

M0006416: Wellcome Historical Medical Museum display: "Creation of man as a handcraft"

Publication/Creation

21 October 1939

Persistent URL

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

CREATION OF MAN AS A HANDICRAFT

EVEN MORE COMMON THAN THE MYTH OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD AS A HANDICRAFT IS THAT OF THE CREATION OF MAN AND OF OTHER LIVING BEINGS FROM THE VARIOUS MATERIALS READY TO HAND IN A WORLD WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE



PROMETHEUS FORMING MEN OUT OF CLAY
RELIEF OF THE ROMAN PERIOD IN THE MUSEE
MUSEO LOMBARDO, MILANO (after Ziemer, *op. cit.*, p. 101)

ACCORDING TO ONE GREEK MYTH, THE DEMI-GOD PROMETHEUS MADE MEN OUT OF CLAY. ON THE RELIEF PROMETHEUS IS SEEN ON THE RIGHT WORKING AT A HUMAN FIGURE. WHILE COMPLETED FIGURES ARE STANDING IN THE FOREGROUND. ON THE LEFT IS THE GODDESS ATHENE, HOLDING A BIRD, THAT IS, THE EMBODIMENT OF THE LIFE OR SOUL WHICH SHE IS GIVING TO A FIGURE MADE BY PROMETHEUS

THE CREATION OF MAN FROM WOOD

WOOD IS THE SECOND COMMONEST MATERIAL FROM WHICH MAN IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN FORMED. GENERALLY IT IS THE LIVING WOOD OF SPECIFIC TREES FROM WHICH THE CREATOR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE CARVED OR OTHERWISE FORMED LIVING CREATURES. JUST AS, IN THE EVOLUTIONARY TYPE OF MYTH, HUMAN BEINGS ARE SOMETIMES SAID TO EMERGE FROM THE LIVING TREE. THIS TYPE OF MYTH IS WIDESPREAD AMONG PRIMITIVE PEOPLES BUT ALMOST UNKNOWN IN MORE ADVANCED CULTURES

SEE ALSO SECTION 4, (NORSE MYTH)

THE CREATION OF MAN FROM METAL

THE ASHANTI OF WEST AFRICA BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST MEN AND ANIMALS WERE FORGED BY THE CREATOR OUT OF METAL

THE CREATION OF MAN FROM EARTH OR CLAY

MYTHS OF THE CREATION OF MEN AND ANIMALS MOST FREQUENTLY DERIVE THEM FROM EARTH, CLAY OR MUD. SUCH STORIES ARE FOUND ALL OVER THE WORLD, IN AUSTRALASIA AND INDONESIA, IN AFRICA, SIBERIA, NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA, IN CHINA, AND AMONG THE ANCIENT HEBREWS, GREEKS AND EGYPTIANS. THE CREATOR IS GENERALLY THOUGHT TO BE A GOD OR DEMI-GOD

A COMMON COROLLARY TO THIS MYTH IS THE GIVING OF LIFE, THE SPIRIT OR SOUL, TO THE NEWLY MADE BODY. THIS LIFE IS SOMETIMES THOUGHT OF AS THE WIND. SOMETIMES AS AIR FROM HEAVEN. SOMETIMES AS THE BREATH OF THE CREATOR, AND SOMETIMES SYMBOLISED UNDER THE FORM OF A BIRD OR INSECT



GOD MAKING ADAM FROM THE DUST OF THE EARTH
FROM MOSAIC ART (SEE SECTION 11.11) IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

MANY BIBLICAL STORIES SHOW A STRIKING SIMILARITY, AT LEAST EXTERNALLY, TO THE LEGENDS OF OTHER PEOPLES. ONE OF THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS EMBODIED IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS IS THE STORY OF THE CREATION OF MAN FROM THE DUST OF THE EARTH. (SEE SECTION 11.11). HERE THE BODY OF ADAM IS SEEN EMERGING FROM A LUMP OF EARTH AT GOD'S COMMAND

IT MAY BE COMPARED WITH A VARIANT OF THE BABYLONIAN MYTH (SEE SECTION 2.14) IN WHICH MAN IS FORMED BY MIXING EARTH WITH THE BLOOD OF THE GODS



CHNUM FASHIONING A MAN ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL
RELIEF FROM THE TEMPLE AT PHILAE
AFTER BOUTERLIN, I., *op. cit.*, p. 101

MYTHS OF THE MAKING OF MAN FROM EARTH OR CLAY GENERALLY SUPPOSE THAT THE CREATOR FORMED THE FIGURE IN HIS HANDS LIKE A MODELLER. THE EGYPTIAN MYTH, HOWEVER, REPRESENTS THE CREATOR CHNUM AS A POTTER, SHAPING MAN ON A WHEEL. JUST AS PTAH FORMED THE EGG OF THE WORLD

THE CREATION OF MAN FROM STONE

ONLY IN AUSTRALIA AND THE CELEBES DO THE MYTHS RELATE HOW A GOD MADE STONE FIGURES WHICH BECAME HUMAN BEINGS

COMPARE THE GREEK MYTH OF DEUCALION AND PYRRHA WHO RECREATED THE HUMAN RACE AFTER A FLOOD BY THROWING BEHIND THEM STONES WHICH TURNED INTO MEN AND WOMEN

THE CREATION OF MAN FROM VEGETABLE MATTER

THE QUICHE OF CENTRAL AMERICA THOUGHT THAT THE GODS HAD MADE MANKIND OUT OF MAIZE AND ON MINDANAO IN THE PACIFIC IT IS SAID THAT THE GODS FORMED HUMAN BEINGS OUT OF GRASS