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Note: We have replaced terms such as ' we man ', ' we act ', ' we woman ' with 'holy man', 'sacred act', 'holy woman'... because the digital translation program does not know how to translate these words. The term 'holy' is then not used in its high and ethical biblical sense, but rather as the possession of much occult, subtle power. We could also speak, respectively, of a sorcerer, a magical plant, a witch...

14.1. Cycle (Roman lustratio, purification)

Bibl . st.: WB Kristensen , *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions* , Amsterdam, 1947, 233ff .. –

The subject is the rite that takes the form of a loop, a circular movement, as depicted particularly by Roman, Indian, and Egyptian sources. Although such a loop may sometimes be merely an impulse of the revelers , in many cases it is a sacred act. Moreover, a striking similarity elicits a shared understanding. It is this latter aspect that Kristensen attempts to uncover.

Established interpretation . – At the end of the 19th century, it was argued that the sacred loop consists of drawing a magic circle around a central object – e.g., the Roman people – which protects against adverse influences. The drawn line is then a boundary, an invisible wall. It is an apotropaic act that wards off adverse influences. – Kristensen casts doubt on this interpretation.

Roman lustratio (purification).

After the census, by Servius When Tullius (King of Rome -578/-534) instituted the ritual, the citizens were drawn into ranks as an ' exercitus ' (army) on the

Campus Martius . The king or his representative walked around the people three times with sacrificial animals, after which the animals were sacrificed to Mars, the god of war, with the vow that the lustratio would be repeated five years later (periodicity). A recited prayer explained the meaning: the deities were requested to renew the life force - 'power' - of the Roman people. Peculiar: as a conclusion, the highest magistrate hammered a nail into the wall of the temple of Jupiter, Rome's supreme god. The sum of these sacred acts was called 'lustratio', purification.

Its core was the cycle.

Even the sacrifice could be omitted, as is evident from Pliny's *Historia . naturalis* 8:42 : at a circus race, the charioteer was thrown from the chariot. Whereupon his horses galloped from the circus to the Capitol and “cleansed the temple of Jupiter three times (' lustrasse ')”. This was considered a great augurium (sacred sign). In other words: the loop repeated three times was in itself a cleansing . Suetonius , *De vita caesarum* , 7 (Vitellius), says that an eagle flying a circle above the army's banners 'cleanses' the banners.

Kristensen .

The notion that such a lustratio acts as a delimiting magic circle is incorrect. For one cleanses what is already contaminated (in an unfavorable state), not what is at risk of becoming contaminated.

To clarify this, Kristensen reflects on what a sacred loop meant. – The entire ceremony on the Campus Martius was called 'lustratio' but also 'lustrum', cleansing agent. The duration of the following five years was also called that metonymically.

Cleansing . – For many, the term evokes a negative connotation, namely the washing away of impurity. However, in fact, ritual cleansing was primarily an act through which a sacred quality (the property of the cleansing agent) was imparted. Numerous historical records (including those of the Egyptians and the Greeks) confirm this interpretation.

Purification means that the beneficiary 'rises' from his 'death' (state of exhaustion) (acquires life force). For Kristensen , this is an application of his religious-historical concept of 'totality', the integration ('harmony') of opposites: daily life is “life force/exhaustion” and calls for lustratio, a supply of life force that saves from exhaustion.

Periodicity.

Each purification was performed “with a view to” the next, for each time a solemn repetition was promised five years—a lustrum—later. The prayer

concerned the life force of the people during the interim. The repetition was so essential that the duration of five years was not a profane duration but a sacred time. As, oc, 242, the author concludes: “The cycle of five years was thus also a means of purification.”

The local loop and the loop of time were closely related concepts in ancient consciousness. Ancient Greeks referred to both by the same name: ' periodos ', meaning wandering movement, and 'period' (measure of duration). A loop is a movement that ends where it begins. Periodicity implies that the endpoint is itself once again a starting point: exhaustion is a supply of life force that leads to exhaustion, which is itself once again a supply of life force. Endless.

14.2. Cycle (year, saeculum).

Bibl . st.: WB Kristensen , *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions*, Amsterdam, 1947, 243v ..

The best known of all sacred periods is that of the year. All ancient peoples interpreted it as stated: the year is a series of partial periods running backward within itself. The end of the year is thereby a closure but at the same time an opening to the new, renewed year. Whereupon the author says: “The downfall could just as well be called 'ascent'” (oc, 243).

The circle or loop thus pointed towards itself and already contained the new loop within itself. That was the sacred meaning: self-renewal, resurrecting energy. - The common Egyptian word for 'year' was ' renp -t', meaning “that which renews (or rejuvenates)”, written with the sign of a young stem with a bud on it. - Throughout antiquity, the end of the year was a ritual as a celebration of resurrecting life.

Secular period .

In Rome, this interpretation is particularly striking in the oldest sacred rituals at the end of a ' saeculum ', a secular period. Such a fortunate end was attributed to extraordinary events in nature and in the people. For instance, in 249: Rome found itself in great distress, near ruin as a result of miscalculations in the First Punic War. Alarming omens were also observed. All this pointed to the end of a saeculum and the beginning of a new saeculum . Such a 'transition' was celebrated with nocturnal games in honor of those who govern Rome's fate, the gods and goddesses of the underworld.

Axiom.

Just as the infernal deities had brought downfall, death, so they had to bring

ascent, life. In the background: “He who causes evil (death, downfall) shall restore it.”

Dis and Proserpina , the underworld couple, were therefore celebrated in that sense. Dis, also Dis Pater, was—just like Pluto or Saturn, for example—the male god of the harmony (merging) of death and life (and thus of life and death). His essence (i.e., his life force in the first place) was—according to writers such as Varro and Cicero—the earth as a life force that causes everything to rise/set/rise/set... endlessly.

Kristensen also calls this progression "the absolute life" (where "absolute" means "outside of which there is no other"), in other words: the pre-Christian, pagan life. Proserpina (Kore) was the female deity of the harmony of opposites, death and resurrection.

The secular festivals (with the games) were primarily devoted to the main couple. “Their dual nature – according to the author – shows that the end of the old saeculum was equated with the beginning of the new: in the downfall one saw the ascent to be contained.” (Oc, 244).

Periodicity.

What once began in the very first saeculum celebration (*note*: the mythical beginning), the secular basic energy, unfolds in the interconnected series of sacred times that continually make the first or primordial time present from saeculum to saeculum , from 'century' to 'century', i.e., from an era resting within itself to a new era resting within itself.

Thus, in Rome, the profane duration became a sacred time realized through rites. Also at the end of the celebrations, as in the five-year lustrum, the vow was made to repeat the feast at the end of the period in honor of the numina , the high deities, Dis and Proserpina “who closed and opened the period” (according to the author).

Concluding remarks.

The author refutes the view that the transition from century to century signifies a magical boundary, “as is commonly believed,” with the intention of preventing the old calamity from passing on to the new sacred age.

The basic idea was rather this: the calamity that is the end of the old saeculum is actually not an absolute calamity, but a calamity without further ado. The premise here, as in all pre-modern religions, is that what was once instituted as a

rite “in the beginning” will manifest itself time and again as life force emerging upon exhaustion. “The period was a temporary cycle and—like the local cycle—the form in which enduring life is realized. Through both forms, the local and the temporary, took place a divine supply of life force, i.e., the purification of the people.” (Oc, 245).

14.3. Cycle (nail as a doomsday sign).

Library st.: *WB Kristensen , Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions*, Amsterdam, 1947, 245/248.

The text deals with the consecrated nail as the present proposition of what the author calls “the gods of Fate”.

Fundamental Theory

Dis and Proserpina , the primordial couple , dispose of salvation as the feared deities of the underworld (for the dead), but in such a way that their divine decree “took no account of human desires aimed at finite happiness” (oc, 245). Their decree encompassed salvation but also calamity! It was a harmony of opposites! “No one approaches that mystery without fear” (ibid.).

This fear was invariably present, but at the end of a period— *saeculum* , *lustrum*, year-end—this fear surfaced particularly strongly. The proof of this—according to the author—is the ceremony with which the three periods were ritually closed: a nail was driven into the wall of the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. This was the final act at the New Year's celebration (September 13), at the five-year *lustrum*, and at the centenary celebration.

The profound importance of this rite is evident from “an ancient law written in archaic letters” (*Liv.* 7:3, 5), which stipulated that only the highest magistrate was permitted to perform it. Moreover, the true background is revealed in the fact that this ceremony took place not only periodically but also in response to isolated events that caused great fear, such as infectious diseases or unheard-of crimes (*Liv.* 7:3, 3; 8:18, 12).

Fate.

During that period, but also outside of it, in major emergencies, the dreaded order of life manifested itself, which the deities established without regard for earthly 'human' interests. The Romans called such a course of life and death 'Fatum', which we can translate as 'Fate'.

Incidentally:

The ancient Greeks called it ' Moira ', ' Ananke ', ' Aisa '. The nail driven in during a rite was the visible and tangible present manifestation of the inexorable determination that was the fate ordained by the deities. The ancients did not understand by this what we moderns call 'natural law' (which also entails a kind of inexorability of a lawful nature), but rather the decree of the deities, who paid no heed to our earthly reason and its concepts, nor to our earthly moral law and the concepts inherent in it.

In that well-defined sense, Kristensen calls the policy of the underworld deities 'super-rational' and 'super-ethical'. "In nature and in history, the demonic Fate revealed itself in the anxious moments when life was threatened with destruction" (oc , 247).

Note - The term 'demonic' implies that the deities and their policies are subject to the ebb and flow of rise and fall, of good and evil. The term is used here in the historical sense of religion.

The author finds proof of his thesis in the accounts of the celebration of the famous secular festival in the year -17 BC. As tradition prescribed, the nocturnal sacrifices were made on or near the subterranean altar of Dis and Proserpina , but now also to the goddesses of Fate (the Moirai , the Eileithueiai) and also to Tellus (the Earth) or Ceres or Demeter.

The novelty in this was that Fate was now specifically named, even though it was already represented in the nail. Demeter or the Eileithueiai (goddesses of the life and death of the earth) spoke plainly.

The highest magistrate.

What has been discussed above makes it understandable why only the highest magistrate - praetor maximus, dictator clavis figendi causa – was authorized to perform the ceremony of driving in the nail. Whoever did so acted as the executor of the dreaded fate; indeed, he was Jupiter, the Roman supreme god, visibly and tangibly represented.

He was this in both periodic and non-periodic rites. For every misfortune was caused by Fate, the inscrutable decree of the deities, and made a condition of resurrection life.

14.4. Cycle (fortress / city / wall / gates).

Library st.: WB Kristensen , *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions* , Amsterdam, 1947, 253/266. –

Theme: the ancient city

The ancient city, or rather its citadel, as a visible and tangible present-day representation of the underworld, which in turn was interpreted as a citadel and a city. The author takes the Egyptian city of Memphis with its 'walls' as a sample of sacred geography: "Ordinary walls cannot be meant. But, if we call them 'mythical walls,' what does that mean?" (Oc, 253). The author provides an Egyptian model.

Kristensen states that the principal deities of Memphis were those of the earth and, as well as the underworld, immediately. The city was her visible dwelling place, but her 'true' home was the underworld (and, as well as the realm of the dead).

Under this assumption, the circuit around the walls is the 'image' (understand: visible and tangible present position) of the passage around the underworld (actually the realm of the dead). This then makes the path followed by the dying and rising Sun God understandable: Sokaris (Osiris) – just like the Sun God – dies and rises, and the believers follow him on that path. So much for a sample of sacred cosmology.

A widespread faith

Not only the Egyptians, but also other ancient peoples experienced the underworld (the realm of the dead) as a walled fortress. Moreover, they designated their cities as 'images' (they make them present) of the land of eternal life that was the underworld.

Earthly dwelling places were interpreted as reflections of 'cosmic' (understand: extraterrestrial) situations. – We are dealing here with a religious geography that seems strange to us—moderns and postmoderns—but formed one of the fundamental components of the ancients' view of the universe and was deeply rooted in their faith.

Ancient Greek Thebes.

The mystery religion, just as in Memphis, belonged in Thebes. Demeter was the principal goddess. Alongside her, Dionysus, the Kabires, and the goddess Harmonia with her son Poludoros (Pluto or Dis Pater) were worshipped.

The temple of Demeter stood on the citadel, the Kadmeia, which – according to Hesychius – was called "the island of the blessed." The citadel was considered the 'cosmic' (understand: extraterrestrial) dwelling place of the goddess Demeter.

Inverted perspective.

The realm of the dead (the underworld) was a walled fortress. The poet *Pindar* (*Olymp.* 2:77) says that the deceased beloved by the gods attain immortality “in the citadel (' tursis ') of Kronos (the primordial god) on the island of the blessed”.

The city of Thebes as a whole made the underworld visibly and tangibly present. In this sense, people spoke of the fact that Thebes lay on the river of the underworld, for the river Ismenos , which flowed past the city, was originally called, according to “tradition,” ' Ladon ', di Lethe , the river of the underworld.

The city wall of Thebes

The city wall of Thebes—already as famous as the city wall of Troy—revealed, according to the ancients, the cosmic character of the city. The myth recounted that it was not built like ordinary earthly city walls but had come into existence in a miraculous way: at the founding of the city, the stones had joined together to form a wall through the life-force of the harmonious sounds of a seven-stringed lyre that then sounded its tones for the first time. The underworld goddess Harmonia had thus caused the wall to come into existence. She was a mystery goddess, which entails that she was worshipped within the closed framework of a group of initiates. Her wall—the Theban Wall—was the wall of the underworld, the realm of the dead.

The city gates of Thebes

Mythically speaking, these were the gates of the underworld. Demeter was worshipped as the chief goddess in Seven-Gate Thebes. Greek cities named ' Pulos ', meaning gate, were named after “the gates of hell”. The wall was the separation between the profane and the sacred world, with the gates being the transitions.

As is known, Jesus once said of his church that “the gates of hell” would never prevail against them.

14.5. Totality

Bibl . st. : WB Kristensen , *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions* , Amsterdam, 1947, 272ff. (*The Demonic Gods of Totality*).

Thesis

The ancients expressed the harmony (coexistence) of opposites (salvation/damnation; ethical good/ethical evil) in the local and temporal cycle described above, which expresses the idea of “immortal life,” understood as an alternation of decline/rise and rise/decline, not as a uniform, monotonous

continuation of existence. Among the ancients, the harmony of opposites was also expressed in the idea of 'totality'. The author dwells extensively on Babylonian totality.

The Babylonian myths

These formulate with striking sharpness the contradictory nature of the factors that collectively constitute the 'totality'. - Anu was the cosmic god , “the Father of the Seven Gods”. As such, he was the one who determined the fate of all things. - Well, in Anu all—the totality—life forces, good and evil, were united! “Salvation and calamity proceeded from him.” (Oc, 272). In that sense , Labartu , the disease demon, was called “the daughter of Anu ” (understand: of the same temperament as Anu). Anu's type of behavior was visible and tangible in the disease demon and the ailments caused by her. - In that same sense, the Seven Gods were his 'sons': they showed the true type of behavior of their 'Father' of whom they are “the children”. Thus reads a text:

“Seven are the gods of the vast heaven; seven are the gods of the wide earth. Seven are the destructive gods; seven are the gods of the ' kissatu ' (understand: totality). Seven are the evil gods (...): in heaven they are seven; on earth seven.” Whereupon the author says: “The demonic nature of the gods of totality cannot be described more clearly” (oc, 273).

Demonic . - The author defines: they are demonic in the religious sense of the word, i.e. supra-rational and supra- ethical for earthly reason and the order of conscience . Rational behavior and conscientious behavior in the earthly-human sense are no law for the deities of the totality!

They were not just in the earthly-human sense. The consequence: although they prescribed rational and ethical laws for mankind, they trampled underfoot their own conduct.

Contradiction

Such a contradiction was abundantly clear to the ancient consciousness, as is evident from some of the most impressive religious texts. For instance, the Book of Job (*note: if one isolates it from its entirely biblical context*), the Babylonian Lamentations, and Prometheus Bound.

The poets of such texts faced the riddle of divine demonic influence and ultimately found no earthly-rational or earthly-ethical solution.

They resigned themselves to such totality of 'divine' reality despite all 'human'

objections. This type of deity was known to most ancient peoples. It manifested itself most clearly when it concerned the supreme deities. The god of Job, the Greek Zeus, the double Fortuna in Rome, the Indian Varuna , and at one time even Ahura Mazda insofar as he—in an interpretation—encompassed both heavenly spirits, exhibit, as sovereign (understand: elevated above earthly human laws of thought and action) determiners of actual fate as experience revealed it to be seen and undergone, the conduct of the Babylonian Anu as outlined above.

Kristensen will decide later.

From such demonic deities ultimately originated salvation (ascent) and calamity (descent), the opposites that constitute the enduring—understand: in the pre-Biblical sense eternal—life of the universe and humanity within it. They were the ultimate reason for what the Babylonians called 'totality'. “The will of these gods was Fate, the Moriah , divine but inhuman” (oc, 273).

The great multitude must have been well aware of this. They had their rational and conscientious concepts. In religious texts, believers reflect on this. But for all ancient cultures, wisdom (reason) and justice (conscience) were simultaneously 'cosmic' concepts, i.e., 'divine' concepts that reached beyond their own earthly concepts.

Kristensen, who had the courage to address this—which quite a few religion specialists do not do— rightly states that those cosmic concepts were demonic concepts.

14.6. Dualism.

Bibl . st.: WB Kristensen , *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions*, Amsterdam, 1947, 274v .. –

The author feels that his demonism must settle accounts with dualism. By 'dualism' he understands the fact that evil is attributed to independent beings (powers, spirits) that are the enemies of humans and deities. Expressed more clearly: on the one hand there are good beings (deities, ancestors, all kinds of spirits) and on the other hand evil beings. With perhaps beings that do not make the choice between salvation and damnation, between good and evil. Indecisive ones, if you will.

Magical texts.

According to the author, a kind of dualism occurs in magical texts and practices. Babylonian magic offers countless models of this: evil deities are repeatedly appeased by appealing to good—favorable—deities. Immediately, the

impression arises—as Kristensen puts it—that the world of deities is splitting into two hostile camps. With the conclusion: there is dualism!

Kristensen's refutation.

The magical texts and practices are the same everywhere and at all times. While religions, with their myths, worship services, and symbols, differ from one another just as much as the cultures to which they belong, the magic is “remarkably similar all over the world.” Indeed, Kristensen goes so far as to state that the monotony of magic is so great that there can hardly be any question of a particular Babylonian, Greek, Egyptian, or contemporary magic: the evil powers and beings are the same everywhere and are always conjured in the same way. A proposition that is something of a commonplace among a number of religious specialists.

Note - If this is true, then Kristensen has systematically neglected the differences between the individual forms of magic . In terms of language, methods, and axioms, forms of magic align very closely with the religions with which they are associated. One gets the impression that the author is not, or not very, familiar with the practice of exorcising “evil.” For instance, what is called a possessed person in Greece is something different from what Jesus calls a possessed person in the Gospels. The entire religious context is so distinct that, if one denies these distinctions, one does so, as it were, willfully! Or rather, “in the name of a preconceived proposition,” which here is demonism .

Kristensen's truth.

In Babylonian religion, Anu is the 'father'—understand: the one who determines the type of behavior—of deities that are called 'good' or 'evil' within incantation practices. The goodness or evil is relative and depends on accidental circumstances that reveal the formation of factions. In themselves they are 'demonic', being neither purely good nor purely evil: a harmony of these opposites. It is only when beings (deities, ancestors, spirits) confront one another within certain situations that they are 'evil' to the opposing party and 'good' to their own party.

Exorcism result.

If the ancient Babylonian finds himself in such a dilemma and remains within the Anu system, then only one solution remains for him to ward off evil, namely to call upon not purely good beings but demonic beings willing to place themselves at the disposal of the exorcist. Kristensen therefore concludes with good reason: “To the religious sensibility (understand: of the Babylonian who remained faithful to his faith in Anu), the evil gods were not merely enemies, but, like their father

Anu, also saviors, namely deliverers from the calamity that originated from themselves” (oc, 274ff.).

Note - Pay attention to what Kristensen says: “not enemies per se,” for pure enemies are not even conceivable in his purely demonistic interpretation of the Babylonian religion. He thinks merely in terms of mixed beings, not also in terms of beings performing pure choice.

Conclusion. - Kristensen 's demonism is undeniably a partial truth regarding the salvific and moral roles of holy beings. Outside of Christianity, very many higher and lower beings never choose purely for salvation or damnation, for the conscientious or the unconscionable. They therefore remain 'demonic' (mixed). But this is only partially true.

