans and sacrifices to Heaven (Baldick 2000: 28) The Rouran also fired arrows at the sky during thunderstorms (ibid.). These practices seem to be related to Rouran indigenous beliefs (Keown 2013: 37). Along with Buddhism spread the doctrines of karma, nonviolence, and compassion. But it is difficult to know how the moralizing tenets of Buddhism mixed with indigenous, local beliefs. Buddhism most likely did not spread far beyond the ruling elites, while the main religious beliefs for most of the population of Inner Asia of that period was shamanism. This is suggested by the persistence of shamanistic beliefs in Eastern Central Asia amongst variable peoples inhabiting this region today.

Northern Wei

The Northern Wei empire (386–556 CE) was founded by the Toba, Mongolian-speaking nomads from what is now Inner Mongolia. Nomads and farmers interacted closely in this period, and Buddhism competed fiercely with steppe shamanism among the Toba, eventually replacing it. The Northern Wei did not adopt Chinese traditional ideologies like Daoism and Confucianism and instead promoted Buddhism at court (Liu 2010: 77).

Turkic Khaganates

Buddhism continued its influence during the Turkic Khaganates (583–744 CE), as the western branch of the Turk empire adopted Buddhism as a court religion. Nevertheless, the Turks continued to practice their indigenous religion as well, centered on Tengri (Heaven) and the earth goddess Umay. Their political system was established on the belief that Heaven authorized the *qaghan* and punished those who disobeyed the ruler (Baldick 2000: 39). Tengriism continued its influence in the region throughout the Mongol Empire (Atwood 2004: 173).

It is unclear to what degree Buddhist doctrine was officially adopted due to the influence of indigenous Turkic religion. The inscription on the stele inscribed in memory of Kül-Tegin (684–731 CE), a general of the Second Turkic Khaganate, reads: "when the blue sky (and) the brown earth was created above, the sons of men were created between (them)" (Malov 1951: 36). The inscription also described the formation of the universe according to Turkic beliefs: "at the top the Sky of the Turks and the sacred Land and Water of the Turks" (Malov 1951: 37). The Türks, like the Xiongnu believed in the "Sky granted by charisma (*qut*)" and sacrificed to Heaven (Bichurin 1950: 231).

V.F. Panov noted a direct similarity in the titles of Xiongnu, Turk, and ancient Mongolian rulers. In the Chinese transcription, the *chenli gudu* ("son of heaven") roughly corresponds to the ancient Turkic *tanri qut*(*y*) ("borne by Heaven" [Bichurin 1950a: 237]) and the Mongolian *tenger-yin hüüd* ("sons of heaven") (Panov 1916: 2, 33-4, 36-42; 1918: 23-24).

During the First Turkic Khaganate, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism penetrated the steppes through Sogdian merchants. Neither religion, however, was very influential (Golden 1992: 150).

In the Second Khaganate, Buddhism was negatively perceived as an ideology of the weak (Moses 1973: 47).

Uyghur Khaganate

In the Uyghur Khaganate (744–840 CE) shamanism and Heaven (Tengri) worship were originally practiced. Once the Uyghurs formed relations with settled civilizations and became intermediaries on the Silk Road, the large city of Ordu Baliq (Karabalghasun) arose as the first capital of the Uyghur Khanate in the Mongolian steppes on the Orkhon River. The city was mainly inhabited by non-nomads. In 762 CE the Uyghur Qagan Bögü converted to Sogdian Manicheism and forcefully converted the entire city into Manicheism, which significantly changed their culture (Golden 1992: 174, Atwood 2004, 561). As a result of Bögü's conversion, Manichaeism, previously a persecuted minority religion, became the state religion in the Uyghur Khaganate. However, it does not seem to have spread far beyond the capital of Ordu Baliq. (Clark 2009). Manichean doctrine centered on the belief in a powerful and moralizing god, on keeping the ten commandments, on strict vegetarianism, abstinence from drinking alcohol and tobacco smoking, and the renunciation of idolatry, lying, greed, killing, sexual misconduct, theft, sorcery, standing in two opinions concerning the religion, and slackness and negligence of work (Colditz 2009: 76-80). Breaking these commandments risked he divine punishment in this and future lives, including severe consequences in one's social status such as hierarchical debasement, exclusion from absolution, excommunication and consequently the imprisonment of the Light particles of the soul in the Bolos, the final prison of Matter" (Colditz 2009: 79-80). However, by 982, the Uyghur kingdom of Turfan turned toward (Atwood 2004: 48).

Shiwei

Between the ninth and tenth centuries, the region was briefly ruled by the Shiwei. Little is known about their religious beliefs (Taskin 1984). They most likely practiced shamanism (N. Kradin, pers. comm., December 2020).

Liao Empire

In the early tenth century, the Khitan founded the Liao Empire (907–1125 CE) on the territory of what is today Inner Mongolia. The official religion included different elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, as well as pre-imperial Khitan religious believes, which featured traces of animism, totemism, and magic. The Khitans, led by the emperor, worshiped the Heaven and Earth, the Sun, the Moon, and the sacred mountains of Mue and Heishan. In sacrificial rites to the deities of heaven, earth, and the sacred mountains, the Khitan offered a black bull, a white or yellow-red horse, and a ram (Ye 1979: 315-316, 523-528). The Khitan totem animals were a white a horse and a dog. The Khitan court might have consciously promoted a variety of religions, such as Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism as skillful means of attracting the followers of those traditions. The Liao Empire did not declare a single religion as its official state religion, leading to an era of religious diversity, competition, and collaboration between different beliefs and ideologies (Lin 2011: 238-239). This provided a strong basis for the legitimization of imperial power by various groups of conquered peoples. The most predominant world religion in the Liao Empire was Buddhism. Buddhism penetrated Liao from different ethnic groups-- the Uyghurs, Xi Xia, Korea, and China (Wittfogel and Feng 1949: 222, 298, 306-307). Like previous forms of Inner Asian Buddhism, the main MSP force was the doctrine of karma, according to which, all sentient beings in saṃsāra, gods, semigods,

humans, animals, ghosts, and denizens of hell are subject to karmic consequences, old age, illness, death, and rebirth.

The Mongol Period (1125–1745 CE)

When the Mongols became the leading steppe tribe in the eleventh century, they practiced the indigenous shamanism. During the Mongol empire, Möngke Tengri ("Blue Sky"), or Eternal Heaven, was the center of their civic religion. Below the Eternal Heaven, which destines all things, and was the Mother Etüken, or the Mother Earth, a protectress of the Mongol ruling clan. Shamans played an important role as healers, spirit mediums, diviners, weather makers, and as courtly clergy through which Tengri spoke, and which had influence on political life behind the scenes. Unlike all other things, Tengri, the sun, the moon, and the stars were considered permanent. Although it was believed that Eternal Heaven determines all things, it does not appear as a moralizing spirit. One of its main functions was to protect the *qaghan* and his state, but also to give good fortune, protect from illness and violence, and increase the livestock. The Eternal Heaven, endowed with energy since the beginning of time, energizes the entire space. In it are contained 99 *tengris*. After one dies the invisible spirit remains and can influence the living in a positive or negative way. Good spirits go to the sky, and a bed spirit go to the earth. Therefore, the bed energy comes from the earth, and the good energy comes from the sky. The shaman cuts off the bed energy that comes from the earth.

The Secret History of the Mongols, the early twelfth-century account of the birth and rise of Chinggis Khan, underlines the continuing importance of Möngke Tengri, which mandates the power of the Mongols' true ruler through miraculous signs and through shamans. Eternal Heaven was annually worshipped by the khans in the company of shamans, at the opening and closing of the mare milk season from late May till early August, with the offerings of fermented mare's milk from white horses (Atwood, 2004: 532).

At a later time, Eternal Heaven was annually worshipped along with 99 gods. With Mongols' contacts with other religions in their empire, with the term *tengri* Mongols began to refer to various deities of other traditions, including gods (Sanskrit *deva*) belonging to one of the six realms of *saṃsāra*, who, although having supernatural powers, are mortals, subject to death and rebirth and are neither omniscient nor all-powerful. They delight in heavenly, sensual pleasures or abide in meditative equipoise in their respective heavens. Their heavenly births are results of their virtuous karma in previous lives and their heavenly dwellings last until that karma becomes exhausted. The term *tengri* also began to denote the Chinese notion of *tien* ("heaven"), Hindu gods, Allah, and Christian God. Thus, all these deities became included into the all-encompassing Eternal Heaven. During the Mongol empire, Mongol khans kept the clergy of different religions on their courts and asked them to pray for them, but had very little interest in converting to other religions.

When Pope Innocent IV sent a message to the Mongolian court scolding and threatening the Mongols with wrath of God for their attacks on Christian world, and encouraging the court to convert to Catholic faith, Güyüg Khan (r. 1246-1248), a grandson of Chinggis Khan, responded with a letter of 1246, in which the Mongols' belief that everything is destined by Tengri comes to light. In his message to the Pope, Güyüg Khan stated: "God ordered us to destroy them and gave them up to our hands. For otherwise, if God has not done this what could man do to man? …... But we worshipping God have destroyed the whole earth from the

East to the West in the power of God. And if this was not the power of God, what could men have done?" (Dawson 1980, 85-86).

Möngke Khan (1251-1259), another grandson of Chinggis Khan, who promoted Tibetan and Indian Buddhism, when he told to missionary William of Rubruck that he believed in a single God who has "given humankind several paths" (quoted in Baldick 2000: 101), he was referring to Tengri. In his view, God gave the Mongols their shamans as spiritual guides, and he gave to Christians the Bible. He also pointed out that Mongols follow the advice of their shamans and therefore live peacefully, whereas the Christians struggle because they do not follow the advice given in the Bible (ibid., 101).

The notion of Christian heaven or hell was absent in Mongolian shamanism. Italian diplomat Giovanni da Pian del Carpine reported in a 1245–7 mission to the Great Khan's court that the Mongols, "are devoted to prophecies, magic, and incantations" (ibid., 99) and believe that life after death is similar to Mongolian life on Earth. Certain behaviors were enforced through customary law, some carrying the penalty of death (ibid., 95, 99).

Where Christian missionaries failed in converting the Mongol Khans to Christianity, Buddhist monks succeeded, becoming the powerful religious figures in Mongol courts, the imperial religious preceptors until the collapse of Yuan Dynasty in 1368. Although Mongols' early contacts with Buddhism were with the Chinese Chan Buddhism, eventually, under Qubilai, Möngke, and Ögedei Khans, Tibetan and Kashmiri forms of Buddhism became predominant, with Tibetan Buddhists becoming the most influential Buddhist clergy in the empire. Mongol Khans' converstion to Buddhism was a lasting legacy covering the entire of Inner Asia. Tibetan Phag pa Lama ('Phags pa Bla ma) of the Sakya order, who having become appointed by Qubilai Khan as imperial preceptor in Qubilai's court at his age of 26, and the head of all Buddhist monks in China advised Qubilai Khan and his nephew not to resort to violence. He appealed to the Khan to abolish capital punishment and abstain from violence on the grounds that violence is ineffective in strengthening the royal power.

The nomads of the Mongolian steppes were familiar with Uyghur Manichaeism, and Nestorian Christianity was widespread among a number of chiefdoms and tribes (for example, among the Kereits) (Gumilev 1987). But under the Mongol Empire and its conquests, the Mongol Khans practiced religious tolerance and patronized all religions, encouraging religious diversity. Following the example of Chinggis Khan, in conquered countries, clergies were exempted from taxes, and the temples, shrines, mosks, and monasteries were spared. The Khans hoped to win over religious elites and might have even hoped to protect themselves from harm from other gods. Over time, some Mongols in the Middle East and in the parts of Central Asia, and Eurasia converted to Islam - the religion of warriors and merchants (Fletcher 1986; Skrynnikova 1988; Khazanov 1993; 1994; De Wesse 1994; May 2012).

Mongolian shamanic practices and ancestor worship persisted until the sixteenth century. We know little about the shamanism of the early period. Baldick writes that there is little known about Mongol religion in the fifteenth century, but it seems that Buddhism temporarily lost its influence (ibid., 106). In 1580, Altan Khan of Tümed Mongols initiated a process of conversion of his territory to Buddhism and initiated the persecutions of the shamans and shamanesses who performed blood sacrifices. He had them executed or exiled, their property confiscated, and their shamanic figurines (*ongoons*) burnt and replaced by an image of the Buddhist deity Mahākāla. In the *Altan Khan's Code of Law*, we also read that the

code prohibited the *khoilgo* practice of burring the servants, animals, and the like with the body of a deceased nobleman, and it required that things dedicated to the *khoilgo* rite be given to a Buddhist monastic community and used for Buddhist religious activities. It further forbade the killing of animals on the 1st, 8th, and 15th days of a lunar month, and it stipulated fasting on those days. It also determined the hierarchy of the monastic degrees and introduced penalties for those who would harm a member of a monastic community and punishments for monks who breached their monastic vows. Other Mongol khans in their territories followed Altan Khan's example. With Altan Khan's persecution of shamans, certain shamanic practices either completely disappeared or became transformed under the influence of Buddhism and adopted by Buddhist lamas who adapted them to Buddhist pantheon and Buddhist ritual practices. These Buddhist-influenced shamanic traditions are sometimes called "yellow shamanism."

Summary

The prevailing popular religion among Mongols until the sixteenth century was a local version of shamanism, which lacked strong moralizing aspects. However, ruling elites periodically superimposed moralizing religions. Buddhism entered the region early in the Common Era, and became the official religion in several imperial confederations. However, how far it spread into the non-elite population prior to the sixteenth century is uncertain. Additionally, Buddhism periodically lost its pre-eminence as the state religion, and at one point, it was replaced by Manichaeism (in the Uyghur empire). Buddhism also coexisted with Tengrism and took its roots among the general population only after 1580, with Altan Khan's conversion to Tibetan Buddhism and persecution of the shamans.

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Siberia (Lena River Valley)

NGA: Lena River Valley
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This narrative was adapted from the chapter on small-scale societies by Eva Brandl (2019) in *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Note on Terminology: The term "Yakut" is frequently found in our sources to refer to the Sakha people. However, Sakha is the preferred self-designated term. Therefore, out of respect, we generally prefer "Sakha" instead of "Yakut", except for source titles and direct quotations.' The Yakut, who prefer to call themselves "Sakha," [...] are the farthest-north Turkic people, with a consciousness of having once lived farther south kept alive by legends and confirmed by historical and archaeological research.'

Sakha

The *Sakha* are a Turkic people inhabiting the Lena river valley of Siberia. Their ancestors migrated there from the Lake Baikal region in the fourteenth century and may have shared cultural roots with Mongols and Chinese Uyghurs (Balzer & Skoggard 1997). They subsisted on pastoralism, specifically the breeding of horses and cattle for meat and dairy (ibid.). Animal husbandry was supplemented with hunting and fishing; cereal agriculture was not introduced until the region came under Russian control (ibid.). Sakha families were transhumant/semi-nomadic. In the summers, they occupied *urossy* or tents made from birch bark (Wrangel & Sabine 1842: 38). In the winters, they built yurts or earth huts, small cottages covered in earth, mud, clay, and cow dung for insulation (ibid.; Jochelson 1933: 139).

Some native Siberian groups, such as the Chukchi, Yukaghir, Koryak, Itelmen, and Aleut, appear to recognize a supreme being of some kind that is seen as the giver and sustainer of life, but unlike a personal god, this being or force is indefinite, elusive, and only conceptualized in very vague terms (Willerslev 2011: 517). Rather than a high god, it is a kind of primordial totality from which the particular souls or viewpoints of more limited creatures such as humans and animals arise, and which both transcends and encompasses the latter (Willerslev 2011: 519). In daily life, more concrete entities predominate. For example, the Sakha cosmos was

made up of myriad spirit beings, including gods thought to inhabit nine heavenly realms in the east, among them deities associated with the sun, the hearth, and fertility (Gogolev 1992: 80). The highest deity was an all-father called Ayyy-Toyon who sat on a milky-white throne in the heavens (Sieroszewski 1993: 743). Some sources describe the all-father as a benevolent creator who ruled over the lesser spirits (Priklonski & Krauss 1888: 176). Others write that Ayyy-Toyon "was kind and did not interfere in human affairs" (Tokarev & Gurvich 1964: 280), but also argue that some aspects of this deity had become "very much mixed up with features of the Christian God" (ibid.) during the colonial period. There was also a benevolent female deity called Ayyy-syt who was responsible for childbirth and fertility (Tokarev & Gurvich 1964: 280). People honoured the benevolent deities, and especially the all-father, during a spring festival where kumys or fermented mare's milk was dedicated to them (Jochelson 1906: 263). People then prayed for the all-father's blessings (Jochelson 1906: 263). These festivals also featured athletic contests and people exchanged goblets, gave speeches, and sang songs about the clans who were present and their relationships with each other (Sieroszewski 1993: 734).

The benevolent sky deities were juxtaposed with some dark gods and spirits that were thought to dwell in the underworld, among them also a chief god of that place (Coxwell 1925: 42). According to some sources, these spirits dwell in a bad place called Mung Taar, which was the domain of Asharay Bioho (Sauer 1802: 116). It appears that the Christian notion of Satan, introduced by missionaries, was later adopted by some Sakha and possibly merged with the indigenous lord of the underworld during the colonial period (Sieroszewski 1993: 1012). It appears that some sky gods were potentially destructive and frightening, among them Ulu-Toyon and his son Sugai-Toyon, who was in control of thunder (Sauer 1802: 116). The latter acted as "his minister of immediate vengeance" (Sauer 1802: 116). People propitiated the destructive forces during autumn festivals (Jochelson 1906: 265). These festivities were meant to appease the dark deities and to protect people from them during the winter, when they were vulnerable to disease and starvation (Jochelson 1906: 265). The primary deities were Ulu-Toyon and some destructive spirits associated with the upper realm, along with Axsan Duolai and the spirits of the underworld (Jochelson 1906: 265). Unlike the benevolent forces, these deities received blood sacrifices (Jochelson 1906: 265). Accordingly, people propitiated both the benevolent and the destructive deities with sacrifices, although offerings differed (Sauer 1802: 116).

Building on this juxtaposition between benevolent and malicious forces, the Sakha cosmos was divided "into *aiyy* -the divine, light, clean, and good- and *abahy* -the diabolical, evil, and unclean. Humanity, livestock, and useful animals and plants comprised aijy. Everything harmful and foul - that is, everything that causes harm to humanity - was the invention of *abahy*" (Gogolev 1992: 71). The contrast between benevolent and malevolent forces was also reflected in people's treatment of fire. Some sources write that Sakha people had a special regard for the fire of the hearth, which was believed to be pure (Tokarev & Gurvich 1964: 281). Its spirit (*Uot-ichchite*) required gifts of food, milk, and kumys or fermented mare's milk (Tokarev & Gurvich 1964: 281). However, there was also a bad, destructive kind of fire, which was associated with the lord of the underworld and propitiated with the sacrifice of a red, dark, and white stallion (Sieroszewski 1993: 1029).

Sakha notions of 'sin' or 'misdeed' were broad, and incorporated domains that a Western audience would consider both mundane and spiritual:

Very characteristic of the Yakut beliefs is the absence of conceptions of paradise and hell and the lack of any idea of retaliation as we understand it. The Yakut word ajy usually translated, sin, means more properly, harm, damage; for instance, ajy is used when milk is spoiled by a mouse falling into it, or, when a man's bed is contaminated by a frog (Jochelson 1933: 104).

Contamination was feared, and offences against spirit beings could provoke misfortune. In addition to the more powerful deities, the Sakha cosmos also featured numerous lesser spirits or *ichchi* which were thought to inhabit rocks, trees, natural forces, living beings, and artefacts (Balzer & Skoggard 1997). Spirits claimed rights over the animals, plants, and objects they inhabited. Those who encroached on their territory without paying their proper respects were "liable to be punished in some way: by illness, epizooty [epidemics among animals], or some other calamity. The Yakut is a hunter and fisherman. The *abasy-siäce* (i.e., *abasy*, the eater) also procures food for himself, and this food may be the man and his cattle" (Jochelson 1933: 104). For example, when hunters killed a bear, they were obligated to drink its blood, consume raw meat from the bear's body, and perform a special chant (Sieroszewski 1993: 1023). Otherwise the bear would avenge himself (Sieroszewski 1993: 1023). Some people believed that a hunter who had killed many bears would eventually be killed by one (Sieroszewski 1993: 1023).

Those who had been afflicted with some disease or other forms of misfortune consulted shamans, who cured people by driving away the spirits that had caused their misfortune (Priklonskil 1891: 81). Some sources write that "every spirit causes only those diseases which are peculiar to his sib" (Priklonskil 1891: 81). Shamans held seances for healing rituals; to this end, they travelled to other cosmic realms to retrieve lost souls or capture harmful spirits (Balzer 1996: 306). In this they received assistance from spirit helpers. Mediating spirits took the form of animals, such as "raven and eagle [or] such birds as the loon, hawk, crane, woodgrouse, swan, lark, cuckoo, and sandpiper, and included bears, wolves, foxes, bulls, and dogs" (Balzer 1996: 308). The shaman's drum was associated with the horse (Balzer 1996: 312). During "seances, a dancing bird-shaman can ride a horse-drum and wear iron reindeer antlers in a headdress" (Balzer 1996: 312). The drum acted as the shaman's guide or vehicle during spirit journeys (Priklonski 1891: 81). The shaman called on the spirits of his ancestors to assist him, and then journeyed to the underworld and the heavens to find the spirit and persuade them to let go of the patient (Priklonski 1891: 81). Shamans wore a special coat (*kuma*) which was decorated with iron ornaments, which represented various animals and celestial bodies (specifically a pierced sun and a half moon) (Priklonski & Krauss 1888: 172). These reminded the shamans of entities encountered during spirit journeys, and of the twilight that governs the spirit realm (Priklonski & Krauss 1888: 172). Shamans also had 'doubles' such as the 'mother-beast' spirit or *iio-kyyl* (Balzer 1996: 308). This concept is rooted in a complex notion of the soul. Sakha are thought to possess "three main souls: the *iio-kut* or 'mother soul', *buor-kut* or 'earth-clay soul', and *salgyn-kut* or 'air-breath soul" (Balzer 1996: 308). All three of these souls undergo transformations when a person trains to become a shaman (Popov 1947: 285; Balzer

1996: 308). The mother soul transforms into the 'mother-beast', which also takes the form of an animal (Balzer 1996: 309), usually that of a bird that helped the shaman carry out his tasks (Balzer 1996: 309b, 310a). Eagles were of particular significance among the Sakha (Balzer 1996: 311). Many of these elements are also present in the shamanic traditions of other Siberian peoples, and the practices of the Sakha and their neighbours often influenced each other (Balzer 1996: 311).

While many shamans acted as healers, shamans were not always benevolent, and some could be harmful. People feared shamans on account of their ability to put curses on people, animals, and objects, which would "be ruined and perish" (Sieroszewski 1993: 979). People also feared the spirits of some deceased shamans (Tokarev & Gurvich 1964: 281). Ethnohistorians speak of the "implicit menace of Sakha stories about still-avoided shamans' graves, about ravens as bad omens, and about shamanic curses […] that are said to have affected some families for several generations" (Balzer 1996: 313). Even Christianized Sakha were afraid of shamans (Priklonski & Krauss 1888: 175). One source writes of a case where a Christian priest had assaulted a shaman, who then took revenge by cursing the priest, driving him insane (Priklonski & Krauss 1888: 175). Fear of supernatural retaliation may have motivated people to share food and other resources with shamans. For example, one account states that people were inclined to treat powerful shamans well: "all to whom he would come received him and fed him as the greatest of lords" (Sieroszewski 1993: 979). Accordingly, it appears that shamans' use of curses followed a logic of retaliation that was present in Sakha society. Blood vengeance was common, and was allegedly pursued up until the ninth generation (the boundary of clan membership), with all descendants considered legitimate targets until then (Sieroszewski 1993: 720).

However, misfortune was not only brought on by offending the spirits or the shamans who served them. Those who lied under oath were also thought to court disaster. The process of swearing oaths and the consequences of breaching them are described in some older accounts:

> A magician [RCH: i.e., the shaman] places his tambour and dress before the fire, the embers of which are burning. The accused stands before it, facing the sun, and says: 'May I lose during my life all that 'man holds dear and desirable, father, mother, wives, children, 'relations; all my possessions and cattle; the light of the sun, 'and then my own life; and may my spirit sink to eternal misery (*mung taar*), if I be guilty of the charge laid against me!' The magician throws butter on the hot embers; the man accused must then step over the tambour and dress, advance to the fire, and swallow some of the exhaling smoke from the butter; then, looking to the sun, say, 'If I have sworn false, deprive me 'of the light and heat.' Some of the tribes close the ceremony by making the accused bite the head of a bear; because they allow this beast to have more than human wisdom, and suppose that some bear will kill the aggressor (Sauer 1802: 123).

The available evidence suggests that supernatural retribution for lying under oath, which occurred in this life, did not translate into a broad system of punishment and reward in the afterlife. Some ethnographers claim that the Sakha had little sense of punishment or reward in the afterlife, even after Christianization (Sieroszewski 1993: 958). In contrast, among

the Dolgani, a Sakha-speaking population of reindeer herders of mixed origin, some transgressions were also thought to cause harm in the afterlife. For example, men and women who died childless were turned into frightening ghosts (Popov 1946: 22). Widowers who remarried lost favour with the gods because such actions were believed to go against fate (Popov 1946: 22). This was the case because "the [first] woman he selected was believed to have been born specially for him and had been fated to be his wife" (Popov 1946: 22).

Ancestry and descent figured prominently in people's notions of identity, moral character, and spiritual power. For example, the reputation of one's ancestors as good and respected people also affected one's own reputation, and in the same manner, the descendants of people who had unjustly injured, killed or robbed others were held in low regard (Sieroszewski 1993: 726). Furthermore, pedigrees were thought to create various spiritual powers associated with blacksmiths. Spirits feared blacksmiths (Sieroszewski 1993: 984). However, only people whose ancestors had been smiths for nine generations were able to forge iron and brass jewelry and tambourines for shamans (Sieroszewski 1993: 984). Otherwise, "the birds with crooked claws and beaks will tear his heart apart" (Sieroszewski 1993: 984). The instruments of a smith with a rich pedigree even had souls of their own (*ichchilyakh*), like sentient beings (Sieroszewski 1993: 985). Finally, Sakha considered themselves to be the children of the White Creator or White Lord, and to descend from a shared mythical ancestor (Sieroszewski 1993: 751). However, others write that there was no real ancestor worship (Tokarev & Gurvich 1964: 281). Accordingly, we have yet to find clear evidence showing that ancestors monitored and enforced moral norms.

However, their belief system had other ways of supporting shared values. For example, notorious evildoers became impure or 'defiled' by their actions, just like people who came into contact with polluting substances. They were therefore excluded from some ritual activities (Sauer 1802: 117). Important values and ideals were also transmitted through oral traditions. Traditional folk tales tell of heroes going on adventures or facing trials (Sieroszewski 1993: 954). These often involve normative aspects of Sakha culture such as the moral obligation to participate in blood feuds to avenge relatives (Sieroszewski 1993: 954). Heroes embody the ideals of Sakha society, and often go through some trials and tribulations to mature into victorious conquerors (Sieroszewski 1993: 955). Heroes have the favour of the all-father and support from good shamans, facing down villains or evil spirits who are sometimes supported by sinister shamans (Sieroszewski 1993: 955). The benevolent spirits and deities usually help or advise the hero on his journey (Sieroszewski 1993: 957). In some tales, spirit entities remind the hero of his moral obligations or scold him for immoral behaviour. In one such tale, a sky spirit rebukes the hero for killing his brother and reminds him of the retribution that must follow (Sieroszewski 1993: 719). In some stories, the hero tests his fate by imploring supernatural forces to harm him, which brings about ironic or anti-climactic deaths (Sieroszewski 1993: 954). For example, in one play on this motive the hero repeatedly implores the heavens to punish him in a dramatic fashion before eventually perishing from a mere puff of air (Sieroszewski 1993: 954). This element may have been present in some stories with a fratricide motive. For example, one source briefly mentions a story in which a younger brother murders his older brother (Aydan-baytyr and Iren-batyr), hinting that this offence was followed by a similar outcome (Sieroszewski 1993: 954). However, the lack of detail in that passage makes it difficult to tell how often folk tales invoke supernatural forces in this manner, and whether deities and

spirit entities merely rebuke heroes and/or answer requests to smite them, or whether these forces are ever portrayed to punish fratricide independently and of their own accord. A closer examination of folk tale collections is needed to answer these outstanding questions.

Summary

The Sakha cosmos was populated with a wide range of benevolent and malicious beings. Supernatural forces were involved in the punishment of deception by pursuing people who had lied under oath, although it seems that people had to invoke them first. In general, spirits and other supernatural forces were primarily concerned with issues of purity and pollution and whether people had respected them and fulfilled their ritual obligations toward them, rather than with the enforcement of moral norms. Failure to meet these obligations resulted in illness or other disasters. It also seems that spirits could block access to forests, land, and lakes to individuals who did not appropriately respect and honor them. At other times the spirits could also be indifferent to people. The notion of good and evil was broader than that embraced in Western societies and also included ritual pollution. Notorious evildoers became impure or 'defiled' by their actions, just like people who came into contact with polluting substances. However, the Sakha had little sense of punishment or reward in the afterlife. Shamans could inflict curses on people who displeased or mistreated them, and this may have motivated people to treat them with respect. This type of supernatural retribution followed a logic of retaliation that was also present in the practice of blood vengeance, being invoked by the shamans themselves rather than a higher authority. Oral traditions portray benevolent entities that give advice to humans and sometimes rebuke them for immoral conduct, but the evidence that they actively punished such behaviours is slim and may need further investigation.

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Valley of Oaxaca

NGA: Valley of Oaxaca
Contributors: Enrico Cioni

Early and Middle Formative Oaxaca (1400—500 BCE)

Early archaeological evidence for ritual in the Valley of Oaxaca has been interpreted as indicating a preoccupation with communicating with the ancestors. During the Tierras Largas (1400–1150 BCE) and early San José (1150–850 BCE) phases, there is evidence for rituals through which men contacted and/or worshipped ancestors, possibly via bloodletting and use of hallucinogenic substances, and rituals through which women contacted recent ancestors, possibly via divination practices and the manipulation of figurines. This, at least, is how Marcus (1999) interprets the available data, based on more recent ethnohistoric observations, as well as evidence for apparently similar rituals practiced in northern China at a similar time (1200–1000 BCE). It is possible, of course, that ancient Oaxacans performed these rituals in order to persuade the dead to intervene in the lives of mortals in a positive or negative way, perhaps even to reward or punish certain behaviors. However, neither Marcus nor any other sources suggest that this was the case, or that there is any evidence to suggest that this may have been the case.

Similarly, it is likely that, by at least 700 BCE, in-group loyalty and/or respect for authority had become important ethical values in ancient Oaxaca, judging, respectively, from

large-scale construction projects (Joyce 2009:116-117) and differential treatment of bodies at death (Marcus 1999). However, there appears to be no clear evidence that Oaxacans believed supernatural agents (be they gods, ancestors, or anything else) rewarded these behaviors or punished their opposite. Much the same can be said for later centuries.

There is some indication that, at this time, society in the Valley of Oaxaca was divided into segments, possibly ones based on descent. Carved ceramics unearthed at San José Mogote and several other settlements depict two distinct symbolic entities, one earthquake) (Blanton et al. 1999:38; Flannery and Marcus 1994:136–139; Marcus 1989). This pottery may refer to male descent groups as only males are buried with the carved imagery. At San José Mogote, the largest site at this time, the community was partitioned into two areas, one sky and the other earth (Pyne 1976). These social segments were integrated into a larger cooperative arrangement.

Late Formative and Classic Oaxaca (500 BCE–900 CE)

The Main Plaza at the site of Monte Albán was the setting for large-scale public rituals involving a blending of traditional activities such as auto-sacrificial bloodletting, ancestor veneration, divination, and ritual feasting with practices like human sacrifice, which "were particularly significant in contacting deities and ancestors, reenacting the cosmic creation and the sacred covenant, and renewing the world" (Joyce 2009: 139). Again, sources do not speculate on the possibility of MSP-related beliefs among ancient Oaxacans. However, it does seem reasonable to infer, from reconstructions such as Joyce's, that Oaxacan supernatural agents who were capable of intervening in the lives of their worshippers were motivated not so much by the moral quality of their worshippers' behavior towards other humans, but by the quality of their offerings to their gods.

On ceramic artifacts, Cocijo, a supernatural entity associated with lightning and rain, symbolically dominates across the region following the foundation of Monte Albán, continuing until the fall of that central settlement. Ritual activities associated with Cocijo focus on the integration of social/community segments, including processions, and ancestor veneration (Marcus 1983). Processional rituals and food-sharing activities that integrated social segments across a community are evidenced at Lambityeco (Middle Classic period), a secondary center under Monte Albán (Feinman and Nicholas 2019). During the period when Monte Albán was the regional capital, integrative ritual activities predominated over more divisive ones focussed on punishment.

Post-Classic Oaxaca (900–1520 CE)

Communication with supernatural agents remained central to Oaxacan ritual practices in the Post-Classic. This is suggested by the placement of offerings in Classic-period tombs, as well as by the nature of these offerings, all of which were traditionally associated with death, sacrifice, and ancestors: small ceramic vessels, incense burners, figurines, and obsidian blades (Joyce 2009: 251-252).

Later Post-Classic beliefs may be partly reconstructed based on the ethnohistoric observations of Zapotec rituals on the part of Spanish sources in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Lind 2015). According to these sources, the Zapotecs believed in multiple deities,

foremost among them a "supreme universal god" named Bezelao, or Lord 13 Flower (Pohl 2003:201-206). Unfortunately, the Spanish sources do not indicate whether these beings were thought to be omniscient, omnipresent, or omnipotent.

Spanish sources also do not suggest that the Zapotecs believed in MSP. Judging from their accounts, the Zapotecs thought that supernatural agents were responsible for misfortunes, and that when these occurred the relevant supernatural agents must be placated through ritual (Lind 2015: 346-347), but the Spanish sources do not suggest that the Zapotecs believed that supernaturals specifically caused misfortunes to punish moral transgressions. Spanish sources do describe an annual ceremony that involved the confession of transgressions committed over a year, followed by autosacrificial bloodletting and the offering of valuable items to a deity that was then expected to absolve worshippers of their transgressions (Lind 2015, 344). However, the nature of these transgressions and the deity's identity both remain unclear, and the fact that the ritual also involved offerings suggests that these were sufficient to secure the gods' benevolence.

Beginning in the 1520s, following Spanish conquest, Christianity spread rapidly throughout Mesoamerica, as demonstrated, for examples, by census records registering baptisms and marriages (Cline 1993). Christianity is a highly moralizing religion (Angenendt and Riches 2014).

Summary

There is no direct evidence that belief in MSP was absent in the Valley of Oaxaca until its first appearance with the arrival of Christianity. Analysis of archaeological data, parallels with other world religions, and ethnohistoric accounts by early colonial sources allow limited reconstruction of the pre-contact religious system. Overall, it appears that the relationship between people and their gods in ancient Mesoamerica centered on offerings and other rituals, suggesting that gods were thought to be motivated less by their worshippers' behavior towards other humans, than by their attention to themselves.

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Basin of Mexico

NGA: Basin of Mexico
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Formative and Classic Periods (400 BCE-900 CE)

Based on iconographic data and evidence for ritual, Carballo (2018: 129-132) suggests that, beginning in the 5th century BCE, the region saw the development of a discernible central Mexican pantheon likely understood in broadly similar terms as gods in later periods. As we shall see below, however, there is scholarly disagreement surrounding the question of whether or not pre-Columbian Mesoamerican deities were concerned with the moral quality of human behavior.

The Classical period--particularly the site of Teotihuacan--has yielded a particularly rich set of archaeological and iconographic clues to dominant belief systems at the time. For example, Helmke and Nielsen (2017: 134) interpret some of these clues as suggesting that warriors expected to be rewarded with an idyllic afterlife: this is based on the depiction, on ceramic incense burners likely intended for ceremonial use, of "warrior bundles" associated with "luxuriant plants and butterflies", which seemingly echoes the Mexica belief that men killed in battle or as war captives would spend part of their afterlife in an idyllic world, before being reincarnated into birds and butterflies (see below). Similarly, McKeever (1995) interprets a wall painting in Tepantitla, one of Teotihuacan's apartment complexes, as the depiction of a possible afterlife where the dead enjoy an idyllic landscape populated with birds and butterflies. Moreover, it is likely that the warriors of Teotihuacan were closely associated with a deity known as "the Storm God", possibly a predecessor to the Aztec deity Tlaloc. For example, warriors were frequently depicted bearing the Storm God's key attributes, including "goggles" and fangs (Nielsen and Helmke 2017: 141). This suggests that one of Teotihuacan's major

deities rewarded the qualities, or aspects of morality, that make a good warrior, above all loyalty to the polity.

Ultimately, however, Helmke and Nielsen (2017: 135) argue that pre-Columbian gods lacked "omnipresence" (which in their definition includes the quality of being "all-knowing", that is, omniscience) and were relatively limited in their power and influence compared to their Abrahamic counterparts, based on the observation that in "traditional Amerindian religions, both before and after the arrival of Europeans and even to this day, the divine is inherently a part of nature and as such can be seen as immanent and more local than omnipresent".

Toltec Period (900–1168 CE)

The earliest iconographic depictions of the deity Tezcatlipoca date to the Toltec period (Wilkosz 2014: 21), and include relief carvings on the primary temple platform of the Toltec capital of Tula. Later, among the Aztecs, Tezcatlipoca was believed to be omniscient and omnipresent, at least according to some sources. According to Durán, for example, as part of the Toxcatl festival, "wretches and sinners" were expected to confess their transgressions to Tezcatlipoca; those who did not show remorse or regret risked punishment from the god in the form of illness, poverty, or public outing of the crime and subsequent punishment (but not punishment in the afterlife). Durán's "wretches and sinners" included those guilty of theft, murder, and sexual transgressions (Wilkosz 2014: 72-75). Another Spanish source, Bernardino Sahagún, wrote that Tezcatlipoca inflicted paralysis, blindness, or "rottenness" on those who committed sexual transgressions such as adultery and premarital sex (Wilkosz 2014: 205). Note, however, that this contradicts Helmke and Nielsen's (2017: 135) above-mentioned claim regarding pre-Columbian deities. It is possible that the Toltecs already had similar beliefs about Tezcatlipoca, and/or about other gods, but no source could be found to confirm this.

Aztec Period (1428 CE-1521 CE)

The Aztec empire's dominant ethnic group, the Mexica, believed they had a direct, personal relationship with their gods. Gods rewarded those who offered them prayers, chants, offerings and sacrificial victims by providing them with "life and sustenance" (Olivier 2017: 581); conversely, famines, epidemics and agricultural catastrophes were seen as divine punishments that necessitated placatory ceremonies (López Lujan 2017: 614). It was also possible to influence the gods' behaviour (specifically, their intervention--or lack thereof--in the affairs of the living) by way of communication channels established through divinatory practices (Olivier 2012).

Different groups (e.g. ethnicities, professions, communities) benefited from the protection of a patron deity. Even enslaved people could count in the protection of a major deity such as Tezcatlipoca: slave-owners who failed to observe the customs dictated for Day 1 Death or Ce Miquitzli (that is, removing collars from the enslaved people in their employ and treating them with the greatest respect) were thought to be punished by Tezcatlipoca through the reversal of the roles of slave-owner and enslaved (Olivier 2017, 580; Sahagún 1950–1982:4:34–35).

Scholars disagree as to whether the Aztec gods were thought to concern themselves with the moral quality of human behavior. Scholars such as Carballo (2016, 2018), for example, argue that certain powerful gods were chiefly concerned with maintaining cosmic order, which

could be upset by moral transgressions on the part of humans. Indeed, in the Florentine Codex, an ethnographic text compiled in the 16th century, transgressors among the Aztecs "were admonished for bad conduct, but not because it showed disobedience to God or had consequences for the salvation of one's soul. Instead, their disorderly actions endangered the community's welfare and undermined the cosmic order" (Favrot Peterson 2019: 177). As already noted, Tetzcatlipoca, in particular, was thought to punish moral transgressions as an offence against this cosmic order, and "see into men's hearts" to root out offenders. Acts such as murder, theft, and sexual transgressions are mentioned in ethnographic sources as incurring Tetzcatlipoca's wrath, especially among rulers (*Florentine Codex* 6.10). Again, however, scholars such as Helmke and Nielsen (2017: 135) suggest that, in fact, Mesoamerican gods did not have any sort of omniscience, and argue that they were fairly limited in their ability to intervene in human life, so were not effective moral punishers.

Similarly, sources appear to offer contradictory information regarding Aztec beliefs in the afterlife, such that León-Portilla (1982: 127) argued that the Aztecs believed that one's fate in the afterlife was primarily determined by the nature of one's death, not one's moral conduct, while López Austin (1988, 338) argued that they believed both that the nature of one's death could be a punishment or reward for one's moral conduct, and that a person who had cultivated the virtues of valour, purity and devotion was more likely to find reward in the afterlife. However, according to Baquedano (2011), the ethnographic writings of Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagún (1500-1590) suggest that both interpretations contain an element of truth.

Sahagún describes four possible destinations for the Aztec dead.

- Those who died a natural death went to a region of the afterlife known as Mictlan. According to some accounts, this was believed to be the case for both rulers and commoners, while other accounts suggest that rulers would not enter Mictlan by by virtue of their superiority. Mictlan was believed to be miserable and cold, a place of "much suffering" (Sahagún 1950-1982: 3, 42). After four years, these dead met eternal rest.
- Those who died in a way that suggested the personal intervention of the god Tlaloc (drowning, lightning, hemorrhoids, dropsy, or gout) went to Tlalocan, where they found "great wealth, [...] great riches. Never did one suffer. Never did the ears of green maize, the gourds, the squash blossoms, the heads of amaranth, the green chilis, the tomatoes, the green beans, the cempoalxochitl, fail" (Sahagún 1950-1982: 3, 47). After four years, these dead found their way back to the world of the living through reincarnation, but with no memory of their experience of Tlalocan.
- Men who died in battle, captives killed by their captors, sacrificial victims, and women who died either while pregnant or as a consequence of giving birth all went to Tonatiuh Ilhuicac, the dwelling of the sun and "a place of wealth, a place of joy" (Sahagún 1950-1982: 3, 49). After four years, these souls returned to the world of the living in the form of winged creatures (e.g. birds, butterflies). Graulich (1982, 264) also suggests that priests tasked with sacrificial killing were also granted access to this place.

- According to the *Codex Vaticanus A* (Sahagún 1950-1982: 6, 96), children who died before learning to speak went to Chichihuacuauhco, where they latched onto a many-breasted tree that would nurture them.

Baquedano (2011) argues that this system encouraged Aztec citizens to pursue particularly virtuous endeavours such as fighting, giving birth to the next generation, and offering themselves to the gods. Of these endeavours, the first two in particular suggest that the Mexica and their gods valued loyalty to the polity above other aspects of morality.

Beginning in the 1520s, following Spanish conquest, Christianity spread rapidly throughout Mesoamerica, as demonstrated, for examples, by census records registering baptisms and marriages (Cline 1993). Christianity is a highly moralizing religion (Angenendt and Riches 2014).

Summary

Scholarly opinion differs on the extent to which supernatural powers from the Formative Period through Aztec times were concerned with monitoring and enforcing moral behaviour among humans. Further, there is evidence that certain core principles of later Aztec religion had their origins in the pre-Teotihuacan cultures of the Formative period.

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Cahokia

NGAs: Cahokia
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Mississippian Religion
The geographical location of Cahokia, a large and complex pre-contact settlement in the heart of the Mississippi River Valley, was virtually uninhabited until about 1000 CE. The Lohmann-Stirling phase, 1050-1200 CE, was a period of great change and demographic expansion. The previous settlement pattern of sparse clusters of houses was abandoned in favor of widespread units of single-family farmsteads, between which were larger ritual or symbolic complexes, likely serving as the focal point of communal interaction. These include several centrally-located granaries, though it is unclear to exactly what purpose this collected produce was put: For

communal rituals and festivals? To be saved for some emergency use? At its height, there were at least 50,000 people supported within the 2000 km^2 region surrounding Cahokia.

Some archaeologists are skeptical whether there was a ruler or king figure at Cahokia. The community could be led by a priesthood or oligarchic group of ruler-priests within a social stratum that included chiefs, sub-chiefs, elders, priests, and other religious functionaries. The Cahokians were capable of feats of organization that included the famous Monks Mound and other mounds which required moving 1.1 million m^3 or earth and a 15 m high wooden palisade that ran for nearly 3 km.

Starting around 1200 CE, for some still unexplained reasons, the population in Cahokia had fallen about 40% from the Lohmann-Stirling peak, giving way to the Moorehead phase of settlement.

There is very little known about the specific tenets of religion in Cahokia before the arrival of Christianity (Peregrine 2017). Mississippian religion, a form of which was likely practiced at Cahokia, evolved from Woodland belief and ritual systems, which included ancestor shrines and sacred monuments (Dye 2000: 138). The religion is also known as the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex. Anthropological data on indigenous North American southwest societies is often used for insight into Mississippian religion and society (Granberry 2005: 109). The cosmology of Cahokia, the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex, seems to have different scholarly interpretations. There are more literal interpretations of archaeological evidence and oral tradition like those from Dye (2000) and Granberry (2005) which highlight concepts like a moralizing Earth Mother figure who would punish those that broke taboos (Dye 2000: 146) and an underworld through which the dead are reborn as children (Granberry 2005: 114). Other interpretations highlight themes of holistic interconnectedness. Hall (1997: 35, 57), for example, details how reincarnation was linked to mound building at Cahokia: the earth on the mound that would grow grass in the spring represented the reincarnation of the person buried beneath it. A more holistic interpretation seems more in line with later indigenous cosmology, in which nature spirits, animals, and humans are equal and interconnected.

Mississippian religion shared many characteristics with Mesoamerican religions, such as a hybrid birdman deity, a cosmology in which the sky featured as "the realm of order and supernatural power", and a focus on the performance of rites of renewal and regeneration (Peregrine 2001: 337). Mississippian deities included the Earth Mother, the Birdman, the Twins, and the Great Serpent. Priests, shamans, and other religious specialists contacted these deities through ritual and sacrifice. Shamans moved between the worlds of the dead and the living to heal individuals and communities and religious cults often focused on one spirit or deity (Dye 2000: 139). Individuals could obtain powers from spirits through "fasting, employing guardian spirits, and seeking visions." Mississippian spirituality was strongly linked to administrative power: chiefs were top priests and had connections with deities and spirits (Dye 2000: 139–141).

David Dye suggests the Earth Mother was a supernatural moralizing force: "She was a guardian for people who respected her and abided by her rules, but she dispensed punishment to those who broke her taboos, brought about disharmony and imbalance in the world, and violated prescribed rules" (Dye 2000: 146). Birdman imagery dominates the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex: the Birdman is a mythical warrior with falcon features (Brown 2004: 106). Dye's description of the Birdman, however, does not include mention of correct behavior, only

"prayer, respect, and supplication," on behalf of the deeds and battles of the mythic figure (Dye 2000: 149). In tribes that likely trace their origins to Cahokia, the Birdman is linked to the myth of the Morning Star, "an allegorical figure who plays a central role in ensuring the triumph of life over death, day over night, summer over winter (Brown 2004: 118)." In these tribes (which include Kansa, Omaha, and Osage), the Morning Star opposes the Great Serpent, who represents death and the lower world. "Morning Star represents the capacity for rebirth; the Great Serpent exercises discretion over the timing of death. Each controls aspects of fertility: Morning Star controls the generation of human life and the Serpent/puma the generation of plant and animal life" (Brown 2004: 119).

In Cahokia it is likely that elites were deeply involved in religious ceremonies, including those connected with the care of ancestral remains as well as calendrical rituals and feasts. The timing of these ceremonies appears to have been worked out using large circles of posts or "woodhenges" that allowed measurement of the sun's position throughout the year. Elites were identified by elaborate regalia, personal ornaments, and ritual paraphernalia that incorporated exotic materials obtained through extensive long-distance trade. It appears that some of these items were created by specialist craftspeople present at Cahokia itself. Shell beads and effigy pipes originating here were distributed throughout the midcontinent. Human sacrifice rituals like the burials uncovered in Cahokia's Mound 72 suggest a level of social stratification, but more research is needed about the ties between sacrifice rituals and appeasement of Mississippian high gods.

Illinois Religion

The Illiniwek (known to European Settlers as the Illinois Confederation) period refers to the span of time from 1640 CE, the approximate date of the first European written reports of the Illinois (also known as Inoca, Illiniouek, Illini). The region referred to as the Illinois Country in both modern and older (though Western) sources was located to the east of the Middle Mississippi river, bounded to the north by Lake Michigan, to the south by the Ohio river, and to the west by the Wabash. However, it is likely that the Illinois-speaking groups encountered by Europeans in the 17th century had arrived in this area relatively recently, possibly migrating westwards from the Lake Erie basin, perhaps displacing previous inhabitants of the Mississippi watershed like the Oneota and others.

Despite the use of the term 'Illinois Confederacy' to describe prevailing socio-political life in the region, there is no indication in the written sources of any formal inter-nation political organizations such as those found among Haudenosaunee groups to the northeast in the same period. Political leadership among the various Illinois tribes was provided by both peace chiefs— who played important diplomatic roles, such as conducting calumet (peace pipe) ceremonies for visitors but had relatively little formal authority—and war chiefs, who organized raids on other settlements.

In the post-contact period e.g. late 17th century), the Iliniouek were settled in large villages often close to French forts and trading posts, most notably the Grand Village of the Kaskaskia. It has traditionally been assumed that these large settlements, which included Miami-Illinois speakers from various subgroups as well as Chickasaws, Shawnees, and others, functioned almost as refugee centres as the Illiniwek fled attacks from the Haudenosaunee to the east and clustered together in the wake of disease and depopulation. Some, however,

argue that these large agglomerated settlements represented instead strategic policy by certain nations to monopolize critical bison-hunting territory and slave raiding opportunities.

From the 1660s and 1670s onwards, France claimed title to the Illinois Country (Pays des Illinois) as part of its North American colonial possessions. French presence was generally limited to small numbers of missionaries and traders, while the tribal groups maintained much autonomy. This all changed in 1717 CE, when Illiniwek lands were incorporated directly into the French colony of Louisiane. After this, the French began to settle arable farmers and black slaves in large numbers throughout the Middle Mississippi Valley. In 1763 CE, at the end of the Seven Years' War, France ceded the part of their Louisiane colony that lay east of the Mississippi to the British. The Illiniwek resisted British incursions into the region for several years. British forces eventually managed to occupy Fort de Chartres, the main French military and administrative centre in the region, in 1765 CE until they, in turn, were unseated by American Revolutionary forces under general George Rogers Clark.

Information on Illiniwek cosmology comes from Peoria oral tradition and French observation. Ethnographic and anthropological texts describe some tenets of Illinois procedure and cosmology. Young Illinois men went on vision quests and women fasted in lodges in order to connect with personal spirits called manitous. Shamans connected to animal spirits conducted rituals and ceremonies which often included smoking tobacco and dancing (Pritzer 2000: 418). Calumet pipe ceremonialism, which originated with the Pawnee and spread to other tribes, was present among the Illinois (Hall 1997: 4, 30). The Thunderbird was a symbol of these ceremonies (ibid., 30). However, few Illiniwek oral traditions have survived: Truman Michelson recorded four Peoria oral traditions in 1916 (categorized later by the Illinois State Museum as Illinois, see: Illinois State Museum 2000). The knowledge-keepers were George Washington Finley- one of the last speakers of the Peoria language, Nancy Stand of the United Peoria and Miami Tribe, and one or two additional unidentified Peoria citizens (Illinois State Museum 2000). Indigenous oral traditions are told and interpreted in different ways depending on the speaker and context of the story (McArdle 2020, pers. comm.). We therefore cannot make generalizations about Illinois culture from the surviving oral traditions. Oral traditions demonstrate a cosmology based on holistic connectivity and natural cause and effect. These concepts can be seen in French observations of Illinois beliefs as well. Writings from Jacques Marquette suggest the Illiniwek believed that the earth rested on the back of an otter, and that the universe had three levels: the Upper World, inhabited by the sun and the thunder; the Middle World (Earth); and the Lower World, home to monsters (Illinois State Museum 2000; Marquette 1674: 139-141). This interconnectedness and cause and effect is the only kind of "moralizing" concern that can be directly inferred in relation to Illiniwek cosmology.

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The relation to our definitions of morality here is complicated. Some of the tenets of our definition are likely found in Iliniwek oral tradition but cannot be inferred due to the lack of surviving oral traditions and indigenous voices needed to interpret these traditions. In many North American indigenous creation myths, the foundations of the world are determined by the relationship between animals and nature – humans are not the center of the world (McArdle, pers. comm). A potential example of this cosmology is the Illiniwek oral tradition *Rabbit and Possum* in which the Rabbit and the Possum decide whether it is light or dark all the time (Stand 1916, retrieved from Illinois State Museum 2000). Morality and conduct are larger than the human-human interactions we use in our definition. However, themes of morality can likely also be applied to human relationships based on the context and aim of the speaker of the oral tradition.

Summary

Evidence for the exact tenets of the cosmologies of SECC and earlier cultures is quite thin. In later indigenous cultures, it is likely that oral traditions imparted messages of moral concern like honesty, reciprocity, and refraining from harm. These traditions can be spoken and interpreted differently based on speaker, context, and intent. Indigenous cosmologies likely had some prosocial elements (such as demands for resource sharing being legitimated through dream requests, which were thought to have adverse consequences if not met by the community). It also appears that these cosmologies had elements that legitimated core features of the social structure (such as the kinship system). Cosmologies were generally based on maintaining harmonious balance, and improper or harmful behavior and conduct had natural consequences. In contrast, moralizing enforcement (which emphasizes direct punishments and rewards) appears to have been either limited or narrow in scope. The available evidence suggests that systematic punishment across domains, and as a primary concern of the religious system, emerged in response to colonial pressures.

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Finger Lakes
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This narrative was adapted from the chapter on small-scale societies by Eva Brandl (2019) in
Seshat History of the Axial Age.

Iroquois Religion
The Haudenosaunee, more commonly known as the League of the Iroquois, inhabited the Great
Lakes area of North America. A confederacy of five nations founded in the 16th century, they
were made up of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca (Reid 1996). The
Tuscarora joined them in the early 18th century as a sixth nation (Reid 1996). In Haudenosaunee
oral traditions, the nations were joined by the Peacemaker: this shared tradition acts as part of
the cultural foundation of the confederacy (Haudenosaunee Confederacy 2020). The
Haudenosaunee spoke Ukwehuwe (Iroquoian) languages and formed part of what is now
known as the Eastern Woodlands culture area. The nations were governed by a group of chiefs,
who congregated in a hierarchical system of councils to debate matters of common concern. At
the highest level of this system, the member nations were represented in a common league
council. Traditional values emphasize "peace, harmony, obedience, and hospitality" (Noon
1949: 26).

Oneida Indian Nation describes their oral traditions as "ageless" and explain that their
oral traditions have more than one version (Oneida Indian Nation 2020). They write, "More

than entertainment, these stories teach children the values of their culture, such as honesty and kindness" (Oneida Indian Nation 2020). One ethnographer writes that oral traditions determined "the Iroquois value system which contained a series of regulatory ethics" (Foley 1975: 31). Oral traditions introduce us to a cosmology which includes numerous spirits and animals. Spirits discussed by ethnographers prominently included the Three Sisters, the spirits of the sacred crops maize, beans, and squash, which were celebrated in the annual thanksgiving festivals (see Morgan & Lloyd 1901a: 180-199; for an Haudenosaunee perspective see *The Legend of the Three Sisters* retrieved from Oneida Indian Nation 2020). There were also lesser spirits, some of them malicious, which were thought to cause misfortune (for an example see Waugh 1916: 98p).

Some sources write that the most important entity was the Great Spirit, "who was responsible for the creation of men, the plants, and animals and the forces of good in nature" (Reid 1996: 6, 8). The Oneida Indian Nation calls the Great Spirit "perfect" but shares a version of the Haudenosaunee Creation Story which is more nuanced than Reid's explanation, with several spirits and animals possibly playing roles in the creation process (Oneida Indian Nation 2020; see *The Haudenosaunee Creation Story* retrieved from Oneida Indian Nation 2020). Early anthropologists theorized that this moralistic concept of the Great Spirit was a product of the colonial encounter, when Christian concepts introduced by Jesuit missionaries were incorporated into the indigenous cosmos (Morgan & Lloyd 1901b: 233p). According to Lewis Henry Morgan, these encounters prepared the way for the eventual transformation of Iroquois beliefs into an "ethical religion" (Morgan & Lloyd 1901b: 234). The same source describes pre-contact religion as an essentially amoral worship of the sun, which was "paid prayer and sacrifice and thanks for such good gifts as food, sunshine, and victory over the enemy" (Morgan & Lloyd 1901b: 234). According to this account, before contact, people propitiated a range of different spirits who had little or no connection to moral conduct (Morgan & Lloyd 1901b: 234).

However, it is important to remember that ethnographers categorized indigenous society according to their own worldviews, which were shaped by the values and intellectual traditions of the Victorian period. In accepting this interpretation, we force a Western, punitive-moralistic lens onto Haudenosaunee oral traditions. In contrast, indigenous morality is often more concerned with natural cause and effect and holistic interconnectedness. As a result, Haudenosaunee oral traditions seem to teach lessons rather than describe punishment (an example of how this may be seen in the Oneida tale *The Legend of the Hermit Thrush* retrieved from Oneida Indian Nation 2020). Furthermore, spiritual entities can embody values without implementing them by force. For example, descriptions of myths suggest that cosmic entities, such as the moon, the sun, and the sky, were put in relation to each other reflecting kin categories (such as mother, maternal uncle, and maternal grandmother, who are all part of the matrilineage) (Foster 1974: 71). Some authors have suggested that this "hierarchy brings order to the cosmos in a way analogous to the way kinship brings order to the society" (Foster 1974: 71). However, we are not aware of evidence showing that these entities took a punitive stance on conduct between humans. Some claim that in 'archaic' Haudenosaunee belief, after death, the soul was thought to journey to the land of the dead (St John 1994: 303). Before entering the afterlife, the soul had to traverse an abyss, and while people who had shown good conduct could count on the help of a guide, others were doomed to fall into a pit where they were would be tormented with a painful, never-ending itch (St John 1994: 303). This happened to

people who had committed suicide, were disobedient, or had abandoned a pregnant wife (St John 1994: 303p). Accordingly, if present during the pre-contact period, this enforcement appears to have been limited to a set of very specific offences.

All cultures are shaped by contact with other cultures, and Haudenosaunee worldviews were no exception. This is evident in the emergence of the Handsome Lake religion in the 19th century, a prophetic movement that merged traditional beliefs and practices and a concern with cultural revival with elements borrowed from Quaker religion (see Parker 1913; Deardorff 1951; Wallace 1978 for comprehensive accounts). The pantheon of this new religion drew on ancient culture heroes and other mythical beings (Wallace & Steen 1969: 251). However, it also included a Christian-deirved notion of heaven and hell, along with a Christianized concept of the Great Spirit (Morgan & Lloyd 1901a: 226p). He also had a counterpart in the Evil Spirit or Tormentor, a devil-like figure who was thought to torment 'sinners' in the afterlife (Wallace & Steen 1969: 318; St John 1994: 136). The Tormentor was believed to punish a broad range of offences, including witchcraft, spousal abuse, promiscuity, and gambling (St John 1994: 136p). Accordingly, some sources write that it was during this period that the notion of systematic divine judgment in the afterlife was introduced into Haudenosaunee spirituality (Wallace & Steen 1969: 317). Others concur that "most of the punishments inflicted upon evil persons are derived from Christian theology" (Noon 1949: 26). This is supported by accounts that suggest that these ideas were considered novel and were initially met with doubt, although they became widespread later on (Wallace & Steen 1969: 317).

However, other tenets of Haudenosaunee cosmology may have been present pre-contact. Ethnographic sources describe a Haudenosaunee cosmology of order and disorder based on harmonious relations with nature (Foley 1975: 46; St John 1994: 50). The spirits of humans, animals, and the forces of nature were all connected and communicated with each other (St John 1994: 50). The soul was thought of as the shadow of the person, and it was thought to communicate with "[d]ead ancestors, guardian spirits, animal spirits, 'inanimate' spirits and mythic beings" (St John 1994: 60). Dreams were seen as carrying messages from spiritual entities, which appeared to dreamers to give advice and make demands (Foley 1975: 31-34). The dreamer and his community then strove to meet these demands (Foley 1975: 31-34). The "denial of a request […] might upset the harmony between human and non-human persons" (St John 1994: 57). Dream requests -where people had a right to receive objects they had dreamed about- also played a role in ceremonies such as the Midwinter festivities (Foley 1975: 34). These requests, legitimated by the authority of dreamed experiences, may have had a prosocial role. For example, one ethnohistorian writes that "dreams functioned as an economic levelling device fostering an equality of distribution within the local village. Failure to appease the dreamer in the proscribed manner not only had dire consequences for the individual dreamer but also for the community" (Foley 1975: 34). The same source names instances in which women appealed to dreams to demand resources for their subsistence, such as food and land for planting corn (Foley 1975: 33).

Whenever the harmony of the cosmos had become disturbed, the spiritual connections between all animate things were vital to restoring balance in the world (St John 1994:50). The people's welfare also depended on maintaining harmonious relations with the dead. The living were obliged to offer up food and presents to the dead (Shimony 1961: 231). Those who

neglected these observances were met with illness and death (ibid.). In general, failure to fulfill ritual obligations could endanger the individual, but also cause disease and misfortune for their relatives and descendants in future generations, and ritual objects could turn on their owners and 'eat' them (Shimony 1961: 275). Ceremonies honouring the dead provided an opportunity for cooperative activities. Leading up to the Feast of the Dead, ceremonial leaders and other members of the community "clean up the graveyard of the Longhouse, burning the brush, tidying the markers, and planting new plants [...]. This indicates respect and attention to the dead and also indicates a sense of responsibility toward the community" (Shimony 1961: 232). Ancestors were also invoked in other rituals. For example, warriors invoked the deeds of their ancestors during War Dances (Fenton 1953: 106p). The balance between the human and spiritual worlds is seen in the timing of Condolence Councils, when a new chief replaces one who has died. These councils can only be held after the crops have been harvested because they are associated with death (Hall 1997: 35).

Summary

Haudenosaunee cosmology was made up of a rich assemblage of mythical beings and rituals, which were designed to establish harmonious relationships between people and the world around them. Haudenosaunee spiritual beliefs also had some prosocial elements. For example, mythology and oral traditions taught important moral values and legitimized core features of the social structure such as the kinship system. Ceremonies provided an opportunity to engage in cooperative activities. Furthermore, people justified demands for resource sharing with dreams. Dream requests were thought to have adverse consequences if the community did not meet them. However, while these practices may have contributed to prosocial activities such as food sharing, people had to invoke their dream journeys before making actionable requests, suggesting that this differed from the active monitoring that characterizes supernatural enforcement in other religions. The available evidence further suggests that moralizing punishment and reward in the afterlife was narrow in scope, and only applied to a small set of specific offences. Ethnohistorical sources state that systematic punishment across a broad range of domains, and as a primary concern of the religious system, emerged in response to colonial pressures. We acknowledge that the long history of contact with missionaries and other colonial influences complicates our analysis.

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Cuzco
NGA: Cuzco
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Evaluating the existence and nature of moralizing superhuman punishment in the deep past of the central Andes presents some distinctive interpretive challenges. The region has one of the deepest independent records of social complexity, but no detailed written record existed until Spanish writers began to produce retrospective accounts of the Inca Empire in the mid-1500s. The Spanish ethnohistoric corpus is extensive, but it is contradictory and biased, and even a cursory comparison of the Inca Empire and earlier complex societies demonstrates the problems with directly extrapolating descriptions of Andean religion across space and time. Consequently, the material record of archaeology offers the sole source of direct evidence for millennia of social evolution in the central Andes. That record is fragmentary and is far from representative, and it is important to acknowledge the constraints inherent to addressing metaphysical questions using ancient material patterns. This review will focus on describing material patterns in monumental structures, open spaces, iconography, and ritual contexts.

Late Preceramic Period (3500–1800 BCE)
During the Late Preceramic period, large, permanent settlements coalesced for the first time in some coastal areas (Haas and Creamer 2006: 745–50; Zeidler 2008:461-464). Different subsistence strategies supported this population growth and resource coordination, and coastal communities exploited local combinations of fishing/shellfishing, wild plant gathering, and the horticultural cultivation of beans, peppers, maize and other plants (Quilter 1991: 393–401). In some coastal valleys, formally laid out plazas appeared, which were often associated with modest circular semisubterranean plazas and low pyramid mounds. The largest known concentration is in the Norte Chico region, with the site of Caral treated by some as an urban center of the first Andean civilization (Haas and Creamer 2006; Quilter 2014: 89; Vega-Centeno 2006).

The scale of the open plazas and size of some early platform mounds indicates an increased coordination in construction activities, potentially involving populations living beyond a particular site. The existence of multiple construction phases indicates the periodic enlargement and elaboration of monuments that began as fairly modest projects. This might indicate festive cycles that brought outlying populations to the center during time of resource abundance, to feast and occasionally enlarge or improve the collective monument. The work of construction was potentially a symbolically powerful act of landscape modification that punctuated seasonal ceremonies and local beliefs. Similar developments, which occurred in

other world regions, may include Stonehenge, Gobekli Tepe, and Poverty Point that seem to have functioned at a time when hunter-gatherers were transitioning toward agriculture. It also is similar to the evolution of mound-building in the North American eastern woodlands (Adena, Hopewell, Mississippian).

Early monuments were architecturally simple and built of readily available materials, including mud bricks and *shicra* (reed net bags filled with rocks). Although the scale of construction was impressive, special plazas and platform-top structures were probably too small to accommodate the labor force that would have built them (Pozorski and Pozorski 2018:356). For example, the earliest dated circular sunken plaza—dated to 3500 BCE at Sechín Bajo—measured around 100 square meters, a space that could comfortably hold only hold several dozen individuals in its interior, or seat a smaller number at its perimeter (Quilter 2014:85). Other circular sunken plazas reach a few hundred square meters at sites such as Cerro Lampay and Caral. Likewise, while the volume of fill used to raise early platform mounds reached several thousand cubic meters, early temple structures built on the summits had small rooms, rarely with more than a few dozen square meters of interior space. The scalar contradictions between construction labor and accessibility suggest that over time only a small percentage of a region's population participated in activities in sunken plazas or entered temple buildings. Some researchers interpret this as evidence of durable social hierarchies, although others might see other kinds of exclusive groups (e.g., sodalities, ancestral cults) helping to coordinate otherwise egalitarian societies.

Highland populations also began to invest more labor and resources in building ceremonial architecture at this time. Preceramic groups constructed semi-subterranean courts, mounds and free-standing ritual chambers with hearths at sites such as Huaricoto, La Galgada, and Kotosh, leading scholars to identify a shared "Kotosh Religious Tradition" (e.g. Burger 1992: 45–52). This tradition continued to thrive during the second millennium BCE, in the succeeding Initial Period (Quilter 2014: 136). Kotosh temples, of modest size, were associated with the burials of prominent women and men.

The construction of early ceremonial architecture complemented continuity and change in rituals and offerings taking places in domestic, subsistence, and mortuary contexts. For instance, archaeologists found that the two Late Preceramic pyramids at Río Seco were surrounded by dense scatters of ritual deposits, where the people had made offerings of plants and the remains of birds and sea lions (Quilter 2014: 86). Offerings from the Huaca de los Ídolos at Áspero included animal fur, plant remains, basketry, and clay figurines of human figures. At Caral, human figurines also appear in association with ritual architecture, and flutes made of carved pelican and condor bone have been encountered as well.

The presence of exotic fauna in offerings appears to have intensified over time (Burger 2008), and was incorporated into decorative elements, including mural painting and frieze-work on monumental structures. The early temple at Ventarrón has polychrome murals of a deer caught in a net, the earliest known example of such decoration (Quilter 2014:89). At Buena Vista, the Temple of the Fox has incised and painted animals decorating its walls (Benfer et al. 2007). The temple complex at that site is aligned with the pathway of the sun, and the Temple of the Menacing Disc at that site has a clay sculpture of an angry circular face that is flanked by two deer-like animals. The sculpture is located in the innermost part of the temple and could be

seen through a doorway by people who had access to a square patio that measured less than 100 square meters (Benfer et al. 2007).

Initial Period (1800–800 BCE)
The basic architectural components that appeared in the Late Preceramic period continue after the appearance of pottery on the Peruvian north coast (Pozorski and Pozorski 2008). The importance of ceremonial architecture to coastal populations grew during the Initial Period (1800–800 BCE) and religious centers became more elaborate as construction projects continued over time. Initial Period communities came together periodically to perform rituals at monumental U- or J-shaped pyramid complexes (Dillehay 2004). Some of these developed from pre-existing Preceramic ritual centers, while others were new foundations. The spread of common architectural and artistic elements suggests the regional distribution of loosely overlapping religious traditions, which can be seen at sites like Garagay (Rimac Valley), Cardal (Lurín Valley), and Sechín Alto (Casma Valley) (Burger and Salazar-Burger 1991; Quilter 2014: 120–25). High relief polychrome friezes appear at some of these religious centers, typically depicting zoomorphic (spiders, sea otters, felines) and monstrous beings, like the blue feathered, fanged creature seen at Garagay. There are also figures that possess the features of humans and animals, and the large modeled heads at Huaca de los Reyes and Moxeke. At Garagay, there is a frieze of a fanged polychrome cayman or lizard figure, while Burger and Salazar (1998) excavated a similar creature at Mina Perdida, which possessed a human head and limbs. Shibata's (2017) recent excavations at Huaca Partida (Nepeña Valley) have identified murals and friezes decorating the exterior walls of the multi-tiered temple structure. The lower levels are associated with a fish/cayman and a feline, above which is a winged anthropomorph that the excavator identifies as a shamanic mediator who connects the terrestrial world with the celestial one, an upper tier decorated with a polychrome frieze of a raptorial bird.

Religious activities likely included both public processions, feasts and offerings in the open plazas and rituals restricted to priestly elite groups in special courts and chambers. Offering caches included a variety of materials, including sheets of precious metal, pottery, burnt plants, crystals, clay figurines, and animal remains (Burger 2012; Dillehay 2004; Moore 2014: 225). Burger (2012) excavated a group of elite burials associated with the monumental complex at Cardal, noting that one elderly male was buried with a necklace of sea lion canines and red-painted whalebone earspools. Burger interprets them as emblems of leadership, possibly by a shamanic practitioner. Those excavations also encountered an offering that contained a child's decapitated head, ceremonial pottery, a figurine, greenstone beads, and a sea lion canine. Although not widespread, human sacrifice might also be indicated in the burials atop a pyramid at Late Preceramic Áspero and by bas-reliefs of richly dressed men carrying dismembered body parts at Initial Period Cerro Sechín (Moore 2014: 234; Quilter 2014: 650). It is difficult to extrapolate from this to the nature of early Peruvian deities (or spirits, or ancestors), their powers and concerns, but in general we can say that a logic of sacrifice and supplication seems to have structured ritual activity. In historic-period Andean societies, it was obligatory to show respect to and care for a range of "supernatural" beings—for instance through festivals, food offerings, and "feeding" and clothing ancestral mummies (MacCormack 1998: 308–11; Mannheim and Salas Carreño 2015: 60–64)—in order to secure protection for the community and favorable conditions for agriculture. Theoretically, something similar may

have been taking place at this early date, although we should keep in mind the depth of time separating historic Andean communities from their Archaic and Initial Period predecessors. Pozorski and Pozorski (1993: 48) note that many of the Initial Period U-shaped pyramid complexes in the coastal valleys face towards the mountains and the water sources that were vital for irrigated agriculture: perhaps ceremonies addressed gods with the power to ensure the flow of life-giving water. Moseley and Heckenberger (2013: 646) suggest that some Preceramic and Initial Period monuments "emulated *Apu*, sacred mountain peaks and the homes of masculine deities who controlled rainfall," but ultimately this is hard to verify. The concept of *apu* is projected backward from the Inca era, when the political organization of the Central Andes was very different from that of early prehistoric societies.

The study of iconography is also used to make inferences about early Andean religion. As noted above, depictions of animals—and the offering of exotic animals—can be seen at early religious centers, possibly distinguishing some individuals as religious or political leaders. Aside from clay figurines, human representations are rare in early religious art. There is some iconography that suggests the existence of belief in superhuman beings, some of them associated with celestial bodies. Haas et al. (2003) believe that a drawing on a gourd dating to 2600–2000 BCE from the Norte Chico region represents a "Staff God" similar to the deity known from later Chavín, Wari and Tiwanaku art. The figure on the gourd faces the viewer and holds one staff in each hand; its fanged mouth suggests that it is no ordinary human ruler or priest but some form of metahuman being. Over time, some religious iconography suggests the association of superhuman beings with powers over weather phenomena: "rayed heads," perhaps denoting the radiant power of the sun, and water and lightning images linked with snakes. These early "gods" are not anthropomorphic, raising questions of how they might have intersected with moral beliefs of the societies where they appear. Composite human-animal figures, often interpreted as deities, are found in the art of the Initial Period, for example in sculpted friezes at monumental sites (Pozorski and Pozorski 2018). These often appear as modeled stucco heads that bring to mind the "theriomorphic" figures seen on Late Preclassic Maya temples (for instance, at Cerros, Cuello, Lamanai and Mirador). Mayanist scholars have identified a general trend toward more anthropomorphic images that eventually coalesce around representations of Maya royalty and gods in the Classic period.

From the emerging picture of early religious monuments and the sketchy evidence from offerings and mortuary practices, it is possible to make some general statements about social development and religious practice, although many aspects of belief remain elusive. The scalar features of early monumental complexes suggest that they drew together people from multiple communities—and perhaps people living beyond the local valley—who came for festivities and contributed periodically to the labor that built the impressive complexes. The different degrees of access and identification of high-status burials suggests that there were leaders, perhaps hereditary elites, who managed construction work and ritual activities at these sites. These leaders were often buried in association with religious monuments, sometimes with the same exotic materials that appear in the most important offerings. At a time when irrigation networks were beginning to reshape coastal valleys, there appear to be people and superhuman beings that were at the center of ritual networks, the recipients of exotic goods and labor. These supernatural beings are not humans, and while there is no way to prove that these were not "moral monsters," that provided oversight in everyday human interactions, it is

significant that their representations appear to be limited to contexts that few people would see, even during important religious festivals. It is not possible to quantify the extent to which the material flows to religious leaders and superhuman beings were reciprocated, either by the redistribution of food or the promulgation of an ideology of ceremonial intercession on behalf of the laboring population.

In addition to the identification of religious leaders and superhuman beings in transegalitarian societies on the coast, it is possible to recognize the lack of a universal pantheon that might bind different coastal valleys—or coastal and highland areas—under the same religious beliefs (and by extension, superhuman moral oversight). There are multiple overlapping religious traditions across the central Andes, and some differences in the offerings seen at the sites of fishing, farming, and herding populations (Burger 2012). The early religious complexes and depictions of superhuman beings are different enough to suggest that these are not "high gods" capable of overseeing the moral life of all humans. There is no evidence that superhuman beings were part of the everyday ritual life of ordinary people, based on what little is known of domestic rituals. Instead of exerting an omnipresent oversight, the depictions of superhuman beings seem more like the organizing patrons for the festive cycles of early religious centers, occupying sacred places, and in the case of celestial beings, organizing the timing of construction events and ceremonies.

Early Horizon (800–200 BCE)

The Early Horizon is characterized by the continued spread of religious architecture and iconography throughout the Central Andes. This was once thought to be driven by the highland temple and plaza complex of Chavín de Huántar in the modern-day Ancash region of Peru. However, research at Initial Period centers shows that the architectural elements and depictions of superhuman beings seen at Chavín de Huantar have precedents on the coast (Kembel and Rick 2004: 62). Chavín was just one among many important first-millennium BCE centers with monumental sacred architecture, and the use of Mito-style temples in its vicinity suggests the co-existence of diverse beliefs and practices (Contreras 2017). Chavín influence fades with distance, and the religious structures and iconography of the south-central Andes— for example, the Yaya-Mama Complex of the Lake Titicaca Basin—do not reflect the influence of Chavín. Some of the most important ritual features found at Chavín de Huantar are unique to the site and would have been accessible to very small numbers of people (Rick 2017).

Chavinoid artwork represents richly attired figures whose hybrid animal and human features suggest—in time-honored Andean style—that they are metahuman beings (Moseley and Heckenberger 2013: 651). Prominent among them was the aforementioned Staff God. It appeared in elaborate form at Chavín de Huántar on the carved stone known as the Raimondi Stela (whose precise original location is unknown), grasping two staffs or scepters and baring sharp canines (Burger 1992: 174—175). Within a cross-shaped chamber deep in the temple complex stood the five-meter-high Lanzón Stone, a carved monolith that may have embodied a chthonic deity (Rick 2008). Like other beings represented at Chavín and other Early Horizon sites, the Raimondi and Lanzón figures sport feline features: fangs and clawed hands and feet. Pozorski et al. (2017: 554) have noted that in historically observed Amazonian societies, jaguars are "symbols of force and power" and "tools of social control as potential punishers when traditional values and rules are not respected." These authors proposed that such symbolic

role, along with the association of predatory cats with "shamanic practices," may help explain the prominence of felines and feline features at Initial Period sites on the coast. Their arguments could also be applied to Late Horizon iconography in the highlands and elsewhere, with the implication that the fierce deities of the Chavín cult were concerned with ensuring human adherence to customary ethical codes.

However, such use of ethnography—from a society two millennia later with a different social organization and inhabiting a different linguistic and ecological region—is a flawed foundation to build on. Is there felid imagery on the coast and in the highlands after about 1500 BCE? Yes, but the meaning of that imagery is more elusive. For the Incas, the jaguar was a symbol of lowland savagery. There is a story of a prince who killed a jaguar and started wearing its pelt around. He then began to terrorize and cannibalize his lowland opponents—essentially a "Heart of Darkness" story rather than one of moral retribution.

Iconography is not the only source for understanding religious practices in this period: archaeological excavation at Early Horizon sacred centers has been used to make inferences about ceremonies and religious organization. Lumbreras (1993) argued that Chavín de Huántar served as an oracle for the wider region, where ritual specialists may have interpreted environmental clues in order to predict El Niño events (see also Burger 1992: 193–95). Others have stressed the importance of Chavín as a pilgrimage site where adherents could have intense experiences of divine power, mediated through dazzling imagery, music and the ritual use of hallucinogenic drugs (Burger 1992, Weismantel 2014, Kolar 2017). The monumental architecture shows a concern with controlling and restricting access, and it is likely that a trained priesthood was present to direct ceremonies. While public rites and processions took place in the plazas outside the temples, it was likely only a small subset of pilgrims who were admitted to the innermost galleries and allowed to interact with the Lanzón stone (Kembel and Rick 2004). The labyrinthine passages leading to the statue were accessible only via a small circular plaza, perhaps restricted to high-ranking initiates. Caches of valuable goods, such as the fine ceramics and stone vessels found in the Ofrendas Gallery, as well as carved human finger bones placed on the Lanzón's head (Rick 2005: 79; Quilter 2014: 144), suggest that adherents of the Chavín cult interacted with its deities through offerings and sacrifice. Rick (2017) has noted the diversity of ritual features across the ceremonial complex, however, which suggest that the restricted, priest-managed circuit through the temple was part of a broader, and less centrally managed, set of religious practices taking place at times of religious congregation.

There are several different schools of thought about the ways Chavín ideas and practices were disseminated beyond Chavín de Huántar. In Burger's (1992: 192–93) view, the cult was a peaceful one that succeeded by transcending pre-existing ethnic boundaries. Some have argued that richly decorated textiles aided efforts by missionaries or initiates to spread the new creed across the Andes (e.g. Moseley 2001: 168–70). However, the interpretation of Chavín as a missionizing religion has fallen out of favor in recent years, partly due to a lack of evidence for local shrines or temples where worship could have taken place in proselytized areas. A consensus view is developing of Chavín de Huántar as a pilgrimage site dominated by a priestly elite. The finely crafted artefacts bearing Chavinoid iconography that circulated through the Early Horizon Andes may have played an exclusionary role, in which such goods bestowed social power on those who had access to and could interpret them.

Overall, there is scant evidence for moralizing superhuman powers in this period of Andean prehistory. While some scholars have seen the architectural and iconographic programs at Chavín and other Early Horizon sites as expressions of long-standing Andean values such as reciprocity and complementarity (Quilter 2014: 151; Weismantel 2014/2015: 48), it would be quite a leap from this to arguing that the gods of Chavín enforced such values by monitoring, punishing and rewarding the behavior of their worshippers. The "shamanic" elements identified by many scholars in Chavinoid artwork hint that mind-altering, direct contact with supernatural beings for the privileged few—rather than a system of divine punishment and reward—formed the core of Chavín religious experience. Hallucinogenic snuff was used in the south-central Andes before 2000 BCE, and snuff trays are present on the coast during the Initial Period (Torres 1995), reinforcing the sense that Andean societies viewed the supernatural as largely existing outside of their daily lives.

In this section we have focused on developments in, or originating in, the highlands, to the exclusion of the coast, but it is worth noting briefly that the iconography of the south coast Paracas culture of the first millennium BCE also gestures towards the importance of shamanism, including images of shamans in flight on textiles and ceramics, possibly after using hallucinogens. Paracas archaeology long focused on elaborate mortuary ceremonies, but recent work at population centers has identified platform mounds and sunken plazas (Tantaleán et al. 2016). Its supernatural imagery features many human bodies with zoomorphic or monstrous attributes. The possibility that supernatural agents represented with monstrous features are less likely to play the role of divine overseer and judge of human morality remains a question to be explored comparatively. It is not clear whether this sort of religious leadership existed along the north coast, where many U-shaped mound centers were abandoned during the Early Horizon. In the Nepeña Valley, Chicoine and colleagues have identified densely settled sites with agglutinated enclosure compounds. Those enclosures hold modest-sized plazas that sometimes contain evidence for musical performances and other ceremonial activities (Helmer and Chicoine 2013).

Early Intermediate Period (200 BCE–600 CE)
During the Early Intermediate Period, regionally distinctive cultures developed in the Central Andes, including Recuay in the north-central highlands, Gallinazo and Moche on the north coast, and Nasca on the south coast (Lau 2002–2004; Moseley 2001: 173–203). Farther south, the modest sunken patio complexes and monoliths seen at sites like Pukara and Chiripa persisted for centuries before evolving into a distinct state religion at the Titicaca Basin site of Tiwanaku. Here we focus mainly on the Moche culture, which has produced the most evidence of urbanism, stratification, and political centralization.

The political and religious organization of the Moche (c. 100–900 CE) remains a matter of debate (Chapdelaine 2011). Earlier portrayals of a unitary state based in the Moche and Chicama valleys that expanded through conquest (Larco Hoyle 1945) have been replaced by a recognition of more complex developments. Although the site of the Huacas of Moche, two vast adobe pyramids in the Moche Valley, was probably not the "capital" of the entire North Coast, it was nevertheless one of the most impressive ceremonial centers ever built in the Pre-Columbian Americas. The reproduction of elements of the iconography seen on the exterior of the Huaca de la Luna in the Chicama Valley to the north (Huaca Cao Viejo) and the Nepeña

Valley to the south (Pañamarca) suggests the successful introduction of state ideology (e.g., Jackson 2008), as does the broad distribution of royal iconography along the north coast. The repetition of iconography depicting a "Temple of the Staircase and Wave" (de Bock 2003) suggests the broad distribution of temple structures across space and time, which might be taken as evidence of a more ecclesiastical form of religion in the Moche world. Nevertheless, it is important to note the diversity of ritual practices found in proximity to Moche monuments (e.g., Chicoine 2011).

Moche culture is famous for its elaborate visual culture, including painted and sculpted pottery, fine metalwork, and painted adobe murals. Several figures portrayed in these media have been interpreted as deities and supernatural creatures. Many of these superhuman figures are anthropomorphic, with animal features (fangs, wings) that are reminiscent of earlier depictions of shamanic figures. Elite burials show humans adorned in some of the same superhuman costumes depicted on Moche ceramics. Makowski (2003: 353) identifies four different gods, distinguished by their adornments and attributes, that recur in the iconography, including a Rayed Deity (or Warrior Priest). In Quilter's (1997, 1990) view, this personage should be interpreted as a sun god who re-established order after a period of cosmic chaos in which even inanimate objects revolted against their masters, and who now receives sacrifices in recognition of this role.

Moche artwork features humans with much greater frequency than the iconography of earlier periods. Decorative themes include the interaction between the living and the dead, and the existence of an afterworld as a kind of inverted version of the world of the living (Bourget 2006, Wiersema 2010). It is interesting to see the production—for some deceased only—of mortuary assemblages that invoke the elements of everyday life. Does this resemble ancient Egyptian practice and/or early imperial Chinese (Han) ones? Perhaps such practices reflect not beliefs about the afterworld, but an enduring metaphysical aspect to some humans, which needed to be nurtured in a death context that was set apart from the world of the living. This would be very different from the concept of afterlife realms like Hades or Heaven, where moral behavior could be punished or rewarded.

From his studies of ceramic iconography (especially the "Burial Theme") and the mortuary treatment of high-ranking individuals, Bourget (2006: 224) concludes: "If the iconography serves in part to represent this other world and the proper way of relating to it, then it would seem that only a fairly restricted number of individuals could access this afterworld." In his analysis, it was elite power and status, not correct moral behavior, that conferred access to a continued existence after death.

It is unclear whether some figures in the iconography, particularly on "fineline" painted pots, represent gods or members of the ruling elite dressed as gods. Some of the spectacularly rich burials uncovered in recent decades, such as the "Lord of Sipán" (Lambayeque Valley) and the priestesses of San José de Moro, included ritual regalia matching that of gods shown in fineline scenes (Bourget 2016: 380; Donnan and Castillo 1992). Likewise, the discovery of the remains of sacrificial victims at Huaca de la Luna, Dos Cabezas and Cao Viejo showed that the Sacrifice Ceremony depicted on pottery and temple walls, in which the blood of defeated high-ranking warriors is offered to the Rayed Deity (also called "Warrior Priest"), was in fact performed at the sacred pyramids (Sutter and Cortez 2005). One possibility is that the scenes portrayed in the artwork were intentionally ambiguous. Quilter (1997: 114) draws an analogy

with the Christian Eucharist: both a pivotal moment in the life of Christ and a ceremony reenacted by worshippers during church services. Some scholars suggest that the reenactment of central mythic dramas could have functioned to fructify the earth and ensure the continued flow of water for irrigation (a "gift from the gods" according to Chapdelaine [2011: 191]).

Several lines of evidence—iconography, elite burials, archaeological evidence of sacrifice, and monumental construction—thus converge to produce a picture of Moche society as ruled by a priestly elite, who cemented their authority by embodying the gods in ceremonies that included human sacrifice (Bourget 2006, 2016). As in earlier periods, there is little evidence of moralizing supernatural beings, and what we think of as Moche religion appears to have been confined to an exclusive noble class. Despite the shared elements of identity and belief that were distributed along the north coast in Moche times, it is important to draw attention to the geographical limits to any religious integration. Outside of the lower coastal valleys of northern Peru, contemporaneous societies did not share these beliefs. For example, in the north-central highlands, the fantastical composite beings that had adorned monumental sites during the Early Horizon were largely replaced in Recuay ceramics and sculpture by representations of human men and women, usually marked out as high-status figures through their clothes and adornments (Lau 2011: 196–206). Ancestor veneration was evidently an important aspect of Recuay religion. By the end of the period (c. 700 CE), monumental above-ground mortuary structures were widespread in the northern highlands; they included spaces where the living could make offerings to their ancestors as well as niches and doorways that allowed mummy bundles to be removed for ceremonies (Lau 2011: 111–16). We can see from this ritual architecture that Recuay people believed they had a duty to nourish the dead. It is not possible to tell whether the ancestors monitored, punished and rewarded human behavior, but this was not the case in historic-period highland societies where ritual activity centered on ancestral remains. Rather, the relationship was one of reciprocity: propitiating and consulting the dead ensured prosperity and protection for the living (Lau 2002: 281).

Middle Horizon (c. 600–1000 CE)

Two highland polities had a widespread influence on the Central Andes during the Middle Horizon. From its capital in the Ayacucho region, the Wari state controlled scattered colonies across the region. Its presence was felt more broadly through the spread of iconography and ceramic and architectural styles. Tiwanaku, centered on a great city and monumental complex near the shores of Lake Titicaca, also exerted limited political and wider cultural influence on the area to the south of the Wari sphere.

The iconography of both polities featured three recurring images: a Staff God (positioned frontally and grasping two staffs), a Rayed Head, and a range of "attendants" viewed in profile (Isbell 2008: 734; Isbell and Knobloch 2006). Pictorial elements like appendages radiating from the head and vertically divided eyes mark the figures out as metahuman beings (Cook 2004: 105–06). However, there were also important differences between Wari and Tiwanaku ritual practices and political structures. These are images that circulated earlier in other parts of the Andes, and the published literature is rarely clear about how many examples of this iconography have been identified on portable artifacts and sculpted stone. Isbell and colleagues (2018) approach the common use of iconography as part of a south-central Andean world that he calls the Southern Andean Iconographic Series. The focus

on these three figures obscures the appearance of other animal, human, and superhuman figures in Wari and Tiwanaku iconography. It is important to note that work at local sites in many parts of the highlands does not necessarily reinforce an impression of widely shared belief and identity. For example, Bélisle's (2019) excavations at the local center of Ak'awillay in the Cuzco region have uncovered evidence of distinct decorative styles, architectural forms, and ritual practices.

Wari iconography features many scenes of political domination and ritualized violence, interpreted by Anita G. Cook (2004) as expressions of an elite seeking to legitimize its position. The Wari capital lacks large plaza spaces and monumental temple complexes, but ritual activities linked to human sacrifice took place in D-shaped temples, which are found in the Ayacucho Valley and, more rarely, elsewhere in the Wari sphere of influence (McEwan and Williams 2012: 67). D-shaped temples are small one-roomed buildings that could hold a few dozen people, and they are found at colony sites outside of the Ayacucho region, including Espiritu Pampa, Cerro Baúl, and sites in the Sondondo and Soras Valleys. Several researchers have noted the apparent coordination of Wari peripheral sites with prominent mountains, suggesting the prominent peaks and bodies of water were important elements in Wari cosmology (e.g., Glowacki and Malpass 2003; Schreiber 2004; Williams and Nash 2006).

In the Ayacucho region, D-shaped temples are associated with the ritual use of trophy heads, a practice seen earlier in the nearby coastal valleys of Nasca. For instance, at Conchopata in the polity's heartland, 31 trophy heads prepared from recently deceased adults, many showing cranial injuries, were found inside a D-shaped structure along with finely decorated pottery and sacrificed camelids (Tung 2014: 246). Isotope analysis showed that the sacrificed individuals were not local to the region (246). One possible interpretation of these remains is that the ceremonies in D-shaped structures entailed the symbolic subjugation of defeated enemies. Ritual/religious structures in both the capital and the provinces also shows a concern with controlling and restricting access, perhaps indicating the presence of a priestly elite (Schreiber 2001: 92). This iconographic and archaeological evidence does not give the impression that the Wari Staff God (or any other supernatural beings) functioned as an arbiter of correct ethical conduct. The artwork abounds with images of trophy heads and disembodied organs, often in close connection with motifs suggesting agricultural growth (Cook 2004: 111). The bio-archaeological evidence for ritualized head-taking among the Wari elite could potentially be explicable as an attempt to propitiate supernatural powers to ensure crop fertility and favorable weather conditions.

Tiwanaku has been described as a "hospitality state," held together by communal rituals, feasting and pilgrimage routes rather than direct administrative control by the imperial center over the periphery (Bandy 2013). Unlike the Wari capital, the site of Tiwanaku had a monumental religious precinct at its core, with several low platform mounds and modest plaza spaces that scholars have interpreted as accessible to pilgrims coming to the site from the surrounding region. With the exception of the temple at Omo in the Moquegua Valley (Goldstein 2015), there is little religious architecture in the Tiwanaku style outside the capital, suggesting that there was little attempt to impose an institutionalized religion on communities within the polity's sphere of influence. Recently, Baitzel and Trigo Rodríguez (2019) have identified a Tiwanaku Camelid Sacrificer, a human-camelid hybrid that appears in the iconography found on portable objects distributed across Tiwanaku networks. Instead,

overarching group identities may have been formed, and elite power bolstered, through the public ritualized feasts held at the capital, where meat and maize beer were consumed in vast quantities (Berryman 2010: 4). Bandy (2013: 144) comments: "Elite status at Tiwanaku was formulated in a commensal idiom … The aristocracy was constituted as a body of permanent hosts, and their subjects as eternal guests."

Sacred sites around and in Lake Titicaca were visited again and again for the purpose of making animal sacrifices and offerings of fine vessels, metalwork, and ornaments of precious shells and stones (Bauer et al. 2004; Delaere et al. 2019; Seddon 2004). Delaere et al. believe these ceremonies, performed by elite specialists but witnessed by a wider community, were a vital component of state formation processes in the south-central Andes. They hypothesize that they "would have emphasized the re-production of a pan-regional moral code signaling appropriate civic and economic behavior" (Delaere et al. 2019: 8234).

The moral values valued highly within the Tiwanaku state thus included generosity and ritualized hospitality. While it is theoretically possible that the fierce Staff God or other deities enforced these "prosocial" practices through the threat of punishment, there is little evidence for this. More probably, such norms were reinforced through communal feasting and traditional host–guest relationships across the empire. Moreover, the repeated rituals at sacred sites at Lake Titicaca could have played a more exclusionary role than that ascribed to them by Delaere et al. (2019), shoring up elite status by demonstrating their privileged access to higher-order supernatural entities (R. Alan Covey, pers. comm. 2019). The populations within the Tiwanaku orbit no doubt had their own ritual practices and concerns, but there are few signs of the presence of deities like the Staff God in their everyday lives.

Late Intermediate Period (c. 1000–1476 CE)
The Late Intermediate Period represents the phase of Andean prehistory that followed the collapse of the highland polities of Tiwanaku and Wari. Although the highlands experienced widespread decentralization and the cessation of monumental construction and widely distributed art styles, complex coastal societies continued to flourish and spread. Foremost among them was Chimor, the kingdom ruled by Chimú elites, which expanded from what had once been the Moche heartland to conquer much of the northern and central coast (Quilter 2014: 243–44). For a review of the Late Imtermediate Periods, see Covey (2008; also Conlee et al. 2004; Quilter 2014: 231).

Chimú religion built on what had come before, displaying some motifs and supernatural figures familiar from Moche contexts, but also differed in important ways. For instance, the Moon Animal, a mythical creature with clawed feet, sinuous body, and often a serrated back, is found in both Moche and Chimú (as well as Recuay) artwork (Mackey and Vogel 2003: 327). According to Moore and Mackey (2008: 798–99), the Chimú pantheon also included a Staff God, a Goddess, and a deity with a feathered headdress; but in contrast to representations of supernatural beings in the Chavín or Moche style, the Staff God of Chimor lacked theriomorphic elements like fangs or claws. Some artefacts also depict nobles with headdresses and large ear ornaments, sometimes presiding over subordinates in audience scenes (Moseley 2001: 268).

This trend towards more straightforwardly anthropomorphic representations of important figures, whether divinities or lords, may be linked to the increasing importance of ancestor veneration on the coast during this period. At the capital, Chan Chan, and at urban

complexes in other valleys along the North Coast, the Chimú elite oversaw the construction of walled compounds composed of intricate arrangements of chambers, now known as *ciudadelas*. In the innermost precincts of some of these were platforms where royals and their retainers were buried (Conlee et al. 2004: 215). A miniature model of a chamber inside a Chimú *ciudadela* was deposited at the Moche pyramid of Huaca de la Luna, by that time abandoned (Quilter 2014: 246–47). It shows several mummy bundles, including one seated in pride of place on a raised dais. Below him are musicians and ceramic vessels that may have contained maize beer: possibly the model shows a ceremony held in honor of the royal or noble ancestors (246–47).

It is likely that deceased royals and nobility continued to play an active role in Chimú society, receiving offerings and perhaps even being consulted on matters of state. However, given the great pains taken to exclude the majority of the population from the inner sanctums of the *ciudadelas*, we cannot conclude that deceased ancestors watched over moral behavior in any broad sense. More probably, their presence served as a kind of charter for the continuing authority and wealth of elites claiming descent from them.

The Chimú also occasionally practiced human sacrifice on a large scale. In one recently discovered example, over 140 children and over 200 camelids were sacrificed at Huanchaquito-Las Llamas around 1450 CE (Prieto et al. 2019). This was not merely a continuation of older Moche practices: contrasts in the victims chosen (children rather than captured warriors) and in the treatment of the bodies suggest that Chimú-directed sacrificial rites had different rationales and supplicated different supernatural forces. The excavators of this deposit note that the killing coincided with an episode of flooding and high rainfall on the coast, linked to the El Niño–Southern Oscillation: they raise the possibility that the sacrifice was a response to this climatic stress. Unfortunately, we cannot discern which supernatural figure or force the representatives of the Chimú state hoped to propitiate by performing the ritual: maybe royal ancestors or a more remote creator deity? Regardless, this and other mass ritualized killings suggest that for the Chimú (or at least the elite), the way to attract attention and favor from metahuman beings was through sacrifice rather than adhering to a moral code.

The construction of the massive *ciudadelas* at Chan Chan contrasts with the ritual scale seen across the Andean highlands for most of the Late Intermediate Period (Covey 2008). Most regional settlement hierarchies are decentralized, and the largest sites lack formal plazas or temples. A great deal of ceremonial life appears to have been centered around kin-based ceremonies, which included the construction and maintenance of above-ground mortuary repositories located in natural places surrounding settlements. Local material culture and domestic architecture are variable enough to suggest diverse identities, and there is no iconography that would indicate the existence of religious beliefs with moralizing superhuman punishment.

To the south of Chimu the Pachacamac shrine integrated the small polities of the central/south coast. Pachacamac was a universal creator and an entity that existed above the local political hierarchies, whose patron wak'as were said to be children or wives of Pachacamac. At the same time, the creator was a fixed entity, residing in the temple at Pachacamac, and there weren't branch temples or a widely distributed iconography that would suggest that most people saw Pachacamac as watching over them.

The Inca Period (c. 1400–1532 CE)

An alternative name for the period in which the Central Andes region was politically unified under Inca rule is the Late Horizon. Beginning around 1400, the Incas expanded from their core in the Cuzco Valley to build the largest empire in the pre-Columbian Americas, stretching from what is now southern Colombia in the north to Argentina and Chile in the south and encompassing desert, high sierra and tropical rainforest ecosystems (Bauer 2004; Covey 2006). Andean religious beliefs during the period of Inca domination seem to be more easily accessible than those of previous civilizations because soon after the Spanish arrived in the early sixteenth century, they began to produce written accounts of the people they encountered, their culture and ritual practices. Christian indigenous and mestizo authors, such as the Quechua noblemen Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala and the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (son of a conquistador and an Inca princess) also wrote chronicles in the 1600s. These and other sources present some major interpretive pitfalls. The Andean men were born after the European invasion and wrote as Christians, whereas Spaniards writing on Inca religion earlier had their own agendas: they were intent on either showing that the Incas glimpsed Christian truth (Bartolomé de las Casas) or were committed demon-worshippers or using Inca religion to help justify the Spanish conquest. The early modern documentary sources should be treated with caution for several reasons: the Spanish interpreted Andean religion through the lens of a monotheistic faith with a single moralizing deity; many Andean nobles converted to Christianity before they began to share oral traditions with the chroniclers; and all authors had political motives in writing these works (R. Alan Covey, pers. comm. 2019). Nevertheless, when used carefully, these sources can shed light on the nature of the supernatural agents who populated the Andean cosmos during the Late Horizon.

Inca state religion centered on the worship of the Sun, from whom Inca royals claimed descent, as well as a host of other superhuman beings. The creator, Viracocha, may initially appear to fit the definition of a "high god", and his name was used by some early missionaries to translate the Christian concept of "God" (Hosne 2018: 323). Garcilaso de la Vega identified the coastal creator Pachacamac, to whom a sanctuary was dedicated on the central coast, with both Viracocha and the God of Abraham (MacCormack 2006: 636–37). However, such processes of religious translation elevated these deities to a position they had not occupied in pre-contact Andean belief (Hosne 2018; Zuidema 1992: 19). For instance, according to the creation story set down by the chronicler Juan de Betanzos (1976: Part One: I), Viracocha was not actively involved in the world of humans and did not assume the role of a cosmic judge.

The Sun was also a splendid and distant figure rather than a personal god who watched over human moral conduct. The Incas built sun temples at their administrative centers in the central highlands—between Quito (Ecuador) and Paria (Bolivia)—as well as at important creation shrines like Pachacamac and Titicaca. There was no local manifestation of this state cult, which appears to have been absent in most coastal areas and in the south-central Andes. Many coastal societies revered the Moon (Killa), while herders venerated the thunder (Illapa). In the south-central Andes, Inca offerings on snowcapped mountaintops indicate a religious patronage that respected powerful places (apus) already important to local people.

It should also be emphasized that in the late pre-Hispanic Andes, beings like the Sun, Pachacamac or Viracocha coexisted with a wide range of supernatural entities—including deceased ancestors and animate mountains, rocks and springs (Nielsen et al. 2017: 243–44).

The Quechua word *wak'a* (or *huaca*) could be applied to any of these beings, to a sacred place or shrine, or to a powerful deity. Andean people interacted with *wak'as* by making offerings and showing reverence in ritually prescribed ways, in exchange for which they hoped for agricultural plenty and protection from misfortune (Yaya 2012: 148). The relationship between a community and its *wak'as* was one of reciprocity and was generally framed in terms of kinship, so that, for example, a mountain could be the ancestor of a local descent group (Chase 2015: 80–81). Andean supernatural agents were not concerned with abstract notions of sin and virtue. It was simply necessary to fulfil one's ritual obligations to them in order to ensure the flow of vitality and the continued flourishing of human communities. Additionally, ordinary farmers fed the Earth Mother (Pachamama) as a way to ensure the fertility of their fields, and fisherfolk made their own offerings to Mother Ocean (Mama Qocha). The Inca state does not appear to have played a role in that sort of everyday ritual.

As a possible hint of supernatural punishment in the late pre-hispanic Andes, the sixteenth-century Spanish priest Francisco de Ávila (in Zuidema 1992: 29) relates how in the Huarochirí region of central Peru, abnormal births (including the birth of twins) were thought to be caused by human fault and required rites of propitiation addressed to the Thunder. However, this account comes from native witnesses who were born after the conquest, raised as Christians, and who understood that religious officials in nearby Lima considered traditional religion to be idolatry. The people of Huarochirí had already worked the Crucifixion into their myths of universal upheaval.

Natural disasters like earthquakes might also be interpreted as signs of divine anger and disapproval. However, supernatural punishment generally afflicted entire communities rather than individuals; nor was there any expectation that it would be fair or just. Andean people did not expect to be judged for their actions after death, and the idea of an immortal soul was not part of their cosmology.

Instead, "prosocial" ethical norms were enforced at the community level through networks of mutual reliance. Those who refused to support their neighbors and kin could be informally sanctioned, for instance by the withdrawal of help to harvest their own crops. The central ethical value for Andean village communities under Inca rule can therefore be identified as *ayni*, reciprocity. At the level of the state, some forms of wrongdoing, such as rebellion against Inca authority or murder, were punished by Inca officials (D'Altroy 2014: 358–60). In the Andes during this period, moral monitoring and punishment of infractions were thus human affairs, carried out without reference to the will of supernatural beings.

Summary

Having reviewed the evidence for religious activities since the advent of agriculture in the central Andes, some general inferences can be made based on the existing evidence.

1. Supernatural agents. Superhuman beings appear in religious iconography early on, and there are some elements (fanged or winged anthropomorphs) that appear in different regions and periods. There might be a trend from depicting monstrous figures to theriomorphic ones to more anthropomorphic ones, and in the earlier depictions there are shamanic figures who transform in order to access some superhuman beings. Although there is much that remains unknown about ancient belief systems, the early distribution of these images was highly restricted—people generally had to travel to a religious center on a festive occasion to see an image of a superhuman being, and in the

iconography it appears that altered states and special sacred knowledge or power were needed for a small number of individuals to interact with those beings. Over time, it was more common for these beings to be represented on portable elite objects (textiles, pottery), but these had a restricted distribution. Although it is possible that beliefs were not consistent with these patterns, the material evidence is more suggestive of supernatural agents that were not directly involved with human affairs, or positioned in a way to monitor everyday morality. Of course, the ritual activities that occurred away from religious monuments suggest a concern for other entities—the earth, the sea, mountains, ancestors, that might have a closer relationship with ordinary people. The superhuman beings inhabiting local sacred landscapes might have worked within the logic of community hierarchies and kin-based moral oversight, but they would not necessarily exercise oversight beyond a local scale. From Inca ethnohistory, there seems to be an inverse relationship between the power of a *wak'a* and its engagement with everyday human affairs.

2. Morality aspects. The archaeological record does not permit the reconstruction of moral values across space and time. It is safe to say that the religious developments described in this chronology took place in societies that were developing or maintaining social hierarchies, so that the logic of moral action would probably be T-shaped: political and formal religious hierarchies would treat the structured inequalities of society as morally appropriate, while people from the same stratum or occupation might hold more balanced values about interpersonal behavior. Inca ethnohistory offers some views on morality around the time of the Spanish conquest. The principles of respect and reciprocity were important for kin groups, and were modified as political strategies of the imperial state. These were largely worked out at the local level, with Inca 'law and order' enacted in the provinces only when governors representing the ruler were present at an administrative site. The Inca ruler oversaw the moral life of the capital city and the Inca nobility personally.

3. Supernatural monitoring. From the evidence, it is possible that there were entities could have monitored humans from a distance, especially if rayed figures represent the Sun. However, the representation of these figures suggests that they were seen as too distant for ordinary humans to approach, and they were housed in a small number of temples, making it unlikely that shamans or priests could act as the agents of a monitoring supernatural for the broader population. Inca ethnohistory suggests that locally-powerful mountains and other *wak'as* could inflict punishment on a region—through earthquakes, hail, landslides—but they were not omniscient, or even very interested in how humans interacted with one another.

4. Supernatural punishment. It is possible to associate large-scale offerings with major environmental disasters (e.g., ENSO-associated floods and landslides), and ethnohistory describes such punishment as the result of a lack of reverence or care for superhuman beings. If anything, these probably would have been seen as a moral/sacred failing of the priestly elite—one coastal flood myth says that the people of the Lambayeque Valley bound their king and cast him into the sea to end their punishment. Inca sources suggest that regular gifts of food, drink, cloth, and other things that different *waka's* would want would maintain a good relationship—it was proactive and done at the

group/community/political scales. Punishment does not appear to be individualized or linked to the afterlife.

5. Supernatural agency. The diversity of representations and offering practices suggests fairly localized conceptualization of superhuman agents. Even the most broadly shared images do not suggest beliefs that would be widely distributed enough to use religion to buttress a shared set of moral values across polities, ethnicity, and subsistence landscapes.

6. It appears that religious elites were the ones with the greatest access to superhuman beings. To the extent that there were state religions, they did not displace local beliefs and ritual practices.

Overall, the Central Andes represents a clear example of the formation of large-scale complex societies in the absence of MSP.

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North Colombia

NGA: North Colombia

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Tairona

The name Tairona is generally used in reference to the indigenous groups of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region, a mountainous range stretching along Colombia's Caribbean coast. The Tairona people came in contact with the Spanish in the sixteenth century, but the name is also applied to the pre-contact societies that inhabited that same area and which are mostly known through the artefacts they left behind. The Tairona phase of occupation is dated roughly 1050–1524 CE, with 1524 the year in which the Spanish military garrison was established that spelled the death-knell for indigenous autonomy.

At the time of the Spanish Conquest, the Tairona were organized into semi-independent village groups governed by a priestly class and a hierarchy of chiefs (Oyuela-Caycedo 2008: 423). Most likely, this system began to emerge between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, as suggested by the appearance of several new ceremonial buildings, new spaces dedicated to feasting activities, a general overhaul of the layout of settlements, and evidence for the expansion and intensification of agricultural activities (Giraldo 2010: 283). There is evidence for a thriving and diverse regional economy in North Colombia at the time, with workshops housed by craft specialists (including gold smelters, semiprecious stone engravers, and merchants). The crafts specialization, coupled with intensive exchange of agricultural products, was possible because of the regional ecological diversity. This diversity encouraged the development of centers of specialization and regions of production for items such as ceramics, lithic artifacts, and agricultural products. It also produced a diversity of cultural—religious and linguistic—

groups. The Tairona society that encountered—and was quickly overrun by—Spanish settlers represented a high-point of cultural pluralism, resulting in both a flourishing society but also periodic outbursts of sectarian violence and struggles for regional hegemony.

The Sierra Nevada is currently inhabited by the Kogis, Arhuacos, Wiwas, and Kankuamos descendants of the Taironas displaced and segregated during the Spanish conquest. They constitute an indigenous town hall recognized by the Colombian legislation. Scholarship on Tairona religion borrows from studies on one of these groups, the Kogis, because archaeological, historic, and ethnographic evidence on infrastructure, mythology, material culture, and territory suggests the Taironas were the ancestors of the Kogis (Soto Holguín 1988: 97, 112; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1977: 104), some scholars use Kogi cosmology and myth as the basis for our understanding of Tairona traditions.

By contrast, other scholars argue that we cannot assume this cultural continuity as it is posited (e.g. Uribe 1992, Bocarejo 2001 and 2002, Giraldo 2020). These scholars observe that the polities now known as "Tairona" collapsed during the 16th century, and at most three to four thousand people survived by around 1600. Moreover, they point out that the indigenous people who survived were subjected to missionization, Spanish and then Colombian rule and interaction with non-indigenous populations. Therefore, they say, it is simply not possible to argue that their beliefs remain unchanged 500 years later.

Though there is scholarly debate regarding possible continuities between Tairona and Kogi culture, it is still worth describing Kogi cosmology. The Kogis have an animistic belief system with supernatural divinities. These include ancestors and totemic-animals like the jaguar, the bat, frog, snake, birds, lizards and bears. These animal divinities are easily identifiable in the iconography on the metal objects and pottery vestiges found during excavations and in modern Kogi rituals that evolved from Tairona material culture (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1997: 266, Museo del Oro Tairona 2014: 39). The frog served as a symbolic representation of fertility, an important aspect of Tairona cosmology. The jaguar was the "father of creation" and representations are seen in ceramic figures and masks (Londoño 1992: 48, 24). Ethnographic summaries and material culture describe greater gods like the Sun and Universal Mother, who, along with totemic animals, control, determine, and organize reality and are active in human affairs (Museo de Oro Tairona 2014: 39; Falchetti 1993: 34-35, 37; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1997). Ethnography studies suggest that ancestors can be called upon for protection through ceremonial offerings (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1977: 265). Older literature puts forth that Mámas are priests chosen to be the direct representatives of gods and performed all ceremonies (Londoño 1992: 72; Navia 1999). An updated long-term anthropological study by Falk Xue Parra Witte describes mámas as experts who manage and balance cosmic forces (Witte 2017: 24).

In the Kogi cosmology, the concept of morality is "framed by a set of pragmatic cosmic rules of conduct indicated in the stories and defined by the Mother as the 'Law of Origin' (or 'Law of the Mother')" (Witte 2017: 251). The Mother defines law, which is concerned with correct conduct and action. Reichel Dolmatoff (1990: 12) describes the Universal Mother as demanding adherence to behaviors and conduct including "collaboration, reciprocity, honestly, and an utterly no-materialistic attitude towards life … Signs of 'disorder' such as hermaphroditism, left handedness, seven-month babies, twins, cause consternation and are attributed to the Mother Sun's displeasure with mankind's behavior" (Reichel Dolmatoff 1990:

12). Witte (2017: 24) describes the principles set out by the Law of Origin as "vast," and explains that: "Morality is a cosmologically originated principle inherent to the order of being and associated to the function of things in how they should relate" (Witte: 2017: 251). In Witte (2017: 251)'s descriptions, however, the law seems most concerned with human behavior in relation to nature and environmental preservation, eg, not damaging the environment. Overall, then, if we assume cultural similarity between the Kogi and the Tairona, the Tairona likely also believed in a universe where some but not all supernatural beings or forces were primarily concerned with human morality.

While Reichel Dolmatoff (1990: 12) infers direct punishment from an agentic Universal Mother, Witte argues that that the Mother only sets the laws to maintain cosmic balance and does not punish the Kogi people directly. Supernatural punishments are "the expression of ecological imbalances caused by social disregard for cosmic rules" (Witte 2017: 155). Breaking the Mother's laws causes cosmic imbalance, which in turn causes natural disaster, illness and other negative consequences. Mámas are charged with balancing the cosmos to stop or slow disasters but are unable when the imbalance is too great (Witte 2017: 222). In other words, Reichel Dolmatoff suggests that the Kogi gods dispensed moralistic punishment and reward, whereas Witte suggests that the mechanism for punishment, at least, was more impersonal. It seems like there is not enough data to tell whether the Tairona believed in a moralizing agentic entity or a moralizing impersonal force. In addition, the Kogi are fairly egalitarian (Witte 2007: 26), and we are aware of no evidence that suggests specific beliefs about differences in supernatural consequences for rulers, elites, and commoners. We do not have enough data to make this inference about the Tairona.

Although archaeology and chronicles attempt to inform us about several rituals performed by individuals against harm, there is no concrete evidence of direct supernatural punishment. Ancestors do not seem to punish their descendants for incorrect behavior but can be called on for protection. In one such procedure, beads and necklaces are deposited inside pottery vessels during the construction of houses as offerings to ancestors and the Universal Mother (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1977: 265). This procedure mainly focuses on the idea of kinship protection from the ancestors but does not imply any type of enforcement of kinship obligations. If we infer cultural continuity, it seems likely that the Tairona also believed in a universe where supernatural beings or forces could be prevented, through ritual means, from punishing morally transgressive behavior.

While there is some evidence for consequences from supernatural forces in life among the Kogi, there is no mention in the relevant literature of the concept of punishment in the afterlife. Witte (2017: 151) describes the Kogi afterlife as follows: "Upon death, the human body itself becomes food for the same earth which had grown those trees, plants and crops, as nourished by the Kogi's confessions and payments". This description suggests there was likely no supernatural moralizing punishment in the afterlife in Kogi cosmology and therefore we infer its absence in Tairona cosmology as well.

As our knowledge on Kogi cosmology comes from 20th century and 21st century observational data, there is some question on whether Christianity influenced tenets of MSP in Kogi society. Scholars who support the use of Kogi cosmology as a proxy for understanding Tairona beliefs argue that priests did not have much influence on Kogi society until the 18th century, and it was small even then, as the Kogi guarded their traditional culture (Witte 2017:

36). Witte (2017: 40) concludes that the literature seems to agree that the Kogi have maintained their traditional principles and continually fought against outside religious influence.

Summary

There is little information on the exact tenets of Tairona religion, and no concrete evidence for moralizing supernatural punishment. There is scholarly debate on whether Kogi cosmology can be used to reconstruct the Tairona belief system. Kogi peoples face natural consequences for improper conduct: ignoring the Mother's laws can provoke disorder. MSP in Kogi cosmology is characterized by a broad set of morality concerns and moralistic punishment was diffuse (on groups rather than individuals), while morality as a primary focus remains in dispute.

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Lowland Andes

NGA: Lowland Andes

Contributors: Eva Brandl, Ana María Marín Morales, Jill Levine

This narrative was adapted from the chapter on small-scale societies by Eva Brandl (2019) in *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Note on Terminology: The term "Jivaro" is frequently found in our sources to refer to a number of peoples in the Ecuador-Peru region, namely speakers of the Chicham and Shiwiar language groups including the Achuar, Awajun, and Wampis peoples. The term is, however, highly offensive to contemporary populations, as it was repurposed by many Spanish colonial writers to indicate a 'barbaric' or 'savage' nature. While much of the scholarship we rely on uses this term, out of respect, we use the word "Shuar" or "Chicham", except for source titles and direct quotations.

Chicham

The *Chicham* or Shuar inhabit the Andean lowlands of Peru and Ecuador and share a Chicham language. They have historically subsisted on swidden horticulture, planting root crops such as manioc and sweet potatoes along with other vegetables (Beierle 2006). They supplemented farming with hunting, fishing, and gathering (ibid.). The population was dispersed into compact hamlets built in relative isolation (Dyott 1926:160). Each hamlet was made up of one communal house, a large elliptical structure built from wood, lianas, and cane-stalks and occupied by a group of related families (Rivet 1907:583). Some hamlets "form, however, larger or smaller groups, separated from each other by forest and yet connected with each other by narrow footpaths" (Brüning 1928:52). Due to frequent hostilities, homesteads were separated by large tracts of no man's land (Bennett Ross 1984:93).

Amazonian worldviews are animistic, but also 'perspectivist'. Their "world is inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view" (Viveiros de Castro 1998:469). Humans' ordinary perception of reality differs from the way these beings see humans and themselves (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470).

> In fact, animals and spirits see themselves as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture – they see

their food as human food […], they see their bodily attributes […] as body decorations or cultural instruments, they see their social system as organized in the same way as human institutions are (Viveiros de Castro 1998:470).

Those barriers are broken down during shamanistic rituals and under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs, granting access to this deeper reality. The Chicham communicate not only with other humans, but also with spirits, plants, and animals, all of which are thought to possess *wakan* or 'souls' (Descola 1996:375). This is accomplished through incantations, dreams, and visionary trances (ibid.). Productive exchanges with the environment, such as successful hunts, depend on the observance of rules of etiquette. For example, humans were expected to desist from causing unnecessary suffering to game animals because the latter bore grudges against hunters who had done so (Descola 1996:114). Furthermore, the dead were thought to sometimes inhabit red deer, which were therefore not hunted, as per "injunction of the ancients" (Descola 1996:114).

Furthermore, some lines of evidence suggest that ancestors dispensed favours to their descendants. For example, some sources write of beliefs and practices related to stones, including "small round black stones which are said to have been hurled down from heaven by a flash of lightning, or more strictly speaking, by those departed Jibaro warriors whose spirits are believed to be active in thunder and lightning" (Karsten 1935: 382p). These stones were thought to grant victory in warfare and the growth of domestic animals (Karsten 1935: 382p). Women also received sacred stones from their female ancestors after taking hallucinogens (such as *natéma*), which were thought to grant a long life, the growth of crops, and plenty of food to eat (Karsten 1935: 432-436). Ancestors also played a conceptual role in notions of proper conduct, especially with regards to bravery. Early accounts write that young children were initiated into smoking, and during these ceremonies, elders invoked the merits of the child's adult relatives and ancestors, specifically their successes in warfare (Simson 1880: 388). During the same rituals, elders expressed hopes that, "after the manner of his forefathers [the child would] prove himself a brave warrior" (Simson 1880: 388). Ancestors also disciplined naughty youngsters. One ethnographer writes that in severe cases, a young person who had committed an offence was secluded in a palm shelter, where he had to fast for two days before ingesting a narcotic (*maikoa*) (Karsten 1935: 237p). He would then experience visions of his ancestors, who scolded him and taught him about his obligations (Karsten 1935: 237p). Accordingly, it appears that while ancestors modelled cultural values related to bravery and virility, people had to invoke them to discipline their descendants (rather than policing them on their own accord).

Rather than being dominated by a supreme divine authority that monitored people's behaviour, the Chicham cosmos is suffused with a logic of reciprocity and retaliation that also characterizes human relationships. This is evident in the concept of the *muisak* or avenging soul. This soul returns from the dead to avenge slights committed against its bearer: "both the Jibaros and the Canelos Indians believe that old men may, after death or even in their lifetime, appear in the shape of jaguars, anacondas, or other formidable or dangerous animals and in this disguise punish their relatives for neglect of duty" (Karsten 1935:252). Avenging spirits, though acting out of anger and malice, may thus encourage individuals to fulfill their obligations. Curses and sorcery may play a similar role. A powerful old man is believed to have

the power to curse those who anger him with death (Harner 1973: 111). Illness and death were readily attributed to such invisible forces (Harner 1973:152). However, these powers were fueled by anger at being slighted, not by some higher authority. Kinsmen who had failed to live up to expectations were vulnerable to sorcery, but so were warriors to the wrath of their victim's vengeful spirit. The souls of slain enemies seek to exact vengeance on their killer by causing nightmares or accidents (Descola 1996:115). After their return from a successful raid, warriors had to purify and protect themselves with hen's blood, a ritual bath, and the application of *genipa* body paint (Karsten 1935:305).

But the killing of enemies was not met with disapproval. Far from being seen as immoral, it was encouraged and celebrated, and bravery in warfare was an important part of the value system. Hauntings from vengeful victims were therefore treated as "very temporary inconveniences [that] amount to very little compared with the glorious feat of arms of which they are the consequence" (Descola 1996:115) and do not deter further killings. Once cleansed, the head-taker attempted to use the powers of his enemy's *muisak* "for increasing the power of women who are members of [his] household" (Harner 1973: 192). If handled properly, *tsantsas* or shrunken heads brought good fortune to the killer (Stirling 1938: 75). They also served as a token proving that the killer "had properly fulfilled the obligation to his lineage in taking blood revenge" (Stirling 1938: 75), and that this "would please the spirits of his ancestors" (Stirling 1938: 75). Ordinary dead people are thought to bother the living to "bewail their solitude" (Descola 1996: 114). Humans placated them with gifts of food and beer (ibid.). However, it appears that the Chicham treat these hauntings as a nuisance rather than a serious threat (ibid.). It therefore appears that the power of ghosts to inflict real harm is limited to specific circumstances.

Other aspects of the indigenous cosmos have been hotly debated by anthropologists. For example, some culture summaries and encyclopaedia entries list a number of higher deities such as the rain god, the anaconda, the earth, sun, and moon, and the chonta palm (for an example see Beierle 2006). Indeed, some early sources speak of a rain god "who lives in the solitudes of the cloud-wrapped mountain peaks" (Stirling 1938: 116) and who punished people who disrespected his territory by releasing heavy rains and floods (ibid.). They also write of an anaconda river god who demanded that humans respect his territory by remaining silent when passing through (Stirling 1938: 116). However, they also note that these entities received no sacrifices or special ceremonies (Graff 1923: 2016). Others claim that there were no gods in the strict sense of the term such as creator gods or supreme beings, although they also mention an earth mother figure called *Nungüi* (Tessmann 1930: 356). They further claim that there was no creation myth for the world as a whole, only for various features of indigenous culture (Karsten 1935: 503). However, "the heavenly bodies, the sun, the moon, and the stars, which are regarded as 'people' (*eintsu*) by the Jibaros, have originally lived on the earth, but at a certain epoch went up to the sky where they have remained ever since" (Karsten 1935: 503). Yet others have argued that entities such as the rain god (*Piribri* or *pirípiri*) or the anaconda river god (*Pangi* or *paŋi*) were in fact plants used in rain magic or ordinary spirits without special powers (Harner 1962: 268). They have further argued that the earth mother figure was really a group of female spirits (*nuŋui*) associated with the growth of crops (Harner 1962: 268).

A similar point can be made about the concept of *tsarutama*. Again, culture summaries and encyclopaedia entries treat *tsarutama* as an impersonal supernatural force that animated

everything (for an example see Beierle 2006). In addition, it has been argued that various types of souls played a prominent role, most importantly the *arutam* soul, which boys and men acquired through a strenuous vision quest. Possessors of strong *arutam* souls attained great powers. They were immune to sorcery and physical attacks, and some were thought to become immortal (Beierle 2006). However, it seems that these concepts have changed considerably during the 20th century, with stark differences in the accounts of earlier and more recent ethnographers (Boster 2003: 169). These shifts may have been caused by Salesian missionaries (Boster 2003: 169). Given the limited success of many missionaries, this claim may surprise some. For example, Jesuit missionaries were already sent out to missionize the area in the 17th century, although their first attempts were not successful (Bollaert 1863: 116). Jesuits were later expelled from the area and attempts at Christianization ceased for some time at the beginning of the 19th century (Stirling 1938: 23p). Missionaries only began to establish a significant presence among the Chicham in the 1890s (Meiser 2011: 496). In the 1970s, many Chicham still resisted conversion to Christianity (Descola 1996: 357).

However, despite these factors, contact with missionaries may have influenced the *arutam* and *tsarutama* concepts as we know them today. Early ethnographers identified *arutam* with the souls of the ancestors, who were thought to appear to people as wild animals or natural phenomena and to advise the living in issues such as warfare by appearing in dreams (Boster 2003: 167). Contact with these souls was vital for success in warfare and a long life (Boster 2003: 167). Dreams and vision quests were important more generally because "normal waking life […] is simply 'a lie' or illusion, while the true forces that determine daily events are supernatural" (Harner 1973:153). *Arutam* were recognized as visions that were not thought to share a spiritual essence with the world as a whole (Harner 1962: 268p).

In contrast, later ethnographers noted that Salesian missionaries infused these concepts with Catholic theology, interpreting mythical figures as individual manifestations of a single spiritual essence that provided moral instruction to people (Boster 2003: 170p). Some have argued that this interpretation reshaped indigenous beliefs, leading to the "transformation of *arutam* into the central organizing principle of the Shuar cosmovision" (Boster 2003: 177) and shifting from "protecting and aiding warriors to its more general role in giving power and productivity to all Shuar" (Boster 2003: 184). This led to an emphasis on the "broader implications of *arutam* for a life of moral rectitude" (Boster 2003: 184). This shift was further favoured by the decline of warfare (Boster 2003: 184).

In addition, missionaries may have influenced afterlife beliefs. Some early ethnographers speculated that in earlier times, people may have believed that ancestors were reborn in their descendants, although these beliefs were not shared by everyone (Karsten 1935: 217). Others wrote that after death, the soul (*wakaní*) goes up to the sky and lives there with other souls in an afterlife characterized by plenty (Tessmann 1930: 356). Apparently unrelated to the afterlife, Sangay (a volcano in Ecuador) was believed to be the territory of a malevolent entity (*iguánchi*) that kidnapped people to torment them (Karsten 1935: 382p). Catholic missionaries capitalized on this concept to introduce the notion of hell and with it the concept of punishment for immoral behaviour after death, which shifted afterlife beliefs in some indigenous groups, although others were much less affected (Karsten 1935: 382p; Harner 1973: 203). Accordingly, the available evidence suggests that the concept of divine punishment in the afterlife was introduced by missionaries.

Summary

While some have argued that the cosmos was suffused by a supernatural force present in all things and even included high gods, this has been contested by other sources. Ancestors may have modelled cultural values and even disciplined young people who were disobedient, but it appears that people had to invoke them with hallucinogens and dream visions to take on that latter role. Supernatural retribution for slights and offences committed against people was present, but this was enacted through curses and vengeful spirits that translated the retaliatory logic of blood vengeance into spiritual forces - not through supernatural forces that enacted a moral code as third-party authorities. The available evidence suggests that ideas typical of systematic moralizing religions (such as divine retribution after death) were introduced by Christian missionaries, and even then only spread to some communities and not others.

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Big Island Hawai'i

NGA: Big Island Hawai'i
Contributors: Enrico Cioni, Jenny Reddish, Robert Hommon (section headed "Robert Hommon's Notes on Moralizing Religion in Traditional Hawai'i")

Ancestral Polynesian Society and Early Hawai'i (up until c. 1580 CE)
Hawaiian societies did not develop writing before the arrival of Europeans in the eighteenth century. However, this does not mean it is impossible to say anything about the beliefs and religious practices of the first Polynesian voyagers to reach the archipelago. One way of reconstructing these intangible aspects of early Hawaiian societies is to use phylogenetic methods, borrowed from evolutionary biology and historical linguistics. For instance, the "triangulation method" applied by Patrick Kirch and Roger Green (1987, 2001) integrates post-contact ethnohistoric accounts, archaeological data, and linguistic reconstructions to build up a picture of "ancestral Polynesian society" (APS), the common substrate from which all Polynesian societies—from Tonga and Samoa in the west to Aotearoa (New Zealand) in the south and Hawai'i in the north—developed.

In *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia* (2001), Kirch and Green distinguish several features of Polynesian theology that were present in APS, which they locate in western Polynesia: Tonga, Samoa, and several smaller island groups. *Mana* (generative power), and a distinction between *tapu* and *noa* (roughly speaking, sacred and profane) were already important structuring concepts and accompanied Polynesians as they radiated out from this homeland to settle archipelagoes like the Society Islands, Cook Islands, the Marquesas, and later Hawai'i (Kirch and Green 2001: 239–41). Linguistic and ethnohistoric studies also point to the antiquity of ancestor veneration among Polynesian societies. In APS, claim Kirch and Green (244–45),

ancestors (*tupunga*) were the source of growth and of the *mana* that is "essential for life itself" (see also Fox 1996).

Other concepts are attested only for central and eastern Polynesian societies. While the anthropomorphic deity *Taangaloa* was already being worshipped in APS, three other major gods, *Taane*, *Tuu* and *Rongo*, came later, after the expansion to central and eastern Polynesia beginning around 1000 CE (Kirch and Green 2001: 242; Wilmshurst et al. 2011). This marked a "fundamental change in Polynesian theology", which likely also coincided with the formation of a class of ritual specialists separate from the chiefly elites (Kirch and Green 2001: 275).

The first settlers of the Hawaiian Islands came from Central-Eastern Polynesia, very probably the Marquesas, after c. 1000 CE (Allen 2014; Athens et al. 2014), and so would have brought these concepts and religious institutions with them. However, still other facets of religion appear to be Hawaiian innovations, linked to the development of highly centralized political organization in the islands: a hierarchy of hereditary priests (*kahuna*), for instance, and the transformation of the *tapu*/*noa* distinction into the *kapu* system, a set of "protocols and prohibitions" of a complexity not seen anywhere else in the Pacific (Kirch 2010: 21; Kirch and Green 2001: 249).

Kirch and Green do not speculate in *Hawaiki* about the evolution of moralizing religion in Polynesian societies. On the basis of the evidence they present, it seems fair to say that the earliest Polynesians had ritual obligations towards their ancestors, who had to be supplicated in order to ensure the flow of *mana*. Maintaining good relations with ancestors through offerings and ritual observances remained vital in Hawai'i alongside the worship of the higher-order gods (Valeri 1985: 30). As we discuss below, the most important ancestral deities, the *'aumakua*, had been transformed by late pre-contact times into enforcers of "moral law" (24). They were concerned not only with being nourished by offerings but also with their descendants' adherence to a broader system of norms, which included both ritual and ethical obligations—a distinction between the two was not emic for the Hawaiians.

Phylogenetic analysis points to an expansion of the pantheon of anthropomorphic gods at the PCE stage to include *Taane*, *Tuu* and *Rongo*, and over the course of the evolution of complex chiefdoms and archaic states in the Hawaiian Islands, these gods (and the more ancient *Taangaloa*) gained dedicated priesthoods, temples and more elaborate rites in their honor (Kirch and Ruggles 2019: 19; Sahlins 1995: 256–63). It is difficult to be precise about the timing, or about how "moralizing" these gods were in the centuries after 1000 CE. What we can say is that Hawaiian religion of the earliest periods represented an intermediate stage between the concepts, deities and rites inherited from central-eastern Polynesia and the more intricate and formalized system in place by the late eighteenth century.

Late Pre-Contact Hawai'i (1580 CE-1819 CE)

Hawaiian families and individuals prayed to ancestral gods known as *'aumakua*, deceased humans who had lost their individualized identities and names and now manifested themselves in the form of animals, plants and natural phenomena (Valeri 1985: 19–30). These gods "expected" their worshippers/descendants to "refrain from breaking the laws of the many gods, to observe and obey the *kapua* pronounced by the chiefs and *kahuna* and to be a helpful person and refrain from hurting his fellow men in any way" (Mitchell 1992, 77). *'Aumakua* often

took the form of dangerous animals such as sharks, thereby functioning as "representative[s] of moral law … if sharks do not kill, it is because the *'aumakua* protect their living relatives; if they do kill, it is because these same *'aumakua* are punishing a moral transgression" (Valeri 1985: 24).

In addition to the *'aumakua*, Hawaiians also worshipped a complex pantheon constituted by four major gods and hundreds of thousands of minor ones. By the time of European contact, the Central-Eastern Polynesian quartet of *Taangaloa, *Taane*, *Tuu* and *Rongo* (called Kanaloa, Kāne, Kū, and Lono in the Hawaiian language) had risen to the rank of "state gods" and played an important role in legitimizing the authority of the chiefly class (Kirch and Ruggles 2019: 19). "It should be noted that the totality of deities is defined by the expression—often placed at the beginning of prayers (cf. Beckwith 1940, 82)—*i kini o ke akua, ka lehu o ke akua, ka mano o ke akua*, 'the 40,000 deities, the 400,000 deities, the 4,000 deities' (Emerson 1965, 21)" (in Valeri 1985, 14). There are many legends in which gods punish humans for impiety: for example, the one in which the shark god, Kauhuhu, almost eats the human protagonist for setting foot on the god's land (Westervelt 2012, 49-59). Moreover, the fact that, in their prayers, people would ask gods like Kane to grant them things such as wisdom and prosperity (e.g. Beckwith 1940, 57) suggests a belief that the gods could also reward piety by direct intervention in their worshippers' lives. Conversely, there are legends in which gods punish people who violate the system of morality known as the *kapu* (Kirch, pers. comm.).

The *kapu* included the following prescriptions (Kamaku 1964 [1898], 72-76), which suggest that ancient Hawaiians championed virtues related to loyalty and personal integrity above all others:

4. Coveting the property of another has many aspects to it, a spying upon another, lying in ambush on his trail, plotting, treachery, deceit, trickery with the intent to murder secretly in order to get someone's goods. All of these things come under the head of robbery and are of the nature of murder (*pepehi wale*).
5. If one has determined to enrich at another's expense the evil has many shapes. [...]
6. If a man wishes to deal truthfully with another and afterwards finds that things have been misrepresented to him, there are many things involved in that. [...]
10. There were all sins, clearly understood to be wrong[...].
17. To act justly without trespassing or deceiving, not frequenting another's house, not gazing wistfully upon your neighbor's goods not begging for anything that belongs to him--that is the prudent course.
18. The following actions were considered worthy of approbation: to live thriftily, not to be a vagabond, not to keep changing wives, not to be always shifting from one chief to another, not to run in debt.

Overall, however, it would appear that moral transgressions were mostly policed by human agents, specifically chiefs: "In contact-era Hawai'i, the legitimate use of force included not only the ability of kings to wage wars of territorial conquest, but also to exercise the right over life or death in the everyday affairs of the common people. This kind of continual threat no doubt was highly effective in maintaining the control of chiefs or *ali'i*. The frequent references in the ethnohistoric sources to death as a penalty for breaking some kapu are striking. Failure to perform the prostrating *kapu* in the presence of a high-ranking *ali'i*, any number of violations

against the person or property of the king of a chief, coughing or uttering any noise during a religious service, and various other infractions were all punishable by death" (Kirch 2010, 69).

Post-Contact Hawaii (from 1820 CE)
The *kapu* system was abolished in 1819. It was made clear that it would not be reinstated (after the period of ritually sanctioned "defilement" and free-eating following the death of Kamehameha I) when the regent queen Ka'ahūmanu ate with the young king, Liholiho, breaking the "eating taboo" that forbade men and women to dine together; the high priest of the war god Kū, Hewahewa, then set fire to the god images and their sanctuaries (Seaton 1974, 197). American Protestant missionaries arrived in 1820, and their influence is evident in edicts issued by various chiefs, but (Calvinist) Christianity was established as the state religion only in 1825, with the beginning of the reign of Kamehameha III (Fish Kashay 2008, 18, 33-35). Christianity is a highly moralizing religion (Angenendt and Riches 2014).

A Survey of Central-Eastern Polynesia
According to the Glottolog classification, the Hawaiian language belongs to the Central-Eastern Polynesian branch of the Austronesian family. In this section we review what is known about MSP in other Polynesian cultures within this branch. The main question that motivates this section (and to which we return in the Summary), is whether this knowledge allows us to make inferences about MSP beliefs in Hawaii between the time when the archipelago was settled and the late prehistoric period (Hawaii1 and Hawaii2 according to Seshat classification).

Maori
Afterlife: According to Te Rangi Hiroa (1925, edited and republished by Sir Peter Buck in 1952), the Maori had no concept of punishment or reward in the afterlife:

> Rewards and punishments in a future state were not known to the Maori until after the coming of the white man. The Maori concept did not include the reward or punishment of the soul in the next world for what its body had done in this world. The Maori gods rewarded or punished in this world and were strangely apathetic to what occurred in the next. Thus death closed the account of the body, and the soul (wairua) entered the spirit land (reinga) with a clean sheet and without apprehension. As there were no just and unjust, there were no heaven and hell, and the one spirit land accommodated all. (p. 516)

Te Rangi Hiroa also suggests that this belief was widespread in Polynesia:

> In spite of variations and elaborations, the Polynesians and the Maori believed in the immortality of the soul and in a spirit land to which the souls of the dead went as their just right, without fear of being penalized for deeds committed in their life on earth. (p. 519)

Best (1924) confirms that the Maori did not believe in punishment or reward in the afterlife:

> Several writers have told us that the Maori concept of the lower spirit world is that of a hell; this is absolutely wrong. Never did he conceive any punishment of the soul in the spirit world. This erroneous statement seems to have been practically confined to the missionary type of writer. The "place of torment" of which the Rev. Mr. Yate told us had

no place in Maori belief. Dr. Savage, who visited New Zealand in 1805, remarked that the natives have an idea of a variety of rewards and punishments in a future state! Inasmuch as this writer could not converse with the natives, and interpreters were not, he must have indulged his imagination to some extent. [...]

Earle, who sojourned in New Zealand in 1827, did not so give play to his imagination, and so gives us a credible account of native belief on this subject. He wrote: 'The natives had not formed the slightest idea of there being a state of future punishment. They refuse to believe that the good spirit intends to make them miserable after their decease.' [...] (pp. 324-325)

This life: Te Rangi Hiroa writes that the Maori gods "rewarded or punished in this world" (p. 516), but elsewhere his text does not suggest that these rewards or punishments had any basis in morality. Instead, the gods punished those who failed to respect them, as we can see in the following quote:

Apart from classical distinctions, Tane's practical value to the people was his position as divine head of the department of forests and their products, timber for woodwork and birds for food. Before one of the tree children of Tane was felled for an important house or canoe, recognition of Tane's parenthood had to be made by some ritual chant or an offering. Non-recognition of Tane brought punishment in some form, such as obstruction to the work. [...] Fowlers hunting in the forests recognized Tane as the lord of birds, and the first bird killed was laid aside, with appropriate words, as an offering to Tane. After that they had Tane's tacit permission to go on catching for themselves. (p. 455; a few lines down, Te Rangi Hiroa equated Tane to the Hawaiian god Kane)

Alternatively, gods would punish transgressions of things that were *tapu*:

Theoretically, the atua kahukahu [family gods] defended the family honour by punishing those who transgressed against the various tapu restrictions of the family, whether wilfully or through ignorance. The spirits entered the body of the transgressor and produced the suffering and abnormal condition now known as disease. (p. 463)

Best (1924) provides the following definition of *tapu*, which suggests that transgressions against that which is *tapu* could also be classified as transgressions against the gods:

To put the matter briefly, it may be said that tapu means prohibition, a multiplication of "Thou shalt not." These may be termed the laws of the gods, and they must not be infringed. The penalty for neglect of these unspoken commands is the withdrawal of the protecting power of the gods. This left the erring one in parlous plight, for it meant that his active life principle was seriously affected, and nothing stood between the innumerable evil influences that are ever active, and his defenceless body. (p. 251)

Actions that were seen as violations of the *tapu* system included any act perceived as disrupting the hierarchy between men and women and between chiefs and commoners (e.g. a man and a woman sharing a meal, a commoner stealing a chief's possession), threatening the separation between death and life (e.g. trespassing onto a place where a person had died), or insulting the gods (e.g. trespassing onto a place a worship). Overall, these and other actions listed by Best (1924, pp. 252-259) suggest a greater concern over purity and pollution, and for respect toward the gods, than for moral behavior between humans.

Rarotonga

The following quote from a missionary that Gill includes in his 1856 book should likely not be taken at face value: most likely, it is a Christian misinterpretation of beliefs surrounding the Rarotongan equivalent of the *tapu* system.

> The people of Rarotonga, in their heathen state, had also conviction of sin. [...] They held that it was sin to profane the names, the representations, the word, and the habitations of the gods. They knew it was wrong to steal, to commit lewdness, to murder; they felt that these, and other wicked deeds, were followed by punishment here, and that they would be subjected to penalties hereafter.

Gill was himself a missionary, so it is unclear whether his own interpretations of Rarotongan rituals should be seen as valid. Overall, his writings suggest that the Rarontongans believed that supernatural entities could be coaxed into punishing one's enemies and rewarding oneself simply through offerings or the correct performance of specific rituals, regardless of one's enemies moral faults or one's own merit. For example, Gill (pp. 8-10, 18) describes Rarotongan women making offerings to the remains of their mother in order to achieve a good harvest, a "priest" using human remains as intermediaries to request that the gods give sickness or death to the priest's enemies, and various ceremonies performed in order to compel the gods into terminating an ongoing natural disaster such as a drought, floods, or an epidemic (the first by pouring water onto a skeleton, the second by setting fire to a skeleton, the third by performing human sacrifice).

Unfortunately, more recent sources do not devote much attention to MSP among the Rarotongans. However, the one passage we could find that explicitly deals with the matter seems to confirm that supernatural punishment had little to do with moral behaviour toward other people, except perhaps for respect for authority, though that could also be ascribed to the *tapu* system:

> A decrease in mana was likely to be explained as the person having displeased the gods, or to interference by an evil deity, or ritual having been performed incorrectly, or a subordinate having failed to pay due respect to his chief, or some other standard of behaviour having not been met. [...] Conversely, increases in mana could be regarded as reward for exemplary adherence to the norms. (Gilson 1980: 12)

Overall, it seems reasonable to assume that more general observations on moralistic supernatural punishment in Polynesia as a whole (e.g. ones by Handy and Oliver, see below) likely also apply to pre-contact Rarotonga.

Tahiti

Tahiti appears to be another case where there was no moralistic punishment either on earth or in the afterlife.

> The Tahitian gods were an unforgiving, fearsome lot unless properly propitiated and well fed, and even then they were capable of turning their backs. As an overriding force for social control, they were better than a thousand laws, since the punishment for infractions was not clearly defined in the supernatural world, and one could never be sure that the divine punishment would necessarily fit the earthly crime. (Ferdon 1981: 70)

Captain Bligh could find no belief in an afterlife, only in a state of nothingness. However, other Tahitians believed differently. […] John Forster's queries in this regard brought forth the information that the soul left the body upon death but hovered about the corpse for some little time before taking up its permanent abode in one of the carved wooden statues erected in the places of burial. From here it must have sallied forth occasionally, since the afterlife was pictured as a happy one with sunny days where one feasted on breadfruit and even the meat required no cooking. Since upward social mobility was inconceivable for the living, why should it exist in the hereafter? The servant remained a servant, the chief a chief.

Another view pictured the spirit as a lively individual who, […] [u]pon death, […] was purified and became one of the lesser deities. As such, it had to be propitiated by the living with prayers and offerings since, as an employee of the higher deity, it was known to watch over the living by curing their illnesses or inflicting punishment on those who deserved it. (Ferdon 1981: 174–75)

Cook Islands (Penrhyn)

It seems that the gods mostly intervened in human lives based on requests and offerings from their worshippers:

Though the priests controlled the means of approach to the gods on the more important occasions, there were times when a small group, or an individual, had to deal directly with the unseen powers without awaiting the mediation of a priest. For such occasions certain incantations had been composed, and it was a part of the general education to learn the correct observances with regard to the particular gods, and to commit the appropriate incantations to memory. The incantation, having been established as the correct approach, had mana (favor) in itself to obtain the desired end, in that its recitation acknowledged the authority of the god, and by pleasing him, inclined him to regard his devotee with favor. […] The ceremonial pattern here contains three elements, the incantation, the offering of a share of the catch, and a set posture while repeating the ritual. On some occasions there was the additional element of marking the fish. The significance of the laying aside of a portion of fish for the god may be interpreted through comparison with the psychological attitude toward the giving of presents in social life. Hospitality was based on reciprocity, and giving was followed in due time by receiving. After the giving of a share of fish to the god, the god would be expected to reciprocate by making future fishing operations successful. Also, the gods were angered by obvious neglect, and the failure to render a share of the fish would cause the god to render future fishing operations fruitless, and might even precipitate disaster and misfortune in other undertakings. (Buck 1932: 88)

Marquesas

Afterlife: Among the Marquesans, one's fate in the afterlife had more to do with the quality and quantity of offerings received from the living than anything else. Presumably this reflected one's status in life.

The Marquesans believed there were below the earth three regions. In the lowest, that to which those who had many pigs offered attained, life was good with an abundance of

excellent food and lovely women. Above this was a world of mediocre sort where there was an amplitude of good things, but not luxury. Still above this, next the earth, as a realm haunted by demons, where there were only disgusting foods that were brought down from earth by evil spirits. Souls that had only one pig's head offered to them could not penetrate beyond this unpleasant region. But there was also, in addition to these three nether worlds, another region that is not definitely located, to which were consigned souls that had had nothing offered for them at all, a disgusting hell in which these abandoned souls lay sunk in mire until someone came to their rescue and offered a pig for them (77, p. 251). (Handy 1971 [1927]: 75)

This life: As elsewhere in Polynesia, one could be punished for transgression of the *tapu* system.

> In the Marquesas, tapu meant primarily restricted or forbidden because sacred, not to be profaned, and secondly, defiled, spiritually dangerous. Tapu had as its fundamental meaning, sacred; thus, a first-born's head was tapu. The secondary meaning applied to rules to protect sacredness : thus, a woman's menstrual cloth was not tapu, but it was tapu to touch it. (Handy 1923: 257)

> The punishment for the breaking of tapu was supposed to be sickness, or sudden death in some such manner as by drowning, or by being eaten by sharks. Leprosy was caused by the breaking of the tapu relating to defilement. Deep ulcers (puku) were supposed to result from eating the fish sacred to the priests and the gods. It was also thought that the breaking of tapu established by the tribal priest was punished by curses directed by the priest. An insult to personal tapu was punished directly by physical violence, or indirectly through witchcraft. (Handy 1923: 263)

Violations against the *tapu* system included women's transgressions against men, commoners' transgressions in relation to chiefs and priests and their possessions and everything else associated with them, any transgressions in relation to heads (including those of women), certain colours on certain islands, the portion of fruit or fish that should be given to the gods, certain games (in that they could not be played by women), certain activities and foods depending on the season, anything a priest had declared tapu, anything to do with death, and so on. Overall, it seems that transgressions against the *tapu* system had more to do with a concern for maintaining boundaries between the pure and the impure than morality—though it's worth noting that sources like Handy don't use either "purity" or "impurity" (Handy 1923: 257-263). Some forms of antisocial behavior (most notably, theft and murder) were also seen as violations against the *tapu* system, but these were often punished by human rather than supernatural agents:

> For murder, theft, insult, or other personal offense within a tribe, the recourse was personal or family retaliation by open force or by supernatural means. Murder and other offenses on the part of other tribes were, if sufficiently serious, avenged by the tribe as a whole. All evidence indicates that stealing within a tribe was very rare and that killing was more so. Stealing was so frowned upon by public opinion that a father would disown a son who did it. Theft was usually punished by supernatural means but sometimes by death. Most of the murders that occurred within a tribe had as their motive sexual jealousy. A chief enforced his authority by supernatural means or by

having the offenders killed by his war leaders (toa). The executive tuhuna functioned as guardians of the chief's rights, — several of the stories collected illustrate this, — but the protection of property was generally by supernatural means through a spell or by making the property tapu in one way or another, such as by giving it a sacred name. (Handy 1971 [1927]: 56-57)

The following quote suggests that the chiefly classes had a different relationship to supernatural entities compared to commoners, but either way there was no sense of MSP: for chiefs, one could earn the favour of at least some supernatural entities via offerings and prayer, while commoners believed at least some supernatural entities to be highly dangerous and overall best avoided.

Among the upper classes the souls of the deceased became atua ["gods"] who spoke to them through tau'a and could be placated by rituals, offerings, and prayers. For the lower classes these same souls were perceived as implacable spirits, and thus best avoided. (Ferdon 1993: 50)

It is also worth noting that in the case of something like thieving, rather than the thief being automatically punished for their actions by supernatural entities, supernatural entities must be prompted by the thief's victims in order for the thief to receive punishment. Even then, it's not clear that the supernatural entities "understand" that they are punishing someone specifically for thieving—it seems that they may have been simply "activated" and made more likely than normal to attack the presumed thief.

Suspecting a particular person of having committed a robbery, the victim would give people's names to the presumed culprit's breadfruit trees, pigs, and other possessions. These then became bewitched by the spirits of the named individuals and could never again be used by the presumed thief. (Ferdon 1993: 50)

Polynesia in General

A look at sources that specifically discuss commonalities between Polynesian belief systems generally, Handy (1927) and Oliver (2002) don't appear to have much to say about MSP during life, suggesting again that it did not form an important part of Polynesian belief systems. Both confirm that as a concept MSP was universally excluded from ideas of the afterlife; any known examples of differentiation in the fates of "souls" in the afterlife had more to do with status than anything else.

As a generalization, it may be said that the souls of those without superior mana, exhibited in worldly distinction of some kind were destined to dwell after life on earth in the lower regions, while souls with mana, those who were distinguished by divine descent, or by sacred or notable attainment of some kind in this life, such as priesthood, wealth, prowess in war, or distinction in craft, were destined ultimately to attain some sort of heavenly or earthly paradise. (Handy 27, 76)

[…] among many if not most Polynesian peoples a human's conduct toward other humans had less effect upon his fate in the afterlife than did his conduct toward gods. (Oliver 2002, 177)

Robert Hommon's Notes on Moralizing Religion in Traditional Hawai'i
These notes, expanding on the preceding material in this chapter, propose an answer to the question "Did a moralizing religion exist in traditional Hawai'i?" According to the definitions in the *Introduction*, the term 'moralizing religion' refers to "clusters of beliefs and practices postulating a system of supernatural punishment and reward for morally salient behavior in human interactions." They observe that "[w]hat most of the cultural evolution theories of moralizing religion have in common is the idea that belief in supernatural punishment motivates prosociality (i.e. behavior that benefits others) in ways that contribute to the flourishing of complex societies" (Turchin et al. 2019:2)

The answer to the question proposed here is that a moralizing religion did exist in traditional Hawai'i, though not in the elaborate worship of the great gods in major temples by kings, high ranked chiefs, and priests, but rather in the daily worship of *'aumākua*, deified ancestors, by individuals and families at small local shrines and altars.

The Hawai'i Island Primary State
Primary states, polities that attained statehood spontaneously, uninfluenced by pre-existing states, were the ultimate ancestors of all other state societies, past and present. It is widely recognized that primary states emerged between about 2,000 and 6,000 years ago in six regions: Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, Mesoamerica, and Andean South America. Polynesia, with primary states that emerged more recently in Hawai'i and Tonga, is the seventh such region. Three competing Hawaiian primary states had emerged by about AD 1720. Unlike the archaeological record of the earliest pre- or proto-literate states in the other six regions, that of the Hawaiian primary states is complemented by a rich literature including a large body of oral historical narratives preserved in written form; long multi-island genealogies; public records of the nineteenth century Hawaiian monarchy; and numerous accounts by fully-literate eyewitness, both native and foreign (Hommon 2013).

The Hawaiian Islands were colonized around the eleventh century by voyagers sailing more than 3,500 km from islands in Eastern Polynesia. At the time of Hawai'i's first contact with the non-Polynesian world in 1778-1779 during Captain Cook's third voyage, the largest and most powerful of its states, the Hawai'i Island Kingdom, consisted of eight traditional districts, including two on the island of Maui that had been annexed by conquest. I estimate the population of this 11,000 km^2 kingdom to have been roughly 260,000. King Kalani'ōpu'u, who ruled as both head of state and head of government at the time, delegated power to a multi-level stratified bureaucracy through which he exercised what was generally recognized as his legitimate power to collect taxes, maintain order, declare wars, and direct public works projects (Hommon 2013).

The Hawai'i Island state encompassed about 450 named local communities known as *ahupua'a* or *'āina*. The Hawaiian population was divided into two sharply defined socioeconomic classes. Commoners (*maka'āinana*), the great majority of the population, cultivated crops, caught and collected virtually all seafood, and produced nearly all manufactured necessities and prestige goods (Malo 1951:60-61).

Commoners were forbidden to trace ancestry beyond two ascending generations (Kamakau 1992:242). In contrast, chiefs (*ali'i*), who comprised probably one to two percent of the population, claimed membership in the aristocratic class by tracing genealogical

connections to chiefly ancestors within ten generations. A chief's ascribed rank depended primarily on his or her genealogical distance from a senior line of firstborns. A chief's position in the political hierarchy tended to parallel kinship seniority so that rulers were usually of one of the top four ranks and chiefs of local *ahupua'a* communities were of low ranks "As kings, priests, governors, war leaders, landlords, and bureaucrats, chiefs occupied virtually every administrative position of political, military, economic, and ritual power in ancient Hawai'i" (Hommon 2013:17). The term "*kahuna*" applied to specialists including commoners skilled in various crafts and priests (*kāhuna pule*) of either class.

According to Malo (1951:53), a king's

> duties in the government were to gather the people together in time of war, to decide all important questions of state, and questions touching on the life and death of the common people as well as of the chief and his comrades. It was his to look after the soldiery. To him belonged the property derived from the yearly taxes, and he was the one who had the power to dispossess commoners and chiefs from their lands. It was his to assess the taxes both on commoner and on chiefs and to impose penalties in case the land tax was not paid. It was his duty to consecrate the temples, to oversee the performance of religious rites in the temples of human sacrifice . . . that is, in the *luakini*, to preside over the celebration of the Makahiki festival, and such other ceremonies as he might be pleased to appoint. From these things will be apparent the supremacy of the king over the people and chiefs. The soldiery were a factor that added to the king's pre-eminence.

Hawaiian Religion: Sources

David Malo, cited above, is one of three Hawaiian scholars whose contributions to Hawaiian culture, society, and history are key to the following discussion. Malo (c. 1793-1853) was the author, in 1838, of *Hawaiian Antiquities* (*Mo'olelo Hawai'i*), two editions of which are cited here (1951, 1996).

In the 1860s Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau (1815-1876) published numerous articles in Hawaiian newspapers which have been translated and collected in several books, including *Ka Po'e Kahik*o: *The People of Old* (1964).

Mary Kawena Pukui (1895-1986) was the author or co-author of many volumes including *The Polynesian Family System in Ka-'u* (1972), *Nānā i ke Kumu: Look to the Source* (1972), and several editions of the *Hawaiian Dictionary* (1973, 1986).

Mana, Kapu, and Noa

As in other Polynesian societies, the status of the Hawaiian chiefly class was based on the quality called *mana*. The fundamental principle of traditional Hawaiian religion, "*mana* manifests the power of the gods in the human world" (Shore 1989:164). The *mana* of chiefs was manifest in sexual potency and in the growth and abundance of the society's crops and other food resources (Shore 1989:138–142). The chiefs' intercession with the gods was believed to bring the blessings of agricultural abundance, internal order, and success in war. It was in recognition of the potency of chiefly power over both spiritual and earthly matters that commoners supplied the chiefs with material necessities and wealth. [Hommon 2013:19]

Intimately associated with *mana* were the concepts of *kapu* (*tapu* in various Polynesian languages, the source of "taboo" in English) and *noa*. Anthropologist Bradd Shore (1989:164)

has defined *tapu* as "a state of contact with the divine" and *noa* as "the unbounded state of separation from the divine." Anthropologist Valerio Valeri (1985a:90), however, views the pair as relative qualities, in that "persons or things that are closer to the divine are *kapu* to those that are less close to it." While a low-ranked chief, for example, was *kapu* to a commoner, he was *noa* to a chief of superior rank. The term *kapu* can refer either to the "contained potency of some thing, place, or person" or, in a passive sense, to the state of being "forbidden or dangerous for someone who is *noa*." In the first sense, it connotes sacredness and reverence, in the second, fear and danger (Shore 1989:144) [Hommon 2013:19]

Great Gods

While both commoners and chiefs worshipped major Polynesian gods (*akua*) and ancestral spirits (*aumākua*), as in other areas of life their participation in religious practices tended to vary along class lines. In general, high ranked chiefs presided over and high ranked priests performed infrequent, often regularly scheduled ceremonies in major temples (*heiau*) dedicated to major gods (*akua*) in behalf of the entire kingdom and its districts during eight months of the year, as well as various events of the four-month-long Makahiki festival. In contrast, while commoners occasionally observed major ceremonies and festival events, their ritual life probably tended to be centered primarily around the daily worship of *'aumākua* at small neighborhood shrines and altars.

Hawaiians worshipped many gods, poetically described by the phrase "*kini-akua, lehu-akua, mano-akua*," meaning "forty thousand gods, four hundred thousand gods, four thousand gods" (Malo 1951:83). The four primary anthropomorphic gods, born of the primordial pair of earth (female) and sky (male), were Kū, Lono, Kāne, and Kanaloa (Kirch and Green 2001:243-244; Pukui et al. 1972:1:24). Each of these four were said to exist in any of *kino lau*, ("four hundred bodies"), including animals such as sharks and owls, as well as plants and stones (Handy and Pukui 1972:123; Valeri 1985b:10). Many of these forms were identified by the god's name and a descriptive epithet. For example Hawai'i Island's god of war was known as Kū-kā'ili-moku, literally "Kū Island-Snatcher," and Lono-nui-ākea (Lono of the Vast Expanses) was one of the manifestations of the agricultural god Lono. Kāne was sometimes recognized as "the leading god among the great gods" (Beckwith 1970:42), and Kanaloa is probably the most ancient of the Polynesian gods (Kirch and Green 2001:242-243). However, according to Valeri (1985:109-111), as regards the religious and political significance of rituals and the temples (*heiau*) in which they were performed, the major gods were ranked, in order of most to least important, Kū, Lono, Kāne, and Kanaloa.

Hawaiians worshipped their gods and deified ancestors with prayers and sacrifices of food and other valuable items. They believed, as did other Polynesians, that supernatural beings demanded respect, responded to prayerful requests and consumed the shadow or essence of food offerings in the form of odor or smoke (Firth 1970:245-253; Pukui et al. 1972:10)

In behalf of the kingdom and its component districts, high ranked priests (*kāhuna pule*) belonging to two orders (*mo'o*) performed complex ceremonies in major temples that sometimes continued for days without interruption (Malo 1951:175; Pukui and Elbert 1986:5). About 500 temples are known throughout the archipelago (Hommon 2013:90). Most of them appear to have served as *heiau ho'oulu'ai*, or "temples for the increase of food crops" where

priests of the Order of Lono performed ceremonies on behalf of prominent chiefs (Pukui and Elbert 1986:64).

About 99 of the *heiau* have been identified as *luakini,* temples where, at the command of the king, priests of the Kū Order performed ceremonies dedicated to a war god such as Hawai'i Island's Kū-kā'ili-moku (Kolb and Dixon 2002:523–525). The dedication of a *luakini*, an act that constituted a declaration of war, required 13 ritual phases over a span of ten days that included the sacrifice of at least three humans (usually war captives or *kapu* violators), and the offering of and feasting on hundreds of pigs (Malo 1951:175).

Moralizing in Traditional Hawai'i

Moralizing in Hawai'i is here explored from three perspectives: right (*pono*) and wrong (*hewa*) behavior; the application of *kapu* by chiefs as a means of social control; and reward and punishment by the *'aumakua*.

According to Biccieri (2017:32), morality can be described as

> a code of conduct that guides behavior. Moral codes regulate the behaviors that a society considers to be most important, including behaviors that directly or indirectly affect others: rules against killing, causing pain, and deceiving are all examples of rules that prohibit causing direct or indirect harm.

Hewa and *Pono*. In any society moral codes are based on the identification of behaviors that are widely considered to be right and wrong. In Chapter 23 of *Hawaiian Antiquities*, entitled "Wrong and Right Conduct (*Na Hewa Me No Pono*)" Malo (1951:81-87)[7] lists behaviors traditionally considered to be either *hewa* or *pono*. Depending on context, *hewa* is variously translated with terms such as "wrong," "sin," "evil," and "finding fault," while translations of *pono* include "right," "worthy of approbation," "virtuous," and "commendable." Behaviors considered *hewa* include slander, gossip, sarcasm, intimidation, and several forms of lying; those considered *pono* include acting as a responsible member of society skilled at farming, fishing, or craftwork (Malo 1951:72-76, 1996:42-44, 186--189; see also Pukui and Elbert 1986:67, 340-341). Though making no mention of *mana, kapu,* or *noa,* or of gods or spirits, the chapter suggests the range of behaviors that may have been seen to warrant punishment or reward, supernatural or otherwise.

Kapu as Social Control.   Hawaiian chiefs routinely employed the popular belief in their divinely endowed power of *kapu* to enforce behavioral rules in several ways. Prescriptive rules required certain behaviors. For example, the *kapu moe* required that most chiefs as well as commoners lie prostrate in the presence of chiefs of the two most sacred ranks. Proscriptive rules prohibited certain behaviors such as touching a superior chief's belongings. Most such rules were "permanent" in the sense that they were always in effect, as was the prohibition on women eating pork and most varieties of bananas. Some permanent rules varied seasonally as did the prohibition on fishing for *aku* (bonito) that alternated every six months with the prohibition on *ōpelu* (mackerel scad) fishing. Chiefs could also declare a "situational" rule pertaining to a specific activity for a limited time by, for example, temporarily forbidding commoners to swim or paddle out to a visiting European ship with goods to offer to the crew.

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[7] Cited by Cioni (2019) as "Kamaku 1964 [1898], 72-76"

Violation of each of the permanent rules noted above were punishable by death (Hommon 2013:56, 134, 243; Malo 1951:29, 56-57, 189). Cioni (2019) is correct in observing that violations of the chiefs' declared *kapu* "were primarily policed by human agents, rather than by supernatural agents." It is interesting to note that journal entries by members of Captain Cook's expedition within weeks of first contact with Hawaiians at Kealakekua Bay in 1779 suggest that scofflawry may have been common:

The Cook chronicles testify to two sorts of tabu transgressions by ordinary Hawaiian women. First, they ignored interdictions on the sea by swimming out to the ships at night while the tabu was on. Secondly, when women slept on board the ships, as on most nights, they did taste of forbidden fruits and pork, and in the company of men—the British seamen." (Sahlins 1981:46-48).

Reward and Punishment by *'Aumākua*.   Mary Kawena Pukui is a significant source for the following discussion of Hawaiian deified ancestors (*'aumākua*), and particularly for the proposal that punishments and rewards administered by *'aumākua* constitute evidence for the existence of a moralizing religion in traditional Hawai'i. Though Pukui was born more than a century after Hawai'i's initial contact with the non-Polynesian world, she was educated in traditional Hawaiian practices and beliefs by her maternal grandmother in the Ka'ū District of Hawai'i Island (Pukui et al. 1972:viii). That *'aumakua* worship persisted in Ka'ū into the 20th century is indicated by the fact that "Pukui memorized names of all her family *'aumākua* as part of her childhood education. She learned a total of 50 names! With so many *'aumākua*, the word *'ao'ao* was used to designate the spiritual ancestors on a specific side or branch of the family" (Pukui et al. 1972:36).

[Kū, Lono, Kāne, and Kanaloa] were distant, awesome deities, concerned with the mighty forces of land and sea, storm and calm, light of day and dark of night. As major gods, their help was invoked for major causes and great events. For the needs and solaces of daily life, Hawaiians called on their own personal ancestor gods, the *'aumākua*." (Pukui et al. 1972:24)

Unlike the powerful gods of deep antiquity, the *'aumākua* were believed to be transformed human ancestors, some of whom had been known by their worshippers as still-living relatives. In contrast to the elaborate, government-sponsored ceremonies for the great gods in major temples, *'aumākua* worship consisted of relatively simple, often daily rituals performed by and for the benefit of local families and individual farmers, fishers and craftworkers. *'Aumākua* were "personal gods, *pili kino*" of both chiefs and commoners (Kamakau 1964:55), but it seems likely that *'aumākua* worship was more significant in the religious lives of commoners, who, unlike chiefs, seldom if ever participated directly in prayers and offerings to the great gods in major temples.

"With one's *'aumakua*, a human-to-spirit communication was possible. One spoke to an *aumakua* through ritual and with reverence, but without the almost paralyzing awe of the *akuas* or impersonal gods sometimes inspired. Therefore, an *'aumakua* could also be a 'spiritual go between' passing prayers to the *akua*" (Pukui et al. 1972:35).

Though normally invisible and ever-present, *'aumakua*, like the great gods, were capable of appearing in *kino lau*, animal, vegetable, or mineral guises (Pukui et al. 1972:36).

Hawaiians believed that their 'aumakua aided them in their tasks, as when a shark 'aumakua brought fish to their canoe, protected them by warning of potential danger, or saved them when they were in trouble. (Pukui et al. 1972:37) "The 'aumākua also had that most beguiling quality, a sense of fun. 'Aumākua could also be capricious, mischievous and naughty" (Pukui et al. 1972:39).

Families and individual farmers, fishermen, and craft specialists (kāhuna), in each ahupua'a community worshipped 'aumākua at a variety of small, relatively simple stone altars and shrines. Today, the most numerous identifiable ceremonial structures are fishing shrines (ko'a), small stone structures built along the shores of all islands, where local fishermen prayed and sacrificed a portion of each catch to the local 'aumakua to ensure continued abundance.

The Mua was the men's eating and lounging house, and their sanctuary. At one end was an altar (kuahu) dedicated to the family 'aumakua whose effigies stood there. Here the head of the household prayed and performed necessary rites sometimes without, sometimes with the aid of a kahuna pule [professional priest], when came time for the rites of the life cycle such as birth, cutting the foreskin, sickness and death. Here the family rites during the monthly days of kapu were performed. The common daily worship would seem to have consisted in offering a bit of food (hanai'ai) at the time of eating." (Handy and Pukui 1972:95–96)

The following excerpts from sources by Kamakau and Pukui describe or imply instances of punishment and reward (underlined) by 'aumākua

The Pohaku o Kane, the Stone of Kane was a place of refuge, a pu'uhonoa, for each family from generation to generation. It was not a heiau; it was a single stone monument (he wahi'eoeo pohaku ho'okahi), and a kuahu altar with ti and other greenery planted about. When trouble came upon a family for doing wrong against an 'aumakua god, by being irreligious, or doing any of these defiling things, the cause for this trouble was shown to them by dreams, or visions, or through other signs sent by the god. It was pointed out to them what sacrifices to offer, and what gifts to present, to show their repentance for the wrong committed by the family. They were to go to the Pohaku o Kane, their pu'uhonua, where they were to make offerings to atone for their wrongdoing (mohai hala) and to pacify the god (mohai ho'olu'olu)." (Kamakau 1964:32).

The 'aumakua makes its warnings, reprimands and guidance known in dreams, visions, physical manifestations, or just the nagging feeling that something was wrong." (Pukui et al. 1972:38)

"Illness was often thought to be punishment sent from an offended 'aumakua. Breaking the food kapus (taboos), bathing in pools that were kapu, violating the kapu of the menstrual period—all could bring reprimands, in the form of physical discomfort. So could behavior that impaired interpersonal relationships—greed, dishonesty, theft. Often these were 'diagnostic clues.' A swollen hand pained a thief until he made restitution." (Pukui et al. 1972:38)

"[W]hen one man became an expert canoe maker and another an especially skilled fisherman, this was due only partly to individual training. The training was superimposed on the mana (special power or talent) each had received from his 'aumakua." (Pukui et al. 1972:37)

For all their appealing, human-like qualities, the 'aumākua remained figures of supreme authority. After death each mortal would know his 'aumākua as implacable judge and jury. For the 'aumākua had the power to punish or reward the released spirit, or even to send it back to

the body. The true unfortunates were the spirits whose earthly existence was found unworthy. Explains Mrs. Pukui: "Those who in life had offended and did not try to correct the offense disgusted the 'a*umākua*. The *'aumākua* would not bother with them [thus punishing by withholding contact]. These became *'ao kuewa*, homeless, hungry, wandering spirits, chasing moths and grasshoppers for food." (Pukui et al. 1972:40)

In the ancient days, the *'aumakua* and the *kumupa'a* ancestral deities were havens of forgiveness (*pu'u kalahala*); they were healers; they counteracted (*wehe*) trouble. Death or suffering sent by another [sorcery] were as nothing to the *'aumākua*, and escape from these influences was called 'life from the *'aumākua,' o ke ola ia a ka 'aumākua*." Thus there were many lives saved by the *'aumakua* in the ancient days. The reward of right living was an *'aumakua* life', the warding off of death from another…. (Kamakau 1964:28-29).

> "Very different was the calling upon of the *'aumākua* (*ho'aumākua ana*) by *ka po'e kahiko* [the people of old] in the setting to rights of the punishments and troubles sent by the *'aumākua* to this or that family" (Kamakau 1964:60).
>
> "It was kapu to even cross the smoke from a fire in which a cock or a kapu fish was cooking. If they did, they would get a *ma'i ho'opa'i* (a chastising illness inflicted by the ancestral *'aumakua*). (Kamakau 1964:87).
>
> "The medical kahunas, *kahuna lapa'au*, did not use real medicines in the ancient days. The illnesses they treated were those sent by the *akua* ['*aumākua*] to punish a man for doing evil, breaking oaths, and wrongdoing against consecrated things—eating the *akua's* animal form, or a kapu plant or fish or wearing forbidden clothing—and all sorts of other errors. If the illness was a very serious one, one that a kahuna could not comprehend, and it was beyond the knowledge of the first kahuna who treated for it, then it was due to the *'aumākua*. It was very difficult to dodge the "smoke" (*uahi*) of the *'aumakua*" (Kamakau 1964:95).

Conclusion

Available evidence appears to support a two-fold answer to the question of the existence of moralizing religion in traditional Hawai'i based primarily on whether behaviors were believed to be punished and rewarded supernaturally or by human agency. The government-sponsored worship of the great gods (*akua*) in major temples cannot be considered a moralizing religion given that punishments for violations of its norms were administered by or at the order of chiefs rather than by supernatural means.

In contrast, the worship of deified ancestors (*'aumākua*) by individuals and family groups in local communities meets the definition of a moralizing religion as it was based on the fundamental belief that both rewards and punishments were administered by these ancestors.

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Summary

There are clear moralizing elements in the late pre-contact Hawaiian religion. However, morality was not the primary focus of the chief Hawaiian deities, who cared more about correct rituals and sacrifices. Furthermore, it appears that prosocial prescriptions in the *kapu* system were of secondary concern compared to restrictions placed on women (e.g., separation of women and men at mealtimes, higher quality foods reserved for men) and commoners (looking at, touching the chiefs). Additionally, offenses against *kapu* were primarily policed by human agents, rather than supernatural agents. Finally, the idea of punishment or reward in the afterlife appears to be universally absent in Polynesia.

A very interesting question is how far back in the Hawai'i history we can infer the presence of the MSP elements, limited as they were. Phylogenetic analyses have been used to reconstruct the religious beliefs and institutions that the first Hawaiian settlers brought with them. This heritage included ancestor veneration, important religious concepts *mana* and *kapu*, and four major anthropomorphic gods cognate with the Ancestral Polynesian *Taangaloa* and the Proto-Central Eastern Polynesian *Taane*, *Tuu* and *Rongo*.

Our survey of Central-Eastern Polynesian cultures, closely related to Hawai'i, however, found very little evidence for MSP. In Maori, Rarotonga, Tahiti, and Cook Islands gods punished violations of the *tapu* system, including acts perceived as disrupting the hierarchy between men and women or between chiefs and commoners, and failing to respect the gods, rather than for moral behavior between humans (note that in this volume our focus is on *prosocial* morality, as defined in Chapter 1). A partial exception to this pattern is the Marquesas, in which some forms of antisocial behavior (theft and murder) were also seen as violations against the *tapu* system. It is significant that Hawai'i, almost certainly, were colonized from the Marquesas. Thus, it seems appropriate to propose that these very limited MSP elements were retained in Hawai'i and indeed developed and institutionalized there to an extent not seen in related Polynesian societies.

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Papua New Guinea (Oro)

NGA: Oro, PNG

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This narrative was adapted from the chapter on small-scale societies by Eva Brandl (2019) in *Seshat History of the Axial Age*.

Orokaiva

The *Orokaiva* are a Melanesian population located in Papua New Guinea. Their ethnonym is of colonial origin (Crocombe & Hogbin 1963: 1). Prior to the colonial period, the population now known as Orokaiva were divided into various autonomous 'tribes' speaking distinct but mutually intelligible dialects of a shared Papuan language (Latham & Beierle 2004). These 'tribes' cultivated roots and tubers such as taro, which formed their primary means of subsistence (ibid.). They supplemented swidden horticulture with foraging, fishing, hunting, and animal husbandry (ibid.). Pigs were the most important domestic animals and played a prominent role in symbolism and ritual (ibid.). Dogs and chickens were also raised (ibid.). The Orokaiva resided in compact villages made up of family huts built from bush poles, palm wood,

and fronds (Dakeyne 1969: 10). In addition, villagers constructed men's houses named *oro* or *arijo*, which housed unmarried boys and served ceremonial functions (Williams & Murray 1930: 70).

The Orokaiva spiritual world was populated by 'demigods' or culture heroes, ancestor spirits, and animistic beliefs. They conceived of the cosmos as divided into two realms: "the human world, comprising villages and gardens, and the wild world, *ariri*, the bush, where everything is dangerous and inimical to man, and where the ghosts (*sovai*) have their abode" (Schwimmer 1973: 140). In line with their association with the jungle, spirits or *sovai* were thought to be present in wild animals (Schwimmer 1973: 116). When people domesticated plants and animals, they also removed the dangerous spirit essences to make them 'safe' (Schwimmer 1973: 116). For example, piglets were 'sealed' off from these malevolent spiritual influences with medicines (Schwimmer 1973: 141). They were only really domesticated after this process had been completed (Schwimmer 1973: 142). But despite their powers, these spirits did not resemble the omnipotent creator gods of the Abrahamic religions. Spirits were not considered superior to humans: "So-called supernatural beings, like persons and things, are part of society. As such, they are also subordinated to the values that order society and their identity is determined in terms of relations" (Iteanu 1990: 37). Spirits were defined by their position in ritual exchanges, specifically their ability to butcher, eat, and distribute meat in culturally sanctioned ways (Iteanu 1990: 37). These ritual obligations helped to define relationships between participants, and impose distinctions between humans, animals, and spirits. Bloch (1992: 12) emphasizes that spirits are similar to humans and their spirits are "normally localised in the bush, more particularly in a village of the dead in a remote place". It is thus not surprising that, following the arrival of Christian missionaries, Orokaiva were initially reluctant to accept claims about god's omnipotence (Schwimmer 1969: 129).

While the human world was seen as distinct from the bush and the spirit world, people crossed over from one to the other after death, when they turned into spirits or *sovai* (Latham & Beierle 2004: 7). After roaming the village, these "depart to special places of the dead" (Latham & Beierle 2004: 7). These places were called *sovai-ta-na*, and were visible in features of the natural environment such as large rocks, pools, or hills that belonged to different clans (Williams & Murray 1930: 281p). Some people believed that when a person died, "the sovai of those formerly deceased assemble to receive the new sovai and bear him away with them" (Williams & Murray 1930: 281). Accordingly, during funeral rites, the dead person was "told to make himself known to them, and to offer them gifts in order to make sure of a cordial welcome" (Williams & Murray 1930: 281). The dead person's spirit was sometimes distressed about leaving their old life behind (Williams & Murray 1930: 281). During funeral rites, mourners also invoked a "place of sunshine where there are neither march-flies nor mosquitoes to bother him" (Williams & Murray 1930: 282). It appears that some spirits went up the sky, which is reflected in oral traditions where these are described as upper sovai or *i-sovai* (Williams & Murray 1930: 282). This was true of people who had been slain in battle, although people did not regard these spirits as superior to other *sovai* (Williams & Murray 1930: 282). At least one oral tradition depicts an underworld where the spirits of the dead live together (Williams & Murray 1930: 282). However, early ethnographers also report that people's ideas about the afterlife were often vague (Williams & Murray 1930: 282) and possibly contradictory,

with little to indicate that moral conduct in this life affected people's fate in the afterlife.

The spirits of the dead had ambiguous feelings towards their surviving relatives and living people in general (Williams & Murray 1930: 282). On the one hand, specific *sovai* conferred special powers, medicines, and messages to the leaders of colonial-era religious movements such as the Taro Cult (for further detail see below), but also to healers and hunting magicians (Williams & Murray 1930: 282p). Furthermore, spirits would assist hunters and horticulturalists by helping the plants grow and helping them to catch prey (Williams & Murray 1930: 283). Occasionally, the spirit of a specific dead person might show gratitude towards their surviving relatives for their support. For example, one oral tradition tells of a "grateful warrior whose younger brother cared for his children after he had been killed, and who subsequently, in the form of a bird, warned this younger brother of an approaching raid" (Williams & Murray 1930: 283). The older brother's spirit then transformed back into a warrior and fought back the raiding party, allowing his younger sibling to escape (Williams & Murray 1930: 283). Accordingly, folk tales provide an example of a spirit who rewarded a relative for the prosocial treatment of his descendants, although it appears that this was driven by a sense of personal reciprocity between the spirit and his surviving relatives, rather than by some higher authority. It should be noted that, while powerful, these spirits were not seen as controlling the whole world (Williams & Murray 1930: 287), and so any tendency to reward prosocial behaviour was probably limited to interactions between their own relatives. This interpretation is also found in an encyclopaedia entry stating that spirits were thought to "chastise errant kin by bringing upon them misfortune, illness, and even death" (Latham & Beierle 2004: 7), with no mention of non-kin.

Given their association with danger and the wild, the spirits of the dead were hostile most of the time (Williams & Murray 1930: 283). This could result in misfortunes such as crop failures, sickness, and bad luck in hunting (Williams & Murray 1930: 283). Spirits sometimes appeared as monsters to pursue and torment a human victim (Williams & Murray 1930: 283p). On a larger scale, they also caused natural disasters such as earthquakes, which happened when the spirits were moving around underground (Williams & Murray 1930: 284). These spirit attacks often resulted from people angering or antagonizing the spirits (for an example see Williams & Murray 1930: 284), and it appears that these episodes were usually triggered by offences against the spirits or failure to observe rituals rather than by offences between people. This is evident in the following passage: "The native goes in real fear of his dead relatives and in perpetual anxiety lest he should offend them and incur their displeasure" (Williams 1928: 58). Illness and misfortune were thought to befall those who dared enter a dead man's gardens, but also those who failed to observe the offerings and other rituals meant to honour the dead (ibid.). The same trends can be seen in rituals designed to ensure the survival of infants. These were embedded in ritual transactions between the souls of dead people and those of new-borns (Schwimmer 1973: 92). The dead person was thought to still reside in the garden they had been cultivating (Schwimmer 1973: 92). After the birth of a child, the parents took the baby to that piece of land and informed the spirit that they, and later their child, would look after the land (Schwimmer 1973: 92). The parents also placed a stick in the ground which was connected to the soul of the baby, which after some rituals was collected by the father and taken home (Schwimmer 1973: 92). When a baby died, the mother's family may blame it on the father's

failure to perform these rituals correctly, which could result in the baby being 'taken away' by the *sovai* (Schwimmer 1973: 92). Conversely, the father's family may blame it on the mother's failure to cultivate the *sovai's* land properly (Schwimmer 1973: 93). Spirits could also harm people in more indirect or inadvertent ways. For example, dead people's spirits could enter into wild animals (Schwimmer 1973: 141). Some of these looked or behaved abnormally (Schwimmer 1973: 141). This was attributed to the "dead hunters and killers who retain their human wilfulness [sic] while deprived of human bonds" (Schwimmer 1973: 141). Eating an animal that had a spirit in them was thought to cause sickness (Williams & Murray 1930: 283).

Due to the dangerous nature of the spirits of the dead, people's feelings towards them were ambivalent (Williams & Murray 1930: 284), ranging from hostility, expressed in attempts to fight them (Williams & Murray 1930: 285), to attempts to placate and appease them to win their favour and avoid harm (Williams & Murray 1930: 285). This was done by presenting the spirits with food offerings, which were left in the vegetable gardens and around the village (Williams & Murray 1930: 285). To prevent adverse consequences after a funeral, mourners presented a dead person with grave goods such as ornaments, which were meant to placate their spirit (Williams & Murray 1930: 285). Having placated the spirit, people asked the *sovai* for plentiful crops and success in hunting (Williams & Murray 1930: 286). These reciprocal interactions with the spirit world had a moral dimension insofar as reciprocity was a key feature of Orokaiva ideology more generally. But again, oral traditions indicate that the spirits' interest in conduct between humans was limited to some very specific cases between their own relatives.

In addition to the more generic *sovai*, some sources also mention 'demigods' or the most powerful ancestor spirits, usually mythical culture heroes, who had their abode in Mt Lamington, an active volcano believed to be the centre of the universe (Schwimmer 1973: 51). In mythical time, the mountain housed primordial humans (ibid.). Going near the crater was thought to anger the spirits that dwelled within, and the area was taboo (Schwimmer 1977: 281). This is evident in the origin myth of the crater, which tells of a man named Sumbiri and his wife, who the violated sacred space of the mountain:

> According to all versions, a man named Sumbiri and his wife Suja went hunting on the Mountain. […] In three of the versions, the Mountain began to rise while Sumbiri (ignoring a taboo) slept with his wife. Several crags then formed on one of which the couple was lodged, unable to climb down. Separated from the world, they leapt into the crater that had formed between the crags. The fourth version, collected at Hohorita and belonging to the Sangara tribe, describes a fight between a pig (presumably the first pig ever hunted by man) and a large dog or dogs, during which the mountain began to change shape. Originally it was 'one Mountain but now it became divided into parts so that there remained a number of peaks too steep to climb up or down.' Pig and dog(s) disappeared into the hole that was formed; the man and woman found themselves separated on different crags and died of loneliness and despair (Schwimmer 1969: 6).

Notions of taboo and sacred space were evident in people's responses to volcanic activity. For example, when Mt Lamington erupted in 1951, many Orokaiva interpreted the event as punishment for breaches of taboo, such as the use of firearms near the volcano (the

consequences of the eruption are discussed in Schwimmer 1977). Others were convinced that the spirits of the mountain had punished the colonial powers for killing indigenous people (Schwimmer 1977: 299). This may indicate that people occasionally attributed volcanic activity to moral conduct among humans. However, as we have noted, other interpretations, more focused on taboos, were also present, indicating that these interpretations were mostly post hoc. While Schwimmer, the ethnographer who witnessed these events, collected the relevant myths in 1966-7, he believes that they predated the eruption of Mt Lamington in 1951. While he does not make any conclusions about transformations during the colonial period, some of his material indicates that some aspects of Orokaiva cosmology may have transformed between the field research periods of early anthropologists and his own. For example, he writes that the spirits of the dead reside in Mt Lamington (Schwimmer 1969: 5), where they are "headed by the first man to have suffered death, Sumbiripa, to whom all the activity of the Mountain is ascribed" (ibid.). In fact, Sumbiripa provided a "safe confinement of the dead" (Schwimmer 1973: 80), which people repaid by not disturbing the mountain (ibid.). This conflicts somewhat with accounts given by earlier ethnographers, who primarily located the spirits of the dead in the bush without reference to Sumbiripa (see above).

The oral traditions collected by Schwimmer indicate that, beyond their association with sacred space, mythical culture heroes were also the source of important social norms and moral conventions (Schwimmer 1973: 51). In the indigenous cultural system, social institutions such as warfare, feasting, and gift exchange, were said to have come into being through the actions of primordial ancestors and other mythical figures (some of these myths and their implications for Orokaiva social philosophy are explored in Schwimmer 1973: 51-56). Mythology provided a template for (temporarily) overcoming internecine strife. For example, in mythical times, a fight broke out in a community that was preparing a feast (Schwimmer 1973: 52):

> As Ivi and Gasi quarreled with Ombota, the mother and father went down to Erehata creek, taking with them their entire small house, as it stood on its posts. They floated down that stream until it met the river Embara. […] They stopped when they had reached a place called Sorovi-Ereremba. Meanwhile their sons, about to give the feast, inquired where their parents were but could not find them. When the battle (*isoro*) was over, Gasi and the oldest son, Havurure, went away to find their mother and father. Upon arriving at the place called Sorovi-Ereremba, they saw them where they had come to a stop. Their parents told them: 'We are staying here but you must go back and feast.' The sons then went back, but their mother and father stayed behind. At that time, their parents' words were as follows: 'We are staying here. In bad times you will hear no speech from us but if times are good, and you intend to hold a feast, then listen to our speech.' Thus they spoke (Schwimmer 1973: 53).

This tale establishes a set of customs related to feasting, such as the construction of ceremonial houses for the purpose of giving a feast (Schwimmer 1973: 53). The parents, or feast-givers, remove this ritual house from the festival after fighting breaks out. Accordingly, a "feast could be permitted only if perfect peace reigned among the guests. If the guests quarreled the demigod's spirit would at once depart and the feast would be ritually void or even calamitous" (Schwimmer 1973: 54). Given the importance of feasting and kin relations in the social

structure and politics of many Melanesian societies, Schwimmer's claim that these myths predate the eruption of 1951 may have merit. On the other hand, these oral traditions, like similar ones in other small-scale societies, appear to prefigure or model normative institutions of Orokaiva society in mythical time rather than monitoring their enforcement in the present.

Beneath the normal social order lurked archaic powers that were potent but also highly dangerous. These forces did not follow normal social rules and distinctions. They were activated in dramatic collective rituals like the *jape* (also known as *embahi*) ceremony of the initiation ritual, in which boys and girls re-entered the settlement after a period of seclusion. Adults assumed specific characters or personas on the occasion:

> On the day of the *jape* ceremony, the candidates are brought back into the village some time before dawn. They are immediately set upon by the different *jape* characters which attack them violently, each in its own specific way, while a flimsy hedge of elderly villagers do their best to protect them. If a candidate is killed, he does not receive a funeral and is immediately buried secretly in the bush. The characters do not just attack the children, however. They destroy at random everything that represents society, burning houses, killing domesticated animals, and uprooting palm trees. They set brother against brother, and sometimes have sexual intercourse with married women (Iteanu 1990: 46).

The powerful but dangerous spiritual force at work in these ceremonies "temporarily extinguishes social relations and obliterates the distinction between subjects, objects and supernatural beings" (Iteanu 1990: 47). The attackers in the ceremony wear bird feathers and pig tusks and behave in a bird-like manner to represent ancestor spirits and the young initiates are likened to pigs being herded onto a butchering platform (Bloch 1992: 8). This ceremonial destruction of the normal social order was followed by another lengthy period of seclusion for the initiates (Iteanu 1990: 46). The community re-established ordinary social relations some years after these events by giving a big feast and exchange ceremony during which gifts were offered (Iteanu 1990: 47). Children ascended a ceremonial platform from which they emerged as complete social persons once pigs have been slaughtered and shared among the guests (Iteanu 1990: 48). This bizarrely antisocial behaviour exhibited by the spirits actually contributes in the longer run to the transformation of children into moral community members (Bloch 1996: 8). However, the logic behind the ceremony is very different from that of the moralising god or any kind of supernatural moral enforcement mechanism (Whitehouse 1996 discusses the *embahi* ceremony in terms of shared terror and solidarity).

On one level, Orokaiva society possessed a social order validated by ancestors and culture heroes who provided templates for correct ritual behaviour. Ancestor spirits and demigods might abandon ritual feasts if its hosting parties quarreled, with deleterious consequences for the living, thus incentivizing limited forms of cooperation. However, some collective rituals like the *jape* ceremony endorsed antisocial behaviour, including intra-group violence and other behaviours that would normally have been morally censured.

Much of the ethnographic research and writing on the Orokaiva was undertaken after the spread of Christianity to the region, which began in the 1890s. This adds another layer of complexity to our analysis. First, many Orokaiva incorporated the Christian god into their

worldview and began to ascribe supernatural retributions to him. This is evident in people's responses to the eruption of Mt Lamington (see above): "A great deal of evidence supports Belshaw and Keesing in their suggestion that in 1951 the Orokaiva ascribed the eruption to the anger of the Christian God and thought they had brought this anger on themselves by various transgressions" (Schwimmer 1977: 289). It appears that people increasingly blamed misfortunes on a broader range of supernatural forces. For example, when an Orokaiva community experienced a catastrophic crop failure in the 1970s, villagers assumed that conflicts and in-fighting among the residents had caused some spiritual force to punish them (Newton 1985: 93). While some suspected the work of a sorcerer, many attributed their misfortune to the Christian god and their own ancestors (ibid.). Second, popular movements (commonly classified as 'cargo cults') appeared in Melanesia in the wake of colonization. These cults often merged traditional beliefs and practices with Christian influences introduced by missionaries (see Schwimmer 1969; 1973). As government ethnographer F.E. Williams wrote in his 1923-5 research on popular movements: "no little confusion now exists between the new and old" (Williams 1928: 5). This is evident in the Bia movement, which started in the early 20th century when a 'prophet' received a visit from the spirit of a dead man, who informed him that a powerful, omniscient spirit being (*Kekesi*) presided over the territory he found himself in (Chinnery & Haddon 1917: 452). This being announced himself as a friend of Jesus, gave the community a body of laws, and declared that their food supply would be destroyed if they disobeyed them (Chinnery & Haddon 1917: 452). The being also told him "to observe the moral code of the tribe" (Chinnery & Haddon 1917: 452), but also to follow government orders (Chinnery & Haddon 1917: 452) and to sing praise songs to him (Chinnery & Haddon 1917: 452p). Another prominent movement was the Taro Cult (Newton 1985: 34). Accordingly, it appears that moralizing punishment by an omniscient supreme being was introduced in the colonial period.

Furthermore, the presence of these colonial-era cults may have been a confounding factor in some cross-cultural datasets. Specifically, Swanson (1960)'s dataset notes that moralistic supernatural sanctions related to health were present, based on two monographs by the above-mentioned Williams. It seems likely that the basis for Swanson's coding were Orokaiva shamans from different cults (Baigona men and Taro men), who worked with spirits to punish others or to avenge themselves against people who had slighted them:

> The Baigona men were visited by the spirits of the dead, and had dealings with them particularly in that reptilian form which the dead frequently take in Orokaiva theory. It was only necessary for the Baigona man to look at or name his victim, and the spirit who was in league with him would in some hardly understood manner effect the damage. Similarly the Taro men could punish any who gave them offence by means of the spirit of the dead (or in some cases the spirit of the taro itself) by which they were possessed (Williams 1928: 208).

Summary

In reviewing ethnographic descriptions of Orokaiva religion, it seems reasonable to conclude that MSP was not a primary feature of the religious system. The Orokaiva interacted with

demigods and ancestor spirits through ritual exchanges and an elaborate system of initiation (Schwimmer 1973; Iteanu 1990). Indigenous explanations for misfortune in Melanesia typically invoke sorcery or unintended offences against the supernatural agents themselves (Whitehouse 1996). Some oral traditions depict heroes who are rewarded for prosocial behaviour by ancestor spirits, but it appears those were limited to interactions between kin, and only closely related ancestors were concerned with them. Moreover, spirits traditionally endorsed ritualized acts that would be regarded as highly immoral in everyday Orokaiva life (Iteanu 1990: 46-47). Ethnographic sources show that Christianity and Christian-influenced cults spread during the colonial period (Chinnery and Haddon 1917; Williams 1928; Bashkow 2006). Christianity features the full set of MSP traits (Angenendt and Riches 2014). Accordingly, the available evidence suggests that broad-scope moralizing punishment by a supreme being was introduced in the colonial period.

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Chuuk Islands

NGA: Chuuk Islands
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Our understanding of the pre-Christian beliefs of the Chuuk islanders comes from a combination of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century accounts by missionaries, ethnographers and colonial officials, and later ethnographies and oral histories. Anthropologist Ward Goodenough used these sources in combination with his own fieldwork in Chuuk from 1947 onwards to write a 2002 book on the religious life of the islanders before missionization. That volume, *Under Heaven's Brow*, is the main source for this narrative, along with other ethnographies.

The population was divided into a number of matrilineal kin groups, each of which was made up of smaller lineages that were scattered across multiple islands (Caughey 1977: 64). According to Goodenough, the Chuukese believed in an outer world, "from which people in this world derived their being" (Goodenough 1986: 558). Specifically, "the spirit that animated each person came from there and returned there after physical death" (Goodenough 1986: 558). The spirit world was the source of much of human knowledge, including medicines, magic spells, and subsistence activities, such as navigation and the construction of houses and canoes (Goodenough 1986: 558). More broadly, "Micronesians consider people and things that drift in from beyond the horizon as coming from that world, which is also a spirit world" (Goodenough 1986: 559), and that imbued them with special powers and efficacy (ibid.). Oral traditions about legendary chiefs often attribute to them powers associated with the spirit world and the sky (Goodenough 1986: 559).The indigenous Chuukese cosmos was populated by a range of gods and spirits. The people conceived of themselves as inhabiting a disc dividing two great spirit realms, an underwater world ruled by the "Lord of Deep" (*Sowunóón*) and a multi-tiered sky

world presided over by the chief sky god, "Great Spirit" (*Énúúnap*) (Goodenough 2002: 83–85).

The lowest part of the sky was called air sky, which housed *ledidi*, an intermediate plane of existence (Bollig 1927: 1) where "free love" (ibid.) was practiced. The next part of the sky was called cloud sky, where two blissful islands were located (Bollig 1927: 1). This was followed by the star sky (Bollig 1927: 2). The highest part of the sky was the abode of the gods or *fatam* (Bollig 1927: 2). These gods were headed by the great spirit or *Önulap*, along with many other deities, who gathered at a sacred lake (Bollig 1927: 2). This lake was guarded by an eel-like being called *Nisoukepilen* who "devours the souls who become lost while wandering across the sea" (Bollig 1927: 2). Another significant location in the sky world was *Udderäs*, which was associated with war and weapons (Bollig 1927: 3). The sky world was also home to many lesser gods and various different localities, some of them associated with light and good spirits (Bollig 1927: 3). To the south was a "fool's paradise" (Bollig 1927: 3) named *Eaur*, which was associated with plentiful crops and the source of fruits and sacred pumice stones (Bollig 1927: 3p). These were thought to prevent famine (Bollig 1927: 4). Another deity called *Semenkoror* functioned as a culture hero who taught many skills to humans (Bollig 1927: 7). Some goddesses were associated with female activities such as weaving (Bollig 1927: 9p).

While many of these gods were benevolent, numerous other deities peopled these realms. Some were malevolent, such as *Olfäd*, who was cunning, angry, and vindictive, and was a shapeshifter with trickster qualities (Bollig 1927: 7p). According to one source, people "regard him as the evil principle which is there only to destroy the words of Önulap on earth and to make man evil" (Bollig 1927: 9). However, he had also brought cats and fire to earth (albeit inadvertently), and thus people were indebted to him to some extent (Bollig 1927: 8p). In general, most deities behaved much like people did, with oral traditions depicting them fighting, partying, and marrying each other (Bollig 1927: 7). Nor was the immediate environment of the islands and nearby seas free from other-than-human entities: Goodenough (2002: 87) list a variety of spirits of the land, reefs, driftwood, waves, etc.; demons, inherently evil spirits; and potentially dangerous ghosts of the recently deceased, who tended to haunt graves (see below).

All of these entities could affect the islanders' lives for good or ill, and required different forms of interaction, ranging from making offerings on altars, to reciting spells and chants, to spirit mediumship through possession and trance (Goodenough 2002; Hezel and Dobbin 1996). For example, the benevolent sky deities and good spirits bestowed "many good teachings, works, and medicines" (Bollig 1927: 28) on people and protected them from misfortune (ibid.). In return, they demanded that people follow various commandments and prohibitions or *binin* (Bollig 1927: 28). These prohibitions encompassed restrictions imposed by chiefs on their subjects, but most were food taboos and other ritual prohibitions (Bollig 1927: 41; for some examples see Bollig 1927: 42). Violating these prohibitions triggered punishment by the spirits, which caused the perpetrator to become *feienau* (Bollig 1927: 41). Early ethnographers translate this as 'sin' or 'sinner', but also note that this concept differs from the Christian notion of sin (Bollig 1927: 41p). Obeying the spirits conveyed their protection and good fortune, and rebelling against them was thought to bring about misfortune as punishment (Bollig 1927: 28). The spirits expressed their displeasure by 'biting' people, which could cause pain, illness, and death (Bollig 1927: 28).

Other beings were malevolent by nature, and others (such as the "sharp water" reef spirits and the spirits inhabiting breadfruit trees) were potentially dangerous if the correct ritual obligations and taboos were not observed (Goodenough 2002: ch. 9). Consistent with this observation, some ethnographers claim that most cases of supernatural harm originated with random ghosts or lesser spirits that 'owned' a particular place (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 150). Another ethnographer notes that most of these nature spirits were malevolent (Bollig 1927: 29), and some of the lesser spirits were even preoccupied with sowing discontent between people (Bollig 1927: 14). Some of these spirits had an ambivalent nature. For example, a spirit being called *Soumöröges'es* was thought to bring children's souls when they were born (Bollig 1927: 16). However, he was also feared. After the birth of a child, midwives performed various rituals to drive away any malicious spirits, and this included *Soumöröges'es,* to prevent him from changing his mind and taking the child's soul away again (Bollig 1927: 16). Probably referring to the same entity, another source reports that that people attributed death in childbirth to *Soumwerekes* and *Inˑoˑoni* , two ghost who collected the souls of women and children in a spirit canoe to 'eat' them (Fischer 1963: 536). Most of these lesser beings were not primarily concerned with policing human ethical conduct, and many cases of supernatural harm had no moralizing component.

However, other supernatural forces took an active interest in the moral quality of the Chuuk islanders' relations with one another. The highest god, known as Great Spirit or *Önulap*, was an old giant with white hair and heavy eyes (Bollig 1927: 4). One early ethnographer writes that this deity was considered all-powerful and omniscient:

> He is the father of the gods and human beings. Everything comes from him, including illness and misfortune. Everything is *tinien Önulap* (fate, messenger of the great spirit). Human beings too belong to *Önulap*. [...] *Önulap* also knows everything that human beings do [...] The gods and spirits are also subject to Önulap. Whatever they do they do only at his command (Bollig 1927: 5).

This god was also associated with creation. Specifically, a female eel spirit called *Nigoubub* created the earth and humans following a command from *Önulap* (Bollig 1927: 12). Women propiated her in matters related to pregnancy and childbirth (Bollig 1927: 12). The same source notes that people considered *Önulap* himself to be distant and rarely worshipped him directly, although they invoked him in battle (Bollig 1927: 5). Reports from neighboring atolls with closely related belief systems suggest that although he did not often intervene in everyday life, he could kill those whose behavior displeased him (Goodenough 2002: 92). The god "Good Determining" (*Óórorofich*) "was angered by theft and another antisocial behavior" (Goodenough 2002: 98), though Goodenough does not explicitly say that he punished those guilty of such acts. Moralizing enforcement by gods was apparently targeted at the individual: Goodenough gives no examples of collective punishment. Furthermore, Chuukese religious specialists, known as *itang*, promulgated a code of conduct that they presented as "part of the heavenly gods' design for human existence" (Goodenough 2002: 308). This included both the observation of taboos and "prosocial" interpersonal values such as social harmony, respect for the authority of chiefs and elders, honesty, humility, and loyalty to one's kin group (306–8). Accordingly, it appears that the sky deities legitimated important moral values.

The Chuukese equivalent of a person's "soul" was not a single entity but consisted of two parts: a good or beautiful soul (*ngúnúyééch*) and a bad or ugly one (*ngúnúngngaw*) (Goodenough 2002: 64; Bollig 1927: 14). Everyone had both components, regardless of their personality or behavior. The bad soul begins and grows with the body and remains attached to it as long as the person is alive (Bollig 1927: 14). The good soul comes from the sky and the spirit world (Bollig 1927: 16). It sits on the shoulder and can use its wings to fly away, which occurs during dreams (Bollig 1927: 15). If the soul flew off and stayed away too long, the person could go insane and die (Bollig 1927: 15). The two souls were in constant conflict with each other, and the bad soul always tried to devour the good one (Bollig 1927: 15).

Both aspects survived the death of the body. The bad soul lingered on earth, close to the corpse, and was indiscriminately dangerous to the living. Specifically, the bad soul tried to devour the good soul, which the surviving relatives tried to prevent by lighting a fire to scare the bad soul (Bollig 1927: 21p). The bad soul remained close to the dead person's body for some time and led a ghost-like existence eating dirt (Bollig 1927: 22). Known as *sope*, these ghosts were malevolent and were known to attack people (Bollig 1927: 22). Ghosts sometimes took on the shape of rabid dogs and wild cocks and attacked domestic animals (Bollig 1927: 23). People tried to protect themselves from them by applying magic potions to their homes or by calling on sorcerers to drive them off with a spell (Bollig 1927: 22p).

In contrast, the good soul departed to the spirit world. Initially, it also remained near the grave for some days, until the relatives ceremonially burned the deceased's property (Bollig 1927: 24). The smoke sent the good soul up to the sky (Bollig 1927: 24). There, it would settle down on an animal or a shooting star to ride on it (Bollig 1927: 24). The thought that the deceased person's soul had "found a little place" (Bollig 1927: 24) was comforting (ibid.). If the soul found a guardian spirit right at the grave, it could proceed to the spirit realm straight away (Bollig 1927: 25). One ethnographer writes that these souls were 'tested' by two stones that stood in front of *Önulap*'s house in the upper sky (Bollig 1927: 25). When "a soul that is unworthy goes to the house of Önulap, the two stones [in front of his dwelling] strike against each other and kill it" (Bollig 1927: 5). Unfortunately, from the description it remains unclear what 'worthiness' entailed. If they passed the test, these souls then turned into benevolent spirit persons, although the same source writes that they could also be harmful if people displeased them (Bollig 1927: 25). Once in the sky, the souls occupied different localities assigned to their kin groups (Bollig 1927: 25). This afterlife resembled people's life on earth, and the "souls live there, eat, drink, smoke, sleep, dance, etc., just as on earth. In moral aspects too they are true human beings" (Bollig 1927: 25). Some of these spirits responded to prayers and assisted the living (Bollig 1927: 25). This was the fate of most good souls.

However, there was some variability in the good souls' outcomes. In some cases, the soul was led astray and wandered about restlessly in a kind of liminal state, which could anger them and cause them to harm people (Bollig 1927: 24). These angry spirits were also known as *sope* (Bollig 1927: 25). From early accounts, it appears that the manner of burial could have an effect on the soul's tendency to become such a wandering ghost. Early ethnographers note that people were buried facing the sea (Bollig 1927: 18). This was thought to help the soul fly out to sea and into the afterlife, and was done out of fear of the dead person's spirit and to discourage it from wandering on land (Bollig 1927: 18). According to Hezel (1995), in Micronesian belief in general, the manner in which the person died also had a strong influence

on the soul's destination: violent death or death in childbirth predisposed one to a "restless and troubled existence" in the afterlife. Furthermore, some souls that had entered the spirit world were later destroyed because they angered the gods or "spirit chiefs" (see Goodenough 2002: 134). Goodenough (2002: 134) explicitly notes that the Chuukese themselves would not have thought of such outcomes in terms of either punishment or reward for their conduct in life. Instead, it was determined by one's "psychic disposition," which was innate and unchangeable (146). Finally, social status may have played a role in people's experiences in the afterlife. The good souls of members of chiefly lineages, *itang* and other ritual specialists may have received some special treatment in the spirit world, for instance by becoming spirit chiefs (Goodenough 2002: 150), but there was no sharp distinction between the fates of elites and non-elites in the afterlife.

On the subject of the effect of beliefs about the afterlife on people's behavior while alive, Goodenough (2002: 146) writes:

> The general pattern of a person's behavior, his or her behavioral inclinations … were indicative of what might be in store for the good soul after the person's death. It seems reasonable to infer, therefore, that beliefs about the fate of the soul provided at least some incentive for people to endeavour to be correct in their behavior to others and, especially, to be obedient to the authority of chiefs, lineage heads, and older siblings of the same sex.

Moreover, according to some accounts, souls of the dead were interrogated by the gods on their conduct in life, including, for example, on whether they had been obedient to their chiefs. And at least on the atoll of Namoluk, warriors who died in battle went to join the god of war in the sky realm (150). Overall, then, even if the Chuukese had no concept of universal divine judgment after death, their beliefs surrounding the afterlife encouraged them to act prosocially and avoid antisocial behavior, in the hopes that this would mean a positive afterlife.

Good souls interacted with their surviving kin in two main ways. First, if the living performed certain rites, they could be channelled via spirit mediumship and become "effecting spirits," protecting their kin and sharing useful knowledge for fishing, weaving, and so on (Goodenough 2002: ch. 12). In the past, "each lineage had particular named spirits of its own with whom lineage members could communicate" (Mahony 1971: 137), often the spirits of lineage ancestors, although some had a hazier connection to their followers (ibid.). The mediums usually became possessed by a particular spirit, often shortly after the death of a relative, which established a permanent link between them (Goodenough 1986: 558). Second, good souls punished improper behavior within the kin group. Lineage elders intervened when issues arose and to correct the conduct of other members of the lineage, and so did the spirits of the lineage ancestors (*énúún eterekes*) (Caughey 1977: 89). The latter were motivated by "sympathy for their descendants" (Caughey 1977: 89), which encouraged them to favour peace, harmony, and respectful conduct among the living members of the lineage (ibid.). Failure to observe these norms, such as disrespect and quarrelling, angered the ancestors, which could result in illness, although this could affect any member of the lineage and not just the perpetrators (Caughey 1977: 89). These beliefs are evident in people's responses to pregnancy and birth complications (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 135). Specifically, it was thought that

"ancestors take this opportunity to punish the lineage members for their neglect of their family obligations, particularly toward the woman in childbirth" (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 135). This could also happen as a punishment for failure to meet kin obligations within the lineage more broadly (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 150). People responded to such incidents by presenting gifts to the woman and demonstrating their concern for her, or by performing various spells and healing rituals (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 135). These measures were thought to placate the angry spirit (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 135). Disrespecting the lineage elders and chiefs also met supernatural retribution (Caughey 1977: 89). For example, if someone refused to pay tribute or first fruits to his chief, their crops would fail (Caughey 1977: 89). Another source reports that failing to present these gifts of food angered both the chief's and one's own ancestors, and this would cause misfortune (Fischer 1958: 209p). Finally, a person who failed to distribute a recently deceased family member's property to their surviving children was at risk of illness caused by that person's good soul (Goodenough 2002: 211). Accordingly, some ethnographers conclude that the ancestor spirits "have the function of watchdogs over the family solidarity" (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 150). These materials suggest that moralizing supernatural punishment was present in this life, although it did not always target the individual transgressors, and the relevant supernatural agents focussed on their 'assigned' kin group rather than society in general. Furthermore, some ethnographers write that random ghosts and nature spirits usually caused more damage than ancestors because the latter were generally sympathetic to their descendants (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 150). Accordingly, it appears that the postulated punishments were not extreme.

The first Protestant missionaries arrived in 1885, although their numbers increased under German and Japanese occupation (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 44). Many islanders converted, although fear of spirits and sorcerers remained common (Gladwin & Sarason 1953: 44). However, people's beliefs shifted in other ways. For example, one early ethnographer writes that Christianized islanders merged the trickster god *Olfäd* with the devil (Bollig 1927: 9). This complicates attempts to reconstruct pre-contact belief systems.

Summary

In Chuukese culture, treating others well – behaving respectfully to elders and chiefs, generously to dependents, and honestly in all one's affairs – was valued very highly. Ritual specialists known as *itang* taught these values, presenting them as ultimately deriving from a divine source. Some, but not all, of the myriad gods and spirits of the Chuukese cosmos were motivated to monitor and punish human ethical conduct, and they had different spheres of concern. The Great Spirit had initiated the creation of the world and its creatures and, though rarely directly intervening in human affairs, could end the lives of those who acted immorally. However, some sources note that most prohibitions imposed by the deities and other spirits were food taboos and other ritual restrictions. Ancestors were more likely to punish specific kinds of misconduct that amounted to disloyalty within the kin group. At the same time, some sources note that most kinds of supernatural harm were inflicted by random, lesser spirits without moralizing intentions. Furthermore, while ancestors sometimes targeted the individual transgressor for punishment, this was not always the case. The Chuukese equivalent of the soul was bipartite; the "bad soul" invariably became a malevolent ghost, but various fates could

befall one's "good soul." There was no belief in universal divine judgement for actions in life, and outcomes in the afterlife were not generally conceptualized as forms of punishment or reward. However, there were aspects of moralizing enforcement in the afterlife that likely encouraged Chuuk Islanders to act in prosocial ways.

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