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STONE CULTS AND VENERATED STONES IN THE GRAECO-TURKISH AREA.

THE veneration of stones seems to have been world-wide at an early stage in religious development, and has left traces everywhere in the magical and 'folklore' practices of civilized peoples. Over the Semitic area stone worship, as such, survived later and more generally than among peoples more prone to anthropomorphism; and Islam, so far from being able to displace it, tacitly sanctioned it by allowing the reverence paid already by pagan Arabs to the Black Stone of the Kaaba to be perpetuated on the rather far-fetched hypothesis that the angel Gabriel had brought it to Mecca.¹

Christianity, somewhat in the same way, has permitted or encouraged the paying of reverence to stones associated by tradition with saintly personages, the Stone of Unction at Jerusalem being a typical example. In both the great religions of the Near East the arbitrary association of certain stones with sacred persons and events has been allowed to replace or mask the more primitive idea of worshipping stones as fetishes with independent power.

Side by side with cults so masked by orthodoxy exist others of a purely secular sort, not necessarily more ancient chronologically, though more openly primitive in spirit, as magic and witchcraft are more primitive than religion.

The present paper is an attempt to bring together from what may be called roughly the Graeco-Turkish area, some instances of stones venerated independently of religion and often indiscriminately, by Christians and

¹ Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 297; cf. Burton, *Pilgrimage*, iii. 158, n. 176 n., and Ray's *Collection of Voyages*, ii. 163.

Mahomedans in common, and of others brought to a greater or less degree within the pale of Islam or of Christianity: those of the second category, it will be noted, have frequently a more or less exact prototype, which to some extent sanctions their veneration, in the important holy-places of the religion concerned. Whether from contamination, *i.e.* from the interaction of Christian and Mahomedan ideas over the area in question, or independently, *i.e.* from the original prevalence of similar ideas among the populations concerned, the developments of these stone-cults in both religions will be found closely parallel.

Venerated stones fall into two main groups, which to some extent overlap: those of the first class are selected for their natural qualities, especially their material, those of the second for their shape or for work upon them. An intermediate link is formed by stones bearing 'miraculous' marks or imprints, presumably natural and accidental, which are generally accounted for by legends bringing them into connection with venerated personages.¹

I.—NATURAL STONES.

A.—STONES SELECTED FOR THEIR NATURAL QUALITIES.

To the first class apparently belongs what we may consider the prototype of venerated stones in Islam, the Black Stone of the Kaaba; this seems to be an aerolith and is built into the Holy House in fragments. Though it is supposed, and with every probability, to be the cultus-object of the idolatrous pre-Islamic Arabs at Mecca, all *hadjis* piously kiss it as part of the pilgrimage.² Another sacred stone, on which the Prophet is supposed to have sat, exists in a mosque at Medina. It is reputed to cure sterility.³

For instances of stones venerated by Eastern Christendom for their material, we may cite the miraculous alabaster stone seen at Angora by Schiltberger (c. 1400),⁴ and mentioned also by later travellers.⁵ This

¹ The extraordinary ease with which any peculiarity of a stone may be so construed as to bring it into relation with a local saint is exemplified by the case of a stone seen by Wheeler at the door of the church of S. Andrew at Patras, which 'being struck by another stone' sent out 'a stinking Bituminous Savour.' This was attributed to its having been the seat of the judge who condemned the saint. (*Journey into Greece*, 294.)

² It would be interesting to know whether the 'stone from Mecca' built into the mosque at Hassan-dede in Cappadocia received similar reverence (Crowfoot in *J. R. Anthr. Inst.* xxx. 308).

³ Goldziher in *Archiv für Religionsw.* xiv. 308.

⁴ Ed. Penzel, 85.

⁵ Tournefort, *Voyage*, Letter XXI.; Lucas, *Voyage dans la Grèce*, Amsterdam, 1714, i. 111; Pococke, *Descr. of the East*, ii. 89; M. Walker, *Old Tracks and New Landmarks*, 71, cf. 65.

stone was cut in the shape of a cross and built into a church, the miracle being that it 'burnt' *i.e.* was translucent in sunlight;¹ it was credited also with healing powers. In spite of its shape it was the centre of a pilgrimage in which Moslems participated.

The selection of these stones for veneration evidently depends primarily on their unusual material. In other cases colour plays a part. Yellow stones preserved in two mosques at Constantinople (the Ahmedyeh² and the Yeni Valideh³) are held to be charms against jaundice.⁴ Analogous is the use of white stones as milk-charms,⁵ of which the semi-opaque prehistoric gems of Melos and Crete offer an excellent example.⁶ A plain white marble slab built into a church on the Cyzicene Peninsula is credited with the same property, scrapings of it being drunk in water by anxious mothers.⁷

B.—PIERCED STONES.

Natural pierced stones and rocks are used superstitiously all over the Near East. In the Taurus, near a medicinal hot spring traditionally connected with S. Helena, is a natural pierced rock bearing, at a distance, a strong resemblance to the figure of a man leaning on a stick. This is supposed to represent a shepherd turned to stone by the curse of S. Helena, and Greeks and Turks who make use of the healing powers of the spring, pass through the hole in the rock as part of their cure.⁸ Near Caesarea Mrs. Scott-Stevenson was shewn 'a large circular stone with a hole in its centre' to which 'the natives bring their children soon after they are born, and pass them through the hole in order that they may learn to speak

¹ The 'Yanar Tash' near Caesarea and the thin, semitransparent marble of the bishop's tomb at Nicaea are 'miracles' of the same unexciting kind, apparently not exploited as cures. Another 'burning stone' was shewn in the Parthenon at Athens, both before and after the Turkish occupation, with an appropriately varied legend (Martoni, in *Ath. Mitth.* xxii. 429; Gálland, *Journal*, i. 38; Guilletière, *Athènes*, 197).

² Carnoy and Nicolaïdes, *Folklore de Constantinople*, 99 f.

³ Evliya, *Travels*, tr. von Hammer, ii. 83: it must be touched by the patient three times on a Saturday.

⁴ The connection between the yellow colour and the yellow disease is obvious (cf. V. de Bunsen, *Soul of a Turk*, 156 f.) Similarly in Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, 155, yellow is symbolic of (malarial) fever, red of chickenpox (κόκκινοι).

⁵ Also blue objects, on account of the relation between the words for blue (γαλάζιος) and milk (γάλα).

⁶ *Ridgeway Essays*, 167.

⁷ Hasluck, *Cyzicus*, 27; cf. below, p. 69

⁸ I. Valavanis, *Μικρασιατικά*, 102 f.

early.'¹ Near Everek in the same district is a natural pierced rock which is traversed by persons suffering from coughs,² and barren women make a similar use of a natural arch near the summit of Parnassus.³ At Gallipoli fever-patients pass through a natural hole in the rock beneath the lighthouse.⁴ At Arta in western Greece a pierced stone called *Ζαρόπετρα* is similarly used, with the familiar rag-tying rite, by Turks and Jews.⁵

In Turkish Athens an artificial passage in the rock (called *τρύπιο λιθάρι*) above the Stadium, was similarly used for superstitious purposes, various offerings being made to the presiding spirit.⁶ Similar pierced-stone cults are cited from Bosnia;⁷ all, including the Cyprian cults discussed below, depend on the supposed magic virtue of pierced objects, which seems to be world-wide.

The supposed virtue of holed stones, as of other traversable pierced objects, is probably bound up with the conception of holes as 'entrances' or 'new starts.' All entrances, *quâ* beginnings, are regarded as critical points for good or evil. A sick person may be thought to 'change his luck' by the act of passage alone.

In the case of sacred objects which are acknowledged to possess beneficent influence, it is obvious that the 'change of luck' will be a change for the better. Moreover, the patient at the moment of passing through is exposed to the beneficent influence from all sides.

'Passing through' having once become familiar as a form of ritual in connection with objects admittedly sacred, a natural, if illogical, confusion leads to the assumption that 'going through holes is lucky,' and rocks and stones or other objects capable of being so traversed tend to become respected and often to accumulate sacred traditions.

In cases where the hole is not large enough to admit a person, a

¹ *Our Ride through Asia Minor*, 206. Is this a (giants') millstone (*μυλόπετρα*) promoted to a 'Stone of Speech' (*ὀμιλῶ* = speak)? Sillier things have happened.

² Carnoy and Nicolaïdes, *Trad. Pop. de l'Asie Mineure*, 338.

³ From Mr. Cole of the Lake Copais Company.

⁴ Constantinides, *Καλλιπολις*, 76.

⁵ Byzantios, *Δοκίμιον τῆς Ἀρτης*, 367: ἐν αὐτῇ φέροντες διαβιβάζουσιν χάριν ἰάσεως τοῦς ἀσθενεῖς αὐτῶν ἐγκαταλιμπάνοντες (!) πᾶν αὐτῶν εἶδος φορέματος ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ θέσει. The nature of the aperture (natural or artificial) in this stone, is not stated. The stone itself is 2'00 m. high, and 1'00 m. broad.

⁶ Hobhouse, *Travels*, i. 325; Dupré, *Voyage à Athènes*, 36; Kambouroglous, *Ἱστορία Ἀθηναίων ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας*, 224.

⁷ *Wiss. Mitth. aus Bosnien*, iv. 434 f.

smaller object may be passed through, and, having absorbed the virtue of the sacred object, transfer it by close juxtaposition to the supplicant. Thus at the grave of Tchetim Tess Baba, an *abdal* or 'fool-saint' buried at Monastir, both head- and foot-stones are pierced with holes. Women desirous of children pass through these holes two eggs which they afterwards eat. Wounds which refuse to heal are cured by a bandage which has been through the same process.

C.—STONES WITH NATURAL MARKINGS.

Stones bearing miraculous markings, especially footprints, find prototypes for Islam in the footprints of Abraham at Mecca,¹ of the Prophet at Constantinople² and Jerusalem,³ of the Prophet's camel on Sinai,⁴ and of his mule at Medina.⁵ The imprints of the foot of Hadji Bektash at Croia and Shiah in Albania,⁶ and of his hand at Sidi Ghazi,⁷ of Sheikh Shaban's hand at his *tekke* near Caesarea,⁸ and of Demir Pehlivan Baba's in Bulgaria⁹ are local relics of the same sort. The hoofprint of the prophet Khidr's horse was formerly shewn at a *tekke* in Pontus.¹⁰ The well-known imprint of the hand of Mahommed II. in S. Sophia is perhaps the best-known instance. This, according to Elworthy, has attained to a cult among the vulgar by a confusion of Mahommed the Conqueror with Mahommed the Prophet, and is invoked for protection against the Evil Eye.¹¹ The 'sweating column' in the same mosque owes its curative powers to the hole made in it by the finger of the Prophet Khidr.¹²

In Eastern Christianity we may perhaps regard the 'Footprint of

¹ Burckhardt, *Arabia*, i. 267.

² *Jardin des Mosques* in Hammer-Hellert, *Hist. Emp. Ott.* xviii. 57. It was deposited in the Mosque of Eyoub by Sultan Mahmoud I. (1730-54).

³ Le Strange, *Palestine*, 136.

⁴ Pococke, *Descr. of the East*, i. 146.

⁵ Goldziher, *Arch. f. Religionsw.* xiv. 308.

⁶ Degrand, *Haute Albanie*, 240; Ippen, *Skutari*, 77.

⁷ Mordtmann, *Σύλλογος ΚΠ., Παραπτ. τοῦ θ. τόμου*, xv.

⁸ Carnoy and Nicolăides, *Trad. Pop. de l'Asie Mineure*, 212.

⁹ Kanitz, *Bulgaria*, 536.

¹⁰ Anderson, *Studia Pontica*, i. 10. Similar 'hoof-prints' are shewn as those of the horse of the saint Ali Baba at Tomoritz in Albania (Baldacci, *Bull. R. Soc. Geogr.* 1915, 978).

¹¹ Elworthy, *Evil Eye*, 251.

¹² *Q. D. Palestina vereins*, xvii. 303. This column has also a Christian legend connecting it with S. Gregory (Lethaby, *S. Sophia*, 102).

Christ,' formerly shewn to pilgrims in the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem¹ as the prototype of this class of venerated stones. In modern Greece a reputed hoofmark in the rock at Philiatra (in Triphylia) is attributed to the mule of the Virgin, who appeared there,² and in Crete a similar mark is pointed out as the imprint of S. Nicetas' winged horse,³ another as that of the horse of the secular hero Digenes.⁴

The imperishable nature and obvious interpretation of such stones, if characteristically marked, tends to secure their local veneration regardless of changes in the religion of their *clientèle*. The footprint in the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, earlier attributed to Christ, is obviously the same as that held under Mussulman administration to be that of the Prophet, and probably served in Jewish times as that of Abraham.⁵ A 'footprint' in Georgia is held by various parties at one and the same time to be that of the legendary queen Tamar, of a Christian priest flying from persecution, and of a Mahommedan saint who converted the district to Islam. It is thus venerated by all, irrespective of their creed.⁶

II.—WORKED STONES

Stones venerated on account of work upon them are divided into two main categories, shaped stones and inscribed stones.

A.—STATUES AND RELIEFS.

Stones carved with figures, *i.e.*, statues and reliefs, need hardly be considered on the Mahommedan side, since the prohibition of images by Islam has taken deep root in the popular mind. Exceptional, if not unique, is the cult formerly attaching to a headless Roman statue still preserved in a fountain outside the Valideh Mosque at Candia, which was supposed to represent a Moslem warrior saint turned to stone by Christian

¹ Petrus Diaconus, in Geyer, *Itin. Hieros.* 107: 'Super saxum posuit dominus Iesus pedem suum quando eum Symeon accepit in ulnis, et ita remansit pes sculptus, ac si in cera positus esset.' Another footprint of Christ was shewn on the Mount of Olives (Didron, *Christian Iconography*, ii. 217).

² Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, No. 192.

³ *Ibid.* No. 199.

⁴ *Ibid.* No. 120.

⁵ A pre-Crusading Moslem account (1047) of the Rock says that the footprint was then said to be that of Abraham (Le Strange, *Palestine*, 128).

⁶ Palgrave, *Ulysses*, 74.

magic.¹ Popular feeling among Mussulmans is, as a rule, against images ; there is a tradition that angels will not enter where there is a semblance of a man,² and another to the effect that *complete* statues are the abode of devils.³ This leads to their mutilation, sometimes even against the owner's interest.⁴ At the same time it is not uncommon to find statues or reliefs held in considerable superstitious respect by Moslems as the abode of *djinns* possessed of power⁵ ; but this power is evoked by secular magic.

The Moslem or Semitic view of 'graven images' has not been without its influence on the Eastern Churches, which officially prohibit statues and reliefs of sacred persons. In practice, however, ancient reliefs are occasionally objects of Christian cult, even inside the church, as for example the fairly numerous reliefs of the Thracian horseman used as *eikons* of S. George in Thrace.⁶ At the village church of Luzhani in lower Macedonia, Mr. Wace tells me, a horseman-relief is built into the low wall dividing the women's gallery from the main building. The top of the relief is covered with the grease of votive candles, as the relief has a reputation for curing earache, neuralgia, etc., in children : the face of the horseman is washed, and the water used (*ἀπὸνύμμα*) applied to the ailing part. It is significant that the church is dedicated to S. Demetrius, a

¹ Pashley, *Crete* (1837), i. 194 : 'In this city the devout Mohammedan women burn incense every Friday, and some of them suspend bits of rag, and similar votive offerings, to honour an ancient statue . . . The tradition current among them is that the saint was an Arab, to whose dress the ancient robe of the statue bears some resemblance, and that he greatly distinguished himself during the famous siege of the Kástron [*i.e.* Candia].' The statue is figured on p. 186 of Pashley's work. Cf. also Spratt, *Crete* (1865), i. 44 : 'The bust [!] of a Roman statue, at a fountain within the town . . . is . . . decorated and paid reverence to by some of the Turkish devotees every Friday, . . . besides having a lamp with oil or incense set before it also . . . I was informed that it [*i.e.*, this worship] is due to a belief amongst the superstitious, that it is the petrified remnant of a sainted Ethiopian Musulman who was killed in the war, and whose head and lower members were cut off by the Christians, but who is destined to rise to life when the Ghiaour are to be exterminated from the island.' The statue is still (1915) as Pashley saw it, except that the flesh parts and lower draperies have been *painted black*, evidently to shew that the saint was an 'Arab' : the cult is discontinued, though the lighting of lamps and candles at the place by negro women is still remembered. Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, ii. 765, cites also Chourmouzes, *Κρητικά*, 57 in this connection.

² Cantemir, *Emp. Ott.* tr. Jonquières, i. 184.

³ D'Arvieux, *Mémoires*, i. 45 : 'Ils prétendent que les statues des hommes et des femmes sont en droit de contraindre les ouvriers qui les ont faites de leur donner une âme, & que cela ne se pouvant pas faire, . . . les diables se nichent & se servent de ces corps pour molester les hommes, mais que pour les empêcher, il n'y a qu'à les mutiler & les défigurer, & que les diables les voyant en cet état, les méprisent, les ont en horreur & vont chercher à se loger autre part.'

⁴ Le Bruyn, *Voyage*, i. 82.

⁵ For instances see Le Strange, *Palestine*, 500 ; Garstang, *Land of the Hittites*, 95, n. 3.

⁶ Dumont, *Mélanges*, 219 ; Mertzides, *Αἱ χώραι τοῦ παρελθόντος*, 41.

cavalier like S. George. But reliefs of purely secular subjects may be consecrated by their position in churches. Such is the white marble relief of a nude woman, powdered fragments of which, drunk in water, are used as a milk-charm at the monastery of Poyani in Albania.¹ But the virtue of a relief is not dependent on such a position, but only enhanced or consecrated by it, and a secular relief placed in no relation to a church may be thought to have power, among Christians as among Moslems.

A relief of the Dioscuri by the village spring at Levetzova (Laconia), which was supposed to represent local spirits, was venerated by Christian villagers almost in our own day without coming into the sphere of the church at all.² The same is true of the so-called 'Demeter' statue worshipped by the peasants at Eleusis for good crops.³ Clarke, the discoverer of this reputed survival of Demeter worship, rightly observes that the connection with the crops is based on the supposition that certain ornaments on the *polos* headdress of the figure represented ears of corn; the statue is, in fact, no longer thought to be a Demeter.⁴ In all probability the finding of the statue chanced to coincide with an abundant harvest and the inference was (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*) that the talisman was 'white' or favourable.

A somewhat similar case is related from Byzantine Constantinople. In the course of building operations for a palace of Romanus I., a marble bull's head was discovered, which was burnt for lime. The destruction of the talisman (as the event proved the bull's head to be) resulted in recurrent epidemics among cattle all over the empire.⁵

In all these secular cults of statues and reliefs the underlying idea is that the figures represent spirits enchanted for a purpose, good or evil, who have power, within the limits of their enchanter's intentions, and may be placated by a certain ritual. On the Moslem side, as we have seen, owing to the religious ban on representations of the human form, their activity is normally conceived of as maleficent, and their cult is placation.

¹ Patsch, *Das Sandschak Berat*, i. 154; cf. above p. 64.

² L. Ross, *Wanderungen durch Griechenland*, ii. 242.

³ E. D. Clarke, *Travels*, II. vi. 601 f.; Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, No. 139, and note.

⁴ Michaelis, *Ancient Marbles*, 242.

⁵ M. Glycae, *Annales*, 304 F: τῶν θεμελίων καταβαλομένων, βοός, φασίν, εὐρεθῆναι μαρμαρινοῦ κεφαλὴν ἣν εὐρόντες καὶ συντριψάντες εἰς τὸν τοῦ τιτάνου κάμινον βάλλουσιν. ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ μέχρι τῶν τῆδε χρόνων οὐκ ἐπαύσατο πανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς ὁπόσῃ ἡ τῶν Ῥωμαίων περιέχει δυναστεία, τὰ τῶν βωῶν διαφθεῖρεσθαι γένη.

B.—COLUMNS, ETC.

An important and interesting group of worked stones which owe their superstitious veneration to their shape is formed by the upright pierced monoliths used for superstitious purposes by the inhabitants in various parts of Cyprus.¹ Of these some are used by women desirous of children, who seat themselves on the top of the stone, others by fever patients with the usual rag-tying ceremony; in other cases sick children and barren women are passed through the holes in the stones. So far as these practices have a connection with religion, this is due to the proximity of the stones to churches. One stone is (unofficially) canonised as 'Αγία Τρυπημένη ('S. Bored').² When these pierced monoliths were first discovered (at Paphos), the usual extravagant hypotheses of 'survivals' were put forward.³ Subsequent researches by Guillemard and Hogarth have made it clear that they are parts of ancient oil-presses,⁴ and that as many as fifty of them exist in various parts of the island; of these only a very small proportion are used for any superstitious purpose. 'The belief in the mysterious virtues of these monoliths,' Hogarth concludes, 'exists in so few cases, and is so weak even in those few, that it may be fairly argued that it is only of modern origin and has not had time even yet to develop into a universal tenet.'⁵

The arbitrary selection of certain stones of this kind for superstitious purposes, and the variation in the ritual attaching to them is probably due to local dealers in magic. All have a certain *a priori* eligibility, both as pierced stones (see above) and also, to a certain extent, as columnar stones.

Any isolated upright stone or column, if at all conspicuous, is apt to attract superstitious reverence. The underlying idea is doubtless that such isolated columns mark places where talismans or objects enchanted for a definite purpose, generally prophylactic, are buried. Most of the talismans

¹ Hogarth, *Devia Cypria*, 46 ff. cf. 41.

² This is interesting as an example of popular canonization by Christians exactly on Turkish lines. The Turks frequently anthropomorphise haunted places and objects they venerate in the same way and 'Αγία Τρυπημένη is exactly paralleled by *Delikli Baba*. The sex in the present case is due to the gender of *πέτρα*.

³ Cesnola, *Cyprus*, 189.

⁴ Some light is shed on the method of working these by Macalister's discovery at Gezer (*Q.S.P.E.F.* 1909, Pl. 2).

⁵ *Devia Cypria*, 52. The stones at Paphos are figured by M. Ohnefalsch-Richter (*Gr. Sitten und Gebräuche aus Cypern*, Pl. 17), who adheres to the old theory of their ancient religious use (p. 40).

of Constantinople cited by Evliya¹ are connected with columns. The Column of Constantine was supposed already in Byzantine times to cover the Palladium and other relics,² and to be on this account in a special sense the Luck of the city.³ A solemn burying of the talismans against plague in honour of S. Charalambos under a column in Athens little more than a century ago is recorded by Kambouroglous.⁴ Similarly when a place in Zante was discovered accidentally to be haunted, the remedy was to set up there a column marked with a cross.⁵ The same connection between column and talisman is probably to be discerned in the account of an inscribed porphyry column discovered at Constantinople in 1563 and deposited as a precious thing in the treasury of the Grand Signior.⁶

A column of a sacred building, if conspicuous for any peculiarity, may evolve its own cultus. Cases are to be found in the 'sweating' column of S. Sophia, mentioned above, and in the column in the Mosque of the Groom at Cairo, to be cited later.

Columns may easily be brought within the pale of Christianity by the analogy of the Column of Christ's scourging. This *motif* is employed to sanctify the superstitious cult of a column at Paphos, at which S. Paul is said to have been scourged; the imprint of his hand appears on it, with curious inconsequence, on S. John's day.⁷

A column in a church⁸ at Athens sacred to S. John is well known for its cures of fevers. According to local tradition S. John himself buried the

¹ *Travels*, tr. von Hammer, i. 16 ff.; Carnoy and Nicolaïdes, *Folklore de Constantinople*, I ff.

² See Ducange, *C. P. Christiana*, 76 P, and the same author's notes to Anna Comnena, 382-3 P. A prophylactic service at the column, in which the Emperor and Patriarch took part, was performed 'according to ancient custom' in 1327 (Niceph. Greg. viii. 15).

³ Ducas, 289-90 B; Chalcondyles, 397 B.

⁴ *Ιστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, ii. 183 (cited by M. Hamilton, *Greek Saints*, 71), from a contemporary note of 1792.

⁵ Politis, *Παραδόσεις*, 510: 'ς τὸν τόπον ἐκείνον γιατί εἶναι κακός, ἔβαλαν μία κολόνα μὲ ἓνα σταυρὸ ἀπάνου.

⁶ *Νέος Ἑλληνομῆμων*, vii. 176 (201), 1563: Μηνὶ Νοεμβρίῳ 5' τοῦ ἀφ' ἑ' ἔτους, ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, ἐπὶ τινος χήρας Εὐλῆ γυναικός, δρύσσαντες τινες πρὸς τὸ αὐξῆσαι τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς, ἐκεῖ εὑρον κίονα πορφυροῦν, τὸ μὲν μήκος ἔχοντα ποδῶν μὲ, τὸ δὲ πλάτος σπιθαμῶν ἰς. Ἐγκεκόλαπτο δὲ παρὰ τῇ κεφαλῇ ταυτὶ τὰ στοιχεῖα ΕΡΓΝΕC. Εὐθέως μὲν οὖν ὁ βασιλεὺς προστάξας ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις τοῦτον ἐκόμισαν· ὃν ἰδὼν λίαν ἐθαύμασε· ὥς μέγα δὲ καὶ πολύτιμον χρῆμα, τοῖς βασιλικοῖς αὐτοῦ θησαυροῖς ἐναπέθετο.

⁷ Hogarth, *Devia Cypria*, 8.

⁸ Seventeenth century writers speak of this column as dedicated to S. John, evidently before the building of a church.

spirits or talismans of fever and other sicknesses under the column.¹ The ritual of the cure is as follows. The patient, having made his vow, takes a thread, 'measures' it on the eikon of S. John, and cuts off a corresponding length.² He wears this thread for three nights tied round his arm and then affixes it with wax to the column.

A similar miraculous column exists built into the church of the Virgin at Areopolis in Mani. Fever patients drink scrapings of it in water with a waning moon.³

Columnar stones are similarly brought into the pale of Islam by connecting them with saints. Of such a stone, sixteen feet high, near Kotch Hissar, Ainsworth tells a pretty story to the effect that a mosque was once being erected in a neighbouring village and good Musulmans were contributing to it by the voluntary labour of bringing stones. A pious girl was enabled by her faith to transport this huge stone to the spot where it now rests. Here a young man appeared to her and told her 'God had accepted her services and was well pleased': the girl died on the spot and was buried beneath the stone.⁴ Evidently she was one of the unknown 'saints of God,' the mysterious messenger being in all probability Khidr. A cult or superstitious use of this stone is not mentioned.

A rather more complicated story explains the pillar worshipped at a Bektashi *tekke* near Uskub in Macedonia.⁵ The saint Karadja Achmet is said to have brought this stone, together with his own head, which had been cut off in a war, to the spot where it is now. A woman exclaiming at the extraordinary sight, the saint put down his head and the stone at the site of the present *tekke*.⁶ Whatever its origin, the pillar is in

¹ Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, No. 155; M. Hamilton, *Greek Saints*, 65 ff.; Rodd, *Customs of Modern Greece*, 167; Kambouroglous, *Ἱστορία Ἀθηνῶν*, i. 221, is the source of all.

² This part of the ritual seems to have escaped the notice of former writers. The idea is of some antiquity (see Weyh, *Μέτρον λαμβάνειν*, in *Byz. Zeitschr.* xxxii. 164 ff.), and has parallels elsewhere in modern Greece.

³ Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, ii. 764, citing *Πανδώρα*, xxii. 336.

⁴ *Travels*, i. 187. A similar story, with a less religious colouring, is told of the 'Maiden's Stone' (Column of Marcian) at Constantinople (Carnoy and Nicolaïdes, *Folklore de Constantinople*, 107 f.).

⁵ See Evans in *J.H.S.* xxi. 200 ff., who says that one version of the stone's history was that it was brought by a holy man from Bosnia, without details.

⁶ F. W. H. This story is a broken-down version of that told of the Bosnian saint, Hazreti Ali, whose head was cut off by his father for an alleged intrigue (after the model of Joseph and Zuleika) with his father's young wife. The saint, who was of course innocent, walked with his head in his hand till, a woman exclaiming at the sight, his head fell and *his father was turned into stone*—but was afterwards resuscitated by the virtue of the saint (*Wiss. Mitth. aus Bosnien*, i. 462).

its present position part of the regular ritual furniture of a Bektashi house of prayer.

Some similar hagiological legend in all probability attaches (or will attach) to an ancient column composed of four drums and a base on the site of Tyana in Asia Minor. This column is a fairly exact Moslem parallel to that of S. John at Athens. Persons suffering from fever visit it in the morning, taking with them a holy man who recites some prayers, after which the patient ties a rag of his clothing to a nail and drives the nail into the joints of the column.¹

A good example of the plain 'shaped stone' class is afforded by the stones at Konia associated with the tomb of the Imam Baghevi. These are two drums of an angle-pillar from a classical colonnade. The pillar, which formed the junction between two ranges of columns set at right angles, had its two *antae* worked as half-columns, so that the section of each drum is heart-shaped. With the angle uppermost the two drums present some resemblance to a saddle, from which circumstance they are supposed to represent the horses of the Imam turned to stone, and cures are wrought by contact with them in the posture thus suggested.²

C.—WRITTEN STONES.

More numerous and more interesting are the written stones put to superstitious uses. The magical power attributed by Orientals to letters is well known.³ As historical examples of talismanic written stones in Asia Minor, may be quoted the inscription supposed to have been carried off by Haroun-al-Rashid from Angora,⁴ and another, composed at the request of Ala-ed-din I. for the protection of the walls of Konia by the mystic poet Jelal-ed-din Roumi.⁵ Christian Miletus was similarly protected by a magic inscription,⁶ and the Rhodian knights, in a like spirit, engraved the lintel

¹ Texier, *Asie Mineure*, ii. 111. 'Le malade vient le matin, accompagné d'un iman qui récite quelques prières ; après quoi le malade déchire une petite partie de son vêtement, et la cloue dans un des joints de la pierre ; cela s'appelle clouer la fièvre. Les joints de la colonne sont criblés de clous plantés dans le même but.'

² F. W. H.

³ On this see Hastings' *Dict. of Religion*, art. *Charms* (*Muhammadian*).

⁴ Hadji Khalfa, tr. Armain, 703.

⁵ Hammer-Hellert, *Hist. Emp. Ott.* i. 40.

⁶ *C.I.G.* 2895. Cf. also the prophylactic inscription on the land-walls of Constantinople (Millingen, *Walls of Constantinople*, 100), and for the general use of prophylactic charms on Syrian buildings of the early Christian period, Prentice in *American Exped. to Syria*, iii. 17 ff.

of the chief gate at their castle of Boudroum with the charm-text, *Nisi Dominus Custodierit*, etc.¹

In the seventeenth century more than one gate of Constantinople was protected by stone cannon-balls 'hang'd up over severall gates . . . with Turkish writing upon them.'²

Turning to the use of charm-inscriptions in modern life, we find Mahommedan houses customarily protected by the apotropaic *Mashallah*, and both houses and ships by the 'lucky' names of the Seven Sleepers.³

Greek Christian houses are frequently protected by the device $\frac{IC}{NI} \left| \frac{XC}{KA} \right.$ over the door. Apotropaic charms, written on paper or metal, which are a similar expression of belief in the magic potency of letters, are often worn suspended round the neck by Orientals, either for good luck generally or as cures for disease.

It is obvious that such magic is devised to serve its masters. Christian magic may naturally be regarded as hostile to Mahommedans, which accounts for the frequent mutilation of the crosses on Christian buildings after a Turkish conquest. Similarly at Smyrna the well-known inscription over the gate of the Byzantine castle,⁴ the sense of which is quite innocent, was removed in 1827, and, despite liberal offers from archaeologists anxious for its preservation, built into the new barracks; but not before the letters had been deliberately chiselled out,⁵ evidently with the intention of abolishing its magic power, conceived of as *a priori* hostile to Moslems since it was associated with a Christian building. In the same spirit the Turkish proprietor of a village near Uskub gave a general order that 'written stones' found on his premises should be thrown into the river, 'all such being works of the Devil and the cursed Giaour.'⁶

¹ Newton, *Halicarnassus*, ii. 637.

² Covell, *Diaries*, ed. Bent, 217. Covell probably refers to the two gates (S. Romanus and S. Barbara) now known as *Top Kapoussi*: this has generally been translated 'Cannon Gate,' but the primary meaning of *top* is not 'cannon,' but 'ball.' Gates, as entries, are specially in need of protection, just as all entries and the beginnings of new enterprises are regarded as potentially dangerous. The *inscribed* cannon-ball is, of course, a 'reinforced' amulet: for globular objects used as a protection against the evil eye in the east, see Hildeburg, *Man*, 1913, 1 ff. (Egypt), and cf. Rycaut, *Present State of the Turkish Empire*, 40 (a golden ball suspended over the entrance to the Imperial divan).

³ Falkener, *Ephesus*, 158; von Hammer, *Constantinopolis*, ii. 60; Prokesch, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, i. 395. The Seven Sleepers patronise especially the shipping of the Black Sea (C. White, *Constantinople*, i. 187).

⁴ *C.I.G.* 8749.

⁵ Arundell, *Asia Minor*, ii. 395.

⁶ Evans in *Archaeologia*, xlix. 86.

On the other hand, examples of ancient inscriptions which are supposed to have beneficial powers are numerous; these powers, needless to say, have no connection whatever with the nature of the inscription. The colossal inscribed block from the monument of a certain Caius Vibius at Philippi is used by many women who stop at the adjacent *khan* as a milk-charm,¹ fragments of it being broken off, powdered, and drunk in water.² Its selection is of course merely due to its conspicuousness and the presence on it of a supposed written charm.

At Tatar Bazarjik (Eastern Roumelia) a Greek *stèle* inscribed with a proxeny decree (called *Yessir Tashi* or 'Slave's stone') is used by sick, and (as usual) especially fever-stricken,³ persons for cure. Patients scrape the stone, as at Philippi, tie a rag of their clothing to it, and leave a *para* on it in payment. The stone is supposed to mark the grave of a saint who in his lifetime ('four hundred years ago') was a Christian slave turned Moslem; he ordered the stone to be placed on his grave.⁴

A 'stone font or holy water stoup' with a Christian inscription in the interstices of a cross is similarly used to charm away disease at Eldjik in Galatia;⁵ here the patient drives in a nail to 'hold down' the disease, a ritual act analogous to the universal tying of rags to sacred trees and saints' tombs. At Eldjik the cross has been left intact and is probably thought to be part of the charm.

A somewhat similar Christian example of a pagan stone pressed into the service of religion and to some extent adopted by the church, is the famous Sigaeon inscription, which was long kept at the church of Yenisehr for the cure of ague. Patients were rolled on it, while the priest read an appropriate Christian exorcism.⁶ This stone was probably selected, in a

¹ Heuzey et Daumet, *Macédoine*, i. 45.

² F. W. H. A sinking on the top of this stone is said to be the hoof-print (ἀχνάρι) of Bucephalus.

³ According to V. de Bunsen (*Soul of a Turk*, 175), fever is one of the few diseases which cannot be cured by prayer. Its intermittent character encourages the idea that it is the work of a capricious *djinn*.

⁴ Tsoukalàs, *Περιγραφή Φιλιπποπόλεως* (Vienna, 1851), 65; Dumont in *Mélanges Dumont*, 201, 322. The Christian slave may be introduced into the legend, since the letters of the supposed magic inscription are Greek.

⁵ Anderson in *J.H.S.* xix. 88. The inscription in the arms of the cross, read by the editor ΕΠ|ΜΟ|ΝΟΥ|ΗΣ, may have been intended for ΕΜΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ: for this word as a charm, see Prentice, *Amer. Exped. to Syria*, iii. 21.

⁶ Lechevalier, *Troy*, 17; Walpole, *Memoirs*, 97.

district where inscriptions are common, on account of the unusual, and to ordinary people illegible, character of its archaic lettering.¹

In a Bulgarian church near Monastir Chirol was shewn a Greek inscription much worn by the knees of the faithful, which, the priest informed him, it was no use trying to read, since it was 'written in the devil's language.' Nevertheless it was considered 'an excellent stone for exorcising evil spirits.'² Here it would seem that the spirit or magic of the stone was originally 'black' but had been, as it were, harnessed to serve the church.

III.—SURVIVAL OR DEVELOPMENT OF STONE CULTS.

The selection of ancient inscriptions as objects of superstition is exceedingly capricious. In general, Anatolian peasants are apt to consider that inscriptions are a secret guide to treasure hidden in or near the stone on which the letters are written.³ This idea, however, evokes no reverence for inscribed stones, and they are often split open without scruple to find the supposed treasure.⁴ But even this degree of mystery does not attach to all inscribed stones. At Aezani (Phrygia), where inscribed *stelae* of the 'door' type are very common, they are habitually used as washing-blocks by the women of the village. Unfamiliarity, therefore, seems certainly one condition of the selection both of 'treasure' stones and of 'healing' stones. The interest shewn by 'Frank' travellers is another. But the ultimate choice of such stones for reverence or superstitious regard probably depends on pure accident. The following story, told me in Thrace, illustrates the ordinary attitude of the peasant's mind toward them. A Bulgarian peasant, living between Viza and Kirk Kilisse, found an inscribed stone, which he took to his house. His wife used it as a washing-block, but was at once visited by terrifying dreams and the farm animals began to die. Next the mother-in-law of the peasant trod on the stone and broke it; she died shortly after. The peasant, getting frightened,

¹ So also the irregular character of the lettering gave a magic reputation to an inscription seen by Lucas at Stenimachos in Bulgaria (*Voyage de la Grèce*, i. 192, cf. 198).

² V. Chirol, *Twixt Greek and Turk*, 67 (no political significance need be attached to the priest's words!).

³ For (statues and) inscriptions regarded as marking places where treasure is buried, see Polites' note on his *Παραδόσεις*, No. 408.

⁴ For an instance, see *Arch. Epig. Mitth.* 1886, 95.

took the stone back to the place where he found it, and offered sacrifice (*courban*) upon it. A Greek passing by saw the newly-shed blood and enquired the reason of the sacrifice; having heard the tale, he made light of it, put the stone on his horse, and rode away with it. But the ill-luck followed him and his horse went blind. The moral is of course that the stone was bewitched or *djinn*-haunted (*στοιχειωμένον*) and was one of those best left alone.¹ A run of good luck following its acquisition, on the other hand, might have proved its title to superstitious reverence, if not to adoption by religion.

The origins of such cults as these depend not on tradition but on coincidence. The chance of finding a 'survival,' *i.e.*, a stone venerated continuously from ancient times to our own, is so slight as to be negligible. It is only by chance that altars or votive *stelae* are preferred to monuments of a purely secular character.

Supposed 'survivals' of this kind will not bear examination any more than the Cyprian monoliths. Ramsay, in his *Pauline Studies*,² mentions a written stone used by Turks for superstitious purposes, for which he claims that its cult was continuous from antiquity. His account is as follows:— 'Three or four miles from Pisidian Antioch we found in a village cemetery an altar dedicated to the god Hermes. On the top of the altar there is a shallow semicircular depression, which must probably have been intended to hold liquid offerings poured on the altar, and which was made when the altar was made and dedicated. A native of the village . . . told us that the stone was possessed of power, and that if anyone who was sick came and drank of the water that gathered in the cup, he was forthwith cured of his sickness. This belief has lasted through the centuries; it has withstood the teaching and denunciation of Christians and Mahomedans alike,' etc. etc.

The fact of the cultus or folklore practice attached to this stone is clear enough, but some of Ramsay's inferences are more than disputable. If, as seems beyond doubt, this inscribed stone is Sterrett's No. 349, a quadrangular *cippus* with inscription recording the dedication of a *Hermes*,³

¹ A very similar mediaeval Greek story of an enchanted stone, which was dug up by accident and brought ill-luck, is given by Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, ii. 1139 f., though here the stone does not appear to have had an inscription. The aid of the church was called in to conjure the spirits back into the stone, after which it was again buried.

² vi. (*The Permanence of Religion*, etc.), 156 ft.

³ *Wolfe Expedition* (*P. Amer. School*, iii.), p. 218 (Altü Kapı). The text runs: δ δεινα | Διομήδου | ἔργον | ἀνέθηκεν.

i.e., a statue of Hermes, the stone was never an altar except in form. There is, therefore, no reason to refer the beginnings of its cultus-use to ancient times. It was most probably selected as a suitable stone for a grave and transported in recent times to the Turkish cemetery. The hollow on the top of the 'altar' probably dates in its present form only from the adaptation of the stone to its use as a tombstone; previously it may have had some kind of sinking for the attachment of the statue of Hermes alluded to in the inscription. Circular sinkings are commonly made on Turkish tombstones; the reason usually given is that birds are enabled to drink of the rain and dew that collects in them.¹ Further, Turkish *Jews* have a superstition that the dew which collects on tombstones cures children of fainting fits.² This belief is possibly borrowed from, probably shared by, the Turks. It will be seen that this reduces the fact that the stone is inscribed with the name of a god to a mere accident. Its potency comes primarily from its use as a tombstone and is probably reinforced by the fact that it has an inscription not 'understood of the people,' and therefore assumed to be of a magical character.

Sir Arthur Evans found at Ibrahimovce, near Uskub (Macedonia), a Roman altar dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which was used by the villagers as a rain-charm. It is generally kept face downward, but in times of drought Christians and Mahommedans, headed by a local Bey, go together to the stone, and having restored it to its upright position, pour libations of wine on the top, praying the while for rain.³ Evans remarks that the procedure here has no parallels in ordinary Slavonic folk-usage, and suggests that the use of the altar has been continuous since Roman times. But, while the practice of wetting the rain-charm is world-

¹ C. White, *Constantinople*, i. 319, iii. 367; Walsh, *Constantinople*, ii. 423. According to Skene (*Wayfaring Sketches*, 218), the hollows are looked upon as affording the dead a means of practising the virtue of charity to the animal world: in Syria they are said to be 'for souls to drink out of' (*Q. S. Pal. Expl. F.* 1893, 217). There may be a reminiscence of the basins placed to feed the pigeons of the Kaaba at Mecca (Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, i. 277); pigeons are a feature of Turkish cemeteries and sacred birds, since a pigeon is supposed, according to one account, to have inspired Mahommed (Varthema in Burton's *Meccah*, ii. 352). For the sacredness of pigeons in Turkey, see Carnoy and Nicolaïdes, *Traditions de Constantinople*, 7.

² *Onzième Congrès d'Orientalistes* (Paris, 1897), sect. vii. 264. Cf. the analogous medicinal use of water from a cup which has been buried for three years on a dead body (Blunt, *People of Turkey*, ii. 145). In Bosnia the rain-water which collects in a hollow of a stone—apparently natural—selected for veneration for reasons unknown to us, is drunk by sick peasants for cure. The broad principle underlying all such uses is that the absorption by swallowing not only of parts of a sacred object, but of things which have been in contact with it, is beneficial.

³ *Archaeologia*, xlix. 104.

wide, the Roman rain-rituals he cites as parallels do not include libation. In all probability this stone has been found in comparatively recent times, and the 'Frankish' writing on it, from some combination of circumstances unknown to us, interpreted as a rain-charm, the ritual being prescribed by a local dervish or sorcerer. On this particular case some light is thrown by the peasants' beliefs regarding a 'written stone' buried in a vineyard near Monastir: this was once dug up, but torrents of rain followed. It is now kept buried, because, if anyone dug it up again, *it would never stop raining*.¹ The more accommodating *djinn* who presides over the stone at Ibrahimovce can be so placated as to bring about a sufficient, but not excessive, rainfall when required.

The idea of rain-making 'written stones,' it may be remarked, is familiar to the Turks, since Turk, their eponymous ancestor, is said to have received from his father Japhet (who, in turn, inherited it from Noah) a stone engraved with the name of God which had the property of causing and stopping rain. This particular stone has been lost, but stones are said to be sometimes found which possess the same properties and are supposed to have some vague connection with the original stone of Noah.²

A Christian stone-cult in connection with a Church of the Apostles near Preveza affords a baffling example of haphazard selection: for this stone, though venerated, is not in itself at all remarkable. We can only guess that its veneration is due to dreams and other accidental circumstances; the legend in regard to it is most unhelpful. The stone in question is preserved outside a church immediately to the left of the high road between Preveza and Yannina, about two hours from the former place. There seems no question of 'survival,' or even of antiquity, since the stone was discovered in 1867. It has been enclosed in a small, pillar-like shrine of plastered rubble of the type commonly seen on Greek roadsides. The upper part of the pillar includes the usual niche, facing west, and containing a cheap *eikon* of SS. Peter and Paul and an oil lamp. The stone itself

¹ From Mr. A. J. B. Wace; cf. his *Nomads of the Balkans*, 133.

² D'Herbelot, *Bibl. Orientale*, s.vv. *Giourtasch* and *Turk* and *Supplement*, p. 140. A rough boulder on the summit of the Cyprian Olympus, which seems to have been vaguely connected with the ark of Noah, was formerly used as a rain-charm by the local Greeks. In times of drought it was lifted on poles, to the accompaniment of singing, by the peasants of the surrounding villages (Hackett, *Church in Cyprus*, 463, quoting Lusignan). Here the position of the stone seems to have had more to do with its selection than the stone itself. Any mountain-top is an appropriate place for watching the weather, and particularly for rain-making, since mountain-tops attract rain-clouds.

is built into the lower part of the pillar, one surface only being exposed under a niche facing south. It seems to be an ordinary unworked stone of irregular shape with two or three sinkings in its exposed surface. The whole stands in close juxtaposition to the south-east corner of the humble modern church, and is surrounded by a wooden railing with two gates. Pilgrims pass in by the eastern gate, kiss the stone, and pass out by the western gate. Incubation (for one night) is practised in the church, and the stone has a great reputation for cures, which are not confined to Christians: a Moslem shepherd, for example, is said to have cured his sick flock by passing them through the enclosure.

As to the discovery of the wonder-working stone the story told me by the priest attached to the church is as follows. A monk from a neighbouring monastery was bidden by a vision to build at this spot a church to the Holy Apostles. One of the trees cut down during the clearing of the site *bled* copiously. This was regarded as a sign from Heaven, indicating that the desired site for the church was found. A stone was placed on the stump of the tree to stop the bleeding, and it is this stone which receives the reverence of pilgrims to-day.

It is remarkable that in this legend the stone now regarded as sacred plays an entirely secondary part, and may even be regarded as receiving homage vicariously for the miraculous tree-stump it is supposed to cover.

In fact, the whole of the story betrays itself as derived from secular folklore adapted clumsily enough to account for the miraculous stone. The bleeding tree was evidently of the dangerous haunted (*στοιχειωμένον*) class¹: the real purpose of the stone is clear from the fact that when wood-cutters fell a tree of this sort they place a stone in the middle of the trunk to prevent the spirit of the tree rushing out and doing them harm.²

The official account of the discovery wholly ignores the marvels attending it, and fails to make plain how the virtues of the stone were recognised.³ Its main importance for us lies in the claim that the

¹ For bleeding trees in general, see Frazer, *Golden Bough* (1900), i. 173. For a tree in Mytilene which bled when cut, see Mary Walker, *Old Tracks*, 194; and for haunted trees in Greece, Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, Nos. 323 ff.; *Λαογραφία*, i. 658. I am told by Mr. Archie Charnaud that a tree which obstructs one of the newly planned streets at Brusa was allowed, after solemn deliberation on the part of the authorities, to retain its position because it 'bled' at the first attempt to cut it down.

² Polites, *op. cit.* 325.

³ S. Byzantios, *Δοκίμιον τῆς Ἀρτῆς καὶ τῆς Πρεβέλης* (Athens, 1884), 258 n.: *Εἰς θέσιν καλουμένην Ἀνω Λούτσαν ἔκειτο ἀρχαῖος τις ἱερὸς Ναὸς ἐπ' ὀνόματι τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων Ἀιθάρι*.

sacred stone was discovered under clerical supervision less than fifty years ago.

The entire impossibility of certainty as to the age and origin of such cults, and particularly the danger of arguing from analogies, is shewn by the history of the 'Black Stone' preserved at the tomb of Daniel at Susa (Sûs). The tomb of Daniel is known to have been shewn at Susa as early as 530 A.D.¹ The 'Black Stone' was originally a block of dark marble, nearly cubical in form, bearing hieroglyphic figures in relief and cuneiform inscriptions. In the 'fifties of the last century it was held in great honour and considered bound up with the luck of the province. At that time (and probably to this day) its fragments were to be found built into one of the porticoes attached to the tomb of Daniel. It thus offered to all appearances a very fair counterpart of the broken Black Stone built into the Kaaba at Mecca, which is generally, and probably rightly, considered a relic of idolatrous worship surviving into the later cult.

By the lucky accident of frequent travellers' visits to Susa, the actual history of the Black Stone and its rise to fame is known in some detail. About 1800, the Black Stone was discovered in the mound covering the ruins of Susa, and rolled down to the river-bank by the very dervish who kept the tomb in the 'fifties. It there served for some years as a washing-block, and attracted the notice of several European travellers. Monteith and Kinneir in 1809 found it was treated with some superstitious respect,² and made drawings of the inscriptions. In 1811, Sir R. Gordon, who tried without success to obtain possession of the stone, found its reputation on the increase: after this, presumably for security, it was buried, then disinterred by the guardians of the tomb of Daniel. In 1812 Ouseley found it had a reputation as a talisman against plague, hostile invasion, and other evils. In 1832 a 'stranger sayyid,' supposed to be a 'Frank' in disguise,

ἐπικαλούμενος, ἔνεκα τοῦ πρὸς μεσημβρίαν, ἔξω τοῦ Ναοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἱερὸν Βῆμα, δεξιόθεν ὑπάρχοντος ἐντὸς τῆς γῆς γωνιώδους τινος λίθου, ὃν ἀπεκαλύψαμεν τῷ 1867 ἔτει, καὶ περιεφράξαμεν διὰ Κουβουκλίου, δι' ὃν λογοποιοῦνται πολλά, καὶ δι' ὃν ἐνεργοῦνται τῇ Θεοῦ χάριτι διὰ πρεσβειῶν τῶν πανευφήμων Ἀποστόλων διάφορα ἱαμάτων χαρίσματα, οὐ μόνον πρὸς τοὺς ἡμετέρους, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἑτεροθρήσκους, προσίοντας καὶ ἐπικαλουμένους τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ λίθου σωματικὴν θεραπείαν εὐλαβῶς καὶ προσφέροντας κηρούς τε καὶ ἀλλὰ ἀφιερῶματα. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ ὁ θαυματουργὸς οὗτος λίθος, ὢν ἀφανής, δι' Ἀρχιερατικῆς ἐποπτείας ἀνεκαλύφθη κατὰ Ἰούλιον τοῦ εἰρημένου ἔτους, καὶ περιεφράχθη, ὥς εἴρηται, ἐδέχθη ἵνα διορθωθῇ καὶ ὁ μικρὸς καὶ πεπαλαιωμένος Ναός, ὅπερ καὶ ἐγένετο· ἀλλὰ τούτου, ἐκ περιστάσεώς τινος εἶτα πυρποληθέντος, ἀνεκαινίσθη ἐνδοξότερος καὶ λαμπρότερος . . . ἐν ἔτει 1871.

¹ Theodosius, *De Situ Terrae Sanctae*, ed. Geyer, *Itin. Hieros.* 149.

² In Egypt and Syria ancient stones, figured and written, seem generally so treated (see Garstang, *Land of the Hittites*, 95, n. 3, and 97).

blew it to pieces with gunpowder in the hope of discovering hidden treasure: this was evidently the outcome of the interest shewn in the stone by foreigners. Naturally enough, no treasure was found. But, probably from the conviction that as the stone (1) attracted Franks,¹ and (2) did not contain treasure, it must have remarkable occult powers, 'the fragments were carefully collected and reinterred within the precincts of the tomb. Immediately afterwards the province was almost depopulated by plague, the bridge at Shuster suddenly broke, and the famous dam at Hawízah was carried away; all of which disasters were, of course, ascribed to the destruction of the talisman.'² The rise of the stone from obscurity to great superstitious importance can thus be placed between the years 1800 and 1832.

In conclusion, having shewn how quickly a stone may rise to honour even in modern times, we may cite as a pendant the history of a suddenly arrested pillar-cult in Cairo, quite primitive in form, which rose to its climax and fell again apparently within a few days or weeks, both rise and fall being due to the arbitrary acts of definite persons.

A contemporary observer gives the following account:—

'On the line of the street from the citadel to Bab Zuileh is a mosque called Giania-el-Sais, or Mosque of the Groom. At the corner of it is a high Corinthian pillar I asked how the lower part of the pillar came to be covered over with a thick coat of plaster, and received for answer that this was the celebrated Amood-el-Metuely, which was proclaimed by a Mogrebbin Sheikh to have miraculous power, and that [*sic*] if sterile women licked it with their tongue they would become mothers.³ All on a sudden the pillar was so besieged by people wishing to lick it that the street was blocked up and the Pasha [Mahommed Ali], hearing of the delusion, caused a guard to be set while the masons plastered and built round the lower part of it with bricks.'⁴

¹ Cf. Arundell, *Travels in Asia Minor*, i. 62 ff.

² Rawlinson, in *J.R.G.S.* ix. 69: for the history of the stone as given above, see further Walpole, *Travels*, 423 (with Monteith's drawing of the stone); Ouseley, *Travels*, i. 421 f.; de Bode, *Luristan*, ii. 91; Loftus, *Travels in Chaldaea*, 416; and *Trans. Roy. Soc. Lit.* v. (1856), 446.

³ There seems to be a column credited with similar powers at Mediret-el-Fayoum. I know of it only from Sir Gilbert Parker's story, *The Eye of the Needle*, in *Donovan Pasha*.

⁴ Paton, *Hist. of the Egyptian Revolution* (1877), ii. 276 f. This story is particularly interesting in view of the desperate efforts which have been made to find a classical past for the Athenian column of S. John.

These two 'life-histories' make it abundantly clear that a stone-cult, however primitive in type, need not be *chronologically of ancient origin*, even where the stone is itself ancient. Further, that a venerated stone need not represent the displaced central cultus-object of the holy-place in which it is found, but may be, as at Susa, an originally independent object attracted into the orbit of an already existing sanctuary, or, as at Cairo, a portion of an already existing sacred building arbitrarily selected for special veneration.

Our general conclusions may be tabulated somewhat as follows:—

(1) Certain kinds of stones, especially (*a*) holed stones, (*b*) columnar stones, (*c*) stones carved with figures, and (*d*) inscribed stones (irrespective of the meaning of their inscriptions), are especially likely to attract superstitious veneration.

(2) Selection from among these classes depends on such considerations as size, or other conspicuousness, backed by the coincidence of dreams, or other accidental happenings, with their discovery or use. A stone's chance of selection for veneration is greatly enhanced if it is introduced (accidentally or purposely) into (*a*) a sacred building, or (*b*) a cemetery.

(3) The ritual connected with the veneration of such stones is exactly that of other venerated objects in popular religion, chiefly forms of 'contact' or 'absorption.'

(4) Reverence for such stones, whether secular or religious, by Christians or Moslems, need not be of old standing, nor need it persist. Proved or even probable survivals from antiquity are exceedingly rare.

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