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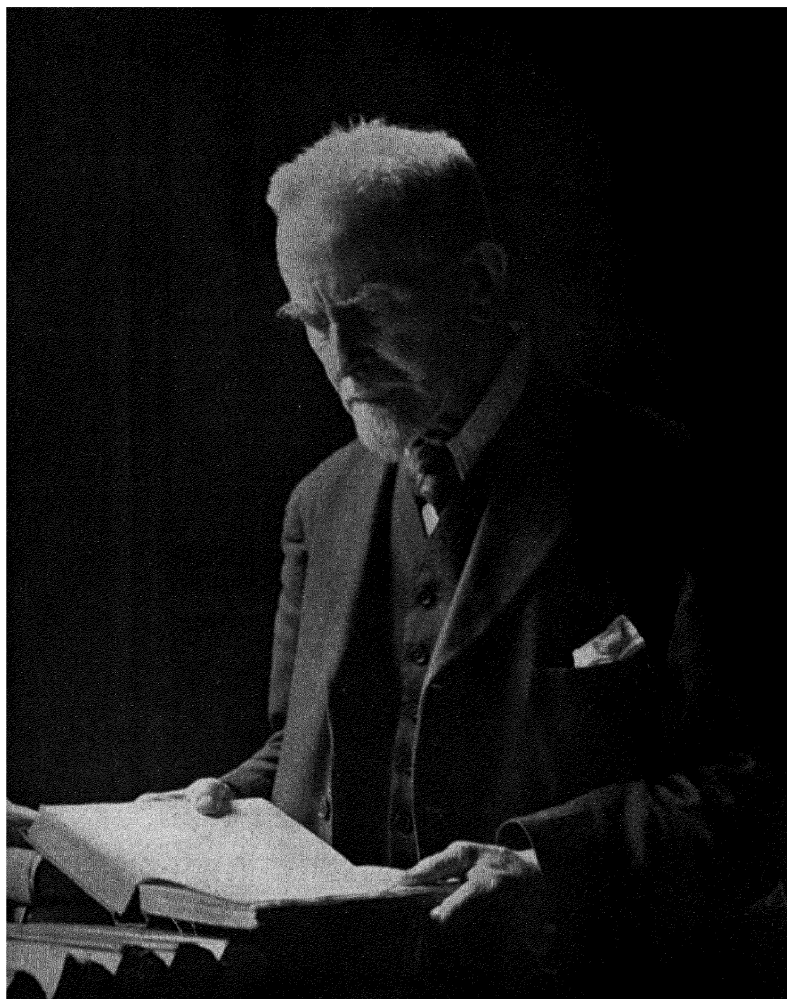
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SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER, O.M.

THE  
FRAZER LECTURES

1922-1932

BY DIVERS HANDS

EDITED BY

WARREN R. DAWSON, F.R.S.E.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
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TO THE  
COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS  
BY WHOSE EFFORTS AND SYMPATHY  
THE FRAZER LECTURESHIP WAS ESTABLISHED  
THIS VOLUME  
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED



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## INTRODUCTION

ON the completion of the third edition of Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough*, which had grown with the years from two to twelve volumes, a group of his friends and colleagues, wishing to commemorate this and the other important contributions to science and literature that had been begotten of his learning and industry, organized a subscription to establish a fund to be devoted to some appropriate purpose in honour of Sir James Frazer. A proposal was made in the first instance that the commemoration should take the form of a portrait, but all those who knew Sir James intimately at once felt that his modest nature would recoil from any measure that had for its object the commemoration of himself personally, or even that of his own works. An alternative suggestion was accordingly made, that it would be far more pleasing to Sir James if the money furnished by the subscribers were devoted to the advancement of the cause of the science in which he had so long and so devotedly laboured. It was then proposed that it would be appropriate to devote the fund to the equipment of ethnological expeditions, to enlarge in the field the work that he had begun in the study, to obtain first-hand information from areas in respect of which the extant material was defective or incomplete, and to illuminate some of the many dark corners in ethnology, anthropology, and folk-lore. Whilst many of the subscribers welcomed this proposal, it was thought by others that such field-work must necessarily be costly and uncertain, and that unless abundant funds were continually forthcoming and trained researchers constantly available who should be both willing and competent for such work, it would necessarily often have to remain in a state of

suspended activity, if not in complete abeyance, for considerable periods of time.

While the matter was thus under consideration, the Great War intervened. The attention and activities of those concerned were urgently diverted elsewhere, and the projected scheme for a Frazer Memorial was, for the time being, entirely dropped.

After the Armistice, when normal civil life could be resumed, and those who had been so long engaged in other quarters were free to return to their daily interests, the question of the Frazer Memorial was again revived. World conditions had in the meantime completely changed. The enormous rise in cost at once put out of the question the possibility of organizing expeditions, and the more practical and happier proposal was made that a lectureship in Social Anthropology should be established if means could be found to provide and administer a sufficient capital sum to ensure its permanence and success.

A small committee, consisting of representatives of the universities with which Sir James had been particularly associated—Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow, and Liverpool—was formed to frame a definite scheme. As the result of the deliberations of this committee, the Frazer Lectureship was formally established in 1921, and the capital of the fund was vested in the Financial Board of Cambridge University, who, as trustees, administer it. The terms of the trust are of the simplest nature: it is provided that the lectures should be delivered, annually and in successive rotation, at Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, and Liverpool, the appointment of the lecturers being vested in the Vice-Chancellor or Principal of the respective universities.<sup>1</sup>

When the arrangements were completed, and the Frazer Lecture had become an established fact, an Address<sup>2</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> Although the foundation of the lectureship originated in Cambridge and is administered there, the well-known academic courtesy prompted the founders to initiate the series at Oxford, Cambridge following as the second in succession.

<sup>2</sup> The Address was drawn up by Professor A. E. Housman, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

presented to Sir James Frazer, and as this expresses clearly and concisely the sentiments and wishes of the promoters, the Editor cannot do better than transcribe it in full:

## ADDRESS

to

SIR JAMES GEORGE FRAZER

LL.D., D.C.L., Litt.D.

on the occasion of the foundation

in his honour

of the

FRAZER LECTURESHIP

in Social Anthropology

in the

Universities of Oxford, Cambridge

Glasgow, and Liverpool

Anno Domini MCMXXI

The friends and admirers who have united to found in your honour an annual lectureship in Social Anthropology, a science requiring no such link to connect it with your name, are not altogether content to set up their monument and withdraw in silence. They feel, and they hope that you will understand, the wish to approach more nearly an author whose works have bound to him in familiarity and affection even those to whom he is not personally known, and to indulge, by this short Address, an emotion warmer than mere intellectual gratitude.

*The Golden Bough*, compared by Virgil to the mistletoe but now revealing some affinity to the banyan, has not only waxed a great tree but has spread to a spacious and hospitable forest, whose king receives homage in many tongues from a multitude resorting thither for its fruit or timber or refreshing shade. There they find learning mated with literature, labour disguised in ease, and a museum of dark and uncouth superstitions invested with the charm of a truly sympathetic magic. There you have gathered together, for the admonition of a proud and oblivious race, the scattered and fading relics of its foolish childhood, whether withdrawn from our view among savage folk and in different countries, or lying unnoticed at our doors. The forgotten milestones of the road which man has travelled, the mazes and blind alleys of his appointed progress through time, are illuminated by your art and genius, and the strangest of remote and ancient things are brought near to the minds and hearts of your contemporaries.



They return you thanks for all that they have received at your hands, and they wish you years of life and continuance of strength to crown with new sheaves that rich and various harvest of discoveries which has already rewarded your untiring industry and your single-hearted quest of truth.

This Address was signed by 175 Supporters, and a perusal of their names at once reveals the truly international and world-wide nature of the movement that founded the lectureship.<sup>1</sup> The Address, which came as a complete surprise to Sir James, deeply touched him, and to it he replied in the following words:

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-STUDENTS—I am deeply sensible of the honour you have done me by founding in my name a lectureship of Social Anthropology at four great Universities. Such an honour is usually reserved till the world can judge more fully and impartially of a man's work than it is possible to do in his lifetime. I can only hope that, if posterity should concern itself with my writings, it will not reverse the verdict which you have passed upon them. In any case, you have erected a monument which will no doubt survive him whom you desire to commemorate, and will carry on his work when he himself has long been mingled with the common dust. It is my earnest wish that the lectureship should be used solely for the disinterested pursuit of truth, and not for the dissemination and propagation of any theories or opinions of mine. As you know, I have never sought to formulate a system or to found a school, being too conscious of the narrow limits of my knowledge and abilities to attempt anything so ambitious. I have been content to investigate a few problems in the history of man; but I am well aware, and I have endeavoured to keep my readers constantly aware, of the extreme uncertainty of all the solutions which I have ventured to offer of these problems, always remembering that the study of man's mental evolution, like the study of the physical universe in which he appears to exist as an insignificant particle, is still only in its inception, and that the views which we of the present day take of that evolution, as of that universe, are necessarily but temporary and provisional, destined with the progress of knowledge to be superseded by truer and more comprehensive views in the future. To that progress I trust that the lecture-

<sup>1</sup> The Address and the reply to it, together with a list of Supporters, was privately printed as a pamphlet at St. Dominic's Press, Ditchling.

ship which you have founded may in some measure contribute. At the least, it will be a monument of your generosity, if not of my fame: it will serve to show those who come after us that in an age when the world was torn into hostile camps and exhausted by internecine conflict, scholars could still meet on common ground, above the clash of arms, in the serene air and untroubled light where truth is sought by her votaries. Whatever else comes of it, the approbation of so many of my contemporaries will act as a spur to my industry: it will encourage me to labour yet a while for the advancement of knowledge, that so I may the better deserve the honour which you have conferred upon me.

J. G. FRAZER

1 BRICK COURT, TEMPLE  
LONDON  
*30th April 1921*

The views of the founders of the Frazer Lectureship and those of Sir James himself being thus clearly formulated, the first Frazer Lecture was duly delivered in 1922, since which date others have followed in annual succession:

- 1922. Oxford. "The Evolution of Kinship: an African Study", by the late E. Sidney Hartland, LL.D., F.S.A. Published as a pamphlet at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1922.
- 1923. Cambridge. "Immigrants and their Influence in the Lake Region of Central Africa", by the Rev. Canon John Roscoe, M.A., Honorary Canon of Norwich. Published as a pamphlet by the Cambridge University Press, 1924.
- 1924. Glasgow. "The Age of the Gods", by W. J. Perry, M.A., D.Sc., Reader in Cultural Anthropology in the University of London.
- 1925. Liverpool. "Myth in Primitive Psychology", by Bronislaw Malinowski, Ph.D., D.Sc., Reader in Social Anthropology in the University of London. Expanded and published in book form by Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co., in the "Psyche Miniatures" Series, 1926.
- 1926. Oxford. "La Mise à Mort du Dieu en Égypte", by Alexandre Moret, Litt.D., Membre de l'Institut

- de France, Professeur au Collège de France, Paris. Published in book form, with illustrations, at the Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1927.
1927. Cambridge. "The Diffusion of Culture", by R. R. Marett, M.A., D.Sc., F.B.A., Reader in Social Anthropology in the University of Oxford; Rector of Exeter College, Oxford. Published as a pamphlet by the Cambridge University Press, 1927.
1928. Glasgow. "The Study of Popular Sayings", by Edward A. Westermarck, Ph.D., LL.D., Professor of Sociology in the University of London, and Professor of Philosophy in the Academy of Abö, Finland.
1929. Liverpool. "The Religion of a Primitive People", by A. C. Haddon, M.A., Sc.D., F.R.S., late Reader in Ethnology in the University of Cambridge. Published in the *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* (Liverpool University Press), vol. xvii. (1930), pp. 4-18.
1930. Oxford. "Les Océaniens", by Dr. Paul Rivet, Professeur au Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.
1931. Cambridge. "The Earlier Religion of Greece in the Light of Cretan Discoveries", by Sir Arthur Evans, M.A., D.Litt., F.R.S. Published as a pamphlet, with illustrations, by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., 1931.
1932. Glasgow. "The Aryan Theory as it stands 'To-day'", by Sir Arthur Keith, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., Conservator of the Museum and Hunterian Professor, Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Permission has kindly been given by the respective authors and publishers of those lectures that had previously been printed to reproduce them in this volume—a courtesy that is gratefully felt and acknowledged. Four of the essays in this volume have not as yet been published (those for the years 1924, 1928, 1930, and 1932), and these have now been printed from the original manuscripts kindly supplied by the authors.

The lectures here collected are printed word for word, and, save for some trifling verbal alterations, without the slightest change, from the original publications or manuscripts. The Editor has, however, redrafted all the bibliographical references in the footnotes on a uniform plan: that adopted in Sir James Frazer's books. The Editor has accordingly verified the references, and has quoted all works by their full titles, with the date and place of publication, and he has inserted, wherever necessary, the Christian names or initials of the authors quoted in order to facilitate reference by students. As Sir James Frazer's own books set so fine an example in the matter of complete and thorough references, the Editor has taken his method as the model for this volume.

The lectures in this book will be found to differ considerably in length. The longest are those that were, after delivery, elaborated into book form, but most of them are almost exactly in the words in which they were orally delivered. Each is entirely independent, and as the authors of the lectures are laid under no restrictions either in the choice of subjects or the preparation of their addresses, each is consequently solely responsible for his own statements and opinions.

At the request of many friends, Sir James Frazer has been prevailed upon to allow his portrait to be inserted in this volume. The photograph was taken in July 1932 by Mr. W. E. Lake, while Sir James was working in the Board Room of the British Museum.

WARREN R. DAWSON

LONDON  
8th August 1932



# I

## THE EVOLUTION OF KINSHIP : AN AFRICAN STUDY

By E. SIDNEY HARTLAND, LL.D., F.S.A.

WE are met this evening to inaugurate a series of lectures on Social Anthropology under a scheme to commemorate the work of one who has probably done more than any other living man to carry forward the study of that subject, by interesting in it people of all ranks and classes in this country and elsewhere, through his strenuous labours, his enthusiastic application to the solution of some of its many problems, and by his eloquent and fearless advocacy of the truth and the whole truth, as he understands it. This is not to claim that he has discovered all that is to be known on the matters he has spent so many years in studying and expounding. Truth is far wider than the vision of any single man. However much one may discover and verify, there is still a universe beyond to explore. Nor does this attitude of admiration for Sir James Frazer's work imply that we definitely and finally accept all his conclusions, so far as they go, or even a specific conclusion. It implies much more than this. It acknowledges and glories in the profound significance of his inquiries for ourselves and all thoughtful persons; it asserts that these inquiries are of value for the intellectual and spiritual progress of the race, that they have been undertaken in high seriousness, and that if they have not achieved the full end they proposed, they have at least shown us the direction in which to look for answers to the questions that we are driven to ask in exploring the history of the past, and in trying to

understand the present condition of humanity, in attempting to measure the effect on mankind of "all this unintelligible world", and the response to environment of our complex nature. It embodies, in short, our appreciation of his efforts to explain the facts of history, and it takes a form intended to assist others in probing ever more deeply into those facts, and to urge them by his example to desist from no effort, from no toil that promises an intelligible result.

I need not say that I esteem it a great honour to be invited to open the series of lectures this evening. But I have undertaken to do so with many misgivings. The more closely I approached the task, the more I have felt my inability to lead the way in a manner worthy of such an occasion. I could have wished that someone had been selected who had himself been in direct touch with a people in a stage of culture remote from ours, and who would have been able to bring his resources and his experience of such a people to aid in solving the many riddles that constantly perplex anthropological students. It may, however, be that one who has for many years been occupied more or less with these problems may be able to contribute a little, even from an easy chair, towards the furtherance of the scientific investigations in which he is interested. I hope, therefore, that you will forgive me if I have the temerity to ask your attention for a few minutes to the social organization of some of the Bantu tribes and the way in which it has evolved as a result of their history.

The Bantu race is one of mixed Hamitic and Negro descent, speaking in many dialects a language of its own. It inhabits Africa from the Equator to the south coast. The most recent researches have led to the conclusion that its original home was in the region of the great lakes and that it has migrated thence in several streams, coming down either side of the continent until it met the Hottentots, a different race bearing probably much Hamitic (or Semitic), Negro and Bushman blood; and its progress was thus stopped, or at least delayed, both east and west before it had reached the

extreme south. A more virile and prolific race than the Hottentots, it was, when the White Man with his insatiable thirst of adventure and discovery arrived, still pressing on and gradually though slowly overwhelming the Hottentots and ousting them from their ancient seats. The Bantu are thus late comers throughout the greater part of the territory they occupy. We need not discuss questions of chronology here. It is evident from their warlike character and still mobile habits that the movement was recent as the life of nations is reckoned, and it has in fact hardly yet ceased. In migrations over an expanse so vast and the constant encounters with foes sometimes of alien race, sometimes of their own, the influences to which the Bantu have been subjected and the consequent changes in their social relations must have been very great and numerous. Of this outcome of a history so full of varied fortunes and relentless tragedies I propose to examine this evening a few examples.

The Bantu are by no means on the lowest step of civilization. Their social organization has progressed in various directions. The race started with a tribal organization and the classificatory system of kinship—that is, a system of kinship in which all the terms are terms expressing not individual relationships but those of groups. That system is very different from ours. It is the system in use by practically all peoples in the savage state and in the state of what we call the lower barbarism. It is framed to express not physiological but social facts and relations. By peoples in this stage consanguinity is not fully understood. True, it is perceived dimly, but it is utilized only very gradually as the facts are progressively assimilated. The process takes generations, indeed millenniums, during which the terms in use by the old reckoning are slowly adapted to the conditions evolved by increasing knowledge and experience, and are changed or supplemented from time to time. In the lower culture the communities are relatively small, and by means of the classificatory system a man knows precisely in what relation he stands to every other member of the community to which he



belongs. This is essential in a society which is not a state but a tribe. Such a society is based not on citizenship but on kinship. Every person therefore must have a recognized relationship, nearer or more remote, to every other member, or he is an alien—that is to say, an enemy, with no rights whatever, not even to life itself.

In the most archaic condition we have been able to discover, such a tribe is usually found divided into totemic clans having descent on the mother's side only. A totemic clan is a group whose symbol is an animal or plant or some other object which they regard with quasi-religious respect, avoiding it as taboo or sacred, and whose members are held to be related to one another in a brotherhood traced either through the mother or through the father, but not through both. The mother's side is that in regard to which the first glimmering of consanguinity or physiological, as opposed to social, kinship enters the savage mind; and in such a condition it is probable the Bantu-speaking peoples started on their career—a career in the course of which some branches of the race have attained a comparatively high civilization and founded stable and powerful kingdoms, while others, less favoured, have scarcely passed beyond the hunting stage, or at best are pastoral nomads.

We all remember the ancient saying that there is always something new from Africa. The observation is hardly less true now than when it was first uttered. A commonplace during the boundless revelations of the last two generations, it has received since the war a fresh and unexpected illustration in the book by Edwin W. Smith and the late Andrew Murray Dale on *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (2 vols., 1920). From the happy combination of a British missionary and a British Government official, both of them long familiar with the country and the people, we have in this book an unsurpassed account of a society of which we hardly even suspected the existence. In this society we find a tribe in the act of groping its way out of archaic conditions, of passing from clan-kinship and descent through the mother only, by

way of paternal descent to true consanguinity. They are indeed still a long distance from the goal; but perhaps it will be interesting to spend a few minutes in watching their efforts, in tracing the mode and direction of their secular struggle, and comparing the process with that through which certain other branches of the race are passing on the road to higher social relations.

The Ba-ila, or the Ila people, inhabit the very centre of the continent. They are congregated on the banks of the River Kafue, a tributary of the Zambezi, descendants of more than one stream of Bantu immigrants from the north or north-east, coming probably by different routes and at different times. Hence they are a mixed people of whose origins and early history their traditions appear to have preserved no information—not even the most illusory and untrustworthy—save that they tell us that their ancestors “descended” on a certain rock, which is dented with pits or grooves said to be the footprints of these ancestors when they first set foot upon it; but whence they descended, or how, or why, the Baila are mute.<sup>1</sup> They are divided into totemic clans which are exogamous and derive their descent exclusively through women. The authors give a list of these clans, confessedly imperfect, amounting to ninety-three in number. Since the bride is taken to live with her husband wherever his abiding-place may be, the clans are spread all over the country.<sup>2</sup> Politically the country is divided into about eighty communes, each of them concentrated round one or more villages. Each commune is ruled by a chief and each village, or in case of large villages each segment of the village, by a head-man, who is appointed by election, usually from among his predecessor’s “children” or nephews (that is, his sisters’ sons).<sup>3</sup> His appointment to office generally involves his succession to the personal inheritance of his predecessor; for the first thing he has to do is to pay his predecessor’s debts. He must therefore not only be a man of ability on the mental

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *op. cit.* i. pp. 3, 18, 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 283, 287, 292, 294.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 299, 300, 304.

side, but also be qualified on that more material side on which the chief of an English town is likewise expected to be endowed.<sup>1</sup> A commune may comprise inhabitants belonging to many totem-clans, for though a totem-clan is by no means confined to one community, it is often specially associated with it in the public mind and speech. Such an association may have arisen in different ways, as notably perhaps because the clan is strong in numbers there, or because a well-known man who belongs to the clan is chief of the commune.<sup>2</sup> It has been very unfortunate for the well-being of the Baila that these communes have never been able to combine together into a single state. They have not lacked a common consciousness: they have a common language. They have not lacked external pressure. During the last hundred years they have had constant collisions with the Makololo, the Matabele, the Barotsi, and other neighbours whose names are less familiar to us. More than once they have been invaded and overrun; they have been compelled to pay tribute; and they have emerged from these troubles from time to time with a population depleted and their land swept bare of cattle.<sup>3</sup> The history of the last hundred years has probably been a repetition, perhaps in a more emphatic form, of the history of previous centuries. Yet all has not availed to quiet the jealousies and quarrels of the various communes, or to unite the people even temporarily for purposes of defence. Every commune is independent and will yield nothing of its barbarous freedom. It is hostile to every other commune. The result has been continual internecine strife, raids, murders, anarchy, until the Rhodesian Government intervened, took possession of the land, and brought in the *Pax Britannica*.<sup>4</sup>

But beside the communes and the clans there is a further subdivision, and it is this which renders the social organization so interesting. When a young man marries and takes his bride home he sets up a household, he founds a family. He

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *op. cit.* p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 299, 291, 283.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 22 *sqq.*

<sup>4</sup> Details are given, *ibid.* pp. 22-57.

is the head. His domestic establishment is of course limited in number, consisting of himself, his wives and children, with sometimes an aged parent, and his slaves; for domestic slavery is a deeply rooted institution. All these dependents are comprehensively grouped around him as his "children". The peculiarity of the Ila family consists in the fact that kinship is reckoned as far back as the lineage of the family can be traced, not through the mother, as on the analogy of the clan we might expect, but through the father exclusively.<sup>1</sup> This leads to very curious and remarkable complications. Messrs. Smith and Dale lay it down broadly that "the Baila reckon consanguinity through the father only". We will see how this really is.

It must be borne in mind that consanguinity is physical, whereas kinship in the savage sense is social. By virtue of the classificatory system many more persons are reckoned as kinsmen than we are ourselves disposed to admit—indeed, many more than any system founded on and expressive of consanguinity can admit to any degree of kinship. It admits entire groups under one appellation. It admits, for instance, to the name and relation of father of a person not one man but a number of men belonging to the generation preceding his own. Everyone has many fathers, not only the man who begat him, or who was the husband of his mother, but all that husband's brothers, many of his cousins, and in fact all the men of his generation belonging to the same clan. In the same way the women of the same generation, or who are married to men of that generation and that clan, are all reckoned as mothers to the succeeding generation. In ordinary circumstances a woman knows her own particular child and the child knows his own particular mother, if he be not clever enough to identify his own particular father. At least he can identify his own mother's husband, and even in the classificatory system he makes distinctions in ordinary speech between persons in these relations, calling, for instance, one "mother" or "father" simply and another "little mother" or

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *op. cit. supra*, i. pp. 283, 284.

“little father” and so on. But no such distinction is made in the laws of the tribe. In very archaic times, indeed, it is possible that it was obscured by a practice of nursing and suckling the children of the clan in common. The group-relationships were not limited to the father or mother; they extended throughout the clan, and they conferred and imposed correlative rights and duties. Every member of the clan of the same generation as a given man or woman was his brother or sister and “father” or “mother” to his children. Among the Arunta of Central Australia, who like all tribes in the lower culture have the classificatory system, when a man dies his daughter’s husband is required to mourn for him, and among the mourning rites he is expected to inflict with a club great gashes on his shoulders which must be most painful, since they leave him with cicatrices for the rest of his life. This duty rests not only on the man who has actually married a daughter of the deceased, but on all those who according to the customs and institutions of the tribe could have done so; and the penalty for infringing the rule by not inflicting serious wounds on himself was that any other father of an actual or possible wife might take her away and give her to another man! <sup>1</sup> This is perhaps an extreme case, but it illustrates the far-reaching application of the classificatory system.

The system was a reflection of the social organization. It is founded not upon physiological but upon social facts. For reasons which I have elsewhere discussed, it seems that in the early stage in which it arose the physical relation of a child to its father was unknown. What people were conscious of was the existence of a society communistic in its character where all the members were closely bound together, not merely by locality, but also by common experience, common needs, aspirations, beliefs, hopes and fears, and in which the chief difference discernible between individuals was the difference of age, as to which indeed their ideas were any-

<sup>1</sup> (Sir) Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 500.

thing but precise. These are the facts expressed in the classificatory system. The perception of physiological facts naturally began with the relation of a child to its mother. Once that perception started it grew, but it grew slowly. After a while human predilections, jealousies, and selfishness aided its growth and gradually prevailed over the primitive communism which we must presuppose—nay, for which we have evidence not only in the classificatory system itself, but also in the condition of savages in various parts of the world. These concurred with increasing knowledge and mastery of nature, and the consequent increase of wealth and power, to produce groups of various kinds with their inevitable consequence of distinctions in the ranks and classes of society. Civilization has then fairly begun. One after another these developments left their marks on the system of kinship. Old words were used in new senses. New words or phrases were introduced. Each tribe, each community worked out its own development, not necessarily or probably in isolation, but in the course of collisions with, or peaceful infiltrations from, its neighbours. The process has taken many generations, and is even yet incomplete.

While all the Bantu peoples are in a relatively advanced stage of civilization, some more, some less, the Baila are not in the front rank. Like all Bantu tribes, their civilization is based upon the clan: the family appears to be a new-comer into the field, and to be still struggling with the clan for influence. Its entrance into the social life of the tribe as a patrilineal institution must probably be accounted for by the rule that on marriage a wife goes to her husband's dwelling and makes her abode there: he does not come to that of her kindred. The same rule obtains among the aborigines of Australia. There all the tribes originally, it is probable, reckoned lineage and kinship exclusively through the mother, but a large number of them, roughly all those of the western half of the continent, have become patrilineal. I think it is not too much to conclude that the change in this case is the result, mainly, at least, of the residence of the wife with her

husband's band and under his authority and protection.<sup>1</sup> Among the Bantu the wife is generally married by purchase, that is, by the payment of a bride-price which transfers to the bridegroom the exclusive possession of the bride and the right to the children that may be born of the union. To this rule the Baila are no exception. But the transfer of the children involves more than their possession and control: it involves also the reckoning of their descent from the husband and his forefathers, instead of from his wife and her foremothers. In this way most of the South African Bantu have bridged the transfer from maternal to paternal lineage. The Baila, however, have not abandoned the old reckoning. All their clans still count descent through the mother, as they did at the time of the Bantu dispersion. The problem is how the new reckoning through the father is to be reconciled with it. The clans are powerful. Each of them has its totem or totems; and though there are signs of a change and development, perhaps a degradation, of Bantu totemism in the taking of additional totems by the several clans and some apparent advance in the localization of the clans, the totem is still a bond between the clansmen, wherever they may be. A clan is moreover, as the authors rightly point out, "a natural mutual-aid society". An offence against one member of a clan is an offence against all. All spring to arms on his behalf. An act of aggression by one member is the act of all, and all are liable to suffer for it. All contribute to the bride-price payable by a clansman, and to fines laid upon any of them. Reciprocally the members of the clan share in the bride-price paid for a girl of the clan and in the fines paid for the offence of a member of another clan against a fellow-clansman of

<sup>1</sup> I have argued this in the *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, iv. pp. 65, 86, and, subsequently, in *Primitive Society: the Beginnings of the Family and the Reckoning of Descent* (London, 1921), p. 40. It may be worth noting that Sir Baldwin Spencer, who had formerly expressed a different opinion on the priority of female descent, has on fuller consideration accepted that priority among the Australian tribes (see his Presidential Address to the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, Offprint, p. 34).

their own.<sup>1</sup> In short, the clan is still the centre of the primitive communism: it is the main pillar of the social structure. The father as head of the new institution of the family is recognized as the ruler of the household. But divorce is frequent and the household may break up. In this case, though the children are his and remain with him, they do not belong to his clan, and his control over them, even while their mother is still part of the household, is overridden by the claims of her clan exercised through her brothers.<sup>2</sup> If a child be married it is the clan (not the father) who decide upon the match, and settle the amount of bride-price to be received or given: the father gets (or apparently gives) very little of it.<sup>3</sup>

Further, if a member of the clan go to visit a place where the clan is dominant, and where another member of the same clan is chief, he will find himself in an entirely different position from what he enjoys where he was born, or where his father lived and, it may be, was chief. He will find that he has a status there which he has not at the place of his birth. It is his mother's home, the home of his clan. In the event of the chief's death he will be eligible to succeed him. He is a kinsman in a sense in which he is not a kinsman at his father's home. There he is "a mere nobody"; his clan is not there, though his father's clan may be dominant. The men of that clan may politely refer to him as "our child", but he is an alien. To the men of that clan he has only "a half and half clan, a pseudo-clan". When sacrifices are offered, an oblation made on his behalf will only be an oblation of water; he is not of the clan, he is "treading the land of others".<sup>4</sup> In saying, as the authors do, that "consanguinity is traced through the father only", they are going too far. Physical relationship, consanguinity, is as yet imperfectly understood. What we have is a competition between two kinds of kinship—one through the father, the other through the mother—both social, not physical. So far the Baila only reckon relationship

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *op. cit. supra*, i. p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 286, 287.



through the father to a very limited extent. It is true that in a loose sense they count as relations the kindred both of the mother and of the father. This may be a result of the confusion caused by two competing kinships. Where descent through the father only is fully established, it is not consanguinity but social relationships only that are even there expressed. By reason of social requirements, of the freedom of the sexual relations, or of the necessity to arrange for the continuance of a family in order to provide for the continuity of ancestral worship, no child can be so wise as to know his own father, and physical paternity is not a determining factor, as it is with us.

In the meantime it is obvious that among the Baila matrilineal descent is fighting a losing battle, and there can be little doubt that, if they had been left to the play of the forces of native culture only, they would sooner or later have adopted patrilineal kinship, as other Bantu tribes have done.

While the tendency to change from kinship through the mother to kinship through the father is universal among the Bantu, every tribe seeks for itself the solution of the problem how to effect the transfer. We will inquire how some of them have accomplished or are seeking to accomplish it.

Far to the north, in the cradle of the race, the Baganda have attained the height of Bantu civilization. In their case the introduction of descent through the father seems to have been the result of the conquest and unification of the country by a patrilineal people, conjectured to have been of Galla race from the north. Tradition places the coming of the first king thirty-three generations ago.<sup>1</sup> If we could measure this period by our own customs its commencement would thus be fixed about a thousand years ago; but, seeing that the Bantu marry and begin the rearing of children much earlier than we do, the actual time would be far shorter than that. In any event it is unsafe without independent evidence to rely upon tradition, which is always liable seriously to distort the facts underlying it. We can therefore do no more than

<sup>1</sup> John Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), p. 186.

accept the fact of the formation of the kingdom by foreign conquest, leaving the probable date to be determined by further inquiry. What we know of the customs of the Baganda leaves us in little doubt that the conquered people at that date still reckoned their lineage through their mothers, and that the conquerors, on the contrary, were patrilineal and imposed their reckoning on the people in general—a process still awaiting completion. The king must consort only with Baganda women, to secure that the issue would be eligible for the crown. If he married a foreigner the children would be deemed aliens and be excluded from the succession—a manifest relic of maternal kinship. There is, moreover, considerable competition among the clans for the honour of giving a mate to the king, and the possibility that a king, the fruit of such union, could be claimed as a kinsman. This is secured by rendering it illegal for the king formally to marry any lady who may become the mother of his children. All such ladies are simply taken into his harem, and his acknowledgement of their issue renders them, if male, eligible to succeed him. The king's sons always take their mothers' totems, and the clan to which the mother belongs claims them as its children.<sup>1</sup> The children of ordinary parents are taught in infancy to respect their mothers' totems as well as their fathers'; that is, the children are brought up as members of both clans. But when they reach adolescence they discard their mothers' totems and retain those of their father. It seems to be an act of choice that by universal practice has become obligatory.<sup>2</sup> In this way the Baganda have solved the problem of transfer.

The Baganda combine pastoral and agricultural work. The men keep the cattle, of which they have large herds of different breeds; the women cultivate the ground.<sup>3</sup> Economically both industries are important. They have both contributed to the degeneration of totemism, and materially restricted the importance of hunting. Thus they have had a decisive

<sup>1</sup> John Roscoe, *op. cit.* pp. 187, 189, 84, 85, 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 415, 416, 426.

effect on the progress of society. In the arid lands of south-west Africa the Herero were an exclusively pastoral and migratory people. Their totemism also was of a degenerate and abnormal character, but such as it was they held to it. The trend towards male kinship was displayed in a double organization. The older organization was the *eanda*, the matrilineal clan; the newer organization was that of the *oruzo*, a clan reckoned entirely through males. Every Herero was at the same time a member both of his mother's *eanda* and of his father's *oruzo*. Both were totemic, but the *oruzo* had taken over the totemic usages, except the blood-feud. That remained to the *eanda* and against the offender and his *eanda*. The cattle, in which the wealth of the people consisted, were inherited by the *oruzo*. If, however, the paternal side failed, the cattle might be inherited by the *eanda*; but the heir, before he could incorporate them with his *oruzo*-inheritance and take them to his own kraal, was required to perform a religious ceremony. They then became his individual property. It is clear that the *oruzo* is of comparatively recent introduction. It probably owes its strength to economical causes. Cattle-keeping, which is the only industry, is carried on, everywhere among the Bantu, only by the men. The women are not allowed to have anything to do with it. That seems to have given the *oruzo* its power, but it has not yet had time to overcome the deeply rooted tradition of maternal descent.<sup>1</sup> The tribe was almost destroyed by the shameless brutality, greed, and cruelty of the Germans; and how far it is recovering since the war, or what form its institutions are now taking, we have yet to learn.

The social polity of the Bafioté of Loango has more interest for our special purpose. Whereas among the Baila kinship through the father is making its way by means of the family, it is remarkable that the family is the stronghold of maternal descent and kinship among the Bafioté. Unlike the Herero,

<sup>1</sup> I have more fully considered the organization of the Herero in *Memoir of the American Anthropological Association*, iv. p. 16, and in *Primitive Society*, p. 73.

they dwell in a rich, well-watered land at the mouth of the Congo and live a settled life as cultivators of the ground. As this is work done chiefly by women it is probably the chief influence that has preserved their matrilineal institutions. The family, whether high or low, is continued only through the mother. All rank as well as property descends through her. Royal princesses are of all women most favoured. As soon as they arrive at maturity and have passed through the paint-house (a necessary step to becoming marriageable) they have a political position, seats and voices in the councils of state, for it is from them that the heir will ultimately derive his title. They may choose their husbands freely and change them when they will.<sup>1</sup> The ordinary woman is married by payment of a bride-price or a present of goods to her parents. She is taken by the bridegroom to his dwelling and is required to be faithful to him.<sup>2</sup> Husbands are very jealous. The law of adultery is everywhere very strict. Among the neighbouring Mayumbe the husband may even put his wife to death if a man merely touch her unwittingly.<sup>3</sup> Yet matrilineal descent among these tribes draws no distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children. All alike they are reckoned to the mother's kin, and succeed to their uncles', not their fathers', property. Birth, we are told, sanctifies the child.<sup>4</sup>

Among the Bafiote both father and mother are consulted as to their daughter's marriage, and apparently they share the bride-price.<sup>5</sup> Farther inland, on the banks of the Kwilu, among the Bahuana it is otherwise. There the aspirant for a girl's hand woos her with gifts, until "his heart becomes big", or he has no more gifts to give her. Then he takes a present to her mother (not her father) and says he wants to marry her daughter. The old lady does not regard the matter very seriously. She does not even consult her husband. Why

<sup>1</sup> F. Pechuel-Loesche, *Volkskunde von Loango* (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> R. E. Dennett, *Notes on the Folk Lore of the Fjort* (London, 1898), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition an der Loango-Küste* (Jena, 1874-1875), i. p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> R. E. Dennett, *Journal of the African Society* i. (1901). p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 262.

should she? Her daughter belongs to her family, not her husband's, and has resided at her mother's brother's village ever since she reached maturity. So the complaisant mother simply says: "I don't mind"; the happy swain carries the bride off to the hut he has prepared for her, and the affair is finished. Nothing is said of a bride-price.<sup>1</sup>

The Bafioté have, in fact, got farther on the road to paternal descent than the Bahuana. As among the Baila, the clan or sib stands in opposition to the family, but, unlike that of the Baila, the clan is heritable in the male line.<sup>2</sup>

The royal family, however, recognizes no kin through the father and has no clan. It is a caste of itself. The members are marked off from other people by a separate burial-place or cemetery, and a separate totem, the leopard, which is the royal beast, the symbol of what we may call the state.<sup>3</sup> They are above all courts of law, and cannot be compelled even to give evidence or to pledge their oaths. The husbands whom the princesses marry do not become royal; their consorts, when tired of them, simply discard them.<sup>4</sup> The women of the royal family at least practise unbounded mother-right, to use the convenient term for the totality of matrilineal institutions in their pure form. As the old Scotswoman said about the Hebrew patriarchs, they have "great privileges".

Dr. Rivers kindly suggests to me that the explanation of this and other peculiarities of Fioté society is to be found in a body of matrilineal immigrants who succeeded in becoming the ruling class of Loango, but failed to impress their polity as a whole on the patrilineal tribe whose chiefs they had become. The Bafioté are a mixed people. A number of other Bantu-speaking tribes seem to have gained a footing at their expense in Loango at various times, and the present population shows evidence of the incorporation of members of many stocks.<sup>5</sup> According to tradition the royal stock is an

<sup>1</sup> Emil Torday and T. A. Joyce, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxvi. (1906), p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> E. Pechuel-Loesche, *Volkskunde von Loango* (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 467.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 468.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 2 sqq.

immigrant.<sup>1</sup> This, if correct, would account for its position before the law. But the people among which it settled can hardly be described as a patrilineal people without some qualification. We have no evidence when this immigrant stock settled among the Bafioté, or obtained supreme power. Probably, however, Dr. Rivers' conjecture is substantially correct, and the Bafioté were then already far on their way to the adoption of a patrilineal polity which the immigrant stock, though it could not entirely prevent the adoption, may have to some extent retarded.

If we turn to ordinary women, who do not enjoy royal privileges, although they are closely hemmed in by their husband's jealousy, yet even they are by no means the slaves or beasts of burden we often suppose them to be. The wife is mistress of her own hearth. It is true she has to cook for her husband, and to provide him with vegetable food from her own fields by her own labour or that of her slaves; all beyond what is reasonably necessary for him she keeps for herself or her children. Nor can her husband take a vegetable from her basket or an egg from her store without her permission. She works no harder than he does, often much less, and in a polygynous household she has a helper in every one of her co-wives.<sup>2</sup>

A prominent institution, however, is the *china*, or prohibition. This seems to be a degenerate form of totemism, of which, through the development of the fetish-cult and the influence of the *banganga*, or medicine-men, who are very powerful among the Bantu of the west and south of Africa, there remains little more than a system of prohibitions. When these prohibitions are recent they are not totemic; they are prescribed by the authority of the medicine-man, or undertaken by vow, to avert some danger imagined to threaten him on whom they are imposed, or by whom they are undertaken, or else to cure an illness. Such prohibitions are generally

<sup>1</sup> E. Pechuel-Loesche, *op. cit.* p. 175. Cf. Miss Kingsley's Introduction to R. E. Dennett, *Notes on the Folk Lore of the Fjort* (London, 1898).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 187, 214.

personal to him; they may be temporary, they may last his life long, or they may even be continued to his family after his death. But when a prohibition is of ancient date, it is transmitted in the paternal line and bears every mark of being totemic: the object or species of animal or vegetable avoided is avoided by the whole clan, and the members of the clan are bound to exogamy. The *china* is in fact the totem; it is the symbol that unites the members of the clan; it provides the children of a polygynous household with a test of their common descent on the father's side; it unites them in a common interest in their quasi-divine ancestors, whom they are required to worship and from whom in the world of the departed they expect paternal care and assistance; it provides a correction to the centrifugal tendency of mother-right, and enables the children of one father to present a common front to their enemies and oppressors. For the clan, being in its essence a political as well as a religious body, manifests itself in common action and mutual protection. More than that, if the German professor Pechuel-Loesche's investigations may be trusted, Fioté speculations on the subject of the soul have yielded a basis which may be termed philosophical for the unity of the paternal line. Whereas the mother's family rests on birth, on the unity of the flesh and blood, the clan is inherited through the father, the begetter, because it is he who transmits the life, who continues the potency of the forefathers, the soul-stuff, from generation to generation. Among the Negro races love for the mother and the tenderest attachment to her are a marked and pleasing characteristic, emphasized by the polygynous polity which dissipates the father's responsibility and affection among the children of numerous mothers often drawn from a wide area and many tribes.<sup>1</sup> But, at least among the Bafioté, the children recognize that there is due also a loyalty to their father and his ancestors. He is the author of their being and a senior member, if not

<sup>1</sup> Miss Mary H. Kingsley, for instance, records that she knew one gentleman whose wives stretched over 300 miles of country, with a good wife-base in a coast-town as well (*Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 215).

the head, of their clan; and this necessarily carries with it the recognition of their relation and duties to their brothers and sisters, equally with themselves the children of their father and members of their clan, though not children of their mother.<sup>1</sup> Thus the institutions of the Bafote, evolving in the same direction with those of the Baila, are evolving in quite a different manner. Those of the Baila are evolving by means of the family; those of the Bafote are evolving by the agency of the clan. While the Baila are effecting the transfer from kinship through the mother to that through the father by means of the family, the Bafote are effecting the same transfer by means of the clan, though neither of them as yet has solved the problem.

These are some of the ways by which in the development of civilization various branches of the Bantu-speaking populations are finding their way from the archaic institution of mother-right into a new conception of kinship and social polity. But this is only one side of the evolution that is taking place. With widening knowledge the consciousness of the relation of individuals to one another is being quickened. The recognition of paternity reacts on the whole conception of kinship, and consanguinity begins to be substituted for social kinship as the basis of society. The terms of relationship become more and more definite, and connubial relations are gradually limited in directions previously unthought of. The classificatory system which does not distinguish between individuals in a class gives way. In this slow process many inconsistencies are produced, and it is long before they are reduced to order. Among the Baila they are still to a considerable extent entangled. Thus my brothers and sisters are called my *bakwesu*, but that term is not limited to the children of my own parents: it extends to the children of my father's brothers and to the children of my mother's sisters. With descent through the mother only the children of my mother's sisters would belong to her clan and bear her totem. The children of my father's brothers if they be not, as they might

<sup>1</sup> E. Pechuel-Loesche, *op. cit.* p. 468.



be, also children of my mother's sisters, do not belong to her clan; but in the family, which counts descent through the father, they are recognized as brothers and sisters. The case is different with the children of my mother's brothers and those of my father's sisters. These, whom we should call cross-cousins, are recognized, and these alone, by the Baila as cousins. As such, according to clan-rules, they may marry one another, if of appropriate sexes, because they do not belong to the same clan; and they probably were once regarded as the proper persons to intermarry. Consequently the children of a man and those of his sister if of different sexes address one another as husband and wife, and they may still marry. But in course of the sharpening *flair* of the Baila for consanguinity such a marriage, though permissible, is now frowned upon. My mother's brother's daughter, who is also reckoned as a cousin, however, is forbidden as a wife, notwithstanding that we still address one another quite regularly and properly as "wife" and "husband". The fact of such an address is witness to a bygone practice of marriage between the children of a woman and those of her brother.

There are other relatives between whom a similar address takes place. In the classificatory system of kinship the term grandfather or grandmother extends to all the brothers of the actual grandfather and their wives and the sisters of the grandmother. What is interesting is that a man addresses these collateral grandmothers, whether wives of a collateral grandfather or sisters of a grandmother, as "my wife", and they in return address him as "my husband", and on the other hand he also addresses his granddaughters and the wives of his grandsons as "my wife", in both cases extending the word in its classificatory sense. Dr. Rivers, dealing specially with the facts of Melanesian society, has shown that there a similar usage testifies to the former rule that marriage was recognized between such relatives. The same rule still applies, or at all events is not wholly at an end, among the Baila. Our authors say that "between me and my collateral grandmothers on my own side" (that is, the women

to whom the classificatory system extends the term *grand-mother*) "there is no taboo; I address each of them as *mwingu*, my wife, and may treat her as such".<sup>1</sup> And they add: "This is only an extension of the principle that my collateral grandfather's property is mine potentially; I may enter my grandfather's brother's village, spear his oxen or rob his fields with impunity". In both cases the Ila man is entitled to anticipate a possession which the law will eventually confer on him. Unfortunately they have not thought it necessary to give actual pedigrees in which these marriages have taken place. After laying it down that the land belongs to the community and does not pass from one to another by death, and that what passes as inheritance is cattle, wives, slaves, and personal belongings, such as tools, spears, medicines, etc., they only think it necessary to say: "In the case of the wives of the deceased, the patriarchal practice is followed, and a kinsman takes them to raise up seed to his brother".<sup>2</sup> But something more than this must be implied in the principle that "my collateral grandfather's property is mine potentially". If it be mine, it is mine in my own right, by virtue of inheritance. They tell us "that every freeman who dies has somebody who 'eats his name'", that is to say, becomes his heir. But of details they do not give us much: they say, by way of illustration, that "the widows of the deceased are taken, as we have said, by his heir. Or if there are many he may take three, the deceased's nephew one, and a son one. In the latter case, of course, he would not inherit his own mother. The deceased's mother's people have the right to one of the wives."<sup>3</sup> The fact of course is that "the patriarchal practice" referred to and the inheritance of wives are two distinct things. The

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *op. cit. supra*, i. p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 390.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 390, 391. Note that his mother's clan would be the clan of the deceased, and the members of it would have contributed to the original bride-price of these widows. Among the Thonga this is expressly put forward as a ground of claim (see Henri A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (Neuchâtel, 1912-1913), i. p. 207). Among other Bantu tribes it was probably looked on in the same light; but whether there was any definite rule we cannot say.

“patriarchal practice” is well known in Africa; but it can only take effect when the husband dies without issue, whereas the inheritance of wives here referred to comes into force whenever a married man dies leaving issue who will preserve his name and ancestral cult, and will thus free his widow to become the inheritance of some other man who as his heir may have a claim upon her. Such a wife in a polygynous community may be quite young, and it is only the young widows who are thus inherited. Elderly women usually find refuge in a son’s household.

Among other Bantu peoples similar relations exist between the nephew and his uncle’s (his mother’s brother’s) wife. On the shores of Delagoa Bay a Thonga nephew addresses his uncle’s wife as “wife”, and is intimate with her during his uncle’s life; though it is not quite clear whether marital relations with her can be actually established until after her husband’s death. Then she is formally made over to him. If there be more than one widow and more than one nephew they arrange matters to their mutual liking, without always waiting for the husband’s death to settle the question.<sup>1</sup> The Baganda practice seems to have been the same.<sup>2</sup>

With regard, however, to the relations between a man and his grandchildren, who if granddaughters or wives of his grandsons are addressed, among the Baila, as “my wife”, we are told expressly that “This does not now mean that I may marry them or that I have any rights whatever over their persons”.<sup>3</sup> But it does at least imply that such rights were once recognized. The advance of civilization has outrun the changes of vocabulary necessary to give expression to it. The grandmother still addresses her grandson as “my husband” and her granddaughter as “my fellow-wife”.<sup>4</sup> She too preserves in her speech an earlier condition of things which has passed away. Indeed, the Ila tongue, emerging while the

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Junod, *op. cit.* i. pp. 212, 228, 255, 257; see also *idem*, *Les Baronga* (Lausanne, N.D.), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> John Roscoe, *The Baganda* (London, 1911), pp. 129, 121.

<sup>3</sup> E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *op. cit.* i. p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

people were still in the full classificatory stage, comprehends only the means of expressing two generations above and below that of the speaker, and the relationships which were proper to the stage of civilization in which it took shape, and has to be adapted as best it may to the growth of practice following on wider knowledge, and consequently a more exact conception of human relationships. In any case it follows with halting steps the advance of culture. This is a phenomenon by no means rare, and one that has analogies everywhere in the lower culture in the list of prohibited degrees which supplement the rules of exogamy. Among the Baila, the more remote generations are expressed by a repetition of the alternate terms "grandfather" and "father", or "son" and "grandson".

The history of the advance of culture in these lower stages is a slow succession of steps by which a society organized on the classificatory basis of kinship gradually breaks away from that basis to build up a new system corresponding to a more accurate appreciation of fact. So slow is it that it often appears to be going back on its old tracks. The conversion of matrilineal to patrilineal descent often deserts the sure ground of physiological fact to flounder in a legal fiction. To comply with social requirements and to provide issue for a man who has not himself begotten children to continue the worship of ancestors it authorizes him to count as such children who certainly—obviously—cannot derive their origin from him. The adoption of children has many motives. It enables a man or woman to fill the void created by the loss of a child, and so to provide for the satisfaction of a human call for affection, or for the preservation or increase of the strength of a family or clan, or even of a tribe, both of these motives being necessitated by the circumstances of a people in a semi-savage state, surrounded by foes or compelled to hunt wild animals for food or clothing.

Fosterage no doubt fulfils some of these purposes. In later times and other lands it is used to safeguard young lives exposed to the incidents of warfare; and like adoption it

creates an artificial kinship, the milk-tie, as it was called, being held very sacred. In earlier times it may have been applied by a clan which acted on the communistic principles of archaic society, and then it would be with difficulty distinguished from adoption by the tribe or clan. Adoption is in any case the creation of an artificial kind of kinship, a social, not a consanguine kinship. Men had not yet learned to distinguish social from physical kinship, and it served them on their way to a true kinship. With that once attained it has gradually sunk out of sight in most communities, though in some it is retained as a subordinate and relatively unimportant kind of kinship. The accumulation of pedigrees and their meticulous examination in every tribe under research are the only sure way to ascertain exactly how far that tribe has progressed towards true kinship.

Here I must bring these remarks to an end. I fear you will think them already far too long. What I have tried to do is, however imperfectly, to indicate the great interest that the social polity and regulations of these Bantu-speaking tribes have for the student of social evolution, and the contribution the study of them can make to the history of society and of civilization.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I cannot omit to acknowledge gratefully my indebtedness in the preparation of the foregoing pages to the counsel and assistance of Dr. William Crooke, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, and Dr. R. R. Marett, whose willing and friendly help on various points has been most valuable.

## II

# IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE LAKE REGION OF CENTRAL AFRICA

By the Rev. Canon JOHN ROSCOE, M.A.

THE first Frazer Lecture was delivered by the learned anthropologist, Dr. Hartland, and I was therefore surprised when I was asked to deliver the second. In accepting this honour I realized that, while there are many more capable anthropologists who would have been proud to address you, yet I am able to impart special knowledge of a part of Africa, which may be of value. At the same time I feel my own unworthiness of this association with the name of Sir James Frazer, whose prodigious studies and indefatigable labours have done so much for the cause of anthropology. I am proud to call myself a disciple of Sir James, to whose inspiration I owe my first love for this important branch of study. It is interesting to see how, during the past few years, anthropology has attracted the attention of some of the greatest minds of this University, and how this study is yearly taking a higher place among the sciences, as its importance becomes more generally recognized. It was at Cambridge that Robertson Smith did his great work in this direction; and it was he who inspired Sir James Frazer to recognize the fascination and value of anthropology. Now Sir James in his turn is inspiring others to give their attention and labours to this study.

Many years ago my interest was aroused by a talk with him; and I have since then made careful observation of one part of Africa. I therefore ask your indulgence while I strive to lay before you some ideas respecting the influence of

immigrants in what is known as the Uganda Protectorate. For years it has been my practice to gather from the oldest members of any tribe of people whom I have chanced to meet information concerning their traditions and customs, with a view to obtaining a more intimate knowledge of their origin and a better understanding of their social and political development. Further I have sought, whenever possible, to obtain indications of age from such witnesses as stone objects and implements.

My investigations lead me to think that there have been at least three distinct races in the Lake region, each of which has left traces of its residence. There may have been others, indeed it is most probable that there were, but we are without definite evidence of more than three. Who the people were who left the earliest traces it is impossible to say, but there are indications that they were people of considerable intelligence. In one spot there are megaliths, some four times the height of a man, built up of great boulders so placed as to represent a giant figure, which was most probably intended to be worshipped; stone implements indicating a knowledge of working in stone have been found; and there are traces of buildings with stone enclosures, built by people whose knowledge of stone work far surpassed that of the inhabitants whom the first European travellers found in the country. In other places, too, we have found holes of considerable depth, which are held by the Government geologist to be the remains of shafts from which ironstone was dug. At the time when I first heard of these, they were regarded as entrances to the home of the god of the underworld, and were considered too sacred to be visited without offerings of cattle, being always approached in fear and trembling. Thirty years ago I found one or two stone objects which were being used as fetishes, and these are now in our Museum. Whether we are to regard these discoveries as indicating a race belonging to a remote stone age or a race of a later date when that age was merging into the iron age, is more than we can decide with our present information. They form, however, proofs

of the existence of an earlier set of immigrants, who have completely vanished, leaving no trace of their manner of life and only a bare indication of their existence.

The next inhabitants of whose existence we have evidence are a less intelligent people, the negroes whose descendants are in the land at the present day. From these it is possible to learn what life was like in the times before the more recent migrations, which latter have considerably changed the country and the manners of the people. In speaking of these negro people, I think it will be best to treat first of the lower orders and to show their development and the influence upon them of contact with Europeans.

The lowest order of these negroids, I think, is the people to be found on the mountain ridges of Ruwenzori and Elgon, whither they have retired in order to be free from the incursions of stronger tribes, especially the later intruders, who were chiefly pastoral.

These groups of negroids are numerous; they seldom deserve the title of a tribe, for they are little more than groups of families, the descendants often of a common parent. The different groups, however, hold aloof from each other and seldom intermarry. Each group has its social divisions or clans, with their distinctive *muziro* or totems by which they recognize relationship and arrange their marriage alliances. The largest of these groups or tribes numbers only about one thousand, and few of them are numerically of importance. Some of these refugees, even to the present day, have resisted the further advance of the conquerors of the plains and maintained their independence. They have also resisted the change of customs which necessarily follows when intercourse with outside peoples is established. To these small tribes and especially to those on Ruwenzori we may look with some confidence for a knowledge of what were the common habits and customs of the tribes who at an earlier date inhabited the plains.

The members of each tribe form their own small communities separate from other tribes, but inter-tribal relations



are on the whole peaceable. Some tribes, such as the Bakyiga and the Bagesu, are of an unfriendly disposition within the tribe, and there is much strife of clan against clan, but at seasons of harvest there is peace, and both men and women can go from village to village to drink beer and form marriage alliances. At such times weapons are laid aside, and men of different clans intermingle without fear, but at other times men who wish to enter the district of another clan go in small parties, well armed. A man is seldom called upon to travel far from his home. Ten miles was probably the extent of an ordinary journey before tribal barriers were broken down by the coming of the British; within such a confined area a man found all that he required for existence. Clothing, if any was worn, consisted of an animal skin roughly dressed and tied, in the case of a woman, round the waist, and in the case of a man, round the neck, leaving one side exposed. Among many tribes clothing, even of skins, is not used; and both men and women go naked. Instead of the skin dress women sometimes make themselves skirts of grass, but unmarried women and girls seldom wear any clothing, and dress is often a sign of marriage. Among these unclothed and semi-clothed people there are certain strict rules of morality, and no man would violate any girl of his own clan.

We find among them no idea of a common ruler and no recognition of a chief of a district. Each small group of huts contains some five or six families who do not accept the authority of any other group. Often the inhabitants of a village are closely related; a father builds his hut soon after marriage, and as his sons grow to marriageable age, they too build near by, and thus the little group of four or five huts composes the village. In other cases two men who are friends build adjoining huts and their sons as they grow up build near by, thus forming a larger village. Seldom, however, do the villages exceed ten huts, because the young men are apt to break away and seek new ground upon which to settle. This may well be accounted for by the desire to avoid friction in settlements where there is no ruler, and the only law is the

word of the oldest member or of the man chosen by common consent to be "father" of the village. His word is generally upheld by other members of the village, and any disturbance is punished by fine, which is as a rule the heaviest penalty imposed. In cases of murder among the Bakyiga, where tempers are uncertain, the culprit, when discovered, is buried alive with his victim. In other crimes a fine is deemed sufficient, though sometimes the culprit is also driven from the village, his goods being confiscated by the elders.

The buildings of these people are of the most primitive construction. The frame consists of a dome of stout sticks which are pushed a few inches into the ground in a circle, and bent over inwards, with their ends tied together by strips of bark; upon this dome grass is laid as thatch, and the building is completed in a few hours. The floor is simply the earth smoothed, and the bed of the owner and his wife consists of a bundle of grass, with a hide thrown upon it in the case of wealthy people, while the children sleep on the bare floor. A fire of wood is kept burning day and night, so that the room is warm, and bedclothing becomes unnecessary.

The staple food is porridge made from the grain of the small millet. This is ground to a coarse gritty flour between two stones; and porridge made of this flour forms the chief meal, which is eaten in the evening about sunset. Sometimes a little food, usually left over from the evening meal, is eaten in the morning, and often a man will roast a few cobs of maize or a sweet potato at noon, but these items are regarded as luxuries rather than necessities. The members of the family sit round the pot, helping themselves with their hands as long as the food lasts. Seasoning for food is a luxury, and a packet of salt is a welcome gift. The food is sometimes dipped into the salt, but more frequently a pot of edible weeds, boiled and mixed with a little salt, is set before the family with the porridge, and each person dips his porridge into the pot before conveying it to his mouth. A man and his wife and their children gather round the same pot for meals.

Marriage customs are simple; and, as the main desire is

to avoid the intermarriage of closely related persons, clan exogamy is the rule. Descent is reckoned through the male line; a man chooses a wife and marries her after paying a marriage fee. The amount of this fee is fixed by the parents in the case of some tribes, but it is more usual for the bride's uncle, her father's brother, in conjunction with her own brother to fix the fee, which is then divided among the members of her father's clan. The amount is reckoned in cows or goats, the cow being the standard of value. In some tribes it is customary for men to exchange their sisters instead of paying any marriage fee. This bartering of women, while it is not regarded as selling them into slavery, has some of the characteristics of bondage, for a woman cannot leave the husband to whom she is thus married without obtaining the consent of her clan and restoring the amount which he paid for her. No woman claims to have any right over the child which she bears, nor can the father claim sole right over it, but it belongs to the clan. When weaned it is taken away to some near relative of the father, and this relative is held responsible to the clan for it. The wife brings her husband's child into the world, but the husband has the right to determine her duties, of which the chief is to provide vegetable food for him. Any clan brother of her husband may approach the woman's couch without fear of her husband's wrath. Should the husband take a second wife, he must build another hut for her in his village. Among those tribes which recognize plurality of wives there is seldom any sign of jealousy.

My observations in East Africa in general lead me to think that where patrilineal descent is followed the husband takes his bride from her home and surroundings to his own clan and relations, but when descent is matrilineal the husband marries his wife and provides a home for her among her own people. The latter custom is followed by the few tribes which I have met in the Tanganyika colony, but in the Lake district descent is always reckoned through the male line.

Among the tribes in the Lake district there are in existence two opposite customs; among some the men allow their clan

brothers the use of their wives, while among others, which are the more enlightened and educated tribes, the men guard their wives and keep them for themselves, and any disobedience in this respect on the part of the wife may be punished by death, even if the offender is a clan brother of her husband.

There is considerable divergence in the method of disposing of the dead, but it seems to me that burial is a recent custom, and that in earlier times the dead were cast out into the bush. Among some of the more primitive usages was the custom of fetching back the chief parts of the body and eating them during the days of mourning. In all cases mourning is important, but the purpose of it is not to express affection and grief, but to safeguard the mourners against the superhuman powers of the ghost. The various customs of dealing with the dead which we now know probably all arose from the belief in a future life, the ghost being able to assist or to hinder people. The ceremonious treatment of the body after death gives the ghost pleasure, whereas its ire would be aroused by careless treatment which would show that its departure from this life was not regretted. The reason given for eating the body, or portions of it, is that this frees the ghost from this world and enables it to go to the other life. Again, the various offerings laid with the body in the grave and the offerings made to it later on are intended to placate the ghost and assure it that it is not forgotten and that its absence is regretted. Ghosts have their own special abode, more often than not near the place of their earthly dwelling, where they observe what is done by their living relatives. This interest of ghosts in the doings of the living has a marked and beneficial effect upon the clan members. Any irregularity is punished by the ghost, especially if it happens to be adultery within the prohibited degree of relationship or marriage. Again a ghost is able to guard the living and to induce the wealthier members of the clan to help its relatives and give them presents.

A common weapon of these primitive people is a heavy club, while the most formidable is a rude iron spear; a few

arrows of wood, sometimes tipped with iron, are also used. Women, the chief workers in the fields, are also the potters, and their pots are thick and clumsy, with few attempts at decoration. They are built up in a spiral fashion, the clay being smoothed with the hand and afterwards with a bit of gourd shell.

Such I imagine were the inhabitants whom the later invaders found dwelling in most parts of the Lake region. We now turn to the later invaders, who are all pastoral people, and who state that their forefathers came from the north or north-east. The question as to who these invaders were is still unanswered, though there is reason to think that they are connected with the Galla tribes. The most conservative of them are the Banyankole, whose social customs have long resisted outside influence and have only begun to break down within my own memory. These pastoral people of Ankole are admitted by the other tribes to be the oldest of the Bahuma tribes in the Lake region. Though this is so, they have retained the purest blood of all the tribes I have examined. This fact I attribute to their religious customs and their belief in sympathetic magic in connection with the milk and cattle customs, as I shall explain in due course. The life of the tribe is entirely devoted to the interests of the cattle. All social customs have to fall into line with what is believed to assist in the increase and welfare of the cattle; all that is considered harmful either to the cows or to the milk must be avoided. The people are nomads, their homes being temporary structures, because in a few days, or at most a few weeks, they must move on to new fields of pasture for their cattle.

When these people first entered the plains with their large herds of cattle, there can have been no cause of friction between them and the original inhabitants. The inhabitants remained attached to their small plots of land which they cultivated to yield their yearly supply of grain and vegetables, while the invaders required the large grassy plains unsuited for agricultural purposes. The two sets of people could thus live in the same district without danger of falling foul of

each other. When, however, friendships were made and the question of intermarriage arose, the pastoral people resented the suggestion of allowing their women to marry agricultural men, though illicit relations between pastoral men and agricultural women might not have aroused resentment, and would have been disregarded so long as the men did not attempt to introduce women of the agricultural class into their homes and clans. These pastoral tribes were totemic and had strict laws regarding clan exogamy. They seem to have restricted generally a man to one wife, unless this wife was childless, in which case it would be permissible for the husband to take a second wife. If a man had reason to divorce his wife, he might take another. It was not a sense of morality that restricted a man to one wife or made him put away his first wife before he took a second, but rather the limited supply of milk. A man must be able to provide a wife with milk, for that was the staple food, and any infringement of this custom was thought to have dire effects upon the cattle and to endanger the existence of the tribe. Polygyny was not actually forbidden, but it was uncommon. Polyandry, on the other hand, was quite common, owing to the inability of many men to procure a sufficient number of cows to pay the marriage fee and afterwards to supply the wife and family with milk as food. Vegetable diet was forbidden, for milk had to be kept apart in the stomach from any vegetable matter. If any man through adverse circumstances was forced to eat such food, he had to fast for a considerable time before drinking milk, to make sure that there was no danger of contaminating the milk and affecting the whole herd by sympathetic magic. After eating vegetable food an aperient was necessary, to make sure that the stomach was cleansed and that there would be no danger in his resuming his milk diet. Other foods often eaten by the agricultural class, such as fish, eggs, or fowls, were regarded with disgust, and there was little need to point out to anyone the necessity of avoiding such things. This formed a safeguard against marriage with other races. Another reason for avoiding marriage with agricultural

women was that they were the chief tillers of the land, and any manual labour which did not minister to the need of the cattle was considered injurious to the herds; pastoral women were expected to be always sleek and fat and to avoid all manner of work. Their presence in the kraal was considered to be beneficial to the herds. A man from the pastoral people would therefore generally refrain from sexual relations with a woman of the agricultural class, lest he should injure the herds by sympathetic magic.

The pastoral people, being of a better physical type and having greater moral courage than the ordinary negro, sooner or later made the agricultural people subservient and assumed lordship over them. This power was exerted when the more influential pastoral men required weapons or household utensils or more durable houses than they were accustomed to build for themselves, the agricultural men being then called upon to give their labour and supply the need. Thus the agricultural people became serfs to their superiors and supplied them with all their necessities, even with the beer which they required for drinking when they ate beef and were not allowed to drink milk. Moreover they took a willing part in any war of their superiors, in the hope of obtaining plunder. The more carefully the customs of these pastoral people are examined, the more impossible it appears for one of their women to marry a man of the agricultural class. She would rather die than suffer the degradation of marrying such a husband.

Morality among young girls of the pastoral class was particularly strict, and a mother was responsible for her daughter's character until she married. If the girl went wrong, she was liable to be put to death together with her seducer, and her parents seldom sought to shield her, but would even be among the first to condemn her. The guilty girl might not go out by the ordinary gate of the enclosure through which the cattle had to pass, but a way was broken in the fence, and through this she was dragged to her death. This rigid enforcement of custom was intended to ensure the safety of

the herd, for the people believed that the cows would cast their calves, or the calves would die, if the guilty person was allowed to live.

It should also be noted that marriage had to take place in the evening. The bride's arrival at her new home was timed to coincide with the return of the cows from pasture, and female calves were taken a little way along the path to meet her and conduct her to her new home. As she entered the kraal, she scattered grain which bears most fruit on the ground upon which the cows stood during the following night. In each case we notice the belief in sympathetic magic; the bride's influence works upon the herd and calves, and the grain strengthens the beneficent effect of her arrival upon the herd.

Though the bride up to the time of her marriage had been carefully guarded against any sexual relations with men, yet after marriage she was expected to welcome to her couch any of her husband's brothers and friends whom he might bring to spend the night with him. Such a reversal of our ideas of morality can only be explained by comparison with the customs adopted for increasing and strengthening the herds.

Having thus briefly stated the extreme cases of the agricultural and pastoral classes which I have been able to examine among the most primitive tribes, it remains to note the influence of these invaders upon the original inhabitants, and the reflex influence upon themselves of contact with agricultural people. For this purpose it is necessary to take particular groups of people. In the first instance I will take the Bakitara, whose milk customs are breaking down, though the process is not yet complete. These people to-day permit, under certain circumstances, pastoral women to marry men from an agricultural tribe. The practice is said to have begun several generations back, when a king found certain men of the agricultural class to be most useful and capable. They were raised to the rank of free-men and told that they might marry any women from the pastoral tribe who were willing to accept them. Their new rank raised them above the



agricultural class, and as they were wealthy, having herds of cattle, there were found women willing to accept them as husbands. These came mostly from the homes of herdsmen who found it difficult to get food for their families or good husbands for their daughters; the change from poverty to comparative wealth was welcome. The men raised to this estate were not allowed to move about among the pastoral people as equals in all respects, but they took their places in councils and were treated with respect. The effect of the intermarriage was reciprocal, for the influence of his wife and his new associations refined the man in many respects, while he enriched the woman and to some extent widened her outlook, especially where food was concerned. Gradually other food was introduced in place of a purely milk diet, and the children became accustomed to partake of vegetable food as a matter of course. We also find new totems introduced, as children evidently took those of both their parents and formed new clans. Agricultural people then began to imitate their superiors in matters of marriage; girls were given in marriage much earlier than formerly, they had a period of preparation for marriage, and the marriage took place in the evening as among the pastoral people. The communistic idea about the wife became universal, and a woman was not called unfaithful if she had relations with a man of her husband's clan. Property became common to the clan and not the sole possession of the individual. The king, however, still claimed a right to any cattle which he might wish to appropriate, though this right was not used freely as heretofore, but only at special times, and the taking of cattle was regarded as levying a tax. In earlier times the eldest son was regarded as the heir, but later this was not always the case, though in the majority of instances he succeeded to the property. The clan had the right of choosing the heir, and the king usually confirmed the choice.

Among the pastoral people milk customs began to be less strictly observed and vegetable food was introduced; people even drank milk soon after a meal of other food. Agricultural

people began; with the consent of their superiors, to keep cows and to improve their existence by imitating the pastoral people. The nomadic life of the pastoral people ceased; only a few herdsmen wandered about with the cattle, while the wealthier cattle-owners settled in some place near the king.

The huts of the pastoral people began to be improved, as the owner settled in a permanent habitation and surrounded himself with subordinates, who would render him assistance either with his herds of cattle or in his fields, or by building for him when necessary, or by fighting, should there be cause. Village life thus sprang into existence, and communities, which before had been restricted to members of the same families, now increased in size and included members of various clans. Under the new conditions of life herds were restricted to special places, and if allowed in the village the animals were kept in enclosures which were always at some distance from the enclosures of the king or the chiefs. This was mainly for reasons of sanitation which now began to be considered. Land assumed a new value; pastoral land was no longer the only land of importance, but areas of arable land were also carefully sought for and zealously guarded. The growth of village communities called for new laws, and these were made by the ruler or king, who during the gradual changes had assumed greater powers. His chief power lay in the fact that he was thought to possess special and superior knowledge, and was regarded as divine or in such close communion with the divinity that he could help the whole nation in difficulties, such as drought, famine, or illness.

With the making of laws came in the idea of taxation. The king, who as a pastoral chief claimed all the cattle, now allowed that claim to be disregarded, but instituted definite ownership of land with rules for bringing to him in return food-stuffs and other things necessary for the new conditions of life. Later there came into existence more extended taxation, not only in the form of food and produce, but also of state labour and annual rent for land occupied, though there was as yet no restriction as to the amount of land a man

might till; each man was free to cultivate land where he would and as much as he wished. The peasants, who were the original owners of the land and free agents, have become the serfs of the chiefs and subjects of the king. The king in turn has had to regulate his laws and customs so as to provide for the serf and his requirements; he has also had to broaden the scope of his religious ceremonies, for in the past these have dealt exclusively with the cattle and their needs.

The agricultural people are beginning to imitate their masters and to change their habits. At marriage the fee is now paid in cows; the bride is prepared for marriage in much the same fashion as a pastoral bride; she goes to her husband in the evening, veiled, and when it is possible she is carried, and she has a period of seclusion after marriage. In some birth customs, too, the pastoral people are followed. The birth of twins is considered to be due to the direct influence of the gods. The parents of twins are favoured with divine interposition and are enabled thereby to dispense gifts and blessings; for this purpose they are gladly welcomed to various places that they may bestow their blessing upon people, cattle, and land. This ceremony they perform by sprinkling the people, cattle, and land with a mixture of sacred white clay and their urine.

Death ceremonies among the agricultural people show a marked change, for now they seldom cast out their dead nor do they, as was the habit in certain places, eat them, but bury them with marks of reverence. The pastoral people continue to make their cattle take a part in the mourning; on the first evening after the death of a chief his cows are not milked, and the calves are kept from them, so that both cows and calves low all night; the mature bulls are not allowed to mate again with the cows, but are killed as soon as possible after the death. During the period of mourning the bulls are killed beside the grave, as offerings to the dead, at intervals of one or two days, to allow time for the meat of the bulls to be eaten by the mourners; they reside near the grave and eat beef, but must not drink milk. The length of the mourning is deter-

mined by the wealth of the deceased and the number of bulls to be killed. Cows are also often dedicated to the dead; these are kept alive, and their milk is daily offered at a shrine; here it stands for a time, and afterwards it is drunk by the heir and certain members of his family as a sacred meal in communion with the ghost.

Changes in religious ideas were also caused by the adaptation and interweaving of the religious opinions of the pastoral and agricultural people. In the religion of both the Creator is shut out from all direct worship, while his sons are supposed to work for him in regulating the affairs of the world. The god of plenty has now to take upon himself not only the care of cattle, but also the interests of agriculture and the welfare of the people. There is not, however, any developed form of worship such as is found among the more advanced people of Buganda. It is still the ghosts who do most for the living; and to these superhuman beings more attention is given than to any of the gods whose worship is professed. Ghosts are said to be able to influence the chiefs and other persons possessing power to help the poor; and they can warn their living relatives when danger threatens them. They can also injure members of other clans and bring troubles such as sickness and death, when asked to do so. It is therefore necessary to keep them in the right frame of mind, lest they should consider themselves neglected or offended through the indiscretion of any member of the clan, and retaliate by causing some calamity; infringement of clan-custom might cause the ghost annoyance, and its displeasure would then be evidenced especially by sickness among the young. It is accordingly to the interest of the clan members to inter the body of the deceased with due respect and afterwards to make sacrifices to him, thus keeping the ghost amiable and securing his help. The pastoral people had fuller and more elaborate usages of dealing with the ghosts, and these have been passed on to the agricultural people, who in earlier times did not honour their dead to such an extent.

From these people of Bunyoro and Ankole we turn to the

Baganda, among whom the greatest progress has been made. Here agricultural and pastoral people have become so fused that no dividing line remains, and the people are merged into one great tribe under a powerful king, who has divided his country into large districts with important chiefs to rule them. The land is the all-important possession, and it has taken the place which the cows originally held. It is regarded as the property of the king who, though he doles it out for management to the chiefs, himself retains the sole right to it. Even the king cannot dispose of it, but must pass it on intact to his successor. The cows have receded to an unimportant place among the necessities of daily life, though they are still reckoned as the standard of wealth. They do not, however, as in Ankole, mark a man by their presence or absence as important or unimportant; this point is decided by the land which he rules as chief. An important chief may have fewer cows than one of his subordinates, for he may have exchanged his cows for wives, lest he should cause some other chief or his king to become jealous and seek to plunder him.

With the fusion of the two classes there came new rules for social life and a more settled form of government. The chiefs are magistrates who hold their courts in their country residences, though litigants have the right to appeal from a lower to a higher court and even, if dissatisfied, to the king's court. Laws are made by the king in open court, and chiefs see to it that they are enforced. The king sends his tax-gatherer annually into each district with instructions as to the sum which he is to collect. The king's residence is a regular town; his enclosure with its hundreds of huts assumes much greater proportions than the royal residence of any neighbouring country. Every chief has both a town and country residence. In the capital a portion of land is granted to him, and he is not allowed to build on any other site; from the capital to his country residence he is required to build a good road and to bridge each river and swamp, thus making it possible to reach the farthest part of the country without trouble.

In regard to marriage customs polygyny, which in earlier

times was exceptional, has become universal; the rule that clan brothers have the right of access to each other's wives ceases, and each man retains his wife or wives as his own property. On the other hand, clan socialism holds good, so that all the property a man may mass together is, at his death, disposed of by the head of the clan in consultation with the leaders of it, and a man's sons may take nothing of their father's without clan consent. Men retain the pastoral dislike to tilling the land, for that is the work of women, while men are builders, warriors, and artisans. The subjugation of surrounding tribes has become a matter of concern to chiefs and their subjects; and there is a marked advance in the workmanship of weapons, pottery, buildings, and in sanitation. The clothing consists of either bark-cloth or well-dressed skins; the home is furnished with beds and other comforts; but it remains a crime for a man to sit on a stool, and a woman would be instantly put to death if she sat on a raised seat.<sup>1</sup> These are survivals of old customs.

The features and physical structure have undergone a considerable change, and few people retain the distinctive Muhuma features. The nose is broader, the lips thicker, and the frame has broadened, while the height is slightly less than that of the pure pastoral tribes.

The advance in religious ideas among the Baganda is great, though the clans still retain their veneration for ghosts and indeed raise them to a much higher position, those of notable persons being given the rank of gods. The ritual of the worship of these gods has become elaborate, and the huts of the priests assume the dignity of temples. In these, together with the priests, there reside mediums, who are able to hold communication with the gods and to give oracles, especially in cases of sickness.

In the position of the national gods we see a great change, since four gods are singled out to meet the particular needs of the nation, the gods of Abundance, of War, of Plague, and of Rain. Each of the first three has his temple, which is kept

<sup>1</sup> With the advent of British rule these customs have ceased.

in repair by the State; he has large estates and possessions, and his chief priest is a person who claims the respect of every chief and with whom even the king is careful to keep on friendly terms. These gods are said to have a divine origin, but we know, from the fact that we have in the University museum the relics of the god of war, that he was a human being, and that the jaw-bone with other relics formed the emblem or figure of the god. The public can approach these gods only occasionally, because offerings of value have to be presented; and only the king and wealthy chiefs can consult them privately. These gods with the exception of the rain-god (Musoke) are terrestrial, but Musoke is celestial. It is evident from the method of obtaining favours from him that the people were at one time in a difficulty. They knew the requirements of the other gods, but with Musoke they were at a loss. To solve the problem they married him to a native woman, who in time became a goddess, and through her the people make their requests to Musoke for rain or fair weather.

There remains one temple more to be mentioned and that perhaps the most important in the land, differing from the others in many respects. It is the temple of a late king. When a king of Buganda died, he was not buried; indeed no one might say that the king was dead, for that would have been to admit that there was some power stronger than his, a fact which was always denied. That the "fire is extinct" was all that might be said; and the king was supposed to be present in another form. The body underwent a long process of mummifying, which lasted six months. It was then taken to a hut on a hill-top in a part of the country which was reserved for the tombs of kings. The body was laid on a frame of wood, and the building was filled with bark-cloths, skin mantles, and other offerings, and sealed by having the entrance blocked and made to look like part of the roof, so that no doorway showed from the outside. Round this tomb the principal widows, with certain important chiefs who held office under the dead king, stood with their backs to the tomb and were clubbed to death. There was no force used in securing these

victims, who went voluntarily, regarding death as an honour, because they expected to accompany the king and retain their offices about him in the other life. A strong fence was built round the tomb forming a courtyard and it was here that these people were killed; there their bodies were left, lying where they fell. Another fence was built round the first, and inside this outer fence captives, often numbering as many as five hundred, were put to death. It took two or three days to kill these victims, and their bodies also were left where they fell, a guard being set to keep off birds and beasts of prey. Certain widows were then sent to take charge of the tomb, their duty being to guard the courtyards and till the land around. At the end of six months a chief opened the tomb and, making his way to the body, removed the jaw-bone, brought it out, and secured the tomb as before. The jaw-bone was cleansed, until it was free from any flesh or perishable matter, and was wrapped in a portion of a lion-skin, which was stitched tightly over it and decorated with beads and cowry-shells. The whole was placed in a stool whose top was fashioned like a bowl; and the stool with its contents was wrapped in a leopard-skin and bark-cloth. The decorated jaw-bone was taken to a temple which the departed king had built during his lifetime within his enclosure. With it was put the stump of the king's umbilical cord, which also was decorated. These relics became the objects to which the ghost of the king attached itself; and a man who had been one of the king's constant attendants during life became the medium through whom any communications with him might be made. This medium was not always under the influence of the ghost; there were times when he might walk about and visit like an ordinary person, but he was required to live in the temple and to be ready at any time to impersonate the king, who was said to take entire possession of him and cause him to lose his own identity. During the process of preparing the body for interment this man, with some of the widows of the departed king, had to drink the beer and milk in which the dead body was daily washed. This was supposed to imbue



them with the qualities of the deceased and fit them for their future offices as mediums and guardians. During the time that the medium was under the influence of the ghost he spoke and gesticulated as the king had done. I have seen and heard one of these mediums when under the spell, and I feel sure the action was hypnotic, probably caused by auto-suggestion.

The king's successor had to build his capital on another site, but this might be near that of his predecessor where the temple stood. The old enclosure was kept in regal state by the new king, the upkeep being a charge upon the State. The reigning king was expected to go once each year to this temple, when he was accompanied by large numbers of people. It was a State visit carried out with all the pomp that the king could command. He entered the temple, the relics were brought before him, and each of them was handed to him for examination. When he left the enclosure, he was supposed to be moved by sad memories of the past and with grief for his predecessor, and suddenly on the road he stood still and commanded that all the people who were within a certain distance on the road should be captured. These were seized by the king's guard, taken back to the temple and offered in sacrifice to the departed to form part of his retinue in the other world. This ended the annual ceremony for the departed king. The point I wish to note is that the belief of the whole nation was such that they not only entered into the ordinary worship of the gods, but took a part even in this and other ceremonies, which involved a large loss of life. In no case of human sacrifice was resentment ever shown by the people; the victims even went willingly to death after capture, though they might attempt to escape capture. The people accepted these things as necessary for the good of the nation.

No two kings might have their temples on the same hill, and no two tombs might be on the same hill, for each hill so occupied became sacred to the king whose temple or tomb was on it. The chiefs and widows were put in charge and members from their clans kept up a relay of guardians, re-

placing anyone who died, so that the traditions were orally handed down from generation to generation with remarkable freshness. The queen was the first chief guardian of the temple, and when she died, her successor was chosen from the princesses.

This lecture would be incomplete without mention of the influence of the Arabs and the British upon the natives during the past few years. First I shall deal briefly with the influence exerted by the Arabs, though they never remained for more than a few years at a time.

Arab traders probably first found their way into Uganda between 1840 and 1850, their object being to purchase slaves and ivory. They carried with them cotton goods, muzzle-loading guns, and a supply of ammunition for bartering. During their stay they introduced various innovations which we must regard as reforms, foremost among them being sanitation and building. They introduced square houses which were more roomy and allowed more light into the rooms than the old beehive huts. A greater improvement was the substitution of the cesspool for the custom of resorting to uncultivated plots in the neighbourhood or to a field near the house. Another reform was the washing with soap; they taught the people to make soap from animal fat mixed with ashes from burnt plantain stems. Further, they taught the making of mats from the fronds of the wild palm trees which are abundant in some parts of the swampy land. Reading and writing in Arabic characters was taught to a few, but did not make great headway, because the Arabs only taught those who wished to adopt the Mussulman faith. The greatest evil they introduced was venereal disease, spread through the princesses. These women were many and were free to roam about as they wished, but were not allowed to marry. They soon found that the Arabs were willing to pay them in goods if they would go and live with them. These princesses carried the infection to their other paramours, the chiefs, who in their turn spread the disease through their wives. Though the Arabs did not spend many years in the country, they left

behind them marked changes, most of which were on the whole beneficial.

It is, however, to the British that we must give the credit for the great and lasting reforms in this region; and these are still in progress. The missionaries taught new religious ideas and ended the toll of human sacrifice; they also taught arts and crafts, so that now there are to be found carpenters, brickmakers, bricklayers, printers, and other artisans, while reading and writing have spread apace. Since the British Government took over the country, good roads have been made upon which motor traffic, worked by natives, is daily passing. Motor bicycles are to be seen and even motor cars, used by chiefs and progressive wealthy men. The lake is navigated by good ships, many of them manned by natives; there are telegraphs worked by natives; and they have also large estates where cotton is grown and ginneries worked, so that the cotton is made ready for shipment entirely by the labour of natives. In the offices of the Government natives are to be found as trusted clerks, and their country is managed by them in a creditable manner. These wonderful improvements have come about through the presence of the British, who are still working there among them and treat them as friends and helpers.

Old customs have broken down, and wherever this has happened, before anything of a better nature could take their place, vices have crept in, which are corrupting the natives. It is a time of transition from the old heathen customs to Christianity and Western civilization, and for the moment the people are in many cases suffering. What we can confidently say is that there are many noble characters in this wide area; and it is to be hoped that the natives will in the long run emerge a splendid race with the best of the British traditions as their ideals.

### III

## THE AGE OF THE GODS

By W. J. PERRY, M.A., D.Sc.

THE day has not yet dawned when we can appreciate fully the contribution to learning of the great scholar in whose honour these lectures have been founded. The series of volumes published by Sir James Frazer, all of them bearing witness to his genius, constitutes a literary monument that will stand for ever as a landmark in the history of learning. His activities have been so varied, he has opened up so many fields of inquiry, that few are competent to gauge the extent of his originality. Who else could have compiled a four-volume treatise on *Totemism and Exogamy*, dealing with one of the most difficult problems of social anthropology, and also have edited the work of *Pausanias* in six volumes, replete with classical learning, and have carried out the historical investigations embodied in his *Adonis, Attis, and Osiris*, which, I venture to believe, is his greatest work, in addition to the production of many other volumes of *The Golden Bough*?

The object of this lecture, which I had the honour of delivering before the University of Glasgow, is to offer a few observations on a topic that runs like a thread of gold through the many-hued tapestry woven by the brain of Sir James Frazer. I refer, of course, to the Divine Kingship, to the study of which he has devoted the great bulk of the mass of learning that constitutes *The Golden Bough*.

I propose, in this place, to sketch, in brief outline, some

of the generalizations concerning the divine kingship that emerge from a wide comparative study of that social institution.

Let us plot out on a map the distribution of the great civilizations of the world, excluding, of course, the modern civilization of Western Europe and its ramifications. We observe at once that they occupy a fairly continuous area. First we have the civilizations of the Ancient East. These include Egypt, Babylonia, Crete, Syria, Persia, and India, to mention the most important. It is among this group of peoples that mankind first emerged into the light of history. We are able in this area to read of events dating as far back as the fourth millennium before Christ. From that remote period until the dawn of Classical Greece, the Ancient East continued to radiate its influence in all directions. In Europe, for example, the development of prehistoric civilization, in the so-called Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages, is clearly the outcome of the radiation of the cultural influences of the highly civilized peoples of the Ancient East. If we include Classical Greece with the peoples of the Ancient East, we may say that the tutelage of Western Europe lasted until the Renaissance. That is to say, Western and Northern Europe, now in the forefront of civilization, formed originally a belt of less civilized peoples contiguous to the advanced peoples of the Ancient East and Greece.

The same phenomenon may be witnessed in other parts of the world. It is becoming daily more apparent that the civilizations of Eastern Asia owed their establishment to the peoples of the Ancient East. In their turn these outlying civilizations gave rise to others. For example, Indian civilization was transplanted to Java, as well as to Cambodia and elsewhere in Indo-China. The Hindu states in Java founded daughter-settlements in the great chain of islands running east to Timor, as well as round the coast of Borneo and other islands of the great archipelago of the East Indies.

America provides a similar instance. The central area, from Mexico to Peru, was the seat of the greatest civiliza-

tions. The outlying parts of North and South America clearly owe their cultural capital to this central source.

Some of us are convinced that American civilization was introduced from Asia. There was plenty of time for the transplantation to have taken place; for the most liberal estimate can hardly assign the beginnings of the Maya civilization to a date earlier than the fourth century of our era; and the beginnings of Peruvian civilization can hardly have been much earlier than the time of Christ. It is not necessary, however, to stress this point.

This rapid survey shows in all parts of the world the workings of a continuous process. First in the central area are the oldest civilizations. These in their turn have given rise, in the outlying areas, to daughter-settlements that are usually on a lower level of culture. These daughter-settlements in their turn gave rise to others.

This vast historical process has thus given rise to a belt of less highly civilized food-producing peoples surrounding the area of the great civilizations of antiquity. This belt includes communities possessing a vast range of culture. If we place the beginnings of food production at about 4000 B.C., it follows that the process has been at work for at least 6000 years. It is already becoming obvious that the great majority of food-producing societies are the result of this process; and it is clear, to some of us at least, that every food-producing people will ultimately be swept into the net. By this I mean that every man who cultivates the soil, or breeds animals for food, does so, not on his own initiative, but because he has been taught so to do. He is one of a chain of food-producers reaching back to the beginning of that craft.

The realization of this process necessitates the adoption of a definite and, I fear, unpopular attitude towards the beliefs and practices of peoples of the lower culture. They are often called "primitive". Their customs are assumed to be those appropriate to the mentality of men who are in the early stages of the development of culture. No attempt is made, by the great majority of students, to estimate the value of this

so-called "primitive" culture. The statements of the peoples themselves are usually ignored, or treated as childish fancies. It seems indeed hopeless for the Australian native to explain that his people had nothing to do with the elaboration of the complicated social regulations and ceremonials that they possess. When he says that his ancestors were taught their customs by wonderful strangers, who often came from the sky, and returned there after a time, no serious attention is paid to him. On the contrary these culture-heroes are explained away; they are rarely treated as actual human beings. Yet, throughout the world, peoples of all degrees of culture unite in disclaiming any credit for the inauguration of their customs, and unanimously ascribe them to the teaching of strangers more highly civilized than themselves.

I do not know of any people of the lower culture who claim to have originated any important element of their culture. Minor variations may occur from time to time, but even these variations are in the direction of simplification, or degradation, rather than of invention or elaboration. Indeed, we may take it as an axiom that every food-producing community owes its cultural capital to some source outside itself, and characterizes this source as being on a higher cultural level than itself. It is for those who persist in treating modern savages as "primitives", without any inquiries into the basis of their assumption, to produce cogent evidence for the spontaneous development of custom, and thus provide a refutation of savage beliefs concerning the origins of these customs. Until this is done, the only reasonable course is to accept savage tradition as substantially correct. Each savage community throughout the ages receives its cultural capital from another community of a higher order of civilization, and hands it on generation by generation, without adding anything substantial to it. Therefore, if we take any modern savage community at random, and trace back its cultural connections, we should be ascending a cultural ladder. We should be working back into the more advanced civilizations

of the past, and should finally reach the ultimate source of that culture.

Savage tradition, in ascribing cultural endowment to more highly civilized peoples, is therefore in close agreement with the findings of history. Obviously we have been observing the same process from opposite ends. We began by studying the broad facts of the distribution of culture, and then turned to the consideration of the traditions of modern savages. In both cases the result was the same. We are faced with a group of early civilizations concentrated in the Ancient East, including Classical Greece, which have supplied the rest of the world throughout the ages with its cultural capital. Leaving America on one side for the time being, we seek in vain, through the comparative study of culture, or of native tradition, for evidence of any serious contribution to culture among peoples of the outlying areas.

The traditions of less civilized peoples of to-day usually ascribe the beginnings of their culture to gods, or divinely descended strangers. They tell us, in each such instance, that their age was preceded by an Age of the Gods.

We may begin the study of these divine or semi-divine beings from two different standpoints. These standpoints rest on the two generalizations that have just been laid down. From the point of view of savage society, gods represent a body of experiences of which they themselves are ignorant. These lowly peoples only know their gods as strangers coming from outside to found their society. Sometimes we are told that they came from the sky; or we are told that they came from some other country, some other island; or we may be told simply the bare fact of their arrival. These strangers sometimes went away again after instructing the people in certain aspects of culture. For instance, certain tribes of Australia assert that they owed the whole of their culture to beings such as Bunjil, Daramulun, Baiame, to mention a few of them. These beings belong to a world in the sky, to which certain favoured persons, such as doctors, alone have access. The Australian natives know nothing concerning the history



of these beings before they arrived among them. They are not aware of the conditions of culture in the great archipelagoes that ring their continent round on north and east, whence their culture-heroes probably came. For them initiation ceremonies have to be carried out because the great All-Fathers so ordained. They have no idea how the All-Fathers came by these ceremonies, and they do not seem inclined to inquire into the matter. They are interested in ceremonies only in so far as they directly affect their lives.

Culture-heroes of this type figure in the traditions of many savage peoples. The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona; the Bontoc, Igorot, Ifugao, and other mountain tribes of the Philippines; and some of the tribes of Central Celebes, may be cited as instances. They agree in ascribing their cultural beginnings to beings resembling the All-Fathers of Australia. They display an ignorance like that of the Australians about the real significance of these beings. They all agree, however, in regarding these beings as immeasurably superior to themselves in knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

These culture-heroes, associated as they are so frequently with the sky-world, must be regarded as "gods", or, at least, as "demi-gods". At the same time it is impossible when we study native tradition to ignore the essentially human attributes of these beings.

I have already stressed this point in *The Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*. I mentioned, among other instances, the ruler of the Toradja state of Makale in Celebes, who claimed descent from the supreme being; also the case of Lowalangi, a supreme being of South Nias, who is said to have planted trees in certain villages of that island. These instances led me to abandon the use of the word "god" in that book, and to speak only of "sky-beings". In this way I was enabled to speak without prejudice of beings who partook of both "divine" and human natures.

<sup>1</sup> See W. J. Perry, *The Children of the Sun* (London, 1923); *idem*, *The Megalithic Culture of Indonesia* (Manchester, 1918), for evidence concerning these beings.

Sky-beings of a similar nature are said to have founded ruling groups in many places. I have already cited in previous writings many examples of this process. One of the best-known examples is that of Japan. The Mikado is in the direct line of descent from Jimnu Tenno, the grandson of Amaterasu, the sun goddess, who sent him down with a group of followers to inaugurate the earthly kingdom of Japan. Greek mythology affords many examples of the foundation, by sky-beings, of dynasties in various parts of the eastern Mediterranean.

There is no essential difference between culture-heroes, such as we learn of in Australia, and sky-beings who found kingdoms. We are told, for example, that the Bontoc of Luzon in the Philippines owed their culture to a sky-being named Lumawig. He married a Bontoc woman, and afterwards returned to the sky. The Bontoc tell us why he did not found a ruling house. His sons were killed, for some reason or other, and their graves are still to be seen near the village of Bontoc itself.

Native tradition throughout the world thus records the coming of wonderful strangers, bearing with them many gifts of knowledge. In rare instances, such as that of the Natchez of Louisiana, the provenance of the sky-born strangers is known. Usually complete ignorance is shown on this matter.<sup>1</sup>

A comprehensive survey of the peoples of lower culture goes to show that these widespread groups of civilizing sky-beings bear a resemblance to one another. In collecting the material for *The Megalithic Culture of Indonesia* I was struck by the fact that in Central Celebes; in Minahassa; in the Philippines; in Timor, the culture-heroes and founders of dynasties called themselves the Children of the Sun. Further inquiry revealed a similar condition of affairs in other parts of the world. The Children of the Sun were the bringers of civilization to the island world of the Pacific. They were the founders of the civilization of the whole of America. They

<sup>1</sup> *The Children of the Sun*, p. 167.

played an important part in the mythology of Greece. The oldest-known royal families of India and Persia, as well as of the Hittites, were solar in origin. The claim to solar descent was made by certain of the post-diluvian kings of Sumer. The early royal families of the Celts belonged to the same great group. The title of Son of the Sun was used by the kings of Egypt for thousands of years.

We have now arrived at the point at which we can review culture-heroes and founders of dynasties historically; for the list just compiled contains both mythology and history. The Children of the Sun colonized Samoa; they have long since disappeared from that archipelago. The Children of the Sun ruled over Egypt through many historical centuries. Solar dynasties still survive in South-Eastern Asia as well as in Japan. From whichever direction we approach this widespread group, the mythological or the historical, the result is the same. The facts agree harmoniously, and point to the conclusion that in the past there was a vast dispersion of the Children of the Sun throughout the world. They were responsible for the foundation of kingdoms in a host of countries.

There is ample time for this spread to have taken place. The earliest instance known to me of the use of the title "Son of the Sun" is that of Dedkere-Isesi, the eighth king of the 5th dynasty in Egypt, about 2600 B.C. The foundation of the kingdom of Japan is probably not earlier than 600 B.C. The foundation of the Maya civilization of Guatemala and Honduras was many years later. This allows about 3000 years for the Children of the Sun to pass from the Ancient East to America.

Mythology and history are at one upon another point. Native tradition throughout the world accords divine honours to the sky-beings to whom they owe so much. The historical Children of the Sun, as, for example, in Egypt, were incarnate gods. The king of Egypt was addressed as a god; in the temple ritual he was the equal of the gods; he even worshipped himself as a god, as is shown, for

example, in the inscriptions of the Sed Festival in the temple of Bubastis.<sup>1</sup>

It is remarkable that the country where the divine kingship can be studied in its earliest form, by the aid of written records, should have possessed the closest approximation of human beings to godhead. I know of no other human society to compare with Egypt in this respect.

It will probably be argued that the Egyptian kingship was the product of a long prior development. Some Egyptologists, for example, speak of a "tribal stage", of a "totemic stage", out of which dynastic Egypt gradually emerged. In the minds of these scholars there probably lurks the conviction that modern food-producing savages provide evidence concerning the prehistoric phases of Egyptian culture. In that case they are begging the question. Modern savages are modern savages; the Egyptians emerged into history more than five thousand years ago—a vast lacuna to be filled up. Moreover, the Egyptian kingship appears to have assumed its salient characteristics within a very few years. The literary texts and material remains reveal little or no signs of any lengthy prior development.

It will, I am convinced, eventually be seen that the earliest kingship was the most closely allied to divinity. The Age of the Gods rapidly reached its climax. Degeneration and decay, and ultimate extinction, was the fate of the divine kingship of antiquity.

The Age of the Gods was largely bound up with the Children of the Sun. When we survey the widespread groups of Children of the Sun we find that they have often died out. It might be said that this is only what would be expected. Dynasties cannot go on for ever. The failure of Lumawig to found a solar line among the Bontoc is a case in point. We are told that the solar kings of Sonabait in Timor were killed because of **their** cruelty. All manner of means might be quoted to account for the disappearance of individual groups.

Certain instances of the disappearance of the Children of

<sup>1</sup> Edouard Naville, *The Festival Hall of Osorkon II*. (London, 1892), Pl. 6.

the Sun, however, suggest that this complacency is ill-founded. We are sometimes told explicitly the circumstances of the extinction of the royal line. My attention became directed towards this matter in the case of the Samoan branch. The traditional accounts state that the Children of the Sun fished up the islands of the archipelago from the depths of the ocean, and then came down from the sky world to people it. The earliest rulers were of the pure solar line. They ruled over a kingdom with a complicated hierarchy. The ruling family was divided into two divisions, and the king married a woman from each. The sons of these two unions provided the two most important chiefs. The ruler himself was of pure solar lineage on both sides. He married, in the first place, a woman of solar rank. Their son was the supreme ruler. The king also married a woman of another branch, associated with the underworld. This union provided the next important chief. He was the secular or war chief, and bore the title of Tui. We are told that the superior chieftainship died out because the reigning chief could not find a woman of equal rank to be his wife, so there was no son to carry on the title. Henceforth, we are told, the Tui chief was the most exalted in rank. This episode evidently was of supreme importance to the Samoans. They say that when the break occurred Samoa was no longer ruled over by immortal kings, but by a mortal. The Age of the Gods had ended. The Tui chiefs are highest in rank in Samoa, Fiji, and Tonga. The Tui chiefs of Tonga, like those of Samoa, head their genealogy with the Son of the Sun. The Bugi state of Macassar in Southern Celebes has a similar tradition concerning the extinction of its solar line of kings. The lack of a princess of pure lineage causes the extinction of this high office.

The instances just quoted are remarkable in that they mark, in each case, the end of an epoch. The traditions state that the earliest ruling groups were "immortal", that at a certain definite time a break occurred, and that henceforth the kings were mortal.

An illuminating instance of this break is provided by the

Sumerian and Babylonian accounts of the Flood. The pre-diluvian kings lived lives of fabulous length. The story recounts that the last of these pre-diluvian kings gained immortality. We are told that he sailed across the flood-waters in a boat belonging to the sun god, and arrived at the Isles of the Blest, where he enjoyed immortal life. This privilege ceased with him. The Epic of Gilgamesh recounts an unsuccessful attempt to regain this privilege.<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous accounts of the loss of immortality. So far as I am aware, the loss is permanent. Tradition, in such cases, usually ascribes the knowledge to the sky-beings, and reveals ignorance on the part of ordinary mortals of the means whereby immortality is gained.

We may say, in general, that the Children of the Sun took with them throughout the world the knowledge of ritual procedures that were supposed to procure a conscious life in the hereafter, which may be termed "immortality". This knowledge disappeared with them in the outlying parts of the world. The gods mounted the rainbow into Valhalla, and the Age of the Gods came to an end, to live on in the memories of widespread groups of peoples.

It is interesting to inquire into the historical traditions of the Children of the Sun themselves. The literature of ancient India provides the necessary material. Sanskrit and later writings describe the spread of solar dynasties throughout India. Solar kings ruled in that country from the very beginning of history.

The Children of the Sun throughout the world contracted incestuous marriages. It is well known that the Incas of Peru married their sisters. The Pharaohs of Egypt in many cases married their sisters, and this practice became so general

<sup>1</sup> It is still necessary to controvert the prevailing assumption that the story of the Flood was based upon the tradition of a primordial catastrophe. This is yet another instance of the widespread *a priori* attitude towards tradition. The story of the Flood is closely bound up with the attainment of immortality. We have to account for the king who achieved immortality, and sailed away in the sun gods' boat across the waters to the Isles of the Blest.

that it was even adopted by the Greek rulers of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Thus the celebrated Cleopatra was wife to her two brothers in succession, and Ptolemy II., Philadelphus, married his sister Arsinoe. It is perhaps not so widely known that the solar kings of India practised the same custom. The hymns of the *Rig-Veda* refer to Yama, a son of the sun, who is said to have found out the way to the land of the dead. He is said, in some accounts, to have married his sister Yami. Other accounts say that she wished to marry him, but he refused.<sup>1</sup>

The close associations between the early ruling groups of India and Persia are well known. Yima corresponds in Persia to Yama in India. Yima was a son of the sun, who married his sister. That is to say, the practice of brother-sister marriage was orthodox in Persia, but had lapsed in India. The Brahmana texts likewise contain an account of Manu, the survivor of the Flood, who begat the human race through his daughter.<sup>2</sup> Prajapati, the great figure who stands behind the Brahmanas, likewise begat men through his daughter.<sup>3</sup>

The figures of Yama, Manu, and Prajapati are traditional; they represent a state of affairs that has long since passed away. But it would seem that the practice of incestuous unions persisted in India down to historical times.

The Indian evidence known to me is largely derived from the Buddhist Chronicles. Hardy, in his *Manual of Buddhism*, says: "In the beginning of the present antah-kalpa, the monarch Maha Sammata, of the race of the Sun, received existence by the apparitional birth. As it was with the unanimous consent, or appointment, sammata, of the beings concerned, that he was anointed king, he was called Maha Sammata. The glory proceeding from his body was like that of the sun. By the power of irdhi he was able to seat himself in the air without any visible support."<sup>4</sup>

This description is characteristic of the solar race. The

<sup>1</sup> *Rig-Veda*, x.  
etc.), i. 8, 1.

<sup>2</sup> J. Eggeling, *Satapatha Brahmana* (Oxford, 1882,

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 5, 3; i. 7, 4.

<sup>4</sup> R. Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism* (London, 1853), p. 125.

Chronicle then proceeds to recount the descent of this great king down to the time of the Buddha himself. The Buddha belonged to the Sakhya branch of the solar line. This branch originated at Kapilavastu.

The story of the foundation of Kapilavastu is as follows: One of the inferior queens of King Amba, or Okkaka, managed, by means of an intrigue, to secure the succession to the throne for her son. The royal princes, in consequence, went away with a vast concourse of people and founded Kapilavastu. The old king said to them on parting, "My sons, I have thoughtlessly given to another the kingdom that rightfully belongs to you. These women are witches, and have overcome my better judgment by their wiles; Janta will be my successor; therefore take whatever treasures you wish, except the five which belong to the regalia, and as many people as will follow you, and go to some other place that you may there take up your abode."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note, in passing, that the princes were not to take the regalia with them. The possession of these objects was evidently necessary for the integrity of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

The princes went with a great concourse of people and founded a city. "When the five sisters (there were four brothers) heard of their departure, they thought that there would be no one now to care for them, as their brothers were gone; so they resolved to follow them and joined them, with such treasures as they could collect."

The question of marriage soon arose. The princes said: "If we send to any of the inferior kings to ask their daughters in marriage, it will be a dishonour to the Okkaka race; and if we give our sisters to their princes, it will be an equal dishonour; it will therefore be better to stain the purity of our relationship than that of our race". They therefore appointed the eldest sister as Queen-Mother and each of the younger princes took one of his sisters to wife. Their father, when he

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Hardy, *op. cit.* pp. 130 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> I have already discussed the significance of regalia in *The Children of the Sun*, p. 390.



heard of this action on the part of his children, was delighted. He exclaimed: "The princes are skilful in preserving the purity of our race". Hence the adoption of the term "Sakhya".<sup>1</sup>

The fortunes of the solar race of Kapilavastu can be followed still further. The Sakhya family founded dynasties in Burma and Ceylon, as well as throughout India. "The Glass Palace Chronicle" of Burma, written in 1829 at the command of King Bagyidaw, recounts the foundation of the kingdom of Tagaung in Burma by Abhiraja, a member of the Sakhya family, a son of the sun. His sons carried on the dynasty, which lasted till thirty-three kings had reigned, all of them, presumably, of pure solar blood. The kingdom finally broke up and gave rise to others.

Tagaung was restored by another solar prince of Sakhya line, named Dhajaraja. He came from India after the break-up of the Sakhyan kingdom. He found in Burma a princess of pure solar blood, and married her, thus keeping the line pure. This princess was a descendant in the pure line of Abhiraja, the original founder of Tagaung. Dhajaraja built a palace and fortifications. He was installed as ruler, his wife being associated with him in the consecration ceremony.<sup>2</sup>

This imperial solar line died out. It will be remembered that the founders of Kapilavastu preserved the purity of their line by marrying their sisters. It is also mentioned in the case of Dhajaraja of Tagaung, that he was consecrated after he had found a princess of solar line to be his queen. It would seem, therefore, that the failure of a wife of pure solar blood would mean the failure of the Children of the Sun. Indian annalists were well aware of this. The Buddhist annals speak of the descendants of Muchalinda, a descendant of Maha Sammata. These were sixty thousand in number, and spread throughout the whole of Jambudwipa, founding many kingdoms; but since they were all descended from Maha Sammata, they were

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Hardy, *op. cit.* p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 1 sqq.

all of the same race. Their descendants, however, in the course of time neglected to keep up the purity of their blood, and other races were formed.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the migration of Dhajaraja reveals the same ideas at work. He came to Tagaung because the solar line had been extinguished by a prince who was suffering from an injustice. A certain king sought the daughter of another, both of them presumably of Sakhya race. The other king, anxious to preserve the purity of his race, gave him not a princess of the blood royal, but a daughter by a slave-woman. The son of the union vowed vengeance and took it; hence the flight of Dhajaraja to Burma.

The Chronicles of Ceylon, especially the *Mahavamsa*, give precisely similar information about the Children of the Sun in that island. The founder of the solar line in Ceylon was Vijaya. He was the son of an orthodox solar marriage, between brother and sister. His mother gave birth on sixteen occasions to twin children—Vijaya, the eldest, was sent away because of his violent behaviour. He went to Ceylon, and landed there with seven hundred officers of state, who proceeded to divide up the territory and to give their names to the divisions.<sup>2</sup>

An interesting passage now occurs in the Chronicle. "Thus these followers, having formed many settlements, giving to them their own name; thereafter having held a consultation, they solicited their ruler to assume the office of sovereign. The king, on account of his not having a queen-consort of equal rank to himself, was indifferent at that time to his inauguration." The nobles therefore sent a deputation to the king of Southern Madhura, in India, with presents, and demanded of him a daughter. They went, so it was said, in search of a royal virgin.

The king of Madhura agreed and sent his daughter. He also sent the daughters of seven hundred of his state officials to marry the officials of Vijaya.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Hardy, *op. cit.* p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> G. Turnour, *The Mahavamsa* (Ceylon, 1837), pp. 46 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

The *Mahavamsa* says that the nobles of Vijaya insisted upon his consecration. This means to say that the states ruled over by the Children of the Sun could not function properly until the supreme ruler had been inaugurated. The evidence we have shows clearly that this inauguration required the presence of a queen-consort of equal rank. In some cases this queen was the sister of the king; in others she was evidently unrelated, or distantly related, but of pure solar descent.

The accounts of the foundations of kingdoms in India, Burma, and Ceylon show us once again that the Children of the Sun moved about the world with large numbers of followers. Wherever they settled they took with them the organization of the state. These solar dynasties were constantly breaking up and giving rise to others, often as the result of internal strife.

These daughter-settlements were of two kinds, as we have seen. The first were ruled over by a king and queen of pure lineage, directly descended from the Sun, with divine prerogatives, including the privilege of immortality. The second type of daughter-settlement was founded by rulers of less exalted rank, usually the outcome of the union between a solar king and a queen of inferior rank.

This evidence serves to emphasize the distinction between the Age of the Gods and that which followed. At the same time native annals suggest a thread of continuity running through this process of proliferation. The claim of the Tui chiefs of Samoa and Tonga to descent from rulers of the pure solar line is thus substantiated fully in Indian records.

The accounts of the foundation of states in Burma and Ceylon are also illuminating in that they show that the organization of the state, with its hierarchy of officials, was transplanted from place to place. There is seemingly no question of the spontaneous development of state organization. The great concern of the ruling group is to preserve intact the traditional institutions to which they are accustomed.

The traditions of Samoa and Tonga, just mentioned, reveal a like preoccupation with the past. They claim con-

tinuity with the bygone Age of the Gods, and make no pretensions to originality themselves. It would therefore appear that we have to seek the origin of tribal organization; the totemic clan system; the dual organization; and other social institutions of savage peoples, among the more advanced civilizations of antiquity, and not among modern savages themselves.

The Buddhist annals of India, Burma, and Ceylon are full of fascinating information, much of it of high importance to the student. I must forbear in this place to follow up these clues in detail; but I cannot resist the temptation to mention one point.

The cross-cousin marriage has for many years intrigued anthropologists. Many savage communities lay it down as a rule, or as desirable, that a man should marry the daughter of his mother's brother or of his father's sister. This is known as the cross-cousin marriage. It occurs widely throughout Australia and is found in certain parts of Melanesia, Indonesia, and India, to mention only a few areas.

I do not intend to discuss this matter at length—I merely wish to point out one fact that is in danger of being overlooked, viz. its widespread occurrence among royal families. In *The Children of the Sun* I have recorded instances in which royal families systematically practised cross-cousin marriages.<sup>1</sup>

It will be remembered that the solar ruling families of India trace their descent back to incestuous unions, particularly between brother and sister. These unions in course of time ceased to be practised and other forms of marriage took their place.

The *Mahavamsa* of Ceylon gives certain details concerning the genealogy of Gotama Buddha. Gotama, we are shown in his genealogical tree, was in the direct line of descent of the solar kings of Kapilavastu, the Sakhya kings. He married the daughter of his mother's brother. In so doing he was following the practice of his family.

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 373-374.

For all the recorded unions in his family tree are cross-cousin marriages. Moreover they are marriages in which brother and sister marry sister and brother. Thus Buddha's father's sister married his mother's brother. In like manner Buddha's father's father married the sister of his mother's father; and his father's mother married the brother of his mother's mother. This is not the whole of the story. The Buddha belonged to the pure Sakhyan family that originated at Kapilavastu. His wife, on the other hand, belonged to another ruling family that originated at Koli. In like manner his parents belonged to these two families; his father was Sakhya by descent, and his brother was Koliya; similarly with his father's father and father's mother. That is to say, the Sakhya family provided the males in Buddha's ancestry, while the Koliya family provided their wives. On the other hand, in the family of Buddha's wife, the Koliya family, the marriages were between Koliya men and Sakhya women.<sup>1</sup> Thus the evidence, so far as it goes, reveals to us two closely interrelated families, intermarrying and continuously practising cross-cousin marriages.

There is a story to account for this. The sister chosen to be the queen mother of Kapilavastu became stricken with leprosy, and retired to the forest. There she met Rama, king of Benares, likewise afflicted. They became cured, married, and founded the city of Koli. Thirty-two sons were born to this union. These sons married the thirty-two daughters of the four kings of Kapilavastu. Henceforth it became the custom for the rulers of Kapilavastu and Koli to intermarry in this manner, *i.e.* to exchange daughters as consorts to their sons.

It is evident that this practice was kept up down to the time of Buddha.

I do not propose to enter into an extended discussion of the cross-cousin marriage. It seems to me, however, that any theory of the cross-cousin marriage cannot afford to

<sup>1</sup> G. Turnour, *op. cit.* pp. 9-10; R. S. Hardy, *op. cit.* pp. 134-137; A. M. Hocart, "Buddha and Devadatta", *Indian Antiquary*, liv. (1925), p. 98.

neglect these instances. The fact that an important branch of the children of the sun deliberately practised the cross-cousin marriage at least as early as the sixth century B.C. either as a modification of, or as a substitute for, the brother-sister marriage, cannot be ignored. The associations of the cross-cousin marriage amongst modern savages are such as to suggest the influence of culture-heroes and ruling houses.

The dependence of solar dynasties on pure-blooded marriages for their continuance raises an interesting point. It is well known that the Egyptian royal family adopted the title of "Son of the Sun" during the 5th dynasty. We know of at least four preceding dynasties during which this title was not used. In the outlying parts of the world—in Peru, for instance—the Children of the Sun have come from elsewhere with their organization ready-made. In view of their practice, from the beginning, of incestuous, or full-blooded marriages, presumably they must have come from some other country ruled over by solar kings. They would be like the Suns of the Natchez of Louisiana, who claimed to be descended from immigrants who came from a country in the southwest ruled over by many Suns. Each solar dynasty of India descends in turn from a preceding solar dynasty. Go where we will, we find solar dynasties claiming descent from solar dynasties. Each solar king or queen must, by birth or adoption, be of pure solar rank. The conclusion, therefore, seems forced upon us that the various groups of Children of the Sun throughout the world are derived from one primordial stock.

## IV

### MYTH IN PRIMITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

By BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI, Ph.D., D.Sc.

DEDICATION TO SIR JAMES FRAZER

IF I had the power of evoking the past, I should like to lead you back some twenty years to an old Slavonic university town—I mean the town of Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland and the seat of the oldest university in eastern Europe. I could then show you a student leaving the mediaeval college buildings, obviously in some distress of mind, hugging, however, under his arm, as the only solace of his troubles, three green volumes with the well-known golden imprint, a beautiful conventionalized design of mistletoe—the symbol of *The Golden Bough*.

I had just then been ordered to abandon for a time my physical and chemical research because of ill-health, but I was allowed to follow up a favourite side-line of study, and I decided to make my first attempt to read an English masterpiece in the original. Perhaps my mental distress would have been lessened, had I been allowed to look into the future and to foresee the present occasion, on which I have the great privilege of delivering an address in honour of Sir James Frazer to a distinguished audience, in the language of *The Golden Bough* itself.

For no sooner had I begun to read this great work than I became immersed in it and enslaved by it. I realized then that anthropology, as presented by Sir James Frazer, is a great science, worthy of as much devotion as any of her elder

and more exact sister-studies, and I became bound to the service of Frazerian anthropology.

We are gathered here to celebrate the annual totemic festival of *The Golden Bough*; to revive and strengthen the bonds of anthropological union; to commune with the source and symbol of our anthropological interest and affection. I am but your humble spokesman, in expressing our joint admiration to the great writer and his classical works: *The Golden Bough*, *Totemism and Exogamy*, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, *Psyche's Task*, and *The Belief in Immortality*. As a true officiating magician in a savage tribe would have to do, I have to recite the whole list, so that the spirit of the works (their *mana*) may dwell among us.

In all this, my task is pleasant and in a way easy, for implicit in whatever I may say is a tribute to him whom I have always regarded as the "Master". On the other hand, this very circumstance also makes my task difficult, for having received so much, I fear I may not have enough to show in return. I have therefore decided to keep my peace even while I am addressing you—to let another one speak through my mouth, another one who has been to Sir James Frazer an inspiration and a lifelong friend, as Sir James has been to us. This other one, I need hardly tell you, is the modern representative of primitive man, the contemporary savage, whose thoughts, whose feelings, whose very life-breath pervades all that Frazer has written.

In other words, I shall not try to serve up any theories of my own, but instead I shall lay before you some results of my anthropological field-work, carried out in north-west Melanesia. I shall restrict myself, moreover, to a subject upon which Sir James Frazer has not directly concentrated his attention, but in which, as I shall try to show you, his influence is as fruitful as in those many subjects that he has made his own.



## THE RÔLE OF MYTH IN LIFE

By the examination of a typical Melanesian culture and by a survey of the opinions, traditions, and behaviour of these natives, I propose to show how deeply the sacred tradition, the myth, enters into their pursuits, and how strongly it controls their moral and social behaviour. In other words, the thesis of the present work is that an intimate connection exists between the word, the mythos, the sacred tales of a tribe, on the one hand, and their ritual acts, their moral deeds, their social organization, and even their practical activities, on the other.

In order to gain a background for our description of the Melanesian facts, I shall briefly summarize the present state of the science of mythology. Even a superficial survey of the literature would reveal that there is no monotony to complain of as regards the variety of opinions or the acrimony of polemics. To take only the recent up-to-date theories advanced in explanation of the nature of myth, legend, and fairy tale, we should have to head the list, at least as regards output and self-assertion, by the so-called school of Nature-mythology which flourishes mainly in Germany. The writers of this school maintain that primitive man is highly interested in natural phenomena, and that his interest is predominantly of a theoretical, contemplative, and poetical character. In trying to express and interpret the phases of the moon, or the regular and yet changing path of the sun across the skies, primitive man constructs symbolic personified rhapsodies. To writers of this school every myth possesses as its kernel or ultimate reality some natural phenomenon or other, elaborately woven into a tale to an extent which sometimes almost masks and obliterates it. There is not much agreement among these students as to what type of natural phenomenon lies at the bottom of most mythological productions. There are extreme lunar mythologists so completely moonstruck with their idea that they will not admit that any other phenomenon could lend itself to a savage rhapsodic interpretation except

that of earth's nocturnal satellite. The Society for the Comparative Study of Myth, founded in Bèrlin in 1906, and counting among its supporters such famous scholars as Ehrenreich, Siecke, Winckler, and many others, carried on their business under the sign of the moon. Others, like Frobenius for instance, regard the sun as the only subject around which primitive man has spun his symbolic tales. Then there is the school of meteorological interpreters who regard wind, weather, and colours of the skies as the essence of myth. To this belonged such well-known writers of the older generation as Max Müller and Kuhn. Some of these departmental mythologists fight fiercely for their heavenly body or principle; others have a more catholic taste, and prepare to agree that primeval man has made his mythological brew from all the heavenly bodies taken together.

I have tried to state fairly and plausibly this naturalistic interpretation of myths, but as a matter of fact this theory seems to me to be one of the most extravagant views ever advanced by an anthropologist or humanist—and that means a great deal. It has received an absolutely destructive criticism from the great psychologist Wundt, and appears absolutely untenable in the light of any of Sir James Frazer's writings. From my own study of living myths among savages, I should say that primitive man has to a very limited extent the purely artistic or scientific interest in nature; there is but little room for symbolism in his ideas and tales; and myth, in fact, is not an idle rhapsody, not an aimless outpouring of vain imaginings, but a hard-working, extremely important cultural force. Besides ignoring the cultural function of myth, this theory imputes to primitive man a number of imaginary interests, and it confuses several clearly distinguishable types of story, the fairy tale, the legend, the saga, and the sacred tale or myth.

In strong contrast to this theory which makes myth naturalistic, symbolic, and imaginary, stands the theory which regards a sacred tale as a true historical record of the past. This view, recently supported by the so-called Historical School

in Germany and America, and represented in England by Dr. Rivers, covers but part of the truth. There is no denying that history, as well as natural environment, must have left a profound imprint on all cultural achievements, hence also on myths. But to take all mythology as mere chronicle is as incorrect as to regard it as the primitive naturalist's musings. It also endows primitive man with a sort of scientific impulse and desire for knowledge. Although the savage has something of the antiquarian as well as of the naturalist in his composition, he is, above all, actively engaged in a number of practical pursuits, and has to struggle with various difficulties; all his interests are tuned up to this general pragmatic outlook. Mythology, the sacred lore of the tribe, is, as we shall see, a powerful means of assisting primitive man, of allowing him to make the two ends of his cultural patrimony meet. We shall see, moreover, that the immense services to primitive culture performed by myth are done in connection with religious ritual, moral influence, and sociological principle. Now religion and morals draw only to a very limited extent upon an interest in science or in past history, and myth is thus based upon an entirely different mental attitude.

The close connection between religion and myth which has been overlooked by many students has been recognized by others. Psychologists like Wundt, sociologists like Durkheim, Hubert, and Mauss, anthropologists like Crawley, classical scholars like Miss Jane Harrison have all understood the intimate association between myth and ritual, between sacred tradition and the norms of social structure. All of these writers have been to a greater or lesser extent influenced by the work of Sir James Frazer. In spite of the fact that the great British anthropologist, as well as most of his followers, have a clear vision of the sociological and ritual importance of myth, the facts which I shall present will allow us to clarify and formulate more precisely the main principles of a sociological theory of myth.

I might present an even more extensive survey of the opinions, divisions, and controversies of learned mytho-

logists. The science of mythology has been the meeting-point of various scholarships: the classical humanist must decide for himself whether Zeus is the moon, or the sun, or a strictly historical personality; and whether his ox-eyed spouse is the morning star, or a cow, or a personification of the wind—the loquacity of wives being proverbial. Then all these questions have to be re-discussed upon the stage of mythology by the various tribes of archaeologists, Chaldean and Egyptian, Indian and Chinese, Peruvian and Mayan. The historian and the sociologist, the student of literature, the grammarian, the Germanist and the Romanist, the Celtic scholar and the Slavist discuss, each little crowd among themselves. Nor is mythology quite safe from logicians and psychologists, from the metaphysician and the epistemologist—to say nothing of such visitors as the theosophist, the modern astrologist, and the Christian Scientist. Finally, we have the psycho-analyst who has come at last to teach us that the myth is a day-dream of the race, and that we can only explain it by turning our back upon nature, history, and culture, and diving deep into the dark pools of the sub-conscious, where at the bottom there lie the usual paraphernalia and symbols of psycho-analytic exegesis. So that when at last the poor anthropologist and student of folk-lore come to the feast, there are hardly any crumbs left for them!

If I have conveyed an impression of chaos and confusion, if I have inspired a sinking feeling towards the incredible mythological controversy with all the dust and din which it raises, I have achieved exactly what I wanted. For I shall invite my readers to step outside the closed study of the theorist into the open air of the anthropological field, and to follow me in my mental flight back to the years which I spent among a Melanesian tribe of New Guinea. There, paddling on the lagoon, watching the natives under the blazing sun at their garden-work, following them through the patches of jungle, and on the winding beaches and reefs, we shall learn about their life. And again, observing their ceremonies in the cool of the afternoon or in the shadows of the evening,

sharing their meals round their fires, we shall be able to listen to their stories.

For the anthropologist—one and only among the many participants in the mythological contest—has the unique advantage of being able to step back behind the savage whenever he feels that his theories become involved and the flow of his argumentative eloquence runs dry. The anthropologist is not bound to the scanty remnants of culture, broken tablets, tarnished texts, or fragmentary inscriptions. He need not fill out immense gaps with voluminous, but conjectural, comments. The anthropologist has the myth-maker at his elbow. Not only can he take down as full a text as exists, with all its variations, and control it over and over; he has also a host of authentic commentators to draw upon; still more he has the fulness of life itself from which the myth has been born. And as we shall see, in this live context there is as much to be learned about the myth as in the narrative itself.

Myth as it exists in a savage community, that is, in its living primitive form, is not merely a story told but a reality lived. It is not of the nature of fiction, such as we read to-day in a novel, but it is a living reality, believed to have once happened in primeval times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies. This myth is to the savage what, to a fully believing Christian, is the Biblical story of Creation, of the Fall, of the Redemption by Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. As our sacred story lives in our ritual, in our morality, as it governs our faith and controls our conduct, even so does his myth for the savage.

The limitation of the study of myth to the mere examination of texts has been fatal to a proper understanding of its nature. The forms of myth which come to us from classical antiquity and from the ancient sacred books of the East and other similar sources have come down to us without the context of living faith, without the possibility of obtaining comments from true believers, without the concomitant knowledge of their social organization, their practised morals, and

their popular customs—at least without the full information which the modern field-worker can easily obtain. Moreover, there is no doubt that in their present literary form these tales have suffered a very considerable transformation at the hands of scribes, commentators, learned priests, and theologians. It is necessary to go back to primitive mythology in order to learn the secret of its life in the study of a myth which is still alive—before, mummified in priestly wisdom, it has been enshrined in the indestructible but lifeless repository of dead religions.

Studied alive, myth, as we shall see, is not symbolic, but a direct expression of its subject-matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements. Myth fulfils in primitive culture an indispensable function: it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom.

I shall try to prove all these contentions by the study of various myths; but to make our analysis conclusive it will first be necessary to give an account not merely of myth, but also of fairy tale, legend, and historical record.

Let us then float over in spirit to the shores of a Trobriand <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Trobriand Islands are a coral archipelago lying to the north-east of New Guinea. The natives belong to the Papuo-Melanesian race, and in their physical appearance, mental equipment, and social organization they show a combination of the Oceanic characteristics mixed with some features of the more backward Papuan culture from the mainland of New Guinea.

For a full account of the Northern Massim, of which the Trobrianders form a section, see the classical treatise of Professor C. G. Seligman, *Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910). This book shows also the relation of the Trobrianders to the other races and cultures on and around New Guinea. A short account will also be found in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, by the present author (London, 1922).

lagoon, and penetrate into the life of the natives—see them at work, see them at play, and listen to their stories. Late in November the wet weather is setting in. There is little to do in the gardens, the fishing season is not in full swing as yet, overseas sailing looms ahead in the future, while the festive mood still lingers after the harvest dancing and feasting. Sociability is in the air, time lies on their hands, while bad weather keeps them often at home. Let us step through the twilight of the approaching evening into one of their villages and sit at the fireside, where the flickering light draws more and more people as the evening falls and the conversation brightens. Sooner or later a man will be asked to tell a story, for this is the season of *fairy tales*. If he is a good reciter, he will soon provoke laughter, rejoinders, and interruptions, and his tale will develop into a regular performance.

At this time of the year folk-tales of a special type called *kukwanebu* are habitually recited in the villages. There is a vague belief, not very seriously taken, that their recital has a beneficial influence on the new crops recently planted in the gardens. In order to produce this effect, a short ditty in which an allusion is made to some very fertile wild plants, the *kasiyena*, must always be recited at the end.

Every story is “owned” by a member of the community. Each story, though known by many, may be recited only by the “owner”; he may, however, present it to someone else by teaching that person and authorizing him to retell it. But not all the “owners” know how to thrill and to raise a hearty laugh, which is one of the main ends of such stories. A good raconteur has to change his voice in the dialogue, chant the ditties with due temperament, gesticulate, and in general play to the gallery. Some of these tales are certainly “smoking-room” stories, of others I will give one or two examples.

Thus there is the maiden in distress and the heroic rescue. Two women go out in search of birds’ eggs. One discovers a nest under a tree, the other warns her: “These are eggs of a snake, don’t touch them”. “Oh, no! They are eggs of a bird”, she replies and carries them away. The mother snake comes

back, and finding the nest empty starts in search of the eggs. She enters the nearest village and sings a ditty:

I wend my way as I wriggle along,  
The eggs of a bird it is licit to eat;  
The eggs of a friend are forbidden to touch.

This journey lasts long, for the snake is traced from one village to the other and everywhere has to sing her ditty. Finally, entering the village of the two women, she sees the culprit roasting the eggs, coils around her, and enters her body. The victim is laid down helpless and ailing. But the hero is nigh; a man from a neighbouring village dreams of the dramatic situation, arrives on the spot, pulls out the snake, cuts it to pieces, and marries both women, thus carrying off a double prize for his prowess.

In another story we learn of a happy family, a father and two daughters, who sail from their home in the northern coral archipelagoes, and run to the south-west till they come to the wild steep slopes of the rock island Gumasila. The father lies down on a platform and falls asleep. An ogre comes out of the jungle, eats the father, captures and ravishes one of the daughters, while the other succeeds in escaping. The sister from the woods supplies the captive one with a piece of lawyer-cane, and when the ogre lies down and falls asleep they cut him in half and escape.

A woman lives in the village of Okopukopu at the head of a creek with her five children. A monstrosly big stingaree paddles up the creek, flops across the village, enters the hut, and to the tune of a ditty cuts off the woman's finger. One son tries to kill the monster and fails. Every day the same performance is repeated till on the fifth day the youngest son succeeds in killing the giant fish.

A louse and a butterfly embark on a bit of aviation, the louse as a passenger, the butterfly as aeroplane and pilot. In the middle of the performance, while flying overseas just between the beach of Wawela and the island of Kitava, the louse emits a loud shriek, the butterfly is shaken, and the louse falls off and is drowned.



A man whose mother-in-law is a cannibal is sufficiently careless to go away and leave her in charge of his three children. Naturally she tries to eat them; they escape in time, however, climb a palm, and keep her (through a somewhat lengthy story) at bay, until the father arrives and kills her. There is another story about a visit to the Sun, another about an ogre devastating gardens, another about a woman who was so greedy that she stole all food at funeral distributions, and many similar ones.

In this place, however, we are not so much concentrating our attention on the text of narratives, as on their sociological reference. The text, of course, is extremely important, but without the context it remains lifeless. As we have seen, the interest of the story is vastly enhanced and it is given its proper character by the manner in which it is told. The whole nature of the performance, the voice and the mimicry, the stimulus and the response of the audience mean as much to the natives as the text; and the sociologist should take his cue from the natives. The performance, again, has to be placed in its proper time-setting—the hour of the day, and the season, with the background of the sprouting gardens awaiting future work, and slightly influenced by the magic of the fairy tales. We must also bear in mind the sociological context of private ownership, the sociable function and the cultural rôle of amusing fiction. All these elements are equally relevant; all must be studied as well as the text. The stories live in native life and not on paper, and when a scholar jots them down without being able to evoke the atmosphere in which they flourish he has given us but a mutilated bit of reality.

I pass now to another class of stories. These have no special season, there is no stereotyped way of telling them, and the recital has not the character of a performance, nor has it any magical effect. And yet these tales are more important than the foregoing class; for they are believed to be true, and the information which they contain is both more valuable and more relevant than that of the *kukwanebu*. When a party goes

on a distant visit or sails on an expedition, the younger members, keenly interested in the landscape, in new communities, in new people, and perhaps even new customs, will express their wonder and make inquiries. The older and more experienced will supply them with information and comment, and this always takes the form of a concrete narrative. An old man will perhaps tell his own experiences about fights and expeditions, about famous magic and extraordinary economic achievements. With this he may mix the reminiscences of his father, hearsay tales and legends, which have passed through many generations. Thus memories of great droughts and devastating famines are conserved for many years, together with the descriptions of the hardships, struggles, and crimes of the exasperated population.

A number of stories about sailors driven out of their course and landing among cannibals and hostile tribes are remembered, some of them set to song, others formed into historic legends. A famous subject for song and story is the charm, skill, and performance of famous dancers. There are tales about distant volcanic islands; about hot springs in which once a party of unwary bathers were boiled to death; about mysterious countries inhabited by entirely different men or women; about strange adventures which have happened to sailors in distant seas; monstrous fish and cephalopods, jumping rocks and disguised sorcerers. Stories again are told, some recent, some ancient, about seers and visitors to the land of the dead, enumerating their most famous and significant exploits. There are also stories associated with natural phenomena; a petrified canoe, a man changed into a rock, and a red patch on the coral rock left by a party who ate too much betel nut.

We have here a variety of tales which might be subdivided into *historical accounts* directly witnessed by the narrator, or at least vouched for by someone within living memory; *legends*, in which the continuity of testimony is broken, but which fall within the range of things ordinarily experienced by the tribesmen; and *hearsay tales* about distant countries and

ancient happenings of a time which falls outside the range of present-day culture. To the natives, however, all these classes imperceptibly shade into each other; they are designated by the same name, *libwogwo*; they are all regarded as true; they are not recited as a performance, nor told for amusement at a special season. Their subject-matter also shows a substantial unity. They all refer to subjects intensely stimulating to the natives; they all are connected with activities such as economic pursuits, warfare, adventure, success in dancing and in ceremonial exchange. Moreover, since they record singularly great achievements in all such pursuits, they redound to the credit of some individual and his descendants or of a whole community; and hence they are kept alive by the ambition of those whose ancestry they glorify. The stories told in explanation of peculiarities of features of the landscape frequently have a sociological context, that is, they enumerate whose clan or family performed the deed. When this is not the case, they are isolated fragmentary comments upon some natural feature, clinging to it as an obvious survival.

In all this it is once more clear that we can neither fully grasp the meaning of the text, nor the sociological nature of the story, nor the natives' attitude towards it and interest in it, if we study the narrative on paper. These tales live in the memory of man, in the way in which they are told, and even more in the complex interest which keeps them alive, which makes the narrator recite with pride or regret, which makes the listener follow eagerly, wistfully, with hopes and ambitions roused. Thus the essence of a *legend*, even more than that of a *fairy tale*, is not to be found in a mere perusal of the story, but in the combined study of the narrative and its context in the social and cultural life of the natives.

But it is only when we pass to the third and most important class of tales, the *sacred tales* or *myths*, and contrast them with the legends, that the nature of all three classes comes into relief. This third class is called by the natives *liliu*, and I want to emphasize that I am reproducing *prima facie* the natives' own classification and nomenclature, and limiting

myself to a few comments on its accuracy. The third class of stories stands very much apart from the other two. If the first are told for amusement, the second to make a serious statement and satisfy social ambition, the third are regarded, not merely as true, but as venerable and sacred, and they play a highly important cultural part. The *folk-tale*, as we know, is a seasonal performance and an act of sociability. The *legend*, provoked by contact with unusual reality, opens up past historical vistas. The *myth* comes into play when rite, ceremony, or a social or moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality, and sanctity.

In the subsequent chapters of this book we will examine a number of myths in detail, but for the moment let us glance at the subjects of some typical myths. Take, for instance, the annual feast of the return of the dead. Elaborate arrangements are made for it, especially an enormous display of food. When this feast approaches, tales are told of how death began to chastise man, and how the power of eternal rejuvenation was lost. It is told why the spirits have to leave the village and do not remain at the fireside, finally why they return once in a year. Again, at certain seasons in preparation for an overseas expedition, canoes are overhauled and new ones built to the accompaniment of a special magic. In this there are mythological allusions in the spells, and even the sacred acts contain elements which are only comprehensible when the story of the flying canoe, its ritual, and its magic are told. In connection with ceremonial trading, the rules, the magic, even the geographical routes are associated with corresponding mythology. There is no important magic, no ceremony, no ritual without belief; and the belief is spun out into accounts of concrete precedent. The union is very intimate, for myth is not only looked upon as a commentary of additional information, but it is a warrant, a charter, and often even a practical guide to the activities with which it is connected. On the other hand, the rituals, ceremonies, customs, and social organization contain at times direct references to myth, and they are regarded as the results of mythical event. The

cultural fact is a monument in which the myth is embodied; while the myth is believed to be the real cause which has brought about the moral rule, the social grouping, the rite, or the custom. Thus these stories form an integral part of culture. Their existence and influence not merely transcend the act of telling the narrative, not only do they draw their substance from life and its interests—they govern and control many cultural features, they form the dogmatic backbone of primitive civilization.

This is perhaps the most important point of the thesis which I am urging: I maintain that there exists a special class of stories, regarded as sacred, embodied in ritual, morals, and social organization, and which form an integral and active part of primitive culture. These stories live not by idle interest, not as fictitious or even as true narratives; but are to the natives a statement of a primeval, greater, and more relevant reality, by which the present life, fates, and activities of mankind are determined, the knowledge of which supplies man with the motive for ritual and moral actions, as well as with indications as to how to perform them.

In order to make the point at issue quite clear, let us once more compare our conclusions with the current views of modern anthropology, not in order idly to criticize other opinions, but so that we may link our results to the present state of knowledge, give due acknowledgement for what we have received, and state where we have to differ clearly and precisely.

It will be best to quote a condensed and authoritative statement, and I shall choose for this purpose the definition and analysis given in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, by the late Miss C. S. Burne and Professor J. L. Myres. Under the heading "Stories, Sayings, and Songs", we are informed that "this section includes many *intellectual* efforts of peoples . . ." which "represent the earliest attempts to exercise reason, imagination, and memory". With some apprehension we ask where is left the emotion, the interest, and ambition, the social rôle of all the stories, and the deep connection with

cultural values of the more serious ones? After a brief classification of stories in the usual manner we read about the sacred tales: "*Myths* are stories which, however marvellous and improbable to us, are nevertheless related in all good faith, because they are intended, or believed by the teller, to explain by means of something concrete and intelligible an abstract idea or such vague and difficult conceptions as Creation, Death, distinctions of race or animal species, the different occupations of men and women; the origins of rites and customs, or striking natural objects or prehistoric monuments; the meaning of the names of persons or places. Such stories are sometimes described as *aetiological*, because their purpose is to explain why something exists or happens."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have in a nutshell all that modern science at its best has to say upon the subject. Would our Melanesians agree, however, with this opinion? Certainly not. They do not want to "explain", to make "intelligible" anything which happens in their myths—above all not an abstract idea. Of that there can be found to my knowledge no instance either in Melanesia or in any other savage community. The few abstract ideas which the natives possess carry their concrete commentary in the very word which expresses them. When being is described by verbs to lie, to sit, to stand, when cause and effect are expressed by words signifying foundation and the past standing upon it, when various concrete nouns tend towards the meaning of space, the word and the relation to concrete reality make the abstract idea sufficiently "intelligible". Nor would a Trobriander or any other native agree with the view that "Creation, Death, distinctions of race or animal species, the different occupations of men and women" are "vague and difficult conceptions". Nothing is more familiar to the native than the different occupations of the male and female sex; there is nothing to be *explained* about it. But though familiar, such differences are at times irksome, unpleasant, or at least limiting, and there is the need to justify

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 4th ed. (London, 1912), pp. 210 and 211.

them, to vouch for their antiquity and reality, in short to buttress their validity. Death, alas, is not vague, or abstract, or difficult to grasp for any human being. It is only too hauntingly real, too concrete, too easy to comprehend for anyone who has had an experience affecting his near relatives or a personal foreboding. If it were vague or unreal, man would have no desire so much as to mention it; but the idea of death is fraught with horror, with a desire to remove its threat, with the vague hope that it may be, not explained, but rather explained away, made unreal, and actually denied. Myth, warranting the belief in immortality, in eternal youth, in a life beyond the grave, is not an intellectual reaction upon a puzzle, but an explicit act of faith born from the innermost instinctive and emotional reaction to the most formidable and haunting idea. Nor are the stories about "the origins of rites and customs" told in mere explanation of them. They never explain in any sense of the word; they always state a precedent which constitutes an ideal and a warrant for its continuance, and sometimes practical directions for the procedure.

We have, therefore, to disagree on every point with this excellent though concise statement of present-day mythological opinion. This definition would create an imaginary, non-existent class of narrative, the aetiological myth, corresponding to a non-existent desire to explain, leading a futile existence as an "intellectual effort", and remaining outside native culture and social organization with their pragmatic interests. The whole treatment appears to us faulty, because myths are treated as mere stories, because they are regarded as a primitive intellectual arm-chair occupation, because they are torn out of their life-context, and studied from what they look like on paper, and not from what they do in life. Such a definition would make it impossible either to see clearly the nature of myth or to reach a satisfactory classification of folk-tales. In fact we would also have to disagree with the definition of legend and of fairy tale given subsequently by the writers in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*.

But above all, this point of view would be fatal to efficient

field-work, for it would make the observer satisfied with the mere writing down of narratives. The intellectual nature of a story is exhausted with its text, but the functional, cultural, and pragmatic aspect of any native tale is manifested as much in its enactment, embodiment, and contextual relations as in the text. It is easier to write down the story than to observe the diffuse, complex ways in which it enters into life, or to study its function by the observation of the vast social and cultural realities into which it enters. And this is the reason why we have so many texts and why we know so little about the very nature of myth.

We may, therefore, learn an important lesson from the Trobrianders, and to them let us now return. We will survey some of their myths in detail, so that we can confirm our conclusions inductively, yet precisely.

### MYTHS OF ORIGIN

We may best start with the beginning of things, and examine some of the myths of origin. The world, say the natives, was originally peopled from underground. Humanity had there led an existence similar in all respects to the present life on earth. Underground, men were organized in villages, clans, districts; they had distinctions of rank, they knew privileges and had claims, they owned property, and were versed in magic lore. Endowed with all this, they emerged, establishing by this very act certain rights in land and citizenship, in economic prerogative and magical pursuit. They brought with them all their culture to continue it upon this earth.

There are a number of special spots—grottoes, clumps of trees, stone heaps, coral outcrops, springs, heads of creeks—called “holes” or “houses” by the natives. From such “holes” the first couples (a sister as the head of the family and the brother as her guardian) came and took possession of the lands, and gave the totemic, industrial, magical, and sociological character to the communities thus begun.



The problem of rank which plays a great rôle in their sociology was settled by the emergence from one special hole, called Obukula, near the village of Laba'i. This event was notable in that, contrary to the usual course (which is: one original "hole", one lineage), from this hole of Laba'i there emerged representatives of the four main clans one after the other. Their arrival, moreover, was followed by an apparently trivial but, in mythical reality, a most important event. First there came the *Kaylavasi* (iguana), the animal of the Lukulabuta clan, which scratched its way through the earth as iguanas do, then climbed a tree, and remained there as a mere onlooker, following subsequent events. Soon there came out the Dog, totem of the Lukuba clan, who originally had the highest rank. As a third came the Pig, representative of the Malasi clan, which now holds the highest rank. Last came the Lukwasisiga totem, represented in some versions by the Crocodile, in others by the Snake, in others by the Opossum, and sometimes completely ignored. The Dog and Pig ran round, and the Dog, seeing the fruit of the *noku* plant, nosed it, and then ate it. Said the Pig: "Thou eatest *noku*, thou eatest dirt; thou art a low-bred, a commoner; the chief, the *guya'u*, shall be I". And ever since, the highest sub-clan of the Malasi clan, the Tabalu, have been the real chiefs.

In order to understand this myth, it is not enough to follow the dialogue between the Dog and the Pig which might appear pointless or even trivial. Once you know the native sociology, the extreme importance of rank, the fact that food and its limitations (the taboos of rank and clan) are the main index of man's social nature, and finally the psychology of totemic identification—you begin to understand how this incident, happening as it did when humanity was *in statu nascendi*, settled once for all the relation between the two rival clans. To understand this myth you must have a good knowledge of their sociology, religion, customs, and outlook. Then, and only then, can you appreciate what this story means to the natives and how it can live in their life. If you stayed among them and learned the language you would con-

stantly find it active in discussion and squabbles in reference to the relative superiority of the various clans, and in the discussions about the various food taboos which frequently raise fine questions of casuistry. Above all, if you were brought into contact with communities where the historical process of the spread of influence of the Malasi clan is still in evolution, you would be brought face to face with this myth as an active force.

Remarkably enough the first and last animals to come out, the iguana and the Lukwasisiga totem, have been from the beginning left in the cold: thus the numerical principle and the logic of events is not very strictly observed in the reasoning of the myth.

If the main myth of Laba'i about the relative superiority of the four clans is very often alluded to throughout the tribe, the minor local myths are not less alive and active, each in its own community. When a party arrives at some distant village they will be told not only the legendary historical tales, but above all the mythological charter of that community, its magical proficiencies, its occupational character, its rank and place in totemic organization. Should there arise land-quarrels, encroachment in magical matters, fishing rights, or other privileges the testimony of myth would be referred to.

Let me show concretely the way in which a typical myth of local origins would be retailed in the normal run of native life. Let us watch a party of visitors arriving in one or the other of the Trobriand villages. They would seat themselves in front of the head-man's house, in the central place of the locality. As likely as not the spot of origins is near by, marked by a coral outcrop or a heap of stones. This spot would be pointed out, the names of the brother and sister ancestors mentioned, and perhaps it would be said that the man built his house on the spot of the present head-man's dwelling. The native listeners would know, of course, that the sister lived in a different house near by, for she could never reside within the same walls as her brother.

As additional information, the visitors might be told that the ancestors had brought with them the substances and paraphernalia and methods of local industry. In the village of Yalaka, for instance, it would be the processes for burning lime from shells. In Okobobo, Obweria, and Obowada the ancestors brought the knowledge and the implements for polishing hard stone. In Bwoyталu the carver's tool, the hafted shark tooth, and the knowledge of the art came out from underground with the original ancestors. In most places the economic monopolies are thus traced to the autochthonous emergence. In villages of higher rank the insignia of hereditary dignity were brought; in others some animal associated with the local sub-clan came out. Some communities started on their political career of standing hostility to one another from the very beginning. The most important gift to this world carried from the one below is always magic; but this will have to be treated later on and more fully.

If a European bystander were there and heard nothing but the information given from one native to the other, it would mean very little to him. In fact, it might lead him into serious misunderstandings. Thus the simultaneous emergence of brother and sister might make him suspicious either of a mythological allusion to incest, or else would make him look for the original matrimonial pair and inquire about the sister's husband. The first suspicion would be entirely erroneous, and would shed a false light over the specific relation between brother and sister, in which the former is the indispensable guardian, and the second, equally indispensable, is responsible for the transmission of the line. Only a full knowledge of matrilineal ideas and institutions gives body and meaning to the bare mention of the two ancestral names, so significant to a native listener. If the European were to inquire who was the sister's husband and how she came to have children, he would soon find himself once more confronted by an entirely foreign set of ideas—the sociological irrelevance of the father, the absence of any ideas about physiological procreation, and

the strange and complicated system of marriage, matrilineal and patrilineal at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

The sociological relevance of these accounts of origins would become clear only to a European inquirer who had grasped the native legal ideas about local citizenship and the hereditary rights to territory, fishing grounds, and local pursuits. For according to the legal principles of the tribe all such rights are the monopolies of the local community, and only people descendent in the female line from the original ancestress are entitled to them. If the European were told further that, besides the first place of emergence, there are several other "holes" in the same village, he would become still more baffled until, by a careful study of concrete details and the principles of native sociology, he became acquainted with the idea of compound village communities, *i.e.* communities in which several sub-clans have merged.

It is clear, then, that the myth conveys much more to the native than is contained in the mere story; that the story gives only the really relevant concrete local differences; that the real meaning, in fact the full account, is contained in the traditional foundations of social organization; and that this the native learns, not by listening to the fragmentary mythical stories, but by living within the social texture of his tribe. In other words, it is the context of social life, it is the gradual realization by the native of how everything which he is told to do has its precedent and pattern in bygone times, which brings home to him the full account and the full meaning of his myths of origin.

For an observer, therefore, it is necessary to become fully acquainted with the social organization of the natives if he wants really to grasp its traditional aspect. The short accounts, such as those which are given about local origins, will then

<sup>1</sup> For a full statement of the psychology and sociology of kinship and descent see articles on "The Psychology of Sex and the Foundations of Kinship in Primitive Societies", "Psycho-analysis and Anthropology", "Complex and Myth in Mother Right", all three in the psychological journal, *Psyche*, Oct. 1923, April 1924, and Jan. 1925. The first article is included in *The Father in Primitive Psychology* (*Psyche* Miniature, 1926).

become perfectly plain to him. He will also clearly see that each of them is only a part, and a rather insignificant one, of a much bigger story, which cannot be read except from native life. What really matters about such a story is its social function. It conveys, expresses, and strengthens the fundamental fact of the local unity and of the kinship unity of the group of people descendent from a common ancestress. Combined with the conviction that only common descent and emergence from the soil give full rights to it, the story of origin literally contains the legal charter of the community. Thus, even when the people of a vanquished community were driven from their grounds by a hostile neighbour their territory always remained intact for them; and they were always, after a lapse of time and when their peace ceremony had been concluded, allowed to return to the original site, rebuild their village, and cultivate their gardens once more.<sup>1</sup> The traditional feeling of a real and intimate connection with the land; the concrete reality of seeing the actual spot of emergence in the middle of the scenes of daily life; the historical continuity of privileges, occupations, and distinctive characters running back into the mythological first beginnings—all this obviously makes for cohesion, for local patriotism, for a feeling of union and kinship in the community. But although the narrative of original emergence integrates and welds together the historical tradition, the legal principles, and the various customs, it must also be clearly kept in mind that the original myth is but a small part of the whole complex of traditional ideas. Thus on the one hand the reality of myth lies in its social function; on the other hand, once we begin to study the social function of myth, and so to reconstruct its full meaning, we are gradually led to build up the full theory of native social organization.

One of the most interesting phenomena connected with traditional precedent and charter is the adjustment of myth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the account given of these facts in the article on "War and Weapons among the Trobriand Islanders", *Man*, Jan. 1918; and in Professor Seligman's *Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 663-668.

and mythological principle to cases in which the very foundation of such mythology is flagrantly violated. This violation always takes place when the local claims of an autochthonous clan, *i.e.* a clan which has emerged on the spot, are overridden by an immigrant clan. Then a conflict of principles is created, for obviously the principle that land and authority belong to those who are literally born out of it does not leave room for any new-comers. On the other hand, members of a sub-clan of high rank who choose to settle down in a new locality cannot very well be resisted by the autochthons—using this word again in the literal native mythological sense. The result is that there come into existence a special class of mythological stories which justify and account for the anomalous state of affairs. The strength of the various mythological and legal principles is manifested in that the myths of justification still contain the antagonistic and logically irreconcilable facts and points of view, and only try to cover them by facile reconciliatory incident, obviously manufactured *ad hoc*. The study of such stories is extremely interesting, both because it gives us a deep insight into the native psychology of tradition, and because it tempts us to reconstruct the past history of the tribe, though we must yield to the temptation with due caution and scepticism.

In the Trobriands we find that the higher the rank of a totemic sub-clan, the greater its power of expansion. Let us first state the facts and then proceed to their interpretation. The sub-clan of the highest rank, the Tabalu sub-clan of the Malasi clan, are found now ruling over a number of villages: Omarakana, their main capital; Kasanayi, the twin village of the capital; and Olivilevi, a village founded some three “reigns” ago after a defeat of the capital. Two villages, Omlamwaluwa, now extinct, and Dayagila, no longer ruled by the Tabalu, also once belonged to them. The same sub-clan, bearing the same name and claiming the same descent, but not keeping all the taboos of distinction and not entitled to all the insignia, is found ruling in the villages of Oyweyowa, Gumilababa, Kavataria, and Kadawaga, all in the

western part of the archipelago, the last mentioned on the small island Kayleula. The village of Tukwa'ukwa was but recently taken over by the Tabalu some five "reigns" ago. Finally, a sub-clan of the same name and claiming affinity rules over the two big and powerful communities of the South, Sinaketa and Vakuta.

The second fact of importance referring to these villages and their rulers is that the ruling clan does not pretend to have emerged locally in any of those communities in which its members own territory, carry on local magic, and wield power. They all claim to have emerged, accompanied by the original pig, from the historical hole of Obukula on the north-western shore of the island near the village of Laba'i. From there they have, according to their traditions, spread all over the district.<sup>1</sup>

In the traditions of this clan there are certain definitely historical facts which must be clearly disentangled and registered: the foundation of the village of Olivilevi three "reigns" ago, the settlement of the Tabalu in Tukwa'ukwa five "reigns" ago, the taking over of Vakuta some seven or eight "reigns" ago. By "reign" I mean the life-rule of one individual chief. Since in the Trobriands, as no doubt in most matrilineal tribes, a man is succeeded by his younger brother, the average "reign" is obviously much shorter than the span of a generation and also much less reliable as a measure of time, since in many cases it need not be shorter. These particular historical tales, giving a full account of how, when, by whom, and in what manner the settlement was effected, are sober matter-of-fact statements. Thus it is possible to obtain from independent informants the detailed account of how, in the time of their fathers or grandfathers respectively, the chief Bugwabwaga of Omarakana, after an unsuccessful war, had to flee with all his community far south, to the usual spot where a temporary village was erected. After a couple of years

<sup>1</sup> The reader who wants to grasp these historical and geographical details should consult the map facing p. 51 of the writer's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London, 1922).

he returned to perform the peace-making ceremony and to rebuild Omarakana. His younger brother, however, did not return with him, but erected a permanent village, Olivilevi, and remained there. The account, which can be confirmed in the minutest detail from any intelligent adult native in the district, is obviously as reliable an historical statement as one can obtain in any savage community. The data about Tukwa'ukwa, Vakuta, and so on are of similar nature.

What lifts the trustworthiness of such accounts above any suspicion is their sociological foundation. The flight after defeat is a general rule of tribal usage; and the manner in which the other villages become the seat of the highest rank people, *i.e.* intermarriage between Tabalu women and head-men of other villages, is also characteristic of their social life. The technique of this proceeding is of considerable importance and must be described in detail. Marriage is patrilocal in the Trobriands, so that the woman always moves to her husband's community. Economically, marriage entails the standing exchange of food given by the wife's family for valuables supplied by the husband. Food is especially plentiful in the central plains of Kiriwina, ruled over by the chiefs of highest rank from Omarakana. The valuable shell ornaments, coveted by the chiefs, are produced in the coastal districts to the west and south. Economically, therefore, the tendency always has been, and still is, for women of high rank to marry influential head-men in such villages as Gumilababa, Kavataria, Tukwa'ukwa, Sinaketa, and Vakuta.

So far everything happens according to the strict letter of tribal law. But once a Tabalu woman has settled in her husband's village, she overshadows him by rank and very often by influence. If she has a son or sons these are, until puberty, legal members of their father's community. They are the most important males in it. The father, as things are in the Trobriands, always wishes to keep them even after puberty for reasons of personal affection; the community feels that their whole status is being raised thereby. The majority desire it; and the minority, the rightful heirs to the head-men,



his brothers and his sisters' sons, do not dare to oppose. If, therefore, the sons of high rank have no special reasons for returning to their rightful village, that of their mother, they remain in the father's community and rule it. If they have sisters these may also remain, marry within the village, and thus start a new dynasty. Gradually, though perhaps not at once, they succeed to all the privileges, dignities, and functions vested till then in the local head-man. They are styled "masters" of the village and of its lands, they preside over the formal councils, they decide upon all communal matters where a decision is needed, and above all they take over the control of local monopolies and local magic.

All the facts I have just reviewed are strictly empirical observations; let us now look at the legends adduced to cover them. According to one story two sisters, Botabalu and Bonumakala, came out of the original hole near Laba'i. They went at once to the central district of Kiriwina, and both settled in Omarakana. Here they were welcomed by the local lady in charge of magic and all the rights, and thus the mythological sanction of their claims to the capital was established. (To this point we shall have to return again.) After a time they had a quarrel about some banana leaves pertaining to the beautiful fibre petticoats used for dress. The elder sister then ordered the younger to go, which among the natives is a great insult. She said: "I shall remain here and keep all the strict taboos. You go and eat bush-pig, *katakayluva* fish." This is the reason why the chiefs in the coastal districts, though in reality they have the same rank, do not keep the same taboos. The same story is told by natives of the coastal villages with the difference, however, that it is the younger sister who orders her senior to remain in Omarakana and keep all the taboos, while she herself goes to the west.

According to a Sinaketan version, there were three original women of the Tabalu sub-clan, the eldest remained in Kiriwina, the second settled in Kuboma, the youngest came to Sinaketa and brought with her the *Kaloma* shell discs, which started the local industry.

All these observations refer only to one sub-clan of the Malasi clan. The other sub-clans of this clan, of which I have some dozen on record, are all of low rank; are all local, that is have not immigrated into their present territory; and some of them, those of Bwoytalu, belong to what might be called the pariah or specially despised category of people. Although they all bear the same generic name, have the same common totem, and on ceremonial occasions would range themselves side by side with the people of the highest rank, they are regarded by the natives as belonging to an entirely different class.

Before I pass to the re-interpretation or historical reconstruction of these facts, I shall present the facts referring to the other clans. The Lukuba clan is perhaps the next in importance. They count among their sub-clans two or three which immediately follow in rank the Tabalu of Omarakana. The ancestors of these sub-clans are called Mwauri, Mulobwaima, and Tudava; and they all three came out from the same main hole near Laba'i, out of which the four totemic animals emerged. They moved afterwards to certain important centres in Kiriwina and in the neighbouring islands of Kitava and Vakuta. As we have seen, according to the main myth of emergence, the Lukuba clan had the highest rank at first, before the dog and pig incident reversed the order. Moreover, most mythological personalities or animals belong to the Lukuba clan. The great mythological culture-hero Tudava, reckoned also as ancestor by the sub-clan of that name, is a Lukuba. The majority of the mythical heroes in connection with the inter-tribal relations and the ceremonial forms of trading belong also to the same clan.<sup>1</sup> Most of the economic magic of the tribe also belongs to people of this clan. In Vakuta, where they have been recently overshadowed, if not displaced, by the Tabalu, they are still able to assert themselves; they have still retained the monopoly in magic; and, taking their stand upon mythological tradition, the Lukuba still affirm their real superiority to the usurpers.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, p. 321.

There are far fewer sub-clans of low rank among them than among the Malasi.

About the third large totemic division, the Lukwasisiga, there is much less to be said as regards mythology and cultural or historic rôle. In the main emergence myth they are either completely left out, or else their ancestral animal or person is made to play an entirely insignificant part. They do not own any specially important forms of magic and are conspicuously absent from any mythological reference. The only important part which they play is in the great Tudava cycle in which the ogre Dokonikan is made to belong to the Lukwasisiga totem. To this clan belongs the head-man of the village Kabwaku, who is also the chief of the district of Tilataula. This district was always in a relation of potential hostility to the district of Kiriwina proper, and the chiefs of Tilataula were the political rivals of the Tabalu, the people of the highest rank. From time to time the two would wage war. No matter which side was defeated and had to fly, peace was always restored by a ceremonial reconciliation, and the same relative status once more obtained between the two provinces. The chiefs of Omarakana always retained superiority of rank and a sort of general control over the hostile district, even after this had been victorious. The chiefs of Kabwaku were to a certain extent bound to execute their orders; and more especially if a direct capital punishment had to be meted out in olden days the chief of Omarakana would delegate his potential foe to carry it out. The real superiority of the chiefs of Omarakana was due to their rank. But to a great extent their power and the fear with which they inspired all the other natives was derived from the important sun and rain magic which they wielded. Thus members of a sub-clan of the Lukwasisiga were the potential foes and the executive vassals, but in war the equals, of the highest chiefs. For, as in peace times the supremacy of the Tabalu would remain unchallenged, so in war the Toliwaga of Kabwaku were considered generally the more efficient and redoubtable. The Lukwasisiga clan were also on the whole

regarded as land-lubbers (*kulita'odila*). One or two other sub-clans of this clan were of rather high rank and intermarried rather frequently with the Tabalu of Omarakana.

The fourth clan, the Lukulabuta, includes only sub-clans of low rank among its numbers. They are the least numerous clan, and the only magic with which they are associated is sorcery.

When we come to the historical interpretation of these myths a fundamental question meets us at the outset: must we regard the sub-clans which figure in legend and myth as representing merely the local branches of a homogeneous culture, or can we ascribe to them a more ambitious significance and regard them as standing for representatives of various cultures, that is as units of different migration waves? If the first alternative is accepted then all the myths, historical data, and sociological facts refer simply to small internal movements and changes, and there is nothing to be added to them except what we have said.

In support of the more ambitious hypothesis, however, it might be urged that the main legend of emergence places the origins of the four clans in a very suggestive spot. Laba'i lies on the north-western beach, the only place open to sailors who would have come from the direction of the prevailing monsoon winds. Moreover, in all the myths the drift of a migration, the trend of cultural influence, the travels of culture-heroes, take place from north to south and generally, though less uniformly, from west to east. This is the direction which obtains in the great cycle of Tudava stories; this is the direction which we have found in the migration myths; this is the direction which obtains in the majority of the Kula legends. Thus the assumption is plausible that a cultural influence has been spreading from the north-western shores of the archipelago, an influence which can be traced as far east as Woodlark Island, and as far south as the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago. This hypothesis is suggested by the conflict element in some of the myths, such as that between the dog and the pig, between Tudava and Dokonikan, and

between the cannibal and non-cannibal brother. If we then accept this hypothesis for what it is worth, the following scheme emerges. The oldest layer would be represented by the Lukwasisiga and Lukulabuta clans. The latter is the first to emerge mythologically; while both are relatively autochthonous in that they are not sailors, their communities usually lie inland, and their occupation is mainly agriculture. The generally hostile attitude of the main Lukwasisiga sub-clan, the Toliwaga, to what would be obviously the latest immigrants, the Tabalu, might also be made to fit into this hypothesis. It is again plausible that the cannibal monster who is fought by the innovator and cultural hero, Tudava, belongs to the Lukwasisiga clan.

I have expressly stated that the sub-clans and not the clans must be regarded as migration units. For it is an incontrovertible fact that the big clan, which comprises a number of sub-clans, is but a loose social unit, split by important cultural rifts. The Malasi clan, for instance, includes the highest sub-clan, the Tabalu, as well as the most despised sub-clans, Wabu'a and Gumsosopa of Bwoytalu. The historical hypothesis of migratory units would still have to explain the relation between sub-clans and clan. It seems to me that the minor sub-clans must also have been of a previous arrival, and that their totemic assimilation is a by-product of a general process of sociological reorganization which took place after the strong and influential immigrants of the Tudava and Tabalu type had arrived.

The historical reconstruction requires, therefore, a number of auxiliary hypotheses, each of which must be regarded as plausible, but must remain arbitrary; while each assumption adds a considerable element of uncertainty. The whole reconstruction is a mental game, attractive and absorbing, often spontaneously obtruding itself upon a field-worker, but always remaining outside the field of observation and sound conclusion—that is, if the field-worker keeps his powers of observation and his sense of reality under control. The scheme which I have here developed is the one into which

the facts of Trobriand sociology, myth, and custom naturally arrange themselves. Nevertheless, I do not attach any serious importance to it, and I do not believe that even a very exhaustive knowledge of a district entitles the ethnographer to anything but tentative and cautious reconstructions. Perhaps a much wider collation of such schemes might show their value, or else prove their utter futility. It is only perhaps as working hypotheses, stimulating to more careful and minute collection of legend, of all tradition, and of sociological difference, that such schemes possess any importance whatever.

As far as the sociological theory of these legends goes the historical reconstruction is irrelevant. Whatever the hidden reality of their unrecorded past may be, myths serve to cover certain inconsistencies created by historical events, rather than to record these events exactly. The myths associated with the spread of the powerful sub-clans show on certain points a fidelity to life in that they record facts inconsistent with one another. The incidents by which this inconsistency is obliterated, if not hidden, are most likely fictitious; we have seen certain myths vary according to the locality in which they are told. In other cases the incidents bolster up non-existent claims and rights.

The historical consideration of myth is interesting, therefore, in that it shows that myth, taken as a whole, cannot be sober dispassionate history, since it is always made *ad hoc* to fulfil a certain sociological function, to glorify a certain group, or to justify an anomalous status. These considerations show us also that to the native mind immediate history, semi-historic legend, and unmixed myth flow into one another, form a continuous sequence, and fulfil really the same sociological function.

And this brings us once more to our original contention that the really important thing about the myth is its character of a retrospective, ever-present, live actuality. It is to a native neither a fictitious story, nor an account of a dead past; it is a statement of a bigger reality still partially alive. It is alive in that its precedent, its law, its moral, still rule

the social life of the natives. It is clear that myth functions especially where there is a sociological strain, such as in matters of great difference in rank and power, matters of precedence and subordination, and unquestionably where profound historical changes have taken place. So much can be asserted as a fact, though it must always remain doubtful how far we can carry out historical reconstruction from the myth.

We can certainly discard all explanatory as well as all symbolic interpretations of these myths of origin. The personages and beings which we find in them are what they appear to be on the surface, and not symbols of hidden realities. As to any explanatory function of these myths, there is no problem which they cover, no curiosity which they satisfy, no theory which they contain.

#### MYTHS OF DEATH AND OF THE RECURRENT CYCLE OF LIFE

In certain versions of origin myths the existence of humanity underground is compared to the existence of human spirits after death in the present-day spirit-world. Thus a mythological *rapprochement* is made between the primeval past and the immediate destiny of each man, another of those links with life which we find so important in the understanding of the psychology and the cultural value of myth.

The parallel between primeval and spiritual existence can be drawn even further. The ghosts of the deceased move after death to the island of Tuma. There they enter the earth through a special hole—a sort of reversed proceeding to the original emergence. Even more important is the fact that after a span of spiritual existence in Tuma, the nether world, an individual grows old, grey, and wrinkled; and that then he has to rejuvenate by sloughing his skin. Even so did human beings in the old primeval times, when they lived underground. When they first came out on the surface they had not yet lost this ability; men and women could live eternally young.

They lost the faculty, however, by an apparently trivial, yet important and fateful event. Once upon a time there lived in the village of Bwadela an old woman who dwelt with her daughter and granddaughter; three generations of genuine matrilineal descent. The grandmother and granddaughter went out one day to bathe in the tidal creek. The girl remained on the shore, while the old woman went away some distance out of sight. She took off her skin, which, carried by the tidal current, floated along the creek until it stuck on a bush. Transformed into a young girl, she came back to her granddaughter. The latter did not recognize her; she was afraid of her, and bade her begone. The old woman, mortified and angry, went back to her bathing-place, searched for her old skin, put it on again, and returned to her granddaughter. This time she was recognized and thus greeted: "A young girl came here; I was afraid; I chased her away". Said the grandmother: "No, you didn't want to recognize me. Well, you will become old—I shall die." They went home to where the daughter was preparing the meal. The old woman spoke to her daughter: "I went to bathe; the tide carried my skin away; your daughter did not recognize me; she chased me away. I shall not slough my skin. We shall all become old. We shall all die."

After that men lost the power of changing their skin and of remaining youthful. The only animals who have retained the power of changing the skin are the "animals of the below"—snakes, crabs, iguanas, and lizards: this is because men also once lived under the ground. These animals come out of the ground and they still can change their skin. Had men lived above, the "animals of the above"—birds, flying-foxes, and insects—would also be able to change their skins and renew their youth.

Here ends the myth as it is usually told. Sometimes the natives will add other comments drawing parallels between spirits and primitive humanity; sometimes they will emphasize the regeneration motive of the reptiles; sometimes tell only the bare incident of the lost skin. The story is, in



itself, trivial and unimportant; and it would appear so to anyone who did not study it against the background of the various ideas, customs, and rites associated with death and future life. The myth is obviously but a developed and dramatized belief in the previous human power of rejuvenation and in its subsequent loss.

Thus, through the conflict between granddaughter and grandmother, human beings, one and all, had to submit to the process of decay and debility brought on by old age. This, however, did not yet involve the full incidence of the inexorable fate which is the present lot of man; for old age, bodily decay, and debility do not spell death to the natives. In order to understand the full cycle of their beliefs it is necessary to study the factors of illness, decay, and death. The native of the Trobriands is definitely an optimist in his attitude to health and illness. Strength, vigour, and bodily perfection are to him the natural status which can only be affected or upset by an accident or by a supernatural cause. Small accidents such as excessive fatigue, sunstroke, over-eating, or exposure may cause minor and temporary ailments. By a spear in battle, by poison, by a fall from a rock or a tree, a man may be maimed or killed. Whether these accidents and others, such as drowning and the attack of a crocodile or a shark, are entirely free from sorcery is ever a debatable question to a native. But there is no doubt whatever to him that all serious and especially all fatal illnesses are due to various forms and agencies of witchcraft. The most prevalent of these is the ordinary sorcery practised by wizards, who can produce by their spells and rites a number of ailments covering well-nigh the whole domain of ordinary pathology, with the exception of very rapid fulminating diseases and epidemics.

The source of witchcraft is always sought in some influence coming from the south. There are two points in the Trobriand Archipelago at which sorcery is said to have originated, or rather to have been brought over from the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago. One of these is the grove of Lawaywo between the villages of Ba'u and Bwoytalu, and the other is the

southern island of Vakuta. Both these districts are still considered the most redoubtable centres of witchcraft.

The district of Bwoyталu occupies a specially low social position in the island, inhabited as it is by the best wood-carvers, the most expert fibre-plaiters, and the eaters of such abominations as stingaree and bush-pig. These natives have been endogamous for a long time, and they probably represent the oldest layer of indigenous culture in the island. To them sorcery was brought from the southern archipelago by a crab. This animal is either depicted as emerging out of a hole in the Lawaywo grove, or else as travelling by the air and dropping from above at the same place. About the time of its arrival a man and a dog went out. The crab was red, for it had the sorcery within it. The dog saw it and tried to bite it. Then the crab killed the dog, and having done this, proceeded to kill the man. But looking at him the crab became sorry, "its belly was moved", and it brought him back to life. The man then offered his murderer and saviour a large payment, a *pokala*, and asked the crustacean to give him the magic. This was done. The man immediately made use of his sorcery to kill his benefactor, the crab. He then proceeded to kill, according to a rule observed or believed to be observed until now, a near maternal relative. After that he was in full possession of witchcraft. The crabs at present are black, for sorcery has left them; they are, however, slow to die for once they were the masters of life and of death.

A similar type of myth is told in the southern island of Vakuta. They tell how a malicious being of human shape, but not of human nature, went into a piece of bamboo somewhere on the northern shore of Normanby Island. The piece of bamboo drifted northwards till it was washed ashore near the promontory of Yayvau or Vakuta. A man from the neighbouring village of Kwadagila heard a voice in the bamboo and he opened it. The demon came out and taught him sorcery. This, according to the informants in the south, is the real starting-point of black magic. It went to the district of Ba'u in Bwoyталu from Vakuta and not directly from the

southern archipelagoes. Another version of the Vakuta tradition maintains that the *tauva'u* came to Vakuta not in a bamboo but by a grander arrangement. At Sewatupa on the northern shore of Normanby Island there stood a big tree in which many of the malignant beings used to reside. It was felled, and it tumbled right across the sea, so that while its base remained on Normanby Island the trunk and the branches came across the sea and the top touched Vakuta. Hence sorcery is most rampant in the southern archipelago; the intervening sea is full of fish who live in the branches and boughs of the tree; and the place whence sorcery came to the Trobriands is the southern beach of Vakuta. For in the top of the tree there were three malignant beings, two males and a female, and they gave some magic to the inhabitants of the island.

In these mythical stories we have but one link in the chain of beliefs which surround the final destiny of human beings. The mythical incidents can be understood and their importance realized only in connection with the full beliefs in the power and nature of witchcraft, and with the feelings and apprehensions regarding it. The explicit stories about the advent of sorcery do not quite exhaust or account for all the supernatural dangers. Rapid and sudden disease and death are, in native belief, brought about, not by the male sorcerers, but by flying witches who act differently and possess altogether a more supernatural character. I was unable to find any initial myth about the origin of this type of witchcraft. On the other hand, the nature and the whole proceedings of these witches are surrounded by a cycle of beliefs which form what might be called a standing or current myth. I shall not repeat them with detail, for I have given a full account in my book, the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.<sup>1</sup> But it is important to realize that the halo of supernatural powers surrounding individuals who are believed to be witches gives rise to a continuous flow of stories. Such stories can be regarded as minor myths generated by the strong be-

<sup>1</sup> Chap. x. *passim*: especially pp. 236-248, also pp. 320, 321, 393.

lief in the supernatural powers. Similar stories are also told about the male sorcerers, the *bwaga'u*.

Epidemics, finally, are ascribed to the direct action of the malignant spirits, the *tauva'u*, who, as we saw, are mythologically often regarded as the source of all witchcraft. These malignant beings have a permanent abode in the south. Occasionally they will move to the Trobriand Archipelago, and, invisible to ordinary human beings, they walk at night through the villages rattling their lime-gourds and clanking their wooden sword clubs. Wherever this is heard fear falls upon the inhabitants, for those whom the *tauva'u* strike with their wooden weapons die, and such an invasion is always associated with death in masses. *Leria*, epidemic disease, obtains then in the villages. The malignant spirits can sometimes change into reptiles and then become visible to human eyes. It is not easy to distinguish such a reptile from an ordinary one, but it is very important to do so, for a *tauva'u*, injured or ill-treated, revenges himself by death.

Here, again, around this standing myth, around this domestic tale of a happening which is not placed in the past but still occurs, there cluster innumerable concrete stories. Some of them even occurred while I was in the Trobriands; there was a severe dysentery once, and the first outbreak of what probably was Spanish influenza in 1918. Many natives reported having heard the *tauva'u*. A giant lizard was seen in Wawela; the man who killed it died soon after, and the epidemic broke out in the village. While I was in Oburaku, and sickness was rife in the village, a real *tauva'u* was seen by the crew of the boat in which I was being paddled; a large multi-coloured snake appeared on a mangrove, but vanished mysteriously as we came near. It was only through my short-sightedness, and perhaps also my ignorance of how to look for a *tauva'u*, that I failed to observe this miracle myself. Such and similar stories can be obtained by the score from natives in all localities. A reptile of this type should be put on a high platform and valuables placed in front of it; and I have been assured by natives who have actually witnessed it

that this is not infrequently done, though I never have seen this myself. Again, a number of women witches are said to have had intercourse with *tauva'u*, and of one living at present this is positively affirmed.

In the case of this belief we see how minor myths are constantly generated by the big schematic story. Thus with regard to all the agencies of disease and death the belief, and the explicit narratives which cover part of it, the small concrete supernatural events constantly registered by the natives, form one organic whole. These beliefs are obviously not a theory or explanation. On the one hand, they are the whole complex of cultural practices, for sorcery is not only believed to be practised, but actually is practised, at least in its male form. On the other hand, the complex under discussion covers the whole pragmatic reaction of man towards disease and death; it expresses his emotions, his forebodings; it influences his behaviour. The nature of myth again appears to us as something very far removed from a mere intellectual explanation.

We are now in full possession of the native ideas about the factors which in the past cut short man's power of rejuvenation, and which at present cut short his very existence. The connection, by the way, between the two losses is only indirect. The natives believe that although any form of sorcery can reach the child, the youth, or the man in the prime of life, as well as the aged, yet old people are more easily stricken. Thus the loss of rejuvenation at least prepared the ground for sorcery.

But although there was a time when people grew old and died, and thus became spirits, they yet remained in the villages with the survivors—even as now they stay around the dwellings when they return to their village during the annual feast of the *milamala*. But one day an old woman-spirit who was living with her people in the house crouched on the floor under one of the bedstead platforms. Her daughter, who was distributing food to the members of the family, spilled some broth out of the coco-nut cup and burnt the spirit, who expostulated and reprimanded her daughter. The latter replied:

"I thought you had gone away; I thought you were only coming back at one time in the year during the *milamala*". The spirit's feelings were hurt. She replied: "I shall go to Tuma and live underneath". She then took up a coco-nut, cut it in half, kept the half with the three eyes, and gave her daughter the other. "I am giving you the half which is blind, and therefore you will not see me. I am taking the half with the eyes, and I shall see you when I come back with other spirits." This is the reason why the spirits are invisible, though they themselves can see human beings.

This myth contains a reference to the seasonal feast of *milamala*, the period at which the spirits return to their villages while festive celebrations take place. A more explicit myth gives an account of how the *milamala* was instituted. A woman of Kitava died leaving a pregnant daughter behind her. A son was born, but his mother had not enough milk to feed him. As a man of a neighbouring island was dying, she asked him to take a message to her own mother in the land of spirits, to the effect that the departed one should bring food to her grandson. The spirit-woman filled her basket with spirit-food and came back wailing as follows: "Whose food am I carrying? That of my grandson to whom I am going to give it; I am going to give him his food." She arrived on Bomagem beach in the island of Kitava and put down the food. She spoke to her daughter: "I bring the food; the man told me I should bring it. But I am weak; I fear that people may take me for a witch." She then roasted one of the yams and gave it to her grandson. She went into the bush and made a garden for her daughter. When she came back, however, her daughter received a fright for the spirit looked like a sorceress. She ordered her to go away saying: "Return to Tuma, to the spirit-land; people will say that you are a witch". The spirit-mother complained: "Why do you chase me away? I thought I would stay with you and make gardens for my grandchild." The daughter only replied: "Go away, return to Tuma!" The old woman then took up a coco-nut, split it in half, gave the blind half to her daughter, and kept the half

with eyes. She told her that once a year she and other spirits would come back during the *milamala* and look at the people in the villages, but remain invisible to them. And this is how the annual feast came to be what it is.

In order to understand these mythological stories, it is indispensable to collate them with native beliefs about the spirit-world, with the practices during the *milamala* season, and with the relations between the world of the living and the world of the dead, such as exist in native forms of spiritism.<sup>1</sup> After death every spirit goes to the nether world in Tuma. He has to pass at the entrance Topileta, the guardian of the spirit-world. The new-comer offers some valuable gift, the spiritual part of the valuables with which he had been bedecked at the time of dying. When he arrives among the spirits he is received by his friends and relatives who have previously died, and he brings the news from the upper world. He then settles down to spirit-life, which is similar to earthly existence, though sometimes its description is coloured by hopes and desires and made into a sort of real Paradise. But even those natives who describe it thus never show any eagerness to reach it.

Communication between spirits and the living is carried out in several ways. Many people have seen spirits of their deceased relatives or friends, especially in or near the island of Tuma. Again, there are now, and seem to have been from time immemorial, men and women who in trances, or sometimes in sleep, go on long expeditions to the nether world. They take part in the life of the spirits, and carry back and forth news, items of information, and important messages. Above all they are always ready to convey gifts of food and valuables from the living to the spirits. These people bring home to other men and women the reality of the spirit-world. They also give a great deal of comfort to the survivors, who are ever eager to receive news from their dear departed.

<sup>1</sup> An account of these facts has been already given in an article on "Baloma; Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands" in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. xlv., 1916.

During the annual feast of the *milamala*, the spirits return from Tuma to their villages. A special high platform is erected for them to sit upon, from which they can look down upon the doings and amusements of their brethren. Food is displayed in big quantities to gladden their hearts, as well as those of the living citizens of the community. During the day valuables are placed on mats in front of the head-man's hut and the huts of important and wealthy people. A number of taboos are observed in the village to safeguard the invisible spirits from injury. Hot fluids must not be spilled, as the spirits might be burned like the old woman in the myth. No native may sit, cut wood within the village, play about with spears or sticks, or throw missiles, for fear of injuring a *Baloma*, a spirit. The spirits, moreover, manifest their presence by pleasant and unpleasant signs, and express their satisfaction or the reverse. Slight annoyance is sometimes shown by unpleasant smells, more serious ill-humour is displayed in bad weather, accidents, and damage to property. On such occasions—as well as when an important medium goes into a trance, or someone is near to death—the spirit-world seems very near and real to the natives. It is clear that myth fits into these beliefs as an integral part of them. There is a close and direct parallel between, on the one hand, the relations of man to spirit, as expressed in present-day religious beliefs and experiences, and, on the other hand, the various incidents of the myth. Here again the myth can be regarded as constituting the furthest background of a continuous perspective which ranges from an individual's personal concerns, fears, and sorrows at the one end, through the customary setting of belief, through the many concrete cases told from personal experience and memory of past generations, right back into the epoch where a similar fact is imagined to have occurred for the first time.

I have presented the facts and told the myths in a manner which implies the existence of an extensive and coherent scheme of beliefs. This scheme does not exist, of course, in any explicit form in the native folk-lore. But it does corre-



spond to a definite cultural reality, for all the concrete manifestations of the natives' beliefs, feelings, and forebodings with reference to death and after-life hang together and form a great organic unit. The various stories and ideas just summarized shade into one another, and the natives spontaneously point out the parallels and bring out the connections between them. Myths, religious beliefs, and experiences in connection with spirits and the supernatural are really all parts of the same subject; the corresponding pragmatic attitude is expressed in conduct by the attempts to commune with the nether world. The myths are but a part of the organic whole; they are an explicit development into narrative of certain crucial points in native belief. When we examine the subjects which are thus spun into stories we find that they all refer to what might be called the specially unpleasant or negative truths: the loss of rejuvenation, the onset of disease, the loss of life by sorcery, the withdrawal of the spirits from permanent contact with men, and finally the partial communication re-established with them. We see also that the myths of this cycle are more dramatic, they also form a more consecutive, yet complex, account than was the case with the myths of origins. Without labouring the point, I think that this is due to a deeper metaphysical reference, in other words, to a stronger emotional appeal in stories which deal with human destiny, as compared with sociological statements or charters.

In any case, we see that the point where myth enters in these subjects is not to be explained by any greater amount of curiosity or any more problematic character, but rather by emotional colouring and pragmatic importance. We have found that the ideas elaborated by myth and spun out into narrative are especially painful. In one of the stories, that of the institution of the *milamala* and the periodical return of the spirits, it is the ceremonial behaviour of man, and the taboos observed with regard to the spirits, which are in question. The subjects developed in these myths are clear enough in themselves; there is no need to "explain" them, and the

myth does not even partially perform this function. What it actually does is to transform an emotionally overwhelming foreboding, behind which, even for a native, there lurks the idea of an inevitable and ruthless fatality. Myth presents, first of all, a clear realization of this idea. In the second place, it brings down a vague but great apprehension to the compass of a trivial, domestic reality. The longed-for power of eternal youth and the faculty of rejuvenation which gives immunity from decay and age, have been lost by a small accident which it would have been in the power of a child and a woman to prevent. The separation from the beloved ones after death is conceived as due to the careless handling of a coco-nut cup and to a small altercation. Disease, again, is conceived as something which came out of a small animal, and originated through an accidental meeting of a man, a dog, and a crab. Elements of human error, of guilt, and of mischance assume great proportions. Elements of fate, of destiny, and of the inevitable are, on the other hand, brought down to the dimension of human mistakes.

In order to understand this, it is perhaps well to realize that in his actual emotional attitude towards death, whether his own or that of his loved ones, the native is not completely guided by his belief and his mythological ideas. His intense fear of death, his strong desire to postpone it, and his deep sorrow at the departure of beloved relatives belie the optimistic creed and the easy reach of the beyond which is inherent in native customs, ideas, and ritual. After death has occurred, or at a time when death is threatening, there is no mistaking the dim division of shaking faith. In long conversations with several seriously ill natives, and especially with my consumptive friend Bagido'u, I felt, half-expressed and roughly formulated, but still unmistakable in them all, the same melancholy sorrow at the transience of life and all its good things, the same dread of the inevitable end, and the same questioning as to whether it could be staved off indefinitely or at least postponed for some little time. But again, the same people would clutch at the hope given to them by

their beliefs. They would screen, with the vivid texture of their myths, stories, and beliefs about the spirit-world, the vast emotional void gaping beyond them.

### MYTHS OF MAGIC

Let me discuss in more detail another class of mythical stories, those connected with magic. Magic, from many points of view, is the most important and the most mysterious aspect of primitive man's pragmatic attitude towards reality. It is one of the problems which are engaging at present the most vivid and most controversial interests of anthropologists. The foundations of this study have been laid by Sir James Frazer, who has also erected a magnificent edifice thereon in his famous theory of magic.

Magic plays such a great part in north-west Melanesia that even a superficial observer must soon realize its enormous sway. Its incidence, however, is not very clear at first sight. Although it seems to crop up everywhere, there are certain highly important and vital activities from which magic is conspicuously absent.

No native would ever make a yam or taro garden without magic. Yet certain important types of planting, such as the raising of the coco-nut, the cultivation of the banana, of the mango, and of the bread-fruit, are devoid of magic. Fishing, the economic activity only second in importance to agriculture, has in some of its forms a highly developed magic. Thus the dangerous fishing of the shark, the pursuit of the uncertain *kalala* or of the *to'ulam* are smothered in magic. The equally vital, but easy and reliable method of fishing by poison has no magic whatever. In the construction of the canoe—an enterprise surrounded with technical difficulties, requiring organized labour, and leading to an ever-dangerous pursuit—the ritual is complex, deeply associated with the work, and regarded as absolutely indispensable. In the construction of houses, technically quite as difficult a pursuit, but involving neither danger, nor chance, nor yet such com-

plex forms of co-operation as the canoe, there is no magic whatever associated with the work. Wood-carving, an industrial activity of the greatest importance, is carried on in certain communities as a universal trade, learnt in childhood, and practised by everyone. In these communities there is no magic of carving at all. A different type of artistic sculpture in ebony and hardwood, practised only by people of special technical and artistic ability all over the district, has, on the other hand, its magic, which is considered as the main source of skill and inspiration. In trade, a ceremonial form of exchange known as the *Kula* is surrounded by important magical ritual; while, on the other hand, certain minor forms of barter of a purely commercial nature are without any magic at all. Pursuits such as war and love, as well as certain forces of destiny and nature such as disease, wind, and weather, are in native belief almost completely governed by magical forces.

Even this rapid survey leads us to an important generalization which will serve as a convenient starting-point. We find magic wherever the elements of chance and accident and the emotional play between hope and fear have a wide and extensive range. We do not find magic wherever the pursuit is certain, reliable, and well under the control of rational methods and technological processes. Further, we find magic where the element of danger is conspicuous. We do not find it wherever absolute safety eliminates any elements of foreboding. This is the psychological factor. But magic also fulfils another and highly important sociological function. As I have tried to show elsewhere, magic is an active element in the organization of labour and in its systematic arrangement. It also provides the main controlling power in the pursuit of game. The integral cultural function of magic, therefore, consists in the bridging-over of gaps and inadequacies in highly important activities not yet completely mastered by man. In order to achieve this end, magic supplies primitive man with a firm belief in his power of succeeding; it provides him also with a definite mental and pragmatic technique wherever his

ordinary means fail him. It thus enables man to carry out with confidence his most vital tasks, and to maintain his poise and his mental integrity under circumstances which, without the help of magic, would demoralize him by despair and anxiety, by fear and hatred, by unrequited love and impotent hate.

Magic is thus akin to science in that it always has a definite aim intimately associated with human instincts, needs, and pursuits. The magic art is directed towards the attainment of practical ends; like any other art or craft it is also governed by theory, and by a system of principles which dictate the manner in which the act has to be performed in order to be effective. Thus magic and science show a number of similarities, and, with Sir James Frazer, we can appropriately call magic a pseudo-science.

Let us look more closely at the nature of the magic art. Magic, in all its forms, is composed of three essential ingredients. In its performance there always enter certain words, spoken or chanted; certain ceremonial actions are always carried out; and there is always an officiating minister of the ceremony. In analysing, therefore, the nature of magic, we have to distinguish the formula, the rite, and the condition of the performer. It may be said at once that in the part of Melanesia with which we are concerned, the spell is by far the most important constituent of magic. To the natives, knowledge of magic means the knowledge of the spell; and in any act of witchcraft the ritual centres round the utterance of the spell. The rite and the competence of the performer are merely conditioning factors which serve for the proper preservation and launching of the spell. This is very important from the point of view of our present discussion, for the magical spell stands in close relation to traditional lore and more especially to mythology.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of almost all types of magic we find some story

<sup>1</sup> See *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 329, 401 *sqq.*, and pp. 69-78 of "Magic, Science and Religion" in *Science, Religion and Reality*, Essays by Various Authors (1925).

accounting for its existence. Such a story tells when and where that particular magical formula entered the possession of man, how it became the property of a local group, how it passed from one to another. But such a story is not the story of magical origins. Magic never "originated"; it never was created or invented. All magic simply *was* from the beginning, as an essential adjunct to all those things and processes which vitally interest man and yet elude his normal rational efforts. The spell, the rite, and the object which they govern are coeval.

Thus the essence of all magic is its traditional integrity. Magic can only be efficient if it has been transmitted without loss and without flaw from one generation to the other, till it has come down from primeval times to the present performer. Magic, therefore, requires a pedigree, a sort of traditional passport in its travel across time. This is supplied by the myth of magic. The manner in which myth endows the performance of magic with worth and validity, in which myth blends with the belief in magical efficiency, will be best illustrated by a concrete example.

As we know, love and the attractions of the other sex play an important rôle in the life of these Melanesians. Like many races of the South Seas they are very free and easy in their conduct, especially before marriage. Adultery, however, is a punishable offence, and relations within the same totemic clan are strictly forbidden. But the greatest crime in the eyes of the natives is any form of incest. Even the bare idea of such a trespass between brother and sister fills them with violent horror. Brother and sister, united by the nearest bond of kinship in this matriarchal society, may not even converse freely, must never joke or smile at one another, and any allusion to one of them in the presence of the other is considered extremely bad taste. Outside the clan, however, freedom is great, and the pursuit of love assumes a variety of interesting and even attractive forms.

All sexual attraction and all power of seduction are believed to reside in the magic of love. This magic the natives

regard as founded in a dramatic occurrence of the past, told in a strange, tragic myth of brother and sister incest, to which I can only refer briefly here.<sup>1</sup> The two young people lived in a village with their mother, and by an accident the girl inhaled a strong love decoction, prepared by her brother for someone else. Mad with passion, she chased him and seduced him on a lonely beach. Overcome by shame and remorse, they forsook food and drink, and died together in a grotto. An aromatic herb grew through their inlaced skeletons, and this herb forms the most powerful ingredient in the substances compounded together and used in love magic.

It can be said that the myth of magic, even more than the other types of savage myth, justifies the sociological claims of the wielder, shapes the ritual, and vouches for the truth of the belief in supplying the pattern of the subsequent miraculous confirmation.

Our discovery of this cultural function of magical myth fully endorses the brilliant theory of the origins of power and kingship developed by Sir James Frazer in the early parts of his *Golden Bough*. According to Sir James, the beginnings of social supremacy are due primarily to magic. By showing how the efficacy of magic is associated with local claims, sociological affiliation, and direct descent, we have been able to forge another link in the chain of causes which connect tradition, magic, and social power.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this discourse I have attempted to prove that myth is above all a cultural force; but it is not only that. It is obviously also a narrative, and thus it has its literary aspect—an aspect which has been unduly emphasized by most scholars, but which, nevertheless, should not be completely neglected. Myth contains germs of the future epic, romance, and tragedy; and it has been used in them by the creative

<sup>1</sup> For the complete account of this myth see the author's *Sex and Repression in Primitive Society* (1926), where its full sociological bearings are discussed.

genius of peoples and by the conscious art of civilization. We have seen that some myths are but dry and succinct statements with scarcely any nexus and no dramatic incident; others, like the myth of love or the myth of canoe magic and of overseas sailing, are eminently dramatic stories. Did space permit, I could repeat a long and elaborate saga of the culture-hero Tudava, who slays an ogre, avenges his mother, and carries out a number of cultural tasks.<sup>1</sup> Comparing such stories, it might be possible to show why myth lends itself in certain of its forms to subsequent literary elaboration, and why certain other of its forms remain artistically sterile. Mere sociological precedence, legal title, and vindication of lineage and local claims do not lead far into the realm of human emotions, and therefore lack the elements of literary value. Belief, on the other hand, whether in magic or in religion, is closely associated with the deepest desires of man, with his fears and hopes, with his passions and sentiments. Myths of love and of death, stories of the loss of immortality, of the passing of the Golden Age, and of the banishment from Paradise, myths of incest and of sorcery, play with the very elements which enter into the artistic forms of tragedy, of lyric, and of romantic narrative. Our theory, the theory of the cultural function of myth, accounting as it does for its intimate relation to belief and showing the close connection between ritual and tradition, could help us to deepen our understanding of the literary possibilities of savage story. But this subject, however fascinating, cannot be further elaborated here.

In our opening remarks two current theories of myth were discredited and discarded: the view that myth is a rhapsodic rendering of natural phenomena, and Andrew Lang's doctrine that myth is essentially an explanation, a sort of primitive science. Our treatment has shown that neither of these mental attitudes is dominant in primitive culture; that neither

<sup>1</sup> For one of the main episodes of the myth of Tudava, see pp. 209-210 of the author's "Complex and Myth in Mother-right" in *Psyche*, vol. v., Jan. 1925.



can explain the form of primitive sacred stories, their sociological context, or their cultural function. But once we have realized that myth serves principally to establish a sociological charter, or a retrospective moral pattern of behaviour, or the primeval supreme miracle of magic—it becomes clear that elements both of explanation and of interest in nature must be found in sacred legends. For a precedent accounts for subsequent cases, though it does so through an order of ideas entirely different from the scientific relation of cause and effect, of motive and consequence. The interest in nature, again, is obvious if we realize how important is the mythology of magic, and how definitely magic clings to the economic concerns of man. In this, however, mythology is very far from a disinterested and contemplative rhapsody about natural phenomena. Between myth and nature two links must be interpolated: man's pragmatic interest in certain aspects of the outer world, and his need of supplementing rational and empirical control of certain phenomena by magic.

Let me state once more that I have dealt in this book with savage myth, and not with the myth of culture. I believe that the study of mythology as it functions and works in primitive societies should anticipate the conclusions drawn from the material of higher civilizations. Some of this material has come down to us only in isolated literary texts, without its setting in actual life, without its social context. Such is the mythology of the ancient classical peoples and of the dead civilizations of the Orient. In the study of myth the classical scholar must learn from the anthropologist.

The science of myth in living higher cultures, such as the present civilizations of India, Japan, China, and last but not least, our own, might well be inspired by the comparative study of primitive folk-lore; and in its turn civilized culture could furnish important additions and explanations to savage mythology. This subject is very much beyond the scope of the present study. I do, however, want to emphasize the fact that anthropology should be not only the study of savage

custom in the light of our mentality and our culture, but also the study of our own mentality in the distant perspective borrowed from Stone Age man. By dwelling mentally for some time among people of a much simpler culture than our own, we may be able to see ourselves from a distance, we may be able to gain a new sense of proportion with regard to our own institutions, beliefs, and customs. If anthropology could thus inspire us with some sense of proportion, and supply us with a finer sense of humour, it might justly claim to be a very great science.

I have now completed the survey of facts and the range of conclusions; it only remains to summarize them briefly. I have tried to show that folk-lore, the stories handed on in a native community, live in the cultural context of tribal life and not merely in narrative. By this I mean that the ideas, emotions, and desires associated with a given story are experienced not only when the story is told, but also when in certain customs, moral rules, or ritual proceedings, the counterpart of the story is enacted. And here a considerable difference is discovered between the several types of story. While in the mere fireside *tale* the sociological context is narrow, the *legend* enters much more deeply into the tribal life of the community, and the *myth* plays a most important function. Myth, as a statement of primeval reality which still lives in present-day life and as a justification by precedent, supplies a retrospective pattern of moral values, sociological order, and magical belief. It is, therefore, neither a mere narrative, nor a form of science, nor a branch of art or history, nor an explanatory tale. It fulfils a function *sui generis* closely connected with the nature of tradition, with the continuity of culture, with the relation between age and youth, and with the human attitude towards the past. The function of myth, briefly, is to strengthen tradition and endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it back to a higher, better, more supernatural reality of initial events.

Myth is, therefore, an indispensable ingredient of all culture. It is, as we have seen, constantly regenerated; every

historical change creates its mythology, which is, however, but indirectly related to historical fact. Myth is a constant by-product of living faith, which is in need of miracles; of sociological status, which demands precedent; of moral rule, which requires sanction.

We have made, perhaps, a too ambitious attempt to give a new definition of myth. Our conclusions imply a new method of treating the science of folk-lore, for we have shown that it cannot be independent of ritual, of sociology, or even of material culture. Folk-tales, legends, and myths must be lifted from their flat existence on paper, and placed in the three-dimensional reality of full life. As regards anthropological field-work, we are obviously demanding a new method of collecting evidence. The anthropologist must relinquish his comfortable position in the long chair on the verandah of the missionary compound, Government station, or planter's bungalow, where, armed with pencil and notebook and at times with a whisky and soda, he has been accustomed to collect statements from informants, write down stories, and fill out sheets of paper with savage texts. He must go out into the villages, and see the natives at work in gardens, on the beach, in the jungle; he must sail with them to distant sandbanks and to foreign tribes, and observe them in fishing, trading, and ceremonial overseas expeditions. Information must come to him full-flavoured from his own observations of native life, and not be squeezed out of reluctant informants as a trickle of talk. Field-work can be done first- or second-hand even among savages, in the middle of pile-dwellings, not far from actual cannibalism and head-hunting. Open-air anthropology, as opposed to hearsay note-taking, is hard work, but it is also great fun. Only such anthropology can give us the all-round vision of primitive man and of primitive culture. Such anthropology shows us, as regards myth, that far from being an idle mental pursuit, it is a vital ingredient of practical relation to the environment.

The claims and the merits, however, are not mine, but are due once more to Sir James Frazer. *The Golden Bough* con-

tains the theory of the ritual and sociological function of myth, to which I have been able to make but a small contribution, in that I could test, prove, and document it in my field-work. This theory is implied in Frazer's treatment of magic; in his masterly exposition of the great importance of agricultural rites; in the central place which the cults of vegetation and fertility occupy in the volumes of *Adonis*, *Attis*, *Osiris*, and in those on the *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*. In these works, as in so many of his other writings, Sir James Frazer has established the intimate relation between the word and the deed in primitive faith; he has shown that the words of the story and of the spell, and the acts of ritual and of ceremony are the two aspects of primitive belief. The deep philosophic query propounded by Faust, as to the primacy of the word or of the deed, appears to us fallacious. The beginning of man is the beginning of articulate thought and of thought put into action. Without words, whether framed in sober rational conversation, or launched in magical spells, or used to entreat superior divinities, man would not have been able to embark upon his great Odyssey of cultural adventure and achievement.

## V

### LA MISE A MORT DU DIEU EN ÉGYPTÉ

Par ALEXANDRE MORET, Membre de l'Institut

L'ŒUVRE de Sir James Frazer, enquête exhaustive sur toutes les croyances primitives, s'étend largement aux populations demi-civilisées, dans toutes les parties du monde et dans tous les temps. Ce domaine englobe aussi l'antiquité classique, dont la civilisation évoluée garde tant de souvenirs d'un passé barbare: c'est en faisant la patiente analyse des traditions helléniques conservées par Pausanias, que Frazer a été amené à étendre son investigation, suivant les principes de la méthode comparative. De nouveau, dans ces dernières années, son infatigable cerveau s'est exercé sur ce champ de recherches, puisqu'on nous annonce un livre sur Ovide, le poète des traditions mythologiques à l'époque romaine. Plus haut que l'antiquité classique, Frazer a remonté jusqu'à l'Orient ancien, dans cette région méditerranéenne, qui est le véritable berceau des religions, champ immense ouvert à sa sagacité, mais plus ardu à exploiter à cause des difficultés de langues et de l'état moins avancé de la recherche scientifique.

Dans l'Orient ancien, l'Égypte, entre tous les pays, constitue, pour l'étude du folklore, un terrain privilégié: là s'est épanouie, pendant quatre mille ans, une civilisation que révèlent soit les monuments figurés, soit les textes, depuis le stade paléolithique jusqu'à l'ère chrétienne. L'Égypte n'a-t-elle pas fourni à Frazer une des plus significatives figures dans sa galerie des «idoles de la tribu», Osiris, prototype du dieu qui meurt, *The Dying God*, doctrine cardinale de l'œuvre friariézienne? Comment l'enquête de Frazer, poussée sur tous

les domaines et de toutes les époques, nous renseigne-t-elle de l'extérieur sur la figure énigmatique d'Osiris? D'autre part, comment la doctrine frazérienne trouve-t-elle, en Égypte même, de précieux éléments de démonstration, tel sera le sujet de la présente leçon.

## I

DÉFINITIONS. LE BUT DE LA CIVILISATION PRIMITIVE:  
NOURRITURE ET FÉCONDITÉ

Dès que la pensée de l'homme s'éveille, une méditation angoissée s'impose à lui: la vie et la mort, deux faces d'un même problème. D'abord la vie: naître, grandir et subsister, en combattant la faim et la maladie, ce qui pose un autre problème: s'assurer une nourriture régulière et abondante. Puis, la mort à laquelle nul n'échappe: signifie-t-elle disparition totale? ou bien, survit-il quelque chose de l'individu? La survivance semble possible, puisque, dans la nature, chaque être quoique mortel, peut, à son tour, donner la vie, revivre dans sa progéniture: d'où l'immense importance de la descendance. Ajoutons que, pour les animaux et les végétaux, leur reproduction régulière peut assurer à l'homme cette garantie qu'il cherche, contre la faim. *Nourriture* et *fécondité*, voilà ce qui préoccupe avant tout l'homme primitif, soit qu'il spéculé sur les animaux ou les végétaux.

Toutefois, en ce qui concerne l'homme, cette raison d'espérer, que donne la descendance, reste obscure: si la race subsiste, l'individu disparaît, et qui sait ce qu'il devient? Les Égyptiens, imbus d'ardente foi en la survie, n'ont pas échappé, à certaines époques de crise sociale et religieuse, à l'appréhension de l'inconnu, pour ce qui a trait à l'individu. Au jour des funérailles, retentissait parfois ce chant désabusé, que les harpes scandaient de leur harmonie plaintive:

«Les corps s'en vont, et d'autres restent (à leur place), depuis le temps des ancêtres. Les dieux (rois défunts) qui existaient jadis, reposent dans leurs Pyramides, et les nobles aussi, les glorieux, sont ensevelis dans leurs tombeaux. Mais ils ont

bâti des maisons dont les places ne sont plus. . . . Leurs murs sont détruits, leurs places n'existent plus, comme si elles n'avaient jamais existé. Personne ne revient de là-bas, qui pourrait nous dire ce qu'il en est, qui nous dirait ce dont ils ont besoin, afin de tranquilliser nos cœurs, jusqu'au moment où nous irons, aussi, là où ils sont partis. . . . Vois, personne n'emporte avec soi ses biens; vois, personne ne revient, qui s'en est allé. . . .»<sup>1</sup>

Toutefois, les Égyptiens ont, comme les autres peuples, compris que la nature est une source d'espoir pour l'individu. Essayons de revenir, avec Frazer, à la mentalité des primitifs. Cessons de considérer l'homme, dans la nature, comme un être d'exception; observons le spectacle de la vie universelle, l'alternance des saisons, les conditions d'existence des végétaux et des animaux. L'Égyptien primitif y trouvera des raisons d'espérer; partout le jour succède à la nuit, l'inondation suit la sécheresse, l'été remplace l'hiver, les végétaux morts ont des rejetons vivaces, les graines enterrées engendrent de nouveaux fruits, et les animaux se reproduisent, selon un rythme inflexible et permanent, commandé par les saisons. Or, nous dit Frazer:

«Le spectacle des grands changements, dont les hommes sont chaque année témoins, sur cette terre, les a, de tout temps, fortement frappés, les a portés à méditer sur les causes de cette transformation. Leur curiosité n'était pas purement désintéressée, car, même l'être primitif, n'est pas sans voir combien sa propre existence est intimement liée au cours naturel des choses, combien sa propre existence est mise en danger par des phénomènes tels que ceux qui peuvent congeler les fleuves, ou dépouiller le sol de sa verdure.»<sup>2</sup>

L'ancien Égyptien, comme tout primitif, a constaté que sa vie et sa mort dépendent largement de la nature et suivent le rythme des saisons. Mais l'homme est supérieur aux autres

<sup>1</sup> W. Max Müller, *Die Liebespoesie der alten Ägypter* (Leipsic, 1899), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 304. Sauf indication contraire, nous citons le *Rameau d'Or* dans l'édition abrégée en un volume, dont l'admirable traduction est due à Lady Frazer (Paris, Geuthner, 1924). De même, *Atys et Osiris* sont cités d'après la traduction française de M. Peyre (Paris, Geuthner, 1926).

êtres par son cerveau, capable de réflexion intelligente et de prévoyance calculée; aussi est-ce son privilège de subordonner, autant qu'il le peut, le sol, les végétaux, les animaux, à l'entretien de sa propre existence. Il tentera donc de s'assurer nourriture pour lui et ses enfants, non plus au hasard des caprices du ciel et de la terre, mais en maîtrisant les forces naturelles, en disciplinant la fertilité du sol et des troupeaux, prétendant même commander aux saisons.

Sir James Frazer signale partout cette prétention, qu'a l'homme primitif, de se procurer «nourriture et progéniture», *«en pratiquant des rites magiques pour régir les saisons»*. Il note ceci: 1° «Arrivés à un certain degré d'évolution, les hommes se figurent tenir en mains les moyens de prévenir les calamités, et croient que, grâce à la magie, ils peuvent accélérer, ou retarder, la marche des saisons; en conséquence, ils pratiquent des cérémonies, récitent des incantations, afin de faire tomber la pluie, de faire briller le soleil, ou de produire la multiplication du bétail et l'abondance des récoltes»;

2° «A un stade plus avancé de civilisation, les hommes croient obtenir un résultat semblable et plus certain par le sacrifice d'un dieu, le dieu qui meurt, *The Dying God.*»<sup>1</sup>

Examinons tour à tour si les Égyptiens ont passé par les mêmes stades, 1° le stade des procédés magiques, 2° le stade religieux, qui comporte le sacrifice d'un dieu, afin de vaincre la mort et de fertiliser la nature.

## II

### LES PROCÉDÉS MAGIQUES

L'Égyptien a certainement cru à l'existence de *formules magiques qui commandent à la nature*. Cependant, aucun des papyrus magiques qui nous sont parvenus ne nous a conservé le texte des incantations «pour faire briller le soleil», ni «pour faire venir l'inondation du Nil», phénomène qui, en Égypte, remplace la pluie, presque inexistante. Toutefois, l'usage de telles formules est attesté.

<sup>1</sup> Rameau d'Or, p. 304.



### A. *Commander à la Nature*

Les magiciens d'Égypte, à toutes les époques, prétendent pouvoir arrêter ou remettre en branle, la barque du Soleil<sup>1</sup>; ils se vantent de provoquer la nuit, en plein jour; ils peuvent suspendre le cours du Nil, faire de cette masse fluviale deux tranches qu'à volonté ils superposent, ou remettent en place, pour chercher des objets au fond du fleuve<sup>2</sup>; en un mot, ils commandent aux forces de la nature. Les formules secrètes, nous dit-on, se trouvent dans les *Livres de Thot*, que le dieu écrivit de sa propre main. Il y a une formule pour «charmer» le ciel, la terre, le monde de la nuit, les montagnes, les eaux, pour permettre de comprendre ce que disent les oiseaux, les reptiles et même les *poissons* de l'eau. Grâce à une autre formule, un mort peut reprendre la forme qu'il avait sur terre, revoir le soleil et la lune se lever dans le ciel.<sup>3</sup>

Ces livres, que le roi et les magiciens sont seuls à connaître,<sup>4</sup> sont enfermés dans un bloc de pierre, déposé dans la «Chambre des Livres, à Héliopolis».<sup>5</sup> Telle est la tradition ancienne.

A une époque plus récente, on nous raconte ceci: «Les Livres sont dans un coffret de fer; celui-ci est dans un coffret de bronze; celui-ci dans un coffret de bois de cannelier; celui-ci dans un coffret d'ivoire et d'ébène; celui-ci dans un coffret d'argent; celui-ci dans un coffret d'or, et c'est ce dernier qui renferme les Livres». Un nœud de serpents, de scorpions, de reptiles divers, long de 6 kilomètres, grouille autour des coffrets, qui sont encore gardés par un grand serpent immortel.<sup>6</sup> Les lecteurs du *Rameau d'Or* se rappelleront sans doute les cachettes, emboîtées les unes dans les autres, où les

<sup>1</sup> P. Lacau, *Textes religieux* (Paris, 1910), § ii. (XII<sup>e</sup> dyn.). Voir aussi *Stèle de Metternich*, l. 206. On trouvera la traduction et le commentaire des textes magiques gravés sur cette stèle dans notre étude: «Horus Sauveur,» ap. *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, nov.-déc. 1915.

<sup>2</sup> G. Maspero, *Contes populaires* (4<sup>e</sup> édit.), p. 31. E. Naville, *Das ägyptische Todtenbuch* (Berlin, 1886), chap. lxv. (Sur ces formules cf. Hermann Grapow, ap. *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, xlix. (1912), p. 51.)

<sup>3</sup> *Contes*, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 133 (*Conte de Satni*).

magiciens, de tous pays, mettent à l'abri les choses précieuses, et spécialement, les âmes, ou la vie des individus. Dans une légende irlandaise, un géant raconte à sa femme:

«Ma vie se trouve dans l'écurie, sous les pieds d'un gros cheval. Au-dessous se trouve un petit lac; sur le lac, il y a sept peaux grises; sur ces peaux, sept mottes de bruyère; et, par-dessus le tout, sept planches de chêne. Dans ce lac vit une truite dont le corps renferme un canard; dans le ventre du canard, se trouve un œuf; dans l'œuf il y a une épine noire . . . , tant que cette épine ne sera pas réduite en miettes, je ne pourrai pas mourir.»<sup>1</sup>

On voit que les cachettes des magiciens d'Égypte sont presque aussi compliquées.

### B. Commander au Nil

Après le Soleil, la principale force naturelle, en Égypte, réside dans le *Nil*. Rois et magiciens ont prise sur lui, car ce dieu se révèle sous une forme humaine, et l'on sait comment agir sur un dieu-homme: par l'attrait invincible de la *nourriture* et de la *femme*.

A Silsilis, sur les parois de grès entre lesquelles coule le Nil resserré, Ramsès II, Merneptah et Ramsès III ont gravé le récit des rites qu'ils célébraient, deux fois l'an, pour *stimuler* le fleuve.<sup>2</sup> Vers le 15 Epiphi (env. 15 juin), au moment de la sécheresse, alors que le Nil mourant n'a plus même assez d'eau pour «cacher le mystère du monde inférieur» (Douat), les rois reconfortaient le dieu par l'offrande d'un veau, d'oies et de canards, puis, prenant «*les Livres qui font sortir le Nil de ses sources*», ils en jetaient au fleuve une copie, comme un ordre de commencer la crue.

Deux mois après, le 15 Thot (env. 15 août), le roi recommençait les rites, «à l'époque de l'eau pure», c'est-à-dire quand la crue était déjà en pleine croissance. Les deux dates

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, trad. Stiébel-Toutain, ii. p. 467. Cf. trad. Lady Frazer, p. 624.

<sup>2</sup> R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler* (Berlin, 1849-1856), iii. Pls. 175, 200, 217; C. Palanque, *Le Nil aux temps pharaoniques* (Paris, 1903), p. 87.

données à Silsilis signifient certainement le début de la crue et la crue déclarée; les rites correspondent donc: 1° à la fête «de la Nuit de la Goutte» (dont il sera question plus loin), qui tombe vers le 15 juin, et 2° à la fête «de la plénitude du Nil» (vers le 15 août); toutes deux figurent aujourd'hui encore dans les usages des Égyptiens. Les offrandes jetées au fleuve, avec les livres magiques, forçaient le Nil à sortir de sa cachette, puis à donner le plein de ses eaux.

Le grand papyrus Harris a conservé une liste des offrandes fondées par Ramsès III (vers l'an 1170), et inscrites «sur 272 Livres du dieu Nil»,<sup>1</sup> pendant quarante-huit ans. Le total en est extrêmement considérable. Voici quelques chiffres, parmi des dizaines d'autres: 470.000 pains, 879.224 gâteaux, 2.564 vaches, 1.089 chèvres, 154.672 mesures de fruits d'une seule espèce, des céréales, des plantes, des fleurs, par centaines de milliers. A la fin de la liste, on cite des statues du dieu Nil, en or, argent, lapis, malachite, cuivre, fer, pierre, bois, et des statues de la déesse Nil (celles-ci appelées *rpât* = princesse). Offrandes et statues étaient (d'après les stèles de Silsilis) jetées au Nil avec les «livres».

Ces statues du dieu et de la déesse Nil, jetées simultanément au fleuve, signifient probablement un rite de mariage sacré, une «hiérogamie», d'où résultera la fécondité de la crue.

Dans le cas du Nil, la hiérogamie prend une double forme. Tantôt on rapporte qu'un couple de statues évoque l'union féconde des Nils mâle et femelle. Le rite, déduit du papyrus Harris, est signalé par Thévenot qui a vu, en 1657, le 18 août, les fêtes de la plénitude du Nil: après la coupure de la jetée, on égorge quelques moutons et on jette au Nil deux statues en bois, représentant un homme et une femme, les fiancés du Nil.<sup>2</sup>

Tantôt, c'est une seule statue, celle d'une «fiancée» qu'on donne au Nil, pour provoquer sa fécondité. Le rite était célébré jusqu'à ces dernières années. Vers le 15 août, près de

<sup>1</sup> James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* (Chicago, 1905), iv. §§ 296-303.

<sup>2</sup> Jean de Thévenot, *Relation d'un voyage au Levant* (Paris, 1672), p. 301.

l'île de Rodah (Caire), on ~~fétait~~ la rupture des digues temporaires, pour laisser entrer l'eau nouvelle de la crue dans les canaux d'irrigation: c'est la «percée de la digue» (*gebr el khalig*). A l'entrée d'un canal, du côté du fleuve, et devant la digue qu'on allait ouvrir, on disposait un cône tronqué en terre, appelé '*arouesh*', c'est-à-dire la «poupée» = «la mariée», «la fiancée»: ce cône de terre est donc considéré comme un mannequin féminin. Au sommet du cône, on semait du maïs et du millet; l'eau montante arrivait à l'entrée du canal, encore oblitéré par la digue, attaquait le mannequin, et l'enlevait peu à peu, une semaine ou deux avant la «coupure». Ce nom de fiancée, observe Frazer, révèle l'intention du rite. On prétendait marier le fleuve, principe mâle, à son épouse, la terre à céréales, que ses eaux allaient féconder.<sup>1</sup> Cette autre forme de hiérogamie est un charme employé universellement pour solliciter la croissance des céréales; elle remonte, en Égypte, à la plus haute antiquité. De plus, la tradition s'est longtemps conservée, à l'époque musulmane, sous une forme encore plus directe et plus parlante: on jetait au fleuve un mannequin vêtu d'oripeaux et paré comme une fiancée, le jour de la coupure du khalig.<sup>2</sup>

Il est vraisemblable que mannequin de terre et statues représentent les atténuations du sacrifice réel d'une vierge vivante. Aucun texte hiéroglyphique ne décrit ce sacrifice de la «fiancée du Nil»; mais des allusions à ces rites apparaissent dans la vieille littérature religieuse et dans un conte populaire: on y voit que le Nil est un mâle qui convoite les femmes. Aux textes des Pyramides, on décrit la joie mêlée de terreur qui saisit les riverains au début de la crue:

«Ils tremblent, ceux qui voient le Nil Hâpi quand il bat ses vagues» (§ 1151). . . . «Osiris, c'est le premier flot de la crue . . . c'est un mâle qui enlève les femmes à leurs maris, et qui les emmène au lieu qui lui plaît, quand son cœur se prend

<sup>1</sup> Rameau d'Or, p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> Giacomo Lumbruso, *L' Egitto al tempo dei Graeci et dei Romani* (Rome, 1895), p. 5; C. Palanque, *Le Nil aux temps pharaoniques*, p. 85; A. J. M. R. Savary, *Lettres sur l'Égypte* (Paris, 1828), chap. xiv.

de désir» (§ 507).<sup>1</sup> Au *Conte des Deux Frères*, on relève ce trait: le fleuve bat ses vagues et effraie la femme de Bataou, qui s'enfuit; il la poursuit et crie: «Je veux m'emparer d'elle!». Le Nil se contente, toutefois, de capturer une boucle de ses cheveux.<sup>2</sup> Dans la stèle pseudo-historique du roi Zeser, où il est question des moyens de remédier à la sécheresse, on rappelle que le Nil court «comme un mâle vers les femmes».<sup>3</sup>

Le Papyrus Harris nous a montré l'atténuation de ce rite au moyen des statues. Pourtant, pendant des retours passagers à l'anarchie, les antiques coutumes pouvaient resurgir dans toute leur atrocité. Si l'on en croit Maqrizi, dans les temps troublés qui précèdent la conquête arabe, on avait remis en honneur le vieil usage de jeter une jeune fille au Nil. Après 640, le khalife Amrou s'y opposa, mais le Nil marqua son mécontentement, et la crue ne se produisit pas.<sup>4</sup> Une sédition éclata; pour l'apaiser, Amrou reprit le rite pharaonique de jeter au fleuve une prière écrite; le Nil obéit et envoya docilement la crue, en réponse à l'ordre magique.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pyramide du roi Ounas (environ 2540 av. J.-C.). Nous citons l'édition de Kurt Sethe, *Das altägyptische Pyramidentexte* (Leipsic, 1908-1910).

<sup>2</sup> Nouvel Empire thébain, vers 1300. *Pap. d'Orbiney*, x. ll. 6-10; voir G. Maspero, *Contes*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Rédaction de basse époque; C. Palanque, *op. cit.* p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> G. Lumbroso, *op. cit.* p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> C. Palanque, *Le Nil*, p. 82. Les fêtes du Nil sont observées encore aujourd'hui, mais elles ont perdu tout caractère originel et on ne perce plus de digue.

En remontant dans le passé, on constate la persistance de la tradition. Bonaparte, lors de l'Expédition d'Égypte, présida les cérémonies, en grande pompe. Pour la période arabe et turque cf. Palanque, *op. cit.* pp. 80 sq. Pour l'Empire Romain, G. Lefebvre a relevé dans le temple d'Achôris (Tehneh, Moyenne Égypte) une série d'inscriptions grecques nommant les prêtres chargés de faire les cérémonies et de surveiller la crue du Nil, de 285 à 345 après J.-C., entre le 3 et le 16 août, au moment où «l'eau nouvelle, bienfaisante et fécondante avec son limon fertile, monte jusqu'au temple», c'est-à-dire dans le nilomètre du temple. La date très précise de cette fête indique qu'il s'agit de ce qu'on appelle encore aujourd'hui la «fête de la plénitude du Nil» (*ouefa el bahr*) ou la «percée de la digue». (G. Lefebvre, «La Fête du Nil à Achôris,» extrait du *Bulletin Archéologique d'Alexandrie*, No. 18, 1921.)

## III

## LES PROCÉDÉS RELIGIEUX: LE SACRIFICE DU DIEU

Les pratiques magiques pour commander à la nature, tout en restant dans les usages, ne suffirent plus, cependant, aux Égyptiens, dès l'époque memphite. A ce moment d'une civilisation déjà très raffinée, l'Égypte illustre parfaitement la théorie générale présentée par Frazer:

«Les hommes ont compris, à la réflexion, que les alternances de l'été et de l'hiver, du printemps et de l'automne, ne résultaient aucunement de leurs rites magiques, mais qu'une cause plus profonde opérait derrière ces décors mouvants de la Nature. Ils se figurèrent alors que le développement, ou le dépérissement, des végétaux, la naissance, ou la mort, des créatures étaient les effets de la force croissante ou décroissante d'êtres divins, de dieux et de déesses qui, venant au monde, se mariaient, enfantaient et mouraient, tout comme les hommes.»

C'était substituer une *explication religieuse* aux explications magiques. Mais: «tout en attribuant le cycle des alternances annuelles aux mutations correspondantes que subissaient leurs divinités, les hommes continuèrent à se dire qu'en pratiquant certains rites magiques, ils arriveraient à seconder le dieu, source de vie, dans sa lutte contre la mort, et qu'il pourrait ainsi ranimer ses forces chancelantes, voire le ressusciter».<sup>1</sup>

Les Égyptiens croyaient que chaque force de la nature était animée par un dieu, dont la vie et la mort expliquaient le renouveau et le dépérissement périodiques de l'Univers. Ainsi, les dieux étaient soumis à la mort. Cela découle des textes hiéroglyphiques les plus anciens. La mort, pour tous les êtres, dieux compris, étaient, les Égyptiens le savaient bien, la contre-partie de toute vie; quand ils essayaient de se représenter les temps antérieurs à la création du monde, ils disaient que c'était au temps primordial, «avant qu'il existât le ciel, qu'il existât la terre, avant que fussent enfantés les

<sup>1</sup> Rameau d'Or, p. 305.

dieux, avant qu'il existât la mort». <sup>1</sup> Comme partout, l'homme, en Égypte, s'est figuré les dieux à sa ressemblance. Conséquence de cet anthropomorphisme, tout dieu naît, devient adulte, puis vieillit et meurt. On se représentait le soleil à l'aube, comme un enfant; à midi, comme un homme fait, et le soir, comme un vieillard courbé, s'appuyant sur une canne, laissant tomber la salive de sa bouche tremblante. <sup>2</sup> Aussi les calendriers des temples commémorent, par des fêtes, les dates de la naissance des dieux et de leurs funérailles. On savait qu'Héliopolis possédait le cadavre d'Atoum; Thinis, celui d'Onouris; et Mendès, la momie d'Osiris. <sup>3</sup> Un dieu du ciel, Horus l'aîné, avait été mis en morceaux; la tête d'Isis avait été coupée; et Seth-Typhon avait connu la mort, après avoir lui-même dépecé Osiris.

Cette calamité de la mort, comment la rendre supportable et compatible avec la puissance infinie prêtée à la divinité? Par la démonstration que le dieu ne meurt que pour renaître. Les dieux des astres, dont l'apparition et la disparition au firmament étaient anxieusement surveillées, en fournissaient la preuve visible: pour ne citer que l'astre-roi, n'est-il pas d'expérience quotidienne que, s'il meurt chaque soir à l'occident, il renaît chaque matin à l'orient? Aussi, tout être divin était-il comparé au soleil dans sa naissance et sa mort quotidiennes. Pourtant, ce qui intéressait les hommes, c'était moins la constatation du fait, que l'explication intéressée qu'ils en tiraient, pour résoudre, à leur avantage, l'énigme de la mort. Dans toute la nature, les phénomènes alternés de croissance et de déclin, de reproduction et de destruction, correspondaient, dans l'esprit des Égyptiens, à la naissance, aux mariages féconds, à la mort, à la renaissance des dieux. Si le dieu meurt, c'en est fait de la vie universelle, mais si le dieu renaît, tout doit renaître avec lui. Le *dieu qui meurt* intéressait donc les hommes surtout en tant que *dieu qui doit*

<sup>1</sup> *Textes des Pyramides*, § 1446.

<sup>2</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, i. (Paris, 1895), pp. 89, 161.

<sup>3</sup> *De Iside*, 21. G. Maspero, *op. cit.* i. p. 111, n. 2; p. 116. Cf. A. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin* (Paris, 1902), p. 221.

*renaître*. Dès lors, le devoir des hommes s'impose clairement: il faut, et il suffit, qu'ils *aident les dieux* à bien supporter l'épreuve de la mort quotidienne, ou périodique, et qu'ils contribuent, de tous leurs efforts, à les faire *renaître*. En cela consistera, pour une grande part, le culte que les Égyptiens rendront à leurs dieux.

La magie vient ici au secours du culte: Frazer nous en donne mille exemples.

«En magie, on tient pour vrai qu'il suffit d'un simple simulacre de l'effet désiré pour, infailliblement, produire cet effet.

«Les cérémonies du culte doivent donc donner la représentation de ce que l'on souhaite pour le dieu. Ce sont des *dramas*, où l'on figure, par exemple, l'union féconde des dieux et déesses de la fertilité, la mort désolante de l'un, sinon des deux conjoints, enfin la radieuse résurrection de l'un ou de l'autre.»<sup>1</sup>

Par l'effet de la magie sympathique, non seulement les dieux en cause, mais la nature entière, et surtout les hommes, bénéficieront de l'appui décisif prêté par la créature à ses créateurs. En même temps que la résurrection du dieu, on facilitera la renaissance du printemps, ou la résurrection des hommes morts. Telle est la loi générale.

Suivant la situation géographique des divers peuples, cette loi présente des applications variées, adaptées aux conditions du pays et des hommes. «Dans la zone tempérée, note Sir James, les plus frappants de tous les changements qu'amènent les saisons et qui affectent, comme des présages, l'existence des hommes, sont ceux qui se rapportent à la végétation.

«L'influence des saisons sur les animaux, si grande soit-elle, ne se manifeste pas de façon aussi évidente. D'où il suit que dans les *dramas magiques*, joués dans le but de chasser l'hiver et de ramener le printemps, on insiste sur la végétation; arbres et plantes l'emportent sur les bêtes et les oiseaux. C'est dans les pays riverains de la Méditerranée orientale que ces rites ont été le plus répandus et célébrés. Sous les noms

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 305.



d'Osiris, Tammouz, Adonis, Atys, les peuples de l'Égypte et de l'Asie occidentale représentaient le dépérissement et le renouveau annuels de la vie et, en particulier, de la vie végétale, en les personnifiant par un dieu qui meurt et qui renaît chaque année.»<sup>1</sup>

Nous voici au cœur de notre sujet. Examinons comment textes et scènes figurées des monuments égyptiens répondent à cette interprétation du mythe osirien.

### A. *La Passion d'Osiris, dieu agraire*

Osiris est un personnage complexe, «aux noms multiples, et dont la nature est mystérieuse», disent les Égyptiens. Au II<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère, Plutarque, 4.000 ans après le temps où naquit le mythe, tâche d'en faire l'exégèse, de discerner le véritable visage du dieu sous ses masques accumulés et successifs.

«Pour les uns, nous dit-il, Osiris est le Nil qui s'unit avec Isis, la terre; pour d'autres, il est la lune, principe d'humidité et de fécondation.» Plutarque pense, non sans raison, que chacune de ces explications est fausse isolément, si elle prétend contenir tout le sens du personnage osirien, mais qu'il y a dans chacune une part de vérité. Par contre, il repousse comme absurde celle-ci:

«On dit qu'Osiris est enseveli quand on cache la semence dans la terre et qu'il retourne à la vie, se montre de nouveau lorsque les germes commencent à pousser.»<sup>2</sup>

Or, c'est dans cette hypothèse dédaignée que Sir James Frazer a discerné le caractère dominant d'Osiris.

Diodore et Plutarque<sup>3</sup> nous ont appris l'essentiel de la légende anthropomorphique: Osiris fut un roi bienfaisant, qui révéla aux hommes la culture du blé, de l'orge, de la vigne, et les arracha à l'anthropophagie, en leur donnant comme nourriture le pain, et comme boisson, le vin et la bière. A l'âge de 28 ans, Osiris tomba dans un guet-apens, où l'attira

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> *De Iside*, 65-70.

<sup>3</sup> Diodore, i. 14; *De Iside*, 12 sq. Cf. A. Moret, *Le Nil et la civilisation égyptienne*, p. 100.

son frère Seth; mis à mort, son corps fut jeté au Nil, qui l'emporta en Méditerranée, dont le flot le poussa jusqu'à Byblos. C'est là que sa femme Isis le retrouva, caché dans les branches d'un arbrisseau, l'*érika*, qui avait poussé sur son cercueil. Ramené en Égypte, le cercueil fut, par malheur, découvert par Seth, qui, dans sa haine impie, coupa en 14 (ou 16) morceaux le corps sacré. Isis se mit en *quête*, *chercha*, *trouva*<sup>1</sup> les membres que Seth avait dispersés; à mesure qu'elle retrouvait une partie du corps, elle la faisait mettre en terre, lui élevant sur place une sépulture, si bien que 14, ou 16 villes d'Égypte se vantaient de posséder le tombeau d'Osiris. Cependant, Horus, fils posthume d'Osiris, fut élevé par Isis pour venger son père; Horus arracha à Seth l'héritage de l'Égypte, et Osiris revécut ainsi, triomphant, en son fils. D'autre part, Isis avait inventé «le remède qui donne l'immortalité»<sup>2</sup>; grande magicienne, elle avait su faire du cadavre d'Osiris un dieu immortel.

Tous ces traits, dont seuls Diodore et Plutarque nous donnent un exposé cohérent, sont très anciens. Aux textes des Pyramides de la V<sup>e</sup> dynastie, puis dans les Hymnes à Osiris de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> dynastie, ils se retrouvent épars, mais complets.<sup>3</sup>

Voyons comment Frazer les interprète et y discerne, sous les épisodes anthropomorphiques, un dieu de la végétation.

Chez tous les peuples, dans tous les temps, les traits du culte agraire sont les suivants: *Moissonner*, c'est couper à la faucille l'esprit du blé, caché dans une gerbe. *Séparer le grain de la paille*, sous les coups des fléaux, ou, comme cela se fait en Égypte, par les pieds des troupeaux, et trier les grains au moyen de vans, c'est démembrer, couper en morceaux son corps. *Semer le grain*, c'est mettre en terre, ensevelir des fragments du dieu, pour fertiliser les champs. Mais *le dieu renaîtra* avec le blé ou les pousses nouvelles. La moisson est une mise à mort. Semailles et sépulture se confondent. Germination signifie résurrection.

En est-il de même en Égypte? Pour le savoir, Sir James se

<sup>1</sup> Termes rituels des textes égyptiens.

<sup>2</sup> Diodore, i. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Nil et la civilisation égyptienne*, pp. 95-96.

demande à quel moment de l'année le paysan égyptien fêtait Osiris. «La date à laquelle on fête une divinité fournit souvent une indication précieuse sur sa véritable nature. . . . Si ces fêtes ont lieu à l'époque des semailles du blé, ou à celle de la moisson, nous en inférons que la divinité personnifie la terre ou le blé.»<sup>1</sup> Interrogeons donc, avec Sir James, les traditions des auteurs classiques, et voyons si les monuments égyptiens les confirment.

### B. Rites de la Moisson

Diodore (i. 25) rapporte «une pratique fort ancienne, encore en usage en Égypte», au moment où il l'a visitée (vers 60 av. J.-C.). Il rappelle qu'«Osiris inventa la culture des fruits de la terre et qu'Isis avait découvert l'usage du blé et de l'orge»; aussi «pour consacrer le souvenir de cette découverte . . . au moment de la moisson, les *premiers épis sont donnés en offrande: alors les hommes se frappent la poitrine et se lamentent en invoquant Isis*».<sup>2</sup>

Mais, se demande Frazer, pourquoi le paysan égyptien, au lieu de se réjouir comme il est d'usage pour la moisson, donne-t-il des signes de deuil? Et pourquoi, en Phénicie aussi, les moissonneurs chantent-ils, à ce moment, des airs plaintifs? Ne serait-ce point qu'ils doivent dissimuler leur joie naturelle sous une douleur de convention? Un dieu, l'esprit du blé, est mis en morceaux sous les dents de leurs faucilles, ou démembré sur l'aire, et foulé par les sabots de leurs troupeaux. Sir James Frazer retrouve cent exemples de ces Lamentations sur le *Vieil Homme* ou sur la *Vieille Femme*, ainsi qu'on appelle l'*Esprit du blé qui habite dans la gerbe*.<sup>3</sup>

Si l'on recherche une confirmation du texte de Diodore dans les scènes de moisson, si fréquemment représentées dans les tombeaux égyptiens, au premier aspect on sera déçu.

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, pp. 353, 404. *Atys et Osiris*, pp. 74-76.

<sup>3</sup> Couper le blé à la faucille est un acte rituel, mentionné aux Pyramides, pour la préparation de l'offrande (§ 657). Parfois le roi en personne s'en charge, de même que nous le verrons fossoyer la terre, cf. W. M. F. Petrie, *Medum* (London, 1892), Pl. 18.

Les tableaux où l'on voit les équipes de paysans couper l'orge, ou le blé, à la faucille, confectionner des tas de gerbes, diriger les bœufs, les ânes, les moutons et les porcs, qui piétineront les épis sur l'aire, nettoyer les grains à la balayette, au van, au tamis, faire, avec la paille, des meules (en forme de pyramides tronquées),—semblent, à première vue, dépourvus de toute allusion à un Esprit de la végétation. De courtes légendes, gravées au-dessus des travailleurs, définissent les travaux, ou



FIG. 1. Ramsès III coupe la gerbe qui est offerte, avec un taureau blanc, au dieu Min (Médinet Habou. Cf. A. Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris, 1913), pp. 8 et 236).

conservent des fragments de conversation, en style populaire, énigmatique. Peut-être, dans ces textes concis et de sens difficile, qui procèdent souvent par interrogations, y a-t-il autre chose que des plaisanteries de paysans; mais cela reste obscur.<sup>1</sup> Cependant quelques traits assez significatifs doivent être notés.

Au milieu des moissonneurs qui manient la faucille, se tient un joueur de flûte, qui souffle dans son instrument

<sup>1</sup> Sur ces tableaux et leurs légendes voir Pierre Montet, *Les Scènes de la vie privée dans les tombeaux égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire* (Strasbourg et Paris, 1925), pp. 199-229.

(Fig. 2); un des paysans met sa faucille sous son bras, lui fait face et chante, en faisant des gestes.<sup>1</sup> Nous ignorons ce qu'il chante, mais «cela est très beau», dit un assistant. Rien n'indique que l'air, ou la chanson, soient gais ou animés; le flûtiste et le chanteur ont des faces rigides et compassées. Serait-ce un chant de lamentation? L'hypothèse est plausible, à cause du témoignage de Diodore.<sup>2</sup> Sir James Frazer pourrait trouver, dans cette scène, une confirmation des coutumes que rapporte Diodore. En dehors des tableaux spéciaux de concerts et de danses, aucune autre scène agricole ou de

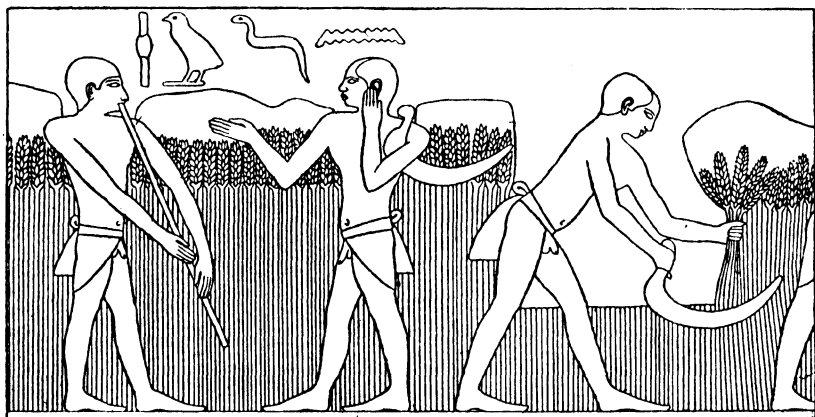


FIG. 2. Le chant de la moisson accompagné par la flûte (Tombeau de Ti, d'après Montet, *op. cit.* Pl. 16). Cf. Tombeau de Menna, Flinders Petrie, *Arts et métiers*, Fig. 70.

métier, ne fait intervenir un flûtiste.<sup>3</sup> Par contre, les auteurs classiques, d'Hérodote à Tibulle, nous disent qu'en Égypte un joueur de flûte ouvrait la marche aux cortèges des fêtes de Dionysos-Osiris; ils nomment la flûte «invention d'Osiris».<sup>4</sup> Or, nous verrons plus loin qu'à la saison «symétrique» des semailles, il est attesté que le paysan égyptien «pleure»

<sup>1</sup> P. Montet, *op. cit.* pp. 201-202, Pl. 16, Tombeau de Ti (V<sup>e</sup> dyn.).

<sup>2</sup> Confirmé par Firmicus Maternus, qui demande aux Égyptiens: «Cur plangitis fruges terrae et crescentia lugetis semina?» (*De errore profanarum religionum*, ii. 7.)

<sup>3</sup> Cela ressort des scènes étudiées par P. Montet, *op. cit.* pp. 194, 202, 356.

<sup>4</sup> Hérodote, ii. 48; Tibulle, ap. Theodore Hopfner, *Fontes religionis Aegyptiacae*, p. 148, cf. pp. 167, 355.

encore Osiris, en exhalant sa plainte dans la flûte rustique, que constitue un roseau.

Cette plainte est-elle le fameux chant funèbre en usage en Phénicie,<sup>1</sup> à Chypre, ailleurs encore, sous des noms divers, et que les Grecs désignaient par *Linos*? «Les Égyptiens l'appellent *Manéros*», dit Hérodote, et «il semble qu'ils l'aient toujours chanté».<sup>2</sup> Brugsch a tenté d'expliquer *Mavepōs* par *Mâa n per.k*, mots qui constituent l'*incipit* d'un chant funèbre d'Isis et Nephthys sur Osiris.<sup>3</sup> Ces mots signifient: «Viens vers ta maison»; tout le morceau poétique est bâti sur ce thème. Sir James Frazer accepte cette hypothèse et lui donne quelque vraisemblance en notant que la phrase: «Viens dans ta maison» se rencontre souvent dans les lamentations en l'honneur du dieu agraire qui meurt. Chez les Indiens Cherokees, «on garde toujours intact un sentier, depuis le champ jusqu'à la maison», pour que l'esprit du blé, qu'ils appellent la Vieille Femme, «pût être encouragé à rester dans la maison et n'aille pas se promener ailleurs».<sup>4</sup>

D'autres traits d'un culte agraire antique se relèvent çà et là.

Aux fêtes de Min,<sup>5</sup>—dieu de l'énergie virile, adoré au Ramesséum et dans le grand temple de Médinet Habou (Ramsès II et III), le 1<sup>er</sup> Pakhons (1<sup>er</sup> mois de l'été) comme «dieu du territoire (*tep hespt*)» et «fertilisateur des champs, producteur des récoltes»,—le roi, en présence des statues de ses ancêtres, coupait rituellement une gerbe de blé avec une faucille d'or (Fig. 1), la dédiait à son père Min, et faisait

<sup>1</sup> Aux fêtes d'Adonis, le *lamento*, qui déplore la mort du dieu de la végétation, est accompagné par la flûte; cf. G. Glotz, *Revue des Études Grecques*, xxxiii., No. 152 (1920), p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Hérodote, ii. 79. Cf. A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch* (Leipsic, 1890), p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> P. J. de Horrak, *Les Lamentations d'Isis et de Nephthys* (Paris, 1866). Cf. A. Moret, *Rois et dieux d'Égypte*, 3<sup>e</sup> éd. (Paris, 1922), p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, pp. 353, 404.

<sup>5</sup> Textes et tableaux dans Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, ii. Pls. 163 et 212-213. Voir la description détaillée et la traduction des textes conservés dans G. Daressy, *Notice explicative de Médinet Habou* (Caire, 1897), pp. 121 et suivantes. Le rite est célébré à l'occasion de la fête *Sed* du roi.

amener, en procession, un taureau blanc, coiffé de plumes (osiriennes), probablement pour le sacrifier.<sup>1</sup> A la fin de la cérémonie, on lâchait quatre oies qui volaient aux quatre coins du monde pour dire aux dieux du Sud, Nord, Est, Ouest, qu'Horus, fils d'Isis, avait pris la couronne (et que le Pharaon régnant avait fait de même). Telle qu'elle est

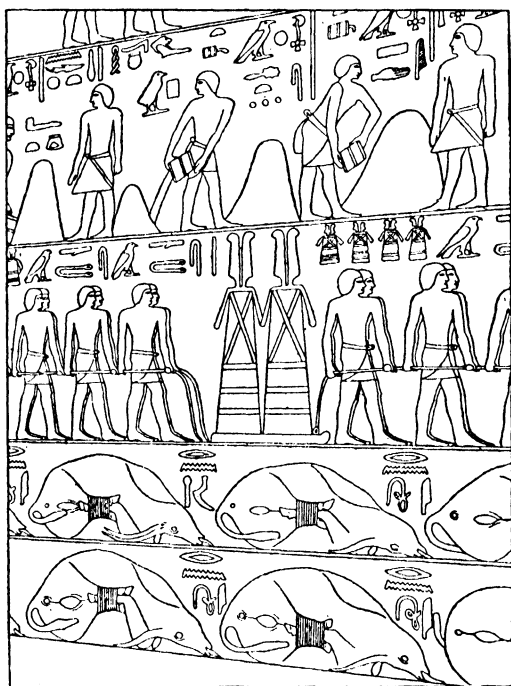


FIG. 3. Halage des *Stat* sur traîneaux (Bissing, *Die Mastaba des Gemnikäi*, ii. Pl. 9).

figurée, sous la XIX<sup>e</sup> dynastie,<sup>2</sup> la fête a un caractère «royal» (fête Sed); nul doute, cependant, qu'à l'origine, elle ne fût surtout un «drame sacré», un «mystère» de la mise à mort de l'Esprit du blé et de la fécondité, sous les espèces de la gerbe

<sup>1</sup> Le taureau est l'image vivante d'Osiris (*De Iside*, 39. 20); Osiris est fréquemment appelé le «taureau de l'Occident» dans les textes hiéroglyphiques, et identifié «au taureau, grande victime (*sma our*)». Cf. Diodore, i. 21.

<sup>2</sup> A Esneh, l'empereur Caracalla est figuré coupant rituellement la gerbe (Lepsius, *Denkm.* iv. Pl. 102).

et du taureau. L'épisode final montrait que l'Esprit du blé se réincarnait dans un successeur vigoureux; l'avènement d'Horus (et du roi) signifie la résurrection annuelle, dans la nature, du dieu de la fécondité.<sup>1</sup>

Dans les tombeaux, ce tableau n'apparaît pas, le culte populaire étant plus simple en manifestations<sup>2</sup>; mais un épisode rustique de la fête des moissons (jusqu'ici méconnu) est conservé dans quelques mastabas de l'Ancien Empire. Parmi les offrandes, fruits, fleurs, bétail, venus des champs, qui défilent pour le défunt, figurent des simulacres (2, 3 ou

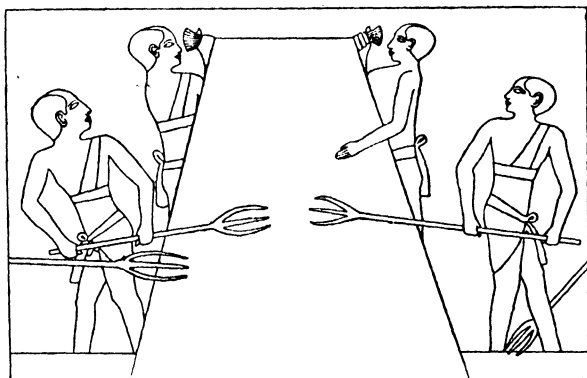


FIG. 4. Grenier portatif (Tombeau de Ti, d'après P. Montet, *op. cit.* Pl. 18).

4), halés sur des traîneaux, par les prêtres du culte funéraire (*hemou ka*). La forme de ces singuliers objets, quand elle est stylisée, évoque celle d'un récipient haut et mince, qu'on a qualifié de vase, jarre, etc. Ce récipient—(parfois muni d'un couvercle, orné de fleurs sur les côtés (Fig. 4)—semble être un grenier portatif, un moule en bois (?), qu'on dressait dans les champs, pour y jeter les gerbes, avec des fourches. Le moule remplacerait la meule de gerbes, dont il rappelle la forme stylisée (Figs. 4 à 8).

Sur d'autres reliefs, là où les contours sont simplifiés, le

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (Paris, 1902), p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Pour toutes les opérations agricoles voir le tableau très complet qu'en a donné Mlle F. Hartmann, *L'Agriculture dans l'ancienne Égypte*.



réceptient évoque la forme de la *gerbe de lin*, au moment où les cueilleurs l'arrachent (Fig. 6). Ailleurs, les gerbes, droites ou renversées, qui coiffent la déesse du grain Neprijt, ou

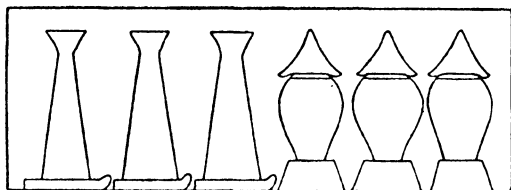


FIG. 5. *Stat* sur traîneau, servant d'offrandes<sup>1</sup> (Ancien Empire, Lepsius, *Denkm.* ii. Pl. 35).

qu'on présente à la déesse des moissons Renout, donnent les prototypes de cet objet appelé la *stat*.<sup>2</sup>

Or, telle la *corn-maiden* du folk-lore, la *stat* apparaît déguisée en mannequin; sa partie supérieure forme tête, parée de 2, 3 ou 4 plumes caractéristiques d'Osiris sous sa forme la plus ancienne, celle d'*Anzti*, fétiche de Busiris<sup>3</sup>; sur sa poitrine se croisent les bandelettes des divinités emmail-

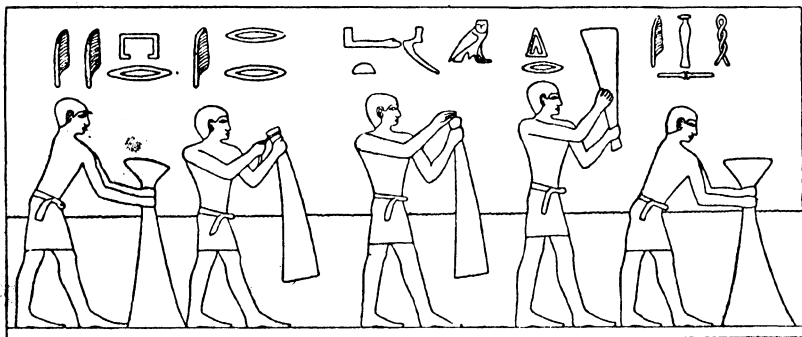


FIG. 6. Cueillette des gerbes de lin; comparer la gerbe et la *stat* (Tombeau de Hetepet; L. Klebs, *op. cit.* p. 54).

lotées, momifiées; deux bandelettes tombent des épaules, comme des bras; sur la base, on distingue les rayures d'autres liens. On pare et on emmaillote de même façon le tronc

<sup>1</sup> Au Tombeau de Mera, il y a des magasins pour les *stat*, accessoires du culte funéraire (G. Daressy, *op. cit.* p. 555).

<sup>2</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire*, *op. cit. supra*, i. pp. 82 et 120 (figures).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Le Nil et la civilisation égyptienne*, p. 90.

d'arbre *zed*, autre fétiche d'Osiris. La comparaison des deux

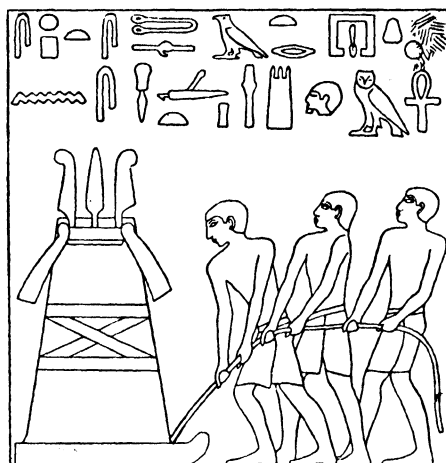


FIG. 7. Défilé de la *stat* halée pour servir d'offrande (Tombeau de Tepe-mânkh, L. Klebs, *op. cit.* p. 43).

simulacres suffirait à démontrer (Figs. 9-10) que le récipient, gerbe, ou meule, est aussi un simulacre du dieu agraire.

Notons que, dans les tombeaux, les servants du ka halent

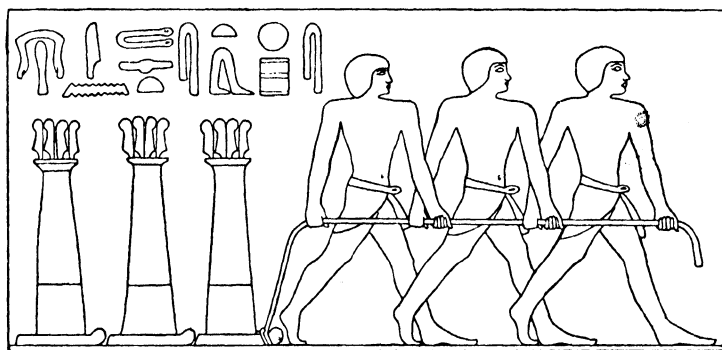


FIG. 8. Les servants du Ka font défilé les *stat* (N. de G. Davies, *The Mastaba of Ptah-hetep*, ii. Pl. 22).

ces simulacres sur traîneaux quand ils amènent au défunt les offrandes alimentaires<sup>1</sup>; dans les temples, les rois et les

<sup>1</sup> A ce sujet voir la bibliographie dans Luise Klebs, *Die Reliefs des alten Reiches*, pp. 42-43, sous la rubrique *Opferschlitten*, et les textes dans P. Montet, *op. cit.* p. 388. Mlle Klebs voit dans l'objet un grand vase à fruits;

prêtres tirent et consacrent les mêmes récipients, couronnés de plumes, par devant les dieux générateurs, tels qu'Amon et Min.<sup>1</sup> Donc, au nombre des offrandes rituelles, on compte le simulacre du dieu qui féconde les champs.

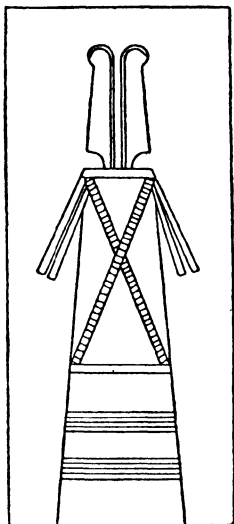


FIG. 9. La *stat*, fétiche coiffé de plumes et ceint de bandelettes (Bissing, *Gemnikäi*, ii. Pl. 11). Cf. la *corn-maiden*, Fig. 18.

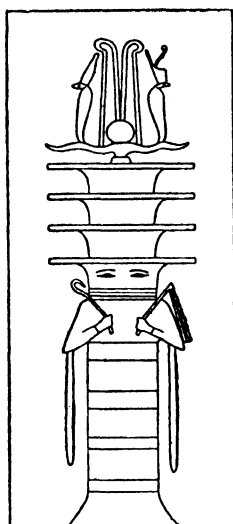


FIG. 10. Le *zed* d'Osiris, coiffé de plumes, ceint de bandelettes, figuré avec tête et bras (A. Wiedemann, *Sarg der Sättenzeit zu Bonn*, ap. Bon. Jahrb. xxx. Pl. 4).

Quel est le nom de ce singulier objet? Les légendes des tableaux sont réticentes; elles emploient des périphrases

F. W. von Bissing remarque que ce *Fruchtgebilde*, qu'il attribue à une *Erntefest*, est voisin des scènes de mesurage des grains; G. Daressy a noté (*Le Mastaba de Mera*, Mémoires de l'Institut Égyptien, 1898, p. 555) que la forme rappelle celle des greniers.

<sup>1</sup> F. W. von Bissing, *Die Mastaba des Gemnikäi* (Berlin, 1905), ii. p. 31, a relevé tous les exemples de présentation, ou de consécration des *merout sta.t*, dans les temples. Le récipient y prend parfois la forme de coffrets plus petits et moins hauts que dans les tombeaux de l'ancien empire; mais à Louqsor, le temple de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> dyn. donne encore la forme haute, que nous avons reproduite par notre Fig. 11, d'après une photographie. Pour le nom *mert*, Bissing l'interprète d'après *mer* «lier» d'où *Bündel*. Or, le déterminatif du lien, nécessaire avec ce sens, manque partout. Le sens normal de *mert* est «chérie, aimée». Comparez *merj* «chéri», épithète du berger osirien (*infra*, p. 35, n. 5), et l'*arouseh* «fiancée» des fellahs actuels (voir Appendice).

(comme il arrive aussi pour désigner Osiris). Sous l'Ancien Empire, on écrit d'ordinaire: «faire défiler le traîneau pour l'offrande funéraire» ou «les traîneurs traînent *ce qui est traîné*» (*sta.t*), les mots en italiques s'appliquent au simulacre. Depuis le Nouvel Empire, au lieu de *sta.t*, ou avant ce mot, on lit *mer.t*, pluriel *merout*. Or, *mert* signifie *l'aimée*, *la chérie*, c'est le nom que l'on donne à l'épouse ou à la «fiancée», *mert stat* serait «*la chérie traînée*».

Qu'on se rappelle la «fiancée du Nil» parfois représentée, jusqu'à nos jours, par une meule de terre, couronnée d'orge ou de blé (voir p. 12 et l'Appendice).

Il est tout à fait vraisemblable que le simulacre est une personnification de l'esprit du grain qui se cache dans la première, ou la dernière gerbe du champ moissonné. Frazer a donné cent exemples de cas analogues, où l'on fait, avec une gerbe, une poupée, parée de fleurs, de plumes, d'ori-peaux; on l'appelle la «vieille», mais aussi la «vierge», la «fiancée», la «mariée»<sup>1</sup>; c'est elle qu'on met à mort en coupant la gerbe. Sur les murs des tombeaux égyptiens, les *merout*

figureraient, dans les cortèges d'offrandes, un divin témoin de la fertilité agricole, sous forme d'Esprit sacrifié et *mort*, puisqu'il est emmaillotté de bandelettes funéraires.

Enfin, remarquons que dans les tombeaux de l'Ancien Empire, à l'endroit même où l'on bâtit les meules de gerbes, on dressait souvent de petits autels chargés de vases d'eau et de pains, offrandes rituelles à une divinité.<sup>2</sup> Nul doute

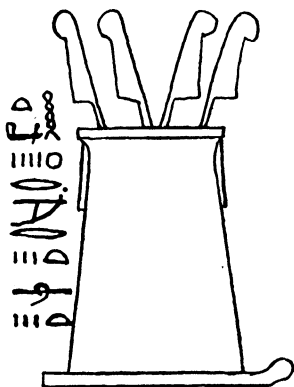


FIG. 11. La *mert stat* consacrée par le roi à Amon-Min (Louqsor, XVIII<sup>e</sup> dyn. d'après A. Gayet, Fig. 48 (58), et une photographie).

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, pp. 386-389. Au Japon, il y a encore aujourd'hui des fêtes où des danseuses, vêtues d'épis, figurent des gerbes animées. (A. Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris, 1913), p. 237 et Pl. 8.)

<sup>2</sup> Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, ii. Pl. 80 a; Marie Mogensén, *Le Mastaba égyptien de la Glyphtothèque Ny Carlsberg* (Paris, 1921), p. 24. Aucune inscription ne définit ces autels (Montet, *op. cit.* p. 228). Dans les tombeaux du Nouvel

qu'il s'agisse ici d'un sacrifice rustique aux divinités agraires, qu'on mettait à mort à la moisson, mais avec toutes les formes polies de l'affliction et de l'adoration.

De même, les bouchers qui dépècent les victimes animales envoient un morceau, en offrande pour la *stat*, à l'officiant (*kherheb*) du culte funéraire.<sup>1</sup> La gerbe reçoit donc au culte (voir Appendice).

Ainsi, d'une part, la «*stat* pour les offrandes» peut figurer «ces premiers épis donnés au temps de la moisson» dont parle Diodore (*supra*, p. 19), offrande des prémices de la moisson (*tep shemou*) citée dans les contrats.<sup>2</sup> Mais, d'autre part, la *stat* est le simulacre de l'esprit du grain, dont la mise à mort était un rite préparatoire aux semailles: «le champ (ou le nome) vit; on a fait les *stat*; tu laboures l'orge, tu laboures le blé. . . .»<sup>3</sup> On peut se demander si le «traînage de la chérie traînée» n'évoque pas, encore, l'expulsion hors du champ de l'esprit agraire mort,<sup>4</sup> qui doit, chaque année, laisser place vide pour l'esprit du grain nouveau? Rappelons qu'aux funérailles humaines on traîne vers la nécropole, sur un traîneau pareil, les défunts et le *tikenou*.<sup>5</sup>

Quoi qu'il en soit, la *stat* ou *mert*, gerbe ou meule, semble une personnification de l'esprit du grain, qu'Osiris, dès l'Ancien Empire, a usurpée et parée de ses attributs.

### C. Les larmes d'Isis et la Crue

Reste à expliquer pourquoi, selon Diodore, les paysans évoquaient Isis au moment de la moisson. Isis peut être considérée comme «la Vieille», la forme féminine de l'Esprit du blé; mais il y a une autre interprétation que Frazer utilise

Empire thébain, on voit les paysans déposer des offrandes devant la déesse serpent Renout ou devant le sycomore (Nout, Osiris.). Cf. G. Maspero, *Histoire*, i. pp. 120-121.

<sup>1</sup> F. W. von Bissing, *op. cit.* p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> F. Ll. Griffith, *The Inscriptions of Siut and Der Rifeh* (London, 1889), l. 279, 309.

<sup>3</sup> *Textes des Pyramides*, §§ 2069-2070.

<sup>4</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, pp. 288-296, 540, 575: au temps de la moisson, ou du carnaval, on expulse la mort, figurée par une gerbe, ou un mannequin.

<sup>5</sup> A. Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris, 1913), pp. 42 à 50.

judicieusement. En Égypte, la moisson se fait d'avril à mai. C'est le moment où le Nil diminue peu à peu dans son lit, semble rentrer sous terre, abandonnant ses rives, délaissant les canaux et les champs. Le fleuve paraît mourir, comme morte est la moisson. Pourtant, quelques semaines après, l'étoile d'Isis, la brillante Sothis (le Chien de la Canicule) se montre au ciel, à l'aube, vers le 15 juin. Ce signe annonce *le début de la crue* (qui est aussi le début de l'année fixe ou religieuse). «Sothis ramène l'année» dit on aux Pyramides<sup>1</sup>: cette nuit-là est «la nuit de la grande crue, sortie de la grande déesse (Isis)».<sup>2</sup> Une goutte tombe du ciel, «en cette nuit de la descente des eaux»!<sup>3</sup> C'était le signal d'une grande fête: aujourd'hui encore, le calendrier copte, au 18 juin, célèbre la «nuit de la goutte». (*leilet en noqta*); les Grecs de l'époque ptolémaïque appelaient ces panégories «les fêtes du Nil», τὰ Νειλαῖα.<sup>4</sup>

Or, la solution de cette énigme est donnée par Pausanias<sup>5</sup>: «Les Égyptiens disent qu'Isis pleure Osiris quand le fleuve commence à croître; et quand il inonde les champs, ils disent que ce sont les larmes d'Isis».

Par conséquent, le deuil, au temps des moissons, se manifeste par deux épisodes: 1° Les paysans se lamentent, se frappent et invoquent Isis; 2° Isis pleure, et de ces pleurs naît la crue, qui ramène la résurrection du Nil et de la végétation.

«Si Osiris, dit Frazer, était un Esprit du blé, rien ne saurait être plus naturel que de le pleurer à la St-Jean. Or, à cette époque, la moisson était passée, les champs dénudés, le fleuve très bas; la vie était suspendue, le dieu du blé était mort. C'est alors que ceux qui voyaient des esprits divins dans toutes les opérations de la nature, pouvaient, en effet, attribuer la crue du fleuve sacré aux pleurs versés par la déesse, à la mort de son époux.»<sup>6</sup>

Donc, conclut Frazer, «la clef des mystères d'Osiris nous

<sup>1</sup> § 477.

<sup>2</sup> § 265.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Lieblein, *Recueil de travaux*, xxii. p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Fritz Krebs, *Zeitschrift für äg. Sprache*, xxxv. (1897), p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> *De Phocicis*, x. 323.

<sup>6</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 351.

est fournie par le cri mélancolique des moissonneurs égyptiens. Jusqu'à l'époque romaine, on a pu l'entendre retentir dans les champs; il annonçait la mort de l'Esprit du blé, prototype rustique d'Osiris.»<sup>1</sup>

### D. Rites des Semailles

Un autre moment cardinal du culte populaire d'Osiris tombe au temps des semailles. En Égypte, elles ont lieu en automne (au mois d'Athyr), quand les eaux de la crue commencent à se retirer, laissant les terres molles, faciles à façonner par la main, le hoyau ou la charrue. Plutarque s'étonne que cette mise en terre de la semence prenne le caractère d'un rite solennel et mélancolique, aussi bien chez les Grecs que chez les Égyptiens:

«On les voit gratter la terre de leurs mains et l'entasser à nouveau sur le trou, dans l'espoir mal assuré que ce qu'ils déposent dans le sol puisse mûrir un jour. Ils agissent ainsi à beaucoup d'égards, comme ceux qui enterrent et pleurent un mort.»<sup>2</sup>

Les rites funèbres des semailles consacrent, somme toute, l'enterrement des grains, la mise en terre du dieu agraire. Firmicus Maternus demande aux Égyptiens: «Pourquoi vous lamentez-vous sur les fruits de la terre et pleurez-vous les semences qui croissent?»<sup>3</sup> Ce chrétien oublie la description biblique: «Ceux qui sèment avec larmes moissonneront avec chants d'allégresse; celui qui marche en pleurant, quand il porte la semence, revient avec allégresse, quand il porte ses gerbes».<sup>4</sup>

Les monuments égyptiens confirment-ils cette interprétation? Nous croyons possible de démontrer que le paysan égyptien croyait qu'en se livrant au travail de *fossoyer la terre* avec le hoyau (*khebes ta*), il préparait la tombe de l'Esprit des grains, Osiris; en recouvrant les semences de terre, au moyen

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 420.

<sup>2</sup> *De Iside*, 70.

<sup>3</sup> *De errore profanarum religionum*, ii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Psaume cxxvi. 5. Cf. *Atys et Osiris*, p. 73.

de la charrue (*ska itou* = labourer les grains), ou par le piétinement des troupeaux, il mettait en terre Osiris.

Dans un tombeau de la III<sup>e</sup> dynastie,<sup>1</sup> un semeur jette les grains à la volée sur les champs où la charrue, attelée de bœufs, passe ensuite pour recouvrir la semence de terre; or le semeur, fait exceptionnel, porte sur la tête une couronne de fleurs<sup>2</sup>; cela fait supposer qu'il attache à ce qu'il fait le sens d'un rite sacré.

D'ordinaire, des bergers poussent un troupeau de moutons (Ancien Empire) ou des pourceaux (XVIII<sup>e</sup> dyn.) sur la terre ensemencée. Hérodote, qui a vu la scène,<sup>3</sup> dit que les pourceaux font pénétrer les grains dans la terre, en les foulant sous leurs pieds.

Y a-t-il quelque apparence que les bergers aient conscience, à ce moment, que leurs bêtes poussent en terre l'Esprit des grains, Osiris?

Une formule, de rédaction ancienne, retrouvée sur une stèle de l'époque saïte, l'atteste formellement. On prie les passants de ne pas oublier la mémoire du mort osirien, qui est dans le tombeau, et on leur rappelle le rite populaire pour Osiris: «N'avez-vous pas vu le berger du bétail, quand il marche? Il a trouvé un roseau sur le chemin; il pleure, dans sa gorge, celui pour lequel les hommes fossoient la terre (*khebes ta*), celui que les dieux enfanteront, alors que ceux-ci (les hommes) ont cessé de travailler (de labourer?).» Les éditeurs de ce texte en ont bien vu le sens: le berger pleure le dieu de la végétation, Osiris, et il joue de tristes mélodies

<sup>1</sup> W. M. F. Petrie, *Medum* (London, 1892), Pl. 18; Montet, *op. cit.* p. 185.

A l'époque préthinite, on voit le roi Scorpion, hoyau en main, fossoyant la terre, tandis qu'un assistant va semer le grain (A. Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris, 1913), Pl. 5, p. 182). Aux Pyramides, les rites de fossoyer la terre et de semer sont attestés, pour préparer l'offrande du pain (§§ 1046, 1082, 1388, 760).

<sup>2</sup> P. Montet, *op. cit.* p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> ii. 14; l'emploi des pourceaux (animaux typhoniens) pour cet acte avait d'abord paru suspect, mais un tableau d'une tombe thébaine, vers 1500, décrit la scène: P. E. Newberry and Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Report on some Excavations in the Theban Necropolis* (London, 1908), Pl. 13.



sur sa rustique flûte de roseau.<sup>1</sup> Nous voyons là le pendant du tableau de la moisson (voir p. 21) où le flûtiste, mêlé aux moissonneurs, déplore la mise à mort des épis.

D'ailleurs, nous possédons une de ces chansons des bergers qui poussent leurs bêtes, soit sur les champs humides qu'on vient d'ensemencer, soit sur l'aire de terre battue, où tour à tour moutons et pourceaux enterrent, ou dépiquent les grains. Il y est fait une allusion directe à un berger qui vient de l'Occident, la région funéraire:

Le berger est dans l'eau avec les poissons.

Il parle avec le silure; il échange des saluts avec l'oxyrhynque.

Occident! D'où vient le berger? (C'est un) berger d'Occident.

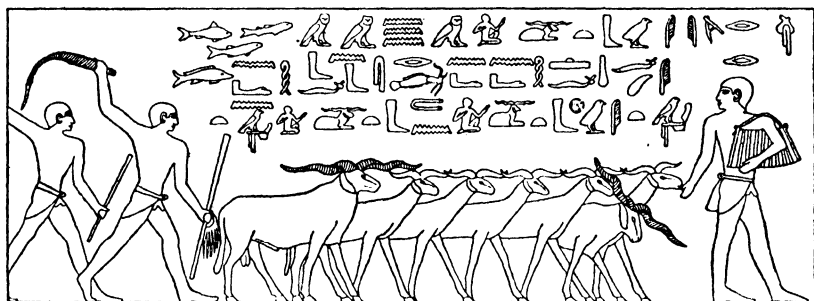


FIG. 12. La chanson des bergers (Tombeau de Ti).

Le sens est obscur. Les commentateurs n'y discernent qu'un couplet de chanson rustique, une plaisanterie de paysan. On ne voit guère, cependant, pourquoi le berger est «dans l'eau» et dialogue avec des poissons, attendu qu'un champ, même irrigué, au moment du piétinement du grain par les troupeaux, est déjà «sorti de l'eau»<sup>2</sup> et, de toute façon, vide de poissons. D'autre part, des deux tableaux où la chanson apparaît, l'un est une scène de dépiquage des grains sur l'aire. M. Montet remarque avec raison: «C'est sur une aire

<sup>1</sup> Max Burchardt et G. Roeder, «Ein altertümelnder Grabstein der Spätzeit», *Zeitschrift f. äg. Spr.* lv. (1919), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Voir le *Conte des deux frères*, G. Maspero, *Contes populaires*<sup>4</sup>, p. 5: «Une fois, à la saison du labourage, son grand-frère lui dit: «Prépare-nous notre attelage pour nous mettre à labourer, car la terre est sortie de l'eau . . .» Cf. Hérodote, ii. 14.

jonchée d'épis bien secs qu'évolue leur troupeau et ils (les bergers) n'auront pas l'occasion d'y échanger des civilités avec les hôtes des marais». En effet; mais ces difficultés disparaissent, si l'on suppose que le berger dont on parle, c'est le Berger type, le dieu qui manie la crosse des pasteurs et le fouet des bouviers, Osiris-Anzti. Lui, c'est bien le dieu jeté au Nil par Seth, qui est dans l'eau,<sup>1</sup> le «noyé de la première fois» (*mehi*).<sup>2</sup> Ses rapports avec les poissons sont attestés par la littérature populaire: lorsque Osiris, découpé en morceaux, fut jeté au Nil, «ses parties naturelles furent dévorées par le lépidote, le phagre et l'oxyrhynque», selon Plutarque<sup>3</sup>; au Conte des Deux Frères, on nous dit que le phallus de Bataou-Osiris fut avalé par le silure (*nâr*)<sup>4</sup>; n'existe-t-il pas, en basse Égypte, un nome du silure, où la capitale, Mendès, abritait un Bélier âme d'Osiris (*ba neb Zedt*)? Une allusion isolée pourrait sembler négligeable; ce faisceau d'allusions ne peut être fortuit. Le Berger d'Occident, que chantent les bergers humains, au moment rituel de la mise à mort, ou du *khebes ta*, est celui qu'on appelle «le dieu qui préside à l'Occident», Osiris Khentamenti.<sup>5</sup>

### E. Fécondation de la terre par des statues

Ce qu'on attendait de l'ensevelissement d'Osiris, au jour du *khebes ta*, c'était la fécondation des terres où l'on déposait le grain. Le corps du dieu agissait comme un *charme* (qui assurait par magie sympathique, la croissance des semences. Il existe beaucoup de pays où l'on enterre dans les champs une *effigie du dieu agraire*. En Égypte aussi, le rite existait. Cette scène du culte rustique n'est représentée nulle part dans les tableaux agricoles des tombeaux égyptiens; mais,

<sup>1</sup> Pyr. §§ 507, 589, 1018.

<sup>2</sup> Pyr. § 388.

<sup>3</sup> *De Iside*, 18.

<sup>4</sup> G. Maspero, *Contes*, p. 10; le «*clarias*», selon Cl. Gaillard, cité par Montet, *op. cit.* p. 23. Une autre tradition réservait plutôt ce rôle profanateur à l'oxyrhynque (*De Iside*, 7, 18), qui, selon Élien, *De Nat. anim.* x. 46, serait né des blessures d'Osiris.

<sup>5</sup> M. Pierre Montet (*op. cit.* p. 191) cite le début d'une autre chanson de bergers: «O Berger! Où est le chéri . . . (Il est) dans . . . » Le mot *merj* «chéri, aimé» conviendrait dans un *lamento* sur le dieu agraire. La *stat* s'appelle aussi «chérie»: *mert* (p. 29).

dans le culte officiel des temples, elle était jouée réellement. Plutarque apporte ici un témoignage précis.

C'est le 17 Athyr, selon Plutarque, qu'Osiris fut tué; aussi, les Égyptiens célébraient-ils des rites funèbres les quatre jours suivants (qui, dans l'année alexandrine, correspondent aux 14 à 17 novembre). A ce moment, qui est celui des semailles, on jouait un *Mystère* «sous forme de drame», qui rappelait quelques scènes de la mort, et préparait la résurrection du dieu. Le 19 Athyr, des prêtres se rendaient vers la mer, portant une châsse contenant un coffret d'or. Ils versaient de l'eau fraîche dans ce coffret: là-dessus, des spectateurs poussaient un cri, indiquant qu'*Osiris était retrouvé*. Puis, ils modelaient, avec de la terre, mélangée d'épices et d'encens, une petite statue, ayant la forme d'un croissant de lune, qu'on revêtait d'une robe et de parures.<sup>1</sup> Cette statue, si vraiment elle était en forme de croissant, évoquait, par la forme de la nouvelle lune, le renouvellement, la renaissance attendue pour Osiris.<sup>1</sup>

En somme, deux rites ont été évoqués: 1° Fabrication d'une statue en terre et matières diverses; 2° Fécondation de cette statue par de l'eau.

On pourrait suspecter ces témoignages à cause de leur date récente; ils sont, cependant, d'antiques survivances d'une tradition plusieurs fois millénaire. Les textes des Pyramides nous renseignent, non par récit continu, mais par allusions réticentes, sur le drame sacré «de la première fois», lorsque Osiris Sepi, c'est-à-dire «en morceaux», fut démembré par Seth. La première scène du «drame» comporte bien la fabrication d'un «corps éternel» pour Osiris. On nous montre Isis en pleurs se livrant à une *quête* funèbre, *recherchant, trouvant* les morceaux du cadavre divin. 1° Elle rassemble les *membres disjecta* et, par les rites de la momification, crée un corps indestructible, où l'âme d'Osiris trouvera un asile. Grâce aux ressources de la magie imitatrice, on rend à cette momie, les mouvements de la vie, on simule l'ouver-

<sup>1</sup> *De Iside*, 39. Il est plus probable que le «croissant de lune» est une interprétation fautive de la silhouette arquée d'une statuette momiforme.

ture de la bouche, des yeux, des oreilles, et le jeu des bras et des jambes. 2° Horus, fils d'Isis, vengeur d'Osiris, «fait naître», c'est-à-dire modèle des statues; l'âme d'Osiris pourra «entrer dans ces corps de bois, de pierre, de métal» où elle sera en sécurité, car les hommes entoureront ces «images vivantes d'Osiris» d'un culte pieux et d'une protection efficace.<sup>1</sup>

Les statues d'Osiris, ainsi modelées, vivaient dans les temples. Mais d'autres images du dieu servaient à des rites pour fertiliser les terres.

Plutarque nous a décrit une statuette en terre, qui était fertilisée par l'eau du Nil. Ailleurs,<sup>2</sup> il raconte comment «Isis, lorsqu'elle parcourut l'Égypte entière pour retrouver les lambeaux d'Osiris démembré, fit enterrer, dans chaque province, le morceau du corps divin (retrouvé en ces lieux)», peut-être encasté dans une statue, qui figurait le corps au complet. Les temples ptolémaïques nous ont conservé, en effet, les listes des provinces qui possédaient les divers lambeaux d'Osiris. Il n'est pas douteux, comme le pense Frazer, que la présence de ces reliques se rapporte à un procédé magique pour fertiliser le sol.

Dans un petit temple d'Osiris, encore intact, sur le toit du grand temple d'Hathor, à Dendérah, est gravé un rituel illustré des fêtes célébrées pour Osiris<sup>3</sup> au mois de Khoiak,

<sup>1</sup> A. Moret, *Le Nil et la civilisation égyptienne*, pp. 103, 197, 446. Cette «entrée de l'âme» dans les statues, ne serait-ce pas une tradition primitive dont Frazer a montré l'universelle application et l'extrême importance? On fait sortir l'âme d'un corps, qui est menacé, pour l'abriter dans un autre corps, ou dans un lieu quelconque (*Rameau d'Or*, pp. 622 sq.). Rien ne pourra plus tuer le cadavre, puisque le principe de sa vie ne peut y être atteint. Dans le *Conte des deux frères*, le héros du conte, Bataou (un des noms de l'Osiris primitif), enchante son propre cœur, le place dans la fleur d'un sapin, où il reste en sécurité, tant qu'on ne connaît pas la cachette. Pareillement, l'âme d'Osiris peut devenir extérieure à son corps et résider dans une statue impérissable, que la magie rendait vivante. (*Rameau d'Or*, p. 628; cf. Max Burchardt, «Das Herz der Bata», ap. *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, 1. (1912), p. 118.) <sup>2</sup> *De Iside*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> V. Loret, «Les Fêtes d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak», ap. *Recueil de travaux*, iii. (1882), pp. 43 sq.; iv. (1883), pp. 21 sq.; v. (1884), pp. 85 sq. Le texte est divisé en paragraphes, auxquels nous renvoyons. Cf. Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion* (London, 1904), p. 27.

c'est-à-dire en automne, quand on fossoyait la terre (*khebes ta*) pour les semailles. Les rites s'échelonnaient du 12 au 30 Khoiak; ils débutent par la confection de petites statues, faites de sable et terre végétale; on y semait grains d'orge et de blé, mélangés d'encens et de pierres rares. Ces statues représentent: 1° Les 14 morceaux d'Osiris (*sepi*) démembré par Seth. On les enterre suivant le rite décrit par Plutarque.<sup>1</sup> On fabrique ces statues dans les 14 villes<sup>2</sup> qui possèdent un lambeau d'Osiris. 2° Une statue complète d'Osiris Khentamenti, en forme de momie couronnée.<sup>3</sup> Elle représente le dieu complet, mais théoriquement encore démembré. 3° Une statue de Sokaris,<sup>4</sup> en forme de momie, qui figure le dieu après la reconstitution définitive, obtenue par Isis et Horus.

Que fait-on de ces statues? Les rites varient selon les villes, mais aboutissent à des résultats identiques. En Abydos, et dans la plupart des villes, les statues ensemencées sont emmaillotées (*qeris*) selon les rites funèbres. On les introduit dans une cuve de pierre, probablement remplie de terre, qu'on arrose avec de l'eau. La cuve est appelée «terrain (*hesepi*) de Khentamenti»; ce nom rappelle le «jardin d'Adonis» (§ 14). Plus tard, les statues sont portées au temple de Sokaris, puis mises en terre (*sma-ta*) dans la nécropole, le jour où l'on fossoie les champs.<sup>5</sup> A Saïs, les rites différaient, mais nous sont mal connus.<sup>6</sup> A Busiris, après une procession nocturne, à la lueur des lampes<sup>7</sup> (le 22 Khoiak), on déposait la statue d'Osiris Khentamenti, avant de l'enterrer, du 24 au 30 Khoiak, pendant 7 jours, sur des branches de sycomore (l'arbre de la déesse Nout, mère d'Osiris): «on fait cela pour les 7 jours qu'Osiris passe dans le ventre de sa mère Nout, enceinte de lui. Un jour est pour un mois; les sycomores sont pour Nout.»<sup>8</sup> Après quoi, on enterrait Osiris Khentamenti dans la nécropole. La statue de Sokaris était mise dans un tombeau ombragé d'arbres, le jour du *khebes ta*.<sup>9</sup> Il semble,

<sup>1</sup> §§ 1-13.<sup>2</sup> Parfois 16 villes (§ 13).<sup>3</sup> §§ 14-15.<sup>4</sup> § 33.<sup>5</sup> § 18.<sup>6</sup> § 32.<sup>7</sup> Il est probable que c'est la fête décrite par Hérodote à Saïs (ii. 62).<sup>8</sup> § 88.<sup>9</sup> § 34.

bien que cela n'apparaisse pas très clairement, qu'on enterrait les statues de l'an précédent,<sup>1</sup> et que celles de l'année en cours étaient conservées dans des tombeaux.

De toute façon, le point culminant des rites est le dernier jour, 30 Khoiak, «fête du fossoyage de la terre» (*khebes ta*); c'est alors que les statues sont, les unes «mises en terre» dans la nécropole, les autres déposées sous des arbres, dans un tombeau, en chacune des 14 ou 16 villes qui possèdent un lambeau du corps sacré. Or, ce jour, après lecture du «rituel pour fertiliser la campagne» (*srwd sekhet*), on laboure une pièce de terre, appelée «champ d'Osiris» (*aht Osiris*), qui mesure environ 50 mètres carrés.<sup>2</sup> On y plante orge, épeautre, lin, qui germeront et donneront des grains et des fils à tisser; c'est avec la pâte de ces grains et ces fils qu'on modèlera les statues décrites, qu'on tissera les étoffes dont on les habille.<sup>3</sup> Il est possible que «ce champ d'Osiris» soit aussi un champ «témoin», où la germination des céréales et du lin attestera la résurrection du dieu, et la fertilisation de l'Égypte commencée par ses lambeaux.

Beaucoup de choses nous échappent dans le texte prolixe, d'autant plus que ces rites étaient simultanément célébrés dans 16 nomes, avec des variantes qui n'éclaircissent pas le problème. Du moins, l'idée essentielle est claire: Brugsch y avait déjà reconnu un rite de Jardin d'Osiris (analogue à celui des *Jardins d'Adonis*<sup>4</sup>) et Frazer en a dégagé nettement la conception d'ensemble. A Philæ, les bas-reliefs qui accompagnent les textes osiriens montrent le cadavre d'Osiris étendu sur sa couche funèbre; un prêtre l'arrose et, du corps ensemené, montent 28 tiges nouvelles.<sup>5</sup> A Denderah, c'est un arbre entier qui sort du corps divin. Ces tableaux attestaient l'efficacité des rites:

«Nous pouvons comprendre maintenant pourquoi les prêtres enterraient des effigies d'Osiris, faites de terre et de blé.

<sup>1</sup> §§ 18, 92, pour Khentamenti.

<sup>2</sup> §§ 56 à 60.

<sup>3</sup> §§ 59-61.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, «Das Osiris Mysterium von Tentyra» (*Zeitschrift f. äg. Spr.* xix. (1881), p. 77); cf. *Die Adonisklage und das Linoslied* (Berlin, 1852).

<sup>5</sup> A. Moret, *Rois et dieux d'Égypte* (Paris, 1922), p. 101.

Quand on reprenait ces effigies à la fin de l'année, ou à un intervalle plus court, on trouvait que le blé avait poussé du corps d'Osiris, et on saluait là la cause de la croissance des récoltes.»<sup>1</sup>

«Ainsi, le dieu du blé faisait sortir le blé de lui-même, *il donnait son corps pour nourrir le peuple; il mourait pour que le peuple pût vivre.*» En effet, les hymnes à Osiris disent en propres termes:

«Tu es le père et la mère des hommes; ils vivent de ton souffle; *ils mangent la chair de ton corps.*»<sup>2</sup>

#### IV

#### CE QUE LES DIEUX ET LES HOMMES ATTENDENT DU SACRIFICE DIVIN

Ce n'est pas seulement à la végétation que va le profit du sacrifice d'Osiris. L'utilité du rite agraire s'étend à toutes les créatures. Il nous reste à montrer comment, en Égypte, les dieux en bénéficient et les hommes y participent.

Parlons d'abord des dieux. Le culte journalier des dieux se célébrait, selon les mêmes rites, dans tous les temples de l'Égypte, du moins, à partir du Nouvel Empire thébain: nous le savons par les rituels gravés sur les murs des temples, ou écrits sur papyrus. Or, ces rites reproduisent, entre autres choses, le scénario du drame de la mort et de la résurrection d'Osiris. Le dieu, quel que soit son nom, est censé avoir subi le démembrement; on commence donc par rassembler ses os et ses chairs; on reconstitue ce corps, comme on l'a fait pour Osiris, on en forme une momie, ceinte de bandelettes, ointe de fards et d'huile, parée de sceptres et d'ornements osiriens. L'âme est confiée à ce corps éternel, ou aux statues, comme pour Osiris; les mêmes rites magiques ouvrent la bouche, les oreilles, les yeux, et remettent en mouvement les membres des statues. Osiris est donc devenu le prototype du dieu; tout

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Ostracon du Caire, *Zeitschrift f. äg. Spr.* xxxvii. (1900), pp. 30-33.

être divin est adoré selon le rituel osirien.<sup>1</sup> Pourquoi? Parce que la mort osirienne est le prélude nécessaire de la résurrection; celle-ci a été obtenue, pour Osiris, d'une manière si certaine, par des rites d'une efficacité si démontrée, qu'on a jugé inutile de chercher mieux. Le «dieu qui meurt» est devenu le modèle obligé de tout dieu. La *mort* était à ce point inséparable de l'idée de divinité qu'à l'époque thébaine, un papyrus (dit des Signes), retrouvé à Tanis par Petrie et Griffith,<sup>2</sup> donne la définition suivante du signe *neter*, c'est-à-dire du dieu: «il est emmaillotté» ou «il est enseveli». (*iw.f qeris*.) Le dieu est donc figuré comme un mort, mais un mort ressuscité tel qu'Osiris.

Pour les hommes, il en fut de même. Ils s'appliquèrent le remède qui donne l'immortalité, inventé par Isis:

«Isis ne voulut pas que les combats, les souffrances qu'elle avait endurés et tant de traits de sagesse et de courage fussent ensevelis dans l'oubli et le silence. La déesse Isis institua donc des Mystères (τελετοί) très saints qui devaient être des images, des représentations et des scènes mimées des souffrances d'alors, pour servir de leçons de piété et de consolation pour les hommes et les femmes qui passeraient par les mêmes épreuves.»<sup>3</sup>

Qu'est-ce à dire, sinon que la *Passion* d'Osiris a montré aux hommes comment ils peuvent se sauver de la mort, à l'exemple des dieux? L'histoire sociale de l'Égypte nous fait assister aux luttes des Égyptiens avides d'obtenir pour eux-mêmes ces promesses de résurrection. Au début de l'Ancien Empire, le roi seul, et la famille royale, sont initiés aux rites osiriens et bénéficient de la résurrection; eux seuls vont au ciel après la mort. De règne en règne, prêtres et nobles arrachent aux «royaux» le privilège de la bonne mort; quelque temps avant 2000, une révolution sociale bouleverse l'Égypte; la plèbe détruit pour un temps la royauté, surprend les secrets de la famille royale, connaît les mystères des rites osiriens; tout homme du peuple aspire désormais à parvenir, après la

<sup>1</sup> A. Moret, *Rituel du culte divin en Égypte* (Paris, 1902), pp. 32-34.

<sup>2</sup> Voir A. Moret, *Le Nil*, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> *De Iside*, 27.



mort, «à la condition des dieux», et veut participer aux droits religieux, qui étaient jusque-là le monopole d'une élite. Après l'an 2000, que voyons-nous en effet? Tout Égyptien pratique les rites qui feront de lui *un Osiris* après la mort. Les rois célèbrent alors, en grande pompe, à Abydos, les Mystères d'Osiris; le peuple joue son rôle dans le drame sacré qui reproduit le règne de l'Être-Bon, le meurtre criminel suivi d'une résurrection triomphante, bref les épisodes de la Passion d'Osiris, dieu du blé, patron de la bonne mort. Le culte d'Osiris s'est généralisé; tous les hommes espèrent revivre dans l'au-delà.<sup>1</sup> Mais quelle preuve apporte-t-on que cette résurrection est effectuée? Ouvrez les tombes populaires du Moyen et du Nouvel Empire: vous y trouverez des statuettes en terre végétale, semée de grains de blé; elles représentent Osiris et tout homme défunt que maintenant on nomme «Osiris». Dans les tombes des grands personnages, on rencontre les mêmes témoignages, plus luxueux, mais non pas plus efficaces. Sur une natte de roseaux, une toile est tendue, portant, tracée à l'encre noire, une silhouette d'Osiris, couché sur le côté gauche, de grandeur naturelle. La surface de cette figure a été couverte de terreau, dans lequel on a semé des grains d'orge. Les grains ont germé; on a tondu les pousses lorsqu'elles ont atteint une longueur d'environ 8 centimètres. On a obtenu ainsi un tapis verdoyant en forme d'Osiris.<sup>2</sup> Aussi vrai qu'Osiris ressuscite sous cet aspect végétal, aussi vrai tout mort, qui a reçu les mêmes rites, reverdira et renaîtra comme le dieu:

«Ainsi, de la mort et de la résurrection de leur grand dieu, les Égyptiens tiraient, non seulement aide et nourriture, dans cette vie, mais aussi leur espoir d'une vie éternelle, par delà la tombe.»<sup>3</sup>

Nourriture et fécondité, promesse d'éternité, tel était l'apport du «dieu qui meurt» à la nature et à l'humanité.

<sup>1</sup> A. Moret, *Le Nil et la civilisation égyptienne* (Paris, 1925), pp. 292 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Voir A. Moret, *Rois et dieux d'Égypte* (Paris, 1922), pp. 99 et 102, Pl. II.

*Rameau d'Or*, p. 357.

## v

## VARIANTES DU THÈME:

## ANIMAUX-DIEUX, HOMMES, ROIS MIS À MORT

Le thème du dieu qui meurt offre encore d'autres variantes. Une des plus intéressantes est celle qui présente *la mort* non plus comme une nécessité néfaste et abominable, mais comme un moyen souverain de sauvegarder la santé et la fécondité des êtres vivants, la fertilité du sol et de la végétation. Dans ce cas, il ne s'agit plus à proprement parler de mort subie, mais de *mise à mort* rituelle. L'homme a discipliné la mort et sait s'en servir pour des fins utiles.

De la santé ou de la vigueur des grands dieux de la nature dépendent celles de l'homme et de l'univers. En Égypte, si le Soleil perdait de son éclat et de sa chaleur, si le Nil venait à diminuer ou donner une crue insuffisante, tout languissait, tout était menacé de mort. Les hommes rendent donc les dieux responsables des défaillances de la nature, mais, comme il est difficile d'atteindre le Soleil lui-même ou le Nil, on leur substitue des représentants sur terre. Ce sont parfois des statues, mais plutôt des hommes vivants ou des animaux, parce que la surveillance et la contrainte des hommes s'exercent plus facilement sur ceux-ci, représentants sur terre de la divinité.

Sir James Frazer a réuni de nombreux exemples de ces croyances chez les peuples divers de tous les temps; des animaux, des hommes, mais surtout des rois, sont choisis pour représenter les dieux de la nature parmi les humains; de leur vie et de leur santé découlera la prospérité de tous les êtres vivants. Cependant, ces animaux, ou ces hommes, censés divins, n'échappent ni à la maladie, ni aux accidents, ni à la vieillesse, ni surtout à la mort. Aussi les hommes, leurs sujets, prennent-ils vis-à-vis d'eux des précautions rigoureuses. De là, les tabous qui s'exercent sur la nourriture et les conditions de vie des êtres sacrés; de là, surtout, une coutume fort répandue et que Frazer a lumineusement expliquée: *la mise à*

*mort rituelle* des animaux et des hommes divins, à partir d'un âge déterminé, lorsqu'on suppose, ou qu'on constate, que leur vigueur, leur fécondité est en défaut, parce qu'elle a subi les atteintes du temps.

L'Égypte offre-t-elle des exemples de ces coutumes primitives? Cela paraît vraisemblable en ce qui concerne les animaux; cela reste hypothétique en ce qui concerne les rois.

### A. *Animaux divins*

Plutarque rapporte ceci: lorsque Isis parcourut l'Égypte entière pour retrouver les lambeaux d'Osiris démembré, elle fit mettre en terre, dans chaque province, le lambeau retrouvé du corps divin. Cet ensevelissement régional, nous l'avons vu, est un des rites qui fertilisent la terre. Mais, selon Diodore, Isis demande aux prêtres d'adorer, en même temps qu'Osiris, quelques-uns des *animaux* qui ont aidé le dieu dans les travaux de l'agriculture.<sup>1</sup> De là le culte des taureaux à Memphis, Héliopolis et Hermonthis, du bœuf à Éléphantine et à Thèbes; on les appelle les «images vivantes», ou les représentants, «les hérauts, les interprètes» des dieux parmi les hommes; le culte s'en est perpétué depuis l'époque thinite (d'après la pierre de Palerme et Manéthon) jusqu'à l'époque romaine. Les mieux connus sont les taureaux Apis, dont Mariette a retrouvé la nécropole au Sérapeum; à la basse époque, on les dénomme Osiris-Apis; ils concentrent en eux les vertus efficaces des deux puissants dieux de la nature, souvent confondus en un seul: le Nil Hâpi et Osiris.

Les Apis formaient comme une *dynastie* d'animaux-rois; on les appelait «Majesté»; on les sacrait en grande pompe; on leur rendait les honneurs dus aux dieux et aux rois; ils se succédaient, sans interruption, mais non de père en fils. D'une part, les prêtres choisissaient les futurs Apis au cours d'une recherche dans toute l'Égypte (qui rappelle la *quête* d'Osiris), et les reconnaissaient à certaines marques; la royauté d'Apis était donc en quelque sorte *élective*. D'autre part,

<sup>1</sup> Diodore, i. 21. 5-11; iv. 6. 3. Cf. Strabon, xvii. 1. 23.

elle était *temporaire*. Selon Plutarque, Pline et Solin, les Apis ne devaient pas vivre au delà d'un temps déterminé; ceux d'entre eux qui atteignaient vingt-cinq ans étaient mis à mort par noyade, dans une piscine sacrée.<sup>1</sup> Or, la mort par noyade était sainte entre toutes, en souvenir d'Osiris jeté au fleuve, le «noyé de la première fois». Le professeur Griffith a prouvé qu'on accordait aux noyés du Nil un respect superstitieux et comme un caractère sacré.<sup>2</sup> Sur la réalité même de la mise à mort rituelle d'Apis à date fixe, au temps où nous pouvons le vérifier, c'est-à-dire à la fin de la période thébaine, les opinions sont partagées. Deux stèles du Sérapéum nous donnent la date de la mort de deux Apis; elles sont de l'an 26; «*ce jour-là, on a conduit la Majesté d'Apis au Kebhou* (peut-être la piscine sacrée dont parle Plutarque, peut-être terme vague désignant la nécropole); après le Kebhou, Apis est admis dans la «*sacristie des embaumeurs*». Il n'est pas impossible que le chiffre 26 s'explique par 25 ans de règne, plus l'année de vie du jeune taureau avant son intronisation. Quoi qu'il en soit, Apis était momifié,<sup>3</sup> du moins partiellement, tel qu'Osiris; ses funérailles mettaient en deuil l'Égypte entière, comme si c'était Osiris, qu'on ensevelissait avec le taureau. Du fait qu'aucune momie d'Apis n'a été retrouvée au complet dans les sarcophages, mais seulement des portions de cadavre, Sir James Frazer déduit que le corps d'Apis pouvait avoir été, au moins partiellement, démembré et mangé en communion rituelle. Aucun texte égyptien ne corrobore jusqu'ici cette assertion. Si elle se vérifiait, Apis évoquerait Osiris, sous tous ses aspects: Osiris dieu des laboureurs, mis en morceaux qui fertilisent la terre, et sacrifié pour nourrir les hommes de sa chair.

La mise à mort rituelle d'Apis s'explique encore pour une autre raison, que Plutarque suggère seulement, mais à laquelle Frazer a donné une force démonstrative singulière:

<sup>1</sup> Émile Chassinat, «La Mise à mort rituelle d'Apis», ap. *Recueil de travaux*, xxxviii. (1920), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitschrift f. äg. Spr.* xlvi. (1909-1910), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Le rituel de cet embaumement d'Apis a été récemment publié par Wilhelm Spiegelberg, ap. *Zeitschrift f. äg. Spr.* lvi. (1920), pp. 1-33.

«Lorsqu'il survient une chaleur excessive et pernicieuse, qui produit des épidémies ou d'autres calamités extraordinaires, les prêtres choisissent quelques-uns des animaux sacrés, et, les emmenant avec le plus grand secret dans un lieu obscur, ils cherchent d'abord à les affrayer par des menaces; si le mal continue, ils les égorgent et les offrent en sacrifice, soit pour punir le mauvais génie, soit pour une des plus grandes expiations qu'ils puissent faire.»<sup>1</sup>

Ainsi, les animaux sacrés de l'Égypte passaient pour responsables de la santé publique et de la fertilité du sol, compromise par les épidémies ou la sécheresse excessive. Sir James Frazer déduit d'exemples similaires que le sacrifice *anormal* d'animaux sacrés, en temps de catastrophes, signifie qu'on se débarrasse pieusement de protecteurs, ou de fertilisateurs, dont le pouvoir efficace est surpris en défaut. Quant à la mise à mort rituelle, à *date fixe*, elle indique qu'on veut épargner au taureau la faiblesse et l'épuisement de l'âge, et sauver, en même temps, la nature et les hommes des conséquences funestes de cette sénilité. Mieux vaut, d'ailleurs, recueillir l'âme avant la déchéance physique complète, et la transmettre encore vivace à un successeur tout jeune et vigoureux.

Un autre exemple de la mise à mort périodique d'un animal sacré en Égypte nous est rapporté par Hérodote (ii. 42): «A Thèbes, tous les ans, à la fête d'Amon, on sacrifie un bélier, animal sacré du dieu thébain: de la peau de l'animal, on revêt la statue du dieu. Cela fait, les prêtres se frappent eux-mêmes de coups, en signe de deuil, à cause de la mort du bélier; enfin, ils l'enterrent dans une tombe sacrée.» D'après Sir James Frazer, on tuait le bélier, non par sacrifice à Amon, mais comme étant le dieu lui-même: son identité avec la bête ressort du fait qu'on revêt son image de la peau du bélier tué (*Rameau d'Or*, p. 471). Amon est, en effet, un dieu de l'énergie virile, un dieu fécondateur. Pourquoi le tuait-on chaque année sous forme de bélier? C'était peut-être parce qu'en immolant le dieu en pleine vigueur, on le faisait re-

<sup>1</sup> *De Iside*, 73.

vivre dans un autre plus jeune, encore en possession de toute son énergie et d'une ardeur intacte. Fertilité des champs, vigueur et fécondité de la race humaine, voilà les fruits attendus d'un telsacrifice. Les hommes tiennent pour responsables les dieux agraires, soit en personne, soit sous forme d'animal.

### B. Hommes et rois sacrifiés

Parfois, c'est aussi sous la forme d'un *homme* que le dieu est sacrifié. La victime humaine peut être choisie parmi des prisonniers de guerre, des étrangers, des esclaves, ou même parmi les nationaux. Manéthon<sup>1</sup> raconte que les Égyptiens brûlaient les hommes aux cheveux roux et répandaient leurs cendres au moyen de *vans*, comme s'il s'agissait *de vanner des grains de blé*. Si, comme nous le supposons, ces sacrifices humains avaient pour objet de faire pousser les récoltes (le vannage des cendres semble l'indiquer), le choix des victimes à cheveux roux s'expliquerait comme mieux propres à figurer l'Esprit du blé, mis à mort, ou vanné, sous l'aspect des grains roux et dorés de la moisson.<sup>2</sup>

Mais c'est aussi l'homme par excellence, le *roi* qui peut être mis en cause comme agent de la fertilité universelle. Il ne s'agit pas ici d'une responsabilité morale, telle que tout roi, ancien ou moderne, conscient de ses devoirs, soucieux des intérêts de son royaume, peut assumer; nous parlons d'une responsabilité matérielle et personnelle, qui engage parfois la vie du roi.

La théorie a été ainsi formulée par Frazer, en conclusion d'une quantité d'observations:

«Les peuples primitifs croient souvent que leur sécurité et celle du monde entier dépendent de la vie d'un de ces

<sup>1</sup> Cité dans *De Iside*, 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, p. 360. (Il faut noter que le roux, le rouge est la couleur de Seth-Typhon, le meurtrier d'Osiris.) Frazer retrouve aussi dans la légende de Busiris, prétendu roi d'Égypte, qui sacrifiait tous les étrangers pour prévenir l'échec des crues ou récoltes (Ovide, *Ars Amat.* 647), le rappel d'une coutume qui substituait à l'esprit du Nil ou du blé massacré — Osiris mort — une victime humaine (*Rameau d'Or*, p. 419).

hommes-dieux qui incarnent, à leurs yeux, la divinité. Mais rien n'empêchera l'homme-dieu de mourir, de vieillir et de mourir. . . . Le danger est terrible, car si le cours de la nature dépend de la vie de l'homme-dieu, quelles catastrophes ne se produiront-elles pas lorsqu'il mourra! Il n'y a qu'un moyen de détourner le péril: c'est de tuer l'homme-dieu aussitôt qu'apparaissent les premiers symptômes de son affaiblissement, et de transférer son âme dans un corps plus solide, par exemple dans le corps d'un successeur vigoureux. . . .»<sup>1</sup>

Retrouvons-nous en Égypte quelque trace de cette barbare et tragique coutume? Il existait quelque obscure tradition sur la déchéance possible des rois, car Ammien Marcellin en dit quelques mots, à propos des rois barbares de la Germanie. «En Germanie, le roi, suivant une vieille coutume, doit abandonner le pouvoir et quitter le trône, si, pendant son existence, la fortune de la guerre trébuche, si la terre refuse l'abondance des moissons,—comme en pareil cas, les Égyptiens en usent avec leurs souverains.»<sup>2</sup>

On pourrait rapprocher de ce texte: la tradition biblique, qui impute au Pharaon de Joseph ou de Moïse, les sept années de famine et les dix plaies d'Égypte; en outre, les légendes de Manéthon sur les rois Aménophis et Bocchoris, jugés responsables de la santé publique lors d'une épidémie de peste (Bocchoris fut brûlé vif). Toutefois, ces cas restent exceptionnels; ils n'ont qu'une valeur de vague tradition et n'ont plus le sens précis des meurtres rituels, où le roi serait le «dieu qui meurt». Pourtant, ce sacrifice sauvage était encore en usage, nous disent Diodore et Strabon, dans la haute vallée du Nil, *au pays de Méroé, aux derniers temps de la civilisation égyptienne*:

«A Méroé, les prêtres exercent l'autorité la plus absolue, puisqu'ils peuvent, si l'idée leur vient à l'esprit, dépêcher au roi un messager et lui ordonner de mourir. . . . Ils déclarent que c'est la volonté des dieux . . . ils font entendre encore

<sup>1</sup> *Rameau d'Or*, trad. Stiébel et Toutain, ii. pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Ammien Marcellin, xxviii. 15. 14.

d'autres raisons . . . *d'après les vieilles traditions*. . . Mais, sous le règne de Ptolémée II, le roi des Éthiopiens, Ergamène, élevé à l'école de la Grèce et instruit dans la philosophie, osa, le premier, braver ces préjugés. Il massacra tous les prêtres, et, après avoir aboli une coutume absurde, il gouverna le pays selon sa volonté.»<sup>1</sup>

Strabon (xvii. 2. 3) nous confirme que les prêtres osaient signifier au roi des Éthiopiens «l'ordre de mourir et de céder la place à un autre».<sup>2</sup>

Ici, il s'agit bien d'un meurtre rituel du roi, encore pratiqué dans un pays colonisé dès la XII<sup>e</sup> dynastie par les Égyptiens, et qui a fourni, plus tard, au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère, *une dynastie* (la XXV<sup>e</sup>) à l'Égypte. Chose bien remarquable: aujourd'hui encore, dans la région de *Fachoda*, la coutume a subsisté. Seligman l'a observée dans le plus grand détail, et, ici, le meurtre du roi n'est pas seulement décrit, mais *expliqué*. Quand le roi des Shillouk montre des signes de maladie ou de sénilité, en particulier dans ses rapports sexuels avec les femmes royales, un de ses fils a le droit de tuer son père et de régner à sa place; ou bien, le roi reçoit l'ordre de mourir; on le mure dans une cabane où il meurt de faim, à moins qu'on ne l'étrangle tout d'abord.<sup>3</sup> Donc, si on tue le roi, c'est parce que le déclin de sa force met en péril, par influence sympathique, la santé publique, la *fécondité* de la race et la fertilité du sol. L'explication serait la même que pour le meurtre d'Apis. Le représentant du dieu sur terre, s'il vieillit, doit céder la place à un successeur vigoureux.

En Égypte, c'est ce qui était arrivé à Osiris, prototype divin du Pharaon: mis à mort à 28 ans, il cède la place au jeune Horus que, tour à tour, les Pharaons humains relaieront sur terre. Mais, observons-nous, en ce qui concerne les Pharaons, *la royauté temporaire*, la *mise à mort de victimes substituées*,

<sup>1</sup> Diodore, iii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Moret, *Mystères égyptiens* (Paris, 1913), p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Pour les références voir *Mystères égyptiens*, p. 185, et *Rameau d'Or*, pp. 250 sq.



l'*abdication* suivie de remplacement, par un fils ou héritier, c'est-à-dire les atténuations de la coutume, observées par Sir James Frazer dans tant de cas?

C'est ici que se pose le problème d'une fête énigmatique: la *fête Sed*, ou *jubilé des fêtes Sed*, dont l'importance était sans égale pour le roi, si l'on en juge par son antiquité, sa persistance, et sa fréquence. Attestée depuis les premiers rois, thinites et même préthinites, elle ne cesse, pendant 4.000 ans, d'être célébrée par les rois d'Égypte, jusques et y compris l'époque gréco-romaine.<sup>1</sup>

Nous ignorons le sens du titre *fête Sed* (à moins qu'on n'y voie le nom d'un très ancien dieu Chacal, *Sed*, protecteur de la famille royale); quant à sa signification historique, faute de textes explicites, elle reste très obscure. Selon les bilingues grecs, c'était un jubilé *trentenaire*, «de la 30<sup>e</sup> année»; en fait, certains rois l'ont célébré à partir de la 30<sup>e</sup> année de leur règne; mais on constate un grand nombre de fêtes *Sed* célébrées avant la 30<sup>e</sup> année, ou par des Pharaons n'ayant pas régné, ni même vécu trente ans. Ces données restent donc énigmatiques. Il ne faut pas s'en étonner puisqu'il s'agit d'une tradition remontant aux origines *millénaires* de la royauté égyptienne. Néanmoins, de l'analyse de très nombreuses représentations de la fête *Sed*, il résulte ceci:

A l'occasion de la fête *Sed*,

1° Le roi renouvelle les rites du couronnement, qui le consacrent successeur d'Osiris comme roi d'Égypte; il prend un costume spécialement *osirien*, qui ressemble à un linceul (Figs. 13-14). On le traite comme s'il était *mort*; il reçoit, dans sa personne, et dans ses statues, le culte divin, c'est-à-dire les rites osiriens funéraires: on ranime ce dieu mort par l'ouverture de la bouche, des oreilles, des yeux, etc. . . . Au sortir de ces rites, le roi est réputé «*renouveler ses naissances*»; il recommence une nouvelle vie; il reçoit des années par millions.

2° La reine et les enfants royaux assistent toujours au jubilé. Ils y jouent un rôle essentiel, quoique mal défini: la

<sup>1</sup> Pour les références voir A. Moret, *Des Clans aux empires* (Paris, 1924), p. 175, et *Le Nil*, p. 146.

femme du roi semble représenter l'élément sexuel, dont la fécondité importe à la famille royale, au peuple, à la nature entière; les enfants sont là évidemment pour représenter la descendance, et les candidats à l'héritage royal.

3° A l'aube de la fête Sed, on célèbre la résurrection d'Osiris<sup>1</sup> et de Râ par l'érection du fétiche Zed et d'obélisques, symboles du renouveau de la végétation et de l'activité solaire, et peut-être, emblèmes phalliques.

4° Des délégués de tous les temples provinciaux, avec les dieux des nomes et des villes, les fonctionnaires, le peuple, assistent au jubilé qui est suivi d'une distribution d'aliments

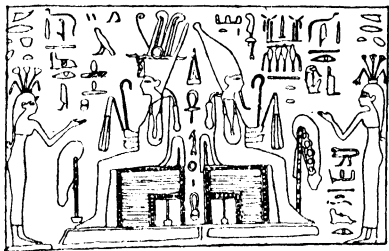


FIG. 13. Osiris intronisé au cours de sa fête Sed (Berlin, Sarcophage No. 11.978. *Zeitschrift f. äg. Spr.* xxxix. Pl. 5).

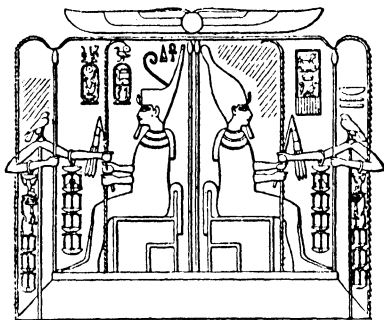


FIG. 14. Amenophis III intronisé au cours de sa fête Sed (Louqsor).

par le roi en quantité énorme. Ce sont «les cadeaux de l'année trente».<sup>2</sup>

Avec quelque imagination, dans cette fête, qui «renouvelle les naissances du roi», qui consacre à nouveau son pouvoir royal, sa santé, et probablement sa virilité (obélisque, zed), en présence de l'épouse royale, de ses enfants, du peuple entier, des dieux et des hommes, — on retrouverait le souvenir d'un temps où la royauté était *temporaire*. Après un délai fixe ou variable, le roi vieilli devait, pour la sécurité de son peuple et

<sup>1</sup> Précédée de la mise à mort de l'Esprit du Grain, telle que nous l'avons décrite dans la fête de Min (p. 134 et Fig. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. les textes réunis par H. Brugsch, *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipsic, 1883-1891), pp. 1119-1132.

de la nature, accepter le sacrifice dont Osiris, le dieu qui meurt, lui avait enseigné la vertu. Il était mis à mort, et son âme, sa force fécondante, étaient recueillies par un successeur vigoureux. A supposer que l'hypothèse soit exacte, ceci se passait néanmoins *antérieurement à l'époque thinite*. Dès le milieu du IV<sup>e</sup> millénaire, au temps de Narmer et de Ménès, les rois ont pu exiger qu'au sacrifice réel fût substituée une mort *rituelle*, mais *fictive*. On imita sur la personne du roi vieilli les rites qui chaque jour ranimaient Osiris et les dieux dans les temples; en faisant du roi un Osiris, on assurait au Pharaon, sans le sacrifier, un renouveau de vie et de force, dont bénéficiaient aussi les hommes et la nature. Ces offrandes innombrables de l'année 30 attestaient, ou faisaient espérer, un renouveau universel de fertilité. Dans le «corps éternel» des statues, l'âme du roi, mise à l'abri, bravait la décrépitude sénile. Toutefois, pour plus de sécurité, on répétait tous les trois ou quatre ans, les rites du Sed; la renaissance du roi gagnait à recevoir un renouvellement périodique, à mesure qu'il avançait en âge.

## VI

## CONCLUSION

Nous concluons que la théorie frazérienne du *Dieu qui meurt* pour assurer à la nature et aux hommes nourriture, fécondité et renaissance, annuelle et éternelle, explique raisonnablement: 1<sup>o</sup> le mythe osirien; 2<sup>o</sup> le sacrifice des animaux sacrés; et 3<sup>o</sup> peut-être ce jubilé où le roi tente de se rajeunir périodiquement. Les faits attestés en Égypte: démembrement d'Osiris au temps de la moisson, enterrement pour les semailles, résurrection avec les pousses nouvelles, sont de même ordre que ceux recueillis dans tout l'univers, à propos des Esprits du blé ou de la végétation. Les effets attendus: fécondation des terres et des vivants, résurrection annuelle, promesse de vie après la mort, correspondent aux espoirs que suscite le sacrifice d'Atys, d'Adonis, de Dionysos et de cent autres. Les rites magiques de la *gerbe*, des *statuettes semées de*

*grains*, des *jardins*, ou les *dramas sacrés de la passion*, existent en Égypte, comme ailleurs. Enfin, l'adoucissement progressif des sacrifices, la substitution d'animaux aux hommes, de la mort fictive au meurtre rituel, paraissent aussi se retrouver dans les mœurs des Égyptiens. En nous faisant discerner *la loi générale* sous les aspects particuliers propres à l'Égypte, Sir James Frazer a donc rendu aux études égyptologiques un service inappréciable. L'explication qu'il a donnée de cette grande figure d'Osiris, qui domine la religion populaire, les mœurs et les institutions royales, peut, dans ses grandes lignes, passer pour démontrée. Un tel résultat n'est pas moins important pour le folklore, ou la mythologie comparée. L'enquête égyptienne étaye une documentation forcément composite, éparpillée dans l'espace et le temps, par le témoignage d'une civilisation homogène, la plus ancienne qui soit accessible, et la seule qu'on puisse suivre au cours d'une évolution de 4.000 ans.

Me sera-t-il permis d'ajouter que nous devons remercier encore Sir James Frazer pour un autre exemple, qu'il nous a donné avec une générosité magnifique? L'érudition minutieuse ne lui suffit pas. Il ne borne pas son effort au dénombrement des faits: avec une intelligence pénétrante, où l'esprit de finesse s'associe à la plus scrupuleuse prudence, il ose expliquer, il construit; il retrouve le fil des idées dans le dédale des faits; il brandit le *Rameau d'Or* pour nous éclairer sur les obscurs chemins du passé. Observez qu'il a l'âme d'un poète et le style d'un maître écrivain; c'est avec une émotion discrète mais perceptible, là où elle est de mise, qu'il saura décrire les périls de l'âme, ou retracer les erreurs de l'esprit.

Le *Rameau d'Or*, en même temps qu'une somme d'érudition infinie, est l'œuvre d'un philosophe et d'un artiste. Il ne fallait pas moins que ces dons réunis pour révéler à l'homme d'aujourd'hui le subconscient de son âme primitive et, sous les masques inertes et conventionnels de la mythologie classique, dévoiler le véritable et vivant visage de la nature.

## APPENDICE

## SUR LE CULTE PARTICULIER DE LA GERBE EN ÉGYPTÉ

Nous avons attiré l'attention sur la transformation de la gerbe en mannequin osirien (p. 140), qu'on appelle *mert stat* «chérie traînée»; nous avons signalé les rapprochements possibles avec la «fiancée», la «vierge» — ou la «vieille» — de tant de cultes agraires.

Identifiée, d'une part, avec Osiris-Anzti, et recevant des

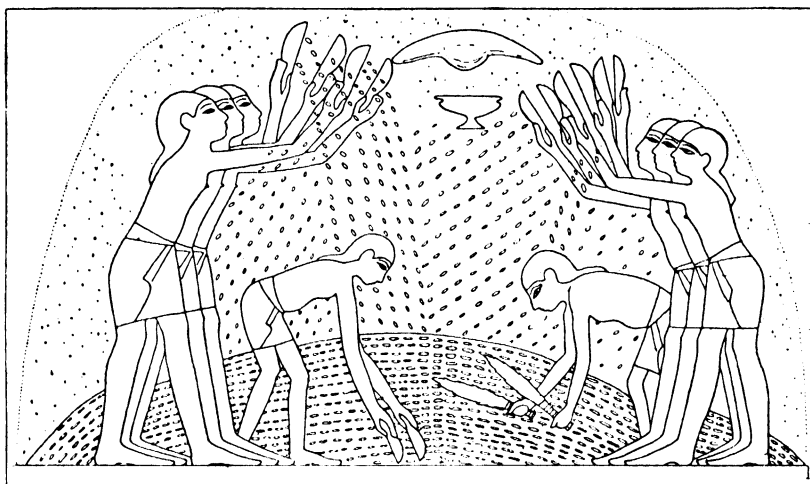


FIG. 15. Les vanneurs et l'offrande à la gerbe, divinité de la Moisson (Tombeau de Nakht, p. xx).

offrandes, dans les conditions définies *supra*, p. 144, la gerbe peut, d'autre part, avoir été adorée comme divinité particulière. Nous trouvons en Égypte des traces de ce culte, mais seulement, jusqu'ici, dans des tombes du Nouvel Empire.

Une splendide publication, aux frais du Metropolitan Museum de New-York, a été faite par N. DE G. DAVIES de la tombe de Nakht (XVIII<sup>e</sup> dyn.); on y voit (Pl. 20) que les tableaux du vannage des grains sont sous la protection d'une idole; celle-ci est placée au-dessus d'une coupe d'offrandes, ou d'offrandes variées (Figs. 15-16) et elle reçoit, par conséquent, le culte des vanneurs. M. DAVIES reconnaissait (avec

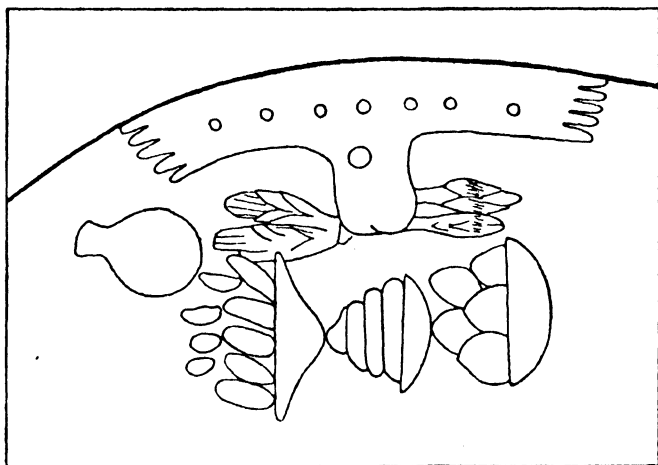


FIG. 16. La Gerbe et les offrandes, figure redressée (N. de G. Davies, *Tomb of Nakht*, Fig. 12).

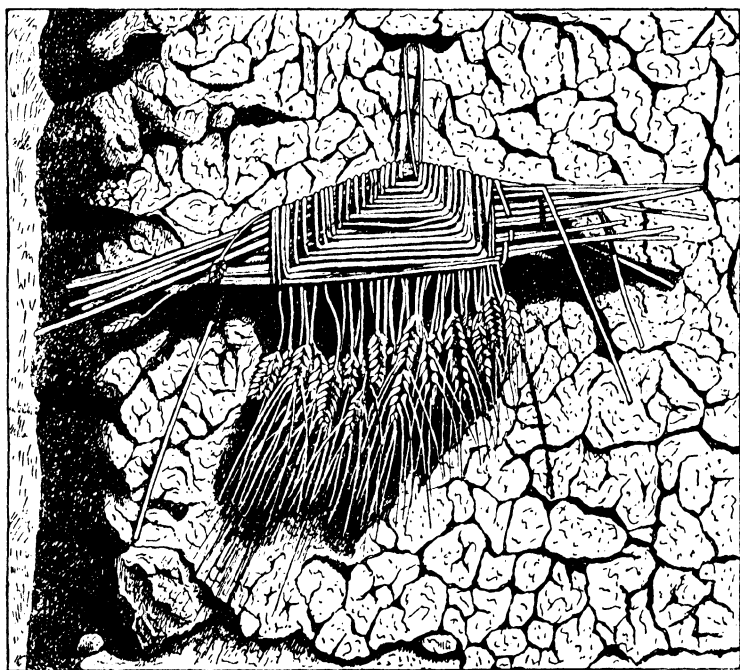


FIG. 17. L'*arouseh* «fiancée», pendue au mur d'une maison actuelle d'el-Lahun.

doute), dans ce fétiche, un croissant de lune, et il suggérait que c'était l'emblème d'une divinité de la moisson (*l. c.* p. 64). Il démontrait, par des variantes de même époque, que cette offrande à la *Divinité de la Moisson* se retrouvait en parallélisme avec l'offrande à la déesse-serpent Renout (Ernoutet), «la dame du grenier, qui est honorée le premier jour

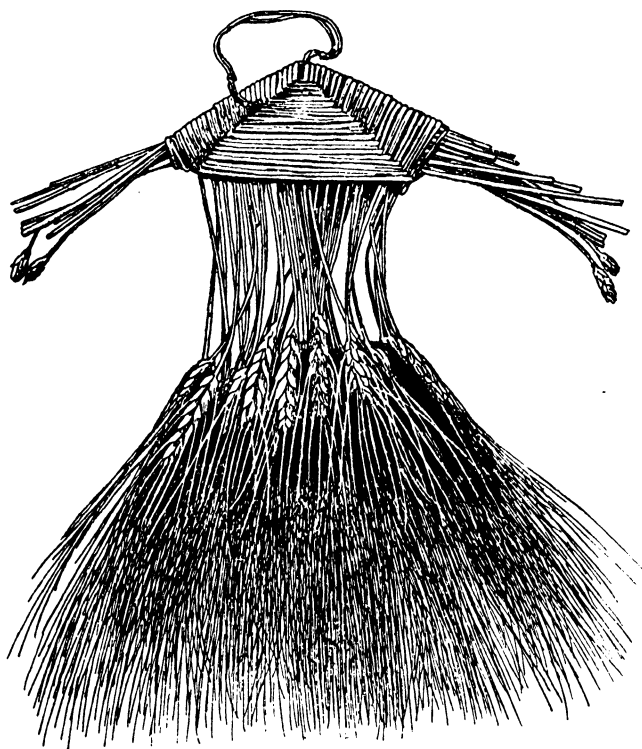


FIG. 18. Corn-Maiden provenant de Chypre.

du premier mois de l'Été, le jour de la naissance du dieu-grains Nepry».

Miss WINIFRED S. BLACKMAN a eu le mérite de donner une explication très plausible de l'énigmatique fétiche de cette Divinité de la Moisson.<sup>1</sup> Elle démontre que c'est la gerbe

<sup>1</sup> "Some Occurrences of the Corn-*'arûseh* in Ancient Egyptian Tomb Paintings," ap. *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, (viii. (1922), p. 235). Nos Figures 15 à 18 sont empruntées à cet article.

elle-même, telle qu'elle apparaît encore, suspendue au-dessus de la porte, ou plantée au faîte des maisons des fellahs actuels. Or, les Égyptiens modernes lui donnent le nom caractéristique: '*arouseh*, fiancée. On la dispose de telle façon qu'elle évoque une vague silhouette humaine, avec un buste, des bras écartés, et une jupe d'épis. Les formes développées ressemblent à un mannequin (Fig. 18); les formes réduites rappellent le fétiche de la tombe de Nakht (Figs. 16-17). Ainsi, parallèlement à la «chérie-traînée» *mert stat*, il existait, dans l'Égypte ancienne, et il subsiste, dans l'Égypte actuelle, une représentation de la Gerbe, adorée sous la forme de cette *corn-maiden*, dont Frazer a si bien caractérisé le rôle dans les cultes agraires.



## VI

### THE DIFFUSION OF CULTURE

By R. R. MARETT, M.A., D.Sc., F.B.A.

AT the moment when there arrived the invitation, at once so attractive and so alarming, to deliver the Frazer Lecture before this ancient University, I happened to be engaged in reviewing a book<sup>1</sup> to which Prof. Elliot Smith had contributed one of his characteristic introductions. Of this disquisition such was the general purport and tone that it struck me as a perfect example of what Bacon describes as the Turkish method of establishing a dogma: *postquam ceteras philosophias, more Ottomanorum erga fratres suos, pugnacibus confutationibus contrucidasset, de singulis pronuntiavit*.<sup>2</sup> More especially, however, was one moved to pity and fear by the ruthless handling of the two chief victims of this onslaught, Tylor and Frazer. Sir Edward Tylor, it was asserted, from 1871 onwards had written in vain, nay, had strayed down a blind alley with the whole of a sheeplike world at his tail. As for his cardinal doctrine of animism, this was stigmatized as "the merest 'guess at some plausible explanation' in flagrant defiance of the known facts". The passage continued: "His most famous disciple, Sir James Frazer, took perhaps the worst of his master's fallacies as the text of *The Golden Bough*. By the literary charm of his style and the richness of his references to classical and more recent literature he has given a new lease of life to what Sir Edward Tylor had in mind (the

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Massingham, *Downland Man* (London, N.D.).

<sup>2</sup> *Novum Organum*, I. lxvii.

neglect of the historical method) when he coined the phrase 'learned nonsense'."

Now I confess that when confronted with these aggressive utterances, I felt as might some respectable, if possibly unenlightened, pagan who beheld his cherished idols quivering under the blows of some Boanerges of the Pacific such as was the Rev. Thomas Gowles of pious memory. It was plain that, if those of the old faith were content to remain passive, the sanctuary must inevitably be defiled. On the other hand, should one actively resist, there was at least a sporting chance that ultimately the iconoclast might adorn the sideboard.

So I screwed up my courage and resolved to undertake this Frazer Lecture, in sheer loyalty to the scientific tradition so stoutly championed by the great scholar whom we are here to honour. Moreover, I had no hesitation in proposing as a title for my address the very watch-word and war-cry of the sect that makes light of his work. In their eyes the diffusion of culture affords a full explanation of the nature of culture, and there is no other point of view from which that nature as revealed in history can be profitably studied. This contention I shall endeavour to traverse. Not that I or any other man in his senses would go to the opposite extreme and deny that anything is to be learnt about culture from the way in which it has spread. But I want to put the argument from diffusion in its place as part of a more comprehensive and complex apparatus of research. Indeed, whether I succeed or not in doing so, I shall go on believing that it ought to be and can be done. To me it is inconceivable that half a century of diligent inquiry into that process of culture, or self-cultivation, whereby man has advanced from rude beginnings to such civilization as we now enjoy can have missed the way of truth so completely as to have achieved nothing. Why, its very failure to adopt any rigid conventions in respect to its theoretical outlook and procedure may be taken as a measure of its success as a living movement of thought. *C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron*. The working principles of the school of cultural anthropology which Tylor

may be said to have founded in this country developed in and through the work itself. The man in the study busily propounded questions which only the man in the field could answer, and in the light of the answers that poured in from the field the study as busily revised its questions. For example, as between Sir James Frazer and field-workers of the type of Sir Baldwin Spencer and the Rev. John Roscoe, how much has been given and how much received in exchange. Thus mutually stimulated, observation and interpretation, the body and the soul of the growing science, have advanced from strength to strength together.

Let us consider the Tylorian theory of animism from the only standpoint that is relevant for the history of science, namely, as a dynamic force. All was chaos in the treatment of primitive mythology and religion until this bold generalization—"won from the void and formless infinite" as it was, not by any so-called act of pure thought, but by patient inference from the best and fullest evidence available at the time—provided a rallying-point to which the scattered thoughts could gather in some order; as when, to quote the *Posterior Analytics*, in the midst of a panic a brave man makes a stand and the rout is stayed.<sup>1</sup> Here was a clue that at least gave men courage to strike for the heart of the maze. Eager students who had sat at Tylor's feet, such as Sir Everard im Thurn, went forth into the wilds with a conviction that a unifying meaning could be imparted to the medley of incoherent beliefs that they were likely to encounter.<sup>2</sup> Not that Tylor had professed to provide a "key to all mythologies"; nor did his followers ever forget that their sole concern with the theory was to test it further. As it was, some thirty years went by before any serious objection was taken to its validity as a formula applying to all the manifestations of primitive creed or cult. Even to-day the latest report from the continent where im Thurn found so much that was typically animistic in the native religions insists that this single principle will

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Post. An.* II. xix.

<sup>2</sup> (Sir) E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883).

serve to characterize and interpret their entire contents.<sup>1</sup> In saying this Dr. Karsten may be right or wrong; and my own view, after examining his data, is that he goes too far. Be this as it may, it remains true that an able and enthusiastic explorer finds it to-day still feasible to direct his footsteps by a light that was kindled by Tylor more than fifty years ago.

And yet we are told that the theory of animism was "the merest guess", and one that was "in flagrant defiance of the known facts". Now it is obvious that these two charges must be taken together. There would be no point in denouncing a working hypothesis as a guess if the meaning were simply that it embodied an effort of constructive imagination. Guess-work, as every passman knows, is the very nerve of all inductive science. Guessing becomes illicit, however, in either of two cases; namely, when the hypothesis is not framed at the start in accordance with such facts as are already known; or, again, when no attempt is made to prove it by reference to fresh facts as they come to light. For the sting of the accusation, then, we must look to the statement that, in guessing, Tylor defied the known facts. Did he do so, then, in either or both of the ways just mentioned? Surely no one who has studied *Primitive Culture*, with its vast array of evidence so lucidly digested, will venture to assert that Tylor scamped the preliminary induction on which his theory rested. Or, again, will anyone who is conversant with the subsequent history of anthropological research question the thoroughness with which the verification of the doctrine of animism in its numberless applications has been carried out, both by Tylor himself and by a host of his contemporaries and successors? One is therefore forced to conclude that by the "known facts" which Tylor is said to have defied are meant facts in the possession of Prof. Elliot Smith which were never within the reach of Tylor at all. Apparently Tylor defied these facts in the same way as palaeolithic man defied iron tools, the

<sup>1</sup> R. Karsten, *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London, 1926).

Romans defied railways, and Prof. Elliot Smith defies the facts which I hope to unearth when I excavate my next dolmen. One hardly likes to accuse so zealous a supporter of the historical method of criticizing a thinker of a previous generation without regard to the historical conditions that limited his outlook. Yet I see no way out of it. There might be some justification, perhaps, for blaming a great thinker of the past for not rising superior to the intellectual prepossessions and prejudices of his time. But there can be absolutely no justification for holding him up to scorn as one who ignored evidence that was not yet to hand. If Prof. Elliot Smith is really guilty of this anachronistic attitude towards Tylor, then as a critic he is past praying for; and to criticize without discernment is the surest mark of ἀπαιδευσία.

I am prepared to deal no less faithfully with the strictures levelled against the author of *The Golden Bough*; but actually there is little need to do so. Whereas Tylor is no more, Sir James Frazer is among us, and in such a state of vigour as bodes ill for any detractor of whom he should choose to take notice. It is to be observed that he is vilified as the intellectual bondsman of Tylor, as if his association with Robertson Smith had in no wise affected the orientation of his thought. Naturally not a hint is given that a third and most prolific source of inspiration lay elsewhere, namely in himself. Erudition, indeed, and the gift of style are placed to his credit. The point of the compliment, however, is that, without such gilding of the pill, the world might not have been so ready to swallow his "learned nonsense". But, apart from the objection that disparagement so ungraciously expressed is in doubtful taste, there is ample ground for condemning a type of criticism so destitute of the historic sense as to lose sight of the fact that the sole virtue of a scientific theory consists in being "sufficient unto the day". It is true that, although Sir James Frazer is accused of propagating "perhaps the worst" of Tylor's fallacies—so many were these fallacies, it appears, and so bad, that the scrupulous critic cannot be sure—the charge of defying the known facts is not repeated

against him. Perhaps it is as well; seeing that with the author of *The Golden Bough* the collection of facts amounts almost to a foible. One might even go so far as to conjecture that, in all that relates to the subject of primitive culture, facts unknown to Sir James Frazer, and yet known to Prof. Elliot Smith, would be scarcely worth the knowing. The head and front, then, of the alleged offending is that a borrowed theory was allowed to make nonsense of facts which the diffusionist at the waving of his wand can transform into sense. But, even suppose that a master of this talismanic method can do so now, could he have done it at the time when *The Golden Bough* was published, and, if so, why was it left undone? Once again we seem to be listening to the prophet who is wise after the event. Surely, of all the great pioneers of anthropology, Sir James Frazer has been the foremost in proclaiming the purely provisional character of his working principles. Not to speak of that drastic reconstruction of the theoretical framework which caused the second edition of *The Golden Bough* when it replaced the first to read almost like a different work, I know nothing in the history of science more dramatic, and at the same time more indicative of the true spirit of research, than the περιπέτεια that awaits one in the third edition. Here the reader who has won his way through many volumes of consistent advocacy in support of a certain theory encounters in the preface of a concluding part—and prefaces are written last—a passage in which that theory is questioned, nay, if we press the words, would seem to be withdrawn altogether. “It is time”, writes the author quaintly, “to unmask the puppet before laying him in the box.”<sup>1</sup> Apparently he has come to suspect that, after all, the hypothesis of a vegetation-spirit, the product of animism, will by no means account for every type of sacred personage, human or divine, that is reputed to control the occult sources of the earth’s fertility. Osiris, for instance, may have been a real man. But a human wonder-worker whose mystic

<sup>1</sup> Compare *The Golden Bough*<sup>3</sup>, Part VII. (*Balder the Beautiful*), vol. i. p. vi. (1913), with Part IV. (*Adonis, Attis and Osiris*), vol. ii. p. 160 (1914).

powers an official successor might claim to inherit is in essence other than a personification of nature subject to periodic incarnation in and through a chain of human lives. Now is it possible that Prof. Elliot Smith is so ungenerous, as well as unversed in the history and logic of science, that, while himself adopting the same view of Osiris—and doubtless adopting it ready-made, since he is avowedly no expert in regard to the cultural side of Egyptian archaeology—he can taunt the investigator who has spent a quarter of a century in weighing the evidence with talking nonsense, because he kept revising his opinions as he went along, and did not announce at the start what only dawned on him at the finish? One has often heard of the man who kicks over the ladder that has enabled him to mount. But, when a friend makes ready a ladder of the kind required, to kick him for his pains is a refinement in the art of attaining scientific eminence for which a parallel is happily hard to find.

I apologize if I have been betrayed into unnecessary heat in defending reputations perhaps too well established to need vindication against criticism perhaps too perverse to call for serious notice. But I can at least plead piety as my excuse for crying hands off from Tylor, the father of Oxford anthropology. Or, again, how should a Frazer Lecturer keep silent when the work of Frazer is slighted? And yet, of course, Sir James Frazer can take care of himself. The majestic windmill is in working order. Let fantastic slayers of dragons beware, who venture within the reach of its long arms.

But it is high time that I turn from the polemics to the positive tenets of the diffusionist school. Even though it is hard to believe that persons who are so uncritical in respect to the opinions of others can have formed their own opinions with judgement, one must try to examine their creed without prejudice and on its merits. May I say at once that, if it were put forward under proper reservations as a working hypothesis, I should have no fault to find with the saga of the wanderings of the so-called “Children of the Sun”? Nay, I would add that, however objectionable may have been the

methods by which the theory in question has been forced on public attention, it seems to me to be both suitable and likely to promote research on helpful lines, even if the ultimate effect of such a process of verification be to cause it to break down. Admitting, however, as I am ready to do, that Mr. Perry puts his case moderately and with a growing sense of the difficulties that he has to meet, I cannot see how the premature dogmatism of Prof. Elliot Smith is going to be of the slightest service either to the particular cause which he has made his own or to the cause of science in general. I call it dogmatism because his pronouncements have the ring of infallibility, even if conscience sometimes warns him that it is human to err. If a man writes deliberately: "there can no longer be any doubt that the essential elements of civilization did really originate in Egypt", what is the use of adding by way of after-thought: "it is my duty to inform the reader in the most specific way that I lay no claim to the right to express any opinion on archaeological matters"?<sup>1</sup> "Two voices are there"; and, to judge by the relative frequency of their utterances, the voice of Hyde prevails over the voice of Jekyll.

What is the more surprising is that, in the very work from which these extracts are culled, a short account is given of the genesis of the theory, wherein it is shown that, if there can no longer be any doubt about its truth, it started nevertheless from somewhat dubious beginnings. In the Summer Term of 1911 Prof. Elliot Smith—having, it is true, already composed, and posted off to the publishers, the earlier version of his book on *The Early Egyptians*, in which the claim of Egypt as the originator of the megalithic culture of Europe was roughly staked out—came up to Cambridge to act as an examiner. There he happened to see a skull from the Chatham Islands, in the South Pacific, that appeared to him to display those "Giza traits" with which his craniological studies in Egypt had already made him familiar. It ought, by the way, to encourage the practice of bequeathing one's mortal remains to a museum if it should become widely known that in four

<sup>1</sup> *The Ancient Egyptians*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1923); compare p. xi with p. 17.



or five thousand years' time one's descendants can thus be identified by the expert, even though in the meantime they may have settled anywhere between China and the Channel Islands. Now to connect Egypt with the other side of New Zealand on the diagnosis of a single specimen was decidedly a long shot. Yet in science the longest shot is permissible, provided that one does not register it as a hit without further inquiry, but continues to follow up the chase until the quarry is secured. This Prof. Elliot Smith proceeded to do, finding confirmatory evidence in other crania from the East. In the meantime his visit to Cambridge had coincided with the psychological moment when the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers was preparing his well-known address to the anthropological section of the British Association, in which he emphasized the need of greater attention to culture-contact as a clue to the movements of peoples. In trying to work out the history of migration in the Pacific area Dr. Rivers had found that this method—already applied to the same problem by German scholars who had the material culture of the region chiefly in view—could be extended to the study of the social institutions with illuminating results. From Rivers, then, Prof. Elliot Smith immediately took over this promising method, possibly without looking into its logical implications very deeply; and, at the same time, seeing that rude stone monuments were common to Europe and the Far East, was encouraged to seek for signs of Egyptian influence in a new direction. It is hardly necessary here to recount the further steps by which the investigation advanced until in 1915, the year in which Mr. Perry comes to the fore with the suggestion that the motive behind all this expansion was the desire for metals and other precious substances, the view was formulated that Egypt was the creator of civilization throughout the whole world. Now neither up to this point nor in its later development was the theory one to which a reasonable man could take exception when offered as such—that is, in so far as its claim to be true was made to rest simply on its adequacy to correlate and explain the known facts. These

facts, let it be noted, since *ex hypothesi* they related to the civilization of every age and clime, were not such as could be surveyed in a hurry, nor without the co-operation of men of very accurate and various learning. As it is, there can be no manner of doubt that whatever gold may lurk in the outpourings of the diffusionist school will be sifted from the dross in the process of time. *Securus judicat orbis scientiarum*. Nay, if as may well happen, the profit substantially outweighs the labour of such inquiry—a contingency that must depend in no small degree on the fairness with which the argument is originally stated—the world will doubtless forgive Prof. Elliot Smith for having allowed the fumes of a world-embracing fancy to mount, like those of a new wine, to his head.

But if this is so—if posterity is apt to condone intemperance in one who yet somehow makes good so as to leave a fortune behind him—it may be asked why we too should not be charitable towards extravagances such as are natural enough to one who plays the seer. The answer is that we are not posterity. We are not gazing at a battle film, but are in the midst of the battle itself. In the actual state of the controversy about diffusion, both as regards its general value as a methodological principle and with reference to the particular question of the extent of the missionary enterprise of Egypt, it would be sheer cowardice to refuse to take up arms on whichever side one holds to be in the right. Posterity would have nothing but contempt in store for those who fell back, or even stood still instead of advancing, if it turned out in the end that the lion in the path was but another kind of animal which, with a little more resolution, they might have stripped of its disguise.

Such, therefore, being my excuse for indulging in disputation when I might have chosen some peaceful subject, let me in the short time that remains try to show in more detail how Prof. Elliot Smith seems to me to prejudice his own cause by allowing exaggeration and bias to pervade his forensic efforts. In these respects I hold him to be equally

at fault whether he is advocating diffusion from Egypt, or diffusion *simpliciter*, as the be-all and end-all of cultural anthropology—the particular and the general questions being so closely associated in his view that it is doubtful how far he is aware of any difference between them. However this may be, since the two topics have no necessary connection with each other, I had better consider under separate heads how the theory itself is mishandled and how the method on which any such theory should be based is misunderstood.

In the first place, then, I would contend that a dogma to the effect that Egypt was the fountain-head of civilization is of no use to science at all. What is wanted is a working hypothesis stated with sobriety, that is, in such a way as not to stifle criticism, but to promote further research. Prof. Elliot Smith, however, appears to take the maxim “strike but hear me” to mean, “let my reasoning deserve castigation so long as I can get the public to attend”. Or, since there are no grounds for suspecting him of conscious guile, let us say that he seeks to browbeat the world into a state of conviction after having himself experienced that sort of mystic illumination to which a *non posse peccare* is attached by way of endorsement. For myself, I fail to see why, in science, we should insist on pronouncing a verdict of “guilty” or “not guilty”, when “not proven” is the most that the evidence entitles us to say. As M. de Morgan puts it, “we must not seek to give to prehistory a precision which it lacks”.<sup>1</sup> I suppose, however, that Prof. Elliot Smith would claim that he had established his induction beyond the reach of reasonable doubt by the discovery of certain crucial instances. Thus, already by 1915, four years after the theory was first put forward, Dr. Rivers, who indeed may have been predisposed to believe in it seeing that he was partly responsible for its inception, was led by the occurrence of a form of mummification in Torres Strait corresponding in many details to that found in Egypt to

<sup>1</sup> J. de Morgan, *Prehistoric Man* (London, 1924), p. 5. The whole chapter is very instructive on the same point.

declare roundly: "I no longer hesitate to believe that the group of customs and beliefs forming the complex most suitably known as megalithic developed in Egypt and spread thence to the many parts of the world where we find evidence of its existence at the present time".<sup>1</sup> Now, I wish to assign all due importance to this notable conversion; for the late Dr. Rivers, if perhaps by temperament somewhat impulsive, was a thinker who would never gloss over difficulties or talk at random. Prof. Elliot Smith declares that from 1918 onwards Dr. Rivers went "the whole way" with him.<sup>2</sup> If so, I can but marvel, seeing what a very long way that was. Granting the possibility of evidence that would conclusively prove some influence on the part of Egypt—and one would have supposed that Egyptian trade-goods were characteristic enough to have left far more of a trail than they can be shown to have done at present—it is quite another matter to raise upon the narrow basis of a single identification, however plausible, a towering structure of loose analogies as top-heavy as an inverted pyramid. Yet Prof. Elliot Smith would apparently deem us blind if we cannot see that a mummy in Torres Strait is a sure indication that the dolmen is derived from the *mastaba*, or that sculptured elephants are likely to be found in a land of tapirs and macaws. My point is that the attempted generalization is on the vastest scale. It is what Bacon would term an *axioma maxime generale*; such as is legitimate only when it serves to correlate a number of *axiomata media* which lend themselves to proof in detail. Yet at every turn one finds such subordinate questions largely begged. Instead of decisive facts, the bulk of the so-called evidence seems to me to consist merely of a mass of pre-conceived opinions.

In view of my time-limits a single example must suffice. Having premised that by its shape the cowry is suggestive of the female principle, Prof. Elliot Smith roundly asserts: "the earliest conception of a deity arose out of these beliefs

<sup>1</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Ethnology* (London, 1926), p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Ancient Egyptians*<sup>2</sup>, p. vii; cf. *Psyche*, iii. (1922), p. 118.

connected with the cowry".<sup>1</sup> Now this is but a *medium axioma*, a single stone in the structure; yet, it must be admitted, one of considerable dimensions, were it certain that it was solid. Perhaps Prof. Elliot Smith has been occasionally visited by doubts on this important subject; for in another work there occurs much the same statement with the qualification "probably".<sup>2</sup> I confess that half my righteous indignation evaporates when the oracle hedges, as the wisest oracles are apt to do. Even so, the doctrine in its calm disregard of other speculative possibilities is of astonishing naïveté. How can anyone presume to say what the earliest manifestation of human religion may have been, when the gaps in the historical record are so vast? Or, even if "earliest known" be substituted for the word "earliest"—and that is surely a very different matter—are we going to ignore the reasonable likelihood of some animistic belief having arisen in connection with what seem to be ceremonial burials on the part of Neanderthal man? Or, again, if Cro-Magnon man has among his grave-furniture what appear to be the fragments of a shell from the Indian Ocean, and if cowries, of a Mediterranean not a Red Sea type, likewise occur together with other pierced objects, shells, teeth, and so on, as accompaniments of the rite of burial, does it follow irresistibly that he had picked up the notion of a revitalizing efficacy derived from the life-giving symbol of birth in some pre-Predynastic Egypt? Once more, are we not to be allowed to deduce the existence of the bull-roarer in Late Palaeolithic times from certain ivory pendants of similar appearance, and, in view of the world-wide distribution of the instrument as a symbol of fertility—due not improbably to the suggestion of thunder and rain-storm that proceeds from its sound—to treat this as another possible source of the idea of deity? And what, too, about the so-called hunting-magic that seemingly inspires

<sup>1</sup> *Shells as Evidence of the Migrations of Early Culture*, by J. W. Jackson, with Introduction by G. Elliot Smith (Manchester, 1917), p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> G. Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon* (Manchester, 1919), p. 151. "The Great Mother, at first with only vaguely defined traits, was probably the first deity that the wit of man devised. . . ."

so much of the cave-art, with its masked dancers and so on? And what of the female figurines with no proved connection with cowries or graves? I certainly do not myself know the answer to the question how much religion was involved in these very various practices, seemingly ceremonial, of very ancient times, a full catalogue of which I have not attempted to draw up. But I am certain that Prof. Elliot Smith cannot know it either. Nevertheless he is prepared to pour scorn on those who dispense for the time being with specific explanations and try rather to discover psychological tendencies that may account for such phenomena as a class. Thus Sir James Frazer in dealing with beliefs about the mandrake, which after all has an unusual shape likely to prove suggestive on its own account, cautiously refers them to "the primitive tendency to personify nature". "A gratuitous and quite arbitrary assumption!" exclaims Prof. Elliot Smith, who thereupon treats us to a demonstration that the mandrake is a "surrogate" of the cowry; whereby "any doubt . . .", he informs us, "is removed, and with it the fallacy of Sir James Frazer's wholly unwarranted claims is also exposed".<sup>1</sup> That we must reckon with shells in the history of religion no one who has read Mr. Jackson's interesting book is likely to deny. But surely Prof. Elliot Smith is intolerable with his cowry, whether he pretends to extract the idea of deity from it as with a pin, or simply tries to cram it down our throats.

Under a second and distinct heading let me discuss the value to anthropology of an all-sufficing diffusionist method, apart from its bearing on the special question of Egypt as the cradle-land of civilization. I would say at once that I object to it only in so far as it seems to take sole and entire charge of the study of man. It has long been recognized that the most baffling and at the same time fascinating problems occur in relation to the diffusion of folk tales, and in this particular context, more than, perhaps, in any other, the criteria whereby genuine diffusion may be determined have been ingeniously elaborated. Again, the intensive study of

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of the Dragon*, pp. 143, 144.

the world's languages—a subject somewhat neglected in this country—reveals such far-reaching connections that one is, so to speak, prepared for anything in the way of ethnic movement and the transmission of culture from very remote times onwards. Granting all this, however, one is not bound to deprecate anthropological research of any and every other kind as so much waste of energy. Indeed, the more reasonable upholders of the diffusionist method would certainly not go so far. The late Dr. Rivers, for instance, always maintained that the last word in anthropology lay with the psychologist. He was, however, for putting off psychological interpretation until the exterior history of culture as the product of a traffic conducted along a network of crooked ways during countless ages had been far more completely, if not once for all, made out.<sup>1</sup> In other words, those of us whose tastes were psychological must wait till our next reincarnation to indulge them—truly, as Plato says, a trifling adjournment.<sup>2</sup> It may be correct in formal logic to argue that, before you can give the reason why something has happened, you must know for a fact that it has happened. The logic of discovery, however, shows that a reason, being of a general nature, brings a number of particular facts into relation; and therefore, when used with due precautions as a hypothetical bridge, can lead to the detection of fresh particulars of the same kind by enabling their real character to be recognized. Take, for example, the principle so gratuitously assumed by Prof. Elliot Smith that, for religious purposes, another kind of shell can come to be treated as equivalent to the cowry; nay, that such a surrogate, as he terms it, may be looked for in something so utterly distinct in its specific properties as the mandrake. I am not for the moment concerned to affirm or deny that these substitutions did in point of fact occur. All I wish to make clear is that, in offering a proof which is largely inferential, Prof. Elliot Smith has escaped his own

<sup>1</sup> W. H. R. Rivers in *The Sociological Review*, Oct. 1913, p. 293; and see my comments in *Psychology and Folklore*, 1920, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Republic*, 498 D.

notice in playing the psychologist; since he was unconsciously and therefore uncritically using as his theoretical bridge from the cowry to the mandrake or what not a conception of religious symbolism as a mental process exhibiting a recognizable law or tendency of its own. Not being a trained psychologist, he possibly imagines that the tendencies of the mind as observable through the medium of human institutions are obvious enough to be taken for granted. But the mental world of the savage, as mirrored for example in *The Golden Bough*, is a veritable topsy-turvydom, where our logic and our sense of values alike seem almost to be inverted. If Prof. Elliot Smith had but dipped a little more deeply into the so-called "nonsense" of Sir James Frazer, he might have learnt to distrust his own sense as applied to the mental processes of the pre-dynastic Egyptians. Some of us, indeed—and I can at least speak for myself—are so greatly preoccupied with the study of the mind of the savage as it works here and now under social conditions complicated by all the contaminating influences of modern civilization that, while fully allowing that anthropology is purely historical in its scope, we are more immediately interested in analysing existing tendencies than in using such analysis as a key to the past. Let me admit frankly that such a point of view is not without its dangers. Thus in particular, whereas analysis is bound to arrange its results in a typological order, the fact that sooner or later these results have to subserve the interpretation of history makes it all too easy to confound typology with chronology. The very word "primitive", with which the anthropologist finds it so hard to dispense, notoriously helps to confuse the merely old-fashioned with the old in time. As for terms such as M. Lévy Bruhl's "prelogical" or my own "pre-animistic", they are perhaps unfortunate in so far that the psychological priority implied in what is at least their primary connotation is apt to be construed as if a direct chronological reference was intended. Even, however, if certain treacherous ambiguities attend such a theoretical procedure, namely one that emphasizes the need of insight into



present observable conditions, and tends to postpone the analogical reconstruction of the relatively unknowable conditions of the past, it is the business of science to purge a legitimate method of its faults, not to drop psychology in despair and envisage human history as a series of events following one upon the other without rhyme or reason.

Yet this, I take it, is precisely the way in which Prof. Elliot Smith wants history to be viewed. Thus he is constantly referring to the arbitrariness of the historical process. Here, I suspect, he is confusing two very distinct things. For purposes of identification as between human institutions or products suspected of being genetically related, it is often the relatively irrational adjuncts, the unessential details that escape readaptation, which count most. It is their very insignificance, so to speak, that constitutes their significance in this particular connection. But to transfer the idea to a wholly different context, and regard the whole development of civilization as arbitrary, is to insult the intelligence of mankind. No doubt all history must involve, at any rate for an onlooker of finite understanding, a casual element, a particularity to which no explanation in universal terms can provide a complete offset. But, because the same thing cannot, strictly speaking, occur twice, it by no means follows that history is but a chapter of accidents. A certain consistency, not to put it more strongly, has been displayed by the human race in its age-long conflict with circumstance. This doctrine, however, of the psychic unity of mankind is as a red rag to Prof. Elliot Smith. *Faenum habet in cornu; longe fuge!* For instance, his common sense is outraged by the postulate that the same invention could be made twice over. And yet without a precisely similar assumption of psychic unity his own theory breaks down. Arbitrarily, that is to say, by a happy or unhappy fluke, Egypt is alleged to have invented civilization. But how was the rest of the world induced to adopt it when invented? Clearly this part of the process cannot have been equally accidental. If a spontaneous variation is required every time that a custom is copied, the theory of chances

succumbs to overwork. Mankind, then, at any rate, as apart from the unique Egyptians, had enough psychic unity to be as clay in the hands of the potter. A capacity for passive imitation brings the rest of us spiritually into line, if hardly into touch. In short, the mind is treated as a *tabula rasa*. The bogey so long ago exorcised from psychology has attached itself to Prof. Elliot Smith and grins at us over his shoulder. Is it, indeed, that he expects to find converts exclusively among those who do not think for themselves?

The last grains are falling to the bottom of the hour-glass, and I must make an end of my remarks. I trust that in the short time at my disposal I have said enough to confute a heresy, even if hardly to establish the foundations of the true faith. I would add that in real life Prof. Elliot Smith has always struck me as a most reasonable as well as otherwise charming man. It is only on paper that he appears to me to let his enthusiasm run away with him. Such indeed is the vigour with which he urges his cause that, while I dislike his opinions, I cannot but admire the man. Doubtless his attitude towards Sir Edward Tylor or Sir James Frazer is precisely the same. Granting, then, likewise that even a Frazer Lecturer may be fallible in his views, however estimable as a human being, let me make my bow, with a word of sincere thanks to my distinguished audience for having given me so patient a hearing.

## VII

### THE STUDY OF POPULAR SAYINGS

By EDWARD A. WESTERMARCK, Ph.D., LL.D.

I DESIRE to express my sincere thanks to the University of Glasgow for inviting me to deliver the lecture in honour of Sir James Frazer, to the British Association for including it among its evening discourses, to Principal Sir Donald Macalister and Professor Bryce for the extremely kind words they have uttered, and to the public who have honoured me with their presence to-night. I have a quite peculiar sentimental reason for taking pride and delight in this accidental connection with the University of Glasgow. For I may say that of the three writers who above all others have exercised an inspiring influence on my work in Sociology and Ethics, two have been closely associated with this University. Of these two, separated in time by more than a century, one is Adam Smith, not in his capacity of an economist, but as the author of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, whose masterly analysis of the moral consciousness I have found wonderfully confirmed by a comparative study of the customs and laws of the different peoples of the world. The other is Sir James Frazer. I have heard Sir James himself regret that he has derived his facts from books without supplementing them through personal work in the field. This was really the main reason why I wanted to point out the enormous importance of his research just for the field anthropologist. A commander *should* not expose himself to the dangers attending action on the field. And in Social Anthropology Sir James Frazer is the supreme commander.

On this occasion when I, thanks to the kindness of Glasgow University and the British Association, have an opportunity to pay my tribute of admiration and gratitude to Sir James Frazer's monumental contributions to science, I desire, in doing so, to emphasize one aspect of them which is apt to be overshadowed by the more prominent qualities of Sir James's writings as inexhaustible mines of facts and store-houses of far-reaching generalizations and epoch-making theories. I mean their importance for the student in the field, who has to provide Social Anthropology with fresh materials. When I, thirty years ago, first set out to improve my defective knowledge of folk-lore through some personal experience of native customs and beliefs and, almost by chance, made Morocco my field of study, I carried with me, besides tents and rifles and other necessary things, some books, one of which proved to be of inestimable value for my special purpose. It was *The Golden Bough*, which then—luckily enough for my pack-mule—consisted of two volumes only, not of twelve. It drew my attention to facts that otherwise in all probability would have escaped my notice, since many customs are not discovered without being looked for. It offered suggestions and explanations, which were none the less valuable because they were not in every case applicable to the particular data that came under my observation. And it brought home to me the great lesson, which no field-anthropologist should ever forget, not to rest content with recording mere external modes of native behaviour without endeavouring, so far as possible, to find the ideas or sentiments underlying them. I therefore think that it may be an appropriate way of rendering homage to my great teacher to mention some general results of my experience as a field-worker.

It has been said by one of the pioneers of modern anthropological research, the late Dr. Rivers, that there is no more depressing and apparently hopeless task than that of trying to discover why people perform rites and ceremonies: "Directly one approaches the underlying meaning of rite or

custom . . . one meets only with uncertainty and vagueness, unless, as is most frequently the case, the people are wholly satisfied with the position that they are acting as their fathers have done before them".<sup>1</sup> I cannot say that this pessimistic view is confirmed by my own observations in Morocco, where I generally found the natives to have quite definite ideas about their rites. But the direct inquiry into these ideas is not the only way in which they may be detected. In many cases the most convincing information is obtained, not from what the natives say *about* their rites, but from what they say at the moment when they perform them, that is, from the words accompanying the rites. I shall illustrate the value of such information by a few examples.

In Morocco, as in many parts of Europe, smouldering fires are made on Midsummer Day or on some other definite day of the year, and the people leap over them and also take their animals over the ashes. They believe that by doing so they rid themselves and the animals of any evil that may cling to them. When they perform these ceremonies they say some words like these: "We shook on you the fleas and lice and the illnesses of the heart, as also of the bones; we shall pass through you again next year and the following years with quietness and health". On the following morning the animals are taken over the ashes by their masters, who say, "We shook on you that which again wanted to hurt us and also our animals, may you again take away that which is harmful, we shall take from you that which is useful". In other words, purificatory effects are attributed to the fires and their ashes.<sup>2</sup> Many similar sayings have more recently been collected from the south of Morocco by M. Laoust, but although he admits that the Berbers now regard the fires as means of purification or expulsion of evil influences, he still believes in the theory that they originally were designed to

<sup>1</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, "Sociology and Psychology", *Sociological Review*, ix. (London, 1916), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, ii. (London, 1926), pp. 65-69, 182 sqq.

reinforce the sun's light and heat by sympathetic magic. This idea is not found anywhere in Morocco, and the facts by which he tries to support the old solar theory seem utterly inadequate to its rehabilitation. He chiefly refers to the opinions held by Mannhardt and Sir James Frazer with regard to the European fire-festivals.<sup>1</sup> But it has escaped his notice that in the last edition of *The Golden Bough* its author has changed his earlier views. Sir James points out that Mannhardt's theory is very slightly, if at all, supported by the evidence and is probably erroneous, and he now considers that the true explanation of the fire-ceremonies is the idea held in Morocco, namely, that they are purificatory in intention.<sup>2</sup>

The Moorish methods of covenanting are also, I believe, of some interest from a more general point of view. They imply some kind of bodily contact—by an exchange of turbans or cloaks, by the joining of hands, or by the partaking of a meal in common; and the covenanting ceremony derives its force from the idea that both parties thereby expose themselves to each other's conditional curses, in other words, that he who is guilty of breach of faith is cursed. By the contact the potential curse is transferred from one party to the other, and if the given promise is broken the curse is actualized. The nature of the restraint which a common meal lays upon those who partake of it is very clearly expressed in the words addressed to a faithless participant, "May God and the *food* repay you", and in the curse, which is a very dangerous one, "I left to you the food that we shared"; the food embodies a curse. Among the ancient Semites, also, a common meal was a method of sealing a compact, as appears from various passages in the Old Testament; and in other instances a covenant was made with the deity by means of a sacrificial meal. In his famous theory of the origin of sacrifice Robertson Smith interpreted this

<sup>1</sup> Laoust, "Noms et cérémonies des feux de joie chez les Berbères du Haut et de l'Anti-Atlas", *Hespéris*, ii. (Paris, 1921), pp. 419 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Balder the Beautiful*, i. p. vii. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 329 sqq.

meal as an act of communion. But the Moorish customs of covenanting, and the sayings connected with them, have led me to believe that the very similar methods used by the ancient Hebrews in their covenanting with the deity were intended, not to establish communion, but to transfer conditional curses both to the men and their god. In Morocco the practice of *l-ʿār*, which intrinsically implies the transference of a conditional curse, is very frequently resorted to for the purpose of compelling, not only a living man, but also a dead saint to grant a request.

In all parts of Morocco rags or clothing or hair are tied to some object connected with a dead saint. In many cases this is done by a petitioner who thereby expects to profit by the *baraka*, or holiness, of the object, and the idea of disease-transference may also be conspicuously present in his mind, as is proved by the words uttered, for example, by someone who ties a string from his clothes to a saintly tree, "I left my fever in you, O wild olive tree". But in other cases the sayings accompanying an act of this kind disclose a very different idea. In the Great Atlas I visited a place where the famous Muhammadan saint 'Abdu 'l-Qadir al-Jilani, buried at Baghdad, who in Morocco is more highly venerated than any other saint, has a small sanctuary, close to which there is a cairn with a pole full of rags stuck in it. When a petitioner fastens a strip of his clothes to the pole, he mutters some words like these: "O saint behold! I promise you an offering and I will not untie you until you attend to my case." If his wish is fulfilled he goes back to the place, offers the sacrifice which he promised, and unties the knot which he made. A Berber servant of mine from Aglu in Sūs told me that once when he was in prison he invoked Lalla Raḥma Yusf, a great female saint whose tomb is in that neighbourhood, and tied his turban, saying, "I am tying *you*, O Lalla Raḥma Yusf, and I am not going to open the knot till you have helped me, nor shall I ever again invoke you if you do not assist me". He said that on the same night his chains were opened by the saint, who was evidently frightened by the threat, and

he escaped from the prison. These and other sayings of the same class, which so clearly express the idea of tying up the saint in order to compel him to render the assistance asked for, suggested to me that some similar idea may perhaps underlie the Latin word for religion, *religio*, if, as has been conjectured, this word is related to the verb *religare*, "to tie". It might have implied, not that man was tied by his god, but that the god was in the religious ritual tied by the man.

While a saying uttered on the occasion when a rite is performed is apt to throw light on the meaning of the rite, there are other sayings which can themselves be explained only by the circumstances in which they are used. This is the case with a large number of proverbs, though they at the same time also help us to a better understanding of the mental or social facts from which they rose. During the eight years I have spent in Morocco I have collected a number of proverbs, amounting to about two thousand, and both in collecting them and in working up the material I have followed certain principles which seem to me to be essential for a sociological study of proverbs, and therefore to justify a somewhat detailed discussion of the subject.<sup>1</sup>

First, what is meant by a proverb? Many definitions have been given. James Howell said in his book *Paroimiografia*, published in 1659, that the chief ingredients which go to make a true proverb are "sense, shortness, and salt". He then omitted a most essential, and generally recognized, characteristic of a proverb, namely, popularity, acceptance, and adoption on the part of the people. But he was fully aware of it; for he also says that "proverbs may be called the truest franklins or freeholders of a country", and that they have no other parent but the people, being traditional sayings, precepts, and memorandums handed over from one generation to another. Of course each of them must have had an author—we cannot believe in the spontaneous generation of

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed discussion of this subject is found in my book, *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco, a Study of Native Proverbs*, published two years later (London, 1930).



proverbs. But, as Archbishop Trench observes in his little book on proverbs, the author may only have clothed in happier form what others had already felt and uttered. The proverb may have been “the wit of one, and the wisdom of many”—to use a phrase coined by Lord Russell—and its constitutive element is not the utterance on the part of the one, but the acceptance on the part of the many, whose sanction *makes* it a proverb. The same may be said of the accessions which the stock of popular proverbs in the course of time has received from literary sources.

Another quality that has often been held essential to a proverb is figurativeness. The Latin *proverbium* means a saying in which a figurative expression is used in the place of the plain word, *pro verbo*. But though this may generally be the case in the most popular proverbs, there are many sayings recognized as proverbs that contain no figure of speech. This is admitted by Aristotle, who says in one chapter of his book on rhetoric that proverbs are “metaphors from species to species”, but in another chapter that “some proverbs are also maxims”. On the other hand, there is hardly a proverb that does not in its form, somehow or other, differ from ordinary speech. It contains some touch of fancy in the phrasing, it personifies inanimate objects or abstract conceptions, it is paradoxical, hyperbolic, pointed and pungent, pithy and epigrammatical, or it makes use of the antithesis or parallelism, or of rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, or puns. Of all the formal helps which the proverb employs for obtaining currency among people, for being listened to with pleasure, or for impressing itself more powerfully on their memory, the rhyme is one of the most prominent, at least in modern and Arabic—though not in Latin—proverbs, and also the false rhyme, as for example in the saying, “A stitch in time may save nine”. Dr. Fuller, in his *Gnomologia*, published in 1732, took the false rhyme for a little artifice “contrived purposely to make the sense abide the longer in the memory, by reason of its oddness and archness”. This theory is perhaps a little too ingenious: a false

rhyme may be resorted to simply because a genuine one cannot be found. Sometimes the predilection for a rhymed proverb actually leads to the distortion of a word, as also to an illogical sequence of words; and quite frequently a proverb has come into existence chiefly for the sake of its rhyme. Generally speaking, it holds true that many proverbs have achieved popularity not on account of what they say, but of the way they say it, and that the secret of their success has been some spice of originality or of humour in their composition.

The proverbs of a people may be studied from different points of view. In many cases their study has been the pursuit of philologists, who have been mainly interested in the linguistic aspect of the subject. Various Arabic scholars have made use of proverbs for their study of modern Arabic dialects, and a recent student of Jewish folk-lore has even said that proverbs are the "people's voice", not only in so far as it reflects the popular mind, but also because it "is an accurate record of the vernacular". This, however, is a hazardous proposition. As a source of information on the language spoken by a people its proverbs must be handled with caution, as they may contain expressions that are not found in the native idiom but belong to another dialect from which the proverb has been imported or, as is often the case with Arabic proverbs, have been taken from the literary language, which in many respects differs from the modern vernaculars.

Another method of studying proverbs is to examine their diffusion. Peoples have at all times taken sayings from each other. Among the nations of Europe we find a host of identical, or almost identical, proverbs which obviously have a common origin. Kelly, who in 1818 published what he called *A Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs*, was mortified at discovering that so many of them were of foreign extraction. (By the way, the title of his book was not quite correct, as, on his own admission, he excluded from his collection all "superstitious observations which were apt to

fill men's minds with panick apprehensions", all proverbs that were openly obscene—and these, he said, were very many—and all those "that seem to make too homely with the Almighty Being"). We know for certain that a large number of our proverbs have been borrowed from the Romans, who themselves had borrowed many of theirs from the Greeks, and another great source has been the Bible. Others have descended to us from the Middle Ages, when popular sayings in Latin translations spread from one country to another through the monasteries, and afterwards were retranslated into the vernaculars. Others again were introduced into Europe by Jews and Arabs; the extraordinary wealth of Spanish proverbs has to a large extent been attributed to such influence. Arabic-speaking peoples have also in common a store of sayings, partly derived from the Muhammadan traditions but largely of secular origin. The wanderings of proverbs are a fascinating study, but one beset with considerable difficulties. It should always be borne in mind that the resemblance between proverbs may have another cause than diffusion, namely, the uniformity of human nature, which makes men in similar situations think and feel alike. The real test of a common origin is therefore not the mere similarity of ideas and sentiments expressed in the proverbs, but the similarity of formal expression, of course with due allowance for modifications that are apt to occur when a saying is adopted from another language and transported into a new soil.

There is a third way of studying proverbs, which is primarily concerned with their contents as a subject of sociological or psychological interest, although at the same time the form, and especially the influence that the form exercises on the contents, must not be lost sight of. It is generally recognized that in the proverbs of a people are found precious documents concerning its character and temperament, opinions and feelings, manners and customs. They have been called "the philosophy of the vulgar". Lord Bacon said that "the genius, wit, and spirit of a nation are

discovered by their proverbs". There may be some exaggeration in such statements, as many of the proverbs are not indigenous. But on the other hand it should be remembered that a foreign proverb is hardly adopted by a people unless it is in some measure congenial to its mind and mode of life; that it is apt to be modified so as to fit in with its new surroundings; that, when sufficiently deeply rooted, it may in turn influence the native habits of thought and feeling; and that, if it does not succeed in being acclimatized in its adoptive country, it will wither and die. These facts are of great importance on account of the frequent difficulty, or impossibility, of separating indigenous proverbs from others which have crept into the language from abroad. Of particular value is to notice the degree of popularity a certain proverb, or a certain class of proverbs, has gained among a people.

As an illustration of the insight a people's proverbs may give us into its life, it may possibly interest you to hear a brief extract from my collection of sayings relating to robbery, which I found among a tribe of mountaineers in Northern Morocco, who carry on robbery as a genuine trade; I once spent six months among them. As to the form of these and other proverbs I can give you no idea of the beauty of the Arabic originals, their rhythm and rhyme and assonance, since I presume that you prefer to hear them in English translation. As Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote, "most proverbs have this peculiarity that they sound best in their native tongue, but if they are translated into another language they lose much of their beauty; just as some wines cannot stand exportation and only give their proper delicacy of flavour in the places where they are produced". Of course, robbery is not considered quite right from a higher point of view; there is a saying that "selling and buying is better than robbery". But when an old highwayman retires from his favourite occupation with a feeling that, after all, he is a sinner who in the future life may be called to account for his transgressions, he is comforted with the saying, "Repent, God will forgive you".

People should never forget to be on their guard against robbers. "He who is careless will be left to scratch himself" (out of regret). "Guarding is victorious over destiny." "If the market is full, look after your goods and stretch your neck." A man who owns sheep is advised to watch them: "Be a jackal before the jackals eat you". When a well-to-do person who, as a safeguard against robbers, keeps watchmen is asked why he goes to the expense of doing it, he answers, "To be eaten by lions is better than to be tormented by hyenas". The robbers, too, take their precautions. If a man intends to commit robbery in another person's garden, he may send a boy in advance to make sure that the owner does not happen to be there. If the boy is caught and confesses his errand, the following saying, referring to a fool who is sent to try if a river is safe to cross, is applied: "By the head of a fool the depth of the river is measured". But a robber should be brave. When a man who is asked by another to go with him to rob answers that they might be shot, he is told by the other one, "The life has its fixed limit, and why the fear?" When robbers who are surprised by people passing by run away and leave their weapons behind, the remark is made, "In a fright they called the boy 'Aisha'"—a name given to girls. If a party of men go to rob somebody of his animals and the owner, on detecting them, cries for help, one of the robbers may try to save himself by joining in the shouting; it is said of him, "He eats with the jackals and weeps with the shepherd".

When a robber has been caught, many persons will at once come and complain that they also have been robbed: "When the cow falls down, the daggers are many". A robber excuses himself by saying, "Lack of work is a misfortune"; or, "The cold teaches one to steal charcoal", meaning that he had to procure something for himself and his family to prevent starvation. If a robber has succeeded in escaping to another tribe and the sheikh comes and confiscates his brother's property, the latter complains, "One eats beans, and for another they swell in his stomach". When a robber, or any

other wrong-doer, escapes undetected and an innocent person is caught—from the authorities' point of view the chief thing is that somebody should be caught—people who are aware of his innocence remark, "The minaret fell down, hang the barber". A poor man who is robbed has nobody to speak on his behalf: "The orchard of an orphan is always robbed, even though it is surrounded with a wall". Yet it is a great sin to rob a fatherless child of his property: "The property of the fatherless stops in the throat". A father who finds that he has been robbed by his son, as frequently happens in our tribe, says, "Who is your enemy? The bean said to him, He who is with me in the skin-sack"—an allusion to a small insect often found inside dry beans. If a person who is robbed is not killed by the robber, his neighbours comfort him by saying, "If the head is alive, it will not be without a cap"; or, "If the bone is alive, it will bring forth flesh".

The value of proverbs as evidence of opinions generally held by a people may perhaps seem to be lessened by the fact that not infrequently some of them contradict the teaching of others. But such incongruities, which have been commented upon by several students of proverbs, really only add to the fulness of the testimony. Many of them are more apparent than real. Proverbs have often the form of categorical imperatives; but common-sense morality does not share the rigorism of certain philosophers, and the unconditional character of its proverbial maxims may be simply due to their necessary brevity. In such cases their one-sidedness has to be corrected by other proverbs dealing with particular circumstances that modify the general rule. To take a few instances. The duty of almsgiving, which is one of the five practical duties of Islam, called the pillars of religion, is often inculcated in the proverb, "Give what there is in your pocket, God will bring you what is absent", and so forth. But even this cardinal duty has its limitations. It should be practised with discretion. You should bestow charity only on those who are destitute, not on those whose poverty is less pressing: "The dead are dear to us, but as for the

wounded they will be cured". Moreover, in practising charity you should not forget the needs of your family, nor your own needs: "Don't let charity go out of your house until the children are satisfied". A person who impoverishes himself through excessive charity is "like a needle that clothes the people and is herself naked". "He who gives away his goods during his life will call on God, but He will not help him." On the other hand, the religious prohibition of giving the *zakāt*, or legal alms, to a person who is not a Muhammadan is in the popular sayings supplemented by another rule referring to ordinary alms: "Give it for the sake of God, and give it even to him who does not believe in God". In Morocco, as elsewhere, there are many sayings that enjoin economy, such as, "Eat and drink, and put what is left into a palmetto bag". But there are others that make fun of a person who might live in comfort and yet is too stingy to do it. He is like a butcher "who sups on intestines", or "like a donkey he carries gold and silver and wants straw". What is the good of being parsimonious when we know that "death is nearer than the twinkling of the eye". "Eat and drink and dress yourself and say, Come, O death!" In proverbs like these we may discern differences of inclination and temperament; one maxim appeals to one person, another quite different maxim to another, and as people are not all alike so also their proverbs differ.

There is, further, the distinction between proverbs that represent ideals and others that are based on realities which do not come up to these ideals. The rule of tit-for-tat forms the contents of many Moorish sayings: "Despise him who despises you, or throw him away from you"; "Revenge is forgotten only by bastards". But side by side with the doctrine of resentment there is the doctrine of forgiveness: "Show mercy to him who is on earth, he who is in heaven will have mercy upon you"; "Forgiveness from the heart is better than a box of gold". Truthfulness is insisted upon: "Speak the truth, even though it is bitter"; "The liar is cursed; even though he is a learned man he is cast off by God"; "A lie is

of no avail". Yet there are occasions when this does not hold good and it is prudent to have recourse to a lie: "O man, see and be silent; if you eat meat, say it is fish"; "If he asks you about something, then say, I don't know".

It must not be assumed, however, that a people's proverbs on a certain topic always tell us the whole truth about their feelings relating to it. The Moorish sayings about women and married life may serve as a warning. Islam, as everybody knows, looks upon women with unfriendly and suspicious eyes. The Moors are acquainted with the widespread Muhammadan saying that "women are defective in understanding and religion". "God has omitted them from his mercy." "The beauty of the man is in his intelligence and the intelligence of the woman is in her beauty." Women are friends of the devil. They are possessed by *jnūn*, or evil spirits, nay there are women who really are *jnūn* in disguise. Their looks are dangerous, their curses are more fearful than those of men; it is said, "If men swear to do you harm spend your night sleeping, and if women swear to do you harm spend your night awake". Women are quarrelsome: "Girls will not finish their quarrel until they scratch each other's cheeks"; "Old women will not rest from their quarrel until they pull out each other's white hairs". Women are more cunning than the devil: "The cunning of women is strong, and the cunning of the devil is weak".

Yet in spite of all this wickedness of woman a man should not hesitate to marry. Though Islam regards marriage as a civil contract, it nevertheless enjoins it as a religious duty "incumbent on all who possess the ability". The Moors say that a married man is blessed in this life and goes to Paradise after death, whereas, "If someone dies a bachelor he will rise again with the evil spirits". At the same time the advantages of bachelorhood also make themselves heard in the proverbs: "The man who is a bachelor goes where he likes and is saved from running"; and "Woman is a vessel of wood, and he who travels in it is lost". A man should be careful in his choice of a wife. He should marry into a good



family, even though it is poor: "Marry a woman of noble origin, and sleep on a mat". Even in other circumstances it is better to marry a poor woman than a rich: "When you take a wife take a poor one, even though you bring her a loaf of bread and a sardine she will be content"; "Don't take a wife who has money, she will treat you with arrogance and say to you, Fetch water" (which is a woman's business). "Don't marry a tall woman, she will embarrass you in regard to clothes and drawers." "When you marry, marry a short one, when you cut clothes for her you will have no trouble."

There are many sayings relating to married life, all equally unromantic. "He who loves his wife should guard her"—not allowing other men to talk with her. "Consult your wife and follow your own mind, consult your wife and act contrary to her advice." "Obedience to women makes one enter hell." A thievish wife is of course a great nuisance. If a man, when coming home from his work in the evening, is told that his wife has stolen something from another person, he says, "If a man has no trouble his she-ass will cause it to him". One of the very few tolerably kind sayings I have found used with regard to a wife, though quite prudential like all the others, is the proverb, "A sweet tongue will be sucked by the lioness", meaning that a man who does not quarrel with his wife, but speaks nicely to her, will be loved by her as if he were her sucking-child. I have heard several proverbs relating to the love of women, but none in connection with marriage. The most hateful saying comes from Sîdi Hammu, the great sage of the southern Berbers. He said, "O ye women, seed of the poisonous oleander bush, you should all be burned in a fire, if my mother were not one of you".

Now, if we judged the Moors by their proverbs we might easily draw the conclusion that the men are utterly devoid of tender feelings towards their wives. But here we have an instance of the danger the student of a people's proverbs runs if he takes them as indicative of its character, without possessing adequate knowledge of its habits and modes of thought. That in other cases the Moors, not only are capable

of tender feelings, but also are ready to demonstrate them, appears from their many sentimental sayings about friendship; and it would be a true wonder if they were destitute of all such feelings in their relations to their wives. But it is no wonder that their proverbs are silent on the subject. We have to take into account the Moorish ideas of decency. It is considered indecent of a man to *show* any affection for his wife; in the eyes of the outside world he should treat her with the greatest indifference. I once had a discussion with some women in a Bedouin tribe, who were anxious to hear about the women in my own country. They greatly approved of our monogamy; when there are two wives in a tent, they said, they scratch each other's faces and pull each other by the hair. On the other hand, they were almost indignant when I told them that we do not pay anything for our wives, but sometimes even get money with them; they argued that if we pay nothing for a wife we must consider that she is worth nothing. Then I said, "In my country the husband is always kind to his wife, and when they go out together they walk arm in arm". But this I should never have said. The women suddenly turned pale as a sheet and did not know where to look, and even the two men who were present felt much embarrassed. I found, too late, that it was probably the most indecent thing I had said in all my life. On board a steamer going to Genoa I once met a young Moor from Fez. He had just married and was now on his wedding trip, but he had left his wife at home. This was very appropriate behaviour for a newly married young man.

Proverbs are not merely reflections of life, but play an active part in it; and this functional aspect should also engage the attention of the student. They teach resignation in adversity, they give counsels and warnings, they are means of influencing the emotions, will, and behaviour of others, as they may influence one's own, whether they are shaped as direct commands, or are statements of some experience drawn from life, or are expressions of approval or admiration or of disapproval or contempt. The exceedingly frequent use

of proverbs in Morocco, as in other countries with a Semitic culture, proves their great social adaptability. The proverb is not only a spice by which anybody may add piquancy to his speech, but it shortens a discussion, it makes a neat argument which has the authority of custom and tradition—as Aristotle said, “proverbs are in the nature of evidence”—it is a dignified way of confessing an error or offering an apology, and it makes a reproof less offensive by making it less personal. One reason for the great popularity that proverbs enjoy among the Moors is their desire to be polite. Good manners are the subject of a very long section of the Muhammadan traditions, and are also enjoined in many of the proverbs. You should be polite in your speech: “Sow wheat, don’t sow thorns, and everybody will like you and love you”; “Silence for a year is better than a bad word”. If anybody shows you a thing which he owns, you should say it is good, whatever you may think of it: “If you see him riding on a bamboo-cane, say to him, Good health to your *horse*”. You should mind your own business; if you interfere in other people’s you may be told, “Enter your own market, don’t enter the market of others”; or, “Everyone buries his mother as he likes”. A proverb is often an excellent substitute for a direct refusal, which may seem inappropriate or rude. In a country where charity is a cardinal duty it does not sound well to say “no” to a beggar; it is much better to convey one’s denial by making an excuse: “What will death take from an empty house?” or, “Our sickness is the same, and the one who cures is God”. Or if a person is asked by another to lend him money, he may inform him that he has already spent all his money (whether it is true or not) by answering, “The sowing passed you before March” (the time when the sowing comes to an end). Or if a woman who is going to a wedding asks another woman to lend her her costume, and the latter wants it herself because she also is going to the wedding, it is a polite answer to say, “No one gives yeast on a feast-day”—when every mistress of a household needs all the yeast she has.

In spite of their natural politeness, however, the Moors are an excitable race and, when enraged, hurl at each other the most awful curses. How exquisite their curses may be you can judge from one of them: "God damn your grandfather and the grandfather of your grandfather and the grandfather of him who does not curse your grandfather"—grandfathers are great favourites in Moorish curses because a curse is supposed to effect not only the person mentioned in it, but all his descendants as well. But the use of an appropriate proverb may serve to cool the rage, stop the quarrel, and make those who were cursing each other a moment before rejoice and shake hands with each other. Some months ago, when two of my servants from Tangier quarrelled, I had only to recite the proverb, "The quarrel of a native of Tangier is like fumigation with benzoin" (which only lasts for a moment), and the angry look was at once changed into a friendly smile. In Morocco the commission of an offence against a person very frequently leads to the intervention of a third party on behalf of the offender; the Moors distinguish between forgiveness from the heart and forgiveness for the sake of another. And in such a case a proverb may be used as a kind of *'ār*, which implies the transference of a conditional curse and consequently should act as a means of compulsion. The intervener may say to the offended party, "Only he who is very patient attends to the *'ār*"; or, if the offender is a man of family, "Beat the dog, and respect him for the sake of his master"—meaning the father of the culprit. Thus proverbs are in various ways conducive to goodwill and peace.

If proverbs are to be studied from the points of view I have now advocated—without any desire to prejudice other methods of study—it is of course necessary to know their intrinsic meaning and not merely their form and literal meaning, which may suffice for the philologist and the diffusionist. This imposes upon the collector a task which has seldom been satisfactorily accomplished. Many proverbs are no doubt perfectly intelligible without an explanation.

Others are only apparently so, because they easily suggest an interpretation which is not the correct one. And others cannot even deceive us, because they appear as veritable riddles which baffle any attempt to decipher their meaning. How many of the proverbs I have quoted to-night would not have been incomprehensible if they had been detached from the circumstances in which they are used? Yet sayings of an equally mysterious character are constantly offered us without any commentaries, and this is done even by otherwise excellent field-workers. In a recent book on West African proverbs the writer of the preface feels himself compelled to remark that if the saying of the Tshi-speaking natives, "When a fool is told a proverb, the meaning of it has to be explained to him", is applied to the reader of the book, "few of us, it is to be feared, will escape conviction of folly". Even the foremost compiler of English proverbs, Hazlitt, confesses that he has been obliged to leave without a gloss many proverbs which have defied his attempt to unriddle their occult meaning. I cannot, then, strongly enough insist on the necessity of carefully recording the situations in which proverbs are used, unless the collector has made sure that they have no other meaning but that which they directly express.<sup>1</sup> It is true that many a proverb admits of a variety of applications and is used in different situations, and who can know all of them? In my own collection I have recorded the circumstances in which such proverbs seem to be most frequently applied, or which most readily occur to the mind of a native informant when he speaks of them. The latter procedure is contrary to a rule laid down in *The Handbook of Folk-Lore*, where it is said that proverbs "can only be listened for, and noted whenever they are incidentally cited". But this is an impossible requirement made upon collectors of proverbs. You must not suspect me of having taken part

<sup>1</sup> I was glad to find that Dr. Raymond Firth has likewise emphasized the duty of field-anthropologists to examine and record the attendant circumstances of proverbs, in his interesting and suggestive articles on "Proverbs in Native Life, with particular reference to those of the Maori", published in two recent numbers of *Folk-Lore*, xxxvii. (1926), pp. 134-153, 245-270.

in those marauding expeditions of robbers that form the background of some of the proverbs.

When we are sure of the intrinsic meaning of proverbs, and only then, we can find a reasonable solution of a problem that has proved a constant stumbling-block to collectors and compilers, namely, their classification. Various schemes have been tried. The most convenient one—from the collector's point of view—is the method adopted by those who, on their own confession, have published the proverbs in the order in which they have jotted them down in their note-books. Very frequently proverbs have been arranged in alphabetical order according to the first letters of the first word, or according to the first word itself, if it consists of one letter only—as in the case of English proverbs beginning with the word "A"—or according to the first letters of the first significant word. Sometimes proverbs have been classed under various headings suggested by the person, animal, object, or anything else round which they are formally woven, as when the Ashanti proverb, "If you strike a lion your own head will pain you", is placed under the heading "Wild animals", although the proverb is purely metaphorical—an arrangement which cannot even interest zoologists, as lions are often mentioned in the proverbs of countries where no lions exist. Collectors and compilers have obviously been anxious to find a principle of some sort to put order into their chaotic material; but I fail to see that any of these formal methods of arrangement can be of much practical use. What has been disconnected before is brought together into a hotchpotch hardly less difficult to digest; and if anyone wants to know what may be said on a certain subject in this medley of proverbs he has to find it out for himself. My experience is that even when trying to discover if a particular proverb in my own collection has been previously recorded by somebody else, the alphabetic classification has given me little help; proverbs are subject to variation, and the word to look for has often been changed in this process.

All such formal classifications are of course impossible if

the proverbs are to be treated as sociological or psychological documents. They must then be grouped together according to subjects or situations on which they have a bearing, and be accompanied with all explanations necessary for the right understanding of their import and implications. Proverbs that are applicable in different situations may have to be repeated under different headings, and even these repetitions may be anything but exhaustive; but, to judge by my own experience, a few representative instances are generally sufficient to reveal the meaning attached to the proverb. A good subject index will be extremely useful.

I am afraid that the subject I have now discussed may perhaps seem too trivial for a discourse on this solemn occasion. Proverbs are not nowadays held in high esteem, and their study is rather neglected. It was different in former days. One of the earliest collectors of proverbs was no lesser person than Aristotle, who evidently thought that such an occupation was not unworthy a philosopher of his reputation. The foremost student of proverbs in more recent times was the great humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam, who in his work *Adagia*, first published in the year 1500, brought together more than four thousand proverbs from ancient Greek and Roman writers and provided them with copious explanations and commentaries; and the interest aroused by his book was so great that it was re-issued in more than fifty editions. In this country proverbs were once highly appreciated by all ranks of society. In the days of Queen Elizabeth a member of the House of Commons made a speech entirely composed of the most homely proverbs on such a serious subject as an Act against double payment of book-debts. Subsequently, however, a reaction set in; Lord Chesterfield declared that "a man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms". But I say with Dr. Fuller, in the preface to his old collection of English proverbs, that "no man ought to despise, ridicule, or any way discourage the diligence and kindness of those that take pains to bring home to others

without price those things of profit and pleasure". If due attention is bestowed upon the collection of proverbs, we may hope that the scientific study of them will better than hitherto keep pace with the progress made within other branches of folk-lore.



## VIII

### THE RELIGION OF A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

By A. C. HADDON, M.A., Sc.D., F.R.S.

I FULLY appreciate the kindness of the University of Liverpool in giving me this opportunity publicly to acknowledge the debt which anthropologists owe to the unceasing labours of my old friend, Sir James Frazer, who has provided them with a systematic and well-documented mass of ethnographical material written in a literary style which captivates alike specialists and those who do not profess to be students of ethnology.

In this lecture, however, I do not propose to deal with my subject in the comparative method of which Sir James is so brilliant an exponent, but to follow the practice which we have adopted in the Cambridge School of the intensive study of a limited area. For obvious reasons, the limited area I have chosen is that embraced by the islands of Torres Straits, but I regret that my treatment of the religion of the islanders cannot be very intensive, owing to lack of enough precise information, and it is extremely doubtful if this can ever be remedied.

As we shall see, the islanders had various cults in most, probably in all, of which there was an emotional aspect, that, without defining it further, may be termed "religious", as the emotions evoked were distinctly of the same order as those that characterize all recognized religions. I leave it for others to decide whether these people had what is generally understood as a "religion". I am concerned merely to describe as briefly as I can various emotional and cult practices that permeated the economic and social life of the people; the

attitude of mind and feeling associated with most of these practices cannot be separated into a system apart from their daily life.

The islands of Torres Straits fall into three main groups: (1) The high western islands, consisting of old igneous rocks, mainly granitic, which are simply the northern termination of the Australian cordillera. (2) The central islands, low vegetated sandbanks, but there are similar islands elsewhere in the Straits. (3) The eastern islands, which are volcanic, these are Erub (Darnley) and one or two neighbouring islets, and the three Murray islands—Mer, Dauar, and Waier.

The islanders were all practically in the same stage of material culture, the difference being mainly due to the relative fertility of the three areas. The western islands are for the most part infertile and the natives had to rely upon fishing, and particularly upon catching dugong and turtle, to supplement their poor gardens. The central islanders had practically no gardens, and so frequently had to wander in their canoes to uninhabited islands where they could get wild fruits, and to spots where turtle were to be had. The eastern islands have a rich soil, and so the natives could live almost entirely on their garden produce, supplemented with fishing and catching turtle.

All the islanders traded with the inhabitants of definite spots in New Guinea and its coastal islands, giving shells, shell ornaments, pearl shell, and probably turtle and dugong meat for canoes, bows and arrows, cassowary and bird-of-paradise feathers, sago, and a few other things. The western islanders more particularly had dealings with the natives of Cape York, but they got very little from them except javelins and spear-throwers, which, however, were employed only by some western islanders.

Up to about seventy years ago, the men went nude and the women wore only petticoats made of shredded leaves or roughly beaten bark. They did not make pottery. From the time that ships began to pass regularly through the Straits, about the end of the eighteenth century, the islanders eagerly

begged for any iron object, as their stone and shell axes and bamboo knives were not very efficient implements.

The islanders are western Papuans with woolly hair and a dark chocolate skin. They were, however, composed of different stocks which may briefly be described as (1) a primitive long-headed type, (2) another long-headed strain, and (3) a stock with a somewhat broad head, but a discussion of their racial affinities is beyond my present scope. The western islanders speak a language which is allied to the group of languages which characterizes the centre and northern portion of Australia, but the eastern islanders speak a language which is akin to some of the languages in the western neighbouring mainland of New Guinea. The central islanders were on the whole more closely allied to the western.

It is thus evident that the islanders were in a low state of material culture, but they were on the whole an energetic, enterprising, intelligent people who were always ready to defend their islands from possible enemies; on account of this last trait the early voyagers gave them a bad reputation. Captain T. B. Wilson wrote in 1835: "they have the character of being very treacherous, daring, and deceitful. Horsburgh, in his Directory, cautions voyagers to be on their guard in their intercourse with the natives of the numerous islands in Torres Straits, particularly with those of Murray's Island." We know that certain of the islanders were constantly raiding other islands, mainly for the purpose of taking heads, and doubtless they were treacherous and cruel. There was an old and universal custom, called *sarup*, which enjoined on them to kill all shipwrecked people, for which they give the following reason. If they were strangers they might cause trouble by killing some of the people on the island on which they landed, or they might perform harmful magic; if belonging to the place itself, having lost their senses through being in the water, they might kill people or do other harm while in an irresponsible condition, but if a person was recognized by a friend, that friend would take care of him. Occasionally strangers were spared.

When the *Charles Eaton* was wrecked in 1834 near Cape York, some natives of Aurid, one of the central islands, were on a neighbouring island on one of their quests for food. Five of the crew took a boat and abandoned the rest; with the exception of two boys all the remainder were murdered by the Aurid men, doubtless because they were *sarup*. According to custom the heads of the victims were kept. Eventually the two boys were bought for a bunch of bananas apiece by a Murray islander, who treated them very kindly till they were rescued by Captain Lewis in 1836.

When Bampton and Alt visited Erub in 1793, five men were massacred, for which thorough vengeance was taken. About eighty-five years later, the Rev. S. McFarlane was told that the natives did not object to the white men taking water from the island, but they did object to their washing themselves and their dirty clothes in the only drinking water the natives then had, and the sailors were killed as they showed fight.

It is impossible to say how far the bad repute which the natives had was due to the thoughtlessness or worse of the sailors of passing vessels in the early days. The attack of the Tutu men on the boats of a surveying ship in 1792 appears to have been entirely unprovoked, and for this incident the island was named Warrior Island. We do know that during the early days of the pearl-shelling industry the natives were very badly treated by a few irresponsible white skippers and their South-Sea crews, but this belongs to relatively late times and has no direct bearing upon the older reputation of the islanders.

It is safe to say that until 1888 everyone regarded the natives as typical savages, naturally ferocious and not to be trusted, but owing to the constant constraint for some years of the better class of white men they were then inoffensive and amenable. Up to this time, no one had taken the trouble to find out what restraints the natives imposed upon themselves, what were their ideas on things in general, or what lay behind their rites and ceremonies.

It is essential for all communities that there should be rules of conduct, what to do and what not to do; these naturally vary from people to people, but the aim in all is the maintenance of stable conditions, and even among the most primitive peoples this is the constant care and earnest endeavour of the older and more responsible men. In their effort to maintain social continuity the elders are supported by public opinion, and where central authority is weak, apart from retribution at the hands of the friends of the injured party, recourse must be had to the sorcerer who punishes by sickness or death the offending person. To this extent and from the fear that he inspires in evil-doers, the sorcerer may be regarded as an aid towards social stability. Such was the case for the western Torres Straits islanders.

Until very recently, and perhaps it is so still, it was believed by the Murray islanders that a spirit might feel resentment when children of the deceased were neglected or wronged, or when land or chattels of the deceased were taken by those who had no claim to them. No doubt in the past such fear of the spirits' wrath had a deterrent effect on wrong-doers and helped to keep the people straight. With this exception, there is no evidence that their code of morality gained either sanction or support from religion. No appeal was made to totem, ancestor, or hero, and no punishment from these quarters was made for infringement of social morality.

The ethics of these people was a purely secular affair; it did not derive from spiritual authority, and thus their morality was social rather than religious in the narrower sense of the term.

The code of ethics was definitely taught during the initiation ceremonies. The lads were then in a transition stage, when increasing virility stirred up new emotions and aspirations. The self-restraint acquired during the period of complete isolation (at all events in some islands) was advantageous, and being cut off from all the interests of the outer world the lads had an opportunity for quiet meditation which must have tended to mature their minds. The privations and often

the infliction of physical suffering were lessons in endurance. The lads were awed by the rites they had witnessed, and by the sacred secrets that had been unfolded to them. It is not easy to conceive of a more effectual means for a rapid training during this impressionable age.

The injunctions were: Remembrance of the admonitions, reticence, thoughtfulness, respectful behaviour, prompt obedience, generosity, diligence, kindness to parents and other relatives in deed and word, truthfulness, helpfulness, manliness, discretion in dealings with women, quiet temper. Bravery, ferocity, endurance of pain and hardship, and other warlike qualities, were regarded as great virtues. The prohibitions were against theft, borrowing without leave, shirking duty, talkativeness, abusive language, talking scandal, marriage with certain individuals, revealing the sacred secrets.

But it was not only on such occasions that the youths were instructed—in a friendly manner the elders would admonish an unruly lad; he was told to take care of himself and was warned to amend his ways.

That morality is rarely directly inculcated in the folk-tales of the Torres Straits islanders is due to the fact that, typically, such tales are simply non-moral; nevertheless disapprobation or punishment does sometimes follow on wrong-doing. On the whole the folk-tales reflect the general opinion of the responsible people of an earlier period than the arrival of Europeans.

Mythology belongs to quite a different category as it fortifies a man by giving authority to his beliefs and to many of his daily actions, and also provides an emotional sanction for his cult practices. We find in the case of the Torres Straits islanders that myth enhanced the prestige of tradition, as was especially manifest in the ceremonies connected with death and with the hero cults.

These people were universally regarded as "dangerous savages", but the specific rules of conduct, which I have published elsewhere, exhibit a delicacy of feeling which is quite comparable with our own code of social morality, and

there is very little that a strict European moralist could add to or subtract from what is taught to these youths.

When the white man arrived, the western islanders practised a form of totemism which contained such characteristic features as clan organization, exogamy, respect for the totem, friendliness to the totem kin, and the like. Not only were the totem animals not killed or injured by their human kin, but the latter were supposed to possess certain psychical and other characteristics of the totem animal. The crocodile-men were said to be very strong and to have no pity. The cassowary-men were fond of fighting and prided themselves on their thin legs and fast running. The dog-men were said to be sometimes fierce and fond of fighting, at other times they were friendly and "glad to see people". The members of the shovel-nosed skate clan were quiet and peaceable folk, not much given to talking. The dugong and turtle were such important articles of food that the prohibition against their being eaten by their respective human kin was in force only in the case of the first one killed in the season. There were certain rites in connection with the control of these animals, or the luring of them to their death, which were performed by the head-men respectively of the dugong and turtle clans. There was no indication that the actual increase of totems could be effected. Practically all the totems were animals, and these were grouped into two classes, those of the land and of the sea, but the classification was not very exact. The term for a totem was *augud* or *augad*, and it seems evident that there was a mystical relation between the totems and their human kin, and, judging from the later development of the term *augud*, there was a mystery associated with the totem which was in the main religious. On its purely social side totemism had a definite ameliorating influence in social intercourse, for even in a state of warfare a man would not wittingly fight another man of the same totem as his own, and a man could safely visit such a man in enemy country. All those who had the same totem, wherever they came from, were regarded as brothers and sisters and were subject to corresponding social

privileges, restraints, and duties. In the western islands the initiation of the youths was closely associated with totemism, and it was mainly at this time that moral instruction was imparted.

In the eastern islands totemism as such had disappeared before the arrival of Europeans. The only probable relics of totemism are: (1) Village exogamy; (2) the hereditary nature of certain shrines and their attendant ritual, some of which may have been connected formerly with the increase or control of totems by the elders of the respective clans; (3) the existence of a few groups of men with animal names, but these groups were concerned solely with ceremonies connected with the Malu cult that came from the western islands; (4) the belief in spirit animals. The spirit of one about to die or of a recently deceased person usually appeared to the living in the form of some animal. Usually it is the eponymous animal of a group with an animal name that appears on the death of a male member. Women are represented by flying animals, bats and birds, but no relation was indicated between groups of women and particular birds. This looks suspiciously like what occurs in south-eastern Australia; to these sacred animals the terms "sex patrons" or "animal brethren" have been applied. I am not prepared to admit that all of these are totemic; the spirit animals superficially look like vestiges of totemism, but there is no evidence to show that these animals were ever associated with the social organization.

The islanders believed in the continuity of life after death; the spirits of the dead went to an island in the west where conditions of existence were similar to those left behind. There was no discrimination between the fate of those of either sex, or between peaceable and aggressive people.

The spiritual world was never far from the thoughts and actions of the people. Landtman has given a large number of tales from Mawata of visits in dreams to the land of the spirits, and such dreams seem to have become, as it were, standardized—they follow a general pattern which was widely



recognized, and the slighter evidence we have from the islanders points to the same conclusion. The great ceremonies merely visibly reinforced a current belief and gave it a convincing dramatic form.

Tradition states that the elaborate annual pantomimic ceremonies in commemoration of the recent dead, and incidentally of those long since dead, arose in Daru, an island close to the coast of New Guinea. They were adopted by the people of Mawata on the coast, spread to the western islands, and eventually in a modified form reached the eastern islands. Probably we shall never know for certain what funeral ceremonies there were before this culture drift. As the essential idea of the new ceremonies was a reassurance of personal continuity after death, as witnessed by the return of the spirits, it is not surprising that they held a supreme place in the socio-religious life of the people.

In the west the great funeral ceremonies were also the occasion for ceremonies connected with dugong hunting: the dugong harpoons and other tackle were brought into the sacred enclosure and by simple rites acquired power which enabled them to be effective in hunting. We may safely regard this power or virtue as being derived from the spirits of the dead who were believed to be then actually present. It is true that the men who personified the spirits knew that the women were deceived by their mumming, for when a woman died her husband would confess the deception to the corpse, probably through fear of some reprisal by the spirit of his wife when she discovered the fraud. Though the men dressed up as spirits and mimicked the gait and other characteristics of the man when alive, there evidently was at the back of their minds a belief that the spirits were actually present, the pantomime being merely the vehicle for the manifestation of the spirits.

These ceremonies in Mer consisted of two main elements: (1) the dramatization of a legend accounting for various practices connected with funerals and the journeying of the new spirits to the island in the west. A prominent figure in

these ceremonies, which took place immediately after a death, was a disguised performer who represented a spirit or mythical being, who had come to fetch the spirit of the departed and to conduct it to the island of the spirits; (2) the pantomimic representation of recently deceased persons in their character of denizens of the spirit world, which took place some months later. Each district had its characteristic *keber*, or death-dance, with its special costumes, and as these were performed on the same occasion, the whole proceedings were of an elaborate and impressive nature. In describing the opening episode, Mr. J. Bruce informed us that as a dancer who represented a recently dead man's spirit came nearer, he danced at a furious speed. The women wailed, and amid her tears the widow would exclaim, "That's my man", or a mother, "There's my boy", as the gestures and movements of the mime recalled those which had characterized the deceased. The delusion that the dancer is the spirit of a dead person is aided by the costume and accoutrements; the make-up is splendid, the mimicry is excellent, the delusion is almost perfect, more especially as it is assisted by the implicit belief of the women and children that it is really the spirit of their deceased relative.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that the ceremonies comforted the mourners; probably the main reason was that it reassured them that the ghostly relatives would no longer haunt the living, as they were now safely established in their spirit home; but apart from this there may have been a real pleasure in the idea of the return of the spirit, for we must not forget that these affectionate people kept their dead in remembrance as far as was possible with their limited resources. This may be the explanation of the stones painted with human faces which were placed at the foot of a funeral screen in the island of Nagir, and to which, eighty years ago, according to Macgillivray, were "attached names of persons who were dead".

<sup>1</sup> A brilliant synopsis of the funeral ceremonies of the Torres Straits islanders is given by Sir James Frazer in Lecture VIII., in *The Belief of Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, vol. i. (London, 1913).

I was also several times assured that the preservation of skulls in houses was due to a sentiment of affection; and the Rev. W. H. MacFarlane has recently informed me that, so far as he can ascertain, the only reason for keeping the mummified body in the eastern islands was that friends might have something to keep afresh the memory of the deceased—as one man put it, “all same photo”.

It was not only in these highly dramatic ceremonies that the spirits of the dead came into contact with the living. Certain men in Mabuia were reported to be friends of the spirits, and to be possessed of the gift of spirit-divination. Other “spirits’ friends” were the “ghost-seeing men”, to whom the ghosts of deceased persons appear. The skulls of relatives were frequently kept and decorated in various ways, so that in times of difficulty or danger the living could appeal to the spirits of these deceased relatives who advised the living in dreams. Throughout the islands the spirits gave palpable proofs of their resentment if they felt that they had been slighted by inadequacy in the funeral ceremonies, and it was stated in Mer that the spirits of dead relatives caused strong winds to blow down the houses and plantations of those who oppressed their young defenceless dependents. This is the sole instance recorded of spiritual powers acting on their own initiative in the cause of social morality.

Another great ceremony that was borrowed at Mawata from the western islanders was the annual turtle ceremony which took place in October-November when the turtle were breeding, which was the main turtle-fishing season. Dr. Landtman says that before the ceremony began, the people attended to the graves of their dead, clearing the ground and ornamenting the graves. They put down food for the dead, poured coco-nut milk on each grave, and said: “You look out for turtle and give them to me; I give you plenty of food and make the burial-place nice”. (The graves were not attended to in connection with the dugong ceremony; the spirits were already in the ceremonial ground, and should a fire have been lit by the graves they would stay by the fire and not interest

themselves in the fishing.) In the sacred ground of this ceremony a platform was erected on which were ranged carapaces of turtle, on one end of the platform (*agu*) was placed a wooden image of a renowned ancient turtle hunter of Tutu named Muyer (or Múiere). Also a few skulls of famous harpooners of turtle were decorated, and as they were placed on the platform the people invoked their assistance to make the turtle come to be caught. Near the image of Muyer other human effigies, called "*agu*-spirits", were set up and the men asked them to give them plenty of turtle.

The islanders, though they were expert in the technicalities of fishing and horticulture, felt the need of assistance in these operations, more especially in those where there was risk or uncertainty.

More particularly in the west perhaps there were various ceremonies to ensure good fishing and the ripening of certain wild fruits, at which masked dancers performed. The Torres Straits islanders had raised the manufacture of turtle-shell masks to a high level; these masks represented the human face, sometimes in combination with an animal form, but occasionally the human face was lacking. The employment of the human face suggests that there was a spirit implicated in the rites, and indeed we know that some masks had individual names, but we do not know who the personages were. It seems probable that originally they were ancestors.

On Mabuiag, in the western islands, in order to make the yams grow, small wooden human effigies (*madub*) were suspended along with bull-roarers in a booth near the gardens. The men danced at night time round the gardens and repeatedly sang the song of the *madub*. Later, on the same night, after the men had finished, the spirits (*mari*) of the *madub* also danced and sang, for the *mari* do what the men do; they were said to swing the bull-roarers at the same time.

In many folk-tales the persons referred to are turned into rocks, stones, or other natural objects, but they are often represented by worked stones or effigies; they do not appear to have any powers or to be able to do anything. No one knows

who made the effigies; it is only known that their forefathers revered them.

There were also stones for garden fertility, but these were appropriately more numerous in the eastern islands, and a large number have been collected from Mer. They were either natural stones or stones more or less rudely carved to represent the human face or form; frequently these represented women. Other stones carved as women were placed by a fire to prevent its going out. The stones that were used for making rain always represented men. Some stones assisted fishing operations, others controlled rats or snakes. Some stones appear to have been used solely for malevolent practices. It frequently happens that these sacred stones were ambivalent: one of them could ensure or inhibit success in collecting terns' eggs, the rain stones could also be used for malevolent purposes, and a sorcery stone could be employed to counteract the harm it had done. The sacred stones belonged to certain localities which were family property, and only the head-men of those families could perform the rites.

It is significant that many of these stones in the eastern islands are not made of the local volcanic rock, but of rock that must have come from the western islands.

Thus for various kinds of aid in life by means of sacred stones, stone images and other artefacts, they obtained the help of the spirits of their dead, and possibly too of other spirits whose relationship was lost in the mists of antiquity. These were at times definitely invoked, or merely formulae might be uttered. The stones were simply anointed or offerings made, as for instance on Waier, one of the Murray islands, where there is an almost shapeless stone which represents a man and is called Waipem. In January the sacred men of this particular shrine made an offering of fruit, and thought to themselves, "If we give you plenty fruit, I think you give us plenty turtle", and the turtle would be sure to come.

The term "magical" is frequently applied to the practices

connected with such sacred stones, and when the stones are natural forms which bear some resemblance to that of the object they are supposed to influence, there is some reason for this designation. The wooden tobacco charms, which always have a male human form, were usually attached to sticks so that the tobacco might grow to a similar height; this might be termed mimetic magic, but the male figure suggests that there was a spiritual influence at work. Landtman distinctly states that many mimetic practices of the Kiwaians were for the purpose of "teaching" the yams, sweet-potatoes, or other plants how to grow big.

Owing to the disruptive influence of various kinds of foreigners in Torres Straits for some seventy years, the old customs had become so obsolete that forty years ago the younger men knew very little about the past and now it is impossible to recover most of the old beliefs and rites; but as the neighbouring coast of New Guinea has been much less affected, we are justified in assuming that what occurred on the coast may fairly be used as evidence for the islands, especially as we know that borrowing had taken place, hence I have not hesitated to make use of the very fine researches of Dr. Landtman on the Kiwai Papuans.

In southern Melanesia, and particularly in New Caledonia, there are a great many sacred stones analogous to those of Torres Straits, and we are definitely informed that a spirit was associated with such stones which by its *mana* effected what was required. It seems probable that the use of sacred stones in Torres Straits and South Melanesia belongs to the same culture layer, and thus we may accept the evidence from the latter in explanation of the former.

We can thus envisage the culture of the western islanders as having a totemic society permeated with cults in which the spirits of the dead were invoked for the practical needs of daily life, but there is no clear evidence of what may be called a worship of the dead in the strict sense of the word.

The weakness of a totemic society lies in the fact that each clan forms a political unit and there is no strong common

bond between the clans. There is a partial exception in the case where the clans are grouped into moieties or phratries, and the solidarity of a moiety frequently exhibits itself in a covert animosity to the other moiety, though each group obtains its wives from the opposite moiety. In the great death ceremony of Mawata the clans, though working harmoniously, had their definite positions in the ceremonial ground as well as their special functions. Further, whatever the relation may be between the totem and the totem kin, it seems to be too indefinite and impersonal to constitute a satisfactory basis for an effective religion. There cannot be much emotional satisfaction in an indefinable alliance with a group of animals or plants, nor can these be regarded as adequate helpers in times of difficulty and danger. For instance, what avail could be expected from a cassowary when there are no cassowaries in the islands, or how could a fish help those on land?

In the eastern islands totemism had long disappeared as such. Totem exogamy was replaced by village exogamy, which may have been the result of a former localization of clans, and the numerous family shrines, more especially perhaps those that constrained animals or ensured a supply of food, may also be an echo of totemism. In Mer there were also traces of some sort of reverence having been paid to the ancestors of various family groups.

Such was the condition of affairs when hero cults invaded the islands. In the west, Kwoiam, or Kuiam, is reported to have gone to Mabuiag with his maternal kinsman from an island near Cape York. He was a great warrior who fought single-handed, though accompanied by his sister's son. In a fit of pique he killed his mother, and then, avowedly to "pay" for his mother, after massacring most of the people of Mabuiag, went to various islands and the mainland of New Guinea to kill people and to take their heads. Dr. Landtman says that Kwoiam was stated to be the first who taught the people how to fight, but it seems most probable that it was the taking of heads that he taught them. He had two crescentic

turtle-shell emblems that shone brilliantly at night, each of which afterwards became the emblem, and was termed the *augud*, of one of the moieties of Mabuiag. He fought with javelins hurled by a spear-thrower (but this weapon is also used by the Marind-anim of south-west New Guinea). He was described as being like a "mainlander" (*i.e.* an Australian), and everything he did was "mainland fashion", but whatever his origin may have been, he cannot be regarded as a pure Australian, as savage warfare and head-hunting are not Australian characteristics. Kwoiam was invoked in war and his emblems were worn by the two front men of the double column of fighters; no one was allowed to pass in front of the men who wore the emblems, and we have it on good authority that the mere fact of the emblems being present gave to the warriors such assurance and valour that they were almost invariably victorious.

As Kwoiam was an inspiring and consolidating feature in the life of the inhabitants of the western islands, so a group of hero brethren played a similar part for the natives of the central and eastern islands.

Two Brothers, Sigai and Maiau, remained in Yam, where a remarkable cult was developed and grafted upon the pre-existing totemism. Of the other Brothers, Kulka stayed at Aurid, and the mask that represented him was taken away by Captain Lewis when he rescued the two survivors from the massacre of the crew of the *Charles Eaton*; Seo went to Masig, but nothing is known about his cult; and finally Bomai and Malu went to Mer, where an elaborate cult prevailed till the early 'seventies.

All these cults were connected with head-hunting and the turtle-shell masks or effigies were ornamented with human skulls or jaw-bones, but head-hunting was not so prevalent at Mer. Lack of time precludes a description of these ceremonies; suffice it to say that lads were initiated with solemn rites, and good behaviour was inculcated. The masks were worn by privileged men and were shown to the initiated, but they were too sacred to be seen by others. In Yam it was



disclosed to the novices that Sigai was a hammer-headed shark and Maiau a crocodile, but outsiders and women never knew this. In Mer, the name Malu was known to all, but Bomai was a secret name. The myth of the Brethren was expounded to the novices and their wanderings narrated. During the ceremonies the novices were frightened and ill-treated by men disguised as a spiritual personage named Magur, whose secret name was Ib. It is evident that this was essentially the disciplinary executive of the Malu cult which was always ready to punish those who, by breaches of conduct or act of sacrilege, incurred the disfavour of the Malu authorities, and was also a means for terrorizing the women and thereby keeping up the fear and mystery of the Malu ceremonies. In Mer the cycle of the Malu ceremonies took three years to complete, but each annual ceremony did not last very long. Certainly in Yam, and doubtless elsewhere, the Brethren were invoked by men when going out to fight, or when in danger. In Mer the most sacred element in the cult centred round the person of Bomai; he was appealed to in time of distress, as when a canoe capsized, or when someone was ill.

It is clearly stated by some of the natives that the Brethren came from Marilag, which has been identified as the Forbes Islands about 120 miles south of Cape York, and thence they went to Yam, the central islands, and finally to Mer. The use of masks and head-hunting are not Australian customs, but are very characteristic of certain parts of New Guinea; indeed some informants said that the Brethren came from New Guinea, but the balance of tradition seems against this. There are certain analogies between the cult of the Brethren and that of various groups of brothers in Melanesia, and it is conceivable that this cult came direct from Melanesia to certain islands off the north Queensland coast and thence to Torres Straits, but it is certain that it did not come direct to the eastern islands from Melanesia.

The cults of the Brethren came to a people who either had totemism or small family or local rituals, most of which were

associated with improving the food supply. Cults of spirits of the deceased were universal, but these appear to have been restricted mainly to their own families, though the benefits obtained might be shared by a larger circle. The new cults replaced in the west the indefinite communal association of a totem with its clan for a definite personal relation with superhuman beings, and it is no wonder that they spread from island to island. The cults of the Brethren provided a synthesis which hitherto had been lacking, as all the men could now meet as members of a common brotherhood, which was impossible under the earlier conditions, and a feeling of solidarity and an intense pride in the new cults were engendered.

There are other cults and practices which I must pass over for lack of time, but enough has been said to prove the complexity of the religious culture of the Torres Straits islanders. There is no reason to doubt that when the islanders first arrived they had various forms of culture of their own, though probably we shall never be able to be certain what these were. The great death ceremonies had their traditional home in the island of Daru, but they may have developed from analogous ceremonies in vogue in the south-west of New Guinea. The dugong ceremonies which were associated with the death ceremonies were a local development, and similarly the turtle ceremonies were of insular origin. The death-dances of Mer, collectively known as *keber*, with their songs in the western language, admittedly came from the western islands after the coming of Bomai and Malu. The original home of Kwoiam is at present obscure; if it be shown that he came from Cape York we must suppose that a non-Australian element was implicated. The Brethren theoretically might have come from New Guinea, but neither Landtman for the neighbouring coastal Papuans, nor Wirz for the Marind-anim of the south-west of New Guinea, afford corroborative evidence, neither is there anything more than presumptive evidence of a Melanesian origin of these cults; but the cult of sacred stones and a few other cultural data,

such as the outrigger canoes, have strong Melanesian affinities. Possibly, now that they have been stated, some of these unsolved problems will be cleared up in the future.

In reviewing the socio-religious culture of the Torres Straits islanders one finds, except perhaps for head-hunting and a modified form of cannibalism, there is very little that cannot be matched by what our own ancestors practised, or what is taught or connived at by cultural religions of the present day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The detailed information on the subject of this lecture will be found in the *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, vols. v. and vi., and in vol. i., which will be published shortly.

## IX

### LES OCÉANIENS

Par Dr. PAUL RIVET

J'ENTENDS par «Océaniens» le complexe ethnique qui comprend les Australiens et les Tasmaniens, les Mélanésiens, les Polynésiens et les Micronésiens, les Indonésiens, les Mon-Khmer, les Munda, complexe dont l'unité linguistique est aujourd'hui établie d'après les travaux de W. Schmidt, d'A. Trombetti et mes propres recherches.<sup>1</sup>

Cette vaste unité linguistique ne correspond ni à une unité anthropologique, ni à une unité ethnographique, et l'on peut supposer que la communauté de langues de ces peuples profondément dissemblables est un phénomène secondaire et que c'est la langue de l'un d'entre eux qui s'est imposée à l'ensemble, pour des raisons et dans des conditions qui restent obscures. Peut-être cette unification linguistique provient-elle de ce fait que ces peuples représentent des vagues humaines issues sensiblement de la même région ou de régions contigües, comme permettent de le soupçonner les données fournies par l'anthropologie et l'ethnographie.

Si les Australiens nous apparaissent dès l'époque historique cantonnés dans leur île, si la découverte à Talgai d'un crâne peut-être pléistocène, en tous cas extrêmement ancien, à caractères nettement australiens, démontre qu'ils avaient pris possession de cet habitat dès une époque extrêmement reculée, il est prouvé qu'autrefois ils occupaient un territoire beaucoup plus considérable. La trouvaille faite à Wadjak

<sup>1</sup> Pour la bibliographie cf. P. Rivet, «Le Groupe océanien», *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, xxvii. (Paris, 1927), pp. 141-168.

(Java) par E. Dubois de deux crânes australoïdes, très probablement pléistocènes, la découverte par H. Mansuy et Mlle Colani d'un crâne analogue dans les couches néolithiques inférieures du gisement de Lang-Cuom (Tonkin) montrent que ce territoire comprenait certaines parties de la Malaisie et de la péninsule indochinoise. Bien avant que ces faits ne fussent connus, de Quatrefages et Hamy avaient décelé l'existence d'un élément australoïde dans l'Inde, hypothèse confirmée depuis la découverte dans la région de Bénarès de pétroglyphes identiques aux pétroglyphes australiens et par la démonstration d'affinités marquées entre l'Australien et le Munda, langue parlée autrefois dans tout le nord-est de l'Inde depuis l'Himalaya jusqu'au golfe du Bengale, avant d'avoir été refoulée par les invasions tibéto-birmanes, aryennes et dravidiennes.

La survivance de l'emploi du boumèrang à Célèbes, dans le sud-est de l'Inde et dans le Guzerat parle dans le même sens. La survivance du même instrument à Espiritu Santo et en Nouvelle-Zélande, l'identité des pointes de lances taillées à grands éclats d'Australie et des îles de l'Amirauté permettent peut-être d'étendre à certaines îles de Mélanésie et même de Polynésie cette influence australienne, encore que ces faits puissent être interprétés comme des emprunts.

Quoi qu'il en soit, il semble certain que les Australiens ont occupé à une époque très ancienne une partie de l'Inde, de l'Indochine et de la Malaisie, avant d'être refoulés dans leur habitat actuel, et il est tentant de supposer qu'ils représentent la plus ancienne vague humaine océanienne issue des régions méridionales de l'Asie et de l'Insulinde.

Les Mélanésiens ont occupé eux aussi autrefois un territoire beaucoup plus étendu qu'aujourd'hui.

De Quatrefages et Hamy ont montré qu'un élément mélanésien est intervenu dans le peuplement d'un certain nombre d'îles polynésiennes jusques et y compris l'île de Pâques. D'autre part, H. Mansuy et Mlle Colani ont découvert dans les couches néolithiques les plus anciennes de Duong-thuoc, de Khac-kiêm et de Lang-Cuom (Tonkin), des crânes se

rattachant nettement à la race mélanésienne et le même type ethnique a été décelé dans l'Ibde (type noir prédravidien de Lapicque) où il a persisté jusqu'à nos jours, en particulier chez les populations dravidiennes.

L'ethnographie confirme entièrement ces conclusions et permet de les élargir encore. Les ethnographes, en particulier Graebner, ont en effet démontré qu'un grand nombre d'éléments culturels mélanésiens se retrouvent dans tout le monde océanien, dans l'archipel indien et dans l'Asie méridionale. Il n'est donc pas illogique de penser que le centre de dispersion des Mélanésiens ait été sensiblement le même que celui des Australiens. Ce serait la deuxième vague humaine qui en serait issue.

Il semble qu'il en soit de même pour les Indonésiens. Ceux-ci ont, de l'avis de tous, exercé leur influence non seulement sur le domaine mélanésien, mais aussi en Asie méridionale. Cette ancienne influence sud-asiatique est attestée non seulement par l'ethnographie mais aussi par la linguistique et par l'anthropologie. Dès le néolithique en effet, un élément indonésien important a contribué au peuplement de l'Indochine (Annam et Tonkin), élément dont on retrouve des traces chez les populations actuelles, notamment au Cambodge, malgré les grands mélanges que celles-ci ont subis.

Quant aux Polynésiens, l'histoire de leurs migrations est trop connue pour que j'y insiste. Il y a parmi les ethnologues quasi unanimité pour leur attribuer comme lieu d'origine quelque région de l'Asie méridionale ou de l'Insulinde.

J'ajouterai encore que l'existence d'un substrat océanien est manifeste dans l'Inde, dans les traditions populaires, l'ethnographie et les langues indo-aryennes de ce pays, ainsi qu'il résulte des études de Hornell, de Sylvain Lévi, de J. Przyluski, et de Sten Konow.

On peut donc admettre qu'à une époque très ancienne sont partis de l'archipel asiatique et du sud de l'Asie vers le monde océanien une série d'essaims humains qui successivement l'ont occupé en tout ou en partie: Australo-Tasmaniens,

Mélanésiens, Micro-Polynésiens, Indonésiens, chacune de ces migrations refoulant la précédente ou parfois se mélangant ou se juxtaposant à elle.

Ces peuples dont les migrations semblent s'être faites surtout par voie maritime, ont-ils limité leur action au domaine océanien ou leur expansion a-t-elle atteint des terres plus lointaines? Telle est la question que je vais maintenant examiner.

### EXPANSION ORIENTALE

Au cours de ces dernières années, mes études m'ont amené à rechercher tout d'abord les traces de l'influence de ces peuples océaniens sur le Nouveau-Monde. J'ai pu ainsi démontrer que deux d'entre eux au moins, les Mélanésiens et les Australiens, ont contribué au peuplement de l'Amérique, pour une part à coup sûr moins importante que les peuples venus du nord de l'Asie par le détroit de Behring et le chapelet des îles aléoutiennes, mais qui n'est pas cependant négligeable.

J'ai appuyé cette double thèse sur une série d'arguments anthropologiques, ethnographiques, et linguistiques.<sup>1</sup>

L'influence des Australiens s'est fait sentir surtout dans l'extrême Sud de l'Amérique méridionale. La présence d'un type physique australoïde dans cette région a été plus ou moins explicitement confirmée, depuis la publication de ma première étude, par les travaux de V. Lebzelter, de M. Gusinde, de S. Sergi, de K. Hilden et de G. Sergi.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. Rivet, «Les Australiens en Amérique», *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, xxvi. (Paris, 1925), pp. 23-63; «Les Malayo-Polynésiens en Amérique», *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, nouv. série xviii. (Paris, 1926), pp. 141-278.

<sup>2</sup> Viktor Lebzelter, «Ein Onaschädel aus Feuerland», *Congrès international des Américanistes, Compte Rendu de la XXI<sup>e</sup> Session à Göteborg en 1924*, 2<sup>e</sup> partie (Göteborg, 1925), pp. 422-434; Martin Gusinde et Viktor Lebzelter, «Kranio-logische Beobachtungen an feuerländischen und australischen Schädeln», *Anthropos*, xxii. (1927), pp. 259-285; Martin Gusinde, «Zur Kraneologische de Feuerländer», *Atti del XXII Congresso internazionale degli Americanisti, Roma*, 1926, i. (Rome, 1928), pp. 337-356; Sergio Sergi, «Il volume delle vertebre dei Fuegini», *ibid.* pp. 427-447; Kaarlo Hilden, «Zwei Indianerschädel aus Feuerland», *Acta Geographica*, iii. (Helsingfors,

La parenté du groupe linguistique Con (Ona et Patagons) et des dialectes australiens et tasmaniens <sup>1</sup> n'a été contestée jusqu'ici que par A. Trombetti, mais il ne semble pas que les critiques de ce savant ait ébranlé ma thèse.

Quant aux preuves ethnographiques, qui reposent surtout sur les travaux de W. Schmidt, je n'ai pas à revenir sur elles.<sup>2</sup>

Depuis la publication de mon travail, A. A. Mendes Corrêa a suggéré l'idée très ingénieuse que la migration australienne avait pu emprunter la voie de l'Antarctique. Je me suis d'autant plus volontiers rallié à cette idée que les géologues admettent que ces régions, aujourd'hui si inhospitalières, ont pu présenter des conditions climatiques meilleures, suffisantes pour permettre le passage d'un peuple primitif vivant uniquement de chasse et de pêche, il y a environ 6.000 ans.<sup>3</sup> Cette hypothèse nous permettrait de fixer d'une façon approximative la date de l'arrivée de ces premiers émigrants océaniens en Amérique et nous expliquerait à la fois la faible influence qu'ils ont exercée et la localisation de cette influence aux régions méridionales du Nouveau Monde.

L'influence mélanésienne, beaucoup plus manifeste, se révèle d'une part par la fréquence d'un type hypsidolichocéphale (type de Lagoa Santa ou type paléo-américain) dans toute l'Amérique depuis la Basse-Californie au Nord jusqu'à l'Argentine au Sud, en passant par la région des Pueblos, la Colombie, l'Équateur et le Brésil, type nettement appa-

1930), No. 2 (tirage-à-part de 48 pp.); Giuseppe Sergi, «Crani antichi e altre ossa della Patagonia», *Revista di Antropologia*, xxviii. (Rome, 1928-1929), pp. 281-305.

<sup>1</sup> A. Trombetti a démontré la parenté de l'Australien et du Tasmanien: «I linguaggi estinti della Tasmania», *Rendiconto delle Sessioni della R. Acad. delle Scienze dell' Istituto di Bologna* (Classe di Scienze Morali), 2<sup>e</sup> série, x. (Bologne, 1926), pp. 69-98.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. à ce sujet: Wilhelm Koppers, «Die Frage der eventuellen alter Kulturbeziehungen zwischen dem südlichen Südamerika und Südaustralien», *Proceedings of the XXIIIrd Internat. Congress of Americanists at New York*, 1928 (New York, 1930), pp. 678-686.

<sup>3</sup> P. Rivet, «Recherche d'une voie de migration des Australiens vers l'Amérique», *Compte-rendu sommaire des Séances de la Société de Bio-géographie*, 3<sup>e</sup> Année, Séance du 19 fév. 1926, No. 18 (Paris, 1926), pp. 11-16.



renté au type hypsidolichocéphale mélanésien, d'autre part par la parenté des langues du groupe Hoka avec les langues océaniques et plus particulièrement avec le Mélanésien, et enfin par l'extrême abondance des éléments culturels océaniques dans les civilisations du Nouveau Monde.

Je ne reviendrai ici que sur cette partie de ma démonstration.

Ces éléments culturels apparaissent dans toutes les manifestations de la vie sociale:

Sarbacane; Propulseur; Casse-tête annulaire et étoilé; Arc à balles; Fronde.

Herminette à manche coudé.

Bâton à balancier pour le transport des fardeaux.

Pont de liane.

Rame à béquille; Embarcation faite de faisceaux de roseaux;

Pirogue double; Pirogue à balancier; Décoration des proues de bateau avec des dessins d'œil.

Maison dans les arbres.

Mortier en bois; Hamac; Brosse à cheveux.

Manteau de pluie en fibres végétales; Vêtement d'écorce et masse servant à leur fabrication; Poncho; Procédé de tissage; Teinture ikatten; Étui pénien; Ornement de nez; Plaque pectorale; Décoloration artificielle des plumes d'oiseaux vivants [tapirage].

Quipu.

Conque en coquille; Tambour en bois; Tambour à membrane de peau; Arc musical; Bâton de rythme; Flûte de Pan.

Tablette de jeu à cupules; Échasses; Churinga.

Préparation de boissons alcooliques par mastication de tubercules ou de graines.

Cultures en terrasses avec irrigation.

Emploi des coquilles comme offrandes et comme monnaies; Danses masquées; Têtes trophées; Potlach; Salutation larmoyante.

Déformation du mollet par ligatures; Amputation de

phalanges en signe de deuil; Trépanation; Incrustations diverses dans les dents.

A cette liste, il y aurait lieu d'ajouter encore un important lot de similitudes, principalement d'ordre sociologique, signalées récemment par G. Friederici.<sup>1</sup>

Tous ces faits auraient besoin d'être étudiés un à un. Chacun d'eux devrait faire l'objet d'une carte de répartition aussi bien en Amérique qu'en Océanie. Seule cette étude permettra de faire une discrimination entre ceux qui relèvent certainement d'une filiation culturelle et ceux qui peuvent résulter d'une invention indépendante. Elle permettra aussi sans aucun doute de dissocier cette influence océanienne sur l'Amérique et de stratifier en quelque sorte ses apports. Pour l'instant, on peut affirmer que, même si l'avenir oblige à certaines éliminations, il restera assez de preuves pour établir les liens étroits que civilisation américaine et civilisation océanienne ont entre elles.

J'ajouterai que la pathologie comparée apporte elle aussi son appui à la thèse générale que je viens d'exposer.

Un savant brésilien, Olympio da Fonseca <sup>2</sup> a montré que certains Indiens du Matto Grosso avaient une maladie de peau (*chimbêrê*) identique par ses manifestations cliniques et par son parasite pathogène à une maladie de peau (*tokelau*) de certaines populations d'Asie et d'Océanie. Un Indien nord-américain, Fred. L. Soper <sup>3</sup> a montré qu'au Paraguay, chez les tribus qui ont été en contact avec les Blancs ou avec les Noirs la proportion des cas d'anchylostome duodénal par rapport à ceux de *Necator americanus* est de 1 à 14, qu'elle

<sup>1</sup> Georg Friederici, «Die vorkolumbischen Verbindungen der Südseevölker mit Amerika», *Mitteilungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, xxxvi. Heft 1 (Berlin, 1928), pp. 27-51; «Zu den vorkolumbischen Verbindungen der Südseevölker mit Amerika», *Anthropos*, xxiv. (1929), pp. 441-487.

<sup>2</sup> Olympio da Fonseca filho, «Affinidades parasitológicas e clinicas entre o Tokelau da Asia e da Oceania e o Chimbêrê dos indigenas de Matto Grosso», *Revista Médico-chirurgica do Brasil*, xxxviii. No. 8 (Rio de Janeiro, août 1930), tirage-à-part de 31 pp.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick L. Soper, «Report of a nearly pure *Ancylostoma duodenale* in native South American Indians», *American Journal of Hygiene*, vii. (Baltimore, 1927), pp. 174-184.

monte à 1 pour 57 chez les Terenos du Matto Grosso, et à 1 pour 194 chez les Indiens brésiliens, tandis que chez les Lenguas, peuplade du Chaco, restée en dehors du contact d'éléments étrangers, cette proportion est inversée: soit 13 cas d'anchylostome pour un cas de *Necator*.

La répartition mondiale de l'anchylostome le conduit à penser que le parasite a été introduit en Amérique par des migrations anciennes venues d'Indonésie ou de Polynésie, et que ces migrations n'ont pas pu suivre la route du détroit de Bahring parce que le parasite n'aurait pas trouvé dans ces régions froides les conditions indispensables à sa vie larvaire en dehors de l'organisme humain, à moins toutefois que l'homme n'ait traversé ces contrées à une époque où elles jouissaient d'un climat plus tempéré que le climat actuel, ou en un temps inférieur à la durée de la vie du parasite, ce qui est peu probable. Il y a donc lieu de penser que la migration s'est faite à travers des zones chaudes, c'est-à-dire à travers le Pacifique.

Enfin le Professeur Nicolle a constaté tout récemment que le typhus exanthématique du Mexique et du Guatemala se rapproche davantage du typhus océanien que du typhus européen.<sup>1</sup>

L'invasion mélanésienne en Amérique s'est faite sans aucun doute par voie maritime à travers le Pacifique et par vagues successives. Sa date approximative peut être soupçonnée d'après la date d'apparition d'éléments culturels océaniens dans les anciennes civilisations du Mexique et du Pérou (propulseur; fronde; flûte de Pan; danses masquées; têtes-trophées; dès la civilisation de Nazca et de Tiahuanaco au Pérou, sarbacane; dès la civilisation de Teotihuacán au Mexique). Sans attacher une valeur définitive aux essais de chronologie absolue qui ont été tentés aussi bien pour le Mexique que pour le Pérou, on peut en induire que ces migrations remontent au moins au début de notre ère.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Nicolle, «Un Argument d'ordre médical . . . sur l'origine océanienne de certaines tribus indiennes du Nouveau Monde», *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, nouv. série, xxiv. (Paris, 1932).

## EXPANSION SEPTENTRIONALE

O. Gjerdman a signalé un grand nombre de concordances lexicales entre l'Aïnu et les langues malayo-polynésiennes et j'ai pu constater moi-même des similitudes remarquables entre cette langue et celles du groupe océanien. De son côté, Matsumoto a mis en évidence des ressemblances entre les mêmes langues et le Japonais.<sup>1</sup> Comme il est peu probable que l'Aïnu et le Japonais se rattachent tous deux à l'Océanien, il reste à déterminer quelle est celle de ces deux langues qui est spécifiquement océanienne, les concordances de vocabulaire constatées dans l'autre pouvant s'expliquer par des emprunts secondaires. J'inclinerais à penser que ce sont les Aïnu, autrefois maîtres de tout le Japon, qui sont les vrais Océaniens: en effet, le regretté Strenberg a mis en évidence, dans un travail posthume, de frappantes affinités culturelles entre leur civilisation et celle des Océaniens.<sup>2</sup>

Quoi qu'il en soit, il y a longtemps que les anthropologistes ont signalé l'existence d'un élément indonésien au Japon.

Cette remarquable concordance entre les résultats de l'anthropologie, de la linguistique et de l'ethnographie me conduit à admettre qu'un des éléments du groupe océanien a, à un moment donné, étendu son influence vers le nord jusqu'à l'archipel nippon.

## EXPANSION OCCIDENTALE

Depuis longtemps déjà, Graebner a signalé la présence de nombreux éléments culturels océaniens en Afrique et en Europe; dans ce continent, en particulier dans le bassin méditerranéen, certains de ces éléments apparaissent dès l'époque préhistorique, tandis que d'autres se présentent dans

<sup>1</sup> Un article sur cette importante question par W. Schmidt a paru récemment sous le titre, «Die Beziehungen der austrischen Sprachen zum Japanischen», dans la nouvelle revue *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, i. (Vienne, 1930), pp. 239-251.

<sup>2</sup> Leo Sternberg, "The Ainu Problem", *Anthropos*, xxiv. (1929), pp. 755-759.

les civilisations modernes comme survivances d'un passé ancien.<sup>1</sup>

Je n'ai pas la prétention d'énumérer ici tous les éléments culturels africains qu'on peut rapprocher d'éléments océaniens. Je me contenterai de citer:

Le boumerang; la fronde; le bâton à balancier pour le transport des fardeaux; le pont de liane; l'embarcation en faisceaux de roseaux; la pirogue à balancier; le manteau de pluie en fibres végétales; le vêtement en écorce et l'outil servant à sa préparation; l'étui pénien; le quipu; le tambour en bois; le tambour à membrane de peau; l'arc à musique; le bâton de rythme; la tablette de jeu à cupules; les échasses; le churinga; les coquilles-monnaies et les coquilles-offrandes; les danses masquées; les têtes-trophées; le potlach; l'amputation des phalanges en signe de deuil; la trépanation.

En Europe, on peut noter, soit dès l'époque préhistorique ou protohistorique, soit à l'état de survivance:

Le boumerang; le propulseur; la fronde; le bâton à balancier pour le transport des fardeaux; l'embarcation en faisceaux de roseaux; la pirogue à balancier; la décoration des proues à l'aide de dessins d'œil; le manteau de pluie en paille; la trompette de coquille; l'arc musical; la flûte de Pan; le tambour à membrane de peau; les échasses; le churinga; la culture en terrasses avec irrigation; les danses masquées; le potlach; les mutilations digitales; la trépanation.

Cette thèse ethnographique, en ce qui concerne l'Afrique, est entièrement confirmée par l'anthropologie. De Quatrefages et Hamy croyaient déjà à l'unité de la race nègre africaine et océanienne et cette thèse, reprise et développée par L. Lericq, n'est plus guère contestée. Les travaux de

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Loewenthal, «Alteuropäisch-altozeanische Parallelen», *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, lix. (Vienne, 1929), pp. 1-8.

R. Broom ont attiré l'attention sur la présence d'un élément australoïde dans le sud de l'Afrique, conclusion qui paraît singulièrement renforcée par une étude récente de M. R. Drennan.<sup>1</sup>

En ce qui concerne l'Europe, les faits sont beaucoup moins clairs. S'il y a eu dans ce continent, notamment dans le bassin méditerranéen un substrat ethnique océanien, il est naturel qu'il ait été absorbé par les invasions indo-européennes et sémitiques, qui sont venues superposer à lui. Je me demande toutefois si le type humain fossile du quaternaire supérieur ancien, connu sous le nom de race négroïde de Grimaldi, dont des survivances ont été retrouvées en Bretagne à l'époque néolithique et au Portugal à l'époque mésolithique<sup>2</sup> et dont les affinités exactes n'ont pas encore été clairement établies, ne devrait pas être rapprochée des Nègres océaniens, dont l'ethnographie fait soupçonner l'existence ancienne, précisément dans cette région. Une comparaison rapide, que je me propose de pousser davantage m'a montré que cette hypothèse vaut la peine d'être sérieusement envisagée.<sup>3</sup>

La linguistique, à son tour, parle également en faveur d'une influence océanienne sur l'Europe et sur l'Afrique.

Je signalerai tout d'abord la très curieuse observation de Marcel Cohen relative à un certain nombre de mots communs aux langues indo-européennes et sémites du contour méditerranéen qui ne peuvent s'expliquer ni par l'Indo-Européen ni par le Sémitique, mais qui correspondent exactement à des radicaux océaniens. Ces *mots-bouchons*,

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Drennan, "An Australoid Skull from the Cape Flats", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, lix. (1929), pp. 417-427.

<sup>2</sup> G. Herve, «De l'existence d'un type humain à caractères vraisemblablement négroïde dans . . . la vallée du Tage», *Revue Anthropologique*, xl. (Paris, 1930), pp. 325-337.

<sup>3</sup> A. A. Mendes Correa a déjà entrevu la possibilité de cette filiation dans un important travail qui m'avait échappé, parce qu'il a paru pendant la Guerre: «Sôbre una forma craniana arcaica» [*Anales científicos da Faculdade de Medicina do Porto*, iv. No. 1 (Porto, 1917-1918), pp. 1-79]. La concordance générale des idées du savant anthropologiste portugais avec celles que j'expose ici a d'autant plus de valeur qu'elle s'est produite d'une façon absolument indépendante.

provenant d'un substrat océanien, auraient surnagé lorsque ce substrat fut recouvert par le flot des invasions blanches.

D'autres faits paraissent appuyer cette hypothèse.

J'ai montré que le vocabulaire sumérien a subi une influence très marquée des langues océaniennes, au point que je n'ai pas hésité à rattacher cette langue au groupe océanien<sup>1</sup>: d'autre part, Waddell et surtout Autran ont signalé des similitudes remarquables entre le Sumérien et l'Indo-Européen, cependant que Drexel réunissait un grand nombre de correspondances lexicales entre la même langue et les langues du Bornu, c'est-à-dire avec des langues nègres africaines. Si des recherches ultérieures confirment ces travaux, le Sumérien deviendrait le lien entre l'Océanie, l'Europe, et l'Afrique.

Le travail de Drexel en particulier mérite de retenir l'attention. Nous savons en effet que les langues africaines constituent une unité linguistique, dans laquelle les langues du Bornu prennent place, et les recherches de Mlle Homburger ont démontré que ce groupe linguistique africain dérive de l'Égyptien. Dans ces conditions, n'y-a-t-il pas lieu de se demander si l'Égyptien ancien, comme le Sumérien, n'aurait pas été primitivement une langue d'origine océanienne qui n'aurait pris que secondairement l'aspect linguistique qui a conduit à le classer dans la famille chamito-sémitique? Ainsi s'expliqueraient peut-être les particularités de cette langue, qui ont fait parfois douter de sa parenté originelle avec des langues chamito-sémitiques.

Cette hypothèse ne vaut naturellement que si la date où les langues africaines se sont détachées de l'Égyptien n'est pas aussi récente que le croit L. Homburger. Un rapide sondage, que j'ai fait au cours de ces derniers mois, m'a montré que cette hypothèse n'est pas invraisemblable. En effet, j'ai pu trouver en Égyptien ancien un nombre important de radicaux avec l'Océanien. Par exemple: qu'on veuille bien comparer *g'b.t*, «feuille»; *pr*, «maison»; *mw.t*, «mourir»; *grh*, «nuit»; *kt*, «petit»; *r'*, «soleil», «jour», respectivement avec

<sup>1</sup> P. Rivet, «Sumérien et Océanien», *Collection linguistique publiée par la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, xxiv. (Paris, 1929).

les Nos. 103, 150, 51, 170, 189, et 102 de mon vocabulaire comparé malayo-polynésien-hoka, et le mot *pr.t*, «graine», «fruit», avec le mot de même signification dans mon vocabulaire comparé suméro-océanien.<sup>1</sup>

Si l'avenir confirme ces «anticipations», le lien linguistique entre l'Océanien, le bassin méditerranéen et l'Afrique serait définitivement établi.

Quoi qu'il en soit, il ne me paraît pas douteux que les peuples océaniens aient à une époque très ancienne exercé une influence considérable sur ces régions.

La voie qu'ils ont suivie ne semble pas douteuse. C'est sans aucun doute le long des côtes méridionales de l'Asie qu'ils ont fait leur migration vers l'ouest. Leur itinéraire est en quelque sorte jalonné par les faits ethnographiques que j'ai cités et notamment par la répartition du boummerang. De l'Inde, où sa survivance a été signalée, on le trouve en pays sumérien, puis chez les peuples nomades établis dans les oasis et le désert arabiques, les montagnes du Sinaï et la zone désertique entre Égypte et Palestine, dans le Shépélah et la Syrie creuse, en Égypte, d'où il se répand en Afrique et y donne naissance au couteau de jet, et enfin dans le monde indo-européen préhistorique et protohistorique. Je pourrais citer d'autres exemples aussi typiques, notamment la répartition des embarcations faites de faisceaux de roseaux ou des ornements de proue en forme d'yeux.

Un doute peut exister toutefois en ce qui concerne le type australoïde qui, en Afrique comme en Amérique, semble limité à l'extrémité méridionale du continent. Serait-il invraisemblable de supposer que les Australiens, dans leur migration vers le sud, se seraient brisés en deux fractions en arrivant aux rives de l'Antarctique, l'une se dirigeant vers l'Est, c'est-à-dire vers l'Amérique, l'autre vers l'Ouest, c'est-à-dire vers l'Afrique? Simple suggestion qui vaut peut-être la peine d'être envisagée.

<sup>1</sup> J'espère publier dans quelques mois le résultat de ces recherches dans le *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*.



## CONCLUSION

En résumé, il me semble que, du sud de l'Asie ou de l'Insulinde, à une époque extrêmement reculée, sont parties une série de migrations humaines qui se sont répandues en éventail à travers le Pacifique et l'Océan indien et qui, après avoir peuplé toutes les îles de ces deux océans, ont atteint à l'est le Nouveau-Monde, au nord le Japon, à l'ouest, l'Europe et l'Afrique.

Le fait que ces peuples ont surtout utilisé la voie maritime ne me semble nullement en contradiction avec l'idée que je me fais de l'antiquité de leurs migrations. Il me semble en effet qu'une des premières découvertes que l'homme a été amené à faire et à perfectionner est précisément le radeau. Sitôt qu'il a vu flotter un tronc d'arbre, l'idée de l'utilisation de cette extraordinaire propriété du bois a dû s'imposer à son esprit et quelques lianes lui ont permis, en unissant quelques-uns de ces troncs, de fabriquer un moyen de transport relativement commode et sûr. Si l'on songe aux difficultés et aux dangers de toute nature que la voie de terre opposait aux déplacements des peuples primitifs (les travaux du Commandant Lefebvre des Noëttes nous ont montré combien fut tardive l'utilisation rationnelle des animaux de trait), on comprend aisément qu'ils aient préféré s'exposer aux risques de la voie maritime plutôt que d'affronter les obstacles sans nombre de la voie terrestre.

L'exposé qui précède est suffisamment explicite pour que je n'aie pas à démontrer en quoi l'hypothèse, en partie démontrée que je propose, se distingue de celle qu'Elliot Smith et ses élèves ont exposée et soutenue avec tant d'ardeur et de talent,<sup>1</sup> et aussi comment ces deux hypothèses se rejoignent. Elliot Smith et ses élèves admettent comme moi l'existence d'une très ancienne migration tropicale ou subtropicale, ayant atteint les mêmes continents, mais, tandis qu'ils en placent le

<sup>1</sup> Cf. l'excellent exposé de cette théorie par Louis Germain: «Les Origines de la civilisation précolombienne et les théories d'Elliot Smith», *L'Anthropologie*, xxxii. (Paris, 1922), pp. 93-128.

point de dispersion en Égypte, j'estime que ce point doit être reporté beaucoup plus à l'est, vers l'Asie méridionale et l'Insulinde, c'est-à-dire au centre même de l'aire recouverte.

Les raisons de ce choix ressortent en partie de l'exposé que j'ai fait au début de ce travail de l'origine des différentes migrations océaniennes. Mais il en est d'autres.

Il m'a toujours semblé que les conditions qui ont permis à l'homme primitif de se survivre et de se propager, alors qu'il était encore dépourvu d'armes et de moyen de protection contre le milieu et cependant entièrement dépendant de ce milieu où il devait trouver toute l'année la nourriture végétale indispensable, n'ont pu être remplies que par un climat tropical. La région que j'ai indiquée me semble répondre à ces conditions que le bassin du Nil.

D'autre part, il n'y a eu, comme l'a écrit M. Boule, en Asie méridionale «vers le miocène supérieur et le pliocène inférieur, un mouvement de vie tout à fait extraordinaire, notamment chez les Primates supérieurs». La découverte récente, près de Pékin, dans des couches remontant au début du quaternaire, des restes d'un être que tout porte à rattacher à la lignée du *Pithecanthropus erectus* de Java, dont l'âge exact restait en discussion, démontre en effet que l'Asie méridionale a été une région où très anciennement se sont élaborées d'étonnantes ébauches d'humanité, sinon les formes les plus primitives du phylum humain.

Une découverte aussi considérable, faite au cours de l'exploration d'une zone relativement restreinte, permet tous les espoirs lorsqu'on étendra systématiquement les fouilles à l'Inde, à la péninsule indochinoise et à l'Insulinde, car c'est encore vers ces régions que la sensationnelle trouvaille des environs de Pékin oriente irrésistiblement les recherches, puisque les animaux associés aux restes du *Sinanthropus* paraissent être venus du Sud.<sup>1</sup>

En terminant cet exposé, où j'ai tenté de tracer à très

<sup>1</sup> P. Teilhard de Chardin, «Une Importante Découverte en paléontologie humaine: Le *Sinanthropus pekinensis*», *Revue des Questions Scientifiques* (Louvain, juillet, 1930), tirage-à-part de 16 pp.

grands traits l'histoire d'une des plus anciennes migrations humaines en une vaste synthèse où je me suis efforcé de grouper tous les faits essentiels actuellement connus, relevant des disciplines les plus diverses je ferai remarquer que l'aire de distribution que j'attribue aux peuples océaniens coïncide d'une façon remarquable avec l'aire de répartition de la civilisation de l'arc mélanésien, et avec celle d'une particularité morphologique à laquelle j'attribue une grande importance, la tache mongolique.

En ce qui concerne l'arc, il suffira pour le constater de se reporter à la distribution établie par Graebner.<sup>1</sup>

Pour la tache mongolique, il importe de compléter notablement la carte publiée par Apert, en tenant compte des faits postérieurs à son établissement.<sup>2</sup> D'une extrême fréquence, comme on le sait, chez les indigènes d'Amérique, chez les Malayo-Polynésiens, les Japonais, les Coréens, les Chinois, les Annamites, les Siamois, les Birmans, les Nocobariens, les Singhalais, les Tamil et les Hova, elle se retrouve avec une fréquence moindre mais encore très remarquable chez les indigènes de Port-Saïd (60.5 pour cent) et du Caire (51.8 pour cent),<sup>3</sup> en Tunisie chez les Arabo-Berbères (54.8 pour cent), les Juifs (47 pour cent) et les Nègres et Nègroïdes (73.3 pour cent), en Algérie chez les Arabo-Berbères (26 pour cent) et les Juifs (33.3 pour cent),<sup>4</sup> au Maroc où elle est très commune<sup>5</sup> et chez les Yaoundé du Cameroun (67.14 pour cent). Je suis convaincu qu'une recherche systématique de ce caractère faite *au moment de la naissance* chez les autres peuples africains et chez certains peuples méditerranéens,<sup>6</sup> rendrait cette distribution plus frappante encore.

<sup>1</sup> F. Graebner, «Die melanesische Bogenkultur und ihre Verwandten», *Anthropos*, iv. (1909), pp. 726-780; 998-1032. La carte se trouve à la page 999.

<sup>2</sup> E. Apert, «La Tache Bleue congénitale mongolique», *La Presse Médicale* (Paris, 26 mars, 1910), p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> Observations encore inédites des Drs. E. Rivet et R. E. Schemeil.

<sup>4</sup> Hermann ten Kate, «Osservazioni sulle machie turchine congenite nei ragazzi Tunisi ed Algerini», *Revista di Antropologia*, xxviii. (Rome, 1928-1929), pp. 223-236.

<sup>5</sup> Renseignements communiqués par Mme la doctoresse Legey.

<sup>6</sup> Chez les enfants de moins d'un an, la tache mongolique a été observée

En définitive, du Japon à la Tasmanie, de la Méditerranée à l'Amérique, on peut suivre pas à pas les multiples étapes de la vaste migration océanienne. Ce domaine immense n'est encore que délimité. Il appartiendra aux chercheurs de l'avenir de déterminer l'ordre chronologique, les caractères spéciaux, les aires d'expansion des diverses vagues humaines issues de l'Asie méridionale ou de l'Insulinde, dont le rôle dans l'histoire du peuplement du monde et de la civilisation apparaît si considérable.

dans la proportion de 16.18 pour cent à Cagliari, de 8.69 pour cent à Messine (H. ten Kate, *op. cit. supra*). Chez les nouveaux-nés portugais de la région de Porto, la proportion est de 16.6 pour cent (A. A. Mendes Correa et Gonçalves de Azevedo, «La Tache Bleue congénitale chez les nouveaux-nés portugais», *L'Anthropologie*, xli. (Paris, 1931), pp. 132-133.

## X

### THE EARLIER RELIGION OF GREECE IN THE LIGHT OF CRETAN DISCOVERIES

By Sir ARTHUR EVANS, M.A., D.Litt., F.R.S.

It is now thirty-five years since, in a paper read in the Anthropological Section of the British Association at Liverpool, I set forth the results of my earlier researches on the primitive religion of prehistoric Greece, and in 1900, in a somewhat amplified form, these were laid before the Hellenic Society, and finally published in my work on *Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult*.<sup>1</sup>

Those researches, based mainly on superficial explorations and the evidence of early seal-stones collected by me on Cretan soil, antedated the epoch-making results brought to light by the excavations of the Great Palaces at Knossos and elsewhere. The very term "Minoan" was as yet unminted. "Mycenaean" Greece still stood in the foreground as representing an exotic and unexplained phenomenon not yet recognized as, in the main, merely a later offshoot of a much older culture, stage beyond stage of which could be traced in the "Mid-sea" land where it is now seen to link up the earliest civilization on European soil with that of the Nile Valley and of the Ancient East. The Phoenician still was being constantly invoked as a *Deus ex machina*.

It might perhaps be thought that results arrived at when our knowledge of the greater monuments of Minoan Crete was still practically non-existent had lost their value.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan and Co., 1901: reproduced from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.

Happily, however, though the facts on which these earlier conclusions were based have been largely supplemented by the later discoveries, they concerned fundamentally an early religious stratum the general character of which has not been affected by the additional material that has so greatly illuminated it.

The cult of such natural objects as holy trees and stones, the special sanctity of outstanding peaks and rocks, and notably of caves—the actual entrance passages of the Underworld—is itself of world-wide distribution. The folk-lore of our own country and of the Celtic West—as of the Iberian before it—is, as is well known, deeply rooted in such beliefs.

So far as the ancient Greeks were concerned, much of the primitive religion of this class must have been brought with them from the more northerly regions from which they originally reached Hellas. At the time when our knowledge of the Greek world becomes really full, the artistic spirit of the race had largely transformed the original “stocks and stones” that had been the earlier objects of worship,<sup>1</sup> and they appear at most as survivals, doubled by the divinity in perfect human shape. Apollo, beneath his bay-tree, gracefully leans against the column or sits on his *omphalos*, both the one and the other of which had once stood as his visible impersonation. So, too, the Zeus of Mount Lykaïos retained his earlier material manifestation in the twin pillars that stood on its peak, while elsewhere his rude Arcadian worshippers contented themselves with a square block, such as that on which Minoan Genii are in one case seen pouring their libations. In his form of *Καππώτας* we seem to have a record of an actual meteoric stone. It is needless here to cite such other well-known examples as the two posts with cross-pieces that stood for the Heavenly Twins among the Spartans, or the *ἀργὸς λίθος* that was the oldest image of Eros at Thespieae.

<sup>1</sup> See on this L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford, 1896), i. pp. 13 *sqq.*, etc., and Martin P. Nilsson, *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its survival in Greek Religion* (Lund, 1927), pp. 201 *sqq.*

How far were such aniconic idols actual local survivals? That the immigrant Greeks had brought with them primitive religious conceptions of this class is a proposition that can hardly be disputed. Yet it is clear that in the case of heavy blocks, often imperfectly hewn out or of purely natural formations, the new-comers must have fitted their own primitive traditions of worship to objects of this character that were already centres of veneration to the older inhabitants of the land. In Mainland Greece the cult of many such "stocks and stones" may thus go back to ethnic elements much older than the intrusive Minoan, while, as will be shown below, there are certainly cases, as at Delphi, where the Cretan element must be taken into account. In Crete itself, however, Minoan tradition in such matters may be regarded as dominant, and is certainly present in the tale of Kronos swallowing his son, who was the "Cretan Zeus", in the shape of the *βαίτυλος* stone.

The great caves, such as are found in the Cretan limestone districts, provided, moreover, in their stalagmite pillars cult objects within what themselves were natural shrines of primitive religion. In modern times such grotesque formations, standing out like ghostly figures against the surrounding darkness, are generally associated—as in our own Island—with fairies and witches. But the discovery of the Sacred Double Axes in the crevices of the pillars of this kind that rose in the lower sanctuary of the Dictaeon Cave sufficiently indicates their connection with the great Minoan Goddess. The Dictaeon Table of Offerings of black steatite with its triple cups and a dedication formula, incised in the Minoan Script of Class A, was originally supported at its corners by four legs, but showed a central prominence below with a flat surface clearly designed to rest on some solid base. It seemed to me a reasonable supposition that it had actually been placed on the top of one of the low "omphalos"-like stalagmites such as were proper to the smaller Upper Grotto where it was brought to light. Its top may have been cut slightly flatter in order to give a surer support for the table.

It is thus, indeed, that I have ventured to complete this cult object in a restoration of it made for the Ashmolean Museum (Fig. 1).

The offertory remains found in the Dictaeon Cave cover

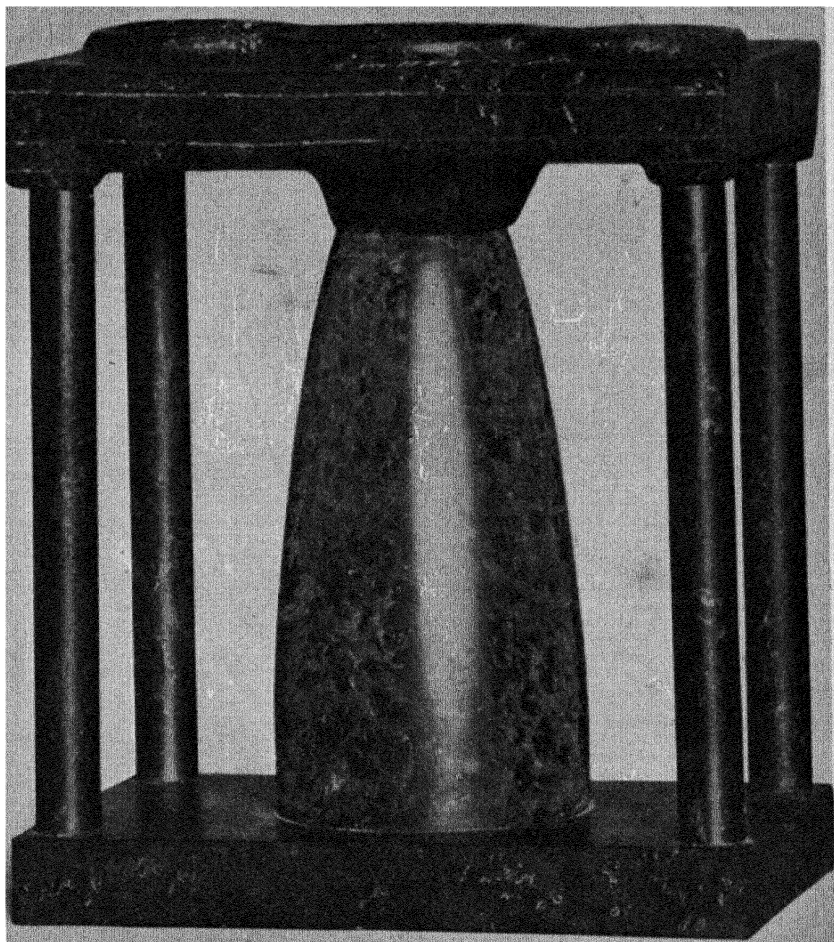


FIG. 1. The Dictaeon libation table, restored.

the period from the closing Middle Minoan phase to the time of the early Greek settlement, and include small votive



vessels of the early Geometrical class.<sup>1</sup> That the Psychro Cave itself represents the Dictæan Cave of Lyktian tradition as referred to by Hesiod<sup>2</sup> can hardly be doubted. According to the version of the story preserved by the neighbouring Dorian foundation—the successor of the earlier and, as the name shows, Minoan Karnêssos—it was the secret retreat of Rhea and the birthplace of the Cretan Zeus. There is every reason for believing that it was to Rhea in her earlier form as the Minoan Mother Goddess that the Table of Offerings was dedicated, and the finding of her votive double axes in the crevices of the stalagmite pillars confirms this conclusion.

This survival of the cult of the “baetylic” image in the form of a stalagmite pillar finds, moreover, a still more ancient parallel in Crete. There can surely be no remaining doubt that a cave containing ancient relics discovered some years since on a rocky hill overlooking the exposed roadstead of Amnisos,<sup>3</sup> on the mouth of the river Karteros, some miles east of the old harbour town of Knossos, must be identified with the “Cave of Eileithyia” already mentioned in the *Odyssey*.<sup>4</sup> The earlier exploration of the cave carried out in 1886 was of a more or less superficial nature, nor was it possible at that date to draw definite conclusions as to the early pottery found. A fuller excavation, however, recently carried out by Dr. Sp. Marinatos,<sup>5</sup> the Cretan Ephor of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hogarth's conclusion (*British School in Athens*, vi. p. 115) that the offertory remains only went down to late “Mycenaean” times requires modification. Amongst smaller objects obtained by me at different times, including the occasion of my preliminary excavation in 1896, were small Geometric vases of a votive character.

<sup>2</sup> *Theogonia*, v. 477 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Now known as *Hagioi Apostoloi*.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* xix. 188, στήσε δ' (Ὀδυσῆα) ἐν Ἀμνισῷ, ὅθι τε σπέος Εἰλειθυίης. Cf., too, Strabo x. 476. I have referred to this natural “baetylic” cult in *Palace of Minos*, ii. Part II. pp. 839, 840. The original excavation of this cave was undertaken by Prof. F. Halbherr and Dr. I. Hatzidakis (*The Antiquary*, vol. xxviii. p. 212: *Ιλαπρασσός*, x. (1886–1887), pp. 339 sqq.).

<sup>5</sup> Summary accounts of Dr. Marinatos's results have been published by Prof. G. Karo (*Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1930, pp. 136, 137, and 1931, p. 296). His own full report has not seen the light, but I am indebted to his kindness for the view of the inner temenos and stalagmite pillars reproduced in Fig. 2.



FIG. 2. Stalagmite pillar within temenos of rough masonry in "Cave of Eileithyia", near Knossos.  
(From a photograph by Dr. Sp. Marinatos.)

Antiquities, has demonstrated the vast period of time covered by the remains. The Late Neolithic epoch is itself represented by the finest vessels of that age yet brought to light, and the votive pottery goes down through all the Minoan and succeeding Geometrical and proto-Corinthian phases to later classical times. But, apart from the evidence of this abiding cult,—extending backwards beyond the beginnings of the definitely Minoan type of culture,—we have here the clearest evidence as to the character of the cult itself. In the middle of the cave rises a stalagmite pillar, which, in the half darkness, might itself suggest a standing female figure in long robes, and the religious attributes with which it was invested are at the same time evidenced by the surrounding of the pillar by a temenos of rough masonry (see Fig. 2).

Eileithyia, the Goddess of Childbirth, with whom the Greeks associated this cave sanctuary from the Homeric Age onwards, was also identified by them with Nekhebet, the Goddess of the third Nome of Upper Egypt. This Goddess, who combines the vulture symbol of the South with the uraeus serpent of the North, was herself regarded as the twin of Wazet, the Goddess of the Delta, early assimilated with Isis,<sup>1</sup> and Hathor, and thus another version of the Mother of Horus whom she hid away from Set in her special haunt, the marshes of Buto. Her symbols were the uraeus snake and the *waz* or papyrus wand, and she could herself assume the form of a snake.

The intimate connection of Minoan Crete with the Nile Valley, which goes back to the predynastic times, has been demonstrated by such a long series of discoveries extending from the southern plain of Mesarà to the site of Knossos that any criticism which excludes the probable reaction of Egyptian elements on the Early Cretan religion stands to-day self-condemned. This connection has indeed been illustrated by the recent discovery of the Temple-Tomb of the Priest-kings of Knossos where a stone libation table came

<sup>1</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), ii. p. 48.

to light indistinguishable from the late prehistoric class of Egypt.

*Mutatis mutandis*,—the cave in the rocky hill-side being substituted for the papyrus thicket,—the hiding away of the divine infant from Set by the Nile Goddess might well have supplied the suggestion for the stories of Rhea and the Cretan Zeus. The relation of the cult of the Delta Goddess to that of Minoan Knossos is indeed borne out by very material evidences. Her special symbol the *waz* or papyrus shoot appears, at least from the beginning of the Middle Minoan Age onwards, as a sacral motive; the snake itself is the emblem of the Mother Goddess, and is seen on her faïence image of the "Temple Repositories", coiling up over her tiara in Uraeus-like fashion.<sup>1</sup> The symbolic group of the Cow suckling the Calf was also transferred to the Knossian Snake-Goddess.

The Greek beliefs regarding the attributes of Eileithyia, in so far as they assimilate her to Artemis, themselves fit in with those of the Minoan Goddess, to whom in her character of huntress the bow was sacred, and in whose central shrines at Knossos were found votive arrows. Her successor, known in later times as Diktynna, is shown on a Provincial coin of Crete, seated on a heap of rocks and holding in one hand an arrow and in the other the infant Zeus, while the Korybantes stand on guard beside her.<sup>2</sup> As protectress of the infant God, we see here a real approach to the "Wazet Goddesses" identified by the Greeks with Eileithyia. In her case the arrow symbol referred to the pangs of delivery,<sup>3</sup> but the magic Cretan herb dittany (δίκταμνον) with which her hair was wreathed and wherewith the wounds from poisoned arrows were cured, while pointing to the healing powers in childbirth, suggests a certain assimilation with Diktynna—in other words, with the Great Minoan Goddess.

<sup>1</sup> See my observations, *Palace of Minos*, i. pp. 509 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Svoronos, *Numismatique de la Crète ancienne*, Pl. xxxiii., Figs. 23, 24: small silver piece of Trajan's time. Diktynna wears the short chiton of Artemis. I have a specimen found near Knossos.

<sup>3</sup> Homer, *Il.* xi. 269, 270. Here and xix. 119, the plural *Ειλειθύναι* is used.

The Cave of Amnisos is separated only by a rough range of low hills from the site of Knossos, and its stalagmite formation is by far the most striking of any in the immediately surrounding district.<sup>1</sup> There is every reason, therefore, for believing that the immemorial cult that had attached itself to the aniconic natural pillar was akin to that of which we see a more fully developed and partially iconic form in the central shrine of the House of Minos.

There seems to be good reason for believing that the lower stalagmite growths, with rounded tops, of these limestone caves, which greatly resemble the *omphalos* shape, may in fact have actually originated this cult-shape. As already noted, it seems probable that a stalagmite block of this kind had actually served as the central support of the Dictæan libation table. A painted stucco fragment from the area of "Taureador Frescoes" in the east quarter of the Knossian Palace presents an object of this shape, showing a pale blue ground, with a red band wound about it in a net-like fashion (Fig. 3),<sup>2</sup> and the comparison of this with the more elaborate network of beading wound about the *omphalos* of Delphi, as seen in its marble copy Fig. 4, is almost inevitable. The sports that the "Taureador Frescoes" illustrate were, as we know, celebrated in honour of the Minoan Goddess, and the netted *omphalos* in that case might be taken as her visible emblem. The transference to the young God by the later cult is itself a normal feature.

The obelisk with which Apollo is elsewhere associated on the coins of the Illyrian Apollonia, Ambrakia, and Orikos may in its origin represent higher natural pillars of the same class as the *omphalos*. That these aniconic images connected themselves with Minoan cult-forms would itself be quite in keeping with the revelations of the earliest ritual objects of his Delphic shrine that have been due to the recent excava-

<sup>1</sup> The much larger Cave of Skotino in the less accessible country east of this, is three times more distant from the site of Knossos. It was also used as a place of cult and doubtless for pilgrimages from the great Minoan centre.

<sup>2</sup> *Palace of Minos*, iii. pp. 839 *sqq.*, where see the comparison with the Delphi *omphalos*.

tions.<sup>1</sup> Beneath the adyton itself was brought to light the snout of a lioness head "rhyton" of a white marble-like material,<sup>2</sup> exactly answering to those found in the treasury of the Central "Sanctuary Hall" of the Palace at Knossos, and undoubtedly of Knossian fabric. The identity of the earlier cult was further illustrated by the discovery, beneath the Pythian Temple and on the borders of the altar, of

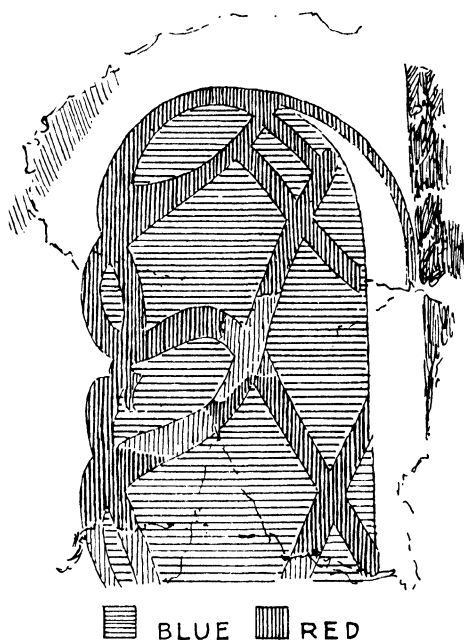


FIG. 3. Fresco fragment from Knossos, showing *omphalos*-like object with bands round.



FIG. 4. Marble *omphalos* from Delphi with beaded network.

miniature bronze axes of the usual Minoan votive kind. All this, indeed, fits in with the tradition preserved by the Homeric Hymn to Apollo as to the Cretan origin of the Delphic cult as it does with the abiding worship of Apollo Delphinios at Knossos itself.

One feature of this group, moreover, that recurs in the records of the primitive Minoan cult not only agrees with

<sup>1</sup> See P. Perdrizet, *Fouilles de Delphes*, v. p. 3; J. de Mot, *Revue Archéologique*, 1904, pp. 214, 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Palace of Minos*, ii. p. 833, Fig. 549, and cf. pp. 827 *sqq.* and Figures.

that of the early shrines of historic Greece, but is also a prominent characteristic in the popular beliefs that still live on throughout a large European area.

I refer to the intimate connection between tree and stone. At Delphi itself a tree appears at times beside the *omphalos*. The baetylic stone was always at hand as a material home for the spiritual being, brought down into it by due ritual. But this "possession" was itself a temporary condition. The inert object, whether it were of stone or wood or other material, though sacred in itself, was only "charged"—if we may use such a modern expression—with the divinity by invocatory action. It thus became a real "Bethel", the divine presence within it being at times indicated by a settled bird, on the early terra-cotta shrine from Knossos by doves above its triple columns. So, too, in a more human sphere the ancient Lombards placed figures of doves above the wooden grave-posts of their departed kinsmen, a symbol of the indwelling ghost.

But the sacred tree might itself be regarded as permanently fitted with divine life as manifested by its fruit and foliage. It seems thus to have been regarded as reinforcing the effectiveness of mere aniconic blocks, and, according to a very usual practice, it was associated with these inert shapes. Often the tree is placed in a stone enclosure of equal sanctity or overshadows a baetylic pillar. Such an arrangement is frequent in the Minoan signet scenes that have thrown such a flood of light on the early religion, and some idea of the frequency of this combination in the rustic cult of classical times can be gathered by its constant recurrence in the background of the Pompeian wall-paintings.

This conjunction of the animate divinity, continuously manifested by the tree in the putting forth of its leaves and flowers, with the holy stone as its temporary embodiment, is very widespread. A still living record—no more than twenty miles from a sister university—of ritual ceremonies concerned with an ancient monument may serve, indeed, to bring home this dual conception of early religion.

The Stone Circle of Rollright, with the adjoining King's Stone and dolmen known as the "Whispering Knights", have, as often happens in such cases, supplied a shelter and rallying point for primitive beliefs.<sup>1</sup> The extent of this survival in this case—for it was like a little piece of the Morbihan set down on English soil—seems partly to have been due to the fact that the old British tongue had lived on in the Forest of Wychwood, within which it lay, far into the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> That the monument represented a king and his army turned into stone by a witch—who here stands for the supernatural power and changes herself into an "eldern tree"—was of common knowledge, but the extent and ramifications of the superstitions attaching to the stones that I was myself able many years since to elicit from the country people was truly astonishing. Nearly all the Breton tales—such as, for instance, the stones flying down at certain seasons to drink at a stream below—were current in this very isolated rustic district. But perhaps of all the items that I was then able to collect, the most original—specially valuable for the relation of this to primitive stone worship—was told me by an old woman, the wife of a man of eighty, of Great Rollright village, that she had heard from her husband's mother many years before. On Midsummer Eve when the "eldern tree" was in blossom it was a custom for people to come up to the King's Stone and stand in a circle round it. Then the "eldern" was cut, and, as it bled, with real blood, "the King moved his head".

Of all the trees of the wood, indeed, "Dame Elder", with its berries of blood-red juice, has been the last to lose its supernatural life.<sup>3</sup> So, too, the Minoan sacred trees, so far

<sup>1</sup> I may refer for some portion of this to my article on the "Rollright Stones and their Folklore", in *Folklore*, vi. (1895), pp. 6-51.

<sup>2</sup> In the "Perambulation of Wychwood" of Edward III.'s time (1300) the name Tremaunmere="tre maun", place of the (boundary) stone, "mere", English for land-mark, is of the same dual character as "Cotswold" itself, and points to a bilingual survival (A. E., *ibid.* p. 51).

<sup>3</sup> In Essex the elderberry juice is known as "Danes blood". I found that the idea of the "bleeding" elder was still rife among the Rollright children, William Stukeley (*Abury, a Temple of the British Druids* (London, 1743),



as it is possible to determine their species, were generally fruit trees. On a remarkable gold signet-ring from the site of Knossos (Fig. 5), acquired by me during my first visit there in 1894—which in some ways affords the best illustration of the religious conception underlying the primitive cult of such stones—what appear to be fig-trees overhang the entrance to the holy enclosure.

Beneath this is visible a small aniconic column, while, outside, a female personage, in whom we may recognize the

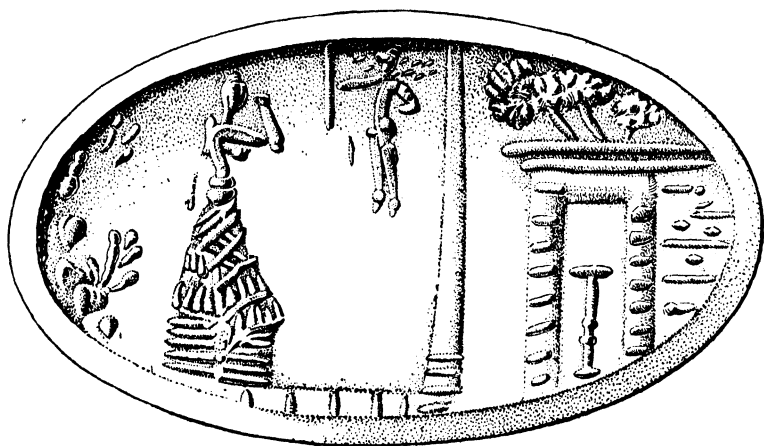


FIG. 5. Gold signet-ring from Knossos.

Goddess herself, brings down before an obelisk immediately in front of her, as if to enter into its possession, a small warrior God, his locks flying upwards as a sign of rapid descent.

On the gold ring of the Mycenae Treasure, the Goddess is seated on a small cairn, itself of baetylic significance, while her little handmaiden pulls down a bunch of grapes from what can only be interpreted as a branching vine—shown without leaves to emphasize its fruitfulness—against which she sits. Upon the remarkable gold signet-ring from the site

p. 83) has a probable reference to the Midsummer ceremony. He says that "on a certain day in the year the young men and maidens customarily meet and make merry with cakes and ale" on a plot by the King's Stone.

of Knossos that brought with it the discovery of the Temple-Tomb of its Priest-kings, one of the scenes depicted shows a young male attendant pulling down the branch of a tree and holding out a small flask, presumably containing the expressed juice of its fruit, to the Goddess, who sits on the border of her shrine. On another signet (Fig. 13 *a* below), found in the Vapheio Tomb, where a youth pulls down a branch of a sacred tree beside a kind of *omphalos*, the juice—analogous to the *Soma* of the Vedas—seems already to have taken effect in stirring the Goddess to an ecstatic dance.

The king and army turned into stone of the Rollright tales and other widespread popular traditions of similar transformations illustrate a very deep-lying source of the aniconic form of cult, which indeed precedes the stage when baetylic “stocks and stones” were connected with the higher divinities. In India and elsewhere at the present day rough stones are set up as actually representing the departed and as affording a material resting-place for his ghost. It is the idea of which the earliest record in the West is supplied by Aristotle’s statement<sup>1</sup> that the Iberians set up pointed stones (*ὀβελίσκοι*) round a warrior’s grave, each representing a slain enemy. Traces of this idea are to be seen in the rudely iconic stone images recently discovered in the Minoan cenotaph chamber at Dendra, near Mycenae,<sup>2</sup> and are equally in evidence in the primitive cup-holding images above the Scythian kurgans known as *kamennaye babe* (stone women) to the Russian peasants and in the more elegant Spartan *stelae*, where the seated figures hold a kylix in their hands.

The ordinary sepulchral cult of actual gravestones was transferred in a more elaborate form to heroes and even to actual divinities. A highly interesting Minoan example of this will be mentioned later on; meanwhile it is well to point out that, so far as the old Greek world is concerned, such

<sup>1</sup> *Politics*, viii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Persson, *Kungagraven i Dendra*, p. 147.

cults were either clearly taken over from the early pre-Hellenic element in Hellas itself or belonged to a more Eastern religious sphere, closely, as we shall see, related to the Minoan, its centres having to be sought in Syria or Anatolia and Cyprus.

Such was the "Tomb of Adonis" in the temple-court of Byblos, that of Aphroditê at Paphos beside her sacred cone, and of the same Goddess—here clearly Minoan—under her old Cretan title of Ariadnê in the sacred grove of Amathus. At Paphos, too, we find the tomb of Kinyras—"lord of the lyre"—the Cilician double of Apollo.

In Greece proper such so-called tombs—an expression due to later ignorance of the essence of baetylic worship—bear traces of their pre-Hellenic sources. At Argos a "Tomb of Ariadnê" was shown in the sanctuary of the "Cretan Dionysos".

The image of Apollo, which had only partly lost its aniconic shape, over the tomb of Amyklæ really connects itself with his double, Hyakinthos, whose name belongs to the earlier ethnic stratum. At Delphi, where the older elements of cult go back to a Minoan plantation, the *omphalos* itself was regarded as a tomb, which was, however, piously transferred to the Thracian Dionysos.

In the great days of Greece it was repugnant to religious feeling that a God should have a gravestone. Nothing could be more eloquent of this attitude than the scornful outburst of Epimenides "the Divine", regarding the mortal Zeus of Crete. The words of his poem on "Minos", partly quoted by St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus,<sup>1</sup> have been now more fully supplied by the Syriac Commentary of Ishodad,<sup>2</sup> which at the same time confirms St. Paul's attribution of the lines to the Cretan "Prophet", the author of an epic poem on Minos:

<sup>1</sup> Titus, i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Mrs. Gibson's translation of the *Commentaries of Ishôdad of Merv* (*Horae Semiticae*) and Prof. Rendel Harris's brilliant identification of the fragment of Epimenides' *Minos*: *op. cit.* pp. xii-xv. Cf., too, Sir William Ramsay's observations, *Asiatic Elements in Greek Civilization* (1928), pp. 32 sqq.

The Cretans carved a tomb for thee, O Holy and High!  
 Liars, noxious beasts, idle bellies!  
 For thou dost not die, ever thou livest and standest firm,  
 For in thee we live and move and have our being.<sup>1</sup>

This attitude of Epimenides is the more remarkable when it is remembered that he was not only born in Crete and a resident of Knossos, but that he was steeped in the old religious traditions,<sup>2</sup> was himself a member of a revived guild of Kuretes, and in all probability conversant with the still surviving Eteocretan language. He does not seem to have understood that the original idea was rather of a temporary burial of the young God, and that what later was looked on as his actual gravestone had been in truth his baetylic pillar.

A pillar of this kind, afterwards misdescribed as the "Tomb of Zeus", may well have existed in the place where it was said to have been pointed out on the peak of Juktas that rises above Knossos, in connection with the shrine, doubtless of the Mother Goddess, the remains of which, together with an offertory deposit, I had myself occasion to explore.<sup>3</sup>

In the great days of Classical Greece this baetylic worship, in the cases where it still survived in relation to the higher religion, was, as we have seen, very imperfectly understood. Such examples were, in fact, themselves exotic, and it was not till the days when the "Orontes had flowed into the Tiber" that a revolutionary change occurred. A new era was ushered in when the Great Phrygian Mother, in the shape of the sky-fallen stone of Pessinus, transported in a State galley to Ostia, was solemnly escorted to Rome by Scipio

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gibson's translation is here followed, but the A.V. words (Acts xvii. 28) partly restored. The fragment continues "so therefore the blessed Paul took this sentence from Minos"—i.e. the "Minos" of Epimenides.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus, indeed, our chief source of these, cites him at the head of his authorities (V. lxxx. 4).

<sup>3</sup> See *Palace of Minos*, i. pp. 156 sqq. and cf. pp. 623 sqq. The stone ladles characteristic of this deposit were paralleled by that from Trullos, on a foot-hill of Juktas, with an inscription containing part of the same formula as that which occurs on the Dictæan libation table.

Nasica, followed by Senate and people alike, noble matrons and Vestals.<sup>1</sup> In the throes of the Second Punic War the Romans, following the Sibylline warning to "seek the Mother", and further advised by the Pythia, had turned to the older religion.

But this higher baetylic cult, misunderstood in Greece, intrusive in the Roman World, had in the East a continuous extension from the shores of South-West Asia Minor onwards, and has never ceased to be at home there. It was, in fact, not only a possession of Anatolians and Syrians and the Western Semites, but had a very ancient home amidst the Arabian deserts and was destined to be assimilated and once more diffused westwards by Islam. The original Mosque is represented by the early caves and niches cut in the rock, such as are still to be seen in the neighbourhood of Medina, with aniconic stone images of the divinity within. The Mosque of Mecca itself, with its sacred stone, is essentially taken from the old Arabian stone-worship akin to that of the West Semitic temples. Thus the whole Mohammedan world may be said to be strewn with little *Caabas*. The turbaned head-stones of the "Saints' Graves", wherever they occur in that vast area,—which themselves are in some sort aniconic images of a heroic cult,—are often associated in their immediate vicinity by baetylic pillars that have only an indirect sepulchral connection. It has thus happened that not only wherever the Arabs themselves spread their conquest, but throughout the European as well as the Asiatic parts of the Turkish dominions, there has been a revival of the higher baetylic cult.

It was thus possible, only a short time since, to have a personal experience on what was once Hellenic soil of a form of worship as ancient as anything recorded by the pictorial signets of Minoan Crete—yet essentially of the same kind.

I venture to repeat here my original account of this

<sup>1</sup> For the introduction of the cult of Cybelê at Rome, see especially H. Graillot, *Le Culte de Cybèle, Mère du Dieux* (1912), pp. 25 *sqq.*

experience: as supplying a striking illustration of this form of worship in its relation to sepulchral religion.<sup>1</sup>

“In the course of some archaeological investigations in upper Macedonia, I heard of a sacred stone at a Turkish village called Tekekiöi, between Skopia and Istib, which was an object of veneration not only to the native Moslems, but to many Christians from the surrounding regions, who made it an object of pilgrimage on St. George’s day. In company with my guide, a Mohammedan Albanian, I visited the spot and found that the stone was contained in a two-roomed shrine under the charge of a Dervish. There was here, in fact, a mosque or ‘*mesgeda*’ in the oldest sense of the word, as a shrine of pre-Islamic stone-worship, like that containing the pillar form of the God of Bostra.

“For the better understanding of the ritual employed, I went through the whole ceremony myself. A roomy, mud-floored antechamber, made for the convenience of the worshippers, communicated by an inner doorway with the shrine of the stone itself. The ‘holy of holies’ within was a plain square chamber, in the centre of which rose the sacred pillar (Figs. 6, 7). Like the baetylic stones of antiquity, it might be said to have ‘fallen from heaven’, for, according to the local legend, it had flown here over a thousand years since from Khorassan. The pillar consisted of an upright stone of square section with bevelled angles about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  feet thick, supporting another smaller and somewhat irregular block. Both were black and greasy from secular anointing, recalling the time-honoured practice of pouring oil on sacred stones as Jacob did at Bethel. On one side of this ‘Niger Lapis’ is a kind of sunken hearth-stone, upon which are set candlesticks of antique form for the nightly illumination of the stone, a distant reminiscence of the Phoenician candlestick altars and cressets, such as those seen on either side of the cone at Paphos upon some well-known coin-types.

<sup>1</sup> From *Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult* (Macmillan and Co., 1901), pp. 104 sqq. (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxi. pp. 202 sqq.).

On the other side of the pillar is a small stone base, on which the votary stands for his prayers and ritual observances. The floor is strewn with the fleeces of sacrificed rams, and on the walls are suspended triangular plait-work offerings made of ears of corn, placed here by votaries who desire to draw

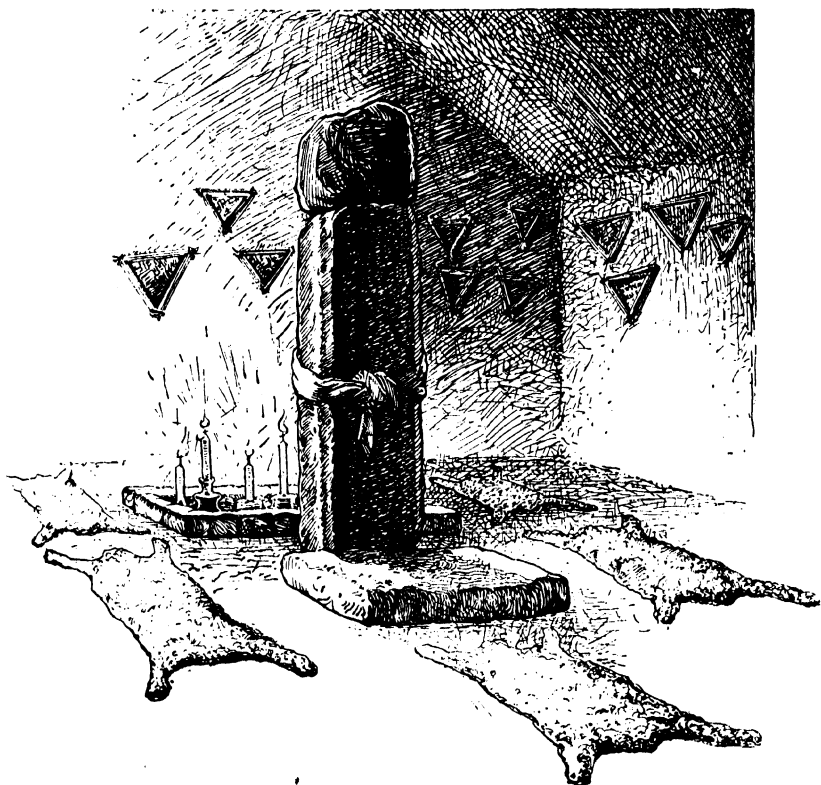


FIG. 6. Sacred stone in shrine at Tekekiöi.

forth from the Spirit of the stone a beneficent influence on their crops.

“Taking his stand on the flat stone by the pillar, the suppliant utters a prayer for what he most wishes, and afterwards embraces the stone in such a way that the finger tips meet at the further side. A sick Albanian was walking round the pillar when I first saw it, kissing and embracing it at every turn.

“The worshipper who would conform to the full ritual

now fills a keg of water from a spring that rises near the shrine — another primitive touch — and makes his way through a thorny grove up a neighbouring knoll, on which is a wooden enclosure surrounding a Mohammedan Saint's Grave or Tekke. Over the headstone of this grows a thorn-tree hung with rags of divers colours attached to it—according to a widespread primitive rite—by sick persons who had made a pilgrimage to the tomb. The turbaned column itself represents in aniconic shape the visible presence of the departed Saint, and, conjointly with the thorn-bush, a

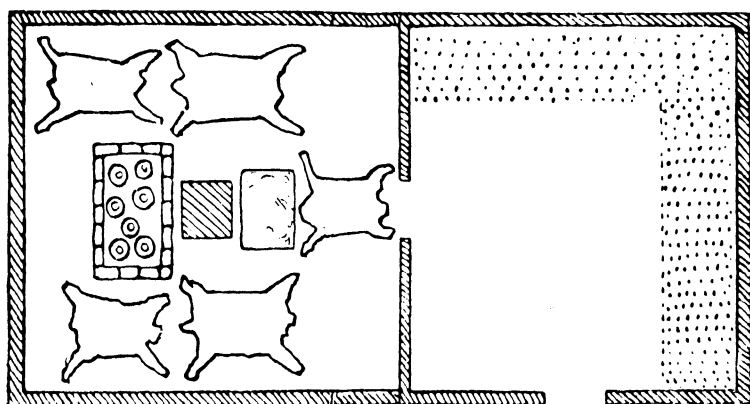


FIG. 7. Plan of shrine, Tekekiöi.

material abode for the departed Spirit, so that we have here a curious illustration of the ancient connection between Tree and Pillar worship.

“In the centre of the grave was a hole, into which the water from the holy spring was poured, and mixed with the holy earth. Of this the votary drinks three times, and he must thrice anoint his forehead with it. This draught is the true Arabian *solwān*, or ‘draught of consolation’.

“It was now necessary to walk three times round the grave, each time kissing and touching with the forehead the stone at the head and foot of it. A handful of the grave dust was next given me, to be made up into a triangular amulet and worn round the neck. An augury of pebbles, which were



shuffled about under the Dervish's palms over a hollowed stone, having turned out propitious, we now proceeded to the sacrifice. This took place outside the sepulchral enclosure, where the Priest of the Stone was presently ready with a young ram. My Albanian guide cut its throat, and I was now instructed to dip my right hand little finger in the blood and to touch my forehead with it.

"The sacrifice completed, we made our way down again to the shrine, while peals of thunder rolled through the glen from the Black Mountain above. It was now necessary to divest one's self of an article of clothing for the Dervish to wrap round the sacred pillar, where it remained all night. Due offerings of candles were made, which, as evening drew on, were lit on the sunken hearth beside the stone. I was given three barley corns to eat, and a share in the slaughtered ram, of which the rest was taken by the priest, was set apart for my supper in the adjoining antechamber. Here beneath the same roof with the stone, and within sight of it through the open doorway, I was bidden to pass the night, so that the occult influences due to its spiritual possession might shape my dreams as in the days of the patriarchs."

It is clear that some of the larger Minoan tombs were at the same time shrines of the protecting Mother Goddess, and the pillar within them may have been rather to supply a material place of indwelling for the divinity than for the spirit of the human subject interred within. A conspicuous instance of this was the Tomb of the Double Axes near Knossos, where at the head of the rock-cut grave of the departed warrior was a regular altar slab on which seem to have stood the full paraphernalia of the cult, including the ritual Double Axes, while the baetylic form of the Goddess was represented by a column cut in relief on the adjoining rock wall.

Under a different aspect the recently discovered Temple-Tomb, south of the Palace, illustrates the same idea. The upper part of its structure had been a columnar pillar shrine of a kind of which more than one example exists in the Palace

itself, the Little Palace, and the adjacent mansions. Beneath it, as usual in such cases, was a crypt, the stone pillars of which, in this case two, supported corresponding wooden columns on the floor above. Of the ritual function served by such pillars there are many evidences, not only in the repetition of the incised Double-Axe symbol, but in the actual placing against them of its socketed, pyramidal stands and by the offertory vessels set round the base. In the present case the pillars had originally been covered with painted stucco, of which only traces remained, but the character of the cult was itself sufficiently revealed by finely incised Double-Axe signs, apparently, originally twice repeated on all the blocks of the walls.

From this pillar crypt, standing in immediate relation to the cult of the Minoan Goddess as carried out in the upper sanctuary, a portal in the west wall led to the sepulchral chamber itself, cut in the rock, but provided with a central pier and brilliantly lined with gypsum slabs and pilasters. The rock ceiling above, where visible between the huge rafters, had been painted a brilliant Egyptian blue, to convey to the departed a vision of the sky.

The burial vault itself, as its sunken pavement and central pillar indicate, was also a scene of worship, and a characteristic stone block for libations, which seems to have drifted into the hall from this inner compartment, with its five tubular cavities, represents in an almost unchanged form an early Nilotic cult object. An incense burner of L.M. II date was also remarkable as having been painted inside as well as out with bright coloured decoration for the benefit of the dead. In the last age of the Palace (*c.* 1400 B.C.) the vault was again opened for the interment—probably of some last scion of the House of Minos—in a corner pit. This, though it had been rifled for precious objects, contained many interesting relics, and there was also evidence of a renewed funereal cult, illustrated by a series of offertory bowls and goblets, amongst which were miniature jugs otherwise associated with domestic snake worship of Knossos.

This cult of the household snakes, of which extraordinary evidence has been recently brought to light in a house bordering the West Court of the Palace, and which is still deeply rooted in primitive customs both of Greece and of its Slavonic and Albanian borderlands, is of fundamental importance in its bearing on the more developed worship of the Minoan Goddess. The reptile is here the simple ringed or grass snake, very different from the adder that became a distinguishing mark of the Goddess in her more awesome chthonic aspect. Its essential aspect is that of a beneficent Genius, and, as linked with the divinity, brings with it the idea of house-mother. From the newly discovered evidence, it is evident that the sections of the Minoan terra-cotta drain-pipes—a favourite refuge of these water-loving reptiles—were taken over into the ritual furniture of the Goddess as a cult-object, and persisted thus over a space of some twelve centuries till the time when, in the sanctuary of the Lady of Paphos, the water-pipe section was transformed into a dove-cot.

The miniature libation jugs associated with the Temple-Tomb, identical with those of the domestic snake-room above referred to, in fact emphasized the maternal character of the Goddess who there guarded the last resting-place of scions of the royal and priestly caste of the House of Minos. She is still essentially the “house-mother”.

We feel that we are in presence of a religion of an intimate character, far removed from the chilly atmosphere of Olympus. Although the larger outstanding objects of its cult were still mainly of the aniconic or baetylic class, the imagery of the divine agents has happily been largely preserved to us. It may be said, indeed, that this form of religion, which does not bind the worshipper to any artistic interpretation of the divinity, leaves the imagination more free to visualize its anthropomorphic aspects. To the primitive Greeks, whose outward objects of cult seem to have been of even a ruder and more exclusively natural class, epic lays and hymns supplied materials for this pictorial side, and this was no

doubt also the case with the Minoan Cretans, though, except for a few surviving extracts in classical writers, these have wholly perished. Had the "Minos" of Epimenides been preserved, more of these divine episodes would doubtless have been known—a reference, indeed, of the Syriac Commentator referred to above, shows, for instance, that the story of Attis and Adonis slain by the boar was shared by the young Cretan God. But happily, in default of written documents—at least such as can be interpreted—the imagery of Minoan religion is largely supplied from two sources. Some evidence can be obtained from the painted plaster remains on Palace walls and elsewhere as on the very important sarcophagus of Hagia Triada. Most of our knowledge, however, is due to a special class of gold signet-rings, bearing religious subjects, which, though evidently also used for practical purposes during their owner's lifetime, were regarded as his special *peculium* after death, and buried with him as a kind of passport to the world beyond.

A ring of this kind, as already noted, gave a clue to the discovery of the Temple-Tomb at Knossos. There we see depicted the advent of the Goddess in a bark that also conveys her pillar-shrine across an arm of sea to a new rock sanctuary.

But of capital importance in its bearing on Minoan religion is a massive gold signet-ring of identical form, which, as the result of a special journey to the West Coast of the Morea, I was able to secure and publish.<sup>1</sup> This had been found some years before by a peasant who was engaged in extracting blocks for building material from the larger of the bee-hive tombs, the remains of which were subsequently explored by Dr. Dörpfeld, who identified the locality with Nestor's Pylos. From the popular name hence given to the *tholos* it has been convenient to refer to the object as the "Ring of Nestor". The intaglio design on this signet, which is not later than the first half of the sixteenth century B.C., is of

<sup>1</sup> See my *Ring of Nestor: A Glimpse into the Minoan After-World* (Macmillan and Co., 1923), pp. 43 *sqq.*

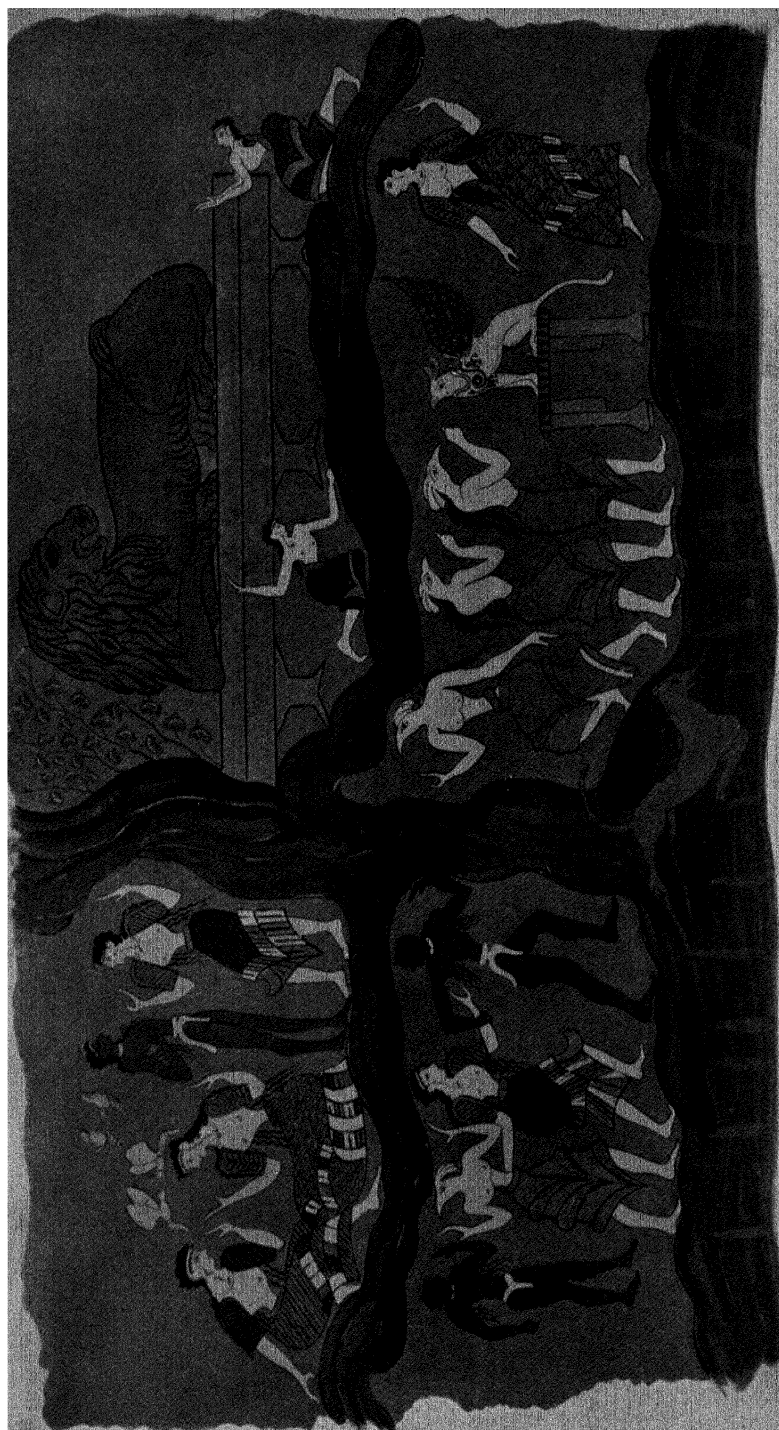


FIG. 8. Design on the "Ring of Nestor" translated into a painting of the "Miniature" class.

microscopic execution, containing no less than fourteen figures, and affords the solitary glimpse that we possess of the Minoan Underworld and of the admission of the departed into the realms of bliss.<sup>1</sup> It is divided into four compartments by a great tree, the Minoan counterpart of Yggdrasil, "the Tree of the World", and the treatment of the subject, as well as the details of the figures, so closely recalls the contemporary "Miniature Frescoes" of Knossos that Monsieur Gilliéron, the gifted reproducer of Minoan artistic monuments, at my request, translated it into colours



FIG. 9. Detail showing butterflies and chrysalises above Goddess, on "Ring of Nestor": enlarged 10 diams.



FIG. 10. Chrysalis above Goddess on Vapheio signet.

on the same lines as the wall-paintings. The monochrome copy of this, reproduced in Fig. 8, may give some idea of the religious importance of the scenes illustrated.

The key to the significance of the whole subject is supplied by the small objects above the seated figure of the Goddess (Fig. 9), here, as in other cases, engaged in converse with a female companion. Two butterflies are seen fluttering above the head of the Goddess, and above them again what can only be interpreted as two chrysalises. Professor Poulton, indeed, whose authority on this matter is of the very highest,

<sup>1</sup> *Palace of Minos*, iii. p. 145.

has pointed out that the tag at the side, answering to a girdle round the middle, and the head in an upward position, defines the chrysalises as those of the Garden White butterfly.<sup>1</sup>

The butterflies and chrysalises above the Goddess are naturally emblematic of resurgence, and certain other relics on which this discovery threw a new light go far to show that this symbolic idea played a large part in the Minoan conception of the chief divinity.

The popular belief that departed spirits could take the form of butterflies is of course of world-wide occurrence, and still survives in the folk-lore of Crete and modern Greece, where butterflies are "little Souls". But the chrysalis, as



FIG. 11. Gold chrysalis bead, Chamber-Tomb, Mycenae.

representing the intermediate stage of suspended life, seems to be new to religious symbolism. There is, nevertheless, more than one Minoan instance of symbolic gold chrysalises. The most naturalistic is a gold bead found by the British excavators in a chamber-tomb at Mycenae (Fig. 11).<sup>2</sup> Others of ruder form, suspended by short chains, occurred together with gold butterflies in the Third

Shaft Grave there (Fig. 12).

What, from its characteristic shape and prominent eyes, is undoubtedly the same chrysalis symbol as the gold bead (Fig. 11) appears, moreover, above the Goddess depicted in an ecstatic state produced by the fruit of her sacred tree on a gold signet-ring from the Vapheio Tomb (Figs. 10, 13 *a, b*). The tree stands by a baetylic pillar, and a branch has been pulled down for her, as on the Knossos signet, by her young male attendant. To the right, one of her small handmaidens, we may suppose, lies prone on a large Minoan shield, and above is a Double-Axe symbol illustrating the ritual character of the scene.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of London* (1924), lxxix. *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Wace in *Illustrated London News*, Feb. 24, 1923, p. 300. From Tomb 518 of the Kalkani Cemetery.

On the "Ring of Nestor" the double emblem, of resurgence and spiritual life—the chrysalises with the butterflies above—has an evident significance. In the space immediately to the right of the Goddess appears a youth with flowing hair,

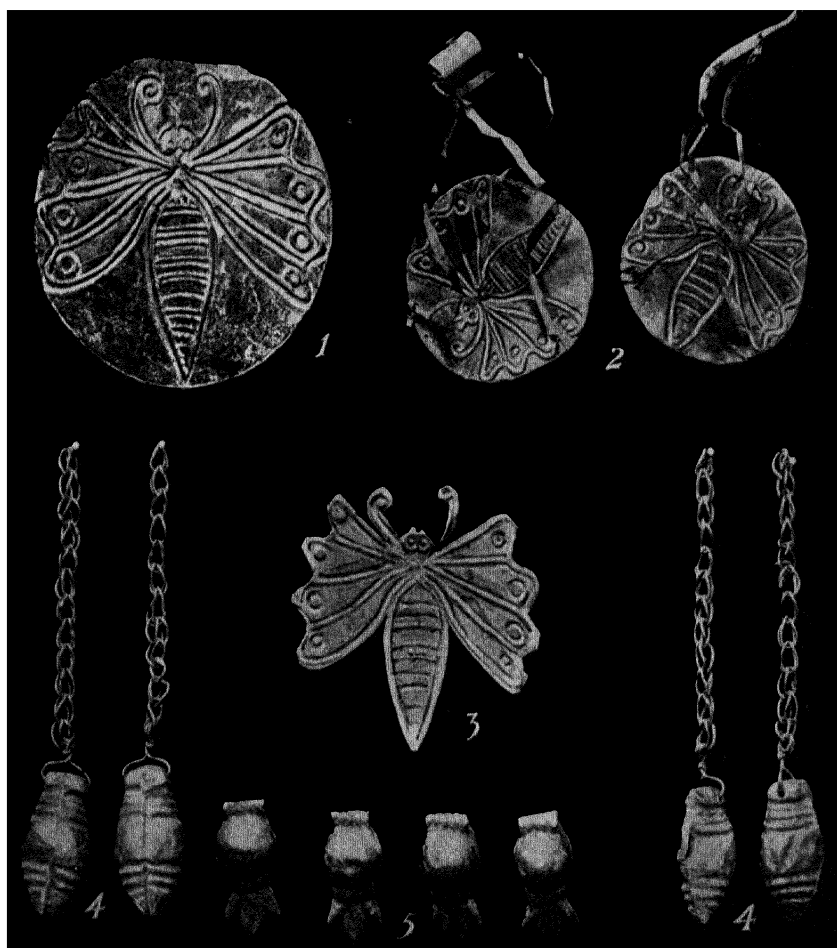


FIG. 12. Gold scales, butterflies, and chrysalises from Third Shaft Grave, Mycenae.

confronted with a short-skirted damsel, who faces him with both hands raised in an attitude of surprise. Have we not here, reunited by the life-giving power of the Goddess so clearly symbolized, a scene of reunion in the Land of the



Blest of a young couple whom death had parted? <sup>1</sup> In the next compartment, to the right of the trunk of the Tree of the World, the lion appears as in Egypt at the entrance to the Underworld, in this case on a kind of bench, tended by the two handmaidens of the Goddess. In the lower zone is a scene of initiation in which the same young couple are led by "griffin ladies" before the presiding inquisitor in the shape of a winged griffin seated on a throne, behind which the Goddess herself reappears.

A scene which in some respects may be regarded as the sequel to that shown in Fig. 13 *a* appears on a gold signet-



FIG. 13. *a*, Gold signet-ring from Vapheio Tomb, showing chrysalis above Goddess; *b*, Chrysalis as shown on signet (4 diams.).

ring from a Mycenae chamber-tomb shown in Fig. 14. The subject will be best understood if, as in some other cases, we regard it as divided into two separate scenes. To the right the Goddess, as in the parallel subject where the Double-Axe and chrysalis emblems appear in the field, is thrown into an ecstatic state by the fruit of her sacred tree, a branch of which is here again pulled down for her by the male attendant.

The other side of the subject depicts a similar figure in a mourning attitude, leaning over a little enclosure within which stands a small baetylic pillar, while from the upper

<sup>1</sup> See my interpretation, *Palace of Minos*, iii. pp. 152 *sqq.*, and *Ring of Nestor*, pp. 64, 65.

part of the balustrade is suspended a diminutive Minoan shield, seen in profile, clearly belonging to the youthful personage here interred. In the parallel design already described the shield refers to an adult warrior.

We seem in these cases, indeed, to have actual illustrations of an aspect of the religion so prominent in the later cult of Adonis and Attis, the child or favourite of the Goddess, cut off before his prime by some untoward accident which in Crete, as in Syria, seems also to have been due to a wild boar.

On another signet from Mycenae there is seen a standing



FIG. 14. Design on gold signet-ring from Mycenae (3 diams.).

figure of a youth armed with a spear laying his hand on the wrist of the seated Goddess. On the Knossian ring already described (Fig. 5) a similar spear-holding youth descends on his sacred obelisk. Elsewhere we see a boy with bow and arrow.

The motherly relationship of the Goddess is, in other cases, still more clearly emphasized. A beautiful example of this is supplied by the chryselephantine figurine of a boy-God in the act of adoration, which seems originally to have been grouped with the "Boston Goddess" in the same materials, who also wears a tiara (Fig. 15). A painted clay image of the Goddess, recently found in a tomb of the Mavro

Spelio Cemetery at Knossos,<sup>1</sup> shows her holding up her infant son, who is seen at full length with extended arms. But still more significant is a similar version of the Mother and

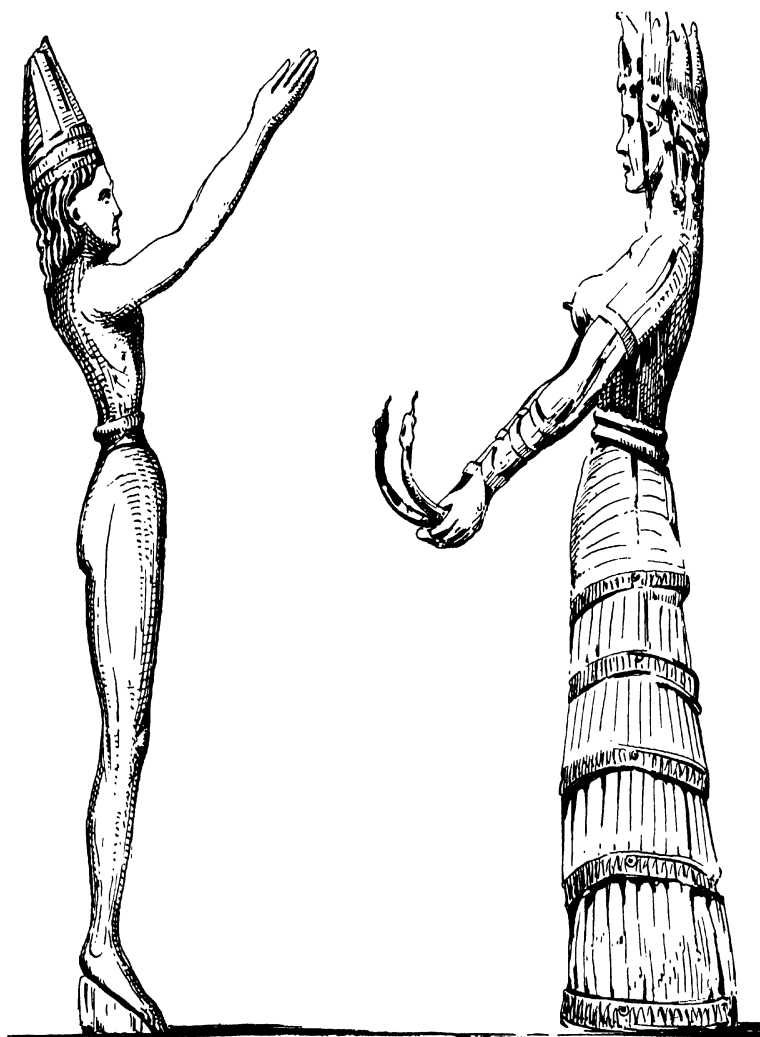


FIG. 15. Group of boy-God adoring Goddess. *Restored drawing by Monsieur E. Gilliéron, fils.*

Child on a gold signet-ring, obtained by me a few years

<sup>1</sup> See E. J. Forsdyke, *The Mavro Spelio Cemetery at Knossos* (*British School in Athens*, xxviii.), pp. 290, 291, and Pl. 21; and cf. *Palace of Minos*, iii. pp. 469, 470.

since from Thisbê in Boeotia, the scene on which inevitably suggests religious parallels of much later date. I cannot do better than here repeat my full description of the design on this remarkable relic (Fig. 16).

"The Goddess is seated on a throne with a back to it and cross lines between the legs that seem to betray the reaction of the 'camp-stool' type common in religious scenes both in frescoes and signets. She holds up in her left hand, as seen

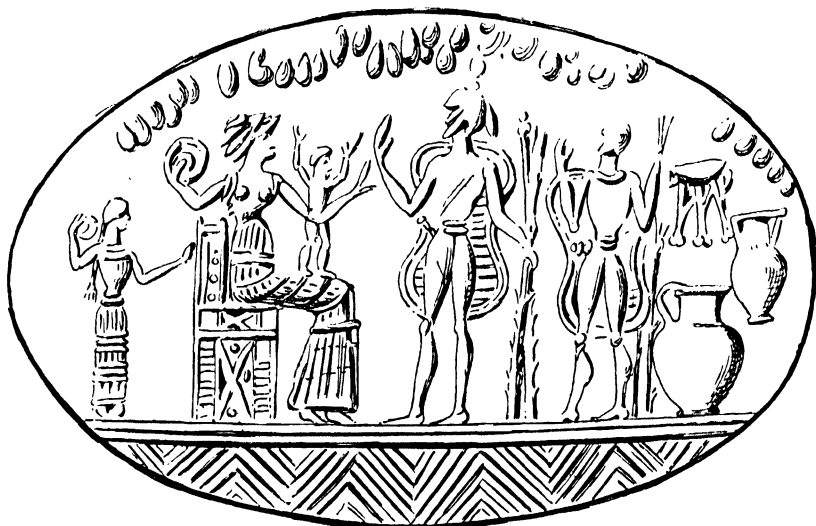


FIG. 16. Signet-ring of base gold from tomb, Thisbê, showing scene of adoration of Mother Goddess and Child.

on the bezel, what looks like a disk with a small central cup which in the impression forms a boss, and her girl attendant behind—one we may suppose of her usual twin *κοῦραι*—holds up a smaller object of the same kind in a similar manner. It seems probable that in this disk-like object with its central boss we must recognize a bronze cymbal, or, perhaps, two held together. The form in fact answers to that of the pair found by Dr. Xanthudides in the very late 'Cymbal-player's Tomb' at Mouliaṇà in East Crete, and very similar cymbals have been found in graves of the Egyptian Thebes. The Minoan Rhea finds here a new link with Cybelê, who also

frequently appears enthroned holding in one hand a *tympanum*.

"The Goddess holds out her other arm with open hand in response to the adoring gestures of the two male figures who are seen approaching her, while, on her knees, the Divine Child stands upright, supported behind by his Mother's outstretched arm and with both hands upraised to greet the worshippers.

"The two adorant figures, each of whom raises a forearm, are seen in the garb of warriors, wearing on their heads crested helmets, with cheek-pieces, and tightly girt with Minoan belts, beside which are seen the heads of daggers or short swords. In one case there is visible a cross strap descending from the shoulder, by which the shields of the 8-shaped type, though not long enough to cover the whole body, were slung on their backs. These shields show a ribbed under-surface. Though provided thus with defensive armour and the dirks, to demonstrate their heroic character, these two personages do not, as might have been expected, hold spears in their right hands. On the contrary, each grasps two budding stems—best seen in the case of the foremost figure—which must be certainly interpreted as some kind of vegetable offerings to the Goddess. Myrtle shoots with their aromatic odour, connected in their origin with 'myrrh', would be perhaps the most appropriate gift, especially when it is recalled that Myrrha, the mythical mother of Adonis, who was transformed into a myrtle bush, must be regarded as the old Cypriote religious equivalent of the Cretan Rhea. But the plant to which these delineations bear the most obvious resemblance is unquestionably the reed, and here again, as in the case of the cymbals, it is impossible not to recognize a singular community with the cult of Attis and Cybelê. The first day, in fact, of the great annual feast of these divinities, that marked the return of Spring—the 15th of March—was distinguished in the Roman Calendar as 'the entry of the reed', when men, women, and children as 'cannophori' carried reeds in procession.

"This religious usage was itself said to have been an allusion to the exposure of the new-born Attis in the reed beds by the river Gallos—where the babe was nurtured by aquatic creatures—and, following the example of Pharaoh's daughter, his discovery there by the Goddess. Though the myth takes variant forms and the folk-tales are naturally inconsistent, the root relationship of Cybelê or of the kindred Ma to Attis was that of Mother to Son. In a hymn he is twice referred to as the son of Rhea.

"Behind the second adorant on the signet is a group of three vessels, including a tripod cauldron of a type somewhat resembling that from the 'Tomb of the Tripod Hearth' at Knossos, but with rather longer legs, and, apparently, with the two handles not fixed on the rim but movable and hanging down. Below this is what seems to be a two-handled amphora, and a ewer with a single handle, recalling that from which the Goddess or an attendant is seen pouring liquid into a large metal jar on a gold bead-seal from Thisbê, and, again, on a seal-impression from the 'Archives' of Knossos. These vessels clearly represent substantial offerings made to some Treasury of the Goddess at the time of the annual Epiphany of the infant God.

"The whole scene is arched over above with conventional rocks which in this case may well be thought to indicate the sacred birth cave or grotto."

Nothing can be more remarkable than the parallelism that this whole scene presents with the Adoration of the Magi. It is sufficiently exemplified by the typical example of the sixth century A.D. given in Fig. 17. In the case of the Thisbê signet, indeed, the adjacent figures are in warrior guise, with shields and helmets in place of the oriental caps and breeks generally worn by the Magi. The number of the adorants, two, instead of three, is itself consistent with early Christian iconography.

The overhanging rocks in the Minoan version connecting the birthplace with a cave or rock-shelter itself inevitably recalls the Grot of Bethlehem—nor can we forget its former

association as recorded by St. Jerome. "Bethlehem", he says, "regarding which the Psalmist sings, 'the truth is sprung out of the Earth', was erstwhile shaded by the Grove of Thammuz, that is, of Adonis, so that, where first Christ cried as a child, the paramour of Venus was once bewailed."<sup>1</sup>

I may have already said enough to show that the higher aniconic cult and accompanying religious scenes of the Minoan world as preserved to us by pictorial representation, and both in Crete and the "Mycenaean" regions of Mainland Greece, by both natural and artificial sanctuaries, is part and



FIG. 17. Adoration of Magi on Christian ring-stone, VIth cent. A.D.

parcel of that of a more Eastern province which extended in ancient time through Asia Minor and Syria, and found, indeed, further affinities in the earliest Arabian worship.

Broadly comparing it with the religion of the Ancient Greeks it must be said that it had a more spiritual essence. From another aspect it had a more personal bearing. On the "Ring of Nestor", where the symbols of resurgence are seen above her head in chrysalis and butterfly shape, she has clearly the power of giving life beyond the grave to her worshippers. She was very near to her votaries. As is shown by a remarkable chryselephantine figurine found in Crete,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, *Ep. LVIII., ad Paulinum presbyterum*, c. 3 (*Corpus Scriptt. Eccles. lat. recensuit Isidorus Hilberg*, Part I. p. 532). Cf. *Palace of Minos*, iii. p. 476.

<sup>2</sup> Now in the Toronto Museum.

she could be conceived as partly at least in the masculine garb of the girl taureadors who assisted in carrying out the dangerous bull-sports held in her honour, and such a vision of her no doubt offered a very present aid to them in the times of their direst need. She guarded her children even beyond the grave. In the Temple-Tomb recently explored by me at Knossos the actual burial chamber of the departed ruler, with its central pillar, hewn itself in the rock, opens, as we have seen, into the pillar crypt below her upper sanctuary. Nor was this sepulchral guardianship confined only to higher dignitaries. In the "Tomb of the Double Axes", marked by her columnar form, the outline of the rock-cut grave of the departed warrior was elaborately carved in the shape of the sacred weapon. Here, indeed, we see a religious symbolism such as was never carried farther in Christian times.

So far as it has been possible to read the evidences of the old Cretan worship we seem to discern not only a pervading spiritual essence but something in its followers akin to the faith that for the last two millennia has moved the adherents of successive Oriental religions, Iranian, Christian, and Islamic. It involves a dogmatic spirit in the worshipper far removed from the true Hellenic standpoint, and it is interesting to note that the one outstanding expression of the attitude of "true-belief" is to be found in the rebuke of the Cretan prophet, that won St. Paul's approval, administered to those who would deny the immortality of Zeus. But the rebuke itself was due, as we have seen, to the failure to understand the resurrectional conception of the Minoan divinities which extended to the Great Mother. She herself, indeed, on a Thisbê bead-seal is seen in her character of Spring Goddess rising from the ground holding the three poppy capsules<sup>1</sup>—a pictorial scene that seems to have been later almost literally taken over by classical art.

May not the Minoan religion, as was the case with the parallel Oriental cults—including that of the kindred

<sup>1</sup> *The Ring of Nestor*, pp. 15, 16, and Fig. 16.



Thracian sectaries—have had its propagandist side? The question is inevitably raised by some remarkable remains associated with the small port of Niru Khani, a Minoan haven with remains of the ancient harbour works some seven miles east of that of Knossos.<sup>1</sup> Here a mansion excavated by the late Cretan Ephor, Dr. Xanthudides, and regarded by him as that of an archpriest, contained, besides signs of their actual manufacture, a store-room with double axes of the ritual kind, some of them over a metre in diameter, and other magazines literally stacked with tripod altars of painted terra-cotta.

The period represented by this mansion corresponds with that of the great Minoan expansion in Mainland Greece. The settlement itself was cut off from its hinterland by rugged ranges, but, on the other hand, the building in which these stores were found was placed actually near the head of a mole that ran out from the adjoining wharf and offered every facility for shipment. The inference is almost inevitable that we have here the evidence of an organized attempt to provide for the religious needs of co-religionists overseas. May there not even have been some actual propaganda *in partibus infidelium*?

In the internal disposition of the halls or “megara” of the private mansions themselves there are features that curiously anticipate later ecclesiastical arrangements. The head of the household, who had his seat in the principal chamber, would, indeed, according to the usual practice of primitive society, have performed the function of family priest. In the “megaron” of the “Royal Villa” at Knossos<sup>2</sup> the basilican features at once strike the eye. We have here not only the triple division of the body of the hall, but the raised “tribunal”, and the “exedra” in the central niche of which was set the seat of honour, like that of a Christian bishop.

But the discovery in connection with the Temple-Tomb of the House of Minos of what seems to have been the

<sup>1</sup> See, too, *Palace of Minos*, ii. Part I. pp. 280 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Palace of Minos*, ii. Part II. pp. 405 sqq.

residence of the high sacerdotal functionary who acted as its guardian carries these comparisons a step farther. The section here brought to light of what must be recognized as his private chapel shows "choir-stalls" on either side of what

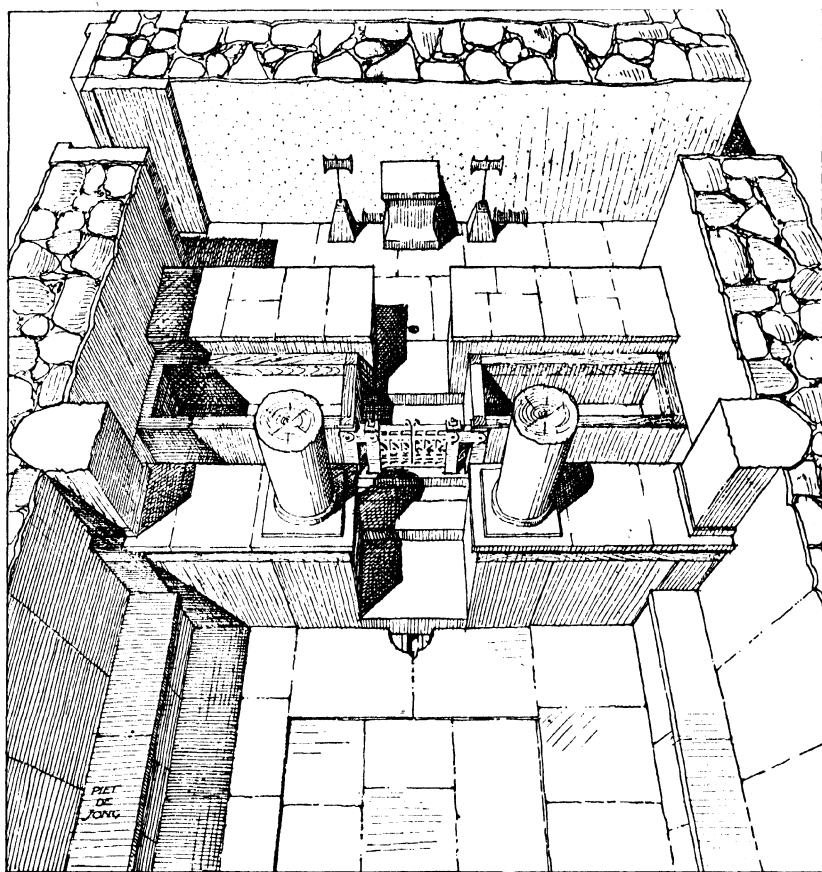


FIG. 18. Perspective plan of west section of High Priest's Chapel, Knossos, by Piet de Jong.

remains of the body of the hall, and beyond this an elaborate arrangement of a double chancel and inner sanctum. An outer balustrade with a central opening leads through an interspace with cists for offerings to an inner chancel originally shut off by double metal gates restored in Fig. 18. The inner sanctuary thus entered was backed by an altar,

flanked by two pyramidal bases, on which had stood the Sacred Double-Axe symbols of the cult.<sup>1</sup>

Greek religion had its mysteries, but the Gods of both sexes, more or less on a par, by no means stood in such a close personal relation as is indicated by the evidences of the Minoan cult. Their disunion marked by family and clannish feuds was as conspicuous as their multiplicity of form and attributes. In contrast to this, throughout the Minoan world, what appears to be the same paramount Goddess constantly reappears, varying, indeed, in action and vocation. A truer parallel, indeed, is presented by the local Baalim and their female equivalents of Semitic cult, the essence of the divinity being essentially the same. At times the Goddess stands in warlike guise, elsewhere she is the huntress, in one case, as we have seen, "Lady of the Sports". She is associated, as are the Hellenic divinities, with different living animals such as guardian lions and watch-dogs, deer and wild goats of the chase, swans and doves, and—both as a sign of domestic motherhood and of the awesome power in the Underworld—snakes, both harmless and noxious. That a process of differentiation had begun is probable enough, but wherever we are able to trace the actual symbols of the cult among these various impersonations the same ritual forms are seen constantly recurring, in particular, the Sacred Double Axe.

The general conclusion, as it seems to me, is that we are in the presence of a largely Monotheistic cult, in which the female form of divinity held the supreme place. It is, indeed, substantially the same form of religion as that so widespread, still at a later date, throughout the Anatolian and bordering Syrian regions. The Minoan Goddess is a sister form to Astartê, and the Syrian Goddess, to Ma, to Kybelê—identified with Rhea—and to other kindred divinities. And in the one case, as in the other, we have this female type associated, as son or as paramour or consort, with a young male satellite, such as is represented by Adonis, Kinyras, or Attis. The

<sup>1</sup> The High Priest's Chapel will be more fully described in the forthcoming concluding volume of my *Palace of Minos*.

orgiastic element so characteristic of this Eastern group is also here visible. We see the *Soma* of the Sacred Tree acting as the agent of spiritual possession on a series of the signet scenes above referred to and stirring the Goddess—or it may be in cases a votary who takes her place—to an ecstatic dance, at times perhaps, as in the case of the figure prone on the shield, to a Shamanistic trance. In the scene on the steatite “rhyton” from Hagia Triada we see, indeed, a harvesters’ rout of a more orgiastic nature led by a rustic Dervish who plays a primitive form of *sistrum*.

Surveying the whole field it may be confidently said that, so far as the evidence goes, of all these kindred religious systems, that of ancient Crete and of the Minoan world stands out as the purest and best. A certain moral ingredient—taken over, it may be, from Ancient Egypt—is perceptible in the idea of the weighing of the Soul in butterfly form evidenced by the gold scales from the Mycenae tomb, and by the scene on the “Ring of Nestor” where the deceased are led before the Griffin Inquisitor, enthroned before the Goddess. I will venture, indeed, to repeat a conclusion put forward elsewhere<sup>1</sup> and based on the whole range of evidence afforded by the now very considerable mass of Minoan monuments. “From the beginning to the end of Minoan Art, amongst all its manifold relics—from its earliest to its latest phase—not one single example has been brought to light of any subject of an indecorous nature.”

It is not necessary here to elaborate the contrast with classical art from its earliest period onwards. When in the other direction we examine the religious practices of Paphos or Hierapolis or the character of the associations in which Attis and Adonis stood to their divine mistresses the contrast is still more marked. The youthful male personage who is coupled with the Minoan Goddess stood to her, according to the persistent tradition of Rhea and the Cretan Zeus, in a filial relation and none other. On the early signets we see him as a youthful warrior or hunter, and in the beautiful

<sup>1</sup> *Palace of Minos*, ii. Part II. p. 279.

chryselephantine figure that seems to have been associated with the "Boston Goddess" he appears as a young boy, whose divinity is expressed by his tiara, in the act of adoration before his Lady Mother (Fig. 15). In the case of the painted terra-cotta image from the Mavro Spelio tomb, and again in the remarkable scene on the Thisbê signet (Fig. 16) he appears as an infant, held upright on his Mother's knees like the holy Babe of the later religion on the lap of the *Theotokos*, or the *Madonna*.

## XI

### THE ARYAN THEORY AS IT STANDS TO-DAY

By Sir ARTHUR KEITH, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.

IN the seventies of last century, when Sir James Frazer, in whose honour this lecture is given, was a student in the University of Glasgow, Max Müller's theory of the Aryans was receiving nasty knocks. That master of clear prose had captured popular imagination by the easy way he had settled what seemed to others a very difficult problem. The problem was to discover how a vast sea of speech—the Aryan sea<sup>1</sup>—had come into existence. The farthest shores of this sea lie in India; while its nearest limits are along our western coasts. The Aryan sea covers almost the whole of the continent of Europe and extends far enough into Asia to occupy an area almost equal to that of Europe. Max Müller's explanation was simple and attractive. In his mind's eye he pictured a small lake of Aryan humanity, which had existed long ago near the upper waters of the Oxus—north of Afghanistan and to the west of the Pamirs and of the Hindu Kush—a lake which overflowed from time to time, sending out wave after wave of Aryan-speaking humanity. The waves broke east and west—reaching the plains of India, the plateaus of Persia and of Armenia, and ultimately breaking over Europe—each succeeding wave pushing its predecessor farther towards the Atlantic. It was in this manner that Max Müller accounted for the existence of the series of kindred tongues which link

<sup>1</sup> This "sea" comprises the following languages: Celtic, Teutonic, Latin and derivatives, Albanian, Greek, Slavonic, Lithuanian, Armenian, Iranian, Indic and Tocharian (Chinese Turkestan).

our speech with that of the Punjab—over a distance of some 4500 miles.

### RACE AND SPEECH

In those mid-Victorian times this simple explanation of the origin of the Aryans and of the diffusion and differentiation of their speech was being subjected to a running fire of criticism. More especially was Max Müller blamed for confusing two different things—race and speech. A negro may speak an Aryan tongue; that does not make him an Aryan. The origin and spread of the races of Europe make one problem; the origin and spread of the languages they now speak present another. Max Müller indignantly denied that he had made any such mistake; when he used the word Aryan he referred only to speech—not to the speakers. Yet the charges levelled against him seem to have struck terror into the hearts of all subsequent students of Aryan origins. No sooner does the word Aryan escape from their lips or drop from their pens than they hasten to assure their hearers or readers that they refer only to speech, beliefs, or customs—as if words could exist without living mouths to utter them, beliefs without living brains to hold them, and practices without hands to execute them. Nay, we cannot separate the problems of race and speech. The origin of the inhabitants of Europe and of the tongues they speak are parts of one problem. And yet I admit, for the solution of this problem and for the sake of clear thinking, it is essential that we should have one name for the speech of Europe and another for its inhabitants.

### THE CAUCASIANS

If we accept Aryan as a name for the family of languages spoken between the Indus and the Atlantic, what name are we to give to the speakers? Are the nationalities and peoples scattered across the Aryan sea of languages sufficiently similar to be united within the same family of races? They are sufficiently similar, and there should be no doubt as to the

name which should be given to them, a name established by long usage—Caucasian. Caucasias, on the Eurasian frontier, lies almost in the heart of the great division of humanity we wish to particularize. We shall find as we proceed that the Aryan sea of languages is not quite conterminous with the Caucasian sea of humanity, but they are sufficiently co-extensive to assure us that we cannot solve the one problem without solving the other. The evolution of the family of Aryan tongues from a common ancestral speech, and the evolution of the family of Caucasian races from a single ancestral racial type, are different aspects of the great Indo-European puzzle.

### THE ORIGINAL ARYAN HOMELAND

The running fire of criticism made Max Müller less certain of another part of his theory. He had confidently placed the original Aryan home in the western valleys of the Pamirs; he reluctantly gave that home up, but stoutly maintained until the very last that it had been "somewhere in Asia". His opponents, who sought to transfer the Aryan cradle to Europe, were soon in the ascendant. A profound but cloistered student of tongues—Dr. Robert Gordon Latham—had broached this idea as early as 1862, but it was not until the last three decades of the nineteenth century, when German students joined in the Aryan chase, that scholars acquiesced in the possibility of Europe having bred her own tongues. At first German inquirers were content, like Latham, to place the Aryan cradle in Western Russia, but the more they investigated the more did they become convinced that North Germany—at least lands bordering on the Baltic—had the best claim to be considered the original home, not only of the Aryan family of speech, but also of the original Aryan people. The tall, fair long-heads of North-Western Europe—the Nordics as we call them to-day—were the original Aryans, and it was they who in the course of long ages spread abroad and gave the Caucasian family of humanity its varied forms of speech. Surveying the problem in 1890, Huxley gave his



verdict in favour of the European hypothesis, regarding that region of Russia which lies west of the Ural Mountains as the most likely centre of radiation of Aryan-speaking Norsemen. The European theory of Aryan origin still carries the day, but I notice that its most recent supporters—my good friends Prof. V. Gordon Childe, Prof. J. L. Myres, Mr. Harold Peake, and Prof. J. F. Fleure—to whose writings I gladly acknowledge my debt, transfer the Aryan cradle ever nearer to the verge of Asia. Ultimately I think they will have to cross the frontier altogether, for as things are shaping it seems to me as if Max Müller was to prove a true prophet in declaring that the Aryan cradle was in Asia. It is probable, I think, that it will turn out to have been not so far from the region he originally selected. On the other hand, another friend—Dr. P. Giles, Master of Emmanuel College—favours the Danubian amphitheatre south of the Carpathians as the most probable centre from which the various forms of Aryan speech radiated.

### THE FIRST COLONIZATION OF EUROPE BY CAUCASIANS

Since Max Müller's death at the end of last century many discoveries have been made which lead towards a solution of the Aryan problem. I will touch on the more significant of these discoveries. The evidence to my mind is now conclusive that Europe was colonized by Caucasians at a comparatively late date when reckoned according to the calendar used by geologists. The Caucasian pioneers began to appear in Europe in dribblets in an interval of the last ice-age—which if we count in years cannot well be less than 20,000 years ago. We do not know exactly where they came from; it could not have been from the West, for there lies the Atlantic; nor from the frozen North. They must have come from the South or, as I think most likely, from the East. They may have come both from Africa in the South and Asia in the East. The point is immaterial, for those early mammoth-hunting Caucasians—Cromagnons, and their contemporaries—are

sufficiently alike in structure of body that we must regard them as derivatives of a common stock whose evolutionary home we may presume to have been in Asia rather than in Africa.

### THE STATE OF WESTERN EUROPE, 3000 B.C.

We know how these early inhabitants of Europe obtained a subsistence and how they continued to live down to a date as late as 3000 B.C. They lived on the natural produce of land and shore. It needs a fertile hunting country to maintain one soul to the square mile all the year round. A tribe numbering a hundred needs at least a hundred square miles as its own territory for a bare subsistence. In the year 3000 B.C. the population of the British Isles was probably under 30,000; I doubt very much if the natural produce of soil and river could provide, summer and winter, sustenance for a greater number. The continent of Europe has an area of 3.75 million square miles; if we make the rather liberal allowance of five square miles for the support of each individual—man, woman, and child—we obtain a total population for Europe in the year 3000 B.C. of 750,000—three-quarters of a million. And now on the same area 475 millions of men, women, and children manage to live. How has this vast transformation been accomplished? Five hundred people are living on an area which 5000 years ago provided enough for only a single soul. The solution of this problem of increased populations seems to me to lie at the very root of the Aryan problem. It is, in truth, a problem of economics.

### LIFE IN THE EAST, 3000 B.C.

If this was the degree of penury and of darkness which brooded, some 5000 years ago, over the western shores of what is now the Aryan sea, what was then the state of human life in its eastern areas? The sun of civilization was already high in the eastern heavens. Modes of life had reached an advanced degree of elaboration; the civilized

world was already surprising in its extent. Cities had been built on the Indus and seaports established at its mouth; city life was already old in Mesopotamia. The great Gedrosian plateau—stretching from India to Mesopotamia<sup>1</sup>—the area now inhabited by Persians, Afghans, and Baluchi—had long ceased to be the home of hunters. There were civilized communities in the upper waters of the Tigris and Euphrates. In Egypt civilization had already passed through several cycles. Crete had established a sea-going traffic with Egypt and Asia Minor. There must have been ships on the Black Sea, for it is only by making this supposition that we can explain the spread of civilization to the plains of the Danube and of the Dnieper.

### THE ANTIQUITY OF AGRICULTURE

In the year 3000 B.C. the art of agriculture was already old in the East. As a result, the eastern end of the Aryan sea had become crowded with humanity, while its western end remained unexplored and very sparsely inhabited. Plainly, if there had been any continuous spread of humanity and of tongues at the early date of which we write, it could not have been from the empty spaces of the West towards the already crowded land of the East. Only when the West had learned from the East the rudiments of agriculture could it become a centre of active and continuous emigration. For in its essence agriculture is the art of raising repeated and ever-increasing crops of humanity from the soil. That knowledge, as we have seen, Western Europe did not acquire until a comparatively late date. It is useless, then, to seek for the Aryan cradle in the West; it must lie somewhere in the East, where, at an early period, humanity was multiplying exceedingly.

<sup>1</sup> A name is needed for that part of Asia which projects southwards between the Euphrates in the west and the Indus in the east. Here I have used the name given to a small part of the Asiatic empire of Alexander the Great to cover the area specified.

### WHERE DID MANKIND FIRST BEGIN TO TILL THE SOIL?

Discoveries are being made which, if they do not reveal the actual original Aryan home, do guide us in its direction. The excavations which are being carried out at Ur under the direction of Mr. Leonard Woolley, and at Kish under Prof. S. Langdon, and the still older explorations of Susa by M. de Morgan in the south-western corner of Persia, tell us very plainly that at the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C. agriculture in the lands to the north of the Persian Gulf had attained a high development and indeed was then already old. How old we can as yet only guess, but if we place its beginnings early in the sixth millennium B.C. we shall under-estimate rather than over-estimate the antiquity of the art which still provides the foundation of our modern civilization, and which has led to such a rapid increase of the population of the world.

### DISTRIBUTION OF THE CAUCASIAN STOCK IN THE EAST

Until the sandy wastes of Arabia, of the Sahara, and of Turkestan have been explored we cannot be certain of the source from which the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia derived their arts and crafts and their knowledge of crops and of dairies. We may feel certain, however, that wherever their knowledge may have come from, the original home of the Sumerians was not in lands lying to the south of Mesopotamia; they must have come from the higher lands to the north and east—probably from the Gedrosian plateau. The facial features of the early Sumerian inhabitants of Ur leave us in no doubt that they were members of the great Caucasian family of mankind. Before the beginning of the fourth millennium the Caucasian stock was already in occupation of the whole of that great tract of land which stretches from the Euphrates in the west to the Indus in the east. They were extending into India on the one hand and into Arabia on the other.

### THE INDO-AFRICAN BLACK BELT

Why do I say so decidedly that these Caucasians living on the Euphrates and on the Indus must have come from the North? I am guided by two circumstances. The first is this. So like are the peoples of North-Eastern Africa to those of the greater part of India that I must suppose, to explain this similarity, that at no very remote date a dark-skinned belt of humanity stretched across the southern world from Africa to India and beyond India into the distant East. My second reason is that people with pale skins and pronounced noses—be their heads long or round—have the area of their distribution now, and apparently always have had their area of distribution, to the north of the “black band”. At what date the Caucasian stock began to invade the black lands of the South we cannot tell; it was certainly long before the oldest records which have been uncovered so far by the excavator’s spade.

### HOW SPEECH AND RACE EXTEND THEIR TERRITORIES

Critics may at once reply that if the early invaders of the black band were Caucasian, their speech was certainly not Aryan. I would answer that when one race invades the territory of another, three things may happen: (1) the invaders may completely replace the native population and establish their own speech, customs, and beliefs; (2) the invaders may establish their speech and customs but lose their birthright of race by intermarriage with the population native to the land invaded; that is what happened eastwards of the Indus; (3) the invaders may retain their racial birth-right but accept from the conquered a new speech and a novel manner of living; that is what I suppose to have happened in Mesopotamia. The Caucasians who crossed into Semitic territory acquired the speech of their new subjects. The true Beduin Arab is a Caucasian speaking an adopted Semitic tongue. Between the Semitic and Aryan tongues may lie a great

evolutionary gulf, but that is not true of men who speak these two tongues; they are first cousins.

# THE EASTERN FRONTIER OF THE ARYAN TONGUE AND OF THE CAUCASIAN STOCK

I have led you on an imaginary journey to the East in search of the Aryan cradle because I believe that Max Müller is to prove right: that cradle was situated in Asia. Before we can make further progress, however, it is necessary to explore not only the eastward frontiers of Aryan speech, but also of the Caucasian type of mankind. We know much more of the eastern frontier than was known to Max Müller and his contemporaries. For this most valuable increase of knowledge we are indebted to Sir Aurel Stein<sup>1</sup> much more than to any other explorer. If we begin in the south and work northwards, we must first follow the valley of the Indus. Until the Indus bends eastwards behind the Himalayas it marks the farthest limits of the pale-skinned Caucasian type, but not, of course, of the Aryan tongue; that spreads far into India. At and beyond the bend of the Indus we find Aryan-speaking Caucasians on both banks until the Tibetan frontier is being approached, when the Caucasian type gives place quite abruptly to the Mongolian type. All the tribes living in the southern valleys of the Karakoram and of the Hindu Kush are unmistakable Caucasians and their speech is Aryan. In the upper valleys of the Oxus and of the Pamirs we still meet Aryan-speaking Caucasians; they have the same facial features, nearly the same colouring of skin, and the same size and shape of body as the people of the upper Indus, but they are round-headed—not long-headed as the latter are. They are people of the same race, only those in the south have narrow heads of

<sup>1</sup> Sir Aurel Stein. Reports on anthropological data of his three Expeditions—1903, 1906, 1916—were prepared by T. A. Joyce and appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, xxxiii. (1903), p. 305; xl. (1912), p. 450; lvi. (1926), p. 105. See also my Report on Ancient Skulls brought back by Sir Aurel Stein, *ibid.* lix. (1929), p. 1. Also *Nature*, cxxi. (1928), p. 555.

medium length and those of the Pamirs have short heads of medium width.

### THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF CHINESE TURKESTAN

North of the Pamirs comes the opening into that vast mid-Asiatic basin, Chinese Turkestan. Without a doubt a very ancient civilization lies buried under the dusty deserts of this wide and long valley, leading eastwards to Mongolia, China, and Japan. Sir Aurel Stein found definite evidence that the inhabitants of Chinese Turkestan had at one time been Aryan speakers. The prevailing type in the western part of the basin—in Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan—is now of the Caucasian type, but farther east the Mongolian type prevails. Even in the earlier centuries of our era, when the correspondence of the inhabitants and traders of Chinese Turkestan was conducted in an Aryan tongue, the inhabitants in the eastern part were not Caucasian but Mongols. It is a most unexpected combination to find Mongolian features linked to an Aryan speech. On the other hand, Caucasian features associated with a Mongolian (Ural-Altaic) form of speech is an old-established and well-recognized combination. It is illustrated by the modern Turks, whose original home lay near Chinese Turkestan. The Turk is racially a Caucasian, linguistically a Tartar or Mongol. In the eleventh century they set out from Central Asia to make their home in Asia Minor, thus driving an isthmus across the great Aryan sea of tongues. Bands of the true Mongolians have at different times settled amongst Caucasian neighbours in Eastern and South-Eastern Russia, and still retain plain masks of their racial origin.

### THE ARYAN AND CAUCASIAN FRONTIERS DO NOT CORRESPOND IN THE NORTH OF EUROPE

Following the Aryan frontier towards the north we find a state of matters which is both interesting and instructive for

the student of human origins. Finland and Esthonia are inhabited by a fair Caucasian people, but like the dark-haired Turks they speak a Mongolian (Finno-Ugric) tongue. In Baltic lands Nordic peoples live side by side, one speaking a Finno-Ugric, the other an Aryan tongue. Canon Taylor, whose studies of the Aryan problem are deservedly still held in high esteem, was of opinion that the Aryan and Finno-Ugric families of speech would ultimately be traced back to a common origin. The fact that on the northern and eastern frontiers of the Aryan world we find peoples of Caucasian type speaking Asiatic tongues seems to me to support his opinion, and also to favour those who seek to trace Aryan and Mongolian tongues from a common source.

#### SUMMARY OR ARGUMENT

Having made a cursory journey along the circuit of the Aryan world, it is now time to return to the West in order that I may knit together the scattered threads of my argument. I began by a brief outline of Max Müller's contention that the origin of the Aryan tongue and of the Aryan-speaking peoples was to be sought for in Asia, somewhere in Turkestan—between the Caspian and the Pamirs. It was then necessary for me to specify the directions in which our knowledge has increased since Max Müller's time—our new knowledge of the first arrival of men of the Caucasian type in Europe and the condition in which these men lived down to, and indeed after, the date 3000 B.C. I then led you to the East in order that we might note that everything pertaining to our modern civilization, with its consequent great increase of population, was there moving at least 2000 years ahead of the backward state then prevailing in the West, and that therefore the theory that places the cradle of Aryanism—in both tongue and folk—in North-Western Europe, or indeed in any part of Europe, has become untenable. As the discovery of agriculture bears so directly on the propagation and spread of peoples and tongues, it was necessary for me to review the



evidence bearing on the focus from which a knowledge of this art spread abroad. The evidence, such as it is, plainly suggests that the focus was on or near the Gedrosian plateau and therefore not so far from the Aryan centre postulated by Max Müller. I had then to touch on the eastern frontier in order to remind you (1) that the Aryan tongue had spread eastwards into Chinese Turkestan as well as into India, far beyond the limits of the Caucasian stock, and (2) that there were Caucasian peoples in Western Asia and in Northern Europe who were not Aryan speakers. The racial and linguistic frontiers do not correspond.

#### WHAT THE ARYAN THEORY HAS TO EXPLAIN

How then does the Aryan theory stand to-day? This theory, if it is right, must explain two series of facts: (1) it must explain how it has come about that the population of Europe when surveyed from north to south falls into three bands or zones—a fair zone in the north which includes both long and round-headed Caucasians; a southern band of dark-complexioned long-heads; and an intermediate zone of round-heads, usually brown- or black-haired; (2) the theory must explain how the Aryan tongue became spread over Europe and why it has become broken up into its various regional forms. The theory must also explain the evolutionary relationship of the peoples and languages of Europe to each other and to those of Asia. It is my contention that the theory which best explains all these facts traces the modern population of Europe, and the tongues they speak, to Asia beyond the Caspian Sea. The theory is really a resuscitation of that promulgated by Max Müller seventy years ago.

#### ORIGIN OF THE TRIPLE ZONE

In Europe there is a triple zone of peoples—Mediterranean in the south, Alpines in the middle, and Nordics in the north. Now at the Asiatic end of the Caucasian area we found a

somewhat similar order—a dark-complexioned, long-headed people in the south; a round-headed, lighter-complexioned people in the middle, but nowhere in Asia is repeated the third or fair zone of Europe. But let us try to restore the distribution of Caucasian humanity to the state which it was in when its pioneers first appeared in Europe. They began to appear in the West during a remission in the last ice-age. If the fair-haired stock was in existence then, which we have every reason to believe was the case, what part of Asia should we expect it to occupy? Let us conceive, for a moment, that the climatic conditions of the last ice-age were to return and that the ice-sheet in the Arctic circle were again to descend over Northern and Central Europe. The Lapps, and other Mongolian peoples who fringe the Arctic circle, would be driven southwards, with the fair-haired Caucasian zone in front of them. The movement, however, would not be a direct migration towards the South. Owing to the ice-cap descending much farther in Europe than in Asia, the retreat would entail a wheeling or flanking movement towards the East as well as the South. At the climax of the glacial movement we should find the fair-haired zone had been moved into Asia, south of the Urals. We should then have in prehistoric (late Pleistocene) Western Asia, just as in modern Europe, a Caucasian humanity arranged in a triple zone—one of dark-complexioned and long-headed people in the south, another of dark-haired and round-headed in the middle, a third of fair-haired and long-headed folk farther to the north. When we have to explain the present distribution of racial types in Europe, the theory which best fits the facts known to us is that which assumes that the Caucasian colonization of Europe was effected from Asia, and that before the westward migratory movement began the Caucasian stock in Western Asia was already arranged, as now in Europe, in a triple zone from south to north.

## THE DIFFUSION OF ARYAN SPEECH

Thus the Caucasian world of humanity was established at a very remote date. Mankind in all parts of the earth was then still dependent on the crumbs which fell from Nature's table for a sustenance. We have now to consider the solution of the linguistic problem. Where was the Aryan tongue evolved? How did it spread across the sea of Caucasian humanity? How did it become broken up into an infinite multitude of dialects—which in the course of time have developed into a family of languages? The circumstances which brought about the diffusion of the Aryan tongue amongst peoples of the Caucasian stock must have had a compelling force behind them—a power of life and death. Now, there is only one set of conditions which could have exercised such a power—the conditions which arose when the discovery of agriculture had been made. Converging lines of evidence lead us to conclude that this discovery, which opened a completely new epoch in the long history of humanity, was made somewhere in South-Western Europe, and if not by a Caucasian people, then by one living near the Caucasian frontier. If we suppose that a knowledge of the arts of agriculture reached tribes of Aryan-speaking, resolute Caucasians living in Transcaspania about the beginning of the fifth millennium or even of the sixth millennium B.C., then we have the ideal Aryan cradle for which Max Müller searched and thought he had found. As the arts of agriculture became diffused and the peoples who adopted them multiplied, we can understand how stock and speech spread abroad. As in the modern theory of light which holds that propagation is both particulate and undulatory, so it is in the propagation of tongues. The Aryan speech spread as those who spoke it spread; it also passed as part of a cultural wave from people to people. The Aryan speech from being a local dialect has become the mental coinage of one-third of the total population of the globe. England's early adoption

of industrialism led to a world-wide distribution of her trade; an early adoption of agriculture by an Aryan-speaking Caucasian people gave their tongue an advantage over the dialects of all neighbouring tribes who strove to remain hunters.

#### THE ANCIENT ROUTES WHICH LED FROM ASIA TO EUROPE

One other discovery of the present century bears directly on the Aryan problem and deserves mention here. Archaeologists have uncovered the older cultures of Europe and the paths along which they have spread. There were three routes leading from Eastern Asia to Western Europe: (1) the Southern route along the Mediterranean giving access to Spain, Brittany, the British Isles, and ultimately Scandinavia; (2) there was the Northern or Steppe route passing through Russia and Poland to Baltic countries; (3) there was the Middle or Danubian route leading to Belgium and neighbouring lands. The Southern route lay along the dark-complexioned zone, the Middle route through the Alpine zone, while the Northern route lay in the fair zone.

Between these main routes were many criss-cross passages. I do not think anyone has suggested that the original Aryan tongue spread westwards along the Southern route; the Middle route has had and still has its advocates; but most have seen reason to prefer the Northern route through the fair zone as the highway for the spread of Aryan-speaking conquerors. Probably it will be found that both Middle and Northern routes were used by westernward-moving Aryanism. There have been, of course, repercussions—movements from the west towards the east and more particularly vigorous and powerful movements of men, culture, and speech from north to south, rarely from south to north. But these repercussion and criss-cross migrations represent late movements—movements which were engendered by the increase of numbers which followed the arrival of a knowledge of agriculture in the north and west of Europe.

## SIR JAMES G. FRAZER

Such, then, is the state in which I conceive the Aryan theory to be in at the present time. My audience may ask: What has a discussion of this problem to do with the great scholar we desire to honour—one of the greatest of our age—Sir James G. Frazer? Let me explain how I conceive he is related to the subject of my lecture. He is a master mariner—one who, during a long, prosperous, and industrious lifetime, has sailed his ship in all the linguistic seas of the world. From these living seas he has dredged a rare harvest of myth, belief, custom, and folk-lore—flotsam and jetsam which have drifted down to us from the childhood of humanity and which no one heeded until he put to sea. And now that rare harvest of a lifetime has become enshrined for all the world to read and study in the well-thumbed volumes of *The Golden Bough*. And of all the linguistic seas across which Sir James Frazer has drawn his dredge none have yielded so rich a harvest as the Aryan sea, the origin of which I have sought to explain in this lecture given in his honour.

Nor can I permit this occasion to slip by without acknowledging my indebtedness to another graduate of Glasgow University and also an old friend—Colonel L. A. Waddell.<sup>1</sup> In recent years he has collected and discovered new evidence which favours the derivation of the population of the British Isles directly from Asia. We Scots are, he maintains, of Phoenician origin. My chief regret is that I cannot accept Colonel Waddell's theory whole-heartedly. The origin of the Scots and of the tongues they speak and have spoken in past time seems to me not an isolated problem, as it does to Colonel Waddell, but part of the great dual problem—the origin of the great Caucasian family and its variegated forms of speech.

<sup>1</sup> *The Phoenician Origin of the Britons, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons*, 1924.









