CHAPTER ONE

Genesis and Precession

Since Darwin's time, the early evolution of humanity and our distant relatives the apes has been intensely debated. Some evidence suggests that the primitive hominids were not our ancestors. Hominid fossils at the French site of the Grotte du Renne at Arcy-sur-Cure (Yonne) suggest that primitive hominids survived into a relatively recent epoch.[1] Meanwhile, the Swanscombe skull fragments (fossils of three cranial bones) found in gravel terraces along the upper and middle Thames have been classified as an early form of *Homo sapiens* (archaic homo sapiens or a sister group of *Homo sapiens*).[2] This evidence supports the idea that there were *Homo sapiens* living in the Neanderthal epoch, and probably alongside other hominids. R. de la Ferrière argues that "if a human is not the product of an independent source, he is of a lineage that appears very early among those living species."[3]

Paleoanthropology has made amazing discoveries. Two of the most relevant findings were reported a few years ago by an international research team headed by M. Böhme of the University of Tübingen. The first is related to the study of *Graecopithecus freybergi* from the Balkan Peninsula, which potentially stands in the human evolutionary line a little more than seven million years ago. This finding also challenges traditional assumptions that the early evolution of humans had taken place exclusively in Africa.[4] The second, and likely the most startling, is the recent discovery of a great ape *Danuvius guggenmosi* in Germany, which may shake the current theory

of human evolution. Danuvius lived 11.62 million years ago, and was well adapted to using all four limbs for climbing and walking upright on two legs, much earlier than previously believed. Böhme notes, "For the first time, we were able to investigate several functionally important joints, including the elbow, hip, knee and ankle, in a single fossil skeleton of this age … It was astonishing for us to realize how similar certain bones are to humans, as opposed to great apes."[5]

The ability to walk upright on a regular basis is considered a key characteristic of human beings. Regarding the importance of the upright stance to human orientation in space, Mircea Eliade notes that adopting the vertical posture already represents a transcending of the condition typical of other primates. "Uprightness cannot be maintained except in a state of wakefulness. It is because of man's vertical posture that space is organized in a structure that is inaccessible to the prehominians." [6] Space can be organized around the human body as extending forward, backward, to right, to left, upward and downward.

Nonetheless, Böhme warns us, "instead of seeing [*Danuvius*] as a model for ancestors from which humans evolved, we can now view them as having undergone their own evolution … The last common ancestor of humans and chimps did not look like a chimp, but it might have looked like *Danuvius*!"[7] Whatever the case, in the process of evolutionary transformation, and regardless of geological cataclysms as well as the other obstacles more generally associated with the struggle for life, man continued his march, instructed by some Superior Spirit of the Unknown.[8]

In his approach to human evolution, R. de la Ferrière affords great importance to the equinoctial precession and its sociological and geochronological projections. Precession of the equinox is one of the Earth's three most important motions.[9] It causes the celestial equator to cut the stationary ecliptic a little earlier each year, thus producing a very slow retrograde motion. The period to complete the precessional motion around the orbit is 25,920 years at the rate of 72 years per degree.

If we consider the hypothesis that our earliest ancestors emerged at least about 12 million years ago, as suggested so far, there would have been more than 460 complete equinoctial precessions, with accompanying natural catastrophes and collapses, during which humans slowly evolved.

Raynaud de la Ferrière refers to periods of about 2,160 years each that arose during the full precession of 25,920 years. This relates to the energy

zones that surround our solar system, of which there are 12, just as there are 12 months each year. In the interstellar medium, what is travelled in a year is also travelled every 25,920 years due to the Earth's precessional obliquity. This means that the revolution of the Earth around the Sun is completed in reverse—due to precession in—25,920 years. As a result there are two simultaneous parallel motions, the one much faster than the other. Thus, precession is an inexorable astronomical phenomenon.

The History of Humanity is divided into phases classified as 'World', 'Age', 'Era', etc. These great Ages (of about 2,000 years) are in terms of Astronomical Cycles, called Precessional Ages.[10]

The precession of the equinoxes, has long been used as an instrument in the field of geochronology to determine time-scales for prehistoric ages. It is one of the various methods to determine the periods of glaciation. During the Ice Age, says F. Zeuner, "ice-caps were repeatedly formed in the polar and temperate regions of the earth, and the climate everywhere was profoundly affected. Several such periods of glaciation alternated with periods of a 'normal' climate resembling that of the present day."[11] Old Stone Age humans adapted themselves to these climate fluctuations, often by migrating or through the advancement of civilization and culture.

Adam Frank, in *The Constant Fire: Beyond the Science vs. Religion Debate,* asserts that our own species, *Homo sapiens,* has existed long enough to experience some of these changes: the advance and retreat of glaciers, the creation of land bridges between continents, and terrestrial emergence from and submergence beneath the waves.[12] Over the course of the last 12 million years, it is likely that in each cycle of approximately 20,000 plus years there is first a cooling of the Earth, which prompts people to emigrate from the extremes of the planet towards the equatorial zone. This is followed by a cycle of glacial melting, rising temperatures, prolonged rainfall, and finally floods.[13]

Floods provide a plausible framework to explain values, not to mention the distribution of loess (sediment). Indeed, the *loess plateau* formed more than two million years is one of most valuable geographical areas in the world for scientific research.[14] Stories of a great flood are found in various Christian and Hebraic scriptures, as well as in other ancient narratives, such as the Popol Vuh of the Mayas. The great deluge is widely considered a universal myth, given that it appears in almost every prehistoric culture. Frank asserts that while the specifics of the narrative differ, the central

themes of decay, vengeance, and renewal appear many times. There are more than 300 documented variations of this basic narrative.[15] R. de la Ferrière distinguishes between partial floods and universal floods.

> The flood story is a historical fact which is found in various cultures. The Bible talks about it, but it is also found on the other side of the Atlantic, in the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Mayas, which shows that the Indians of Central America were not unaware of it. This is unrelated to conversion to Christianity, since the Quiché Mayan civilization had already reached its apogee long before the arrival of Europeans … In fact, there are numerous floods (the one we know in the West would have been among the most benign and would have occurred about 20 centuries before the Christian era). But it is likely that these 'partial' floods were nothing more than floods that took on importance in the minds of the people of that region at that time. It is possible, however, that universal floods occurred at certain periods, and it is not unusual that no trace of peoples who may have lived in those distant epochs is found. Thus, Great Civilizations may have reached a supreme degree of Knowledge and Perfection, and if no traces of those Great Sages have been discovered, we must remember that we do not possess any specimen either of Neanderthal men, or of any other periods of some epochs even closer to our own.[16]

An implication of these observations is that our physical world is not random or unstructured. The myths created in past societies serve as a tool to categorize and explain natural phenomena and catastrophic events. These events gave rise to lessons and stories that could be transmitted to subsequent generations. Nowadays, this process of transmission and teaching permits geologists, archeologists, anthropologists, historians, and astrophysicists to systematically analyze catastrophe myths and to speculate regarding the real nature of the events that gave rise to them. As knowledge develops, older theories became outdated as science progressively offers new data and religious mythologies becomes less mysterious.[17]

For instance, in South America, B. Masse and his team examined 4,259 myths or sacred narratives about the world and how humanity came to be in its present form in light of available geological, paleoenvironmental, archeological, and documentary evidence.[18]

The Great Religious Cycles

Religion is not here used in the dogmatic sense, of one religion set against another, but in the broader sense of *religāre*, to reunite, to bind together. Similarly, science (from Latin, scientia, meaning knowledge) is used in an unlimited sense, and includes knowledge that is both accepted and rejected by academia.

Émile Durkheim asserts that it has long been known that the first system of representations with which men have pictured to themselves the world were of religious origin.[19] Eliade assumes that the sense of 'the sacred' is an element in the structure of consciousness and not a stage in the history of consciousness. To be—or, rather, to become—a full human being signifies being 'religious.' On the other hand, Frank posits that "science, and its function and fruits, methods and means is a hierophany. It makes life's sacred character apparent to us."[20]

While debates regarding science and religion can be endless, R. de la Ferrière argues that religions rest on certain principles that are always the same but with different external manifestations across time and place. In the first of his *Great Messages*, he states:

> In religion as well in other fields, an individual is not satisfied with assertions that lack proof. Critical thinking has developed in such a way that a religion whose teaching is based on affirmation without rational arguments is looked on as outdated and even as an obstacle to social progress.
>
> Science and Religion have diverged so much that the former disregarded the latter, despite the efforts of religion to accommodate scientific standards. But Faith cannot be mixed with rationality, hence Science. The strength of religion resides in its immutability.[21] However, the church cannot condemn or ignore scientific discoveries, e.g., Earth's form, its motion around the Sun, the nature of stars, the age of the world, etc. Consequently, it should vary its teaching: It is a need that imposes itself like the transformation of a living species. This law of metamorphosis is the principle of life. Is not the religious life itself manifested in its highest form: of the spirit?
>
> Religion in the past had already undergone various abrupt changes in form. However, with new rites or in the process of adapting to new religious forms, man has not realized that they were the same but are rather being

> transformed and covered with a new dress to better fit new intellectual and spiritual needs. Indeed, the successive forms of the Great Traditional Religion born in the West several millennia ago are all united by means of the same esotericism, which is immutable and common to all of them. This esotericism constitutes the non-deformable frame, the plot on which they are built.[22]

In academic research, esotericism is usually used as scholarly construct according to two main perspectives: a typological construct and a historical construct. The typological construct is commonly used in the context of religious studies and associated with the notion of 'secrecy', which is reserved for elites of initiated disciples. The historical construct esotericism is not considered as type of religion but as a general label for certain specific currentes in Western culture that display certain similarities and are historically related. Hence the term Western esotericism.[23]

R. de la Ferrière outlines the main differences between exotericism and esotericism. Exotericism is the part of a religious teaching that is accessible to all. It is offered in the form of images, because a figurative sense is necessary to enable the secular to understand the profoundest religious and existential problems. For instance, parables can be used to shed precious light on the Truth: they are a form of religious education that uses simple words, stories and clear ideas.

Exotericism is what can be learned from a catechism or through a university program. By contrast, esotericism refers to what is 'inner' or hidden, what is known only to the privileged few: Instructors, Masters, Initiates. However, the adage "Seek and you shall find" also holds true. Esoteric knowledge is available to anyone willing to make an effort to understand the occult sense in the great teachings. Not all great Truths can be fully disclosed. Indeed, good judgment is necessary.[24] In his *Psychological Purpose*, R. de la Ferrière points out that "Mystery does not exist; it is nothing more than a weak door for those who do not want to see. The Secret is nothing more than a wall, an obstacle for those that do not dare to continue. Esotericism is a temple open to those who have learned to be Silent."[25]

II

The universe as a repository for boundless lines of enquiry occupies a unique place in our collecive core of curiosity.

> When we refer to God, it is to the sky we look at. Since earliest times, man may have lifted his gaze towards the celestial vault, and the myriad stars may have intrigued him (it is known now that more than 6,000 stars are visible, which is a tiny fraction of total).
>
> When we rise above these problems, how can we not to be captivated by finding many parallels that make us understand the homogeneity of all? Macrocosm and Microcosm are closely linked. Dr. Robert Lavezzari revealed curious relationship between astronomic life and human life.
>
> The 72 heartbeats per minute of a healthy person corresponds to the 72 years the Earth's tilt moves one degree.
>
> For each breath, the heart beats four times, which equals 18 breaths per minute. This corresponds to the four seasons and to the 18 years of the nutation of the Earth's axis under lunar influence.
>
> The total of 25,920 breaths in 24 hours [18 x 60 = 1080 x 24 = 25,920] makes us think of the precession of equinoxes. From this motion of Earth emerges the precessional Ages (25,920/12 = 2,160 years per sign). Then, from 4,320 to 2,160 **BCE** corresponds to the Cycle of **TAURUS** that symbolized Egypt, the Chaldeans, etc. Then came the Cycle of **ARIES**, which transformed religion: Moses prohibited Hebrews from worshipping of the Golden Calf (Apis). The Christian Age corresponds to the Sun getting into the new sign of **PISCES**. (Didn't Jesus have this emblem?).[26]
>
> Of course, this symbolism is not of absolute precision, but we should note that the Great Cycles mark the history of people.
>
> Evidently, the history of humanity is not cut into equal fragments, as everyone knows that winter enters a little bit into spring and summer usually extends into autumn. The fact of passing to another sign does not imply an abrupt renewal. Nonetheless, all the Great Civilizations are characterized by this precessional motion, which leads many to say that we approach the Golden Age.
>
> The Age of **AQUARIUS** should effectively symbolize a new cycle of more than 2,000 years and mark a renovation. In order to announce this Age others find support

> in the discovery of atomic disintegration, calling it an Atomic Age, which can be symbolized by the planet **URANUS**, which is characterized by abrupt changes and ruled by the sign of the **WATERCARRIER** (Aquarius).
>
> Others support their prophecies through the Scriptures.[27]

The Great Cycles refer to the periods of about 2,000 years based on the precession of equinoxes. Approximately 4,320 to 2,160 BCE corresponds to the Cycle of Taurus that symbolized Egypt, the Chaldeans, etc. Then came the Cycle of Aries, which transformed religion: Moses prohibiting the worship of the Golden Calf (Apis) is one prominent example. After came the Christian Age, which corresponds to the sign of Pisces (symbolized by two fishes swimming in opposite directions).

Some very basic knowledge of cosmobiology is helpful for better understanding the functions of the Ages. An apologia for this science of the stars will not be undertaken here, especially since those intellectuals who reject it have generally not studied it comprehensively, if at all.

"The sky is an open book, and unique in that man can't destroy it," says R. de la Ferrière. In the words of Plotinus, the most influential philosopher of classical antiquity: "The stars are like letters which inscribe themselves at every moment in the sky ... Everything in full of signs ... All events are coordinated ... All things depend on each other. Everything breathes together."[28]

Astrology is about the nature and motion of celestial bodies. It was well known to Paracelsus (1493-1541) and Kepler (1571-1630), but came to be rejected by rationalists along with alchemy and other occult doctrines. Nevertheless, it continued to attract new adepts, including Goethe (1749-1832) and C. G. Jung (1875-1961).

Astrology is divided into two parts. The first is based on mathematics, and requires astronomical expertise. The second part follows an empirical method. After long observations extending over centuries, certain conclusions were reached. For instance, Uranus was discovered in 1781, but it was only at the turn of the 20th century that astrologers reached unanimous consensus on its meaning. Once an astrologer has mastered these two parts, he or she can discern certain trends and possibilities and even sometimes forecast precise incidents, even if it remains undoubtedly necessary to distinguish the charlatan from the scientist.

Occultists rightly say: 'The wise man rules his star, but the ignorant man is ruled by it."[29]

III

In addition to the astronomical thesis, there is a second hypothesis that complements the first, though it focuses on the problem with less scientific data. To the views of historiographers, philosophers, and exegetes of these aspects, biblical prophecies are of vital importance. R. de la Ferrière begins by acknowledging the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil:[30]

> It is necessary to comment on the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, to whom was granted the gift of messianic prophecy. Everything is in agreement as to the coming of a Messiah known as Lord of the World, Christ[31] the King, or Son of Man. In any case this would happen under the sign of Aquarius, the Watercarrier, the dispenser of celestial water.
>
> Aquarius is represented in astronomy by two parallel wavy lines, which is the hieroglyph that represents water in Egypt as well in Mexico. It is unusual to find the same symbol on both extreme sides of the ocean, which is pronounced **ATL** (root of the word **ATLANTIS**). On celestial maps, Aquarius is represented by a young man, the Watercarrier, who holds a pitcher pouring wave that spreads across the sky. His name is Ganymede, whose story forms part of Greek mythology. Knowledge of this legend is invaluable, in that it contains a hidden meaning found in several narratives. For instance, Ganymede's abduction by an Eagle is found in Dante's Divine Comedy. Dante says that Lucia came in person in his dream to abduct him. Lucia equals light, *lucius* in Latin. Lucia is the hypostasized mystic light of the eagle. It is known that an eagle is the symbol of St. John (symbolized by the Scorpio-Eagle constellation).[32]

He also mentions St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897), who writes about the Divine Eagle and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743–1803) who also announced the Age of Aquarius. Furthermore, he asserts that for a long time Biblical studies, especially in America, have expanded to include new interpretations and various work that magnify the agreement of researchers to discuss the signs that herald the return of Christ, which precisely coincides with the beginning of the Age of Aquarius.[33] We find theological reference to concepts such as a new world order, the New Age, a new era, etc. However, these concepts are in general not aligned with the characteristics of the Age of Knowledge as outlined by R. de la Ferrière.

> Concerning the return of Christ in the New Testament in Matthew 24:30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." The sign might correspond to the Watercarrier sign.
>
> In the same Chapter: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places" [24:6-7]
>
> Will it be necessary to comment on this?
>
> Further, we read in verse 33: "When you see all these things, know that he [the Son of Man] is near at the gates". [24:33]
>
> We read in Luke's Gospel, Chapter 21: "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." [35-36][34]

Hence, Raynaud de la Ferrière acknowledges certain signs as precursors of a of what he called a new Theocracy. These include the Reformation in the 16th century; the French Revolution; the spread of the Gospel throughout the world; the rise of atheism; the foundation of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations; social laws; hydroelectric power; feminism; the return of the Jews to Palestine; the resurgence of Atlantis; and the development of occultism, among others.[35] Regarding theocracy, he points out:

> "It will not be the leadership of monks or representatives of any religion, but a theocracy in the most plausible sense of the word, a spiritual hierarchy and authority based on knowledge and wisdom, a kingdom of realization for all.[36]

In other words, "humanity will organize itself for a world government that will have at its head not politicians, but psychologists, pedagogues, initiates, sages".[37]

IV

The polarity or core energetic charge of the Zodiac signs can be either positive or negative. In the context of precessional ages and in initiation matters, this fact indicates that during positive periods, the Schools of Initiation are accessible to everyone, while during negative periods, they close and Esoteric Centers operate instead.

What does Initiation mean?

> Initiation is organized tradition that conserves the Sacred Sciences. It is not a doctrine but the study of all, which purpose is not to promise anything: nor paradise, nor empyrean world … On the contrary, it demands all: proofs, sacrifices, self-denial, etc. Initiates are those who truly seek to build according to the highest ideals either in the physical world or in the intellectual, spiritual, and moral realms. Their humanitarianism and philanthropy allow them to work selflessly, inspired by universal love. Initiation is not possible without the leadership of another human being and reaches a point of sublimity and greatness that cannot be fully expressed and analyzed linguistically. The underlying fundamentals remain immutable, but some knowledge of them is offered in each cycle according to the current state of evolution.[38]

There is a difference between a philosopher or a theologian and an Initiate. While the philosopher is the "friend of wisdom," the Initiate has become the Wise. The theologian can seem to be not yet ready for full esoteric comprehension. While the philosopher registers the human functions and the theologian (in any doctrine, i.e., Hinduism, Jewish, or Christian) tends towards the divine domain, the Initiate coordinates both in a spirit of synthesis that goes beyond conventional analysis. In other words, philosophy represents the thesis and theology the antithesis, while the Initiate represents the synthesis.[39]

There are Initiates and initiates and surely pseudo initiates. Discernment is required, however, as not all whole claim to be or are seen to be Initiates are worthy of the title and might be better called ‘initiates’ or even ‘pseudo initiates.

V

Religion in the past had already undergone various abrupt changes in form. However, even in the midst of the rise new rites and the process of adapting to new religious forms, man has not realized that religion remains unchanged in its essence even it is transformed in its manifestations. Metaphorically, it is like being covered with a new dress to better fit new intellectual and spiritual needs.

What is the new religious form for the current Age? In 1949, R. de la Ferrière outlined some key features:

> Let's try in a few words to present the clearest possible idea of what the Age of Aquarius reserves for us. In mythology and religious astrology, the sign of Aquarius is represented by an exceptionally handsome young man named Ganymede, who pours a pitcher of water that flows in two parallel streams and diffuses across. The interpretation of this figure, ♒ its location in the Zodiac and the symbol of water allows us to say that the Watercarrier, could realize the Ideal of Justice that all religious forms, regardless of their dogmas and rites, have as part of their teaching, and for which each soul also aspires. We could also expect an Age of Universality.
>
> Shall we clarify this important point? We could think—supported by religious astrology and in Old and New Testament's prophecies that individualities and personalities to which we all are subject in all dominion would progressively disappear to cede their place to a state of universality. Here, the particular values of one would be available to all.
>
> This state is also characterized by abundance. This quality is, on the other hand, the direct and indirect dependence of the preceding one. The fact of pouring into the sky this luminous stream, which according to symbolists would be the origin of the Milky Way—is sufficiently explicit to insist on the purity of intentions of this young man … who holds an amphora in his arms (the Water Carrier, Aquarius).
>
> The two waves also represent the two polarities necessary in all things to be fruitful: Science and Religion are thus also represented, and if the waves do not mix or confuse, it is to indicate Faith is not explained by scientific positivism and that, in the concrete analysis, it is not necessary for subjectivity to intervene. One and the other domain can walk side by side like two parallel

> bands. These paths offer the researcher all desirable domains coming from the same source, thus proving this Universality and the Single Base Principle.
>
> If the Watercarrier is a fixed sign in the Zodiac,[40] it is of a great importance because this conveys a notion of a primordial Age throughout this great Human History. It is known that the twelve zodiac signs are manifested in four ternaries. These important points in the zodiac also represent the elements (Fire, Earth, Water and Air).
>
> These two polarities in the symbol show a perfect balance between the forces in action. Further, it is the only adult male figure in the Zodiac (the Twins are represented by two children and Virgo by a woman) that makes us think on the prophecy: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven…" (See Matthew 24: 30 or Revelation 3:12).
>
> We have pointed the opposition [of the Watercarrier] in the zodiac. Those who know planetary symbolism are trained on the value of this position: the sign of Lion is the fixed domicile of the Sun, which means that the Watercarrier is the only sign that receives the vitalizing solar influences, for the Sun shines constantly through its front window…[41]

The profound transformation requires an Instructor who represents the synthesis and symbolizes the world's general aspirations. To discuss precessional Ages without recognizing this truth leads nowhere.

> In addition to these transformations, the preceding Cycles instruct us about the following fact: each time a New Age began, there was a corresponding change in the religious form and a profound transformation and adaptation of its esoteric teachings in tandem with human intellectual evolution. For some time now, this transformation in the established Churches has been evident: each innovates, for we are far from what was so often immutability proclaimed in the course of the preceding centuries.
>
> Each time, there is a also a capital event took place: a great characteristic as we have already seen: the preceding ages were always marked by a living symbol, a precise divine sign. At this time the central event, from which all others flow, is the advent of Christ the King (the Avatar of the Orientalists). This can be explained by the advent of the Great Teacher of Humanity, the Special Envoy, as it is announced by all Scriptures and Prophecies and who should spiritually reign on the Earth.

> Although this Message may seem very strange and inaccessible for all of those who lack preparation on the topic, it is necessary to have confidence in its advent due to certain precursory signs in the current social state, a direct consequence of the spiritual state that will reign then.[42]

Some of the precursor signs that he mentions include the Gospel preached throughout the Earth, the apostasy of the nations and the war against religions.

> This set of data that announce the New Age allows us to foresee that an Instructor, an Inspired, should rule the world's conduct. He comes to Earth to bring the good word as has happened in every likely cycle, regardless of its distance in history and whatever the places that were cradle of evolution. Buddha for Asia, Jesus for Europe, Muhammad for Africa, and in the present a **Son of Man** for America. "**His coming will be sudden**," as the Bible says, and furthermore: He would pass from East to West as a lightning ...[43]

In this Great Cycle, he visions America as "elevated to the gaze of the High Divine Intelligence." He refers to the continent as having a special regenerative Center. This is in part because of geological, magnetic and symbolic reasons. It is known that the Earth's magnetism moves from pole to pole through millions of years in what is known as geogmagnetic reversal. In other terms, the spiritual pole of the world moved from Tibet to the Andes in America.

Asia already had its great Instructors in India, Muhammad in Africa, while Jesus represented the evolution corresponding to Europe. Indeed, he was born in the Near East under Roman authority, and later the Church had its headquarters on the European continent, with Rome as a major spiritual center.

We are just at the beginning of the Age and it becomes more evident that the Americas are much older than was previously thought. The Andean region was a cradle of civilization where rich and complex societies developed independently. So far, Caral in Peru, with its 5,000 years of history, is considered to be the oldest site of civilization in the Americas. R. Shady argues that the population of Caral built a society unprecedented in Andean archaeology. Various indicators suggest a theocratic state.[44]

History can be curiously fragmented, but in the early 2000s, deep history burst onto the scene as an ambitious exploration of the very *longue durée* of history, its champions arguing for a periodization of human history reaching back tens of thousands, if not millions, of years. Historians can now go beyond the horizon of written sources to embrace evidence from fields including geology, archaeology, biology, and genomics. The aim is not only to expand the historical record but also to correct 'shallow history.'[45]

In "Deep History and Pitfalls of Periodization", J. Rodriguez suggests that deep historians expand their views by questioning their own subjectivity and the dominance of European timelines and subjectivities. By decentering Europe, deep historians can expand their work not just by acknowledging Indigenous narratives and timescales, but by centering them. For instance, she says "Latin American history should not be told as three empires that rose and fell, but as one continuously filled with multiple living, and dynamic, communities. Throughout the Americas, past, present, and future mix in an endless process of human consciousness and memorializing."[46] Enrique Dussel, one of the founders of the philosophy of liberation (non-Eurocentric Latin America philosophy), has extensively written on this subject.[47] This topic is beyond the scope of the book, but it is one that deserves further research.

On the other hand, in the midst of the rise new rites and the process of adapting to new religious forms, we see different ways to learn about them. The New Religious Movements, NRM "was originally developed to replace the terms "sect" and "cult," both of which had been used fruitfully by scholars to denote particular religious formations, but had acquired pejorative associations in general use."[48] The New Visibility of Religion thesis has increasingly come to dominate the discourse on religion today under various perspectives (sociological, political, popular culture). This thesis about the emergence of a 'new religion' is far more complex and nuanced than the notion of decline and replacement propounded in the past.[49]

The sociologist of religion Linda Woodhead has documented the rise of "no religion" perspective—which does not mean a mere negation of religion but an ambiguous and somewhat elusive state characterized by a "combination of evolutionary biology and an expanded cosmological horizon informed by space exploration and astrophysics"—which has been "important in shaping younger people's worldviews rather than traditional belief in a benevolent and omnipotent creator God."[50]