

المرحلة الرابعة

النص 1

الجزء 3

## Ancient Mesopotamian Religion

One of their prominent features was a terrifying brightness (*melammu*) which surrounded them, producing an immediate reaction of awe and reverence among men. In many cases, the various deities have family relations of one another, a trait found in many other polytheistic religions. The historian J. Bottero was of the opinion that the gods were not viewed mystically, but were instead seen as high-up masters who had to be obeyed and feared, as opposed to loved and adored. Nonetheless, many Mesopotamians, of all

classes, often had names that were devoted to a certain deity; this practice appeared to have begun in the third millennium BC among the Sumerians, but also was later adopted by the Akkadians, Assyrians and Babylonians as well.

Initially, the pantheon was not ordered, but later Mesopotamian theologians came up with the concept of ranking the deities in order of importance. A Sumerian list of around 560 deities that did this was uncovered at Farm and Tell Abu Salabikh and dated to circa 2600 BC, ranking five primary deities as being of particular importance.

One of the most important of these early Mesopotamian deities was the god Enlil, who was originally a Sumerian

divinity viewed as a king of the gods and a controller of the world, who was later adopted by the Akkadians. Another was the Sumerian god An, who served a similar role to Enlil and became known as Anu among the Akkadians.