

B. Religious Life of Early and Middle Bronze Ages

123-130

I. Nature and course of primitive religion.

a. Nature of primitive mentality (Lévy-Bruhl).

1. Pre-logical.

A'. No concept of causality.

B'. No concern for contradictions.

C'. Explanations based on sequence, concomitance, resemblance.

2. Impersonality and fluidity:- "dynamism".

A'. Individual personality merged in corporative personality.

B'. Impersonal power may reside in any outstanding element.

b. Worship of "high" gods, as well as spirits (Schmidt).

1. Cosmic, heavenly, creative, all-powerful deities.

2. Resemblance to a primitive monotheism.

c. Antiquity of religious concepts.

1. Belief in after-life goes back to Middle Paleolithic.

2. Late Paleolithic shows dynamistic concepts in art.

A'. Neolithic figurines show fertility elements.

3. Albright questions whether man's artistic abilities are higher now than in prehistory; suggests that mythology was richer ca. 3000 than ca. 2000 B.C.

A'. Geographic diffusion shows some myths vastly old.

4. Many languages became less complex in their visible history.

d. Primitive man had a type of pre-logical abstraction.

1. Languages early had words for qualities (e.g., goodness).

2. "Divinity" was related to creation and to good social relations.

A'. This supported concept of single "high" god.

II. Egyptian religion, 3000-1600 B.C.

130-140

a. Isolation and uniformity made Egypt religiously conservative.

b. Egyptian totemism different from ideal totemic pattern.

1. Animals, but other elements, including contradictory.

2. Often no consistent geographic attachment.

3. No consanguinity, exogamy, etc.

c. Early cosmogonies.

1. Memphite theology - the creative word.

2. Heliopolithan cosmogony - successive generations of the ennead.

d. Concern for after-life of the pharaoh.

1. Pyramids.

2. Pyramid Texts

A'. Pre-logical, corporative, dynamistic mentality.

B'. Solar vs. Osirian elements.

e. Results of collapse under 1st Intermediate Age.

1. Suffering stimulated change from pre-logical stage to an empirical and pre-philosophical logic.

2. Classical literary age.

A'. Didactic and gnomic works.

I'. Practical, sceptical, stressing other world.

II'. Good life referred to "the god".

B'. Pessimistic and "prophetic" works.

I'. Release from sufferings of this world.

C'. Coffin Texts, successors of Pyramid Texts.

I'. Royal prerogative of after-life extended to upper classes.

II'. Dynamism of Pyramid Texts becomes magic in Coffin Texts.

3. Increased emphasis on social justice.

A'. Pyramid Age had stressed charity and impartiality.

B'. This stress increased to become characteristic of Middle Emp.