

what was the sumerian religion

****What Was the Sumerian Religion? Exploring the Beliefs of an Ancient Civilization****

what was the sumerian religion is a fascinating question that opens a window into one of the earliest known civilizations in human history. The Sumerians, who thrived in Mesopotamia around 4500 to 1900 BCE, developed a complex and rich religious system that shaped not only their daily lives but also influenced subsequent cultures. Understanding the Sumerian religion means diving into myths, gods, rituals, and temples that reveal much about how ancient people made sense of the world around them.

The Foundations of Sumerian Religion

The Sumerian religion was deeply intertwined with their environment and society. At its core, it was a polytheistic belief system, meaning the Sumerians worshipped many gods and goddesses. These deities were believed to control the forces of nature and human destiny, reflecting the Sumerians' attempt to explain everything from the unpredictable floods of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the cycles of seasons and agricultural productivity.

Unlike some later monotheistic religions, Sumerian gods were not omnipotent or all-good; instead, they had human-like qualities, with strengths, weaknesses, desires, and conflicts. This made their myths relatable and vivid, featuring stories of creation, divine battles, and moral lessons. The gods were seen as living beings who required offerings and rituals to maintain cosmic order and favor.

Key Deities in the Sumerian Pantheon

Some of the most important gods in the Sumerian religion included:

- ****Anu****: The sky god and father of the gods, considered the supreme authority in the divine hierarchy.
- ****Enlil****: God of air, wind, and storms, often regarded as the chief deity who controlled the fate of humanity.
- ****Enki (Ea)****: God of water, wisdom, and creation, credited with helping humans and inventing crafts.
- ****Inanna (Ishtar)****: Goddess of love, fertility, and war, one of the most complex and widely revered figures.
- ****Ninhursag****: The earth mother goddess, associated with fertility and childbirth.
- ****Utu (Shamash)****: The sun god and god of justice.
- ****Nanna (Sin)****: The moon god, overseeing time and cycles.

Each city-state in Sumer often had a patron deity who was believed to protect and guide its people. For example, the city of Ur was dedicated to Nanna, while Uruk was associated with Inanna.

How the Sumerians Practiced Their Religion

Religion in Sumer was not just a private affair; it was central to political and social life. Temples, known as **ziggurats**, were the heart of religious activity. These towering structures served as places of worship, administrative centers, and sometimes economic hubs. The ziggurat was believed to be the dwelling place of the gods on earth, bridging the divine and human realms.

Rituals, Offerings, and Priests

Sumerian religious practice involved a variety of rituals designed to appease the gods and ensure their favor. These included:

- **Sacrifices**: Animals, food, and precious goods were offered to the gods.
- **Prayers and Hymns**: Poetic compositions praising the gods and seeking their blessings.
- **Divination**: Methods like reading animal entrails or observing celestial events to predict the future or understand divine will.
- **Festivals**: Seasonal festivals celebrated agricultural cycles and mythological events.

Priests played a vital role, acting as intermediaries between the gods and the people. They managed temple affairs, conducted rituals, and interpreted omens. The priesthood was powerful and often intertwined with the ruling class, reinforcing the authority of kings who claimed divine sanction.

Mythology and Sacred Texts

The Sumerian religion is known to us today largely through myths inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform script. These stories provide insight into their worldview and values. Some famous myths include:

- **The Epic of Gilgamesh**: One of the oldest literary works, telling the story of a king's quest for immortality and his encounters with gods.
- **The Creation Myth**: Describing how the world and humans were fashioned by the gods from primordial chaos.
- **The Descent of Inanna**: A tale of the goddess's journey to the underworld and her triumphant return, symbolizing death and rebirth.

These narratives were not merely entertainment; they were sacred teachings that helped explain life's mysteries and reinforced social order.

The Role of the Afterlife in Sumerian Beliefs

Unlike some later religious systems that emphasize a hopeful afterlife or resurrection, the

Sumerian view of the afterlife was more somber. The underworld, called Kur or Irkalla, was a dark and dreary place where all souls went regardless of their earthly conduct. It was ruled by the goddess Ereshkigal and was a shadowy existence rather than a paradise or hell.

This belief influenced how the dead were treated, with rituals and offerings aimed at sustaining the spirit in the underworld. Ancestor worship and maintaining the favor of deceased relatives were important aspects of their religious life.

How Religion Influenced Sumerian Society and Culture

The Sumerian religion shaped many aspects of their civilization beyond spirituality. It influenced:

- **Law and Governance**: Kings were seen as chosen by the gods, and laws were thought to reflect divine will.
- **Art and Architecture**: Temples, statues, and reliefs depicted gods and mythological scenes.
- **Science and Astronomy**: Religious needs drove the study of celestial bodies for calendars and omens.
- **Literature and Education**: Scribes copied religious texts and myths, preserving cultural knowledge.

This integration of religion with daily life helped stabilize their society and left a lasting legacy for future Mesopotamian cultures like the Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians.

Understanding the Legacy of Sumerian Religion Today

The question of what was the Sumerian religion continues to intrigue historians, archaeologists, and enthusiasts of ancient cultures. Although much of their belief system faded with the rise of other empires and religions, its influence endures. Concepts like divine kingship, mythic storytelling, and temple worship can trace roots back to Sumer.

Modern scholarship relies heavily on archaeological discoveries in southern Iraq and the study of cuneiform tablets to reconstruct the intricacies of Sumerian spiritual life. These findings not only enrich our knowledge of ancient Mesopotamia but also provide a glimpse into humanity's earliest attempts to understand existence through faith and ritual.

Exploring the Sumerian religion invites us to appreciate the complexity of early human thought and the universal quest to connect with the divine, a theme that has persisted throughout human history.

Frequently Asked Questions

What was the Sumerian religion?

The Sumerian religion was the ancient belief system practiced by the Sumerians, characterized by polytheism and the worship of numerous gods associated with natural forces and city-states.

Who were the main gods in the Sumerian religion?

The main gods in the Sumerian religion included Anu (sky god), Enlil (god of air and storms), Enki (god of water and wisdom), Inanna (goddess of love and war), and Utu (sun god).

How did the Sumerians practice their religion?

Sumerians practiced their religion through rituals, offerings, temple worship, festivals, and prayers, often conducted by priests in large temple complexes called ziggurats.

What role did temples play in the Sumerian religion?

Temples, especially ziggurats, were considered the earthly homes of the gods where priests performed rituals, made offerings, and maintained the gods' favor to ensure prosperity.

Did the Sumerian religion have a creation myth?

Yes, the Sumerian religion included creation myths describing the origins of the world and humanity, often involving gods shaping the earth and humans created to serve the gods.

How did the Sumerian religion influence later cultures?

Sumerian religious beliefs and myths influenced later Mesopotamian civilizations like the Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians, shaping their gods, rituals, and cosmology.

What was the Sumerian view of the afterlife?

The Sumerians believed in a bleak and shadowy afterlife in the underworld, where souls lived a dreary existence, reflecting a generally pessimistic view of life after death.

Were there any religious texts in the Sumerian religion?

Yes, the Sumerians produced religious texts, hymns, prayers, and myths inscribed on clay tablets, including stories like the Epic of Gilgamesh and creation myths.

How did the Sumerian religion explain natural phenomena?

The Sumerian religion attributed natural phenomena like storms, floods, and fertility to the actions and moods of their gods, interpreting these events as divine will or messages.

Additional Resources

****Understanding the Sumerian Religion: Foundations of Ancient Mesopotamian Belief Systems****

what was the sumerian religion is a question that delves into one of the earliest and most influential spiritual frameworks in human history. Emerging in southern Mesopotamia around 3500 BCE, the Sumerian religion laid foundational concepts that would echo throughout subsequent civilizations in the region and beyond. Unlike monotheistic faiths, the Sumerian belief system was polytheistic, deeply intertwined with the natural world, socio-political structures, and the daily lives of its adherents. Investigating this religion reveals complex mythologies, ritual practices, and theological ideas that offer insights into early human attempts to understand existence, divinity, and cosmic order.

The Core Characteristics of Sumerian Religion

At its core, the Sumerian religion was a polytheistic faith centered around a pantheon of gods and goddesses who personified natural forces and societal aspects. These deities were believed to control everything from the weather and fertility to justice and war. Unlike later religious traditions that often emphasized salvation or moral codes, the Sumerian religious worldview was primarily concerned with maintaining cosmic balance and ensuring the favor of the gods for communal prosperity.

The Sumerians conceptualized their gods as anthropomorphic beings endowed with human-like emotions and needs. Temples, known as ziggurats, served as the physical and spiritual centers where priests conducted rituals and offerings. The religion was deeply ritualistic, with ceremonies designed to appease the gods, ensure agricultural fertility, and secure protection from malevolent forces.

Polytheism and the Pantheon of Deities

The pantheon was hierarchically structured, with An (the sky god) often recognized as the supreme deity or the father of gods. Other principal gods included Enlil, the god of air and storms; Enki, the god of water and wisdom; and Inanna (later Ishtar), the goddess of love, war, and fertility. Each city-state had a patron deity, reflecting the intertwining of religion and politics in Sumerian society.

This multiplicity of gods reflected the Sumerians' understanding of the world as a

complex, interconnected system where divine forces governed every aspect of life. The gods were not omnipotent or omniscient but exhibited human vulnerabilities, which made their narratives rich with conflict, cooperation, and transformation.

Mythology and Cosmology

Sumerian religion offered elaborate creation myths and cosmological narratives that explained the origins of the world and humanity. The "Enuma Elish," although more Babylonian in composition, has roots in Sumerian tradition, illustrating the mythic battles among gods that led to the formation of the cosmos.

One central myth involves the goddess Ninhursag and the god Enki, whose interactions symbolize the creation of humans and the establishment of order from primordial chaos. These stories were not merely theological but provided a framework for understanding natural phenomena, social order, and the place of humans within the universe.

Religious Practices and Societal Impact

Religion permeated every aspect of Sumerian life, from governance to agriculture. Kings were often seen as divine representatives or intermediaries between the gods and the people, legitimizing their authority through religious rituals and temple-building projects.

Rituals and Priesthood

Priests held significant power and responsibility as custodians of sacred knowledge and ritual practice. They performed daily offerings, sacrifices, and divination to communicate with the gods and seek guidance. These rituals were essential for securing divine favor, especially in matters such as crop fertility, protection from enemies, and communal wellbeing.

The construction of ziggurats—massive stepped temples—symbolized the axis mundi, connecting heaven and earth. These architectural feats demonstrated the importance of religion in urban planning and cultural identity.

Afterlife Beliefs

Sumerian views on death and the afterlife were notably somber. Unlike later faiths promising paradise or reincarnation, the Sumerian underworld was a dark, dreary place where all souls dwelled regardless of earthly deeds. This perspective underscores a focus on the present life and the importance of maintaining divine favor during one's lifetime rather than seeking posthumous reward.

Comparative Perspectives: Sumerian Religion and Other Ancient Faiths

When compared to contemporary and subsequent ancient religions, the Sumerian system exhibits both shared traits and unique characteristics. Like the Egyptian and later Mesopotamian religions, it was polytheistic and deeply ritualistic. However, its pantheon and mythos laid the groundwork for Akkadian, Babylonian, and Assyrian religious developments.

The anthropomorphic portrayal of gods contrasts with the more abstract divine concepts in later monotheistic religions, highlighting the evolution of religious thought over millennia. Additionally, the Sumerian emphasis on ritual precision and temple worship influenced religious administration practices in future cultures.

Legacy and Influence

The Sumerian religion's legacy extends far beyond its historical timeframe. Its myths influenced the narrative structures of later Mesopotamian epics, including the famous "Epic of Gilgamesh," which grapples with themes of mortality and divine-human relationships. Moreover, many Sumerian religious symbols, rituals, and theological ideas were adapted by successor civilizations, cementing its role as a foundational pillar in the history of human spirituality.

- **Influence on Mesopotamian cultures:** Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians integrated Sumerian deities and myths into their own religious frameworks.
- **Contributions to literature:** Sumerian myths shaped epic storytelling traditions.
- **Architectural impact:** The ziggurat form inspired religious architecture in the ancient Near East.

Exploring what was the Sumerian religion entails more than cataloging gods and rituals; it invites reflection on the shared human endeavor to explain existence and find meaning through the divine. Its richness and complexity reveal an ancient worldview where spirituality and daily life were inseparable, offering valuable perspectives on the roots of organized religion.

[What Was The Sumerian Religion](#)

what was the sumerian religion: Adapa's Treatise on Sumerian Religion Adapa of the The Twin Rivers Rising,

what was the sumerian religion: *Religion, Literature, and Scholarship: The Sumerian*

Composition Nanše and the Birds Niek Veldhuis, 2021-10-11 This book uses insights from religious studies, literary theory, and the history of science for understanding the Sumerian composition *Nanše and the Birds* in the context of the Old Babylonian scribal school. The discussions of Babylonian religion, literature, and scholarship focus on the usefulness and relevance of these modern concepts for categorizing the ancient text. The volume presents the first critical edition of *Nanše and the Birds*, as well as editions of the hymn *Nanše B* and all third millennium and Old Babylonian lexical lists of birds. It includes 37 plates with photographs and line drawings, including many previously unpublished tablets. The final chapter discusses the identity and orthography of all Sumerian bird names in literary, administrative and lexical texts.

what was the sumerian religion: The Sumerians Samuel Noah Kramer, 2010-09-17 “A readable and up-to-date introduction to a most fascinating culture” from a world-renowned Sumerian scholar (American Journal of Archaeology). The Sumerians, the pragmatic and gifted people who preceded the Semites in the land first known as Sumer and later as Babylonia, created what was probably the first high civilization in the history of man, spanning the fifth to the second millenniums B.C. This book is an unparalleled compendium of what is known about them. Professor Kramer communicates his enthusiasm for his subject as he outlines the history of the Sumerian civilization and describes their cities, religion, literature, education, scientific achievements, social structure, and psychology. Finally, he considers the legacy of Sumer to the ancient and modern world. “An uncontested authority on the civilization of Sumer, Professor Kramer writes with grace and urbanity.” —Library Journal

what was the sumerian religion: ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF WORLD RELIGION (Free Book) DARSHAN SINGH Darshan Singh, 2025-07-24 ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF WORLD RELIGION (Free Book) DARSHAN SINGH

what was the sumerian religion: The Religion of the Nabataeans J.F. Healey, 2015-08-27 The history of the Nabataean Kingdom of Hellenistic-Roman times, centred on Petra, is now well known, but until the publication of this book, no monograph has been devoted to Nabataean religion, known to us principally from inscriptions in Nabataean Aramaic, iconography, archaeology and Greek literary texts. After a critical survey of the sources, the author analyses systematically the information on the individual gods worshipped by the Nabataeans, including a detailed illustrated account of temples and iconography. A further major section discusses religious themes: aniconism, henotheism, death-cult and the divinisation of kings. In a final chapter, Nabataean religion is considered in relation to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The book will be of particular interest to historians of religion in the Graeco-Roman Near East and to Semitic epigraphists.

what was the sumerian religion: The Origins of Greek Religion Bernard Clive Dietrich, 2004 Nilsson's seminal work on Minoan-Mycenaean religion had its second edition in 1950 prior to the decipherment of Linear B; yet he found much in the archaeological record of the Bronze Age which he associated with later Greek religion.

what was the sumerian religion: Ancient Mediterranean Religions John C. Stephens, 2016-06-22 This book offers a clear and concise historical overview of the major religious movements of the ancient Mediterranean world existing from the time of the second millennium BCE up until the fourth century CE, including both the Judeo-Christian and pagan religious traditions. Recognizing the significant role of religious institutions in human history and acknowledging the diversity of religious ideas and practices in the ancient Mediterranean world, “religion” is defined as a collection of myths, beliefs, rituals, ethical practices, social institutions and experiences related to the realm of the sacred cosmos. Without focusing too much attention on technicalities and complex vocabulary, the book provides an introductory road map for exploring the vast array of religious data permeating the ancient Mediterranean world. Through an examination of literary and archeological evidence, the book summarizes the fundamental religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Near Eastern world, including the religious traditions of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel. Turning westward, the fascinating world of ancient Greek and Roman religion is considered next. The discussion begins with a description of Minoan-Mycenaean religion, followed by a consideration of

classical Roman and Greek religion. Next, the numerous religious movements that blossomed during Hellenistic-Roman times are discussed. In addition, the fundamental theological contributions of various Greco-Roman philosophical schools of thought, including Orphism, Stoicism, Pythagoreanism, Platonism and Neo-Platonism, are described. Greco-Roman philosophy functioned as a quasi-religious outlook for many, and played a decisive role in the evolution of religion in the classical and Hellenistic period. The theological speculations of the philosophers regarding the nature of God and the soul made a huge impact in religious circles during the classical and Hellenistic era. Moving forward in history from archaic and classical times to the later Hellenistic-Roman period, the old religious order of the past falls by the wayside and a new updated religious paradigm begins to develop throughout the Mediterranean world, with a greater emphasis being placed upon the religious individual and the expression of personal religious feelings. There are several important social and historical reasons for this shift in perspective and these factors are explained in the chapter focusing upon personal religion in Hellenistic times. Since the entire religious topography of the ancient Mediterranean world is rarely outlined in a single volume, this book will be a welcome addition to anyone's library.

what was the sumerian religion: *Ancient Mesopotamian Religion and Mythology* W.G. Lambert, 2016-03-17 The late W.G. Lambert (1926-2011) was one of the foremost Assyriologists of the latter part of the twentieth century. His principle legacy is a large number of superb critical editions of Babylonian literary compositions. Many of the texts he edited were on religious and mythological subjects. He will always be remembered as the editor of the Babylonian Job (Ludlul bel nemeqi, also known as the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer), the Babylonian Flood Story (Atra-hasis) and the Babylonian Creation Epic (Enuma elish). The present book is a collection of twenty-three essays Lambert published between the years 1958 and 2004. These endure not only as the legacy of one of the greatest authorities on ancient Mesopotamian religion and mythology, but also because each makes statements of considerable validity and importance. As such, many are milestones in the fields of Mesopotamian religion and mythology.

what was the sumerian religion: *The Religion of Ancient Mesopotamia* Charles River Editors,, 2025-06-20 A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? Throughout time, people have been religious by nature, and billions today adhere to unique faiths across the world. In Charles River Editors' Religions of the World, readers can get caught up to speed on today's religions and yesterday's religions in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known. Throughout history, the world's most prominent religions have had intricacies that made them unique, yet many of them have also shared similar characteristics and stories. Nowhere is this clearer than in the religion practiced by people in Ancient Mesopotamia, which also happens to be the oldest documented religion in the world. Ancient Mesopotamian religion continues to captivate people for many of the same reasons today's best known religions and their histories fascinate people. The religion practiced by the Ancient Mesopotamians provides a certain mix between the mundane and the surreal, and at the same time aspects of it are both familiar and bizarre to people today. Some find themselves drawn to it based on its preeminent position in religious history as the oldest documented religion in the world. Others become fascinated with the close connections between some of the Mesopotamian religious texts, which include a flood story, a creation story and a story of the righteous sufferer, and their parallels in the Hebrew Bible. There are also many who learned about the mythological tales of the Greco-Roman world as children and revel in the mythological battles, love affairs and intrigue depicted in the Mesopotamian texts. Today the Ancient Mesopotamians and their religion are a source of curiosity, but thousands of years ago the religion was an integral part of their lives. From their birth to their death, deities surrounded them, and whether their social interactions were on the level of a smaller city or that of a larger nation-state, deities played key roles in the social fabric of their society. In fact, the people and religion were so intertwined that a study of Ancient Mesopotamian religion is a study of Ancient Mesopotamian culture. Religions of the World: The Religion of Ancient Mesopotamia examines the

history and legacy of the religion practiced by the Ancient Mesopotamians, looking at the similarities it shares with other religions and the differences that make it unique. Along with pictures of important figures and places, you will learn about the religion of Ancient Mesopotamia like you never have before, in no time at all.

what was the sumerian religion: *Anunnaki - Star Gods Of Sumer* Larz Trent, In this engaging and scholarly book, we explore the rich mythology of the Anunnaki, the star gods of ancient Sumer. Recognized as the creators of writing, the Sumerians triggered an unprecedented advance in human development by recording the wisdom of the gods and forever transforming civilization. Furthermore, we delve into the Sumerian legend of the creation of man, which surprisingly aligns with Darwin's theory, presenting a unique narrative that merges mythology and science. This book offers a fascinating journey through the legends that shaped Sumerian culture, highlighting the enduring influence of the Anunnaki on human history and spirituality.

what was the sumerian religion: Religion and World Civilizations Andrew Holt, 2023-06-30 An indispensable resource for readers investigating how religion has influenced societies and cultures, this three-volume encyclopedia assesses and synthesizes the many ways in which religious faith has shaped societies from the ancient world to today. Each volume of the set focuses on a different era of world history, ranging through the ancient, medieval, and modern worlds. Every volume is filled with essays that focus on religious themes from different geographical regions. For example, volume one includes essays considering religion in ancient Rome, while volume three features essays focused on religion in modern Africa. This accessible layout makes it easy for readers to learn more about the ways that religion and society have intersected over the centuries, as well as specific religious trends, events, and milestones in a particular era and place in world history. Taken as a whole, this ambitious and wide-ranging work gathers more than 500 essays from more than 150 scholars who share their expertise and knowledge about religious faiths, tenets, people, places, and events that have influenced the development of civilization over the course of recorded human history.

what was the sumerian religion: Prähistorische und antike Göttinnen Julia Katharina Koch, Christina Jacob, Jutta Leskovar, 2020 Die Erforschung und Bewertung der Quellen zu weiblichen Gottheiten der europäischen Vorgeschichte sind ausgesprochen heterogen. In der archäologischen Forschung werden die Vorstellungen von Göttinnen stark von schriftlichen Überlieferungen meist aus einer historisch späten, patriarchal strukturierten Entwicklungsphase wie der griechischen Klassik und der römischen Kaiserzeit geprägt. Zudem haben sich im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts teilweise stark überzeichnete Bilder von Göttinnen etabliert, die ihren Weg über die (prä-)historischen wie außeruniversitären 'Mythenforschungen' bis zur Entstehung neuheidnischer Kulte fanden. Die Grundlagen für die Rekonstruktion antiker Kulte wie für die Entstehung neuheidnischer Verehrung einer 'Großen Göttin' werden hier kritisch auf der Basis archäologischer Quellen diskutiert. 'Prähistorische und antike Göttinnen' ist aus den Beiträgen der Jubiläumstagung '20 Jahre FemArc-Netzwerk archäologisch arbeitender Frauen', im Jahr 2011 in Kooperation mit den Städtischen Museen Heilbronn veranstaltet, hervorgegangen.

what was the sumerian religion: Was vom Himmel kommt Gösta Ingvar Gabriel, Brit Kärger, Annette Zgoll, Christian Zgoll, 2021-09-07 In antiken Mythen ist der Himmel nicht nur ein kosmischer, sondern vor allem ein numinoser Raum. Was von dort kommt, besitzt herausragende Bedeutung. Der vom Collegium Mythologicum vorgelegte transdisziplinäre Band erforscht mythische Stoffe, die in antiken Kulturen des Mittelmeers und des Vorderen Orients von diesem Transfer berichten. Auf Basis einer neu etablierten Erzählstoff-Forschung (Hylistik) werden die Befunde der einzelnen Beiträge systematisch zusammengeführt und verglichen. Hierdurch erschließt der Band ein reiches Spektrum an Mythen unterschiedlicher Kulturen in Form von Einzelstudien, Überblicksbeiträgen und weiterführenden Auswertungen. Behandelt werden u. a. das Herabbringen des ersten Tempels durch die mesopotamische Göttin Innana, der Feuerraub des Prometheus, der Transfer des Zauberbuchs des ägyptischen Gottes Thot, der Sturz der Krankheitsdämonin Lamaštu sowie Jupiters Gabe des Unterpfands der römischen Weltherrschaft. Im Ergebnis erweisen sich die

Transfers vom Himmel herab als kognitiv-strukturierend, legitimierend und affektiv-stabilisierend und letztendlich als wichtige mythisch-narrative Beschreibungen für Numinosität.

what was the sumerian religion: The Penguin Handbook of Ancient Religions Various contributors, 2009-08-27 This overview of the religious customs of ancient cultures boasts an international selection of contributors, all of whom are leading scholars in their field. The cultural practices of popular as well as formal religion are explored in detail, giving an impression of all, not only elite societies. Every topic is placed in its own cultural context, while bearing in mind its relevance to a wider historical and sociological debate. The result is an erudite and thoroughly readable handbook to ancient religions, from Palaeolithic cave art to the rituals of Aztec and Inca civilizations.

what was the sumerian religion: The Anunnaki Sumerians Ryan Moorhen, It is possible that the Adamu man lived in south Iraq without leaving traces that are recognizable today. Our present concrete evidence for advanced human occupation in Sumerian begins with the stage at which man was already building complex ziggurats. This seems to reflect what happened in Egypt as a matter of record. Looking back into earlier times and different regions is necessary to understand how this came about. The Anunnaki Adamu manufactured drastic changes to his life shortly after 10000 BC. In addition to hunting and gathering food, he cultivated crops, especially cereals, and domesticated animals. Both changes were not necessarily initiated by the same group. It is still unclear why Adamu and Adapa manufactured such changes. The comet hypothesis and ice sheet melting seem to be the most likely explanations. While it was once thought that a deteriorating climate drove him there, it is now known that the Near East's climate was becoming wetter and warmer during this time. Another hypothesis has been proposed more recently. The man received this knowledge from the Anunnaki civilization. The population immortalized these techniques; they represented the Eagle Apkallu deities giving bags, or buckets, from a mysterious land of Dilmun that no longer exists. Nevertheless, what is in these bags? According to the Anunnaki Apkallu, they were between Anunnaki and Sumerian men.

what was the sumerian religion: Germanische Kultorte Matthias Egeler, 2016-05-31 Der Band „Germanische Kultorte: »Vergleichende, historische und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Zugänge« zieht die Bilanz eines interdisziplinären Symposiums, das im Oktober 2015 am Institut für Nordische Philologie der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München stattfand. Diskutanden aus Nordischer Philologie, Archäologie, Altorientalistik und Religionswissenschaft tauschten sich in diesem Rahmen über unterschiedlichste Aspekte germanischer (und ausgewählter anderer) »Kultorte« aus und deckten dabei ein Spektrum von Fragen ab, das von allgemeinen Problemen der Auseinandersetzung mit »heiligem Raum« über die spezifischen religiösen Räume der germanischen Religionsgeschichte bis hin zu ihrer modernen Rezeption reichte.

what was the sumerian religion: The Early History of Heaven J. Edward Wright Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism University of Arizona, 1999-12-13 When we think of heaven, we generally conjure up positive, blissful images. Heaven is, after all, where God is and where good people go after death to receive their reward. But how and why did Western cultures come to imagine the heavenly realm in such terms? Why is heaven usually thought to be up there, far beyond the visible sky? And what is the source of the idea that the post mortem abode of the righteous is in this heavenly realm with God? Seeking to discover the roots of these familiar notions, this volume traces the backgrounds, origin, and development of early Jewish and Christian speculation about the heavenly realm -- where it is, what it looks like, and who its inhabitants are. Wright begins his study with an examination of the beliefs of ancient Israel's neighbors Egypt and Mesopotamia, reconstructing the intellectual context in which the earliest biblical images of heaven arose. A detailed analysis of the Hebrew biblical texts themselves then reveals that the Israelites were deeply influenced by images drawn from the surrounding cultures. Wright goes on to examine Persian and Greco-Roman beliefs, thus setting the stage for his consideration of early Jewish and Christian images, which he shows to have been formed in the struggle to integrate traditional biblical imagery with the newer Hellenistic ideas about the cosmos. In a final chapter Wright offers a

brief survey of how later Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions envisioned the heavenly realms. Accessible to a wide range of readers, this provocative book will interest anyone who is curious about the origins of this extraordinarily pervasive and influential idea.

what was the sumerian religion: A Psychoanalytic History of the Jews Avner Falk, 1996
This includes the evolution of the Hebrew religion as a projective response to the inner conflicts produced by the human family; the sociopsychological development of the Israelite kingdoms in Canaan; the fascinating duality of Jewish life in the Diaspora; and the emotional ties of the Jews to their idealized motherland from the Babylonian exile to modern political Zionism.

what was the sumerian religion: A Handbook of Ancient Religions John R. Hinnells, 2007-03-01
Ancient civilisations exercise an intense fascination for people the world over. This Handbook provides a vivid, scholarly, and eminently readable account of ancient cultures around the world, from China to India, the Middle East, Egypt, Europe, and the Americas. It examines the development of religious belief from the time of the Palaeolithic cave paintings to the Aztecs and Incas. Covering the whole of society not just the elite, the Handbook outlines the history of the different societies so that their religion and culture can be understood in context. Each chapter includes discussion of the broad field of relevant studies alerting the reader to wider debates on each subject. An international team of scholars convey their own deep enthusiasm for their subject and provide a unique study of both popular and 'official' religion in the ancient world.

what was the sumerian religion: The Early History of Heaven J. Edward Wright, 2002-03-28
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