



‘RITUAL’: A LEXICOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF SOME RELATED TERMS FROM AN EMIC PERSPECTIVE

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In its very operation, the intellectual endeavor of studying rituals, constructing theories about ‘ritual’, and ‘theorizing rituals’² apparently builds on the term ‘ritual’. That points to the European legacy of this intellectual and academic undertaking and its possible Eurocentric underpinnings.³ As many other key-terms in the humanities, ‘ritual’ and the related term ‘rite’⁴ go back to Latin, which has the noun *ritus* and the adjective *ritualis* (‘relating to rites’).⁵ However, that does not imply semantic and pragmatic continuity, for the meaning of these Latin terms does not correspond to the modern way of employing them. Hence, when modern scholars write about ‘rituals’

¹ The editor is indebted to Jan G. Platvoet for a fruitful exchange of emails in the early stages of this project.

² For these modes of discourse, see the introductory essay (“Ritual Studies, Ritual Theory, Theorizing Ritual”) to this volume.

³ In this respect, the study of ‘ritual’ is not different from the study of ‘religion’, but while warnings of the Eurocentric implications of the study of ‘religion’ are by now part and parcel of the reflective self-understanding of the study of religion, the same cannot be said about ritual studies and ritual theory. Moreover, there are by now two German dissertations that discuss emic equivalents to the Western term ‘religion’: B. Schmitz, *“Religion” und seine Entsprechungen im interkulturellen Bereich* (Marburger wissenschaftliche Beiträge 10; Marburg, 1996); H.M. Haußig, *Der Religionsbegriff in den Religionen. Studien zum Selbst- und Religionsverständnis in Hinduismus, Buddhismus, Judentum und Islam* (Bodenheim, 1999).

⁴ These terms are often used as synonyms in ritual studies and ritual theory. From a theoretical point of view, this is unsatisfactory and should be avoided. See also the essay by Snoek in this volume.

⁵ While C.T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews’ Edition of Freund’s Latin Dictionary. Revised, Enlarged, and in Great Part Rewritten* (Oxford, 1996 [1879]), 1596, regards the etymology of *ritus* as “unknown”, there are by now several etymological suggestions available. A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots. Troisième édition, revue, corrigée et augmentée d’un index* (Paris, 1951), 85 and 1014, argue that *ritus* depends on the root **er-* (*ar-*), enlarged by **ei-* and the suffix *-tu-*. They find the word to be an example of the concordances between the Indo-Iranian and the Italo-Celtic religious vocabulary, as *ritus* would correspond to the Vedic *ṛtām*, designating the ‘correct order’. Another etymology links the word to the Indo-European root **rē(i)-* ‘to reason’, ‘to count’; see C. Watkins, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots. Second Edition* (Boston, 2000), 71.

in Roman religion, their way of using the term 'rituals' matches Roman discourses only superficially.⁶

As far as I know, the history of the term 'rite' from its Latin origins to its modern usage in different vernacular languages has not yet been written. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (<http://dictionary.oed.com>), the word 'ritual' is attested in English as a noun since the 17th century.⁷ As an adjective, it is attested already in the 16th century.⁸ However, there is ample evidence that the term 'ritual' underwent a serious semantic transformation in the late 19th/early 20th centuries.⁹ Moreover, once it became a key-term in the humanities, in the scholarly vocabulary 'ritual' has increasingly replaced alternative (and partly synonymous) terms, such as 'ceremony', 'observance', 'celebration', 'custom', 'service', and 'tradition'.

The modern theoretical discourse about 'ritual' tacitly starts from the premise that 'rituals' can be found in each and every society, culture, and religion.¹⁰ For this reason, virtually every book on any given culture or religion invariably devotes at least one chapter to the respective 'rituals' of the society/culture/tribe/group/movement/religion in question. In most descriptions, however, the question

⁶ See A. Henrichs, "Dromena and Legomena. Zum rituellen Selbstverständnis der Griechen", Fritz Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart, Leipzig, 1998), 33–71, 37: "Hinter dem lateinischen Vokabular verbirgt sich ein neuzeitliches Verständnis von rituellem Verhalten, das in seiner Abstraktionsfähigkeit weit über den antiken Ritusbegriff hinausgeht." See also J. Scheid, *An Introduction to Roman Religion* (Edinburgh, 2003), 30: "The term *ritus* (in Greek *nomos*) designated the mode of action, a mode of celebrating religious festivals or rituals, not the content of those festivals. To designate that content, that is to say what we now call 'rites' or 'rituals', the Romans employed the terms *sacra* or *caerimoniae*." There is a similar discrepancy between the modern and the ancient usage of the term 'cult'; see B. Lang, "Wie sagt man 'Kult' auf lateinisch und griechisch? Versuch einer Antwort anhand antiker und christlicher Texte", Chr. Auffarth and J. Rüpke (eds), *Epitome tes oikoumenes. Studien zur römischen Religion in Antike und Neuzeit für Hubert Cancik und Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier*, (Potsdamer altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 6; Stuttgart, 2002), 29–36. Unfortunately, Lang does not comment on the fact that the modern varieties of the Latin term in modern English, French, and German have quite different semantic shadings.

⁷ 1649 JER. TAYLOR *Apol. Liturgy* (ed. 2) § 89 "Then the Bishop prays *ritè*, according to the rituell or constitution."

⁸ 1570 FOXE *A. & M.* (ed. 2) 83/1 "Contayning no maner of doctrine . . . but onely certayn ritual decrees to no purpose."

⁹ See Asad 1988; Boudewijnse 1995; Bremmer 1998; Stausberg 2002.

¹⁰ Occasionally, this assumption is made explicit, for instance by Rappaport 1999, 31: "the ubiquity of ritual . . . : no society is devoid of what a reasonable observer would recognize as ritual."

of which terms the people in question use in order to refer to what the scholar classifies (from an etic point of view) as 'rituals' remains surprisingly absent.¹¹ Yet, when a scholar holds the view that 'his' case at the same time presents prototypical evidence for the very fact, and theory, of 'ritual', the relevant emic terminology is mentioned. This is the case, for example, with Frits Staal and his views of Vedic ritual. Staal writes: "Vedic ritual . . . comprises data of which no one has denied that they come under ritual. There are, moreover, Indian terms which demarcate this domain and distinguish it from other things (e.g. Sanskrit *yajña*)."¹²

Staal implicitly points to what is at issue here for ritual theory and theorizing rituals. For the very occurrence of words (terms) that may be deemed to mean 'ritual' in English in the lexicon of any given language¹³ may be considered to provide important evidence that the speakers of that language discursively construct 'ritual' as a demarcated domain of reality (including culture and possibly also religion). An analysis of how these demarcations are achieved could shed light on the very mechanisms of constructing 'ritual', and that could help to move beyond the Euro-American legacy of the discourse about 'ritual'. Instead of merely, in an almost colonial fashion, applying a Western term ('ritual') to non-Western phenomena, this may be a first step towards coming closer to indigenous ways of self-understandings. And such an endeavor should have to begin with a closer scrutiny of the relevant vocabulary from an emic perspective, i.e., by a scholarly (outsider) analysis of the way the terminology is employed and constructed in specific languages.

Since it is generally considered legitimate to speak, by way of example, of the 'economy' of societies that may not have a word that closely matches the English term 'economy' in their language(s),

¹¹ One exception that confirms the rule is Lewis 1980, 39: "The Gnaou have many ways to indicate what they are referring to when they talk about what I take to be 'ritual'; perhaps most commonly they speak of 'doing things', using the verb root *-bari-* which has roughly the range of the verbs 'work', 'do' and 'make' in English . . . But 'doing things' was not limited to ritual, and there were other ways to talk of it." The author even presents some extracts of recordings in order "to show how the Gnaou talk about ritual."

¹² Staal 1989, 64. Surprisingly, Staal does not discuss these terms in his book.

¹³ This act of stipulating meaning implies a certain understanding of 'ritual' and its possible equivalents on the part of the "reasonable observer" (Rappaport). Therefore, it is not sufficient merely to consult dictionaries in order to find out whether such terms occur in specific languages.

the generally shared assumption of the universality of 'ritual' does not depend on the occurrence of such 'emic terms' for 'ritual'. However, the documented occurrence of emic terms for 'ritual' that demarcate 'ritual' as a separate domain in several linguistic areas could to some extent weaken the obvious suspicion that 'ritual' is merely a modern, Western concept, one that is more than anything else indicative of modern, Western history and preoccupations. Emic equivalents to 'ritual'—i.e., terms that from a scholarly perspective seem to correspond to our notion of 'ritual'—could at least lay the groundwork for a 'referential' conceptualization of 'ritual', in the sense that different cultures or cognitive systems (languages) seem to 'refer' to a specific domain of life that we, in the West, happen to denote by the term 'ritual'.¹⁴ If "most cultures see important distinctions between ritual and other types of activities", as Catherine Bell suggests,¹⁵ it would be reasonable to assume that these distinctions are mirrored in the respective terminologies.

With theoretical questions such as these in mind, I started, in November 2002, contacting a number of colleagues to ask them to join the hunt for such terms and to invite them to contribute brief articles on the occurrence of possible equivalents to the Western term 'ritual' in their respective area of linguistic competence. In particular, I asked the contributors to address the following four questions (and to add some references to main dictionaries and literature for further reading):

- (i) Is there a word/graphem/term (or several) that could be considered to be equivalent to 'ritual'?
- (ii) How could one 'define' that word (or those words)—i.e. the attributes, the intension of the term(s)?
- (iii) For which phenomena is it/are they applied—i.e. the range, the extension of the term(s)?
- (iv) Conclusion: X vs. 'ritual': similarities and differences.¹⁶

¹⁴ For a similar attempt to address the question of the validity of a universally valid concept of 'religion', see M. Riesebrodt, "Überlegungen zur Legitimität eines universalen Religionsbegriffs", B. Luchesi and K. von Stuckrad (eds), *Religion im kulturellen Diskurs/Religion in Cultural Discourse. Festschrift für Hans Kippenberg zu seinem 65. Geburtstag/Essays in Honor of Hans G. Kippenberg on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 52; Berlin, New York, 2004), 127–149. It is from Riesebrodt that I have borrowed the term 'referential'. Riesebrodt, in turn, borrowed it from Robert K. Merton.

¹⁵ Bell 1997, 76.

¹⁶ Some authors went well beyond answering this set of questions.

The aim of this collection of brief articles was not to present an exhaustive dossier on all languages of the world.¹⁷ Not even all linguistic groups and family of languages could be covered.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the hope is that the following collection of articles may be useful as a first overview and that it may stimulate others to go deeper into individual areas of analysis or to apply this set of questions to languages not yet covered by this preliminary survey. For want of a better scheme, the arrangement of the languages follows in alphabetical order.¹⁹ The following eighteen (partly modern, partly ancient, partly dead, partly still used and living) languages will be discussed: Akkadian, Anishnabe, Arabic, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Hittite, Hopi, Japanese, Mongolian, Old Norse, Persian, Sami, Sanskrit, Tamil, Tibetan, and Turkish. Thereafter, I present some concluding reflections.

Michael Stausberg

Akkadian

In addition to hundreds of words for specific rituals, there are several generic terms in Akkadian that can be connected with the modern notion of 'ritual'. Thereby, two basic meanings are clearly distinguished: Daily and other regularly performed rituals in connection with the cult are separated from rituals performed on a special occasion. The term *parṣu*, which appears in the earliest texts

¹⁷ The selection of languages is contingent because it depended partly on my knowledge of colleagues whom I knew were interested in the issue and who would be able to deliver a piece in a rather short span of time. (This chapter was the last that we included in the volume, and the delay in its publication could not be anticipated when I first approached the contributors.)

¹⁸ I am particularly unhappy about the omission of African languages. The reason for this is that I had approached several colleagues, but some politely declined, and a chapter that I was promised never arrived.

¹⁹ The most obvious solution would have been to arrange the languages according to language families. However, I was not satisfied by that solution, because languages such as Arabic and Sanskrit exert a terminological influence in their respective cultural and religious spheres of influence that transcends the borders of the linguistic families. The Persian terminology, e.g., is influenced by Arabic, but not by its 'relative' Sanskrit. Some of the languages and ritual terminologies covered here are interrelated (Arabic-Persian-Turkish; Sanskrit-Tamil-Tibetan), while others are not.

written in Akkadian, denotes the cultic order and—among other meanings, such as ‘office’ and ‘divine power’, which also fall within the category of divine order—it is sometimes used to describe the rituals performed within the temples. A more specific word for these rituals is *kidudû*, a Sumerian loan-word (from KI.DU.DU), though it is seldom used.

In contrast to the words for regularly performed rituals, terms for rituals performed on a special occasion are more numerous. The noun *nēpešu*, which as a *nomen instrumenti* can also mean ‘tools’ or ‘utensils’, is used from the beginning of the second millennium BCE until the end of cuneiform script to denominate ritual procedures. Its generic character becomes apparent in the usage of the word in connection with terms designating specific rituals (e.g. *enūma nēpešī ša Šurpu teppušu*, “when you perform the rituals of [the text-series] ‘Burning’”). With regard to text-series, it is often used to denote rituals in contrast to the incantations, which they accompany. While *nēpešu* is exclusively used for rituals with a positive connotation, the word *epištu* can have a pejorative sense. The basic meaning of this term is ‘handiwork’, ‘manufacture’, ‘achievement’, but it also signifies positive and negative ritual acts, as well as evil magic. Both *nēpešu* and *epištu*, as well as the verb *epēšu*, the usual word for ‘performing’ a ritual, are derived from the stem *pš, meaning ‘to act’, ‘to be active’, which has a much wider semantic range than ‘ritual’.

A term that is exclusively used for the meaning ‘ritual’ is *kikiṭṭû*, a borrowing from the Sumerian KÌD.KÌD. Like *nēpešu* it is used for a variety of phenomena, such as medical or exorcist rituals, and has no negative connotation. It appears regularly before or after descriptions of rituals. In the first millennium BCE, the word *dullu* (originally meaning ‘work’, ‘misery’, ‘hardship’) is frequently used in letters to indicate rituals. In contrast to *kikiṭṭû*, which is a learned expression, *dullu* is a more colloquial word used by Babylonian and Assyrian scholars.

Still problematic is the Akkadian reading of the logogram DÙ.DÙ.BI, which appears ubiquitously in first millennium BCE magical, medical, or other exorcistic texts as a designation for rituals (*agenda*) in contrast to the incantations (*dicenda*). A late commentary explains DÙ.DÙ.BI as *epuštašu* (from *epištu*), ‘its pertinent ritual’ (BRM IV/32, line 4), but this remains an isolated reference. Apart from *epištu*, it could probably also be read *kikiṭṭû* or *nēpešu*.

The Akkadian terminology for rituals distinguishes between *parṣu* and *kidudû* as designations of the regular ‘rites’ of the temples and

nēpešu, *epištu*, *kikiṭṭû*, and *dullu* as generic terms for rituals performed on demand. While *kidudû* and *kikiṭṭû* are the only words exclusively used for the meaning 'ritual', *kikiṭṭû* appears in scholarly texts and *dullu* is used mostly in letters. The most common word for 'ritual' is *nēpešu*, which appears in all kinds of texts.

Dictionaries and further reading

The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (Glückstadt, Chicago, 1956 ff).

W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden, 1958–1981).

M.J.H. Linszen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon. The temple ritual texts as evidence for Hellenistic cult practises* (Cuneiform monographs 25; Leiden, Boston, 2004), 19–22.

Nils P. Heeßel

Anishnabe

Anishnabe belongs to the Algonquian family of Native American languages. Rituals or religious ceremonies in the Anishnabe context are not necessarily conceived as structured, although they may be. Hence, the term that is the equivalent of ritual, *Di-nen-daam*, is not descriptive, as, for example, the Chinese term *li* was originally, but denotes intention or state of mind. All a ceremony needs is an individual giving thanks or asking for help from the spirit realm in any setting, such as a crowded city street or a busy council meeting.

To begin the ceremony, all the individual has to do is to think it: *Di-nen-daam* ("I will now begin this thought"). With no set form for the ritual, the individual is free to communicate using only thought should he or she be in a place where undue attention would not be welcome. Ceremonial paraphernalia need not be present. All that is required is the presence of the individual carrying out the ritual. *Di-nen-daam* signifies the concept of being totally present; that is, one is present in mind, heart, body, and spirit, and with all one's faculties in a heightened state of alertness. The term signifies that one's heart-wish is in place. *Di* comes from the root word *de* for 'heart'. *Nen* comes from the root *nen-do-mo-win* ('the thought', 'idea', or the 'brain'). *Daam* comes from the root *Daa* ('being present'); e.g., this is the term with which one would answer, for example, in roll call. *Di-nen-daam* is in the first person; once the tense shifts from first person, any number of configurations will automatically take place.

Di-nen-daam is not ritual-specific and is applicable to any setting. There are other terms with which to designate specific rituals, and these are often descriptive, particularly of action. For example, *Jees-kee-ni-ni* is the term for one who performs a 'shaking tent' ritual. This is a ritual where the person performing it is assisted by others, and the ritual is performed for the benefit of people other than the one carrying it out. *Jees-ki-ni-ni* means someone who can make the ground—or at least the tent in which the ritualist is placed—shake. *Jees* comes from the root *jees-caam-gi-shkaa*: an 'earth tremor' or 'quake'. The root is versatile and is applicable to one's body, house, or most other objects afflicted with tremors. *Ni-ni* is the singular term for man. In the Great Lakes Anishnabe tradition, the *Jees-kee-ni-ni* is understood to be the most powerful religious ceremony, and it is a ritual that is associated with individuals who have the relationships with spirits necessary to carry it out.

Another example of a term for a specific ritual is *pwaa-gna-gaa*, meaning someone taking part in a dance at a pow-wow. The literal sense of the term is 'someone who dances with the pipe'. Linguistic liberty can stretch the term to 'someone who dances like a pipe'. *Pwaa-gun* is the ceremonial pipe central to Anishnabe ritual. *Gna-gaa* comes from the multivalent *nee-gaan*, meaning 'the front', in this case related to the term *beems-skwa-kaa* ('to move and dance in a circle'). Hence, the pipe was at the forefront of the ceremony or at the front of an actual line of dancers moving in a circular fashion.

Di-nen-daam denotes the individualistic nature of Anishnabe spirituality, a reflection of what the anthropologist, Robert Lowie, termed "democratized shamanism" in the early 1930s. Traditionally, every individual was expected to attain a relationship with one or more spirits through fasting and other methods. Some, of course, become more powerful in these regards than others and will be able to perform certain rituals, such as the *Jees-ki-ni-ni*, that require particular abilities. Hence, given the nature of Anishnabe spirituality, the focus in rituals is more often on intention and spontaneous spiritual achievement rather than a rigid structure.

Further reading

J. Paper, "Ceremony and Ritual, Anishnabe", *American Indian Religious Traditions. An Encyclopedia* 1 (2005), 103–111.

Kenn Pitawanakwat and Jordan Paper

Arabic

Arabic has no word that exactly corresponds to the (modern) Western concept of ritual. In the following, those Arabic roots are examined that have to do with (religious) 'praxis', 'customs', or 'ceremonial behavior'. For this purpose, the commonly used modern dictionaries, lexica, and encyclopedias were consulted.²⁰

The word *šā'ira* is rendered in most dictionaries under the lemma 'ritual', but its use is in fact restricted to ceremonies performed during the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca (*ḥaǧǧ*) and to pre-Islamic tribal war ritual on the Arab peninsula (from which part of the *ḥaǧǧ* performances seem to be derived). It stems from the root *š-ʿ-r*, which denotes something sensed, memorized (conf. *šīr*, pl. *aš'ār* 'poem', 'poetry'), or marked, signed, hinting at (*šī'ār* 'sign', pl. *šū'ūr/aš'īra*),²¹ hence known, being aware of, or (emotionally) felt (*šū'ūr* 'knowledge', 'perception'). Its plural, *šā'ār*, additionally denotes the stations where prescribed rites during the *ḥaǧǧ* are performed. For that purpose, use is also made of *maš'ar* (pl. *maš'ār*) stemming from the same root. Moreover, *iš'ār* (pl. *iš'ārāt*) denotes a special place for 'marked' sacrificial animals to be slaughtered, that is, 'holy places'. The marking of the animal to be sacrificed with two cuts itself is denoted by different forms derived from this root *š-ʿ-r*. In modern use, *iš'ār* also means 'legal prescriptions'.

Prescribed Islamic rituals that are compulsory for every Muslim—such as the *ḥaǧǧ*, daily prayer (*ṣalāt*), *ramadān* fast (*ṣawm*)—are called *'ibāda* (pl. *'ibādāt*). According to Islamic law, an *'ibāda* can only be performed validly in a state of ritual purity (*ṭahāra*). As a consequence, all practices that are necessary to bring about *ṭahāra* do not fall in the legal category of *'ibādāt* (such as the minor or major ablution, *wuḍū'* and *ǧusl*), as is the case with 'folk-religious' practices (such as shrine worship and pilgrimage, *ziyāra*).²² Nevertheless, *'ibāda* (which

²⁰ Special attention was given to the analysis of the results of a full-text research in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. CD-ROM Edition (EI CD-ROM)*, 2d update: vols. 1–11 (Leiden, 2003); see esp. the entries "'Āda'" (G.-H. Bousquet); "Adab" (F. Gabrieli); "'Ībādāt" (G.-H. Bousquet); "'Īd" (E. Mittwoch); "Marāsīm" (P. Sanders et al.); "Šhī'ār" (T. Fahd); "Sunna" (G.H.A. Juynboll and D.W. Brown); "'Urf" (G. Libson and F.H. Stewart).

²¹ *Šī'ār* can also be the collective form of one single *šā'ira*, i.e. *ḥaǧǧ*-ritual performances in general.

²² This distinction is not always clear cut as some 'folk-religious' practices were

stems from the root ‘b-d, ‘to serve’, also ‘to venerate’, ‘to worship’; cf. *‘abd* ‘servant’, ‘slave’, e.g. of God) is used by Christian Arabs and members of non-orthodox Muslim sects for their respective religious rituals in general, most commonly for any form of individual or communal prayer (‘service’). The celebration of the Christian mass (*qad-dasa*) is called by Christian Arabs more specifically *quddās* (pl. *qadādīs/quddāsāt*), from the root q-d-s, ‘holy’. The consecration is called *taqāḍīs*. On the other hand, other derivations from ‘b-d are used in Muslim Arabic—besides their basic meaning—with specific connotations implying non-Muslim contexts, such as *ta‘abbud* for Christian saint worship, *ma‘būd(a)* for deity or idol (lit.: ‘served’, ‘worshipped’), *ma‘bad* for temple (i.e. non-Muslim place of worship).

Another word for observing a religious custom is *taqs* (pl. *tuqūs*). Derivations of the word have a special Christian connotation (like *taqsī*, *taqsīyyāt* ‘liturgical’, ‘priest’, ‘liturgy’), which hints at its original context. Nevertheless, *taqs* (which also means ‘weather’, ‘climate’) is in use today in academic Arabic for religious rituals in general.

As in earlier Western usage, practices that are called ‘ritual’ in recent academic terminology are subsumed in Arabic under categories like ‘prescriptions’ or ‘traditions’ and ‘customs and manners’. The respective terms can be used also to denote (or include) ‘ritual’ acts and practices, ceremonies, etc.

In the context of Islamic law, (binding) tradition—in the sense of ‘imitating’, that is, submitting to older authoritative practices—is called *taqlīd* (‘custom’, ‘practice’; pl. *taqāḍīd*, adj. *taqlīdī* ‘traditional’, in modern usage also with pejorative meaning in the sense of ‘blind obedience and imitation’). In contrast to religious Muslim law (*ṣar‘/ṣarī‘a*) commonly accepted—and in some historical contexts even codified—customary law and practice is either called *‘urf* (‘custom’ or ‘common usage’; pl. *a‘rāf*, stems from the root ‘-r-f ‘to know’) or *‘āda*. Whereas *‘urf* in the course of Islamic history referred more often to binding, especially fiscal, monetary and property regulations (accepted or granted by the ruling authority), *‘āda* (‘habit’; pl. *‘ādāt/‘awā‘id*) definitely also includes other social and religious customary practices (such as ‘rituals’, say, the custom of saint veneration) that are not

nolens volens integrated by the authorities of Islamic law (*‘ulamā‘*) into an ‘orthodox’ context, such as recitations of poems in the mosque on the assumed birthday of the prophet Muḥammad, called *mawlid* or *mawlūd*.

part of *šarī'a* and can be used analogously to the Western concept of 'manners and customs'.²³ *Āda* stems from the root *'-w-d* which has the general meaning 'to go back to', 'to belong to', 'to do something again'. Its many derivatives cover the semantic field of 'accustoming', 'customary', and 'repetition'.

Another term that has found its way into many other languages in the so-called Islamic World is *marāsim* in the sense of 'customs and manners'. It is formally and semantically a (collective) plural. The corresponding singular *marṣam* does not exist with that meaning. In Arabic, *marāsim*—besides 'customs'—denotes 'secular' ceremonies (that is, those not primarily concerned with Islam, such as marriage ceremonies) or (commemorative) celebrations. It is derived from the root *r-s-m*, literally 'to paint', hence 'to inscribe', 'to prescribe'. Its verbal noun *rasm* (pl. *rusūm*)—among many others meanings (such as 'painting' or 'sketch')—has the meaning 'prescription', 'formality', 'ceremony'. The adjective *rasmī* ('official', that is, 'pertaining to the [prescribing] state' or some other 'secular' authority) is often opposed to *dīnī* ('religious'). The participle of the same root, *marṣūm* ('inscribed', 'decreed'; pl. *marāsim*) is also used as a noun meaning 'decree', 'prescription'. *Rasm/rusūm* and *marāsim* can be used synonymously for 'prescriptions' and 'ceremony'; *marāsim* seems to have a slightly more passive connotation, and is much more commonly used to denote 'customs and manners'.

When we speak of 'secular' ceremonies within the 'Islamic World', this includes customs in connection with the human life-cycle (child-birth, adolescence, marriage, death) as they do not form part of the 'rituals' which are regulated by Islamic law (for example, the name-giving ceremony to a new born child, circumcision rituals, marriage ceremonies, etc.).²⁴ Secular festive events are called *ḥafl/ḥafla* (pl. *ḥaflāt*)

²³ Sometimes both *'urf* and *'āda* are used with the same meaning, depending on the respective regional and historical terminology. Other synonyms in that sense would be *dastūr/dustūr* (pl. *dasātūr*, of Iranian origin; in modern usage, 'constitution') or *qānūn* (pl. *qawānīn*; from the Greek *kanón*).

²⁴ Of course, there are detailed legal regulations concerning those acts which affect kinship relations, especially regulations for inheritance. But there are no prescribed rituals. Customary rituals were either integrated, tolerated, or condemned, even combated, by the religious authorities, although ordinary believers tried to appease them by means of commissioning religious 'officials' (such as muezzins, mosque preachers, imams, kadis, etc.), applying certain Islamic symbols and ritual elements to these customs. For example, as far as prayer is concerned in this context, only a prayer for the deceased is prescribed by religious law.

or *ih̄tifāl* (pl. *ih̄tifālāt*)—both from the root *h-f-l*, ‘to assemble’—in contrast to the clearly religious feast called *ʿīd* (pl. *aʿyād*). Other celebrations—especially when one or more persons are ‘honored’, as in (modern) marriage festivities—can be called *tašrīfa* (pl. *tašrīfāt*), which is derived from *šaraf* (‘honor’).

This leads into the field of ritualizations in social life. The traditional term for ‘good manners’ is *adab* (pl. *ādāb*),²⁵ which subsequently became the Arabic word for ‘literature’ in the early Middle Ages, as the earliest prose works written in Arabic were guidelines and regulations of decency and etiquette for the members of the caliphate court. Ceremonial courtesy is called *taklīf* (pl. *takālīf*, adj. *mutakallaf*), which contains the notion of unnatural stiffness and constraint, as the basic noun of the same root, *kulfa* (pl. *kulaf*), denotes tiresomeness, affectedness, formality, and therefore ceremonial behavior (which reflects the ritual critique that accompanies every ritualization of social life).

It should be borne in mind that Arabic is used as a secondary language by many populations forming lingual minorities in the Arabic-speaking world. Moreover, it plays the role of a *lingua franca* in several other regions bordering the Arabic-speaking world, such as in East and sub-Saharan Africa, or even far from it, such as in Dagestan in the Northern Caucasus up to the 19th century. ‘Ritual’ terminology (religious and ‘secular’) of Arabic origin (itself often originally derived from Aramaic and Iranian roots) has disseminated widely—parallel to the spread of Islam—into many other languages. The usage of Arabic vocabulary in those languages (such as Afro-Asiatic/Hamitic, Turkic, Caucasian, Indo-Iranian, and Malay) was adapted, altered, and sometimes actively expanded according to Arabic rules of morphology. We must take into account a repercussion of those *arabesque* forms—created by speakers (and writers) of non-Arabic languages—into modern Arabic, a field that so far has not been systematically researched.

To conclude: In common Arabic usage, *ʿibāda* refers to the central rituals of the Abrahamic religions. A more abstract word in academic usage for religious rituals in general is *ṭaqs*. All other cus-

²⁵ The original meaning of *adab* seems to be ‘norm of conduct’, and—again—‘custom’, which resembles the same semantic field as *sunna*, another term worth mentioning in the context of regulated social behavior. *Sunna* refers to the generally approved standard or practice introduced by the prophet Muḥammad which should be followed by every Muslim.

tomary rituals are referred to with the terms *rasm/rusūm* or *marāsim*. The semantic field of Arabic terms referring to 'ritual' in the strict sense—such as *rasm* or *šā'ira*—can be circumscribed by the notions of 'marking', 'sketching', 'ordering', 'prescribing', and 'ruling'. Ceremonies 'assembling' many people can be called *ḥafl* or *iḥtifāl*. Especially *marāsim* and *iḥtifāl* are often differentiated with the adjectives *dīnī* ('religious') and *rasmī* ('official', that is, pertaining to some secular authority).

Further reading

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Robert Langer

Chinese

In Classical Chinese and in the different Chinese local dialects there are hundreds of terms denoting specific rituals or rites. In the following, only such terms shall be dealt with which can be taken as the most basic generic terms for 'ritual'.

The best known generic term denoting a similar field of religious performances as the term 'ritual' is the term *li* 禮, which is mainly used in the Confucian tradition. It is not used in the Daoist tradition perhaps because of the negative connotation associated with it in *Laozi* (*Daode jing* 38) and *Zhuangzi*. In the Buddhist tradition, it is used in connection with worship. The most important Chinese term for rites used in all traditions is *yi* 儀, which denotes the formal model aspect of individual rites.

The Confucian tradition has reflected on the concept of ritual *li* 禮 the most theoretical and abstract way in ritual chapters and books, such as *Xunzi* "Li lun", *Liji*, and *DaDai Liji*. The Daoist term for ritual is a binome composed of the words *ke* 科 and *yi* 儀. Other Daoist terms referring to religious performances are *zhaijiao* 齋醮 and *baibai* 拜拜. In the Buddhist tradition, we find mainly the term *yi* (*shi*) 儀(式), but also the terms *libai* 禮拜, *gong* 供, and *fashi* 法事 or *foshi* 佛事.

Li 禮 might be defined as performing a Confucian ideal system of rules (on a religious, socio-political, moral, and cosmic level); *ke* 科,

bai 拜, *gong* 供, and *shi* 事 can be defined as Daoist/ Buddhist performative acts; and *yi* 儀 is the notion of the outer appearance of rites, the model ceremonial form.

Confucian *li* 禮 is a generic term denoting all sorts of human activities that establish an order that is conceived to accord with the proper order of an ideal system of rules. It comprehends official etiquette, as well as sacrificial, birth, capping, wedding, and mourning rites, religious services, clothing, correctness, rules of behavior, officials equipment, and also inner attitudes. Its meaning is thus much broader than the meaning of ‘ritual’. In traditional Chinese encyclopedias, we find highly differentiated subdivisions of ritual which follow a basic fivefold division into rites concerning auspicious affairs (religious rites) (*ji li* 吉禮), imperial affairs (*ja li* 嘉禮), guest affairs (*bin li* 賓禮), military affairs (*jun li* 軍禮), and unlucky affairs (*xiong li* 凶禮). Ritual is distinctly opposed to codified positive legal statutes.

According to Pines, in the Western Zhou (1040–771 BCE) *li* refers to sacrificial rites.²⁶ The broad concept of ceremonial propriety appears in these texts under the name of “ceremonial decorum” (*yi* 儀) or “awe-inspiring ceremonies” (*weiyi* 威儀), which referred to the precise, orderly performance of the complicated ceremonies in which each participant behaved according to his rank and seniority in his lineage. In the early Chunqiu (770–476 BCE) speeches, *li* primarily referred to the inter-state etiquette, and, more broadly, to the proper handling of international relations. From the mid-Chunqiu period, statesmen began applying the term *li* to a broad range of political activities, such as personnel policy, proper handling of rewards and punishments, and ensuring smooth functioning of the administration in general. *Li* thus evolved into an overall pattern of governing, and this meaning clearly overshadowed its ceremonial origins. This interpretation of *li* gained popularity in late Chunqiu discourse. At that time, *li* was for the first time connected to Heaven and Earth, and its value was further elevated thereby. At the end of the Chunqiu Period, Confucius concentrated on ethical aspects of *li* at the expense of its political functions. In the Zhanguo Period (475–221), *li* comprised two distinct meanings as a signifier of the social order: on the

²⁶ For this and the following, see Y. Pines, “Disputers of the *Li*: Breakthrough in the Concept of Ritual in Preimperial China”, *Asia Major* 13 (2000), 1–41.

one hand, it referred to hierarchic order in general; on the other, *li* was intrinsically linked to the aforementioned Western Zhou set of ritual regulations, with their overt hereditary connotations. Further on, it was developed as a moral principle, a norm of interpersonal intercourse; it became an internal virtue, part of the innate good nature of human beings. Finally, at the end of the Zhanguo Period, *li* became a multi-faceted term that referred to political, social, economic, military, ethical, religious, and educational spheres, to mention only a few. Yet this richness of functions should not obscure the nature of *li* as primarily a sociopolitical term, a regulator of society and the state. It further achieved a cosmic dimension, becoming the terminological counterpart of the True Way—*Dao* as a supreme truth; the unique force applicable at the cosmic, social, and individual level, the One that Pervades All. At its highest level, *li* is treated as an unchanging, unifying force of the universe. In later times, *li* always comprises these different layers of meaning: Zhou religious ritual, socio-political order, moral principle, and cosmic law.

Structurally,²⁷ at least since Zhanguo times ritual has to be understood as a twofold relationship. Firstly, it is an outer formal expression of an invisible ideal order. On the other hand, correct ritual is the expression for the realization of a correct order. The realization of correct ritual is thus the correct order itself. Secondly, ritual action is always directed towards a certain context and thus always responds to a given situation that is encountered (any kind of persons, such as superiors, inferiors, friends, family members, enemies; gods, ancestors; occasions such as birth, marriage, death; state affairs, such as audiences, covenants, meetings; specific places, certain times—in the broadest sense, any situation). Ritual is defined not through its particular context but through the correctness of its formal correspondence to every single situation, a correctness through which the ideal order is expressed. That is why it can be applied to such different spheres as political, social, economic, military, ethical, religious, and educational spheres. Talking about ritual, we thus have a threefold structure: firstly, a certain context; secondly, a certain action that

²⁷ The structural analysis is based on J. Gentz, "Ritus als Physiognomie. Frühe chinesische Ritentheorien zwischen Kosmologie und Kunst", Dietrich Harth and Gerrit Jasper Schenk (eds), *Ritualdynamik. Kulturübergreifende Studien zur Theorie und Geschichte rituellen Handelns* (Heidelberg, 2004), 307–337.

responds to this context; and thirdly, an invisible ideal with which this action is to accord. Ritual action is the formal encoded expression of a confrontation between a certain ideal and a certain context, a confrontation of which the action is the only visible intermediary. The ritual act thus becomes the visible judgment of the invisible ideal regarding the concrete context. The ritually acting person is therefore judge and witness at the same time.

The Daoist terms *ke* 科 and *yi* 儀 refer to religious performative acts, such as commands, dances, prayers, purifications, invocations, consecration and offering formulas, hymns, and perambulations. The terms *ke* 科 and *yi* 儀 are taken as class categories for such scriptures in the Daoist Canon (approx. 600) which contain rules for religious performances, such as fasting, prayers, and offerings. They stand in between the classes ‘(“magical”) methods’ (*fa* 法) and ‘monastic regulations’ (*jie* 戒, *lü* 律). Schipper²⁸ gives the following subordination of the terms: he translates *ke* 科 as a great (for example, two-day) service for a local community which may consist of some fifteen rituals (*yi* 儀), which include a succession of rites (*fa* 法): purification, invocation, etc. In contrast to *yi* 儀, which is a standard Chinese term for rite, the term *ke* 科 has a more Daoist implication in that it refers less to a moral than to a cosmological order in the sense of a hierarchical classification of beings. According to Lagerwey,²⁹ “the binome *k’o-yi* (*keyi* 科儀 jg) then, may be defined as ‘regular patterns of behavior that give concentrated expression to the order of things’”. They recreate the universe through returning to the Origin. The synecdochial term *zhaijiao* 齋醮 denotes the sphere of fasting and offering and thus the whole sphere of Daoist ritual. Of all the rituals, the Offering (*jiao* 醮) is the basic liturgical service conducted for the living which comprises rituals of communion and covenant. Fasts (*zhai* 齋) include rituals for the living and for the dead and comprise rituals to obtain merits. *Baibai* 拜拜 is a general term for worship. It also means a religious festival or any kind of ritual or festive event. It is also frequently used in colloquial popular language. In opposition to Confucian ritual, only a small part of these religious performative acts, which are performed by ritual spe-

²⁸ Cf. K. Schipper, *The Taoist Body* (1982), foreword by N. Girardot, trans. K.C. Duval (Berkeley, 2000), 74–76.

²⁹ See J. Lagerwey, *Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (London, 1987), 286.

cialists, themselves realize the cosmic order. Great rituals and small rites have to be distinguished: small rites are part of the daily practice of healing, exorcising, and purifying individuals. By contrast, the great rituals, which contain many rites, concern groups of people and may be divided in funerary services for the ancestors (kin rituals, called 'somber', *you* 幽, referring to the world of the dead) and in services for the gods (Heaven rituals, called 'pure', *qing* 清, referring to Heaven).³⁰

The Buddhist terms *li* 禮 and *bai* 拜 (also *libai* 禮拜) denote many different sorts of inner and outer reverence, worship and adoration acts (*vādana*). *Yi* (*shi*) 儀(式) denotes only the outer formal aspect of the performative ceremonial act, the visible part as expression of worship. *Yigui* 儀軌 is an expression for a genre of Buddhist esoteric literature continuing the vedic *kalpa sūtras*, which contains prescriptions for secret ceremonies and rituals, secret ritual methods such as mudras and mantras, and rules of behavior. *Gong* 供 are Pūjā-offerings and *foshi* 佛事 or *fashi* 法事 are expressions for all kinds of services that are carried out to honor the Buddha or the Dharma. The semantic field of all Chinese generic terms denoting ritual always includes the semantic realm of rules, precepts, and discipline. On the generic level, the concepts of ritual and rule are never differentiated terminologically. In the Confucian and Daoist traditions, the different rituals basically serve to reenact the cosmic order that has been disturbed or endangered either by human non-ritual behavior (Confucianism) or by powers of darkness (Daoism). Since the cosmic order is envisioned as a moral order and the rites embody cosmic order, as liturgical matrices on which conduct must be modeled the rites are taken to carry moral meaning. That is why they are so closely related to moral precepts and rules.

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Joachim Gentz

³⁰ See Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 72–76.

Egyptian

The few Egyptian terms that allow of being associated with our concept ‘ritual’ are distributed between two aspects, ‘prescription’ and ‘performance’.³¹ For ‘ritual’ in the sense of ‘prescription’ (what is to be done and how), there are two expressions: *tp-rd* and *n.t-ꜥ*, both of which can be translated as ‘ritual prescription’. The former is based on the word for ‘foot’ and thus means as much as guidance, orientation; the latter is based on the word for ‘arm’ or ‘hand’ (‘that which belongs to the hand’; it is unclear if it means ‘action’, or ‘handbook’, ‘manual’, yet for the latter there is the word *jmj-dr.t*, ‘what is in one’s hand’). In association with *jjj*, ‘to do, carry out, make’, *jjj n.t-ꜥ* means ‘to perform a ritual’, while *jjj tp-rd* means ‘to make or enact a prescription’. *Tp-rd* also means ‘order’ (cf. Hebrew *siddur* and *sefer*). For ‘ritual’ in the sense of ‘performance’, there is the expression *jjj-j ḥ.t*, ‘to do things’ (‘to sacrifice’, especially as the title of the king as the “lord of the sacrificial cult”). For ‘to sacrifice’, there are a number of other expressions with *jb.t*. The expression *jb.t-ntr* (‘divine things’) denotes both ‘divine sacrifice’ and ‘sacrificial ritual’, and is often best rendered as ‘sacred action’, ‘service’, ‘cult’. The word for celebration, *h3b*, also appears in two forms that are distributed between the aspects ‘performance’ and ‘prescription’: as a masculine noun, *h3b* means ‘celebration’; as a feminine noun, *h3b.t*, it means ‘order of festivals, list of festivals, celebratory ritual, celebratory role’. The expression *bs*, which occasionally is to be rendered as ‘rite’, comes from the word ‘to initiate’ and is related to secret rites into which one has to be initiated, just as in the case of the more common word *š3.w*, ‘secrets’. Then there are, of course, also expressions for specific ritual actions, such as ‘purification’ (*wḥ*), ‘libation’ (*jr.t qbḥ*), ‘burning incense’ (*jr.t sntr*), ‘slaughtering’ (*sft*), ‘transfiguration’ (*s3ḥ.w*), ‘to worship, worship’ (*dw3*), ‘to perform the sacrificial litany’ (*wdn*).

For the Egyptian concept of ritual, its proximity to ‘law’ and ‘prescription’ is important—rites are prescribed actions that must be executed on certain occasions and whose execution has to occur in strict accordance with the prescription—as is its proximity to the concept

³¹ The article “Rituale” in the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, V, 271–285 (W. Helck) provides no references on terminology.

of the secret. Rituals are performed partly in public, as in the case of processional celebrations, or they exclude the public, which is normally the case for Egyptian rituals.

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Jan Assmann

Greek

The (ancient) Greek language does not have a word that corresponds to the modern notion of a 'ritual'. Instead, it uses different words that designate specific rituals: *thysía*, for example, designates a sacrifice offered to the gods, *enagismós*, a sacrificial offering to the dead, *spondé* a libation for the gods, *choái* a drink-offering to the dead, etc. Similarly, the general word for 'festival' (*heorté*) is often replaced by a paraphrase, which lists the main components of a festival: "a procession, a contest and a sacrifice" (*pompè kai agòn kai thysía*).

Nonetheless, several terms that belong to the semantic field 'to act', 'action', can be used in a more general sense to designate rituals, though without encompassing all rituals. The paraphrase *hierà poièîn* ('to perform the sacred things/rites') may be used in this sense, with *hiera* referring to ritual actions concerning the gods. Another paraphrase that can be used as a very general term in connection with ritual actions is *therapeúein tous theús* ('to serve the gods', that is, to perform cultic actions; cf. *sébein*, 'to revere').

Three other words, which belong to the semantic field 'to act', 'to perform', 'to do'—the verb *teleîn* (cf. the substantive *teleté*), the participle *drómēna*, and the substantive *órgia* (plural)—are used almost exclusively in connection with the rituals of mystery cults and initiation. *Teléō* ('to perform', 'to execute', 'to fulfill') is used in the specific sense of 'to initiate' (usually into a mystery cult, but also to initiate a priest), but also/as well as in the more general sense of 'to perform' (for example, *hierà* or *thusían teleîn*, 'to perform sacred rites or a sacrifice'); the word *teleté* expresses the mystic rites practiced at initiation. *Drómēna* ('the things done', from *drân*, 'to act, to perform', for example, *hierà drân*, 'to perform a sacrifice') is the term that comprises all the mystical rites. The word *órgion*, etymologically connected

with *ergon* ('work', 'deed'), from *érdo* ('to work', 'to do', 'to perform'; but also in a more specific sense: 'to sacrifice'), is the word that most closely corresponds to 'ritual'. Although it is most commonly used only to designate secret rites, it is also attested in the more general meaning of 'rites' in the service of gods. Similarly, *orgiázein* ('to perform orgies') usually means the celebration of rites in the cult of Dionysos, but it can also designate any ritual service to gods.

Instead of using a word that corresponds to our notion of a ritual, the Greeks often use the general term *tà nomizómēna* ('the actions prescribed by custom') in order to refer to ritual actions, not only of a religious nature. The ancient lexicographer Harpokration, for example, gives the following definition of *orgiázein* in his lexicon (s.v. *orgeônes*): "*orgiázein* means to sacrifice and to do the actions prescribed by custom" (*orgiázein gár estí tò thyein kai tà nomizómēna poiéîn*).

This brief—and incomplete—survey of Greek words used in connection with rituals suggests that the Greek concept of rituals emphasizes the performance of (specific) actions prescribed by custom. This can be clearly seen in the following anecdote (Athenaios VII 297d/e): "The Boiotians sacrifice to the gods those eels of the Kopaic Lake which are of surpassing size, putting wreaths on them, saying prayers over them, and casting barley-corns on them as on any other sacrificial victim; and to the foreigner who was utterly puzzled at the strangeness of this custom and asked the reason, the Boiotian declared that he knew one answer, and he would reply that one should observe ancestral customs, and it was not his business to justify them to other men".

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Angelos Chaniotis

Hebrew

There are basically three words that, in some way or the other, cover the meaning of 'ritual' in Hebrew: (1) *ʿabodāh*, (2) *puḥān*, and (3) *teqes* (or sometimes *tekes*). However, none of these words has the same basic meaning or the same extension as the English word 'ritual'.

The basic meaning of *ʿabodāh* is 'labor, work'. From Biblical times on, the term also denoted the whole complex of the temple cult in Jerusalem. Occasionally, however, in Biblical Hebrew, it is used for specific ritual prescriptions, such as the eating of the unleavened bread during Passover (Ex. 13:5). The term *ʿabodāh* was always restricted to the Jewish ritual and never denoted rituals outside Judaism, unless the adjective *zarāh* ('foreign') was added. The compound *ʿabodāh zarāh* may denote a foreign cult as a whole, as well as the object of this cult, for example, an idol. The latter meaning is predominant. Moreover, there are some word compounds that are parallel to *ʿabodāh zarāh*, such as *ʿabodat elīlīm* (literally 'the cult of idols') or *ʿabodat kokābīm* (literally 'the cult of stars'), which generally have the same meaning as *ʿabodāh zarāh*. We may conclude, then, that the term *ʿabodāh* can be seen to a certain degree as an emic equivalent to the etic concept of 'ritual'. As such, it denotes a complex of ritual prescriptions, as well as a single ritual. However, it differs from the etic concept of 'ritual' by the fact that it is never used as a comparative concept, but is either restricted to the Jewish cult or, with the aforementioned compounds, confined to non-Jewish rituals.

Closer parallels to the etic concept of 'ritual' can be seen in the term *puḥān*, which first occurred in Rabbinic Hebrew. Its basic meanings are 'service' and 'worship'. The term is more or less used equivalently to *ʿabodāh*, which may be seen, for example, in Sifre Deut. § 41. Here, within the context of an exegesis of Dan. 6:17, the question arises as to whether worship (*puḥān*) existed in Babylonia. The actual meaning of the question is whether a sacrificial service existed in Babylonia and the answer is given by the explanation that as the sacrifice service is called *ʿabodāh* ('labor'), so is the prayer called *ʿabodāh* ('labor'), that is, there is no 'service' but 'prayer' in Babylonia. In general, *puḥān* is used less frequently than *ʿabodāh*. Only in modern Israeli Hebrew does *puḥān* appear as a definite equivalent for the

English ‘worship’, ‘cult’, or ‘ritual’, and in this manner it can be used for Jewish as well as non-Jewish ‘rituals’.

Like *pulhān*, the term *teqes* (or *tekes*) also first occurred in Rabbinic Hebrew, but its general use is even less frequent than the former. *Teqes* is derived from Greek τάξις and its basic meaning is ‘order’, but it also covers ‘ceremony’ or ‘ritual’, Jewish as well as non-Jewish ones. In modern Israeli Hebrew, it also has the meaning of ‘protocol’.

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Hans-Michael Haußig

Hittite

Many Hittite texts from the second millennium BCE are usually characterized or catalogued by modern scholars as “ritual texts” or “festival rituals”,³² mainly based on their contents. These texts indeed give (brief) descriptions of how to perform rituals or ceremonies. There are two central terms, namely *aniur* and EZEN₄, and a number of related words, but they all refer to specific kinds of rituals.

The word *aniur* (sometimes also written with logograms, such as KIN, SISKUR, or SISKUR, which also can be applied to other Hittite readings) can be taken as the generic Hittite term for ‘ritual’, as can be derived from such expressions as: “When I perform the great ritual on behalf of a man” (KUB 32.9+ rev. 36: *man antuhšan šalli aniur aniyami*) or “She arranges the ritual” (KBo 15.19 i 18: *aniur handaiuzzi*). Sentences like “I am performing the ritual of/against impurity” (KUB 12.58 ii 31: *paḫannaš aniur aniškimi*) or “When the morning comes, the king performs . . . the ritual of the house, the ‘pure’ ritual” (KUB 24.5+ obv. 28f: *mahhan lukzi nu=za haššuš . . . paḫannaš aniur parkui aniur iyazi*) otherwise make clear that *aniur*

³² E. Laroche, *Catalogue des textes hittites* (Paris, 1971), no. 390–470, 591–724.

as a generic term can also be used for a special kind (or part) of a concrete ritual. The etymology of *aniur* is uncertain; some favor a relation to Latin *onus* ('load'), but it may be more convincing to interpret the verbal basis of *aniur* as one way of expressing (perhaps solemnly) the verb 'to do'.³³

In Luwian, another Anatolian language closely related to Hittite, *malhašša* is the general term for 'ritual', as we learn from the phrase "master of the ritual" (*malhaššaššiš* EN-*aš*), which corresponds to the Hittite phrase (*aniuraš* EN-*aš*).

Besides this generic term for 'ritual', some other nouns in Hittite refer to special rituals: *maldeššar* may mean a special ritual in fulfillment of a vow, while *mukeššar* can refer to a ritual to evoke gods or the dead. But both nouns have a broader semantic field: *maldeššar* also means 'recitation' (cf. etymologically German 'melden') or 'vow'; *mukeššar* in most contexts simply means 'evocation' and not a special ritual of evocation.

The second generic term is EZEN₄. A phonetic Hittite reading of this logogram has yet to be determined. While *aniur* refers to rituals that deal with the removal of all kind of 'impurity' or harm, EZEN₄ is the technical term for (ritual) actions concerning the cult that mainly the king and/or the queen (or sometimes even a prince) performed in honor of the gods. In absolute use, EZEN₄ refers to the description of cultic acts (processions, ceremonies for the deities, and the like), but in compound construction the word is semantically restricted to refer to a special festival, and we know of at least eighty different festivals (EZEN₄) celebrated in the Hittite capital. The two most important of these festivals during the New Hittite Empire in the 14th and 13th centuries BCE—the EZEN₄ AN.TAH.ŠUM and the EZEN₄ *nuntariyašha*—were celebrated in spring and fall, respectively, both lasting more than one month.

While we can take EZEN₄ as the generic term covering all rites and ceremonies that make up all the festival, it is worth mentioning some further interesting terms. *Hazzūwi-* means 'ceremony', which is part of the cultic entertainment of the gods. The "masters of the ceremony" (KUB 20.19 iii 2: LÚ.MEŠ *hazzūwaš*) belong to the cultic staff, and we also read in a text that there are "no ceremonies

³³ See further J. Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*, vols. 1–2 (Berlin, 1984), 66–71.

for the gods” (KBo 10.20 i 2: DINGIR.MEŠ-*aš hazziwi* NU.GÁL *kuiki*), but also about “ceremonies (and) festivals of the house/palace” (KBo 2.8 iv 6: *nu=kan hazziwi* EZEN₄ É-*aš*). Such references show that *hazziwi-* is also a ritual term, but does not refer to ‘ritual’ in general. The same is the case with *šaklai-*, whose semantic field ranges from ‘customary behavior’, ‘rule’, ‘privilege’, to ‘rite’ or ‘ceremony’, especially ‘rites’ performed for different deities. Oracular questions are sometimes raised to make clear which rite should be carried out for the deity (cf. KUB 5.6 i 44–45: *naš ŠA DINGIR-LIM šaklai punuššer*). But also offering food and drink to the deity is part of such a ceremony (cf. KUB 13.4 iii 69–70: *nu=kan mahhan DINGIR.MEŠ-aš šaklain aššanuzi DINGIR-LIM-ni adanna akuwanna pai*). Though both *hazziwi-* and *šaklai-* refer to cultic and ritual behavior, these words never denote ‘ritual’ or ‘festival’ as generic terms.

Many texts of the Hittite cuneiform corpus refer to religion and official cult in Anatolia in the second millennium BCE, by providing us with detailed descriptions of ritual acts and behavior. According to terminology, we can distinguish two types: *aniur* is used for rituals that treat an individual person to counteract magic, to remove impurity, to help somebody to recover his/her health again or to re-integrate him or her into Hittite society; on the other hand, EZEN₄ is used for the ritual performance of festivals, including the feeding of gods and the entertainment of people alike in the course of such festivals.

Further reading

V. Haas, *Materia Magica et Medica Hethitica* (Berlin, 2003), 26–28.

Manfred Hutter

Hopi

The Hopi language is spoken by a Puebloan people of northeastern Arizona. The exact number of speakers is difficult to estimate, but the *Hopi Dictionary* places the number between 5,000 and 10,000 speakers (there are about 11,000 Hopis, but not all of them speak the language).³⁴ Hopi is a separate branch of the Northern Uto-

³⁴ *Hopi Dictionary. Hopiikwa Lavàytutuveni. A Hopi-English Dictionary of the Third Mesa Dialect* (Tucson, 1998).

Aztec language family (the other branches are Californian and Numic; the Southern family consists of Tepiman, Taracahitan, and Corachol/Aztec). The Hopi language consists, technically, of four dialects: one on First Mesa, two on Second Mesa, and one on Third Mesa. This section is based on the Third Mesa dialect.

Hopi religion is extremely ritualized, and there are several terms for 'ritual'. The most important term is the cover term *wimi*, which the aforementioned *Hopi Dictionary* defines as follows: "n. 1. religious rite, ritual, ceremony, religion, religious practices open only to initiates, esoteric rites. ~t ang momngwit muuyawuy epyangwu. The leaders of ceremonies go by the moon (to determine their respective dates).— Maraw momoymuy ~'am. The Maraw ceremony is a religious practice carried out by women. — Hopi ~t.sa enang sutsep hintsakma. The Hopi do [sic] everything incorporating religion with it. — Nu' pay iwimiy ang nukwangkuyvanta. I'm going through my religious ceremonies in good stead. 2. (met., poss.) habit. Pam mōoti pas kwayngaptat pu' nōsngwunūqey put ~'yta. Going to the bathroom prior to eating is a habit with him." The term often takes the suffix form in the names of specific ceremonies, such as *Alwimi* (Al or 'Two-Horn' ceremony), *Katsinwimi* (Kachina ceremonies), *Lakonwimi* (Lakon ceremony), and *Wuwtsimwimi* (Wuwtsim ceremony). When referring to religious societies or offices in those societies, the stem is used as a prefix, such as *wimkya* ('member or initiate of a society'), *wimmomngwi* ('society chief'), *wimna'at* (his or her 'ceremonial father'), *wimtawi* ('ritual song'), and *wimnavoti* ('knowledge of an esoteric religious practice').

The stem is also used in verb constructions such as *wimkyati* ('become initiated as'), *wimmatsiwa* ('be given a ceremonial name'), *wimta* ('introduce a religious practice', 'make a new ceremony'), and *wimtwoylata* ('induct' or 'initiate', 'mark with a badge of priesthood by initiation into a religious society').

There are other terms used for rituals, such as *hihimu* ('various things'), from *himu*, ('thing?'). In its accusative form, it can be used to refer to a ceremony just like *wimi*, as in *Marawhiita* ('Maraw thing?', that is, Maraw ceremony). In fact, a combination of the two terms has also been attested by the *Hopi Dictionary*: *wimhimu* ('ritual object' or 'practice'). A very common indefinite form often used to denote actual ritual practice is the verb *hintsatskya* ("they are performing something"). Parallel uses of the term are *swohintsatskya* ("they performed it jointly"), *tsakohintsatskya* ("they performed it like amateurs"), and *kwangwahintsakngwu* ("he performed really well as a rule"). I have also found a nominal form: *wukohintsakpi* ('a very involved performance'),

and the *Hopi Dictionary* records the terms *wimhitsuksakpi* ('religious practice[s] and ritual[s] open only to initiates') and *pavasiwhintsakpi* ('ritual practice'). The latter stem is a term indicating prayer: *pavasiwa* ('be engaged in ritual supplication', 'intensive common prayer and ritual in esoteric session').

Wümi, thus implies the esoteric knowledge of matrilineal clans and their associated secret societies (both male and female), which are passed on through oral traditions, secret initiations, public ceremonies, songs, dances, and masked performances; and the possession of which is evidenced by various privileges, objects, properties, and tracts of land. Thus the term implies ritual knowledge, object, person, and action.

I have argued elsewhere that the Hopi worldview envisions a causal chain of givens to which esoteric knowledge and its expression through ritual are integral: "The Hopi conceive of human life as an integral part of a chain reaction. It is a logical sequence of givens: proper attitude and the careful completing of ceremonials bring the clouds, which drop their moisture and nourish their children (the corn and vegetation). The crops are harvested and human life is regenerated, the stages of life continue and the Hopi ideal is reached: to become old and die in one's sleep."³⁵ The causal chain depends on individual morals, especially those of the chiefs, and on the proper completion of the ceremonies. To complete ceremonies properly, one needs to be initiated into clan knowledge and tradition, maintain a 'ritual attitude' to life, that is, *pam qatsit aw hintsaki* ("he or she works for life"), and maintain a pure heart and good intentions. There is also an evil causal chain, which is the inverse of the good one and is expressed through the activities of witches and sorcerers, which in Hopi thought are evil by definition.³⁶

All Hopi individuals are initiated before puberty into one of the two societies that perform the Kachina masked dances, the *Powamuywimkyam* and the *Katsinwimkyam*. Over the course of a lifetime, any man or woman can simultaneously be an initiated member of several esoteric societies and, thus, spend a large amount of time engaged in ritual activity. There were about ten major ceremonies

³⁵ A.W. Geertz, "A Typology of Hopi Indian Ritual", *Temenos* 22 (1986), 41–56, here 48.

³⁶ For more information, see A.W. Geertz, "Ethnohermeneutics and Worldview Analysis in the Study of Hopi Indian Religion," *Numen* 50 (2003), 309–348.

performed by the various secret societies during the year, some of which could take up to three weeks. The usual time span was nine days (an initial day accompanied by two sets of four days). Modern time schedules, however, have favored the much shorter Kachina dances, which take only four days. Only a few of the major ceremonies are still being performed today.

The broader range of semantic nuance in the Hopi term for 'ritual' constitutes the major difference between the English and Hopi terms. Whereas the English term is more precise and restricted, the Hopi term comes closer to our understanding of 'religion'.

Dictionaries and further reading

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Armin W. Geertz

Japanese

For the purpose of this article, 'rituals' shall be understood as standardized, repetitively performed actions that possess a political, administrative, or religious significance. The Japanese language has not produced a general term for this range of possible meanings. The relevant texts use either different terms or the proper names of the actions.

Etymologically, the term *matsurau* ('to visit the Gods') came to be identified with the word *matsuru*, meaning 'to worship' or 'to dedicate something to a god' (*kami*). In ancient Japan, the term *matsuru*, or rather *matsurigoto*, combined the meanings of 'government' and 'ritual feast'. This concept was re-invoked after the Meiji Restoration (1868) through the proclamation of *saisei itchi* ('the unity of religion and politics').

The term *matsuri* and its Sino-Japanese reading *sai* were used to designate festivals of sacrifice, supplication to the gods, thanksgiving, and purification, all of which initially possessed some relation to the

Emperor (Tenno). With the development of seasonal festivals and festivals of seasonal change in Shinto shrines, the application of the terms *matsuri* or *sai* was extended to cover also those festivities, as the words *reisai*, the annual shrine festival, or *jichinsai*, the Shinto consecration of a building site, show. Many *matsuri* comprise an initial, solemn part conducted by priests called *saigi*, and an informal, celebratory part in which the laymen participate, the latter often being a modern addition.

In a Buddhist context, one can cite the terms *e* ('assembly'), as in *hōe* ('Buddhist service'), and *shiki* ('rite', 'form'), as in *sōshiki* ('funeral rite'). However, religious actions that follow a fixed pattern are often designated within both the Shinto and the Buddhist traditions by their proper names, such as *kuyō* ('offering to the ancestors'), *kitō* ('prayer') or *zazen* ('ritual sitting'). The common religion of Japan, which is usually referred to as 'folk religion', encompasses an abundance of practices that follow a prescribed pattern.

To the present day, no single meta-lingual term has emerged out of this multitude of different practices. There has been some theorizing about the meaning of practices and ceremonies, however, as the Sōtō-Zen teachings on the unity of practice and enlightenment attest. The modernization of Japan began in the second half of the 19th century as a monumental project of translating Western works on the natural and human sciences. In the process of establishing itself in Japan, the academic discipline of religious studies took over crucial theories and terms from its Western models. Terms such as 'religion', 'magic' and 'belief' were introduced as analytic categories, often without any consideration of the applicability of these terms to an analysis of Japanese religions. Likewise, the term 'ritual' was appropriated without much reflection and translated into Japanese with the term *girei*, which has a long prehistory in Chinese and Buddhist texts. The definition of *girei* in the relevant dictionaries largely draws on theoretical outlines of Western research. Japanese scholars of religious studies often pursue the division of religious teaching and practice inherent in the term ritual/*girei* and thus present a distorted view of Japanese religion. The term ritual/*girei* as used in the discourse on religion in Japan not only implies the division of religious teaching and practice but also demotes religious practice to a status below that of religious teaching. In the face of this Christian, more specifically Protestant polemic inherent in the term, it would have been surprising, indeed, if an emic equivalent

had been found in Japan. Since religious acts form the core of Japanese religions, it is not necessary to designate them as such with a discrete term.

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Inken Prohl

*Mongolian*³⁷

Despite having been incorporated into the larger religio-cultural context of Tibetan Buddhism, the indigenous religious traditions are still present as a separate autochthonous tradition even in present-day Mongolia. If we consider the Mongolian Buddhist context that is heavily dependent on Tibetan Buddhism,³⁸ we may take the Mongolian *jang üile* as an appropriate term to denote 'ritual'. *Jang üile* is a composite expression, formed by the components *jang* ('character', 'disposition', 'habit', 'custom') and *üile* ('action', 'deed'). Translated literally, the term signifies 'actions that are performed out of habit'. Lessing gives the translation "manner or method of doing, religious ceremony",³⁹ and adds as the Tibetan equivalent *cho ga*.⁴⁰ Thus the term *jang üile* translates the Tibetan *cho ga*. This is verified in the translations of Tibetan ritual texts into Mongolian.⁴¹

After the conversion of the Mongols to Buddhism, the indigenous texts that the Shamans had recited orally up to that date were partially written down. The orally transmitted texts were collected by

³⁷ The following reflections are tentative and should be taken as provisional. More research has to be carried out in order to determine the exact meaning and use of the terms suggested here.

³⁸ Tibetan terminology is discussed in a separate entry.

³⁹ F.D. Lessing et al., *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1960), 1034.

⁴⁰ For this term, see the essay on Tibetan.

⁴¹ See V.L. Uspensky, *Catalogue of the Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs in the St. Petersburg State University Library*. With assistance from O. Inoue, edited and foreword by T. Nakami (Tokyo, 1999), 365–367.

researchers and later published in written form. We have to ask whether the term *jang üile*, used in the Buddhist translation language, is being extended to these non-Buddhist texts, and thus serves as an abstract literary category as it does in the Tibetan language.

The evidence from the indigenous Mongolian sources clearly shows that only the texts heavily influenced by Buddhism use the term *jang üile*. Several texts that describe the rituals to be performed for the deity of the hearth-fire bear the title *ghal-un tngri takiqui-yin jang üile* (“offering-ritual to the fire-tngri”). Most of the ritual texts of the indigenous religious tradition, however, use the term *yosun* instead of *jang üile*. Mongolian *yosun* is a broad and rather unspecific term, already used in the oldest written Mongolian source, the *Secret History of the Mongols* dating from 1228 CE. Signifying, among other meanings, a “generally accepted rule, traditional custom, habit, usage”,⁴² it encompasses the cultural, social, and religious norms and customs that specify Mongolian culture as distinct and unique from the surrounding cultures. *Yosun*, however, is a term that has different meanings dependent on the context. It may be translated as ‘way of living’, but also as ‘political rule’ or ‘mode of government’. In our context, it has to be understood as ‘generally accepted method of doing’.

To conclude: We find evidence of the use of two different terms that serve as emic equivalents of ‘ritual’. In a religio-cultural context heavily influenced by Buddhism the term *jang üile* is preferred, whereas in an indigenous religious context *yosun* is used. Both terms, however, have in common that they point to the way, or method, of doing something. They both describe performative actions.

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Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz

Old Norse

There are several terms referring to ritual actions in Old Norse. The verb *blóta* (‘to sacrifice’, ‘to worship the god[s]’), for instance, appears

⁴² Lessing et al., *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 435.

frequently in sacrificial contexts, while *vígja* ('to consecrate') is evidenced in connection with initiations. There are also expressions for divinations, such as *fella blótsþánn* ('to cast lot-twigs'). All these terms have a restricted signification implying certain activities often considered as religious. Old Norse (ON) *siðr* (Gothic *sidus*, Old High German *situ*, Old English *sidu*, *seodu*), however, is a more general term connoting 'custom', 'habit', 'manner', 'conduct', 'moral life', 'religion', 'faith', and 'ritual', ceremonial'.

In the Icelandic Sagas (13th century), relating to the historical and cultural conditions in pre-Christian Scandinavia, *siðr* is attested in religious and/or ritual contexts. The Christian author Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241), for instance, described the sacrificial cult in Trøndelag, Norway, during the 10th century: "It was ancient custom (*forn siðr*) that when sacrifice (*blót*) was to be made, all farmers were to come to the *hof* (sanctuary, multifunctional building)" (*Hákonar saga góða*, 14). In this passage, Snorri describes the public sacrificial rituals, the holy objects, and the participants in cult activities. Since he describes these actions as something taking place in ancient times, he used the concept *forn siðr* ('ancient custom'). In the compound *siðvenja* ('custom', 'practice'), the term relates to other kinds of 'ritual' activities, such as death ceremonies. The *Eyrbyggja saga* 33 mentions the last service to the dead (*nábjargir*) that Arnkel rendered to his father Thorolf. He wrapped some clothes around Thorolf's head and "got him ready for burial according to the custom of the time (*éptir siðvenju*)". In *Ynglingasaga* 36, Snorri uses the term *siðvenja* when describing the rituals of the funeral and inheritance feast (*erfi*) after the death of King Önund, such as the libation ceremonies, vows, and the ritual entering of the high-seat.

The term *siðr* also occurs in contexts where the religious element is less apparent. In *Egils saga* 25 (13th century, but set in pre-Christian period), Grim says to his companions when coming into the presence of the king: "It is said to be the custom (*siðr*) here to meet the king unarmed". It seems as if the term here is primarily concerned with the formality that had to be observed in the presence of the king as the physical embodiment of political power. On the other hand, ancient Scandinavian rulers appeared in important cultic roles and legitimised their power with religious symbolism. Thus a religious dimension may also be traceable in this situation. In chapter 65 of the same saga, the traditional single combat, the ON *hólm-gangr*, is referred to as *lóg, . . . ok forn siðvenja* "law, . . . and ancient

custom”. Such ritualized duels were means of resolving legal disputes. Most likely, they also included religious elements. In medieval legal texts, *siðr* is used in a general sense to denote traditional customary laws. According to the Swedish Östgöta-Law (Bygd. 44. §1), for instance, (Old Swedish) *siðvænna* (‘custom’, ‘law’) was supposed to be followed when fire damage occurred.

There is an interesting authentic piece of evidence of *siðr* in a 10th century poem composed by Hallfred Ottarsson. This poet had met the Christian King Olaf Tryggvason, but still respected the heathen gods. He tells us that he was reluctant to hate Odin because he now must serve Christ. Despite his doubts, he proclaimed his loyalty to the new faith: “This ritual/religion/faith (*siðr*) has now come to the prince of the men of Sogn [i.e. King Olaf], who has forbidden [heathen] sacrifices (*blót*)”. In connection with conversion, the ancient customs and heathen rituals (*hinn forni siðr; heidinn siðr*) were contrasted with Christian liturgy and beliefs (*hinn nýi siðr, kristinn siðr*). ON *siðaskipti* (‘change of faith/custom/ritual’, ‘conversion’) indicates that the term had gained wider religious connotations in conversion contexts and referred to ‘religion’ in a more general sense. At this stage of its semantic development, the term seems to encompass aspects of faith and belief, as well as those of religious usage. *Heilagra manna sôgur* (II, p. 276) states: “he had fully converted to one religion (*sið*), to belief in God the Father”.

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Olof Sundqvist

Persian

Although Zoroastrianism, the pre-Islamic religion of Iran, is a ritualistic faith, no specific term for 'ritual' seems to exist in Middle Persian. Since ritual plays a much lesser role in Islam, it is not surprising to find that no single, well-defined term for 'ritual' has developed in modern Persian.

For the noun 'ritual', Haïm gives *āyin-e parasteš*, *marāsem-e 'ebādat*, *dastur*, *dasturnāme-ye parasteš*. An on-line English-Persian dictionary (www.farsidic.com), which generally reflects modern usage, gives: *tašrifāt-e mazhabī*, *āyin-e parasteš*, *tašrifāt*. For 'religious rite', Haïm has *ša'āyer-e mazhabī*, *ādāb-e dīnī*. For 'rite', the on-line dictionary gives the translations: *farmān-e asāsi*, *marāsem*, *tašrifāt-e mazhabī*, *ādāb*.

Of these, *farmān-e asāsi* ('fundamental order', 'essential command'), is evidently based on an understanding of the term 'rite', which has little to do with 'ritual'. Similarly, *dastur*, ('rule', 'instruction', 'custom', 'permission'; (Junker and Alavi: "A: Instruktion, Vorschrift, Anweisung; B. Brauch, Sitte, Regel, Ordnung; C. Erlaubnis")), does not correspond to the concept of 'ritual' as most Westerners would understand it. Nor does it appear to be widely used in this sense in modern Persian usage. The more elaborate *dasturnāme-ye parasteš*, ('system of rules for worship') comes closer in that it reflects the idea of a prescribed sequence of actions connected with religious worship; nevertheless, the words are not given as an idiomatic expression in any of the standard dictionaries, and presumably represent an attempt to define what is meant by 'ritual' rather than being an idiomatic translation.

The expressions *āyin-e parasteš*, *marāsem-e 'ebādat*, *tašrifāt-e mazhabī*, *ša'āyer-e mazhabī*, and *ādāb-e dīnī* all consist of the construction 'noun + *ezāfet* (connecting particle) + qualifier (noun or adjective)'. The adjectives *mazhabī* and *dīnī* both mean 'religious, connected with religion'. Another synonym, though with some non-Islamic connotations, is the adj. *āyini*, deriving from Middle Persian *zōwēn* ('manner', 'custom', 'form', 'propriety') (MacKenzie). *Parasteš*, a verbal noun of Persian origin, means 'worship'; according to Haïm, it is a synonym of the (originally Arabic) term *'ebādat*, although the latter has stronger connotations of Islamic acts of devotion and ritual.

Of the nouns qualified by these terms, *marāsem* means 'ceremonies', 'formalities', 'observances', 'program' (Haïm, Junker-Alavi), and can be used, for example, for ceremonies connected with the Opening

of Parliament (Haïm). Haïm lists both *ādāb* and *āyin* as its synonyms. *ādāb* (the plural of *adab*: ‘politeness’, ‘courtesy’, ‘good breeding’) basically means ‘etiquette’, ‘formalities’, ‘ceremonies’, ‘rites’. According to Haïm, *āyin* means ‘rite’, ‘ceremony’, ‘custom’, ‘law’, ‘institution’, ‘religion’, ‘decoration’, ‘ornament’; Junker and Alavi give ‘rule’, ‘ceremony’, ‘doctrine’ (“Regel, Zeremonie, Doktrin”). As was said earlier, the term *āyin* is of pre-Islamic origin and carries some associations of non-Islamic religion. The word *tašrifāt* derives from the Arabic root š-r-f, which denotes the concept ‘noble’, and may originally have been used for ceremonies to honor someone (cf. *ra’is-e tašrifāt*, ‘master of ceremonies’; see Haïm). In modern Persian, it is used for ‘ceremonies’, ‘formalities’ (Haïm, Junker-Alavi). *šā’āyer*, the plural of *šā’ire*, means ‘rites’, ‘ceremonies’, ‘customs’.

The relatively imprecise definition of these terms is illustrated by the usage found in a book on religion, *Marāsem-e mazhabi va ādāb-e Zartoštīyān* (Teheran, 1372/1993–4), whose title can be translated as *Religious Rites and Customs of the Zoroastrians*. The initiation ceremony is referred to by the word *āyin* (‘rite’, ‘ceremony’, 158), and is said to be one of “the Zoroastrians’ religious rites” (*marāsem-e mazhabi-ye Zartoštīyān*). *āyin* (‘rite’, ‘ceremony’), is also used for festivals (226f.), wedding ceremonies (168f.), the last rites for the dead (194f.), and the investiture of priests (256f.). Only for the last two would the term ‘ritual’ seem wholly appropriate. *Marāsem-e āyini* is used regularly as synonym of *marāsem-e mazhabi* (e.g., 224), with the adjective *āyini* reflecting the wider sense of *āyin* as ‘religion’.

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Philip G. Kreyenbroek

Sami

Sami (Lappish), the western-most of the Uralic languages, is spoken by about 30,000 persons in central and northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and in northwestern Russia. The differences between the regional varieties are considerable and comparable to those between

the Romance languages. The words presented in this short survey are collected from the six largest Sami dialect groups: South (S.), Lule (L.), North (N.), Inari (I.), Skolt (Sk.), and Kildin (Kld.) Sami.

The words of the ritual terminology in Sami can be divided into three groups: words referring to the indigenous religion (which in the main was abandoned during the 18th century after several centuries of Christian missionary work), words referring to Christian practices, and words that are used regardless of religion and in non-religious contexts.

(1) There is no traditional Sami word for 'ritual' as a generic concept, but several words for different types of ritual activities, among them general words for 'sacrifice' like *värro* (L.), *uhre* (I.), *palvv* (Sk.), and *anntmušš* (Kld.), as well as words for special types of sacrifices, such as *tseegkuve* (S.: 'reindeer sacrifice'), and *sjiele* (S.: 'offering' ([of small things, like rings, pieces of metal, or glass beads])). Other words are related to the most important ritual specialist, the *noaidi*. His ritual activities were called *nåajtome* (S.) or *noaidevuohhta* (N.), and characterized by the verb *gievvut* ('act under the influence of a profound religious emotion'). Since his most important tool was the drum, there are several words for 'to drum'. One of them is *meevredh* (S.).

(2) Other words are solely used for Christian practices. *Gásta* (N.) (related to *gástat*, 'get wet') and *risttâm* (Sk.) are words for 'baptism', 'christening', whereas *skallos* (L.), *bassimállásat* (N.) (from *bassi*, 'sacred' and *mállásat* [pl.], 'meal at which there are guests'), and *pričas* (Sk.) are words for 'the Lord's supper', 'communion'. *Vihat* (pl.) means 'wedding', 'marriage (ceremony)', and *vihahus* (N.) means both 'wedding' and 'consecration of a church'. *Hávdádus* (N.) and *ruõk'kmõš* (Sk.) are words for 'burial', 'funeral'; *biedna* (L.), *tjåhkalvis* (L.), and *ruhkosat* (pl., N.) for 'prayer-meeting'; *girkomeanut* (pl., N.) for 'religious ceremony', and *ipmilbálvalus* for '(divine) service'.

(3) Of course, there are words that are not bound to any special religion, as well as words for non-religious rituals. Words such as *bálvalus* (N.): 'service', 'worship'), *meanut* (plur., N.): 'behavior', 'conduct', 'ceremonies'), and *oaffar* (N.): 'sacrifice'), are used both for indigenous and Christian ritualizations. The same is true for *juoigat* (N.): 'to perform a Sami chant'), and *namahit* (N.): 'name'), and the many words for greeting rituals, such as *buorástahttet* (L.: 'greet' [by saying *buoris*, "good day"]), *fårmastit* (L.: 'greet' [by embracing a person]), and *dearvvahit* (N.: 'greet' [by putting one's hand on a person's shoulder or shaking hands]).

Dictionaries

- H. Grundström, *Lulelappsk ordbok/Lulelappisches Wörterbuch* 1–4 (Schriften des Instituts für Dialektforschung und Volkskunde in Uppsala C/1; Uppsala 1946–54).
- G. Hasselbrink, *Südlappisches Wörterbuch* 1–3 (Schriften des Instituts für Dialektforschung und Volkskunde in Uppsala C/4; Uppsala, 1981–85).
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- K. Nielsen, *Lappisk ordbok/Lapp Dictionary* 1–3 (Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning B/17; Oslo, 1932–38).
- K. Nielsen and A. Nesheim, *Lappisk ordbok/Lapp Dictionary* 4–5. (Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning B/17; Oslo, 1945–62).

Further reading

- H. Rydving, “Shamanistic and postshamanistic terminologies in Saami”, Tore Ahlbäck (ed.), *Saami Religion* (Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis 12; Stockholm, 1987), 185–207.

Håkan Rydving

Sanskrit

In Sanskrit, there is no one single word or term that could be considered equivalent to ‘ritual’ (whatever it might mean), but a number of terms that come close to it:

1. *karma(n)*, *kriyā* (both from *kr-*, ‘to do’, ‘make’): ‘action’, ‘work’, ‘religious rite’, ‘ceremony’. In Vedic texts (ca. 1750–500 BCE), *karma* predominantly denotes a religious rite, especially the sacrifice (see below). From the early Upaniṣads onwards, it also denotes all deeds leading to the cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*), as well as the ethical perspective that good action leads to higher forms of life. *Karmakāṇḍa* means those parts of the Veda that are related to sacrificial rites and the merits resulting from them.

2. *saṃskāra* (from *sam-kr-*, ‘to put something correctly together’, ‘to make something perfect’; cf. Sanskrit from *samskṛta*, lit. ‘the well-formed [language]’): ‘making perfect’, ‘purificatory rite’, ‘rite’ in general, especially ‘lifecycle rite’, for example, *upanayana* (‘initiation’), *vivāha* (‘marriage’), *antyeṣṭi* (‘death ritual’); also, though it is not a *saṃskāra* in a strict sense, *śrāddha* (‘ancestor ritual’). The term often denotes the twelve ‘canonical’ life-cycle rites. As was aptly argued

by Brian K. Smith, through *saṃskāras* somebody is made fit or equivalent for the sacrifice or the holy, because gods only accept what is correct and perfect.⁴³

3. *pūjā* (probably from Skt. *pūj-*, 'to honor', possibly from Tamil *pūcu*, 'to anoint somebody with something'), 'worship', 'adoration', 'respect', 'homage'. *Pūjā* basically denotes the worship of deities according to a ritual script that traditionally includes sixteen elements of service (*upacāra*) that can be reduced to five essential parts (*pañcopacāra*): anointment of the deity (*gandha*, *anulepana*), flowers (*puṣpa*), incense (*dhūpa*), lights or lamps (*dūpa*), feeding of the deity (*naivedya*). The difference between it and Vedic rituals (see entry 4, below) is that in *Pūjās* all food is vegetarian, and that women and members of the 'low' Śūdra class (*varṇa*) are by and large also entitled to perform it. The *Pūjā* has been analyzed as honoring a deity like a respected guest (Thieme), a deliberated subordination under the power of the deity (Babb) or a commensual act that shows the union between worshipper and god (Fuller).

4. *yajña*, *yāga* (from *yaj-*, 'to sacrifice'): 'sacrifice', 'sacrificial rite'. In Vedic religion, there are essentially two major types of sacrifices: a) domestic sacrifices, for example, lifecycle rites (*saṃskāra*, see above) or morning and evening rituals (*agnihotra*, *saṃdhyā*); b) public rituals (*śrauta*) performed by a sacrificer (*yajamāna*) and a Brahmin priest. These rituals have been classified variously: according to the sacrificial objects, for example, vegetarian food (*haviryajña*, *iṣṭi*), human sacrifices (*puruṣamedha*), animal sacrifices (*paśubandha*, *aśvamedha*), sacrifices including pressing the *soma* drink (*agniṣṭoma*); according to the time, for example, new- and full-moon sacrifices (*darśapūrṇamāsa*); or according to the function, for example, royal consecration (*rājasūya*). The Vedic sacrifice is basically a fire sacrifice. If sacrificial objects are poured into the fire (*agni*), the sacrifice is also called *homa* (from *hu-*, 'to pour').

5. *utsava* (from *ud-sū*, 'to rise'),⁴⁴ *melā* (from *mil-*, 'to meet'): 'festival'. Both terms commonly denote communal festivals that are related to mythological events, the harvest cycle, ancestors, or pilgrimages

⁴³ B.K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion* (New York, 1989), 86.

⁴⁴ See, however, J. Gonda, "Skt Utsava—'festival'", in: *India antiqua. A volume of Oriental studies presented by his friends and pupils to Jean Philippe Vogel, C.I.E., on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his doctorate* (Leiden, 1947), 146–155, who derives *utsava* from *ut-su* ('to press').

(*ñrthayātrā*). Festivals often include worship (*pūjā*), sacrifices (*yajña*, *homa*, etc.), fasting, night vigil, dances, music, donations (*dāna*), and/or religious vows (*vrata*). Hindu festivals, sometimes also called *līlā*, ‘(divine) play’, are generally characterized by a large number of folk-religious elements.

6. *kalpa* (from *klp-*, ‘to bring something in proper order’; cf. *samkalpa* below): ‘A prescribed sacred rule’, ‘manner of acting’ (especially in rituals). *kalpa* generally refers to a set of ritual rules or laws that are prescribed and that one has to follow, but also to procedures or manners of acting. It does not refer to a specific ritual or ceremony.

Religious acts have been variously classified by Indian philosophers and theologians. A basic distinction is that between *laukika* (‘worldly’, ‘secular’) and *vaidika* (‘related to the Veda’, ‘religious’), or that between acts that are ‘compulsory’ (*nitya*), ‘occasional’ (*naimittika*), and ‘optional’ (*kāmya*). Sacrificial acts are further divided by different words, repetitive acts, numbers, accessory details, contexts, and names.⁴⁵ Moreover, the *mīmāṃsakas*, or hermeneutical interpreters of Vedic rituals, defined (*Śrauta*) sacrifices (*yāga*) by three constituents: *dravya* (material, substance), *devatā* (deity), and *tyāga* (abandonment).⁴⁶ This means that the sacrificer offers (and thereby abandons) substances to deities. P.V. Kane paraphrases it correctly: “*yāga* means abandonment of *dravya* intending it for a deity”.⁴⁷ In a *homa*, for instance, the sacrificer pours the substance *ghee* into the fire and thus abandons it for the sake of a deity.

Even more sophisticated than this emic definition of sacrifice is the scholastic point of the philosophical-hermeneutical *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* tradition that ritual/religious acts are divided into primary acts (*pradhāna* or *arthakarma*) and (several) subsidiary acts (*kratvartha* or *guṇakarma*).⁴⁸ The *mīmāṃsakas* argue that only primary acts bring about transcendental effects (*apūrvā*). For, according to them, every act is related to some material substance, but only in primary acts is the result not seen immediately or after some time. Thus the act of ‘thresh-

⁴⁵ Mīmāṃsāsūtra 2.1.1–2 and 2.2.21–24; see Ganganatha Jha, *Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources* (Varanasi, 2d ed. 1964), 235 ff.

⁴⁶ Cf. Mīmāṃsāsūtra 4.2.27.

⁴⁷ P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra* (Poona, 1974), vol. II/2, 983.

⁴⁸ Mīmāṃsāsūtra 2.1.6–8.

ing' serves to clean the corn used in a sacrifice; the result is seen immediately because the act is focused on subordinate material substance. However, in primary ritual acts the material substance is subordinate; the act relates in itself and its relation to *apūrva*. For the *mīmāṃsakas*, any Vedic injunction would be meaningless if the relationship between the sacrificial act and its future result were not separable.

According to the philosopher Kumāṛila⁴⁹ (7th century), *apūrva* is a potency (*yogyatā*) that is created by the sacrifice (not by the sacrificer!) and that makes it possible for the sacrificial act to show its result later, for example, in the heaven (*svarga*). Kumāṛila is well aware that 'worldly' acts, too, show their result only after some time, as do farming, eating, or studying, for example. From this general idea of causal efficiency of acts, he develops an elaborate and rather technical theory of the relationship between the primary and subsidiary acts regarding the accumulation or hierarchy of *apūrva* and smaller units of it. However, it is important that for Kumāṛila any correctly performed sacrificial act (that is, any act that follows Vedic injunctions) creates a persistent, never-ending potency that ontologically is not located in the capability of the sacrificer but exists in and of itself. This potency becomes a disposition (*saṃskāra*) in the sacrificer's soul, where it develops its results. Kumāṛila thus connects the efficacy of a sacrificial act with the sacrificer but not with his personal or individual motives or possibilities. Moreover, he also develops a theory of the unseen (*adr̥ṣṭa*) results of acts which forms the basis of nearly all Indian notions of *karman* and reincarnation.

The Mīmāṃsā classification of acts makes it clear that Indian scholars of ritual generally distinctively separated sacrificial acts from normal or worldly acts. This is also evident from the learned (*Śāstric*) prescription that all rituals should start with an intentional ritual act (*saṃkalpa*),⁵⁰ which *inter alia* implies a declaration of what the ritual is for. Any *saṃkalpa* ideally includes the following elements: 1) mantra (e.g. *om tatsad*), 2) *hic et nunc* (usually, *adyeḥa*), 3) place names, 4) time

⁴⁹ For the following, see also W. Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection. Explorations in Indian Thought* (New York, 1991), 300ff.

⁵⁰ See A. Michaels, "Saṃkalpa: The Beginning of a Ritual", J. Gengnagel, U. Hüsken, and S. Raman (eds), *Words and Deeds. Hindu and Buddhist Rituals in South Asia* (Ethno-Indology 1; Wiesbaden, 2005), 54–64.

parameters, 5) genealogical and kinship data, 6) personal name(s), 7) aim or purpose, 8) ritual action, 9) verb (mostly in present tense used as future tense). By means of such a declaratory formula, the performer of a specific ritual has to specify and identify himself in accordance with spatial, chronological and genealogical criteria.

From a more ordinary Brahmanic-priestly point of view, ritual activity results in religious merit (*punya*), which leads to fruition, enjoyment (*bhukti*), and liberation (*mukti*), but from an ascetic point of view, any ritual is *karma*, thus not the source of immortality but, on the contrary, a cause of suffering because it leads to rebirth and not final liberation. However, it is significant that in both positions ritual activity is considered to replace nature. Rituals are seen as constructions of a world with which man ritually identifies himself: “Man is born into a world made by himself” (Śatapathabrāhmaṇa 6.2.2.7). Only by ritual, but not by ‘normal’ (*karma*) action, can he be liberated. Thus, ritual action has to be separated from non-ritual action, as the Bhagavadgītā (3.9) clearly says: “this world is bound by the bonds of action (*karma*) except where that action is done sacrificially.” The difference between the Brahmanic and a renunciatory view of ritual lies in the fact that in the latter, ritual action is abandoned (cf. the term *saṃnyāsa*, that is, total abandonment) or interiorized. Renunciation, highly ritualized as it is, is therefore often declared as a non-ritual state.

In conclusion, one can say that in India in the sacrificial context there exists an awareness of ritual action but that is limited to Vedic-Brahmanic rites, whereas other forms of ritual action (festivals, etc.) are regarded as substantially different. In other words, within the Vedic-Brahmanic worldview it is always clear and demarcated (e.g. *saṃkalpa*) when ritual (sacrificial) action begins and where it ends. Whatever is not construed by ritual (sacrificial) action is not seen as ritual. This could be regarded as a kind of warning for modern ritual theory when ‘ritual’ is seen as a construction of acts that are regarded as separated from ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ action.

Further reading

A. Michaels, *Hinduism. Past and Present* (Princeton, 2003), 235–252 (with further references).

Axel Michaels

Tamiḷ

Tamiḷ signifiers for 'rite'/'ritual'/'ritualistic'/'ritualism'/'ceremony'/'cult'/'worship' are often Tamilized Sanskrit forms either preserved in their original Sanskrit (= Skt.) form as *tarcamam*, ("thus like"), or in Tamilized form as *tarpavam*, ("thus becoming"). An example of the former: Skt. *karaṇam*>T. *karaṇam*, 'rite', 'action'. 'Rite' has to be understood as a specific case of human action. An example of the latter is *kiriyā* > *kiriyai*, 'rite', 'action'.

There are common composites based on *caṭaṅku* and on *viṇai*. The former is a *tarpavam* of Skt. *ṣaḍ aṅga*> *caṭaṅku*, 'six limbs'. This is associated with a collection of texts known as the six Vedāṅgas. In these we find knowledge supplementary to the Veda including knowledge about rites/ritual, especially in the first Vedāṅga. Therefore, I interpret *caṭaṅku* as a ritual action that is evaluated by Hindus as being in accordance with the Vedāṅgas. When using Tamiḷ *caṭaṅku*, only very few Tamiḷs know the origin of the word. The meaning is lost for many, but the referent is clear to almost everyone. It refers to a rite/ritual/ceremony that is specified in compounds such as the following: *camaya-c-caṭaṅku*, ('religious rite/ritual/ceremony'), *caṭaṅku-murāi*, ('ritual order'), *caṭaṅkunerī*, ('ritualism'). *Caṭaṅku* alone makes Tamiḷs think of a ceremony performed at the pubescence of girls and at nuptials. *Caṭaṅkāka* means 'arrive at puberty (as a girl)'. When translating expressions like 'Hindu ritual' or 'myth and ritual', *caṭaṅku* should be chosen for 'ritual'. 'To perform a ritual' would be *caṭaṅkuceyya*.

Viṇai is a Tamiḷ word. It is commonly used to translate Skt. *karman*, 'action', which determines rebirth. It is also used as grammatical term for 'verb' and can mean 'that which is to be done'. It has also been adopted in the language of rituals in composites such as *camaya viṇaimurāi*, ('religious ritual order'). The Sanskrit word *karman* in the meaning of 'rite/ritual' may also be rendered as >*karumam* in Tamiḷ. There is no semantic change. *Karumam* may replace *viṇai* or alternate with it.

There is a signifier for 'worship' that is *valipātu*, meaning 'song of homage'. *Murukak kaṭavul valipātu* means 'worship of god Murukan'. What we call 'cult' is also *valipātu*, but 'ceremony' would be the aforementioned *viṇaimurāi* ('ritual order'). There is no specific term for liturgy; several words have to be used to explain it.

Finally, in Tamiḷ we find many specific terms for specific rituals. Knowing their meaning opens up a new and more precise knowledge

of them than the English signifiers. What in English is called ‘chariot festival’ is in Tamil *tēr-tīru-vilā* (‘holy festival for the chariot’). This is a temple procession with a chariot being drawn through streets. The chosen god, placed on the chariot, appears to the public. What in English is called ‘ritual hair cutting’ is in Tamil *muṭi koṭuttal* (‘giving of the tuft’) or *muṭi kāṇikkai*, (‘gift of the tuft’). Today this refers not only to the offering of a male’s tuft, but to the giving of males’, females’, and children’s complete hair-set. It has grown under a vow, and then, as a fulfillment of the vow, it is cut and offered to the god. What is called ‘body rolling’ is in Tamil *aṅka-p-pirataṭṭai*, (‘the limb’s [= body’s] rolling round’). The word *pirataṭṭai* or *pirataṭṭai* is a Tamil loanword from Sanskrit *pradakṣiṇā*. It refers to the ritual of men and women lying down on the ground and the (threefold) rolling clockwise around the temple. They act under a vow and the proceedings end in the fulfillment of this vow. What is called ‘piercing’ in English is in Tamil *tuḷaittal* (‘piercing’), being a verbal noun. The noun *tuḷai* means ‘hole’. The verbal noun means ‘making a hole’, ‘piercing’. It has also the extended meaning of ‘torturing’. What is called ‘hook swinging’ in English is a translation from Tamil *ceṭilāṭṭam* (‘post swinging’). Not a hook but a post is swinging.

Peter Schalk

Tibetan

Toni Huber’s remark that “there is no Tibetan category that corresponds well to either ‘ritual’ or ‘rite’, and no detailed classification of practices either”⁵¹ is likely to discourage everybody who embarks upon the project of trying to identify an emic Tibetan term that is equivalent to the Western term ‘ritual’. Huber’s remark, however, suggests that there exists a generally accepted, clear-cut definition of ‘ritual’ and ‘rite’ in cultural anthropology and religious studies. As this is not so, I dare to undertake the task to suggest an emic equivalent for ‘ritual’.

⁵¹ T. Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain. Popular Pilgrimage and Visionary Landscape in Southeast Tibet* (New York, Oxford, 1999), 232, n. 1.

Concerning Tibetan scientific and religious terminology, we are in the unique situation of being able to consult terminological dictionaries that were composed for the purpose of assigning a specific meaning to a word conventionally used in a different context. The oldest and at the same time most important terminological dictionary is the so-called *Mahāvvyutpatti*, composed in the 9th century CE in order to develop a standard language for the translations of Buddhist texts from the Sanskrit. The *Mahāvvyutpatti* gives as equivalent for the Sanskrit term *vidhi* the Tibetan *cho ga* (Mvy 4247), but sometimes also *bya ba* (Mvy 208(6)), the latter signifying 'action', 'deed'. In its original meaning, Tibetan *cho ga* signifies the method or way of doing something. It relates to action and the way actions are performed.

Beside this terminological assignation based on the Sanskrit term *vidhi*, further help in determining an emic equivalent for 'ritual' comes from the autochthonous differentiation of Tibetan literary categories. The literary category of *cho ga*⁵² comprises a bulk of texts dealing with specific actions (including speech) that are differentiated from other actions with regard to the goals pursued and the means by which these goals are pursued. The intended goals may be characterized as pragmatic-religiously orientated. Sarat Chandra Das (1981) and Rerich (1985) list ten kinds of *cho ga* (*cho ga bcu*) documented in texts, among them *bzung dkyil `khor cho ga* ('rituals of magical circles and figures painted on the ground and on paper'), *rim pa dbang gi cho ga* ('rituals of initiation and religious service'), *byin rlabs rab gnas gyi cho ga* ('rituals of empowerment and consecration'), *mnyes byed mchod pa`i cho ga* ('rituals for propitiation'), *mgron mchod gtor ma`i cho ga* ('rituals for *gtor-ma* offerings to a deity'), *sku gzugs tsha tsha`i cho ga* ('rituals for making miniature *tsha tsha*-images'), and *bkra shis tshe`i cho ga* ('rituals to secure a happy and long life').

In the spoken language the term *cho ga* is used to denote "an action which is performed following a close sequence of events".⁵³ However, the action does not necessarily imply a religious goal.

⁵² See Y. Bentor, "Literature on Consecration (Rab gnas)", J.I. Cabezon and R.R. Jackson (eds), *Tibetan Literature. Studies in Genre* (Ithaca, New York, 1996), 290–311, here 290.

⁵³ *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* (Xining, 1979), 236.

To sum up: As an emic equivalent for ‘ritual’ I suggest the Tibetan term *cho ga*. This term denotes the method, or way, of performing an action, mostly, but not necessarily, of a pragmatic-religious kind. Moreover, in Tibetan literature *cho ga* designates a specific literary genre, namely texts that deal with the performance of religious ceremonies and actions in general. In the modern spoken language, *cho ga* is used to characterize a specifically outlined, repetitive action that is performed within a specific succession of events. The action may be of a religious cum pragmatic orientation. We may thus conclude that where we apply the English term ‘ritual’ exclusively to religious performances, the range of the suggested emic equivalent is broader.

Further dictionaries and other materials

- Sakaki, Ryozauro (ed.), *Bonzo Kanwa Shiyaku Taiko, Honyaku Myogi Taishu. Mahāvvyutpatti*. Pts. I and II (Kyoto Teikoku Daigaku. Bunka Daigaku Soshō 3; Kyoto 1916–1925).
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Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz

Turkish

The Turkish language does not have a word covering the same semantics as the word ‘ritual’ in most European languages. Nevertheless, it does exist in Turkish as a loanword, but only as a scientific term, as well as the adjective derived from it: *ritual*.

Several Turkish words have the meaning ‘festivity’, ‘celebration’, ‘ceremony’, etc. When hearing or using these words, a native speaker knows whether there are rituals included in these festivities or ceremonies. The word that is mainly used nowadays for rendering the meaning ‘ceremony’, ‘festivity’ is *tören*. This word is a neologism that was introduced during the first years of the Turkish language reform (that started systematically in 1932 and is still going on), replacing several Arabic words with the same meaning. When using this word, the speaker might refer to any kind of celebration, but this can, of course, be specified by adding further information.

Let us take an example. *Sünnet* is the word denoting the male circumcision, which is carried out during the first years of life. It is

the most important and traumatic event in the life of a young man. It is celebrated according to the financial abilities of the family.

Accordingly, the compound non *sünnet töreni* denotes the 'festivities on the occasion of the circumcision'. The ceremony is carried out according to an arrangement determined by tradition. There is no word for the system of this arrangement as a whole. Every member of the community is perfectly familiar with the arrangement of these ceremonies, and thus it is sufficient to use the word *tören* to give satisfactory information to any other member. If someone—for whatever reason—wants to describe or discuss certain details or steps of the ceremony, he can form a compound using the word *usul*, meaning 'method', 'system'. He thus forms the compound noun *sünnet usulü*, denoting something like 'the order of the festivities', or 'system of the ceremony'.

Another word that is frequently used in connection with festivities is the Arabic loanword *adet*. As this word denotes 'custom', 'tradition', it can also refer to single steps or phases of a celebration, depending on the communicative situation. Moreover, the meaning 'custom', 'tradition' includes the speaker's familiarity with the proceedings of the ceremony in question anyway, as it refers to events that are customary within a certain group. The term *sünnet adeti* can then denote 'the tradition of circumcision', as well as 'the procedure that is traditionally common during a circumcision'.

The linguistic situation is the same in pre-sünnet, that is, pre-Islamic, times. When, for example, a Turkish Buddhist text mentions a certain religious event, we do not find a reference to a certain system behind it.

Even in texts that describe, for example, how a mandala is created, we will simply find a remark like the following: "These are the procedures of creating a mandala."

An explanation of this lack of meta-language has to lie in the fact that speakers (and also writers) move within a communicative situation that is determined by the participation of speakers on an equal footing.

Wolfgang Scharlipp

Concluding Reflections

Reviewing the preceding sections of this article, it is striking to find that none of the contributors could build on an existing body of relevant literature on their particular fields. It seems that questions as those addressed here still lie outside mainstream concerns.

The contributors have chosen different paths to answer the questions I had posed to them. One way of dealing with the challenge is to consult relevant dictionaries and to analyze the terms given by the (mostly Western) lexicographers as synonyms for 'ritual', 'rite', etc. This strategy can be complemented by the reverse operation: To base the search on a wider spectrum of terms that seem to have an obvious semantic affiliation with the concept of 'ritual'; this includes such terms as 'praxis', 'ceremonial behavior', 'customs', and 'performance'. In cases where no term imposes itself as an emic term for 'ritual', one can nevertheless occasionally be proposed (Tamil, Tibetan).

In almost all languages there are dozens, hundreds, if not thousands, of terms that designate specific rituals. At the same time, it seems that there always are some terms that are more general in intension and/or extension. Linguistically, this term can then be taken in the form of a suffix in order to refer to specific rituals (Hopi) or in building a compound construction in order to construct a more general concept (Tamil). Another variety is a construction in which the noun is qualified by a word referring to the 'religious' quality of what is perceived to be ritual-like (Persian). A further option is the use of a combination of terms, each designating specific rituals, in order to refer to a larger ceremonial unity (Greek). On the other hand, linguistic derivatives from more general terms may also be found (Arabic).

Some languages have developed a lexicon that restricts the application of ritual terms to specific classes of phenomena. Such emic terminological classifications are of different kinds. Some languages use different terms depending on the occasions on which the respective 'rituals' are performed (Akkadian, Hittite); there may also be a positive and a pejorative terminology (Akkadian), and there are clusters of terms linked to a ritual specialist (Sami). In several languages, 'rituals' belonging to different religions, religious traditions, or spheres are designated by employing different terms or terminological clusters (Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Mongolian, Sami).

Some languages, however, have produced one or several general terms that come close to being semantic equivalents of the modern Western notion of 'ritual'. This is not necessarily correlated with the existence of complex ritual cultures. Hence, while rituals are key elements in pre-Islamic Iranian religion, Zoroastrianism, and while ritual acts are the core of all Japanese religions, neither Persian nor Japanese have developed a general term corresponding to 'ritual'. In her contribution on Japanese, Inken Prohl suggests that this did not happen because of the paramount importance of ritual practice for Japanese religions ("Since religious acts form the core of Japanese religions, it is not necessary to designate them as such with a discrete term"). Wolfgang Scharlipp makes a similar point for Turkish. In other words, when rituals are a given social reality, one does not need a term to mark them off and conceptually frame them as a separate class of 'things' (whether they be actions, performances, events, or something else). In both of these languages, however, a term for 'ritual' was introduced in modern times within academic discourse, be it as a loanword (the Turkish *ritual*) or as a reframing of a term with a complex semantic pre-history (the Japanese *giri*).

As the experts found the term in such languages as Hopi and Nishnabe, the emergence of general terms does not seem to be the result of the existence of explicit written reflective intellectual traditions ("ritualistics"⁵⁴). However, in both of these cases, the terms seem to refer to mental properties, whether it is esoteric knowledge passed on in secret societies as in the case of Hopi or an intention or state-of-mind as in the case of Nishnabe. In both instances, moreover, the extension of the term goes well beyond the conceptual boundaries of the Western term 'ritual', pointing instead to something we would refer to by such terms as 'religion' or 'spirituality'. Also the Old Norse term *siðr* and the Chinese (Confucian) *li* have broader meanings (both with respect to intension and extension) than 'ritual'.

Sanskrit has several terms that come close to the semantic range of 'ritual', and some of these terms have had an influence other languages, such as Tamil and Tibetan. The evolved ritualistic reflections on the divisions and effects of the rituals and the differences between ritual and non-ritual ('normal', 'worldly') acts, however, did not lead

⁵⁴ For this term, see Stausberg 2003.

to the emergence of one single generic term (*Oberbegriff*) denoting 'rituals'. Thus one obviously does not need such a term in order to engage in 'ritual theory'.

On the other hand, it seems that 'ritual' does not constitute a transcultural referential unity, and while it is clearly possible to find 'rituals' wherever one looks, the conceptual category 'ritual' (much more than 'religion') is a specific modern Western tool of self-reflection and intellectual *modus operandi*.

Let us take a brief look at the semantic spectrum of the concepts analyzed by the authors. The concepts as analyzed in the preceding sections can be grouped into the following semantic fields (which in many cases can be combined), which are listed here according to the pervasiveness of occurrence: (a) order, command, prescription, precepts, rules, laws; (b) custom, tradition, norm, habit, etiquette, morals; (c) action(s), performance, work, and perfection; (d) worship, honoring, serving, and assembling; (e) secret(s), (secret) knowledge, intention, and memorization; (f) marking off and separation. Moreover, (g) many terms seem to correspond to specific types, or instances, of 'ritual'(s) such as sacrifice or festival.

This, then, is what 'ritual' seems to be mostly about when taking reflections on possible emic equivalents of 'ritual' as a starting point. The next step—though one that moves beyond the scope of this chapter—would be analytically to carve out (explicit or implicit) indigenous theories of ritual.