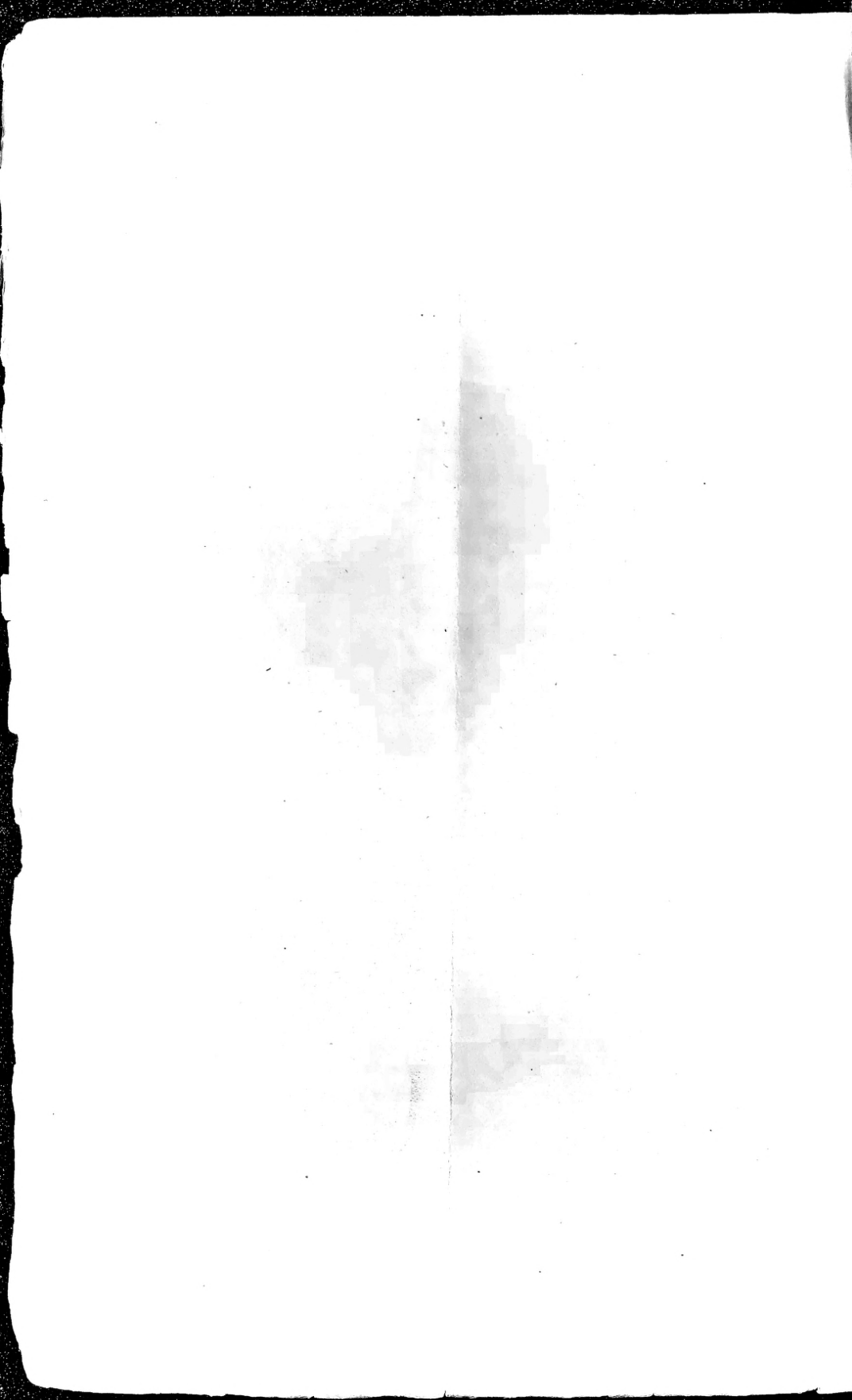


Ceramica.



5556

ON A CERAUNIA OF JADE CONVERTED INTO A GNOSTIC
TALISMAN.

By C. W. KING, M.A.

FEW relics of antiquity combine in one so many and so widely differing points of interest, with respect to the material, the strangely dissimilar uses to which the same object has been applied in two opposite phases of the history of Man, and, above all, the curious superstitions engendered by its peculiar form, as does the stone brought under the notice of the Institute by General Lefroy at the meeting of February 7th of the present year. The kindness of that gentleman having afforded me full opportunity for the careful examination of this interesting monument, I shall proceed, at the request of some members of our Society, to embody in as succinct a form as their multifarious nature will permit, the observations suggested to me by that examination.

The subject, therefore, of this memoir is a small stone celt of the common pattern, but of very uncommon material (in the *antique* class), being made, not of flint, but of dark-green jade or nephrite, 2 in. by 1½ in. in length and greatest width ; and brought, there is reason to believe, from Egypt many years ago, by Colonel Milner, aide-de-camp to Lord J. Bathurst, during the English occupation of Sicily in 1812. Each of its two faces is occupied by a Gnostic formula, engraved with much neatness, considering the excessive hardness of the material, in the somewhat debased Greek character that was current at Alexandria during the third and fourth centuries of our era.

The most important of these two formulæ has been ingeniously forced to take the outline of a wreath composed of broad leaves, in number *fourteen* (or the sacred *seven* duplicated), and doubtless intended for those of the "Five Trees" that figure so conspicuously in Gnostic symbolism ; the ends being tied together with four broad ribbons. This is a design of which no other example has ever come to my

knowledge amongst the innumerable and wondrously varied devices excogitated by the prolific fancy of this religion of mysteries. Upon the four ties are engraved in very minute letters different combinations of the seven Greek vowels, whilst each of the leaves is emblazoned with some "Holy Name," of which many can be easily recognised as constantly recurring in charms of this class; others are disguised by a novel orthography; whilst a few, from the uncertain forms of the lettering, defy all attempts at interpretation.

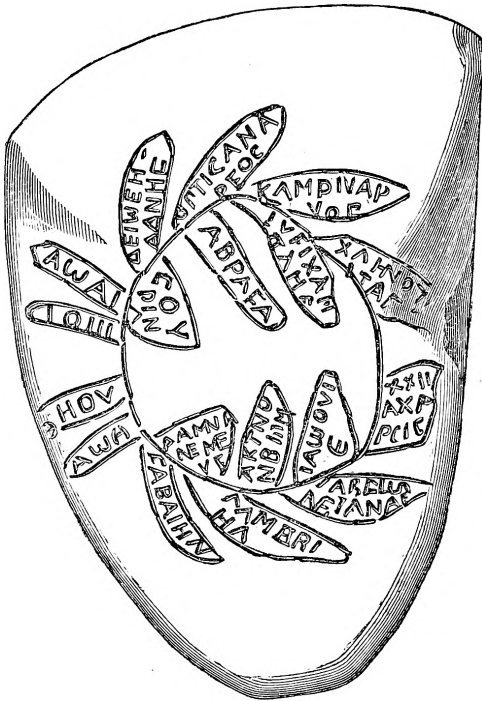
To the first series belong **ΑΒΡΑΧΑ**, "Abraxas," properly an epithet of the sun, but designating here the Supreme Deity; **ΙΑΩΟΥΙΕ**, "Iao, Jehovah;" **ΑΒΛΑΝΑ**, "Thou art our Father!" **ΓΑΜΒΡΙΗΛ**, a curious mode of spelling "Gabriel," that testifies to the difficulty ever felt by the Greeks of expressing the sound of our B; **ΑΚΤΝΟΝΒΩ**, which contains the Coptic form of Anubis; **ΔΑΜΝΑΜΕΝΕΥΣ**, the sun's name in the famous "Ephesian Spell;" and, most interesting of all, **ΠΣΑΝΤΑΡΕΟΣ**, who can be no other than the **ΨΑΝΤΑ** of the *Pistis-Sophia*,¹ one of the great *Τριδώνυμεις*, a Power from whom is enthroned in the planet *Mars*. To the uncertain belong **COYMA**, probably for **COYMAPTA**, a name occurring elsewhere, and perhaps cognate to the Hindoo *Sumitri*, **ΧΩΝΟΝΙΧΑΡ** which may be intended for **ΧΑΡ-ΧΝΟΥΜΙΣ**, a common epithet of the Agathodæmon Serpent; **ΑΕΙΩΕΗΑΑΝΗΣ**; **ΝΕΙΧΑΡΟΠΛΗΣ**; the two last, spells unexplained but very common; **ΜΟΝΑΡΧΟΣ**; whilst **ΑΧΑΡΣΙΣ** and the rest appear here for the first time, if correctly so read.

The other face is covered with an inscription, cut in much larger letters, and in *eight* lines. This number was certainly not the result of chance, but of deep design, for it was mystic in the highest degree, representing—so taught the profoundest doctor of the Gnosis, Marcus—the divine Ogdoad, which was the daughter of the Pythagorean Tetrad, the mother of all creation.² The lines 2, 4, 5, consist of Greek

¹ Cap. 361. A work ascribed to Valentinus, and the only one of the numerous Gnostic Gospels that has been preserved. It professes to be the esoteric teaching of Christ delivered during the *eleven* years he abode on earth after his resurrection; and written down by Philip: its system, however, is pure Majianism veiled under scriptural names. But, for that very reason, it throws more light on the actual

Gnostic remains as to their types and terminology, than do all the notices of the religion to be found in other authorities collectively. The work was discovered in a Coptic MS. of the British Museum, by Schwartze, and published from his transcript, with a Latin version, by Petermann, in 1853.

² St. Hippolytus, *Refut. Om. Hæres.* vi. 50.



Celt, or Ceraunia, of dark green jade, inscribed with Gnostic formulæ,
 with an enlarged representation of one of the inscribed faces.

letters used as *numerals*, intermixed with *siglæ*, which, from their constant occurrence upon monuments of a like nature, are supposed, with good reason, to be symbols of the planets. The numerals, on their part, probably denote various deities, for the Alexandrian Gnosis was the true daughter of Magianism; and in the old theology of Chaldea every god and astral genius had a *number* of his own, and which often stands instead of his proper name in dedicatory inscriptions.³ Thus, the number of H \bar{o} a (Neptune) was 40; of Ana (Pluto), 60; of Bel (Jupiter), 50; of the Sun, 20; of the Moon, 30; of the Air, 10; of Nergal (Mars), 12; &c.

A fragment of the *Pistis-Sophia*⁴ supplied the "spiritual man" with a key to the right interpretation of similar stenography in his own creed. "These be the *Names* which I will give unto thee, even from the Infinite One downwards. Write the same with a sign (cypher), so that the sons of God may manifest (understand?) them out of this place. This is the name of the Immortal One, $\overline{AAA} \overline{\omega\omega\omega}$.⁵ And this is the name of the Voice whereby the Perfect Man is moved, \overline{III} . These likewise be the interpretations of the names of the Mysteries. The first is \overline{AAA} , and the interpretation thereof is $\overline{\phi\phi\phi}$. The second, which is \overline{MMM} , or which is $\overline{\omega\omega\omega}$, the interpretation thereof is \overline{AAA} . The third is $\overline{\psi\psi\psi}$, the interpretation thereof is \overline{OOO} . The fourth is $\overline{\phi\phi\phi}$, the interpretation thereof is \overline{NNN} . The fifth is $\overline{\Delta\Delta\Delta}$, the interpretation thereof is \overline{AAA} , the which is above the throne of \overline{AAA} . This is the interpretation of the second \overline{AAAA} , namely, \overline{AAAAA} ; the same is the interpretation of the whole Name."

Lines 7, 8, are made up of vowels, variously combined, and shrouding from profane eyes the *Ineffable Name* $\overline{IA\Omega}$; which, as we are informed by many authorities (the most ancient and trustworthy being Diodorus Siculus),⁶ was the name of the God of the Jews; meaning thereby their mode of writing "Jehovah" in Greek characters.

Line 3 consists of the seven vowels placed in their natural order. This was the most potent of all the spells in the Gnostic repertory; and its importance may justify the ex-

³ On this curious subject see Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, iii. p. 466.

⁴ Cap. 125.

⁵ That is 1000 and 800 tripled. The

next numbers are 10000 tripled, and so on.

⁶ *Bibliotheca Historica*, i 94.

tensiveness of the following extract from the grand text-book of this theosophy, which sets forth its hidden sense and wondrous efficacy. The primary idea, however, was far from abstruse, if we accept the statement of the writer "On Interpretations" that the Egyptians expressed the name of the Supreme God by the seven vowels thus arranged—**IEHΩOYA**.⁷ But this single mystery was soon refined upon, and made the basis of other and infinitely deeper mysteries. In an inscription found at Miletus (published by Montfaucon), the Holy **IEOYAHΩAEIOYΩ** is besought "to protect the city of Miletus and all the inhabitants of the same;" a plain proof that this interminable combination only expressed the name of some *one* divine being. Again, the *Pistis-Sophia* perpetually brings in **IEOY** invariably accompanied with the epithet of "the Primal Man," *i. e.*, He after whose image or *type* man was first created. But in the fulness of time the semi-Pythagorean, Marcus, had it revealed unto him that the seven heavens in their revelation sounded each one vowel, which, all combined together, formed a single doxology, "the sound whereof being carried down to earth becomes the creator and parent of all things that be on earth."⁸

The Greek language has but one word for *vowel* and *voice*; when, therefore, "the seven thunders uttered their voices," the seven vowels, it is meant, echoed through the vault of heaven, and composed that mystic utterance which the sainted seer was forbidden to reveal unto mortals. "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."⁹ With the best reason, then, is the formula inscribed on a talisman of the first class, for hear what Valentinus himself delivers touching its potency.¹ "After these things his disciples said again unto him, Rabbi, reveal unto us the mysteries of the Light of thy Father, forasmuch as we have heard thee saying that there is another baptism of smoke, and another baptism of the Spirit of Holy Light, and moreover an unction of the Spirit, all which shall bring our souls into the treasurehouse of Light. Declare therefore unto us the mysteries of these

⁷ This is in fact a very correct representation, if we give each vowel its *true* Greek sound, of the Hebrew pronunciation of the word Jehovah.

⁸ Hippolytus, vi. 48.

⁹ Rev. x. 4.

¹ *Pistis-Sophia*, cap. 378.

things, so that we also may inherit the kingdom of thy Father. Jesus said unto them, Do ye seek after these mysteries? No mystery is more excellent than they; which shall bring your souls unto the Light of Lights, unto the place of Truth and Goodness, unto the place of the Holy of holies, unto the place where is neither male nor female, neither form in that place but Light, everlasting, not to be uttered. Nothing therefore is more excellent than the mysteries which ye seek after, saving only the *mystery of the Seven Vowels and their forty and nine Powers*, and the numbers thereof. And no name is more excellent than all these (Vowels),² a Name wherein be contained all Names and all Lights and all Powers. Knowing therefore this Name, if a man shall have departed out of this body of Matter, no smoke (of the bottomless pit), neither any darkness, nor Ruler of the Sphere of Fate,³ nor Angel, nor Power, shall be able to hold back the soul that knoweth that Name. But and if, after he shall have departed out of this world, he shall utter that Name unto the fire, it shall be quenched, and the darkness shall flee away. And if he shall utter that Name unto the devils of the Outer Darkness, and to the Powers thereof, they shall all faint away, and their flame shall blaze up, so that they shall cry aloud 'Thou art holy, thou art holy, O Holy One of all holies!' And if he shall utter that Name unto the Takers-away for condemnation, and their Authorities, and all their Powers, nay, even unto Barbelo,⁴ and the Invisible God, and the three Triple-powered Gods, so soon as he shall have uttered that Name in those places, they shall all be shaken and thrown one upon the other, so that they shall be ready to melt away and perish, and shall cry aloud, 'O Light of all lights that art in the Boundless Light! remember us also, and purify us!'" After such a revelation as this, we need seek no further for the reason of the frequent occurrence of this formula upon talismans intended, when they had done their duty in this world, to accompany their owner into the tomb, continuing to exert there a protective influence of a yet higher order than in life.

² Evidently alluding to the collocation of the vowels on our talisman.

³ The twelve Æons of the Zodiac, the creators of the human soul, which they eagerly seek to catch when released from

the body in which they have imprisoned it.

⁴ The divine mother of the Saviour, and one of the three "Invisible Gods." Cap. 359.

For the student of the mineralogy of the ancients this celt has very great interest in point of *material*, as being the only specimen of true jade, bearing indisputable marks of either Greek or Roman workmanship, that, so far as my knowledge extends, has ever yet been brought to light. This ancient neglect of the material is truly difficult to explain, if the statement of a very good authority, Corsi, be indeed correct, that the sort showing the deepest green is found in Egypt. The known predilection of the Romans for gems of that colour, would, one should naturally expect, have led them in that case to employ the stone largely in ornamentation, after the constant fashion of the Chinese, and to value it as a harder species of the *Smargadus*. The circumstances under which this relic was brought to England render it more than probable that Egypt was the place where it was found; a supposition corroborated by the fine quality of the stone exactly agreeing with what Corsi remarks of the Egyptian kind. That *Alexandria* was the place where the inscription was added upon its surface can admit of little question; the lettering being precisely that seen upon innumerable other monuments which can with certainty be assigned to the same grand focus of Gnosticism. In addition to this, it is very doubtful whether in the third or fourth centuries a lapidary could have been found elsewhere throughout the whole Roman Empire capable of engraving with such skill as the minute characters within the wreath evince, upon a material of this, almost insuperable, obduracy. From the times of the Ptolemies down to the Arab conquest, and even later, Alexandria was the seat of the manufacture of vases in rock crystal. This trade served to keep alive the expiring Glyptic art for the only purpose for which its productions continued to be demanded—the manufacture of talismans, consignments of which must have been regularly shipped together with the crystal-ware,⁵ to Rome, and equally to the other important cities of the empire.

The primitive Egyptians, like the early Chaldeans, used stone in the place of metal for their cutting instruments, and continued its use for making particular articles down into historic times. Herodotus mentions the regular employment of the "Ethiopian stone" sharpened, for a dissect-

⁵ Dum tibi Niliacus portat crystallæ catapulus." Mart. xii. 72.

ing-knife⁶ in the process of embalming, and similarly for pointing the arrows⁷ carried by the contingent of the same nation in the army of Xerxes. The Alexandrian citizen, half-Jew half-Greek, who had the good fortune to pick up this primæval implement, doubtless rejoiced in the belief that he had gotten a "stone of virtue," most potent alike from substance, figure, and nature, and therefore proceeded to do his prize due honour by making it the *medium* of his most accredited spells—nay, more, by inventing a new formula of unusual complication and profundity whereby to animate its inherent powers. As regards its *substance*, the stone probably passed then for a *smaragdus* of exceptional magnitude, and that gem, as Pliny records,⁸ was recommended by the magi as the proper material for a talisman of prodigious efficacy, which, duly engraved, should baffle witchcraft, give success at court, avert hailstorms, and much more of like nature. The *smaragdus* of the ancients was little more than a generic designation for all stones of a *green* colour, and the entire Gnostic series strikingly demonstrates that this hue was deemed a primary requisite in a talismanic gem—the almost exclusive material of the class being the green jasper and the plasma.

Again, as regards *figure*, this celt offered in its *triangular* outline, that most sacred of all emblems, the mystic Delta, the form that signified maternity, and was the hieroglyph of the moon. This belief is mentioned by Plutarch,⁹ and explains why the triangle so often accompanies the figure of the sacred baboon, Luna's special attribute, on monuments, where also it is sometimes displayed elevated upon a column with that animal standing before it in the attitude of adoration.

Lastly, the supposed *nature* of this gift of Fortune was not of Earth, inasmuch as it then passed for a holy thing that "had fallen down from Jupiter," being, in fact, nothing less than one of that god's own thunderbolts. A notion this which will doubtless strike the modern mind as so strange, or rather as so preposterous, that it necessitates my giving at full length my reasons for making such an assertion.

⁶ ii. 86.

⁷ vii. 69.

⁸ xxxvii. 40.

⁹ "De Iside et Osiride," cap. 75. He adds that the Pythagoreans called the

equilateral triangle "Athene"—a curious confirmation of the tradition quoted by Aristotle, that the Attic goddess was one and the same with the Moon.

And in truth the subject is well worth the trouble of investigation, seeing that the same superstition will be found to extend from an early period of antiquity down into the popular belief of our own times throughout a large extent of Europe.

It is in accordance with this notion that I have designated this celt a "ceraunia" (thunderbolt-stone), and it therefore remains for me to adduce my reasons for giving it what must appear to most people so unaccountable and highly inappropriate an appellation, *Sotacus*, who is quoted elsewhere by Pliny "as one of the most ancient writers on mineralogy," is cited by him¹ "as making two other kinds of the ceraunia, the black and the red, resembling *axe-heads* in shape. Of these, such as be black and round are sacred things; towns and fleets can be captured by their instrumentality. The latter are called *Batyli*, whilst the oblong sort are the *Ceraunia*. Some make out another kind, in mighty request in the practices of the magi, inasmuch as it is only to be found in places that have been struck by lightning." One would have been utterly at a loss to understand what the old Greek had been speaking about in the chapter thus confusedly condensed by the later Roman naturalist, or to discover any resemblance in form between the lightning-flash and an axe-head, had it not been for the popular superstition that has prevailed in Germany from time immemorial to the present day, and of which full particulars are given by Anselmus Boetius in his invaluable repertory of mediæval lore upon all such matters, written at the beginning of the 17th century.²

Under the popular names of "Strahl-hammer," "Donnerpfeil," "Donner-keil," "Strahl-pfeil," "Strahl-keil" (lightning-hammer, thunder-arrow or club, lightning-arrow, &c.), and the Italian "Sagitta,"³ he figures stone celts and hammers of five different, but all common, types; remarking that so firm was the belief in these things being the "actual arrow of the lightning" (*ipsa fulminis sagitta*), that should any

¹ xxxvii. 51.

² Gem. et Lapid. Hist. ii. cap. 261.

³ "Saetta" (a vulgar Italian execration), is now restricted to the lightning-missile, the archer's shaft being expressed by the Teutonic "freceia," in accordance with the genius of the language which reserves the old Latin terms for the

things not of this world,—using those of the *lingua militaris* for every-day purposes. The flint arrow-heads found in the *terra marva* of the primæval Umbrian towns, are believed by the peasantry to have this celestial origin, and are highly valued as portable "lightning-conductors."

one attempt to controvert it, he would be taken for a madman. He however confesses with amusing simplicity that the substance of these thunderbolts is exceedingly like the common flint used for striking fire with ; nay, more, he boldly declares he should agree with those few *rationalists* who, on the strength of their resemblance in shape to the tools in common use, pronounced these objects to be merely ordinary iron implements that had got *petrified* by long continuance in the earth, had it not been for the testimony of the most respectable witnesses as to the fact of their being discovered in places just seen to be struck with lightning. Besides quoting some fully detailed instances from Gesner, he adds that several persons had assured him of having themselves seen these stones dug up in places where the lightning had fallen. The natural philosophers of the day accounted for the creation of such substances in the atmosphere by supposing the existence of a vapour charged with sulphureous and metallic particles, which rising above a certain height became condensed through the extreme heat of the sun, and assumed a wedgelike form in consequence of the escape of their moisture, and the gravitation of the heavier particles towards their lower end ! Notwithstanding this celestial origin, the virtue of the production was not then esteemed of a proportionally sublime order, extending no further than to the prevention or the cure of ruptures in children, if placed upon their cradles ; and also to the procuring of sleep in the case of adults. In our own times Justinus Kerner mentions⁴ the same names for stone celts as universally popular amongst the German boors ; but they are now chiefly valued for their efficacy in preserving cattle from the murrain, and consequently the finders can seldom be induced to part with them.

It must not, however, be supposed that Sotacus picked up this strange notion from the Teutones of his own age, whose very existence was probably unknown to him ; his informants were unquestionably those magi cited at the conclusion of Pliny's extract. The Greek mineralogist had lived "apud Regem," that is, at the court of the King of Persia, very probably in the capacity of royal physician, like his countrymen Democedes and Ctesias. In that region

⁴ In his little treatise on Amulets.

he had ample opportunities of seeing stone celts, for Rawlinson observes⁵ that flint axes and other implements, exactly identical with the European in workmanship, are *common* in all the most ancient mounds of Chaldæa, those sites of primæval cities. Such elevations above the dead level of those interminable plains were necessarily the most liable to be lightning-struck; and hence probably arose the idea that these weird-looking stones (all tradition of whose proper destination had long since died out amongst the iron-using Persians) were the actual fiery bolts which had been seen to bury themselves in the clay. And again, to revert to the German belief, it must be remembered that Thor, the Northern Jupiter, is pictured as armed with a huge hammer in the place of the classical thunderbolt. The type of the god had been conceived in the far-remote ages when the stone-hammer was as yet the most effective and formidable of weapons, and was preserved unchanged out of deference to antiquity, after the true meaning of the attribute was entirely forgotten. Nevertheless, his worshippers, accustomed to behold the hammer in the hand of the god of thunder,—*ἰψιβρεμέτης* Zeus,—very naturally concluded that these strange objects, of unknown use, found from time to time deep buried in the earth, were the actual missiles that deity had discharged. It is a remarkable proof of the wide diffusion of the same belief, that the late owner of the relic under consideration, habitually spoke of it as a "thunderstone,"—a name he could only have learnt from the Arabs from whom it was procured, seeing that no such notion with respect to *celts* has ever been current in this country. But every one whose memory reaches back forty years or more, may recollect, that wheresoever in England the fossil *Belemnite* is to be found, it was implicitly received by all, except the few pioneers of Geology (a word then almost synonymous with Atheism), as the veritable thunderbolt shot from the clouds, and by that appellation was it universally known. I, for one, can recollect stories, quite as respectably attested as those Boetius quotes concerning the *Ceraunia*, told respecting the discovery of new fallen belemnites under precisely the same circumstances; and, in truth, the same author does in the preceding chapter treat at length of the *Belemnites*, and his cuts show that the name

⁵ Ancient Monarchies, i. p. 120.

meant then what it does at present ; but he assigns to the missile an infernal instead of a celestial source, giving the vulgar title for it as "Alp-schoss," (elfin-shot,) which he classically renders into "dart of the Incubus," stating further that it was esteemed (on the good old principle, "similia similibus curantur") of mighty efficacy to guard the sleeper from the visits of that much dreaded nocturnal demon. The Prussian, Saxon, and Spanish physicians employed it, powdered, as equally efficacious with the *lapis Judaicus*, in the treatment of the calculus. It was also believed a specific for the pleurisy in virtue of its *pointed* figure, which was analogous to the *sharp* pains of that disease, for so taught the universally accepted "Doctrine of Signatures."

The *Cerauniæ* of Sotacus, however, comprised, besides these primitive manufactures of man, other substances, it is hard to say whether meteorites or fossils ; the nature of which remains to be discussed. Photius,⁶ after quoting the paragraph, "I beheld the *Bætylus* moving through the air, and sometimes wrapped up in vestments, sometimes carried in the hands of the ministers," proceeds to give a summary of the wondrous tale told by the discoverer of the prodigy—one Eusebius of Emesa. He related how that being seized one night with a sudden and unaccountable desire to visit a very ancient temple of Minerva, situated upon a mountain at some distance from the city, he started off, and arriving at the foot, sat down to rest himself. Suddenly he beheld a globe of fire fall down from heaven, and a monstrous lion standing by the same, but who immediately vanished. Running to pick it up as soon as the fire was extinguished, he found this self-same *Bætylus*. Inquiring of it to what god it belonged, the thing made answer that it came from the Noble One (so was called a figure of a lion standing in the temple at Heliopolis). Eusebius thereupon ran home with his prize, a distance of 210 stadia (26 miles), without once stopping, being quite unable to control the *impetus* of the stone ! He described it as "of whitish colour, a perfect sphere, a span in diameter, but sometimes assuming a purple⁷ shade, and also expanding and contracting its dimensions, and having letters painted on it in cinnabar, of which he

⁶ Bibliotheca, 1063, R.

⁷ The Greek purple included every shade from crimson to violet.

gave the interpretation. The stone, likewise, if struck against the wall, returned answers to consultors in a low whistling voice." The grain of truth in this huge heap of lies is obviously enough the fact that Eusebius having had the good fortune to witness the descent of a meteorite, and to get possession of the same, told all these fables about it in order to increase the credit of the oracular stone (which doubtless brought him in many fees) amongst his credulous townfolk. Damascius⁸ (whose *Life of Isidorus Photius* is here epitomising) adds, that this philosopher was of opinion that the stone was the abode of a spirit, though not one of the mischievous or unclean sort, nor yet one of a perfectly immaterial nature. He furthermore states that other *betyli* were known, dedicated to Saturn, Jupiter, and the Sun; and moreover that Isidorus and himself saw many of such *betyli* or *betylia* upon Mount Libanus, near Heliopolis in Syria.

As for the derivation of *betylus*, the one proposed by the Byzantine Hesychius, who makes it come from *bæte*, the goatskin mantle, wherein Rhea wrapped up the stone she gave old Saturn to swallow, instead of the new-born Jove, cannot be considered much more satisfactory than Bochart's, who, like a sound divine, discovers in it a reminiscence of the stone pillar which Jacob set up at Bethel, and piously endeavours to force Sanconiathon, who speaks of the "living" stones, the *bæthylia*,⁹ to confirm his interpretation by correcting his text into "anointed."

But this last *betylus* is beyond all question the same thing with that described by the Pseudo-Orpheus,¹ under the names of *Siderites*, and the *animated Orites*, "round, black, ponderous, and surrounded with deeply-graven furrows." In the first of these epithets may easily be recognised the *ferruginous* character common to all meteorites (*siderites* being also applied to the loadstone), whilst the second seems to indicate the locality where they most abounded viz., Mount Lebanon.

Sotacus' notice, indeed, of the efficacy of the *betylus* in procuring success in seafights and sieges, is copiously illustrated by the succeeding verses of the same mystic poet,

⁸ A stoic philosopher under Justinian.

⁹ "Moreover the god Uranus devised

bæthylia, contriving stones that moved as having life."

¹ *Λιθικά*, 355.

who, it must be remembered, can claim a very high antiquity, there being sufficient grounds for identifying him with Onomacritus, a contemporary of Pisistratus, in the 6th century before our era. The diviner Helenus, according to him, had received this oracular stone from Apollo, and he describes the rites, with great minuteness, for the guidance of all subsequent possessors of such a treasure, by means of which the Trojan woke up the spirit within the "vocal sphere." This was effected by dint of thrice seven days' fasting and continence, by incantations and sacrifices offered to the stone, and by bathing, clothing, and nursing it like an infant. Through its aid, when at length rendered instinct with life, the traitorous seer declared to the Atridæ the coming downfall of Troy; the stone uttering its responses in a voice resembling the feeble wail of an infant desiring the breast. It is more than probable that Orpheus in describing the Orites, had in view the *Salagrama*, or sacred stone of Vishnu, still employed by the Brahmins in all propitiatory rites, especially in those performed at the death-bed. Sonnerat describes it as "a kind of ammonite, round or oval in shape, black, and very ponderous." The *furrows* covering its surface were traced by Vishnu's own finger; but when found of a violet colour, it is looked upon with horror, as representing a vindictive avatar of the god. The possessor keeps it wrapped up in a linen garment like a child, and often bathes and perfumes it—precisely the rites prescribed by our poet for the due consultation of the oracle of the Siderites.

From all this it may safely be deduced that the "stone of power," whether *bætylus* or *orites*, was in most cases nothing more than a fossil; either a ferruginous nodule, or an echinus filled with iron pyrites. Their being found in abundance in one particular locality, precludes the idea of these at least being meteorites, which latter, besides, never assume any regular form, but look like mere fragments of iron-slag. This explanation is strongly supported by the drawings Boetius gives² of what was then called the "Donner-stein," or "Wetter-stein," (thunder, or storm-stone,) and which he very plausibly identifies with Pliny's *Brontias* "that got into the head of the tortoise during thunderstorms," and which is described in another place as the "eye

² ii. cap. 264.

of the Indian tortoise" that conferred the gift of prophecy. His carefully drawn figure of this Donner-stein (which also passed for the "gros Kroten-stein," bigger toadstone), shows it to be only a fossil echinus of a more *oblate* form than the common sort. The regular toadstone, plentifully to be seen in mediæval rings, was, on the other hand, the small hollow hemisphere, the fossil tooth of an extinct fish, found in the greensand formation. In that age the Donner-stein was held to possess all the many virtues of the Toadstone, Belemnite, and Ovum Anguinum, in counteracting poison, giving success in all enterprises, procuring sleep, and protection against danger of lightning. But the old physician, so much in advance of his times, cannot help winding up the list of its virtues with the hint, "Fides sæpe veritate major."

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON CELTS AND OTHER IMPLEMENTS USED AS TALISMANS OR VICTORY-STONES.

THE axe-heads and hammer-heads of stone, known to us by the general designation of celts, have, until recent explorations, been regarded as comparatively of rare occurrence amongst ancient relics obtained from Eastern lands and from some other continental countries. Our information, however, in regard to objects of this class has become greatly extended. Mr. James Yates brought before us, in a former volume of this Journal, examples of stone celts from Java; an interesting specimen obtained at Sardis is figured, vol. xv. p. 178, and some others were found by Mr. Layard at Nineveh. The occurrence of any ornament or inscription upon such objects is very rare, but, amongst numerous stone implements lately obtained in Greece, one is noticed by M. de Mortillet (*Matériaux pour l'Histoire primitive de l'Homme*, Jan. 1868, p. 9), of which he had received from Athens a drawing and an *estampage*; it is described as "une hache en pierre serpentineuse, sur une des faces de laquelle on a gravé trois personnages et une inscription en caractères Grecs. L'ancien outil a évidemment été, beaucoup plus tard, quand on a eu complètement oublié son usage primitif, transformé en talisman ou pierre cabalistique."

At the annual meeting of the Antiquaries of the North,

21 March, 1853, under the presidency of the late King of Denmark, several recent acquisitions were exhibited, obtained for his private collection at Frederiksborg. Amongst these there was an axe-head of stone (length about $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches), perforated with a hole for the handle, and remarkable as bearing on one of its sides four Runic characters, that appear to have been cut upon the stone at some period more recent than the original use of the implement. It has been figured in the *Memoirs of the Society*, 1850-1860, p. 28; see also *Antiquarisk Tidsskrift*, 1852-1854, pp. 258-266. I am indebted to a friend well skilled in Runes and Scandinavian archæology, Dr. Charlton, secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, for the following observations on this interesting relic.

“The first letter is L, and, if we accept the idea that these were Runes of Victory, it may stand for the initial of Loki; the second is Th, and may stand for Thor; the third O, for Odin; the fourth, Belgthor, with a T above it, may refer to Belgthor’s friendship and alliance with Thor, and the T stands for Tyr. We may imagine the names of the Northern gods to have been cut on this stone axe to give it victory in battle, just as the old Germans and Saxons cut mystic Runes on their swords, a practice noticed by Haigh in his *Conquest of Britain by the Saxons*, p. 28, pl. 1, where he has figured amongst various examples of the *Futhorc*, or alphabet of the Thames, and now in the British Museum. At p. 51, *ibid.* pl. iii. fig. 20, he has cited also the Runic inscription on the silver pommel of a sword found at Gilton, Kent, formerly in the collection of the late Mr. Rolfe of Sandwich, and subsequently in the possession of Mr. Joseph Mayer. This relic is now in the precious museum bestowed by his generous encouragement of archæological science on the town of Liverpool. The interpretation given in the latter instance is as follows,—I eke victory to great deeds.³

“There was another explanation given of the characters on the Danish stone axe. It was read—LUTHR. o.—Ludr owns, namely, the weapon thus inscribed.”

³ *Archæologia*, vol. xxxii., p. 321. A spear-head inscribed with Runes is noticed, *Journ. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, vol. xxiii., p. 387. There exist certain massive rings of metal inscribed with Runes, that may have

been, as some antiquaries suggest, appended to sword-hilts as charms. One of these rings, lately found at Carlisle, is in possession of Mr. Robert Ferguson, of Morton, near that city.

In the ancient Sagas, as remarked in Nilsson's *Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia* (translation by Sir John Lubbock, Bart. p. 214), mention occurs of amulets designated life-stones, victory-stones, &c., which warriors carried about with them in battle to secure victory. A curious relation is cited from one of the Sagas, that King Nidung, when about to engage in conflict, perceived that he had neglected to bring a precious heir-loom, a stone that possessed the virtue of ensuring victory. He offered the hand of his daughter, with a third part of his kingdom, to him who should bring this talisman before the fight commenced; and, having received it, he won the battle. In another narrative, the daughter of a Scanian warrior steals during his slumbers the stone that was hung on his neck, and gave it to her lover, who thus became the victor. Nilsson observes that stones are found in museums, for instance, a hammer-stone with a loop, that appear to have been worn thus as talismans in war.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to advert to certain axe-heads of stone, in their general form similar to those with which we are familiar as found in Europe; upon these implements are engraved rude designs, such as the human visage, &c. These objects, of which an example preserved in a museum at Douai has been much cited, may be "victory-stones" of an ancient and primitive people, but they are now generally recognised as of Carib origin, and not European.

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