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ADONIS ATTIS OSIRIS





# ADONIS ATTIS OSIRIS

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF  
ORIENTAL RELIGION

BY

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## PREFACE

THESE studies are an expansion of the corresponding sections in my book *The Golden Bough*, and they will form part of the third edition of that work, on the preparation of which I have been engaged for some time. By far the greater portion of them is new, and they make by themselves a fairly complete and, I hope, intelligible whole. I shall be glad if criticisms passed on the essays in their present shape should enable me to correct and improve them when I come to incorporate them in my larger work.

In studying afresh these three Oriental worships, akin to each other in character, I have paid more attention than formerly to the natural features of the countries in which they arose, because I am more than ever persuaded that religion, like all other institutions, has been profoundly influenced by physical environment, and cannot be understood without some appreciation of those aspects of external nature which stamp themselves indelibly on the thoughts, the habits, the whole life of a people. It is a matter of great regret to me that I have never visited the East, and so cannot describe from personal knowledge the native lands of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. But I have sought to remedy the defect by comparing the descriptions of eye-witnesses, and painting from them what may be called composite pictures of some of the scenes on which I have been led to touch in the course of this volume.



I shall not have wholly failed if I have caught from my authorities and conveyed to my readers some notion, however dim, of the scenery, the atmosphere, the gorgeous colouring of the East.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
*22nd July 1906.*

# CONTENTS

## BOOK FIRST

### ADONIS . . . Pp. 1-159

#### CHAPTER I.—THE MYTH OF ADONIS . . . Pp. 3-8

Changes of the seasons explained by the life and death of gods, p. 3 ; magical ceremonies to revive the divine energies, 4 *sq.* ; prevalence of these ceremonies in western Asia and Egypt, 5 ; Tammuz or Adonis at Babylon, 6 *sq.* ; Adonis in Greek mythology, 8.

#### CHAPTER II.—ADONIS AT BYBLUS . . . Pp. 9-16

Adonis and Astarte worshipped at Byblus, the kingdom of Cinyras, 9 *sq.* ; divinity of Semitic kings, 10 *sqq.* ; kings named Adonis, 12 *sq.* ; the Baal and Baalath the sources of fertility, 13 *sq.* ; personation of the Baal by the king, 14 ; Cinyras, king of Byblus, 14 ; Aphaca and the vale of the Adonis, 14 *sqq.*

#### CHAPTER III.—ADONIS AT PAPHOS . . . Pp. 17-33

Phoenician colonies in Cyprus, 17 *sq.* ; kingdom of Paphos, 18 *sq.* ; sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos, 19 *sq.* ; the Aphrodite of Paphos a Phoenician or aboriginal deity, 20 ; her conical image, 20 *sq.* ; sacred prostitution in the worship of the Paphian Aphrodite and of other Asiatic goddesses, 21 *sqq.* ; the Asiatic Mother Goddess a personification of all the reproductive energies of nature, 23 ; her worship reflects a period of sexual communism, 24 *sq.* ; the daughters of Cinyras, 25 ; the Paphian dynasty of the Cinyrads, 25 *sqq.* ; incest of Cinyras with his daughter Myrrha and birth of Adonis, 27 ; suggested explanation of legends of royal incest, 28 ; the Flamen Dialis and his Flaminica at Rome, 28 *sq.* ; Cinyras beloved by Aphrodite, 29 *sq.* ; Pygmalion and Aphrodite, 30 ; the Phoenician kings of Cyprus and their sons the hereditary lovers of the goddess, 30 *sqq.* ; traditions as to the death of Cinyras, 32 *sq.*



## CHAPTER IV.—THE BURNING OF MELCARTH. Pp. 34-40

Semitic custom of sacrificing a member of the royal family, 34 ; the burning of Melcarth at Tyre, 34 *sqq.* ; the burning of Melcarth at Gades, 36 *sq.* ; the burning of a god or goddess at Carthage, 37 ; the fire-walk at Tyre and at Castabala, 38 ; burnt sacrifice of King Hamilcar, 38 *sq.* ; the death of Hercules a Greek version of the burning of Melcarth, 39 *sq.*

## CHAPTER V.—THE BURNING OF SANDAN . Pp. 41-86

§ 1. *The Baal of Tarsus*, pp. 41-43.—The Tyrian Melcarth in Cyprus, 41 ; the lion-slaying god, 41 *sq.* ; the Baal of Tarsus an Oriental god of corn and grapes, 42 *sq.*

§ 2. *The God of Ibreez*, pp. 43-47.—Counterpart of the Baal of Tarsus at Ibreez in Cappadocia, 43 *sq.* ; god of Ibreez a god of corn and grapes, 44 *sq.* ; fertility of Ibreez, 45 *sq.* ; the horned god, 46 *sq.*

§ 3. *Sandan of Tarsus*, pp. 47-50.—The god of Ibreez a Hittite deity, 47 *sq.* ; the burning of Sandan or Hercules at Tarsus, 48 *sq.* ; Sandan of Tarsus an Asiatic god with the symbols of the lion and double axe, 49 *sq.*

§ 4. *The Gods of Boghaz-Keui*, pp. 50-59.—Boghaz-Keui the ancient capital of a Hittite kingdom in Cappadocia, 50 *sq.* ; the rock-sculptures in the sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui, the two processions, 51 *sq.* ; the lion-god, 53 ; the god and his priest, 53 *sq.* ; the great Asiatic goddess and her consort, 54 *sqq.* ; the youth with the double axe on the lioness the divine son and lover of the goddess, 56 *sq.* ; the mystery of the lion-god, 57 *sq.* ; the Sacred Marriage of the god and goddess, 58 *sq.*

§ 5. *Sandan and Baal at Tarsus*, p. 60.—Sandan at Tarsus apparently a son of Baal, as Hercules of Zeus, 60.

§ 6. *Priestly Kings of Olba*, pp. 61-69.—Priests of Sandan or Hercules at Tarsus, 61 ; kings of Cilicia related to Sandan, 61 ; priestly kings of Olba bearing the names of Teucer and Ajax, 62 ; the Teucrids of Salamis in Cyprus, 62 *sq.* ; burnt sacrifices of human victims at Salamis, traces of similar custom elsewhere, 63 *sq.* ; the priestly Teucers of Olba perhaps representatives of a native god Tark, 65 *sq.* ; western or Rugged Cilicia, 66 ; the Cilician pirates, 66 *sq.* ; the gorges of Cilicia, 67 *sq.* ; the site and ruins of Olba, 68 *sq.* ; the temple of Olbian Zeus, 69.

§ 7. *The God of the Corycian Cave*, pp. 69-78.—Limestone caverns of western Cilicia, 69 *sq.* ; the city of Corycus, 70 *sq.* ; the Corycian cave, 71 *sq.* ; the priests of Corycian Zeus, 72 *sq.* ; the cave of the giant Typhon, 73 *sq.* ; battle of Zeus and Typhon, 74 ; fossil bones of extinct animals a source of tales of giants, 74 *sq.* ; chasm of Olbian Zeus at Kanytelideis, 75 *sq.* ; the god of these chasms called Zeus by the Greeks, but probably



a native god of fertility, 76 *sq.*; analogy of these caverns to Ibreez and the vale of the Adonis, 77 *sq.*; the two gods of Olba perhaps a father and son, 78

- § 8. *Cilician Goddesses*, pp. 79-86.—Goddesses less prominent than gods in Cilician religion, 79; the goddess 'Atheh the partner of Baal at Tarsus, 79 *sq.*; the lion-goddess and the bull-god, 80 *sq.*; the old goddess in later times the Fortune of the City, 81; the Phoenician god El and his wife at Mallus, 81 *sqq.*; Sarpedonian Artemis, 83; the goddess Perasia at Hieropolis-Castabala, 83 *sqq.*; the fire-walk in the worship of Perasia, 85; insensibility to pain a mark of inspiration, 85 *sq.*
- § 9. *The Burning of Cilician Gods*, p. 86.—Interpretation of the fiery rites of Sandan and Perasia, 86.

## CHAPTER VI.—SARDANAPALUS AND HERCULES Pp. 87-99

- § 1. *The Burning of Sardanapalus*, pp. 87-89.—Tarsus said to have been founded by Sardanapalus, 87 *sq.*; his legendary death in the fire, 88; historical foundation of the legend, 88 *sq.*
- § 2. *The Burning of Croesus*, pp. 89-91.—Improbability of the story that Cyrus intended to burn Croesus, 89 *sq.*; older and truer tradition that Croesus attempted to burn himself, 90 *sq.*
- § 3. *Purification by Fire*, pp. 91-94.—Death by fire a mode of apotheosis, 91 *sq.*; fire supposed to purge away the mortal parts of men, leaving the immortal, 92 *sq.*
- § 4. *The Divinity of Lydian Kings*, pp. 94-97.—Descent of Lydian kings from Hercules, the god of the double axe and the lion, 94 *sq.*; Lydian kings held responsible for the weather and crops, 95; the lion-god of Lydia, 96; identity of the Lydian and Cilician Hercules, 96 *sq.*
- § 5. *Hittite Gods at Tarsus and Sardes*, pp. 97-98.—The Cilician and Lydian Hercules (Sandan or Sandon) apparently a Hittite deity, 97 *sq.*
- § 6. *The Resurrection of Tylon*, pp. 98-99.—Death and resurrection of the Lydian hero Tylon, 98 *sq.*; feast of the Golden Flower at Sardes, 99.

## CHAPTER VII.—VOLCANIC RELIGION Pp. 100-124

- § 1. *The Burning of a God*, pp. 100-101.—The custom of burning a god perhaps intended to recruit his divine energies, 100 *sq.*
- § 2. *The Volcanic Region of Cappadocia*, pp. 101-103.—The custom of burning a god perhaps related to volcanic phenomena, 101 *sq.*; the great extinct volcano Mount Argæus in Cappadocia, 102 *sq.*



- § 3. *Fire-Worship in Cappadocia*, pp. 103-104.—Persian fire-worship in Cappadocia, 103; worship of natural fires which burn perpetually, 103 sq.
- § 4. *The Burnt Land of Lydia*, pp. 105-106.—The Burnt Land of Lydia 105 sq.; its soil favourable to the cultivation of the vine, 106.
- § 5. *The Earthquake God*, pp. 106-113.—Earthquakes in Asia Minor, 106 sq. worship of Poseidon, the earthquake god, 107; Spartan propitiation of Poseidon during an earthquake, 107 sq.; East Indian and other modes of stopping an earthquake, 109 sqq.; religious and moral effects of earthquakes, 111 sq.; the god of the sea and of the earthquake naturally conceived as the same, 112 sq.
- § 6. *Worship of Mephitic Vapours*, pp. 113-116.—Poisonous mephitic vapours 113 sq.; places of Pluto or Charon, 114; the valley of Amsanctus 114 sq.; sanctuaries of Charon or Pluto in Caria and Lydia or Phrygia 115 sq.
- § 7. *Worship of Hot Springs*, pp. 116-124.—The hot springs and petrifying cascades of Hierapolis, 116 sqq.; Hercules the patron of hot springs 118 sq.; hot springs of Hercules at Thermopylae and Aedepeus, 119 sqq. reasons for the association of Hercules with hot springs, 122 sq.; sacrifice to volcanoes, 123 sq.

## CHAPTER VIII.—THE RITUAL OF ADONIS Pp. 125-135

Results of preceding inquiry, 125; festivals of the death and resurrection of Adonis, 126 sq.; date of the festival at Byblus, 127; the anemone and the red rose the flowers of Adonis, 127 sq.; festivals of Adonis at Ather and Antioch, 128; resemblance of these rites to Indian and European ceremonies, 128 sq.; death and resurrection of Adonis a myth of the decay and revival of vegetation, 129 sqq.; Tammuz or Adonis as a corn-spirit bruised and ground in a mill, 131 sq.; the mourning for Adonis interpreted as a harvest rite, 132 sq.; Adonis probably a spirit of wild fruits before he became a spirit of the cultivated corn, 133 sq.; propitiation of the corn-spirit perhaps fused with the worship of the dead 134 sq.; the festival of the dead a festival of flowers, 135 sq.

## CHAPTER IX.—THE GARDENS OF ADONIS Pp. 137-151

Pots of corn, herbs, and flowers called the Gardens of Adonis, 137; these "gardens" charms to promote the growth of vegetation, 137 sq.; the throwing of the "gardens" into water a rain-charm, 138; parallel customs of wetting the corn at harvest or sowing, 138 sqq.; "gardens of Adonis" in India, 142 sqq.; "gardens of Adonis" on St. John's Day in Sardinia and Sicily, 144 sqq.; St. John perhaps a substitute for Adonis, 146; custom of bathing on the Eve or Day of St. John (Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day), 146 sqq.; heathen origin of the custom, 149; Midsummer

summer festival of St. John formed perhaps by the union of Oriental and northern elements, 149 *sq.*; midsummer fires and midsummer pairs, 150 *sqq.*; divination by plants at midsummer, 152 *sq.*; in Sicily "gardens of Adonis" sown in spring as well as at midsummer, 153 *sq.*; resemblance of Easter ceremonies to rites of Adonis, 154 *sqq.*; worship of Adonis at Bethlehem and Antioch, 157; the Star of Salvation, 157 *sqq.*

## BOOK SECOND

### ATTIS . . . . . Pp. 161-207

#### CHAPTER I.—THE MYTH AND RITUAL OF ATTIS . . . . . Pp. 163-173

Attis the Phrygian counterpart of Adonis, 163; his relation to Cybele, 163; his miraculous birth, 163 *sq.*; his death, 164 *sq.*; Cybele and Attis at Rome, 165 *sq.*; their spring festival, 166 *sqq.*; the Day of Blood, 166 *sqq.*; eunuch priests in the service of Asiatic goddesses, 168 *sq.*; the mourning for Attis, 169 *sq.*; his resurrection, 170 *sq.*; his mysteries, the sacrament and the baptism of blood, 171 *sq.*; diffusion of his religion from the Vatican, 172 *sq.*

#### CHAPTER II.—ATTIS AS A GOD OF VEGETA- TION . . . . . Pp. 174-177

Sanctity of the pine-tree in the worship of Attis, 174 *sq.*; Attis as a corn-god, 175 *sq.*; Cybele a goddess of fertility, 176 *sq.*

#### CHAPTER III.—ATTIS AS THE FATHER-GOD Pp. 178-181

Meaning of the name Attis, 178; relation of Attis to the Mother Goddess, 178 *sq.*; Attis as a sky-god or Heavenly Father, 179 *sqq.*

#### CHAPTER IV.—HUMAN REPRESENTATIVES OF ATTIS . . . . . Pp. 182-184

Personation of Attis by his high priest, 182 *sq.*; name of Attis in the royal families of Phrygia and Lydia, 183 *sq.*

#### CHAPTER V.—THE HANGED GOD . . . . . Pp. 185-191

Death of Marsyas on the tree, 185 *sq.*; Marsyas apparently a double of Attis, 186; the hanging of Odin on the gallows-tree, 186 *sq.*; skins of human victims used to effect the resurrection, 187 *sq.*; skins of men and horses



set up at graves, 188 *sq.* ; skulls employed to ensure the fertility of the ground and of women, 189 *sq.* ; skin of the human representative of the god in Phrygia perhaps used for like purposes, 190 *sq.*

## CHAPTER VI.—ORIENTAL RELIGIONS IN THE WEST . . . . . Pp. 192-203

Popularity of the worship of Cybele and Attis in the Roman Empire, 192 *sq.* ; effect of the spread of Oriental faiths on Greek and Roman civilisation, 193 *sqq.* ; popularity of the worship of Mithra, its rivalry with Christianity, 195 *sq.* ; the festival of Christmas borrowed by the Church from the Mithraic religion, 196 *sqq.* ; the festival of Easter perhaps influenced by the festival of Attis, 198 *sqq.* ; compromise of Christianity with paganism, parallel with Buddhism, 201 *sqq.*

## CHAPTER VII.—HYACINTH . . . . . Pp. 204-207

Hyacinth interpreted as the vegetation which blooms and withers, 204 *sq.* ; tomb of Hyacinth at Amyclae, 205 *sq.* ; Hyacinth an aboriginal deity, 206 *sq.* ; his sister Polyboea perhaps originally his spouse, 207.

# BOOK THIRD

## OSIRIS . . . . . Pp. 209-324

### CHAPTER I.—THE MYTH OF OSIRIS . . . . . Pp. 211-219

Osiris the Egyptian counterpart of Adonis and Attis, 211 ; his myth, 211 *sqq.* ; Osiris a son of the earth-god and the sky-goddess, 211 *sq.* ; he introduces the cultivation of corn and vines, 212 *sq.* ; his violent death, 213 ; Isis searches for his body and finds it at Byblus, 213 *sqq.* ; the members of Osiris treasured as relics in different places, 215 *sq.* ; Osiris as king and judge of the dead, 216 *sq.* ; his resurrection regarded by the Egyptians as a pledge of their own immortality, 217 *sq.* ; combat between Set and Horus, the brother and son of Osiris, for the crown of Egypt, 218 *sq.*

### CHAPTER II.—THE OFFICIAL EGYPTIAN CALENDAR . . . . . Pp. 220-224

The date of a festival sometimes a clue to the nature of the god, 220 ; the year of the Egyptian calendar a vague or movable one, 220 *sq.* ; divorce of the official calendar from the natural calendar of the seasons, 221 *sq.* ; attempt of Ptolemy III. to reform the calendar by intercalation, 222 *sq.* ; the fixed Alexandrian year instituted by the Romans, 223 *sq.*

### CHAPTER III.—THE CALENDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN FARMER. . . . . Pp. 225-239

- § 1. *The Rise and Fall of the Nile*, pp. 225-227.—In Egypt the operations of husbandry dependent on the annual rise and fall of the Nile, 225 *sq.*; irrigation, sowing, and harvest in Egypt, 226 *sq.*; events of the agricultural year probably celebrated with religious rites, 227.
- § 2. *Rites of Irrigation*, pp. 227-232.—Mourning for Osiris at midsummer when the Nile begins to rise, 227 *sq.*; Sirius regarded as the star of Isis, 228 *sq.*; its rising in July the beginning of the sacred Egyptian year, 229 *sq.*; ceremonies observed in Egypt at the cutting of the dams in August, 231 *sq.*
- § 3. *Rites of Sowing*, pp. 232-236.—The sowing of the seed in November, 232; Plutarch on the mournful character of the rites of sowing, 232 *sqq.*; his view that the worship of the fruits of the earth sprang from a verbal misunderstanding, 234; his theory an inversion of the truth, 234 *sq.*; respect shown by savages for the fruits and animals which they eat, 235 *sq.*
- § 4. *Rites of Harvest*, pp. 236-239.—Lamentations of the Egyptian corn-reapers, 236 *sq.*; similar ceremonies observed by the Cherokee Indians in the cultivation of the corn, 237 *sq.*; lamentations of Californian Indians at cutting sacred wood, 238 *sq.*; Arab ceremony of burying "the old man" at harvest, 239.

### CHAPTER IV.—THE OFFICIAL FESTIVALS OF OSIRIS . . . . . Pp. 240-267

- § 1. *The Festival at Sais*, pp. 240-242.—The Egyptian festivals stationary in the solar year after the adoption of the Alexandrian calendar in 30 B.C., 240 *sq.*; the sufferings of Osiris displayed as a mystery at Sais, 241; the illumination of the houses on that night suggestive of a Feast of All Souls, 241 *sq.*
- § 2. *Feasts of All Souls*, pp. 242-256.—Annual festivals of the dead among the natives of America, the East Indies, and eastern Asia, 242-247; similar festivals of the dead in Europe, 248-253; the Feast of All Souls on 2nd November apparently an old Celtic festival of the dead, 253-255; similar origin suggested for the Feast of All Saints on 1st November, 255 *sq.*
- § 3. *The Festival in the Month of Athyr*, pp. 256-258.—Festival of the death and resurrection of Osiris in the month of Athyr, 256 *sq.*; the finding of Osiris, 257 *sq.*



- § 4. *The Festival in the Month of Choiak*, pp. 258-261.—The great Osirian inscription at Dendera, 258 *sq.*; the death, dismemberment, and reconstitution of Osiris represented at the festival of Choiak, 259 *sqq.*
- § 5. *The Resurrection of Osiris*, pp. 261-263.—The resurrection of Osiris represented on the monuments, 261 *sq.*; corn-stuffed effigies of Osiris buried with the dead to ensure their resurrection, 262 *sq.*
- § 6. *Readjustment of Egyptian Festivals*, pp. 263-267.—The festivals of Osiris in the months of Athyr and Choiak apparently the same in substance, 263 *sq.*; the festival of Choiak perhaps transferred to Athyr when the Egyptians adopted the fixed Alexandrian year, 264 *sq.*; the dates of all the official Egyptian festivals perhaps shifted by a month at the same time in order to restore them to their natural places in the solar year, 265 *sq.*

## CHAPTER V.—THE NATURE OF OSIRIS . . . . . Pp. 268-281

- § 1. *Osiris a Corn-God*, pp. 268-275.—Osiris in the main a personification of the corn, 268 *sq.*; the legend of his dismemberment perhaps a reminiscence of a custom of dismembering human victims, especially kings, in the character of the corn-spirit, 269; Roman and Greek traditions of the dismemberment of kings and others, 269 *sqq.*; dismemberment of the Norse King Hafdán the Black, 271 *sq.*; custom of dismembering a king and burying the pieces in different places, 272 *sq.*; Koniag custom of dismembering whalers, 274; red-haired Egyptian victims perhaps representatives of the corn-spirit, 274 *sq.*
- § 2. *Osiris a Tree-Spirit*, pp. 275-279.—Osiris as a tree-spirit, 275 *sq.*; his image enclosed in a pine-tree, 276; the setting up of the *Dad* pillar at the festival of Osiris, 276 *sq.*; Osiris associated with the pine, the sycamore, the tamarisk, and the acacia, 277 *sq.*; his relation to fruit-trees, the vine, and ivy, 279.
- § 3. *Osiris a God of Fertility*, pp. 279-280.—Osiris perhaps conceived as a god of fertility in general, 279; coarse symbolism to express this idea, 279 *sq.*
- § 4. *Osiris a God of the Dead*, pp. 280-281.—Osiris a god of the resurrection as well as of the corn, 280 *sq.*; great popularity of his worship, 281.

## CHAPTER VI.—ISIS . . . . . Pp. 282-286

Multifarious attributes of Isis, 282; Isis compared and contrasted with the mother goddesses of Asia, 283; Isis perhaps originally the corn-goddess, 283 *sq.*; refinement and spiritualisation of Isis in later times, the popularity of her worship in the Roman empire, 284 *sqq.*

## CHAPTER VII.—OSIRIS AND THE SUN . . . Pp. 287-294

Osiris interpreted as the sun by many modern writers, 287 *sq.*; the later identification of Osiris with Ra, the sun-god, no evidence that Osiris was originally the sun, 288 *sq.*; most Egyptian gods at some time identified with the sun, 290; attempt of Amenophis IV. to abolish all gods except the sun-god, 290 *sq.*; the death and resurrection of Osiris more naturally explained by the decay and growth of vegetation than by sunset and sunrise, 292-294.

## CHAPTER VIII.—OSIRIS AND THE MOON . . . Pp. 295-304

Osiris sometimes interpreted by the ancients as the moon, 295; evidence of the association of Osiris with the moon, 295 *sqq.*; identification of Osiris with the moon apparently based on a comparatively late theory of the moon as the cause of growth and decay, 297 *sq.*; practical rules founded on this theory, 298 *sqq.*; the moon regarded as the source of moisture, 302; the moon naturally worshipped by agricultural peoples, 302 *sq.*; later identification of the corn-god Osiris with the moon, 304.

CHAPTER IX.—THE DOCTRINE OF LUNAR  
SYMPATHY . . . . . Pp. 305-313

The doctrine of lunar sympathy, 305 *sq.*; ceremonies at new moon often magical rather than religious, being intended not so much to propitiate the planet as to renew sympathetically the life of man, 307 *sq.*; the moon supposed to exercise special influence on children, 309 *sqq.*; use of the moon to increase money or decrease sickness, 312 *sq.*

## CHAPTER X.—THE KING AS OSIRIS . . . Pp. 314-318

Osiris personated by the King of Egypt, 314; the Sed festival intended to renew the king's life, 314 *sqq.*; identification of the king with the dead Osiris at the festival, 316 *sq.*; Professor Flinders Petrie's explanation of the Sed festival, 317 *sq.*

## CHAPTER XI.—CONCLUSION . . . . . Pp. 319-324

Essential similarity of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris, 319; superiority of the goddesses associated with Adonis, Attis, and Osiris a mark of the system of mother-right, 319 *sq.*; mother-right in Egypt, 320 *sq.*; Egyptian



marriages of brothers and sisters based on the system of mother-right, 321 *sq.* ; the mythical marriage of Osiris with his sister Isis a reflection of a real social custom, 322 *sq.* ; conservatism of the Egyptians, 323 *sq.* ; original type of Osiris better preserved than those of Adonis and Attis, 324.

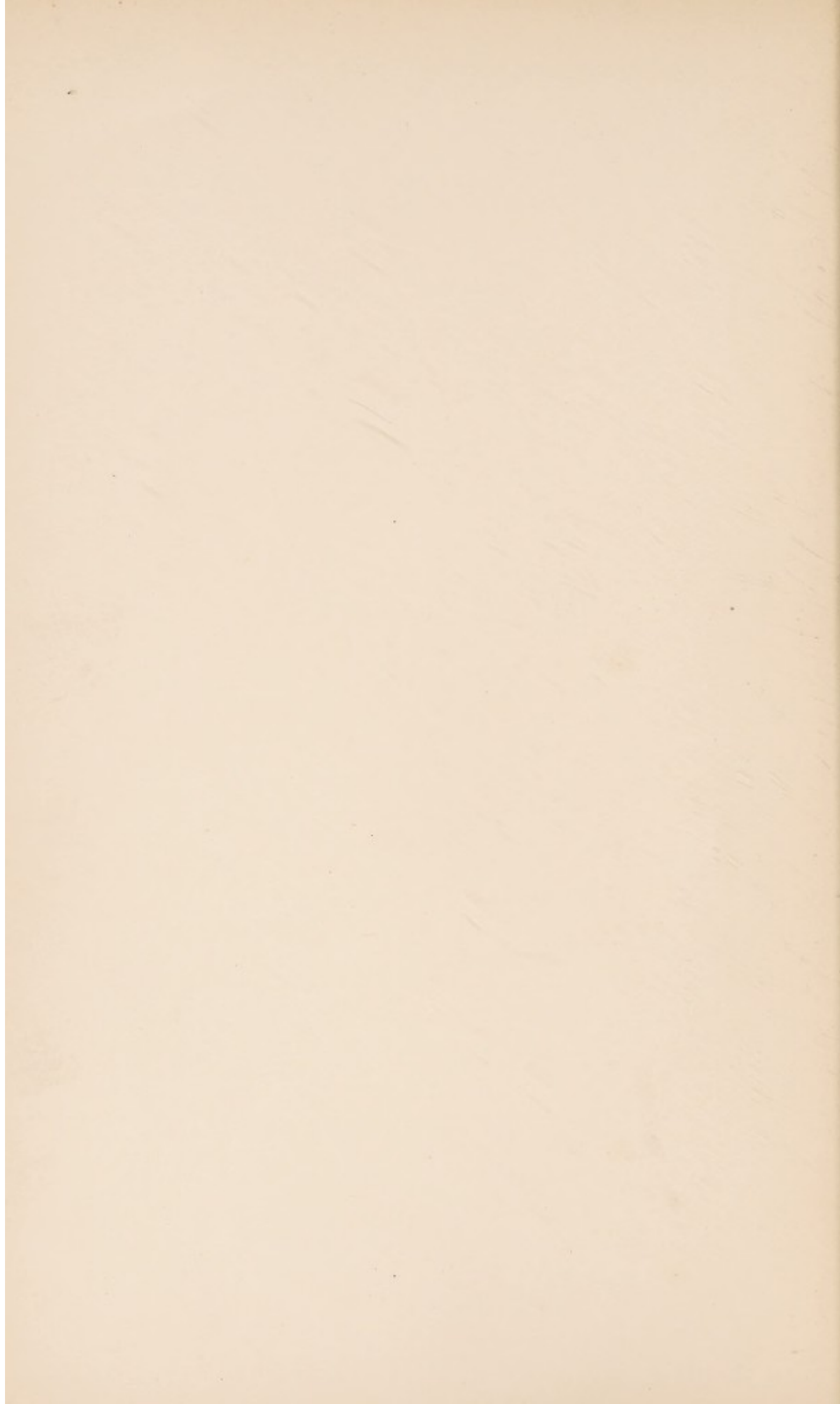
NOTE—A CHARM TO PROTECT A TOWN . . . . . Pp. 325-327

INDEX . . . . . Pp. 329-339



BOOK FIRST

ADONIS



## CHAPTER I

### THE MYTH OF ADONIS

THE spectacle of the great changes which annually pass over the face of the earth has powerfully impressed the minds of men in all ages, and stirred them to meditate on the causes of transformations so vast and wonderful. Their curiosity has not been purely disinterested ; for even the savage cannot fail to perceive how intimately his own life is bound up with that of nature, and how the same processes which freeze the stream and strip the earth of vegetation menace him with extinction. At a certain stage of development men seem to have imagined that the means of averting the threatened calamity were in their own hands, and that they could hasten or retard the flight of the seasons by magic art. Accordingly they performed ceremonies and recited spells to make the rain to fall, the sun to shine, animals to multiply, and the fruits of the earth to grow. In course of time the slow advance of knowledge, which has dispelled so many cherished illusions, convinced at least the more thoughtful portion of mankind that the alternations of summer and winter, of spring and autumn, were not merely the result of their own magical rites, but that some deeper cause, some mightier power, was at work behind the shifting scenes of nature. They now pictured to themselves the growth and decay of vegetation, the birth and death of living creatures, as effects of the waxing or waning strength of divine beings, of gods and goddesses, who were born and died, who married and begot children, on the pattern of human life.

The changes of the seasons explained by the life and death of gods.



Magical ceremonies to revive the failing energies of the gods.

Thus the old magical theory of the seasons was displaced, or rather supplemented, by a religious theory. For although men now attributed the annual cycle of change primarily to corresponding changes in their deities, they still thought that by performing certain magical rites they could aid the god, who was the principle of life, in his struggle with the opposing principle of death. They imagined that they could recruit his failing energies and even raise him from the dead. The ceremonies which they observed for this purpose were in substance a dramatic representation of the natural processes which they wished to facilitate; for it is a familiar tenet of magic that you can produce any desired effect by merely imitating it. And as they now explained the fluctuations of growth and decay, of reproduction and dissolution, by the marriage, the death, and the rebirth or revival of the gods, their religious or rather magical dramas turned in great measure on these themes. They set forth the fruitful union of the powers of fertility, the sad death of one at least of the divine partners, and his joyful resurrection. Thus a religious theory was blended with a magical practice. The combination is familiar in history. Indeed, few religions have ever succeeded in wholly extricating themselves from the old trammels of magic. The inconsistency of acting on two opposite principles, however it may vex the soul of the philosopher, rarely troubles the common man; indeed he is seldom even aware of it. His affair is to act, not to analyse the motives of his action. If mankind had always been logical and wise, history would not be a long chronicle of folly and crime.

The principles of animal and of vegetable life confused in these ceremonies.

Of the changes which the seasons bring with them, the most striking within the temperate zone are those which affect vegetation. The influence of the seasons on animals, though great, is not nearly so manifest. Hence it is natural that in the magical dramas designed to dispel winter and bring back spring the emphasis should be laid on vegetation, and that trees and plants should figure in them more prominently than beasts and birds. Yet the two sides of life, the vegetable and the animal, were not dissociated in the minds of those who observed the



ceremonies. Indeed they commonly believed that the tie between the animal and the vegetable world was even closer than it really is; hence they often combined the dramatic representation of reviving plants with a real or a dramatic union of the sexes for the purpose of furthering at the same time and by the same act the multiplication of fruits, of animals, and of men. To them the principle of life and fertility, whether animal or vegetable, was one and indivisible. To live and to cause to live, to eat food and to beget children, these were the primary wants of men in the past, and they will be the primary wants of men in the future so long as the world lasts. Other things may be added to enrich and beautify human life, but unless these wants are first satisfied, humanity itself must cease to exist. These two things, therefore, food and children, were what men chiefly sought to procure by the performance of magical rites for the regulation of the seasons.

Nowhere, apparently, have these rites been more widely and solemnly celebrated than in the lands which border the eastern Mediterranean. Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead. In name and detail the rites varied from place to place: in substance they were the same. The supposed death and resurrection of this oriental deity, a god of many names but of essentially one nature, is the subject of the present inquiry. We begin with Tammuz or Adonis.<sup>1</sup>

Prevalence  
of these  
rites in  
western  
Asia and  
Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> The equivalence of Tammuz and Adonis has been doubted or denied by some scholars, as by Renan (*Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 216, 235) and by Chwolson (*Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, ii. 510). But the identification of them by Jerome (*Epist.* lviii. 3, and *Comment. on Ezekiel*, viii. 14, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxii. 581, xxv. 82), Cyril of Alexandria (*Comment. on Hosea*, iv. 15, Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxi. 136), and Melito (in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum*, p. 44), may be accepted as conclusive. See W. W. Graf Baudissin, *Studien*

*zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, i. 299; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 273 sqq.; Ch. Vellay, "Le dieu Thammuz," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xlix. (1904), pp. 154-162. An Assyrian origin of the cult of Adonis was long ago affirmed by Macrobius (*Sat.* i. 21. 1). On Adonis and his worship in general see also F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 191 sqq.; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 536 sqq.; Ch. Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammouz dans l'Orient antique* (Paris, 1904).



Tammuz  
or Adonis  
in Baby-  
lonia.

Descent of  
Ishtar to  
the nether  
world to  
recover  
Tammuz.

The worship of Adonis was practised by the Semitic peoples of Babylonia and Syria, and the Greeks borrowed it from them as early as the seventh century before Christ.<sup>1</sup> The true name of the deity was Tammuz: the appellation of Adonis is merely the Semitic *Adon*, "lord," a title of honour by which his worshippers addressed him. In the Hebrew text of the Old Testament the same name Adonai, originally perhaps Adoni, "my lord," is often applied to Jehovah.<sup>2</sup> But the Greeks through a misunderstanding converted the title of honour into a proper name. If scholars are right in deriving the name of Tammuz from a Sumerian phrase meaning "true son," or, more fully, "true son of the deep water,"<sup>3</sup> we must conclude that the Semites of Babylonia took over the worship from their predecessors the Sumerians, an ancient people apparently of the Turanian stock, who had occupied the country, tilled the soil, tended cattle, built cities, dug canals, and attained to a considerable pitch of civilisation before the Semitic hordes appeared on the banks of the Euphrates.<sup>4</sup> Be that as it may, we first meet with Tammuz in the religious literature of Babylon. He there appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature. The references to their connection with each other in myth and ritual are both fragmentary and obscure, but we gather from them that every year Tammuz was believed to die, passing away from the cheerful earth to the gloomy subterranean world, and that every year his divine mistress journeyed in quest of him "to the land from which there is no returning, to the

<sup>1</sup> The mourning for Adonis is mentioned by Sappho, who flourished about 600 B.C. See Th. Bergk's *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*,<sup>3</sup> iii. 897; Pausanias, ix. 29. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, iii. 3327.

<sup>3</sup> *Dumuzi*, more fully *Dumuzi-zibzu*. See P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen* (Berlin, 1900), p. 560; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin, 1902), p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. (Gotha,

1896), pp. 134 *sqq.*; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology* (London, 1899), pp. 1 *sqq.*; H. Winckler, in E. Schrader's *op. cit.* pp. 10 *sq.*, 349; Fr. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, pp. 18 *sqq.* However, Assyriologists are by no means agreed as to the occupation of Babylonia by an alien race before the arrival of the Semites. See M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 21 *sqq.*, 32 *sqq.*; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*<sup>2</sup> (Paris, 1905), pp. 55 *sq.*



house of darkness, where dust lies on door and bolt." During her absence the passion of love ceased to operate: men and beasts alike forgot to reproduce their kinds: all life was threatened with extinction. So intimately bound up with the goddess were the sexual functions of the whole animal kingdom that without her presence they could not be discharged. A messenger of the great god Ea was accordingly despatched to rescue the goddess on whom so much depended. The stern queen of the infernal regions, Allatu or Eresh-Kigal by name, reluctantly allowed Ishtar to be sprinkled with the Water of Life and to depart, in company probably with her lover Tammuz, that the two might return together to the upper world, and that with their return all nature might revive. Laments for the departed Tammuz are contained in several Babylonian hymns, which liken him to plants that quickly fade. His death appears to have been annually mourned, to the shrill music of flutes, by men and women about midsummer in the month named after him, the month of Tammuz. The dirges were seemingly chanted over an effigy of the dead god, which was washed with pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe, while the fumes of incense rose into the air, as if to stir his dormant senses by their pungent fragrance and wake him from the sleep of death.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. Jeremias, *Die babylonisch-assyrischen Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode* (Leipzig, 1887), pp. 4 sqq.; *id.*, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 808, iii. 258 sqq.; M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 565-576, 584, 682 sq.; W. L. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 178-183; P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen*, pp. 81 sqq., 95 sqq., 169; R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (New York, 1901), pp. 316 sq., 338, 408 sqq.; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 397 sqq., 561 sqq. According to Jerome (on Ezekiel, viii. 14) the month of Tammuz was June; but according to modern scholars it corresponded rather to July, or to part of June and part of July. See F.

C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 210; F. Lenormant, "Il mito di Adone-Tammuz nei documenti cuneiformi," *Atti del IV. Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti* (Florence, 1880), i. 144 sq.; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 275; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. "Months," iii. 3194. My friend W. Robertson Smith informed me that owing to the variations of the local Syrian calendars the month of Tammuz fell in different places at different times, from midsummer to autumn, or from June to September. According to Prof. M. Jastrow, the festival of Tammuz was celebrated just before the summer solstice (*op. cit.* pp. 547, 682). He observes that "the calendar of the Jewish Church still marks the 17th day of Tammuz as a fast, and Houtsma has shown that the associa-



Adonis  
in Greek  
mythology.

The tragical story and the melancholy rites of Adonis are better known to us from the descriptions of Greek writers than from the fragments of Babylonian literature or the brief reference of the prophet Ezekiel, who saw the women of Jerusalem weeping for Tammuz at the north gate of the temple.<sup>1</sup> Reflected in the mirror of Greek mythology, the oriental deity appears as a comely youth beloved by Aphrodite. In his infancy the goddess hid him in a chest, which she gave in charge to Proserpine, queen of the nether world. But when Proserpine opened the chest and beheld the beauty of the babe, she refused to give him back to Aphrodite. The dispute between the two goddesses of love and death was settled by Zeus, who decreed that Adonis should abide with Proserpine in the under world for one part of the year, and with Aphrodite in the upper world for another part. At last the fair youth was killed in hunting by a wild boar, or by the jealous Ares, who turned himself into the likeness of a boar in order to compass the death of his rival. Bitterly did Aphrodite lament her loved and lost Adonis.<sup>2</sup> In this form of the myth, the contest between Aphrodite and Proserpine for the possession of Adonis clearly reproduces the struggle between Ishtar and Allatu in the land of the dead, while the decision of Zeus that Adonis is to spend one part of the year under ground and another part above ground is merely a Greek version of the annual disappearance and reappearance of Tammuz.

tion of the day with the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, represents merely the attempt to give an ancient festival a worthier interpretation."

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel viii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 14. 4; Bion, *Idyl*, i.; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 831; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 503 sqq.

## CHAPTER II

### ADONIS AT BYBLUS

THE myth of Adonis was localised and his rites celebrated with much solemnity at two places in western Asia. One of these was Byblus on the coast of Syria, the other was Paphos in Cyprus. Both were great seats of the worship of Aphrodite, or rather of her Semitic counterpart, Astarte;<sup>1</sup> and of both, if we accept the legends, Cinyras, the father of Adonis, was king.<sup>2</sup> Of the two cities Byblus was the more ancient; indeed it claimed to be the oldest city in Phoenicia, and to have been founded in the early ages of the world by the great god El, whom Greeks and Romans identified with Cronus and Saturn respectively.<sup>3</sup> However that may have been, in historical times it ranked as a holy place, the religious capital of the country, the Mecca or Jerusalem of the Phoenicians.<sup>4</sup> The city stood on a height beside the sea,<sup>5</sup> and contained a great sanctuary of Astarte,<sup>6</sup> where in the midst of a spacious open court, surrounded by

Worship  
of Adonis  
and Astarte  
at Byblus,  
the king-  
dom of  
Cinyras.

<sup>1</sup> The ancients were aware that the Syrian and Cyprian Aphrodite, the mistress of Adonis, was no other than Astarte. See Cicero, *De natura deorum*, iii. 23. 59; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 44.

<sup>2</sup> As to Cinyras, see F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 238 sqq., ii. 2. 226-231; W. H. Engel, *Kypros* (Berlin, 1841), i. 168-173, ii. 94-136; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1189 sqq. Meliton calls the father of Adonis by the name of Cuthar, and represents him as king of the Phoenicians with his capital at Gebal (Byblus). See Meliton, "Oration to Antoninus

Caesar," in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London, 1855), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Philo of Byblus, quoted by Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelii*, i. 10; *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 568; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Βύβλος. Byblus is a Greek corruption of the Semitic Gebal (גבל), the name which the place still retains. See E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris, 1864), p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> R. Pietschmann, *Geschichte der Phoenizier* (Berlin, 1889), p. 139. On the coins it is designated "Holy Byblus."

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, xvi. 1. 18, p. 755.

<sup>6</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6.



cloisters and approached from below by staircases, rose a tall cone or obelisk, the holy image of the goddess.<sup>1</sup> In this sanctuary the rites of Adonis were celebrated.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the whole city was sacred to him,<sup>3</sup> and the river *Nahr Ibrahim*, which falls into the sea a little to the south of Byblus, bore in antiquity the name of Adonis.<sup>4</sup> This was the kingdom of Cinyras.<sup>5</sup> From the earliest to the latest times the city appears to have been ruled by kings, assisted perhaps by a senate or council of elders.<sup>6</sup> We learn from an inscription that one of these kings, Yehaw-melek, son of Yehar-baal, and grandson of Adom-melek or Uri-melek, dedicated a pillared portico with a carved work of gold and a bronze altar to the goddess, whom he worshipped under the name of Baalath Gebal, that is, the female Baal of Byblus.<sup>7</sup>

Divinity of  
Semitic  
kings.

The names of these kings suggest that they claimed affinity with their god Baal or Moloch, for Moloch is only a corruption of Melek, that is, "king." Such a claim at all events appears to have been put forward by many other Semitic kings.<sup>8</sup> The early monarchs of Babylon were worshipped as gods in their lifetime.<sup>9</sup> Mesha, king of Moab, called himself the son of his god Kemosh.<sup>10</sup> Among

<sup>1</sup> The sanctuary and image are figured on coins of Byblus. See T. L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica* (London, 1859), pp. 105 sq.; E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 177; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 60; R. Pietschmann, *Geschichte der Phoenizier*, p. 202; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 173. Renan excavated a massive square pedestal built of colossal stones, which he thought may have supported the sacred obelisk (*op. cit.* pp. 174-178).

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xvi. 1. 18, p. 755.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 8; E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 282 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Eustathius, *Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes*, 912 (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 376); Meliton, in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum*, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel xxvii. 9. As to the name Gebal see above, p. 9, note 3.

<sup>7</sup> The inscription was discovered by Renan. See Ch. Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammouz dans l'Orient antique*, pp. 38 sq.; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1903), No. 3, pp. 18 sq. In the time of Alexander the Great the king of Byblus was a certain Enylus (Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 20), whose name appears on a coin of the city (F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 1, p. 103, note 81).

<sup>8</sup> On the divinity of Semitic kings and the kingship of Semitic gods see W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 44 sq., 66 sqq.

<sup>9</sup> H. Radau, *Early Babylonian History* (New York and London, 1900), pp. 307-317.

<sup>10</sup> We learn this from the Moabite stone. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 1, p. 2.



the Aramaean sovereigns of Damascus, mentioned in the Bible, we find more than one Ben-hadad, that is, "son of the god Hadad," the chief male deity of the Syrians;<sup>1</sup> and Josephus tells us that down to his own time, in the first century of our era, Bend-hadad I., whom he calls simply Adad, and his successor, Hazael, continued to be worshipped as gods by the people of Damascus, who held processions daily in their honour.<sup>2</sup> Some of the kings of Edom seem to have gone a step farther and identified themselves with the god in their lifetime; at all events they bore his name Hadad without any qualification.<sup>3</sup> King Bar-rekub, who reigned over Samal in north-western Syria in the time of Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B.C.), appears from his name to have reckoned himself a son of Rekub-el, the god to whose favour he deemed himself indebted for the kingdom.<sup>4</sup> The kings of Tyre traced their descent from Baal,<sup>5</sup> and apparently professed to be gods in their own person.<sup>6</sup> Several of them bore names which are partly composed of the names of Baal and Astarte; one of them bore the name of Baal pure and simple.<sup>7</sup> The Baal whom they personated was no

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings viii. 7, 9, xiii. 24 sq.; Jeremiah xlix. 27. As to the god Hadad see Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 17-19 (where, as so often in late writers, the Syrians are called Assyrians); Philo of Byblus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 569; F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1888), pp. 66-68; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 61, 62, pp. 161 sq., 164, 173, 175; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 93, 493, 496 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Antiquit.* ix. 4. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis xxxvi. 35 sq.; 1 Kings xi. 14-22; 1 Chronicles i. 50 sq. Of the eight kings of Edom mentioned in Genesis (xxxvi. 31-39) not one was the son of his predecessor. This seems to indicate that in Edom, as elsewhere, the blood royal was traced in the female line, and that the kings were men of other families who succeeded to the throne by marrying the hereditary princesses. See my *Lectures on the*

*Early History of the Kingship* (London, 1905), pp. 231 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.* Nos. 62, 63, pp. 163, 165, 173 sqq., 181 sqq.; M. J. Lagrange, *op. cit.* pp. 496 sqq. The god Rekub-el is mentioned along with the gods Hadad, El, Reshef, and Shamash in an inscription of King Bar-rekub's mortal father, King Pan-ammu (G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.* No. 61, p. 161).

<sup>5</sup> Virgil, *Aen.* i. 729 sq., with Servius's note; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, i. 86 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel xxviii. 2, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Menander of Ephesus, quoted by Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18 and 21; *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 446 sq. According to the text of Josephus, as edited by B. Niese, the names of the kings in question were Abibal, Balbazer, Abdastart, Methusastart, son of Leastart, Ithobal, Balezor, Baal, Balator, Merbal. The passage of Menander is quoted also by Eusebius, *Chronic.* i. pp. 118, 120, ed. A. Schoene.



doubt Melcarth, "the king of the city," as his name signifies, the great god whom the Greeks identified with Hercules; for the equivalence of the Baal of Tyre both to Melcarth and to Hercules is placed beyond the reach of doubt by a bilingual inscription, in Phoenician and Greek, which was found in Malta.<sup>1</sup>

Kings  
named  
Adonis.

In like manner the kings of Byblus may have assumed the style of Adonis; for Adonis was simply the divine Adon or "lord" of the city, a title which hardly differs in sense from Baal ("master") and Melek ("king"). This conjecture would be confirmed if one of the kings of Byblus actually bore, as Renan believed, the name of Adom-melek, that is, Adonis Melek, the Lord King. But, unfortunately, the reading of the inscription in which the name occurs is doubtful.<sup>2</sup> Some of the old Canaanite kings of Jerusalem appear to have played the part of Adonis in their lifetime, if we may judge from their names, Adoni-bezek and Adoni-zedek,<sup>3</sup> which are divine rather than human titles. Adoni-zedek means "lord of righteousness," and is therefore equivalent to Melchizedek, that is, "king of righteousness," the title of that mysterious king of Salem and priest of God Most High, who seems to have been neither more nor less than one of these same Canaanitish kings of Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> Thus if the old priestly

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 36, p. 102. As to Melcarth, the Tyrian Hercules, see Ed. Meyer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2650 sqq. One of the Tyrian kings seems to have been called Abi-milk (Abi-melech), that is, "father of a king" or "father of Moloch," that is, of Melcarth. A letter of his to the king of Egypt is preserved in the Tel-el-Amarna correspondence. See R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 237. As to a title which implies that the bearer of it was the father of a god, see below, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> E. Renan, quoted by Ch. Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammouz*, p. 39. But Mr. Cooke reads אדנימלך (Uri-milk) instead of אדנימלך (Adon-milk) (G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 3, p. 18). However, little stress can be laid on

this argument, since the title Adoni Melek, "my lord the king," was often used in addressing Hebrew kings. See, for example, 1 Kings i. 2, 13, 18, 20, 21, 24, 27, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Judges i. 4-7; Joshua x. 1 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis xiv. 18-20, with Prof. S. R. Driver's commentary; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. "Adoni-bezek," "Adoni-zedek," "Melchizedek." It is to be observed that names compounded with Adoni- were occasionally borne by private persons. Such names are Adoni-kam (Ezra ii. 13) and Adoni-ram (1 Kings iv. 6), not to mention Adoni-jah (1 Kings i. 5 sqq.), who was a prince and aspired to the throne of his father David. These names are commonly interpreted as sentences expressive of the nature of the god whom the bearer of the name worshipped. See Prof. Th. Nöldeke, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. "Names,"



kings of Jerusalem regularly played the part of Adonis, we need not wonder that in later times the women of Jerusalem used to weep for Tammuz, that is, for Adonis, at the gate of the temple.<sup>1</sup> In doing so they may only have been continuing a custom which had been observed in the same place by the Canaanites long before the Hebrews invaded the land.

But if Semitic kings in general and the kings of Byblus in particular often assumed the style of Baal or Adonis, it follows that they may have mated with the goddess, the Baalath or Astarte of the city. Certainly we hear of kings of Tyre and Sidon who were priests of Astarte.<sup>2</sup>

The Baal and his female Baalath the sources of all fertility.

Now to the agricultural Semites the Baal or god of a land was the author of all its fertility; he it was who produced the corn, the wine, the figs, the oil, and the flax, by means of his quickening waters, which in the arid parts of the Semitic world are oftener springs, streams, and underground flow than the rains of heaven.<sup>3</sup> Further, "the life-giving power of the god was not limited to vegetative nature, but to him also was ascribed the increase of animal life, the multiplication of flocks and herds, and, not least, of the human inhabitants of the land. For the increase of animate nature is obviously conditioned, in the last resort, by the fertility of the soil, and primitive races, which have not learned to differentiate the various kinds of life with precision, think of animate as well as vegetable life as rooted in the earth and sprung from it. The earth is the great mother of all things in most mythological philosophies, and the comparison of the life of mankind, or of a stock of men, with the life of a tree, which is so common in Semitic as in other primitive poetry, is not in its origin a mere figure. Thus where the growth of vegetation is ascribed to a particular divine power, the same power receives the

iii. 3286. It is quite possible that names which once implied divinity were afterwards degraded by application to common men.

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel viii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Menander of Ephesus, quoted by Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18 (*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 446); G. A. Cooke,

*Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 4, p. 26. According to Justin, however, the priest of Hercules, that is, of Melcarth, at Tyre, was distinct from the king and second to him in dignity. See Justin, xviii. 4. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea ii. 5 *sqq.*; W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 95-107.



thanks and homage of his worshippers for the increase of cattle and of men. Firstlings as well as first-fruits were offered at the shrines of the Baalim, and one of the commonest classes of personal names given by parents to their sons or daughters designates the child as the gift of the god." In short, "the Baal was conceived as the male principle of reproduction, the husband of the land which he fertilised."<sup>1</sup> So far, therefore, as the Semite personified the reproductive energies of nature as male and female, as a Baal and a Baalath, he appears to have identified the male power especially with water and the female especially with earth. On this view plants and trees, animals and men, are the offspring or children of the Baal and Baalath.

Persona-  
tion of the  
Baal by the  
king.

If, then, at Byblus and elsewhere, the Semitic king was allowed, or rather required, to personate the god and marry the goddess, the intention of the custom can only have been to ensure the fertility of the land and the increase of men and cattle by means of homoeopathic magic. There is reason to think that a similar custom was observed from a similar motive in other parts of the ancient world, and particularly at Nemi, where both the male and the female powers, the *Dianus* and *Diana*, were in one aspect of their nature personifications of the life-giving waters.<sup>2</sup>

Cinyras,  
king of  
Byblus.

The last king of Byblus bore the ancient name of Cinyras, and was beheaded by Pompey the Great for his tyrannous excesses.<sup>3</sup> His legendary namesake Cinyras is said to have founded a sanctuary of Aphrodite, that is, of Astarte, at a place on Mount Lebanon, distant a day's journey from the capital.<sup>4</sup> The spot was probably Aphaca, at the source of the river Adonis, half-way between Byblus and Baalbec; for at Aphaca there was a famous grove and sanctuary of Astarte which Constantine destroyed on account of the flagitious character of the worship.<sup>5</sup> The site of the temple has been discovered by modern travellers near the miserable village which still bears the name of Afka at

Aphaca  
and the  
vale of the  
Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 107 sq.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship* (London, 1905), pp. 152 sqq., 194 sqq., 213 sqq., 283 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xvi. 1. 18, p. 755.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, iii. 55; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii. 5; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 18; Zosimus, i. 58.



the head of the wild, romantic, wooded gorge of the Adonis. The hamlet stands among groves of noble walnut-trees on the brink of the lynn. A little way off the river rushes from a cavern at the foot of a mighty amphitheatre of towering cliffs to plunge in a series of cascades into the awful depths of the glen. The deeper it descends, the ranker and denser grows the vegetation, which, sprouting from the crannies and fissures of the rocks, spreads a green veil over the roaring or murmuring stream in the tremendous chasm below. There is something delicious, almost intoxicating, in the freshness of these tumbling waters, in the sweetness and purity of the mountain air, in the vivid green of the vegetation. The temple, of which some massive hewn blocks and a fine column of Syenite granite still mark the site, occupied a terrace facing the source of the river and commanding a magnificent prospect. Across the foam and the roar of the waterfalls you look up to the cavern and away to the top of the sublime precipices above. So lofty is the cliff that the goats which creep along its ledges to browse on the bushes appear like ants to the spectator hundreds of feet below. Seaward the view is especially impressive when the sun floods the profound gorge with golden light, revealing all the fantastic buttresses and rounded towers of its mountain rampart, and falling softly on the varied green of the woods which clothe its depths.<sup>1</sup> It was here that, according to the legend, Adonis met Aphrodite for the first or the last time,<sup>2</sup> and here his mangled body was buried.<sup>3</sup> A fairer scene could hardly be imagined for a story of tragic love

<sup>1</sup> On the valley of the *Nahr Ibrahim*, its scenery and monuments, see Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*,<sup>3</sup> iii. 603-609; W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book, Lebanon, Damascus, and beyond Jordan* (London, 1886), pp. 239-246; E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 282 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 175-179. Among the trees which line the valley are oak, sycamore, bay, plane, orange, and mulberry (W. M. Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 245). Travellers are unanimous in testifying to the extra-

ordinary beauty of the vale of the Adonis. Thus Robinson writes: "There is no spot in all my wanderings on which memory lingers with greater delight than on the sequestered retreat and exceeding loveliness of Afka." Renan says that the landscape is one of the most beautiful in the world.

<sup>2</sup> *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. "Αφάκα, p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Meliton, "Oration to Antoninus Caesar," in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London, 1855), p. 44.



and death. Yet, sequestered as the valley is and must always have been, it is not wholly deserted. A convent or a village may be observed here and there standing out against the sky on the top of some beetling crag or clinging to the face of a nearly perpendicular cliff high above the foam and the din of the river; and at evening the lights that twinkle through the gloom betray the presence of human habitations on slopes which might seem inaccessible to man. In antiquity the whole of the lovely vale appears to have been dedicated to Adonis, and to this day it is haunted by his memory; for the heights which shut it in are crested at various points by ruined monuments of his worship, some of them overhanging dreadful abysses, down which it turns the head dizzy to look and see the eagles wheeling about their nests far below. One such monument exists at Ghineh. The face of a great rock, above a roughly hewn recess, is here carved with figures of Adonis and Aphrodite. He is portrayed with spear in rest, awaiting the attack of a bear, while she is seated in an attitude of sorrow.<sup>1</sup> Her grief-stricken figure may well be the mourning Aphrodite of the Lebanon described by Macrobius,<sup>2</sup> and the recess in the rock is perhaps her lover's tomb. Every year, in the belief of his worshippers, Adonis was wounded to death on the mountains, and every year the face of nature itself was dyed with his sacred blood. So year by year the Syrian damsels lamented his untimely fate,<sup>3</sup> while the red anemone, his flower, bloomed among the cedars of Lebanon and the river ran red to the sea, fringing the winding shores of the blue Mediterranean, whenever the wind set inshore, with a sinuous band of crimson.

<sup>1</sup> E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 292-294. The writer seems to have no doubt that the beast attacking

Adonis is a bear, not a boar.

<sup>2</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 21. 5

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 8.

## CHAPTER III

### ADONIS AT PAPHOS

THE island of Cyprus lies but one day's sail from the coast of Syria. Indeed on fine summer evenings its mountains may be descried looming low and dark against the red fires of sunset.<sup>1</sup> With its rich mines of copper and its forests of firs and stately cedars ; the island naturally attracted a commercial and maritime people like the Phoenicians ; while the abundance of its corn, its wine, and its oil must have rendered it in their eyes a Land of Promise by comparison with the niggardly nature of their own rugged coast, hemmed in between the mountains and the sea.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly they settled in Cyprus at a very early date and remained there long after the Greeks had also established themselves on its shores ; for we know from inscriptions and coins that Phoenician kings reigned at Citium, the Chittim of the Hebrews, down to the time of Alexander the Great.<sup>3</sup>

Phoenician colonies in Cyprus.

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 2, p. 224 ; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 199.

<sup>2</sup> On the natural wealth of Cyprus see Strabo, xiv. 6. 5 ; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, i. 40-71 ; F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 2, pp. 224 sq. ; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 200 sq. As to the firs and cedars of Cyprus see Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, v. 7. 1, v. 9. 1. The Cyprians boasted that they could build and rig a ship complete, from her keel to her topsails, with the native products of their island (Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv. 8. 14).

<sup>3</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of Semitic*

*Inscriptions*, Nos. 12-25, pp. 55-76, 347-349 ; P. Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, pp. 179, 185. It has been held that the name of Citium is etymologically identical with *Hittite*. If that was so, it would seem that the town was built and inhabited by a non-Semitic people before the arrival of the Phoenicians. See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. "Kittim." Other traces of this older race, akin to the primitive stock of Asia Minor, have been detected in Cyprus ; amongst them the most obvious is the Cyprian syllabary, the characters of which are neither Phoenician nor Greek in origin. See P. Gardner, *op. cit.* pp. 154, 173-175, 178 sq.



Naturally the Semitic colonists brought their gods with them from the mother-land. They worshipped Baal of the Lebanon,<sup>1</sup> who may well have been Adonis, and at Amathus on the south coast they instituted the rites of Adonis and Aphrodite, or rather Astarte.<sup>2</sup> Here, as at Byblus, these rites resembled the Egyptian worship of Osiris so closely that some people even identified the Adonis of Amathus with Osiris.<sup>3</sup> The Tyrian Melcarth or Moloch was also worshipped at Amathus,<sup>4</sup> and the tombs discovered in the neighbourhood prove that the city remained Phoenician to a late period.<sup>5</sup>

Kingdom  
of Paphos.

But the great seat of the worship of Aphrodite and Adonis in Cyprus was Paphos on the south-western side of the island. Among the petty kingdoms into which Cyprus was divided from the earliest times until the end of the fourth century before our era Paphos must have ranked with the best. It is a land of hills and billowy ridges, diversified by fields and vineyards and intersected by rivers, which in the course of ages have carved for themselves beds of such tremendous depth that travelling in the interior is difficult and tedious. The lofty range of Mount Olympus (the modern *Troodos*), capped with snow the greater part of the year, screens Paphos from the northerly and easterly winds and cuts it off from the rest of the island. On the slopes of the range the last pine-woods of Cyprus linger, sheltering here and there monasteries in scenery not unworthy of the Apennines. The old city of Paphos occupied the summit of a hill about a mile from the

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 11, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* Ἀμαθοῦς; Pausanias, ix. 41. 2 sq. According to Pausanias, there was a remarkable necklace of green stones and gold in the sanctuary of Adonis and Aphrodite at Amathus. The Greeks commonly identified it with the necklace of Harmonia or Eriphyle. A terra-cotta statuette of Astarte, found at Amathus (?), represents her wearing a necklace which she touches with one hand. See L. P. di Cesnola, *Cyprus* (London, 1877), p. 275. The scanty ruins of Amathus occupy an isolated hill beside the sea. Among

them is an enormous stone jar, half buried in the earth, of which the four handles are adorned with figures of bulls. It is probably of Phoenician manufacture. See L. Ross, *Reisen nach Kos, Halikarnassos, Rhodes und der Insel Cypern* (Halle, 1852), pp. 168 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* Ἀμαθοῦς. For the relation of Adonis to Osiris at Byblus see below, p. 293.

<sup>4</sup> Hesychius, *s.v.* Μάλικα.

<sup>5</sup> L. P. di Cesnola, *Cyprus*, pp. 254-283; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 216-222.



sea; the newer city sprang up at the harbour some ten miles off.<sup>1</sup> The sanctuary of Aphrodite at Old Paphos (the modern Kuklia) was one of the most celebrated shrines in the ancient world. From the earliest to the latest times it would seem to have preserved its essential features unchanged. For the sanctuary is represented on coins of the Imperial age,<sup>2</sup> and these representations agree closely with little golden models of a shrine which were found in two of the royal graves at Mycenae.<sup>3</sup> Both on the coins and in the models we see a façade surmounted by a pair of doves and divided into three compartments or chapels, of which the central one is crowned by a lofty superstructure. In the golden models each chapel contains a pillar standing in a pair of horns: the central superstructure is crowned by two pairs of horns, one within the other; and the two side chapels are in like manner crowned each with a pair of horns and a single dove perched on the outer horn of each pair. On the coins each of the side chapels contains a pillar or candelabra-like object: the central chapel contains a cone and is flanked by two high columns, each terminating in a pair of ball-topped pinnacles, with a star and crescent appearing between the tops of the columns. The doves are doubtless the sacred doves of Aphrodite or Astarte,<sup>4</sup> and the horns and pillars remind us of the similar religious emblems which have been found in the great prehistoric palace of Cnossus in Crete, as well as on many monuments of the Mycenaean

Sanctuary  
of  
Aphrodite  
at Paphos.

<sup>1</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *Devia Cypria* (London, 1889), pp. 1-3; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> vi. 747; É. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, ix. 668.

<sup>2</sup> T. L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica*, pp. 107-109, with fig. 31; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 210-213; George MacDonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 566, with pl. lxi. 19. As to the existing remains of the temple, which were excavated by an English expedition in 1887-1888, see *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 193 sqq. Previous accounts of the temple are inaccurate

and untrustworthy.

<sup>3</sup> C. Schuchhardt, *Schliemann's Ausgrabungen*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 231-233; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, vi. 336 sq., 652-654; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 213 sq.; P. Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> J. Selden, *De dis Syris* (Leipsic, 1668) pp. 274 sqq.; S. Bochart, *Hieroicoicon*, ii. 4 sqq. Compare the statue of a priest with a dove in his hand, which was found in Cyprus (Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 510, with fig. 349).



or Minoan age of Greece.<sup>1</sup> If antiquaries are right in regarding the golden models as copies of the Paphian shrine, that shrine must have suffered little outward change for more than a thousand years; for the royal graves at Mycenae, in which the models were found, can hardly be of later date than the twelfth century before our era.

The  
Aphrodite  
of Paphos  
a Phoeni-  
cian or  
aboriginal  
deity.

Thus the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos was apparently of great antiquity.<sup>2</sup> According to Herodotus, it was founded by Phoenician colonists from Ascalon;<sup>3</sup> but it is possible that a native goddess of fertility was worshipped on the spot before the arrival of the Phoenicians, and that the newcomers identified her, with their own Baalath or Astarte, whom she may have closely resembled. If two deities were thus fused in one, we may suppose that they were both varieties of that great goddess of motherhood and fertility whose worship appears to have been diffused all over western Asia from a very early time. The supposition is confirmed as well by the archaic shape of her image as by the licentious character of her rites; for both that shape and those rites were shared by her with other Asiatic deities. Her image was simply a white cone or pyramid.<sup>4</sup> In like manner, a cone was the emblem of Astarte at Byblus,<sup>5</sup> of the native goddess whom the Greeks called Artemis at Perga in Pamphylia,<sup>6</sup> and of the sun-god

Her  
conical  
image.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Evans, "Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxi. (1901) pp. 99 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 105; compare Pausanias, i. 14. 7. Herodotus only speaks of the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Cyprus, but he must refer to the great one at Paphos. At Ascalon the goddess was worshipped in mermaid-shape under the name of Derceto, and fish and doves were sacred to her (Diodorus Siculus, ii. 4; compare Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 14). The name Derceto, like the much more correct Atargatis, is a Greek corruption of 'Attâr, the Aramaic form of Astarte. See E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 246 sq.

<sup>4</sup> It is described by ancient writers and figured on coins. See Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3; Maximus Tyrius, *Dis-*

*sert.* viii. 8; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* i. 720; T. L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica*, p. 107, with fig. 31; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888), pp. 210-212. According to Maximus Tyrius the material of the pyramid was unknown. Probably it was a stone. The English archaeologists found several fragments of white cones on the site of the temple at Paphos: one which still remains in its original position in the central chamber was of limestone and of somewhat larger size (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) p. 180).

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> On coins of Perga the sacred cone is represented as richly decorated and standing in a temple between sphinxes. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 585; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. xv. No. 3. The sanctuary



Heliogabalus at Emesa in Syria.<sup>1</sup> The precise significance of such an emblem remains as obscure as it was in the time of Tacitus.<sup>2</sup> It appears to have been customary to anoint the sacred cone with olive oil at a solemn festival, in which people from Lycia and Caria participated.<sup>3</sup> The custom of anointing a holy stone has been observed in many parts of the world, for example, in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.<sup>4</sup> To this day the old custom appears to survive at Paphos, for "in honour of the Maid of Bethlehem the peasants of Kuklia anointed lately, and probably still anoint each year, the great corner-stones of the ruined Temple of the Paphian Goddess. As Aphrodite was supplicated once with cryptic rites, so is Mary entreated still by Moslems as well as Christians, with incantations and passings through perforated stones, to remove the curse of barrenness from Cypriote women, or increase the manhood of Cypriote men."<sup>5</sup> Thus the ancient worship of the goddess of fertility is continued under a different name.

In Cyprus it appears that before marriage all women were formerly obliged by custom to prostitute themselves to strangers at the sanctuary of the goddess, whether she went by the name of Aphrodite, Astarte, or what not.<sup>6</sup> Similar customs prevailed in many parts of western Asia. Whatever its motive, the practice was clearly regarded, not as an orgy of lust, but as a solemn religious duty performed

Sacred prostitution in the worship of the Paphian Aphrodite and of other Asiatic goddesses.

stood on a height and a festival was held there annually (Strabo, xiv. 4. 2, p. 667). Her native title was *Anassa*, that is, "Queen." See B. V. Head, *l.c.*; Wernicke in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii. 1, col. 1397. Aphrodite at Paphos bore the same title. See below, p. 26, note 5.

<sup>1</sup> Herodian, v. 3. 5. This cone was of black stone, with some small knobs on it, like the stone of Cybele at Pessinus. It is figured on coins of Emesa. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 659; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. xv. No. 1. The sacred stone of Cybele, which the Romans brought from Pessinus to Rome during the Second Punic War, was small, black, and rugged, but we

are not told that it was of conical shape. See Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 49; Livy, xxix. 11. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> We learn this from an inscription found at Paphos. See *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 188, 231.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, x. 24. 6, with my note.

<sup>5</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant* (London, 1896), pp. 179 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, i. 199; Athenaeus, xii. 11, p. 516 A; Justin, xviii. 5. 4; Lactantius, *Divin. Inst.* i. 17; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 142 sqq. Asiatic customs of this sort have been rightly explained by W. Mannhardt (*Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 283 sqq.).



in the service of that great Mother Goddess of western Asia whose name varied, while her type remained constant, from place to place. Thus at Babylon every woman, whether rich or poor, had once in her life to submit to the embraces of a stranger at the temple of Mylitta, that is, of Ishtar or Astarte, and to dedicate to the goddess the wages earned by this sanctified harlotry. The sacred precinct was crowded with women waiting to observe the custom. Some of them had to wait there for years.<sup>1</sup> At Heliopolis or Baalbec in Syria, famous for the imposing grandeur of its ruined temples, the custom of the country required that every maiden should prostitute herself to a stranger at the temple of Astarte. The emperor Constantine abolished the custom, destroyed the temple, and built a church in its stead.<sup>2</sup> At Byblus the people shaved their heads in the annual mourning for Adonis. Women who refused to sacrifice their hair had to give themselves up to strangers on a certain day of the festival, and the money which they thus earned was devoted to the goddess.<sup>3</sup> This custom may have been a mitigation of an older rule which at Byblus as elsewhere formerly compelled every woman without exception to sacrifice her virtue in the service of religion. I have elsewhere suggested a reason why the offering of a woman's hair was accepted as an equivalent for the surrender of her person.<sup>4</sup> We are told that in Lydia all girls were obliged to prostitute themselves in order to earn a dowry;<sup>5</sup> but we may suspect that the real motive of the custom was devotion rather than

*Anahid*  
<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 199; Strabo, xvi. i. 20, p. 745. As to the identity of Mylitta with Astarte see H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 423, n. 7, 428, n. 4. According to him, the name Mylitta comes from 'Mu 'allidtu, "she who helps women in travail." In this character Ishtar would answer to the Greek Artemis and the Latin Diana. As to sacred prostitution in the worship of Ishtar see M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 475 sq., 484 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, v. 10. 7; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesi-*

*astica*, i. 18. 7-9; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, iii. 58. The last of these writers affirms that matrons as well as maidens prostituted themselves in the service of the goddess.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6. The writer is careful to indicate that none but strangers were allowed to enjoy the women (ἡ δὲ ἀγορὴ μόνουσι ξείνοισι παρακέεται).

<sup>4</sup> "Artemis and Hippolytus," *Fortnightly Review*, December 1904, pp. 985-988.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, i. 93 sq.; Athenaeus, xii. 11, pp. 515 sq.



economy. The suspicion is confirmed by a Greek inscription found at Tralles in Lydia, which proves that the practice of religious prostitution survived in that country as late as the second century of our era. It records of a certain woman, Aurelia Aemilia by name, not only that she herself served the god in the capacity of a harlot at his express command, but that her mother and other female ancestors had done the same before her; and the publicity of the record, engraved on a marble column which supported a votive offering, shows that no stain attached to such a life and such a parentage.<sup>1</sup> In Armenia the noblest families dedicated their daughters to the service of the goddess Anaitis in her temple at Acilisena, where the damsels acted as prostitutes for a long time before they were given in marriage. Nobody scrupled to take one of these girls to wife when her period of service was over.<sup>2</sup> Again, the goddess Ma was served by a multitude of sacred harlots at Comana in Pontus, and crowds of men and women flocked to her sanctuary from the neighbouring cities and country to attend the biennial festivals or to pay their vows to the goddess.<sup>3</sup>

If we survey the whole of the evidence on this subject, some of which has still to be laid before the reader, we may conclude that a great Mother Goddess, the personification of all the reproductive energies of nature, was worshipped under different names but with a substantial similarity of myth and ritual by many peoples of western Asia; that associated with her was a lover, or rather series of lovers, divine yet mortal, with whom she mated year by year, their commerce being deemed essential to the propagation of animals and plants, each in their several kind;<sup>4</sup> and further, that the fabulous union of the divine pair was simulated and, as it were, multiplied on earth by the real, though temporary, union of the human sexes at the sanctuary of the goddess for the sake of thereby ensuring the fruitfulness of the

The Asiatic Mother Goddess a personification of all the reproductive energies of nature.

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 94 sq., 115.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xi. 14. 16, p. 532.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xii. 3. 32, 34 and 36, pp. 557-559; compare xii. 2. 3, p. 535. Other sanctuaries in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Phrygia swarmed with sacred slaves, and we may conjecture, though

we are not told, that many of these slaves were prostitutes. See Strabo, xi. 8. 4, xii. 2. 3 and 6, xii. 3. 31 and 37, xii. 8. 14.

<sup>4</sup> On this great Asiatic goddess and her lovers see especially W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 87 sqq.



Her  
worship  
perhaps  
reflects a  
period of  
sexual com-  
munism.

ground and the increase of man and beast.<sup>1</sup> And if the conception of such a Mother Goddess dates, as seems probable, from a time when the institution of marriage was either unknown or at most barely tolerated as an immoral infringement of old communal rights, we can understand both why the goddess herself was regularly supposed to be at once unmarried and unchaste, and why her worshippers were obliged to imitate her more or less completely in these respects. For had she been a divine wife united to a divine husband, the natural counterpart of their union would have been the lawful marriage of men and women, and there would have been no need to resort to a system of prostitution or promiscuity in order to effect those purposes which, on the principles of homoeopathic magic, might in that case have been as well or better attained by the legitimate intercourse of the sexes in matrimony. Formerly, perhaps, every woman was obliged to submit at least once in her life to the exercise of those marital rights which at a still earlier period had theoretically belonged in permanence to all the males of the tribe. But in course of time, as the institution of individual marriage grew in favour, and the old communism fell more and more into discredit, the revival of the ancient practice even for a single occasion in a woman's life became ever more repugnant to the moral sense of the people, and accordingly they resorted to various expedients for evading in practice the obligation which they still acknowledged in theory. One of these evasions was to let the woman offer her hair instead of her person; another apparently was to substitute an obscene symbol for the obscene act.<sup>2</sup> But while the majority of women thus con-

<sup>1</sup> Compare W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 284 sq. Similarly in Camul, formerly a province of the Chinese empire, the men used to place their wives at the disposal of any foreigners who came to lodge with them, and deemed it an honour if the guests made use of their opportunities. The emperor, hearing of the custom, forbade the people to observe it. For three years they obeyed, then, finding that their lands were no longer fruitful and that many mishaps befell them, they prayed the

emperor to allow them to retain the custom, "for it was by reason of this usage that their gods bestowed upon them all the good things that they possessed, and without it they saw not how they could continue to exist" (Marco Polo, translated by Col. Henry Yule (London, 1875), i. 212 sq.). Here apparently the fertility of the soil was deemed to depend on the intercourse of the women with strangers, not with their husbands.

<sup>2</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 14, p. 13, ed. Potter; Arnobius,



trived to observe the forms of religion without sacrificing their virtue, it was still thought necessary to the general welfare that a certain number of them should discharge the old obligation in the old way. These became prostitutes either for life or for a term of years at one of the temples: dedicated to the service of religion, they were invested with a sacred character,<sup>1</sup> and their vocation, far from being deemed infamous, was probably long regarded by the laity as an exercise of more than common virtue, and rewarded with a tribute of mixed wonder, reverence, and pity, not unlike that which in some parts of the world is still paid to women who seek to honour their Creator in a different way by renouncing the natural functions of their sex and the tenderest relations of humanity. It is thus that the folly of mankind finds vent in opposite extremes alike harmful and deplorable.

At Paphos the custom of religious prostitution is said to have been instituted by King Cinyras,<sup>2</sup> and to have been practised by his daughters, the sisters of Adonis, who, having incurred the wrath of Aphrodite, mated with strangers and ended their days in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> In this form of the tradition the wrath of Aphrodite is probably a feature added by a later authority, who could only regard conduct which shocked his own moral sense as a punishment inflicted by the goddess instead of as a sacrifice regularly enjoined by her on all her devotees. At all events the story indicates that the princesses of Paphos had to conform to the custom as well as women of humble birth.

The legendary history of the royal and priestly family of the Cinyrads is instructive. We are told that a Syrian man, by name Sandacus, migrated to Cilicia, married Pharnake, daughter of Megassares, king of Hyria, and founded the city of Celenderis. His wife bore him a son, Cinyras, who in time crossed the sea with a company of people to Cyprus, wedded Metharme, daughter of Pygmalion, king of the island, and founded Paphos.<sup>4</sup> These legends

*Adversus Nationes*, v. 19; compare Firmicus Maternus, *De err. profan. relig.* 10.

<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew a temple harlot was regularly called "a sacred woman" (*kēdēsha*). See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, s.v. "Harlot"; S. R. Driver, on Genesis xxxviii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 13, p. 12, ed. Potter: Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 19; Firmicus Maternus, *De err. profan. relig.* 10.

<sup>3</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 14. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 14. 3. I follow the text

The daughters of Cinyras.

The Paphian dynasty of the Cinyrads.



seem to contain reminiscences of kingdoms in Cilicia and Cyprus which passed in the female line, and were held by men who married the hereditary princesses. There are some indications that Cinyras was not in fact the founder of the temple at Paphos. An older tradition ascribed the foundation to a certain Aerias, whom some regarded as a king, and others as the goddess herself.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Cinyras or his descendants at Paphos had to reckon with rivals. These were the Tamirads, a family of diviners who traced their descent from Tamiras, a Cilician augur. At first it was arranged that both families should preside at the ceremonies, but afterwards the Tamirads gave way to the Cinyrads.<sup>2</sup> Many tales were told of Cinyras, the founder of the dynasty. He was a priest of Aphrodite as well as a king,<sup>3</sup> and his riches passed into a proverb.<sup>4</sup> To his descendants, the Cinyrads, he appears to have bequeathed his wealth and his dignities; at all events, they reigned as kings of Paphos and served the goddess as priests. Their dead bodies, with that of Cinyras himself, were buried in the sanctuary.<sup>5</sup> But by the fourth century before our era the family had declined and become nearly extinct. When Alexander the Great

of R. Wagner's edition in reading Μεγασάρου τοῦ Ὑρίων βασιλέως. As to Hyria in Isauria see Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Ὑρία. The city of Celenderis, on the south coast of Cilicia, possessed a small harbour protected by a fortified peninsula. Many ancient tombs survived till recent times, but have now mostly disappeared. It was the port from which the Turkish couriers from Constantinople used to embark for Cyprus. As to the situation and remains see F. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), p. 201; W. M. Leake, *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor* (London, 1824), pp. 114-118; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph. - historische Classe*, xlv. (1896), No. vi. p. 94. The statement that the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos was founded by the Arcadian Agapenor, who planted a colony in Cyprus after the Trojan war (Pausanias, viii. 5. 2), may safely be disregarded.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3, *Annals*, iii. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3; Hesychius, s.v. Ταμυράδαι.

<sup>3</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* ii. 13-17.

<sup>4</sup> Tyrtæus, xii. 6 (*Poetae Lyrici Graeci*, ed. Th. Bergk, ii. 404); Pindar, *Pyth.* viii. 18; Plato, *Laws*, ii. 6, p. 660 E; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedag.* iii. 6, p. 274, ed. Potter; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* viii. (vol. i. p. 149, ed. L. Dindorf); Julian, *Epist.* lix. p. 574, ed. F. C. Hertlein; Diogenianus, viii. 53; Suidas, s.v. Καταγρηπάσις.

<sup>5</sup> Schol. on Pindar, *Pyth.* ii. 15 (27); Hesychius, s.v. Κινυράδαι; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* iii. 45, p. 40, ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vi. 6. That the kings of Paphos were also priests of the goddess is proved, apart from the testimony of ancient writers, by inscriptions found on the spot. See H. Collitz, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialektinschriften*, i. p. 22, Nos. 38, 39, 40. The title of the goddess in these inscriptions is Queen or Mistress (*Φαῶσ(σ)ας*). It is perhaps a translation of the Semitic Baalath.



expelled a king of Paphos for injustice and wickedness, his envoys made search for a member of the ancient house to set on the throne of his fathers. At last they found one of them living in obscurity and earning his bread as a market gardener. He was in the very act of watering his beds when the king's messengers carried him off, much to his astonishment, to receive the crown at the hands of their master.<sup>1</sup> Yet if the dynasty decayed, the shrine of the goddess, enriched by the offerings of kings and private persons, maintained its reputation for wealth down to Roman times.<sup>2</sup> When Ptolemy Auletes, king of Egypt, was expelled by his people in 57 B.C., Cato offered him the priesthood of Paphos as a sufficient consolation in money and dignity for the loss of a throne.<sup>3</sup>

Among the stories which were told of Cinyras, the ancestor of these priestly kings and the father of Adonis, there are some that deserve our attention. In the first place, he is said to have begotten his son Adonis in incestuous intercourse with his daughter Myrrha at a festival of the corn-goddess, at which women robed in white were wont to offer corn-wreaths as first-fruits of the harvest and to observe strict chastity for nine days.<sup>4</sup> Similar cases of incest with a

Incest of  
Cinyras  
with his  
daughter  
Myrrha  
and birth  
of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*, ii. 8. The name of the gardener-king was Alynomus. That the Cinyrads existed as a family down to Macedonian times is further proved by a Greek inscription found at Old Paphos, which records that a certain Democrates, son of Ptolemy, head of the Cinyrads, and his wife Eunice, dedicated a statue of their daughter to the Paphian Aphrodite. See L. Ross, "Inscriben von Cypern," *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F. vii. (1850), pp. 520 sq. It seems to have been a common practice of parents to dedicate statues of their sons or daughters to the goddess at Paphos. The inscribed pedestals of many such statues were found by the English archaeologists. See *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888), pp. 228, 235, 236, 237, 241, 244, 246, 255.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 4; Pausanias, viii. 24. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Cato the Younger*, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Ovid, *Metam.* x. 298 sqq.; Hy-

ginus, *Fab.* 58, 64; Fulgentius, *Mytholog.* iii. 8; Lactantius Placidius, *Narrat. Fabul.* x. 9; Servius on Virgil, *Ecl.* x. 18, and *Aen.* v. 72; Plutarch, *Parallela*, 22; Schol. on Theocritus, i. 107. It is Ovid who describes (*Metam.* x. 431 sqq.) the festival of Ceres, at which the incest was committed. His source was probably the *Metamorphoses* of the Greek writer Theodorus, which Plutarch (*l.c.*) refers to as his authority for the story. The festival in question was perhaps the Thesmophoria, at which women were bound to remain chaste (Schol. on Theocritus, iv. 25; Schol. on Nicander, *Ther.* 70 sq.; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxiv. 59; Dioscorides, *De Materia Medica*, i. 134 (135); compare Aelian, *De natura animalium*, ix. 26). According to another account, Adonis was the fruit of the incestuous intercourse of Theias, a Syrian king, with his daughter Myrrha. See Apollodorus, iii. 14. 4 (who cites Panyasis as



Legends  
of royal  
incest, a  
suggested  
explana-  
tion.

daughter are reported of many ancient kings.<sup>1</sup> It seems unlikely that such reports are without foundation, and perhaps equally improbable that they refer to mere fortuitous outbursts of unnatural lust. We may suspect that they are based on a practice actually observed for a definite reason in certain special circumstances. Now in countries where the royal blood was traced through women only, and where consequently the king held office merely in virtue of his marriage with an hereditary princess, who was the real sovereign, it appears to have often happened that a prince married his own sister, the princess royal, in order to obtain with her hand the crown which otherwise would have gone to another man, perhaps to a stranger.<sup>2</sup> May not the same rule of descent have furnished a motive for incest with a daughter? For it seems a natural corollary from such a rule that the king was bound to vacate the throne on the death of his wife, the queen, since he occupied it only by virtue of his marriage with her. When that marriage terminated, his right to the throne terminated with it and passed at once to his daughter's husband. Hence if the king desired to reign after his wife's death, the only way in which he could legitimately continue to do so was by marrying his daughter, and thus prolonging through her the title which had formerly been his through her mother.

The  
Flamen  
Dialis  
and his  
Flaminica  
at Rome.

In this connection it is worth while to remember that at Rome the Flamen Dialis was bound to vacate his priesthood on the death of his wife, the Flaminica.<sup>3</sup> The rule would be intelligible if the Flaminica had originally been the more

his authority); J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 829; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 34 (who lays the scene of the story on Mount Lebanon).

<sup>1</sup> A list of these cases is given by Hyginus, *Fab.* 253. It includes the incest of Clymenus, king of Arcadia, with his daughter Harpalyce (compare Hyginus, *Fab.* 206); that of Oenomaus, king of Pisa, with his daughter Hippodamia (compare J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 156; Lucian, *Charidemus*, 19); that of Erechtheus, king of Athens, with his daughter Procris; and that of Epopeus, king

of Lesbos, with his daughter Nyctimene (compare Hyginus, *Fab.* 204).

<sup>2</sup> The custom of brother and sister marriage seems to have been especially common in royal families. See my note on Pausanias, i. 7. 1 (vol. ii. pp. 84 sq.); as to the case of Egypt see below, pp. 321 sq. The true explanation of the custom was first, so far as I know, indicated by J. F. McLennan (*The Patriarchal Theory*, p. 95).

<sup>3</sup> Aulus Gellius, x. 15. 22; J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 328.



important functionary of the two, and if the Flamen held office only by virtue of his marriage with her. Elsewhere I have shown reason to suppose that he and his wife represented an old line of priestly kings and queens, who played the parts of Jupiter and Juno, or perhaps rather Dianus and Diana respectively.<sup>1</sup> If the supposition is correct, the custom which obliged him to resign his priesthood on the death of his wife seems to prove that of the two deities whom they personated, the goddess, whether named Juno or Diana, was indeed the better half. But at Rome the goddess Juno always played an insignificant part; whereas at Nemi her old double, Diana, was all-powerful, casting her mate, Dianus or Virbius, into deep shadow. Thus a rule which points to the superiority of the Flaminica over the Flamen, appears to indicate that the divine originals of the two were Dianus and Diana rather than Jupiter and Juno, and further, that if Jupiter and Juno at Rome stood for the principle of father-right, or the predominance of the husband over the wife, Dianus and Diana at Nemi stood for the older principle of mother-right, or the predominance of the wife in matters of inheritance over the husband. If, then, I am right in holding that the kingship at Rome was originally a plebeian institution and descended through women,<sup>2</sup> we must conclude that the people who founded the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi were of the same plebeian stock as the Roman kings, that they traced descent in the female line, and that they worshipped a great Mother Goddess, not a great Father God. That goddess was Diana; her maternal functions are abundantly proved by the votive offerings found at her ancient shrine among the wooded hills.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the patricians, who afterwards invaded the country, brought with them father-right in its strictest form, and consistently enough paid their devotions rather to Father Jove than to Mother Juno.

Cinyras is said to have been famed for his exquisite beauty<sup>4</sup> and to have been wooed by Aphrodite herself.<sup>5</sup>

Cinyras  
beloved by  
Aphrodite.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 202 sq., 214 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 231 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *Rhetorum praeceptor*, 11; Hyginus, *Fab.* 270.

<sup>5</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 33, p. 29, ed. Potter.



Pygmalion  
and  
Aphrodite.

The  
Phoenician  
kings of  
Cyprus or  
their sons  
appear to  
have been  
hereditary  
lovers  
of the  
goddess.

Thus it would appear, as scholars have already observed,<sup>1</sup> that Cinyras was in a sense a duplicate of his handsome son Adonis, to whom the inflammable goddess also lost her heart. Further, these stories of the love of Aphrodite for two members of the royal house of Paphos can hardly be dissociated from the corresponding legend told of Pygmalion, the Phoenician king of Cyprus, who is said to have fallen in love with an image of Aphrodite and taken it to his bed.<sup>2</sup> When we consider that Pygmalion was the father-in-law of Cinyras, that the son of Cinyras was Adonis, and that all three, in successive generations, are said to have been concerned in a love-intrigue with Aphrodite, we can hardly help concluding that the early Phoenician kings of Paphos, or their sons, regularly claimed to be not merely the priests of the goddess<sup>3</sup> but also her lovers, in other words, that in their official capacity they personated Adonis. In point of fact it appears to be certain that the title of Adonis was regularly borne by the sons of all the Phoenician kings of Cyprus.<sup>4</sup> It is true that the title strictly signified no more than "lord"; yet the legends which connect these Cyprian princes with the goddess of love make it probable that they claimed the divine nature as well as the human dignity of Adonis. The story of Pygmalion points to a ceremony of a sacred marriage in which the king wedded the image of Aphrodite, or rather of Astarte. If that was so, the tale was in a sense true, not of a single man only, but of a whole series of

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 585, 612; A. Maury, *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, iii. 197, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vi. 22; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* iv. 57, p. 51, ed. Potter; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 243-297. The authority for the story is the Greek history of Cyprus by Philostephanus, cited both by Arnobius and Clement. In Ovid's poetical version of the legend Pygmalion is a sculptor, and the image with which he falls in love is that of a lovely woman, which at his prayer Venus endows with life. That King Pygmalion was a Phoenician is mentioned by Porphyry (*De abstinentia*, iv. 15) on the authority of Asclepiades, a Cyprian.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> In his treatise on the political institutions of Cyprus, Aristotle reported that the sons and brothers of the kings were called "lords" (*ἀνακτες*), and their sisters and wives "ladies" (*ἀνασσαι*). See Harpocration and Suidas, s.v. *Ἀνακτες*. Compare Isocrates, ix. 72; Clearchus of Soli, quoted by Athenaeus, vi. 68, p. 256 A. Now in the bilingual inscription of Idalium, which furnished the clue to the Cypriote syllabary, the Greek version gives the title *Ἰάναξ* as the equivalent of the Phoenician *Adon* (אדן). See *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, i. No. 89; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 74, note 1.



men, and it would be all the more likely to be told of Pygmalion, if that was a common name of Semitic kings in general, and of Cyprian kings in particular. Pygmalion, at all events, is known as the name of the famous king of Tyre from whom his sister Dido fled;<sup>1</sup> and a king of Citium and Idalium in Cyprus, who reigned in the time of Alexander the Great, was also called Pygmalion, or rather Pumi-yathon, the Phoenician name which the Greeks corrupted into Pygmalion.<sup>2</sup> Further, it deserves to be noted that the names Pygmalion and Astarte occur together in a Punic inscription on a gold medallion which was found in a grave at Carthage; the characters of the inscription are of the earliest type.<sup>3</sup> As the custom of religious prostitution at Paphos is said to have been founded by King Cinyras and observed by his daughters,<sup>4</sup> we may surmise that the kings of Paphos played the part of the divine bridegroom in a less innocent rite than the form of marriage with a statue; in fact, that at certain festivals each of them had to mate with one or more of the sacred harlots of the temple, who played Astarte to his Adonis. If that was so, there is more truth than has commonly been supposed in the reproach cast by the Christian fathers that the Aphrodite worshipped by Cinyras was a common whore.<sup>5</sup> The fruit of their union would rank as sons and daughters of the deity, and would in time become the parents of gods and goddesses, like their fathers and mothers before them. In this manner Paphos, and perhaps all sanctuaries of the great Asiatic

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18, ed. B. Niese; Appian, *Punica*, i; Virgil, *Aen.* i. 346 sq.; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 574; Justin, xviii. 4; Eustathius on Dionysius Periegetes, 195 (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 250 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> Pumi-yathon, son of Milk-yathon, is known from Phoenician inscriptions found at Idalium. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 12 and 13, pp. 55 sq., 57 sq. He was deposed by Ptolemy (Diodorus Siculus, xix. 79. 4). Most probably he is the Pymaton of Citium who purchased the kingdom from a dissolute monarch named Pasicyprus

some time before the conquests of Alexander (Athenaeus, iv. 63, p. 167). In this passage of Athenaeus the name Pymaton, which is found in the MSS. and agrees closely with the Phoenician Pumi-yathon, ought not to be changed into Pygmalion, as the latest editor (G. Kaibel) has done.

<sup>3</sup> G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.* p. 55, note 1. Mr. Cooke remarks that the form of the name (פמלון instead of פמיתון) must be due to Greek influence.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 13, p. 12; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 9; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 10.



goddess where sacred prostitution was practised, might be well stocked with human deities, the offspring of the divine king by his wives, concubines, and temple harlots. Any one of these might probably succeed his father on the throne<sup>1</sup> or be sacrificed in his stead whenever stress of war or other grave junctures called, as they sometimes did,<sup>2</sup> for the death of a royal victim. Such a tax, levied occasionally on the king's numerous progeny for the good of the country, would neither extinguish the divine stock nor break the father's heart, who divided his paternal affection among so many. At all events, if, as there seems reason to believe, Semitic kings were often regarded at the same time as hereditary deities, it is easy to understand the frequency of Semitic personal names which imply that the bearers of them were the sons or daughters, the brothers or sisters, the fathers or mothers of a god, and we need not resort to the shifts employed by some scholars to evade the plain sense of the words.<sup>3</sup>

Traditions  
as to the  
death of  
Cinyras.

A constant feature in the myth of Adonis was his premature and violent death. If, then, the kings of Paphos regularly personated Adonis, we must ask whether they imitated their divine prototype in death as in life. Tradition varied as to the end of Cinyras. Some thought that he slew himself on discovering his incest with his daughter;<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That the king was not necessarily succeeded by his eldest son is proved by the case of Solomon, who on his accession executed his elder brother Adoni-jah (1 Kings ii. 22-24). Similarly, when Abimelech became king of Shechem, he put his seventy brothers in ruthless oriental fashion to death. See Judges viii. 29-31, ix. 5 sq., 18.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 34 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> The names which imply that a man was the father of a god have proved particularly puzzling to some eminent Semitic scholars. See W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> p. 45, note 2; Th. Nöldeke, s.v. "Names," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, iii. 3287 sqq. Such names are Abi-baal ("father of Baal"), Abi-el ("father of El"), Abi-jah ("father of Jehovah"), and Abi-melech ("father of a king" or

"father of Moloch"). On the hypothesis put forward in the text the father of a god and the son of a god stood precisely on the same footing, and the same person would often be both one and the other. Where the common practice prevailed of naming a father after his son (*The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 412 sq.), a divine king in later life might often be called "father of such-and-such a god." In Egypt, where the kings were hereditary gods, the queen, under the New Empire, was called "the wife of the god" and "the mother of the god" (A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 113).

<sup>4</sup> Hyginus, *Fab.* 242. So in the version of the story which made Adonis the son of Theias, the father is said to have killed himself when he learned what he had done (Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 34).

others alleged that, like Marsyas, he was defeated by Apollo in a musical contest and put to death by the victor.<sup>1</sup> Yet he cannot strictly be said to have perished in the flower of his youth if he lived, as Anacreon averred, to the ripe age of one hundred and sixty.<sup>2</sup> If we must choose between the two stories, it is perhaps more likely that he died a violent death than that he survived to an age which surpassed that of Thomas Parr by eight years,<sup>3</sup> though it fell far short of the antediluvian standard. The life of eminent men in remote ages is exceedingly elastic and may be lengthened or shortened, in the interests of history, at the taste and fancy of the historian.

<sup>1</sup> Scholiast and Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, xi. 20. Compare F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 243 sq.; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 109-116; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1191.

<sup>2</sup> Anacreon, cited by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 154. Nonnus also refers to the long life of Cinyras (*Dionys.* xxxii. 212 sq.).

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> xiv. 858.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE BURNING OF MELCARTH

Semitic custom of sacrificing a member of the royal family.

IF a custom of putting a king or his son to death in the character of a god has left small traces of itself in Cyprus, an island where the fierce zeal of Semitic religion was early tempered by Greek humanity, the vestiges of that gloomy rite are clearer in Phoenicia itself and in the Phoenician colonies, which lay more remote from the highways of Grecian commerce. We know that the Semites were in the habit of sacrificing some of their children, generally the first-born, either as a tribute regularly due to the deity or to appease his anger in seasons of public danger and calamity.<sup>1</sup> If commoners did so, is it likely that kings, with all their heavy responsibilities, could exempt themselves from this dreadful sacrifice for the fatherland? In point of fact, history informs us that kings steeled themselves to do as others did.<sup>2</sup> It deserves to be noticed that Mesha, king of Moab, who sacrificed his eldest son by fire, claimed to be a son of his god,<sup>3</sup> and no doubt transmitted his divinity to his offspring; and further, that the same sacrifice is said to have been performed in the same way by the divine founder of Byblus, the great seat of the worship of Adonis.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that the human representatives of Adonis formerly perished in the flames. At all events, a custom of periodically burning the chief god of the city in effigy appears to have prevailed

The burning of Melcarth at Tyre.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 38 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Philo of Byblus, quoted by Eusebius, *Praepar. Evang.* i. 10. 29 sq.; 2 Kings iii. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Philo of Byblus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. pp. 569, 570, 571. See above, p. 9.



at Tyre and in the Tyrian colonies down to a late time, and the effigy may well have been a later substitute for a man. For Melcarth, the great god of Tyre, was identified by the Greeks with Hercules,<sup>1</sup> who is said to have burned himself to death on a great pyre, ascending up to heaven in a cloud and a peal of thunder.<sup>2</sup> The common Greek legend, immortalised by Sophocles, laid the scene of the fiery tragedy on the top of Mount Oeta, but another version transferred it significantly to Tyre itself.<sup>3</sup> Combined with the other evidence which I shall adduce, this latter tradition raises a strong presumption that an effigy of Hercules, or rather of Melcarth, was regularly burned at a great festival in Tyre. That festival may have been the one known as "the awakening of Hercules," which was held in the month of Peritius, answering nearly to January.<sup>4</sup> The name of the festival suggests that the dramatic representation of the death of the god on the pyre was followed by a semblance of his resurrection. The mode in which the resurrection was supposed to be effected is perhaps indicated by the statement of a Greek writer that the Phoenicians used to sacrifice quails to Hercules, because Hercules on his journey to Libya had been slain by Typhon and brought to life again by Iolaus, who held a quail under his nose: the dead god snuffed at the bird and revived.<sup>5</sup> Certainly a close connection seems to have subsisted between quails and Melcarth; for legend ran that Asteria, the mother of the Tyrian Hercules, that is, of Melcarth, was transformed into a quail.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 11 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Sophocles, *Trachiniae*, 1191 sqq.; Apollodorus, ii. 7. 7; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 38; Hyginus, *Fab.* 36.

<sup>3</sup> [S. Clementis Romani], *Recognitiones*, x. 24, p. 233, ed. E. G. Gersdorf (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. 1434).

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Antiquit.* viii. 5. 3, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18. Whether the quadriennial festival of Hercules at Tyre (2 Maccabees iv. 18-20) was a different celebration, or only "the awakening of Melcarth" celebrated with unusual pomp once in four years, we do not know.

<sup>5</sup> Eudoxus of Cnidus, quoted by Athenaeus, ix. 47, p. 392 D E. That

the death and resurrection of Melcarth were celebrated in an annual festival at Tyre has been recognised by scholars. See Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 25 sqq.; H. Hubert et M. Mauss, "Essai sur le sacrifice," *L'Année Sociologique*, ii. (1899) pp. 122, 124; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 308-311.

<sup>6</sup> The Tyrian Hercules was said to be a son of Zeus and Asteria (Eudoxus of Cnidus, quoted by Athenaeus, ix. 47, p. 392 D; Cicero, *De natura deorum*, iii. 16. 42). As to the transformation of Asteria into a quail see Apollodorus,



It was probably to this annual festival of the death and resurrection of Melcarth that the Carthaginians were wont to send ambassadors every year to Tyre, their mother-city.<sup>1</sup>

Worship of  
Melcarth  
at Gades,  
and trace  
of a custom  
of burning  
him there  
in effigy.

In Gades, the modern Cadiz, an early colony of Tyre on the Atlantic coast of Spain,<sup>2</sup> there was an ancient, famous, and wealthy sanctuary of Hercules, the Tyrian Melcarth. Indeed the god was said to be buried on the spot. No image stood in his temple, but a perpetual fire burned on the altar, and incense was offered by white-robed priests, with bare feet and shorn heads, who were bound to chastity. Neither women nor pigs might pollute the holy place by their presence. In later times many distinguished Romans went on pilgrimage to this remote shrine on the Atlantic shore when they were about to embark on some perilous enterprise, and they returned to it to pay their vows when their petitions had been granted.<sup>3</sup> One of the last things Hannibal himself did before he marched on Italy was to repair to Gades and offer up to Melcarth prayers which were never to be answered. Soon after he dreamed an ominous dream.<sup>4</sup> Now it would appear that at Gades, as at Tyre, though no image of Melcarth stood in the temple, an effigy of him was made up and burned at a yearly festival. For a certain Cleon of Magnesia related how, visiting Gades, he was obliged to sail away from the island with the rest of the multitude in obedience to the command of Hercules,

i. 4. 1; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 401; Hyginus, *Fab.* 53; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* iii. 73. Quails were perhaps burned in honour of the Cilician Hercules or Sandan at Tarsus. See below, p. 49, note 1.

<sup>1</sup> Quintus Curtius, iv. 2. 10; Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 24. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, iii. 5. 5, pp. 169 sq.; Mela, iii. 46; Scymnus Chius, *Orbis Descriptio*, 159-161 (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, i. 200 sq.).

<sup>3</sup> Silius Italicus, iii. 14-32; Mela, iii. 46; Strabo, iii. 5. 3, 5, 7, pp. 169, 170, 172; Diodorus Siculus, v. 20. 2; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, v. 4 sq.; Appian, *Hispanica*, 65. Compare Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 16. 4.

That the bones of Hercules were buried at Gades is mentioned by Mela (*l.c.*). Compare Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, i. 36. In Italy women were not allowed to participate in sacrifices offered to Hercules (Aulus Gellius, xi. 6. 2; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 28; Sextus Aurelius Victor, *De origine gentis Romanae*, vi. 6; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 60). Whether the priests of Melcarth at Gades were celibate, or had only to observe continence at certain seasons, does not appear. At Tyre the priest of Melcarth might be married (Justin, xviii. 4. 5).

<sup>4</sup> Livy, xxi. 21. 9, 22. 5-9; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i. 24. 49; Silius Italicus, iii. 1 sqq., 158 sqq.



that is, of Melcarth, and how on their return they found a monstrous man of the sea stranded on the beach and burning; for the god, they were told, had struck him with a thunderbolt.<sup>1</sup> We may conjecture that at the annual festival of Melcarth strangers were obliged to quit the city, and that in their absence the mystery of burning the god was consummated. What Cleon and the rest saw on their return to Gades would, on this hypothesis, be the smouldering remains of a gigantic effigy of Melcarth in the likeness of a man riding on a sea-horse, just as he is represented on coins of Tyre.<sup>2</sup> In like manner the Greeks portrayed the sea-god Melicertes, whose name is only a slightly altered form of Melcarth, riding on a dolphin or stretched on the beast's back.<sup>3</sup>

At Carthage, the greatest of the Tyrian colonies, a reminiscence of the custom of burning a deity in effigy seems to linger in the story that Dido or Elissa, the foundress and queen of the city, stabbed herself to death upon a pyre to escape the fond importunities of one lover or in despair at the cruel desertion of another.<sup>4</sup> We are told that Dido was worshipped as a goddess at Carthage so long as the country maintained its independence.<sup>5</sup> Her temple stood in the centre of the city shaded by a grove of solemn yews and firs.<sup>6</sup> The two apparently contradictory views of her character as a queen and a goddess may be reconciled if we suppose that she was both one and the other; that in fact the queen of Carthage in early days, like the queen of Egypt down to historical times, was regarded as divine, and had, like human deities elsewhere, to die a violent death either at the end of a fixed period or whenever her bodily and mental powers began to fail. In later ages the stern old custom might be softened down into a pretence by substituting an effigy for the queen or by allowing her to

Evidence of a custom of burning a god or goddess at Carthage.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, x. 4. 5.

<sup>2</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 674; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 351.

<sup>3</sup> F. Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, *Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, pp. 10-12, with pl. A; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2634.

<sup>4</sup> Justin, xviii. 6. 1-7; Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 473 *sqq.*, v. i. *sqq.*; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 545 *sqq.* According to Varro it was not Dido but her sister Anna who slew herself on a pyre for love of Aeneas (Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 682).

<sup>5</sup> Justin, xviii. 6. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Silius Italicus, i. 81 *sqq.*



The fire-  
walk at  
Tyre.

pass through the fire unscathed. A similar modification of the ancient rule appears to have been allowed at Tyre itself, the mother-city of Carthage. We have seen reason to think that the kings of Tyre, from whom Dido was descended, claimed to personate the god Melcarth, and that the deity was burned either in effigy or in the person of a man at an annual festival.<sup>1</sup> Now in the same chapter in which Ezekiel charges the king of Tyre with claiming to be a god, the prophet describes him as walking "up and down amidst the stones of fire."<sup>2</sup> The description becomes at once intelligible if we suppose that in later times the king of Tyre compounded for being burnt in the fire by walking up and down on hot stones, thereby saving his life at the expense perhaps of a few blisters on his feet. It is possible that when all went well with the commonwealth, children whom strict law doomed to the furnace of Moloch may also have been mercifully allowed to escape on condition of running the fiery gauntlet. At all events, a religious rite of this sort has been and is still practised in many parts of the world: the performers solemnly pace through a furnace of heated stones or glowing wood-ashes in the presence of a multitude of spectators. Examples of the custom could be multiplied.<sup>3</sup>

The fire-  
walk at  
Castabala.

Here I will cite only one. At Castabala, in southern Cappadocia, there was worshipped an Asiatic goddess whom the Greeks called the Perasian Artemis. Her priestesses used to walk barefoot over a fire of charcoal without sustaining any injury. That this rite was a substitute for burning human beings alive or dead is suggested by the tradition which placed the adventure of Orestes and the Tauric Artemis at Castabala;<sup>4</sup> for the men or women sacrificed to the Tauric Artemis were first put to the sword and then burned in a pit of sacred fire.<sup>5</sup> Among the Carthaginians another trace of such a practice may perhaps be detected in the story that at the desperate battle of

The Car-  
thaginian  
king  
Hamilcar  
sacrifices  
himself in  
the fire.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 11 *sq.*, 34 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel xxviii. 14; compare 16.

<sup>3</sup> A. Lang, *Modern Mythology*, pp. 148 *sqq.*; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 306 *sqq.*

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, xiv. 2. 7, p. 537. In

Greece itself accused persons used to prove their innocence by walking through fire (Sophocles, *Antigone*, 264 *sq.*, with Jebb's note).

<sup>5</sup> Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 621-626. Compare Diodorus Siculus, xx. 14. 6.



Himera, fought from dawn of day till late in the evening, the Carthaginian king Hamilcar remained in the camp and kept sacrificing holocausts of victims on a huge pyre ; but when he saw his army giving way before the Greeks, he flung himself into the flames and was burned to death. Afterwards his countrymen sacrificed to him and erected a great monument in his honour at Carthage, while lesser monuments were reared to his memory in all the Punic colonies.<sup>1</sup> In public emergencies which called for extraordinary measures a king of Carthage may well have felt bound in honour to sacrifice himself in the old way for the good of his country. That the Carthaginians regarded the death of Hamilcar as an act of heroism and not as a mere suicide of despair, is proved by the posthumous honours they paid him.

The foregoing evidence, taken altogether, raises a strong presumption, though it cannot be said to amount to a proof, that a practice of burning a deity, and especially Melcarth, in effigy or in the person of a human representative, was observed at an annual festival in Tyre and its colonies. We can thus understand how Hercules, in so far as he represented the Tyrian god, was believed to have perished by a voluntary death on a pyre. For on many a beach and headland of the Aegean, where the Phoenicians had their trading factories, the Greeks may have watched the bale-fires of Melcarth blazing in the darkness of night, and have learned with wonder that the strange foreign folk were burning their god. In this way the legend of the voyages of Hercules and his death in the flames may be supposed to have originated. Yet with the legend the Greeks borrowed the custom of burning the

The death  
of Hercules  
a Greek  
version of  
the burn-  
ing of  
Melcarth.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, vii. 167. This was the Carthaginian version of the story. According to another account, Hamilcar was killed by the Greek cavalry (Diodorus Siculus, xi. 22. 1). His worship at Carthage is mentioned by Athenagoras (*Supplicatio pro Christianis*, p. 64, ed. J. C. T. Otto). I have called Hamilcar a king in accordance with the usage of Greek writers (Herodotus, vii. 165 sq.; Aristotle, *Politics*, ii. 11; Polybius, vi. 51; Diodorus Siculus, xiv. 54. 5). But

the *suffetes*, or supreme magistrates, of Carthage were two in number; whether they were elected for a year or for life seems to be doubtful. Cornelius Nepos, who calls them kings, says that they were elected annually (*Hannibal*, vii. 4), and Livy (xxx. 7. 5) compares them to the consuls; but Cicero (*De re publica*, ii. 23. 42 sq.) seems to imply that they held office for life. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, pp. 115 sq.



god ; for at the festivals of Hercules a pyre used to be kindled in memory of the hero's fiery death on Mount Oeta.<sup>1</sup> We may suppose, though we are not expressly told, that an effigy of Hercules was regularly burned on the pyre.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Amores*, 1 and 54.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BURNING OF SANDAN

#### § 1. *The Baal of Tarsus*

IN Cyprus the Tyrian Melcarth was worshipped side by side with Adonis at Amathus,<sup>1</sup> and Phoenician inscriptions prove that he was revered also at Idalium and Larnax Lapethus. At the last of these places he seems to have been regarded by the Greeks as a marine deity and identified with Poseidon.<sup>2</sup> A remarkable statue found at Amathus may represent Melcarth in the character of the lion-slayer, a character which the Greeks bestowed on Hercules. The statue in question is of colossal size, and exhibits a thickset, muscular, hirsute deity of almost bestial aspect, with goggle eyes, huge ears, and a pair of stumpy horns on the top of his head. His beard is square and curly: his hair falls in three pigtales on his shoulders: his brawny arms appear to be tattooed. A lion's skin, clasped by a buckle, is knotted round his loins; and he holds the skin of a lioness in front of him, grasping a hind paw with each hand, while the head of the beast, which is missing, hangs down between his legs. A fountain must have issued from the jaws of the lioness, for a rectangular hole, where the beast's head should be, communicates by a channel with another hole in the back of the statue. Greek artists working on this or a similar barbarous model produced the refined type of the Grecian Hercules with the lion's scalp thrown like a cowl over

The Tyrian  
Melcarth  
in Cyprus.

The lion-  
slaying  
god.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 18.

*Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 23 and 29, pp. 73, 83 sq., with the notes on pp. 81, 84.

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-*



his head. Statues of him have been found in Cyprus, which represent intermediate stages in this artistic evolution.<sup>1</sup> But there is no proof that in Cyprus the Tyrian Melcarth was burned either in effigy or in the person of a human representative.<sup>2</sup>

The Baal of Tarsus, an Oriental god of corn and grapes.

On the other hand, there is clear evidence of the observance of such a custom in Cilicia, the country which lies across the sea from Cyprus, and from which the worship of Adonis, according to tradition, was derived.<sup>3</sup> Whether the Phoenicians ever colonised Cilicia or not is doubtful,<sup>4</sup> but at all events the natives of the country, down to late times, worshipped a male deity who, in spite of a superficial assimilation to a fashionable Greek god, appears to have been an Oriental by birth and character. He had his principal seat at Tarsus, in a plain of luxuriant fertility and almost tropical climate, tempered by breezes from the snowy range of Taurus on the north and from the sea on the south.<sup>5</sup> Though Tarsus boasted of a school of Greek philosophy which at the beginning of our era surpassed those of Athens and Alexandria,<sup>6</sup> the city apparently remained in manners and spirit essentially Oriental. The women went about the streets muffled up to the eyes in Eastern fashion, and Dio Chrysostom reproaches the natives with resembling the most dissolute of the Phoenicians rather than the Greeks whose civilisation they aped.<sup>7</sup> On the coins of the city

<sup>1</sup> Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 566-578. The colossal statue found at Amathus may be related, directly or indirectly, to the Egyptian god Bes, who is represented as a sturdy misshapen dwarf, wearing round his body the skin of a beast of the panther tribe, with its tail hanging down. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 284 sqq.; A. Furtwängler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 2143 sq.

<sup>2</sup> However, human victims were burned at Salamis in Cyprus. See below, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> For traces of Phoenician influence in Cilicia see F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 2, pp. 167-174, 207 sqq.

Herodotus says (vii. 91) that the Cilicians were named after Cilix, a son of the Phoenician Agenor.

<sup>5</sup> As to the fertility and the climate of the plain of Tarsus, which is now very malarious, see E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey* (London, 1879), chaps. i.-vii. The gardens for miles round the city are very lovely, but wild and neglected, full of magnificent trees, especially fine oak, ash, orange, and lemon-trees. The vines run to the top of the highest branches, and almost every garden resounds with the song of the nightingale (E. J. Davis, *op. cit.* p. 35).

<sup>6</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 13, pp. 673 sq.

<sup>7</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xxxiii. vol. ii. pp. 14 sq., 17, ed. L. Dindorf.



they assimilated their native deity to Zeus by representing him seated on a throne, the upper part of his body bare, the lower limbs draped in a flowing robe, while in one hand he holds a sceptre, which is topped sometimes with an eagle but often with a lotus flower. Yet his foreign nature is indicated both by his name and his attributes; for in Aramaic inscriptions on the coins he bears the name of the Baal of Tarsus, and in one hand he grasps an ear of corn and a bunch of grapes.<sup>1</sup> These attributes clearly mark him out as a god of fertility in general, who conferred on his worshippers the two things which they prized above all other gifts of nature, the corn and the wine. He was probably therefore a Semitic, or at all events an Oriental, rather than a Greek deity. For while the Semite cast all his gods more or less in the same mould, and expected them all to render him nearly the same services, the Greek, with his keener intelligence and more pictorial imagination, invested his deities with individual characteristics, allotting to each of them his or her separate function in the divine economy of the world. Thus he assigned the production of the corn to Demeter, and that of the grapes to Dionysus; he was not so unreasonable as to demand both from the same hard-worked deity.

## § 2. *The God of Ibreez*

Now the suspicion that the Baal of Tarsus, for all his posing in the attitude of Zeus, was really an Oriental is confirmed by a remarkable rock-hewn monument which is to be seen at Ibreez in southern Cappadocia. Though the place is distant little more than fifty miles from Tarsus as the crow flies, yet the journey on horseback occupies five days; for the great barrier of the Taurus mountains rises

The Baal of Tarsus has his counterpart at Ibreez in Cappadocia.

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 2, pp. 171 sq.; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. x. Nos. 29, 30; B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 614; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia* (London, 1900), pp. 167-176, pl. xxix.-xxxii.; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the*

*Hunterian Collection*, ii. (Glasgow, 1901) p. 547; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 727. In later times, from about 175 B.C. onward, the Baal of Tarsus was completely assimilated to Zeus on the coins. See B. V. Head, *op. cit.* p. 617; G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pp. 177, 181.



like a wall between. The road runs through the famous pass of the Cilician Gates, and the scenery throughout is of the grandest Alpine character. On all sides the mountains tower skyward, their peaks sheeted in a dazzling pall of snow, their lower slopes veiled in the almost inky blackness of dense pine-forests, torn here and there by impassable ravines, or broken into prodigious precipices of red and grey rock which border the narrow valley for miles. The magnificence of the landscape is enhanced by the exhilarating influence of the brisk mountain air, all the more by contrast with the sultry heat of the plain of Tarsus which the traveller has left behind.

The rock-sculptures at Ibreez represent a god of corn and grapes adored by his worshipper, a priest or king.

The village of Ibreez is charmingly situated at the northern foot of the Taurus, some six or seven miles south of the town of Eregli, the ancient Cybistra. From the town to the village the path goes through a richly cultivated district of wheat and vines along green lanes more lovely than those of Devonshire, lined by thick hedges and rows of willow, poplar, hazel, hawthorn, and huge old walnut-trees, where in early summer the nightingales warble on every side. Ibreez itself is embowered in the verdure of orchards, walnuts, and vines. It stands at the mouth of a deep ravine enclosed by great precipices of red rock. From the western of these precipices a river clear as crystal, but of a deep blue tint, bursts in a powerful jet, and being reinforced by a multitude of springs becomes at once a raging impassable torrent foaming and leaping over the rocks in its bed. A little way from the source a branch of the main stream flows in a deep narrow channel along the foot of a reddish weather-stained rock which rises like a wall from the water. On its face, which has been smoothed to receive them, are the sculptures. They consist of two colossal figures, representing a god adored by his worshipper. The deity, some twenty feet high, is a bearded male figure, wearing on his head a high pointed cap adorned with several pairs of horns, and clad in a short tunic, which does not reach his knees and is drawn in at the waist by a belt. His legs and arms are bare; the wrists are encircled by bangles or bracelets. His feet are shod in high boots with turned-up toes. In his right hand he holds a vine-branch



laden with clusters of grapes, and in his raised left hand he grasps a bunch of bearded wheat, such as is still grown in Cappadocia; the ears of corn project above his fingers, while the long stalks hang down to his feet. In front of him stands the lesser figure, some twelve feet high. He is clearly a priest or king, more probably perhaps both in one. His rich vestments contrast with the simple costume of the god. On his head he wears a round but not pointed cap, encircled by flat bands and ornamented in front with a rosette or bunch of jewels, such as is still worn by Eastern princes. He is draped from the neck to the ankles in a long robe heavily fringed at the bottom, over which is thrown a shawl or mantle secured at the breast by a clasp of precious stones. Both robe and shawl are elaborately carved with patterns in imitation of embroidery. A heavy necklace of rings or beads encircles the neck; a bracelet or bangle clasps the one wrist that is visible; the feet are shod in boots like those of the god. One or perhaps both hands are raised in the act of adoration. The large aquiline nose, like the beak of a hawk, is a conspicuous feature in the face both of the god and of his worshipper; the hair and beard of both are thick and curly.<sup>1</sup>

The situation of this remarkable monument resembles that of Aphaca on the Lebanon;<sup>2</sup> for in both places we see a noble river issuing abruptly from the rock to spread fertility through the rich vale below. Nowhere, perhaps, could man more appropriately revere those great powers of nature to whose favour he ascribes the fruitfulness of the earth, and through it the life of animate creation. With its cool bracing air, its mass of verdure, its magnificent stream of

The fertility of Ibreez contrasted with the desolation of the surrounding country.

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Davis, "On a New Hamathite Inscription at Ibreez," *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, iv. (1876) pp. 336-346; *id.*, *Life in Asiatic Turkey* (London, 1879), pp. 245-260; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 723-729; Ramsay and Hogarth, "Prehellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1903) pp. 77-81, 85 sq., with plates iii. and iv.; L.

Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hettitarum* (Berlin, 1900), Tafel xxxiv. Of this sculptured group Messrs. W. M. Ramsay and D. G. Hogarth say that "it yields to no rock-relief in the world in impressive character" (*American Journal of Archaeology*, vi. (1890) p. 347). For the route from Tarsus to Ibreez (Ivriz) see E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 198-244.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 14 sqq.



pure ice-cold water—so grateful in the burning heat of summer—and its wide stretch of fertile land, the valley may well have been the residence of an ancient prince or high-priest, who desired to testify by this monument his devotion and gratitude to the god. The seat of this royal or priestly potentate may have been at Cybistra,<sup>1</sup> the modern Eregli, now a decayed and miserable place straggling amid orchards and gardens full of luxuriant groves of walnut, poplar, willow, mulberry, and oak. The place is a paradise of birds. Here the thrush and the nightingale sing full-throated, the hoepoe waves his crested top-knot, the bright-hued woodpeckers flit from bough to bough, and the swifts dart screaming by hundreds through the air. Yet a little way off, beyond the beneficent influence of the springs and streams, all is desolation—in summer an arid waste broken by great marshes and wide patches of salt, in winter a broad sheet of stagnant water, which as it dries up with the growing heat of the sun exhales a poisonous malaria. To the west, as far as the eye can see, stretches the endless expanse of the dreary Lycaonian plain, barren, treeless, and solitary, till it fades into the blue distance, or is bounded afar off by abrupt ranges of jagged volcanic mountains, on which in sunshiny weather the shadows of the clouds rest, purple and soft as velvet.<sup>2</sup> No wonder that the smiling luxuriance of the one landscape, sharply contrasting with the bleak sterility of the other, should have rendered it in the eyes of primitive man a veritable garden of God.

The  
horned  
god.

Among the attributes which mark out the deity of Ibreez as a power of fertility the horns on his high cap should not be overlooked. They are probably the horns of a bull; for to primitive cattle-breeders the bull is the most natural emblem of generative force. At Carchemish, the great Hittite capital on the Euphrates, a relief has been discovered which represents a god or a priest clad in a rich robe, and wearing on his head a tall horned cap surmounted by a disc.<sup>3</sup> Sculptures found at the palace of Euyuk in north-

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 2. 7, p. 537.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Davis in *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, iv. (1876) pp. 336 sq., 346; *id.*, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 232 sq., 236 sq.,

264 sq., 270-272. Compare W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, ii. 304-307.

<sup>3</sup> L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites* (London, 1903), pp. 49 sq. On an



western Cappadocia prove that the Hittites worshipped the bull and sacrificed rams to it.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the Greeks conceived the vine-god Dionysus in the form of a bull.<sup>2</sup>

### § 3. *Sandan of Tarsus*

That the god of Ibreez, with the grapes and corn in his hands, is identical with the Baal of Tarsus, who bears the same emblems, may be taken as certain.<sup>3</sup> But what was his name? and who were his worshippers? The Greeks apparently called him Hercules; at least in Byzantine times the neighbouring town of Cybistra adopted the name of Heraclea, which seems to show that Hercules was deemed the principal deity of the place.<sup>4</sup> Yet the style and costume of the figures at Ibreez prove unquestionably that the god was an Oriental. If any confirmation of this view were needed, it is furnished by the inscriptions carved on the rock beside the sculptures, for these inscriptions are composed in the peculiar system of hieroglyphics now known as Hittite. It follows, therefore, that the deity worshipped at Tarsus and Ibreez was a god of the Hittites, that ancient and little-known people who occupied the centre of Asia Minor, invented a system of writing, and extended their influence, if not their dominion, at one time from the Euphrates to the Aegean. From the lofty and arid tablelands of the interior, a prolongation of the great plateau of Central Asia, with a climate ranging from the most burning heat in summer to the most piercing cold in winter,<sup>5</sup> these hardy highlanders seem to have swept down through the

The god  
of Ibreez  
a Hittite  
deity.

Assyrian cylinder, now in the British Museum, we see a warlike deity with bow and arrows standing on a lion, and wearing a similar bonnet decorated with horns and surmounted by a star or sun. See De Vogüé, *Mélanges d'Archéologie Orientale* (Paris, 1868), p. 46, who interprets the deity as the great Asiatic goddess.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 164 sq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 432 sqq., 537.

<sup>3</sup> The identification is accepted by E. Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. pp. 305, 309), Perrot and Chipiez (*Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 727), and P. Jensen (*Hittiter und Armenier*, p. 145).

<sup>4</sup> Ramsay and Hogarth, "Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1893) p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 360-362; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 572 sqq., 586 sq.



mountain-passes and established themselves at a very early date in the rich southern lowlands of Syria and Cilicia.<sup>1</sup> Their language and race are still under discussion, but a great preponderance of opinion appears to declare that neither the one nor the other was Semitic.<sup>2</sup>

The  
burning of  
Sandan or  
Hercules  
at Tarsus.

In the inscription attached to the colossal figure of the god at Ibreez two scholars have professed to read the name of Sandan or Sanda.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, there are independent grounds for thinking that Sandan, Sandon, or Sandes may have been the name of the Cappadocian and Cilician god of fertility. For the god of Ibreez in Cappadocia appears, as we saw, to have been identified by the Greeks with Hercules, and we are told that a Cappadocian and Cilician name of Hercules was Sandan or Sandes.<sup>4</sup> Now this Sandan or Hercules is said to have founded Tarsus, and the people of the city commemorated him at an annual or, at all events, periodical festival by erecting a fine pyre in his honour.<sup>5</sup> Apparently at this festival,

<sup>1</sup> That the cradle of the Hittites was in the interior of Asia Minor, particularly in Cappadocia, and that they spread from there south, east, and west, is the view of A. H. Sayce, W. M. Ramsay, D. G. Hogarth, W. Max Müller, F. Hommel, and L. Messerschmidt. See *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement for 1884*, p. 49; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa* (Leipsic, 1893), pp. 319 sqq.; *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie*, xv. (1893) p. 94; F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, pp. 42, 48, 54; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites* (London, 1903), pp. 12, 13, 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 351, note 3, with his references; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 10; F. Hommel, *op. cit.* p. 42; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, p. 332.

<sup>3</sup> A. H. Sayce, "The Hittite Inscriptions," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1893) pp. 48 sq.; P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier* (Strasburg, 1898), pp. 42 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Syncellus, *Chronographia*, vol. i.

p. 290, ed. G. Dindorf: Ἡρακλέα τινές φασιν ἐν Φοινίκῃ γινώριζεσθαι Σάνδαν ἐπιλεγόμενον, ὡς καὶ μετὰ τὴν ὑπὸ Καππαδόκων καὶ Κιλικίων. In this passage Σάνδαν is a correction of F. C. Movers's (*Die Phoenizier*, i. 460) for the MS. reading Δισανδάν, the ΔΙ having apparently arisen by dittography from the preceding ΑΙ; and Κιλικίων is a correction of E. Meyer's (*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxxi. 737) for the MS. reading Ἰλίων. Compare Jerome (quoted by Movers and Meyer *l.c.*): *Hercules cognomento Desanaus in Syria Phoenice clarus habetur. Inde ad nostram usque memoriam a Cappadocibus et Eliensibus (al. Deliis) Desanaus adhuc dicitur.* If the text of Jerome is here sound, he would seem to have had before him a Greek original which was corrupt like the text of Syncellus or of Syncellus's authority. The Cilician Hercules is called Sandes by Nonnus (*Dionys.* xxxiv. 183 sq.). Compare Raoul-Rochette in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 159 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv. 8. 3; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xxxiii. vol. ii.



as at the festival of Melcarth, the god was burned in effigy on his own pyre. For coins of Tarsus often exhibit the pyre as a conical structure resting on a garlanded altar or basis, with the figure of Sandan himself in the midst of it, while an eagle with spread wings perches on the top of the pyre, as if about to bear the soul of the burning god in the pillar of smoke and fire to heaven.<sup>1</sup> In like manner when a Roman emperor died leaving a son to succeed him on the throne, a waxen effigy was made in the likeness of the deceased and burned on a huge pyramidal pyre, which was reared upon a square basis of wood; and from the summit of the blazing pile an eagle was released for the purpose of carrying to heaven the soul of the dead and deified emperor.<sup>2</sup> The Romans may have borrowed from the East a grandiose custom which savours of Oriental adulation rather than of Roman simplicity.

The type of Sandan or Hercules, as he is portrayed on the coins of Tarsus, is that of an Asiatic deity standing on a lion. It is thus that he is represented on the pyre, and it is thus that he appears as a separate figure without the

Sandan of Tarsus an Asiatic god with the symbols of the lion and the double axe.

p. 16, ed. L. Dindorf. The pyre is mentioned only by Dio Chrysostom, whose words clearly imply that its erection was a custom observed periodically. On Sandan or Sandon see K. O. Müller, "Sandon und Sardana-pal," *Kunstarchaeologische Werke*, iii. 6 sqq.; F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 458 sqq.; Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 178 sqq.; E. Meyer, "Ueber einige Semitische Götter," *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxxi. (1877) pp. 736-740.

<sup>1</sup> P. Gardner, *Catalogue of Greek Coins, the Seleucid Kings of Syria*, pp. 72, 78, 89, 112, pl. xxi. 6, xxiv. 3, xxviii. 8; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. 180, 181, 183, 190, 221, 224, 225, pl. xxxiii. 2, 3, xxxiv. 10, xxxvii. 9; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) pl. xiii. 1, 2. The structure represented on the coins is

sometimes called not the pyre but the monument of Sandan. Certainly the cone resting on the square base reminds us of the similar structure on the coins of Byblus as well as of the conical image of Aphrodite at Paphos (see above, pp. 10, 20 sq.); but the words of Dio Chrysostom make it probable that the design on the coins of Tarsus represents the pyre. At the same time, the burning of the god may well have been sculptured on a permanent monument of stone. The legend OPTTIOΘHRA, literally "quail-hunt," which appears on some coins of Tarsus (G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pp. lxxxvi. sq.), may refer to a custom of catching quails and burning them on the pyre. This explanation of the legend was suggested by Raoul-Rochette (*op. cit.* pp. 201-205). Doves were burnt on a pyre in honour of Adonis (below, p. 64). Similarly birds were burnt on a pyre in honour of Laphrian Artemis at Patrae (Pausanias, vii. 18. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Herodian, iv. 2.



pyre. From these representations we can form a fairly accurate conception of the form and attributes of the god. They exhibit him as a bearded man standing on a horned and often winged lion. Upon his head he wears a high pointed cap or mitre, and he is clad sometimes in a long robe, sometimes in a short tunic. On at least one coin his feet are shod in high boots with flaps. At his side or over his shoulder are slung a sword, a bow-case, and a quiver, sometimes only one or two of them. His right hand is raised and sometimes holds a flower. His left hand grasps a double-headed axe, and sometimes a wreath either in addition to the axe or instead of it; but the double-headed axe is one of Sandan's most constant attributes.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 4. *The Gods of Boghaz-Keui*

Boghaz-Keui the ancient capital of a Hittite kingdom in Cappadocia.

Now a deity of almost precisely the same type figures prominently in the celebrated group of Hittite sculptures which is carved on the rocks at Boghaz-Keui in north-western Cappadocia. The village of Boghaz-Keui, that is, "the village of the defile," stands at the mouth of a deep, narrow, and picturesque gorge in a wild upland valley, shut in by rugged mountains of grey limestone. The houses are built on the lower slopes of the hills, and a stream issuing from the gorge flows past them to join the Halys, which is distant about ten hours' journey to the west. Immediately above the modern village a great ancient city, enclosed by massive fortification walls, rose terrace above terrace on the rough broken ground of the mountain-side, culminating in two citadels perched on the tops of precipitous crags. A dense undergrowth of stunted oak coppice now covers much of the site. The ruins

<sup>1</sup> F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Monnaies Grecques* (Amsterdam, 1883), pp. 366 sq., 433, 435, with plates F. 24, 25, H. 14 (*Verhandelingen der Konink. Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, xiv.); F. Imhoof-Blumer und O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums* (Leipsic, 1889), pp. 70 sq., with pl. xii. 7, 8, 9; F. Imhoof-Blumer, "Coin-types of some Cilician Cities," *Journal of Hellenic*

*Studies*, xviii. (1898) pp. 169-171; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. xiii. 20; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. 178, 179, 184, 186, 206, 213, with plates xxxii. 13, 14, 15, 16, xxxiv. 2, xxxvi. 9; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 548, with pl. lx. 11. The booted Sandan is figured by G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pl. xxxvi. 9.



of a large palace, built of enormous blocks of stone, occupy a terrace in a commanding situation within the circuit of the walls. This vast city, some four or five miles in circumference, appears to have been the ancient Pteria, which Croesus, king of Lydia, captured in his war with Cyrus. It was probably the capital of a powerful Hittite empire before the Phrygians made their way from Europe into the interior of Asia Minor and established a rival state to the west of the Halys.<sup>1</sup>

From the village of Boghaz-Keui a steep and rugged path leads up hill to the sanctuary, distant about a mile and a half to the east. Here among the grey limestone cliffs there is a spacious natural chamber or hall of roughly oblong shape, roofed only by the sky, and enclosed on three sides by high rocks. One of the short sides is open, and through it you look out on the broken slopes beyond and the more distant mountains, which make a graceful picture set in a massy frame. The length of the chamber is about a hundred feet; its breadth varies from twenty-five to fifty feet. A nearly level sward forms the floor. On the right-hand side, as you face inward, a narrow opening in the rocks leads into another but much smaller chamber, or rather passage, which would seem to have been the inner sanctuary or Holy of Holies. It is a romantic spot, where the deep shadows of the rocks are relieved by the bright foliage of walnut-trees and by the sight of the sky and clouds overhead. On the rock-walls of both chambers are carved the famous bas-reliefs. In the outer sanctuary these reliefs represent two great processions which defile along the two long sides of the chamber and meet face to face on the

The rock-sculptures in the outer sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui represent two processions meeting.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 76; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Πτέρνη. As to the situation of Boghaz-Keui and the ruins of Pteria see W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia* (London, 1842), i. 391 sqq.; H. Barth, "Reise von Trapezunt durch die nördliche Hälfte Klein-Asiens," *Ergänzungsheft zu Petermann's Geographischen Mittheilungen* (No. 2), 1860, pp. 44-52; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor* (London, 1881), pp. 64,

71 sqq.; W. M. Ramsay, "Historical Relations of Phrygia and Cappadocia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., xv. (1883) p. 103; *id.*, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890), pp. 28 sq., 33 sq.; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 596 sqq.; K. Humann und O. Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 71-80, with Atlas, plates xi.-xiv.; E. Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce* (Paris, 1898), pp. 13 sqq.



short wall at the inner end. The figures on the left-hand wall are all men, clad for the most part in the characteristic Hittite costume, which consists of a high pointed cap, shoes with turned-up toes, and a tunic drawn in at the waist and falling short of the knees. The figures on the right-hand wall are women wearing tall, square, flat-topped bonnets with ribbed sides; their long dresses fall in perpendicular folds to their feet, which are shod in shoes like those of the men. On the short wall, where the processions meet, the greater size of the central figures, as well as their postures and attributes, mark them out as divine. At the head of the male procession marches a bearded deity clad in the ordinary Hittite costume of tall pointed cap, short tunic, and turned-up shoes; but his feet rest on the bowed heads of two men, in his right hand he holds a mace or truncheon topped with a knob, while his extended left hand grasps a symbol, which apparently consists of a trident surmounted by an oval with a cross-bar. Facing him, at the head of the female procession, stands a goddess on a lioness or panther. Her costume does not differ from that of the women: her hair hangs down in a long plait behind: in her extended right hand she holds out an emblem to touch that of the god. The shape and meaning of her emblem are obscure. It consists of a stem with two pairs of protuberances, perhaps leaves or branches, one above the other, the whole being surmounted, like the emblem of the god, by an oval with a cross-bar. Under the outstretched arms of the two deities appear the front parts of two animals, which have been usually interpreted as bulls, but sometimes as goats or cats; each of them wears on its head the high conical Hittite cap, and its body is concealed by that of the deity. Immediately behind the goddess marches a smaller and apparently youthful male figure, standing like her upon a lioness or panther. He is beardless and wears the Hittite dress of high pointed cap, short tunic, and shoes with turned-up toes. A crescent-hilted sword is girt at his side; in his left hand he holds a double-headed axe, and in his right a staff topped by an armless doll with the symbol of the cross-barred oval instead of a head.

The entrance to the smaller chamber is guarded on



either side by the figure of a winged monster carved on the rock; the bodies of both figures are human, but one of them has the head of a dog, the other the head of a lion. In the inner sanctuary, to which this monster-guarded passage leads, the walls are also carved in relief. On one side we see a procession of twelve men in Hittite costume marching with curved swords in their right hands. On the opposite wall is a colossal erect figure of a deity with a human head and a body curiously composed of four lions, two above and two below, the latter standing on their heads. The god wears the high conical Hittite hat: his face is youthful and beardless like that of the male figure standing on the lioness in the large chamber; and the ear turned to the spectator is pierced with a ring. To the right of this deity a square panel cut in the face of the rock exhibits a group of two figures in relief. The larger of the two figures closely resembles the youth on the lioness in the outer sanctuary. His chin is beardless; he wears the same high pointed cap, the same short tunic, the same turned-up shoes, the same crescent-hilted sword, and he carries a similar armless doll in his right hand. But his left arm encircles the neck of the smaller figure, whom he seems to clasp to his side in an attitude of protection. The smaller figure thus embraced by the god is clearly a priest. His face is beardless; he wears a skull-cap and a long mantle reaching to his feet with a sort of chasuble thrown over it. The crescent-shaped hilt of a sword projects from under his mantle. The wrist of his right arm is clasped by the god's left hand; in his left hand the priest holds a crook or pastoral staff which ends below in a curl. Both the priest and his protector are facing towards the lion-god. In an upper corner of the panel behind them is a divine emblem composed of a winged disc resting on what look like two Ionic columns, while between them appear three symbols of doubtful significance. The figure of the priest in this costume, though not in this attitude, is a familiar one; for it occurs twice in the outer sanctuary and is repeated twice at the great Hittite palace of Euyuk, distant about four and a half hours' ride to the north-east of Boghaz-Keui. In the outer sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui we see the priest marching in the

The rock-sculptures in the inner sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui.

The lion-god.

The god protecting his priest.

Other representations of the priest at Boghaz-Keui and Euyuk.



procession of the men, and holding in one hand his curled staff or *lituus* and in the other a symbol like that of the goddess on the lioness: above his head appears the winged disc without the other attributes. Moreover he occupies a conspicuous place by himself on the right-hand wall of the outer sanctuary, quite apart from the two processions, and carved on a larger scale than any of the other figures in them. Here he stands on two heaps, perhaps intended to represent mountains, and he carries in his right hand the emblem of the winged disc supported on two Ionic columns with the other symbols between them, except that the central symbol is replaced by a masculine figure wearing a pointed cap and a long robe decorated with a dog-tooth pattern. On one of the reliefs at the palace of Euyuk we see the priest with his characteristic dress and staff followed by a priestess, each of them with a hand raised as if in adoration: they are approaching the image of a bull which stands on a high pedestal with an altar before it. Behind them a priest leads a flock of rams to the sacrifice. On another relief at Euyuk the priest, similarly attired and followed by a priestess, is approaching a seated goddess and apparently pouring a libation at her feet. Both these scenes doubtless represent acts of worship paid in the one case to a goddess, in the other to a bull.<sup>1</sup>

The two deities at the head of the processions at Boghaz-Keui appear to be the great Asiatic goddess and her consort.

We have still to inquire into the meaning of the rock-carvings at Boghaz-Keui. What are these processions which are meeting? Who are the personages represented? and what are they doing? Some have thought that the scene

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 393-395; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, pp. 59 sq., 66-78; W. M. Ramsay, "Historical Relations of Phrygia and Asia Minor," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xv. (1883) pp. 113-120; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 623-656, 666-672; K. Humann und O. Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien*, pp. 55-70, with Atlas, plates vii.-x.; E. Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce*, pp. 3-5, 16-26; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, pp. 42-50.

Compare P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier*, pp. 165 sqq. An interesting Hittite symbol which occurs both in the sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui and at the palace of Euyuk is the double-headed eagle. In both places it serves as the support of divine or priestly personages. After being adopted as a badge by the Seljuk Sultans in the Middle Ages, it passed into Europe with the Crusaders and became in time the escutcheon of the Austrian and Russian empires. See W. J. Hamilton, *op. cit.* i. 383; Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iv. 681-683, with pl. viii. E; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 50.



is historical and commemorates a great event, such as a treaty of peace between two peoples or the marriage of a king's son to a king's daughter.<sup>1</sup> But to this view it has been rightly objected that the attributes of the principal figures prove them to be divine or priestly, and that the scene is therefore religious or mythical rather than historical. With regard to the two personages who head the processions and hold out their symbols to each other, the most probable opinion appears to be that they stand for the great Asiatic goddess of fertility and her consort, by whatever names these deities were known, whether as Ishtar and Tammuz, as Aphrodite and Adonis, as Sandan and Mylitta, or as Cybele and Attis; for under diverse names a similar divine couple was worshipped with similar rites all over western Asia.<sup>2</sup> The tall flat-topped hat with perpendicular grooves which the goddess wears, and the lioness or panther on which she stands, remind us of the turreted crown and lion-drawn car of Cybele, who was worshipped in the neighbouring land of Phrygia across the Halys.<sup>3</sup> So Atargatis, the great Syrian goddess of Hierapolis-Bambyce, was portrayed sitting on lions and wearing a tower on her head.<sup>4</sup> At Babylon an

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 394 sq.; H. Barth, in *Monatsberichte der königl. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1859, pp. 128 sqq.; *id.*, "Reise von Trapezunt," *Ergänzungsheft zu Petermann's Geograph. Mittheilungen* (No. 2) (Gotha, 1860), pp. 45 sq.; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, p. 69; E. Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce*, pp. 20 sqq. According to Barth, the scene represented is the marriage of Aryenis, daughter of Alyattes, king of Lydia, to Astyages, son of Cyaxares, king of the Medes (Herodotus, i. 74). For a discussion of various interpretations which have been proposed see Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 630 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> This is in substance the view of Raoul-Rochette, Lajard, W. M. Ramsay, G. Perrot, and C. P. Tiele. See Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de*

*l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), p. 180, n. 1; W. M. Ramsay, "On the early Historical Relations between Phrygia and Cappadocia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xv. (1885) pp. 113-120; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 630 sqq.; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 255-257.

<sup>3</sup> As to the lions and mural crown of Cybele see Lucretius, ii. 600 sqq.; Catullus, lxiii. 76 sqq.; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 20; Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1644 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 31; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 19. Lucian's description of her image is confirmed by coins of Hierapolis, on which the goddess is represented wearing a high headdress and seated on a lion. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 654; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collec-*



image of a goddess whom the Greeks called Rhea had the figures of two lions standing on her knees.<sup>1</sup>

The youth  
on the  
lioness,  
bearing  
the double  
axe, at  
Boghaz-  
Keui may  
be the  
divine son  
and lover  
of the  
goddess.

But in the rock-hewn sculptures of Boghaz-Keui, who is the youth with the tall pointed cap and double axe who stands on a lioness or panther immediately behind the great goddess? His figure is all the more remarkable because he is the only male who interrupts the long procession of women. Probably he is at once the divine son and the divine lover of the goddess; for we shall find later on that in Phrygian mythology Attis united in himself both these characters.<sup>2</sup> The lioness or panther on which he stands marks his affinity with the goddess, who is supported by a similar animal. It is natural that the lion-goddess should have a lion-son and a lion-lover. For we may take it as probable that the Oriental deities who are represented standing or sitting in human form

*tion*, iii. 139 sq. That the name of the Syrian goddess of Hierapolis-Bambyce was Atargatis is mentioned by Strabo (xvi. i. 27, p. 748). On Egyptian monuments the Semitic goddess Kadesh is represented standing on a lion. See W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, pp. 314 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus; ii. 9. 5.

<sup>2</sup> In thus interpreting the youth with the double axe I agree with Prof. W. M. Ramsay ("On the early Historical Relations between Phrygia and Cappadocia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xv. (1883) pp. 118, 120) and C. P. Tiele (*Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 246, 255). That the youthful figure on the lioness or panther represents the lover of the great goddess is the view also of Professors Jensen and Hommel. See P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier*, pp. 173-175, 180; F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, p. 51. Prof. Perrot holds that the youth in question is a double of the bearded god who stands at the head of the male procession, their costume being the same, though their attributes differ (Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 651). This opinion is not inconsistent with that which I have adopted, for the divine son is naturally a double

of his divine father. With regard to the lionesses or panthers, a bas-relief found at Carchemish, the capital of a Hittite kingdom on the Euphrates, shows two male figures in Hittite costume, with pointed caps and turned-up shoes, standing on a couching lion. The foremost of the two figures is winged and carries a short curved truncheon in his right hand. According to Prof. Perrot, the two figures represent a god followed by a priest or a king. See Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 549 sq. Again, on a sculptured slab found at Amrit in Phoenicia we see a god standing on a lion and holding a lion's whelp in his left hand, while in his right hand he brandishes a club or sword. See Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iii. 412-414. The type of a god or goddess standing or sitting on a lion occurs also in Assyrian art, from which the Phoenicians and Hittites may have borrowed it. See Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* ii. 642-644. Much evidence as to the representation of Asiatic deities with lions has been collected by Raoul-Rochette, in his learned dissertation "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 106 sqq. Compare De Vogüé, *Mélanges d'Archéologie Orientale*, pp. 44 sqq.



on the backs of lions and other animals were originally indistinguishable from the beasts, and that the complete separation of the bestial from the human or divine shape was a consequence of that growth of knowledge and of power which led man in time to respect himself more and the brutes less. The hybrid gods of Egypt with their human bodies and animal heads form an intermediate stage in this evolution of anthropomorphic deities out of beasts.

We may now perhaps hazard a conjecture as to the meaning of that strange colossal figure in the inner shrine at Boghaz-Keui with its human head and its body composed of lions. For it is to be observed that the head of the figure is youthful and beardless, and that it wears a tall pointed cap, thus resembling in both respects the youth with the double-headed axe who stands on a lion in the outer sanctuary. We may suppose that the leonine figure in the inner shrine sets forth the true mystic, that is, the old savage nature of the god who in the outer shrine presented himself to his worshippers in the decent semblance of a man. To the chosen few who were allowed to pass the monster-guarded portal into the Holy of Holies, the awful secret may have been revealed that their god was a lion, or rather a lion-man, a being in whom the bestial and human natures mysteriously co-existed. The reader may remember that on the rock beside this leonine divinity is carved a group which represents a god with his arm twined round the neck of his priest in an attitude of protection, holding one of the priest's hands in his own. Both figures are looking and stepping towards the lion-monster, and the god is holding out his right hand as if pointing to it. The scene may represent the deity revealing the mystery to the priest, or preparing him to act his part in some solemn rite for which all his strength and courage will be needed. He seems to be leading his minister onward, comforting him with an assurance that no harm can come near him while the divine arm is around him and the divine hand clasps his. Whither is he leading him? Perhaps to death. The deep shadows of the rocks which fall on the two figures in the gloomy chasm may be an emblem of darker shadows soon to fall on the priest. Yet still he grasps his pastoral staff and goes forward, as though he said, "Yea,

The mystery of the lion-god.



though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The processions at Boghaz-Keui appear to represent the Sacred Marriage of the god and goddess.

If there is any truth in these guesses—for they are little more—the three principal figures in the processional scene at Boghaz-Keui represent the divine Father, the divine Mother, and the divine Son. But we have still to ask, What are they doing? That they are engaged in the performance of some religious rite seems certain. But what is it? We may conjecture that it is the rite of the Sacred Marriage, and that the scene is copied from a ceremony which was periodically performed in this very place by human representatives of the deities.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the solemn meeting of the male and female figures at the head of their respective processions obviously suggests a marriage, and has been so interpreted by scholars, who, however, regarded it as the historical wedding of a prince and princess instead of the mystic union of a god and goddess, overlooking or explaining away the symbols of divinity which accompany the principal personages.<sup>2</sup> We may suppose that at Boghaz-Keui, as at many other places in the interior of Asia Minor, the government was in the hands of a family who combined royal with priestly functions and personated the gods whose names they bore. Thus at Pessinus in Phrygia, as we shall see later on, the priests of Cybele bore the name of her consort Attis, and doubtless represented him in the ritual.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "There can be no doubt that there is here represented a Sacred Marriage, the meeting of two deities worshipped in different places, like the Horus of Edfu and the Hathor of Dendera" (C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 255). This view seems to differ from, though it approaches, the one suggested in the text.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 182. Compare the remarks of Prof. W. M. Ramsay ("Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiii. (1890) p. 78): "Similar priest-dynasts are a widespread feature of the primitive social system of Asia Minor; their existence is known with certainty or inferred

with probability at the two towns Komana; at Venasa not far north of Tyana, at Olba, at Pessinus, at Aizanoi, and many other places. Now there are two characteristics which can be regarded as probable in regard to most of these priests, and as proved in regard to some of them: (1) they wore the dress and represented the person of the god, whose priests they were; (2) they were *ιερόνυμοι*, losing their individual name at their succession to the office, and assuming a sacred name, often that of the god himself or some figure connected with the cultus of the god. The priest of Cybele at Pessinus was called Attis, the priests of Sabazios were Saboi, the worshippers of Bacchos Bacchoi." As to the priestly rulers of Olba, see below, pp. 61 *sqq.*



If this was so at Boghaz-Keui, we may surmise that the chief pontiff and his family annually celebrated the marriage of the divine powers of fertility, the Father God and the Mother Goddess, for the purpose of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth and the multiplication of men and beasts. The principal parts in the ceremony would naturally be played by the pontiff himself and his wife, unless indeed they preferred for good reasons to delegate the onerous duty to others. That such a delegation took place is perhaps suggested by the appearance of the pontiff himself in a subordinate place in the procession, as well as by his separate representation in another place, as if he were in the act of surveying the ceremony from a distance.<sup>1</sup> The part of the divine Son at the rite would fitly devolve upon one of the high-priest's own offspring, who may well have been numerous. For it is probable that here, as elsewhere in Asia Minor, the Mother Goddess was personated by a crowd of sacred harlots,<sup>2</sup> with whom the spiritual ruler may have been required to consort in his character of incarnate deity. But if the personation of the Son of God at the rites laid a heavy burden of suffering on the shoulders of the actor, it is possible that the representative of the deity may have been drawn, perhaps by lot, from among the numerous progeny of the consecrated courtesans; for these women, as incarnations of the Mother Goddess, were probably supposed to transmit to their offspring some portion of their own divinity. Be that as it may, if the three principal personages in the processional scene at Boghaz-Keui are indeed the Father, the Mother, and the Son, the remarkable position assigned to the third of them in the procession, where he walks behind his Mother alone in the procession of women, appears to indicate that he was supposed to be more closely akin to her than to his Father. From this again we may conjecturally infer that mother-right rather than father-right was the rule which regulated descent among the Hittites.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 53 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 21 *sqq.*



§ 5. *Sandan and Baal at Tarsus*

Sandan at  
Tarsus  
appears to  
be a son of  
Baal, as  
Hercules  
was a son  
of Zeus.

Whatever may be thought of these speculations, one thing seems fairly clear and certain. The figure which I have called the divine Son at Boghaz-Keui is identical with the god Sandan, who appears on the pyre at Tarsus. In both personages the costume, the attributes, the attitude are the same. Both represent a man clad in a short tunic with a tall pointed cap on his head, a sword at his side, a double-headed axe in his hand, and a lion or panther under his feet.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, if we are right in identifying him as the divine Son at Boghaz-Keui, we may conjecture that under the name of Sandan he bore the same character at Tarsus. The conjecture squares perfectly with the title of Hercules, which the Greeks bestowed on Sandan; for Hercules was the son of Zeus, the great father-god. Moreover, we have seen that the Baal of Tarsus, with the grapes and the corn in his hand, was assimilated to Zeus.<sup>2</sup> Thus it would appear that at Tarsus as at Boghaz-Keui there was a pair of deities, a divine Father and a divine Son, whom the Greeks identified with Zeus and Hercules respectively. If the Baal of Tarsus was a god of fertility, as his attributes clearly imply, his identification with Zeus would be natural, since it was Zeus who, in the belief of the Greeks, sent the fertilising rain from heaven.<sup>3</sup> And the identification of Sandan with Hercules would be equally natural, since the lion and the death on the pyre were features common to both. Our conclusion then is that it was the divine Son, the lion-god, who was burned in effigy or in the person of a human representative at Tarsus, and perhaps at Boghaz-Keui. Semitic parallels suggest that the victim who played the part of the Son of God in the fiery furnace ought in strictness to be the king's son.<sup>4</sup> But no doubt in later times an effigy would be substituted for the man.

<sup>1</sup> The figure exhibits a few minor variations on the coins of Tarsus. See the works cited above, p. 50, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 42 sq.

<sup>3</sup> L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 117 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 34.



§ 6. *Priestly Kings of Olba*

Unfortunately we know next to nothing of the kings and priests of Tarsus. In Greek times we hear of an Epicurean philosopher of the city, Lysias by name, who was elected by his fellow-citizens to the office of Crown-wearer, that is, to the priesthood of Hercules. Once raised to that dignity, he would not lay it down again, but played the part of tyrant, wearing a white robe edged with purple, a costly cloak, white shoes, and a golden wreath of laurel. He truckled to the mob by distributing among them the property of the wealthy, while he put to death such as refused to open their moneybags to him.<sup>1</sup> Though we cannot distinguish in this account between the legal and the illegal exercise of authority, yet we may safely infer that the priesthood of Hercules, that is of Sandan, at Tarsus continued down to late times to be an office of great dignity and power, not unworthy to be held in earlier times by the kings themselves. Scanty as is our information as to the kings of Cilicia, we hear of two whose names appear to indicate that they stood in some special relation to the divine Sandan. One of them was Sandu'arri, lord of Kundi and Sizu, which have been identified with Anchiale and Sis in Cilicia.<sup>2</sup> The other was Sanda-sarme, who gave his daughter in marriage to Ashurpanipal, king of Assyria.<sup>3</sup> It would be in accordance with analogy if the kings of Tarsus formerly held the priesthood of Sandan and claimed to represent him in their own person.

Priests of  
Sandan-  
Hercules  
at Tarsus.

Kings of  
Cilicia  
related to  
Sandan.

We know that the whole of western or mountainous Cilicia

<sup>1</sup> Athenaeus, v. 54, p. 215 B, C.<sup>2</sup> The high-priest of the Syrian goddess at Hierapolis held office for a year, and wore a purple robe and a golden tiara (Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 42). We may conjecture that the priesthood of Hercules at Tarsus was in later times at least an annual office.

<sup>2</sup> E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. § 389, p. 475; H. Winckler, in E. Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> p. 88. Kuinda was the name of a Cilician fortress a little way inland from Anchiale (Strabo, xiv. 5. 10, p. 672).

<sup>3</sup> E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. § 393, p.

480; C. P. Tiele, *Babylonisch-assyrische Geschichte*, p. 360. Sandon and Sandas occur repeatedly as names of Cilician men. They are probably identical with, or modified forms of, the divine name. See Strabo, xiv. 5. 14, p. 674; Plutarch, *Poplicola*, 17; *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, No. 4401; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 878; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften d. Kaiser. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, Philosoph. histor. Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 46, 131 sq., 140 (Inscriptions 115, 218, 232).



Priestly  
kings of  
Olba who  
bore the  
names of  
Teucer and  
Ajax.

The  
Teucrids  
of Salamis  
in Cyprus.

was ruled by kings who combined the regal office with the priesthood of Zeus, or rather of a native deity whom, like the Baal of Tarsus, the Greeks assimilated to their own Zeus. These priestly potentates had their seat at Olba, and most of them bore the name either of Teucer or of Ajax,<sup>1</sup> but we may suspect that these appellations are merely Greek distortions of native Cilician names. Teucer (*Teukros*) may be a corruption of Tark, Trok, Tarku, or Troko, all of which occur in the names of Cilician priests and kings. At all events, it is worthy of notice that one, if not two, of these priestly Teucers had a father called Tarkuaris,<sup>2</sup> and that in a long list of priests who served Zeus at the Corycian cave, not many miles from Olba, the names Tarkuaris, Tarkumbios, Tarkimos, Trokoarbasis, and Trokombigremis, besides many other obviously native names, occur side by side with Teucer and other purely Greek appellations.<sup>3</sup> In like manner the Teucrids, who traced their descent from Zeus and reigned at Salamis in Cyprus,<sup>4</sup> may well have been a native dynasty, who concocted a Greek pedigree for themselves in the days when Greek

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 10, p. 672. The name of the high-priest Ajax, son of Teucer, occurs on coins of Olba, dating from about the beginning of our era (B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 609); and the name of Teucer is also known from inscriptions. See below, pp. 68 sq., 76.

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Western Cilicia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) pp. 226, 263; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der Kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, xlv. (1896) No. vi. pp. 53, 88.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 878. Tarkondimotos was the name of two kings of eastern Cilicia in the first century B.C. One of them corresponded with Cicero and fell at the battle of Actium. See Cicero, *Epist. ad Familiares*, xv. 1. 2; Strabo, xiv. 5. 18, p. 676; Dio Cassius, xli. 63. 1, xlvii. 26. 2, 1. 14. 2, li. 2. 2, li. 7. 4, liv. 9. 2; Plutarch, *Antoninus*, 61; B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 618; W.

Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Nos. 752, 753. Moreover, Tarkudimme or Tarkuwassimi occurs as the name of a king of Erme (?) or Urmi (?) in a bilingual Hittite and cuneiform inscription engraved on a silver seal. See W. Wright, *The Empire of the Hittites*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1886), pp. 163 sqq.; L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittitarum*, pp. 42 sq., pl. xlii. 9; *id.*, *The Hittites*, pp. 29 sq.; P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier* (Strasburg, 1898), pp. 22, 50 sq. In this inscription Prof. Jensen suggests Tarbibi- as an alternative reading for Tarku-. Compare P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, pp. 362-364.

<sup>4</sup> Isocrates, *Or.* ix. 14 and 18 sq.; Pausanias, ii. 29. 2 and 4; W. E. Engel, *Kypros*, i. 212 sqq. As to the names Teucer and Teucrian see P. Kretschmer, *op. cit.* pp. 189-191. Prof. Kretschmer believes that the native population of Cyprus belonged to the non-Aryan stock of Asia Minor.



civilisation was fashionable. The legend which attributed the foundation of the Cyprian Salamis to Teucer, son of Telamon, appears to be late and unknown to Homer.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a cruel form of human sacrifice which was practised in the city down to historical times savours rather of Oriental barbarity than of Greek humanity. Led or driven by the youths, a man ran thrice round the altar; then the priest stabbed him in the throat with a spear and burned his body whole on a heaped-up pyre. The sacrifice was offered in the month of Aphrodite to Diomede, who along with Agraulus, daughter of Cecrops, had a temple at Salamis. A temple of Athena stood within the same sacred enclosure. It is said that in olden times the sacrifice was offered to Agraulus, and not to Diomede. According to another account it was instituted by Teucer in honour of Zeus. However that may have been, the barbarous custom lasted down to the reign of Hadrian, when Diphilus, king of Cyprus, abolished or rather mitigated it by substituting the sacrifice of an ox for that of a man.<sup>2</sup> On the hypothesis here suggested we must suppose that these Greek names of divine or heroic figures at the Cyprian Salamis covered more or less similar figures of the Asiatic pantheon. And in the Salaminian burnt-sacrifice of a man we may perhaps detect the original form of the ceremony which in historical times appears to have been performed upon an image of Sandan or Hercules at Tarsus. When an ox was sacrificed instead of a man, the old sacrificial rites would naturally continue to be observed in all other respects exactly as before: the animal

Burnt sacrifices of human victims at Salamis and traces of a similar custom elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Engel, *Kypros*, i. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Porphyry, *De abstinencia*, ii. 54 sq.; Lactantius, *Divin. Inst.* i. 21. As to the date when the custom was abolished, Lactantius says that it was done "recently in the reign of Hadrian." Porphyry says that the practice was put down by Diphilus, king of Cyprus, "in the time of Seleucus the Theologian." As nothing seems to be known as to the date of King Diphilus and Seleucus the Theologian, I have ventured to assume, on the strength of Lactantius's statement, that they were contemporaries of

Hadrian. But it is curious to find kings of Cyprus reigning so late. Beside the power of the Roman governors, their authority can have been little more than nominal, like that of native rajahs in British India. Seleucus the Theologian may be, as Fabricius supposed (*Bibliotheca Graeca*,<sup>4</sup> ed. G. C. Harles, i. 86, compare 522), the Alexandrian grammarian who composed a voluminous work on the gods (Suidas, s.v. Σέλευκος). Suetonius tells an anecdote (*Tiberius*, 56) about a grammarian named Seleucus who flourished and faded prematurely at the court of Tiberius.



would be led thrice round the altar, stabbed with a spear, and burned on a pyre. Now at the Syrian Hierapolis the greatest festival of the year bore the name of the Pyre or the Torch. It was held at the beginning of spring. Great trees were then cut down and planted in the court of the temple: sheep, goats, birds, and other creatures were hung upon them: sacrificial victims were led round: then fire was set to the whole, and everything was consumed in the flames.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps here also the burning of animals was a substitute for the burning of men. When the practice of human sacrifice becomes too revolting to humanity to be tolerated, its abolition is commonly effected by substituting either animals or images for living men or women. At Salamis certainly, and perhaps at Hierapolis, the substitutes were animals: at Tarsus, if I am right, they were images. In this connection the statement of a Greek writer as to the worship of Adonis in Cyprus deserves attention. He says that as Adonis had been honoured by Aphrodite, the Cyprians after his death cast live doves on a pyre to him, and that the birds, flying away from the flames, fell into another pyre and were consumed.<sup>2</sup> The statement seems to be a description of an actual custom of burning doves in sacrifice to Adonis. Such a mode of honouring him would be very remarkable, since doves were commonly sacred to his divine mistress Aphrodite or Astarte. For example, at the Syrian Hierapolis, one of the chief seats of her worship, these birds were so holy that they might not even be touched. If a man inadvertently touched a dove, he was unclean or tabooed for the rest of the day. Hence the birds, never being molested, were so tame that they lived with the people in their houses, and commonly picked up their food fearlessly on the ground.<sup>3</sup> Can the burning of the sacred bird of Aphrodite in the Cyprian worship of Adonis have been a substitute for the burning of a sacred man who personated the lover of the goddess?

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenianus, *Praefatio*, in *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Leutsch et Schneidewin, i. 180. Raoul-Rochette regarded the custom as part of the ritual of the divine death and resurrection. He compared it with the burning

of Melcarth at Tyre. See his memoir, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (1848), p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 54.



If, as many scholars think, Tark or Tarku was the name, or part of the name, of a great Hittite deity, sometimes identified as the god of the sky and the lightning,<sup>1</sup> we may conjecture that Tark or Tarku was the native name of the god of Olba, whom the Greeks called Zeus, and that the priestly kings who bore the name of Teucer represented the god Tark or Tarku in their own persons. This conjecture is confirmed by the observation that Olba, the ancient name of the city, is itself merely a Grecised form of Oura, the name which the place retains to this day.<sup>2</sup> The situation of the town, moreover, speaks strongly in favour of the view that it was from the beginning an aboriginal settlement, though in after days, like so many other Asiatic cities,

The priestly Teucers of Olba perhaps personated a native god Tark.

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Sayce, in W. Wright's *Empire of the Hittites*,<sup>2</sup> p. 186; W. M. Ramsay, "Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1903) pp. 81 sq.; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 251; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, p. 333; P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier*, pp. 70, 150 sqq., 155 sqq.; F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des Alten Orients*, pp. 44, 51 sq.; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 40. Prof. W. M. Ramsay thinks (*l.c.*) that Tark was the native name of the god who had his sanctuary at Dastarkon in Cappadocia and who was called by the Greeks the Cataonian Apollo: his sanctuary was revered all over Cappadocia (Strabo, xiv. 2. 5, p. 537). Prof. Hommel holds that Tarku or Tarchu was the chief Hittite deity, worshipped all over the south of Asia Minor. The Hittite thunder-god, whatever his name may have been, is supposed to be represented on two stone monuments of Hittite art which have been found at Zenjirli and Babylon. On both we see a bearded male god wearing the usual Hittite costume of tall cap, short tunic and shoes turned up at the toes: a crescent-hilted sword is girt at his side: his hands are raised: in the right he holds a single-headed axe or hammer, in the left a trident of wavy lines, which is

believed to represent a bundle of thunder-bolts. On the Babylonian slab, which bears a long Hittite inscription, the god's cap is ornamented with a pair of horns. See K. Humann and O. Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien* (Berlin, 1890), Atlas, pl. xlv. 3; *Ausgrabungen zu Sendschirli*, iii. (Berlin, 1902) pl. xli.; R. Koldewey, *Die Hettitische Inschrift gefunden in der Königsburg von Babylon* (Leipsic, 1900), plates 1 and 2 (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, Heft 1); L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hettitarum*, pl. i. 5 and 6; *id.*, *The Hittites*, p. 41, fig. 6; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> p. 93. Prof. W. Max Müller thinks that Targh or Tarkh did not designate any particular deity, but was the general Hittite name for "god."

<sup>2</sup> J. T. Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the R. Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) p. 458; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) p. 222; W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, pp. 22, 364. Prof. W. M. Ramsay had shown grounds for thinking that Olba was a Grecised form of a native name Ourba (pronounced Ourwa) before Mr. J. T. Bent discovered the site and the name.



it took on a varnish of Greek culture. For it stood remote from the sea on a lofty and barren tableland, with a rigorous winter climate, in the highlands of Cilicia.

Western  
or Rugged  
Cilicia.

Great indeed is the contrast between the bleak windy uplands of western or Rugged Cilicia, as the ancients called it, and the soft luxuriant lowlands of eastern Cilicia, where winter is almost unknown and summer annually drives the population to seek in the cool air of the mountains a refuge from the intolerable heat and deadly fevers of the plains. In western Cilicia, on the other hand, a lofty tableland, ending in a high sharp edge on the coast, rises steadily inland till it passes gradually into the chain of heights which divide it from the interior. Looked at from the sea it resembles a great blue wave swelling in one uniform sweep till its crest breaks into foam in the distant snows of the Taurus. The surface of the tableland is almost everywhere rocky and overgrown, in the intervals of the rocks, with dense, thorny, almost impenetrable scrub. Only here and there in a hollow or glen the niggardly soil allows of a patch of cultivation; and here and there fine oaks and planes, towering over the brushwood, clothe with a richer foliage the depth of the valleys. None but wandering herdsmen with their flocks now maintain a precarious existence in this rocky wilderness. Yet the ruined towns which stud the country prove that a dense population lived and thrived here in antiquity, while numerous remains of wine-presses and wine-vats bear witness to the successful cultivation of the grape. The chief cause of the present desolation is lack of water; for wells are few and brackish, perennial streams hardly exist, and the ancient aqueducts, which once brought life and fertility to the land, have long been suffered to fall into disrepair.

The  
Cilician  
pirates.

But for ages together the ancient inhabitants of these uplands earned their bread by less reputable means than the toil of the husbandman and the vinedresser. They were buccaneers and slavers, scouring the high seas with their galleys and retiring with their booty to the inaccessible fastnesses of their mountains. In the decline of Greek power all over the East the pirate communities of Cilicia grew into a formidable state, recruited by gangs



of desperadoes and broken men who flocked to it from all sides. The holds of these robbers may still be seen perched on the brink of the profound ravines which cleave the tableland at frequent intervals. With their walls of massive masonry, their towers and battlements, overhanging dizzy depths, they are admirably adapted to bid defiance to the pursuit of justice. In antiquity the dark forests of cedar, which clothed much of the country and supplied the pirates with timber for their ships, must have rendered access to these fastnesses still more difficult. The great gorge of the Lamas River, which eats its way like a sheet of forked lightning into the heart of the mountains, is dotted every few miles with fortified towns, some of them still magnificent in their ruins, dominating sheer cliffs high above the stream. They are now the haunt only of the ibex and the bear. Each of these communities had its own crest or badge, which may still be seen carved on the corners of the mouldering towers. No doubt, too, it blazoned the same crest on the hull, the sails, or the streamers of the galley which, manned with a crew of ruffians, it sent out to prey upon the rich merchantmen in the Golden Sea, as the corsairs called the highway of commerce between Crete and Africa.

A staircase cut in the rock connects one of these ruined castles with the river in the glen, a thousand feet below. But the steps are worn and dangerous, indeed impassable. You may go for miles along the edge of these stupendous cliffs before you find a way down. The paths keep on the heights, for in many of its reaches the gully affords no foothold even to the agile nomads who alone roam these solitudes. At evening the winding course of the river may be traced for a long distance by a mist which, as the heat of the day declines, rises like steam from the deep gorge and hangs suspended in a wavy line of fleecy cloud above it. But even more imposing than the ravine of the Lamas is the terrific gorge known as the *Sheitan dere* or Devil's Glen near the Corycian cave. Prodigious walls of rock, glowing in the intense sunlight, black in the shadow, and spanned by a summer sky of the deepest blue, hem in the dry bed of a winter torrent, choked with rocks and tangled with

The deep  
gorges of  
Rugged  
Cilicia.



thickets of evergreens, among which the oleanders with their slim stalks, delicate taper leaves, and bunches of crimson blossom stand out conspicuous.<sup>1</sup>

The site  
and ruins  
of Olba.

The ruins of Olba, among the most extensive and remarkable in Asia Minor, were discovered in 1890 by Mr. J. Theodore Bent. But three years before another English traveller had caught a distant view of its battlements and towers outlined against the sky like a city of enchantment or dreams.<sup>2</sup> Standing at a height of nearly six thousand feet above the sea, the upper town commands a free, though somewhat uniform, prospect for immense distances in all directions. The sea is just visible far away to the south. On these heights the winter is long and severe. Snow lies on the ground for months. No Greek would have chosen such a site for a city, so bleak and chill, so far from blue water; but it served well for a fastness of brigands. Deep gorges, one of them filled for miles with tombs, surround it on all sides, rendering fortification walls superfluous. But a great square tower, four stories high, rises conspicuous on the hill, forming a landmark and earning for this upper town the native name of *Jebel Hissar*, or the Mountain of the Castle. A Greek inscription cut

<sup>1</sup> J. Theodore Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 445, 450-453; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) pp. 208, 210-212, 217-219; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-historische Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 49, 70; D. G. Hogarth and J. A. R. Munro, "Modern and Ancient Roads in Eastern Asia Minor," *Royal Geographical Society, Supplementary Papers*, vol. iii. part 5 (London, 1893), pp. 653 sq. As to the Cilician pirates see Strabo, xiv. 5. 2, pp. 668 sq.; Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 24; Appian, *Bellum Mithridat.* 92 sq.; Dio Cassius, xxxvi. 20-24 [3-6], ed. L. Dindorf; Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompeii*, 11 sq.; Th. Mommsen, *Roman History* (London, 1868), iii. 68-70, iv. 40-45, 118-120. As to the crests

carved on their towns see J. T. Bent, "Cilician Symbols," *Classical Review*, iv. (1890) pp. 321 sq. Among these crests are a club (the badge of Olba), a bunch of grapes, the caps of the Dioscuri, the three-legged symbol, etc. As to the cedars and shipbuilding timber of Cilicia in antiquity see Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, iii. 2. 6, iv. 5. 5. The cedars and firs have now retreated to the higher slopes of the Taurus. Great destruction is wrought in the forests by the roving Yuruks with their flocks; for they light their fires under the trees, tap the firs for turpentine, bark the cedars for their huts and beehives, and lay bare whole tracts of country that the grass may grow for their sheep and goats. See J. T. Bent, in *Proceedings of the R. Geogr. Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 453-458.

<sup>2</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant*, pp. 57 sq.



on the tower proves that it was built by Teucer, son of Tarkuaris, one of the priestly potentates of Olba. Among other remains of public buildings the most notable are forty tall Corinthian columns of the great temple of Olbian Zeus. Though coarse in style and corroded by long exposure to frost and snow, these massive pillars, towering above the ruins, produce an imposing effect. That the temple of which they formed part belonged indeed to Olbian Zeus is shown by a Greek inscription found within the sacred area, which records that the pent-houses on the inner side of the boundary wall were built by King Seleucus Nicator and repaired for Olbian Zeus by "the great high-priest Teucer, son of Zenophanes." About two hundred yards from this great temple are standing five elegant granite columns of a small temple dedicated to the goddess Fortune. Further, the remains of two theatres and many other public buildings attest the former splendour of this mountain city. An arched colonnade, of which some Corinthian columns are standing with their architraves, ran through the town; and an ancient paved road, lined with tombs and ruins, leads down hill to a lower and smaller city two or three miles distant. It is this lower town which retains the ancient name of Oura. Here the principal ruins occupy an isolated fir-clad height bounded by two narrow ravines full of rock-cut tombs. Below the town the ravines unite and form a fine gorge, down which the old road passed seaward.<sup>1</sup>

### § 7. *The God of the Corycian Cave*

Nothing yet found at Olba throws light on the nature of the god who was worshipped there under the Greek name

Limestone  
caverns of  
western  
Cilicia.

<sup>1</sup> J. Theodore Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 445 sq., 458-460; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1890) pp. 220-222; E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Western Cilicia," *ib.* pp. 262-270; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 83-91; W. M. Ramsay and D. G.

Hogarth, in *American Journal of Archaeology*, vi. (1890) p. 345; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 1231. In one place (*Journ. Hellen. Stud.* xii. 222) Bent gives the height of Olba as 3800 feet; but this is a misprint, for elsewhere (*Proceed. R. Geogr. Soc.*, N.S. xii. 446, 458) he gives the height as exactly 5850 or roughly 6000 feet. The misprint has unfortunately been repeated by Messrs. Heberdey and Wilhelm (*op. cit.* p. 84, n. 1).



of Zeus. But at two places near the coast, distant only some fourteen or fifteen miles from Olba, a deity also called Zeus by the Greeks was revered in natural surroundings of a remarkable kind, which must have stood in close relation with the worship, and are therefore fitted to illustrate it. In both places the features of the landscape are of the same general cast, and at one of them the god was definitely identified with the Zeus of Olba. The country here consists of a tableland of calcareous rock rent at intervals by those great chasms which are so characteristic of a limestone formation. Similar fissures, with the accompaniment of streams or rivers which pour into them and vanish under ground, are frequent in Greece, and may be observed in our own country near Ingleborough in Yorkshire. Fossil bones of extinct animals are often found embedded in the stalagmite or breccia of limestone caves. For example, the famous Kent's Hole near Torquay contained bones of the mammoth, rhinoceros, lion, hyaena, and bear; and red osseous breccias, charged with the bones of quadrupeds which have long disappeared from Europe, are common in almost all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> Western Cilicia is richer in Miocene deposits than any other part of Anatolia, and the limestone gorges of the coast near Olba are crowded with fossil oysters, corals, and other shells.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, within the space of five miles the limestone plateau is rent by three great chasms, which Greek religion associated with Zeus and Typhon. One of these fissures is the celebrated Corycian cave.

The city  
of Corycus.

To visit this spot, invested with the double charm of natural beauty and legendary renown, you start from the dead Cilician city of Corycus on the sea, with its ruined walls, towers, and churches, its rock-hewn houses and cisterns, its shattered mole, its island-fortress, still imposing in decay. Viewed from the sea, this part of the Cilician coast, with its long succession of white ruins, relieved by the dark wooded hills behind, presents an appearance of populousness and splendour. But a nearer approach reveals

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> ii. 518 sqq.; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> s.v. "Caves," v. 265 sqq. Compare my notes on Pausanias, i. 35.

7, viii. 29. 1.

<sup>2</sup> J. T. Bent, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. (1890), p. 447.



the nakedness and desolation of the once prosperous land.<sup>1</sup> Following the shore westward from Corycus for about an hour you come to a pretty cove enclosed by wooded heights, where a spring of pure cold water bubbles up close to the sea, giving to the spot its name of *Tatlu-su*, or the Sweet Water. From this bay a steep ascent of about a mile along an ancient paved road leads inland to a plateau. Here, threading your way through a labyrinth or petrified sea of jagged calcareous rocks, you suddenly find yourself on the brink of a vast chasm which yawns at your feet. This is the Corycian cave. In reality it is not a cave but an immense hollow or trough in the plateau, of oval shape and perhaps half a mile in circumference. The cliffs which enclose it vary from one hundred to over two hundred feet in depth. Its uneven bottom slopes throughout its whole length from north to south, and is covered by a thick jungle of trees and shrubs—myrtles, pomegranates, carobs, and many more, kept always fresh and green by rivulets, underground water, and the shadow of the great cliffs. A single narrow path leads down into its depths. The way is long and rough, but the deeper you descend the denser grows the vegetation, and it is under the dappled shade of whispering leaves and with the purling of brooks in your ears that you at last reach the bottom. The saffron which of old grew here among the bushes is no longer to be found, though it still flourishes in the surrounding district. This luxuriant bottom, with its rich verdure, its refreshing moisture, its grateful shade, is called Paradise by the wandering herdsmen. They tether their camels and pasture their goats in it and come hither in the late summer to gather the ripe pomegranates. At the southern and deepest end of this great cliff-encircled hollow you come to the cavern proper. The ruins of a Byzantine church, which replaced a heathen temple, partly block the entrance. Inwards the cave descends with a gentle slope into the bowels of the earth. The old path paved with polygonal masonry still runs through it, but soon disappears under sand. At about two hundred feet from its mouth the cave comes to an end, and a tremendous roar of subterranean water is heard. By crawling on all

The  
Corycian  
cave.

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), pp. 240 sq.



fours you may reach a small pool arched by a dripping stalactite-hung roof, but the stream which makes the deafening din is invisible. It was otherwise in antiquity. A river of clear water burst from the rock, but only to vanish again into a chasm. Such changes in the course of streams are common in countries subject to earthquakes and to the disruption caused by volcanic agency. The ancients believed that this mysterious cavern was haunted ground. In the rumble and roar of the waters they seemed to hear the clash of cymbals touched by hands divine.<sup>1</sup>

Priests of  
Corycian  
Zeus.

If now, quitting the cavern, we return by the same path to the summit of the cliffs, we shall find on the plateau the ruins of a town and of a temple at the western edge of the great Corycian chasm. The wall of the holy precinct was built within a few feet of the precipices, and the sanctuary must have stood right over the actual cave and its subterranean waters. In later times the temple was converted into a Christian church. By pulling down a portion of the sacred edifice Mr. Bent had the good fortune to discover a Greek inscription containing a long list of names, probably those of the priests who superintended the worship. One name which meets us frequently in the list is Zas, and it is tempting to regard this as merely a dialectical form of Zeus. If that were so, the priests who bore the name might be supposed to personate the god.<sup>2</sup> But many strange and barbarous-looking names, evidently foreign, occur in the list, and Zas may be one of them.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 5, pp. 670 sq.; Mela, i. 72-75, ed. G. Parthey; J. T. Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 446-448; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1890) pp. 212-214; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (1896) No. vi. pp. 70-79. Mr. D. G. Hogarth was so good as to furnish me with some notes embodying his recollections of the Corycian cave. All these modern

writers confirm the general accuracy of the descriptions of the cave given by Strabo and Mela. Mr. Hogarth indeed speaks of exaggeration in Mela's account, but this is not admitted by Mr. A. Wilhelm. As to the ruins of the city of Corycus on the coast, distant about three miles from the cave, see Fr. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), pp. 232-238; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp. 67-70.

<sup>2</sup> The suggestion is Mr. A. B. Cook's. See his article, "The European Sky-god," *Classical Review*, xvii. (1903) p. 418, note 2.



However, it is certain that Zeus was worshipped at the Corycian cave ; for about half a mile from it, on the summit of a hill, are the ruins of a larger temple, which an inscription proves to have been dedicated to Corycian Zeus.<sup>1</sup>

But Zeus, or whatever native deity masqueraded under his name, did not reign alone in the deep dell. A more dreadful being haunted a still more awful abyss which opens in the ground only a hundred yards to the east of the great Corycian chasm. It is a circular cauldron, about a quarter of a mile in circumference, resembling the Corycian chasm in its general character, but smaller, deeper, and far more terrific in appearance. Its sides overhang and stalactites droop from them. There is no way down into it. The only mode of reaching the bottom, which is covered with vegetation, would be to be lowered at the end of a long rope. The nomads call this chasm Purgatory, to distinguish it from the other which they name Paradise. They say that there is a subterranean passage between the two, and that the smoke of a fire kindled in the Corycian cave may be seen curling out of the other. The one ancient writer who expressly mentions this second and more grisly cavern is Mela, who says that it was the lair of the giant Typhon, and that no animal let down into it could live.<sup>2</sup> Aeschylus puts into the mouth of Prometheus an account of "the earth-born Typhon, dweller in Sicilian caves, dread monster, hundred-headed," who in his pride rose up against the gods, hissing destruction from his dreadful jaws, while from his Gorgon eyes the lightning flashed. But him a flaming levin bolt, crashing from heaven, smote to the very heart, and now he lies, shrivelled and scorched, under the weight of Etna by the narrow sea. Yet one day he will belch a fiery hail, a boiling angry flood, rivers of flame, to devastate the fat Sicilian fields.<sup>3</sup> This poetical description of the monster,

The cave  
of the  
giant  
Typhon.

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Bent, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) p. 448 ; *id.*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1890) pp. 214-216. For the inscription containing the names of the priests see R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp.

71-79 ; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 878 ; above, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Mela, i. 76, ed. G. Parthey. The cave of Typhon is described by J. T. Bent, *ll. cc.*

<sup>3</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Vincitus*, 351-372.



confirmed by a similar passage of Pindar,<sup>1</sup> clearly proves that Typhon was conceived as a personification of those active volcanoes which spout fire and smoke to heaven as if they would assail the celestial gods. The Corycian caverns are not volcanic, but the ancients apparently regarded them as such, else they would hardly have made them the den of Typhon.

Battle of  
Zeus and  
Typhon.

According to one legend Typhon was a monster, half man and half brute, begotten in Cilicia by Tartarus upon the goddess Earth. The upper part of him was human, but from the loins downward he was an enormous snake. In the battle of the gods and giants, which was fought out in Egypt, Typhon hugged Zeus in his snaky coils, wrested from him his crooked sword, and with the blade cut the sinews of the god's hands and feet. Then taking him on his back he conveyed the mutilated deity across the sea to Cilicia, and deposited him in the Corycian cave. Here, too, he hid the severed sinews, wrapt in a bear's skin. But Hermes and Aegipan contrived to steal the missing thews and restore them to their divine owner. Thus made whole and strong again, Zeus pelted his beaten adversary with thunderbolts, drove him from place to place, and at last overwhelmed him under Mount Etna. And the spots where the hissing bolts fell are still marked by jets of flame.<sup>2</sup>

Fossil  
bones of  
extinct  
animals  
give rise  
to stories  
of giants.

It is possible that the discovery of fossil bones of large extinct animals may have helped to localise the story of the giant at the Corycian cave. Such bones, as we have seen, are often found in limestone caverns, and the limestone gorges of Cilicia are in fact rich in fossils. The Arcadians laid the scene of the battle of the gods and the giants in the plain of Megalopolis, where many bones of mammoths have come to light, and where, moreover, flames have been seen to burst from the earth and even to burn for years.<sup>3</sup> These natural conditions would easily suggest a fable of giants who had fought the gods and had been slain by thunderbolts; the smouldering earth or jets of flame would be

<sup>1</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* i. 30 *sqq.*, who speaks of the giant as "bred in the many-named Cilician cave."

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, i. 6. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, viii. 29. 1, with my

notes. Pausanias mentions (viii. 32. 5) bones of superhuman size which were preserved at Megalopolis, and which popular superstition identified as the bones of the giant Hopladamus.



regarded as the spots where the divine lightnings had struck the ground. Hence the Arcadians sacrificed to thunder and lightning.<sup>1</sup> In Sicily, too, great quantities of bones of mammoths, elephants, hippopotamuses, and other animals long extinct in the island have been found, and have been appealed to with confidence by patriotic Sicilians as conclusive evidence of the gigantic stature of their ancestors or predecessors.<sup>2</sup> These remains of huge unwieldy creatures which once trampled through the jungle or splashed in the rivers of Sicily may have contributed with the fires of Etna to build up the story of giants imprisoned under the volcano and vomiting smoke and flame from its crater. "Tales of giants and monsters, which stand in direct contact with the finding of great fossil bones, are scattered broadcast over the mythology of the world. Huge bones, found at Punto Santa Elena, in the north of Guayaquil, have served as a foundation for the story of a colony of giants who dwelt there. The whole area of the Pampas is a great sepulchre of enormous extinct animals; no wonder that one great plain should be called the 'Field of the giants,' and that such names as 'the hill of the giant,' 'the stream of the animal,' should be guides to the geologist in his search for fossil bones."<sup>3</sup>

About five miles to the north-east of the Corycian caverns, but divided from them by many deep gorges and impassable rocks, is another and very similar chasm. It may be reached in about an hour and a quarter from the sea by an ancient paved road, which ascends at first very steeply and then gently through bush-clad and wooded hills. Thus you come to a stretch of level ground covered with the well-preserved ruins of an ancient town. Remains of fortresses constructed of polygonal masonry, stately churches, and many houses, together with numerous tombs and reliefs, finely chiselled in the calcareous limestone of the neighbourhood, bear witness to the extent and importance of the place. Yet it is mentioned by no ancient writer. Inscriptions prove that its name was Kanyteldeis or Kanytelideis, which still

Chasm of  
Olbian  
Zeus at  
Kanytel-  
ideis.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, viii. 29. 1.

<sup>2</sup> A. Holm, *Geschichte Siciliens im Alterthum*, i. pp. 57, 356.

<sup>3</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*,<sup>3</sup> p. 222, who adduces much more evidence of the same sort.



survives in the modern form of Kanidiwan. The great chasm opens in the very heart of the city. So crowded are the ruins that you do not perceive the abyss till you are within a few yards of it. It is almost a complete circle, about a quarter of a mile wide, three-quarters of a mile in circumference, and uniformly two hundred feet or more in depth. The cliffs go sheer down and remind the traveller of the great quarries at Syracuse. But like the Corycian caves, the larger of which it closely resembles, the huge fissure is natural; and its bottom, like theirs, is overgrown with trees and vegetation. Two ways led down into it in antiquity, both cut through the rock. One of them was a tunnel, which is now obstructed; the other is still open. Remains of columns and hewn stones in the bottom of the chasm seem to show that a temple once stood there. But there is no cave at the foot of the cliffs, and no stream flows in the deep hollow or can be heard to rumble underground. A ruined tower of polygonal masonry, which stands on the southern edge of the chasm, bears a Greek inscription stating that it was dedicated to Olbian Zeus by the priest Teucer, son of Tarkuaris. The letters are beautifully cut in the style of the third century before Christ. We may infer that at the time of the dedication the town belonged to the priestly kings of Olba, and that the great chasm was sacred to Olbian Zeus.<sup>1</sup>

The deity of these great chasms was called Zeus by the Greeks, but he was probably a god of fertility embodied in vegetation and water.

What, then, was the character of the god who was worshipped under the name of Zeus at these two great natural chasms? The depth of the fissures, opening suddenly and as it were without warning in the midst of a plateau, was well fitted to impress and awe the spectator; and the sight of the rank evergreen vegetation at their bottom, fed by rivulets or underground water, must have presented a striking contrast to the grey, barren, rocky wilderness of the surrounding tableland. Such a spot must have seemed to simple folk a paradise, a garden of

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 448 sq.; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) pp. 208-210; R.

Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 51-61.



God, the abode of higher powers who caused the wilderness to blossom, if not with roses, at least with myrtles and pomegranates for man, and with grass and underwood for his flocks. So to the Semite, as we saw, the Baal of the land is he who fertilises it by subterranean water rather than by rain from the sky, and who therefore dwells in the depths of earth rather than in the height of heaven.<sup>1</sup> In rainless countries the sky-god is deprived of one of the principal functions which he discharges in cool cloudy climates like that of Europe. He has, in fact, little or nothing to do with the water-supply, and has therefore small excuse for levying a water-rate on his worshippers. Not, indeed, that Cilicia is rainless; but in countries bordering on the Mediterranean the drought is almost unbroken through the long months of summer. Vegetation then withers: the face of nature is scorched and brown: most of the rivers dry up; and only their white stony beds, hot to the foot and dazzling to the eye, remain to tell where they flowed. It is at such seasons that a green hollow, a shady rock, a murmuring stream, are welcomed by the wanderer in the South with a joy and wonder which the untravelled Northerner can hardly imagine. Never do the broad slow rivers of England, with their winding reaches, their grassy banks, their grey willows mirrored with the soft English sky in the placid stream, appear so beautiful as when the traveller views them for the first time after leaving behind him the aridity, the heat, the blinding glare of the white southern landscape, set in seas and skies of caerulean blue.

We may take it, then, as probable that the god of the Corycian and Olbian caverns was worshipped as a source of fertility. In antiquity, when the river, which now roars underground, still burst from the rock in the Corycian cave, the scene must have resembled Ibreez, where the god of the corn and the vine was adored at the source of the stream; and we may compare the vale of Adonis in the Lebanon, where the divinity who gave his name to the river was revered at its foaming cascades. The three landscapes had in common the elements of luxuriant vegetation and

Analogy  
of the  
Corycian  
and Olbian  
caverns to  
Ibreez and  
the vale  
of the  
Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 13 *sq.*



copious streams leaping full-born from the rock. We shall hardly err in supposing that these features shaped the conception of the deities who were supposed to haunt the favoured spots. At the Corycian cave the existence of a second chasm, of a frowning and awful aspect, might well suggest the presence of an evil being who lurked in it and sought to undo the beneficent work of the good god. Thus we should have a fable of a conflict between the two, a battle of Zeus and Typhon.

Two gods at Olba, perhaps a father and a son corresponding to the Baal and Sandan of Tarsus.

On the whole we conclude that the Olbian Zeus, worshipped at one of these great limestone chasms, and clearly identical in nature with the Corycian Zeus, was also identical with the Baal of Tarsus, the god of the corn and the vine, who in his turn can hardly be separated from the god of Ibreez. If my conjecture is right the native name of the Olbian Zeus was Tark or Trok, and the priestly Teucers of Olba represented him in their own persons. On that hypothesis the Olbian priests who bore the name of Ajax embodied another native deity of unknown name, perhaps the father or the son of Tark. A comparison of the coin-types of Tarsus with the Hittite monuments of Ibreez and Boghaz-Keui led us to the conclusion that the people of Tarsus worshipped at least two distinct gods, a father and a son, the father god being known to the Semites as Baal and to the Greeks as Zeus, while the son was called Sandan by the natives, but Hercules by the Greeks. We may surmise that at Olba the names of Teucer and Ajax designated two gods who corresponded in type to the two gods of Tarsus; and if the lesser figure at Ibreez, who appears in an attitude of adoration before the deity of the corn and the vine, could be interpreted as the divine Son in presence of the divine Father, we should have in all three places the same pair of deities, represented probably in the flesh by successive generations of priestly kings. But the evidence is far too slender to justify us in advancing this hypothesis as anything more than a bare conjecture.



§ 8. *Cilician Goddesses*

So far, the Cilician deities discussed have been males ; we have as yet found no trace of the great Mother Goddess who plays so important a part in the religion of Cappadocia and Phrygia, beyond the great dividing range of the Taurus. Yet we may suspect that she was not unknown in Cilicia, though her worship certainly seems to have been far less prominent there than in the centre of Asia Minor. The difference may perhaps be interpreted as evidence that mother-right and hence the predominance of Mother Goddesses survived in the bleak highlands of the interior, long after a genial climate and teeming soil had fostered the growth of a higher civilisation, and with it the advance from female to male kinship, in the rich lowlands of Cilicia. Be that as it may, Cilician goddesses with or without a male partner are known to have been revered in various parts of the country.

Thus at Tarsus itself the goddess 'Atheh was worshipped along with Baal ; their effigies are engraved on the same coins of the city. She is represented wearing a veil and seated upon a lion, with her name in Aramaic letters engraved beside her.<sup>1</sup> Hence it would seem that at Tarsus, as at Boghaz-Keui, the Father God mated with a lion-goddess like the Phrygian Cybele or the Syrian Atargatis. Now the name Atargatis is a Greek rendering of the Aramaic 'Athar-'atheh, a compound word which includes the name of the goddess of Tarsus.<sup>2</sup> Thus in name as well as in attributes the female

Goddesses less prominent than gods in Cilician religion.

The goddess 'Atheh, partner of Baal at Tarsus, seems to have been a form of Atargatis.

<sup>1</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 616.

<sup>2</sup> The name 'Athar-'atheh occurs in a Palmyrene inscription. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 112, pp. 267-270. In analysing Atargatis into 'Athar-'atheh ('Atar-'ata) I follow E. Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. § 205, p. 247), F. Baethgen (*Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 68-75), G. A. Cooke (*l.c.*), C. P. Tiele (*Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 245), F. Hommel (*Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orient*, pp. 43 sq.), and Father Lagrange

(*Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> p. 130). In the great temple at Hierapolis-Bambyce a mysterious golden image stood between the images of Atargatis and her male partner. It resembled neither of them, yet combined the attributes of other gods. Some interpreted it as Dionysus, others as Deucalion, and others as Semiramis ; for a golden dove, traditionally associated with Semiramis, was perched on the head of the figure. The Syrians called the image by a name which Lucian translates "sign" (σημῆον). See Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 33. It has



The lion-  
goddess  
and the  
bull-god.

partner of the Baal of Tarsus appears to correspond to Atargatis, the Syrian Mother Goddess whose image, seated on a lion or lions, was worshipped with great pomp and splendour at Hierapolis-Bambyce near the Euphrates.<sup>1</sup> May we go a step farther and find a correspondence between the Baal of Tarsus and the husband-god of Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyce? That husband-god, like the Baal of Tarsus, was identified by the Greeks with Zeus, and Lucian tells us that the resemblance of his image to the images of Zeus was in all respects unmistakable. But his image, unlike those of Zeus, was seated upon bulls.<sup>2</sup> In point of fact he was probably Hadad, the chief male god of the Syrians, who is supposed to have been a god of thunder and fertility; for his image at Heliopolis grasped in his left hand a thunderbolt and ears of corn,<sup>3</sup> and at Zenjirli he is represented with a bearded human head and horns, the emblem of strength and fertility.<sup>4</sup> Now we have seen that the god of Ibreez, whose attributes tally with those of the Baal of Tarsus, wears a cap adorned with bull's horns;<sup>5</sup> that the Father God at Boghaz-Keui, meeting the Mother Goddess on her lioness, is attended by an animal which according to the usual interpretation is a bull;<sup>6</sup> and that the bull itself was worshipped, apparently as an emblem of fertility, at Euyuk near Boghaz-Keui.<sup>7</sup> Thus at Tarsus and Boghaz-Keui, as at Hierapolis-Bambyce, the Father God and the Mother Goddess would seem to have had as their sacred

been plausibly conjectured by F. Baethgen that the name which Lucian translates "sign" was really 'Atheh (אתה), which could easily be confused with the Syriac word for "sign" (אחא). See F. Baethgen, *op. cit.* p. 73. The modern writers cited in this note have interpreted this Syrian 'Atheh as a male god, the lover of Atargatis, and identical in name and character with the Phrygian Attis. They may be right; but none of them seems to have noticed that the same name 'Atheh (אתה) is applied to a goddess at Tarsus.

<sup>1</sup> As to the image, see above, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 12 and 17-19.

<sup>4</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 164. On Hadad as the Syrian thunder-god see F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 66-68; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 248 sq.; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 92 sq. That Hadad was the consort of Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyce is the opinion of P. Jensen (*Hittiter und Armenier*, p. 171), who also indicates his character as a god both of thunder and of fertility (*ib.* p. 167).

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 44, 46.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 54.



animals or emblems the bull and the lion respectively. In later times, under Greek influence, the goddess was apparently exchanged for, or converted into, the Fortune of the City, who appears on coins of Tarsus as a seated woman with veiled and turreted head, grasping ears of corn and a poppy in her hand. Her lion is gone, but a trace of him remains on a coin which exhibits the throne of the goddess adorned with a lion's leg.<sup>1</sup> In later times the old goddess became the Fortune of the City. In general it would seem that the goddess Fortune, who figures commonly as the guardian of cities in the Greek East, especially in Syria, was nothing but a disguised form of Gad, the Semitic god of fortune or luck, who, though the exigencies of grammar required him to be masculine, is supposed to have been often merely a special aspect of the great goddess Astarte or Atargatis conceived as the patroness and protector of towns.<sup>2</sup> In Oriental religion such permutations or combinations need not surprise us. To the gods all things are possible. In Cyprus the goddess of love wore a beard,<sup>3</sup> and Alexander the Great sometimes disported himself in the costume of Artemis, while at other times he ransacked the divine wardrobe to figure in the garb of Hercules, of Hermes, and of Ammon.<sup>4</sup> The change of the goddess 'Atheh of Tarsus into Gad or Fortune would be easy if we suppose that she was known as Gad-'Atheh, "Luck of 'Atheh," which occurs as a Semitic personal name.<sup>5</sup> In like manner the goddess of Fortune at Olba, who had her small temple beside the great temple of Zeus,<sup>6</sup> may have been originally the consort of the native god Tark or Tarku.

Another town in Cilicia where an Oriental god and goddess appear to have been worshipped together was Mallus. The city was built on a height in the great Cilician plain near the mouth of the river Pyramus.<sup>7</sup> Its coins exhibit two winged deities, a male and a female, in a kneeling or running attitude. On some of the coins the male deity is

The  
Phoenician  
god El and  
his wife at  
Mallus in  
Cilicia.

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. 181, 182, 185, 188, 190, 228.

<sup>2</sup> E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 246 sq.; F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 76 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* iii. 8. 2;

Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 632.

<sup>4</sup> Ehippus, cited by Athenaeus, xii. 53, p. 537.

<sup>5</sup> F. Baethgen, *op. cit.* p. 77; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 269.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 16, p. 675.



represented, like Janus, with two heads facing opposite ways, and with two pairs of wings, while beneath him is the forepart of a bull with a human head. The obverse of the coins which bear the female deity display a conical stone, sometimes flanked by two bunches of grapes.<sup>1</sup> This conical stone, like those of other Asiatic cities,<sup>2</sup> was probably the emblem of a Mother Goddess, and the bunches of grapes indicate her fertilising powers. The god with the two heads and four wings can hardly be any other than the Phoenician El, whom the Greeks called Cronus; for El was characterised by four eyes, two in front and two behind, and by three pairs of wings.<sup>3</sup> A discrepancy in the number of wings can hardly be deemed fatal to the identification. The god may easily have moulted some superfluous feathers on the road from Phoenicia to Mallus. On later coins of Mallus these quaint Oriental deities disappear, and are replaced by corresponding Greek deities, particularly by a head of Cronus on one side and a figure of Demeter, grasping ears of corn, on the other.<sup>4</sup> The change doubtless sprang from a wish to assimilate the ancient native divinities to the new and fashionable divinities of the Greek pantheon. If Cronus and Demeter, the harvest god and goddess, were chosen to supplant El and his female consort, the ground of the choice must certainly have been a supposed resemblance between the two pairs of deities. We may assume, therefore, that the discarded couple, El and his wife, had also been worshipped by the husbandman as sources of fertility, the givers of corn and wine. One of these later coins of Mallus exhibits Dionysus sitting on a vine laden with ripe clusters, while on the obverse is seen a male

<sup>1</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, pp. 605 sq.; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. cxvii. sqq., 95-98, plates xv. xvi. xl. 9; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 536 sq., pl. lix. 11-14. The male and female figures appear on separate coins. The attribution to Mallus of the coins with the female figure and conical stone has been questioned by Messrs. J. P. Six and G. F. Hill. I follow the view of Messrs. F. Imhoof-Blumer and

B. V. Head.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Philo of Byblus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 569. El is figured with three pairs of wings on coins of Byblus. See G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 174; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Imhoof-Blumer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1572; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. cxxii. 99, pl. xvii. 2.



figure guiding a yoke of oxen as if in the act of ploughing.<sup>1</sup> These types of the vine-god and the ploughman probably represent another attempt to adapt the native religion to changed conditions, to pour the old Asiatic wine into new Greek bottles. The barbarous monster with the multiplicity of heads and wings has been reduced to a perfectly human Dionysus. The sacred but deplorable old conical stone no longer flaunts proudly on the coins; it has retired to a decent obscurity in favour of a natural and graceful vine. It is thus that a truly progressive theology keeps pace with the march of intellect. But if these things were done by the apostles of culture at Mallus, we cannot suppose that the clergy of Tarsus, the capital, lagged behind their provincial brethren in their efforts to place the ancient faith upon a sound modern basis. The fruit of their labours seems to have been the more or less nominal substitution of Zeus, Fortune, and Hercules for Baal, 'Atheh, and Sandan.<sup>2</sup>

We may suspect that in like manner the Sarpedonian Artemis, who had a sanctuary in south-eastern Cilicia, near the Syrian border, was really a native goddess parading in borrowed plumes. She gave oracular responses by the mouth of inspired men, or more probably of women, who in their moments of divine ecstasy were probably deemed incarnations of her divinity.<sup>3</sup> Another even more transparently Asiatic goddess was Perasia, or Artemis Perasia, who was worshipped at Hieropolis - Castabala in eastern Cilicia. The extensive ruins of the ancient city, now known as Bodroum, cover the slope of a hill about three-quarters of

Sarpe-  
donian  
Artemis.

The god-  
dess  
Perasia at  
Hieropolis-  
Castabala.

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pp. cxxi. sq., 98, pl. xvii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Another native Cilician deity who masqueraded in Greek dress was probably the Olybrian Zeus of Anazarba or Anazarbus, but of his true nature and worship we know nothing. See W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 577; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. "Αδανα (where the MS. reading "Ολυμπος was wrongly changed by Salmasius into "Ολυμπος).

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 19, p. 676. The expression of Strabo leaves it doubtful whether the ministers of the goddess

were men or women. There was a headland called Sarpedon near the mouth of the Calycadnus River in western Cilicia (Strabo, xiii. 4. 6, p. 627, xiv. 5. 4, p. 670), where Sarpedon or Sarpedonian Apollo had a temple and an oracle. The temple was hewn in the rock, and contained an image of the god. See R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896), No. vi. pp. 100, 107. Probably this Sarpedonian Apollo was a native deity akin to Sarpedonian Artemis.



a mile to the north of the river Pyramus. Above them towers the acropolis, built on the summit of dark grey precipices, and divided from the neighbouring mountain by a deep cutting in the rock. A mediaeval castle, built of hewn blocks of reddish-yellow limestone, has replaced the ancient citadel. The city possessed a large theatre, and was traversed by two handsome colonnades, of which some columns are still standing among the ruins. A thick growth of brushwood and grass now covers most of the site, and the place is wild and solitary. Only the wandering herdsmen encamp near the deserted city in winter and spring. The neighbourhood is treeless; yet in May magnificent fields of wheat and barley gladden the eye, and in the valleys the clover grows as high as the horses' knees.<sup>1</sup> The ambiguous nature of the goddess who presided over this City of the Sanctuary (*Hieropolis*)<sup>2</sup> was confessed by a puzzled worshipper, a physician named Lucius Minius Claudianus, who confided his doubts to the deity herself in some very indifferent Greek verses. He wisely left it to the goddess to say whether she was Artemis, or the Moon, or Hecate, or Aphrodite, or Demeter.<sup>3</sup> All that we know about her is that her true name was Perasia, and that she was in the enjoyment of certain revenues.<sup>4</sup> Further, we may reasonably conjecture that at

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 128-134; J. T. Bent, "Recent Discoveries in Eastern Cilicia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xi. (1890), pp. 234 sq.; E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Eastern Cilicia," *ibid.* pp. 243 sqq.; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp. 25 sqq. The site of Hieropolis-Castabala was first identified by J. T. Bent by means of inscriptions. As to the coins of the city, see Fr. Imhoof-Blumer, "Zur Münzkunde Kilikiens," *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, x. (1883), pp. 267-290; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. c.-cii. 82-84, pl. xiv. 1-6; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 534 sq.

<sup>2</sup> On the difference between Hieropolis and Hierapolis see W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, pp. 84 sq. According to him,

the cities designated by such names grew up gradually round a sanctuary; where Greek influence prevailed the city in time eclipsed the sanctuary and became known as Hierapolis, or the Sacred City, but where the native element retained its predominance the city continued to be known as Hieropolis, or the City of the Sanctuary.

<sup>3</sup> E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Eastern Cilicia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xi. (1890), pp. 251-253; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 26. These writers differ somewhat in their reading and restoration of the verses, which are engraved on a limestone basis among the ruins. I follow the version of Messrs. Heberdey and Wilhelm.

<sup>4</sup> J. T. Bent and E. L. Hicks, *op. cit.* pp. 235, 246 sq.; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 27.



the Cilician Castabala she was worshipped with rites like those which were held in honour of her namesake Artemis Perasia at another city of the same name, Castabala in Cappadocia. There, as we saw, the priestesses of the goddess walked over fire with bare feet unscathed.<sup>1</sup> Probably the same impressive ceremony was performed before a crowd of worshippers in the Cilician Castabala also. Whatever the exact meaning of the rite may have been, the goddess was in all probability one of those Asiatic Mother Goddesses to whom the Greeks often applied the name of Artemis;<sup>2</sup> and grounds have been shown for thinking that the walk through the fire was a mitigation of an older custom of burning human victims to death.<sup>3</sup> The immunity enjoyed by the priestess in the furnace was attributed to her inspiration by the deity. In discussing the nature of inspiration or possession by a deity, the Syrian philosopher Jamblichus notes as one of its symptoms a total insensibility to pain. Many inspired persons, he tells us, "are not burned by fire, the fire not taking hold of them by reason of the divine inspiration; and many, though they are burned, perceive it not, because at the time they do not live an animal life. They pierce themselves with skewers and feel nothing. They gash their backs with hatchets, they slash their arms with daggers, and know not what they do, because their acts are not those of mere men. For impassable places become passable to those who are filled with the spirit. They rush into fire, they pass through fire, they cross rivers, like the priestess at Castabala. These things prove that under the influence of inspiration men are beside themselves, that their senses, their will, their life are those neither

The fire-walk in the worship of Perasia.

Insensibility to pain regarded as a mark of inspiration.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 2. 7, p. 537. See above, p. 38. The Cilician Castabala, the situation of which is identified by inscriptions, is not mentioned by Strabo. It is very unlikely that, with his intimate knowledge of Asia Minor, he should have erred so far as to place the city in Cappadocia, to the north of the Taurus mountains, instead of in Cilicia, to the south of them. It is more probable that there were two cities of the same name, and that Strabo has omitted to mention one of them. Similarly, there were two cities called Comana, one in

Cappadocia and one in Pontus; at both places the same goddess was worshipped with similar rites. See Strabo, xii. 2. 3, p. 535, xii. 3. 32, p. 557. The situation of the various Castabalas mentioned by ancient writers is discussed by F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, x. (1883), pp. 285-288.

<sup>2</sup> See my article "Artemis and Hippolytus," *Fortnightly Review*, December 1904, p. 993.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 38.



of man nor of beast, but that they lead another and a diviner life instead, whereby they are inspired and wholly possessed."<sup>1</sup> Thus in traversing the fiery furnace the priestesses of Perasia were believed to be beside themselves, to be filled with the goddess, to be in a real sense incarnations of her divinity.<sup>2</sup>

### § 9. *The Burning of Cilician Gods*

The divine triad, Baal, 'Atheh, and Sandan, at Tarsus may have been personated by priests and priestesses.

On the whole, then, we seem to be justified in concluding that under a thin veneer of Greek humanity the barbarous native gods of Cilicia continued long to survive, and that among them the great Asiatic goddess retained a place, though not the prominent place which she held in the highlands of the interior down at least to the beginning of our era. The principle that the inspired priest or priestess represents the deity in person appears, if I am right, to have been recognised at Castabala and at Olba, as well as at the sanctuary of Sarpedonian Artemis. There can be no intrinsic improbability, therefore, in the view that at Tarsus also the divine triad of Baal, 'Atheh, and Sandan may have been personated by priests and priestesses, who, on the analogy of Olba and of the great sanctuaries in the interior of Asia Minor, would originally be at the same time kings and queens, princes and princesses. Further, the burning of Sandan in effigy at Tarsus would, on this hypothesis, answer to the walk of the priestess of Perasia through the furnace at Castabala. Both were, if I am right, mitigations of a custom of putting the priestly king or queen, or another member of the royal family, to death by fire.

<sup>1</sup> Jamblichus, *De mysteriis*, iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Another Cilician goddess was Athena of Magarsus, to whom Alexander the Great sacrificed before the battle of Issus. See Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 5. 9; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. *Μάγαρος*; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 444. The name of the city seems to be Oriental, perhaps derived from the Semitic word for "cave" (מְקָרָה). As to the importance of caves in Semitic religion, see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 197 sqq. The site of Magarsus appears to be at

Karatash, a hill rising from the sea at the southern extremity of the Cilician plain, about forty-five miles due south of Adana. The walls of the city, built of great limestone blocks, are standing to a height of several courses, and an inscription which mentions the priests of Magarsian Athena has been found on the spot. See R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph. - histor. Classe*, xlv. (1896) No. vi. pp. 6-10.



## CHAPTER VI

### SARDANAPALUS AND HERCULES

#### § 1. *The Burning of Sardanapalus*

THE theory that kings or princes were formerly burned to death at Tarsus in the character of gods is singularly confirmed by another and wholly independent line of argument. For, according to one account, the city of Tarsus was founded not by Sandan but by Sardanapalus, the famous Assyrian monarch whose death on a great pyre was one of the most famous incidents in Oriental legend. Near the sea, within a day's march of Tarsus, might be seen in antiquity the ruins of a great ancient city named Anchiale, and outside its walls stood a monument called the monument of Sardanapalus, on which was carved in stone the figure of the monarch. He was represented snapping the fingers of his right hand, and the gesture was explained by an accompanying inscription, engraved in Assyrian characters, to the following effect:—"Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, built Anchiale and Tarsus in one day. Eat, drink, and play, for everything else is not worth that," by which was implied that all other human affairs were not worth a snap of the fingers.<sup>1</sup> The gesture may have been misin-

Tarsus said to have been founded by the Assyrian king Sardanapalus, who burned himself on a pyre.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 9, pp. 671 *sq.*; Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 5; Athenaeus, xii. 39, p. 530 A, B. Compare Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* Ἀγχιάλη; Syncellus, *Chronographia*, vol. i. p. 312, ed. G. Dindorf. The site of Anchiale has not yet been discovered. At Tarsus itself the ruins of a vast quadrangular structure have sometimes been identified

with the monument of Sardanapalus. See E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 37-39; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 536 *sqq.* But Mr. D. G. Hogarth tells me that the ruins in question seem to be the concrete foundations of a Roman temple.



Deaths of  
Babylonian  
and  
Assyrian  
kings on  
the pyre.

terpreted and the inscription mistranslated,<sup>1</sup> but there is no reason to doubt the existence of such a monument, though we may conjecture that it was of Hittite rather than Assyrian origin; for, not to speak of the traces of Hittite art and religion which we have found at Tarsus, a group of Hittite monuments has been discovered at Marash, in the upper valley of the Pyramus.<sup>2</sup> The Assyrians may have ruled over Cilicia for a time, but Hittite influence was probably much deeper and more lasting.<sup>3</sup> The story that Tarsus was founded by Sardanapalus may well be apocryphal,<sup>4</sup> but there must have been some reason for his association with the city. On the present hypothesis that reason is to be found in the traditional manner of his death. To avoid falling into the hands of the rebels, who laid siege to Nineveh, he built a huge pyre in his palace, heaped it up with gold and silver and purple raiment, and then burnt himself, his wife, his concubines, and his eunuchs in the fire.<sup>5</sup> The story is false of the historical Sardanapalus, that is, of the great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, but it is true of his brother Shamashshumukin. Being appointed king of Babylon by Ashurbanipal, he revolted against his suzerain and benefactor, and was besieged by him in his capital. The siege was long and the resistance desperate, for the Babylonians knew that they had no mercy to expect from the ruthless Assyrians. But they were decimated by famine and pestilence, and when the city could hold out no more, King Shamashshumukin, determined not to fall alive into the hands of his offended brother, shut himself up in his palace, and there burned himself to death, along with his

<sup>1</sup> See Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 542 sq. They think that the figure probably represented the king in a common attitude of adoration, his right arm raised and his thumb resting on his forefinger.

<sup>2</sup> L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hettitarum*, pp. 17-19, plates xxi-xxv.; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 492, 494 sq., 528-530, 547.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. W. Max Müller is of opinion that the Hittite civilisation and the

Hittite system of writing were developed in Cilicia rather than in Cappadocia (*Asien und Europa*, p. 350).

<sup>4</sup> According to Berosus and Abydenus it was not Sardanapalus (Ashurbanipal) but Sennacherib who built or rebuilt Tarsus after the fashion of Babylon, causing the river Cydnus to flow through the midst of the city. See *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 504, iv. 282; C. P. Tiele, *Babylonisch-assyrische Geschichte*, pp. 297 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus, ii. 27; Athenaeus, xii. 38, p. 529; Justin, i. 3.



wives, his children, his slaves, and his treasures, at the very moment when the conquerors were breaking in the gates.<sup>1</sup> Not many years afterwards the same tragedy was repeated at Nineveh itself by Saracus or Sinsharishkun, the last king of Assyria. Besieged by the rebel Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, and by Cyaxares, king of the Medes, he burned himself in his palace. That was the end of Nineveh and of the Assyrian empire.<sup>2</sup> Thus Greek history preserved the memory of the catastrophe, but transferred it from the real victims to the far more famous Ashurbanipal, whose figure in after ages loomed vast and dim against the setting sun of Assyrian glory.

## § 2. The Burning of Croesus

Another Oriental monarch who prepared at least to die in the flames was Croesus, king of Lydia. Herodotus tells how the Persians under Cyrus captured Sardes, the Lydian capital, and took Croesus alive, and how Cyrus caused a great pyre to be erected, on which he placed the captive monarch in fetters, and with him twice seven Lydian youths. Fire was then applied to the pile, but at the last moment Cyrus relented, a sudden shower extinguished the flames, and Croesus was spared.<sup>3</sup> But it is most improbable that the Persians, with their profound reverence for the sanctity of fire, should have thought of defiling the sacred element with the worst of all pollutions, the contact of dead bodies.<sup>4</sup> Such an act would have seemed to them sacrilege of the deepest dye. For to them fire was the earthly form of the heavenly light, the eternal, the infinite, the divine; death, on the other hand, was in their opinion the main source of corruption and uncleanness. Hence they took the most

Story that  
Cyrus  
intended  
to burn  
Croesus  
alive.

It is  
unlikely  
that the  
Persians  
would thus  
have  
polluted  
the sacred  
element  
of fire.

<sup>1</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 422 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Abydenus, in *Fragment. Histor. Graec.* ed. C. Müller, iv. 282; Syncellus, *Chronographia*, i. p. 396, ed. G. Dindorf; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 576 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 482-485. C. P. Tiele thought that the story of the death of Saracus might be a popular but mistaken duplicate of the death

of Shamashshumukin (*Babylonisch-assyrische Geschichte*, pp. 410 sq.). Zimri, king of Israel, also burned himself in his palace to escape falling into the hands of his enemies (1 Kings xvi. 18).

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 86 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), p. 274.



stringent precautions to guard the purity of fire from the defilement of death.<sup>1</sup> If a man or a dog died in a house where the holy fire burned, the fire had to be removed from the house and kept away for nine nights in winter or a month in summer before it might be brought back; and if any man broke the rule by bringing back the fire within the appointed time, he might be punished with two hundred stripes.<sup>2</sup> As for burning a corpse in the fire, it was the most heinous of all sins, an invention of Ahriman, the devil; there was no atonement for it, and it was punished with death.<sup>3</sup> Nor did the law remain a dead letter. Down to the beginning of our era the death penalty was inflicted on all who threw a corpse or cow-dung on the fire, nay, even on such as blew on the fire with their breath.<sup>4</sup> It is hard, therefore, to believe that a Persian king should have commanded his subjects to perpetrate a deed which he and they viewed with horror as the most flagitious sacrilege conceivable.

The older and truer tradition was that in the extremity of his fortunes Croesus attempted to burn himself.

Another and in some respects truer version of the story of Croesus and Cyrus has been preserved by two older witnesses—namely, by the Greek poet Bacchylides, who was born some forty years after the event,<sup>5</sup> and by a Greek artist who painted the scene on a red-figured vase about, or soon after, the time of the poet's birth. Bacchylides tells us that when the Persians captured Sardes, Croesus, unable to brook the thought of slavery, caused a pyre to be erected in front of his courtyard, mounted it with his wife and daughters, and bade a page apply a light to the wood. A bright blaze shot up, but Zeus extinguished it with rain from heaven, and Apollo of the Golden Sword wafted the pious king and his daughters to the happy land beyond the North Wind.<sup>6</sup> In like manner the vase-painter clearly represents the burning of Croesus as a voluntary act, not as a punishment inflicted

<sup>1</sup> J. Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*, vol. i. pp. lxxxvi. lxxxviii.-xc.

<sup>2</sup> *Zend-Avesta, Vendidad*, Fargard, v. (*Sacred Books of the East*, iv. 60 sq.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. pp. xc. 9, 110 sq. (*Sacred Books of the East*, iv.).

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, xv. 3. 14, p. 732. Even gold, on account of its resemblance to

fire, might not be brought near a corpse (*id.* xv. 3. 18, p. 734).

<sup>5</sup> Sardes fell in the autumn of 546 B.C. (E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 604). Bacchylides was probably born between 512 and 505 B.C. (R. C. Jebb, *Bacchylides, the Poems and Fragments*, pp. 1 sq.).

<sup>6</sup> Bacchylides, iii. 24-62.



on him by the conqueror. He lets us see the king enthroned upon the pyre with a wreath of laurel on his head and a sceptre in one hand, while with the other he is pouring a libation. An attendant is in the act of applying to the pile two objects which have been variously interpreted as torches to kindle the wood or whisks to sprinkle holy water. The demeanour of the king is solemn and composed: he seems to be performing a religious rite, not suffering an ignominious death.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we may fairly conclude with some eminent modern scholars<sup>2</sup> that in the extremity of his fortunes Croesus prepared to meet death like a king or a god in the flames. It was thus that Hercules, from whom the old kings of Lydia claimed to be sprung,<sup>3</sup> ascended from earth to heaven: it was thus that Zimri, king of Israel, passed beyond the reach of his enemies: it was thus that Shamashshumukin, king of Babylon, escaped a brother's vengeance: it was thus that the last king of Assyria expired in the ruins of his capital; and it was thus that, sixty-six years after the capture of Sardes, the Carthaginian king Hamilcar sought to retrieve a lost battle by a hero's death.<sup>4</sup> Semiramis herself, the legendary queen of Assyria, is said to have burnt herself on a pyre out of grief at the death of a favourite horse.<sup>5</sup>

### § 3. Purification by Fire

These events and these traditions seem to prove that under certain circumstances Oriental monarchs deliberately chose to burn themselves to death. What were these circumstances? and what were the consequences of the

Death  
by fire  
regarded  
by the  
ancients as  
a kind of  
apotheosis.

<sup>1</sup> F. G. Welcker, *Alte Denkmäler*, iii. pl. xxxiii.; A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, ii. 796, fig. 860; A. H. Smith, "Illustrations to Bacchylides," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) pp. 267-269; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 618 sq. It is true that Cambyses caused the dead body of the Egyptian king Amasis to be dragged from the tomb, mangled, and burned; but the deed is expressly branded by the ancient historian as an outrage on Persian religion (Herodotus, iii. 16).

<sup>2</sup> Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 277 sq.; M. Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iv.<sup>5</sup> 330-332; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 604; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 618.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 7.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 38 sq., 88 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Hyginus, *Fab.* 243; Pliny, viii. 155.



Fire was supposed to purge away the mortal parts of men, leaving the immortal.

act? If the intention had merely been to escape from the hands of a conqueror, an easier mode of death would naturally have been chosen. There must have been a special reason for electing to die by fire. The legendary death of Hercules, the historical death of Hamilcar, and the picture of Croesus enthroned in state on the pyre and pouring a libation, all combine to indicate that to be burnt alive was regarded as a solemn sacrifice, nay, more than that, as an apotheosis which raised the victim to the rank of a god.<sup>1</sup> For it is to be remembered that Hamilcar as well as Hercules was worshipped after death. Fire, moreover, was regarded by the ancients as a purgative so powerful that properly applied it could burn away all that was mortal of a man, leaving only the divine and immortal spirit behind. Hence we read of goddesses who essayed to confer immortality on the infant sons of kings by burning them in the fire by night; but their beneficent purpose was always frustrated by the ignorant interposition of the mother or father, who peeping into the room saw the child in the flames and raised a cry of horror, thus disconcerting the goddess at her magic rites. This story is told of Isis in the house of the king of Byblus, of Demeter in the house of the king of Eleusis, and of Thetis in the house of her mortal husband Peleus.<sup>2</sup> In a slightly different way the

<sup>1</sup> This view was maintained long ago by Raoul-Rochette in regard to the deaths both of Sardanapalus and of Croesus. He supposed that "the Assyrian monarch, reduced to the last extremity, wished, by the mode of death which he chose, to give to his sacrifice the form of an apotheosis and to identify himself with the national god of his country by allowing himself to be consumed, like him, on a pyre. . . . Thus mythology and history would be combined in a legend in which the god and the monarch would finally be confused. There is nothing in this which is not conformable to the ideas and habits of Asiatic civilisation." See his memoir, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 247 sq., 271 sqq. The notion

of regeneration by fire was fully recognised by Raoul-Rochette (*op. cit.* pp. 30 sq.). It deserves to be noted that Croesus burned on a huge pyre the great and costly offerings which he dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. He thought, says Herodotus (i. 50), that in this way the god would get possession of the offerings.

<sup>2</sup> As to Isis see Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 16. As to Demeter see Homer, *Hymn to Demeter*, 231-262; Apollodorus, i. 5. 1; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 547-560. As to Thetis see Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 865-879; Apollodorus, iii. 13. 6. Most of these writers express clearly the thought that the fire consumed the mortal element, leaving the immortal. Thus Plutarch says, *περικαλεῖν τὰ θνητὰ τοῦ σώματος*. Apollodorus says (i. 5. 1), *εἰς πῦρ κατετίθει τὸ βρέφος καὶ περιήρει*



witch Medea professed to give back to the old their lost youth by boiling them with a hell-broth in her magic cauldron;<sup>1</sup> and when Pelops had been butchered and served up at a banquet of the gods by his cruel father Tantalus, the divine beings, touched with pity, plunged his mangled remains in a kettle, from which after decoction he emerged alive and young.<sup>2</sup> "Fire," says Jamblichus, "destroys the material part of sacrifices, it purifies all things that are brought near it, releasing them from the bonds of matter and, in virtue of the purity of its nature, making them meet for communion with the gods. So, too, it releases us from the bondage of corruption, it likens us to the gods, it makes us meet for their friendship, and it converts our material nature into an immaterial."<sup>3</sup> Thus we can understand why kings and commoners who claimed or aspired to divinity should choose death by the fire. It opened to them the gates of heaven. The quack Peregrinus, who ended his disreputable career in the flames at Olympia, gave out that after death he would be turned into a spirit who would guard men from the perils of the night; and, as Lucian remarked, no doubt there were plenty of fools to believe him.<sup>4</sup> According to one account, the Sicilian philosopher Empedocles, who set up for being a god in his lifetime, leaped into the crater of Etna in order to establish his claim to godhead.<sup>5</sup> There is nothing incredible in the tradition. The crack-brained philosopher, with his itch for notoriety, may well have done what Indian fakirs<sup>6</sup> and the brazen-faced mountebank Peregrinus did in antiquity, and what Russian peasants and Chinese Buddhists have done in

τὰς θνητὰς σάρκας αὐτοῦ, and again (iii. 13. 6), εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἐγκρυβοῦσα τῆς νυκτὸς ἔφθειρεν δ' ἦν αὐτῷ θνητὸν πατρώον. Apollonius Rhodius says,

ἡ μὲν γὰρ βροτέας αἰεὶ περὶ σάρκας ἔδαιεν  
νύκτα διὰ μέσσην φλογμῷ πυρός.

And Ovid has,

*Inque foco pueri corpus vivente favilla  
Obruit, humanum purget ut ignis onus.*

<sup>1</sup> She is said to have thus restored the youth of her husband Jason, her father-in-law Aeson, the nurses of Dionysus, and all their husbands (Euripides, *Medea*, Argum.; Scholiast

on Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1321; compare Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 879 sqq.); and she applied the same process with success to an old ram (Apollodorus, i. 9. 27; Pausanias, viii. 11. 2; Hyginus, *Fab.* 24).

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, *Olymp.* i. 40 sqq., with the Scholiast; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 152.

<sup>3</sup> Jamblichus, *De mysteriis*, v. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*, 27 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Diogenes Laertius, viii. 2. 69 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*, 25; Strabo, xv. 1. 64 and 68, pp. 715, 717; Arrian, *Anabasis*. vii. 3.



modern times.<sup>1</sup> There is no extremity to which fanaticism or vanity, or a mixture of the two, will not impel its victims.

#### § 4. *The Divinity of Lydian Kings*

The Lydian kings seem to have claimed divinity on the ground of their descent from Hercules, the god of the double-axe and of the lion; and this Lydian Hercules or Sandan appears to have been the same with the Cilician Sandan.

But apart from any general notions of the purificatory virtues of fire, the kings of Lydia seem to have had a special reason for regarding death in the flames as their appropriate end. For the ancient dynasty of the Heraclids which preceded the house of Croesus on the throne traced their descent from a god or hero whom the Greeks called Hercules;<sup>2</sup> and this Lydian Hercules appears to have been identical in name and in substance with the Cilician Hercules, whose effigy was regularly burned on a great pyre at Tarsus. The Lydian Hercules bore the name of Sandon;<sup>3</sup> the Cilician Hercules bore the name of Sandan, or perhaps rather of Sandon, since Sandon is known from inscriptions and other evidence to have been a Cilician name.<sup>4</sup> The characteristic emblems of the Cilician Hercules were the lion and the double-headed axe; and both these emblems meet us at Sardes in connection with the dynasty of the Heraclids. For the double-headed axe was carried as part of the sacred regalia by Lydian kings from the time of the legendary queen Omphale down to the reign of Candaules, the last of the Heraclid kings. It is said to have been given to Omphale by Hercules himself, and it was apparently regarded as a palladium of the Heraclid sovereignty; for after the dotard Candaules ceased to carry the axe himself, and had handed it over to the keeping of a courtier, a rebellion broke out, and the ancient dynasty of the Heraclids came to an end. The new king Gyges did not attempt to carry the old emblem of sovereignty; he dedicated it with other spoils to Zeus in Caria. Hence the image of the Carian Zeus bore an axe in his hand and received the epithet of Labrandeus, from *labrys*, the Lydian word for "axe."<sup>5</sup> Such is Plutarch's account; but we may

<sup>1</sup> The evidence will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, i. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Joannes Lydus, *De magistratibus*, iii. 64.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 61, note 3.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae*, 45. Zeus Labrandeus was worshipped at the village of Labraunda, situated in a pass over the mountains, near Mylasa



suspect that Zeus, or rather the native god whom the Greeks identified with Zeus, carried the axe long before the time of Candaules. If, as is commonly supposed, the axe was the symbol of the Asiatic thunder-god,<sup>1</sup> it would be an appropriate emblem in the hand of kings, who are so often expected to make rain, thunder, and lightning for the good of their people. Whether the kings of Lydia were bound to make thunder and rain we do not know; but at all events, like many early monarchs, they seem to have been held responsible for the weather and the crops. In the reign of Meles the country suffered severely from dearth, so the people consulted an oracle, and the deity laid the blame on the kings, one of whom had in former years incurred the guilt of murder. The soothsayers accordingly declared that King Meles, though his own hands were clean, must be banished for three years in order that the taint of bloodshed should be purged away. The king obeyed and retired to Babylon, where he lived three years. In his absence the kingdom was administered by a deputy, a certain Sadyattes, son of Cadys, who traced his descent from Tylon.<sup>2</sup> As to this Tylon we shall hear more presently. Again, we read that the Lydians rejoiced greatly at the assassination of Spermus, another of their kings, "for he was very wicked, and the land suffered from drought in his reign."<sup>3</sup> Apparently, like the ancient Irish and many modern Africans, they laid the drought at the king's door, and

Lydian  
kings held  
responsible  
for the  
weather  
and the  
crops.

in Caria. The temple was ancient. A road called the Sacred Way led downhill for ten miles to Mylasa, a city of white marble temples and colonnades which stood in a fertile plain at the foot of a precipitous mountain, where the marble was quarried. Processions bearing the sacred emblems went to and fro along the Sacred Way from Mylasa to Labraunda. See Strabo, xiv. 2. 23, pp. 658 sq. The double-headed axe figures on the ruins and coins of Mylasa (Ch. Fellows, *Discoveries in Lycia*, p. 75; B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, pp. 528 sq.). A horseman carrying a double-headed axe is a type which occurs on the coins of many towns in Lydia and Phrygia.

At Thyatira this axe-bearing hero was called Tyrimnus, and games were held in his honour. He was identified with Apollo and the sun. See B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia* (London, 1901), p. cxxviii. On a coin of Mostene in Lydia the double-headed axe is represented between a bunch of grapes and ears of corn, as if it were an emblem of fertility (B. V. Head, *op. cit.* p. 162, pl. xvii. 11).

<sup>1</sup> L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i. 4 141 sq. As to the Hittite thunder-god and his axe see above, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolaus Damascenus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 382 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 381.



thought that he only got what he deserved under the knife of the assassin.

The lion-  
god of  
Lydia.

With regard to the lion, the other emblem of the Cilician Hercules, we are told that the same king Meles, who was banished because of a dearth, sought to make the acropolis of Sardes impregnable by carrying round it a lion which a concubine had borne to him. Unfortunately at a single point, where the precipices were such that it seemed as if no human foot could scale them, he omitted to carry the beast, and sure enough at that very point the Persians afterwards clambered up into the citadel.<sup>1</sup> Now Meles was one of the old Heraclid dynasty<sup>2</sup> who boasted their descent from the lion-hero Hercules; hence the carrying of a lion round the acropolis was probably a form of consecration intended to place the stronghold under the guardianship of the lion-god, the hereditary deity of the royal family. And the story that the king's concubine gave birth to a lion's whelp suggests that the Lydian kings not only claimed kinship with the beast, but posed as lions in their own persons, and passed off their sons as lion-cubs. Croesus dedicated at Delphi a lion of pure gold, perhaps as a badge of Lydia,<sup>3</sup> and Hercules with his lion's skin is a common type on coins of Sardes.<sup>4</sup>

Identity  
of the  
Lydian and  
Cilician  
Hercules.

Thus the death, or the attempted death, of Croesus on the pyre completes the analogy between the Cilician and the Lydian Hercules. At Tarsus and at Sardes we find the worship of a god whose symbols were the lion and the double-headed axe, and who was burned on a great pyre, either in effigy or in the person of a human representative. The Greeks called him Hercules, but his native name was Sandan or Sandon. At Sardes he seems to have been personated by the kings, who carried the double-axe, and perhaps wore, like their ancestor Hercules, the lion's skin. We may conjecture that at Tarsus also the royal family aped the lion-god. At all events we know that Sandan,

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Chronic.* i. 69, ed. A. Schoene.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 50. At Thebes there was a stone lion which was said to have been dedicated by Hercules (Pausanias, ix. 17. 2).

<sup>4</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 553; *id.*, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, pp. xcvi, 239, 240, 241, 244, 247, 253, 254, 264, with plates xxiv. 9-11, 13, xxv. 2, 12, xxvii. 8.



the name of the god, entered into the names of Cilician kings, and that in later times the priests of Sandan at Tarsus wore the royal purple.<sup>1</sup>

### § 5. *Hittite Gods at Tarsus and Sardes*

Now we have traced the religion of Tarsus back by a double thread to the Hittite religion of Cappadocia. One thread joins the Baal of Tarsus, with his grapes and his corn, to the god of Ibreez. The other thread unites the Sandan of Tarsus, with his lion and his double axe, to the similar figure at Boghaz-Keui. Without being unduly fanciful, therefore, we may surmise that the Sandon-Hercules of Lydia was also a Hittite god, and that the Heraclid dynasty of Lydia were of Hittite blood. Certainly the influence, if not the rule, of the Hittites extended to Lydia; for at least two rock-carvings accompanied by Hittite inscriptions are still to be seen in the country. Both of them attracted the attention of the ancient Greeks. One of them represents a warrior in Hittite costume armed with a spear and bow. It is carved on the face of a grey rock, which stands out conspicuous on a bushy hillside, where an old road runs through a glen from the valley of the Hermus to the valley of the Cayster. The place is now called Karabeli. Herodotus thought that the figure represented the Egyptian king and conqueror Sesostris.<sup>2</sup> The other monument is a colossal seated figure of the Mother of the Gods, locally known in antiquity as Mother Plastene. It is hewn out of the solid rock and occupies a large niche in the face of a cliff at the steep northern foot of Mount Sipylus.<sup>3</sup> Thus it would seem that at some time or other the Hittites carried their arms to the shores of the Aegean. There is

The  
Cilician  
and Lydian  
Hercules  
(Sandan  
or Sandon)  
seems to  
have been  
a Hittite  
deity.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, i. 50; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 742-752; L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittiticarum*, pp. 33-37, with plates xxxvii., xxxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, iii. 24. 2, v. 13. 7 with

my note; Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iv. 752-759; L. Messerschmidt, *op. cit.* pp. 37 sq., pl. xxxix. 1. Unlike most Hittite sculptures the figure of Mother Plastene is carved almost in the round. The inscriptions which accompany both these Lydian monuments are much defaced.



no improbability, therefore, in the view that a Hittite dynasty may have reigned at Sardes.<sup>1</sup>

### § 6. *The Resurrection of Tylon*

Death and  
resurrec-  
tion of the  
Lydian  
hero Tylon.

The burning of Sandan, like that of Melcarth,<sup>2</sup> was probably followed by a ceremony of his resurrection or awakening, to indicate that the divine life was not extinct, but had only assumed a fresher and purer form. Of that resurrection we have, so far as I am aware, no direct evidence. In default of it, however, there is a tale of a local Lydian hero called Tylon or Tylus, who was killed and brought to life again. The story runs thus. Tylon or Tylus was a son of Earth.<sup>3</sup> One day as he was walking on the banks of the Hermus a serpent stung and killed him. His distressed sister Moire had recourse to a giant named Damasén, who attacked and slew the serpent. But the serpent's mate culled a herb, "the flower of Zeus," in the woods, and bringing it in her mouth put it to the lips of the dead serpent, which immediately revived. In her turn Moire took the hint and restored her brother Tylon to life by touching him with the same plant.<sup>4</sup> A similar incident occurs in many folk-tales. Serpents are often credited with a knowledge of life-giving plants.<sup>5</sup> But Tylon seems to have been more than a mere hero of fairy-tales. He was closely associated with Sardes, for he figures on the coins of the city along with his saviour Damasén or Masnes, the dead serpent, and the life-giving branch.<sup>6</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion that the Heraclid kings of Lydia were Hittites, or under Hittite influence, is not novel. See W. Wright, *Empire of the Hittites*, p. 59; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 307, § 257; Fr. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, p. 54, n. 2; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 34 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Roman.* i. 27. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Nonnus, *Dionys.* xxv. 451-551; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 14. The story, as we learn from Pliny, was told by Xanthus, an early historian of Lydia.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Glaucus, son of Minos, was restored to life by the seer Polyidus, who learned the trick from a serpent. See Apollodorus, iii. 3. 1. For references to other tales of the same sort see my note on Pausanias, ii. 10. 3 (vol. iii. pp. 65 sq.). The serpent's acquaintance with the tree of life in the garden of Eden probably belongs to the same cycle of stories.

<sup>6</sup> B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, pp. cxi-cxiii, with pl. xxvii. 12. On the coins the saviour's name appears as Masnes or Masanes, but the reading is doubtful. The name Masnes occurred in Xanthus's history of Lydia (*Fragmenta*



he was related in various ways to the royal family of Lydia ; for his daughter married Cotys, one of the earliest kings of the country,<sup>1</sup> and a descendant of his acted as regent during the banishment of King Meles.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that the story of his death and resurrection was acted as a pageant to symbolise the revival of plant life in spring.<sup>3</sup> At all events, a festival called the Feast of the Golden Flower was celebrated in honour of Proserpine at Sardes,<sup>4</sup> probably in one of the vernal months, and the revival of the hero and of the goddess may well have been represented together. The Golden Flower of the festival would then be the "flower of Zeus" of the legend, perhaps the yellow crocus of nature or rather her more gorgeous sister, the Oriental saffron. For saffron grew in great abundance at the Corycian cave of Zeus ;<sup>5</sup> and it is an elegant conjecture, if it is nothing more, that the very name of the place meant "the Crocus Cave."<sup>6</sup> However, on the coins of Sardes the magical plant seems to be a branch rather than a blossom, a Golden Bough rather than a Golden Flower.

Feast of  
the Golden  
Flower at  
Sardes.

*Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 629). It is probably the same with Manes, the name of a son of Zeus and Earth, who is said to have been the first king of Lydia (Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Ant. Rom.* i. 27. 1). Manes was the father of King Atys (Herodotus, i. 94). Thus Tylon was connected with the royal family of Lydia by means of his deliverer as well as in the ways mentioned in the text.

<sup>1</sup> Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *l.c.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, p. cxiii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. cx., cxiii. The festival seems to be mentioned only on coins.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> V. Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustierte*,<sup>7</sup> p. 261. He would derive the name from the Semitic, or at all events the Cilician, language. The Hebrew word for saffron is *karkôm*.

As to the spring flowers of north-western Asia Minor, Leake remarks (April 1, 1800) that "primroses, violets, and crocuses, are the only flowers to be seen" (*Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor*, p. 143). Near Mylasa in Caria, Fellows saw (March 20, 1840) the broom covered with yellow blossoms and a great variety of anemones, like "a rich Turkey carpet, in which the green grass did not form a prominent colour amidst the crimson, lilac, blue, scarlet, white, and yellow flowers" (Ch. Fellows, *Discoveries in Lycia*, pp. 65, 66). In February the yellow stars of *Gagea arvensis* cover the rocky and grassy grounds of Lycia, and the field-marigold often meets the eye. At the same season in Lycia the shrub *Colutea arborescens* opens its yellow flowers. See T. A. B. Spratt and E. Forbes, *Travels in Lycia* (London, 1847), ii. 133. I must leave it to others to identify the Golden Flower of Sardes.



## CHAPTER VII

### VOLCANIC RELIGION

#### § 1. *The Burning of a God*

The custom of burning a god may have been intended to recruit his divine energies.

THUS it appears that a custom of burning a god in effigy or in the person of a human representative was practised by at least two peoples of western Asia, the Phoenicians and the Hittites. Whether they both developed the custom independently, or whether one of them adopted it from the other, we cannot say. And their reasons for celebrating a rite which to us seems strange and monstrous are also obscure. In the preceding inquiry some grounds have been adduced for thinking that the practice was based on a conception of the purifying virtue of fire, which, by destroying the corruptible and perishable elements of man, was supposed to fit him for union with the imperishable and the divine. Now to people who created their gods in their own likeness, and imagined them subject to the same law of decadence and death, the idea would naturally occur that fire might do for the gods what it was believed to do for men, that it could purge them of the taint of corruption and decay, could sift the mortal from the immortal in their composition, and so endow them with eternal youth. Hence a custom might arise of subjecting the deities themselves, or the more important of them, to an ordeal of fire for the purpose of refreshing and renovating those creative energies on the maintenance of which so much depended. To the coarse apprehension of the uninstructed and unsympathetic observer the solemn rite might easily wear a very different aspect. According as he was of a pious or of a sceptical turn of mind, he might



denounce it as a sacrilege or deride it as an absurdity. "To burn the god whom you worship," he might say, "is the height of impiety and of folly. If you succeed in the attempt, you kill him and deprive yourselves of his valuable services. If you fail, you have mortally offended him, and sooner or later he will visit you with his severe displeasure." To this the worshipper, if he was patient and polite, might listen with a smile of indulgent pity for the ignorance and obtuseness of the critic. "You are much mistaken," he might observe, "in imagining that we expect or attempt to kill the god whom we adore. The idea of such a thing is as repugnant to us as to you. Our intention is precisely the opposite of that which you attribute to us. Far from wishing to destroy the deity, we desire to make him live for ever, to place him beyond the reach of that process of degeneration and final dissolution to which all things here below appear by their nature to be subject. He does not die in the fire. Oh no! Only the corruptible and mortal part of him perishes in the flames: all that is incorruptible and immortal of him will survive the purer and stronger for being freed from the contagion of baser elements. That little heap of ashes which you see there is not our god. It is only the skin which he has sloughed, the husk which he has cast. He himself is far away, in the clouds of heaven, in the depths of earth, in the running waters, in the tree and the flower, in the corn and the vine. We do not see him face to face, but every year he manifests his divine life afresh in the blossoms of spring and the fruits of autumn. We eat of his broken body in bread. We drink of his shed blood in the juice of the grape."

## § 2. *The Volcanic Region of Cappadocia*

Some such train of reasoning may suffice to explain, though naturally not to justify, the custom which we bluntly call the burning of a god. Yet it is worth while to ask whether in the building up of the practice these general considerations may not have been reinforced or modified by special circumstances; for example, by the natural features of the country where the custom grew up. For the history

The custom of burning a god may have stood in some relation to volcanic phenomena.



of religion, like that of all other human institutions, has been profoundly affected by local conditions, and cannot be fully understood apart from them. Now Asia Minor, the region where the practice in question appears to have been widely diffused, has from time immemorial been subjected to the action of volcanic forces on a great scale. It is true that, so far as the memory of man goes back, the craters of its volcanoes have been extinct, but the vestiges of their dead or slumbering fires are to be seen in many places, and the country has been shaken and rent at intervals by tremendous earthquakes. These phenomena cannot fail to have impressed the imagination of the inhabitants, and thereby to have left some mark on their religion.

The great  
extinct  
volcano  
Mount  
Argaeus in  
Cappa-  
docia.

Among the extinct volcanoes of Anatolia the greatest is Mount Argaeus, in the centre of Cappadocia, the heart of the old Hittite country. It is indeed the highest point of Asia Minor, and one of the loftiest mountains known to the ancients; for in height it falls not very far short of Mount Blanc. Towering abruptly in a huge pyramid from the plain, it is a conspicuous object for miles on miles. Its top is white with eternal snow, and in antiquity its lower slopes were clothed with dense forests, from which the inhabitants of the treeless Cappadocian plains drew their supply of timber. In these woods, and in the low grounds at the foot of the mountain, the languishing fires of the volcano manifested themselves as late as the beginning of our era. The ground was treacherous. Under a grassy surface there lurked pits of fire, into which stray cattle and unwary travellers often fell. Experienced woodmen used great caution when they went to fell trees in the forest. Elsewhere the soil was marshy, and flames were seen to play over it at night.<sup>1</sup> Superstitious fancies no doubt gathered thick around these perilous spots, but what shape they took we cannot say. Nor do we know whether

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 2. 7, p. 538. Mount Argaeus still retains its ancient name in slightly altered forms (*Ardjeh*, *Erdjich*, *Erfäus*). Its height is about 13,000 feet. In the nineteenth century it was ascended by at least two English travellers, W. J. Hamilton and

H. F. Tozer. See W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, ii. 269-281; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, pp. 94, 113-131; É. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, ix. 476-478.



sacrifices were offered on the top of the mountain, though a curious discovery may perhaps be thought to indicate that they were. Sharp and lofty pinnacles of red porphyry, inaccessible to the climber, rise in imposing grandeur from the eternal snow of the summit, and here Mr. Tozer found that the rock had been perforated in various places with human habitations. One such rock-hewn dwelling winds inward for a considerable distance; rude niches are hollowed in its sides, and on its roof and walls may be seen the marks of tools.<sup>1</sup> The ancients certainly did not climb mountains for pleasure or health, and it is difficult to imagine that any motive but superstition should have led them to provide dwellings in such a place. These rock-cut chambers may have been shelters for priests charged with the performance of religious or magical rites on the summit.

### § 3. *Fire-Worship in Cappadocia*

Under the Persian rule Cappadocia became, and long continued to be, a great seat of the Zoroastrian fire-worship. In the time of Strabo, about the beginning of our era, the votaries of that faith and their temples were still numerous in the country. The perpetual fire burned on an altar, surrounded by a heap of ashes, in the middle of the temple; and the priests daily chanted their liturgy before it, holding in their hands a bundle of myrtle rods and wearing on their heads tall felt caps with cheek-pieces which covered their lips, lest they should defile the sacred flame with their breath.<sup>2</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that the natural fires which burned perpetually on the outskirts of Mount Argæus attracted the devotion of the disciples of Zoroaster, for elsewhere similar fires have been the object of religious reverence down to modern times. Thus at Jualamukhi, on the lower slopes of the Himalayas, jets of combustible gas issue from the earth; and a great Hindoo temple, the resort of many pilgrims, is built over them. The perpetual

Persian  
fire-  
worship  
in Cappa-  
docia.

Worship of  
natural  
fires which  
burn per-  
petually.

<sup>1</sup> H. F. Tozer, *op. cit.* pp. 125-127.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xv. 3. 14 *sq.*, pp. 732 *sq.* A bundle of twigs, called the Barsom (*Beresma* in the Avesta), is still used by the Parsee priests in chanting their

liturgy. See M. Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*<sup>3</sup> (London, 1884), pp. 4, n. 1, 283.



flame, which is of a reddish hue and emits an aromatic perfume, rises from a pit in the fore-court of the sanctuary. The worshippers deliver their gifts, consisting usually of flowers, to the attendant fakirs, who first hold them over the flame and then cast them into the body of the temple.<sup>1</sup> Again, Hindoo pilgrims make their way with great difficulty to Baku on the Caspian, in order to worship the everlasting fires which there issue from the beds of petroleum. The sacred spot is about ten miles to the north-east of the city. An English traveller, who visited Baku in the middle of the eighteenth century, has thus described the place and the worship. "There are several antient temples built with stone, supposed to have been all dedicated to fire; most of them are arched vaults, not above ten to fifteen feet high. Amongst others there is a little temple, in which the Indians now worship; near the altar, about three feet high, is a large hollow cane, from the end of which issues a blue flame, in colour and gentleness not unlike a lamp that burns with spirits, but seemingly more pure. These Indians affirm that this flame has continued ever since the flood, and they believe it will last to the end of the world; that if it was resisted or suppressed in that place, it would rise in some other. Here are generally forty or fifty of these poor devotees, who come on a pilgrimage from their own country, and subsist upon wild sallary, and a kind of Jerusalem artichokes, which are very good food, with other herbs and roots, found a little to the northward. Their business is to make expiation, not for their own sins only, but for those of others; and they continue the longer time, in proportion to the number of persons for whom they have engaged to pray. They mark their foreheads with saffron, and have a great veneration for a red cow."<sup>2</sup> Thus it would seem that a purifying virtue is attributed to the sacred flame, since pilgrims come to it from far to expiate sin.

<sup>1</sup> Baron Charles Hügel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab* (London, 1845), pp. 42-46; W. Crooke, *Things Indian* (London, 1906), p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Jonas Hanway, *An Historical*

*Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea: with the Author's Journal of Travels*, Second Edition (London, 1754), i. 263. Compare W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 219.



§ 4. *The Burnt Land of Lydia*

Another volcanic region of Asia Minor is the district of Lydia, to which, on account of its remarkable appearance, the Greeks gave the name of the Burnt Land. It lies to the east of Sardes in the upper valley of the Hermus, and covers an area of about fifty miles by forty. As described by Strabo, the country was wholly treeless except for the vines, which produced a wine inferior to none of the most famous vintages of antiquity. The surface of the plains was like ashes; the hills were composed of black stone, as if they had been scorched by fire. Some people laid the scene of Typhon's battle with the gods in this Black Country, and supposed that it had been burnt by the thunderbolts hurled from heaven at the impious monster. The philosophic Strabo, however, held that the fires which had wrought this havoc were subterranean, not celestial, and he pointed to three craters, at intervals of about four miles, each in a hill of scoriae which he supposed to have been once molten matter ejected by the volcanoes.<sup>1</sup> His observation and his theory have both been confirmed by modern science. The three extinct volcanoes to which he referred are still conspicuous features of the landscape. Each is a black cone of loose cinders, scoriae, and ashes, with steep sides and a deep crater. From each a flood of rugged black lava has flowed forth, bursting out at the foot of the cone, and then rushing down the dale to the bed of the Hermus. The dark streams follow all the sinuosities of the valleys, their sombre hue contrasting with the rich verdure of the surrounding landscape. Their surface, broken into a thousand fantastic forms, resembles a sea lashed into fury by a gale, and then suddenly hardened into stone. Regarded from the geological point of view, these black cones of cinders and these black rivers of lava are of comparatively recent formation. Exposure to the weather for thousands of years has not yet softened their asperities and decomposed them into vegetable mould; they are as hard and ungenial as if the volcanic stream had ceased to

The Burnt  
Land of  
Lydia.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 8. 18 *sq.*, p. 579; district is mentioned by Vitruvius (viii. xiii. 4. 11, p. 628. The wine of the 3. 12) and Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xiv. 75).



flow but yesterday. But in the same district there are upwards of thirty other volcanic cones, whose greater age is proved by their softened forms, their smoother sides, and their mantle of vegetation. Some of them are planted with vineyards to their summits.<sup>1</sup> Thus the volcanic soil is still as favourable to the cultivation of the vine as it was in antiquity. The relation between the two was noted by the ancients. Strabo compares the vines of the Burnt Land with the vineyards of Catania fertilised by the ashes of Mount Etna; and he tells us that some ingenious persons explained the fire-born Dionysus as a myth of the grapes fostered by volcanic agency.<sup>2</sup>

### § 5. *The Earthquake God*

Earth-  
quakes  
in Asia  
Minor.

But the inhabitants of these regions were reminded of the slumbering fires by other and less agreeable tokens than the generous juice of their grapes. For not the Burnt Land only but the country to the south, including the whole valley of the Maeander, was subject to frequent and violent shocks of earthquake. The soil was loose, friable, and full of salts, the ground hollow, undermined by fire and water. In particular the city of Philadelphia was a great centre of disturbance. The shocks there, we are told, were continuous. The houses rocked, the walls cracked and gaped; the few inhabitants were kept busy repairing the breaches or buttressing and propping the edifices which threatened to tumble about their ears. Most of the citizens, indeed, had the prudence to dwell dispersed on their farms. It was a marvel, says Strabo, that such a city should have any inhabitants at all, and a still greater marvel that it should ever have been built.<sup>3</sup> However, by a wise dispensation of Providence, the earthquakes which shook the foundations of their houses only

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 136-140, ii. 131-138. One of the three recent cones described by Strabo is now called the *Kara Devlit*, or Black Inkstand. Its top is about 2500 feet above the sea, but only 500 feet above the surrounding plain. The adjoining town of Koula, built of the black lava on which it stands, has a

sombre and dismal look. Another of the cones, almost equally high, has a crater of about half a mile in circumference and three or four hundred feet deep.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xiii. 4. 11, p. 628. Compare his account of the Catanian vineyards (vi. 2. 3, p. 269).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xii. 8. 16-18, pp. 578 sq.; xiii. 4. 10 sq., p. 628.



strengthened those of their faith. The people of Apameia, whose town was repeatedly devastated, paid their devotions with great fervour to Poseidon, the earthquake god.<sup>1</sup> Again, the island of Santorin, in the Greek Archipelago, has been for thousands of years a great theatre of volcanic activity. On one occasion the waters of the bay boiled and flamed for four days, and an island composed of red-hot matter rose gradually, as if hoisted by machinery, above the waves. It happened that the sovereignty of the seas was then with the Rhodians, those merchant-princes whose prudent policy, strict but benevolent oligarchy, and beautiful island-city, rich with accumulated treasures of native art, rendered them in a sense the Venetians of the ancient world. So when the ebullition and heat of the eruption had subsided, their sea-captains landed in the new island, and founded a sanctuary of Poseidon the Establisher or Securer,<sup>2</sup> a complimentary epithet often bestowed on him as a hint not to shake the earth more than he could conveniently help.<sup>3</sup> In many places people sacrificed to Poseidon the Establisher, in the hope that he would be as good as his name and not bring down their houses on their heads.<sup>4</sup>

Worship of  
Poseidon,  
the earth-  
quake god.

Another instance of a Greek attempt to quiet the perturbed spirit underground is instructive, because similar efforts are still made by savages in similar circumstances. Once when a Spartan army under King Agesipolis had taken

Spartan  
propitia-  
tion of  
Poseidon  
during an  
earth-  
quake.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 8. 18, p. 579. Compare Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, i. 3. 16, p. 57. Compare Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis*, 11; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 202; Justin, xxx. 4. The event seems to have happened in 197 B.C. Several other islands are known to have appeared in the same bay both in ancient and modern times. So far as antiquity is concerned, the dates of their appearance are given by Pliny, but some confusion on the subject has crept into his mind, or rather, perhaps, into his text. See the discussion of the subject in W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 1158-1160. As to the eruptions in the bay of Santorin, the last of which occurred in 1866 and produced a new island, see Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 51,

ii. 65 *sqq.*; C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 272 *sqq.* There is a monograph on Santorin and its eruptions (F. Fouqué, *Santorin et ses eruptions*, Paris, 1879). Strabo has given a brief but striking account of Rhodes, its architecture, its art-treasures, and its constitution (xiv. 2. 5, pp. 652 *sq.*). As to the Rhodian schools of art see H. Brunn, *Geschichte der griechischen Künstler*, i. 459 *sqq.*, ii. 233 *sqq.*, 286 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 682; Pausanias, iii. 11. 9, vii. 21. 7; Plutarch, *Theseus*, 36; Aristides, *Isthmic.* vol. i. p. 29, ed. G. Dindorf; Appian, *Bell. Civ.* v. 98; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 17. 22; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 543.

<sup>4</sup> Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 22.



the field, it chanced that the ground under their feet was shaken by an earthquake. It was evening, and the king was at mess with the officers of his staff. No sooner did they feel the shock than, with great presence of mind, they rose from their dinner and struck up a popular hymn in honour of Poseidon. The soldiers outside the tent took up the strain, and soon the whole army joined in the sacred melody.<sup>1</sup> It is not said whether the flute band, which always played the Spartan redcoats into action,<sup>2</sup> accompanied the deep voices of the men with its shrill music. At all events, the intention of this service of praise, addressed to the earth-shaking god, can only have been to prevail on him to stop. I have spoken of the Spartan redcoats because the uniform of Spartan soldiers was red.<sup>3</sup> As they fought in an extended, not a deep, formation, a Spartan line of battle must always have been, what the British used to be, a thin red line. It was in this order, and no doubt with the music playing and the sun flashing on their arms, that they advanced to meet the Persians at Thermopylae. Like Cromwell's Ironsides, these men knew how to fight as well as to sing psalms.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, iv. 7. 4. As to the Spartan headquarters staff (*οἱ περὶ δαμοστίας*), see *id.* iv. 5. 8, vi. 4. 14; Xenophon, *Respublica Lacedaem.* xiii. 1, xv. 4. Usually the Spartans desisted from any enterprise they had in hand when an earthquake happened (Thucydides, iii. 59. 1, v. 50. 5, vi. 95. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, v. 70. 1. The use of the music, Thucydides tells us, was not to inspire the men, but to enable them to keep step, and so to march in close order. Without music a long line of battle was apt to straggle in advancing to the charge. The air to which the Spartans charged was called Castor's tune. It was the king in person who gave the word for the flutes to strike up. See Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Respublica Lacedaem.* xi. 3; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 1140; Aristotle, cited by a scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 320; Plutarch, *Instituta Laconica*, 24. When a great earthquake had destroyed the city of

Sparta and the Messenians were in revolt, the Spartans sent a messenger to Athens asking for help. Aristophanes (*Lysistrata*, 1138 *sqq.*) describes the man as if he had seen him, sitting as a suppliant on the altar with his pale face and his red coat.

<sup>4</sup> I have assumed that the sun shone on the Spartans at Thermopylae. For the battle was fought in the height of summer, when the Greek sky is generally cloudless, and on that particular morning the weather was very still. The evening before, the Persians had sent round a body of troops by a difficult pass to take the Spartans in the rear; day was breaking when they neared the summit, and the first intimation of their approach which reached the ears of the Phocian guards posted on the mountain was the loud trampling of leaves under their feet in the oak forest. Moreover, the famous Spartan saying about fighting in the shade of the Persian arrows, which obscured the sun, points to bright, hot weather. See



If the Spartans imagined that they could stop an earthquake by a soldiers' chorus, their theory and practice resembled that of many other barbarians. Thus the people of Timor, in the East Indies, think that the earth rests on the shoulder of a mighty giant, and that when he is weary of bearing it on one shoulder he shifts it to the other, and so causes the ground to quake. At such times, accordingly, they all shout at the top of their voices to let him know that there are still people on the earth; for otherwise they fear lest, impatient of his burden, he might tip it into the sea.<sup>1</sup> Similar beliefs and practices prevail in other parts of the East Indies. When the Balinese and the Sundanese feel an earthquake they cry out, "Still alive," or "We still live," to acquaint the earth-shaking god or giant with their existence.<sup>2</sup> The Bataks of Sumatra in the like circumstances shout "The handle! The handle!" The meaning of the cry is variously explained. Some say that it contains a delicate allusion to the sword which is thrust up to the hilt into the body of the demon or serpent who shakes the earth. Thus explained the words are a jeer or taunt levelled at that mischievous being.<sup>3</sup> Others say that when Batara-guru, the creator, was about to fashion the earth he began by building a raft, which he commanded a certain Naga-padoha to support. While he was hard at work his chisel broke, and at the same moment Naga-padoha budged under his burden. Therefore Batara-guru said, "Hold hard a moment! The handle of the chisel is broken off." And that is why the Bataks call out "The

East Indian modes of stopping an earthquake by informing the god or giant that there are still men on the earth.

Herodotus, vii. 215-226; and as to the date of the battle (about the time of the Olympic games) see Herodotus, vii. 206, viii. 12 and 26; G. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, ii.<sup>2</sup> 673, note 9.

<sup>1</sup> S. Müller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel* (Amsterdam, 1857), ii. 264 sq. Compare A. Bastian, *Indonesien*, ii. 3. The beliefs and customs of the East Indian peoples in regard to earthquakes have been described by G. A. Wilken, *Het animisme bij de volken van den Indischen Archipel*, Tweede Stuk (Leiden, 1885), pp. 247-254. Professor E. B. Tylor was so good as

to lend me his copy of this second part of Wilken's valuable dissertation on animism. See also G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, pp. 604 sq.; and on primitive conceptions of earthquakes in general, E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 364-366.

<sup>2</sup> H. N. Van der Tuuk, "Notes on the Kawi Language and Literature," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xiii. (1881), p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> W. Ködding, "Die batakschen Götter und ihr Verhältniss zum Brahmanismus," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, xii. (1885), p. 405.



handle of the chisel" during an earthquake. They believe that the deluded Naga-padoha will take the words for the voice of the creator, and that he will hold hard accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

Various  
modes of  
prevailing  
upon the  
earthquake  
god to  
stop.

When the earth quakes in some parts of Celebes, it is said that all the inhabitants of a village will rush out of their houses and grub up grass by handfuls in order to attract the attention of the earth-spirit, who, feeling his hair thus torn out by the roots, will be painfully conscious that there are still people above ground.<sup>2</sup> So in Samoa, during shocks of earthquake, the natives sometimes ran and threw themselves on the ground, gnawed the earth, and shouted frantically to the earthquake god Mafuie to desist lest he should shake the earth to pieces.<sup>3</sup> They consoled themselves with the thought that Mafuie has only one arm, saying, "If he had two, what a shake he would give!"<sup>4</sup> The Bagobos of the Philippine Islands believe that the earth rests on a great post, which a large serpent is trying to remove. When the serpent shakes the post, the earth quakes. At such times the Bagobos beat their dogs to make them howl, for the howling of the animals frightens the serpent, and he stops shaking the post. Hence so long as an earthquake lasts the howls of dogs may be heard to proceed from every house in a Bagobo village.<sup>5</sup> The Tongans think that the earth is supported on the prostrate form of the god Móooi. When he is tired of lying in one posture, he tries to turn himself about, and that causes an earthquake. Then the people shout and beat the ground with sticks to make him lie still.<sup>6</sup> During an earthquake the Burmese make a great uproar, beating the walls of their houses and shouting, to frighten away the evil genius who

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Wilken, *op. cit.* p. 252; H. N. van der Tuuk, *op. cit.* pp. 49 sq. For more evidence of similar practices in the East Indies see J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua*, pp. 330, 398, 428.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. F. Riedel, "De Topan-tunuasu of oorspronkelijke Volkstammen van Central Selebes," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxv. (1886) p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 379.

<sup>4</sup> G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 211; Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, ii. 131.

<sup>5</sup> A. Schadenburg, "Die Bewohner von Süd-Mindanao und der Insel Samal," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xvii. (1885), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> W. Mariner, *Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 112 sq.



is shaking the earth.<sup>1</sup> The Dorasques, an Indian tribe of Panama, believed that the volcano of Chiriqui was inhabited by a powerful spirit, who, in his anger, caused an earthquake. At such times the Indians shot volleys of arrows in the direction of the volcano to terrify him and make him desist.<sup>2</sup> Earthquakes are common in the Pampa del Sacramento of eastern Peru. The Conibos, a tribe of Indians on the left bank of the great Ucayali River, attribute these disturbances to the Creator, who usually resides in heaven, but comes down from time to time to see whether the work of his hands still exists. The result of his descent is an earthquake. So when one happens, these Indians rush out of their huts with extravagant gestures shouting, as if in answer to a question, "A moment, a moment, here I am, father, here I am." Their intention is, no doubt, to assure their heavenly father that they are still alive, and that he may return to his mansion on high with an easy mind. They never remember the Creator nor pay him any heed except at an earthquake.<sup>3</sup> Some of the Peruvian Indians regarded an earthquake as a sign that the gods were thirsty, so they poured water on the ground.<sup>4</sup>

An English resident in Fiji attributed a sudden access of piety in Kantavu, one of the islands, to a tremendous earthquake which destroyed many of the natives. The Fijians think that their islands rest on a great serpent and most wicked god named A Dage, who causes earthquakes by turning over in his sleep. So they sacrifice to him things of great value in order that he may turn as gently as possible.<sup>5</sup> In Nias a violent earthquake has a salutary effect on the morals of the natives. They suppose that it is brought about by a certain Batoo Bedano, who intends to destroy the earth because of the iniquity of mankind. So they assemble and fashion a great image out of the trunk of a tree. They make offerings, they confess their sins, they

Religious  
and moral  
effects of  
earth-  
quakes.

<sup>1</sup> Sangermano, *Description of the Burmese Empire* (Rangoon, 1885), p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> A. Pinart, "Les Indiens de l'état de Panama," *Revue d'Ethnographie*, vi. (1887) p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> De St. Cricq, "Voyage du Pérou au Brésil par les fleuves Ucayali et

Amazone, Indiens Conibos," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), IVème Série, vi. (1853) p. 292.

<sup>4</sup> E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 469.

<sup>5</sup> J. Jackson, in J. E. Erskine's *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific*, p. 473.



correct the fraudulent weights and measures, they vow to do better in the future, they implore mercy, and if the earth has gaped, they throw a little gold into the fissure. But when the danger is over, all their fine vows and promises are soon forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

The god of the sea and of the earthquake naturally conceived as one.

We may surmise that in those Greek lands which have suffered severely from earthquakes, such as Achaia and the western coasts of Asia Minor, Poseidon was worshipped not less as an earthquake god than as a sea-god.<sup>2</sup> It is to be remembered that an earthquake is often accompanied by a tremendous wave which comes rolling in like a mountain from the sea, swamping the country far and wide; indeed on the coasts of Chili and Peru, which have often been devastated by both, the wave is said to be even more dreaded than the earthquake.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks often experienced this combination of catastrophes, this conspiracy, as it were, of earth and sea against the life and works of man.<sup>4</sup> It was thus that Helice, on the coast of Achaia, perished with all its inhabitants on a winter night, overwhelmed by the billows; and its destruction was set down to the wrath of Poseidon.<sup>5</sup> Nothing could be more natural than that to people familiar with the twofold calamity the dreadful god of the earthquake and of the sea should appear to be one and the same. The historian Diodorus Siculus observes that Peloponnese was deemed to have been in

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Nieuwenhuis en H. C. B. von Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het eiland Nias," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (Batavia, 1863) p. 118. In Soerakarta, a district of Java, when an earthquake takes place the people lie flat on their stomachs on the ground, and lick it with their tongues so long as the earthquake lasts. This they do in order that they may not lose their teeth prematurely. See J. W. Winter, "Beknopte Beschrijving van het hof Soerakarta in 1824," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, liv. (1902) p. 85. The connection of ideas in this custom is not clear.

<sup>2</sup> On this question see C. Neumann

und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 332-336. As to the frequency of earthquakes in Achaia and Asia Minor see Seneca, *Epist.* xiv. 3. 9; and as to Achaia in particular see C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *op. cit.* pp. 324-326. On the coast of Achaia there was a chain of sanctuaries of Poseidon (L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.<sup>4</sup> 575).

<sup>3</sup> See Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> ii. 147 sqq.; J. Milne, *Earthquakes* (London, 1886), pp. 165 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Thucydides, iii. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, viii. 7. 1 sq., pp. 384 sq.; Diodorus Siculus, xv. 49; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xi. 19; Pausanias, vii. 24. 5 sq. and 12, vii. 25. 1 and 4.



ancient days the abode of Poseidon, that the whole country was in a manner sacred to him, and that every city in it worshipped him above all the gods. This devotion to Poseidon he explains partly by the earthquakes and floods by which the land has been visited, partly by the remarkable chasms and subterranean rivers which are a conspicuous feature of its limestone mountains.<sup>1</sup>

### § 6. *Worship of Mephitic Vapours*

But eruptions and earthquakes, though the most tremendous, are not the only phenomena of volcanic regions which have affected the religion of the inhabitants. Poisonous mephitic vapours and hot springs, which abound especially in volcanic regions,<sup>2</sup> have also had their devotees, and both are, or were formerly, to be found in those western districts of Asia Minor with which we are here concerned. To begin with vapours, we may take as an illustration of their deadly effect the Guevo Upas, or Valley of Poison, near Batur in Java. It is the crater of an extinct volcano, about half a mile in circumference, and from thirty to thirty-five feet deep. Neither man nor beast can descend to the bottom and live. The ground is covered with the carcasses of tigers, deer, birds, and even the bones of men, all killed by the abundant emanations of carbonic acid gas which exhale from the soil. Animals let down into it die in a few minutes. The whole range of hills is volcanic. Two neighbouring craters constantly emit smoke.<sup>3</sup> In another

Poisonous  
mephitic  
vapours.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, xv. 49. 4 sq. Among the most famous seats of the worship of Poseidon in Peloponnese were Taenarum in Laconia, Helice in Achaia, Mantinea in Arcadia, and the island of Calauria, off the coast of Troezen. See Pausanias, ii. 33. 2, iii. 25. 4-8, vii. 24. 5 sq., viii. 10. 2-4. Laconia as well as Achaia has suffered much from earthquakes, and it contained many sanctuaries of Poseidon. We may suppose that the deity was worshipped here chiefly as the earthquake-god, since the rugged coasts of Laconia are ill adapted to maritime enterprise, and the Lacedaemonians

were never a seafaring folk. See C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 330 sq., 335 sq. For Laconian sanctuaries of Poseidon see Pausanias, iii. 11. 9, iii. 12. 5, iii. 14. 2 and 7, iii. 15. 10, iii. 20. 2, iii. 21. 5, iii. 25. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 391 sqq., 590.

<sup>3</sup> "Extract from a Letter of Mr. Alexander Loudon," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, ii. (1832) pp. 60-62; Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 590.



crater of Java, near the volcano Talaga Bodas, the sulphureous exhalations have proved fatal to tigers, birds, and countless insects; and the soft parts of these creatures, such as fibres, muscles, hair, and skin, are well preserved, while the bones are corroded or destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

Places of  
Pluto or  
Charon.

The ancients were acquainted with such noxious vapours in their own country, and they regarded the vents from which they were discharged as entrances to the infernal regions.<sup>2</sup> The Greeks called them places of Pluto (*Plutonia*) or places of Charon (*Charonia*).<sup>3</sup> In Italy the vapours were personified as a goddess, who bore the name of Mefitis and was worshipped in various parts of the peninsula.<sup>4</sup> She had a temple in the famous valley of Amsanctus in the land of the Hirpini, where the exhalations, supposed to be the breath of Pluto himself, were of so deadly a character that all who entered the place died.<sup>5</sup> The place is a glen, partly wooded with chestnut trees, among limestone hills, distant about four miles from the town of Frigento. Here, under a steep shelving bank of decomposed limestone, there is a pool of dark ash-coloured water, which continually bubbles up with an explosion like distant thunder. A rapid stream of the same blackish water rushes into the pool from under the barren rocky hill, but the fall is not more than a few feet. A little higher up are apertures in the ground, through which warm blasts of sulphuretted hydrogen are constantly issuing with more or less noise, according to the size of the holes. These blasts are no doubt what the ancients deemed the breath of Pluto. The pool is now called *Mefite* and the holes *Mefitinelle*. On the other side of the pool is a smaller pond called the *Coccaio*, or Cauldron, because it appears to be perpetually boiling. Thick masses of carbonic acid gas, visible a hundred yards off, float in rapid

The valley  
of Am-  
sanctus.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ch. Lyell, *l.c.*

<sup>2</sup> Lucretius, vi. 738 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, v. 4. 5, p. 244, xii. 8. 17, p. 579, xiii. 4. 14, p. 629, xiv. i. 11 and 44, pp. 636, 649; Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 36. 79; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 208. Compare [Aristotle], *De mundo*, 4, p. 395 B, ed. Bekker.

<sup>4</sup> Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 84, who says that some people looked on Mefitis as a god, the male partner of

Leucothoe, to whom he stood as Adonis to Venus or as Virbius to Diana. As to Mefitis see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 144 *sq.*; R. Peter, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2519 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 563-571, with the commentary of Servius; Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 36. 79; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 208.



undulations on its surface. The vapours given off by these waters are sometimes fatal, especially when they are borne on a high wind. But as the carbonic acid gas does not naturally rise more than two or three feet from the ground, it is possible in calm weather to walk round the pools, though to stoop is difficult and to fall would be dangerous. The ancient temple of Mefitis has been replaced by a shrine of the martyred Santa Felicità.<sup>1</sup>

Similar discharges of poisonous vapours took place at various points in the volcanic district of Caria, and were the object of superstitious veneration in antiquity. Thus at the village of Thymbria there was a sacred cave which gave out deadly emanations, and the place was deemed a sanctuary of Charon.<sup>2</sup> A similar cave might be seen at the village of Acharaca near Nysa, in the valley of the Maeander. Here, below the cave, there was a fine grove with a temple dedicated to Pluto and Proserpine. The place was sacred to Pluto, yet sick people resorted to it for the restoration of their health. They lived in the neighbouring village, and the priests prescribed for them according to the revelations which they received from the two deities in dreams. Often the priests would take the patients to the cave and leave them there for days without food. Sometimes the sufferers themselves were favoured with revelations in dreams, but they always acted under the spiritual direction of the priests. To all but the sick the place was unapproachable and fatal. Once a year a festival was held in the village, and then afflicted folk came in crowds to be rid of their ailments. About the hour of noon on that day a number of athletic young men, their naked bodies greased with oil, used to carry a bull up to the cave and there let it go. But the beast had not taken a few steps into the cavern before it fell to the ground and expired: so deadly was the vapour.<sup>3</sup>

Sanctuaries  
of Charon  
or Pluto  
in Caria.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Mr. Hamilton (British Envoy at the Court of Naples), in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, ii. (1832) pp. 62-65; W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, i. 127; H. Nissen, *Italische Landeskunde*, i. 242, 271, ii. 819 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xiv. i. 11, p. 636.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xiv. i. 44, pp. 649. sq.

A coin of Nysa shows the bull carried to the sacrifice by six naked youths and preceded by a naked flute-player. See B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, pp. lxxxiii. 181, pl. xx. 10. Strabo was familiar with this neighbourhood, for he tells us (xiv. i. 48, p. 650) that in his youth he studied at Nysa under the philosopher Aristodemus.



Sanctuary  
of Pluto at  
the Lydian  
or Phrygian  
Hierapolis.

Another Plutonian sanctuary of the same sort existed at Hierapolis, in the upper valley of the Maeander, on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.<sup>1</sup> Here under a brow of the hill there was a deep cave with a narrow mouth just large enough to admit the body of a man. A square space in front of the cave was railed off, and within the railing there hung so thick a cloudy vapour that it was hardly possible to see the ground. In calm weather people could step up to the railing with safety, but to pass within it was instant death. Bulls driven into the enclosure fell to the earth and were dragged out lifeless; and sparrows, which spectators by way of experiment allowed to fly into the mist, dropped dead at once. Yet the eunuch priests of the Great Mother Goddess could enter the railed-off area with impunity; nay more, they used to go up to the very mouth of the cave, stoop, and creep into it for a certain distance, holding their breath; but there was a look on their faces as if they were being choked. Some people ascribed the immunity of the priests to the divine protection, others to the use of antidotes.<sup>2</sup>

### § 7. *Worship of Hot Springs*

The hot  
springs and  
petrified  
cascades of  
Hierapolis.

The mysterious chasm of Hierapolis, with its deadly mist, has not been discovered in modern times; indeed it would seem to have vanished even in antiquity.<sup>3</sup> It may have been destroyed by an earthquake. But another marvel of the Sacred City remains to this day. The hot springs with their calcareous deposit, which, like a wizard's wand, turns all that it touches to stone, excited the wonder of the ancients, and the course of ages has only enhanced the fantastic splendour of the great transformation scene. The stately ruins of Hierapolis occupy a broad shelf or terrace on the mountain-side commanding distant views of extraordinary beauty and grandeur, from the dark precipices and dazzling snows of Mount Cadmus away to the burnt summits of Phrygia, fading in rosy tints into the blue of the sky.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the ancients assigned Hierapolis to Lydia, and others to Phrygia (W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 84 sq.).

Dio Cassius, lxxviii. 27. 3; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 208; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 6. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (*l.c.*) speaks as if the cave no longer existed in his time.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xiii. 4. 14, pp. 629 sq.;



Hills, broken by wooded ravines, rise behind the city. In front the terrace falls away in cliffs three hundred feet high into the desolate treeless valley of the Lycus. Over the face of these cliffs the hot streams have poured or trickled for thousands of years, encrusting them with a pearly white substance like salt or driven snow. The appearance of the whole is as if a mighty river, some two miles broad, had been suddenly arrested in the act of falling over a great cliff and transformed into white marble. It is a petrified Niagara. The illusion is strongest in winter or in cool summer mornings when the mist from the hot springs hangs in the air, like a veil of spray resting on the foam of the waterfall. A closer inspection of the white cliff, which attracts the traveller's attention at a distance of twenty miles, only adds to its beauty and changes one illusion for another. For now it seems to be a glacier, its long pendent stalactites looking like icicles, and the snowy whiteness of its smooth expanse being tinged here and there with delicate hues of blue, rose and green, all the colours of the rainbow. These petrified cascades of Hierapolis are among the wonders of the world. Indeed they have probably been without a rival in their kind ever since the famous white and pink terraces or staircases of Rotomahana in New Zealand were destroyed by a volcanic eruption some twenty years ago.

The hot springs which have wrought these miracles at Hierapolis rise in a large deep pool among the vast and imposing ruins of the ancient city. The water is of a greenish-blue tint, but clear and transparent. At the bottom may be seen the white marble columns of a beautiful Corinthian colonnade, which must formerly have encircled the sacred pool. Shimmering through the green-blue water they look like the ruins of a Naiad's palace. Clumps of oleanders and pomegranate-trees overhang the little lake and add to its charm. Yet the enchanted spot has its dangers. Bubbles of carbonic acid gas rise incessantly from the bottom and mount like flickering particles of silver to the surface. Birds and beasts which come to drink of the water are sometimes found dead on the bank, stifled by the noxious vapour; and the villagers tell of bathers who

The hot pool of Hierapolis with its deadly exhalations.



have been overpowered by it and drowned, or dragged down, as they say, to death by the water-spirit.

Deposits  
left by the  
waters of  
Hierapolis.

The streams of hot water, no longer regulated by the care of a religious population, have for centuries been allowed to overflow their channels and to spread unchecked over the tableland. By the deposit which they leave behind they have raised the surface of the ground many feet, their white ridges concealing the ruins and impeding the footstep, except where the old channels, filled up solidly to the brim, now form hard level footpaths, from which the traveller may survey the strange scene without quitting the saddle. In antiquity the husbandmen used purposely to lead the water in rills round their lands, and thus in a few years their fields and vineyards were enclosed with walls of solid stone. The water was also peculiarly adapted for the dyeing of woollen stuffs. Tinged with dyes extracted from certain roots, it imparted to cloths dipped in it the finest shades of purple and scarlet.<sup>1</sup>

Hercules  
the patron  
of hot  
springs.

We cannot doubt that Hierapolis owed its reputation as a holy city in great part to its hot springs and mephitic vapours. The curative virtue of mineral and thermal springs was well known to the ancients, and it would be interesting, if it were possible, to trace the causes which have gradually eliminated the superstitious element from the use of such waters, and so converted many old seats of volcanic religion into the medicinal baths of modern times. It was an article of Greek faith that all hot springs were sacred to Hercules.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiii. 4. 14, pp. 629, 630; Vitruvius, viii. 3. 10. For modern descriptions of Hierapolis see R. Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1776), pp. 228-235; Ch. Fellows, *Journal written during an Excursion in Asia Minor* (London, 1839), pp. 283-285; W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 517-521; E. Renan, *Saint Paul*, pp. 357 sq.; E. J. Davis, *Anatolica* (London, 1874), pp. 97-112; É. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, ix. 510-512; W. Cochran, *Pen and Pencil Sketches in Asia Minor* (London, 1887), pp. 387-390; W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 84 sqq. The temperature of the hot pool varies from 85 to

90 degrees Fahrenheit. The volcanic district of Tuscany which skirts the Apennines abounds in hot calcareous springs which have produced phenomena like those of Hierapolis. Indeed the whole ground is in some places coated over with tufa and travertine, which have been deposited by the water, and, like the ground at Hierapolis, it sounds hollow under the foot. See Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 397 sqq. As to the terraces of Rotomahana in New Zealand, which were destroyed by an eruption of Mount Taravera in 1886, see R. Taylor, *Te Ika A Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 464-469.

<sup>2</sup> Athenaeus, xii. 6. p. 512.



"Who ever heard of cold baths that were sacred to Hercules?" asks Injustice in Aristophanes; and Justice admits that the brawny hero's patronage of hot baths was the excuse alleged by young men for sprawling all day in the steaming water when they ought to have been sweating in the gymnasium.<sup>1</sup> Hot springs were said to have been first produced for the refreshment of Hercules after his labours; some ascribed the kindly thought and deed to Athena, others to Hephaestus, and others to the nymphs.<sup>2</sup> The warm water of these sources appears to have been used especially to heal diseases of the skin; for a Greek proverb, "the itch of Hercules," was applied to persons in need of hot baths for the scab.<sup>3</sup> On the strength of his connection with medicinal springs Hercules set up as a patron of the healing art. In heaven, if we can trust Lucian, he even refused to give place to Aesculapius himself, and the difference between them led to a very unseemly brawl. "Do you mean to say," demanded Hercules of his father Zeus, in a burst of indignation, "that this apothecary is to sit down to table before me?" To this the apothecary replies with much acrimony, recalling certain painful episodes in the private life of the burly hero. Finally the dispute is settled by Zeus, who decides in favour of Aesculapius on the ground that he died before Hercules, and is therefore entitled to rank as senior god.<sup>4</sup>

Among the hot springs sacred to Hercules the most famous were those which rose in the pass of Thermopylae, and gave to the defile its name of the Hot Gates.<sup>5</sup> The warm baths, called by the natives "the Pots," were enlarged and improved for the use of invalids by the wealthy sophist Herodes Atticus in the second century of our era. An altar of Hercules stood beside them.<sup>6</sup> According to one

Hot  
springs of  
Hercules  
at Thermo-  
pylae.

<sup>1</sup> Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1044-1054.

<sup>2</sup> Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1050; Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* xii. 25; Suidas and Hesychius, *s.v.* Ἡράκλεια λουτρά; Apostolius, viii. 66; Zenobius, vi. 49; Diogenianus, v. 7; Plutarch, *Proverbia Alexandrinorum*, 21; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 23. 1, v. 3, 4. Another story was that Hercules, like Moses, produced the water by

smiting the rock with his club (Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 4).

<sup>3</sup> Apostolius, viii. 68; Zenobius, vi. 49; Diogenianus, v. 7; Plutarch, *Proverbia Alexandrinorum*, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *Dialogi Deorum*, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, ix. 4. 13, p. 428.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, vii. 176; Pausanias, iv. 35. 9; Philostratus, *Vit. Sophist.* ii. 1. 9.



story, the hot springs were here produced for his refreshment by the goddess Athena.<sup>1</sup> They exist to this day apparently unchanged, although the recession of the sea has converted what used to be a narrow pass into a wide, swampy flat, through which the broad but shallow, turbid stream of the Sperchius creeps sluggishly seaward. On the other side the rugged mountains descend in crags and precipices to the pass, their grey, rocky sides tufted with low wood or bushes wherever vegetation can find a foothold, and their summits fringed along the sky-line with pines. They remind a Scotchman of the "crags, knolls, and mounds confusedly hurled" in which Ben Venue comes down to the Silver Strand of Loch Katrine. The principal spring bursts from the rocks just at the foot of the steepest and loftiest part of the range. After forming a small pool it flows in a rapid stream eastward, skirting the foot of the mountains. The water is so hot that it is almost painful to hold the hands in it, at least near the source, and steam rises thickly from its surface along the course of the brook. Indeed the clouds of white steam and the strong sulphurous smell acquaint the traveller with his approach to the famous spot before he comes in sight of the springs. The water is clear, but has the appearance of being of a deep sea-blue or sea-green colour. This appearance it takes from the thick, slimy deposits of blue-green sulphur which line the bed of the stream. From its source the blue, steaming, sulphur-reeking brook rushes eastward for a few hundred yards at the foot of the mountain, and is then joined by the water of another spring, which rises much more tranquilly in a sort of natural bath among the rocks. The sides of this bath are not so thickly coated with sulphur as the banks of the stream; hence its water, about two feet deep, is not so blue. Just beyond it there is a second and larger bath, which, from its square shape and smooth sides, would seem to be in part artificial. These two baths are probably the Pots mentioned by ancient writers. They are still used by bathers, and a few wooden dressing-rooms are provided for the accommodation of visitors. Some of the water is conducted in an artificial channel to turn a mill about half a mile off at the eastern end

<sup>1</sup> Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1050.



of the pass. The rest crosses the flat to find its way to the sea. In its passage it has coated the swampy ground with a white crust, which sounds hollow under the tread.<sup>1</sup>

We may conjecture that these remarkable springs furnished the principal reason for associating Hercules with this district, and for laying the scene of his fiery death on the top of the neighbouring Mount Oeta. The district is volcanic, and has often been shaken by earthquakes.<sup>2</sup> Across the strait the island of Euboea has suffered from the same cause and at the same time; and on its southern shore sulphureous springs, like those of Thermopylae, but much hotter and more powerful, were in like manner dedicated to Hercules.<sup>3</sup> The strong medicinal qualities of the waters, which are especially adapted for the cure of skin diseases and gout, have attracted patients in ancient and modern times. Sulla took the waters here for his gout;<sup>4</sup> and in the days of Plutarch the neighbouring town of Aedepsus, situated in a green valley about two miles from the springs, was one of the most fashionable resorts of Greece. Elegant and commodious buildings, an agreeable country, and abundance of fish and game united with the health-giving properties of the baths to draw crowds of idlers to the place, especially in the prime of the glorious Greek spring, the height of the season at Aedepsus. While some watched the dancers dancing or listened to the strains of the harp, others passed the time in discourse, lounging in the shade of cloisters or pacing the shore of the beautiful strait with its prospect of mountains beyond mountains immortalised in story across the water.<sup>5</sup> Of all this Greek elegance and luxury hardly a vestige remains.

<sup>1</sup> I have described Thermopylae as I saw it in November 1895. Compare W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, ii. 33 sqq.; E. Dodwell, *Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece*, ii. 66 sqq.; K. G. Fiedler, *Reise durch alle Theile des Königreichs Griechenland*, i. 207 sqq.; L. Ross, *Reisen des Königs Otto in Griechenland*, i. 90 sqq.; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, i. 92 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, iii. 87 and 89; Strabo, i. 3. 20, pp. 60 sq.; C. Neumann und

J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 321-323.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Meteora*, ii. 8, p. 366 A, ed. Bekker; Strabo, ix. 4. 2, p. 425. Aristotle expressly recognised the connection of the springs with earthquakes, which he tells us were very common in this district. As to the earthquakes of Euboea see also Thucydides, iii. 87, 89; Strabo, i. 3. 16, and 20, pp. 58, 60 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Sulla*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *Quaest. Conviviales*, iv. 4. 1; *id.*, *De fraterno Amore*, 17.

Hot  
springs of  
Hercules at  
Aedepsus.



Yet the healing springs flow now as freely as of old. In the course of time the white and yellow calcareous deposit which the water leaves behind it, has formed a hillock at the foot of the mountains, and the stream now falls in a steaming cascade from the face of the rock into the sea.<sup>1</sup> Once, after an earthquake, the springs ceased to flow for three days, and at the same time the hot springs of Thermopylae dried up.<sup>2</sup> The incident proves the relation of these Baths of Hercules on both sides of the strait to each other and to volcanic agency. On another occasion a cold spring suddenly burst out beside the hot springs of Aedepsus, and as its water was supposed to be peculiarly beneficial to health, patients hastened from far and near to drink of it. But the generals of King Antigonos, anxious to raise a revenue, imposed a tax on the use of the water; and the spring, as if in disgust at being turned to so base a use, disappeared as suddenly as it had come.<sup>3</sup>

Reasons  
for the  
association  
of Hercules  
with hot  
springs.

The association of Hercules with hot springs was not confined to Greece itself. Greek influence extended it to Sicily,<sup>4</sup> Italy,<sup>5</sup> and even to Dacia.<sup>6</sup> Why the hero should have been chosen as the patron of thermal waters, it is hard to say. Yet it is worth while, perhaps, to remember that such springs combine in a manner the twofold and seemingly discordant principles of water and fire,<sup>7</sup> of fertility and

<sup>1</sup> As to the hot springs of Aedepsus (the modern *Lipso*) see K. G. Fiedler, *Reise durch alle Theile des Königreichs Griechenland*, i. 487-492; H. N. Ulrichs, *Reisen und Forschungen in Griechenland*, ii. 233-235; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, ii. 409; C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 342-344.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, i. 3. 20, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Athenaeus, iii. 4, p. 73, E, D.

<sup>4</sup> The hot springs of Himera (the modern *Termini*) were said to have been produced for the refreshment of the weary Hercules. See Diodorus Siculus, iv. 23. 1, v. 3. 4; Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* xii. 25. The hero is said to have taught the Syracusans to sacrifice a bull annually to Proserpine at the Blue Spring (*Cyane*) near Syracuse; the beasts were drowned in

the water of the pool. See Diodorus Siculus, iv. 23. 4, v. 4. 1 sq. As to the spring, which is now thickly surrounded by tall papyrus-plants introduced by the Arabs, see K. Baedeker, *Southern Italy*,<sup>7</sup> pp. 356, 357.

<sup>5</sup> The splendid baths of Allifae in Samnium, of which there are considerable remains, were sacred to Hercules. See G. Wilmanns, *Exempla Inscriptionum Latinarum*, No. 735 c; H. Nissen, *Italische Landeskunde*, ii. 798. It is characteristic of the volcanic nature of the springs that the same inscription which mentions these baths of Hercules records their destruction by an earthquake.

<sup>6</sup> H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 3891.

<sup>7</sup> Speaking of thermal springs Lyell observes that the description of them "might almost with equal propriety



destruction, and that the death of Hercules in the flames seems to connect him with the fiery element. Further, the apparent conflict of the two principles is by no means as absolute as at first sight we might be tempted to suppose; for heat is as necessary as moisture to the support of animal and vegetable life. Even volcanic fires have their beneficent aspect, since their products lend a more generous flavour to the juice of the grape. The ancients themselves, as we have seen, perceived the connection between good wine and volcanic soil, and proposed more or less seriously to interpret the vine-god Dionysus as a child of the fire.<sup>1</sup> As a patron of hot springs Hercules combined the genial elements of heat and moisture, and may therefore have stood, in one of his many aspects, for the principle of fertility.

How far these considerations may serve to explain the custom of burning him, or gods identified with him, in effigy or in the person of a human being, is a question which deserves to be considered.

The Indians of Nicaragua used to sacrifice men, women, and children to the active volcano Massaya, flinging them into the craters: we are told that the victims went willingly to their fate.<sup>2</sup> The Sandwich Islanders were formerly in the habit of throwing vast numbers of hogs into the craters of the great volcano Kirauea during an eruption or when an eruption was threatening. Further, they cast hogs into the rolling tide of lava to appease the gods and stay its progress.<sup>3</sup> In Java the volcano Bromok is annually worshipped by people who throw offerings of cocoa-nuts, plantains, rice, chickens, cloth, money, and so forth into the crater.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in antiquity people cast into the craters of Etna vessels of gold and silver and all kinds of victims. If the fire swallowed up the offerings, the omen was good; but if it rejected them, some evil was sure to befall the offerer.<sup>5</sup>

have been given under the head of 'igneous causes,' as they are agents of a mixed nature, being at once igneous and aqueous" (*Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 392).

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* (Madrid, 1851-1855), iv. 74.

<sup>3</sup> W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*,<sup>2</sup>

iv. 250. Compare *ibid.* pp. 236, 350.

<sup>4</sup> W. B. d'Almeida, *Life in Java*, i. 166-173.

<sup>5</sup> Pausanias, iii. 23. 9. Some have thought that Pausanias confused the crater of Etna with the *Lago di Naftia*, a pool near Palagonia in the interior of Sicily, of which the water, impregnated with naphtha and sulphur, is thrown into violent ebullition by jets of volcanic

Sacrifices to volcanoes.



These examples suggest that a custom of burning men or images may possibly be derived from a practice of throwing them into the craters of active volcanoes in order to appease the dreaded spirits or gods who dwell there. But unless we reckon the fires of Mount Argæus in Cappadocia<sup>1</sup> and of Mount Chimaera in Lycia,<sup>2</sup> there is apparently no record of any mountain in western Asia which has been in eruption within historical times. On the whole, then, we conclude that the Asiatic custom of burning kings or gods has probably had no connection with volcanic phenomena. Yet it was perhaps worth while to raise the question of their connection, even though it has received only a negative answer. The whole subject of the influence which physical environment has exercised on the history of religion deserves to be studied with more attention than it has yet received.<sup>3</sup>

gas. See [Aristotle], *Mirab. Auscult.* 57; Macrobius, *Saturn.* v. 19. 26 sqq.; Diodorus Siculus, xi. 89; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Παλική; E. H. Bunbury, in W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 533 sq. The author of the ancient Latin poem *Aëtna* says (vv. 340 sq.) that people offered incense to the celestial deities on the top of Etna.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 102 sq.

<sup>2</sup> On Mount Chimaera in Lycia a flame burned perpetually which neither earth nor water could extinguish. See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 236, v. 100; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 288; Seneca, *Epist.* x. 3. 3; Diodorus, quoted by Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 212 B, 10 sqq., ed. Bekker. This perpetual flame was rediscovered by Captain Beaufort near Porto Genovese on the coast of Lycia. It issues from the side of a hill of crumbly serpentine rock, giving out an intense heat, but no smoke. "Trees, brushwood, and weeds grow close round this little crater, a small stream trickles down the hill hard by, and the ground does not appear to feel the effect of its heat at more than a few feet distance." The fire is not accompanied by earthquakes or noises; it ejects no stones and emits no noxious vapours. There is nothing but a brilliant and perpetual

flame, at which the shepherds often cook their food. See Fr. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), p. 46; compare T. A. B. Spratt and E. Forbes, *Travels in Lycia* (London, 1847), ii. 181 sq.

<sup>3</sup> In the foregoing discussion I have confined myself, so far as concerns Asia, to the volcanic regions of Cappadocia, Lydia, and Caria. But Syria and Palestine, the home of Adonis and Melcarth, "abound in volcanic appearances, and very extensive areas have been shaken, at different periods, with great destruction of cities and loss of lives. Continual mention is made in history of the ravages committed by earthquakes in Sidon, Tyre, Berytus, Laodicea, and Antioch, and in the island of Cyprus. The country around the Dead Sea exhibits in some spots layers of sulphur and bitumen, forming a superficial deposit, supposed by Mr. Tristram to be of volcanic origin" (Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 592 sq.). As to the earthquakes of Syria and Phoenicia see Strabo, i. 3. 16, p. 58; Lucretius, vi. 585. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis xix. 24-28) has been plausibly explained as the effect of an earthquake liberating large quantities of petroleum and inflammable gases. See S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*,<sup>4</sup> pp. 202 sq.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RITUAL OF ADONIS

THUS far we have dealt with the myth of Adonis and the legends which associated him with Byblus and Paphos. A discussion of these legends led us to the conclusion that among Semitic peoples in early times, Adonis, the divine lord of the city, was often personated by priestly kings or other members of the royal family, and that these his human representatives were of old put to death, whether periodically or occasionally, in their divine character. Further, we found that certain traditions and monuments of Asia Minor seem to preserve traces of a similar practice. As time went on, the cruel custom was apparently mitigated in various ways, for example, by substituting an effigy or an animal for the man, or by allowing the destined victim to escape with a merely make-believe sacrifice. The evidence of all this is drawn from a variety of scattered and often ambiguous indications: it is fragmentary, it is uncertain, and the conclusions built upon it inevitably partake of the weakness of the foundation. Where the records are so imperfect, as they happen to be in this branch of our subject, the element of hypothesis must enter largely into any attempt to piece together and interpret the disjointed facts. How far the interpretations here proposed are sound, I leave to future inquiries to determine.

From dim regions of the past, where we have had to grope our way with small help from the lamp of history, it is a relief to pass to those later periods of classical antiquity on which contemporary Greek writers have shed the light of their clear intelligence. To them we owe

Results of preceding inquiry.

Our knowledge of the rites of Adonis derived chiefly from Greek writers.



almost all that we know for certain about the rites of Adonis. The Semites who practised the worship have said little about it; at all events little that they said has come down to us. Accordingly, the following account of the ritual is derived mainly from Greek authors who saw what they describe; and it applies to ages in which the growth of humane feeling had softened some of the harsher features of the worship.

Festivals  
of the  
death and  
resurrec-  
tion of  
Adonis.

At the festivals of Adonis, which were held in western Asia and in Greek lands, the death of the god was annually mourned, with a bitter wailing, chiefly by women; images of him, dressed to resemble corpses, were carried out as to burial and then thrown into the sea or into springs;<sup>1</sup> and in some places his revival was celebrated on the following day.<sup>2</sup> But at different places the ceremonies varied somewhat in the manner and apparently also in the season of their celebration. At Alexandria images of Aphrodite and Adonis were displayed on two couches; beside them were set ripe fruits of all kinds, cakes, plants growing in flower-pots, and green bowers twined with anise. The marriage of the lovers was celebrated one day, and on the morrow women attired as mourners, with streaming hair and bared breasts, bore the image of the dead Adonis to the sea-shore and committed it to the waves. Yet they sorrowed not without hope, for they sang that the lost one would come back again.<sup>3</sup> The date at which this Alexandrian ceremony was observed is not expressly stated; but from the mention of the ripe fruits it has been inferred that it took place in late summer.<sup>4</sup> In the great Phoenician sanctuary of Astarte at Byblus the death of Adonis was annually mourned, to the shrill wailing notes of the flute, with weeping, lamentation, and beating of the breast; but next day he was believed to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshippers. The

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18; *id.*, *Nicias*, 13; Zenobius, *Centur.* i. 49; Theocritus, xv. 132 *sqq.*; Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xi. 590.

<sup>2</sup> Besides Lucian (cited below) see Jerome, *Comment. in Ezechiel.* viii. 14: "in qua (solemnitate) plangitur

quasi mortuus, et postea reviviscens, canitur atque laudatur . . . interfectionem et resurrectionem Adonidis planctu et gaudio prosequens."

<sup>3</sup> Theocritus, xv.

<sup>4</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 277.



disconsolate believers, left behind on earth, shaved their heads as the Egyptians did on the death of the divine bull Apis; women who could not bring themselves to sacrifice their beautiful tresses had to give themselves up to strangers on a certain day of the festival, and to dedicate to Astarte the wages of their shame.<sup>1</sup>

This Phœnician festival appears to have been a vernal one, for its date was determined by the discoloration of the river Adonis, and this has been observed by modern travellers to occur in spring. At that season the red earth washed down from the mountains by the rain tinges the water of the river, and even the sea, for a great way with a blood-red hue, and the crimson stain was believed to be the blood of Adonis, annually wounded to death by the boar on Mount Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> Again, the scarlet anemone is said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis, or to have been stained by it;<sup>3</sup> and as the anemone blooms in Syria about Easter, this may be thought to show that the festival of Adonis, or at least one of his festivals, was held in spring. The name of the flower is probably derived from Naaman ("darling"), which seems to have been an epithet of Adonis. The Arabs still call the anemone "wounds of the Naaman."<sup>4</sup> The red rose too was said to owe its hue to the same sad occasion; for Aphrodite, hastening to her wounded lover, trod on a bush of white

Date of the festival at Byblus.

The anemone and the red rose the flowers of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6. See above, p. 22. The flutes used by the Phœnicians in the lament for Adonis are mentioned by Athenæus (iv. 76, p. 174 F). We have seen that flutes were also played in the Babylonian rites of Tammuz (above, p. 7). Lucian's words, *ἐς τὸν ἡέρα πέμπουσι*, imply that the ascension of the god was supposed to take place in the presence, if not before the eyes, of the worshipping crowds. The devotion of Byblus to Adonis is noticed also by Strabo (xvi. 2. 18, p. 755).

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.* 8. The discoloration of the river and the sea was observed by H. Maundrell on  $\frac{17}{27}$  March  $\frac{1696}{1697}$ .

See his "Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem," in Bohn's *Early Travels in Palestine*, edited by Thomas Wright

(London, 1848), pp. 411 *sq.* Renan remarked the discoloration at the beginning of February (*Mission de Phénicie*, p. 283). In his well-known lines on the subject Milton has laid the mourning in summer:—

*Thammuz came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon  
allur'd  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.*

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Metam.* x. 735; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* v. 72; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 831. Bion, on the other hand, represents the anemone as sprung from the tears of Aphrodite (*Idyl.* i. 66).

<sup>4</sup> W. Robertson Smith, "Ctesias and the Semiramis Legend," *English Historical Review*, ii. (1887) p. 307, following Lagarde.



Festivals of  
Adonis at  
Athens and  
Antioch.

roses; the cruel thorns tore her tender flesh, and her sacred blood dyed the white roses for ever red.<sup>1</sup> It would be idle, perhaps, to lay much weight on evidence drawn from the calendar of flowers, and in particular to press an argument so fragile as the bloom of the rose. Yet so far as it counts at all, the tale which links the damask rose with the death of Adonis points to a summer rather than to a spring celebration of his passion. In Attica, certainly, the festival fell at the height of summer. For the fleet which Athens fitted out against Syracuse, and by the destruction of which her power was permanently crippled, sailed at midsummer, and by an ominous coincidence the sombre rites of Adonis were being celebrated at the very time. As the troops marched down to the harbour to embark, the streets through which they passed were lined with coffins and corpse-like effigies, and the air was rent with the noise of women wailing for the dead Adonis. The circumstance cast a gloom over the sailing of the most splendid armament that Athens ever sent to sea.<sup>2</sup> Many ages afterwards, when the Emperor Julian made his first entry into Antioch, he found in like manner the gay, the luxurious capital of the East plunged in mimic grief for the annual death of Adonis; and if he had any presentiment of coming evil, the voices of lamentation which struck upon his ear must have seemed to sound his knell.<sup>3</sup>

Resem-  
blance of  
these  
rites to  
Indian and  
European  
cere-  
monies.

The resemblance of these ceremonies to the Indian and European ceremonies which I have described elsewhere is obvious. In particular, apart from the somewhat doubtful date of its celebration, the Alexandrian ceremony is almost identical with the Indian.<sup>4</sup> In both of them the marriage of two divine beings, whose affinity with vegetation seems indicated by the fresh plants with which they are

<sup>1</sup> J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 831; *Geoponica*, xi. 17; *Mythographi Graeci*, ed. A. Westermann, p. 359. Compare Bion, *Idyl.* i. 66; Pausanias, vi. 24. 7; Philostratus, *Epist.* i. and iii.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18; *id.*, *Nicias*, 13. The date of the sailing of the fleet is given by Thucydides (vi. 30, *θέρους μεσοῦντος ἤδη*), who, with

his habitual contempt for the superstition of his countrymen, disdains to notice the coincidence. Adonis was also bewailed by the Argive women (Pausanias, ii. 20. 6), but we do not know at what season of the year the lamentation took place.

<sup>3</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 9. 15.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 105 sqq.



surrounded, is celebrated in effigy, and the effigies are afterwards mourned over and thrown into the water.<sup>1</sup> From the similarity of these customs to each other and to the spring and midsummer customs of modern Europe we should naturally expect that they all admit of a common explanation. Hence, if the explanation which I have adopted of the latter is correct, the ceremony of the death and resurrection of Adonis must also have been a dramatic representation of the decay and revival of plant life. The inference thus based on the resemblance of the customs is confirmed by the following features in the legend and ritual of Adonis. His affinity with vegetation comes out at once in the common story of his birth. He was said to have been born from a myrrh-tree, the bark of which bursting, after a ten months' gestation, allowed the lovely infant to come forth. According to some, a boar rent the bark with his tusk and so opened a passage for the babe. A faint rationalistic colour was given to the legend by saying that his mother was a woman named Myrrh, who had been turned into a myrrh-tree soon after she had conceived the child.<sup>2</sup> The use of myrrh as incense at the festival of Adonis may have given rise to the fable.<sup>3</sup> We have seen that incense was burnt at the corresponding Babylonian rites,<sup>4</sup> just as it was burnt by the idolatrous Hebrews in honour of the Queen of Heaven,<sup>5</sup> who was no other than Astarte. Again, the story that Adonis spent half, or according to others a third, of the year in the lower world and the rest of it in the upper world,<sup>6</sup> is explained most simply and naturally by supposing that he represented vegetation, especially the corn, which lies buried in the

The death and resurrection of Adonis a mythical expression for the annual decay and revival of plant life.

<sup>1</sup> In the Alexandrian ceremony, however, it appears to have been the image of Adonis only which was thrown into the sea.

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, *Biblioth.* iii. 14. 4; Schol. on Theocritus, i. 109; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 34; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron.* 829; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 489 sq.; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* v. 72, and on *Bucol.* x. 18; Hyginus, *Fab.* 58, 164; Fulgentius, iii. 8. The word Myrrha or Smyrna is borrowed from the Phoenician

(Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*, s.v. *σμύρνα*). Hence the mother's name, as well as the son's, was taken directly from the Semites.

<sup>3</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 283, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Above, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah xlv. 17-19.

<sup>6</sup> Schol. on Theocritus, iii. 48; Hyginus, *Astronom.* ii. 7; Lucian, *Dialog. deor.* xi. 1; Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 28, p. 163 sq. ed. Osannus; Apollodorus, iii. 14. 4.



earth half the year and reappears above ground the other half. Certainly of the annual phenomena of nature there is none which suggests so obviously the idea of death and resurrection as the disappearance and reappearance of vegetation in autumn and spring. Adonis has been taken for the sun; but there is nothing in the sun's annual course within the temperate and tropical zones to suggest that he is dead for half or a third of the year and alive for the other half or two-thirds. He might, indeed, be conceived as weakened in winter, but dead he could not be thought to be; his daily reappearance contradicts the supposition. Within the Arctic Circle, where the sun annually disappears for a continuous period which varies from twenty-four hours to six months according to the latitude, his yearly death and resurrection would certainly be an obvious idea; but no one except the unfortunate astronomer Bailly<sup>1</sup> has maintained that the Adonis worship came from the Arctic regions. On the other hand, the annual death and revival of vegetation is a conception which readily presents itself to men in every stage of savagery and civilisation; and the vastness of the scale on which this ever-recurring decay and regeneration takes place, together with man's intimate dependence on it for subsistence, combine to render it the most impressive annual occurrence in nature, at least within the temperate zones. It is no wonder that a phenomenon so important, so striking, and so universal should, by suggesting similar ideas, have given rise to similar rites in many lands. We may, therefore, accept as probable an explanation of the Adonis worship which accords so well with the facts of nature and with the analogy of similar rites in other lands. Moreover, the explanation is countenanced by a considerable body of opinion amongst the ancients themselves, who again

<sup>1</sup> Bailly, *Lettres sur l'Origine des Sciences* (London and Paris, 1777), pp. 255 sq.; *id.*, *Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon* (London and Paris, 1779), pp. 114-125. Carlyle has described how through the sleety drizzle of a dreary November day poor innocent Bailly was dragged to the scaffold amid the howls and curses of the

Parisian mob (*French Revolution*, bk. v. ch. 2). My friend the late Professor C. Bendall showed me a book by a Hindoo gentleman in which it is seriously maintained that the primitive home of the Aryans was within the Arctic regions. See Bâl Gangâdhar Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* (Poona and Bombay, 1903).



and again interpreted the dying and reviving god as the reaped and sprouting grain.<sup>1</sup>

The character of Tammuz or Adonis as a corn-spirit comes out plainly in an account of his festival given by an Arabic writer of the tenth century. In describing the rites and sacrifices observed at the different seasons of the year by the heathen Syrians of Harran, he says:—"Tammuz (July). In the middle of this month is the festival of el-Bûgât, that is, of the weeping women, and this is the Tâ-uz festival, which is celebrated in honour of the god Tâ-uz. The women bewail him, because his lord slew him so cruelly, ground his bones in a mill, and then scattered them to the wind. The women (during this festival) eat nothing which has been ground in a mill, but limit their diet to steeped wheat, sweet vetches, dates, raisins, and the like."<sup>2</sup> Tâ-uz, who is no other than Tammuz, is here like Burns's John Barleycorn—

Tammuz  
or Adonis  
as a corn-  
spirit  
bruised and  
ground in  
a mill.

<sup>1</sup> Schol. on Theocritus, iii. 48, ὁ Ἀδωνίς, ἡγουν ὁ σῖτος ὁ σπειρόμενος, ἐξ μῆνας ἐν τῇ γῇ ποιεῖ ἀπὸ τῆς σποράς καὶ ἐξ μῆνας ἔχει αὐτὸν ἡ Ἀφροδίτη, τουτέστιν ἡ εὐκρασία τοῦ ἀέρος. καὶ ἐκτότε λαμβάνουσιν αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνθρωποι. Jerome on Ezekiel, viii. 14: "Eadem gentilitas hujusmodi fabulas poetarum, quae habent turpitudinem, interpretatur subtiliter interfectionem et resurrectionem Adonidis planctu et gaudio prosequens: quorum alterum in seminibus, quae moriuntur in terra, alterum in segetibus, quibus mortua semina renascuntur, ostendi putat." Ammianus Marcellinus, xix. 1. 11: "in sollemnibus Adonidis sacris, quod simulacrum aliquod esse frugum adularum religiones mysticae docent." Id. xxii. 9. 15: "amato Veneris, ut fabulae fingunt, apri dente ferali deleta, quod in adulto flore sectarum est indicium frugum." Clement of Alexandria, Hom. 6. 11 (quoted by W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 281): λαμβάνουσι δὲ καὶ Ἀδωνίς εἰς ὥραιος καρπούς. *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. "Ἀδωνίς κύριον" δύναται καὶ ὁ καρπὸς εἶναι Ἀδωνίς ὅλον Ἀδωνίος καρπός, ἀρέσκων. Eusebius, *Praepar. Evang.* iii. 11. 9: "Ἀδωνίς τῆς τῶν τελείων καρπῶν ἐκτομῆς σύμβολον. Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo,"

iv. *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 32: οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι . . . αὐτὰ τὰ σώματα θεοῦ νομίσαντες . . . ἴσιν μὲν τὴν γῆν . . . Ἀδωνίς δὲ καρπούς. Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 4: τῷ Ἀδωνίδι, τουτέστι τῷ Μαΐῳ . . . ἢ ὡς ἄλλοις δοκεῖ, Ἀδωνίς μὲν ἐστὶν ὁ καρπός, κτλ. The view that Tammuz or Adonis is a personification of the dying and reviving vegetation is now accepted by many scholars. See P. Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier* (Strasburg, 1890), p. 480; id., *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen*, pp. 411, 560; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> p. 397; A. Jeremias, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, iii. 265; R. Wünsch, *Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta* (Leipsic, 1902), p. 21; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 306 sqq. Prof. Jastrow regards Tammuz as a god both of the sun and of vegetation (*Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 547, 564, 574, 588). But such a combination of disparate qualities seems artificial and unlikely.

<sup>2</sup> D. Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, ii. 27; id., *Ueber Tammuz und die Menschenverehrung bei den alten Babyloniern*, p. 38.



*They wasted o'er a scorching flame  
The marrow of his bones ;  
But a miller us'd him worst of all—  
For he crush'd him between two stones.<sup>1</sup>*

This concentration, so to say, of the nature of Adonis upon the cereal crops is characteristic of the stage of culture reached by his worshippers in historical times. They had left the nomadic life of the wandering hunter and herdsman far behind them ; for ages they had been settled on the land, and had depended for their subsistence mainly on the products of tillage. The berries and roots of the wilderness, the grass of the pastures, which had been matters of vital importance to their ruder forefathers, were now of little moment to them : more and more their thoughts and energies were engrossed by the staple of their life, the corn ; more and more accordingly the propitiation of the deities of fertility in general and of the corn-spirit in particular tended to become the central feature of their religion. The aim they set before themselves in celebrating the rites was thoroughly practical. It was no vague poetical sentiment which prompted them to hail with joy the rebirth of vegetation and to mourn its decline. Hunger, felt or feared, was the mainspring of the worship of Adonis.

The mourning for Adonis interpreted as a harvest rite.

It has been suggested by Father Lagrange that the mourning for Adonis was essentially a harvest rite designed to propitiate the corn-god, who was then either perishing under the sickles of the reapers, or being trodden to death under the hoofs of the oxen on the threshing-floor. While the men slew him, the women wept crocodile tears at home to appease his natural indignation by a show of grief for his death.<sup>2</sup> The theory fits in well with the dates of the festivals, which fell in spring or summer ; for spring and summer, not autumn, are the seasons of the barley and wheat harvests in the lands which worshipped Adonis.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The comparison is due to Felix Liebrecht (*Zur Volkskunde*, p. 259).

<sup>2</sup> M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*<sup>2</sup> (Paris, 1905), pp. 307 sq.

<sup>3</sup> On this subject Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie writes to me : "The

Coptic calendar puts on April 2 beginning of wheat harvest in upper Egypt, May 2 wheat harvest, lower Egypt. Barley is two or three weeks earlier than wheat in Palestine, but probably less in Egypt. The Palestine harvest is about the time of that in north Egypt." With regard to



Further, the hypothesis is confirmed by the practice of the Egyptian reapers, who lamented, calling upon Isis, when they cut the first corn;<sup>1</sup> and it is recommended by the analogous customs of many hunting tribes, who testify great respect for the animals which they kill and eat.<sup>2</sup>

Thus interpreted the death of Adonis is not the natural decay of vegetation in general under the summer heat or the winter cold; it is the violent destruction of the corn by man, who cuts it down on the field, stamps it to pieces on the threshing-floor, and grinds it to powder in the mill. That this was indeed the principal aspect in which Adonis presented himself in later times to the agricultural peoples of the Levant, may be admitted; but whether from the beginning he had been the corn and nothing but the corn, may be doubted. At an earlier period he may have been to the herdsman, above all, the tender herbage which sprouts after rain, offering rich pasture to the lean and hungry cattle. Earlier still he may have embodied the spirit of the nuts and berries which the autumn woods yield to the savage hunter and his squaw. And just as the husbandman must propitiate the spirit of the corn which he consumes, so the herdsman must appease the spirit of the grass and leaves which his cattle munch, and the hunter must soothe the spirit of the roots which he

But probably Adonis was a spirit of fruits, edible roots, and grass before he became a spirit of the cultivated corn.

Palestine we are told that "the harvest begins with the barley in April; in the valley of the Jordan it begins at the end of March. Between the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest an interval of two or three weeks elapses. Thus as a rule the business of harvest lasts about seven weeks" (J. Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, p. 209). As to Greece, Professor E. A. Gardner tells me that harvest is from April to May in the plains and about a month later in the mountains. He adds that "barley may, then, be assigned to the latter part of April, wheat to May in the lower ground, but you know the great difference of climate between different parts; there is the same difference of a month in the vintage." Mrs. Hawes (Miss Boyd), who excavated at Gournia, tells me that in Crete the barley is cut

in April and the beginning of May, and that the wheat is cut and threshed from about the twentieth of June, though the dates naturally vary somewhat with the height of the place above the sea. June is also the season when the wheat is threshed in Euboea (R. A. Arnold, *From the Levant* (London, 1868), i. 250). Thus it seems possible that the spring festival of Adonis coincided with the cutting of the first barley at the end of March, and his summer festival with the threshing of the last wheat in June. Father Lagrange (*op. cit.* pp. 305 sq.) argues that the rites of Adonis were always celebrated in summer at the solstice of June or soon afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2. See below, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 396 sqq.



digs, and the fruits which he gathers from the bough. In all cases the propitiation of the injured and angry sprite would naturally comprise elaborate excuses and apologies, accompanied by loud lamentations at his decease whenever, through some deplorable accident or necessity, he happened to be murdered as well as robbed. Only we must bear in mind that the savage hunter and herdsman of those early days had probably not yet attained to the abstract idea of vegetation in general; and that accordingly, so far as Adonis existed for them at all, he must have been the *Adon* or lord of each individual tree and plant rather than a personification of vegetable life as a whole. Thus there would be as many Adonises as there were trees and shrubs, and each of them might expect to receive satisfaction for any damage done to his person or property.

The propitiation of the corn-spirit may have fused with the worship of the dead.

We have seen reason to think that in early times Adonis was sometimes personated by a living man who died a violent death in the character of the god. Further, there is evidence which goes to show that among the agricultural peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean, the corn-spirit, by whatever name he was known, was often represented, year by year, by human victims slain on the harvest-field.<sup>1</sup> If that was so, it seems likely that the propitiation of the corn-spirit would tend to fuse to some extent with the worship of the dead. For the spirits of these victims might be thought to return to life in the ears which they had fattened with their blood, and to die a second death at the reaping of the corn. Now the ghosts of those who have perished by violence are surly and apt to wreak their vengeance on their slayers whenever an opportunity offers. Hence the attempt to appease the souls of the slaughtered victims would naturally blend, at least in the popular conception, with the attempt to pacify the slain corn-spirit. And as the dead came back in the sprouting corn, so they might be thought to return in the spring flowers, waked from their long sleep by the soft vernal airs. They had been laid to their rest under the sod. What more natural than to imagine that the violets and the hyacinths, the roses and

<sup>1</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 1 sqq.; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 224 sqq.



the anemones, sprang from their dust, were empurpled or incarnadined by their blood, and contained some portion of their spirit?

*I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;  
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.*

*And this reviving Herb whose tender Green  
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly, for who knows  
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen?*

At Athens the great Commemoration of the Dead fell in spring about the middle of March, when the early flowers are in bloom. Then the dead were believed to rise from their graves and go about the streets, vainly endeavouring to enter the temples and the dwellings, which were barred against these perturbed spirits with ropes, buckthorn, and pitch. The name of the festival, according to the most obvious and natural interpretation, means the Festival of Flowers, and the title would fit well with the substance of the ceremonies if at that season the poor ghosts were indeed thought to creep from the narrow house with the opening flowers.<sup>1</sup> There may therefore be a measure of truth in the theory of Renan, who saw in the Adonis worship a dreamy voluptuous cult of death, conceived not as the King of Terrors, but as an insidious enchanter who lures his victims to himself and lulls them into an eternal sleep. The infinite charm of nature in the Lebanon, he thought, lends itself to religious emotions of this sensuous, visionary sort, hovering vaguely between pain and pleasure, between slumber and tears.<sup>2</sup> It would doubtless be a mistake to attribute to Syrian peasants the worship of a conception so purely

The festival  
of the dead  
a festival  
of flowers.

<sup>1</sup> This explanation of the name *Anthesteria*, as applied to a festival of the dead, is due to Mr. R. Wünsch (*Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta*, Leipsic, 1902, pp. 43 sqq.). I cannot accept my friend Dr. A. W. Verrall's ingenious derivation of the word from a verb ἀναθέρσασθαι in the sense of

"to conjure up" (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xx. (1900) pp. 115-117). As to the festival see E. Rohde, *Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 236 sqq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 32 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris, 1864), p. 216.



abstract as that of death in general. Yet it may be true that in their simple minds the thought of the reviving spirit of vegetation was blent with the very concrete notion of the ghosts of the dead, who come to life again in spring days with the early flowers, with the tender green of the corn and the many-tinted blossoms of the trees. Thus their views of the death and resurrection of nature would be coloured by their views of the death and resurrection of man, by their own personal sorrows and hopes and fears. In like manner we cannot doubt that Renan's theory of Adonis was itself deeply tinged by passionate memories, memories of the slumber akin to death which sealed his own eyes on the slopes of the Lebanon, memories of the sister who sleeps in the land of Adonis never again to wake with the anemones and the roses.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE GARDENS OF ADONIS

PERHAPS the best proof that Adonis was a deity of vegetation, and especially of the corn, is furnished by the gardens of Adonis, as they were called. These were baskets or pots filled with earth, in which wheat, barley, lettuces, fennel, and various kinds of flowers were sown and tended for eight days, chiefly or exclusively by women. Fostered by the sun's heat, the plants shot up rapidly, but having no root withered as rapidly away, and at the end of eight days were carried out with the images of the dead Adonis, and flung with them into the sea or into springs.<sup>1</sup>

Pots of corn, herbs, and flowers, called the Gardens of Adonis.

These gardens of Adonis are most naturally interpreted as representatives of Adonis or manifestations of his power; they represented him, true to his original nature, in vegetable form, while the images of him, with which they were carried out and cast into the water, portrayed him in his later human form. All these Adonis ceremonies, if I am right, were originally intended as charms to promote the growth or revival of vegetation; and the principle by which they were supposed to produce this effect was homoeopathic or imitative magic. For ignorant people suppose that by

These gardens of Adonis were charms to promote the growth of vegetation.

<sup>1</sup> For the authorities see Raoul Rochette, "Mémoire sur les jardins d'Adonis," *Revue Archéologique*, viii. (1851) pp. 97-123; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 279, note 2, and p. 280, note 2. To the authorities cited by Mannhardt add Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.* vi. 7. 3; *id.*, *De Causis Plant.* i. 12. 2; Gregorius Cyprius, i. 7; Macarius, i. 63; Apostolius, i. 34; Diogenianus, i. 14; Plutarch, *De sera num. vind.* 17.

Women only are mentioned as planting the gardens of Adonis by Plutarch, *l.c.*; Julian, *Convivium*, p. 329 ed. Spanheim (p. 423 ed. Hertlein); Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xi. 590. On the other hand, Apostolius and Diogenianus (*ll.cc.*) say *φυτεύοντες ἢ φυτεύουσαι*. The procession at the festival of Adonis is mentioned in an Attic description of 302 or 301 B.C. (Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 726).



The throwing of the "gardens" into water was a rain-charm.

Parallel European customs of drenching the corn with water at harvest or sowing.

mimicking the effect which they desire to produce they actually help to produce it; thus by sprinkling water they make rain, by lighting a fire they make sunshine, and so on. Similarly, by mimicking the growth of crops they hope to ensure a good harvest. The rapid growth of the wheat and barley in the gardens of Adonis was intended to make the corn shoot up; and the throwing of the gardens and of the images into the water was a charm to secure a due supply of fertilising rain.<sup>1</sup> The same, I take it, was the object of throwing the effigies of Death and the Carnival into water in the corresponding ceremonies of modern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the custom of drenching with water a leaf-clad person, who undoubtedly personifies vegetation, is still resorted to in Europe for the express purpose of producing rain.<sup>3</sup> Similarly the custom of throwing water on the last corn cut at harvest, or on the person who brings it home (a custom observed in Germany and France, and till quite lately in England and Scotland), is in some places practised with the avowed intent to procure rain for the next year's crops. Thus in Wallachia and amongst the Roumanians of Transylvania, when a girl is bringing home a crown made of the last ears of corn cut at harvest, all who meet her hasten to throw water on her, and two farm-servants are placed at the door for the purpose; for they believe that if this were not done, the crops next year would perish from drought.<sup>4</sup> So

<sup>1</sup> In hot southern countries like Egypt and the Semitic regions of western Asia, where vegetation depends chiefly or entirely upon irrigation, the purpose of the charm is doubtless to secure a plentiful flow of water in the streams. But as the ultimate object and the charms for securing it are the same in both cases, it has not been thought necessary always to point out the distinction.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 78 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 94 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 214; W. Schmidt, *Das Jahr und seine Tage in Meinung und Brauch der Rumänen Siebenbürgens*, pp. 18 sq. The custom of throwing water on the last waggon-load of corn returning from the harvest-field has been practised within

living memory in Wigtownshire, and at Orwell in Cambridgeshire. See *Folklore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 50, 51. (In the first of these passages the Orwell at which the custom used to be observed is said to be in Kent; this was a mistake of mine, which my informant, the Rev. E. B. Birks, formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, afterwards corrected.) Mr. R. F. Davis writes to me (March 4, 1906) from Campbell College, Belfast: "Between 30 and 40 years ago I was staying, as a very small boy, at a Nottinghamshire farmhouse at harvest-time, and was allowed—as a great privilege—to ride home on the top of the last load. All the harvesters followed the waggon, and on reaching the farmyard we found the maids of the farm gathered near



amongst the Saxons of Transylvania, the person who wears the wreath made of the last corn cut is drenched with water to the skin; for the wetter he is the better will be next year's harvest, and the more grain there will be threshed out. Sometimes the wearer of the wreath is the reaper who cut the last corn.<sup>1</sup> In northern Euboea, when the corn-sheaves have been piled in a stack, the farmer's wife brings a pitcher of water and offers it to each of the labourers that he may wash his hands. Every man, after he has washed his hands, sprinkles water on the corn and on the threshing-floor, expressing at the same time a wish that the corn may last long. Lastly, the farmer's wife holds the pitcher slantingly and runs at full speed round the stack without spilling a drop, while she utters a wish that the stack may endure as long as the circle she has just described.<sup>2</sup> At the spring ploughing in Prussia, when the ploughmen and sowers returned in the evening from their work in the fields, the farmer's wife and the servants used to splash water over them. The ploughmen and sowers retorted by seizing every one, throwing them into the pond, and ducking them under the water. The farmer's wife might claim exemption on payment of a forfeit, but every one else had to be ducked. By observing this custom they hoped to ensure a due supply of rain for the seed.<sup>3</sup> Also after harvest in Prussia, the person who wore a wreath made of the last corn cut was drenched with water, while a prayer was uttered that "as the corn had sprung up and multiplied through the water, so it might spring up and multiply in the barn and granary."<sup>4</sup> At Schlanow, in Brandenburg, when the sowers return home from the first sowing they are drenched with water "in order that the corn may grow."<sup>5</sup> In Anhalt on the same occasion the farmer is still often

the gate, with bowls and buckets of water, which they proceeded to throw on the men, who got thoroughly drenched."

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermanstadt, 1880), p. 24; H. von Wlislöcki, *Sitten und Brauch der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Hamburg, 1888), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> G. Drosinis, *Land und Leute in*

*Nord-Euböa* (Leipsic, 1884), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Matthäus Praetorius, *Deliciae Prusicae*, p. 55; W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 214 sq., note.

<sup>4</sup> M. Praetorius, *op. cit.* p. 60; W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 215, note.

<sup>5</sup> H. Prahm, "Glaube und Brauch in der Mark Brandenburg," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, i. (1891) p. 186.



sprinkled with water by his family; and his men and horses, and even the plough, receive the same treatment. The object of the custom, as people at Arensdorf explained it, is "to wish fertility to the fields for the whole year."<sup>1</sup> So in Hesse, when the ploughmen return with the plough from the field for the first time, the women and girls lie in wait for them and slyly drench them with water.<sup>2</sup> Near Naaburg, in Bavaria, the man who first comes back from sowing or ploughing has a vessel of water thrown over him by some one in hiding.<sup>3</sup> At Hettingen in Baden the farmer who is about to begin the sowing of oats is sprinkled with water, in order that the oats may not shrivel up.<sup>4</sup> Before the Tusayan Indians of North America go out to plant their fields, the women sometimes pour water on them; the reason for doing so is that "as the water is poured on the men, so may water fall on the planted fields."<sup>5</sup> The Indians of Santiago Tepehuacan steep the seed of the maize in water before they sow it, in order that the god of the waters may bestow on the fields the needed moisture.<sup>6</sup>

Gardens of  
Adonis  
among the  
Oraons and  
Mundas of  
Bengal.

The opinion that the gardens of Adonis are essentially charms to promote the growth of vegetation, especially of the crops, and that they belong to the same class of customs as those spring and midsummer folk-customs of modern Europe which I have described elsewhere,<sup>7</sup> does not rest for its evidence merely on the intrinsic probability of the case. Fortunately we are able to show that gardens of Adonis (if we may use the expression in a general sense) are still planted, first, by a primitive race at their sowing season, and, second, by European peasants at midsummer. Amongst the Oraons and Mundas of Bengal, when the time comes for planting out the rice which has been grown in seed-beds, a party of young people of both sexes go to the forest and cut

<sup>1</sup> O. Hartung, "Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 297.

<sup>4</sup> E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 420.

<sup>5</sup> J. Walter Fewkes, "The Tusayan New Fire Ceremony," *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History*, xxvi. (1895) p. 446.

<sup>6</sup> "Lettre du curé de Santiago Tepehuacan à son évêque," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), Deuxième Série, ii. (1834) pp. 181 sq.

<sup>7</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 190, 193 sqq.



a young Karma-tree, or the branch of one. Bearing it in triumph they return dancing, singing, and beating drums, and plant it in the middle of the village dancing-ground. A sacrifice is offered to the tree; and next morning the youth of both sexes, linked arm-in-arm, dance in a great circle round the Karma-tree, which is decked with strips of coloured cloth and sham bracelets and necklets of plaited straw. As a preparation for the festival, the daughters of the headman of the village cultivate blades of barley in a peculiar way. The seed is sown in moist, sandy soil, mixed with turmeric, and the blades sprout and unfold of a pale yellow or primrose colour. On the day of the festival the girls take up these blades and carry them in baskets to the dancing-ground, where, prostrating themselves reverentially, they place some of the plants before the Karma-tree. Finally, the Karma-tree is taken away and thrown into a stream or tank.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of planting these barley blades and then presenting them to the Karma-tree is hardly open to question. Trees are supposed to exercise a quickening influence upon the growth of crops, and amongst the very people in question—the Mundas or Mundaris—"the grove deities are held responsible for the crops."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when at the season for planting out the rice the Mundas bring in a tree and treat it with so much respect, their object can only be to foster thereby the growth of the rice which is about to be planted out; and the custom of causing barley blades to sprout rapidly and then presenting them to the tree must be intended to subserve the same purpose, perhaps by reminding the tree-spirit of his duty towards the crops, and stimulating his activity by this visible example of rapid vegetable growth. The throwing of the Karma-tree into the water is to be interpreted as a rain-charm. Whether the barley blades are also thrown into the water is not said; but if my interpretation of the custom is right, probably they are so. A distinction between this Bengal custom and the Greek rites of Adonis is that in the former the tree-spirit appears in his original form as a tree; whereas in the Adonis worship he appears in human form,

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 189 sqq.



represented as a dead man, though his vegetable nature is indicated by the gardens of Adonis, which are, so to say, a secondary manifestation of his original power as a tree-spirit.

Gardens of  
Adonis in  
Rajputana.

Gardens of Adonis are cultivated also by the Hindoos, with the intention apparently of ensuring the fertility both of the earth and of mankind. Thus at Oodeypoor in Rajputana a festival is held "in honour of Gouri, or Isani, the goddess of abundance, the Isis of Egypt, the Ceres of Greece. Like the Rajpoot Saturnalia, which it follows, it belongs to the vernal equinox, when nature in these regions proximate to the tropic is in the full expanse of her charms, and the matronly Gouri casts her golden mantle over the verdant Vassanti, personification of spring. Then the fruits exhibit their promise to the eye; the kohil fills the ear with melody; the air is impregnated with aroma, and the crimson poppy contrasts with the spikes of golden grain to form a wreath for the beneficent Gouri. Gouri is one of the names of Isa or Parvati, wife of the greatest of the gods, Mahadeva or Iswara, who is conjoined with her in these rites, which almost exclusively appertain to the women. The meaning of *gouri* is 'yellow,' emblematic of the ripened harvest, when the votaries of the goddess adore her effigies, which are those of a matron painted the colour of ripe corn." The rites begin when the sun enters the sign of the Ram, the opening of the Hindoo year. An image of the goddess Gouri is made of earth, and a smaller one of her husband Iswara, and the two are placed together. A small trench is next dug, barley is sown in it, and the ground watered and heated artificially till the grain sprouts, when the women dance round it hand in hand, invoking the blessing of Gouri on their husbands. After that the young corn is taken up and distributed by the women to the men, who wear it in their turbans. Every wealthy family, or at least every subdivision of the city, has its own image. These and other rites, known only to the initiated, occupy several days, and are performed within doors. Then the images of the goddess and her husband are decorated and borne in procession to a beautiful lake, whose deep blue waters mirror the cloudless Indian sky, marble palaces, and orange groves. Here the women, their hair decked with roses and jessamine,



carry the image of Gouri down a marble staircase to the water's edge, and dance round it singing hymns and love-songs. Meantime the goddess is supposed to bathe in the water. No men take part in the ceremony; even the image of Iswara, the husband god, attracts little attention.<sup>1</sup> In these rites the distribution of the barley shoots to the men, and the invocation of a blessing on their husbands by the wives, point clearly to the desire of offspring as one motive for observing the custom. The same motive probably explains the use of gardens of Adonis at the marriage of Brahmans in the Madras Presidency. Five or nine sorts of seed grains are mixed and sown in little earthen vessels, and the couple water them for four days. On the fifth day the sprouts are taken out and thrown into a tank or river.<sup>2</sup>

In the Himalayan districts of north-western India the cultivators sow barley, maize, pulse, or mustard in a basket of earth on the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month (*Asārḥ*), which falls about the middle of July. Then on the last day of the month they place amidst the new sprouts small clay images of Mahadeo and Parvati and worship them in remembrance of the marriage of those deities. Next day they cut down the green stalks and wear them in their head-dress.<sup>3</sup> Similar is the barley feast known as *Jâyî* or *Jawâra* in upper India and as *Bhujariya* in the Central Provinces. On the seventh day of the light half of the month *Sâwan* grains of barley are sown in a pot of manure, and spring up so quickly that by the end of the month the vessel is full of long, yellowish-green stalks. On the first day of the next month, *Bhâdon*, the women and girls take the stalks out, throw the earth and manure into water, and distribute the plants among their male friends, who bind them in their turbans and about their dress.<sup>4</sup> At

Gardens of  
Adonis in  
north-  
western and  
central  
India.

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-Col. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, i. (London, 1829) pp. 570-572.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, xxv. (1896) p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, ii. (Allahabad, 1884) p. 870.

<sup>4</sup> W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), ii. 293 sq. Compare

Baboo Ishuree Dass, *Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindoos of Northern India* (Benares, 1860), pp. 111 sq. According to the latter writer, the festival of *Salono* [not *Salonan*] takes place in August, and the barley is planted by women and girls in baskets a few days before the festival, to be thrown by them into a river or tank when the grain has sprouted to the height of a few inches.



Sargal in the Central Provinces of India this ceremony is observed about the middle of September. None but women may take part in it, though crowds of men come to look on. Some little time before the festival wheat or other grain has been sown in pots ingeniously constructed of large leaves, which are held together by the thorns of a species of acacia. Having grown up in the dark, the stalks are of a pale colour. On the day appointed these gardens of Adonis, as we may call them, are carried towards a lake which abuts on the native city. The women of every family or circle of friends bring their own pots, and having laid them on the ground they dance round them. Then taking the pots of sprouting corn they descend to the edge of the water, wash the soil away from the pots, and distribute the young plants among their friends.<sup>1</sup>

Gardens of  
Adonis in  
Bavaria.

In some parts of Bavaria it is customary to sow flax in a pot on the last three days of the Carnival; from the seed which grows best an omen is drawn as to whether the early, the middle, or the late sowing will produce the best crop.<sup>2</sup>

Gardens of  
Adonis on  
St. John's  
Day in  
Sardinia.

In Sardinia the gardens of Adonis are still planted in connection with the great Midsummer festival which bears the name of St. John. At the end of March or on the first of April a young man of the village presents himself to a girl and asks her to be his *comare* (gossip or sweetheart), offering to be her *compare*. The invitation is considered as an honour by the girl's family, and is gladly accepted. At the end of May the girl makes a pot of the bark of the cork-tree, fills it with earth, and sows a handful of wheat and barley in it. The pot being placed in the sun and often watered, the corn sprouts rapidly and has a good head by Midsummer Eve (St. John's Eve, the twenty-third of June). The pot is then called *Erme* or *Nenneri*. On St. John's Day the young man and the girl, dressed in their best, accompanied by a long retinue and preceded by children gambolling and frolicking, move in procession to a church outside the village. Here they break the pot by throwing it against the door of the church. Then they sit down in a ring on the grass and eat

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. J. C. Murray - Aynsley, "Secular and Religious Dances," *Folklore Journal*, v. (1887) pp. 253 sq. The writer thinks that the ceremony

"probably fixes the season for sowing some particular crop."

<sup>2</sup> *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 298.



eggs and herbs to the music of flutes. Wine is mixed in a cup and passed round, each one drinking as it passes. Then they join hands and sing "Sweethearts of St. John" (*Compare e comare di San Giovanni*) over and over again, the flutes playing the while. When they tire of singing they stand up and dance gaily in a ring till evening. This is the general Sardinian custom. As practised at Ozieri it has some special features. In May the pots are made of cork-bark and planted with corn, as already described. Then on the Eve of St. John the window-sills are draped with rich cloths, on which the pots are placed, adorned with crimson and blue silk and ribbons of various colours. On each of the pots they used formerly to place a statuette or cloth doll dressed as a woman, or a Priapus-like figure made of paste; but this custom, rigorously forbidden by the Church, has fallen into disuse. The village swains go about in a troop to look at the pots and their decorations and to wait for the girls, who assemble on the public square to celebrate the festival. Here a great bonfire is kindled, round which they dance and make merry. Those who wish to be "Sweethearts of St. John" act as follows. The young man stands on one side of the bonfire and the girl on the other, and they, in a manner, join hands by each grasping one end of a long stick, which they pass three times backwards and forwards across the fire, thus thrusting their hands thrice rapidly into the flames. This seals their relationship to each other. Dancing and music go on till late at night.<sup>1</sup> The correspondence of these Sardinian pots of grain to the gardens of Adonis seems complete, and the images formerly placed in them answer to the images of Adonis which accompanied his gardens.

Customs of the same sort are observed at the same season in Sicily. Pairs of boys and girls become gossips of St. John on St. John's Day by drawing each a hair from his or her head and performing various ceremonies over them,

Gardens of  
Adonis on  
St. John's  
Day in  
Sicily.

<sup>1</sup> Antonio Bresciani, *Dei costumi dell'isola di Sardegna comparati cogli antichissimi popoli orientali* (Rome and Turin, 1866), pp. 427 sq.; R. Tennant, *Sardinia and its Resources* (Rome and London, 1885), p. 187; S.

Gabriele, "Usi dei contadini della Sardegna," *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*, vii. (1888) pp. 469 sq. Tennant says that the pots are kept in a dark warm place, and that the children leap across the fire.



such as tying the hairs together and throwing them up in the air, or exchanging them over a potsherd, which they afterwards break in two, preserving each a fragment with pious care. The tie formed in the latter way is supposed to last for life. In some parts of Sicily the gossips of St. John present each other with plates of sprouting corn, lentils, and canary seed, which have been planted forty days before the festival. The one who receives the plate pulls a stalk of the young plants, binds it with a ribbon, and preserves it among his or her greatest treasures, restoring the platter to the giver. At Catania the gossips exchange pots of basil and great cucumbers; the girls tend the basil, and the thicker it grows the more it is prized.<sup>1</sup>

In these Sardinian and Sicilian ceremonies St. John may have taken the place of Adonis.

In these midsummer customs of Sardinia and Sicily it is possible that, as Mr. R. Wünsch supposes,<sup>2</sup> St. John has replaced Adonis. We have seen that the rites of Tammuz or Adonis were commonly celebrated about midsummer; according to Jerome, their date was June.<sup>3</sup> And besides their date and their similarity in respect of the pots of herbs and corn, there is another point of affinity between the two festivals, the heathen and the Christian. In both of them water plays a prominent part. At his midsummer festival in Babylon the image of Tammuz, whose name is said to mean "true son of the deep water," was bathed with pure water: at his summer festival in Alexandria the image of Adonis, with that of his divine mistress Aphrodite, was committed to the waves; and at the midsummer celebration in Greece the gardens of Adonis were thrown into the sea or into springs. Now a great feature of the midsummer festival associated with the name of St. John is, or used to be, the custom of bathing in the sea, springs, rivers, or the dew on Midsummer Eve or the morning of Midsummer Day. Thus, for example, at Naples there is a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist under the name of St. John of the Sea

Custom of bathing on the Eve or Day of St. John (Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day).

<sup>1</sup> G. Pitre, *Usi e Costumi, Credenze e Pregiudizi del popolo siciliano*, ii. 271-278. Compare *id.*, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, pp. 297 sq. In the Abruzzi also young men and young women become gossips by exchanging nosegays on St. John's Day,

and the tie thus formed is regarded as sacred. See G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, pp. 165 sq.

<sup>2</sup> R. Wünsch, *Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta*, pp. 47-57.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 7, 128.



(*S. Giovan a mare*); and it was an old practice for men and women to bathe in the sea on St. John's Eve, that is, on Midsummer Eve, believing that thus all their sins were washed away.<sup>1</sup> In the Abruzzi water is still supposed to acquire certain marvellous and beneficent properties on St. John's Night. They say that on that night the sun and moon bathe in the water. Hence many people take a bath in the sea or in a river at that season, especially at the moment of sunrise. At Castiglione a Casauria they go before sunrise to the Pescara River or to springs, wash their faces and hands, then gird themselves with twigs of bryony (*vitalba*) and twine the plant round their brows, in order that they may be free from pains. At Pescina boys and girls wash each other's faces in a river or a spring, then exchange kisses, and become gossips. The dew, also, that falls on St. John's Night is supposed in the Abruzzi to benefit whatever it touches, whether it be water, flowers, or the human body. For that reason people put out vessels of water on the window-sills or the terraces, and wash themselves with the water in the morning in order to purify themselves and escape headaches and colds. A still more efficacious mode of accomplishing the same end is to rise at the peep of dawn, to wet the hands in the dewy grass, and then to rub the moisture on the eyelids, the brow, and the temples, because the dew is believed to cure maladies of the head and eyes. It is also a remedy for diseases of the skin. Persons who are thus afflicted should roll on the dewy grass. When patients are prevented by their infirmity or any other cause from quitting the house, their friends will gather the dew in sheets or tablecloths and so apply it to the suffering part.<sup>2</sup> At Marsala in Sicily there is a spring of water in a subterranean grotto called the Grotto of the Sibyl. Beside it stands a church of St. John, which has been supposed to occupy the site of a temple of Apollo. On St. John's Eve, the twenty-third of June, women and girls visit the grotto, and by drinking of the prophetic water learn whether their husbands have been faithful to them in the year that is past, or whether they themselves will wed

<sup>1</sup> J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup>  
i. 490.

<sup>2</sup> G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi  
Costumi Abruzzesi*, pp. 156-160.



in the year that is to come. Sick people, too, imagine that by bathing in the water, drinking of it, or ducking thrice in it in the name of the Trinity, they will be made whole.<sup>1</sup> At Chiaramonte in Sicily the following custom is observed on St. John's Eve. The men repair to one fountain and the women to another, and dip their heads thrice in the water, repeating at each ablution certain verses in honour of St. John. They believe that this is a cure or preventive of the scald.<sup>2</sup> When Petrarch visited Cologne, he chanced to arrive in the town on St. John's Eve. The sun was nearly setting, and his host at once led him to the Rhine. A strange sight there met his eyes, for the banks of the river were covered with pretty women. The crowd was great but good-humoured. From a rising ground on which he stood the poet saw many of the women, girt with fragrant herbs, kneel down on the water's edge, roll their sleeves up above their elbows, and wash their white arms and hands in the river, murmuring softly some words which the Italian did not understand. He was told that the custom was a very old one, much honoured in the observance; for the common folk, especially the women, believed that to wash in the river on St. John's Eve would avert every misfortune in the coming year.<sup>3</sup> On St. John's Eve the people of Copenhagen used to go on pilgrimage to a neighbouring spring, there to heal and strengthen themselves in the water.<sup>4</sup> In Spain people still bathe in the sea or roll naked in the dew of the meadows on St. John's Eve, believing that this is a sovereign preservative against diseases of the skin.<sup>5</sup> To roll in the dew on the morning of St. John's Day is also esteemed a cure for diseases of the skin in Normandy and Perigord. In Perigord a field of hemp is especially recommended for the purpose, and the patient should rub himself with the plants on which he has rolled.<sup>6</sup> At Ciotat in

<sup>1</sup> G. Pitre, *Feste patronali in Sicilia* (Turin and Palermo, 1900), pp. 488, 491-493.

<sup>2</sup> G. Pitre, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> Petrarch, *Epistolae de rebus familiaribus*, i. 4 (vol. i. pp. 44-46 ed. J. Fracassetti). The passage is quoted

by J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 489 sq.

<sup>4</sup> J. Grimm, *op. cit.* i. 489.

<sup>5</sup> Letter of Dr. Otero Acevado, of Madrid, *Le Temps*, September 1898.

<sup>6</sup> J. Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 8; A. de Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des provinces de France*, p. 150.



Provence, while the midsummer bonfire blazed, young people used to plunge into the sea and splash each other vigorously. At Vitrolles they bathed in a pond in order that they might not suffer from fever during the year, and at Saint-Maries they watered the horses to protect them from the itch.<sup>1</sup> A custom of drenching people on this occasion with water formerly prevailed in Toulon, Marseilles, and other towns of the south of France. The water was squirted from syringes, poured on the heads of passers-by from windows, and so forth.<sup>2</sup> From Europe the practice of bathing in rivers and springs on St. John's Day appears to have passed with the Spaniards to the New World.<sup>3</sup>

It may perhaps be suggested that this wide-spread custom of bathing in water or dew on Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day is purely Christian in origin, having been adopted as an appropriate mode of celebrating the day dedicated to the Baptist. But in point of fact the custom is older than Christianity, for it was denounced and forbidden as a heathen practice by Augustine.<sup>4</sup> We may conjecture that the Church, unable to put down this relic of paganism, followed its usual policy of accommodation by bestowing on the rite a Christian name and acquiescing, with a sigh, in its observance. And casting about for a saint to supplant a heathen patron of bathing, the Christian doctors could hardly have hit upon a more appropriate successor than St. John the Baptist.

The custom of bathing at midsummer is pagan, not Christian, in its origin.

But into whose shoes did the Baptist step? Was the displaced deity really Adonis, as the foregoing evidence seems to suggest? In Sardinia and Sicily it may have been so, for in these islands Semitic influence was certainly deep and probably lasting. The midsummer pastimes of Sardinian and Sicilian children may therefore be a direct continuation of the Carthaginian rites of Tammuz. Yet the midsummer festival seems too widely spread and too deeply

Old heathen festival of midsummer in Europe and the East.

<sup>1</sup> A. de Nore, *op. cit.* p. 20; Béranger-Féraud, *Reminiscences populaires de la Provence*, pp. 135-141.

<sup>2</sup> Breuil, in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, viii. (1845) pp. 237 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Diego Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, edited by J.

F. Ramirez (Mexico, 1867-1880), ii. 293.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *Opera*, v. (Paris, 1683) col. 903; *id.*, *Pars Secunda*, coll. 461 sq. The second of these passages occurs in a sermon of doubtful authenticity. Both have been quoted by J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 490.



rooted in central and northern Europe to allow us to trace it everywhere to an Oriental origin in general and to the cult of Adonis in particular. It has the air of a native of the soil rather than of an exotic imported from the East. We shall do better, therefore, to suppose that at a remote period similar modes of thought, based on similar needs, led men independently in many distant lands, from the North Sea to the Euphrates, to celebrate the summer solstice with rites which, while they differed in some things, yet agreed closely in others; that in historical times a wave of Oriental influence, starting perhaps from Babylonia, carried the Tammuz or Adonis form of the festival westward till it met with native forms of a similar festival; and that under pressure of the Roman civilisation these different yet kindred festivals fused with each other and crystallised into a variety of shapes, which subsisted more or less separately side by side, till the Church, unable to suppress them altogether, stripped them so far as it could of their grosser features, and dexterously changing the names allowed them to pass muster as Christian. And what has just been said of the midsummer festivals probably applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the spring festivals also. They, too, seem to have originated independently in Europe and the East, and after ages of separation to have amalgamated under the sway of the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. In Syria, as we have seen, there appears to have been a vernal celebration of Adonis; and we shall presently meet with an undoubted instance of an Oriental festival of spring in the rites of Attis. Meantime we must return for a little to the midsummer festival which goes by the name of St. John.

Mid-  
summer  
fires and  
mid-  
summer  
couples in  
relation to  
vegetation.

The Sardinian practice of making merry round a great bonfire on St. John's Eve is an instance of a custom which has been practised at the midsummer festival from time immemorial in many parts of Europe. That custom has been more fully dealt with by me elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The instances which I have there cited suffice to prove the connection of the midsummer bonfire with vegetation. For example, both in Sweden and Bohemia an essential part of the festival is the raising of a May-pole or Midsummer-tree, which in Bohemia

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 266 *sqq.*



is burned in the bonfire.<sup>1</sup> Again, in a Russian midsummer ceremony a straw figure of Kupalo, the representative of vegetation, is placed beside a May-pole or Midsummer-tree and then carried to and fro across a bonfire.<sup>2</sup> Kupalo is here represented in duplicate, in tree-form by the Midsummer-tree, and in human form by the straw effigy, just as Adonis was represented both by an image and a garden of Adonis; and the duplicate representatives of Kupalo, like those of Adonis, are finally cast into water. In the Sardinian and Sicilian customs the Gossips or Sweethearts of St. John probably answer, on the one hand to Adonis and Astarte, on the other to the King and Queen of May. In the Swedish province of Blekinge part of the midsummer festival is the election of a Midsummer Bride, who chooses her bridegroom; a collection is made for the pair, who for the time being are looked upon as man and wife.<sup>3</sup> Such Midsummer pairs may be supposed, like the May pairs, to stand for the powers of vegetation or of fertility in general: they represent in flesh and blood what the images of Siva or Mahadeô and Pârvatî in the Indian ceremonies, and the images of Adonis and Aphrodite in the Alexandrian ceremony, set forth in effigy.

The reason why ceremonies whose aim is to foster the growth of vegetation should thus be associated with bonfires; why in particular the representative of vegetation should be burned in the likeness of a tree, or passed across the fire in effigy or in the form of a living couple, must be reserved for discussion in another work.<sup>4</sup> Here it is enough to have proved the fact of such association, and therefore to have obviated the objection which might have been

Gardens of Adonis intended to foster the growth of vegetation, and especially of the crops.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 202 sq.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 105.

<sup>3</sup> L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> In the meanwhile I may refer to *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 300 sqq., and the criticisms of Dr. E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. (London, 1906) p. 56, note 3. In the passage referred to I followed W. Mannhardt in interpreting these bonfires as mainly sun-charms, but I recognised their supposed purgative virtue also, pointing out that "to the

primitive mind fire is the most powerful of all purificatory agents" (p. 312). Dr. Westermarck would explain the fires as purificatory only. I am so far in agreement with him that I believe I overestimated the strength of the evidence for the solar virtue of the fires, and underestimated the strength of the evidence for their purificatory virtue. Meantime I suspend my judgment on the question until I have carefully reconsidered the evidence, as I shall do in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.



Modes of  
divination  
at mid-  
summer  
like the  
gardens of  
Adonis.

raised to my theory of the Sardinian custom, on the ground that the bonfires have nothing to do with vegetation. One more piece of evidence may here be given to prove the contrary. In some parts of Germany young men and girls leap over midsummer bonfires for the express purpose of making the hemp or flax grow tall.<sup>1</sup> We may, therefore, assume that in the Sardinian custom the blades of wheat and barley which are forced on in pots for the midsummer festival, and which correspond so closely to the gardens of Adonis, form one of those widely-spread midsummer ceremonies, the original object of which was to promote the growth of vegetation, and especially of the crops. But as, by an easy extension of ideas, the spirit of vegetation was believed to exercise a beneficent and fertilising influence on human as well as animal life, the gardens of Adonis would be supposed, like the May-trees or May-boughs, to bring good luck, and more particularly perhaps offspring,<sup>2</sup> to the family or to the person who planted them; and even after the idea had been abandoned that they operated actively to confer prosperity, they might still be used to furnish omens of good or evil. It is thus that magic dwindles into divination. Accordingly we find modes of divination practised at midsummer which resemble more or less closely the gardens of Adonis. Thus an anonymous Italian writer of the sixteenth century has recorded that it was customary to sow barley and wheat a few days before the festival of St. John (Midsummer Day) and also before that of St. Vitus; and it was believed that the person for whom they were sown would be fortunate, and get a good husband or a good wife, if the grain sprouted well; but if it sprouted ill, he or she would be unlucky.<sup>3</sup> In various parts of Italy and all over Sicily it is still customary to put plants in water or in earth on the Eve of St. John, and from the manner in which they are found to be blooming or fading on St. John's Day omens are drawn, especially as to fortune in love. Amongst the plants used for this purpose

<sup>1</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 464; K. von Leoprechting, *Aus dem Lechrain*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> The use of gardens of Adonis to fertilise the human sexes appears plainly

in the corresponding Indian practices. See above, pp. 142-144.

<sup>3</sup> G. Pitre, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, pp. 296 sq.



are *Ciuri di S. Giovanni* (St. John's wort?) and nettles.<sup>1</sup> In Prussia two hundred years ago the farmers used to send out their servants, especially their maids, to gather St. John's wort on Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day (St. John's Day). When they had fetched it, the farmer took as many plants as there were persons and stuck them in the wall or between the beams; and it was thought that he or she whose plant did not bloom would soon fall sick or die. The rest of the plants were tied in a bundle, fastened to the end of a pole, and set up at the gate or wherever the corn would be brought in at the next harvest. The bundle was called *Kupole*: the ceremony was known as Kupole's festival; and at it the farmer prayed for a good crop of hay, and so forth.<sup>2</sup> This Prussian custom is particularly notable, inasmuch as it strongly confirms the opinion that Kupalo (doubtless identical with Kupole) was originally a deity of vegetation.<sup>3</sup> For here Kupalo is represented by a bundle of plants specially associated with midsummer in folk-custom; and her influence over vegetation is plainly signified by placing her vegetable emblem over the place where the harvest is brought in, as well as by the prayers for a good crop which are uttered on the occasion. This furnishes a fresh argument in support of the view that the Death, whose analogy to Kupalo, Yarilo, and the rest I have shown elsewhere, originally personified vegetation, more especially the dying or dead vegetation of winter.<sup>4</sup> Further, my interpretation of the gardens of Adonis is confirmed by finding that in this Prussian custom the very same kind of plants is used to form the gardens of Adonis (as we may call them) and the image of the deity. Nothing could set in a stronger light the truth of the theory that the gardens of Adonis are merely another manifestation of the god himself.

In Sicily gardens of Adonis are still sown in spring

Sicilian  
gardens of  
Adonis in  
spring.

<sup>1</sup> G. Pitre, *op. cit.* pp. 302 sq.; Antonio de Nino, *Usi Abruzzesi*, i. 55 sq.; A. de Guèrnatis, *Usi Nuziali*, pp. 39 sq. Compare *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*, i. 135. At Smyrna a blossom of the *Agnus castus* is used on St. John's Day for a similar purpose, but the mode in which the omens are drawn is somewhat

different (*Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*, vii. (1888) pp. 128 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> Matthäus Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae*, herausgegeben von Dr. W. Pierson (Berlin, 1871), p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 105 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> l.c.



as well as in summer, from which we may perhaps infer that Sicily as well as Syria celebrated of old a vernal festival of the dead and risen god. At the approach of Easter, Sicilian women sow wheat, lentils, and canary-seed in plates, which they keep in the dark and water every two days. The plants soon shoot up; the stalks are tied together with red ribbons, and the plates containing them are placed on the sepulchres which, with the effigies of the dead Christ, are made up in Catholic and Greek churches on Good Friday,<sup>1</sup> just as the gardens of Adonis were placed on the grave of the dead Adonis.<sup>2</sup> The practice is not confined to Sicily, for it is observed also at Cosenza in Calabria,<sup>3</sup> and perhaps in other places. The whole custom—sepulchres as well as plates of sprouting grain—may be nothing but a continuation, under a different name, of the worship of Adonis.

Resemblance of the Easter ceremonies in the Greek Church to the rites of Adonis.

Nor are these Sicilian and Calabrian customs the only Easter ceremonies which resemble the rites of Adonis. "During the whole of Good Friday a waxen effigy of the dead Christ is exposed to view in the middle of the Greek churches and is covered with fervent kisses by the thronging crowd, while the whole church rings with melancholy, monotonous dirges. Late in the evening, when it has grown quite dark, this waxen image is carried by the priests into the street on a bier adorned with lemons, roses, and jessamine, and there begins a grand procession of the multitude, who move in serried ranks, with slow and solemn step, through the whole town. Every man carries his taper and breaks out into doleful lamentation. At all the houses which the procession passes there are seated women with censers to fumigate the marching host. Thus the community solemnly buries its Christ as if he had just died. At last the waxen image is again deposited in the church, and the same lugubrious chants echo anew. These lamentations, accompanied by a strict fast, continue till midnight on Saturday. As the clock strikes twelve, the bishop appears and announces the glad tidings that 'Christ

<sup>1</sup> G. Pitre, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Κήπους ὠσιστῶν ἐπιταφίους Ἀδώνιδι, Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xi. 590.

<sup>3</sup> Vincenzo Dorsa, *La tradizione Greco-Latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore* (Cosenza, 1884), p. 50.



is risen,' to which the crowd replies, 'He is risen indeed,' and at once the whole city bursts into an uproar of joy, which finds vent in shrieks and shouts, in the endless discharge of carronades and muskets, and the explosion of fire-works of every sort. In the very same hour people plunge from the extremity of the fast into the enjoyment of the Easter lamb and neat wine."<sup>1</sup>

In like manner the Catholic Church has been accustomed to bring before its followers in a visible form the death and resurrection of the Redeemer. Such sacred dramas are well fitted to impress the lively imagination and to stir the warm feelings of a susceptible southern race, to whom the pomp and pageantry of Catholicism are more congenial than to the colder temperament of the Teutonic peoples. The solemnities observed in Sicily on Good Friday, the official anniversary of the Crucifixion, are thus described by a native Sicilian writer. "A truly moving ceremony is the procession which always takes place in the evening in every commune of Sicily, and further the Deposition from the Cross. The brotherhoods took part in the procession, and the rear was brought up by a great many boys and girls representing saints, both male and female, and carrying the emblems of Christ's Passion. The Deposition from the Cross was managed by the priests. The coffin with the dead Christ in it was flanked by Jews armed with swords, an object of horror and aversion in the midst of the profound pity excited by the sight not only of Christ but of the Mater Dolorosa, who followed behind him. Now and then the 'mysteries' or symbols of the Crucifixion went in front. Sometimes the procession followed the 'three hours of agony' and the 'Deposition from the Cross.' The 'three hours' commemorated those which Jesus Christ passed upon

Resemblance of the Easter ceremonies in the Catholic Church to the rites of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> C. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuem*, pp. 26 sq. The writer compares these ceremonies with the Eleusinian rites. But I agree with Mr. R. Wünsch (*Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta*, pp. 49 sq.) that the resemblance to the Adonis festival is still closer. Compare V. Dorsa, *La tradizione Greco-Latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore*, pp. 49 sq. Prof. Wachsmuth's

description seems to apply to Athens. In the country districts the ritual is apparently similar. See R. A. Arnold, *From the Levant* (London, 1868), pp. 251 sq., 259 sq. So in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem the death and burial of Christ are acted over a life-like effigy. See H. Maundrell, in Th. Wright's *Early Travels in Palestine* (London, 1848), pp. 443-445.



the Cross. Beginning at the eighteenth and ending at the twenty-first hour of Italian time two priests preached alternately on the Passion. Anciently the sermons were delivered in the open air on the place called the Calvary: at last, when the third hour was about to strike, at the words *emisit spiritum* Christ died, bowing his head amid the sobs and tears of the bystanders. Immediately afterwards in some places, three hours afterwards in others, the sacred body was unnailed and deposited in the coffin. In Castro-nuovo, at the Ave Maria, two priests clad as Jews, representing Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, with their servants in costume, repaired to the Calvary, preceded by the Company of the Whites. There, with doleful verses and chants appropriate to the occasion, they performed the various operations of the Deposition, after which the procession took its way to the larger church. . . . In Salaparuta the Calvary is erected in the church. At the preaching of the death, the Crucified is made to bow his head by means of machinery, while guns are fired, trumpets sound, and amid the silence of the people, impressed by the death of the Redeemer, the strains of a melancholy funeral march are heard. Christ is removed from the Cross and deposited in the coffin by three priests. After the procession of the dead Christ the burial is performed, that is, two priests lay Christ in a fictitious sepulchre, from which at the mass of Easter Saturday the image of the risen Christ issues and is elevated upon the altar by means of machinery."<sup>1</sup> Scenic representations of the same sort, with variations of detail, are exhibited at Easter in the Abruzzi,<sup>2</sup> and probably in many other parts of the Catholic world.

The  
Christian  
festival of  
Easter  
perhaps  
grafted on  
a festival  
of Adonis.

When we reflect how often the Church has skilfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration

<sup>1</sup> G. Pitre, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, pp. 216-218.

<sup>2</sup> G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, pp. 118-120; A. de Nino, *Usi Abruzzesi*, i. 64 sq., ii. 210-212. At Roccamaramanico part

of the Easter spectacle is the death of Judas, who, personated by a living man, pretends to hang himself upon a tree or a great branch, which has been brought into the church and planted near the high altar for the purpose (A. de Nino, *op. cit.* ii. 211).



of the dead and risen Adonis, which, as we have seen reason to believe, was celebrated in Syria at the same season. The type, created by Greek artists, of the sorrowful goddess with her dying lover in her arms, resembles and may have been the model of the *Pietà* of Christian art, the Virgin with the dead body of her divine Son in her lap, of which the most celebrated example is the one by Michael Angelo in St. Peter's. That noble group, in which the living sorrow of the mother contrasts so wonderfully with the languor of death in the son, is one of the finest compositions in marble. Ancient Greek art has bequeathed to us few works so beautiful, and none so pathetic.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection a well-known statement of Jerome may not be without significance. He tells us that Bethlehem, the traditionary birth-place of the Lord, was shaded by a grove of that still older Syrian Lord, Adonis, and that where the infant Jesus had wept, the lover of Venus was bewailed.<sup>2</sup> Though he does not expressly say so, Jerome seems to have thought that the grove of Adonis had been planted by the heathen after the birth of Christ for the purpose of defiling the sacred spot. In this he may have been mistaken; but even if he was right, the choice of Adonis to succeed Christ cannot but strike us as eminently appropriate when we remember the similarity of the rites which commemorated the death and resurrection of the two. One of the earliest seats of the worship of the new god was Antioch, and at Antioch, as we have seen,<sup>3</sup> the death of the old god was annually celebrated with great solemnity. A circumstance which attended the entrance of Julian into the city at the time of the Adonis festival may perhaps throw some light on the date of its celebration. When the emperor drew near to the city he was received with public prayers as if he had been a god, and he marvelled at the voices of a great multitude who cried that the Star of Salvation had dawned upon them in the East.<sup>4</sup> This may doubtless have been no more than a

The  
worship of  
Adonis at  
Bethlehem.

The  
Morning  
Star,  
identified  
with  
Venus,  
may have  
been the  
signal for  
the festival  
of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> The comparison has already been made by A. Maury, who also compares the Easter ceremonies of the Catholic Church with the rites of Adonis (*Histoire des Religions de la*

*Grèce Antique*, iii. 221).

<sup>2</sup> Jerome, *Epist.* lviii. 3 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxii. 581).

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 9.



fulsome compliment paid by an obsequious Oriental crowd to the Roman emperor. But it is also possible that the rising of a bright star regularly gave the signal for the festival, and that as chance would have it the star emerged above the rim of the eastern horizon at the very moment of the emperor's approach. The coincidence, if it happened, could hardly fail to strike the imagination of a superstitious and excited multitude, who might thereupon hail the great man as the deity whose coming was announced by the sign in the heavens. Or the emperor may have mistaken for a greeting to himself the shouts which were addressed to the star. Now Astarte, the divine mistress of Adonis, was identified with the planet Venus, and her changes from a morning to an evening star were carefully noted by the Babylonian astronomers, who drew omens from her alternate appearance and disappearance.<sup>1</sup> Hence we may conjecture that the festival of Adonis was regularly timed to coincide with the appearance of Venus as the Morning or Evening Star. But the star which the people of Antioch saluted at the festival was seen in the East; therefore, if it was indeed Venus, it can only have been the Morning Star. At Aphaca in Syria, where there was a famous temple of Astarte, the signal for the celebration of the rites was apparently given by the flashing of a meteor, which on a certain day fell like a star from the top of Mount Lebanon into the river Adonis. The meteor was thought to be Astarte herself,<sup>2</sup> and its flight through the air might naturally be interpreted as the descent of the amorous goddess to the arms of her lover. At Antioch and elsewhere the appearance of the Morning Star on the day of the festival may in like manner have been hailed as the coming

14: "*Urbique propinquans in speciem alicujus numinis votis excipitur publicis, miratus voces multitudinis magnae, salutare sidus inluxisse eois partibus adclamantis.*"

<sup>1</sup> M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 370 sqq.; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> p. 424.

<sup>2</sup> Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*,

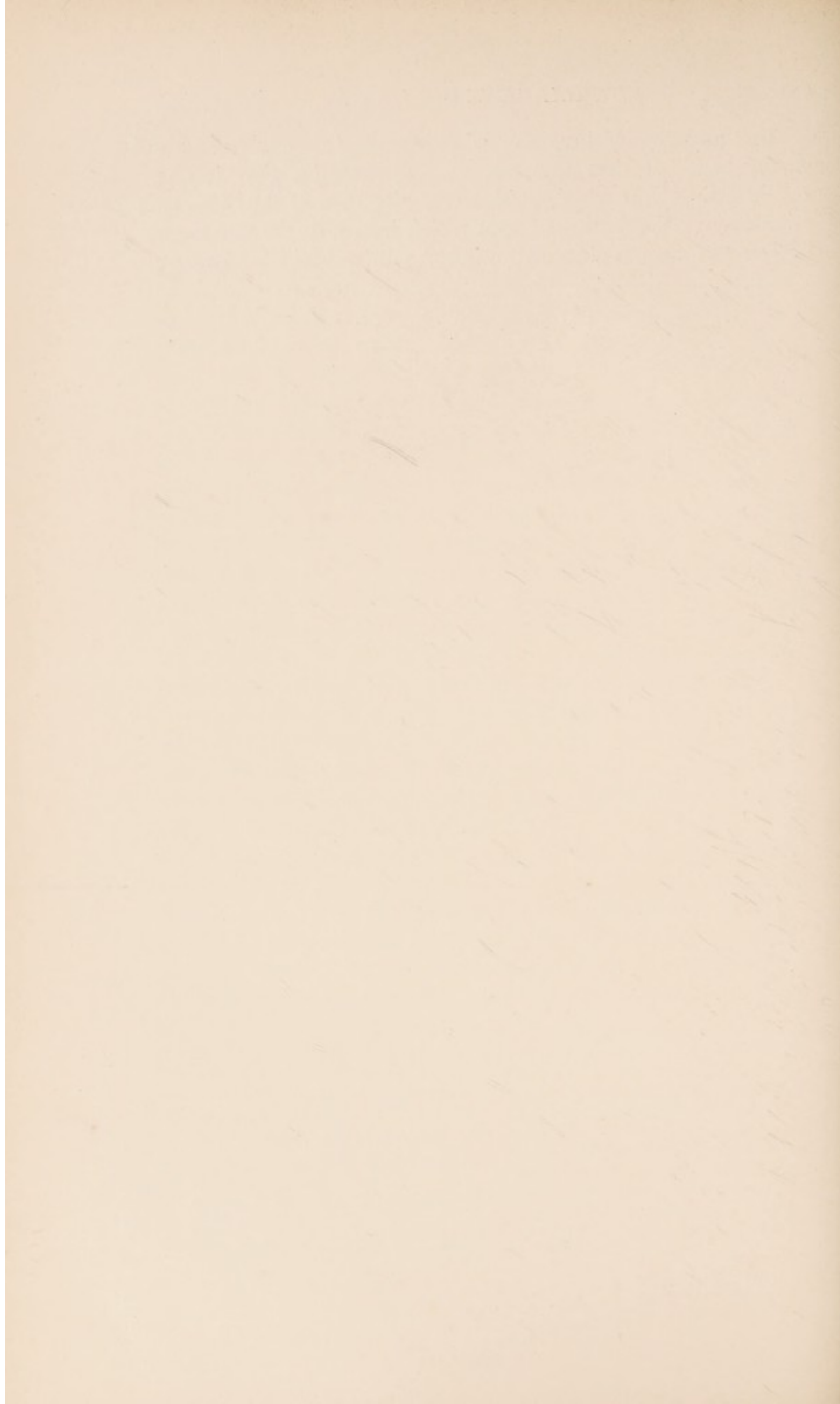
ii. 5. The connection of the meteor with the festival of Adonis is not mentioned by Sozomenus, but is confirmed by Zosimus, who says (*Hist.* i. 58) that a light like a torch or a globe of fire was seen on the sanctuary at the seasons when the people assembled to worship the goddess and to cast their offerings of gold, silver, and fine raiment into a lake beside the temple. As to Aphaca and the grave of Adonis see above, pp. 14 sqq.



of the goddess of love to wake her dead leman from his earthy bed. If that were so, we may surmise that it was the Morning Star which guided the wise men of the East to Bethlehem,<sup>1</sup> the hallowed spot which heard, in the language of Jerome, the weeping of the infant Christ and the lament for Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew ii. 1-12.



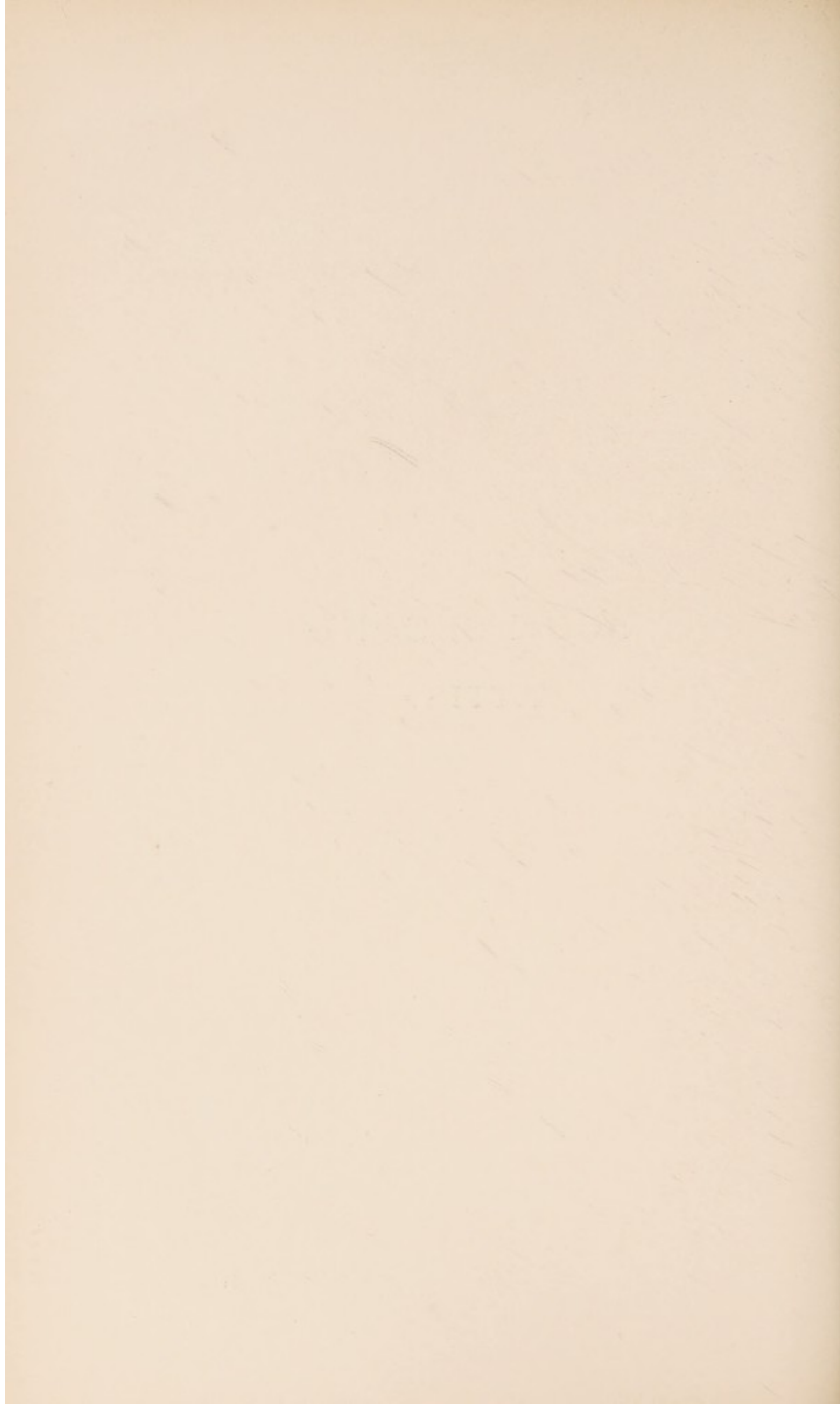




BOOK SECOND

ATTIS







## CHAPTER I

### THE MYTH AND RITUAL OF ATTIS

ANOTHER of those gods whose supposed death and resurrection struck such deep roots into the faith and ritual of western Asia is Attis. He was to Phrygia what Adonis was to Syria. Like Adonis, he appears to have been a god of vegetation, and his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced over at a festival in spring.<sup>1</sup> The legends and rites of the two gods were so much alike that the ancients themselves sometimes identified them.<sup>2</sup> Attis was said to have been a fair young shepherd or herdsman beloved by Cybele, the Mother of the Gods, a great Asiatic goddess of fertility, who had her chief home in Phrygia.<sup>3</sup> Some held that Attis was her son.<sup>4</sup> His birth, like that of many other heroes, is said to have been miraculous. His mother, Nana, was a virgin, who conceived

Attis the Phrygian counterpart of Adonis.

His relation to Cybele.

His miraculous birth.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 59. 7; Salustius philosophus, "Dediisset mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3 and 22. The ancient evidence, literary and inscriptional, as to the myth and ritual of Attis has been collected and discussed by Mr. H. Hepding in his monograph, *Attis, Seine Mythen und sein Kult* (Giessen, 1903).

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, p. 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; Socrates, *Historia*

*Ecclesiastica*, iii. 23. 51 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 223 sqq.; Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 15; *id.*, *Ad Nationes*, i. 10; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, iv. 35. As to Cybele, the Great Mother, the Mother of the Gods, conceived as the source of all life, both animal and vegetable, see Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1638 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Scholiast on Lucian, *Jupiter Tragoedus*, 8, p. 60 ed. H. Rabe (vol. iv. p. 173 ed. C. Jacobitz); Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, pp. 168, 170 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.



The death  
of Attis.

by putting a ripe almond or a pomegranate in her bosom. Indeed in the Phrygian cosmogony an almond figured as the father of all things.<sup>1</sup> Such tales of virgin mothers are relics of an age of childish ignorance when men had not yet recognised the intercourse of the sexes as the true cause of offspring. That ignorance, still shared by the lowest of existing savages, the aboriginal tribes of central Australia,<sup>2</sup> was doubtless at one time universal among mankind. Even in later times, when people are better acquainted with the laws of nature, they sometimes imagine that these laws may be subject to exceptions, and that miraculous beings may be born in miraculous ways by women who have never known a man. Two different accounts of the death of Attis were current. According to the one he was killed by a boar, like Adonis. According to the other he unmanned himself under a pine-tree, and bled to death on the spot. The latter is said to have been the local story told by the people of Pessinus, a great seat of the worship of Cybele, and the whole legend of which the story forms a part is stamped with a character of rudeness and savagery that speaks strongly for its antiquity.<sup>3</sup> Both tales might claim the support of custom, or rather both were probably invented to explain certain customs observed by the worshippers. The story of the self-mutilation of Attis is clearly an attempt to account for the self-mutilation of his priests, who regularly castrated themselves on entering the service of the goddess. The story of his death by the boar may have been told to explain why his worshippers, especially the people of Pessinus, abstained from

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, vii. 17. 11; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, pp. 166, 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 124 sq., 265; *id.*, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 150, 162, 330 sq., 606.

<sup>3</sup> That Attis was killed by a boar was stated by Hermesianax, an elegiac poet of the fourth century B.C. (Pausanias, vii. 17); compare Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8. The other story is told by Arnobius (*Ad-*

*versus Nationes*, v. 5 sqq.) on the authority of Timotheus, an otherwise unknown writer, who professed to derive it from recondite antiquarian works and from the very heart of the mysteries. It is obviously identical with the account which Pausanias (*l.c.*) mentions as the story current in Pessinus. According to Servius (on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115), Attis was found bleeding to death under a pine-tree, but the wound which robbed him of his virility and his life was not inflicted by himself.



eating swine.<sup>1</sup> After his death Attis is said to have been changed into a pine-tree.<sup>2</sup>

The worship of the Phrygian Mother of the Gods was adopted by the Romans in 204 B.C. towards the close of their long struggle with Hannibal. For their drooping spirits had been opportunely cheered by a prophecy, alleged to be drawn from that convenient farrago of nonsense, the Sibylline Books, that the foreign invader would be driven from Italy if the great Oriental goddess were brought to Rome. Accordingly ambassadors were despatched to her sacred city Pessinus in Phrygia. The small black stone which embodied the mighty divinity was entrusted to them and conveyed to Rome, where it was received with great respect and installed in the temple of Victory on the Palatine Hill. It was the middle of April when the goddess arrived,<sup>3</sup> and she went to work at once. For the harvest that year was such as had not been seen for many a long day,<sup>4</sup> and in the very next year Hannibal and his veterans embarked for Africa. As he looked his last on the coast of Italy, fading behind him in the distance, he could not foresee that Europe, which had repelled the arms, would yet yield to the gods, of the Orient. The vanguard of the conquerors had already encamped in the heart of Italy before the rearguard of the beaten army fell sullenly back from its shores.

Worship  
of Cybele  
introduced  
into Rome  
in 204 B.C.

We may conjecture, though we are not told, that the Mother of the Gods brought with her the worship of her youthful lover or son to her new home in the West. Certainly the Romans were familiar with the Galli, the emasculated priests of Attis, before the close of the Republic. These unsexed beings, in their Oriental costume, with little images suspended on their breasts, appear to have been a familiar sight in the streets of Rome, which they traversed in procession, carrying the image of the goddess and chanting their hymns to the music of cymbals and tambourines, flutes

Attis and  
his eunuch  
priests the  
Galli at  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, vii. 17. 10; Julian, *Orat.* v. 177 B, p. 229 ed. F. C. Hertlein. Similarly at Comana in Pontus, the seat of the worship of the goddess Ma, pork was not eaten, and swine might not even be brought into the city (Strabo, xii. 8. 9, p. 575). As to Comana see above, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Metam.* x. 103 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Livy, xxix. chs. 10, 11, and 14; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 259 *sqq.*; Herodian, ii. 11. As to the stone which represented the goddess see Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 16.



and horns, while the people, impressed by the fantastic show and moved by the wild strains, flung alms to them in abundance, and buried the image and its bearers under showers of roses.<sup>1</sup> A further step was taken by the Emperor Claudius when he incorporated the Phrygian worship of the sacred tree, and with it probably the orgiastic rites of Attis, in the established religion of Rome.<sup>2</sup> The great spring festival of Cybele and Attis is best known to us in the form in which it was celebrated at Rome; but as we are informed that the Roman ceremonies were also Phrygian,<sup>3</sup> we may assume that they differed hardly, if at all, from their Asiatic original. The order of the festival seems to have been as follows.<sup>4</sup>

The spring festival of Cybele and Attis at Rome.

At the vernal equinox, the twenty-second of March, a pine-tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a great divinity. The duty of carrying the sacred tree was entrusted to a guild of Tree-bearers. The trunk was swathed like a corpse with woollen bands and decked with wreaths of violets, for violets were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis, as roses and anemones from the blood of Adonis; and the effigy of a young man, doubtless Attis himself, was tied to the middle of the stem.<sup>5</sup> On the second day of the festival, the twenty-third of March, the chief ceremony seems to have been a blowing of trumpets.<sup>6</sup> The third day, the twenty-fourth of

The Day of Blood.

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius, ii. 598 sqq.; Catullus, lxiii.; Varro, *Satir. Menipp.*, ed. F. Bücheler, pp. 176, 178; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 181 sqq., 223 sqq., 361 sqq.; Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 19; compare Polybius, xxii. 18 ed. L. Dindorf.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 41. See Robinson Ellis, *Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford, 1876), pp. 206 sq.; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 142 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Arrian, *Tactica*, 33; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* xii. 836.

<sup>4</sup> On the festival see J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 370 sqq.; the calendar of Philocalus, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> p. 260, with Th. Mommsen's commentary; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 291 sqq.; *id.*, *Baumkultus*, pp. 572 sqq.; G. Wissowa,

*Religion und Kultus der Römer*, pp. 264 sqq.; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 147 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Julian, *Orat.* v. 168 c, p. 218 ed. F. C. Hertlein; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 41; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. chs. 7, 16, 39; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 27; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33. As to the guild of Tree-bearers (*Dendrophori*) see Joannes Lydus, *l.c.*; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4116 sq., 4171-4174, 4176; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 86, 92, 93, 96, 152 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Julian, *l.c.* and 169 c, p. 219 ed. F. C. Hertlein. The ceremony may have been combined with the old *tubilustrum* or purification of trumpets,



March, was known as the Day of Blood: the Archigallus or high-priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering.<sup>1</sup> Nor was he alone in making this bloody sacrifice. Stirred by the wild barbaric music of clashing cymbals, rumbling drums, droning horns, and screaming flutes, the inferior clergy whirled about in the dance with waggling heads and streaming hair, until, rapt into a frenzy of excitement and insensible to pain, they gashed their bodies with potsherds or slashed them with knives in order to bespatter the altar and the sacred tree with their flowing blood.<sup>2</sup> The ghastly rite probably formed part of the mourning for Attis and may have been intended to strengthen him for the resurrection. The Australian aborigines cut themselves in like manner over the graves of their friends for the purpose, perhaps, of enabling them to be born again.<sup>3</sup> Further, we may conjecture, though we are not expressly told, that it was on the same Day of Blood and for the same purpose that the novices sacrificed their virility. Wrought up to the highest pitch of religious excitement they dashed the severed portions of themselves against the image of the cruel goddess. These broken instruments of fertility were afterwards reverently wrapt up and buried in the earth or in subterranean chambers sacred to Cybele,<sup>4</sup> where, like the

which fell on this day. See Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 42; Varro, *De lingua Latina*, vi. 14; Festus, pp. 352, 353 ed. C. O. Müller; W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, p. 62.

<sup>1</sup> Trebellius Pollio, *Claudius*, 4; Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *Deorum dialogi*, xii. 1; Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 686 sqq.; Martial, xi. 84. 3 sq.; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonaut.* viii. 239 sqq.; Statius, *Theb.* x. 170 sqq.; Apuleius, *Metam.* viii. 27; Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum Epitome*, 23 (18, vol. i. p. 689 ed. Brandt and Laubmann); H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 158 sqq. As to the music of these dancing dervishes see also Lucretius, ii. 618 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Bussel, in Sir G. Grey's *Journal of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia*, ii. 330; F. Bonney, "On Some Cus-

toms of the Aborigines of the River Darling, New South Wales," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiii. (1884) pp. 134 sq.; A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 451, 465; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 507, 509 sq. The reason assigned for the custom in the text is conjectural. Compare my article "The Origin of Circumcision," *The Independent Review*, November 1904, pp. 208 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 22 and 24; Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* i. 21. 16; *id.*, *Epitoma*, 8; Schol. on Lucian, *Jupiter Tragoedus*, 8 (p. 60 ed. H. Rabe); Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115; Prudentius, *Peristephan.* x. 1066 sqq.; "Passio Sancti Symphoriani," chs. 2 and 6, Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, v. 1463, 1466; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 14; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*,



offering of blood, they may have been deemed instrumental in recalling Attis to life and hastening the general resurrection of nature, which was then bursting into leaf and blossom in the vernal sunshine.

Eunuch  
priests in  
the service  
of Asiatic  
goddesses.

If there is any truth in this conjectural explanation of the custom, we can readily understand why other Asiatic goddesses of fertility were served in like manner by eunuch priests. These feminine deities required to receive from their male ministers, who personated the divine lovers, the means of discharging their beneficent functions: they had themselves to be impregnated by the life-giving energy before they could transmit it to the world. Goddesses thus ministered to by eunuch priests were the great Artemis of Ephesus<sup>1</sup> and the great Syrian Astarte of Hierapolis,<sup>2</sup> whose sanctuary, frequented by swarms of pilgrims and enriched by the offerings of Assyria and Babylonia, of Arabia and Phoenicia, was perhaps in the days of its glory the most popular in the East.<sup>3</sup> Now the unsexed priests of this Syrian goddess resembled those of Cybele so closely that some people took them to be the same.<sup>4</sup> And the mode in which they dedicated themselves to the religious life was similar. The greatest festival of the year at Hierapolis fell at the beginning of spring, when multitudes thronged to the sanctuary from Syria and the regions round about. While the flutes played, the drums beat, and the eunuch priests slashed themselves with knives, the religious frenzy gradually spread like a wave among the crowd of onlookers, and many a one did that which he little thought to do when he came as a holiday spectator to the festival. For man after man, his veins

8; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 163 sq. A story told by Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* ii. 15, p. 13 ed. Potter) suggests that weaker brethren may have been allowed to sacrifice the virility of a ram instead of their own. We know from inscriptions that rams and bulls were regularly sacrificed at the mysteries of Attis and the Great Mother, and that the testicles of the bulls were used for a special purpose, probably as a fertility charm. May not the testicles of the rams have been employed for the same purpose? and may not those of

both animals have been substitutes for the corresponding organs in men? As to the sacrifices of rams and bulls see G. Zippel, "Das Taurobolium," *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctor-jubiläum L. Friedlaender* (Leipsic, 1895), pp. 498 sqq.; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4118 sqq. and below, pp. 172 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 1. 23, p. 641.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 15, 27, 50-53.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.* 10.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.* 15.



throbbing with the music, his eyes fascinated by the sight of the streaming blood, flung his garments from him, leaped forth with a shout, and seizing one of the swords which stood ready for the purpose, castrated himself on the spot. Then he ran through the city, holding the bloody pieces in his hand, till he threw them into one of the houses which he passed in his mad career. The household thus honoured had to furnish him with a suit of female attire and female ornaments, which he wore for the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup> When the tumult of emotion had subsided, and the man had come to himself again, the irrevocable sacrifice must often have been followed by passionate sorrow and lifelong regret. This natural revulsion of feeling after the frenzies of a fanatical religion is powerfully depicted by Catullus in a celebrated poem.<sup>2</sup>

The parallel of these Syrian devotees confirms the view that in the similar worship of Cybele the sacrifice of virility took place on the Day of Blood at the vernal rites of the goddess, when the violets, supposed to spring from the red drops of her wounded lover, were in bloom among the pines. Indeed the story that Attis unmanned himself under a pine-tree<sup>3</sup> was clearly devised to explain why his priests did the same beside the sacred violet-wreathed tree at his festival. At all events, we can hardly doubt that the Day of Blood witnessed the mourning for Attis over an effigy of him which was afterwards buried.<sup>4</sup> The image thus laid in the sepulchre was probably the same which had hung upon the tree.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the period of mourning the worshippers fasted from bread, nominally because Cybele had done so in her grief for the death of Attis,<sup>6</sup> but really perhaps for the

The  
mourning  
for Attis.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 49-51.

<sup>2</sup> Catullus, *Carm.* lxiii. I agree with Mr. H. Hepding (*Attis*, p. 140) in thinking that the subject of the poem is not the mythical Attis, but one of his ordinary priests, who bore the name and imitated the sufferings of his god. Thus interpreted the poem gains greatly in force and pathos. The real sorrows of our fellow-men touch us more nearly than the imaginary pangs of the gods.

<sup>3</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 7

and 16; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 59; Arrian, *Tactica*, 33; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3 and 22; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 16; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Arnobius, *l.c.*; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33.



same reason which induced the women of Harran to abstain from eating anything ground in a mill while they wept for Tammuz.<sup>1</sup> To partake of bread or flour at such a season might have been deemed a wanton profanation of the bruised and broken body of the god. Or the fast may possibly have been a preparation for a sacramental meal.<sup>2</sup>

The  
Festival  
of Joy  
(*Hilaria*)  
for the  
resurrec-  
tion of  
Attis on  
March  
25th.

But when night had fallen, the sorrow of the worshippers was turned to joy. For suddenly a light shone in the darkness: the tomb was opened: the god had risen from the dead; and as the priest touched the lips of the weeping mourners with balm, he softly whispered in their ears the glad tidings of salvation.<sup>3</sup> On the morrow, the twenty-fifth day of March, the divine resurrection was celebrated with a wild outburst of glee, which at Rome, and probably elsewhere, took the form of a carnival. It was the Festival of Joy (*Hilaria*). A universal licence prevailed. Every man might say and do what he pleased. People went about the streets in disguise. No dignity was too high or too sacred for the humblest citizen to assume with impunity. In the reign of Commodus a band of conspirators thought to take advantage of the masquerade by dressing in the uniform of the Imperial Guard, and so, mingling with the crowd of merrymakers, to get within stabbing distance of the emperor. But the plot miscarried.<sup>4</sup> Even the stern Alexander Severus used to

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 22: "Nocte quadam simulacrum in lectica supinum ponitur et per numeros digestis fletibus plangitur: deinde cum se ficta lamentatione satiaverint, lumen infertur: tunc a sacerdote omnium qui flebant fauces unguentur, quibus perunctis hoc lento murmure susurrat:

Θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένον·  
ἔσται γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐκ πόνων σωτήρια.

*Quid miseros hortaris gaudeant? quid deceptos homines laetari compellis? quam illis spem, quam salutem funesta persuasionem promittis? Dei tui mors nota est, vita non paret. . . . Idolum plangis, idolum de sepultura proferis, et miser cum haec feceris, gaudes. Tu deum tuum liberas, tu jacentia lapidis*

*membra componis, tu insensibile corrigis saxum."* In this passage Firmicus does not expressly mention Attis, but that the reference is to his rites is made probable by a comparison with chapter 3 of the same writer's work. Compare also Damascius, in Photius's *Bibliotheca*, p. 345 A, 5 sqq., ed. I. Bekker: τότε τῇ Ἱεραπόλει ἐγκαθειδήςας ἐδοκοῦν ὄναρ ὁ Ἀττίης γενέσθαι, καὶ μοι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν τὴν τῶν ἱλαρίων καλουμένων ἑορτήν· ὅπερ ἐδήλου τὴν ἐξ ἁδου γεγονυῖαν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν.

<sup>4</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 21. 10; Flavius Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, i. 1; Julian, *Or.* v. pp. 168 D, 169 D; Damascius, *l.c.*; Herodian, i. 10. 5-7; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33. In like manner Easter Sunday,



relax so far on the joyous day as to admit a pheasant to his frugal board.<sup>1</sup> The next day, the twenty-sixth of March, was given to repose, which must have been much needed after the varied excitements and fatigues of the preceding days.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the Roman festival closed on the twenty-seventh of March with a procession to the brook Almo. The silver image of the goddess, with its face of jagged black stone, sat in a waggon drawn by oxen. Preceded by the nobles walking barefoot, it moved slowly, to the loud music of pipes and tambourines, out by the Porta Capena, and so down to the banks of the Almo, which flows into the Tiber just below the walls of Rome. There the high-priest, robed in purple, washed the waggon, the image, and the other sacred objects in the water of the stream. On returning from their bath, the wain and the oxen were strewn with fresh spring flowers. All was mirth and gaiety. No one thought of the blood that had flowed so lately. Even the eunuch priests forgot their wounds.<sup>3</sup>

Such, then, appears to have been the annual solemnisation of the death and resurrection of Attis in spring. But besides these public rites, his worship is known to have comprised certain secret or mystic ceremonies, which probably aimed at bringing the worshipper, and especially the novice, into closer communion with his god. Our information as to the nature of these mysteries and the date of

The  
mysteries  
of Attis.

the Resurrection-day of Christ, was called by some ancient writers the Sunday of Joy (*Dominica Gaudii*). The emperors used to celebrate the happy day by releasing from prison all but the worst offenders. See J. Bingham, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, bk. xx. ch. vi. §§ 5 sq. (Bingham's *Works* (Oxford, 1855), vii. 317 sqq.).

<sup>1</sup> Aelius Lampridius, *Alexander Severus*, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> pp. 260, 313 sq.; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 51, 172.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 337-346; Silius Italicus, *Punic*, viii. 365; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonaut.* viii. 239 sqq.; Martial, iii. 47. 1 sq.; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 3. 7; Arnobius,

*Adversus Nationes*, vii. 32; Prudentius, *Peristephan.* x. 154 sqq. For the description of the image of the goddess see Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 49. At Carthage the goddess was carried to her bath in a litter, not in a waggon (Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ii. 4). The bath formed part of the festival in Phrygia, whence the custom was borrowed by the Romans (Arrian, *Tactica*, 33). At Cyzicus the Placianian Mother, a form of Cybele, was served by women called "marine" (*θαλάσσιαι*), whose duty it probably was to wash her image in the sea (Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 537). See further J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 373; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 133 sq.



The  
sacrament.

The  
baptism  
of blood.

their celebration is unfortunately very scanty, but they seem to have included a sacramental meal and a baptism of blood. In the sacrament the novice became a partaker of the mysteries by eating out of a drum and drinking out of a cymbal, two instruments of music which figured prominently in the thrilling orchestra of Attis.<sup>1</sup> The fast which accompanied the mourning for the dead god<sup>2</sup> may perhaps have been designed to prepare the body of the communicant for the reception of the blessed sacrament by purging it of all that could defile by contact the sacred elements.<sup>3</sup> In the baptism the devotee, crowned with gold and wreathed with fillets, descended into a pit, the mouth of which was covered with a wooden grating. A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead glittering with gold leaf, was then driven on to the grating and there stabbed to death with a consecrated spear. Its hot reeking blood poured in torrents through the apertures, and was received with devout eagerness by the worshipper on every part of his person and garments, till he emerged from the pit, drenched, dripping, and scarlet from head to foot, to receive the homage, nay the adoration, of his fellows as one who had been born again to eternal life and had washed away his sins in the blood of the bull.<sup>4</sup> For some time afterwards the fiction of a new birth was kept up by dieting him on milk like a new-born babe.<sup>5</sup> The regeneration of the worshipper took place at the same time as the regeneration of his god, namely at the vernal equinox.<sup>6</sup> At

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 15, p. 13 ed. Potter; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Above, pp. 169 sq.

<sup>3</sup> H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Prudentius, *Peristephan.* x. 1006-1050; compare Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 28. 8. That the bath of bull's blood (*taurobolium*) was believed to regenerate the devotee for eternity is proved by an inscription found at Rome, which records that a certain Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius, who dedicated an altar to Attis and the Mother of the Gods, was *taurobolio criobolioque in aeternum renatus* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latin-*

*arum*, vi. 510; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4152). The phrase *arcanis perfusionibus in aeternum renatus* occurs in a dedication to Mithra (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi. No. 736), which, however, is suspected of being spurious. As to the inscriptions which refer to the *taurobolium* see G. Zippel, "Das Taurobolium," in *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum L. Friedlaender dargebracht von seinen Schülern* (Leipsic, 1895), pp. 498-520.

<sup>5</sup> Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Sallustius philosophus, *l.c.*



Rome the new birth and the remission of sins by the shedding of bull's blood appear to have been carried out above all at the sanctuary of the Phrygian goddess on the Vatican Hill, where the great basilica of St. Peter's now stands; for many inscriptions relating to the rites were found when the church was being enlarged in 1608 or 1609.<sup>1</sup> From the Vatican as a centre this barbarous system of superstition seems to have spread to other parts of the Roman empire. Inscriptions found in Gaul and Germany prove that provincial sanctuaries modelled their ritual on that of the Vatican.<sup>2</sup> From the same source we learn that the testicles as well as the blood of the bull played an important part in the ceremonies.<sup>3</sup> Probably they were regarded as a powerful charm to promote fertility and hasten the new birth.

The Vatican a centre of the worship of Attis.

M. 25

<sup>1</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi. Nos. 497-504; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4145, 4147-4151, 4153; *Inscriptiones Graecae Siciliae et Italiae*, ed. G. Kaibel, No. 1020; G. Zippel, *op. cit.* pp. 509 sq., 519; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 83, 86-88, 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, xiii. No. 1751; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4131; G. Wilmanns, *Exempla Inscriptionum*

*Latinarum*, No. 2278; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 267; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 169-171, 176.

<sup>3</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, xiii. No. 1751; G. Wilmanns, *Exempla Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Nos. 119, 123, 124; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4127; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 269; H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 191.



## CHAPTER II

### ATTIS AS A GOD OF VEGETATION

The  
sanctity  
of the pine-  
tree in the  
worship  
of Attis.

THE original character of Attis as a tree-spirit is brought out plainly by the part which the pine-tree plays in his legend, his ritual, and his monuments.<sup>1</sup> The story that he was a human being transformed into a pine-tree is only one of those transparent attempts at rationalising old beliefs which meet us so frequently in mythology. The bringing in of the pine-tree from the woods, decked with violets and woollen bands, is like bringing in the May-tree or Summer-tree in modern folk-custom; and the effigy which was attached to the pine-tree was only a duplicate representative of the tree-spirit Attis. After being fastened to the tree, the effigy was kept for a year and then burned.<sup>2</sup> The same thing appears to have been sometimes done with the May-pole; and in like manner the effigy of the corn-spirit, made at harvest, is often preserved till it is replaced by a new effigy at next year's harvest.<sup>3</sup> The original intention of such customs was no doubt to maintain the spirit of vegetation in life throughout the year. Why the Phrygians should have worshipped the pine above other trees we can only guess. Perhaps the utility of the tree may have helped to invest it with a sacred character. The cones of the stone-pine contain edible nut-like seeds, which have been used as food since antiquity, and are still eaten, for

<sup>1</sup> As to the monuments see H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4143, 4152, 4153; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 82, 83, 88, 89.

<sup>2</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 205 sq., ii. 179, 184, 185, 193-195.



example, by the poorer classes in Rome.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a wine was brewed from these seeds,<sup>2</sup> and this may partly account for the orgiastic nature of the rites of Cybele, which the ancients compared to those of Dionysus.<sup>3</sup> Further, pine-cones were regarded as symbols or rather instruments of fertility. Hence at the festival of the Thesmophoria they were thrown, along with pigs and other agents or emblems of productivity, into the sacred vaults of Demeter for the purpose of quickening the ground and the wombs of women.<sup>4</sup>

Like tree-spirits in general, Attis was apparently thought to wield power over the fruits of the earth or even to be identical with the corn. One of his epithets was "very fruitful": he was addressed as the "reaped green (or yellow) ear of corn"; and the story of his sufferings, death, and resurrection was interpreted as the ripe grain wounded by the reaper, buried in the granary, and coming to life again when it is sown in the ground.<sup>5</sup> A statue of him in the Lateran Museum at Rome clearly indicates his relation to the fruits of the earth, and particularly to the corn; for it represents him with a bunch of ears of corn and fruit in his hand, and a wreath of pine-cones, pomegranates, and other fruits on his head, while from the top of his Phrygian cap ears of corn are sprouting.<sup>6</sup> On a stone urn, which con-

Attis as a  
corn-god.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> xix. 105. Compare Athenaeus, ii. 49, p. 57. The nuts of the silver-pine (*Pinus edulis*) are a favourite food of the Californian Indians (S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 421); the Wintun Indians hold a pine-nut dance when the nuts are fit to be gathered (*ib.* p. 237). The Shuswap Indians of British Columbia collect the cones of various sorts of pines and eat the nutlets which they extract from them. See G. M. Dawson, "Notes on the Shuswap People of British Columbia," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ix. (Montreal, 1892), Transactions, section ii. p. 22. The Gilyaks of the Amoor valley in like manner eat the nutlets of the Siberian stone-pine (L. von Schrenk, *Die Völker des Amur-Landes*, iii. 440). See also the commentators on Herodotus, iv. 109 φθειροτράγεονσι.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xiv. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, x. 3. 12 sqq., pp. 469 sqq. However, tipsy people were excluded from the sanctuary (Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 6).

<sup>4</sup> Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* ii. 1, p. 276 ed. H. Rabe.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 8 and 9, pp. 162, 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33. Others identified him with the spring flowers. See Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 8 and 12, iii. 13. 10 ed. F. A. Heinichen; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, vii. 25.

<sup>6</sup> W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen classischer Altertümer in Rom*,<sup>2</sup> i. 481, No. 721.



Cybele as a  
goddess of  
fertility.

tained the ashes of an Archigallus or high-priest of Attis, the same idea is expressed in a slightly different way. The top of the urn is adorned with ears of corn carved in relief, and it is surmounted by the figure of a cock, whose tail consists of ears of corn.<sup>1</sup> Cybele in like manner was conceived as a goddess of fertility who could make or mar the fruits of the earth; for the people of Augustodunum (Autun) in Gaul used to cart her image about in a waggon for the good of the fields and vineyards, while they danced and sang before it,<sup>2</sup> and we have seen that in Italy an unusually fine harvest was attributed to the recent arrival of the Great Mother.<sup>3</sup> The bathing of the image of the goddess in a river may well have been a rain-charm to ensure an abundant supply of moisture for the crops. Or perhaps, as Mr. Hepding has suggested, the union of Cybele and Attis, like that of Aphrodite and Adonis, was dramatically represented at the festival, and the subsequent bath of the goddess was a ceremonial purification of the bride, such as is often observed at human marriages.<sup>4</sup> In like manner Aphrodite is said to have bathed after her union with Adonis,<sup>5</sup> and so did Demeter after her intercourse with Poseidon.<sup>6</sup> Hera washed in the springs of the river Burrha after her marriage with Zeus;<sup>7</sup> and every year she recovered her virginity by bathing in the spring of Canathus.<sup>8</sup> However that may be, the rules of diet observed by the worshippers of Cybele and Attis at their solemn fasts are clearly dictated by a belief that the divine life of these deities manifested

<sup>1</sup> The urn is in the Lateran Museum (No. 1046). It is not described by W. Helbig in his *Führer*. The inscription on the urn (*M. Modius Maxximus archigallus coloniae Ostiens*) is published by H. Dessau (*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4162), who does not notice the curious and interesting composition of the cock's tail. The bird is chosen as an emblem of the priest with a punning reference to the word *gallus*, which in Latin means a cock as well as a priest of Attis.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De gloria confessorum*, 77 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, lxxi. 884). That the goddess here referred to was Cybele

and not a native Gallic deity, as I formerly thought (*Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, p. 178), seems proved by the "Passion of St. Symphorian," chs. 2 and 6 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, v. 1463, 1466).

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 215-217; compare *id.* 175, n. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ptolemaeus, *Nov. Hist.* i. p. 183 of A. Westermann's *Mythographi Graeci*.

<sup>6</sup> Pausanias, viii. 25. 5 sq.

<sup>7</sup> Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xii. 30. The place was in Mesopotamia, and the goddess was probably Astarte. So Lucian (*De dea Syria*) calls the Astarte of Hierapolis "the Assyrian Hera."

<sup>8</sup> Pausanias, ii. 38. 2.



itself in the fruits of the earth, and especially in such of them as are actually hidden by the soil. For while the devotees were allowed to partake of flesh, though not of pork or fish, they were forbidden to eat seeds and the roots of vegetables, but they might eat the stalks and upper parts of the plants.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Julian, *Orat.* v. 173 *sqq.* (pp. 225 *sqq.* ed. F. C. Hertlein); H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 155-157. However, apples, pomegranates, and dates were also forbidden. The story that the mother of Attis conceived him through contact with a pomegranate (above, pp. 163 *sq.*) might explain the prohibition of that

fruit. But the reasons for tabooing apples and dates are not apparent, though Julian tried to discover them. He suggested that dates may have been forbidden because the date-palm does not grow in Phrygia, the native land of Cybele and Attis.



## CHAPTER III

### ATTIS AS THE FATHER GOD

The name  
Attis seems  
to mean  
"father."

THE name Attis appears to mean simply "father."<sup>1</sup> This explanation, suggested by etymology, is confirmed by the observation that another name for Attis was Papas;<sup>2</sup> for Papas has all the appearance of being a common form of that word for "father" which occurs independently in many distinct families of speech all the world over. Similarly the mother of Attis was named Nana,<sup>3</sup> which is itself a form of the world-wide word for "mother." "The immense list of such words collected by Buschmann shows that the types *pa* and *ta*, with the similar forms *ap* and *at*, preponderate in the world as names for 'father,' while *ma* and *na*, *am* and *an*, preponderate as names for 'mother.'"<sup>4</sup>

Relation of  
Attis to the  
Mother  
Goddess.

Thus the mother of Attis is only another form of his divine mistress the great Mother Goddess,<sup>5</sup> and we are brought back to the myth that the lovers were mother and son. The story that Nana conceived miraculously without commerce with the other sex shows that the Mother Goddess of Phrygia herself was viewed, like other goddesses of the

<sup>1</sup> P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 58. 4; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, i. 9, p. 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin. A Latin dedication to *Atte Papa* has been found at Aquileia (Cumont, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopädie*, ii. 2180, s.v. "Attepata"; H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 86). Greek dedications to Papas or to Zeus Papas

occur in Phrygia (H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 78 sq.). Compare A. B. Cook, "Zeus, Jupiter, and the Oak," *Classical Review*, xviii. (1904) p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 6 and 13.

<sup>4</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 223.

<sup>5</sup> Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1648.



same primitive type, as a Virgin Mother.<sup>1</sup> That view of her character does not rest on a perverse and mischievous theory that virginity is more honourable than matrimony. It is derived, as I have already indicated, from a state of savagery in which the mere fact of paternity was unknown. That explains why in later times, long after the true nature of paternity had been ascertained, the Father God was often a much less important personage in mythology than his divine partner the Mother Goddess. With regard to Attis in his paternal character it deserves to be noticed that the Bithynians used to ascend to the tops of the mountains and there call upon him under the name of Papas. The custom is attested by Arrian,<sup>2</sup> who as a native of Bithynia must have had good opportunities of observing it. We may perhaps infer from it that the Bithynians conceived Attis as a sky-god or heavenly father, like Zeus, with whom indeed Arrian identifies him. If that were so, the story of the loves of Attis and Cybele, the Father God and the Mother Goddess, might be in one of its aspects a particular version of the widespread myth which represents Mother Earth fertilised by Father Sky;<sup>3</sup> and, further, the story of the emasculation of Attis would be parallel to the Greek legend that Cronus castrated his father, the old sky-god Uranus,<sup>4</sup>

Attis as a  
Sky-god or  
Heavenly  
Father.

Stories of  
the emascu-  
lation  
of the  
Sky-god.

<sup>1</sup> She is called a "motherless virgin" by Julian (*Or.* v. 166 B, p. 215 ed. F. C. Hertlein), and there was a *Parthenon* or virgin's chamber in her sanctuary at Cyzicus (Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 538). Compare Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1648, iii. 4 sq. Another great goddess of fertility who was conceived as a Virgin Mother was the Egyptian Neith or Net. She is called "the Great Goddess, the Mother of All the Gods," and was believed to have brought forth Ra, the Sun, without the help of a male partner. See C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 111; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), i. 457-462. The latter writer says (p. 462): "In very early times Net was the personification of the eternal female principle of life which

was self-sustaining and self-existent, and was secret and unknown, and all-pervading; the more material thinkers, whilst admitting that she brought forth her son Rā without the aid of a husband, were unable to divorce from their minds the idea that a male germ was necessary for its production, and finding it impossible to derive it from a being external to the goddess, assumed that she herself provided not only the substance which was to form the body of Rā but also the male germ which fecundated it. Thus Net was the type of partheno-genesis."

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Eustathius on Homer, *Il.* v. 408; *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 592, Frag. 30.

<sup>3</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 321 sqq., ii. 270 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony*, 159 sqq.



and was himself in turn castrated by his own son, the younger sky-god Zeus.<sup>1</sup> The tale of the mutilation of the sky-god by his son has been plausibly explained as a myth of the violent separation of the earth and sky, which some races, for example the Polynesians, suppose to have originally clasped each other in a close embrace.<sup>2</sup> Yet it seems unlikely that an order of eunuch priests like the Galli should have been based on a purely cosmogonic myth: why should they continue for all time to be mutilated because the sky-god was so in the beginning? The custom of castration must surely have been designed to meet a constantly recurring need, not merely to reflect a mythical event which happened at the creation of the world. Such a need is the maintenance of the fruitfulness of the earth, annually imperilled by the changes of the seasons. Yet the theory that the mutilation of the priests of Attis and the burial of the severed parts were designed to fertilise the ground may perhaps be reconciled with the cosmogonic myth if we remember the old opinion, held apparently by many peoples, that the creation of the world is year by year repeated in that great transformation which depends ultimately on the annual increase of the sun's heat.<sup>3</sup> However, the evidence for the celestial aspect of Attis is too slight to allow us to speak with any confidence on this subject. A trace of that aspect appears

<sup>1</sup> Porphyry, *De antro nymphaeum*, 16; Aristides, *Or.* iii. vol. i. p. 35 ed. Dindorf; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 983.

<sup>2</sup> A. Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London, 1884), pp. 45 sqq.; *id.*, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (London, 1887), i. 299 sqq. In Egyptian mythology the separation of heaven and earth was ascribed to Shu, the god of light, who insinuated himself between the bodies of Seb (Keb) the earth-god and of Nut the sky-goddess. On the monuments Shu is represented holding up the star-spangled body of Nut on his hands, while Seb reclines on the ground. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 90, 97 sq., 100, 105; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin, 1905), pp. 31 sq.; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der*

*Religion im Altertum*, i. 33 sq. Thus contrary to the usual mythical conception the Egyptians regarded the earth as male and the sky as female. An allusion in the *Book of the Dead* (ch. 69, vol. ii. p. 235, Budge's translation) has been interpreted as a hint that Osiris mutilated his father Seb at the separation of earth and heaven, just as Cronus mutilated his father Uranus. See H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 581; E. A. Wallis Budge, *op. cit.* ii. 99 sq. Sometimes the Egyptians conceived the sky as a great cow standing with its legs on the earth. See A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 5 sq.

<sup>3</sup> The evidence of this will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.



to survive in the star-spangled cap which he is said to have received from Cybele,<sup>1</sup> and which is figured on some monuments supposed to represent him.<sup>2</sup> His identification with the Phrygian moon-god Men Tyrannus<sup>3</sup> points in the same direction, but is probably due rather to the religious speculation of a later age than to genuine popular tradition.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Julian, *Or.* v. pp. 165 B, 170 D (pp. 214, 221, ed. F. C. Hertlein); Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2745; H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 120, n. 8.

<sup>3</sup> H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4146-4149; H. Hepding,

*Attis*, pp. 82, 86 sq., 89 sq. As to Men Tyrannus, see Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Myth.* ii. 2687 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> On the other hand Prof. W. M. Ramsay holds that Attis and Men are deities of similar character and origin, but differentiated from each other by development in different surroundings (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 169); but he denies that Men was a moon-god (*op. cit.* i. 104, n. 4).



## CHAPTER IV

### HUMAN REPRESENTATIVES OF ATTIS

The high priest of Attis bore the god's name and seems to have personated him.

The drawing of the high priest's blood may have been a substitute for putting him to death in the character of the god.

FROM inscriptions it appears that both at Pessinus and Rome the high-priest of Cybele regularly bore the name of Attis.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore a reasonable conjecture that he played the part of his namesake, the legendary Attis, at the annual festival.<sup>2</sup> We have seen that on the Day of Blood he drew blood from his arms, and this may have been an imitation of the self-inflicted death of Attis under the pine-tree. It is not inconsistent with this supposition that Attis was also represented at these ceremonies by an effigy; for instances can be shown in which the divine being is first represented by a living person and afterwards by an effigy, which is then burned or otherwise destroyed.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps we may go a step farther and conjecture that this mimic killing of the priest, accompanied by a real effusion of his blood, was in Phrygia, as it has been elsewhere, a substitute for a human sacrifice which in earlier times was actually offered. Professor W. M. Ramsay, whose authority on all questions relating to Phrygia no one will dispute, is of opinion that at these Phrygian ceremonies "the repre-

<sup>1</sup> In letters of Eumenes and Attalus, preserved in inscriptions at Sivrihissar, the priest at Pessinus is addressed as Attis. See A. von Domaskewski, "Briefe der Attaliden an den Priester von Pessinus," *Archaeologische - epigraphische Mittheilungen aus Oesterreich-Ungarn*, viii. (1884) pp. 96, 98; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 45; W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 315. For more evidence of in-

scriptions see H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 79; Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, i. 724. See also Polybius, xxii. 18 (20), ed. L. Dindorf, who mentions a priest of the Mother of the Gods named Attis at Pessinus.

<sup>2</sup> The conjecture is that of Henzen, in *Annal. d. Inst.* 1856, p. 110, referred to by Rapp, *l.c.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 209, ii. 30, 62 sq.



sentative of the god was probably slain each year by a cruel death, just as the god himself died."<sup>1</sup> We know from Strabo<sup>2</sup> that the priests of Pessinus were at one time potentates as well as priests; they may, therefore, have belonged to that class of divine kings or popes whose duty it was to die each year for their people and the world. The name of Attis, it is true, does not occur among the names of the old kings of Phrygia, who seem to have borne the names of Midas and Gordias in alternate generations; but a very ancient inscription carved in the rock above a famous Phrygian monument, which is known as the Tomb of Midas, records that the monument was made for, or dedicated to, King Midas by a certain Ates, whose name is doubtless identical with Attis, and who, if not a king himself, may have been one of the royal family.<sup>3</sup> It is worthy of note also that the name Atys, which, again, appears to be only another form of Attis, is recorded as that of an early king of Lydia;<sup>4</sup> and that a son of Croesus, king of Lydia, not only bore the name Atys but was said to have been killed, while he was hunting a boar, by a member of the royal Phrygian family, who traced his lineage to King Midas and had fled to the court of Croesus because he had unwittingly slain his own brother.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have recognised in this story of the death of Atys, son of Croesus, a mere double of the myth of Attis;<sup>6</sup> and in view of the facts which have come before us in the present inquiry<sup>7</sup> it is a remarkable circumstance that the myth of a slain

The name of Attis in the royal families of Phrygia and Lydia.

<sup>1</sup> Article "Phrygia" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th ed. xviii. 853. Elsewhere, speaking of the religions of Asia Minor in general, the same writer says: "The highest priests and priestesses played the parts of the great gods in the mystic ritual, wore their dress, and bore their names" (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 101).

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xii. 5. 3, p. 567.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Ramsay, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 379 sqq.; *id.*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, x. (1888) pp. 156 sqq.; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, v. 82 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, i. 94. According to

Prof. W. M. Ramsay, the conquering and ruling caste in Lydia belonged to the Phrygian stock (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) p. 351).

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, i. 34-45. The tradition that Croesus would allow no iron weapon to come near Atys suggests that a similar taboo may have been imposed on the Phrygian priests named Attis. For taboos of this sort see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 344 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Stein on Herodotus, i. 43; Ed. Meyer, s.v. "Atys," in Pauly-Wissowa's, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii. 2, col. 2262.

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 9, 12 sq., 29 sqq., 34.



The Phrygian priests of Attis may have been members of the royal family.

god should be told of a king's son. May we conjecture that the Phrygian priests who bore the name of Attis and represented the god of that name were themselves members, perhaps the eldest sons, of the royal house, to whom their fathers, uncles, brothers, or other kinsmen deputed the honour of dying a violent death in the character of gods, while they reserved to themselves the duty of living, as long as nature allowed them, in the humbler character of kings? If this were so, the Phrygian dynasty of Midas may have presented a close parallel to the Greek dynasty of Athamas, in which the eldest sons seem to have been regularly destined to the altar.<sup>1</sup> But it is also possible that the divine priests who bore the name of Attis may have belonged to that indigenous race which the Phrygians, on their irruption into Asia from Europe, appear to have found and conquered in the land afterwards known as Phrygia.<sup>2</sup> On the latter hypothesis the priests may have represented an older and higher civilisation than that of their barbarous conquerors. Be that as it may, the god they personated was a deity of vegetation whose divine life manifested itself especially in the pine-tree and the violets of spring; and if they died in the character of that divinity, they corresponded to the mummers who are still slain in mimicry by European peasants in spring, and to the priest who was slain long ago in grim earnest on the wooded shore of the Lake of Nemi.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 34 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> See W. M. Ramsay, *s.v.* "Phrygia," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed. xviii. 849 sq.; *id.*, in *Journ. of Hellen. Stud.* ix. (1888) pp. 350 sq. Prof.

P. Kretschmer holds that both Cybele and Attis were gods of the indigenous Asiatic population, not of the Phrygian invaders (*Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, pp. 194 sq.).



## CHAPTER V

### THE HANGED GOD

A REMINISCENCE of the manner in which these old representatives of the deity were put to death is perhaps preserved in the famous story of Marsyas. He was said to be a Phrygian satyr or Silenus, according to others a shepherd or herdsman, who played sweetly on the flute. A friend of Cybele, he roamed the country with the disconsolate goddess to soothe her grief for the death of Attis.<sup>1</sup> The composition of the Mother's Air, a tune played on the flute in honour of the Great Mother Goddess, was attributed to him by the people of Celaenae in Phrygia.<sup>2</sup> Vain of his skill, he challenged Apollo to a musical contest, he to play on the flute and Apollo on the lyre. Being vanquished, Marsyas was tied up to a pine-tree and flayed or cut limb from limb either by the victorious Apollo or by a Scythian slave.<sup>3</sup> His skin was shown at Celaenae in historical times. It

The way in which the representatives of Attis were put to death is perhaps shown by the legend of Marsyas, who was hung on a pine-tree and flayed by Apollo.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 58 sq. As to Marsyas in the character of a shepherd or herdsman see Hyginus, *Fab.* 165; Nonnus, *Dionys.* i. 41 sqq. He is called a Silenus by Pausanias (i. 24. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, x. 30. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Apollodorus, i. 4. 2; Hyginus, *Fab.* 165. Many ancient writers mention that the tree on which Marsyas suffered death was a pine. See Apollodorus, *l.c.*; Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 301 sq., with the Scholiast's note; Lucian, *Tragopodagra*, 314 sq.; Archias Mitylenaeus, in *Anthologia Palatina*, vii. 696; Philostratus Junior, *Imagines*, i. 3; Longus,

*Pastor.* iv. 8; Zenobius, *Cent.* iv. 81; J. Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, i. 353 sqq. Pliny alone declares the tree to have been a plane, which according to him was still shown at Aulocrene on the way from Apamea to Phrygia (*Nat. Hist.* xvi. 240). On a candelabra in the Vatican the defeated Marsyas is represented hanging on a pine-tree (W. Helbig, *Führer*,<sup>2</sup> i. 225 sq.); but the monumental evidence is not consistent on this point (Jessen, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2442). The position which the pine held in the myth and ritual of Cybele supports the preponderance of ancient testimony in favour of that tree.



hung at the foot of the citadel in a cave from which the river Marsyas rushed with an impetuous and noisy tide to join the Maeander.<sup>1</sup> We are told that whenever one of his native Phrygian melodies was played near it, the skin of the dead satyr thrilled; but if the musician struck up an air in praise of Apollo, the skin remained motionless and as it were deaf.<sup>2</sup>

Marsyas  
apparently  
a double  
of Attis.

In this Phrygian satyr, shepherd, or herdsman who enjoyed the friendship of Cybele, practised the music so characteristic of her rites,<sup>3</sup> and died a violent death on her sacred tree, the pine, may we not detect a close resemblance to Attis, the favourite shepherd or herdsman of the goddess, who is himself described as a piper,<sup>4</sup> is said to have perished under a pine-tree, and was annually represented by an effigy hung, like Marsyas, upon a pine? We may conjecture that in old days the priest who bore the name and played the part of Attis at the spring festival of Cybele was regularly hanged or otherwise slain upon the sacred tree, and that this barbarous custom was afterwards mitigated into the form in which it is known to us in later times, when the priest merely drew blood from his body under the tree and attached an effigy instead of himself to its trunk. In the holy grove at Upsala men and animals were sacrificed by being hanged upon the sacred trees.<sup>5</sup> The human victims dedicated to Odin were regularly put to death by hanging or by a combination of hanging and stabbing, the man being strung up to a tree or a gallows and then wounded with a spear. Hence Odin was called the Lord of the Gallows or the God of the Hanged, and he is represented sitting under a gallows-tree.<sup>6</sup> Indeed he is said to have

The  
hanging of  
Odin and  
his human  
victims on  
sacred  
trees.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, vii. 26; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, i. 2. 8; Livy, xxxviii. 13. 6; Quintus Curtius, iii. 1. 1-5; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 106. Herodotus calls the river the Catarrhactes.

<sup>2</sup> Aelian, *Var. Hist.* xiii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Catullus, lxiii. 22; Lucretius, ii. 620; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 181 sq., 341; Polyænus, *Strategem.* viii. 53. 4. Flutes or pipes often appear on her monuments. See H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4100, 4143, 4145, 4152, 4153.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium*

*haeresium*, v. 9, p. 168, ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

<sup>5</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Descriptio insularum Aquilonis*, 27 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, cxlvi. 643).

<sup>6</sup> S. Bugge, *Studien über die Entstehung der nördischen Götter- und Heldensagen* (Munich, 1889), pp. 339 sqq.; K. Simrock, *Die Edda*,<sup>8</sup> p. 382; K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, iv. 244 sq.; H. M. Chadwick, *The Cult of Othin* (London, 1899), pp. 3-20. The old English custom of hanging and disembowelling



been sacrificed to himself in the ordinary way, as we learn from the weird verses of the *Havamal*, in which the god describes how he acquired his divine power by learning the magic runes :

*I know that I hung on the windy tree  
For nine whole nights,  
Wounded with the spear, dedicated to Odin,  
Myself to myself.*<sup>1</sup>

With this Scandinavian parallel before us we can hardly dismiss as wholly improbable the conjecture that in Phrygia a man-god may have hung year by year on the sacred but fatal tree.

The tradition that Marsyas was flayed and that his skin was exhibited at Celaenae down to historical times may well reflect a ritual practice of flaying the dead god and hanging his skin upon the pine as a means of effecting his resurrection, and with it the revival of vegetation in spring. Similarly, in ancient Mexico the human victims who personated gods were often flayed and their bloody skins worn by men who appear to have represented the dead deities come to life again.<sup>2</sup> When a Scythian king died, he was buried in a grave along with one of his concubines, his cup-bearer, cook, groom, lacquey, and messenger, who were

Use of the  
skins of  
human  
victims to  
effect their  
resurrec-  
tion.

traitors was probably derived from a practice of thus sacrificing them to Odin ; for among many races, including the Teutonic and Latin peoples, capital punishment appears to have been originally a religious rite, a sacrifice or consecration of the criminal to the god whom he had offended. See F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, pp. 8 sq. ; K. von Amira, in H. Paul's *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 197 sq. ; Vigfussen and Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i. 410 ; W. Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie* (Leipsic, 1895), pp. 548 sq. ; Th. Mommsen, *Roman History*, bk. i. ch. 12 (vol. i. p. 192, ed. 1868) ; *id.*, *Römisches Strafrecht* (Leipsic, 1899), pp. 900 sqq. ; F. Granger, *The Worship of the Romans* (London, 1895), pp. 259 sqq. ; E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral*

*Ideas*, i. (London, 1906) pp. 439 sq. So, too, among barbarous peoples the slaughter of prisoners in war is often a sacrifice offered by the victors to the gods to whose aid they ascribe the victory. See A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, pp. 169 sq. ; W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*,<sup>2</sup> i. 289 ; Diodorus Siculus, xx. 65 ; Strabo, vii. 2. 3, p. 294 ; Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, vi. 17 ; Tacitus, *Annals*, i. 61, xiii. 57 ; Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, ii. 15. 24, ii. 25. 9 ; Jornandes, *Getica*, v. 41 ; J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 36 sq. ; Fr. Schwally, *Semitische Kriegeralttümer* (Leipsic, 1901), pp. 29 sqq.

<sup>1</sup> *Havamal*, 139 sqq. (K. Simrock, *Die Edda*,<sup>8</sup> p. 55 ; K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, v. 270 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 136 sq.



all killed for the purpose, and a great barrow was heaped up over the grave. A year afterwards fifty of his servants and fifty of his best horses were strangled; and their bodies, having been disembowelled and cleaned out, were stuffed with chaff, sewn up, and set on scaffolds round about the barrow, every dead man bestriding a dead horse, which was bitted and bridled as in life.<sup>1</sup> These strange horsemen were no doubt supposed to mount guard over the king. The setting up of their stuffed skins might be thought to ensure their spirited or ghostly resurrection.

Skins of  
men and  
horses  
stuffed and  
set up at  
graves.

That some such notion was entertained by the Scythians is made probable by the account which the mediaeval traveller de Plano Carpini gives of the funeral customs of the Mongols; for the Scythians seem to have been a Mongolian people. The traveller tells us that when a noble Mongol died, the custom was to bury him seated in the middle of a tent, along with a horse saddled and bridled, and a mare and her foal. Also they used to eat another horse, stuff the carcass with straw, and set it up on poles. All this they did in order that in the other world the dead man might have a tent to live in, a mare to yield milk, and a steed to ride, and that he might be able to breed horses. Moreover, the bones of the horse which they ate were burned for the good of his soul.<sup>2</sup> When the Arab traveller Ibn Batuta visited Peking in the fourteenth century, he witnessed the funeral of an emperor of China who had been killed in battle. The dead sovereign was buried along with four young female slaves and six guards in a vault, and an immense mound like a hill was piled over him. Four horses were then made to run round the hillock till they could run no longer, after which they were killed, impaled, and set up beside the tomb.<sup>3</sup> When an Indian of Patagonia dies, he is buried in a pit along with some of his property. Afterwards his favourite horse, having been killed, skinned, and stuffed, is propped up on sticks with its

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, iv. 71 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Jean du Plan de Carpin, *Historia Mongalorum*, ed. D'Avezac (Paris, 1838), cap. iii. § iii.

<sup>3</sup> *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah, texte Arabe accompagné d'une traduction*,

par C. Defrémery et B. R. Sanguinetti, iv. 300 sq. For more evidence of similar customs, observed by Turanian peoples, see K. Neumann, *Die Hellenen im Skythenlande* (Berlin, 1855), pp. 237-239.



head turned towards the grave. At the funeral of a chief four horses are sacrificed, and one is set up at each corner of the burial-place. The clothes and other effects of the deceased are burned; and to conclude all, a feast is made of the horses' flesh.<sup>1</sup> The Scythians certainly believed in the existence of the soul after death and in the possibility of turning it to account. This is proved by the practice of one of their tribes, the Taurians of the Crimea, who used to cut off the heads of their prisoners and set them on poles over their houses, especially over the chimneys, in order that the spirits of the slain men might guard the dwellings.<sup>2</sup> Some of the savages of Borneo allege a similar reason for their favourite custom of taking human heads. "The custom," said a Kayan chief, "is not horrible. It is an ancient custom, a good, beneficent custom, bequeathed to us by our fathers and our fathers' fathers; it brings us blessings, plentiful harvests, and keeps off sickness and pains. Those who were once our enemies, hereby become our guardians, our friends, our benefactors."<sup>3</sup> Thus to convert dead foes into friends and allies all that is necessary is to feed and otherwise propitiate their skulls at a festival when they are brought into the village. "An offering of food is made to the heads, and their spirits, being thus appeased, cease to entertain malice against, or to seek to inflict injury upon, those who have got possession of the skull which formerly adorned the now forsaken body."<sup>4</sup> When the Sea Dyaks

The Kayans of Borneo use the skulls of their enemies to ensure the fertility of the ground and of women, the abundance of game, and so forth.

<sup>1</sup> Captain R. Fitz-roy, *Voyages of His Majesty's Ships "Adventure" and "Beagle,"* ii. 155 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, iv. 103. Many Scythians flayed their dead enemies, and, stretching the skin on a wooden framework, carried it about with them on horseback (Herodotus, iv. 64). The souls of the dead may have been thought to attend on and serve the man who thus bore their remains about with him. It is also possible that the custom was nothing more than a barbarous mode of wreaking vengeance on the dead. Thus a Persian king has been known to flay an enemy, stuff the skin with chaff, and hang it on a high tree (Procopius, *De bello Persico*, i. 5. 28). This was the

treatment which the arch-heretic Manichæus is said to have received at the hands of the Persian king whose son he failed to cure (Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 22; Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxvii. 137, 139). Still such a punishment may have been suggested by a religious rite. The idea of crucifying their human victims appears to have been suggested to the negroes of Benin by the crucifixes of the early Portuguese missionaries. See H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin* (Halifax, 1903), pp. 14 sq.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Furness, *Home-Life of Borneo Head-Hunters* (Philadelphia, 1902), p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*,<sup>2</sup> i. 197.



of Sarawak return home successful from a head-hunting expedition, they bring the head ashore with much ceremony, wrapt in palm leaves. "On shore and in the village, the head, for months after its arrival, is treated with the greatest consideration, and all the names and terms of endearment of which their language is capable are abundantly lavished on it; the most dainty morsels, culled from their abundant though inelegant repast, are thrust into its mouth, and it is instructed to hate its former friends, and that, having been now adopted into the tribe of its captors, its spirit must be always with them; sirih leaves and betel-nut are given to it, and finally a cigar is frequently placed between its ghastly and pallid lips. None of this disgusting mockery is performed with the intention of ridicule, but all to propitiate the spirit by kindness, and to procure its good wishes for the tribe, of whom it is now supposed to have become a member."<sup>1</sup> Amongst these Dyaks the "Head-Feast," which has been just described, is supposed to be the most beneficial in its influence of all their feasts and ceremonies. "The object of them all is to make their rice grow well, to cause the forest to abound with wild animals, to enable their dogs and snares to be successful in securing game, to have the streams swarm with fish, to give health and activity to the people themselves, and to ensure fertility to their women. All these blessings, the possessing and feasting of a fresh head are supposed to be the most efficient means of securing. The very ground itself is believed to be benefited and rendered fertile."<sup>2</sup>

The stuffed skin of the human representatives of the Phrygian god may have been used for like purposes.

In like manner, if my conjecture is right, the man who represented the father-god of Phrygia used to be slain and his stuffed skin hung on the sacred pine in order that his spirit might work for the growth of the crops, the multiplica-

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), pp. 206 sq. In quoting this passage I have taken the liberty to correct a grammatical slip.

<sup>2</sup> Spenser St. John, *op. cit.* i. 204. See further G. A. Wilken, "Iets over de schedelvereering," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxviii. (1889)

pp. 89-129. A different view of the purpose of head-hunting is maintained by Mr. A. C. Kruyt, in his essay, "Het koppensnellen der Toradja's van Midden-Celebes, en zijne Beteekenis," *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks*, iii. 2 (Amsterdam, 1899), pp. 147 sqq.



tion of animals, and the fertility of women. So at Athens an ox, which appears to have embodied the corn-spirit, was killed at an annual sacrifice, and its hide, stuffed with straw and sewn up, was afterwards set on its feet and yoked to a plough as if it were ploughing, apparently in order to represent, or rather to promote, the resurrection of the slain corn-spirit at the end of the threshing.<sup>1</sup> This employment of the skins of divine animals for the purpose of ensuring the revival of the slaughtered divinity might be illustrated by other examples.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the hide of the bull which was killed to furnish the regenerating bath of blood in the rites of Attis may have been put to a similar use.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 294 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 366 sqq.



## CHAPTER VI

### ORIENTAL RELIGIONS IN THE WEST

Popularity  
of the  
worship of  
Cybele and  
Attis in the  
Roman  
empire.

THE worship of the Great Mother of the Gods and her lover or son was very popular under the Roman Empire. Inscriptions prove that the two received divine honours, separately or conjointly, not only in Italy, and especially at Rome, but also in the provinces, particularly in Africa, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Bulgaria.<sup>1</sup> Their worship survived the establishment of Christianity by Constantine; for Symmachus records the recurrence of the festival of the Great Mother,<sup>2</sup> and in the days of Augustine her effeminate priests still paraded the streets and squares of Carthage with whitened faces, scented hair, and mincing gait, while, like the mendicant friars of the Middle Ages, they begged from the passers-by.<sup>3</sup> In Greece, on the other hand, the bloody orgies of the Asiatic goddess and her consort appear to have found little favour.<sup>4</sup> The barbarous and cruel character of the worship, with its frantic excesses, was doubtless repugnant to the good taste and humanity of the Greeks, who seem to have preferred the kindred but gentler rites of Adonis. Yet the same features which shocked and repelled the Greeks may have positively

<sup>1</sup> H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4099, 4100, 4103, 4105, 4106, 4116, 4117, 4119, 4120, 4121, 4123, 4124, 4127, 4128, 4131, 4136, 4139, 4140, 4142, 4156, 4163, 4167; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 85, 86, 93, 94, 95, *Inscr.* Nos. 21-24, 26, 50, 51, 52, 61, 62, 63.

<sup>2</sup> S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>2</sup> (London, 1899), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *De civitate dei*, vii. 26.

<sup>4</sup> But the two were publicly worshipped at Dyme and Patrae in Achaia, (Pausanias, vii. 17. 9, vii. 20. 3), and there was an association for their worship at Piraeus. See P. Foucart, *Des Associations Religieuses chez les Grecs* (Paris, 1873), pp. 85 *sqq.*, 196; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 982.



attracted the less refined Romans and barbarians of the West. The ecstatic frenzies, which were mistaken for divine inspiration,<sup>1</sup> the mangling of the body, the theory of a new birth and the remission of sins through the shedding of blood, have all their origin in savagery,<sup>2</sup> and they naturally appealed to peoples in whom the savage instincts were still strong. Their true character was indeed often disguised under a decent veil of allegorical or philosophical interpretation,<sup>3</sup> which probably sufficed to impose upon the rapt and enthusiastic worshippers, reconciling even the more cultivated of them to things which otherwise must have filled them with horror and disgust.

The religion of the Great Mother, with its curious blending of crude savagery with spiritual aspirations, was only one of a multitude of similar Oriental faiths which in the later days of paganism spread over the Roman Empire, and by saturating the European peoples with alien ideals of life gradually undermined the whole fabric of ancient civilisation.<sup>4</sup> Greek and Roman society was built on the

The spread of Oriental faiths over the Roman empire contributed to undermine the fabric of Greek and Roman civilisation by inculcating the salvation of the individual soul as the supreme aim of life.

<sup>1</sup> Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1656.

<sup>2</sup> As to the savage theory of inspiration or possession by a deity see E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 131 sqq. As to the savage theory of a new birth see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 423 sqq. As to the use of blood to wash away sins see *id.* ii. 211 sqq. Among the Cameroon negroes accidental homicide can be expiated by the blood of an animal. The relations of the slayer and of the slain assemble. An animal is killed and every person present is smeared with its blood on his face and breast. They think that the guilt of manslaughter is thus atoned for, and that no punishment will overtake the homicide. See Missionary Autenrieth, in *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xii. (1893) pp. 93 sq. In Car Nicobar a man possessed by devils is cleansed of them by being rubbed all over with pig's blood and beaten with leaves. The devils are thus transferred to the leaves, which are thrown into the sea

before daybreak. See V. Solomon, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 227. Similarly the ancient Greeks purified a homicide by means of pig's blood and laurel leaves. See my note on Pausanias, ii. 31. 8 (vol. iii. pp. 276-279). The original idea of thus purging a manslayer was probably to rid him of the angry ghost of his victim, just as in Car Nicobar a man is rid of devils in the same manner. The purgative virtue ascribed to the blood in these ceremonies may be based on the notion that the offended spirit accepts it as a substitute for the blood of the guilty person. This was the view of C. Meiners (*Geschichte der Religionen*, ii. 137 sq.) and of E. Rohde (*Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 77 sq.).

<sup>3</sup> A good instance of such an attempt to dress up savagery in the garb of philosophy is the fifth speech of the emperor Julian, "On the Mother of the Gods" (pp. 206 sqq. ed. F. C. Hertlein).

<sup>4</sup> As to the diffusion of Oriental religions in the Roman empire see G. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*,<sup>5</sup> i. 349 sqq.; J. Reville, *La Religion à Rome sous les*



conception of the subordination of the individual to the community, of the citizen to the state; it set the safety of the commonwealth, as the supreme aim of conduct, above the safety of the individual whether in this world or in a world to come. Trained from infancy in this unselfish ideal, the citizens devoted their lives to the public service and were ready to lay them down for the common good; or if they shrank from the supreme sacrifice, it never occurred to them that they acted otherwise than basely in preferring their personal existence to the interests of their country. All this was changed by the spread of Oriental religions which inculcated the commune of the soul with God and its eternal salvation as the only objects worth living for, objects in comparison with which the prosperity and even the existence of the state sank into insignificance. The inevitable result of this selfish and immoral doctrine was to withdraw the devotee more and more from the public service, to concentrate his thoughts on his own spiritual emotions, and to breed in him a contempt for the present life which he regarded merely as a probation for a better and an eternal. The saint and the recluse, disdainful of earth and rapt in ecstatic contemplation of heaven, became in popular opinion the highest ideal of humanity, displacing the old ideal of the patriot and hero who, forgetful of self, lives and is ready to die for the good of his country. The earthly city seemed poor and contemptible to men whose eyes beheld the City of God coming in the clouds of heaven. Thus the centre of gravity, so to say, was shifted from the present to a future life, and however much the other world may have gained, there can be little doubt that this one lost heavily by the change. A general disintegration of the body politic set in. The ties of the state and of the family were loosened: the structure of society tended to resolve itself into its individual elements and thereby to relapse into barbarism; for civilisation is only possible through the active co-operation of the citizens and their willingness to subordinate their private interests to the common good.

*Sévères* (Paris, 1886), pp. 47 *sqq.*; *Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>2</sup> pp. S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last* 76 *sqq.*



Men refused to defend their country and even to continue their kind.<sup>1</sup> In their anxiety to save their own souls and the souls of others, they were content to leave the material world, which they identified with the principle of evil, to perish around them. This obsession lasted for a thousand years. The revival of Roman law, of the Aristotelian philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Ages, marked the return of Europe to native ideals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world. The long halt in the march of civilisation was over. The tide of Oriental invasion had turned at last. It is ebbing still.<sup>2</sup>

Among the gods of eastern origin who in the decline of the ancient world competed against each other for the allegiance of the West was the old Persian deity Mithra. The immense popularity of his worship is attested by the monuments illustrative of it which have been found scattered in profusion all over the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> In respect both of doctrines and of rites the cult of Mithra appears to have presented many points of resemblance not only to the religion of the Mother of the Gods<sup>4</sup> but also to Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The similarity struck the Christian doctors themselves and was explained by them as a work of the devil, who sought to seduce the souls of men from the true faith by a false and insidious imitation of it.<sup>6</sup> So to the Spanish con-

Popularity of the worship of Mithra; its resemblance to Christianity and its rivalry with that religion.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 604, vi. 661; G. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*,<sup>5</sup> i. 357 sq.; E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i. 345 sq.

<sup>2</sup> To prevent misapprehension I will add that the spread of Oriental religions was only one of many causes which contributed to the downfall of ancient civilisation. Among these contributory causes a friend, for whose judgment and learning I entertain the highest respect, counts bad government and a ruinous fiscal system, two of the most powerful agents to blast the prosperity of nations, as may be seen by the blight which has struck the Turkish empire. It is probable, too, as my friend thinks, that the rapid diffusion of alien faiths was as much an effect as a cause of wide-spread intellectual decay. Such

unwholesome growths could hardly have fastened upon the Graeco-Roman mind in the days of its full vigour. We may remember the energy with which the Roman Government combated the first outbreak of the Bacchic plague (Th. Mommsen, *Roman History*, iii. 115 sq., ed. 1894).

<sup>3</sup> See Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (Brussels, 1896-1899); *id.*, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 3028 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 333 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> E. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 576 sqq.; Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. 339 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, *De corona*, 15; *id.*, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 40; Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, i. 66; *id.*, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 78 (Migne's *Patrologia*



The  
festival of  
Christmas  
borrowed  
by the  
Church  
from the  
religion of  
Mithra.

querors of Mexico and Peru many of the native heathen rites appeared to be diabolical counterfeits of the Christian sacraments.<sup>1</sup> With more probability the modern student of comparative religion traces such resemblances to the similar and independent workings of the mind of man in his sincere, if crude, attempts to fathom the secret of the universe, and to adjust his little life to its awful mysteries. However that may be, there can be no doubt that the Mithraic religion proved a formidable rival to Christianity, combining as it did a solemn ritual with aspirations after moral purity and a hope of immortality.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the issue of the conflict between the two faiths appears for a time to have hung in the balance.<sup>3</sup> An instructive relic of the long struggle is preserved in our festival of Christmas, which the Church seems to have borrowed directly from its heathen rival. In the Julian calendar the twenty-fifth of December was reckoned the winter solstice,<sup>4</sup> and it was regarded as the Nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the sun to increase from that turning point of the year.<sup>5</sup> Now Mithra was regularly identified by his worshippers with the Sun, the Unconquered Sun, as they called him;<sup>6</sup> hence his nativity also fell on the twenty-fifth of December.<sup>7</sup> The Gospels say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth, and accordingly the early Church did not celebrate it. In time, however, the Christians of Egypt came to regard the sixth of January as the date of the Nativity, and the custom of commemorating the birth of the Saviour on that day gradually spread until by the

*Graeca*, vi. 429, 660). Tertullian explained in like manner the resemblance of the fasts of Isis and Cybele to the fasts of Christianity (*De jejuniis*, 16).

<sup>1</sup> J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v. chs. 11, 16, 17, 18, 24-28.

<sup>2</sup> Compare S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 80 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> E. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 579 sq.; Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 338.

<sup>4</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 221; Columella, *De re rustica*, ix. 14. 12;

L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 124; G. F. Unger, in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 649.

<sup>5</sup> In the calendar of Philocalus the twenty-fifth of December is marked *N. Invicti*, that is, *Natalis Solis Invicti*. See *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> p. 278, with Th. Mommsen's commentary, pp. 338 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Dedications to Mithra the Unconquered Sun (*Soli invicto Mithrae*) have been found in abundance. See Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* ii. 99 sqq.

<sup>7</sup> Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. 325 sq., 339.



fourth century it was universally established in the East. But at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century the Western Church, which had never recognised the sixth of January as the day of the Nativity, adopted the twenty-fifth of December as the true date, and in time its decision was accepted also by the Eastern Church. At Antioch the change was not introduced till about the year 375 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

What considerations led the ecclesiastical authorities to institute the festival of Christmas? The motives for the innovation are stated with great frankness by a Syrian writer, himself a Christian. "The reason," he tells us, "why the fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December was this. It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnised on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling fires till the sixth."<sup>2</sup> The heathen origin of Christmas is plainly hinted at, if not tacitly admitted, by Augustine when he exhorts his Christian brethren not to celebrate that solemn day like the heathen on account of the sun, but on account of him who made the sun.<sup>3</sup> In like manner Leo the Great rebuked the pestilent belief that Christmas was solemnised because of the birth of the new sun, as it was called, and not because of the nativity of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Motives  
for the in-  
stitution of  
Christmas.

<sup>1</sup> J. Bingham, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, bk. xx. ch. iv. (Bingham's *Works*, vol. vii. pp. 279 sqq., Oxford, 1855); C. A. Credner, "De natalitiorum Christi origine," *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, iii. 2 (1833), pp. 236 sqq.; Mgr L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> i. 257 sqq.; Th. Mommsen, in *Corpus Inscript. Latin.* i.<sup>2</sup> 338. The earliest mention of the festival of Christmas is in the calendar of Philocalus, which

was drawn up at Rome in 336 A.D. The words are *VIII. kal. jan., natus Christus in Betleem Judee* (L. Duchesne, *op. cit.* p. 258).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by C. A. Credner, *op. cit.* p. 239, note 46, and by Th. Mommsen, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> 338 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *Serm. exc. i* (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxxviii. 1007).

<sup>4</sup> Leo the Great, *Serm. xxii. (al. xxi.) 6* (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*,



The Easter celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ appears to have been influenced by the similar celebration of the death and resurrection of Attis, which was held at Rome at the same season.

Thus it appears that the Christian Church chose to celebrate the birthday of its Founder on the twenty-fifth of December in order to transfer the devotion of the heathen from the Sun to him who was called the Sun of Righteousness.<sup>1</sup> If that was so, there can be no intrinsic improbability in the conjecture that motives of the same sort may have led the ecclesiastical authorities to assimilate the Easter festival of the death and resurrection of their Lord to the festival of the death and resurrection of another Asiatic god which fell at the same season. Now the Easter rites still observed in Greece, Sicily, and southern Italy bear in some respects a striking resemblance to the rites of Adonis, and I have suggested that the Church may have consciously adapted the new festival to its heathen predecessor for the sake of winning souls to Christ.<sup>2</sup> But this adaptation probably took place in the Greek-speaking rather than in the Latin-speaking parts of the ancient world; for the worship of Adonis, while it flourished among the Greeks, appears to have made little impression on Rome and the West.<sup>3</sup> Certainly it never formed part of the official Roman religion. The place which it might have taken in the affections of the vulgar was already occupied by the

liv. 198). Compare St. Ambrose, *Serm.* vi. 1 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xvii. 614).

<sup>1</sup> A. Credner, *op. cit.* pp. 236 *sqq.*; E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 297 *sq.*; Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. 342, 355 *sq.*; Th. Mommsen in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> 338 *sq.* A different explanation of Christmas has been put forward by Mgr Duchesne. He shows that among the early Christians the death of Christ was commonly supposed to have fallen on the twenty-fifth of March, that day having been "chosen arbitrarily, or rather suggested by its coincidence with the official equinox of spring." It would be natural to assume that Christ had lived an exact number of years on earth, and therefore that his incarnation as well as his death took place on the twenty-fifth of March. In point of fact the Church has placed the Annunciation and with it the beginning of his mother's pregnancy on that very

day. If that were so, his birth would in the course of nature have occurred nine months later, that is, on the twenty-fifth of December. Thus on Mgr Duchesne's theory the date of the Nativity was obtained by inference from the date of the Crucifixion, which in its turn was chosen because it coincided with the official equinox of spring. Mgr Duchesne does not notice the coincidence of the vernal equinox with the festival of Attis. See his work *Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 261-265, 272. The tradition that both the conception and the death of Christ fell on the twenty-fifth of March is mentioned and apparently accepted by Augustine (*De Trinitate*, iv. 9, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xlii. 894).

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 156 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> However, the lament for Adonis is mentioned by Ovid (*Ars Amat.* i. 75 *sq.*) along with the Jewish observance of the Sabbath.



similar but more barbarous worship of Attis and the Great Mother. Now the death and resurrection of Attis were officially celebrated at Rome on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of March,<sup>1</sup> the latter being regarded as the spring equinox,<sup>2</sup> and therefore as the most appropriate day for the revival of a god of vegetation who had been dead or sleeping throughout the winter. But according to an ancient and wide-spread tradition Christ suffered on the twenty-fifth of March, and accordingly some Christians regularly celebrated the Crucifixion on that day without any regard to the state of the moon. This custom was certainly observed in Phrygia, Cappadocia, and Gaul, and there seem to be grounds for thinking that at one time it was followed also in Rome.<sup>3</sup> Thus the tradition which placed the death of Christ on the twenty-fifth of March

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 166 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Columella, *De re rustica*, ix. 14. 1; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 246; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 21. 10; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Mgr L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 262 sq. That Christ was crucified on the twenty-fifth of March in the year 29 is expressly affirmed by Tertullian (*Adversus Judaeos*, 8, vol. ii. p. 719 ed. F. Oehler), Hippolytus (*Commentary on Daniel*, iv. 23, vol. i. p. 242 ed. Bonwetsch and Achelis), and Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, xviii. 54; *id.*, *De Trinitate*, iv. 9). The Quartodecimans of Phrygia celebrated the twenty-fifth of March as the day of Christ's death, quoting as their authority certain acts of Pilate; in Cappadocia the adherents of this sect were divided between the twenty-fifth of March and the fourteenth of the moon. See Epiphanius, *Haeres.* l. 1, vol. ii. p. 447 ed. G. Dindorf. In Gaul the death and resurrection of Christ were regularly celebrated on the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh of March as late as the sixth century. See Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, viii. 31. 6 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, lxxi. 566); S. Martinus Dumiensis (bishop of Braga), *De Pascha*, 1 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, lxxii. 50), who says:

"*A plerisque Gallicanis episcopis usque ante non multum tempus custoditum est, ut semper VIII. Kal. April. diem Paschae celebrent, in quo facta Christi resurrectio traditur.*" According to this last testimony, it was the resurrection, not the crucifixion, of Christ that was celebrated on the twenty-fifth of March; but Mgr Duchesne attributes the statement to a mistake of the writer. With regard to the Roman practice the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh of March are marked in ancient Martyrologies as the dates of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. See *Vetustius Occidentalis Ecclesiae Martyrologium*, ed. Franciscus Maria Florentinus (Lucca, 1667), pp. 396 sq., 405 sq. On this subject Mgr Duchesne observes: "Hippolytus, in his Paschal Table, marks the Passion of Christ in a year in which the fourteenth of Nisan falls on Friday twenty-fifth March. In his commentary on Daniel he expressly indicates Friday the twenty-fifth of March and the consulship of the two Gemini. The Philocalien Catalogue of the Popes gives the same date as to day and year. It is to be noted that the cycle of Hippolytus and the Philocalien Catalogue are derived from official documents, and may be cited as evidence of the Roman ecclesiastical usage" (*Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> p. 262).



Heathen  
festivals  
displaced  
by  
Christian.

was ancient and deeply rooted. It is all the more remarkable because astronomical considerations prove that it can have had no historical foundation.<sup>1</sup> The inference appears to be inevitable that the passion of Christ must have been arbitrarily referred to that date in order to harmonise with an older festival of the spring equinox. This is the view of the learned ecclesiastical historian Mgr Duchesne, who points out that the death of the Saviour was thus made to fall upon the very day on which, according to a widespread belief, the world had been created.<sup>2</sup> But the resurrection of Attis, who combined in himself the characters of the divine Father and the divine Son,<sup>3</sup> was officially celebrated at Rome on the same day. When we remember that the festival of St. George in April has replaced the ancient pagan festival of the Parilia;<sup>4</sup> that the festival of St. John the Baptist in June has succeeded to a heathen Midsummer festival of water;<sup>5</sup> that the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August has ousted the festival of Diana;<sup>6</sup> that the feast of All Souls in November is a continuation of an old heathen feast of the dead;<sup>7</sup> and that the Nativity of Christ himself was assigned to the winter solstice in December because that day was deemed the Nativity of the Sun;<sup>8</sup> we can hardly be thought rash or unreasonable in conjecturing that the other cardinal festival of the Christian church—the solemnisation of Easter—may have been in like manner, and from like motives of edification, adapted to a similar celebration of the Phrygian god Attis at the vernal equinox.<sup>9</sup> At least

<sup>1</sup> Mgr L. Duchesne, *op. cit.* p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Mgr L. Duchesne, *l.c.* A sect of the Montanists held that the world began and that the sun and moon were created at the spring equinox, which, however, they dated on the twenty-fourth of March (Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vii. 18). At Henen-Su in Egypt there was celebrated a festival of the "hanging out of the heavens," that is, the supposed reconstituting of the heavens each year in the spring (E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 63). But the Egyptians thought that the creation of the world took place at the rising of Sirius

(Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 24; Solinus, xxxii. 13), which in antiquity fell on the twentieth of July (L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 127 sqq.).

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 163, 178 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> The evidence of this will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>5</sup> Above, pp. 146 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 18-21.

<sup>7</sup> See below, pp. 253 sqq.

<sup>8</sup> Above, pp. 196 sq.

<sup>9</sup> Another instance of the substitution of a Christian for a pagan festival



it is a remarkable coincidence, if it is nothing more, that the Christian and the heathen festivals of the divine death and resurrection should have been solemnised at the same season and in the same places. For the places which celebrated the death of Christ at the spring equinox were Phrygia, Gaul, and apparently Rome, that is, the very regions in which the worship of Attis either originated or struck deepest root. It is difficult to regard the coincidence as purely accidental. If the vernal equinox, the season at which in the temperate regions the whole face of nature testifies to a fresh outburst of vital energy, had been viewed from of old as the time when the world was annually created afresh in the resurrection of a god, nothing could be more natural than to place the resurrection of the new deity at the same cardinal point of the year. Only it is to be observed that if the death of Christ was dated on the twenty-fifth of March, his resurrection, according to Christian tradition, must have happened on the twenty-seventh of March, which is just two days later than the vernal equinox of the Julian calendar and the resurrection of Attis. A similar displacement of two days in the adjustment of Christian to heathen celebrations occurs in the festivals of St. George and the Assumption of the Virgin. However, another Christian tradition, followed by Lactantius and perhaps by the practice of the Church in Gaul, placed the death of Christ on the twenty-third and his resurrection on the twenty-fifth of March.<sup>1</sup> If that was so, his resurrection coincided exactly with the resurrection of Attis.

Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the Church in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with

Com-  
promise of  
Christi-  
anity with  
paganism.

may be mentioned. On the first of August the people of Alexandria used to commemorate the defeat of Mark Antony by Augustus and the entrance of the victor into their city. The heathen pomp of the festival offended Eudoxia, wife of Theodosius the Younger, and she decreed that on that day the Alexandrians should thenceforth celebrate the deliverance of St.

Peter from prison instead of the deliverance of their city from the yoke of Antony and Cleopatra. See L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 154.

<sup>1</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 2; *id.*, *Divin. Institut.* iv. 10. 18. As to the evidence of the Gallic usage see S. Martinus Dumienensis, quoted above, p. 199, note 3.



Parallel  
with  
Buddhism.

its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals. The inflexible Protestantism of the primitive missionaries, with their fiery denunciations of heathendom, had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity was to conquer the world it could do so only by relaxing the too rigid principles of its Founder, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation. In this respect an instructive parallel might be drawn between the history of Christianity and the history of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup> Both systems were in their origin essentially ethical reforms born of the generous ardour, the lofty aspirations, the tender compassion of their noble Founders, two of those beautiful spirits who appear at rare intervals on earth like beings come from a better world to support and guide our weak and erring nature.<sup>2</sup> Both preached moral virtue as the means of accomplishing what they regarded as the supreme object of life, the eternal salvation of the individual soul, though by a curious antithesis the one sought that salvation in a blissful eternity, the other in a final release from suffering, in annihilation. But the austere ideals of sanctity which they inculcated were too deeply opposed not only to the frailties but to the natural instincts of humanity ever to be carried out in practice by more than a small number of disciples, who consistently renounced the ties of the family and the state in order to work out their own salvation in the still seclusion of the cloister. If such faiths were to be nominally accepted by whole nations or even by the world, it was essential that they should first be modified

<sup>1</sup> On the decadence of Buddhism and its gradual assimilation to those popular Oriental superstitions against which it was at first directed, see Monier Williams, *Buddhism*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1890), pp. 147 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> The historical reality both of Buddha and of Christ has sometimes been doubted or denied. It would be just as reasonable to question the historical existence of Alexander the Great and Charlemagne on account

of the legends which have gathered round them. The great religious movements which have stirred humanity to its depths and altered the beliefs of nations spring ultimately from the conscious and deliberate efforts of extraordinary minds, not from the blind unconscious co-operation of the multitude. The attempt to explain history without the influence of great men may flatter the vanity of the vulgar, but it will find no favour with the philosophic historian.



or transformed so as to accord in some measure with the prejudices, the passions, the superstitions of the vulgar. This process of accommodation was carried out in after-ages by followers who, made of less ethereal stuff than their masters, were for that reason the better fitted to mediate between them and the common herd. Thus as time went on, the two religions, in exact proportion to their growing popularity, absorbed more and more of those baser elements which they had been instituted for the very purpose of suppressing. Such spiritual decadences are inevitable. The world cannot live at the level of its great men. Yet it would be unfair to the generality of our kind to ascribe wholly to their intellectual and moral weakness the gradual divergence of Buddhism and Christianity from their primitive patterns. For it should never be forgotten that by their glorification of poverty and celibacy both these religions struck straight at the root not merely of civil society but of human existence. The blow was parried by the wisdom or the folly of the vast majority of mankind, who refused to purchase a chance of saving their souls with the certainty of extinguishing the species.



## CHAPTER VII

### HYACINTH

The Greek  
Hyacinth  
interpreted  
as the  
vegetation  
which  
blooms  
and  
withers  
away.

ANOTHER mythical being who has been supposed to belong to the class of gods here discussed is Hyacinth. He too has been interpreted as the vegetation which blooms in spring and withers under the scorching heat of the summer sun.<sup>1</sup> Though he belongs to Greek, not to Oriental mythology, some account of him may not be out of place in the present discussion. According to the legend, Hyacinth was the youngest and handsomest son of the ancient king Amyclas, who had his capital at Amyclae in the beautiful vale of Sparta. One day playing at quoits with Apollo, he was accidentally killed by a blow of the god's quoit. Bitterly the god lamented the death of his friend. The hyacinth—"that sanguine flower inscribed with woe"—sprang from the blood of the hapless youth, as anemones and roses from the blood of Adonis, and violets from the blood of Attis:<sup>2</sup> like these vernal flowers it heralded the advent of another spring and gladdened the hearts of men with the promise of a joyful resurrection. The flower is usually supposed to be not what we call a hyacinth, but a little purple iris with the letters of lamentation (AI, which in Greek means "alas") clearly inscribed in black on its petals. In Greece it blooms in spring after the early violets but

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 473; L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.<sup>4</sup> 248 sq.; Greve, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. rom. Myth.* i. 2763 sq. Other views of Hyacinth have been expressed by G. F. Welcker (*Griechische Götterlehre*, i. 472), G. F. Unger (*Philologus*, xxxvii. (1877) pp. 20 sqq.),

E. Rohde (*Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 137 sqq.) and S. Wide (*Lakonische Kulte*, p. 290).

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, i. 3. 3, iii. 10. 3; Nicander, *Ther.* 901 sqq., with the Scholiast's note; Lucian, *De saltatione*, 45; Pausanias, iii. 1. 3, iii. 19. 5; J. Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, i. 241 sqq.; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 161-219; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxi. 66.



before the roses.<sup>1</sup> One spring, when the hyacinths were in bloom, it happened that the red-coated Spartan regiments lay encamped under the walls of Corinth. Their commander gave the Amyclaeon battalion leave to go home and celebrate as usual the festival of Hyacinth in their native town. But the sad flower was to be to these men an omen of death; for they had not gone far before they were enveloped by clouds of light-armed foes and cut to pieces.<sup>2</sup>

The tomb of Hyacinth was at Amyclae under a massive altar-like pedestal, which supported an archaic bronze image of Apollo. In the left side of the pedestal was a bronze door, and through it offerings were passed to Hyacinth, as to a hero or a dead man, not as to a god, before sacrifices were offered to Apollo at the annual Hyacinthian festival. Bas-reliefs carved on the pedestal represented Hyacinth and his maiden sister Polyboea caught up to heaven by a company of goddesses.<sup>3</sup> The annual festival of the Hyacinthia was held in the month of Hecatombeus, which seems to have corresponded to May.<sup>4</sup> The ceremonies

The tomb  
and the  
festival of  
Hyacinth  
at  
Amyclae.

<sup>1</sup> Theophrastus, *Histor. Plant.* vi. 8. 1 sq. That the hyacinth was a spring flower is plainly indicated also by Philostratus (*Imag.* i. 23. 1) and Ovid (*Metam.* x. 162-166). See further Greve, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 2764; J. Murr, *Die Pflanzenwelt in der griechischen Mythologie* (Innsbruck, 1890), pp. 257 sqq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, pp. 383 sq. Miss J. E. Harrison was so kind as to present me with two specimens of the flower (*Delphinium Ajacis*) on which the woful letters were plainly visible. A flower similarly marked, of a colour between white and red, was associated with the death of Ajax (Pausanias, i. 35. 4). But usually the two flowers were thought to be the same (Ovid, *Metam.* xiii. 394 sqq.; Scholiast on Theocritus, x. 28; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxi. 66; Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 557, p. 285).

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, iv. 5. 7-17; Pausanias, iii. 10. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, iii. 1. 3, iii. 19. 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Hesychius, s.v. Ἑκατομβεύς; G. F. Unger in *Philologus*, xxxvii. (1877)

pp. 13-33; Greve, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 2762; W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,<sup>3</sup> i. 339. From Xenophon (*Hellenica*, iv. 5) we learn that in 390 B.C. the Hyacinthian festival followed soon after the Isthmian festival, which that year fell in spring. Others, however, identifying Hecatombeus with the Attic month Hecatombaeon, would place the Hyacinthia in July (K. O. Müller, *Dorier*,<sup>2</sup> i. 358). In Rhodes, Cos, and other Greek states there was a month called Hyacinthius, which probably took its name from the Hyacinthian festival. The month is thought to correspond to the Athenian Scirophorion and therefore to June. See E. Bischof, "De fastis Graecorum antiquioribus," *Leipziger Studien für classische Philologie*, vii. (1884) pp. 369 sq., 381, 384, 410, 414 sq.; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> Nos. 614, note 3, 744, note 1. If this latter identification of the month is correct, it would furnish an argument for dating the Spartan festival of Hyacinth in June also. The question is too intricate to be discussed here.



occupied three days. On the first the people mourned for Hyacinth, wearing no wreaths, singing no paeans, eating no bread, and behaving with great gravity. It was on this day probably that the offerings were made at Hyacinth's tomb. Next day the scene was changed. All was joy and bustle. The capital was emptied of its inhabitants, who poured out in their thousands to witness and share the festivities at Amyclae. Boys in high-girt tunics sang hymns in honour of the god to the accompaniment of flutes and lyres. Others, splendidly attired, paraded on horseback in the theatre: choirs of youths chanted their native ditties: dancers danced: maidens rode in wicker carriages or went in procession to witness the chariot races: sacrifices were offered in profusion: the citizens feasted their friends and even their slaves.<sup>1</sup> This outburst of gaiety may be supposed to have celebrated the resurrection of Hyacinth and perhaps also his ascension to heaven, which, as we have seen, was represented on his tomb. However, it may be that the ascension took place on the third day of the festival; but as to that we know nothing. The sister who went to heaven with him was by some identified with Artemis or Proserpine.<sup>2</sup>

Hyacinth  
an  
aboriginal  
god,  
perhaps  
a king,  
who was  
worshipped  
in Laconia  
before the  
invasion  
of the  
Dorians.

It is highly probable, as Erwin Rohde perceived,<sup>3</sup> that Hyacinth was an old aboriginal deity of the underworld who had been worshipped at Amyclae long before the Dorians invaded and conquered the country. If that was so, the story of his relation to Apollo must have been a comparatively late invention, an attempt of the newcomers to fit the ancient god of the land into their own mythical system, in order that he might extend his protection to them. On this theory it may not be without significance that sacrifices at the festival were offered to Hyacinth, as to a hero, before they were offered to Apollo.<sup>4</sup> Further, on

<sup>1</sup> Athenaeus, iv. 17, pp. 139 sq. Strabo speaks (vi. 3. 2, p. 278) of a contest at the Hyacinthian festival. It may have been the chariot-races mentioned by Athenaeus.

<sup>2</sup> Hesychius, s.v. Πολύβοια.

<sup>3</sup> E. Rohde, *Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 137 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, iii. 19. 3. The Greek word here used for sacrifice (ἐναγίζειν)

properly denotes sacrifices offered to the heroic or worshipful dead; another word (θύειν) was employed for sacrifices offered to gods. The two terms are distinguished by Pausanias here and elsewhere (ii. 10. 1, ii. 11. 7). Compare Herodotus, ii. 44. Sacrifices to the worshipful dead were often annual. See Pausanias, iii. 1. 8, vii. 19. 10,



the analogy of similar deities elsewhere, we should expect to find Hyacinth coupled, not with a male friend, but with a female consort. That consort may perhaps be detected in his sister Polyboea, who ascended to heaven with him. The new myth, if new it was, of the love of Apollo for Hyacinth would involve a changed conception of the aboriginal god, which in its turn must have affected that of his spouse. For when Hyacinth came to be thought of as young and unmarried there was no longer room in his story for a wife, and she would have to be disposed of in some other way. What was easier for the myth-maker than to turn her into his unmarried sister? However we may explain it, a change seems certainly to have come over the popular idea of Hyacinth; for whereas on his tomb he was portrayed as a bearded man, later art represented him as the pink of youthful beauty.<sup>1</sup> But it is perhaps needless to suppose that the sisterly relation of Polyboea to him was a late modification of the myth. The stories of Cronus and Rhea, of Zeus and Hera, of Osiris and Isis, remind us that in old days gods, like kings, often married their sisters, and probably for the same reason, namely, to ensure their own title to the throne under a rule of female kinship which treated women and not men as the channel in which the blood royal flowed.<sup>2</sup> It is not impossible that Hyacinth may have been a divine king who actually reigned in his lifetime at Amyclae and was afterwards worshipped at his tomb. The representation of his triumphal ascent to heaven in company with his sister suggests that, like Adonis and Proserpine, he may have been supposed to spend one part of the year in the underworld of darkness and death, and another part in the upper world of light and life. And as the anemones and the sprouting corn marked the return of Adonis and Proserpine, so the flowers to which he gave his name may have heralded the ascension of Hyacinth.

His sister  
Polyboea  
may  
perhaps  
have been  
his spouse.

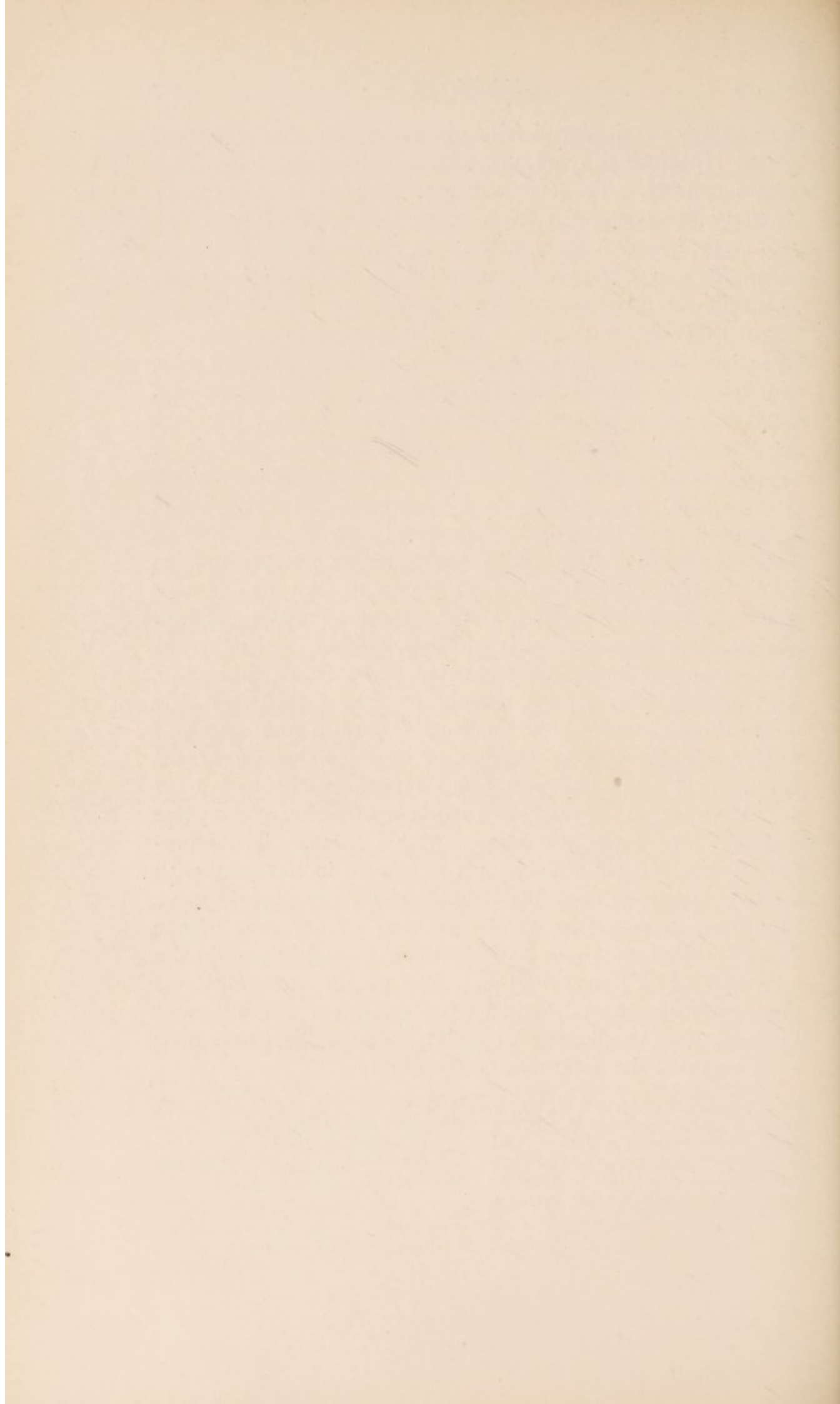
vii. 20. 9, viii. 14. 11, viii. 41. 1, ix. 38. 5, x. 24. 6. It has been observed by E. Rohde (*Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 139, note 2) that sacrifices were frequently offered to a hero before a god, and he suggests with much probability that in these

cases the worship of the hero was older than that of the deity.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, iii. 19. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 28, and below, pp. 320 *sqq.*

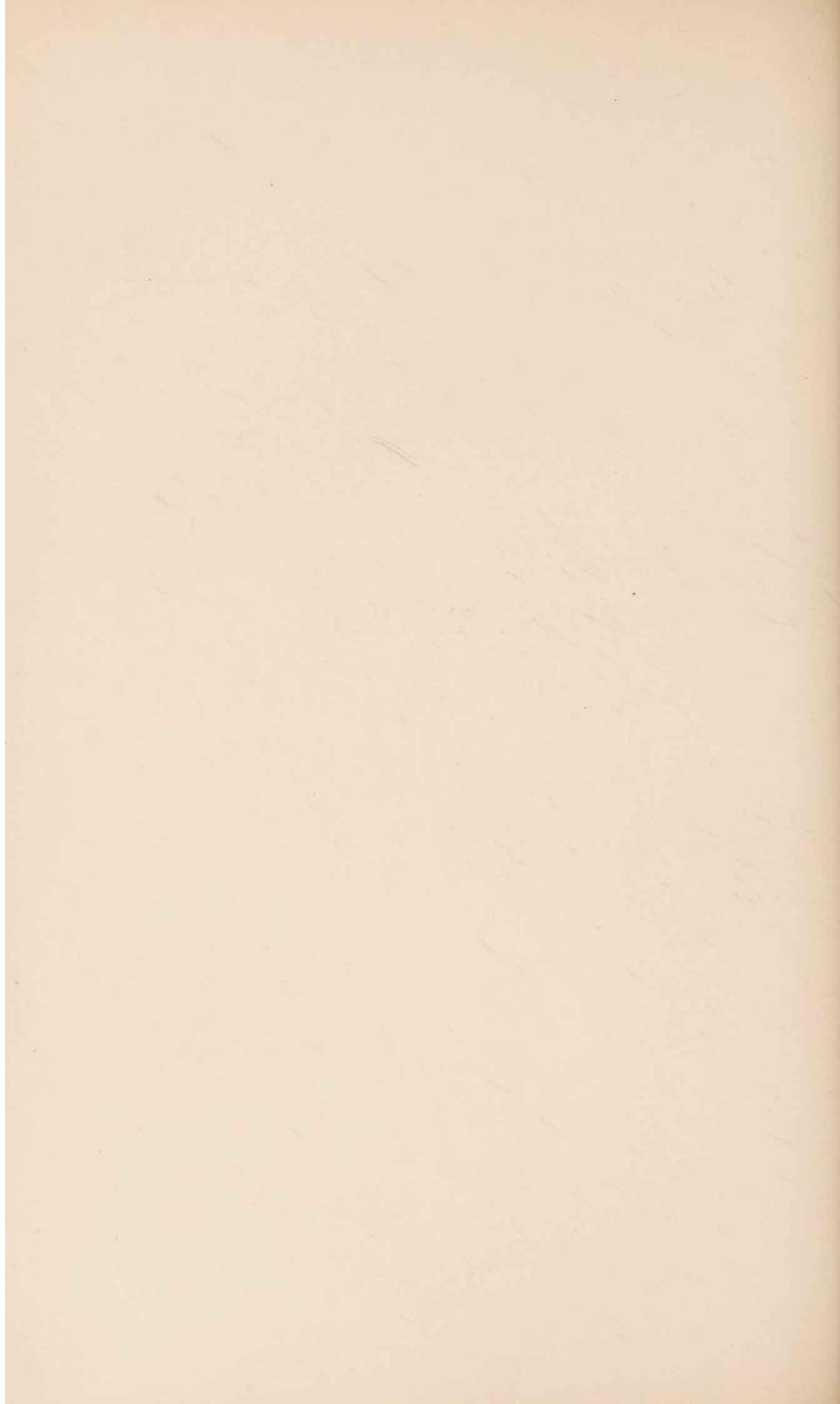






BOOK THIRD  
OSIRIS







## CHAPTER I

### THE MYTH OF OSIRIS

IN ancient Egypt the god whose death and resurrection were annually celebrated with alternate sorrow and joy was Osiris, the most popular of all Egyptian deities; and there are good grounds for classing him with Adonis and Attis as a personification of the great yearly vicissitudes of nature, especially of the corn. But the immense vogue which he enjoyed for many ages induced his devoted worshippers to heap upon him the attributes and powers of many other gods; so that it is not always easy to strip him, so to say, of his borrowed plumes and to restore them to their proper owners. In the following pages I do not pretend to enumerate and analyse all the alien elements which thus gathered round the popular deity. All that I shall attempt to do is to peel off these accretions and to exhibit the god, as far as possible, in his primitive simplicity. The discoveries of recent years in Egypt enable us to do so with more confidence now than when I first addressed myself to the problem some sixteen years ago.

The myth of Osiris is told in a connected form only by Plutarch, whose narrative has been confirmed and to some extent amplified in modern times by the evidence of the monuments.<sup>1</sup> The story runs thus.

Osiris was the offspring of an intrigue between the

Osiris the Egyptian counter-part of Adonis and Attis.

The myth of Osiris.

Osiris a son of the earth-god and the sky goddess.

<sup>1</sup> See Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 12-20; R. V. Lanzzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 692 sqq.; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 365-369; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin, 1905), pp.

34-38; A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 109 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 172 sqq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), ii. 123 sqq.



earth-god Seb (Keb or Geb, as the name is sometimes transliterated) and the sky-goddess Nut. The Greeks identified his parents with their own deities Cronus and Rhea. When the sun-god Ra perceived that his wife Nut had been unfaithful to him, he declared with a curse that she should be delivered of the child in no month and no year. But the goddess had another lover, the god Thoth or Hermes, as the Greeks called him, and he playing at draughts with the moon won from her a seventy-second part<sup>1</sup> of every day, and having compounded five whole days out of these parts he added them to the Egyptian year of three hundred and sixty days. This was the mythical origin of the five supplementary days which the Egyptians annually inserted at the end of every year in order to establish a harmony between lunar and solar time.<sup>2</sup> On these five days, regarded as outside the year of twelve months, the curse of the sun-god did not rest, and accordingly Osiris was born on the first of them. At his nativity a voice rang out proclaiming that the Lord of All had come into the world. Some say that a certain Pamylen heard a voice from the temple at Thebes bidding him announce with a shout that a great king, the beneficent Osiris, was born. But Osiris was not the only child of his mother. On the second of the supplementary days she gave birth to the elder Horus, on the third to the god Set, whom the Greeks called Typhon, on the fourth to the goddess Isis, and on the fifth to the goddess Nephthys.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Set married his sister Nephthys, and Osiris married his sister Isis.

Osiris  
introduces  
the  
cultivation  
of corn and  
of the vine.

Reigning as a king on earth, Osiris reclaimed the Egyptians from savagery, gave them laws, and taught them to worship the gods. Before his time the Egyptians had been cannibals. But Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, discovered wheat and barley growing wild, and Osiris introduced the cultivation of these grains amongst his people,

<sup>1</sup> In Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 12, we must clearly read ἐβδομηκοστὸν δεύτερον with Scaliger and Wyttenbach for the ἐβδομηκοστὸν of the MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 4, with A. Wiedemann's note; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chrono-*

*logie*, i. 94 sqq.; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 468 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 208 sq.

<sup>3</sup> The birth of the five deities on the five supplementary days is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus (i. 13. 4) as well as by Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris*, 12).



who forthwith abandoned cannibalism and took kindly to a corn diet. Moreover, Osiris is said to have been the first to gather fruit from trees, to train the vine to poles, and to tread the grapes. Eager to communicate these beneficent discoveries to all mankind, he committed the whole government of Egypt to his wife Isis, and travelled over the world, diffusing the blessings of civilisation wherever he went.<sup>1</sup> But on his return his brother Set (whom the Greeks called Typhon) with seventy-two others plotted against him. Having taken the measure of his good brother's body by stealth, the bad brother Typhon fashioned and highly decorated a coffer of the same size, and once when they were all drinking and making merry he brought in the coffer and jestingly promised to give it to the one whom it should fit exactly. Well, they all tried one after the other, but it fitted none of them. Last of all Osiris stepped into it and lay down. On that the conspirators ran and slammed the lid down on him, nailed it fast, soldered it with molten lead, and flung the coffer into the Nile. This happened on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, when the sun is in the sign of the Scorpion, and in the eight-and-twentieth year of the reign or the life of Osiris. When Isis heard of it she sheared off a lock of her hair, put on mourning attire, and wandered disconsolately up and down, seeking the body.<sup>2</sup>

His violent death.

Isis searches for his body.

By the advice of the god of wisdom she took refuge in the papyrus swamps of the Delta. Seven scorpions accompanied her in her flight. One evening when she was weary she came to the house of a woman, who, alarmed at the sight of the scorpions, shut the door in her face. Then one of the scorpions crept under the door and stung the child of the woman that he died. But when Isis heard the mother's lamentation, her heart was touched, and she laid her hands on the child and uttered her powerful spells; so the poison was driven out of the child and he lived. Afterwards Isis herself gave birth to a son in the swamps. The infant was the younger Horus, and Buto, the goddess of the north, hid him from the wrath of his wicked uncle Set. Yet she could not guard him from all mishap;

Isis and her infant son Horus.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 13; Diodorus Siculus, i. 14 and 17; Tibullus, i. 7. 29 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 13 sq.



for one day when Isis came to her little son's hiding-place she found him stretched lifeless and rigid on the ground: a scorpion had stung him. Then Isis prayed to the sun-god Ra for help, and he hearkened to her and sent Thoth, who by his words of power restored the child to life.<sup>1</sup>

The body  
of Osiris  
floats to  
Byblus,  
where it is  
recovered  
by Isis.

Meantime the coffer containing the body of Osiris had floated down the river and away out to sea, till at last it drifted ashore at Byblus, on the coast of Syria. Here a fine *erica*-tree shot up suddenly and enclosed the chest in its trunk. The king of the country, admiring the growth of the tree, had it cut down and made into a pillar of his house; but he did not know that the coffer with the dead Osiris was in it. Word of this came to Isis and she journeyed to Byblus, and sat down by the well, in humble guise, her face wet with tears. To none would she speak till the king's handmaidens came, and then she greeted kindly and braided their hair and breathed on them from her own divine body a wondrous perfume. But when the queen beheld the braids of her handmaidens' hair and smelt the sweet smell that emanated from them, she sent for the stranger woman and took her into her house and made her the nurse of her child. But Isis gave the babe her finger instead of her breast to suck, and at night she began to burn all that was mortal of him away, while she herself in the likeness of a swallow fluttered round the pillar that contained her dead brother, twittering mournfully. But the queen spied what she was doing and shrieked out when she saw her child in flames, and thereby she hindered him from becoming immortal. Then the goddess revealed herself and begged for the pillar of the roof, and they gave it her, and she cut the coffer out of it, and fell upon it and embraced it and lamented so loud that the younger of the king's children died of fright on the spot. But the trunk of the tree she wrapped in fine linen and poured ointment on it and gave it to the king and queen, and the wood stands in a temple of Isis and is worshipped by the people of Byblus to this day. And Isis put the coffer in a boat and took the eldest of

<sup>1</sup> A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 366; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the*

*Egyptians*, i. 487 sq., ii. 206-211. These stories of the scorpions are not mentioned by Plutarch.



the king's children with her and sailed away. As soon as they were alone, she opened the chest, and laying her face on the face of her brother she kissed him and wept. But the child came behind her softly and saw what she was about, and she turned and looked at him in anger, and the child could not bear her look and died; but some say that it was not so, but that he fell into the sea and was drowned. It is he whom the Egyptians sing of at their banquets under the name of Maneros. But Isis put the coffer by and went to see her son Horus at the city of Buto, and Typhon found it as he was hunting a boar one night by the light of a full moon.<sup>1</sup> And he knew the body, and rent it into fourteen pieces, and scattered them abroad. But Isis sailed up and down the marshes in a shallop made of papyrus, looking for the pieces; and that is why when people sail in shallops made of papyrus, the crocodiles do not hurt them, for they fear or respect the goddess. And that is the reason, too, why there are many graves of Osiris in Egypt, for she buried each limb as she found it. But others will have it that she buried an image of him in every city, pretending it was his body, in order that Osiris might be worshipped in many places, and that if Typhon searched for the real grave he might not be able to find it.<sup>2</sup> However, the genital member of Osiris had been eaten by the fishes, so Isis made an image of it instead, and the image is used by the Egyptians at their festivals to this day.<sup>3</sup>

Such is the myth of Osiris, as told by Plutarch. A long inscription in the temple at Dendera has preserved a list of the god's graves, and other texts mention the parts of his body which were treasured as holy relics in each of the sanctuaries. Thus his heart was at Athribis, his backbone at Busiris, his neck at Letopolis, and his head at Memphis. As often happens in such cases, some of his divine limbs were miraculously multiplied. His head, for example, was at Abydos as well as at Memphis, and his legs, which were remarkably numerous, would have sufficed for several ordinary

The various members of Osiris treasured as relics in various parts of Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Diodorus, i. 21. 5-9, iv. 6. 3; Strabo, xviii. 1. 23, p. 803.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18. Compare Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 7, p. 142 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.



mortals.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, however, Osiris was nothing to St. Denys, of whom no less than seven heads, all equally genuine, are extant.<sup>2</sup>

Being brought to life again, Osiris reigns as king and judge of the dead in the other world.

According to native Egyptian accounts, which supplement that of Plutarch, when Isis had found the corpse of her husband Osiris, she and her sister Nephthys sat down beside it and uttered a lament which in after ages became the type of all Egyptian lamentations for the dead. In pity for her sorrow the sun-god Ra sent down from heaven the jackal-headed god Anubis, who, with the aid of Isis and Nephthys, of Thoth and Horus, pieced together the broken body of the murdered god, swathed it in linen bandages, and observed all the other rites which the Egyptians were wont to perform over the bodies of the departed. Then Isis fanned the cold clay with her wings: Osiris revived, and thenceforth reigned as king over the dead in the other world.<sup>3</sup> There he bore the titles of Lord of the Underworld, Lord of Eternity, Ruler of the Dead.<sup>4</sup> There, too, in the great Hall of the Two Truths he presided as judge at the trial of the souls of the departed, who made their solemn confession before him, and, their heart having been weighed in the balance of justice, received the reward of virtue in a life eternal or the punishment of vice in annihilation.<sup>5</sup> The confession which the *Book of the Dead* puts in the mouth of the deceased at the judgment-bar of Osiris<sup>6</sup> sets the

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, "Das Osiris-Mysterium von Tentyra," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, xix. (1881) pp. 77 sqq.; V. Loret, "Les fêtes d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, iii. (1882) pp. 43 sqq.; R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 697 sqq.; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, pp. 584 sqq.; *id.*, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, p. 115; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 367 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. Rendel Harris, *The Annotators of the Codex Bezae*, p. 104, note 2, referring to Dulaure.

<sup>3</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 35 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire*

*ancienne*, i. 176; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 140, 262. On Osiris as king of the dead see Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 79.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), pp. 8, 17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> On Osiris as judge of the dead see A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 131 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 187 sqq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (London, 1901), i. pp. liii. sqq.; *id.*, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 141 sqq.; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 102 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> *The Book of the Dead*, ch. cxxv. (vol. ii. pp. 355 sqq. of Budge's translation; pp. 369 sqq. of Pierret's French translation); R. V. Lanson,



morality of the ancient Egyptians in a very favourable light. In rendering an account of his life the deceased solemnly protested that he had not oppressed his fellow-men, that he had made none to weep, that he had done no murder, neither committed fornication nor borne false witness, that he had not falsified the balance, that he had not taken the milk from the mouths of babes, that he had given bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty, and had clothed the naked. In harmony with these professions are the epitaphs on Egyptian graves, which reveal, if not the moral practice, at least the moral ideals of those who slept beneath them. Thus, for example, a man says in his epitaph: "I gave bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked, and ferried across in my own boat him who could not pass the water. I was a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a shelter from the wind to them that were cold. I am one that spake good and told good. I earned my substance in righteousness."<sup>1</sup> Those who had done thus in their mortal life and had been acquitted at the Great Assize, were believed to dwell thenceforth at ease in a land where the corn grew higher than on earth, where harvests never failed, where trees were always green, and wives for ever young and fair.<sup>2</sup>

In the resurrection of Osiris the Egyptians saw the pledge of a life everlasting for themselves beyond the grave. They believed that every man would live eternally in the other world if only his surviving friends did for his body what the gods had done for the body of Osiris. Hence the ceremonies observed by the Egyptians over the dead were an exact copy of those which Anubis, Horus, and the rest had performed over Osiris. Indeed every man after death was identified with Osiris and bore his name. In an Egyptian text it is said of the departed that "as surely as Osiris lives, so shall he live also; as surely as Osiris did not die, so shall he not die; as surely

In the resurrection of Osiris the Egyptians saw a pledge of their own immortality.

*Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 788 sqq.; A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 132-134; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 188-191; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 104-106.

<sup>1</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 106. Compare A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 134 sq.

<sup>2</sup> A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.* p. 135; G. Maspero, *op. cit.* i. 194 sq.; A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 106-109.



as Osiris is not annihilated, so shall he too not be annihilated." And the resurrection of the dead was conceived, like that of Osiris, not merely as spiritual but also as bodily. "They possess their heart, they possess their senses, they possess their mouth, they possess their feet, they possess their arms, they possess all their limbs."<sup>1</sup>

Combat  
between  
Set and  
Horus, the  
brother  
and the son  
of Osiris,  
for the  
crown of  
Egypt.

When Horus the younger, the son of Osiris and Isis, was grown to man's estate, the ghost of his royal and murdered father appeared to him and urged him, like another Hamlet, to avenge the foul unnatural murder upon his wicked uncle. Thus encouraged, the youth attacked the miscreant. The combat was terrific and lasted many days. Horus lost an eye in the conflict and Set suffered a still more serious mutilation. At last Thoth parted the combatants and healed their wounds. According to one account the great battle was fought on the twenty-sixth day of the month of Thoth. Foiled in open war, the artful uncle now took the law of his virtuous nephew. He brought a suit of bastardy against Horus, hoping thus to rob him of his inheritance and to get possession of it himself. The case was tried before the high court of the gods in the great hall at Heliopolis, and the august judges pronounced Horus the true-begotten son of his father. He accordingly assumed the crown and mounted the throne of his father and grandfather. However, according to another and perhaps later version of the story, the victory of Horus over his uncle was by no means so decisive, and their struggles ended in a compromise, by which Horus reigned over the Delta, while Set became king of the upper valley of the Nile from near Memphis to the first cataract.<sup>2</sup>

These legends of a contest for the throne of Egypt

<sup>1</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 96-99; *id.*, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 416. Compare A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, pp. 123-126; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (London, 1901), i. pp. liii. sqq.; *id.*, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 126, 140 sq.; A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, p. 312. However, in later times the body with which the dead came to

life was believed to be a spiritual, not a material body; it was called *sāhu*. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, i. pp. lvii. sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 19 and 55; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 368; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 37 sq.; A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, p. 114; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 176-178.



may perhaps contain a reminiscence of real dynastical struggles which attended an attempt to change the right of succession from the female to the male line. For under a rule of female kinship the heir to the throne is either the late king's brother, or the son of the late king's sister, while under a rule of male kinship the heir to the throne is the late king's son. In the legend of Osiris the rival heirs are Set and Horus, Set being the late king's brother, and Horus the late king's son ; though Horus indeed united both claims to the crown, being the son of the king's sister as well as of the king. A similar attempt to shift the line of succession seems to have given rise to similar contests at Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The legend of their contest may be a reminiscence of dynastic struggles.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 253 sq.



## CHAPTER II

### THE OFFICIAL EGYPTIAN CALENDAR

The date of a festival sometimes furnishes a clue to the nature of the god.

A USEFUL clue to the original nature of a god or goddess is often furnished by the season at which his or her festival is celebrated. Thus, if the festival falls at the new or the full moon, there is a certain presumption that the deity thus honoured either is the moon or at least has lunar affinities. If the festival is held at the winter or summer solstice, we naturally surmise that the god is the sun, or at all events that he stands in some close relation to that luminary. Again, if the festival coincides with the time of sowing or harvest, we are inclined to infer that the divinity is an embodiment of the earth or of the corn. These presumptions or inferences, taken by themselves, are by no means conclusive; but if they happen to be confirmed by other indications, the evidence may be regarded as fairly strong.

The year of the Egyptian calendar a vague or movable one.

Unfortunately, in dealing with the Egyptian gods we are in a great measure precluded from making use of this clue. The reason is not that the dates of the festivals are always unknown, but that they shifted from year to year, until after a long interval they had revolved throughout the whole course of the seasons. This gradual revolution of the festal Egyptian cycle resulted from the employment of a calendar year which neither corresponded exactly to the solar year nor was periodically corrected by intercalation.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> As to the Egyptian calendar see L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 93 sqq.; Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 368 sqq.; R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Ägypter*, i. (Berlin, 1849) pp. 125

sqq.; H. Brugsch, *Die Ägyptologie* (Leipsic, 1891), pp. 347-366; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 468 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 207-210; Ed. Meyer, "Ägyptische Chronologie," *Abhandlungen d. kön. Preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaften*, 1904,



solar year is equivalent to about three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter days ; but the ancient Egyptians, ignoring the quarter of a day, reckoned the year at three hundred and sixty-five days only.<sup>1</sup> Thus each of their calendar years was shorter than the true solar year by about a quarter of a day. In four years the deficiency amounted to one whole day ; in forty years it amounted to ten days ; in four hundred years it amounted to a hundred days ; and so it went on increasing until after a lapse of four times three hundred and sixty-five, or one thousand four hundred and sixty solar years, the deficiency amounted to three hundred and sixty-five days, or a whole Egyptian year. Hence one thousand four hundred and sixty solar years, or their equivalent, one thousand four hundred and sixty-one Egyptian years, formed a period or cycle at the end of which the Egyptian festivals returned to those points of the solar year at which they had been celebrated in the beginning.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime they had been held successively on every day of the solar year, though always on the same day of the calendar.

Thus the official calendar was completely divorced, except at rare and long intervals, from what may be called the natural calendar of the shepherd, the husbandman, and the sailor—that is, from the course of the seasons in which the times for the various labours of cattle-breeding, tillage, and navigation are marked by the position of the sun in the sky, the rising or setting of the stars, the fall of rain, the growth of pasture, the ripening of the corn, the blowing of certain winds, and so forth. Nowhere, perhaps, are the events of this natural calendar better marked or more regular in their recurrence than in Egypt ; nowhere accordingly could their divergence from the corresponding dates of the official calendar be more readily observed. The divergence certainly did not escape the notice of the Egyptians themselves, and some of them apparently attempted successfully to correct it. Thus we are told that the Theban priests, who particularly excelled in astronomy,

Thus the official calendar was divorced from the natural calendar, which is marked by the course of the seasons.

pp. 2 *sqq.* ; F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 150 *sqq.*

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 4, with A. Wiede-

mann's note ; Geminus, *Eisagoge*, 6, pp. 42 *sq.* ed. Halma (Paris, 1819) ; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Geminus, *Eisagoge*, 6, pp. 43 *sq.* ed. Halma.



were acquainted with the true length of the solar year, and harmonised the calendar with it by intercalating a day every few, probably every four, years.<sup>1</sup> But this scientific improvement was too deeply opposed to the religious conservatism of the Egyptian nature to win general acceptance. "The Egyptians," said Geminus, a Greek astronomer writing about 77 B.C., "are of an opposite opinion and purpose from the Greeks. For they neither reckon the years by the sun nor the months and days by the moon, but they observe a peculiar system of their own. They wish, in fact, that the sacrifices should not always be offered to the gods at the same time of the year, but that they should pass through all the seasons of the year, so that the summer festival should in time be celebrated in winter, in autumn, and in spring. For that purpose they employ a year of three hundred and sixty-five days, composed of twelve months of thirty days each, with five supplementary days added. But they do not add the quarter of a day for the reason I have given—namely, in order that their festivals may revolve."<sup>2</sup> So attached indeed were the Egyptians to their old calendar that the kings at their consecration were led by the priest of Isis at Memphis into the holy of holies, and there made to swear that they would maintain the year of three hundred and sixty-five days without intercalation.<sup>3</sup>

Attempt of  
Ptolemy  
III. to  
reform the  
Egyptian  
calendar  
by inter-  
calation.

The practical inconvenience of a calendar which marked true time only once in about fifteen hundred years might be calmly borne by a submissive Oriental race like the ancient Egyptians, but it naturally proved a stumbling-block to the less patient temperament of their European conquerors. Accordingly in the reign of King Ptolemy III. Euergetes a decree was passed that henceforth the movable Egyptian

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 50. 2; Strabo, xvii. i. 46, p. 816. According to Brugsch (*Die Aegyptologie*, pp. 349 sq.), the Egyptians would seem to have denoted the movable year of the calendar and the fixed year of the sun by different written symbols. For more evidence that they were acquainted with a four years' period, corrected by intercalation, see R. Lepsius, *Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 149 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Geminus, *Eisagoge*, 6, p. 43 ed.

Halma. The same writer further describes as a popular Greek error the opinion that the Egyptian festival of Isis coincided with the winter solstice. In his day, he tells us, the two events were separated by an interval of a full month, though they had coincided a hundred and twenty years before the time he was writing.

<sup>3</sup> *Scholia in Caesaris Germanici Aratea*, p. 409 ed. Fr. Eyssenhardt, in his edition of Martianus Capella.



year should be converted into a fixed solar year by the intercalation of one day at the end of every four years, "in order that the seasons may do their duty perpetually according to the present constitution of the world, and that it may not happen, through the shifting of the star by one day in four years, that some of the public festivals which are now held in the winter should ever be celebrated in the summer, and that other festivals now held in the summer should hereafter be celebrated in the winter, as has happened before, and must happen again if the year of three hundred and sixty-five days be retained." The decree was passed in the year 239 or 238 B.C. by the high priests, scribes, and other dignitaries of the Egyptian church assembled in convocation at Canopus; but we cannot doubt that the measure, though it embodied native Egyptian science, was prompted by the king or his Macedonian advisers.<sup>1</sup> This sage attempt to reform the erratic calendar was not permanently successful. The change may indeed have been carried out during the reign of the king who instituted it, but it was abandoned by the year 196 B.C. at latest, as we learn from the celebrated inscription known as the Rosetta stone, in which a month of the Macedonian calendar is equated to the corresponding month of the movable Egyptian year.<sup>2</sup> And the testimony of Geminus, which I have cited, proves that in the following century the festivals were still revolving in the old style. The reform which the Macedonian king had vainly attempted to impose upon his people was accomplished by the practical Romans when they took over the administration of the country. The expedient by which they effected the change was a simple one; indeed it was no other than that to which Ptolemy Euergetes had resorted for the same purpose. They merely intercalated one day at the end of every four years, thus equalising within a small fraction four calendar years to four solar years. Henceforth the official

Institution  
of the fixed  
Alex-  
andrian  
year by  
the  
Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the decree in hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek have been found inscribed on stones in Egypt. See Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 551; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 56; J. P. Mahaffy, *The Empire*

*of the Ptolemies* (London, 1895), pp. 205 sqq., 226 sqq. The star mentioned in the decree is the Dog-star (Sirius). See below, pp. 228 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> W. Dittenberger, *Inscriptiones Graeci Orientalis Selectae*, No. 90, with note 25 of the editor.



and the natural calendars were in practical agreement. The movable Egyptian year had been converted into the fixed Alexandrian year, as it was called, which agreed with the Julian year in length and in its system of intercalation, though it differed from that year in retaining the twelve equal Egyptian months and five supplementary days.<sup>1</sup> But while the new calendar received the sanction of law and regulated the business of government, the ancient calendar was too firmly established in popular usage to be at once displaced. Accordingly it survived for ages side by side with its modern rival.<sup>2</sup> The spread of Christianity, which required a fixed year for the due observance of its festivals, did much to promote the adoption of the new Alexandrian style, and by the beginning of the fifth century the ancient movable year of Egypt appears to have been not only dead but forgotten.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the Alexandrian year see L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 140 sqq. That admirable chronologer argued (pp. 153-161) that the innovation was introduced not, as had been commonly supposed, in 25 B.C., but in 30 B.C., the year in which Augustus defeated Mark Antony under the walls of Alexandria and captured the city. However, the question seems to be still unsettled. See F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 226 sqq., who thinks it probable that the change was made in 26 B.C. For the purposes of this study the precise date of the introduction of the Alexandrian year is not material.

<sup>2</sup> In demotic the fixed Alexandrian year is called "the year of the Ionians," while the old movable year is styled "the year of the Egyptians." Documents have been found which are dated by the day and the month of both years. See H. Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, pp. 354 sq.

<sup>3</sup> L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 149-152. Macrobius thought that the Egyptians had always employed a solar year of  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days (*Saturn.* i. 12. 2, i. 14. 3). The ancient calendar of the Mexicans

resembled that of the Egyptians except that it was divided into eighteen months of twenty days each (instead of twelve months of thirty days each), with five supplementary days added at the end of the year. These supplementary days (*nemontemi*) were deemed unlucky: nothing was done on them: they were dedicated to no deity; and persons born on them were considered unfortunate. See B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, traduite par D. Jourdanet et R. Simeon, pp. 50, 164; Clavigero, *History of Mexico* (London, 1807), i. 290. As this Mexican year of 365 days appears not to have been corrected by intercalation, the festivals tended, like the Egyptian, to rotate throughout the solar year, and so to fall out of harmony with the natural course of the seasons on which they had been originally based. See E. Seler, "The Mexican chronology," in *Bulletin 28 of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1904), pp. 13 sqq. On the other hand, the Indians of Yucatan corrected the deficiency of the year of 365 days by intercalating one day every four years. See D. de Landa, *Relation des choses de la Yucatan* (Paris, 1864), pp. 202-205.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CALENDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN FARMER

#### § 1. *The Rise and Fall of the Nile*

IF the Egyptian farmer of the olden time could thus get no help, except at the rarest intervals, from the official or sacerdotal calendar, he must have been compelled to observe for himself those natural signals which marked the times for the various operations of husbandry. In all ages of which we possess any records the Egyptians have been an agricultural people, dependent for their subsistence on the growth of the corn. The cereals which they cultivated were wheat, barley, and apparently sorghum (*Holcus sorghum*, Linnaeus), the *doora* of the modern Fellahin.<sup>1</sup> Then as now the whole country, with the exception of a fringe on the coast of the Mediterranean, was almost rainless, and owed its immense fertility entirely to the annual inundation of the Nile, which, regulated by an elaborate system of dams and canals, was distributed over the fields, renewing the soil year by year with a fresh deposit of mud washed down from the great equatorial lakes and the mountains of Abyssinia. Hence the rise of the river has always been watched by the inhabitants with the utmost anxiety; for if it either falls short of or exceeds a certain height, dearth and famine are the inevitable consequences.<sup>2</sup> The water begins to rise early in

In Egypt the operations of husbandry are dependent on the annual rise and fall of the Nile.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 36, with A. Wiedemann's note; Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 1, i. 17. 1; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 57 sq., xviii. 60; Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 398, 399, 418, 426 sq.; A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im*

*Alttertum*, pp. 577 sqq.; A. de Candolle, *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, pp. 354 sq., 369, 381; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 14; Diodorus Siculus, i. 36; Strabo, xvii. 1. 3, pp. 786-788; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 167-170; Seneca, *Natur. Quaest.* iv. 2.



June, but it is not until the latter half of July that it swells to a mighty tide. By the end of September the inundation is at its greatest height. The country is now submerged, and presents the appearance of a sea of turbid water, from which the towns and villages, built on higher ground, rise like islands. For about a month the flood remains nearly stationary, then sinks more and more rapidly, till by December or January the river has returned to its ordinary bed. With the approach of summer the level of the water continues to fall. In the early days of June the Nile is reduced to half its ordinary breadth; and Egypt, scorched by the sun, blasted by the wind that has blown from the Sahara for many days, seems a mere continuation of the desert. The trees are choked with a thick layer of grey dust. A few meagre patches of vegetables, watered with difficulty, struggle painfully for existence in the immediate neighbourhood of the villages. Some appearance of verdure lingers beside the canals and in the hollows from which the moisture has not wholly evaporated. The plain appears to pant in the pitiless sunshine, bare, dusty, ash-coloured, cracked and seamed as far as the eye can see with a network of fissures. From the middle of April till the middle of June the land of Egypt is but half alive, waiting for the new Nile.<sup>1</sup>

Irrigation,  
sowing,  
and harvest  
in Egypt.

For countless ages this cycle of natural events has determined the annual labours of the Egyptian husbandman. The first work of the agricultural year is the cutting of the dams which have hitherto prevented the swollen river from flooding the canals and the fields. This is done,

1-10; A. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), pp. 17 sq., 495 sqq.; A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 21-25; G. Maspero, *op. cit.* i. 22 sqq. However, since the Suez Canal was cut, rain has been commoner in lower Egypt (A. H. Sayce on Herodotus, ii. 14).

<sup>1</sup> G. Maspero, *op. cit.* i. 22-26; A. Erman, *op. cit.* p. 23. According to Lane (*op. cit.* pp. 17 sq.) the Nile rises in Egypt about the summer solstice (June 21) and reaches its greatest height by the autumnal equinox (September 22). This agrees exactly with

the statement of Diodorus Siculus (i. 36. 2). Herodotus says (ii. 19) that the rise of the river lasted for a hundred days from the summer solstice. Compare Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 57, xviii. 167; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* iv. 2. 1. According to Prof. Ginzel the Nile does not rise in Egypt till the last week of June (*Handbuch der mathemat. u. technisch. Chronologie*, i. 154). For ancient descriptions of Egypt in time of flood see Herodotus, ii. 97; Diodorus Siculus, i. 36. 8 sq.; Strabo, xvii. 1. 4, p. 788; Aelian, *De natura animalium*, x. 43; Achilles Tatius, iv. 12; Seneca, *Natur. Quaest.* iv. 2. 8 and 11.



and the pent-up waters released on their beneficent mission, in the first half of August.<sup>1</sup> In November, when the inundation has subsided, wheat, barley, and sorghum are sown. The time of harvest varies with the district, falling about a month later in the north than in the south. In upper or southern Egypt barley is reaped at the beginning of March, wheat at the beginning of April, and sorghum about the end of that month.<sup>2</sup>

It is natural to suppose that these various events of the agricultural year were celebrated by the Egyptian farmer with some simple religious rites designed to secure the blessing of the gods upon his labours. These rustic ceremonies he would continue to perform year after year at the same season, while the solemn festivals of the priests continued to shift, with the shifting calendar, from summer through autumn to winter, and onward through spring to summer. The rites of the husbandman were stable because they rested on direct observation of nature: the rites of the priest were unstable because they were based on a false calculation. Yet many of the priestly festivals may have been nothing but the old rural festivals disguised in the course of ages by the pomp of sacerdotalism and severed, by the error of the calendar, from their roots in the natural cycle of the seasons.

The events of the agricultural year were probably celebrated with religious rites.

## § 2. Rites of Irrigation

These conjectures are confirmed by the little we know both of the popular and of the official Egyptian religion. Thus we are told that the Egyptians held a festival of Isis at the time when the Nile began to rise. They believed

Mourning for Osiris at mid-summer when the Nile begins to rise.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 365 sq.; E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), pp. 498 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 23 sq., 69. The last-mentioned writer says (p. 24) that the dams are commonly cut between the first and sixteenth of July, but apparently he means August.

<sup>2</sup> Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* ii. 398 sq.; Prof. W. M. Flinders Petrie, cited above, p. 132, note 3. According

to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 60) barley was reaped in Egypt in the sixth month from sowing, and wheat in the seventh month. Diodorus, on the other hand, says (i. 36. 4) that the corn was reaped after four or five months. Perhaps Pliny refers to lower, and Diodorus to upper Egypt. Elsewhere Pliny affirms (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 169) that the corn was sown at the beginning of November, and that the reaping began at the end of March and was completed in May. This certainly applies better to lower than to upper Egypt.



that the goddess was then mourning for the lost Osiris, and that the tears which dropped from her eyes swelled the impetuous tide of the river.<sup>1</sup> The belief survives in a modified form to this day. For the Nile, as we saw, begins to rise in June about the time of the summer solstice, and the people still attribute its increased volume to a miraculous drop which falls into the river on the night of the seventeenth of the month. The charms and divinations which they practise on that mystic night in order to ascertain the length of their own life and to rid the houses of bugs may well date from a remote antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Now if Osiris was originally a god of the corn, nothing could be more natural than that he should be mourned at mid-summer. For by that time the harvest was past, the fields were bare, the river ran low, life seemed to be suspended, the corn-god was dead. At such a moment people who saw the handiwork of divine beings in all the operations of nature might well trace the swelling of the sacred stream to the tears shed by the goddess at the death of the beneficent corn-god her husband.

Sirius  
regarded  
as the star  
of Isis.

And the sign of the rising waters on earth was soon followed by a sign in heaven. For about a month later, on the twentieth of July, when the river had swollen almost to bursting, the splendid star of Sirius, the brightest of all the fixed stars, appeared at dawn in the east just before sunrise.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians called it Sothis, and regarded it as the star of Isis,<sup>4</sup> just as the Babylonians deemed the planet Venus the star of Astarte. To both peoples apparently the brilliant luminary in the morning sky seemed the goddess of life and

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, x. 32. 18.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), ch. xxvi. pp. 495 sq.

<sup>3</sup> L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 121 sqq.; R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 168 sq. The coincidence of the rising of Sirius with the swelling of the Nile is mentioned by Tibullus (i. 7. 21 sq.) and Aelian (*De natura animalium*, x. 45).

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 27. 4; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 21, 22, 38, 61;

Porphyry, *De antro nymphaeum*, 24; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, ii. 517; Canopic decree, lines 36 sq., in W. Dittenberger's *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 56 (lines 28 sq. in Ch. Michel's *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 551); R. V. Lanzzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 825 sq. On the ceiling of the Memnonium at Thebes the heliacal rising of Sirius is represented under the form and name of Isis (Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, ed. 1878, iii. 102).



love come to mourn her departed lover or spouse and to wake him from the dead. Hence the rising of Sirius on that day, the twentieth of July, marked the beginning of the sacred Egyptian year.<sup>1</sup> The first day of the first month Thoth was theoretically supposed to date from the heliacal rising of the bright star, and in all probability it really did so when the official or sacerdotal year of three hundred and sixty-five days was first instituted. But the miscalculation which has been already explained<sup>2</sup> had the effect of making the star to shift its place in the calendar by one day in four years. Thus if Sirius rose on the first of Thoth in one year, it would rise on the second of Thoth four years afterwards, on the third of Thoth eight years afterwards, and so on until after the lapse of a Siriatic or Sothic period of fourteen hundred and sixty solar years the first of Thoth again coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius, that is, with the twentieth of July.<sup>3</sup> This observation of the

The rising of Sirius on the 20th of July marked the beginning of the sacred Egyptian year.

<sup>1</sup> Porphyry and the Canopic decree, *Il. cc.*; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10, xxi. 10. In inscriptions on the temple at Syene, the modern Assouan, Isis is called "the mistress of the beginning of the year," the goddess "who revolves about the world, near to the constellation of Orion, who rises in the eastern sky and passes to the west perpetually" (R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.* p. 826). It is only in Middle and Lower Egypt that Sirius rises on the twentieth of July. With every degree of latitude that you go south the star rises nearly a day earlier. Thus, whereas near Alexandria in the north Sirius does not rise till the twenty-second of July, at Syene in the south it rises on the sixteenth of July. See R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 168 sq. Now it is to be remembered that the rising of the Nile, as well as the rising of Sirius, is observed earlier and earlier the farther south you go, later and later the farther north you go. The coincident variation of the two phenomena could hardly fail to confirm the Egyptians in their belief of a natural or supernatural connection between them. In the fourth millenium B.C. the heliacal rising of Sirius coincided with the summer solstice and the beginning of the rise of

the Nile. See F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathemat. u. technisch. Chronologie*, i. 190. According to some, the festival of the rising of Sirius and the beginning of the sacred year was held on the nineteenth, not the twentieth of July. See Ed. Meyer, "Aegyptische Chronologie," *Abhandlungen der k. preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaften*, 1904, pp. 22 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Above, pp. 220 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> The first of Thoth coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius (July 20) in the years 2782 B.C., 1322 B.C., and 139 A.D. It would seem, therefore, that the movable Egyptian year of 365 days may have been instituted in 1322 B.C., 2782 B.C., or perhaps in 4242 B.C. (2782 + 1460). See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 125 sqq.; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 192 sqq.; E. Meyer, *op. cit.* pp. 38 sqq. When the fixed Alexandrian year was introduced in 30 B.C. (see above, pp. 223 sq.) the first of Thoth fell on August 29, which accordingly was thenceforth reckoned the first day of the year in the Alexandrian calendar. See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 153 sqq. The period of 1460 solar or 1461 movable Egyptian years was variously called a Sothic period (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* i. 21. 136, p. 401 ed. Potter),



gradual displacement of the star in the calendar has been of the utmost importance for the progress of astronomy, since it led the Egyptians directly to the determination of the approximately true length of the solar year and thus laid the basis of our modern calendar; for the Julian calendar, which we owe to Caesar, was founded on the Egyptian theory, though not on the Egyptian practice.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore a fortunate moment for the world when some pious Egyptian, thousands of years ago, identified for the first time the bright star of Sirius with his goddess; for the identification induced his countrymen to regard the heavenly body with an attention which they would never have paid to it if they had known it to be nothing but a world vastly greater than our own and separated from it by an inconceivable, if not immeasurable, abyss of space.<sup>2</sup>

a Canicular year (from *Canicula*, "the Dog-star," that is, Sirius), a heliacal year, and a year of God (Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10). But there is no evidence or probability that the period was recognised by the Egyptian astronomers who instituted the movable year of 365 days. Rather, as Ideler pointed out (*op. cit.* i. 132), it must have been a later discovery based on continued observations of the heliacal rising of Sirius and of its gradual displacement through the whole length of the official calendar. Brugsch, indeed, went so far as to suppose that the period was a discovery of astronomers of the second century A.D., to which they were led by the coincidence of the first of Thoth with the heliacal rising of Sirius in 139 A.D. (*Die Aegyptologie*, p. 357). But the discovery, based as it is on a very simple calculation ( $365 \times 4 = 1460$ ), could hardly fail to be made as soon as astronomers estimated the length of the solar year at  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, and that they did so at least as early as 238 B.C. is proved conclusively by the Canopic decree. See above, pp. 222 sq. As to the Sothic period see further R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 165 sqq.; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 187 sqq.

For the convenience of the reader I subjoin a table of the Egyptian months, with their dates.

Egyptian Months.	Sothic Year beginning July 20.	Alexandrian Year.
1 Thoth .	20 July .	29 August
1 Phaophi .	19 August	28 September
1 Athyr .	18 September	28 October
1 Choiak .	18 October	27 November
1 Tybi .	17 November	27 December
1 Mechir .	17 December	26 January
1 Phamenoth .	16 January	25 February
1 Pharmuthi .	15 February	27 March
1 Pachon .	17 March	26 April
1 Payni .	16 April .	26 May
1 Epiphi .	16 May .	25 June
1 Mésori .	15 June .	25 July
1 Supplement-ary day	15 July .	24 August

See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 143 sq.; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 200.

<sup>1</sup> The Canopic decree (above, pp. 222 sq.) suffices to prove that the Egyptian astronomers, long before Caesar's time, were well acquainted with the approximately exact length of the solar year, although they did not use their knowledge to correct the calendar except for a short time in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes. With regard to Caesar's debt to the Egyptian astronomers see Dio Cassius, xliii. 26; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 14. 3, i. 16. 39; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 166 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> The islanders of Ceos, in the Aegean, also observed the rising of



The cutting of the dams and the admission of the water into the canals and fields is a great event in the Egyptian year. At Cairo the operation generally takes place between the sixth and the sixteenth of August, and is attended by ceremonies which deserve to be noticed, because they have probably been handed down from antiquity. Near its entrance the canal of Cairo is crossed by a dam of earth, very broad at the bottom and diminishing in breadth upwards, which is constructed before or soon after the Nile has begun to rise. In front of the dam, on the side of the river, is reared a truncated cone of earth called the *'arooseh* or "bride," on the top of which a little maize or millet is generally sown. This "bride" is commonly washed down by the rising tide a week or a fortnight before the dam is cut. Tradition runs that the old custom was to deck a young virgin in gay apparel and throw her into the river as a sacrifice to obtain a plentiful inundation.<sup>1</sup> However that may be, the intention of the present practice appears to be to marry the river, conceived as a male power, to his bride the cornland, which is soon to be fertilised by his water. The ceremony is therefore a charm to ensure the growth of the crops. As such it probably dates, in one form or another, from ancient times. Dense crowds assemble to witness the cutting of the dam. The operation is performed before sunrise, and many people spend the preceding night on the banks of the canal or in boats lit with lamps on the river, while fireworks are displayed and guns discharged at frequent intervals. Before sunrise a great number of workmen begin to cut the dam, and the task is accomplished about an hour before the sun appears on the horizon. When only a thin ridge of earth remains, a boat with an officer on board is propelled against it, and breaking through the slight barrier descends with the rush of water into the canal. The Governor of Cairo flings a purse of gold into the boat as it passes. Formerly the custom was to throw money into the canal. The populace

Ceremonies  
observed in  
Egypt at  
the cutting  
of the  
dams early  
in August.

Sirius with great attention, and drew omens from it as to the salubrity or unhealthiness of the year that was to follow (Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 57. 130).

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), ch. xxvi. pp. 499 sq.



used to dive after it, and several lives were generally lost in the scramble.<sup>1</sup> This practice also would seem to be ancient, for Seneca tells us that at a place called the Veins of the Nile, not far from Philae, the priests used to cast money and offerings of gold into the river at a festival which apparently took place at the rising of the water.<sup>2</sup>

### § 3. Rites of Sowing

The sowing  
of the  
seed in  
November.

Plutarch  
on the  
mournful  
character  
of the rites  
of sowing.

The next great operation of the agricultural year in Egypt is the sowing of the seed in November, when the water of the inundation has retreated from the fields. With the Egyptians, as with many peoples of antiquity, the committing of the seed to the earth assumed the character of a solemn and mournful rite. On this subject I will let Plutarch speak for himself. "What," he asks, "are we to make of the gloomy, joyless, and mournful sacrifices, if it is wrong either to omit the established rites or to confuse and disturb our conceptions of the gods by absurd suspicions? For the Greeks also perform many rites which resemble those of the Egyptians and are observed about the same time. Thus at the festival of the Thesmophoria in Athens women sit on the ground and fast. And the Boeotians open the vaults of the Sorrowful One,<sup>3</sup> naming that festival sorrowful because Demeter is sorrowing for the descent of the Maiden. The month is the month of sowing about the setting of the Pleiades.<sup>4</sup> The Egyptians call it Athyr, the Athenians Pyanepsion, the Boeotians the month of Demeter. Theopompus informs us that the western peoples consider and call the winter Cronus, the summer Aphrodite, and the spring Proserpine, and they believe that all things are brought into being by Cronus and Aphrodite. The Phrygians imagine that the god sleeps in winter and wakes

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Lane, *op. cit.* pp. 500-504.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones*, iv. 2. 7. The cutting of the dams is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus (i. 36. 3).

<sup>3</sup> τῆς Ἀχάας. Plutarch derives the name from ἄχος, "pain," "grief." As to the vaults (μέγαρα) of Demeter see Pausanias, ix. 8. 1; Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* ii. pp. 275 sq. ed. H. Rabe.

<sup>4</sup> In antiquity the Pleiades set at dawn about the end of October or early in November. See L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 242; Aug. Mommsen, *Chronologie* (Leipzig, 1883), pp. 16, 27; G. F. Unger, in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i. pp. 558, 585.



in summer, and accordingly they celebrate with Bacchic rites the putting him to bed in winter and his awakening in summer. The Paphlagonians allege that he is bound fast and shut up in winter, but that he stirs and is set free in spring. And the season furnishes a hint that the sadness is for the hiding of those fruits of the earth which the ancients esteemed, not indeed gods, but great and necessary gifts bestowed by the gods in order that men might not lead the life of savages and of wild beasts. For it was that time of year when they saw some of the fruits vanishing and failing from the trees, while they sowed others grudgingly and with difficulty, scraping the earth with their hands and huddling it up again, on the uncertain chance that what they deposited in the ground would ever ripen and come to maturity. Thus they did in many respects like those who bury and mourn their dead. And just as we say that a purchaser of Plato's books purchases Plato, or that an actor who plays the comedies of Menander plays Menander, so the men of old did not hesitate to call the gifts and products of the gods by the names of the gods themselves, thereby honouring and glorifying the things on account of their utility. But in after ages simple folk in their ignorance applied to the gods statements which only held true of the fruits of the earth, and so they came not merely to say but actually to believe that the growth and decay of plants, on which they subsisted,<sup>1</sup> were the birth and the death of gods. Thus they fell into absurd, immoral, and confused ways of thinking, though all the while the absurdity of the fallacy was manifest. Hence Xenophanes of Colophon declared that if the Egyptians deemed their gods divine they should not weep for them, and that if they wept for them they should not deem them divine. 'For it is ridiculous,' said he, 'to lament and pray that the fruits would be good enough to grow and ripen again in order that they may again be eaten and lamented.' But he was wrong, for though the lamentations are for the fruits, the prayers are addressed to the gods, as the causes and givers of them, that they would be pleased to make fresh fruits to spring up instead of those that perish."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> τὰς παρουσίας τῶν ἀναγκάλων καὶ ἀποκρύψεις.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 69-71.



Plutarch's  
view that  
the worship  
of the  
fruits of  
the earth  
sprang  
from a  
verbal  
misunder-  
standing.

In this interesting passage Plutarch expresses his belief that the worship of the fruits of the earth was the result of a verbal misapprehension or disease of language, as it has been called by a modern school of mythologists, who explain the origin of myths in general on the same easy principle of metaphors misunderstood. Primitive man, on Plutarch's theory, firmly believed that the fruits of the earth on which he subsisted were not themselves gods but merely the gifts of the gods, who were the real givers of all good things. Yet at the same time men were in the habit of bestowing on these divine products the names of their divine creators, either out of gratitude or merely for the sake of brevity, as when we say that a man has bought a Shakespeare or acted Molière, when we mean that he has bought the works of Shakespeare or acted the plays of Molière. This abbreviated mode of expression was misunderstood in later times, and so people came to look upon the fruits of the earth as themselves divine instead of as being the work of divinities: in short, they mistook the creature for the creator. In like manner Plutarch would explain the Egyptian worship of animals as reverence done not so much to the beasts themselves as to the great god who displays his divine handiwork in sentient organisms even more than in the most beautiful and wonderful works of inanimate nature.<sup>1</sup>

Plutarch's  
theory an  
inversion  
of the  
truth :  
fetishism  
is the  
antecedent,  
not the  
corruption,  
of theism.

The comparative study of religion has proved that these theories of Plutarch are an inversion of the truth. Fetishism, or the view that the fruits of the earth and things in general are divine or animated by powerful spirits, is not, as Plutarch imagined, a late corruption of a pure and primitive theism, which regarded the gods as the creators and givers of all good things. On the contrary, fetishism is early and theism is late in the history of mankind. In this respect Xenophanes, whom Plutarch attempts to correct, displayed a much truer insight into the mind of the savage. To weep crocodile tears over the animals and plants which he kills and eats, and to pray them to come again in order that they may be again eaten and again lamented—this may seem absurd to us, but it is precisely what the savage does. And from his point of view the proceeding is not at all absurd but

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 77.



perfectly rational and well calculated to answer his ends. For he sincerely believes that animals and fruits are tenanted by spirits who can harm him if they please, and who cannot but be put to considerable inconvenience by that destruction of their bodies which is unfortunately inseparable from the processes of mastication and digestion. What more natural, therefore, than that the savage should offer excuses to the beasts and the fruits for the painful necessity he is under of consuming them, and that he should endeavour to alleviate their pangs by soft words and an air of respectful sympathy, in order that they may bear him no grudge, and may in due time come again to be again eaten and again lamented? Judged by the standard of primitive manners the attitude of the walrus to the oysters was strictly correct.

*"I weep for you," the Walrus said:  
 "I deeply sympathise."  
 With sobs and tears he sorted out  
 Those of the largest size,  
 Holding his pocket-handkerchief  
 Before his streaming eyes.*

Many examples of such hypocritical lamentations for animals, drawn not from the fancy of a playful writer but from the facts of savage life, could be cited.<sup>1</sup> Here I shall quote the general statement of a writer on the Indians of British Columbia, because it covers the case of vegetable as well as of animal food. After describing the respectful welcome accorded by the Stlatum Indians to the first "sock-eye" salmon which they have caught in the season, he goes on: "The significance of these ceremonies is easy to perceive when we remember the attitude of the Indians towards nature generally, and recall their myths relating to the salmon, and their coming to their rivers and streams. Nothing that the Indian of this region eats is regarded by him as mere food and nothing more. Not a single plant, animal, or fish, or other object upon which he feeds, is looked upon in this light, or as something he has secured for himself by his own wit and skill. He regards it rather as something which has been voluntarily and compassionately

Respect  
shown by  
savages  
for the  
fruits and  
the animals  
which  
they eat.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 389 *sqq.* More examples will be given in the third edition of that book.



placed in his hands by the goodwill and consent of the 'spirit' of the object itself, or by the intercession and magic of his culture-heroes; to be retained and used by him only upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. These conditions include respect and reverent care in the killing or plucking of the animal or plant and proper treatment of the parts he has no use for, such as the bones, blood, and offal; and the depositing of the same in some stream or lake, so that the object may by that means renew its life and physical form. The practices in connection with the killing of animals and the gathering of plants and fruits all make this quite clear, and it is only when we bear this attitude of the savage towards nature in mind that we can hope to rightly understand the motives and purposes of many of his strange customs and beliefs."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the lamentations of the sower become intelligible.

We can now understand why among many peoples of antiquity, as Plutarch tells us, the time of sowing was a time of sorrow. The laying of the seed in the earth was a burial of the divine element, and it was fitting that like a human burial it should be performed with gravity and the semblance, if not the reality, of sorrow. Yet they sorrowed not without hope, perhaps a sure and certain hope, that the seed which they thus committed with sighs and tears to the ground would yet rise from the dust and yield fruit a hundredfold to the reaper. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."<sup>2</sup>

#### § 4. Rites of Harvest

Lamentations of the Egyptian corn-reapers.

The Egyptian harvest, as we have seen, falls not in autumn but in spring, in the months of March, April, and May. To the husbandman the time of harvest, at least in a good year, must necessarily be a season of joy: in bringing home his sheaves he is requited for his long and anxious labours. Yet if the old Egyptian farmer felt a secret joy

<sup>1</sup> C. Hill Tout, "Report on the Ethnology of the Stlatum Indians of British Columbia," *Journal of the*

*Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 140 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxxvi. 5 sq.



at reaping and garnering the grain, it was essential that he should conceal the natural emotion under an air of profound dejection. For was he not severing the body of the corn-god with his sickle and trampling it to pieces under the hoofs of his cattle on the threshing-floor?<sup>1</sup> Accordingly we are told that it was an ancient custom of the Egyptian corn-reapers to beat their breasts and lament over the first sheaf cut, while at the same time they called upon Isis.<sup>2</sup> The invocation seems to have taken the form of a melancholy chant, to which the Greeks gave the name of *Maneros*. Similar plaintive strains were chanted by corn-reapers in Phoenicia and other parts of western Asia.<sup>3</sup> Probably all these doleful ditties were lamentations for the corn-god killed by the sickles of the reapers. In Egypt the slain deity was Osiris, and the name *Maneros* applied to the dirge appears to be derived from certain words meaning "Come to thy house," which often occur in the lamentations for the dead god.<sup>4</sup>

Ceremonies of the same sort have been observed by other peoples, probably for the same purpose. Thus we are told that among all vegetables corn (*selu*), by which is apparently meant maize, holds the first place in the household economy and the ceremonial observance of the Cherokee Indians, who invoke it under the name of "the Old Woman" in allusion to a myth that it sprang from the blood of an old woman killed by her disobedient sons. Similar ceremonies observed by the Cherokee Indians in the cultivation of the corn. "Much ceremony accompanied the planting and tending of the crop. Seven grains, the sacred number, were put into each hill, and these were not afterwards thinned out. After the last working of the crop, the priest and an assistant—generally the owner of the field—went into the field and built a small enclosure in the centre. Then entering it, they seated themselves upon the ground, with heads bent

<sup>1</sup> As to the Egyptian modes of reaping and threshing see Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 419 sqq.; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 572 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 79; Julius Pollux,

iv. 54; Pausanias, ix. 29. 7; Athenaeus, xiv. 11 sq., pp. 618-620. As to these songs see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 223 sq., 252, 257 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *Adonisklage und Linoslied* (Berlin, 1852), p. 24, corrected by A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 336.



down, and while the assistant kept perfect silence the priest, with rattle in hand, sang songs of invocation to the spirit of the corn. Soon, according to the orthodox belief, a loud rustling would be heard outside, which they would know was caused by the 'Old Woman' bringing the corn into the field, but neither must look up until the song was finished. This ceremony was repeated on four successive nights, after which no one entered the field for seven other nights, when the priest himself went in, and, if all the sacred regulations had been properly observed, was rewarded by finding young ears upon the stalks. The corn ceremonies could be performed by the owner of the field himself, provided he was willing to pay a sufficient fee to the priest in order to learn the songs and ritual. Care was always taken to keep a clean trail from the field to the house, so that the corn might be encouraged to stay at home and not go wandering elsewhere. Most of these customs have now fallen into disuse excepting among the old people, by many of whom they are still religiously observed. Another curious ceremony, of which even the memory is now almost forgotten, was enacted after the first working of the corn, when the owner or priest stood in succession at each of the four corners of the field and wept and wailed loudly. Even the priests are now unable to give a reason for this performance, which may have been a lament for the bloody death of Selu," the Old Woman of the Corn.<sup>1</sup> In these Cherokee practices the lamentations and the invocations of the Old Woman of the Corn resemble the ancient Egyptian customs of lamenting over the first corn cut and calling upon Isis, herself probably an Old Woman of the Corn. Further, the Cherokee precaution of leaving a clear path from the field to the house resembles the Egyptian invitation to Osiris, "Come to thy house."

Lamentations of Indians at cutting sacred wood.

Just as the Egyptians lamented at cutting the corn, so the Karok Indians of California lament at hewing the sacred wood for the fire in the assembly-room. The wood must be cut from a tree on the top of the highest

<sup>1</sup> J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1900), pp.

423 sq. I do not know what precisely the writer means by "the last working of the crop" and "the first working of the corn."



hill. In lopping off the boughs the Indian weeps and sobs piteously, shedding real tears, and at the top of the tree he leaves two branches and a top-knot, resembling a man's head and outstretched arms. Having descended from the tree he binds the wood in a faggot and carries it back to the assembly-room, blubbering all the way. If he is asked why he thus weeps at cutting and fetching the sacred fuel, he will either give no answer or say simply that he does it for luck.<sup>1</sup> We may suspect that his real motive is to appease the wrath of the tree-spirit, many of whose limbs he has amputated, though he took care to leave him two arms and a head.

The conception of the corn-spirit as old and dead at harvest is very clearly embodied in an Arab custom. When the harvesters have nearly finished their task and only a small corner of the field remains to be reaped, the owner takes a handful of wheat tied up in a sheaf. A hole is dug in the form of a grave, and two stones are set upright, one at the head and the other at the foot, just as in an ordinary burial. Then the sheaf of wheat is laid at the bottom of the grave, and the sheikh pronounces these words, "The old man is dead." Earth is afterwards thrown in to cover the sheaf, with a prayer, "May Allah bring us back the wheat of the dead."<sup>2</sup>

Arab  
ceremony  
of burying  
"the old  
man" at  
harvest.

<sup>1</sup> S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. A. Janssen, "Coutumes Arabes," *Revue Biblique*, 1<sup>er</sup> avril

1903, p. 258. The customs reported in this article are practised by the Arabs in the neighbourhood of Mádabâ and Kérak.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE OFFICIAL FESTIVALS OF OSIRIS

#### § 1. *The Festival at Sais*

With the adoption of the Alexandrian year in 30 B.C. the Egyptian festivals ceased to rotate through the natural year.

SUCH, then, were the principal events of the farmer's calendar in ancient Egypt, and such the simple religious rites by which he celebrated them. But we have still to consider the Osirian festivals of the official calendar, so far as these are described by Greek writers or recorded on the monuments. In examining them it is necessary to bear in mind that on account of the movable year of the old Egyptian calendar the true or astronomical dates of the official festivals must have varied from year to year, at least until the adoption of the fixed Alexandrian year in 30 B.C. From that time onward, apparently, the dates of the festivals were determined by the new calendar, and so ceased to rotate throughout the length of the solar year. At all events Plutarch, writing about the end of the first century, implies that they were then fixed, not movable; for though he does not mention the Alexandrian calendar he clearly dates the festivals by it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the long festal calendar of

<sup>1</sup> Thus with regard to the Egyptian month of Athyr he tells us that the sun was then in the sign of the Scorpion (*Isis et Osiris*, 13), that Athyr corresponded to the Athenian month Pyanepsion and the Boeotian month Damatrius (*op. cit.* 69), that it was the month of sowing (*ib.*), that in it the Nile sank, the earth was laid bare by the retreat of the inundation, the leaves fell, and the nights grew longer than the days (*op. cit.* 39). These indications agree on the whole

with the date of Athyr in the Alexandrian calendar, namely October 28-November 26. Again, he says (*op. cit.* 43) that the festival of the beginning of spring was held at the new moon of the month Phanemoth, which, in the Alexandrian calendar, corresponded to February 24-March 26. Further, he tells us that a festival was celebrated on the 23rd of Phaophi after the autumn equinox (*op. cit.* 52), and in the Alexandrian calendar Phaophi began on September 28,



Esne, an important document of the Imperial age, is obviously based on the fixed Alexandrian year; for it assigns the mark for New Year's Day to the day which corresponds to the twenty-ninth of August, which was the first day of the Alexandrian year, and its references to the rising of the Nile, the position of the sun, and the operations of agriculture are all in harmony with this supposition.<sup>1</sup> Thus we may take it as fairly certain that from 30 B.C. onwards the Egyptian festivals were stationary in the solar year.

Herodotus tells us that the grave of Osiris was at Sais in Lower Egypt, and that there was a lake there upon which the sufferings of the god were displayed as a mystery by night.<sup>2</sup> This commemoration of the divine passion was held once a year: the people mourned and beat their breasts at it to testify their sorrow for the death of the god; and an image of a cow, made of gilt wood with a golden sun between its horns, was carried out of the chamber in which it stood the rest of the year.<sup>3</sup> The cow no doubt represented Isis herself, for cows were sacred to her, and she was regularly depicted with the horns of a cow on her head.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that the carrying out of her cow-shaped image symbolised the goddess searching for the dead body of Osiris; for this was the native Egyptian interpretation of a similar, if not the same, ceremony which was observed in Plutarch's time about the winter solstice.<sup>5</sup> A great feature of the festival was the nocturnal illumination. People fastened rows of oil-lamps to the outside of their houses, and the lamps burned all night long. The custom was not

The sufferings of Osiris displayed as a mystery at Sais.

The illumination of houses throughout Egypt on the night of the festival suggests that the rite was a Feast of All Souls.

a few days after the autumn equinox. Once more, he observes that another festival was held after the spring equinox (*op. cit.* 65), which implies the use of a fixed solar year. See G. Parthey in his edition of Plutarch's *Isis et Osiris*, pp. 165-169.

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 129-132.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, ii. 41, with Prof. A. Wiedemann's note (*Herodots zweites Buch*, pp. 187 *sqq.*); Diodorus Siculus, i. 11. 4; Aelian, *De natura*

*animalium*, x. 27; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 19 and 39. According to Prof. Wiedemann "the Egyptian name of the cow of Isis was *hes-t*, and this is one of the rare cases in which the name of the sacred animal agrees with that of the deity." *Hest* was the usual Egyptian form of the name which the Greeks and Romans represented as Isis. See R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 813 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 52. The interpretation is accepted by Prof. A. Wiedemann (*Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 482). See below, p. 257.



confined to Sais, but was observed throughout the whole of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

This universal illumination of the houses on one night of the year suggests that the festival may have been a commemoration not merely of the dead Osiris but of the dead in general, in other words, that it may have been a night of All Souls.<sup>2</sup> For it is a wide-spread belief that the souls of the dead revisit their old homes on one night in the year; and on that solemn occasion people prepare for the reception of the ghosts by laying out food for them to eat, and lighting lamps to guide them on their darkling road from and to the grave. The following instances will illustrate the custom.

### § 2. Feasts of All Souls

Annual  
festival of  
the dead  
among  
the Esqui-  
maux.

The Esquimaux of St. Michael and the lower Yukon River hold a festival of the dead every year at the end of November or the beginning of December, as well as a greater festival at intervals of several years. On these occasions food, drink, and clothes are provided for the returning ghosts in the *kashim* or clubhouse of the village, which is illuminated with oil lamps. Every man or woman who wishes to honour a dead friend sets up a lamp on a stand in front of the place which the deceased used to occupy in the clubhouse. These lamps, filled with seal oil, are kept burning day and night till the festival is over. They are believed to light the shades on their return to their old home and back again to the land of the dead. If any one fails to put up a lamp in the clubhouse and to keep it burning, the shade whom he or she desires to honour could not find its way to the place and so would miss the feast. On the eve of the festival the nearest male relation goes to the grave and summons the ghost by planting there a small model of a seal spear or of a wooden dish, according as the deceased was a man or a woman. The totems of

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 62.

<sup>2</sup> In the period of the Middle Kingdom the Egyptians of Siut used to light lamps for the dead on the last day and the first day of the year (A.

Erman, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1882, p. 164; *id.*, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 434 sq.)



the dead are marked on these implements. When all is ready, the ghosts gather in the fire-pit under the clubhouse, and ascending through the floor at the proper moment take possession of the bodies of their namesakes, to whom the offerings of food, drink, and clothing are made for the benefit of the dead. Thus each shade obtains the supplies he needs in the other world. The dead who have none to make offerings to them are believed to suffer great destitution. Hence the Esquimaux fear to die without leaving behind them some one who will sacrifice to their spirits, and childless people generally adopt children lest their shades should be forgotten at the festivals. When a person has been much disliked, his ghost is sometimes purposely ignored, and that is deemed the severest punishment that could be inflicted upon him. After the songs of invitation to the dead have been sung, the givers of the feast take a small portion of food from every dish and cast it down as an offering to the shades; then each pours a little water on the floor so that it runs through the cracks. In this way they believe that the spiritual essence of all the food and water is conveyed to the souls. The remainder of the food is afterwards distributed among the people present, who eat of it heartily. Then with songs and dances the feast comes to an end, and the ghosts are dismissed to their own place. Dances form a conspicuous feature of the great festival of the dead, which is held every few years. The dancers dance not only in the clubhouse but also at the graves and on the ice, if the deceased met their death by drowning.<sup>1</sup>

The Indians of California used to observe annual ceremonies of mourning for the dead,<sup>2</sup> at some of which the souls of the departed were represented by living persons. Ten or more men would prepare themselves to play the part of the ghosts by fasting for several days, especially by abstaining from flesh. Disguised with paint and soot, adorned with feathers and grasses, they danced and sang in the village or rushed about in the forest by night with burning torches in their hands. After a time they presented themselves to the

Annual  
festivals  
of the dead  
among the  
Indians of  
California.

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, pt. i. (Washington, 1899) p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, pp. 328, 355, 356, 384.



relations of the deceased, who looked upon these maskers as in very truth their departed friends and received them accordingly with an outburst of lamentation, the old women scratching their own faces and smiting their breasts with stones in token of mourning. These masquerades were generally held in February. During their continuance a strict fast was observed in the village.<sup>1</sup> Among the Konkaus of California the dance of the dead is always held about the end of August and marks their New Year's Day. They collect a large quantity of food, clothing, baskets, ornaments, and whatever else the spirits are supposed to need in the other world. These they hang on a semicircle of boughs or small trees, cut and set in the ground leafless. In the centre burns a great fire, and hard by are the graves. The ceremony begins at evening and lasts till daybreak. As darkness falls men and women sit on the graves and wail for the dead of the year. Then they dance round the fire with frenzied yells and whoops, casting from time to time the offerings into the flames. All must be consumed before the first faint streaks of dawn appear in the East.<sup>2</sup>

Annual  
festival  
of the dead  
among the  
Miztecs of  
Mexico.

The Miztecs of Mexico believed that the souls of the dead came back in the twelfth month of every year, which corresponded to our November. On this day of All Souls the houses were decked out to welcome the spirits. Jars of food and drink were set on a table in the principal room, and the family went out with torches to meet the ghosts and invite them to enter. Then returning themselves to the house they knelt around the table, and with eyes bent on the ground prayed the souls to accept of the offerings and to procure the blessings of the gods upon the family. Thus they remained on bended knees and with downcast eyes till the morning, not daring to look at the table lest they should offend the spirits by spying on them at their meal.

<sup>1</sup> Kostromitonow, "Bemerkungen über die Indianer in Ober-Kalifornien," in Baer and Helmersen's *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des russischen Reiches*, i. (St. Petersburg, 1839) pp. 88 sq. The natives of the western islands of Torres Straits used to hold a great death-dance at which disguised men personated the ghosts of the lately

deceased, mimicking their characteristic gait and gestures. Women and children were supposed to take these mummers for real ghosts. See A. C. Haddon, in *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. 252-256.

<sup>2</sup> S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, pp. 437 sq.



With the first beams of the sun they rose, glad at heart. The jars of food which had been presented to the dead were given to the poor or deposited in a secret place.<sup>1</sup> The Indians of Santiago Tepehuacan believe that the souls of their dead return to them on the night of the eighteenth of October, the festival of St. Luke, and they sweep the roads in order that the ghosts may find them clean on their passage.<sup>2</sup>

Again, the natives of Sumba, an East Indian island, celebrate a New Year's festival, which is at the same time a festival of the dead. The graves are in the middle of the village, and at a given moment all the people repair to them and raise a loud weeping and wailing. Then after indulging for a short time in the national pastimes they disperse to their houses, and every family calls upon its dead to come back. The ghosts are believed to hear and accept the invitation. Accordingly betel and areca nuts are set out for them. Victims, too, are sacrificed in front of every house, and their hearts and livers are offered with rice to the dead. After a decent interval these portions are distributed amongst the living, who consume them and banquet gaily on flesh and rice, a rare event in their frugal lives. Then they play, dance, and sing to their heart's content, and the festival which began so lugubriously ends by being the merriest of the year. A little before daybreak the invisible guests take their departure. All the people turn out of their houses to escort them a little way. Holding in one hand the half of a cocoa-nut, which contains a small packet of provisions for the dead, and in the other hand a piece of smouldering wood, they march in procession, singing a drawling song to the accompaniment of a gong and waving the lighted brands in time to the music. So they move through the darkness till with the last words of the song they throw away the cocoa-nuts and the brands in the

Annual  
festival of  
the dead  
in Sumba.

<sup>1</sup> Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale*, iii. 23 sq.; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 623. Similar customs are still practised by the Indians of a great part of Mexico and Central

America (Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 24, note 1).

<sup>2</sup> "Lettre du curé de Santiago Tepehuacan à son évêque," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), II<sup>me</sup> Série, ii. (1834) p. 179.



direction of the spirit-land, leaving the ghosts to wend their way thither, while they themselves return to the village.<sup>1</sup>

Annual  
festival of  
the dead  
among the  
Bghais.

The Bghais, a Karen tribe of Burmah, hold an annual feast for the dead at the new moon which falls near the end of August or the beginning of September. All the villagers who have lost relatives within the last three years take part in it. Food and drink are set out on tables for the ghosts, and new clothes for them are hung up in the room. All being ready, the people beat gongs and begin to weep. Each one calls upon the relation whom he has lost to come and eat. When the dead are thought to have arrived, the living address them, saying, "You have come to me, you have returned to me. It has been raining hard, and you must be wet. Dress yourselves, clothe yourselves with these new garments, and all the companions that are with you. Eat betel together with all that accompany you, all your friends and associates, and the long dead. Call them all to eat and drink." The ghosts having finished their repast, the people dry their tears and sit down to eat what is left. More food is then prepared and put into a basket, and at cock-crow next morning the contents of the basket are thrown out of the house, while the living weep and call upon their dead as before.<sup>2</sup>

Annual  
festival of  
the dead in  
Cambodia.

The great festival of the dead in Cambodia takes place on the last day of the month Phatrabot (September-October), but ever since the moon began to wane everybody has been busy preparing for it. In every house cakes and sweetmeats are set out, candles burn, incense sticks smoke, and the whole is offered to the ancestral shades with an invocation which is thrice repeated: "O all you our ancestors who are departed, deign to come and eat what we have prepared for you, and to bless your posterity and make it happy." Fifteen days afterwards many little boats are made of bark and filled with rice, cakes, small coins, smoking incense-

<sup>1</sup> S. Roos, "Bijdrage tot de kennis van taal, land en volk op het eiland Soemba," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxxvi. (1872) pp. 63-65.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. F. Mason, D.D., "Physical Character of the Karens," *Journal of*

*the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866, part ii. pp. 29 sq. Lights are not mentioned by the writer, but the festival being nocturnal we may assume that they are used for the convenience of the living as well as of the dead. In other respects the ceremonies are typical.



sticks, and lighted candles. At evening these are set floating on the river, and the souls of the dead embark in them to return to their own place. The living now bid them farewell. "Go to the lands," they say, "go to the fields you inhabit, to the mountains, under the stones which are your abodes. Go away! return! In due time your sons and your grandsons will think of you. Then you will return, you will return, you will return." The river is now covered with twinkling points of fire. But the current soon bears them away, and as they vanish one by one in the darkness the souls depart with them to the far country.<sup>1</sup> In Tonquin, as in Sumba, the dead revisit their kinsfolk and their old homes at the New Year. From the hour of midnight, when the New Year begins, no one dares to shut the door of his house for fear of excluding the ghosts, who begin to arrive at that time. Preparations have been made to welcome and refresh them after their long journey. Beds and mats are ready for their weary bodies to repose upon, water to wash their dusty feet, slippers to comfort them, and canes to support their feeble steps. Candles burn on the domestic altar, and pastilles diffuse a fragrant odour. The people bow before the unseen visitors and beseech them to remember and bless their descendants in the coming year. Having discharged this pious duty they abstain from sweeping the houses for three days lest the dust should incommode the ghosts.<sup>2</sup> In Siam and Japan also the souls of the dead revisit their families for three days in every year, and the lamps which the Japanese kindle in multitudes on that occasion to light the spirits on their way have procured for the festival the name of the Feast of Lanterns. It is to be observed that in Siam, as in Tonquin and Sumba, the return of the ghosts takes place at the New Year.<sup>3</sup>

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead in  
Tonquin,  
Siam, and  
Japan.

<sup>1</sup> E. Aymonier, *Notice sur le Cambodge* (Paris, 1875), p. 59; A. Leclère, *Le Bouddhisme au Cambodge* (Paris, 1899), pp. 374-376. The departure of the souls is described only by the latter writer. Compare E. Aymonier, "Notes sur les coutumes et croyances superstitieuses des Cambodgiens," *Cochinchine Française, Excursions et Reconnaissances*, No. 16 (Saigon,

1883), pp. 205 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Mariny, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tonquin et de Lao* (Paris, 1666), pp. 251-253. For an account of the custom as observed in recent times see L. E. Louvet, *La Cochinchine Religieuse* (Paris, 1885), pp. 149-151.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 85-87.



Annual  
festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Chewsurs  
and  
Armenians.

The Chewsurs of the Caucasus believe that the souls of the departed revisit their old homes on the Saturday night of the second week in Lent. This gathering of the dead is called the "Assembly of Souls." The people spare no expense to treat the unseen guests handsomely. Beer is brewed and loaves of various shapes baked specially for the occasion.<sup>1</sup> The Armenians celebrate the memory of the dead on many days of the year, burning incense and lighting tapers in their honour. One of their customs is to keep a "light of the dead" burning all night in the house in order that the ghosts may be able to enter. For if the spirits find the house dark, they spit down the chimney and depart, cursing the churlish inmates.<sup>2</sup>

Feast of  
All Souls  
in Brittany  
and other  
parts of  
France.

Similar beliefs survive to this day in many parts of Europe and find expression in similar customs. The day of the dead or of All Souls, as we call it, is commonly the second of November. Thus in Lower Brittany the souls of the departed come to visit the living on the eve of that day. After vespers are over, the priests and choir go in procession, "the procession of the charnel-house," chanting a weird dirge in the Breton tongue. Then the people go home, gather round the fire, and talk of the departed. The housewife covers the kitchen table with a white cloth, sets out cider, curds, and hot pancakes on it, and retires with the family to rest. The fire on the hearth is kept up by a huge log known as "the log of the dead" (*kef ann Anaon*). Soon doleful voices outside in the darkness break the stillness of night. It is the "singers of death" who go about the streets waking the sleepers by a wild and melancholy song, in which they remind the living in their comfortable beds to pray for the poor souls in pain. All that night the dead warm themselves at the hearth and feast on the viands prepared for them. Sometimes the awe-struck listeners hear the stools creaking in the kitchen, or the dead leaves outside rustling under the ghostly footsteps.<sup>3</sup> In the Vosges Mountains on All Souls' Eve

<sup>1</sup> C. v. Hahn, "Religiöse Anschauungen und Totengedächtnisfeier der Chewsuren," *Globus*, lxxvi. (1899) pp. 211 sq.

<sup>2</sup> M. Abeghian, *Der armenische*

*Volks Glaube* (Leipsic, 1899), pp. 23 sq.

<sup>3</sup> A. le Braz, *La Légende de la Mort en Basse-Bretagne* (Paris, 1893), pp. 280-287. Compare J. Lecoœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 283 sqq.



the solemn sound of the church bells invites good Christians to pray for the repose of the dead. While the bells are ringing, it is customary in some families to uncover the beds and open the windows, doubtless in order to let the poor souls enter and rest. No one that evening would dare to remain deaf to the appeal of the bells. The prayers are prolonged to a late hour of the night. When the last *De profundis* has been uttered, the head of the family gently covers up the beds, sprinkles them with holy water, and shuts the windows. In some villages fire is kept up on the hearth and a basket of nuts is placed beside it for the use of the ghosts.<sup>1</sup> Again, in some parts of Saintonge and Aunis a Candlemas candle used to be lit before the domestic crucifix on All Souls' Day at the very hour when the last deceased member of the family had died; and some people, just as in Tonquin, refrained from sweeping the house that day lest they should thereby disturb the poor souls.<sup>2</sup>

In Bruges, Dinant, and other towns of Belgium holy candles burn all night in the houses on the Eve of All Souls, and the bells toll till midnight, or even till morning. People, too, often set lighted candles on the graves. At Scherpenheuvel the houses are illuminated, and the people walk in procession carrying lighted candles in their hands. A very common custom in Belgium is to eat "soul-cakes" or "soul-bread" on the eve or the day of All Souls. The eating of them is believed to benefit the dead in some way. At Dixmude and elsewhere they say that you deliver a soul from Purgatory for every cake you eat. At Antwerp they give a local colour to the soul-cakes by baking them with plenty of saffron, the deep yellow tinge being suggestive of the flames of Purgatory. People in Antwerp at the same season are careful not to slam doors or windows for fear of hurting the ghosts.<sup>3</sup> In the Tyrol "soul-lights,"

Feast of  
All Souls  
in Belgium,  
the Tyrol,  
and  
Bohemia.

<sup>1</sup> L. F. Sauvé, *Le folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, pp. 295 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. L. M. Noguès, *Les mœurs d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Aunis*, p. 76. As to the observance of All Souls' Day in other parts of France see A. Meyrac, *Traditions, coutumes, légendes et contes des Ardennes*, pp.

22-24; Ch. Beauquier, *Les mois en Franche-Comté*, pp. 123-125.

<sup>3</sup> Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Calendrier Belge*, ii. 236-240; *id.*, *Das festliche Jahr*, pp. 229 sq. Soul-cakes are also eaten on this day in south Germany and Austria. They are baked of white flour, and are of a longish rounded



that is, lamps filled with lard or butter, are lighted and placed on the hearth on All Souls' Eve in order that the poor souls, escaped from the fires of Purgatory, may anoint their burns with the melted grease and so alleviate their pangs. Some people also leave milk and dough-nuts for them on the table all night. The graves, too, are decked with flowers and illuminated with wax candles.<sup>1</sup> Similar customs are observed at the same season in Bohemia, where children besides kindle small wax-lights which have been specially bought for the day.<sup>2</sup>

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Letts and  
Samagi-  
tians.

The Letts used to entertain and feed the souls of the dead for four weeks from Michaelmas (September 29) to the day of St. Simon and St. Jude (October 28). They called the season *Wellalaick* or *Semlicka*, and regarded it as so holy that while it lasted they would not willingly thresh the corn, alleging that grain threshed at that time would be useless for sowing, since the souls of the dead would not allow it to sprout. But we may suspect that the original motive of the abstinence was a fear lest the blows of the flails should fall upon the poor ghosts swarming in the air. At this season the people were wont to prepare food of all sorts for the spirits and set it on the floor of a room, which had been well heated and swept for the purpose. Late in the evening the master of the house went into the room, tended the fire, and called upon his dead kinsfolk by their names to come and eat and drink. If he saw the ghosts, he would die within the year; but if he did not see them he would outlive it. When he thought the souls had eaten and drunk enough, he took the staff which served as a poker and laying it on the threshold cut it in two with an axe. At the same time he bade the spirits

shape with two small tips at each end (*Das festliche Jahr*, p. 330). As to these soul-cakes see also K. von Leoprechting, *Aus dem Lechraim* (Munich, 1855), pp. 199 sq.; A. Berlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. 167 sq.

<sup>1</sup> I. v. Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 176-178. In the Italian Tyrol some people set pitchers of water in the kitchen on All Souls' night that

the souls may slake their thirst. See Ch. Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 238. In Baden the inhabitants of many villages, Protestant as well as Catholic, still deck the graves with flowers and lights on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. See E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 601.

<sup>2</sup> Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-kalender aus Böhmen*, pp. 493-495.



go their way, charging them to keep to the roads and paths and not to tread upon the rye. If the crops turned out ill next year, the people laid the failure at the door of the ghosts, who fancied themselves scurvily treated and had taken their revenge by trampling down the corn.<sup>1</sup> The Samagitians annually invited the dead to come from their graves and enjoy a bath and a feast. For their entertainment they prepared a special hut, in which they set out food and drink, together with a seat and a napkin for every soul who had been invited. They left the souls to revel by themselves for three days in the hut; then they deposited the remains of the banquet on the graves and bade the ghosts farewell. The good things, however, were usually consumed by charcoal-burners in the forest. This feast of the dead fell early in November.<sup>2</sup> The Esthonians prepare a meal for their dead on All Souls' Day, the second of November, and invite them by their names to come and partake of it. The ghosts arrive in the early morning at the first cock-crow, and depart at the second, being ceremoniously lighted out of the house by the head of the family, who waves a white cloth after them and bids them come again next year.<sup>3</sup>

In some parts of the Russian Government of Olonets the inhabitants of a village sometimes celebrate a joint festival in honour of all their dead. Having chosen a house for the purpose, they spread three tables, one outside the front door, one in the passage, and one in the room which is heated by a stove. Then they go out to meet their unseen guests and usher them into the house with these words, "Ye are tired, our own ones; take something to eat." The ghosts accordingly refresh themselves at each table in succession. Then the master of the house bids them warm themselves at the stove, remarking that they must

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead  
in Russia.

<sup>1</sup> P. Einhorn, in *Scriptores Rerum Livonicarum*, ii. (Riga and Leipsic, 1848) pp. 587, 598, 630 sq., 645 sq. See also the description of D. Fabricius in his "Livonicae Historiae compendiosa series," *ib.* p. 441. Fabricius assigns the custom to All Souls' Day.

<sup>2</sup> J. Lasicius, "De diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum," in

*Magazin herausgegeben von der lettisch-literarischen Gesellschaft*, xiv. 1 (Mitau, 1868), p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äussern Leben der Ehsten*, pp. 366 sq.; Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehsten abergläubische Gebräuche, Weisen und Gewohnheiten*, p. 89.



Festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Votiaks  
of Russia.

have grown cold in the damp earth. After that the living guests sit down to eat at the tables. Towards the end of the meal the host opens the window and lets the ghosts gently out of it by means of the shroud in which they were lowered into the grave. As they slide down it from the warm room into the outer air, the people tell them, "Now it is time for you to go home, and your feet must be tired; the way is not a little one for you to travel. Here it is softer for you. Now, in God's name, farewell!"<sup>1</sup> Among the Votiaks of Russia every family sacrifices to its dead once a year in the week before Palm Sunday. The sacrifice is offered in the house about midnight. Flesh, bread, or cakes and beer are set on the table, and on the floor beside the table stands a trough of bark with a lighted wax candle stuck on the rim. The master of the house, having covered his head with his hat, takes a piece of meat in his hand and says, "Ye spirits of the long departed, guard and preserve us well. Make none of us cripples. Send no plagues upon us. Cause the corn, the wine, and the food to prosper with us."<sup>2</sup> The Votiaks of the Governments of Wjatka and Kasan celebrate two memorial festivals of the dead every year, one in autumn and the other in spring. On a certain day koumiss is distilled, beer brewed, and potato scones baked in every house. All the members of a clan, who trace their descent through women from one mythical ancestress, assemble in a single house, generally in one which lies at the boundary of the clan land. Here an old man moulds wax candles; and when the requisite number is made he sticks them on the shelf of the stove, and begins to mention the dead relations of the master of the house by name. For each of them he crumbles a piece of bread, gives each of them a piece of pancake, pours koumiss and beer, and puts a spoonful of soup into a trough made for the purpose. All persons present whose parents are dead follow his example. The dogs are then allowed to eat out of the trough. If they eat quietly, it is a sign that the dead live at peace; if they do not eat quietly, it argues the

<sup>1</sup> W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 321 sq. The date of the festival is not mentioned. Apparently it is celebrated at irregular intervals.

<sup>2</sup> M. Buch, *Die Wotyäken* (Stuttgart, 1882), p. 145.



contrary. Then the company sit down to table and partake of the meal. Next morning both the dead and the living refresh themselves with a drink, and a fowl is boiled. The proceedings are the same as on the evening before. But now they treat the souls for the last time as a preparation for their journey, saying: "Eat, drink, and go home to your companions. Live at peace, be gracious to us, keep our children, guard our corn, our beasts and birds." Then the people banquet and indulge in all sorts of improprieties. The women refrain from feasting until the dead have taken their departure; but when the souls are gone, there is no longer any motive for abstinence, the koumiss circulates freely among the women, and they grow wanton. Yet at this, as at every other festival, the men and women eat in different parts of the room.<sup>1</sup>

On All Saints' Day, the first of November, shops and streets in the Abruzzi are filled with candles, which people buy in order to kindle them in the evening on the graves of their relations. For all the dead come to visit their homes that night, the Eve of All Souls, and they need lights to show them the way. For their use, too, lights are kept burning in the houses all night. Before people go to sleep they place on the table a lighted lamp or candle and a frugal meal of bread and water. The dead issue from their graves and stalk in procession through every street of the village. You can see them if you stand at a cross-road with your chin resting on a forked stick. First pass the souls of the good, and then the souls of the murdered and the damned. Once, they say, a man was thus peeping at the ghastly procession. The good souls told him he had better go home. He did not, and when he saw the tail of the procession he died of fright.<sup>2</sup>

A comparison of these European customs with the similar heathen rites can leave no room for doubt that the nominally Christian feast of All Souls is nothing but an old pagan festival of the dead which the Church, unable or

Feast of  
All Souls  
in the  
Abruzzi.

<sup>1</sup> J. Wasiljev, *Übersicht über die heidnischen Gebräuche, Aberglauben und Religion der Wotjaken* (Helsingfors, 1902), pp. 34 sq. (*Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, xviii.). As

to the Votjak clans see the same work, pp. 42-44.

<sup>2</sup> G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi* (Palermo, 1890), pp. 180-182.



The nominally Christian feast of All Souls on Nov. 2 appears to be an old Celtic festival of the dead adopted by the Church in 998 A.D.

unwilling to suppress, resolved from motives of policy to connive at. But whence did it borrow the practice of solemnising the festival on that particular day, the second of November? In order to answer this question we should observe, first, that celebrations of this sort are often held at the beginning of a New Year,<sup>1</sup> and, second, that the peoples of north-western Europe, the Celts and the Teutons, appear to have dated the beginning of their year from the beginning of winter, the Celts reckoning it from the first of November<sup>2</sup> and the Teutons from the first of October.<sup>3</sup> The difference of reckoning may be due to a difference of clime, the home of the Teutons in central and northern Europe being a region where winter sets in earlier than on the more temperate and humid coasts of the Atlantic, the home of the Celts. These considerations suggest that the festival of All Souls on the second of November originated with the Celts, and spread from them to the rest of the European peoples, who, while they preserved their old feasts of the dead practically unchanged, may have transferred them to the second of November. This conjecture is supported by what we know of the ecclesiastical institution, or rather recognition of the festival. For that recognition was first accorded at the end of the tenth century in France, a Celtic country, from which the church festival gradually spread over Europe. It was Odilo, abbot of the great Benedictine monastery of Clugny, who initiated the change in 998 A.D. by ordering that in all the monasteries over which he ruled, a solemn mass should be celebrated on the second of November for all the dead who sleep in Christ. The example thus set was followed by

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 242, note 2, 244, 245, 247.

<sup>2</sup> J. Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, pp. 460, 514 sq.; *id.* "Celtae and Galli," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. ii. p. 8 (separate reprint).

<sup>3</sup> K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, iv. 379 sq. The first of October seems to have been a great festival among the Saxons and also the Samagitians. See Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, i. 12 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, cxxxvii. 135); M. A.

Michov, "De Sarmatia Asiana atque Europea," in S. Grynaeus's *Novus Orbis Regionum ac Insularum veteribus incognitarum* (Bâle, 1532), p. 520. I have to thank Mr. H. M. Chadwick for pointing out these two passages to me. Mr. A. Tille prefers to date the Teutonic winter from Martinmas, the eleventh of November. See A. Tille, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Weihnacht*, pp. 23 sqq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, p. 395.



other religious houses, and the bishops, one after another, introduced the new celebration into their dioceses. Thus the festival of All Souls gradually established itself throughout Christendom, though in fact the Church has never formally sanctioned it by a general edict nor attached much weight to its observance. Indeed, when objections were raised to the festival at the Reformation, the ecclesiastical authorities seemed ready to abandon it.<sup>1</sup> These facts are explained very simply by the theory that an old Celtic commemoration of the dead lingered in France down to the end of the tenth century, and was then, as a measure of policy and a concession to ineradicable paganism, at last incorporated in the Catholic ritual. The consciousness of the heathen origin of the practice would naturally prevent the supreme authorities from insisting strongly on its observance. They appear rightly to have regarded it as an outpost which they could surrender to the forces of rationalism without endangering the citadel of the faith.

Perhaps we may go a step further and explain in like manner the origin of the feast of All Saints on the first of November. For the analogy of similar customs elsewhere would lead us to suppose that the old Celtic festival of the dead was held on the Celtic New Year's Day, that is, on the first, not the second, of November. May not then the institution of the feast of All Saints on that day have been the first attempt of the Church to give a colour of Christianity to the ancient heathen rite by substituting the saints for the souls of the dead as the true object of worship? The facts of history seem to countenance this hypothesis. For the feast of All Saints was instituted in France and Germany by order of the Emperor Lewis the Pious in 835 A.D., that is, about a hundred and sixty years before the introduction of the feast of All Souls. The innovation was made by the advice of the pope, Gregory IV., whose motive may well have been that of suppressing an old pagan custom which was still notoriously practised in France and Germany. The idea, however, was not a novel one, for the

The feast of All Saints on Nov. 1 seems also to have displaced a heathen festival of the dead.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Binterim, *Die vorzüglichsten Denkwürdigkeiten der Christ-Katholischen Kirche*, v. 1 (Mayence, 1829), pp. 493 sq.; Herzog und Plitt, *Real-*

*Encyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*,<sup>2</sup> i. 303 sq.; W. Smith and S. Cheetham, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, i. 57 sq.



testimony of Bede proves that in Britain, another Celtic country, the feast of All Saints on the first of November was already celebrated in the eighth century.<sup>1</sup> We may conjecture that this attempt to divert the devotion of the faithful from the souls of the dead to the saints proved a failure, and that finally the Church reluctantly decided to sanction the popular superstition by frankly admitting a feast of All Souls into the calendar. But it could not assign the new, or rather the old, festival to the old day, the first of November, since that was already occupied by the feast of All Saints. Accordingly it placed the mass for the dead on the next day, the second of November. On this theory the feasts of All Saints and of All Souls mark two successive efforts of the Catholic Church to eradicate an old heathen festival of the dead. Both efforts failed. "In all Catholic countries the day of All Souls has preserved the serious character of a festival of the dead which no worldly gaieties are allowed to disturb. It is then the sacred duty of the survivors to visit the graves of their loved ones in the churchyard, to deck them with flowers and lights, and to utter a devout prayer—a pious custom with which in cities like Paris and Vienna even the gay and frivolous comply for the sake of appearance, if not to satisfy an impulse of the heart."<sup>2</sup>

### § 3. *The Festival in the Month of Athyr*

Festival of the death and resurrection of Osiris in the month of Athyr.

The foregoing evidence lends some support to the conjecture—for it is only a conjecture—that the great festival of Osiris at Sais, with its accompanying illumination of the houses, was a night of All Souls, when the ghosts of the dead swarmed in the streets and revisited their old homes, which were lit up to welcome them back again. Herodotus, who briefly describes the festival, omits to mention its date, but we can determine it with some probability from other

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Binterim, *op. cit.* v. 1, pp. 487 *sqq.*; Herzog und Plitt, *op. cit.* i. p. 303; W. Smith and S. Cheetham, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, i. 57. In the last of these works a passage from the *Martyrologium Romanum Vetus* is quoted which

states that the feast of Saints on the first of November was celebrated at Rome. But the date of this particular Martyrology is disputed. See A. J. Binterim, *op. cit.* v. 1, pp. 52-54.

<sup>2</sup> Herzog und Plitt, *op. cit.* i. 304



sources. Thus Plutarch tells us that Osiris was murdered on the seventeenth of the month Athyr, and that the Egyptians accordingly observed mournful rites for four days from the seventeenth of Athyr.<sup>1</sup> Now in the Alexandrian calendar, which Plutarch used, these four days corresponded to the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of November, and this date answers exactly to the other indications given by Plutarch, who says that at the time of the festival the Nile was sinking, the north winds dying away, the nights lengthening, and the leaves falling from the trees. During these four days a gilt cow swathed in a black pall was exhibited as an image of Isis. This, no doubt, was the image mentioned by Herodotus in his account of the festival.<sup>2</sup> On the nineteenth day of the month the people went down to the sea, the priests carrying a shrine which contained a golden casket. Into this casket they poured fresh water, and thereupon the spectators raised a shout that Osiris was found. After that they took some vegetable mould, moistened it with water, mixed it with precious spices and incense, and moulded the paste into a small moon-shaped image, which was then robed and ornamented.<sup>3</sup> Thus it appears that the purpose of the ceremonies described by Plutarch was to represent dramatically, first, the search for the dead body of Osiris, and, second, its joyful discovery, followed by the resurrection of the dead god who came to life again in the new image of vegetable mould and spices. Lactantius tells us how on these occasions the priests, with their shaven bodies, beat their breasts and lamented, imitating the sorrowful search of Isis for her lost son Osiris, and how afterwards their sorrow was turned to joy when the jackal-headed god Anubis, or rather a mummer in his stead, produced a small

The finding  
of Osiris.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 39. As to the death of Osiris on the seventeenth of Athyr see *ib.* 13 and 42. Plutarch's statement on this subject is confirmed by the evidence of the papyrus Sallier IV., a document dating from the 19th dynasty, which places the lamentation for Osiris at Sais on the seventeenth day of Athyr. See A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*,

p. 262; *id.*, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 39. The words which I have translated "vegetable mould" are γῆν κάπριμον, literally, "fruitful earth." The composition of the image was very important, as we shall see presently.



boy, the living representative of the god who was lost and was found.<sup>1</sup> Thus Lactantius regarded Osiris as the son instead of the husband of Isis, and he makes no mention of the image of vegetable mould. It is probable that the boy who figured in the sacred drama played the part, not of Osiris, but of his son Horus;<sup>2</sup> but as the death and resurrection of the god were celebrated in many cities of Egypt, it is also possible that in some places the part of the god come to life was played by a living actor instead of by an image. Another Christian writer describes how the Egyptians, with shorn heads, annually lamented over a buried idol of Osiris, smiting their breasts, slashing their shoulders, tearing open their old wounds, until, after several days of mourning, they professed to find the mangled remains of the god, at which they rejoiced.<sup>3</sup> However the details of the ceremony may have varied in different places, the pretence of finding the god's body, and probably of restoring it to life, was a great event in the festal year of the Egyptians. The shouts of joy which greeted it are described or alluded to by many ancient writers.<sup>4</sup>

#### § 4. *The Festival in the Month of Choiak*

The great  
Osirian in-  
scription at  
Dendera.

The funeral rites of Osiris, as they were observed at his great festival in the sixteen provinces of Egypt, are described in a long inscription of the Ptolemaic period, which is engraved on the walls of the god's temple at Dendera, the Tentyra of the Greeks, a town of Upper Egypt situated on the western bank of the Nile about forty miles north of Thebes.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, while the information thus furnished is remarkably full and minute on many points, the arrange-

<sup>1</sup> Lactantius, *Divin. Institut.* i. 21; *id.*, *Epitome Inst. Divin.* 23 (18, ed. Brandt and Laubmann). The description of the ceremony which Minucius Felix gives (*Octavius*, xxii. 1) agrees closely with, and is probably copied from, that of Lactantius.

<sup>2</sup> The suggestion is due to Prof. A. Wiedemann (*Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 261).

<sup>3</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, ii. 3. Herodotus

tells (ii. 61) how the Carians cut their foreheads with knives at the mourning for Osiris.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the writers who have been already cited see Juvenal, viii. 29 sq.; Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis*, 22, pp. 112, 114, ed. J. C. T. Otto; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, i. 13; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi. 10.

<sup>5</sup> W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 1127.



ment adopted in the inscription is so confused and the expression often so obscure that a clear and consistent account of the ceremonies as a whole can hardly be extracted from it. Moreover, we learn from the document that the ceremonies varied somewhat in the several cities, the ritual of Abydos, for example, differing from that of Busiris. Without attempting to trace all the particularities of local usage I shall briefly indicate what seem to have been the leading features of the festival, so far as these can be ascertained with tolerable certainty.<sup>1</sup>

The rites lasted eighteen days, from the twelfth to the thirtieth of the month Choiak, and set forth the nature of Osiris in his triple aspect as dead, dismembered, and finally reconstituted by the union of his scattered limbs. In the first of these aspects he was called Chent-Ament, in the second Osiris-Sep, and in the third Sokari.<sup>2</sup> Small images of the god were moulded of sand or vegetable earth and corn, to which incense was sometimes added;<sup>3</sup> his face was painted yellow and his cheek-bones green.<sup>4</sup> These images were cast in a mould of pure gold, which represented the god in the form of a mummy, with the white crown of Egypt on his head.<sup>5</sup> The festival opened on the twelfth day of Choiak with a ceremony of ploughing and sowing. Two black cows were yoked to the plough, which was made of tamarisk wood, while the share was of black copper. A boy

The rites of Osiris in the month of Choiak represented the god as dead, dismembered, and then reconstituted by the union of his scattered limbs.

<sup>1</sup> For complete translations of the inscription see H. Brugsch, "Das Osiris-Mysterium von Tentyra," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1881, pp. 77-111; V. Loret, "Les fêtes d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, iii. (1882) pp. 43-57, iv. (1888) pp. 21-33, v. (1884) pp. 85-103. On the document and the festivals described in it see further A. Mariette-Pacha, *Dendérah* (Paris, 1880), pp. 334-347; J. Dümichen, "Die dem Osiris im Denderatempel geweihten Räume," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1882, pp. 88-101; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, pp. 616-618; R. V. Lanzaone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 725-744; A.

Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 262; *id.*, "Osiris végétant," *Le Museion*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 113; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 128 sq.; Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), pp. 27 sq.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. Lanzaone, *op. cit.* p. 727.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1881, pp. 80-82; A. Wiedemann, in *Le Museion*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 113. The corn used in the making of the images is called barley by Brugsch and Miss M. A. Murray (*l.c.*), but wheat (*blé*) by Mr. V. Loret.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 99, 101.

<sup>5</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 82 sq.; R. V. Lanzaone, *op. cit.* p. 728; Miss Margaret A. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 27.



scattered the seed. One end of the field was sown with barley, the other with spelt, and the middle with flax. During the operation the chief celebrant recited the ritual chapter of "the sowing of the fields."<sup>1</sup> At Busiris on the twentieth of Choiak sand and barley were put in the god's "garden," which appears to have been a sort of large flower-pot. This was done in the presence of the cow-goddess Shenty, represented seemingly by the image of a cow made of gilt sycamore wood with a headless human image in its inside. "Then fresh inundation water was poured out of a golden vase over both the goddess and the 'garden,' and the barley was allowed to grow as the emblem of the resurrection of the god after his burial in the earth, 'for the growth of the garden is the growth of the divine substance.'"<sup>2</sup> On the twenty-second of Choiak, at the eighth hour, the images of Osiris, attended by thirty-four images of deities, performed a mysterious voyage in thirty-four tiny boats made of papyrus, which were illuminated by three hundred and sixty-five lights.<sup>3</sup> On the twenty-fourth of Choiak, after sunset, the effigy of Osiris in a coffin of mulberry wood was laid in the grave, and at the ninth hour of the night the effigy which had been made and deposited the year before was removed and placed upon boughs of sycamore.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, on the thirtieth day of Choiak they repaired to the holy sepulchre, a subterranean chamber over which appears to

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 90 sq., 96 sq., 98; R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.* pp. 743 sq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 128. According to Lanson, the ploughing took place, not on the first, but on the last day of the festival, namely, on the thirtieth of Choiak; and that certainly appears to have been the date of the ploughing at Busiris, for the inscription directs that there "the ploughing of the earth shall take place in the Serapeum of *Aa-n-beh* under the fine Persea-trees on the last day of the month Choiak" (H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 84).

<sup>2</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, p. 28; H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 83, 92. The headless human image in the cow may have

stood for Isis, who is said to have been decapitated by her son Horus, and to have received from Thoth a cow's head as a substitute (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 20; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 177; Ed. Meyer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 366).

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 92 sq.; R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.* pp. 738-740; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 262; Miss M. A. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 99; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 129; compare Miss Margaret A. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 28, who refers the ceremony to the twenty-fifth of Choiak.



have grown a clump of Persea-trees. Entering the vault by the western door, they laid the coffined effigy of the dead god reverently on a bed of sand in the chamber. So they left him to his rest, and departed from the sepulchre by the eastern door. Thus ended the ceremonies in the month of Choiak.<sup>1</sup>

### § 5. *The Resurrection of Osiris*

In the foregoing account of the festival, drawn from the great inscription of Dendera, the burial of Osiris figures prominently, while his resurrection is implied rather than expressed. This defect of the document, however, is amply compensated by a remarkable series of bas-reliefs which accompany and illustrate the inscription. These exhibit in a series of scenes the dead god lying swathed as a mummy on his bier, then gradually raising himself up higher and higher, until at last he has entirely quitted the bier and is seen between the guardian wings of the faithful Isis, who stands behind him, while a male figure holds up before his eyes the *crux ansata*, the Egyptian symbol of life.<sup>2</sup> The resurrection of the god could hardly be portrayed more graphically. Even more instructive, however, is another representation of the same event in a chamber dedicated to Osiris in the great temple of Isis at Philae. Here we see the dead body of Osiris with stalks of corn springing from it, while a priest waters the stalks from a pitcher which he holds in his hand. The accompanying inscription sets forth that "this is the form of him whom one may not name, Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the returning waters."<sup>3</sup> Taken together, the picture and the words seem

The resur-  
rection of  
Osiris  
represented  
on the  
monu-  
ments.

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 94, 99; A. Mariette-Pacha, *Dendérah*, pp. 336 sq.; R. V. Lanzone, *op. cit.* p. 744. Mariette supposed that after depositing the new image in the sepulchre they carried out the old one of the preceding year, thus setting forth the resurrection as well as the death of the god. But this view is apparently not shared by Brugsch and Lanzone.

<sup>2</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendérah*, iv. (Paris, 1873) plates 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 88, 89, 90; R. V. Lanzone,

*Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 757 sqq., with plates cclxviii.-ccxcii.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 131-138.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 621; R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, plate cclxi.; A. Wiedemann, "L'Osiris végétant," *Le Museion*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 112. According to Prof. Wiedemann, the corn springing from the god's body is barley. Similarly in a papyrus of the Louvre (No. 3377)



to leave no doubt that Osiris was here conceived and represented as a personification of the corn which springs from the fields after they have been fertilised by the inundation. This, according to the inscription, was the kernel of the mysteries, the innermost secret revealed to the initiated. So in the rites of Demeter at Eleusis a reaped ear of corn was exhibited to the worshippers as the central mystery of their religion.<sup>1</sup> We can now fully understand why at the great festival of sowing in the month of Choiak the priests used to bury effigies of Osiris made of earth and corn. When these effigies were taken up again at the end of a year or of a shorter interval, the corn would be found to have sprouted from the body of Osiris, and this sprouting of the grain would be hailed as an omen, or rather as the cause, of the growth of the crops.<sup>2</sup> The corn-god produced the corn from himself: he gave his own body to feed the people: he died that they might live.

Corn-stuffed effigies of Osiris buried with the dead to ensure their resurrection.

And from the death and resurrection of their great god the Egyptians drew not only their support and sustenance in this life, but also their hope of a life eternal beyond the grave. This hope is indicated in the clearest manner by the very remarkable effigies of Osiris which have come to light in Egyptian cemeteries. Thus in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes there was found the tomb of a royal fan-bearer who lived about 1500 B.C. Among the rich contents of the tomb there was a bier on which rested a mattress of reeds covered with three layers of linen. On the upper side of the linen was painted a life-size figure of Osiris; and the interior of the figure, which was waterproof, contained a mixture of vegetable mould, barley, and a sticky fluid. The barley had sprouted and sent out shoots two or three inches long.<sup>3</sup> Again, in the cemetery at Cynopolis "were numerous

Osiris is represented swathed as a mummy and lying on his back, while stalks of corn sprout from his body. See R. V. Lanzone, *op. cit.* pp. 801 sq., with plate cccliii. 2; A. Wiedemann, "L'Osiris végétant," *Le Muséon*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 112.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 8, p. 162 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. A. Erman rightly assumes (*Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 213) that the images made in the month of Choiak were intended to germinate as a symbol of the divine resurrection.

<sup>3</sup> A. Wiedemann, "L'Osiris végétant," *Le Muséon*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 111; *Egyptian Exploration Fund Archaeological Report*, 1898-1899, pp. 24 sq.



burials of Osiris figures. These were made of grain wrapped up in cloth and roughly shaped like an Osiris, and placed inside a bricked-up recess at the side of the tomb, sometimes in small pottery coffins, sometimes in wooden coffins in the form of a hawk-mummy, sometimes without any coffins at all."<sup>1</sup> These corn-stuffed figures were bandaged like mummies with patches of gilding here and there, as if in imitation of the golden mould in which the similar figures of Osiris were cast at the festival of sowing.<sup>2</sup> Again, effigies of Osiris, with faces of green wax and their interior full of grain, were found buried near the necropolis of Thebes.<sup>3</sup> Finally, we are told by Professor Erman that between the legs of mummies "there sometimes lies a figure of Osiris made of slime; it is filled with grains of corn, the sprouting of which is intended to signify the resurrection of the god."<sup>4</sup> We cannot doubt that, just as the burial of corn-stuffed images of Osiris in the earth at the festival of sowing was designed to quicken the seed, so the burial of similar images in the grave was meant to quicken the dead, in other words, to ensure their spiritual immortality.

### § 6. *Readjustment of Egyptian Festivals*

The festival of Osiris which Plutarch assigns to the month of Athyr would seem to be identical in substance with the one which the inscription of Dendera assigns to the following month, namely, to Choiak. Apparently the essence of both festivals was a dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god; in both of them Isis was figured by a gilt cow, and Osiris by an image moulded of moist vegetable earth. But if the festivals were the same, why were they held in different months? It is easy to

The festivals of Osiris in the months of Athyr and Choiak seem to have been substantially the same.

<sup>1</sup> B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, in *Egyptian Exploration Fund Archaeological Report*, 1902-1903, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, pp. 28 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *A Second Series of the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*

(London, 1841), ii. 300, note §. The writer seems to have doubted whether these effigies represented Osiris. But the doubt has been entirely removed by subsequent discoveries. Wilkinson's note on the subject is omitted by his editor, S. Birch (vol. iii. p. 375, ed. 1878).

<sup>4</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 188.



suggest that different towns in Egypt celebrated the festival at different dates. But when we remember that according to the great inscription of Dendera, the authority of which is indisputable, the festival fell in the month of Choiak in every province of Egypt, we shall be reluctant to suppose that at some one place, or even at a few places, it was exceptionally held in the preceding month of Athyr, and that the usually well-informed Plutarch described the exception as if it had been the rule, of which on this supposition he must have been wholly ignorant. More probably the discrepancy is to be explained by the great change which came over the Egyptian calendar between the date of the inscription and the lifetime of Plutarch. For when the inscription was drawn up in the Ptolemaic age, the festivals were dated by the old vague or movable year, and therefore rotated gradually through the whole circle of the seasons; whereas at the time when Plutarch wrote, about the end of the first century, they were seemingly dated by the fixed Alexandrian year, and accordingly had ceased to rotate.<sup>1</sup>

The old festival of Choiak may have been transferred to Athyr when the Egyptians adopted the fixed Alexandrian year in 30 B.C.

But even if we grant that in Plutarch's day the festivals had become stationary, still this would not explain why the old festival of Choiak had been transferred to Athyr. In order to understand that transference it seems necessary to suppose that when the Egyptians gave to their months fixed places in the solar year by accepting the Alexandrian system of intercalation, they at the same time transferred the festivals from what may be called their artificial to their natural dates. Under the old system a summer festival was sometimes held in winter and a winter festival in summer; a harvest celebration sometimes fell at the season of sowing, and a sowing celebration at the season of harvest. People might reconcile themselves to such anomalies so long as they knew that they were only temporary, and that in the course of time the festivals would necessarily return to their proper seasons. But it must have been otherwise when they adopted a fixed instead of a movable year, and so arrested the rotation of the festivals for ever. For they could not but be aware that every festival would thenceforth

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 240 *sq.*



continue to occupy for all time that particular place in the solar year which it chanced to occupy in the year 30 B.C., when the calendar became fixed. If in that particular year it happened, as it might have happened, that the summer festivals were held in winter and the winter festivals in summer, they would always be so held in future; the absurdity and anomaly would never again be rectified as it had been before. This consideration, which could not have escaped intelligent men, must have suggested the advisability of transferring the festivals from the dates at which they chanced to be celebrated in 30 B.C. to the dates at which they ought naturally to be celebrated in the course of nature.

Now what in the year 30 B.C. was the actual amount of discrepancy between the accidental and the natural dates of the festivals? It was just about a month. In that year Thoth, the first month of the Egyptian calendar, happened to begin on the twenty-ninth of August,<sup>1</sup> whereas according to theory it should have begun with the heliacal rising of Sirius on the twentieth of July, that is, roughly speaking, a month earlier. From this it follows that in the year 30 B.C. all the Egyptian festivals fell about a month later than their natural dates, and they must have continued to fall a month late for ever if they were allowed to retain those places in the calendar which they chanced to occupy in that particular year. In these circumstances it would be a natural and sensible thing to restore the festivals to their proper places in the solar year by celebrating them one calendar month earlier than before. If this measure were adopted the festivals which had hitherto been held, for example, in the third month Athyr would henceforth be held in the second month Phaophi; the festivals which had hitherto fallen in the fourth month Choiak would thenceforth fall in the month of Athyr; and so on. Thus the festal calendar

The transference would be intelligible if we suppose that in 30 B.C. the dates of all the Egyptian festivals were shifted by a month in order to restore them to their natural places in the calendar.

<sup>1</sup> So it was reckoned at the time. But, strictly speaking, Thoth in that year began on August 31. The miscalculation originated in a blunder of the ignorant Roman pontiffs who, being charged with the management of the new Julian calendar, at first inter-

calated a day every third, instead of every fourth, year. See Solinus, i. 45-47; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 14. 13 sq.; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 157-161.



would be reduced to harmony with the seasons instead of being in more or less flagrant discord with them, as it had generally been before, and must always have been afterwards if the change which I have indicated had not been introduced. It is only to credit the native astronomers and the Roman rulers of Egypt with common sense to suppose that they actually adopted the measure. On that supposition we can perfectly understand why the festival of sowing, which had formerly belonged to the month of Choiak, was transferred to Athyr. For in the Alexandrian calendar Choiak corresponds very nearly to December, and Athyr to November. But in Egypt the month of November, not the month of December, is the season of sowing. There was therefore every reason why the great sowing festival of the corn-god Osiris should be held in Athyr and not Choiak, in November and not in December. In like manner we may suppose that all the Egyptian festivals were restored to their true places in the solar year, and that when Plutarch dates a festival both by its calendar month and by its relation to the cycle of the seasons, he is perfectly right in doing so, and we may accept his evidence with confidence instead of having to accuse him of ignorantly confounding the movable Egyptian with the fixed Alexandrian year. Accusations of ignorance levelled at the best writers of antiquity are apt to recoil on those who make them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If the results of the foregoing inquiry be accepted, the resurrection of Osiris was regularly celebrated in Egypt on the 15th of November from the year 30 B.C. onward, since the 15th of November corresponded to the 19th of Athyr (the resurrection day) in the fixed Alexandrian year. This agrees with the indications of the Roman Rustic Calendars, which place the resurrection (*heuresis*, that is, the discovery of Osiris) between the 14th and the 30th of November. Yet according to the calendar of Philocalus, the official Roman celebration of the resurrection seems to have been held on the 1st of November, not on the 15th. How is the discrepancy to be explained? Th. Mommsen supposed that the festival was officially adopted at Rome

at a time when the 19th of Athyr of the vague Egyptian year corresponded to the 31st of October or the 1st of November of the Julian calendar, and that the Romans, overlooking the vague or shifting character of the Egyptian year, fixed the resurrection of Osiris permanently on the 1st of November. Now the 19th of Athyr of the vague year corresponded to the 1st of November in the years 32-35 A.D. and to the 31st of October in the years 36-39; and it appears that the festival was officially adopted at Rome some time before 65 A.D. (Lucan, *Pharsalia*, viii. 831 *sqq.*). It is unlikely that the adoption took place in the reign of Tiberius, who died in 37 A.D.; for he is known to have persecuted the Egyptian religion (Tacitus, *Annals*,



ii. 85; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 36; Josephus, *Antiquit.* xviii. 3. 4); hence Mommsen concluded that the great festival of Osiris was officially adopted at Rome in the early years of the reign of Caligula, that is, in 37, 38, or 39 A.D. See Th. Mommsen in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> 333 sq.; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ii. 995, No. 8745. This theory of Mommsen's assumes that in Egypt the

festivals were still regulated by the old vague year in the first century of our era. It cannot, therefore, be reconciled with the conclusion reached in the text that the Egyptian festivals ceased to be regulated by the old vague year from 30 B.C. onward. How the difference of date between the official Roman and the Egyptian festival of the resurrection is to be explained, I do not pretend to say.



## CHAPTER V

### THE NATURE OF OSIRIS

#### § 1. *Osiris a Corn-God*

Osiris in  
the main a  
personi-  
fication of  
the corn.

THE foregoing survey of the myth and ritual of Osiris suggests that originally he was in the main a personification of the corn, which may be said to die and come to life again every year. Through all the pomp and glamour with which in later times the priests had invested his worship, the primitive conception of him as the corn-god comes clearly out in the festival of his death and resurrection, which was celebrated in the month of Choiak and at a later period in the month of Athyr. That festival appears to have been essentially a festival of sowing, which properly fell at the time when the husbandman actually committed the seed to the earth. On that occasion an effigy of the corn-god, moulded of earth and corn, was buried with funeral rites in the ground in order that, dying there, he might come to life again with the new crops. The ceremony was, in fact, a charm to ensure the growth of the corn by sympathetic magic, and we may conjecture that as such it was practised in a simple form by every Egyptian farmer on his fields long before it was adopted and transfigured by the priests in the stately ritual of the temple. In the modern, but doubtless ancient, Arab custom of burying "the Old Man," namely, a sheaf of wheat, in the harvest-field and praying that he may return from the dead,<sup>1</sup> we see the germ out of which the whole worship of Osiris was probably developed.

The details of his myth fit in well with this interpreta-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 239.



tion of the god. He was said to be the offspring of Sky and Earth.<sup>1</sup> What more appropriate parentage could be invented for the corn which springs from the ground that has been fertilised by the water of heaven? It is true that the land of Egypt owed its fertility directly to the Nile and not to showers; but the inhabitants must have been aware that the great river in its turn was fed by the rains which fell on the mountains of Abyssinia. Again, the legend that Osiris was the first to teach men the use of corn<sup>2</sup> would be most naturally told of the corn-god himself. Further, the story that his mangled remains were scattered up and down the land and buried in different places may be a mythical way of expressing either the sowing or the winnowing of the grain. The latter interpretation is supported by the tale that Isis placed the severed limbs of Osiris on a corn-sieve.<sup>3</sup> Or more probably the legend may be a reminiscence of a custom of slaying a human representative of the corn-spirit and distributing his flesh or scattering his ashes over the fields to fertilise them. In modern Europe the figure of Death is sometimes torn in pieces, and the fragments are then buried in the ground to make the crops grow well,<sup>4</sup> and in other parts of the world human victims are treated in the same way.<sup>5</sup> With regard to the ancient Egyptians we have it on the authority of Manetho that they used to burn red-haired men and scatter their ashes with winnowing fans,<sup>6</sup> and it is highly significant that this barbarous sacrifice was offered by the kings at the grave of Osiris.<sup>7</sup> We may conjecture that the victims represented Osiris himself, who was annually slain, dismembered, and buried in their persons that he might quicken the seed in the earth. Possibly in prehistoric times the kings themselves played the part of the god and

Osiris a child of Sky and Earth.

The legend of the dismemberment of Osiris points to the dismemberment of human beings, perhaps of the kings, in the character of the corn-spirit.

Roman and Greek traditions of the dismemberment of kings.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 211 sq.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 212 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166.

<sup>4</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii. 238 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 73, compare 33.

<sup>7</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 88. 5. The slaughter may have been performed by the king with his own hand. On Egyptian monuments the king is often

represented in the act of slaying prisoners before a god. See A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, pp. 179, 224. Similarly the kings of Ashantee and Dahomey used often themselves to cut the throats of the human victims. See A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, p. 162; *id.*, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 125, 129.



were slain and dismembered in that character. Set as well as Osiris is said to have been torn in pieces after a reign of eighteen days, which was commemorated by an annual festival of the same length.<sup>1</sup> According to one story Romulus, the first king of Rome, was cut in pieces by the senators, who buried the fragments of him in the ground;<sup>2</sup> and the traditional day of his death, the seventh of July, was celebrated with certain curious rites, which were apparently connected with the artificial fertilisation of the fig.<sup>3</sup> Again, Greek legend told how Pentheus, king of Thebes, and Lycurgus, king of the Thracian Edonians, opposed the vine-god Dionysus, and how the impious monarchs were rent in pieces, the one by the frenzied Bacchanals, the other by horses.<sup>4</sup> These Greek traditions may well be distorted reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing human beings, and especially divine kings, in the character of Dionysus, a god who resembled Osiris in many points and was said like him to have been torn limb from limb.<sup>5</sup> We are told that in Chios men were rent in pieces as a sacrifice to Dionysus;<sup>6</sup> and since they died the same

<sup>1</sup> *Scholia in Caesaris Germanici Aratea*, in F. Eyssenhardt's edition of Martianus Capella, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 56. 4. Compare Livy, i. 16. 4; Florus, i. 1. 16 sq.; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 27. Mr. A. B. Cook was, I believe, the first to interpret the story as a reminiscence of the sacrifice of a king. See his article "The European Sky-God," *Folk-lore*, xvi. (1905) pp. 324 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 269 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Euripides, *Bacchae*, 43 sqq., 1043 sqq.; Theocritus, xxvi.; Pausanias, ii. 2. 7; Apollodorus, iii. 5. 1 sq.; Hyginus, *Fab.* 132 and 184. The destruction of Lycurgus by horses seems to be mentioned only by Apollodorus. As to Pentheus see especially A. G. Bather, "The Problem of the Bacchae," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xiv. (1904) pp. 244-263.

<sup>5</sup> Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 165-205; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17 sq., p. 15 ed. Potter; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum re-*

*ligionum*, 6; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 19. According to the Clementine *Recognitiones*, x. 24 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. 1434) Dionysus was torn in pieces at Thebes, the very place of which Pentheus was king. The description of Euripides (*Bacchae*, 1058 sqq.) suggests that the human victim was tied or hung to a pine-tree before being rent to pieces. We are reminded of the effigy of Attis which hung on the sacred pine (above, p. 166), and of the image of Osiris which was made out of a pine-tree and then buried in the hollow of the trunk (below, p. 276). The pine-tree on which Pentheus was pelted by the Bacchanals before they tore him limb from limb is said to have been worshipped as if it were the god himself by the Corinthians, who made two images of Dionysus out of it (Pausanias, ii. 2. 7). The tradition points to an intimate connection between the tree, the god, and the human victim.

<sup>6</sup> Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 55. At Potniae in Boeotia a priest of



death as their god, it is reasonable to suppose that they personated him. The story that Orpheus was similarly torn limb from limb by the Bacchanals seems to indicate that he too perished in the character of the god whose death he died.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, is said to have been put to death in order that the ground, which had ceased to be fruitful, might regain its fertility.<sup>2</sup> Further, we read of a Norwegian king, Halfdan the Black, whose body was cut up and buried in different parts of his kingdom for the sake of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth. He is said to have been drowned at the age of forty through the breaking of the ice in spring. What followed his death is thus related by the old Norse historian Snorri Sturluson: "He had been the most prosperous (literally, blessed with abundance) of all kings. So greatly did men value him that when the news came that he was dead and his body removed to Hringariki and intended for burial there, the chief men from Raumariki and Westfold and Heithmörk came and all requested that they might take his body with them and bury it in their various provinces; they thought that it would bring abundance to those who obtained it. Eventually it was settled that the body was distributed in four places. The head was laid in a barrow at Steinn in Hringariki, and each party took away their own share and buried it. All these barrows are called Halfdan's barrows."<sup>3</sup> It should be remembered that this

Norwegian tradition of the dismemberment of a king, Halfdan the Black.

Dionysus is said to have been killed by the drunken worshippers (Pausanias, ix. 8. 2). He may have been sacrificed in the character of the god.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De saltatione*, 51; Plato, *Symposium*, 7, p. 179 D, E; Pausanias, ix. 30. 5; Ovid, *Metam.* xi. 1-43; O. Gruppe, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1165 sq. That Orpheus died the death of the god has been observed both in ancient and modern times. See E. Rohde, *Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 118, note 2, quoting Proclus on Plato; S. Reinach, "La mort d'Orphée," *Revue Archéologique*, iii. me Série, xli. (1902) pp. 242 sqq. According to Ovid, the Bacchanals killed him with hoes, rakes, and mattocks. Similarly in West Africa human victims used to be killed with

spades and hoes and then buried in a field which had just been tilled (Labat, *Relation historique de l'Ethiopie occidentale*, i. 380). Such a mode of sacrifice points to the identification of the human victim with the fruits of the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 5. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Saga Halfdanar Svarta*, ch. 9. I have to thank Mr. H. M. Chadwick for referring me to this passage and translating it for me. See also *Heimskringla*, done into English by W. Morris and E. Magnússon, i. 86 sq. (*The Saga Library*, vol. iii.). Halfdan the Black was the father of Harold the Fair-haired, king of Norway (860-933 A.D.). Mr. Chadwick tells me that though the tradition as to



Frey, the  
Scandi-  
navian god  
of fertility,  
buried at  
Upsala.

Halfdan belonged to the family of the Ynglings, who traced their descent from Frey, the great Scandinavian god of fertility.<sup>1</sup> Frey himself is said to have reigned as king of Sweden at Upsala. The years of his reign were plenteous, and the people laid the plenty to his account. So when he died, they would not burn him, as it had been customary to do with the dead before his time; but they resolved to preserve his body, believing that, so long as it remained in Sweden, the land would have abundance and peace. Therefore they reared a great mound, and put him in it, and sacrificed to him for plenty and peace ever afterwards. And for three years after his death they poured the tribute to him into the mound, as if he were alive; the gold they poured in by one window, the silver by a second, and the copper by a third.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently  
widespread  
custom  
of dis-  
membering  
a king and  
burying the  
pieces in  
different  
parts of the  
kingdom.

Taken all together, these Egyptian, Roman, Greek, and Norse legends point to a widespread practice of dismembering the body of a king and burying the pieces in different parts of the kingdom in order to ensure the fertility of the ground and probably also the fecundity of man and beast. Whether regarded as the descendant of a god, as himself divine, or simply as a mighty enchanter, the king was believed to radiate magical virtue for the good of his subjects, quickening the seed in the earth and in the womb. This radiation of reproductive energy did not cease with his life; hence the people deemed it essential to preserve his body as a pledge of the continued prosperity of the country. It would be natural to imagine that the spot where the dead king was buried would enjoy a more than ordinary share of his blessed influence, and accordingly disputes would almost inevitably arise between different districts for the exclusive possession of so powerful a talisman. These disputes could

the death and mutilation of Halfdan was not committed to writing for three hundred years, he sees no reason to doubt its truth. He also informs me that the word translated "abundance" means literally "the produce of the season." "Plenteous years" is the rendering of Morris and Magnússon.

<sup>1</sup> As to the descent of Halfdan and the Ynglings from Frey, see *Heimskringla*, done into English by W.

Morris and E. Magnússon, i. 23-71 (*The Saga Library*, vol. iii.). With regard to Frey, the god of fertility, both animal and vegetable, see E. H. Meyer, *Mythologie der Germanen* (Strasburg, 1903), pp. 366 sq.; P. Hermann, *Nordische Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 206 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Heimskringla*, done into English by W. Morris and E. Magnússon, i. 4, 22-24 (*The Saga Library*, vol. iii.).



be settled and local jealousies appeased by dividing the precious body between the rival claimants, in order that all should benefit in equal measure by its life-giving properties. This was certainly done in Norway with the body of Halfdan the Black, the descendant of the harvest-god Frey; and we may conjecture that in prehistoric times it was done with the bodies of Egyptian kings, who personated Osiris, the god of fertility in general and of the corn in particular. At least such a practice would account for the legend of the mangling of the god's body and the distribution of the pieces throughout Egypt.

To an ancient Egyptian, with his firm belief in a personal immortality dependent on the integrity of the body, the prospect of mutilation after death must have been very repugnant; and we may suppose that the kings offered a strenuous resistance to the custom and finally succeeded in abolishing it. They may have represented to the people that they would attain their object better by keeping the royal corpse intact than by frittering it away in small pieces. Their subjects apparently acquiesced in the argument, or at all events in the conclusion; yet the mountains of masonry beneath which the old Egyptian kings lay buried may have been intended to guard them from the superstitious devotion of their friends quite as much as from the hostile designs of their enemies, since both alike must have been under a strong temptation to violate the sanctity of the grave in order to possess themselves of bodies which were believed to be endowed with magical virtue of the most tremendous potency.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In antiquity the safety of the state was often believed to depend on the possession of a talisman, which sometimes consisted of the bones of a king or hero. Hence the graves of such persons were sometimes kept secret. See my notes on Pausanias, i. 28. 7 and viii. 47. 5 (vol. ii. pp. 366 *sq.*, vol. iv. pp. 433 *sq.*). The violation of royal tombs by a conqueror was not a mere insult: it was a deadly blow struck at the prosperity of the kingdom. Hence Ashurbanipal carried off to Assyria the bones of the kings of Elam, believing that thus he gave their

shades no repose and deprived them of food and drink. See R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 116. The Mpongwe kings of West Africa are buried secretly lest their heads should fall into the hands of men of another tribe, who would make a powerful fetish out of the brains. See P. B. du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa*, pp. 18 *sq.* The graves of Basuto chiefs are kept secret lest certain mythical beings called *Baloi*, who haunt tombs, should get possession of the bones and work evil magic with

The  
Egyptian  
kings  
probably  
opposed the  
custom and  
succeeded  
in abolish-  
ing it.



Beliefs and practices of this sort are by no means confined to agricultural peoples. Among the Koniags of Alaska "in ancient times the pursuit of the whale was accompanied by numerous superstitious observances kept a secret by the hunters. Lieutenant Davidof states that the whalers preserved the bodies of brave or distinguished men in secluded caves, and before proceeding upon a whale-hunt would carry these dead bodies into a stream and then drink of the water thus tainted. One famous whaler of Kadiak who desired to flatter Baranof, the first chief manager of the Russian colonies, said to him, 'When you die I shall try to steal your body,' intending thus to express his great respect for Baranof. On the occasion of the death of a whaler his fellows would cut the body into pieces, each man taking one of them for the purpose of rubbing his spear-heads therewith. These pieces were dried or otherwise preserved, and were frequently taken into the canoes as talismans."<sup>1</sup>

Assimila-  
tion of  
human  
victims to  
the corn.

To return to the human victims whose ashes the Egyptians scattered with winnowing-fans,<sup>2</sup> the red hair of these unfortunates was probably significant. If I am right, the custom of sacrificing such persons was not a mere way of wreaking a national spite on fair-haired foreigners, whom the black-haired Egyptians of old, like the black-haired Chinese of modern times, may have regarded as red-haired devils. For in Egypt the oxen which were sacrificed had also to be red; a single black or white hair found on the beast would have disqualified it for the sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> If, as I conjecture, these human sacrifices were intended to promote the growth of the crops—and the winnowing of their ashes seems to support this view—red-haired victims were perhaps selected as

them. See Father Porte, "Les reminiscences d'un missionnaire du Basuto-land," *Missions Catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) pp. 311 sq. When a Melanesian dies who enjoyed a reputation for magical powers in his lifetime, his friends will sometimes hold a sham burial and keep the real grave secret, lest men should come and dig up the skull and bones to make charms with them. See R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 269.

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Petroff, *Report on the Popu-*

*lation, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, p. 142. The account seems to be borrowed from H. J. Holmberg, who adds that pains were taken to preserve the flesh from decay, "because they believed that their own life depended on it." See H. J. Holmberg, "Ueber die Völker des Russischen Amerika," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae*, iv. (Helsingfors, 1856) p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 31; Herodotus, ii. 38.



best fitted to personate the spirit of the ruddy grain. For when a god is represented by a living person, it is natural that the human representative should be chosen on the ground of his supposed resemblance to the divine original. Hence the ancient Mexicans, conceiving the maize as a personal being who went through the whole course of life between seed-time and harvest, sacrificed new-born babes when the maize was sown, older children when it had sprouted, and so on till it was fully ripe, when they sacrificed old men.<sup>1</sup> A name for Osiris was the "crop" or "harvest";<sup>2</sup> and the ancients sometimes explained him as a personification of the corn.<sup>3</sup>

## § 2. Osiris a Tree-Spirit

But Osiris was more than a spirit of the corn; he was also a tree-spirit, and this may perhaps have been his primitive character, since the worship of trees is naturally older in the history of religion than the worship of the cereals. However that may have been, to an agricultural people like the Egyptians, who depended almost wholly on

Osiris as a tree-spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Herrera, quoted by A. Bastian, *Die Culturländer des alten Amerika*, ii. 639; id., *General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, ii. 379 sq., translated by Stevens (whose version of the passage is inadequate). Compare Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale*, i. 327, iii. 535.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lefébure, *Le mythe Osirien* (Paris, 1874-75), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, ii. 6: "Defensores eorum volunt addere physicam rationem, frugum semina Osirim dicentes esse; Isim terram, Tyfonem calorem: et quia maturatae fruges calore ad vitam hominum colliguntur et divisae a terra separantur, hanc volunt esse mortem Osiridis, cum fruges recondunt, inventionem vero, cum fruges genitali terrae fomento conceptae annua rursus coeperint procreatione generari." Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, i. 13: "Sic et Osiris quod

*semper sepelitur et in vivo quaeritur et cum gaudio invenitur, reciprocum frugum et vividorum elementorum et recidivi anni fidem argumentantur."*

Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 65: οὕτω δὲ καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ φορτικοῖς ἐπιχειρήσομεν, εἴτε ταῖς καθ' ὥραν μεταβολαῖς τοῦ περιέχοντος εἴτε ταῖς καρπῶν γενέσεσι καὶ σποραῖς καὶ ἀρότοις χαίρουσι τὰ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς τούτους συνοικειούμεντες, καὶ λέγοντες θάπτεσθαι μὲν "Ὀσίριν ὅτε κρύπτεται τῇ γῇ σπειρόμενος ὁ καρπός, αὐθις δ' ἀναβιοῦσθαι καὶ ἀναφαίνεσθαι ὅτε βλαστήσεως ἀρχή. Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 31: ὁ δὲ "Ὀσίρις παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις τὴν κάρπιμον παρίστησι δύναμιν, ἣν θρήνοις ἀπομειλίσσονται εἰς γῆν ἀφανιζομένην ἐν τῷ σπόρῳ καὶ ὑφ' ἡμῶν καταναλισκομένην εἰς τὰς τροφάς. Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis*, 22, pp. 112, 114 ed. J. C. T. Otto: τὰ δὲ στοιχεῖα καὶ τὰ μόρια αὐτῶν θεοποιούσιν, ἄλλοτε ἄλλα ὄνματα αὐτοῖς τιθέμενοι, τὴν μὲν τοῦ σίτου σπορὰν "Ὀσίριν (ὅθεν φασὶ μυστικῶς ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνευρέσει τῶν μελῶν ἢ τῶν καρπῶν ἐπιλεχθῆναι τῇ "Ισιδι. Εὐρήκαμεν, συγχαίρομεν).



His image  
enclosed in  
a pine-tree.

their crops, the corn-god was naturally a far more important personage than the tree-god, and attracted a larger share of their devotion. The character of Osiris as a tree-spirit was represented very graphically in a ceremony described by Firmicus Maternus.<sup>1</sup> A pine-tree having been cut down, the centre was hollowed out, and with the wood thus excavated an image of Osiris was made, which was then buried like a corpse in the hollow of the tree. It is hard to imagine how the conception of a tree as tenanted by a personal being could be more plainly expressed. The image of Osiris thus made was kept for a year and then burned, exactly as was done with the image of Attis which was attached to the pine-tree.<sup>2</sup> The ceremony of cutting the tree, as described by Firmicus Maternus, appears to be alluded to by Plutarch.<sup>3</sup> It was probably the ritual counterpart of the mythical discovery of the body of Osiris enclosed in the *erica*-tree.<sup>4</sup>

The setting  
up of the  
*Dad* pillar  
at the  
festival of  
Osiris.

Now we know from the monuments that at Busiris, Memphis, and elsewhere the great festival of Osiris closed on the thirtieth of Choiak with the setting up of a remarkable pillar known as the *Tatu*, *Tat*, *Dad*, or *Ded*. This was a column with four or five cross-bars, like superposed capitals, at the top. The whole roughly resembled a telegraph-post with the cross-pieces which support the wires. Sometimes on the monuments a human form is given to the pillar by carving a grotesque face on it, robing the lower part, crowning the top with the symbols of Osiris, and adding two arms which hold two other characteristic emblems of the god, the crook and the scourge or flail. On a Theban tomb the king himself, assisted by his relations and a priest, is represented hauling at the ropes by which the pillar is being raised, while the queen looks on and her sixteen daughters accompany the ceremony with the music of rattles and sistrums. Again, in the hall of the Osirian mysteries at Abydos the King Sety I. and the goddess Isis are depicted raising the column between them. In Egyptian theology the pillar was

<sup>1</sup> *De errore profanarum religionum*, xxvii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 21 : αἰνῶ δὲ τομὴν ξύλου καὶ σχίσιν λίνου καὶ χοῶς

χεομένας, διὰ τὸ πολλὰ τῶν μυστικῶν ἀναμεμίχθαι τοῦτοις. Again, *ibid.* 42 : τὸ δὲ ξύλον ἐν ταῖς λεγομέναις Ὀσίριδος ταφαῖς τέμνοντες κατασκευάζουσι λάρνακα μνηοειδῆ.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 214.



interpreted as the backbone of Osiris, and whatever its meaning may have been, it was one of the holiest symbols of the national religion. It might very well be a conventional way of representing a tree stripped of its leaves; and if Osiris was a tree-spirit, the bare trunk and branches might naturally be described as his backbone. The setting up of the column would thus, as several modern scholars believe, shadow forth the resurrection of the god, and the importance of the occasion would explain and justify the prominent part which the king appears to have taken in the ceremony.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that in the myth of Osiris the *erica*-tree which shot up and enclosed his dead body, was cut down by a king and turned by him into a pillar of his house.<sup>2</sup> We can hardly doubt, therefore, that this incident of the legend was supposed to be dramatically set forth in the erection of the *dad* column by the king. Like the similar custom of cutting a pine-tree and fastening an image to it in the rites of Attis, the ceremony may have belonged to that class of customs of which the bringing in of the May-pole is among the most familiar. The association of the king and queen of Egypt with the *dad* pillar reminds us of the association of a King and Queen of May with the May-pole.<sup>3</sup> The resemblance may be more than superficial.

In the hall of Osiris at Dendera the coffin containing the hawk-headed mummy of the god is clearly depicted as enclosed within a tree, apparently a conifer, the trunk and branches of which are seen above and below the coffin.<sup>4</sup> The scene thus corresponds closely both to the myth and to the ceremony described by Firmicus Maternus. In another scene at Dendera a tree of the same sort is repre-

Osiris associated with the pine, the sycamore, the tamarisk, and the acacia.

<sup>1</sup> As to the *tat* or *dad* pillar and its erection at the festival see H. Brugsch in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1881, pp. 84, 96; *id.*, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 618; A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 377 sq.; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 17; C. P. Tiele, *History of the Egyptian Religion*, pp. 46 sq.; Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878),

iii. pp. 67, note 3, and 82; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 130 sq.; A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, p. 153, note 1; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 122, 124 sq.; Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, pp. 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 164-168.

<sup>4</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendérah*, iv. pl. 66.



sented growing between the dead and the reviving Osiris, as if on purpose to indicate that the tree was the symbol of the divine resurrection.<sup>1</sup> A pine-cone often appears on the monuments as an offering presented to Osiris, and a manuscript of the Louvre speaks of the cedar as sprung from him.<sup>2</sup> The sycamore and the tamarisk were also his trees. In inscriptions he is spoken of as residing in them;<sup>3</sup> and in tombs his mother Nut is often portrayed standing in the midst of a sycamore-tree and pouring a libation for the benefit of the dead.<sup>4</sup> Further, in a sepulchre at How (Diospolis Parva) a tamarisk is depicted overshadowing the tomb of Osiris, while a bird is perched among the branches with the significant legend "the soul of Osiris,"<sup>5</sup> showing that the spirit of the dead god was believed to haunt his sacred tree.<sup>6</sup> Again, in the series of sculptures which illustrate the mystic history of Osiris in the great temple of Isis at Philae, a tamarisk is figured with two men pouring water on it. The accompanying inscription leaves no doubt, says Brugsch, that the verdure of the earth was believed to be connected with the verdure of the tree, and that the sculpture refers to the grave of Osiris at Philae, of which Plutarch tells us that it was overshadowed by a *methide* plant, taller than any olive-tree. This sculpture, it may be observed, occurs in the same chamber in which the god is represented as a corpse with ears of corn springing from him.<sup>7</sup> In inscriptions he is referred to as "the one in the

<sup>1</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendérah*, iv. pl. 72. Compare E. Lefébure, *Le mythe Osirien*, pp. 194, 196, who regards the tree as a conifer. But it is perhaps a tamarisk.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lefébure, *op. cit.* pp. 195, 197.

<sup>3</sup> S. Birch, in Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkinson, *op. cit.* iii. 62-64; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 106 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Wilkinson, *op. cit.* iii. 349 sq.; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 368; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der*

*alten Aegypter*, p. 621.

<sup>6</sup> We may compare a belief of some of the Californian Indians that the owl is the guardian spirit and deity of the "California big tree," and that it is equally unlucky to fell the tree or to shoot the bird. See S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 398.

<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson, *op. cit.* iii. 349 sq.; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 621; R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, tav. cclxiii.; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 20. In this passage of Plutarch it has been proposed by G. Parthey to read *μυρίκης* (tamarisk) for *μηθίδης* (*methide*), and the conjecture appears to be accepted by Wilkinson, *loc. cit.*



tree," "the solitary one in the acacia," and so forth.<sup>1</sup> On the monuments he sometimes appears as a mummy covered with a tree or with plants ;<sup>2</sup> and trees are represented growing from his grave.<sup>3</sup>

It accords with the character of Osiris as a tree-spirit that his worshippers were forbidden to injure fruit-trees, and with his character as a god of vegetation in general that they were not allowed to stop up wells of water, which are so important for the irrigation of hot southern lands.<sup>4</sup> According to one legend, he taught men to train the vine to poles, to prune its superfluous foliage, and to extract the juice of the grape.<sup>5</sup> The ivy was sacred to him, and was called his plant because it is always green.<sup>6</sup>

Osiris in relation to fruit-trees, wells, the vine and ivy.

### § 3. *Osiris a God of Fertility*

As a god of vegetation Osiris was naturally conceived as a god of creative energy in general, since men at a certain stage of evolution fail to distinguish between the reproductive powers of animals and of plants. Hence a striking feature in his worship was the coarse but expressive symbolism by which this aspect of his nature was presented to the eye not merely of the initiated but of the multitude. At his festival women used to go about the villages singing songs in his praise and carrying obscene images of him which they set in motion by means of strings.<sup>7</sup> The custom was probably a charm to ensure the growth of the crops. A similar image of him, decked with all the fruits of the earth, is said to have stood in a temple before a figure of Isis,<sup>8</sup> and in the chambers

Osiris perhaps conceived as a god of fertility in general.

<sup>1</sup> E. Lefébure, *Le mythe Osirien*, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lefébure, *op. cit.* p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, tav. ccciv.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, ii. 570, fig.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35. One of the points in which the myths of Isis and Demeter agree is that both goddesses in the search for the loved and lost one are said to have sat down, sad at heart and weary, on the edge of a well. Hence those who had been initiated at Eleusis were forbidden to

sit on a well. See Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 15; Homer, *Hymn to Demeter*, 98 sq.; Pausanias, i. 39. 1; Apollodorus, i. 5. 1; Nicander, *Theriaca*, 486; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 20, p. 16 ed. Potter.

<sup>5</sup> Tibullus, i. 7. 33-36.

<sup>6</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 17. 4 sq.

<sup>7</sup> Herodotus, ii. 48; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 12, 18, 36, 51; Diodorus Siculus, i. 21. 5, i. 22. 6 sq., iv. 6. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 7, p. 144 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.



dedicated to him at Philae the dead god is portrayed lying on his bier in an attitude which indicates in the plainest way that even in death his generative virtue was not extinct but only suspended, ready to prove a source of life and fertility to the world when the opportunity should offer.<sup>1</sup> Hymns addressed to Osiris contain allusions to this important side of his nature. In one of them it is said that the world waxes green in triumph through him, and another declares, "Thou art the father and mother of mankind, they live on thy breath, they subsist on the flesh of thy body."<sup>2</sup> We may conjecture that in this paternal aspect he was supposed, like other gods of fertility, to bless men and women with offspring, and that the processions at his festival were intended to promote this object as well as to quicken the seed in the ground. It would be to misjudge ancient religion to denounce as lewd and profligate the emblems and the ceremonies which the Egyptians employed for the purpose of giving effect to this conception of the divine power. The ends which they proposed to themselves in these rites were natural and laudable; only the means they adopted to compass them were mistaken. A similar fallacy induced the Greeks to adopt a like symbolism in their Dionysiac festivals, and the superficial but striking resemblance thus produced between the two religions has perhaps more than anything else misled inquirers, both ancient and modern, into identifying worships which, though certainly akin in nature, are perfectly distinct and independent in origin.<sup>3</sup>

#### § 4. *Osiris a God of the Dead*

We have seen that in one of his aspects Osiris was the ruler and judge of the dead.<sup>4</sup> To a people like the Egyptians,

As god of the corn Osiris came to be viewed as the god of the resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendérah*, iv. pll. 66, 68, 69, 70, 88, 89, 90. Compare R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, tavv. cclxxi., cclxxii., cclxxvi., cclxxxv., cclxxxvi., cclxxxvii., cclxxxix., ccxc.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 132, 136, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> That the Greek Dionysus was nothing but a slightly disguised form of the Egyptian Osiris has been held by Herodotus in ancient and by Mr. P. Foucart in modern times. See Herodotus, ii. 49; P. Foucart, *Le culte de Dionysos en Attique* (Paris, 1904) (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xxxvii.).

<sup>4</sup> Above, pp. 216 sq.



who not only believed in a life beyond the grave but actually spent much of their time, labour, and money in preparing for it, this office of the god must have appeared hardly, if at all, less important than his function of making the earth to bring forth its fruits in due season. We may assume that in the faith of his worshippers the two provinces of the god were intimately connected. In laying their dead in the grave they committed them to his keeping who could raise them from the dust to life eternal, even as he caused the seed to spring from the ground. Of that faith the corn-stuffed effigies of Osiris found in Egyptian tombs furnish an eloquent and unequivocal testimony.<sup>1</sup> They were at once an emblem and an instrument of resurrection. Thus from the sprouting of the grain the ancient Egyptians drew an augury of human immortality. They are not the only people who have built the same far-reaching hopes on the same fragile foundation. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."<sup>2</sup>

A god who thus fed his people with his own broken body in this life, and who held out to them a promise of a blissful eternity in a better world hereafter, naturally reigned supreme in their affections. We need not wonder, therefore, that in Egypt the worship of the other gods was overshadowed by that of Osiris, and that while they were revered each in his own district, he and his divine partner Isis were adored in all.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 262 sq.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians xv. 36-38, 42-44.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 42. Compare E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 115 sq., 203 sq.

Great  
popularity  
of the  
worship  
of Osiris.



## CHAPTER VI

### ISIS

Multi-  
farious  
attributes  
of Isis.

THE original meaning of the goddess Isis is still more difficult to determine than that of her brother and husband Osiris. Her attributes and epithets were so numerous that in the hieroglyphics she is called "the many-named," "the thousand-named," and in Greek inscriptions "the myriad-named."<sup>1</sup> The late eminent Dutch scholar C. P. Tiele confessed candidly that "it is now impossible to tell precisely to what natural phenomena the character of Isis at first referred." Yet he adds, "Originally she was a goddess of fecundity."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Dr. Budge writes that "Isis was the great and beneficent goddess and mother, whose influence and love pervaded all heaven and earth and the abode of the dead, and she was the personification of the great feminine, creative power which conceived, and brought forth every living creature and thing, from the gods in heaven to man on the earth, and to the insect on the ground; what she brought forth she protected, and cared for, and fed, and nourished, and she employed her life in using her power graciously and successfully, not only in creating new beings but in restoring those that were dead. She was, besides these things, the highest type of a faithful and loving wife and mother, and it was in this capacity that the Egyptians honoured and worshipped her most."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 645; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 695; *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, iii. p. 1232, No. 4941. Compare H. Dessau, *In-*

*scriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4376A.

<sup>2</sup> C. P. Tiele, *History of Egyptian Religion*, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 203 sq.



Thus in her character of a goddess of fecundity Isis answered to the great mother goddesses of Asia, though she differed from them in the chastity and fidelity of her conjugal life; for while they were unmarried and dissolute, she had a husband and was a true wife to him as well as an affectionate mother to their son. Hence her beautiful Madonna-like figure reflects a more refined state of society and of morals than the coarse, sensual, cruel figures of Astarte, Anaitis, Cybele, and the rest of that crew. A clear trace, indeed, of an ethical standard very different from our own lingers in her double relation of sister and wife to Osiris; but in most other respects she is rather late than primitive, the full-blown flower rather than the seed of a long religious development. The attributes ascribed to her were too various to be all her own. They were graces borrowed from many lesser deities, sweets rifled from a thousand humbler plants to feed the honey of her superb efflorescence. Yet in her complex nature it is perhaps still possible to detect the original nucleus round which by a slow process of accretion the other elements gathered. For if her brother and husband Osiris was indeed the corn-god, as we have seen reason to believe, she must surely have been the corn-goddess. There are at least some grounds for thinking so. For if we may trust Diodorus Siculus, whose authority appears to have been the Egyptian historian Manetho, the discovery of wheat and barley was attributed to Isis, and at her festivals stalks of these grains were carried in procession to commemorate the boon she had conferred on men.<sup>1</sup> A further detail is added by Augustine. He says that Isis made the discovery of barley at the moment when she was sacrificing to the common ancestors of her husband and herself, all of whom had been kings, and that she showed the newly discovered ears of barley to Osiris and his councillor Thoth or Mercury, as Roman writers called him. That is why, adds Augustine, they identify Isis with Ceres.<sup>2</sup> Further,

How Isis resembled yet differed from the Mother Goddesses of Asia.

Isis perhaps originally the corn-goddess.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 1 sq. Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelii*, iii. 3) quotes from Diodorus a long passage on the early religion of Egypt, prefacing it with the remark that Diodorus's account of the subject

was more concise than that of Manetho.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, viii. 27. Tertullian says that Isis wore a wreath of the corn she had discovered (*De corona*, 7).



at harvest-time, when the Egyptian reapers had cut the first stalks, they laid them down and beat their breasts, wailing and calling upon Isis.<sup>1</sup> The custom has been already explained as a lament for the corn-spirit slain under the sickle.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the epithets by which Isis is designated in the inscriptions are "creatress of the green crop," "the Green One, whose greenness is like the greenness of the earth," and "mistress of bread."<sup>3</sup> According to Brugsch she is "not only the creatress of the fresh verdure of vegetation which covers the earth, but is actually the green corn-field itself, which is personified as a goddess."<sup>4</sup> This is confirmed by her epithet *Sochit* or *Sochet*, meaning "a corn-field," a sense which the word still retains in Coptic.<sup>5</sup> The Greeks conceived of Isis as a corn-goddess, for they identified her with Demeter.<sup>6</sup> In a Greek epigram she is described as "she who has given birth to the fruits of the earth," and "the mother of the ears of corn";<sup>7</sup> and in a hymn composed in her honour she speaks of herself as "queen of the wheat-field," and is described as "charged with the care of the fruitful furrow's wheat-rich path."<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, Greek or Roman artists often represented her with ears of corn on her head or in her hand.<sup>9</sup>

Refinement and spiritualisation of Isis in later times: the popularity of her worship in the Roman empire.

Such, we may suppose, was Isis in the olden time, a rustic Corn-Mother adored with uncouth rites by Egyptian swains. But the homely features of the clownish goddess could hardly be traced in the refined, the saintly form which, spiritualised by ages of religious evolution, she presented to her worshippers of after days as the true wife, the tender mother, the beneficent queen of nature, encircled with the nimbus of moral purity, of immemorial and mysterious sanctity. Thus chastened and transfigured she won many hearts far beyond the

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 237 sq.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 647.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 649. Compare E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 216.

<sup>5</sup> H. Brugsch, *loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, ii. 59, 156; Diodorus Siculus, i. 13, 25, 96; Apollodorus

ii. 1. 3; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 212. See further W. Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 443 sq.

<sup>7</sup> *Anthologia Planudea*, cclxiv. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Epigrammata Graeca ex lapidibus conlecta*, ed. G. Kaibel, No. 1028, pp. 437 sq.; *Orphica*, ed. E. Abel, pp. 295 sqq.

<sup>9</sup> W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 448 sqq.



boundaries of her native land. In that welter of religions which accompanied the decline of national life in antiquity her worship was one of the most popular at Rome and throughout the empire. Some of the Roman emperors themselves were openly addicted to it. And however the religion of Isis may, like any other, have been often worn as a cloak by men and women of loose life, her rites appear on the whole to have been honourably distinguished by a dignity and composure, a solemnity and decorum well fitted to soothe the troubled mind, to ease the burdened heart. They appealed therefore to gentle spirits, and above all to women, whom the bloody and licentious rites of other Oriental goddesses only shocked and repelled. We need not wonder, then, that in a period of decadence, when traditional faiths were shaken, when systems clashed, when men's minds were disquieted, when the fabric of empire itself, once deemed eternal, began to show ominous rents and fissures, the serene figure of Isis with her spiritual calm, her gracious promise of immortality, should have appeared to many like a star in a stormy sky, and should have roused in their breasts a rapture of devotion not unlike that which was paid in the Middle Ages to the Virgin Mary. Indeed her stately ritual, with its shaven and tonsured priests, its matins and vespers, its tinkling music, its baptism and aspersions of holy water, its solemn processions, its jewelled images of the Mother of God, presented many points of similarity to the pomps and ceremonies of Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> The resemblance need not be purely acci-

Resem-  
blance of  
Isis to the  
Madonna.

<sup>1</sup> L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 373-385; J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 77-81; E. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 570 sqq.; J. Reville, *La religion romaine à Rome sous les Sévères*, pp. 54-61; G. Lafaye, *Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1884); E. Meyer and W. Drexler, s.v. "Isis," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 360 sqq.; S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 79 sq., 85 sqq. The chief passage on the worship of Isis in the West is the eleventh book of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*. On the

reputation which the goddess enjoyed as a healer of the sick see Diodorus Siculus, i. 25; W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 521 sqq. The divine partner of Isis in later times, especially outside of Egypt, was Serapis, that is Osiris-Apis (*Aśar-Hāpi*), the sacred Apis bull of Memphis, identified after death with Osiris. His oldest sanctuary was at Memphis (Pausanias, i. 18. 4), and there was one at Babylon in the time of Alexander the Great (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 76; Arrian, *Anabasis*, vii. 26). Ptolemy I. or II. built a great and famous temple in his honour at Alexandria, where he set up an image of



dental. Ancient Egypt may have contributed its share to the gorgeous symbolism of the Catholic Church as well as to the pale abstractions of her theology.<sup>1</sup> Certainly in art the figure of Isis suckling the infant Horus is so like that of the Madonna and child that it has sometimes received the adoration of ignorant Christians.<sup>2</sup> And to Isis in her later character of patroness of mariners the Virgin Mary perhaps owes her beautiful epithet of *Stella Maris*, "Star of the Sea," under which she is adored by tempest-tossed sailors.<sup>3</sup> The attributes of a marine deity may have been bestowed on Isis by the sea-faring Greeks of Alexandria. They are quite foreign to her original character and to the habits of the Egyptians, who had no love of the sea.<sup>4</sup>

the god which was commonly said to have been imported from Sinope in Pontus. See Tacitus, *Histor.* iv. 83 sq.; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 27-29; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* iv. 48, p. 42 ed. Potter. In after ages the institution of the worship of Serapis was attributed to this Ptolemy, but all that the politic Macedonian monarch appears to have done was to assimilate the Egyptian Osiris to the Greek Pluto, and so to set up a god whom Egyptians and Greeks could unite in worshipping. Serapis gradually assumed the attributes of Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing, in addition to those of Pluto, the Greek god of the dead. See G. Lafaye,

*Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie*, pp. 16 sqq.; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 589; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 195 sqq.; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 216-218.

<sup>1</sup> The resemblance of Isis to the Virgin Mary has often been pointed out. See W. Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 428 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 430 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Th. Trede, *Das Heidentum in der römischen Kirche*, iii. 144 sq.

<sup>4</sup> On this later aspect of Isis see W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 474 sqq.



## CHAPTER VII

### OSIRIS AND THE SUN

OSIRIS has been sometimes interpreted as the sun-god; and in modern times this view has been held by so many distinguished writers that it deserves a brief examination. If we inquire on what evidence Osiris has been identified with the sun or the sun-god, it will be found on analysis to be minute in quantity and dubious, where it is not absolutely worthless, in quality. The diligent Jablonski, the first modern scholar to collect and sift the testimony of classical writers on Egyptian religion, says that it can be shown in many ways that Osiris is the sun, and that he could produce a cloud of witnesses to prove it, but that it is needless to do so, since no learned man is ignorant of the fact.<sup>1</sup> Of the writers whom he condescends to quote, the only two who expressly identify Osiris with the sun are Diodorus and Macrobius. The passage in Diodorus runs thus:<sup>2</sup> "It is said that the aboriginal inhabitants of Egypt, looking up to the sky, and smitten with awe and wonder at the nature of the universe, supposed that there were two gods, eternal and primaeval, the sun and the moon, of whom they named the sun Osiris and the moon Isis." Even if Diodorus's authority for this statement is Manetho, as there is some ground for believing,<sup>3</sup> little or no weight can be attached to it. For it is plainly a philosophical, and therefore a late, explanation of the first beginnings of Egyptian religion, reminding us of Kant's familiar saying about the starry heavens and the moral law rather than of the

Osiris interpreted as the sun by many modern writers.

<sup>1</sup> Jablonski, *Pantheon Aegyptiorum* (Frankfort, 1750), i. 125 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 11. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 283, note 1.



rude traditions of a primitive people. Jablonski's second authority, Macrobius, is no better, but rather worse. For Macrobius was the father of that large family of mythologists who resolve all or most gods into the sun. According to him Mercury was the sun, Mars was the sun, Janus was the sun, Saturn was the sun, so was Jupiter, also Nemesis, likewise Pan, and so on through a great part of the pantheon.<sup>1</sup> It was natural, therefore, that he should identify Osiris with the sun,<sup>2</sup> but his reasons for doing so are exceedingly slight. He refers to the ceremonies of alternate lamentation and joy as if they reflected the vicissitudes of the great luminary in his course through the sky. Further, he argues that Osiris must be the sun because an eye was one of his symbols. It is true that an eye was a symbol of Osiris,<sup>3</sup> and it is also true that the sun was often called "the eye of Horus";<sup>4</sup> yet the coincidence hardly suffices to establish the identity of the two deities. The opinion that Osiris was the sun is also mentioned, but not accepted, by Plutarch,<sup>5</sup> and it is referred to by Firmicus Maternus.<sup>6</sup>

The later identification of Osiris with Ra, the sun-god, does not prove that Osiris was originally the sun.

Amongst modern scholars, Lepsius, in identifying Osiris with the sun, appears to rely mainly on the passage of Diodorus already quoted. But the monuments, he adds, also show "that down to a late time Osiris was sometimes conceived as *Ra*. In this quality he is named *Osiris-Ra* even in the 'Book of the Dead,' and Isis is often called 'the royal consort of Ra.'"<sup>7</sup> That Ra was both the physical sun and the sun-god is undisputed; but with every deference for the authority of so great a scholar as Lepsius, it may be doubted whether the identification of Osiris with Ra can be accepted as proof that Osiris was originally the sun.

<sup>1</sup> See Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, bk. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Saturn.* i. 21. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 10 and 51; Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 353; R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 782 sq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 113 sq.

<sup>4</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of*

*the Egyptians*, i. 467; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Isis et Osiris*, 52.

<sup>6</sup> *De errore profan. religionum*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Lepsius, "Ueber den ersten ägyptischen Götterkreis und seine geschichtlich-mythologische Entstehung," in *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1851, pp. 194 sq.



For the religion of ancient Egypt<sup>1</sup> may be described as a confederacy of local cults which, while maintaining against each other a certain measure of jealous and even hostile independence, were yet constantly subjected to the fusing and amalgamating influence of political centralisation and philosophic thought. The history of the religion appears to have largely consisted of a struggle between these opposite forces or tendencies. On the one side there was the conservative tendency to preserve the local cults with all their distinctive features, fresh, sharp, and crisp as they had been handed down from an immemorial past. On the other side there was the progressive tendency, favoured by the gradual fusion of the people under a powerful central government, first to dull the edge of these provincial distinctions, and finally to break them down completely and merge them in a single national religion. The conservative party probably mustered in its ranks the great bulk of the people, their prejudices and affections being warmly enlisted in favour of the local deity, with whose temple and rites they had been familiar from childhood; and the popular dislike of change, based on the endearing effect of old association, must have been strongly reinforced by the less disinterested opposition of the local clergy, whose material interests would necessarily suffer with any decay of their shrines. On the other hand the kings, whose power and glory rose with the political and ecclesiastical consolidation of the realm, were the natural champions of religious unity; and their efforts would be seconded by the refined and thoughtful minority, who could hardly fail to be shocked by the many barbarous and revolting elements in the local rites. As usually happens in such cases, the process of religious unification appears to have been largely effected by discovering points of similarity, real or imaginary, between the provincial deities, which were thereupon declared to be only different names or manifestations of the same god.

Of the deities who thus acted as centres of attraction, absorbing in themselves a multitude of minor divinities, by

<sup>1</sup> The view here taken of the history of Egyptian religion is based on the sketch in Ad. Erman's *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp.

351 sqq. Compare C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 79 sq.

Such identifications sprang from attempts to unify and amalgamate the many local cults of Egypt.



Most  
Egyptian  
gods were  
at some  
time  
identified  
with the  
sun.

Attempt of  
Amenophis  
IV. to  
abolish all  
gods except  
the sun-  
god.

far the most important was the sun-god Ra. There appear to have been few gods in Egypt who were not at one time or other identified with him. Ammon of Thebes, Horus of the East, Horus of Edfu, Chnum of Elephantine, Tum of Heliopolis, all were regarded as one god, the sun. Even the water-god Sobk, in spite of his crocodile shape, did not escape the same fate. Indeed one king, Amenophis IV., undertook to sweep away all the old gods at a stroke and replace them by a single god, the "great living disc of the sun."<sup>1</sup> In the hymns composed in his honour, this deity is referred to as "the living disc of the sun, besides whom there is none other." He is said to have made "the far heaven" and "men, beasts, and birds; he strengtheneth the eyes with his beams, and when he showeth himself, all flowers live and grow, the meadows flourish at his upgoing and are drunken at his sight, all cattle skip on their feet, and the birds that are in the marsh flutter for joy." It is he "who bringeth the years, createth the months, maketh the days, calculateth the hours, the lord of time, by whom men reckon." In his zeal for the unity of god, the king commanded to erase the names of all other gods from the monuments, and to destroy their images. His rage was particularly directed against the god Ammon, whose name and likeness were effaced wherever they were found; even the sanctity of the tomb was violated in order to destroy the memorials of the hated deity. In some of the halls of the great temples at Carnac, Luxor, and other places, all the names of the gods, with a few chance exceptions, were scratched out. The monarch even changed his own name, Amenophis, because it was compounded of Ammon, and took instead the name of Chu-en-aten, "gleam of the sun's disc." Thebes itself, the ancient capital of his glorious ancestors, full of the monuments of their piety and idolatry, was no longer a home for the puritan king. He deserted it,

<sup>1</sup> On this attempted revolution in religion see Lepsius, in *Verhandl. d. königl. Akad. d. Wissensch. zu Berlin*, 1851, pp. 196-201; A. Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 74 sq., 355-357; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 64-72; H. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, i. 441

*sqq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Aegyptische Geschichte*, pp. 396 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 20-22; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 84-92; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, i. 316 *sqq.*; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 68-84.



and built for himself a new capital in Middle Egypt at the place now known as Tell-el-Amarna. Here in a few years a city of palaces and gardens rose like an exhalation at his command, and here the king, his dearly loved wife and children, and his complaisant courtiers led a merry life. The grave and sombre ritual of Thebes was discarded. The sun-god was worshipped with songs and hymns, with the music of harps and flutes, with offerings of cakes and fruits and flowers. Blood seldom stained his kindly altars. The king himself celebrated the offices of religion. He preached with unction, and we may be sure that his courtiers listened with at least an outward semblance of devotion. From the too-faithful portraits of himself which he has bequeathed to us we can still picture to ourselves the heretic king in the pulpit, with his tall, lanky figure, his bandy legs, his pot-belly, his long, lean, haggard face aglow with the fever of religious fanaticism. Yet "the doctrine," as he loved to call it, which he proclaimed to his hearers was apparently no stern message of renunciation in this world, of terrors in the world to come. The thoughts of death, of judgment, and of the life beyond the grave, which weighed like a nightmare on the minds of the Egyptians, seem to have been dismissed for a time. Even the name of Osiris, the awful judge of the dead, is not once mentioned in the graves at Tell-el-Amarna. All this lasted only during the life of the reformer. His death was followed by a violent reaction. The old gods were reinstated in their rank and privileges: their names and images were restored; and new temples were built. But all the shrines and palaces reared by the late king were thrown down: even the sculptures that referred to him and to his god in rock-tombs and on the sides of hills were erased or filled up with stucco: his name appears on no later monument, and was carefully omitted from all official lists. The new capital was abandoned, never to be inhabited again. Its plan can still be traced in the sands of the desert.

Failure  
of the  
attempt.

This attempt of King Amenophis IV. is only an extreme example of a tendency which appears to have affected the religion of Egypt as far back as we can



Identification with the sun is no evidence of the original character of an Egyptian god.

trace it. Therefore, to come back to our point, in attempting to discover the original character of any Egyptian god, no weight can be given to the identification of him with other gods, least of all with the sun-god Ra. Far from helping to follow up the trail, these identifications only cross and confuse it. The best evidence for the original character of the Egyptian gods is to be found in their ritual and myths, so far as these are known, and in the manner in which they are portrayed on the monuments. It is mainly on evidence drawn from these sources that I rest my interpretation of Osiris as a deity primarily of the fruits of the earth.

The solar theory of Osiris does not explain his death and resurrection.

The ground upon which some recent writers seem chiefly to rely for the identification of Osiris with the sun is that the story of his death fits better with the solar phenomena than with any other in nature. It may readily be admitted that the daily appearance and disappearance of the sun might very naturally be expressed by a myth of his death and resurrection; and writers who regard Osiris as the sun are careful to indicate that it is the diurnal, and not the annual, course of the sun to which they understand the myth to apply. Thus Renouf, who identified Osiris with the sun, admitted that the Egyptian sun could not with any show of reason be described as dead in winter.<sup>1</sup> But if his daily death was the theme of the legend, why was it celebrated by an annual ceremony? This fact alone seems fatal to the interpretation of the myth as descriptive of sunset and sunrise. Again, though the sun may be said to die daily, in what sense can he be said to be torn in pieces?<sup>2</sup>

In the course of our inquiry it has, I trust, been made

<sup>1</sup> P. Le Page Renouf, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (London, 1884), p. 113. Compare Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. §§ 55, 57.

<sup>2</sup> The late eminent scholar C. P. Tiele, who formerly interpreted Osiris as a sun-god (*History of Egyptian Religion*, pp. 43 sqq.), afterwards adopted a view of his nature which approaches more nearly to the one advocated in this book. See his *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 35 sq., 123. Professor Maspero has also abandoned

the theory that Osiris was the sun; he now supposes that the deity originally personified the Nile. See his *Histoire ancienne*<sup>4</sup> (Paris, 1886), p. 35; and his *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, i. (Paris, 1895), p. 130. Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge also interprets Osiris as the Nile (*The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 122, 123), and this view was held by some ancient writers (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39). Compare Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), p. 29.



clear that there is another natural phenomenon to which the conception of death and resurrection is as applicable as to sunset and sunrise, and which, as a matter of fact, has been so conceived and represented in folk-custom. This phenomenon is the annual growth and decay of vegetation. A strong reason for interpreting the death of Osiris as the decay of vegetation rather than as the sunset is to be found in the general, though not unanimous, voice of antiquity, which classed together the worship and myths of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, and Demeter, as religions of essentially the same type.<sup>1</sup> The consensus of ancient opinion on this subject seems too great to be rejected as a mere fancy. So closely did the rites of Osiris resemble those of Adonis at Byblus that some of the people of Byblus themselves maintained that it was Osiris and not Adonis whose death was mourned by them.<sup>2</sup> Such a view could certainly not have been held if the rituals of the two gods had not been so alike as to be almost indistinguishable. Again, Herodotus found the similarity between the rites of Osiris and Dionysus so great, that he thought it impossible the latter could have arisen independently; they must, he thought, have been recently borrowed, with slight alterations, by the Greeks from the Egyptians.<sup>3</sup> Again, Plutarch, a very keen student of comparative religion, insists upon the detailed resemblance of the rites of Osiris to those of Dionysus.<sup>4</sup> We cannot reject the evidence of such intelligent and trustworthy witnesses on plain matters of fact which fell under their own cognisance. Their explanations of the worships it is indeed possible to reject, for the meaning of religious

The death and resurrection of Osiris more naturally explained by the annual decay and growth of vegetation.

<sup>1</sup> For the identification of Osiris with Dionysus, and of Isis with Demeter, see Herodotus, ii. 42, 49, 59, 144, 156; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 13, 35; Diodorus Siculus, i. 13, 25, 96, iv. 1; *Orphica*, Hymn 42; Eusebius, *Praepar. Evang.* iii. 11. 31; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* xi. 287; *id.* on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 212; *Διηγγήματα*, xxii. 2, in *Mythographi Graeci*, ed. A. Westermann, p. 368; Nonnus, *Dionys.* iv. 269 sq.; Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 28; Ausonius, *Epigrammata*, 29 and 30. For the identification of Osiris

with Adonis and Attis see Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9. p. 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; *Orphica*, Hymn 42. For the identification of Attis, Adonis, and Dionysus see Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii. 23 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxvii. 448); Plutarch, *Quaestiones Conviviales*, iv. 5. 3; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 19, p. 16 ed. Potter.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35.



cults is often open to question ; but resemblances of ritual are matters of observation. Therefore, those who explain Osiris as the sun are driven to the alternative of either dismissing as mistaken the testimony of antiquity to the similarity of the rites of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, and Demeter, or of interpreting all these rites as sun-worship. No modern scholar has fairly faced and accepted either side of this alternative. To accept the former would be to affirm that we know the rites of these deities better than the men who practised, or at least who witnessed them. To accept the latter would involve a wrenching, clipping, mangling, and distorting of myth and ritual from which even Macrobius shrank.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the view that the essence of all these rites was the mimic death and revival of vegetation, explains them separately and collectively in an easy and natural way, and harmonises with the general testimony borne by antiquity to their substantial similarity.

<sup>1</sup> Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and Dionysus were all resolved by him into the sun ; but he spared Demeter (Ceres), whom,

however, he interpreted as the moon. See the *Saturnalia*, bk. i.

as saying little about  
as saying little about



## CHAPTER VIII

### OSIRIS AND THE MOON

BEFORE we conclude this study of Osiris it will be worth while to consider an ancient view of his nature, which deserves more attention than it has received in modern times. We are told by Plutarch that among the philosophers who saw in the gods of Egypt personifications of natural objects and forces, there were some who interpreted Osiris as the moon and his enemy Typhon as the sun, "because the moon, with her humid and generative light, is favourable to the propagation of animals and the growth of plants; while the sun with his fierce fire scorches and burns up all growing things, renders the greater part of the earth uninhabitable by reason of his blaze, and often overpowers the moon herself."<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be thought of the physical qualities here attributed to the moon, the arguments adduced by the ancients to prove the identity of Osiris with that luminary carry with them a weight which has at least not been lightened by the results of modern research. An examination of them and of other evidence pointing in the same direction will, perhaps, help to set the original character of the Egyptian deity in a clearer light.

1. Osiris was said to have lived or reigned twenty-eight years. This might fairly be taken as a mythical expression for a lunar month.<sup>2</sup>

2. His body was reported to have been rent into fourteen pieces.<sup>3</sup> This might be interpreted of the waning moon,

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 13, 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 18, 42. The hieroglyphic texts sometimes speak of fourteen pieces, and sometimes of sixteen.

But fourteen seems to have been the true number, because the inscriptions of Dendera, which refer to the rites of Osiris, describe the mystic image of the god as composed of fourteen

Osiris was sometimes interpreted by the ancients as the moon.



Evidence  
of the  
association  
of Osiris  
with the  
moon.

which appears to lose a portion of itself on each of the fourteen days that make up the second half of a lunar month. It is expressly said that his enemy Typhon found the body of Osiris at the full moon;<sup>1</sup> thus the dismemberment of the god would begin with the waning of the moon. To primitive man it seems manifest that the waning moon is actually dwindling, and he naturally enough explains its diminution by supposing that the planet is being rent or broken in pieces or eaten away. The Klamath Indians of Oregon speak of the moon as "the one broken to pieces" with reference to its changing aspect; they never apply such a term to the sun,<sup>2</sup> whose apparent change of bulk at different seasons of the year is far too insignificant to attract the attention of the savage, or at least to be described by him in such forcible language. The Dacotas believe that when the moon is full, a great many little mice begin to nibble at one side of it and do not cease till they have eaten it all up, after which a new moon is born and grows to maturity, only to share the fate of its countless predecessors.<sup>3</sup> A similar belief is held by the Huzuls of the Carpathians, except that they ascribe the destruction of the old moon to wolves instead of to mice.<sup>4</sup>

3. At the new moon of the month Phanemoth, which was the beginning of spring, the Egyptians celebrated what they called "the entry of Osiris into the moon."<sup>5</sup>

4. At the ceremony called "the burial of Osiris" the Egyptians made a crescent-shaped chest "because the moon, when it approaches the sun, assumes the form of a crescent and vanishes."<sup>6</sup>

5. The bull Apis, held to be an image of the soul of Osiris,<sup>7</sup> was born of a cow which was believed to have been impregnated, not in the vulgar way by a bull, but by a divine influence emanating from the moon.<sup>8</sup>

pieces. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 126 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians of South-Western Oregon* (Washington, 1890), p. lxxxix.

<sup>3</sup> S. R. Riggs, *Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography* (Washington, 1893), p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> R. F. Kaindl, *Die Huzulen* (Vienna, 1894), p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 43.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 20, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Plutarch, *op. cit.* 43; *id.*, *Quaest. Conviv.* viii. 1. 3. Compare Herodotus, iii. 28; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xi. 10; Mela, i. 9. 58.



6. Once a year, at the full moon, pigs were sacrificed simultaneously to the moon and Osiris.<sup>1</sup>

7. In a hymn supposed to be addressed by Isis to Osiris, it is said that Thoth—

*Placeth thy soul in the bark Ma-at,  
In that name which is thine, of GOD MOON.*

And again :—

*Thou who comest to us as a child each month,  
We do not cease to contemplate thee.  
Thine emanation heightens the brilliancy  
Of the stars of Orion in the firmament, etc.<sup>2</sup>*

Here then Osiris is identified with the moon in set terms. If in the same hymn he is said to "illuminate us like Ra" (the sun), that is obviously no reason for identifying him with the sun, but quite the contrary. For though the moon may reasonably be compared to the sun, neither the sun nor anything else can reasonably be compared to itself.

Now if Osiris was originally, as I suppose, a deity of vegetation, we can easily enough understand why in a later and more philosophic age he should come to be thus identified or confounded with the moon.<sup>3</sup> For as soon as he begins to meditate upon the causes of things, the early philosopher is led by certain obvious, though fallacious, appearances to regard the moon as the ultimate cause of the growth of plants. In the first place he associates its apparent growth and decay with the growth and decay of sublunary things, and imagines that in virtue of a secret sympathy the celestial phenomena really produce those terrestrial changes which in point of fact they merely resemble. Thus Pliny says that the moon may fairly be considered the planet of breath, "because it saturates the earth and by its approach fills bodies, while by its departure it empties them. Hence it

The identification of Osiris with the moon appears to be based on a comparatively late theory that all things grow and decay with the waxing and waning of the moon.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 47; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8. As to pigs in relation to Osiris, see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 305 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the Past*, ii. 121 sq.; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie*

*der alten Aegypter*, pp. 629 sq.

<sup>3</sup> According to C. P. Tiele (*Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 79) the conception of Osiris as the moon was late and never became popular. This entirely accords with the view adopted in the text.



is," he goes on, "that shell-fish increase with the increase of the moon and that bloodless creatures especially feel breath at that time; even the blood of men grows and diminishes with the light of the moon, and leaves and herbage also feel the same influence, since the lunar energy penetrates all things."<sup>1</sup> "There is no doubt," writes Macrobius, "that the moon is the author and framer of mortal bodies, so much so that some things expand or shrink as it waxes or wanes."<sup>2</sup> Again, Aulus Gellius puts in the mouth of a friend the remark that "the same things which grow with the waxing, do dwindle with the waning moon," and he quotes from a commentary of Plutarch's on Hesiod a statement that the onion is the only vegetable which violates this great law of nature by sprouting in the wane and withering in the increase of the moon.<sup>3</sup> Scottish Highlanders allege that in the increase of the moon everything has a tendency to grow or stick together;<sup>4</sup> and they call the second moon of autumn "the ripening moon" (*Gealach an abachaidh*), because they imagine that crops ripen as much by its light as by day.<sup>5</sup>

Practical  
rules  
founded on  
this lunar  
theory.

From this supposed influence of the moon on the life of plants and animals, men in ancient and modern times have deduced a whole code of rules for the guidance of the husbandman, the shepherd, and others in the conduct of their affairs. Thus an ancient writer on agriculture lays it down as a maxim, that whatever is to be sown should be sown while the moon is waxing, and that whatever is to be cut or gathered should be cut or gathered while it is waning.<sup>6</sup> A modern treatise on superstition describes how the superstitious man regulates all his conduct by the moon: "Whatever he would have to grow, he sets about it when she is in her increase; but for what he would have less he chooses

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Macrobius, *Comment. in somnium Scipionis*, i. 11. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Aulus Gellius, xx. 8. For the opinions of the ancients on this subject see further W. H. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (Leipsic, 1890), pp. 61 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A. Allardyce, ii. 449.

<sup>5</sup> J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1902), pp. 306 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Palladius, *De re rustica*, i. 34. 8. Compare *id.* i. 6. 12; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 321: "omnia quae caeduntur, carpuntur, tondentur innocentius decrescente luna quam crescente fiunt." *Geoponica*, i. 6. 8: τινὲς δοκιμάζουσι μηδὲν φθινοῦσης τῆς σελήνης ἀλλὰ αὐξανόμενης φυτεῖν.



her wane."<sup>1</sup> In Germany the phases of the moon are observed by superstitious people at all the more or even less important actions of life, such as tilling the fields, building or changing houses, marriages, hair-cutting, bleeding, cupping, and so forth. The particular rules vary in different places, but the principle generally followed is that whatever is done to increase anything should be done while the moon is waxing; whatever is done to diminish anything should be done while the moon is waning. For example, sowing, planting, and grafting should be done in the first half of the moon, but the felling of timber and mowing should be done in the second half.<sup>2</sup> In various parts of Europe it is believed that plants, nails, hair, and corns, cut while the moon is on the increase, will grow again fast, but that if cut while it is on the decrease they will grow slowly or waste away.<sup>3</sup> Hence persons who wish their hair to grow thick and long should cut it in the first half of the moon.<sup>4</sup> On

<sup>1</sup> J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 144, quoting Werenfels, *Dissertation upon Superstition* (London, 1748), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,<sup>3</sup> § 65, pp. 57 sq. Compare J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 595; Montanus, *Die deutsche Volksfeste, Volksbräuche und deutscher Volksglaube*, p. 128; M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae* (Berlin, 1871), p. 18; *Am Urquell*, v. (1894) p. 173. The rule that the grafting of trees should be done at the waxing of the moon is laid down by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xvii. 108). At Deutsch-Zepling in Transylvania, by an inversion of the usual custom, seed is generally sown at the waning of the moon (A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens*, p. 7). Some French peasants also prefer to sow in the wane (F. Chapiseau, *Folk-lore de la Beauce et du Perche*, i. 291). In the Abruzzi also sowing and grafting are commonly done when the moon is on the wane; timber that is to be durable must be cut in January during the moon's decrease (G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, p. 43).

<sup>3</sup> P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne*, ii. 355; L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-*

*Vosges*, p. 5; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 150; Holzmayer, "Osiliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. (1872) p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> The rule is mentioned by Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, i. 37 (where we should probably read "*ne decrescente tendens calvos fiam*," and refer *istaec* to the former member of the preceding sentence); A. Wuttke, *l.c.*; Montanus, *op. cit.* p. 128; P. Sébillot, *l.c.*; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 511, § 421; Tettau und Temme, *Volkssagen Ostpreussens, Litthauens und Westpreussens*, p. 283; A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 386, § 92; L. Schandelin, in *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iv. 2, p. 402; F. S. Krauss, *Volksglaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 15; E. Krause, "Aberglaubische Kuren und sonstiger Aberglaube in Berlin," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xv. (1883) p. 91; R. Wuttke, *Sächsische Volkskunde*<sup>2</sup> (Dresden, 1901), p. 369; Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 259. The reason assigned in the text was probably the original one in all cases, though it is not always the one alleged now.



the same principle sheep are shorn when the moon is waxing, because it is supposed that the wool will then be longest and most enduring.<sup>1</sup> Some negroes of the Gaboon think that taro and other vegetables never thrive if they are planted after full moon, but that they grow fast and strong if they are planted in the first quarter.<sup>2</sup> The Highlanders of Scotland used to expect better crops of grain by sowing their seed in the moon's increase.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand they thought that garden vegetables, such as onions and kail, run to seed if they are sown in the increase, but that they grow to pot-herbs if they are sown in the wane.<sup>4</sup> So Thomas Tusser advised the peasant to sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon "that they with the planet may rest and arise."<sup>5</sup> The Zulus welcome the first appearance of the new moon with beating of drums and other demonstrations of joy; but next day they abstain from all labour, "thinking that if anything is sown on those days they can never reap the benefit thereof."<sup>6</sup> But in this matter of sowing and planting a refined distinction is sometimes drawn by French, German, and Esthonian peasants; plants which bear fruit above ground are sown by them when the moon is waxing, but plants which are cultivated for the sake of their roots, such as potatoes and turnips, are sown when the moon is waning.<sup>7</sup> The reason for this distinction seems to be a vague idea that the waxing moon is coming up and the waning moon going down, and that

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Krauss, *op. cit.* p. 16; Montanus, *l.c.*; Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, i. 37 (see above, p. 299, note 4). However, the opposite rule is observed in the Upper Vosges, where it is thought that if the sheep are shorn at the new moon the quantity of wool will be much less than if they were shorn in the waning of the moon (L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 5). In Normandy, also, wool is clipped during the waning of the moon; otherwise moths would get into it (J. Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Father Lejeune, "Dans la forêt," *Missions Catholiques*, xxvii. (1895) p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> S. Johnson, *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (Baltimore, 1810),

p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, new edition (London, 1812), p. 107 (under February).

<sup>6</sup> Fairweather, in W. F. Owen's *Narrative of Voyages to explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar*, ii. 396 sq.

<sup>7</sup> A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,<sup>3</sup> § 65, p. 58; J. Lecœur, *loc. cit.*; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 511, § 422; Th. Siebs, "Das Saterland," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, iii. (1893) p. 278; Holzmayer, *op. cit.* p. 47.



accordingly fruits which grow upwards should be sown in the former period, and fruits which grow downwards in the latter. Before beginning to plant their cacao the Pipiles of Central America exposed the finest seeds for four nights to the moonlight,<sup>1</sup> but whether they did so at the waxing or waning of the moon is not said.

Again, the waning of the moon has been commonly recommended both in ancient and modern times as the proper time for felling trees,<sup>2</sup> apparently because it was thought fit and natural that the operation of cutting down should be performed on earth at the time when the lunar orb was, so to say, being cut down in the sky. In France before the Revolution the forestry laws enjoined that trees should only be felled after the moon had passed the full; and in French bills announcing the sale of timber you may still read a notice that the wood was cut in the waning of the moon.<sup>3</sup> But sometimes the opposite rule is adopted, and equally forcible arguments are urged in its defence. Thus, when the Wabondei of eastern Africa are about to build a house, they take care to cut the posts for it when the moon is on the increase; for they say that posts cut when the moon is wasting away would soon rot, whereas posts cut while the moon is waxing are very durable.<sup>4</sup> The same rule is observed for the same reason in some parts of Germany.<sup>5</sup> But the partisans of the

The periods of the moon in relation to the felling of timber.

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 719 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Cato, *De agri cultura*, 37. 4; Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, i. 37; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xvi. 190; Palladius, *De re rustica*, ii. 22, xii. 15; Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iii. 10. 3; Macrobius, *Saturn.* vii. 16; A. Wuttke, *l.c.*; Bavaria, *Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iv. 2, p. 402; W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 58; L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 5; F. Chapi-seau, *Folk-lore de la Beauce et du Perche*, i. 291 sq.; M. Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 630; J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 306; G. Amalfi, *Tradizioni ed Usi*

*nella penisola Sorrentina* (Palermo, 1890), p. 87; K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasilien*, p. 559. Compare F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud*, iii. 438. Pliny, while he says that the period from the twentieth to the thirtieth day of the lunar month was the season generally recommended, adds that the best time of all, according to universal opinion, was the interlunar day, between the old and the new moon, when the planet is invisible through being in conjunction with the sun.

<sup>3</sup> J. Lecœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 11 sq.

<sup>4</sup> O. Baumann, *Usambara und seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin, 1891), p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> Montanus, *Die deutsche Volksfeste*,



The moon regarded as the source of moisture.

ordinarily received opinion have sometimes supported it by another reason, which introduces us to the second of those fallacious appearances by which men have been led to regard the moon as the cause of growth in plants. From observing rightly that dew falls most thickly on cloudless nights, they inferred wrongly that it was caused by the moon, a theory which the poet Alcman expressed in mythical form by saying that dew was a daughter of Zeus and the moon.<sup>1</sup> Hence the ancients concluded that the moon is the great source of moisture, as the sun is the great source of heat.<sup>2</sup> And as the humid power of the moon was assumed to be greater when the planet was waxing than when it was waning, they thought that timber cut during the increase of the luminary would be saturated with moisture, whereas timber cut in the wane would be comparatively dry. Hence we are told that in antiquity carpenters would reject timber felled when the moon was growing or full, because they believed that such timber teemed with sap;<sup>3</sup> and in the Vosges at the present day people allege that wood cut at the new moon does not dry.<sup>4</sup> In the Hebrides peasants give the same reason for cutting their peats when the moon is on the wane; "for they observe that if they are cut in the increase, they continue still moist and never burn clear, nor are they without smoke, but the contrary is daily observed of peats cut in the decrease."<sup>5</sup>

The moon, being viewed as the cause of vegetable growth, is naturally worshipped by agricultural peoples.

Thus misled by a double fallacy primitive philosophy comes to view the moon as the great cause of vegetable growth, first, because the planet seems itself to grow, and second, because it is supposed to be the source of dew and moisture. It is no wonder, therefore, that agricultural peoples should adore the planet which they believe to influence so profoundly the crops on which they depend for subsistence. Accordingly we find that in the hotter

*Volksbräuche und deutscher Volksglaube*, p. 128.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* iii. 10. 3; Macrobius, *Saturn.* vii. 16. See further, W. H. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (Leipsic, 1890), p. 49 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch and Macrobius, *ll. cc.*; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 223, xx. 1;

Aristotle, *Problemata*, xxiv. 14, p. 937 B, 3 sq. ed. Bekker (Berlin).

<sup>3</sup> Macrobius and Plutarch, *ll. cc.*

<sup>4</sup> L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> M. Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 630.



regions of America, where maize is cultivated and manioc is the staple food, the moon was recognised as the principal object of worship, and plantations of manioc were assigned to it as a return for the service it rendered in the production of the crops. The worship of the moon in preference to the sun was general among the Caribs, and, perhaps, also among most of the other Indian tribes who cultivated maize in the tropical forests to the east of the Andes; and the same thing has been observed, under the same physical conditions, among the aborigines of the hottest region of Peru, the northern valleys of Yuncapata. Here the Indians of Pacasmayu and the neighbouring valleys revered the moon as their principal divinity. The "house of the moon" at Pacasmayu was the chief temple of the district; and the same sacrifices of maize-flour, of wine, and of children which were offered by the mountaineers of the Andes to the Sun-god, were offered by the lowlanders to the Moon-god in order that he might cause their crops to thrive.<sup>1</sup> In ancient Babylonia, where the population was essentially agricultural, the moon-god took precedence of the sun-god and was indeed reckoned his father.<sup>2</sup>

Hence it would be no matter for surprise if, after

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 495. In his remarks on the origin of moon-worship this learned and philosophical historian has indicated (*op. cit.* i. 493 sqq.) the true causes which lead primitive man to trace the growth of plants to the influence of the moon. Compare E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 130. Mr. Payne suggests that the custom of naming the months after the principal natural products that ripen in them may have contributed to the same result. The custom is certainly very common among savages, as I hope to show elsewhere, but whether it has contributed to foster the fallacy in question seems doubtful.

The Indians of Brazil are said to pay more attention to the moon than to the sun, regarding it as a source both of good and ill (Spix und Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 379). The natives of Mori, a district of central

Celebes, believe that the rice-spirit Omonga lives in the moon and eats up the rice in the granary if he is not treated with due respect. See A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische Aanteekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoe en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlv. (1900) p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Budge, *Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, on recently-discovered inscriptions of this King*, p. 5 sq.; A. H. Sayce, *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, p. 155; M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 68 sq., 75 sq.; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology* (London, 1899), p. 17 sq. The Ahts of Vancouver's Island, a tribe of fishers and hunters, view the moon as the husband of the sun and as a more powerful deity than her (G. M. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, p. 206).



Thus  
Osiris, the  
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moon.

worshipping the crops which furnished them with the means of subsistence, the ancient Egyptians should in later times have identified the spirit of the corn with the moon, which a pseudo-philosophy had taught them to regard as the ultimate cause of the growth of vegetation. In this way we can understand why in their most recent forms the myth and ritual of Osiris, the old god of trees and corn, should bear many traces of efforts made to bring them into a superficial conformity with the new doctrine of his lunar affinity.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DOCTRINE OF LUNAR SYMPATHY

IN the preceding chapter some evidence was adduced of the sympathetic influence which the waxing or waning moon is popularly supposed to exert on growth, especially on the growth of vegetation. But the doctrine of lunar sympathy does not stop there ; it is applied also to the affairs of man, and various customs and rules have been deduced from it which aim at the amelioration and even the indefinite extension of human life. To illustrate this application of the popular theory at length would be out of place here, but a few cases may be mentioned by way of specimen.

The natural fact on which all the customs in question seem to rest is the apparent monthly increase and decrease of the moon. From this observation men have inferred that all things simultaneously wax or wane in sympathy with it.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Mentras of the Malay Peninsula have a tradition that in the beginning men did not die but grew thin with the waning of the moon, and waxed fat as she neared the full.<sup>2</sup> Of the Scottish Highlanders we are told that "the moon in her increase, full growth, and in her wane are, with them, the emblems of a rising, flourishing, and declining fortune. At the last period of her revolution they carefully avoid to engage in any business of importance ; but the first and middle they seize with avidity, presaging the most auspicious issue to their undertakings."<sup>3</sup> Similarly

<sup>1</sup> This principle is clearly recognised and well illustrated by J. Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 594-596).

<sup>2</sup> D. F. A. Hervey, "The Mentra Traditions," *Journal of the Straits*

*Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 10 (Singapore, 1883), p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. J. Grant (parish minister of Kirkmichael), in Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xii. 457.



in some parts of Germany it is commonly believed that whatever is undertaken when the moon is on the increase succeeds well, and that the full moon brings everything to perfection ; whereas business undertaken in the wane of the moon is doomed to failure.<sup>1</sup> This German belief has come down, as we might have anticipated, from barbaric times ; for Tacitus tells us that the Germans considered the new or the full moon the most auspicious time for business ;<sup>2</sup> and Caesar informs us that the Germans despaired of victory if they joined battle before the new moon.<sup>3</sup> The Spartans seem to have been of the same opinion, for it was a rule with them never to march out to war except when the moon was full. The rule prevented them from sending troops in time to fight the Persians at Marathon,<sup>4</sup> and but for Athenian valour this paltry superstition might have turned the scale of battle and decided the destiny of Greece, if not of Europe, for centuries. The Athenians themselves paid dear for a similar scruple : an eclipse of the moon cost them the loss of a gallant fleet and army before Syracuse, and practically sealed the fate of Athens, for she never recovered from the blow.<sup>5</sup> So heavy is the sacrifice which superstition demands of its votaries. In this respect the Greeks were on a level with the negroes of the Sudan, among whom, if a march has been decided upon during the last quarter of the moon, the departure is always deferred until the first day of the new moon. No chief would dare to undertake an expedition and lead out his warriors before the appearance of the crescent. Merchants and private persons observe the same rule on their journeys.<sup>6</sup> In like manner the Mandingoes of Senegambia pay great attention to the changes of the moon, and think it very unlucky to begin a journey or any other work of consequence in the last quarter<sup>7</sup>

It is especially the appearance of the new moon, with its promise of growth and increase, which is greeted with

<sup>1</sup> Kuhn und Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 457, § 419.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, i. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, vi. 106 ; Lucian, *De astrologia*, 25 ; Pausanias, i. 28. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Thucydides, vii. 50.

<sup>6</sup> Le capitaine Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée* (Paris, 1892), ii. 116.

<sup>7</sup> Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*<sup>5</sup> (London, 1807), pp. 406 sq.



ceremonies intended to renew and invigorate, by means of sympathetic magic, the life of man. Observers, ignorant of savage superstition, have commonly misinterpreted such customs as worship or adoration paid to the moon. In point of fact the ceremonies of new moon are probably in many cases rather magical than religious. The Indians of the Ucayali River in Peru hail the appearance of the new moon with great joy. They make long speeches to her, accompanied with vehement gesticulations, imploring her protection and begging that she will be so good as to invigorate their bodies.<sup>1</sup> On the day when the new moon first appeared, it was a custom with the Indians of San Juan Capistrano, in California, to call together all the young men for the purpose of its celebration. "*Correr la luna!*" shouted one of the old men, "Come, my boys, the moon! the moon!" Immediately the young men began to run about in a disorderly fashion as if they were distracted, while the old men danced in a circle, saying, "As the moon dieth, and cometh to life again, so we also having to die will again live."<sup>2</sup> An old traveller tells us that at the appearance of every new moon the negroes of the Congo clapped their hands and cried out, sometimes falling on their knees, "So may I renew my life as thou art renewed." But if the sky happened to be clouded, they did nothing, alleging that the planet had lost its virtue.<sup>3</sup> A somewhat similar custom prevails among the Ovambo of south-western Africa. On the first moonlight night of the new moon, young and old, their bodies smeared with white earth, probably in imitation of the planet's silvery light, dance to the moon and address to it wishes which they feel sure will be granted.<sup>4</sup> We may conjecture that among these wishes is a prayer for a renewal of life. When a Masai sees the new moon he throws a twig or stone at it with his left hand, and says, "Give me long life," or "Give me strength"; and when a pregnant woman sees the new moon she milks some milk into a

The ceremonies observed at new moon are often magical rather than religious, being intended to renew sympathetically the life of man.

<sup>1</sup> W. Smythe and F. Lowe, *Narrative of a Journey from Lima to Para* (London, 1836), p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Father G. Boscana, "Chinigichinich," in *Life in California, by an American* [A. Robinson] (New York,

1846), pp. 298 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Merolla, "Voyage to Congo," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 273.

<sup>4</sup> H. Schinz, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, p. 319.



small gourd, which she covers with green grass. Then she pours the milk away in the direction of the moon and says, "Moon, give me my child safely."<sup>1</sup> Among the Wagogo of German East Africa, at sight of the new moon some people break a stick in pieces, spit on the pieces, and throw them towards the moon, saying, "Let all illness go to the west, where the sun sets."<sup>2</sup> The Esthonians think that all the misfortunes which might befall a man in the course of a month may be forestalled and shifted to the moon, if a man will only say to the new moon, "Good morrow, new moon. I must grow young, you must grow old. My eyes must grow bright, yours must grow dark. I must grow light as a bird, you must grow heavy as iron."<sup>3</sup>

Attempts  
to eat or  
drink the  
moonlight.

In India people attempt to absorb the vital influence of the moon by drinking water in which the luminary is reflected. Thus the Mohammedans of Oude fill a silver basin with water and hold it so that the orb of the full moon is mirrored in it. The person to be benefited must look steadfastly at the moon in the basin, then shut his eyes and drink the water at one gulp. Doctors recommend the draught as a remedy for nervous disorders and palpitation of the heart. Somewhat similar customs prevail among the Hindoos of northern India. At the full moon of the month of Kuar (September-October) people lay out food on the house-tops, and when it has absorbed the rays of the moon they distribute it among their relations, who are supposed to lengthen their life by eating of the food which has thus been saturated with moonshine. Patients are often made to look at the moon reflected in melted butter, oil, or milk as a cure for leprosy and the like diseases.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 330.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, ii. 279. Compare Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehsten abergläubische Gebräuche, Weisen und Gewohnheiten*, pp. 142 sq.; J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 595, note 1. The power of regeneration ascribed to

the moon in these customs is sometimes attributed to the sun. Thus it is said that the Chiriguano Indians of south-eastern Bolivia often address the sun as follows: "Thou art born and disappearest every day, only to revive always young. Cause that it may be so with me." See A. Thouar, *Explorations dans l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1891), p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896) i. 14 sq.



Naturally enough the genial influence of moonshine is often supposed to be especially beneficial to children; for will not the waxing moon help them to wax in strength and stature? The Guarayos Indians, who inhabit the gloomy tropical forests of eastern Bolivia, lift up their children in the air at new moon in order that they may grow.<sup>1</sup> Among the Apinagos Indians, on the Tocantins River in Brazil, the French traveller Castelnau witnessed a remarkable dance by moonlight. The Indians danced in two long ranks which faced each other, the women on one side, the men on the other. Between the two ranks of dancers blazed a great fire. The men were painted in brilliant colours, and for the most part wore white or red skull-caps made of maize-flour and resin. Their dancing was very monotonous and consisted of a jerky movement of the body, while the dancer advanced first one leg and then the other. This dance they accompanied with a melancholy song, striking the ground with their weapons. Opposite them the women, naked and unpainted, stood in a single rank, their bodies bent slightly forward, their knees pressed together, their arms swinging in measured time, now forward, now backward, so as to join hands. A remarkable figure in the dance was a personage painted scarlet all over, who held in his hand a rattle composed of a gourd full of pebbles. From time to time he leaped across the great fire which burned between the men and the women. Then he would run rapidly in front of the women, stopping now and then before one or other and performing a series of strange gambols, while he shook his rattle violently. Sometimes he would sink with one knee to the ground, and then suddenly throw himself backward. Altogether the agility and endurance which he displayed were remarkable. This dance lasted for hours. When a woman was tired out she withdrew, and her place was taken by another; but the same men danced the monotonous dance all night. Towards midnight the moon attained the zenith and flooded the scene with her bright rays. A change now took place in the dance. A long line of men and women advanced to the fire between the ranks of the

The supposed influence of moonlight on children.

Infants presented to the moon by the Apinagos Indians of Brazil.

<sup>1</sup> A. d'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique Méridionale*, iii. 1<sup>re</sup> Partie (Paris and Strasburg, 1844), p. 24.



dancers. Each of them held one end of a hammock in which lay a new-born infant, whose squalls could be heard. These babes were now to be presented by their parents to the moon. On reaching the end of the line each couple swung the hammock, accompanying the movement by a chant, which all the Indians sang in chorus. The song seemed to consist of three words, repeated over and over again. Soon a shrill voice was heard, and a hideous old hag, like a skeleton, appeared with her arms raised above her head. She went round and round the assembly several times, then disappeared in silence. While she was present, the scarlet dancer with the rattle bounded about more furiously than ever, stopping only for a moment while he passed in front of the line of women. His body was contracted and bent towards them, and described an undulatory movement like that of a worm writhing. He shook his rattle violently, as if he would fain kindle in the women the fire which burned in himself. Then rising abruptly he would resume his career. During this time the loud voice of an orator was heard from the village repeating a curious name without cessation. Then the speaker approached slowly, carrying on his back some gorgeous bunches of brilliant feathers and under his arm a stone axe. Behind him walked a young woman bearing an infant in a loose girdle at her waist; the child was wrapped in a mat, which protected it against the chill night air. The couple paced slowly for a minute or two, and then vanished without speaking a word. At the same moment the curious name which the orator had shouted was taken up by the whole assembly and repeated by them again and again. This scene in its turn lasted a long time, but ceased suddenly with the setting of the moon. The French traveller who witnessed it fell asleep, and when he awoke all was calm once more: there was nothing to recall the infernal dances of the night.<sup>1</sup>

In explanation of these dances Castelnau merely observes that the Apinagos, like many other South American Indians, pay a superstitious respect to the moon. We may suppose

<sup>1</sup> F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1850-1851), ii. 31-34.



that the ceremonious presentation of the infants to the moon was intended to ensure their life and growth. The names solemnly chanted by the whole assembly were probably those which the parents publicly bestowed on their children. As to the scarlet dancer who leaped across the fire, we may conjecture that he personated the moon, and that his strange antics in front of the women were designed to impart to them the fertilising virtue of the luminary, and perhaps to facilitate their delivery.

The presentation of infants to the moon is probably intended to make them grow.

Among the Baganda of Central Africa there is general rejoicing when the new moon appears, and no work is done for seven days. When the crescent is first visible at evening, mothers take out their babies and hold them at arms' length, saying, "I want my child to keep in health till the moon wanes." At the same time a ceremony is performed which may be intended to ensure the king's life and health throughout the ensuing month. It is a custom with the Baganda to preserve the king's placenta with great care during his life. A special minister has charge of the precious object, and every new moon, at evening, he carries it in state, wrapped in bark cloths, to the king, who takes it into his hands, examines it, and returns it to the minister. The keeper of the placenta then goes back with it to the house and sets it in the doorway, where it remains all night. Next morning it is taken from its wrappings and again placed in the doorway until the evening, when it is once more swathed in bark cloths and restored to its usual place.<sup>1</sup> Apparently the placenta is conceived as a vital portion, a sort of external soul, of the king; and the attentions bestowed on it at the new moon may be supposed to refresh and invigorate it, thereby refreshing and invigorating the king's life.

Baganda ceremonies at new moon.

The Armenians appear to think that the moon exercises a baleful influence on little children. To avert that influence a mother will show the moon to her child and say, "Thine uncle, thine uncle." For the same purpose the father and mother will mount to the roof of the house at new moon on a Wednesday or Friday. The father then

Baleful influence supposed to be exercised by the moon on children.

<sup>1</sup> J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902), pp. 63, 76.



puts the child on a shovel and gives it to the mother, saying, "If it is thine, take it to thee. But if it is mine, rear it and give it to me back." The mother then takes the child and the shovel, and returns them to the father in like manner.<sup>1</sup> A similar opinion as to the noxious influence of moonshine on children was apparently held by the ancient Greeks; for Greek nurses took great care never to show their infants to the moon.<sup>2</sup> Some Brazilian Indians in like manner guard babies against the moon, believing that it would make them ill. Immediately after delivery mothers will hide themselves and their infants in the thickest parts of the forest in order that the moonlight may not fall on them.<sup>3</sup> It would be easy to understand why the waning moon should be deemed injurious to children; they might be supposed to peak and pine with its dwindling light. Thus in Angus it is thought that if a child be weaned during the waning of the moon, it will decay all the time that the moon continues to wane.<sup>4</sup> But it is less easy to see why the same deleterious influence on children should be ascribed to moonlight in general.

Use of the moon to increase money or decrease sickness.

There are many other ways in which people have sought to turn lunar sympathy to practical account. Clearly the increase of the moon is the time to increase your goods, and the decrease of the moon is the time to diminish your ills. Acting on this imaginary law of nature many persons in Europe show their money to the new moon or turn it in their pockets at that season, in the belief that the money will grow with the growth of the planet; sometimes, by way of additional precaution, they spit on the coin at the same time.<sup>5</sup> Conversely the waning of the moon is the most natural time to get rid of bodily ailments. In Brittany they think that warts vary with the phases of the moon, growing as it waxes and vanishing away as it wanes.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Abeghian, *Der armenische Volksglaube* (Leipsic, 1899), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Conviviales*, iv. 10. 3. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Spix und Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 381, iii. 1186.

<sup>4</sup> J. Jamieson, *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, new edition (Paisley, 1880), iii. 300 (s.v. "Mone").

<sup>5</sup> F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 260; W. Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, p. 114; Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 257; W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne*, ii. 355.



Accordingly, they say in Germany that if you would rid yourself of warts you should treat them when the moon is on the decrease.<sup>1</sup> And a German cure for toothache, earache, headache, and so forth, is to look towards the waning moon and say, "As the moon decreases, so may my pains decrease also."<sup>2</sup> However, some Germans reverse the rule. They say, for example, that if you are afflicted with a wen, you should face the waxing moon, lay your finger on the wen, and say thrice, "What I see waxes; what I touch, let it vanish away." After each of these two sentences you should cross yourself thrice. Then go home without speaking to any one, and repeat three paternosters behind the kitchen door.<sup>3</sup> The Huzuls of the Carpathians recommend a somewhat similar cure for waterbrash. They say that at new moon the patient should run thrice round the house and then say to the moon, "Moon, moon, where wast thou?" "Behind the mountain." "What hast thou eaten there?" "Horse flesh." "Why hast thou brought me nothing?" "Because I forgot." "May the waterbrash forget to burn me!"<sup>4</sup> Thus a curative virtue appears to be attributed by some people to the waning and by others to the waxing moon. There is perhaps just as much, or as little, to be said for the one attribution as for the other.

<sup>1</sup> A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 387, § 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Die gestriegelte Rockenphilosophie* (Chemnitz, 1759), p. 447.

<sup>3</sup> F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen*

*Mythologie*, ii. 302. Compare J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 596.

<sup>4</sup> R. F. Kaindl, "Zauberglaube bei den Huzulen," *Globus*, lxxvi. (1899), p. 256.



## CHAPTER X

### THE KING AS OSIRIS

Osiris  
personated  
by the  
king of  
Egypt.

IN the foregoing discussion we found reason to believe that the Semitic Adonis and the Phrygian Attis were at one time personated in the flesh by kings, princes, or priests who played the part of the god for a time and then either died a violent death in the divine character or had to redeem their life in one way or another, whether by performing a make-believe sacrifice at some expense of pain and danger to themselves, or by delegating the duty to a substitute.<sup>1</sup> Further, we conjectured that in Egypt the part of Osiris may have been played by the king himself.<sup>2</sup> It remains to adduce some positive evidence of this personation.

The Sed  
festival  
celebrated  
in Egypt  
at intervals  
of thirty  
years.

A great festival called the Sed was celebrated by the Egyptians with much solemnity at intervals of thirty years. Various portions of the ritual are represented on the ancient monuments of Hieraconpolis and Abydos and in the oldest decorated temple of Egypt known to us, that of Usirniri at Busiris, which dates from the fifth dynasty. It appears that the ceremonies were as old as the Egyptian civilisation, and that they continued to be observed till the end of the Roman period.<sup>3</sup> The reason for holding them at intervals of thirty

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 12 sq., 29 sqq., 34, 38, 85 sq., 182 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 269 sq.

<sup>3</sup> A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, pp. 235-238. The festival is discussed at length by Mr. Moret (*op. cit.* pp. 235-273). See further R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 161-165; Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at*

*Abydos*, pp. 32-34; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (London, 1906), pp. 176-185. In interpreting the festival I follow Professor Flinders Petrie. That the festival occurred, theoretically at least, at intervals of thirty years, appears to be unquestionable; for in the Greek text of the Rosetta Stone Ptolemy V. is called "lord of periods of thirty years," and though the cor-



years is uncertain, but we can hardly doubt that the period was determined by astronomical considerations. According to one view, it was based on the observation of Saturn's period of revolution round the sun, which is, roughly speaking, thirty years, or, more exactly, twenty-nine years and one hundred and seventy-four days.<sup>1</sup> According to another view, the thirty years' period had reference to Sirius, the star of Isis. We have seen that on account of the vague character of the old Egyptian year the heliacal rising of Sirius shifted its place gradually through every month of the calendar.<sup>2</sup> In one hundred and twenty years the star thus passed through one whole month of thirty days. To speak more precisely, it rose on the first of the month during the first four years of the period: it rose on the second of the month in the second four years, on the third of the month in the third four years; and so on successively, till in the last four years of the hundred and twenty years it rose on the last day of the month. As the Egyptians watched the annual summer rising of the star with attention and associated it with the most popular of their goddesses, it would be natural that its passage from one month to another, at intervals of one hundred and twenty years, should be the occasion of a great festival, and that the long period of one hundred and twenty years should be divided into four minor periods of thirty years respectively, each celebrated by a minor festival.<sup>3</sup> If this theory of the Sed festivals is correct, we should expect to find that every fourth celebration was distinguished from the rest by a higher degree of solemnity, since it marked the completion of a twelfth part of the star's journey through the twelve months. Now it appears that in point of fact every fourth Sed festival was marked off from its fellows by the adjective *tep* or "chief," and that these "chief" celebrations fell as a

responding part of the hieroglyphic text is lost, the demotic version of the words is "master of the years of the Sed festival." See R. Lepsius, *op. cit.* pp. 161 sq.; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 90, line 2 (vol. i. p. 142); A. Moret, *op. cit.* 260. Mr. Moret attempts to give to the Greek word

(τριάκονταετηρίς) a vague sense which it cannot bear.

<sup>1</sup> This was Letronne's theory (R. Lepsius, *op. cit.* p. 163).

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 228 sq.

<sup>3</sup> This was in substance the theory of Biot (R. Lepsius, *l.c.*), and it is the view of Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie (*Researches in Sinai*, pp. 176 sqq.).



rule in the years when Sirius rose on the first of the month.<sup>1</sup> These facts confirm the view that the Sed festival was closely connected with the star Sirius, and through it with Isis.

Intention  
of the Sed  
festival to  
renew the  
king's life.

However, we are here concerned rather with the meaning and the rites of the festival than with the reasons for holding it once every thirty years. The intention of the festival seems to have been to procure for the king a new lease of life, a renovation of his divine energies, a rejuvenescence. In the inscriptions of Abydos we read, after an account of the rites, the following address to the king: "Thou dost recommence thy renewal, thou art granted to flourish again like the infant god Moon, thou dost grow young again, and that from season to season, like Nun at the beginning of time, thou art born again in renewing the Sed festivals. All life comes to thy nostril, and thou art king of the whole earth for ever."<sup>2</sup> In short, on these occasions it appears to have been supposed that the king was in a manner born again.

The king  
identified  
with the  
dead Osiris  
at the Sed  
festival.

But how was the new birth effected? Apparently the essence of the rites consisted in identifying the king with Osiris; for just as Osiris had died and risen again from the dead, so the king might be thought to die and to live again with the god whom he personated. The ceremony would thus be for the king a death as well as a rebirth. Accordingly in pictures of the Sed festival on the monuments we see the king posing as the dead Osiris. He sits in a shrine like a god, holding in his hands the crook and flail of Osiris: he is wrapped in tight bandages like the mummified Osiris; indeed, there is nothing but his name to prove that he is not Osiris himself. This enthronement of the king in the attitude of the dead god seems to have been the principal event of the festival.<sup>3</sup> Further, the queen and the king's daughters figured prominently in the ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> A discharge of arrows formed part of the rites;<sup>5</sup> and in some

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, pp. 255 sq.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> A. Moret, *op. cit.* p. 240; Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, pp. 33 sq., with the slip inserted at p. 33; W. Flinders Petrie, *op. cit.* p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> A. Moret, *op. cit.* p. 242.



sculptures at Carnac the queen is portrayed shooting arrows towards the four quarters of the world, while the king does the same with rings.<sup>1</sup> The oldest illustration of the festival is on the mace of Narmer, which is believed to date from 5500 B.C. Here we see the king seated as Osiris in a shrine at the top of nine steps. Beside the shrine stand fan-bearers, and in front of it is a figure in a palanquin, which, according to an inscription in another representation of the scene, appears to be the royal child. An enclosure of curtains hung on poles surrounds the dancing ground, where three men are performing a sacred dance. A procession of standards is depicted beside the enclosure; it is headed by the standard of the jackal-god Up-uat, the "opener of ways" for the dead.<sup>2</sup> Similarly on a seal of King Zer, which is referred to 5300 B.C., the king appears as Osiris with the standard of the jackal-god before him. In front of him, too, is the ostrich feather on which "the dead king was supposed to ascend into heaven. Here, then, the king, identified with Osiris, king of the dead, has before him the jackal-god, who leads the dead, and the ostrich feather, which symbolizes his reception into the sky."<sup>3</sup>

According to Professor Flinders Petrie, "the conclusion may be drawn thus. In the savage age of prehistoric times, the Egyptians, like many other African and Indian peoples, killed their priest-king at stated intervals, in order that the ruler should, with unimpaired life and health, be enabled to maintain the kingdom in its highest condition. The royal daughters were present in order that they might be married to his successor. The jackal-god went before him, to open the way to the unseen world; and the ostrich feather received and bore away the king's soul in the breeze that blew it out of sight. This was the celebration of the 'end,' the *sed* feast. The king thus became the dead king, patron of all those who had died in his reign, who were his subjects here and hereafter. He was thus one with Osiris, the king of the dead. This fierce custom became changed, as in other lands, by appointing a deputy king to die in his

Suggested  
explanation  
of the Sed  
festival.

<sup>1</sup> Miss M. A. Murray, *op. cit.*, slip inserted at p. 33. *in Sinai*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches*

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *l.c.*



stead ; which idea survived in the Coptic Abu Nerūs, with his tall crown of Upper Egypt, false beard, and sceptre. After the death of the deputy, the real king renewed his life and reign. Henceforward this became the greatest of the royal festivals, the apotheosis of the king during his life, after which he became Osiris upon earth and the patron of the dead in the underworld." <sup>1</sup>

Osiris  
personated  
by the  
king of  
Egypt.

Whether this interpretation of the Sed festival be accepted in all its details or not, one thing seems quite certain : on these solemn occasions the god Osiris was personated by the king of Egypt himself. That is the point with which we are here chiefly concerned.

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 185. As to the Coptic mock-king see C. B. Klunzinger, *Bilder aus Oberägypten, der Wüste und dem Rothen Meere*, pp. 180 sq. ; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 30.



## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

WE have now concluded our inquiry into the nature and worship of the three Oriental deities Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. The essential similarity of their character justifies us in treating of them together. All three apparently embodied the powers of fertility in general and of vegetation in particular. All three were believed to have died and risen again from the dead ; and the divine death and resurrection of all three were dramatically represented at annual festivals, which their worshippers celebrated with alternate transports of sorrow and joy, of weeping and exultation. The natural phenomena thus mythically conceived and mythically represented were the great changes of the seasons, especially the most striking and impressive of all, the decay and revival of vegetation ; and the intention of the sacred dramas was to refresh and strengthen, by sympathetic magic, the failing energies of nature, in order that the trees should bear fruit, that the corn should ripen, that men and animals should reproduce their kinds.

But the three gods did not stand by themselves. The mythical personification of nature, of which all three were products, required that each of them should be coupled with a goddess, and in each case it appears that originally the goddess was a more powerful and important personage than the god. At all events it is always the god rather than the goddess who comes to a sad end, and whose death is annually mourned. Thus, whereas Osiris was slain by Typhon, his divine spouse Isis survived and brought him to life again. This feature of the myth seems to indicate that

Essential  
similarity  
of Adonis,  
Attis, and  
Osiris.

The superiority of the goddesses associated with Adonis, Attis, and Osiris points to a system of mother-right.



in the beginning Isis was, what Astarte and Cybele always continued to be, the stronger divinity of the pair. Now the superiority thus assigned to the goddess over the god is most naturally explained as the result of a social system in which maternity counted for more than paternity, descent being traced and property handed down through women rather than through men. That such a system once prevailed in the lands where Adonis and Attis were worshipped is a matter of inference. In historical times father-right had certainly displaced mother-right among the Semitic worshippers of Adonis, and probably the same change had taken place among the Phrygian worshippers of Attis. Yet the older custom lingered in Lycia down to the historical period;<sup>1</sup> and we may conjecture that in former times it was widely spread through Asia Minor. The secluded situation and rugged mountains of Lycia favoured the survival of a native language and of native institutions long after these had disappeared from the wide plains and fertile valleys which lay on the highroads of war and commerce. Lycia was to Asia Minor what the highlands of Wales and of Scotland have been to Britain, the last entrenchments where the old race stood at bay.

Mother-right in Egypt.

In Egypt the archaic system of mother-right, with its preference for women over men in matters of property and inheritance, lasted down to Roman times, and it was traditionally based on the example of Isis, who had avenged her husband's murder and had continued to reign after his decease, conferring benefits on mankind. "For these reasons," says Diodorus Siculus, "it was appointed that the queen should enjoy greater power and honour than the king, and that among private people the wife should rule over her husband, in the marriage contract the husband agreeing to

<sup>1</sup> The Lycians traced their descent through women, not through men; and among them it was the daughters, not the sons, who inherited the family property. See Herodotus, i. 174; Nicolaus Damascenus, in Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, xlv. 41 (*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 461); Plutarch, *De mulierum virtutibus*, 9. Dr. L. Messer-

schmidt seems to think that the Lycians were Hittites (*The Hittites*, p. 20). The question of the influence of a system of mother-right on ancient religion has been discussed by Mr. L. R. Farnell (*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vii. (1904) pp. 70-94). I agree with him in thinking that some of the facts which he examines may have no connection with mother-right.



obey his wife in all things."<sup>1</sup> A corollary of the superior position thus conceded to women in Egypt was that the obligation of maintaining parents in their old age rested on the daughters, not on the sons, of the family.<sup>2</sup>

The same legal superiority of women over men accounts, as Miss Rachel Evelyn White was the first to point out, for the most remarkable feature in the social system of the ancient Egyptians, to wit, the marriage of full brothers with full sisters. That marriage, which to us seems strange and unnatural, was by no means a whim of the reigning Ptolemies; on the contrary, these Macedonian conquerors appear, with characteristic prudence, to have borrowed the custom from their Egyptian predecessors for the express purpose of conciliating native prejudice. In the eyes of the Egyptians "marriage between brother and sister was the best of marriages, and it acquired an ineffable degree of sanctity when the brother and sister who contracted it were themselves born of a brother and sister, who had in their turn also sprung from a union of the same sort."<sup>3</sup> Nor did the principle apply only to gods and kings. The common people acted on it in their daily life. They regarded marriages between brothers and sisters as the most natural and reasonable of all.<sup>4</sup> The evidence of legal documents, including marriage contracts, tends to prove that such unions were the rule, not the exception, in ancient Egypt, and that they continued to form the majority of marriages long after the Romans had obtained a firm footing in the country. As we cannot suppose that Roman influence was used to promote a custom which must have been abhorrent to Roman instincts, we may safely assume that the proportion of brother and sister marriages in Egypt had been still greater in the days when the country was free.<sup>5</sup>

Egyptian  
marriages  
of brothers  
and sisters.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 27. 1 sq. On the position of women in ancient Egypt see especially the able article of Miss Rachel Evelyn White, "Women in Ptolemaic Egypt," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) pp. 238-256.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, quoted by Miss R. E. White, *op. cit.* p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> J. Nietzold, *Die Ehe in Ägypten*

*zur Ptolemäisch-römischen Zeit* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 221 sq.; U. Wilcken, "Arsinoitische Steuerprofessionen aus dem Jahre 189 n. Chr.," *Sitzungsberichte der könig. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1883, p. 903; J. Nietzold, *Die Ehe in Ägypten zur Ptolemäisch-römischen Zeit*, pp. 12-14.



Such marriages were based on a wish to keep the property in the family.

It would doubtless be a mistake to treat these marriages as a relic of savagery, as a survival of a tribal communism which knew no bar to the intercourse of the sexes. For such a theory would not explain why union with a sister was not only allowed, but preferred to all others. The true motive of that preference was most probably the wish of brothers to obtain for their own use the family property, which belonged of right to their sisters, and which otherwise they would have seen in the enjoyment of strangers, the husbands of their sisters. This is the system which in Ceylon is known as *beena* marriage. Under it the daughter, not the son, is the heir. She stays at home, and her husband comes and lives with her in the house; but her brother goes away and dwells in his wife's home, inheriting nothing from his parents.<sup>1</sup> Such a system could not fail in time to prove irksome. Men would be loth to quit the old home, resign the ancestral property to a stranger, and go out to seek their fortune empty-handed in the world. The remedy was obvious. A man had nothing to do but to marry his sister himself instead of handing her over to another. Having done so he stayed at home and enjoyed the family estate in virtue of his marriage with the heiress. This simple and perfectly effective expedient for keeping the property in the family most probably explains the custom of brother and sister marriage in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. F. McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History* (London, 1886), pp. 101 *sqq.* Among the Kocchs of north-eastern India "the property of the husband is made over to the wife; when she dies it goes to her daughters, and when he marries he lives with his wife's mother" (R. G. Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, i. 96).

<sup>2</sup> This is in substance the explanation which Miss Rachel Evelyn White gives of the Egyptian custom. See her paper, "Women in Ptolemaic Egypt," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) p. 265. Similarly Mr. J. Nietzold observes that "economical considerations, especially in the case of great landowners, may often have been the occasion of marriages with

sisters, the intention being in this way to avoid a division of the property" (*Die Ehe in Ägypten*, p. 13). The same explanation of the custom has been given by Prof. W. Ridgeway. See his "Supplices of Aeschylus" in *Praelections delivered before the Senate of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1906), pp. 154 *sq.* McLennan had previously explained the marriage of brothers and sisters in royal families as an expedient for shifting the succession from the female to the male line; but he did not extend the theory so as to explain similar marriages among common people in Egypt, perhaps because he was not aware of the facts. See J. F. McLennan, *The Patriarchal Theory*, edited and completed by D. McLennan (London, 1885), p. 95.



Thus the union of Osiris with his sister Isis was not a freak of the storyteller's fancy: it reflected a social custom which was itself based on practical considerations of the most solid kind. When we reflect that this practice of mother-right as opposed to father-right survived down to the latest times of antiquity, not in an obscure and barbarous tribe, but in a nation whose immemorial civilisation was its glory and the wonder of the world, we may without being extravagant suppose that a similar practice formerly prevailed in Syria and Phrygia, and that it accounts for the superiority of the goddess over the god in the divine partnerships of Adonis and Astarte, of Attis and Cybele. But the ancient system both of society and of religion had undergone far more change in these countries than in Egypt, where to the last the main outlines of the old structure could be traced in the national institutions to which the Egyptians clung with a passionate, a fanatical devotion. Mother-right, the divinity of kings and queens, a sense of the original kinship of the gods with nature—these things outlived the Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman conquest, and only perished under the more powerful solvent of Christianity.

The singular tenacity with which the Egyptian people maintained their traditional beliefs and customs for thousands of years sprang no doubt from the stubborn conservatism of the national character. Yet that conservatism was itself in great measure an effect of geographical and climatic conditions and of the ways of life which they favoured. Surrounded on every side by deserts or almost harbourless seas, the Egyptians occupied a position of great natural strength which for long ages together protected them from invasion and allowed their native habits to set and harden, undisturbed by the subversive influence of foreign conquest. The wonderful regularity of nature in Egypt also conduced to a corresponding stability in the minds of the people. Year in, year out, the immutable succession of the seasons brought with it the same unvarying round of agricultural toil. What the fathers had done, the sons did in the same manner at the same season, and so it went on from generation to generation. This monotonous routine is

Thus the marriage of Osiris with his sister Isis reflected a real social custom.

Egyptian conservatism partly an effect of natural conditions and habits of life.



common indeed to all purely agricultural communities, and everywhere tends to beget in the husbandman a settled phlegmatic habit of mind very different from the mobility, the alertness, the pliability of character which the hazards and uncertainties of commerce and the sea foster in the merchant and the sailor. The saturnine temperament of the farmer is as naturally averse to change as the more mercurial spirit of the trader and the seaman is predisposed to it. But the stereotyping of ideas and of customs was carried further in Egypt than in most lands devoted to husbandry by reason of the greater uniformity of the Egyptian seasons and the more complete isolation of the country.

The original type of Osiris better preserved than those of Adonis and Attis.

The general result of these causes was to create a type of national character which presented many points of resemblance to that of the Chinese. In both we see the same inflexible strength of will, the same astonishing industry, the same strange blend of humanity and savagery, the same obstinate adherence to tradition, the same pride of race and of ancient civilisation, the same contempt for foreigners as for upstarts and barbarians, the same patient outward submission to an alien rule combined with an unshakeable inward devotion to native ideals. It was this conservative temper of the people, bred in great measure of the physical nature of their land, which, so to say, embalmed the corn-god Osiris long after the corresponding figures of Adonis and Attis had suffered decay. For while Egypt enjoyed profound repose, the tides of war and conquest, of traffic and commerce, had for centuries rolled over western Asia, the native home of Adonis and Attis; and if the shock of nationalities in this great meeting-ground of East and West was favourable to the rise of new faiths and new moralities, it was in the same measure unfavourable to the preservation of the old.



## NOTE

### A CHARM TO PROTECT A TOWN

THE tradition that a Lydian king tried to make the citadel of Sardes impregnable by carrying round it a lion<sup>1</sup> may perhaps be illustrated by a South African custom. When the Bechuanas are about to found a new town, they observe an elaborate ritual. They choose a bull from the herd, sew up its eyelids with sinew, and then allow the blinded animal to wander at will for four days. On the fifth day they track it down and sacrifice it at sunset on the spot where it happens to be standing. The carcase is then roasted whole and divided among the people. Ritual requires that every particle of the flesh should be consumed on the spot. When the sacrificial meal is over, the medicine-men take the hide and mark it with appropriate medicines, the composition of which is a professional secret. Then with one long spiral cut they convert the whole hide into a single thong. Having done so they cut up the thong into lengths of about two feet and despatch messengers in all directions to peg down one of those strips in each of the paths leading to the new town. "After this," it is said, "if a foreigner approaches the new town to destroy it with his charms, he will find that the town has prepared itself for his coming."<sup>2</sup> Thus it would seem that the pastoral Bechuanas attempt to place a new town under the protection of one of their sacred cattle<sup>3</sup> by distributing pieces of its hide at all points where an enemy could approach it, just as the Lydian king thought to place the citadel of his capital under the protection of the lion-god by carrying the animal round the boundaries.

Further, the Bechuana custom may throw light on a widespread legend which relates how a cunning settler in a new country bought from the natives as much land as could be covered with a hide, and how he then proceeded to cut the hide into thongs and to claim as much land as could be enclosed by the thongs. The most

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Totemism of the Becwana," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 303 sq.

<sup>3</sup> For more evidence of the sanctity of cattle among the Bechuanas see the Rev. W. C. Willoughby, *op. cit.* pp. 301 sqq.



familiar example of such stories is the tradition that Dido procured the site of Carthage in this fashion, and that the place hence received the name of Byrsa or "hide."<sup>1</sup> Similar tales occur in the legendary history of Saxons and Danes,<sup>2</sup> and they meet us in India, Siberia, Burma, Cambodia, Java, and Bali.<sup>3</sup> The wide diffusion of such stories confirms the conjecture of Jacob Grimm that in them we have a reminiscence of a mode of land measurement which was once actually in use, and of which the designation is still retained in the English *hide*.<sup>4</sup> The Bechuana custom suggests that the mode of measuring by a hide may have originated in a practice of encompassing a piece of land with thongs cut from the hide of a sacrificial victim in order to place the ground under the guardianship of the sacred animal.

But why do the Bechuanas sew up the eyelids of the bull which is to be used for this purpose? The answer appears to be given by the ceremonies which the same people observe when they are going out to war. On that occasion a woman rushes up to the army with her eyes shut and shakes a winnowing-fan, while she cries out, "The army is not seen! The army is not seen!" And a medicine-man at the same time sprinkles medicine over the spears, crying out in like manner, "The army is not seen! The army is not seen!" After that they seize a bull, sew up its eyelids with a hair of its tail, and drive it for some distance along the road which the army is to take. When it has preceded the army a little way, the bull is sacrificed, roasted whole, and eaten by the warriors. All the flesh must be consumed on the spot. Such parts as cannot be eaten are burnt with fire. Only the contents of the stomach are carefully preserved as a charm which is to lead the warriors to victory. Chosen men carry the precious guts in front of the army, and it is deemed most important that no one should precede them. When they stop, the army stops, and it will not resume the march till it sees that the men with the bull's guts have gone forward.<sup>5</sup> The meaning of these

<sup>1</sup> Virgil, *Aen.* i. 367 sq., with the commentary of Servius; Justin, xviii. 5. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica*, ix. pp. 462 sq. ed. P. E. Müller (where the hide employed is that of a horse); J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*, pp. 90 sq. Compare R. Köhler, "Sage von Landerwerbung durch zerschnittene Häute," *Orient und Occident*, iii. 185-187.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han*, ii. (London, 1832) p. 235; W. Radloff, *Proben der Volksliteratur der Türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, iv.

179; A. Bastian, *Die Völker des Oestlichen Asien*, i. 25, iv. 367 sq.; T. Stamford Raffles, *History of Java* (London, 1817), ii. 153 sq.; Van Eck, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, Feb. 1880, p. 117. The substance of all these stories, except the first, was given by me in a note on "Hide-measured Lands," *Classical Review*, ii. (1888) p. 322.

<sup>4</sup> J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*, pp. 538 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. W. C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Totemism of the Becwana," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) p. 304.

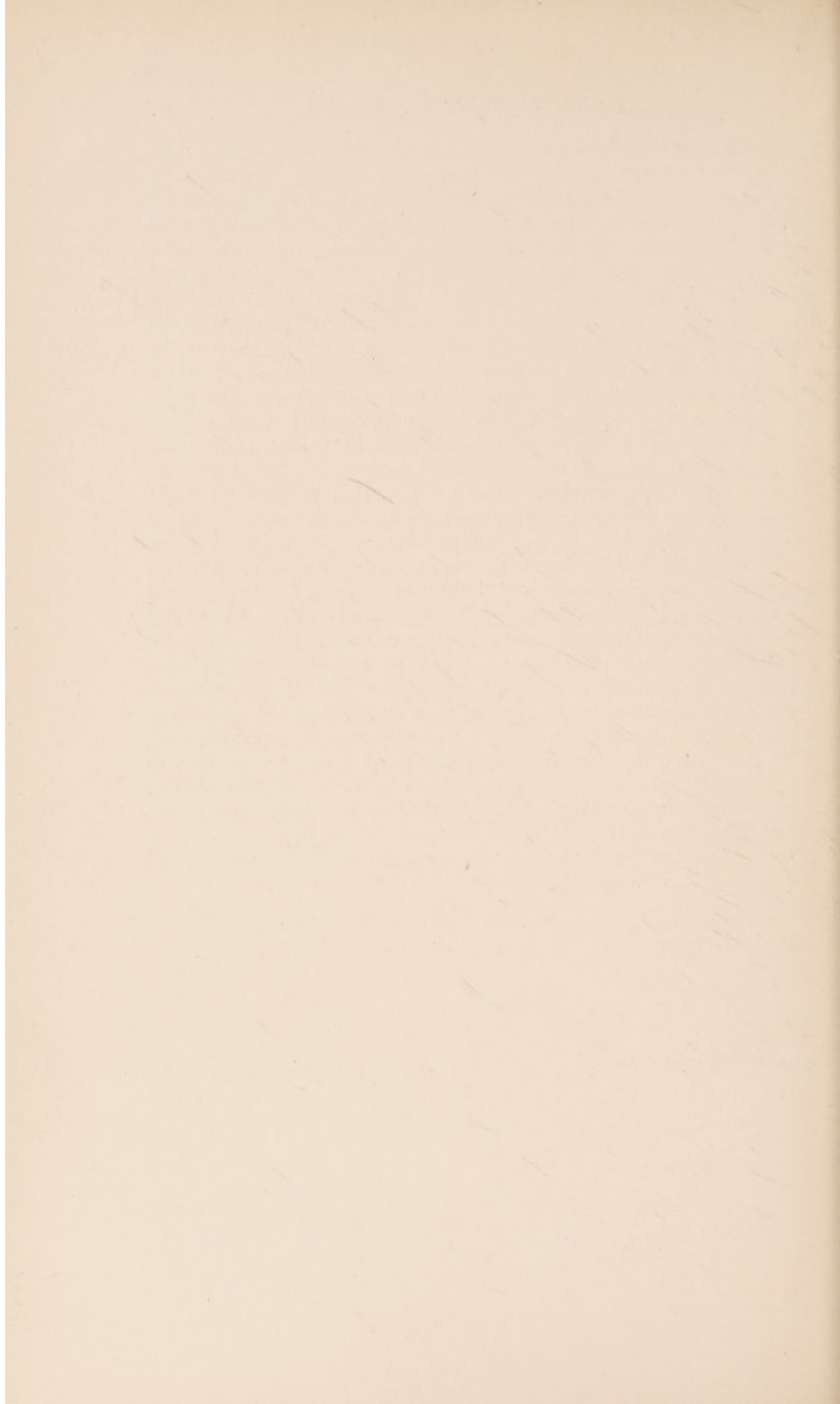


ceremonies is explained by the cries of the woman and the priest, "The army is not seen! The army is not seen!" Clearly it is desirable that the army should not be perceived by the enemies until it is upon them. Accordingly on the principles of homœopathic magic the Bechuanas apparently imagine that they can make themselves invisible by eating of the flesh of a blind bull, blindness and invisibility being to their simple minds the same thing. For the same reason the bowels of the blind ox are carried in front of the army to hide its advance from hostile eyes. In like manner the custom of sacrificing and eating a blind ox on the place where a new town is to be built may be intended to render the town invisible to enemies. At all events the Bawenda, a South African people who belong to the same Bantu stock as the Bechuanas, take great pains to conceal their kraals from passers-by. The kraals are built in the forest or bush, and the long winding footpaths which lead to them are often kept open only by the support of a single pole here and there. Indeed the paths are so low and narrow that it is very difficult to bring a horse into such a village. In time of war the poles are removed and the thorny creepers fall down, forming a natural screen or bulwark which the enemy can neither penetrate nor destroy by fire. The kraals are also surrounded by walls of undressed stones with a filling of soil; and to hide them still better from the view of the enemy the tops of the walls are sown with Indian corn or planted with tobacco. Hence travellers passing through the country seldom come across a Bawenda kraal. To see where the Bawenda dwell you must climb to the tops of mountains and look down on the roofs of their round huts peeping out of the surrounding green like clusters of mushrooms in the woods.<sup>1</sup> The object which the Bawenda attain by these perfectly rational means, the Bechuanas seek to compass by the sacrifice and consumption of a blind bull.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. E. Gottschling, "The Bawenda, a Sketch of their History and

Customs," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 368 sq.







# INDEX

- Abruzzi, All Souls' Eve in the, 253  
 Abydos, 215, 259, 314, 316  
 Acharaca, 115  
 Adad, Syrian king, 11  
 Adom-Melek, 10, 12  
 Adoni-bezek, 12  
 Adonis, myth of, 6 *sqq.*; meaning of name, 6; relation to Aphrodite, 8, 15, 16; as royal title, 12; identified with Osiris, 18, 293; title of Phoenician princes in Cyprus, 30; doves sacrificed to, 64; festivals of, 126 *sqq.*; deity of vegetation, 128 *sqq.*, 137 *sqq.*; a corn-spirit, 131 *sqq.*; gardens of, 137 *sqq.*; worshipped at Alexandria, 126; at Amathus, 18, 41; at Antioch, 128, 157 *sq.*; at Athens, 128; at Bethlehem, 157, 159; at Byblus, 9 *sqq.*; at Paphos, 9, 18 *sqq.*; at Rome, 198  
 — the river, 10, 15; discoloration of, 16, 127  
 Adoni-zedek, 12  
 Aedepsus in Euboea, hot springs at, 121 *sq.*  
 Aeschylus, on Typhon, 75  
 Aesculapius, his dispute with Hercules, 119  
 Agapenor, 26 *n.*  
 Ajax, name of kings of Olba, 62, 78  
 Alcman, the poet, on dew, 302  
 Alexander the Great, 27, 81  
 Alexandria, festival of Adonis at, 126; festival of St. Peter at, 201 *n.*  
 Alexandrian calendar, the, 229 *n.* 3, 240  
 All Saints' Feast on 1st November perhaps of Celtic origin, 255 *sq.*  
 All Souls, feasts of, 242 *sqq.*; in Europe, 248 *sqq.*; feast on 2nd November apparently of Celtic origin, 254 *sq.*  
 Allifae, baths of, 122 *n.* 5  
 Almo, procession to brook, 171  
 Almond in Phrygian cosmogony, 164  
 Amathus, 18, 41  
 Amenophis IV., king of Egypt, his attempted religious revolution, 290 *sq.*  
 Amsanctus, valley of, 114 *sq.*  
 Amyclae, 205, 206, 207; tomb of Hyacinth at, 205  
 Anaitis, 23  
 Anchiale in Cilicia, 87  
 Anemone, the flower of Adonis, 16, 127  
 Animals and plants treated respectfully by savages, 234 *sqq.*  
 Anointing of sacred stones, 21  
 Antioch, festival of Adonis at, 128, 157 *sq.*  
 Anubis, the jackal-headed Egyptian god, 216, 217  
 Apameia, worship of Poseidon at, 107  
 Aphaca, sanctuary of Aphrodite at, 14, 158  
 Aphrodite, sanctuary of, at Paphos, 18 *sqq.*; the summer called, 232  
 — and Adonis, 8, 15, 16  
 Apinagos Indians of Brazil, their dances to the moon, 309 *sq.*  
 Apis, Egyptian bull, 296  
 Apollo, his victory over Marsyas, 185  
 — and Hyacinth, 204, 206 *sq.*  
 — Cataonian, 65 *n.* 1  
 — Sarpedonian, 83 *n.* 3  
 Apotheosis of Roman emperors, 49  
 Arab custom at harvest, 239  
 Archigallus, 167, 176  
 Argaeus, Mount, 102 *sq.*  
 Aristotle on relation of springs to earthquakes, 121 *n.* 3  
 Armenia, religious prostitution in, 23  
 Armenians, their festival of the dead, 248; their customs at new moon, 311 *sq.*  
 Arrian, on Bithynian worship of Attis, 179  
 Artemis Perasia, of Castabala, 38, 83 *sqq.*  
 — of Perga, 20  
 — Sarpedonian, 83  
 — the Tauric, 38  
 Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, 61, 88, 89  
 Asia Minor, volcanic regions of, 102 *sq.*, 105 *sq.*; mother-right in, 320  
 Assumption of the Virgin, 200, 201



- Astarte at Byblus, 9 *sq.*; priests of, 13; sanctuary of, at Aphaca, 14, 158; prostitution in the worship of, 21 *sq.*
- Asteria, mother of Melcarth, 35
- Atargatis, Syrian goddess, 55, 79 *sq.*, 81
- 'Atheh, goddess of Tarsus, 79
- Athena of Magarsus, 86 *n.* 2
- Athenian superstition as to eclipse of the moon, 306
- Athens, festival of Adonis at, 128; festival of the dead at, 135; sacrifice of ox at, 191
- Athyr, death of Osiris on the 17th of, 213, 257; festival of Osiris in the month of, 256 *sqq.*
- Attis, myth and ritual of, 163 *sqq.*; birth, 163 *sq.*; death, 164; self-mutilation, 164; festival, 166 *sqq.*; mysteries of, 171 *sqq.*; a god of vegetation, 174 *sqq.*; a corn-god, 175 *sq.*; statue in the Lateran, 175; as father god, 178 *sq.*; as sky-god, 179 *sqq.*; human representatives of, 182 *sqq.*; title of Phrygian priests of Cybele, 182, 184
- Atys, son of Croesus, 183
- Augustine, on Midsummer festival, 149; on priests of Cybele, 192; on Christmas, 197; as to the conception and death of Christ, 198 *n.* 1; on Isis, 283
- Aulus Gellius, on the moon, 298
- Aurelia Aemilia, 23
- Axe, double-headed, as divine emblem, 50, 52, 94 *sq.*, 96, 97
- Baal, 10 *sqq.*; the god of fertility, 13 *sq.*, 77; as husband of the land, 14  
— of the Lebanon, 18  
— of Tarsus, 43, 47, 60, 79 *sq.*, 86
- Baalath, 10, 13, 14, 20, 26 *n.* 5
- Baalbec, 22
- Babylon, Tammuz at, 6 *sqq.*; religious prostitution at, 22
- Bacchanals kill Pentheus and Orpheus, 270, 271
- Bacchylides, on burning of Croesus, 90
- Baganda, their customs at new moon, 311
- Bagobos of Philippines, their custom at earthquakes, 110
- Baku, fire-worship at, 104
- Balinese, their custom as to earthquakes, 109
- Barleycorn, John, 131 *sq.*
- Bar-rekub, Syrian king, 11
- Bataks of Sumatra, their custom as to earthquakes, 109 *sq.*
- Batara-guru, the Batak Creator, 109
- Bathing at Midsummer, 146 *sqq.*  
— image as rain-charm, 176
- Baths of goddesses, 171, 176
- Bearded Cyprian goddess, 81
- Bechuanas, their custom at founding a town, 325; at going to war, 326
- Belgium, All Souls' Eve in, 249
- Bengal, "gardens of Adonis" in, 140 *sq.*
- Ben-hadad, 11
- Bent, J. Theodore, 68, 72, 69 *n.* 1, 73 *n.* 2, 84 *n.* 1
- Bes, Egyptian god, 42 *n.* 1
- Bethlehem, worship of Adonis at, 157
- Bghais of Burma, their festival of the dead, 246
- Bhujariya, barley feast in India, 143 *sq.*
- Binding and releasing of god, 233
- Birth, miraculous, 163 *sq.*; the new, 172, 193, 316
- Bithynians invoke Attis, 179
- Blood, baptism of bull's, 172 *sq.*; used to wash away sins, 193  
— Day of, 167, 169, 182
- Boar kills Adonis, 8; kills Attis, 164
- Bodroum, 83
- Boghaz-Keui, Hittite remains and sculptures at, 50 *sqq.*
- Bohemia, All Souls' Eve in, 250
- Bones, fossil, 70, 74 *sq.*
- Bonfires at Midsummer, 145, 150 *sqq.*
- Bride of the Nile, 231
- Brittany, All Souls' Eve in, 248
- Bromok, volcano in Java, 123
- Brother and sister marriages, 28, 207; in ancient Egypt, 321 *sq.*
- Brugsch, H., 222 *n.* 1, 224 *n.* 2, 230 *n.*, 278, 284
- Buddhism, its parallelism and contrast with Christianity, 202 *sq.*
- Budge, E. A. Wallis, 179 *n.* 1, 282, 292 *n.* 2
- Bull, worship of, 46 *sq.*, 54, 80; as divine emblem, 80
- Bull's blood, bath of, 172 *sq.*
- Burmese, their behaviour during an earthquake, 110 *sq.*
- Burning of Melcarth, 34 *sqq.*; of Hercules, 35, 39 *sq.*; of Sandan, 48 *sqq.*, 60, 86; of Sardanapalus, 87 *sq.*; of Croesus, 89 *sqq.*; of a god, 100 *sq.*
- Burnt Land, the, of Lydia, 105
- Busiris, 215, 259, 260, 276, 314
- Buto, Egyptian goddess of the North, 213
- Byblus, Adonis at, 9 *sqq.*; religious prostitution at, 22; festival of Adonis at, 126 *sq.*; Osiris at, 214, 293
- Cairo, cutting of the dams at, 230 *sq.*
- Calendar, Alexandrian, 223 *sq.*, 229 *n.* 3, 240  
— Egyptian, 220 *sqq.*  
— of the Egyptian farmer, 225 *sqq.*  
— of Esne, 240 *sq.*  
— Julian, 230  
— Mexican, 224 *n.* 3
- Cambodia, festival of the dead in, 246 *sq.*



- Camul, marriage custom in, 24 n. 1  
 Canathus, a spring, 176  
 Candaules, king of Lydia, 94  
 Canopic decree, 230 n. 1  
 Canopus, the decree of, 223  
 Capital punishment formerly a religious rite, 186 n. 6  
 Cappadocia, Hittites in, 47 sq., 50 sq., 97, 102; Persian fire-worship in, 103  
 Carchemish, 46, 56 n. 2  
 Carpi, de Plano, 188  
 Carthage, Dido at, 37, 326; worship of Hamilcar at, 39  
 Castabala in Cappadocia, 38; in Cilicia, 83 sqq.  
 Castelnau, F. de, 309 sq.  
 Castration, religious and mythical, 164, 165, 167 sqq., 179 sq.  
 Catullus, his poem on Attis, 169  
 Caves, fossil bones found in limestone, 70, 74  
 Celaenae in Phrygia, 185, 187  
 Celebes, custom as to earthquake in, 110  
 Celenderis, 25, 26 n.  
 Ceos, observation of the rising of Sirius in, 230 n. 2  
 Cereals cultivated by the Egyptians, 225  
 Chadwick, H. M., 254 n. 3, 271  
 Charon, sanctuaries of, 114, 115  
*Charonia*, 114  
 Chent-Ament, title of Osiris, 259  
 Cherokee Indians, their Old Woman of the corn, 237 sq.  
 Chewsurs of the Caucasus, their festival of the dead, 248  
 Children, influence of moon on, 309 sqq.  
 Chimaera, Mount, 124  
 China, funeral of emperor of, 188  
 Chios, sacrifice of men to Dionysus in, 270  
 Chiriguano Indians of Bolivia, 308 n. 3  
 Choiak, festival of Osiris in the month of, 258 sqq.  
 Christianity, its compromise with paganism, 201 sqq.; parallel with Buddhism, 202 sq.  
 Christmas, origin of, 196 sqq.  
 Cilicia, legendary relation of, to Cyprus, 25 sq.; kings of, 61; western or Rugged, 66  
 Cilician Gates, pass of the, 44  
 — goddesses, 79 sqq.  
 — pirates, 66 sq.  
 Cinyrads at Paphos, 25, 26, 27 n. 1  
 Cinyras, father of Adonis, 9; king of Byblus, 9, 14; daughters of, 25, 31; history of, 25 sq.; loved by Aphrodite, 29; his death, 32 sq.  
 Citium in Cyprus, 17  
 Claudius, the Emperor, 166  
 Cleon of Magnesia, 36 sq.  
 Comana in Pontus, 23, 165 n. 1  
 Confession of the dead, Egyptian, 216 sq.  
 Conical stones worshipped, 10, 20 sq., 82 sq.  
 Conservatism of the Egyptian character, 222  
 Constantine, Emperor, 14, 22  
 Cook, A. B., 72 n. 2, 178 n. 2, 270 n. 2  
 Cooke, G. A., 31 n. 3  
 Corn wetted as rain-charm, 138 sqq.  
 — and grapes as divine emblems, 43, 45, 47  
 — and vine, their cultivation introduced by Osiris, 212 sq.  
 — -spirit, human representatives of, 269 sq., 274 sq.  
 — -wreaths, 27, 138 sq., 283 n. 2; as first-fruits, 27  
 Corycian cave, 62, 70 sqq.  
 Corycus in Cilicia, 70  
 Cow, symbol of Isis, 241, 257  
 Creation of the world at the spring equinox, 200, 201  
 Crimea, Taurians of the, 189  
 Croesus, burning of, 89 sq.  
 Cronus, identified with Phoenician god El, 9, 82; castrates his father Uranus, 179; castrated by his son Zeus, 179 sq.; the winter called, 232  
 Cutting of the dams at Cairo, 226 sq., 231 sq.  
 Cybele at Augustodunum (Autun), 176; priests of, 182  
 — and Attis, 163  
 — and her lions, 55  
 Cybistra, 44, 46, 47  
 Cyprus early colonised by Phoenicians, 17  
*Dad* or *Ded* pillar, 276 sq.  
 Damascus, kings of, 10 sq.  
 Damasen, 98  
 Dams, cutting of the, in Egypt, 226 sq., 231 sq.  
 Davis, E. J., 42 n. 5, 45 n. 1  
 — R. F., 138 n. 4  
 Days, five supplementary, of the Egyptian calendar, 212  
 Dead, propitiation of the, 134 sq.; annual festivals of the, 135, 242 sqq.; sacrifices to the, 187 sqq.  
 — bodies, pollution caused by, 89 sq.  
 Death and resurrection of gods, 4 sq.  
 Demeter at Eleusis, 92, 262; month of, 232; identified with Isis, 293 n. 1  
 Dendera (Tentyra), the Osirian inscription of, 215, 258 sq.; bas-reliefs at, 261; temple of Osiris at, 258, 277  
 Derceto, 20 n. 3  
 Dew, washing in the, at Midsummer, 146, 147, 148; attributed to the moon, 302



- Diana, festival of, 200  
 — of Nemi, 14, 29  
 Dianus at Nemi, 14, 29  
 Dido, 31; worshipped at Carthage, 37;  
 her death on pyre, 37; her foundation  
 of Carthage, 326  
 Diodorus Siculus, on worship of Poseidon,  
 112 *sq.*; on Osiris and Isis, 287;  
 on superiority of women in Egypt,  
 320  
 Dionysus, 43, 47, 82 *sq.*, 106; human  
 victims rent in pieces in his worship,  
 270 *sq.*; his resemblance to Osiris,  
 280, 293  
 Diphilus, king of Cyprus, 63  
 Disease of language supposed origin of  
 myths, 234  
 Divinity of Semitic kings, 10 *sqq.*, 32;  
 of Lydian kings, 94 *sqq.*  
 Dogs beaten at earthquakes, 110  
 Doves, sacred to Aphrodite or Astarte,  
 19; sacrificed in worship of Adonis,  
 64  
 Dramas, religious or magical, for the  
 regulation of the seasons, 4 *sq.*  
 Drop, night of the miraculous, 228  
 Duchesne, Mgr L., 198 *n.* 1, 199 *n.* 3,  
 200  
 Dyaks of Borneo, their head-hunting,  
 189 *sq.*
- Eagle at apotheosis of Roman emperors,  
 49; double-headed, 54 *n.* 1  
 Earth conceived as mother, 13  
 Earthquake god, 106 *sqq.*  
 Earthquakes, devices employed to stop,  
 109 *sqq.*  
 East Indian customs as to earthquakes,  
 109 *sq.*, 111 *sq.*  
 Easter ceremonies perhaps assimilated to  
 those of Adonis and Attis, 154 *sqq.*,  
 198 *sqq.*; in the Greek and Catholic  
 churches, 154 *sqq.*  
 Edom, kings of, 11  
 Egyptian calendar, 220 *sqq.*  
 — farmer, calendar of the, 225 *sqq.*  
 — months, 230 *n.*  
 Egyptians, national character of, 323 *sq.*  
 El, Phoenician god, 9; identified with  
 Cronus, 9, 82  
 Elissa, 37  
 Emesa, 21  
 Empedocles, story of his death, 93  
 Epiphany, 197  
 Equinox, festival of the spring, 199 *sqq.*;  
 world created at, 200, 201  
 Eregli, the ancient Cybistra, 44, 46  
 Erman, A., 262 *n.* 2, 263, 289 *n.* 1  
 Esne, calendar of, 240 *sq.*  
 Esquimaux, their festivals of the dead,  
 242 *sq.*  
 Esthonians, All Souls' Day among the,  
 251; their customs at new moon,  
 308  
 Etna, Typhon buried under, 73, 74, 75;  
 sacrifices to, 123  
 Eunuch priests of Attis, 164, 165, 167;  
 of Ephesian Artemis, 168; of Astarte,  
 168  
 Euyuk in Cappadocia, 46 *sq.*, 53, 54,  
 80  
 Eye, symbol of Osiris, 288  
 Ezekiel, on king of Tyre, 38
- Farmer, calendar of the Egyptian,  
 225 *sqq.*  
 Farnell, L. R., 320 *n.* 1  
 Father God, 58, 59, 60, 78, 79, 80,  
 178, 179  
 — Sky, 179  
 Feast of All Saints, 255 *sq.*  
 Feasts of All Souls, 242 *sqq.*  
 Fellows, Ch., 99 *n.* 6  
 Fertility, principle of, as conceived by  
 early man, 4 *sq.*; caused by the Baal,  
 13 *sq.*, 77  
 — Asiatic goddess of, 55, 163  
 — Scandinavian god of, 272  
 Festivals of the Dead, 135, 242 *sqq.*  
 Fetishism older than theism, 234  
 Fig, artificial fertilisation of the, 270  
 Fijians, their sacrifices to earthquake  
 god, 111  
 Fire, Persian respect for, 89 *sq.*; purifica-  
 tion by, 92  
 — -walk, 38, 85, 86  
 — -worship, 103 *sq.*  
 Fires on 25th December, 197  
 Firmicus Maternus, on rites of Osiris,  
 276  
 First-born, sacrifice of the, 34  
 Flamen Dialis, 28 *sq.*  
 Flaminica Dialis, 28 *sq.*  
 Flaying as a punishment, 189 *n.* 2  
 Flower, the Golden, feast of, 99  
 Flowers, Festival of, at Athens, 135  
 Flutes, music of, 7, 145, 165, 167, 168,  
 171, 185  
 Fortune, temple of, at Olba, 69, 81  
 — of the city, 81  
 Fossil bones, 70, 74 *sq.*  
 Foucart, P., 280 *n.* 3  
 Frey, Scandinavian god of fertility, 272
- Gad, Semitic god of Fortune, 81  
 Gadez, worship of Melcarth at, 36 *sq.*  
 Galli, priests of Attis, 165, 180  
 Gardens of Adonis, 137 *sqq.*  
 Gardner, E. A., 133 *n.*  
 Gaul, date of Easter in church of,  
 199 *n.* 3  
 Gebal or Byblus, 10  
 Geminus, Greek astronomer, on the  
 Egyptian calendar, 222



- Geographical and climatic conditions, their influence on character, 323 *sq.*  
 German beliefs as to the moon, 306, 313  
 Giants and gods, battle of, 74 *sq.*  
 Glaucus, 98 *n.* 5  
 Goddesses superior to gods under a system of mother-right, 319 *sq.*  
 Gods, death and resurrection of, 4 *sq.*  
 Golden Flower, feast of, 99  
 Gordias, Phrygian kings called, 183  
 Gouri, Indian goddess, 142 *sq.*  
 Grapes as divine emblem, 82  
 — and corn as divine emblems, 43, 45, 47  
 Graves kept secret, 273 *n.* 1, 274  
 Great Mother, the, 192, 193  
 Grenfell, B. P., and Hunt, A. S., 262 *sq.*  
 Grimm, J., 305 *n.* 1, 326  
 Gyges, king of Lydia, 94  
  
 Hadad, Syrian god and king, 11, 80  
 Hair, sacrifice of, 22, 24, 127  
 Halfdan the Black, Norwegian king, his body divided, 271  
 Hamilcar, sacrifice of, 39  
 — Carthaginian king, 91, 92  
 Hanged god, 185 *sqq.*; Odin the God of the Hanged, 186  
 Hannibal at Gadez, 36; his departure from Italy, 165  
 Hanway, J., quoted, 104  
 Harran, Syrians of, 131  
 Harrison, Miss J. E., 205 *n.* 1  
 Harvest, rain-charms at, 138 *sq.*; rites of, 236 *sqq.*  
 — in Egypt, time of, 227  
 Havamal, the, 187  
 Hawes, Mrs., 133 *n.*  
 Hazeel, king of Damascus, 11  
 Head-Feast of Dyaks, 190  
 — hunting of Dyaks, 189 *sq.*  
 Hehn, V., 99 *n.* 6  
 Helice, destroyed by earthquake, 112  
 Heliogabalus, sun-god of Emesa, 20 *sq.*  
 Heliopolis in Egypt, 218, 290; in Syria (Baalbec), 22  
 Hepding, H., 163 *n.* 1, 169 *n.* 2, 176  
 Heraclids of Lydia, 94, 97  
 Hercules identified with Melcarth, 12, 35; burning of, 35, 39 *sq.*; awakening of, 35; the lion-slayer, 41; patron of hot springs, 118 *sqq.*  
 — the Lydian, 94, 96; identified with Cilician Sandan, 48 *sqq.*, 60, 61  
 Herodotus as to burning of Croesus, 89; on Osiris and Dionysus, 293  
 Hierapolis in Lydia or Phrygia, its sanctuary of Pluto, 116; its situation, 116 *sq.*; its hot springs and petrified cascades, 116 *sqq.*  
 Hierapolis-Bambyce in Syria, 55, 64, 79 *n.* 2, 80, 168  
 Hieropolis-Castabala, in Cilicia, 83 *sq.*  
 Hilaria, 170  
 Himera, hot springs of, 122 *n.* 4  
 Hindoos, "gardens of Adonis" among the, 142 *sqq.*  
 Hittite costume, 52  
 — sculptures at Ibreez, 43 *sqq.*; at Euyuk, 46 *sq.*, 53, 54; at Boghaz-Keui, 50 *sqq.*; at Marash, 88; at Carchemish, 46, 56 *n.* 2; in Lydia, 97  
 — thunder-god, 65  
 Hittites, 47 *sq.*; their worship of bulls, 47, 54; in Lydia, 97 *sq.*  
 Hogarth, D. G., 21, 45 *n.* 1, 48 *n.* 1, 68, 72 *n.* 1, 87 *n.* 1  
 Hommel, F., 48 *n.* 1, 65 *n.* 1, 98 *n.* 1  
 Horned cap, worn by god or priest, 44, 46, 65 *n.* 1, 80  
 Horns, sacred, 19, 44, 46  
 Horses, sacrificed to the dead, 188 *sq.*; Lycurgus, king of Edonians, killed by, 270  
 Horus the Elder, brother of Osiris, 212  
 — the Younger, son of Osiris and Isis, 213 *sq.*, 215, 258; his contest with Set, 218 *sq.*; the Eye of, 288  
 Hot springs, worship of, 116 *sqq.*; sacred to Hercules, 118 *sqq.*  
 Human sacrifices, 187 *sqq.*  
 — sacrifices at Salamis in Cyprus, 63; substitutes for, 63 *sq.*  
 — victims sacrificed for the crops, 269 *sq.*, 274 *sq.*  
 Huzuls, the, of the Carpathians, their superstitions as to the moon, 296, 313  
 Hyacinth, his myth and ritual, 204 *sqq.*; his tomb, 205; his festival, 205 *sq.*  
 — the flower, sprung from blood of Hyacinth, 204  
 Hyacinthia, festival of Hyacinth, 205  
  
 Ibn Batuta, 188  
 Ibreez, rock-hewn figures at, 43 *sqq.*  
 Ideler, L., 224 *n.* 1, 230 *n.*  
 Illumination of houses at festivals, 241 *sqq.*  
 Imhoof-Blumer, F., 82 *n.* 1, 85 *n.* 1  
 Incense, 7, 129, 259  
 Incest, legends of, 27 *sq.*  
 Indians, American, their customs in regard to the moon, 296, 301, 303, 307, 309 *sq.*, 312; their customs as to earthquakes, 111  
 — of California, their festivals of the dead, 243 *sq.*  
 Inspiration, Jamblichus on, 85 *sq.*  
 Irrigation in Egypt, rites of, 227 *sq.*  
 Ishtar, Babylonian mother goddess, 6, 22  
 Isis, 282-286; sister and wife of Osiris, 212, 323; her search for the body of Osiris, 213 *sq.*; star of, 228, 230,



- 315; invoked by Egyptian reapers, 237;  
represented by a cow, 241, 257; popularity of her worship, 281, 284 *sq.*; a corn-goddess, 283 *sq.*; identified with Demeter, 293 *n.* 1; superior to Osiris, 319 *sq.*; at Byblus, 92, 214  
Isvara, Indian god, 142, 143  
Ivy sacred to Osiris, 279
- Jablonski, 287, 288  
Jackal-god of Egypt, 317  
Jamblichus, on inspiration, 85 *sq.*; on purification by fire, 93  
Janus-like god, 82  
Japan, festival of the dead in, 247  
Jastrow, M., 7 *n.* 1, 131 *n.* 1  
Java, poisonous vapours in, 113 *sq.*  
Jāyī or Jawāra, barley feast in India, 143 *sq.*  
Jensen, P., 47 *n.* 3, 48 *n.* 2, 56 *n.* 2, 62 *n.* 3, 80 *n.* 4, 131 *n.* 1  
Jerome, on worship of Adonis at Bethlehem, 157, 159  
John Barleycorn, 131 *sq.*  
Josephus, on worship of Syrian kings, 11  
Jualamukhi, fire-worship at, 103 *sq.*  
Julian, Emperor, at Antioch, 128, 157 *sq.*; on food taboos, 177 *n.* 1; on the Mother of the Gods, 193 *n.* 4  
— calendar, 230
- Kanytelideis, 75  
Karabeli, 97  
Karak Indians, their lament at hewing wood, 238 *sq.*  
Kayans of Borneo, their head-hunting, 189  
Keb. *See* Seb.  
Kemosh, god of Moab, 10  
Kings, divinity of, 10 *sqq.*, 94 *sqq.*; divinity of Semitic, 10 *sqq.*; responsible for weather and crops, 95; torn in pieces to promote fertility of ground, 269 *sqq.*  
— of Damascus worshipped, 11  
— of Egypt personate Osiris, 314 *sqq.*  
Kirauea, volcano, 123  
Koniags of Alaska, their treatment of bodies of distinguished men, 274  
Kretschmer, P., 62 *n.* 4, 184 *n.* 2  
Kruyt, A. C., 190 *n.* 2  
Kuklia, 19, 21  
Kupolo, Kupole, 153
- Labrandeus, title of Carian Zeus, 94  
Labraunda, 44 *n.* 5  
Labrys, "axe," 94  
Lactantius, as to the Resurrection, 201; on the festival of Osiris, 257 *sq.*  
Lagrange, Father M. J., 132  
Lamas River, 67  
Lamentations for animals and plants which are eaten, 234 *sq.*
- Lane, A. W., 226 *n.* 1  
Lanterns, Japanese Feast of, 247  
Lanzone, R. V., 260 *n.* 1  
Leake, W. M., 99 *n.* 6  
Lebanon, Mount, 14, 16, 18, 135, 136, 158  
Leo the Great on Christmas, 197  
Lepsius, R., 288  
Lights lit for the use of the dead, 242 *sqq.*  
Lion as divine emblem, 41, 49 *sq.*, 52, 53, 55 *sqq.*, 79 *sq.*, 94, 96  
— -god, 41, 53, 56 *sq.*, 96  
— -goddess, 56 *sq.*, 80 *sq.*  
— -slaying god at Amathus, 41  
Lucian on dispute between Hercules and Aesculapius, 119  
Lunar sympathy, 305 *sqq.*  
Lycia, mother-right in, 320  
Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, his death, 270, 271  
Lydia, religious prostitution in, 22 *sq.*  
Lydian Hercules, 94, 96  
— kings, divinity of, 94 *sqq.*  
Lyll, Sir Ch., 122 *n.* 7, 124 *n.* 3  
Lysias of Tarsus, 61
- Ma, goddess at Comana, 23  
McLennan, J. F., 28 *n.* 2, 322 *n.* 2  
Macrobius, the father of solar mythologists, 288, 294; on the moon, 298  
Mafuie, Samoan god of earthquakes, 110  
Magarsus, in Cilicia, 86 *n.* 2  
Magical rites for the regulation of the seasons, 3 *sqq.*  
Mahadeva, Indian god, 142, 143  
Mallus in Cilicia, oriental deities at, 81 *sqq.*  
Maneros, 215; chant of Egyptian reapers, 237  
Manes, king of Lydia, 99 *n.* 1  
Manetho on sacrifice of red-haired men, 269; on Isis, 283  
Mannhardt, W., 21 *n.* 6  
Marash, 88  
Mariette-Pacha, A., 261 *n.* 1  
Marriage, Sacred, 30 *sq.*, 58 *sq.*  
Marriages of brothers and sisters, 28, 207; in ancient Egypt, 321 *sq.*  
Marsyas, satyr, slain and skinned, 185 *sq.*  
— the River, 186  
Masai, their customs at new moon, 307 *sq.*  
Masnes, or Damasens, 98  
Maspero, G., 292 *n.* 2, 321  
Maury, A., 157 *n.* 1  
Medea, 93  
Mefitis, Italian goddess, 114 *sq.*  
Megalopolis, scene of battle of gods and giants, 74  
Megassares, king of Hyria, 25  
Meiners, C., 193 *n.* 2  
Melcarth at Tyre, 12, 13 *n.* 2, 35 *sq.*; at Amathus, 18; burning of, 35 *sqq.*; in



- relation to quails, 35; at Gadéz, 36 *sq.*;  
his likeness on coins of Tyre, 37
- Melchizedek, 12
- Melek, Moloch, 10
- Meles, king of Lydia, 95
- Melicerter, 37
- Memphis, 215, 218, 222, 276, 285 *n.* 1
- Men Tyrannus, Phrygian moon-god, 181
- Mephitic vapours, worship of, 113 *sqq.*
- Mesha, king of Moab, 10, 34
- Messerschmidt, L., 48 *n.* 1, 98 *n.* 1, 320 *n.* 1
- Metharme, daughter of Pygmalion, 25
- Mexicans, their sacrifice of human victims for the crops, 275
- Mexico, human sacrifices in, 187
- Meyer, E., 47 *n.* 3, 48 *n.* 4, 98 *n.* 1
- Michael Angelo, the *Pietà* of, 157
- Midas, Phrygian kings called, 183; Tomb of, 183
- Midsummer bonfires, 145, 150 *sqq.*
- festival of Adonis, 128; festival in Sardinia, 144 *sq.*
- Mithra, worship of, 195 *sq.*; his birthday on 25th December, 196
- Mixtecs, their feasts of the dead, 244 *sq.*
- Moire, sister of Tylon, 98
- Moloch, 10
- Mommsen, Th., 266 *n.* 1
- Mongols, sacrifice of horses to dead, among the, 188
- Montanists, sect of the, 200 *n.* 2
- Moon, the, in relation to Osiris, 295 *sqq.*;  
savage theories of phases of the, 296;  
believed to be the cause of growth of plants, 297 *sqq.*; practical rules based on theories of the, 298 *sqq.*, 305 *sq.*;  
superstitions as to, 298 *sqq.*, 305 *sqq.*;  
worship of the, 302 *sq.*; supposed to be the source of dew, 302; customs observed at the new, 306 *sqq.*; drinking and eating the, 308; its influence on children, 309 *sqq.*
- god, 181
- Móooi, Tongan god of earthquakes, 110
- Moret, A., 314 *n.* 3, 315 *n.*
- Morning Star, the, 158 *sq.*
- Mother, the Great, 192, 193
- Earth, 13, 179
- Goddess of Asia, 6, 22, 23, 24, 58, 59, 79, 82, 178, 179
- of the Gods, Phrygian, introduced into Rome, 165
- Mother-right, 59; in Asia Minor, 320; in Egypt, 320 *sqq.*
- Movers, F. C., 42 *n.* 4, 48 *n.* 4
- Müller, W. Max, 48 *n.* 1, 65 *n.* 1, 88 *n.* 3
- Mundas of Bengal, 140 *sq.*
- Murray, Miss M. A., 260 *n.* 4
- Mylasa in Caria, 94 *n.* 5
- Mylitta, 22
- Myrrha, mother of Adonis, 27
- Mysteries of Attis, 171 *sqq.*
- Nahr Ibrahim, river, 10
- Names, implying relation to a god, 10 *sqq.*, 14, 32; compounded with Adoni-, 12
- Nana, mother of Attis, 163, 178
- National character influenced by geographical and climatic conditions, 323 *sq.*
- Negroes, their customs at the new moon, 307 *sq.*
- Neith or Net, Egyptian goddess, 179 *n.* 1
- Nemi, 14, 29
- Nephtys, Egyptian goddess, wife of Set, 212, 216
- New birth, 172, 193, 316
- moon, customs observed at the, 306 *sqq.*
- Year festivals, 244, 245, 247
- Nicaragua, Indians of, their sacrifices to a volcano, 123
- Nietzold, J., 322 *n.* 2
- Nile, rise and fall of, 225 *sq.*, 228; offerings to, 232
- the Bride of the, 231
- Noises made at earthquakes, 109 *sqq.*
- Nut, the Egyptian sky-goddess, mother of Osiris, 180 *n.* 2, 211 *sq.*
- Odilo, Abbot of Clugny, 254
- Odin, the God of the Hanged, 186 *sq.*;  
sacrificed to himself, 186 *sq.*
- Oil poured on sacred stones, 21
- Olba in Cilicia, 62, 65 *sq.*, 68 *sq.*, 78
- Old Man of the Corn, 239
- Woman of the Corn, 237 *sq.*
- Omphale, 94
- Oracles given by inspired men or women, 83
- Oraons of Bengal, 140
- Oriental religions in the West, 192 *sqq.*;  
their effect on ancient civilisation, 193 *sqq.*
- Orpheus, death of, 271
- Osiris identified with Adonis, 18; at Amathus, 18; at Byblus, 214, 293; myth of, 211 *sqq.*; his parentage, 211 *sq.*; his death, 213; his resurrection, 216, 261 *sqq.*; ruler and judge of the dead, 216 *sq.*; the dead identified with, 217 *sq.*; graves of, 241, 269, 278; nature of, 268 *sqq.*; a corn-god, 268 *sqq.*; a tree-spirit, 275 *sqq.*; a god of fertility, 279 *sq.*; a god of the dead, 280 *sq.*; the finding of, 257 *sq.*; images of, made of earth and corn, 259, 262 *sq.*; corn-stuffed effigies of, put in graves, 262 *sq.*; popularity of his worship, 281; interpreted as the sun, 287 *sqq.*; his resemblance to Adonis, 18, 293; his resemblance to



- Dionysus, 280, 293; in relation to the moon, 295 *sqq.*; personated by the king of Egypt, 314 *sqq.*; his festival at Sais, 241 *sq.*; festival of, in the month of Athyr, 256 *sqq.*; festival of, in the month of Choiak, 258 *sqq.*; Roman festival of, 266 *n.* 1  
— of the mysteries, 261
- Oura, old name of Olba, 65, 69
- Ovambo, their customs at new moon, 307
- Ox sacrificed instead of man, 63; sacrifice of, at Athens, 191
- Papas, title of Attis, 178, 179
- Paphlagonians, their notion of winter and spring, 233
- Paphos, worship of Aphrodite and Adonis at, 18 *sqq.*; its foundation and history, 25 *sqq.*
- Parilia, 200
- Parvati, Indian goddess, 142, 143
- Payne, E. J., 303 *n.* 1
- Pelops, 93
- Pentheus, king of Thebes, his death, 270
- Perasia, Cilician goddess, 83 *sqq.*
- Perasian Artemis of Castabala, 38
- Peregrinus, his death in fire, 93
- Perga, Artemis of, 20
- Perrot, G., 56 *n.* 2
- Persian respect for fire, 89 *sq.*; fire-worship, 103
- Pessinus, 164, 182 *n.* 1, 183
- Petrarch at Cologne, 148
- Petrie, W. M. Flinders, 131 *n.* 3, 314 *n.* 3, 315 *n.* 3, 317 *sq.*
- Pharnake, mother of Cinyras, 25
- Philadelphia, in Lydia, 106
- Philae, 232, 261, 278, 280
- Philocalus, calendar of, 196 *n.* 5, 197 *n.* 1, 266 *n.* 1
- Phoenicians in Cyprus, 17 *sq.*, 20; in Cilicia, 42
- Phrygia, country of Cybele and Attis, 163
- Phrygians, their notion of winter and summer, 232 *sq.*
- Pietà* of Michael Angelo, 157
- Pigs sacrificed to Osiris, 297
- Pindar, on Typhon, 74
- Pine-cone offered to Osiris, 278  
— -nuts, edible, 174 *sq.*  
— -tree in relation to Attis, 165, 166, 174 *sq.*, 185 *n.* 3; in worship of Dionysus, 270 *n.* 5; in rites of Osiris, 276
- Pirates, the Cilician, 66 *sq.*
- Pitrè, G., quoted, 155 *sq.*
- Placianian Mother, 171 *n.* 3
- Plants and animals treated respectfully by savages, 234 *sqq.*
- Plastene, Mother, 97
- Pleiades, setting of the, 232
- Pliny on lunar influence, 297 *sq.*; on time for felling trees, 301 *n.* 2
- Ploughing, 82 *sq.*, 191; rain-charms at, 139 *sq.*  
— and sowing, Egyptian festival of, 259 *sq.*
- Plutarch, on double-headed axe, 94; on melancholy character of rites of sowing, 232 *sq.*; his use of the Alexandrian calendar, 240; on the commemoration of the death and recovery of Osiris, 257; on Osiris and Dionysus, 293; on Osiris interpreted as the moon, 295
- Pluto, sanctuaries of, 114 *sqq.*
- Plutonia*, 114
- Polyboea, sister of Hyacinth, 205, 207
- Poseidon, the earthquake god, 107 *sq.*, 112 *sq.*
- Prisoners, sacrifice of, 187 *n.*
- Proserpine and Adonis, 8  
— the spring called, 232
- Prostitution, religious, 21 *sqq.*
- Pteria, Hittite capital, 51
- Ptolemy Auletes, 27  
— III. Euergetes, his attempt to reform the Egyptian calendar, 222 *sq.*, 230 *n.* 1
- Pumi-yathon, 31
- Punishment, capital, formerly a religious rite, 186 *n.* 6
- Purification by fire, 92; at marriage, 176
- Pygmalion, 25, 30 *sq.*
- Pymaton, 31 *n.* 2
- Pyramus River, 84, 88
- Pyre of Sandan at Tarsus, 49, 60; festival of the, at Hierapolis, 64
- Quail-hunt, 49 *n.* 1
- Quails in relation to Melcarth, 35
- Quartodecimans of Phrygia, 199 *n.* 3
- Queen of Egypt superior to king, 320  
— of Heaven, 129
- Ra, the Egyptian sun-god, 212, 214, 216, 288, 290
- Rain-charms at harvest, ploughing, and sowing, 138 *sqq.*
- Ramsay, W. M., 23 *n.* 4, 45 *n.* 1, 48 *n.* 1, 56 *n.* 2, 58 *n.* 3, 65 *notes* 1 and 2, 84 *n.* 2, 181 *n.* 4, 182 *sq.*
- Raoul-Rochette, 56 *n.* 2, 64 *n.* 2, 93 *n.* 1, 157 *n.* 1
- Readjustment of Egyptian festivals, 263 *sqq.*
- Reapers, lamentation of Egyptian, 237
- Red-haired men sacrificed by the Egyptians, 269, 274 *sq.*
- Rekub-el, Syrian god, 11
- Renan, E., 10 *n.* 1, 15 *n.* 1, 16 *n.* 1, 127 *n.* 2, 135, 136
- Renouf, P. le Page, 292



- Resurrection of Adonis, 126, 127 *n.* 1;  
of Attis, 170; of Hyacinth, 206; of  
Osiris, 261 *sqq.*; of Tylon, 98 *sq.*  
— of gods, 4 *sq.*
- Rhodians, the Venetians of antiquity,  
107
- Ridgeway, W., 322 *n.* 2
- Robinson, Edward, on vale of Adonis,  
15 *n.* 1
- Rohde, E., 193 *n.* 2, 206, 207 *n.*
- Roman empire, spread of Oriental reli-  
gions in, 192 *sqq.*  
— emperors, apotheosis of, 49  
— festival of Osiris, 266 *n.* 1  
— kingship a plebeian institution, 29
- Romulus, death of, 270
- Rose, the red, 127 *sq.*
- Rosetta stone, the, 223, 314 *n.* 3
- Russia, festivals of the dead in, 251 *sqq.*
- Sacramental meal in worship of Attis,  
172
- Sacred Marriage, 30 *sq.*, 58 *sq.*
- Sacrifice of kings or princes, 32, 34,  
37 *sqq.*; of quails to Hercules, 35;  
human, at Salamis in Cyprus, 63;  
substitutes for, 63 *sq.*; of hair, 127;  
of prisoners, 187 *n.*; of human vic-  
tims for the crops, 269 *sq.*, 274 *sq.*; of  
human victims to volcanoes, 123
- Sadyattes, 95
- St. George, festival of, 200, 201
- St. John, Midsummer festival of water  
associated with, 146 *sqq.*; sweethearts  
of, 144 *sq.*
- St. John's Day, the Midsummer festival,  
144 *sqq.*
- St. Luke, festival of, 245
- St. Peter, festival of, 201 *n.*
- Sais, festival of Osiris at, 241 *sq.*, 256
- Salamis in Cyprus, Teucrids of, 62 *sq.*
- Samal, kingdom of, 11
- Samoans, their custom at earthquakes,  
110
- Sandacus, father of Cinyras, 25
- Sandan, Sandon, or Sandes, Cilician and  
Cappadocian god, identified with Her-  
cules, 48 *sqq.*, 60, 61, 78, 86, 96 *sq.*;  
priests of, 61
- Sanda-sarme, king of Cilicia, 61
- Sandes, 48. *See* Sandan
- Sandon, Cappadocian and Cilician god,  
48; name of Cilician men, 61 *n.* 3;  
name of Lydian Hercules, 94, 96. *See*  
*also* Sandan
- Sandu'arri, king of Cilicia, 61
- Sandwich Islanders, their sacrifices to the  
volcano, 123
- Santorin, 107
- Saracus, king of Assyria, 89
- Sardanapalus, 87 *sq.*
- Sardes, 89, 96, 99
- Sardinia, "gardens of Adonis" in,  
144 *sq.*
- Sarpedonian Artemis and Apollo, 83
- Sayce, A. H., 48 *notes* 1 and 3
- Scorpions, Isis and the, 213 *sq.*
- Scottish Highlanders, their superstitions  
as to the moon, 298, 300, 302, 305
- Scythians, human sacrifices among the,  
187 *sq.*, 189
- Seasons, primitive theory of, 3 *sqq.*
- Seb (Keb, Geb), the Egyptian earth-god,  
father of Osiris, 180 *n.* 2, 211 *sq.*
- Sed, Egyptian festival, 314 *sqq.*
- Seleucus the Theologian, 63 *n.* 2  
— Nicator, 69
- Semiramis, 91
- Serapis, 285 *n.* 1
- Serpents, their knowledge of life-giving  
plants, 98
- Set or Typhon, Egyptian god, brother of  
Osiris, 212, 213, 215, 218, 219
- Shamashshumukin, king of Babylon,  
88 *sq.*, 91
- Sheitan dere, the Devil's Glen, 67
- Shenty, Egyptian cow-goddess, 260
- Siam, festival of the dead in, 247
- Sicily, fossil bones in, 75; customs  
observed on St. John's Day in, 145 *sq.*;  
"gardens of Adonis" in, 146, 153 *sq.*
- Sidon, kings of, 13
- Sinsharishkun, king of Assyria, 89
- Sirius, the star of Isis, 228, 230; heliacal  
rising of, 228 *sqq.*, 315
- Sisters, marriage of gods with their,  
207;  
marriage of brothers with, 28, 321 *sq.*
- Skins of sacrificial victims, 187 *sqq.*
- Sleep and waking of god, 35, 232 *sq.*
- Smith, W. Robertson, 7 *n.* 1, 13 *sq.*,  
86 *n.* 2
- Sokari, title of Osiris, 259
- Solomon, King, 32 *n.* 1
- Solstice, celebration of the winter, 196,  
241
- Sothis, Egyptian name of star Sirius,  
228; Sothic period, 229
- "Soul-cakes," 249
- "— lights," 249 *sq.*
- Souls, feasts of All, 242 *sqq.*
- Sowing, rain-charms at, 139 *sq.*; in  
Egypt, time of, 227; rites of, 232 *sqq.*
- Spartan superstition as to the moon, 306
- Spartans, their propitiation of the earth-  
quake god, 107 *sq.*; their uniform,  
108; their military music, 108
- Spermus, king of Lydia, 95
- Spring called Proserpine, 232
- Springs, worship of hot, 116 *sqq.*
- Star of Salvation, 157; the Morning Star,  
158 *sq.*
- Stlaltum Indians, 235
- Stone, sacred conical, 82, 83
- Stones, sacred, anointed, 21



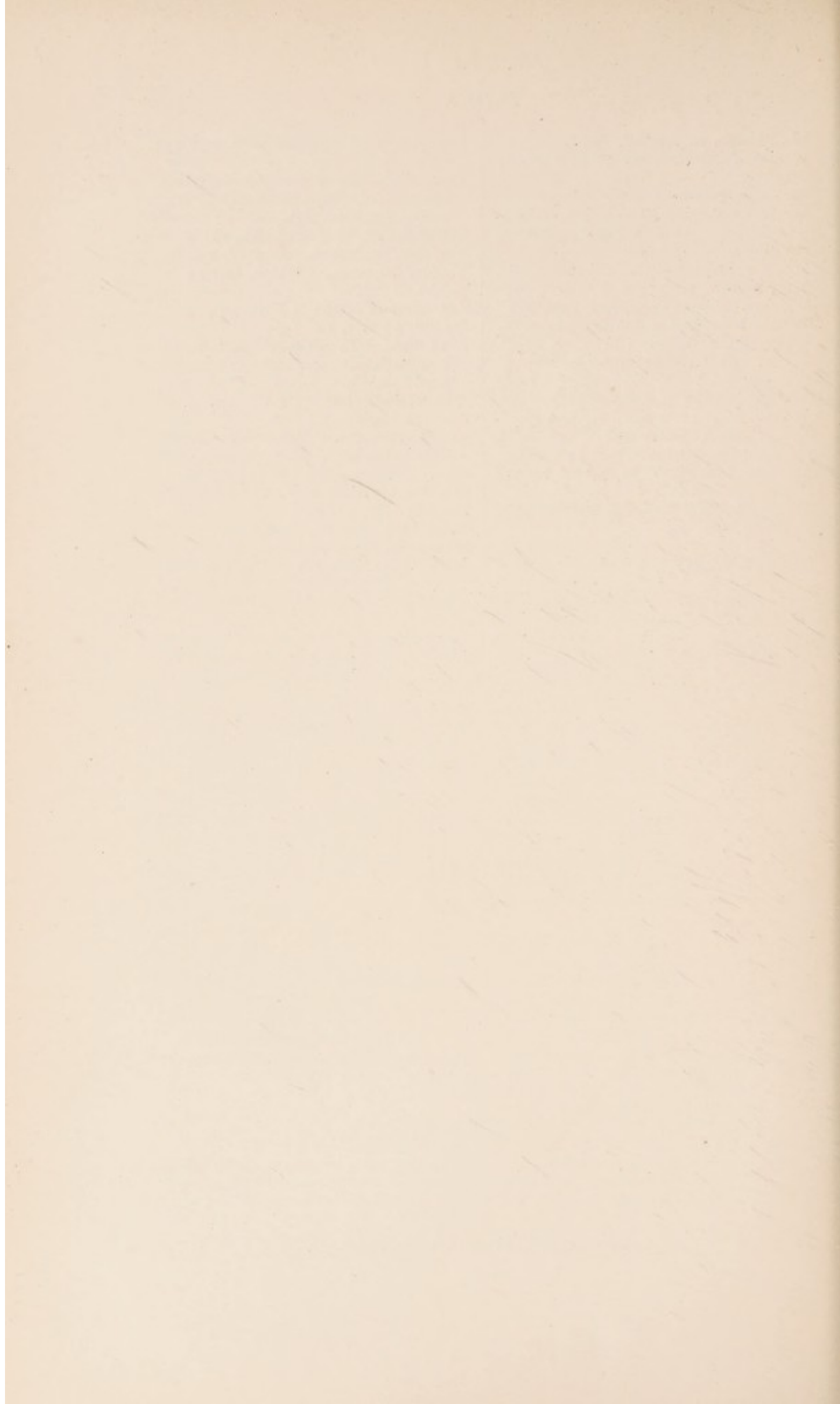
- Strabo, as to Castabala, 85 *n.* 1; on the Burnt Land, 105, 106; on Philadelpia, 106; on Rhodes, 107 *n.* 2; at Nysa, 115 *n.* 3
- Sturluson, Snorri, 271
- Substitution of animals for men in sacrifice, 63 *sq.*
- Suffetes at Carthage, 39 *n.* 1
- Sumba, festival of the dead in, 245 *sq.*
- Sumerians, the, 6
- Summer called Aphrodite, 232
- Sun, the Unconquered, title of Mithra, 196; Nativity of, at winter solstice, 196, 197; Osiris and the, 287 *sqq.*; worship of the sun instituted by Amenophis IV., 290 *sq.*; power of regeneration ascribed to the, 308 *n.* 3
- Superiority of goddesses to gods under a system of mother-right, 319 *sq.*
- Supplementary days of the Egyptian calendar, the five, 212
- Swallow, Isis as a, 214
- "Sweethearts of St. John," 144 *sq.*
- Swine, not eaten, 164 *sq.*, 165 *n.* 1
- Sycamore sacred to Osiris, 278
- Sympathy, doctrine of lunar, 305 *sqq.*
- Talismans, public, 273 *n.* 1
- Tamarisk sacred to Osiris, 278
- Tamirads at Paphos, 26
- Tamiras, 26
- Tammuz at Babylon, 6 *sqq.*; at Jerusalem, 8; month of, 7, 13; a corn-spirit, 131
- Tark or Tarku, Cilician name, 62; name of Hittite god, 65, 78, 81
- Tarkimos, 62
- Tarkondimotos, king of Cilicia, 62 *n.* 3
- Tarkuaris, father of Cilician Teucer, 62, 69, 76
- Tarkudimme, 62 *n.* 3
- Tarkumbios, 62
- Tarsus, Oriental character of, 42; Baal of, 43, 47, 60, 79 *sq.*, 86; founded by Sandan, 48; pyre of Sandan at, 49; native gods of, 60, 78, 86, 96; goddess 'Atheh at, 79; Sardanapalus at, 87; Sandan at, 96 *sq.*
- Tat or Tatu pillar, 276
- Taurians of the Crimea, 189
- Taurobolium, 172
- Tâ-uz, festival of, 131
- Tell-el-Amarna, 291
- Tentyra. *See* Dendera
- Teucer, name of kings of Olba, 62, 65, 69, 76, 78; son of Telamon, 63
- Teucrids of Salamis in Cyprus, 62
- Thebes, the Egyptian, priests of, 221 *sq.*; effigies of Osiris found at, 262 *sq.*
- Thermopylae, Spartans at, 108; hot springs of, 119 *sqq.*
- Thesmophoria, 27 *n.* 4, 175, 232
- Thetis and Peleus, 92
- Thirty years, Sed festival at intervals of, 314 *sqq.*
- Thoth, 212, 214, 216, 218; Egyptian month, 229
- Thunder and lightning, sacrifices to, 75
- god of Hittites, 65; the Asiatic, 95
- Thymbria, 115
- Tiele, C. P., 56 *n.* 2, 58 *n.* 1, 89 *n.* 2, 282, 292 *n.* 2
- Tod, J., 142 *sq.*
- Tongans, their behaviour during an earthquake, 110
- Tonquin, festival of the dead in, 246
- Torres Straits, death dance of natives of, 244 *n.* 1
- Tout, C. Hill, 235 *sq.*
- Tozer, H. F., 103
- Tralles in Lydia, 23
- Trees, rules as to felling, 301
- Trok or Troko, Cilician name, 62
- Trokoarbas, 62
- Trokombigremis, 62
- Tusser, Thomas, on sowing peas and beans, 300
- Tylon, 95; his resurrection, 98
- Tylor, E. B., 75, 109 *n.* 1, 178, 179, 193 *n.* 2
- Typhon, chasm of, in Cilicia, 73; his combat with Zeus, 74, 78; his battle with the gods, 105; enemy of Osiris, 295, 296
- or Set, Egyptian god, brother of Osiris, 212, 213, 215, 218, 219
- Tyre, kings of, 11, 13; Melcarth at, 34 *sqq.*, 39; fire-walk at, 38
- Tyrimnus, 95 *n.*
- Tyrol, All Souls' Eve in the, 249 *sq.*
- Upsala, burial of Frey at, 272
- Uranus castrated by Cronus, 179
- Uri-melek, king of Byblus, 10
- Valley of Poison, 113
- Vapours, worship of mephitic, 113 *sqq.*
- Vatican, the, a seat of the worship of the Phrygian goddess, 173
- Venus, the planet, star of Astarte, 158
- Verrall, A. W., 135 *n.* 1
- Victims, skins of sacrificial, 187 *sqq.*
- Violets sprung from blood of Attis, 166
- Virgin mothers, 163 *sq.*, 178 *sq.*
- , Assumption of the, 200, 201
- Virginity recovered by bathing, 176
- Volcanic religion, 100 *sqq.*; regions of Asia Minor, 102 *sq.*, 105 *sq.*
- Volcanoes, sacrifices to, 123
- Vosges Mountains, All Souls' Eve in the, 248 *sq.*
- Votiaks of Russia, their festival of the dead, 252 *sq.*



- Wachsmuth, C., quoted, 154 *sq.*  
 Wagogo, their customs at new moon, 308  
 Warts, superstitions as to, 312 *sq.*  
 Water worshipped as principle of fertility, 13 *sq.*, 77; festival at Midsummer, 146 *sqq.*  
 Wells, in religion of Osiris, 279  
 Westermarck, E., 151 *n.* 4  
 Whalers, bodies of whalers cut up, 274  
 White, Miss Rachel Evelyn, 320 *n.* 2, 321, 322 *n.* 2  
 Wiedemann, A., 241 *notes* 2 and 4, 261 *n.* 3  
 Wilhelm, A., 72 *n.* 1, 84 *n.* 3  
 Wilken, G. A., 109 *n.* 1, 190 *n.* 2  
 Winter called Cronus, 232  
 — solstice, celebration of, 196, 241  
 Women, position of, in ancient Egypt, 320 *sqq.*  
 World created at the spring equinox, 25th March, 200, 201  
 Wunsch, R., 135 *n.* 1, 146, 155 *n.* 1  
 Xenophanes on Egyptian gods, 233, 234  
 Year, the vague or movable Egyptian, 220 *sqq.*; the fixed Alexandrian, 224; sacred Egyptian, 229  
 Yehaw-melek, king of Byblus, 10  
 Ynglings, descended from Frey, 272  
 Yuruks, herdsmen of Cilicia, 68 *n.* 1  
 Zas, name of priests of Zeus, 72  
 Zenjirli, 65 *n.* 1, 80  
 Zeus, Baal of Tarsus assimilated to, 43, 60; husband-god of Atargatis assimilated to, 80; flower of, 98, 99; castrates his father Cronus, 179 *sq.*  
 — the Carian, 94  
 — Corycian, 70 *sqq.*; his combat with Typhon, 74, 78  
 — of Olba, 62, 65, 69, 70, 76, 78  
 — the Olybrian, 83 *n.* 1  
 Zimmern, H., 131 *n.* 1  
 Zimri, king of Israel, 89 *n.* 2, 91  
 Zoroastrian fire-worship, 103  
 Zulus, their customs at new moon, 300

THE END







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