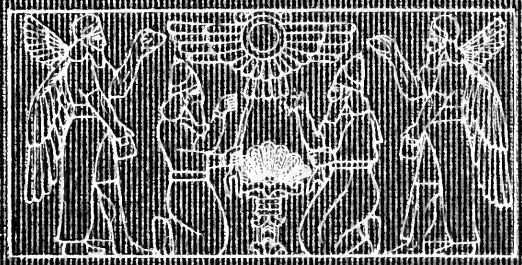


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# FLORA OF THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS.

# THE FLORA

OF THE

# ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS

AND ITS

# OUTCOMES

BY

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# FLORA OF THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS.

## ERRATA.

P. xiii. For "Count d'Alviella," and wherever this name is quoted, read "Count Goblet d'Alviella."

P. xxiv. (Footnote.) For "met at the Quarries of Sinai," read "came in contact about."

P. 34. For "*Heracium*," read "*Hieracium*."

P. 103. (Footnote.) For "about 600 years B.C.," read "were in continued intercourse 2800 B.C."

P. 194. (Continuation of footnote of previous page.) Read, "For wholesale adoption of Assyrian symbols, see the seal of the Greek Bishop of Yakutsk in Miss Marsden's book on Siberian Lepers, p. 153."

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# PREFACE.

Revelations have their genesis in the grey matter of the human brain; contemplation of the unknown evolves disclosures in terms of the known. An idea once generated may be recorded for life in one's memory; it breeds other ideas, which may be either fable or truth, according to the idiosyncrasy and surroundings of the ideator.

E. B.

# PREFACE.

FROM the Study of the Flora of the Assyrian Monuments, there grew the study of an imposing object of veneration—the Assyrian sacred tree; and from the study of this, there grew that of the Assyrian horns, which form a prominent feature of that tree; and thus there grew these miscellaneous pages, which I have called "The Flora of the Assyrian Monuments, and its Outcomes."

This book is like a telescope, in which one tube comes out of another tube

I have endeavoured to make my telescope as short as possible, for fear of wearying the reader.

Some repetitions have occurred, which could not well have been avoided, and which are of little consequence; at other times they are useful; they impress the point on the reader's attention. The illustrations might have been better; but the moment you begin to use modern art to make ancient art prettier, you begin to lose the very thing you don't want to lose, viz. the *rudeness*, by which they gave form to their crude ideas. Those are the hieroglyphics you wish to decipher, and

therefore as long as they are intelligible and true, the illustrations serve their purpose.

When I say there seems no meaning in a story—that is, there is no story to be told, I do not mean that none is possible; but that, in my opinion, some composite pictures seem to have had a specific meaning, while others seem to have no particular meaning, but were intended for simple decorations. I am aware that in many such cases, something has to be put down for the *bias* with which the interpreter approaches his subject.

Professor Sayce, in his inaugural address, at the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, stated, if I remember rightly, that the only way to get at the bottom of Assyriology is to copy, copy, copy, and to translate, translate, translate.

True, but not impossibly, from a psychological point of view, that might also mean that your brain cells get so charged with copy, copy, and translate, translate, that you can see little or nothing else; while a fresh mind which has not been copying and translating, coming to the subject, may see things which have escaped the copyist and the translator.

Of course the work of the copyist and translator may have formed the basis from which the fresh mind draws a great deal of its inspiration; but not *all*, for there are the sculptures which would seem to need little translation, if bias is left aside.

In studying Oriental subjects, connected with extinct communities, we may be apt to look upon what we are studying as the result of the *general* culture of that country; but it is evident that the culture and mode of expression may be *only* of the individual, who originated that thing we now call a relic. Of course I understand that this individual's brain may have stored in it the current impressions of the social atmosphere of that time.

An intricate and obscure study, such as that of diving into the thoughts, characters, and mode of civilization of the ancient Assyrians, can be attacked in many ways, and the more varied the attacks, the more we are likely to reach approximate truth.

The deciphering of inscriptions will give us dates and written records, as far as they go; but this subject can be attacked anthropologically, zoologically, botanically, etymologically, astronomically, etc. What we have to keep in mind, as Prof. Sayce reminded us, is to use in our investigations a 'liberal amount of common sense,' and to consider that what is nonsense in English, French, or German, would be equally nonsense in Assyrian.

To have horns on one's head, like those Assyrian divinities, may be ornamental; but to have horns on the brain, morning, noon, and night for a twelvemonth, is neither ornamental nor pleasant. Yet how can one hope to solve certain obscure

inventions of the thinking organs of past human kind, without *thinking* of them? Revelation after revelation turns up; but, by means of a mental sieve, these heterogeneous revelations are sifted into some sort of order and plausible reality.

By the mode of thinking of to-day, we have to interpret the mode of thinking of those days. The emotions of the poet, the artist, the philosopher, are presumably the same at all times. It is the amount of accumulated knowledge, whether stored in books, or in memories, that makes all the difference.

As soon as one key is discovered, other keys—more or less like—can be invented to open the secrets of the beginnings of human philosophy. Comparing, sifting, speculating, is then a matter of time and patience. By what is going on now, as I said, we try to explain what went on then.

The Greek artist appears to have been essentially a poet of a child-like nature. He saw figures and symbols on Assyrian and Egyptian monuments. He used these figures and symbols as *motives* for weaving other poetical figures and symbols, and so he turned gradually the whole affair into a congeries of novelets—myths and legends—suited to altered and more refined surroundings. These imaginary and poetical stories were about things that his brain was not ripe enough to solve on physical lines.

The Greek artist reached the acme of modelling and of realistic representation of the human figure; but he had not yet caught the relation of what is called the spiritual part of the human figure to what is called the material part. It required much more scientific prying into the phenomena of nature than had been then achieved, and his science was, therefore, far behind the suggestions of his imagination. Naturally in those days there was a vast and mythology, and very little more than the absurd *foundation* of science.

The Greek artist, with his fine realistic imagination, coming in contact with the myths and conventional arts of Assyria and Egypt, borrowed *ideas* from both nations, and in his mental factory evolved sublimities, as far as art was concerned. He was a sort of link between the primitive and later civilizations.

From the Assyrian real flora, I have attempted to creep up to their sacred flora, and to interpret certain symbols found woven in with this. Through further study I may have, perhaps, succeeded in throwing some light on the derivation of other features, which I think are affiliated to those symbols. It is for others to judge how far I may have succeeded in throwing new light, if any, on the subjects discussed.

Wherever it may appear that I am too positive in what I state, it is only a mode of diction, and

simply means, 'in my humble opinion it seems so and so.'

I should mention that a part of these pages was discussed in the 'Babylonian and Oriental Record,' and my thanks are due to the Director of the Record, Prof. Terrien de Lacouperie, for allowing me to make use of those discussions.

I should also mention that a paper on the 'Sacred Trees and Cone-fruit of the Assyrian Monuments' was read by me before the Assyrian Section of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, September, 1892.

This volume is an enlargement of the whole subject as well as a discussion of the outcomes of the study of the Flora of the Monuments.

# INTRODUCTION.

"Not less remarkable than the silent revolution, which has overtaken the once universally accepted hypothesis, as to the successive migrations of the Aryan nations from Central Asia, is the general abandonment of the expectation, which was at one time entertained, that India would interpret for us the meaning of the Teutonic, Roman, and Greek mythologies."—'Origin of the Aryans,' by Dr. Isaac Taylor, p. 299.

So much for authority!

# INTRODUCTION.

THE whole spiritual existence of the Assyrians, and others before them, seems to have been involved in what might be called "Hornism"—a superstition, which still largely exists, either actually, or in some legendary and traditional form. In ancient Assyrian times we find their gods horned; their sacred trees were horned; their bidents, their tridents, their 'fleur-de-lys,' etc., were nothing but modifications of horns. Count d'Alviella, in his 'Migration des Symboles,' p. 161, says that "horns, among the Assyrians, were the distinctive sign of the Divinity." It is probable they may have been the symbol of *power*. Indeed, when we begin to search for the genesis of an idea, such as this, it is not difficult to see that a wild infuriated bull is not a thing to be trifled with. "A right murderous bull—stubborn, aggressive, blood-thirsty, enduring"—would exact reverence from any hunter. A mad wild bull must have been an astonishing phenomenon to the Assyrians.*

* Sir Samuel Baker in 'Wild Beasts and their Ways,' Vol. II, p. 46, writes thus :—"In the savage regions of Central Africa, where the worship of the Deity is unknown, the bull is regarded with a respect that is not bestowed upon any other animal. Vast strength,

Felix Lajard, in his 'Culte de Mithra,' and the 'Culte de Vénus,' has shown how large a part the Bull played in the spiritual imagination of those ancient people. And we must confess that the wild bull exhibits the type of masculinity, and courage.

It seems to have followed as a *natural* consequence that the Assyrians, who had become well acquainted with this indomitable animal in their hunts, should have selected his horns as an emblem of Divine power; and that he should figure continually in their mythology.

We may be too apt to look upon the Assyrians, from the point of view of biblical traditions, and the bias of centuries, as a holy set of beings, who

the perfection of masculine vigour, and indomitable courage, form the combination, which has attracted the adoration of mankind." Then at p. 55, he says: "The charge of a buffalo is a very serious matter . . . . a buffalo is a devil incarnate, when it has once decided upon the offensive. . . . . There is no creature in existence that is so determined to stamp out the life of its opponents, and the intensity of fury is unsurpassed, when a wounded bull buffalo rushes forward upon the last desperate charge . . . . it will not only gore the body with its horns, but it will endeavour to tear it to pieces, and will kneel upon the lifeless form, and stamp it with its hoofs, until the mutilated remains are disfigured beyond all recognition." All this shows what an infuriated bull means. But after all this eulogium of so noble and fearless a creature, it is hardly fair for Sir Samuel to write on p. 56: "I have killed some hundreds of these animals, and I never regret their destruction, as they are naturally vicious, and most dangerous brutes, whose ferocity is totally uncalled for!" This, in the mouth of a hunter who *goes* to destroy this fine animal in its *own* haunts, and not because it comes to attack him in his house, sounds strange. Because it defends itself, with all the ferocity natural to it, and in order to protect its females, and their young ones, it is called 'a dangerous brute, whose ferocity is totally uncalled for!'

passed their days in worshipping and praying; while, on the showing of their artists, they were a cruel, blood-thirsty people, and their rulers tyrants, perhaps many degrees worse than we ourselves would have been, and having a civilization like that of the people of Central Asia, before its domination by the Russians.

We see them warring, enslaving, burning, plundering, and slaughtering other people, and devastating their country; we see them cutting off the heads of their prisoners, and keeping accounts of how many they cut off; dragging others hooked by their lips, flaying others alive, impaling others, and so forth. Their ferocity has been sufficiently shown in the works of their artists.

We may be too apt to overlook the utilitarian side of those people's thoughts, and to look upon them as an unselfish, and holy, God-loving race; if anything, with fewer sins and biases than we have.

The imaginative genius of their poets, for its time, was truly remarkable, and will account for much of their astonishing mythology. This should not be forgotten in investigating the thoughts of those people.

Here is a bit of inimitable poetry, taken from Prof. Sayce's 'Hibbert Lectures,' p. 102:—

"In the struggle between Merodach and the monster Tiamat, the latter opened its mouth to swallow the god. The god, however, was equal

to the occasion, and he thrust a storm-wind down the monster's throat; the monster burst asunder, while her allies fled in terror before the victorious deity." Where will you meet with such a delightful bit of imagery as this? Fancy a storm-wind being thrust into a monster's throat and bursting it into fragments! It is no wonder her allies fled in terror; it was like *dynamite!*

No one but a genius could have invented such a weapon as that.

It appears to me that too scholastic a view may be taken of the whole Assyrian people, and their social atmosphere, as if *we* were not a continuation of *them*, but *they* an entirely different set of beings from all the rest of the human race.

We hear it said that what we want is more 'scholars.' Is it not possible, however, that scholars alone will take only a scholarly view of the people's life, as has been done of the life of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and so only obtain a one-sided view? We have to try and place ourselves mentally in their times, and not look at everything through the scholar's spectacles.

I think there has been far too much 'spirituality' attributed to those blood-thirsty realistic oppressors of humanity. For instance, Perrot et Chipiez, in their 'History of the Art of Chaldea and Assyria,' give on p. 194, vol. i, what they call a tabernacle from the Balawat Gates, British Museum.

Why call this a tabernacle? To my unsophisticated mind, it is a tent, with a leg of mutton in a dish on a table, and a table-attendant keeping off the flies, by means of a fly-flapper, until the king comes—a thing seen every day in India! Near the table is a jar, on a stand, containing water, or more likely wine. Probably the whole refreshment was mistaken for objects intended for sacrifice, but the attendant with a fly-flapper in his hand is uncommonly like an Indian 'Kitmagar'; but being a royal one, he was allowed to have a sword!

We may be apt to give too much weight to every little thing on the monuments, as meaning perhaps something profoundly abstruse and religious, but which in many cases may mean nothing more than the fancy of the artist, to fill up an awkward-looking space.

In the interpretation of Assyrian sculptures, there is one circumstance which may not have been given due weight; it is this: The sculptor had to deliver his thoughts on a *limited* slab of stone; and therefore what may appear to us a purpose, having a *special* meaning, in the mind of the Assyrian artist, may have been only a *physical necessity*, owing to the *limited* space of the slab.

To this simple circumstance is probably due the proximity of the cone to the sacred tree, which not unlikely suggested the idea that the genius was fertilizing the date-tree. It may also have sug-

gested to Lenormant the idea that the genius was 'mesmerizing' the king, if such an expression may be used, by pointing the cone close to his back hair.

Those archaic scientists and philosophers must have been as much astonished as we are at the universe in which they were placed, if not more so; and as much puzzled as we are to account for the worlds within and without us.

By these studies we try to make out some consistent and connected story or stories, regarding what *they* thought of it all, and how they, in their beginnings, accounted for what they saw and felt.

Each archaic philosopher and poet, just as we do, brought to bear on the study of nature his own 'personal equation,' so that he saw things a good deal as they struck *him*; but in those days traditions, dreams, inspirations by gods, and whisperings by devils, fears, hope, etc., undoubtedly had something to do with the direction of their thoughts.

It is certain that man, before he wrote, *pictured*, and so we must look upon ideas translated into pictures, as much more archaic in origin than any words, which may have afterwards been used to account for the things those pictures represented.

Count d'Alviella has noticed the facility with which one symbol fuses with another of a totally different origin. The facility originates in the artist's mind, whose object is not that of preserving

intact a symbol, but that of creating out of the elements stored in his mind ornaments and objects fitted for the places they are intended to occupy, and, above all, *pleasing* to the artistic eye. So he mixes, contorts, modifies—no doubt often unconscious of the 'pickle' he is making of the thoughts and religious inspirations of Assyrian and Egyptian philosophers!

Artistic decorations have at all times been a compound of reality and fancy, the former supplied by surrounding nature, the latter by the artist's visions, which evolve in his brain cells. We thus have the fantasy, and often delightful compositions of the ancient dreamers—the poetry of their art.

With a little exercise of the imagination we can see those first comers into the plains of Chaldea finding forests of date trees, the sweet fruit of which, with the products of their flocks, enabled them to increase and multiply. We can then imagine how this tree eventually became to those people the 'tree of life'; and later on, as they sowed the seed where they settled and raised new varieties, we can imagine that it became to them also the 'key of life'; for did not Herodotus write that the whole plains of Babylon were planted with date trees? In his time they must have been as thick as corn. There is no wonder, therefore, that this tree became an emblem of life—a *sine-qua-non* of their existence.

The *conditions* of their existence may be the *why*

there has been a tree of life at all. In their wanderings they came upon a forest of date trees. Its shade, its fruit and its fire-wood were sufficient reasons for their staying there.

When they multiplied and began to feel the advantage of dates, as a food, what was more natural for them than to look upon the date tree as their saviour—their 'tree of life'? Would it not be the thing *always* in their minds? Those who may have had a turn for picturing would picture it here and there. Would not this tree eventually be also considered as the 'key of life,' in further migrations, just as we now speak of bread as the 'staff of life'?

We have to-day more well-ascertained facts than the Assyrians had—all wrought out by generations of observation, experiment, and careful study, and whipped into shape by stern logic and criticism, as a *check* to the riot of the imagination: nevertheless the mental operations of to-day are essentially those of the Assyrians. A dream, a vision, which we now euphoniously call a speculation, a hypothesis, a theory, in those days 'banged' out as an *infallible* divine revelation. For all we know to the contrary it may have been an inspiration, evolved by the impinging on their brain-cells of molecules of alcohol, opium, hashish, etc.

We now think those Assyrians were imbued with many absurd superstitions. But one cannot mix and converse with people of to-day without be-

coming struck with the fact that ordinary society is still infiltrated with superstitions of all sorts. And this could not be otherwise. You reap what you sow. While schools have been teaching the *natural*, the churches have been teaching the *supernatural*, and so with some sense in the people's minds we find a mixture of a lot of traditional unsoundness, inherited through hundreds of generations, and imbibed in childhood by teaching. A superstition would seem to be a sort of nightmare that cannot be entirely shaken off. The mother, the nurse, the mistresses of infant schools, the priest, *all* stamp it on the child's brain—a sort of indelible stamp.

What do you mean by a superstitious mind? That attitude of a person who, from general ignorance of nature, accepts supposed facts without any attempt to investigate their *how*, or their *why*, and therefore, without applying to them the touchstone of other already *well-ascertained* facts, through accurate investigation, and logic, or the process of putting two and two together.

Superstitions then become the *mythical* facts, swallowed *nem. con.*, and form the basis of the reasoning structure of the individual. That individual never concerns himself or herself with the ordinary laws of nature. He or she has been taught *other* laws.

In Assyrian days, the minds of the people were in expectation of phenomena. Their universe was filled with both good and evil doers. Under such conditions a notion started by one mind—maybe in

a dream—a suspicion— becomes contagious. There is no one to discriminate between what is sensible and what is foolish.

Carlyle has sufficiently shown how contagious ideas became during the French Revolution, when the minds of the people were on the 'qui vive'—in expectation of something happening.

Those Chaldeans saw eclipses, comets,* storms, perhaps felt earthquakes, and other incomprehensible phenomena. What did they all mean? Somebody theorized, and the theory germinated like a weed in the fertile mental soil of such a primitive, ignorant people.

I suspect that the science of Mythology will have to be gone over again by some master-minds and inspected from a different point of view—the psychological. All we know about dreams, visions, inspirations, revelations, hallucinations, etc., will have to be taken into account, at the same time that due consideration is given to the fantasies of poets and artists.

In this connection it would be unwise not to take into consideration the mental effects of drugs, that may have been known to those ancient people.

Then symbols are like stories. A story that passes from the lips of one person into the ear of another, and then through the convolutions of

* It is curious that on the monuments and cylinders I have not met with a *comet*; yet Babylonian works on astronomy mention the appearance of comets.

that person's brain, and out again from his lips into some other person's ear, and so on, ends in becoming as different from the original thing as a lion is different from a giraffe. The interesting thing is that all this is *natural*. Take two persons that have heard the same story. Let them narrate it even one hour afterwards. Each will narrate it *differently*, and this is because the grey matter of their brain, or other parts of their organism, is *constitutionally different*. The story has to pass through a different medium, and becomes 'refracted' —transformed.

So with symbols. Each artist unintentionally makes a little variation ; the next one, copying that, does the same with his copy, and so on ; so that after one or two centuries you begin to wonder whether the last was meant for the first, or for something totally different ; and herein lies the difficulty, for we, in a totally different age, with different thoughts and surroundings, have to place ourselves mentally in the position of the childhood of mankind. Symbols may have some common type, which would indicate their relations, but the whole thing is a question which has to be studied with new light in order to discover what it all really means. Before long, perhaps, new discoveries in Africa and Asia may throw new light on questions which the thoughts of those two ancient peoples invented. Of this there now can be little doubt. The Assyrians and Egyptians were in

intimate relation with each other, at least fourteen centuries B.C., and their correspondence was carried on in cuneiform writing.* So we need not wonder that the symbols and ornamentations of these two civilizations became *intermixed*.

Word symbols in passing from nation to nation get modified—*honor* into 'onore,' 'honneur,' and 'honour.' Other words have undergone vastly greater modifications, so as to become unrecognizable. So with these picture symbols. In passing from brain to brain of artists; from nation to nation; they have dropped here a feature, and there have taken up another. Eventually they have become almost unrecognizable, and apparently a *new* thing with a *new* story attached to it.

Let us take an instance. The highly finished and elaborately decorative sacred tree of the Monuments, intended to occupy a large space on a wall, could not be reproduced on a cylinder, except as a sort of micro-photograph. It had to be degraded not only for want of space, but because of the hardness of the agate, or crystal, or other hard stone of which cylinders were made, and also because of the inferiority of their tools to work such hard material. This degradation is exactly comparable to the degradation of a luxuriant tree,

* 'The Petrie Papyri' by Prof. Mahaffy. New Review, Nov., 1892. Mr. St. Chad Boscawen thinks that the intercourse of the nations can be traced to 28 centuries B.C., and there is evidence that Assyrians and Egyptians met at the quarries of Sinai 6000 years ago!

through insufficient nourishment. It is not only dwarfed, but many of its parts are *suppressed*.

The small picture is only a dwarfed and degraded picture of the large one. In order to interpret it one has to reproduce in his imagination the original model. The *idea* remains, but the general configuration is often wholly altered.

What we might call the *natural* of the Assyrians was restricted pretty much to eating, drinking, procreating, tending their flocks, sowing and gathering their crops when they became settled, together with fighting, slaughtering, plundering and enslaving. All the rest was to them *supernatural*. The Mahomedans seem to have turned both the natural and supernatural into one wholesale supernatural, for with them God's hand is *everywhere* and man's hand *nowhere*. Under one great supreme Deity everything was gathered up.

In the transition of man from the savage animal and fetish-ridden creature to the settled and agricultural man, a theosophy became gradually evolved in the minds of certain contemplative individuals.

A supreme deity and two subordinate classes of gods became necessary items of their thoughts—good spirits and bad spirits accounted for benefits and disadvantages; the former were friends, the latter enemies. These philosophers were shrewd enough to see that the supreme deity, although propitiated by prayers and sacrifices, was often helpless; the evil spirits were 'too much' for him,

and so the good spirits came in handy as helpers in the struggle with demons.

It is easy to conjecture a struggle between minds of cunning and minds of ignorance, and so certain symbols, at first used only in temples, became imitated and utilized for trade purposes. Every one would be anxious to have in his hut, or about his person, a recognized protection against demons.

Like 'patent medicines,' these talismans *never* failed to operate. If they did fail, there would be always some plausible excuse, and the need of some other talisman to strengthen the first.

When sacred books began to be written, cunning people began to find in their verses an article of trade; and so we find verses of the Koran written on a bit of something and given to the credulous to swallow as a cure for diseases; or verses were taken out of the Hindoo sacred books, written on something, and wrapped up in a bit of copper and tied to the arm, and sold as protectors of the person who wore them.

What more comforting than to have a protector on your person, in your house, in your temple; and what more natural for symbols in process of time to be absorbed by later people and transformed into doves, triangles, crooks, mitres, rosaries, holy water, 'fleur-de-lis,' sceptres, etc.—a whole congeries of derived and hybridized symbols, passing into later churches and governments?

# FLORA OF THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS.

"The thick web of fiction man has woven round nature."
—'Apologetic Irenicon' by Professor Huxley, Fortnightly Review, Nov. 1892, p. 565.

# I.

# FLORA

OF

# THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS

## OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM, AND OTHERS.

### THE DATE TREE (*Phœnix dactylifera*).

This is one of the most prominent trees on the Assyrian sculptures. It is figured very characteristically on Nos. 15, 16, 17, etc., and is mostly represented as shown in fig. 1. Other forms also exist, as shown in figs. 2 and 5. Most of them are conventional forms, but some are more realistic.

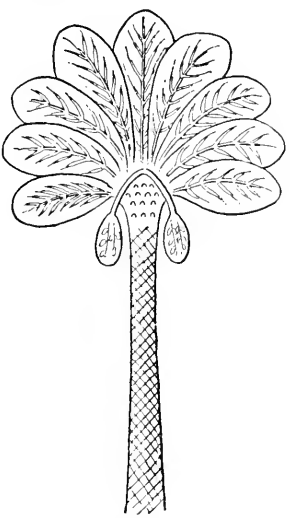


FIG. 1. Ordinary date tree of the Monuments.

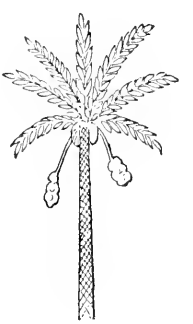


FIG. 2.—Date tree on some of the Sculptures.

This tree has a straight stem, with a plumose head, and a bunch of dates hanging on each side. Moreover, as happens in the natural tree, offsets are frequently figured at the base of the stem, and the stem itself is frequently ornamented with regular projections pointing upwards. These can hardly be meant for any other than the triangular bases of the leaves, which are directed upwards, as shown in fig. 3, and which, in young trees, remain a long time attached to the stem, after the leaves have decayed, or have been cut off, and used for various purposes, such as mats, baskets, stakes, fire-wood, etc.

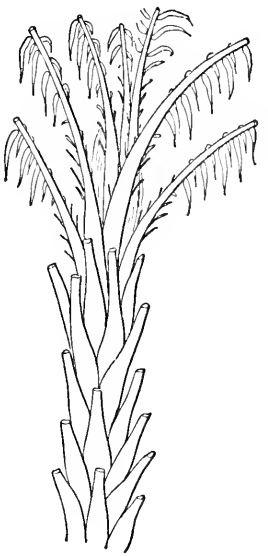


FIG. 3.—From a photo of date tree, 13 to 16 years old (Timber Mus., R. G., Kew). Only half the stem is shown, and the existing leaves cut short.

In the Græco-Roman saloon of the British Museum there is a statue of an athlete (No. 501), which has near it the stump of a date tree, as given in fig. 4, indicating the same feature.

When the date tree becomes old the bases of the lower leaves drop off, leaving only transverse scars in the places of attachment, or an irregular surface, which the Assyrian artists indicated by means of crossed lines.

The date tree is so characteristic that it is hardly necessary to do more than refer to figs. 1, 2, and 5, which show the different ways artists had of representing this tree. Some of them resemble the first attempts a child would make in trying to give expression on paper to a tree-thought.

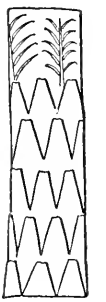


Fig. 4.—Stump of date tree—No. 501, Graeco-Roman saloon, Brit. Mus.

There cannot be much doubt that, in Assyrian times, the date tree was to be found in those regions, and also in other parts of Western Asia, in immense numbers, and its fruit must have been, from very early times, one of the most important kinds of food, more especially to the great mass of the people.

The name of Palmyra or Tadmor would appear to indicate the plentifulness, in later times, of this tree, near that city.

The shores of the Dead Sea also are said to bear unmistakable evidence of whole forests having once existed somewhere in its vicinity, or on the banks of its tributary rivers.

Layard[1] gives a plate representing the conquerors cutting down the date trees of a conquered country.

[1] Monuments of Nineveh, 1st Ser. pl. 73.

This terrible way of clearing a conquered country of its food-trees must have been frequently practised, and will amply account for the almost total disappearance of the date tree from whole regions, where, at previous

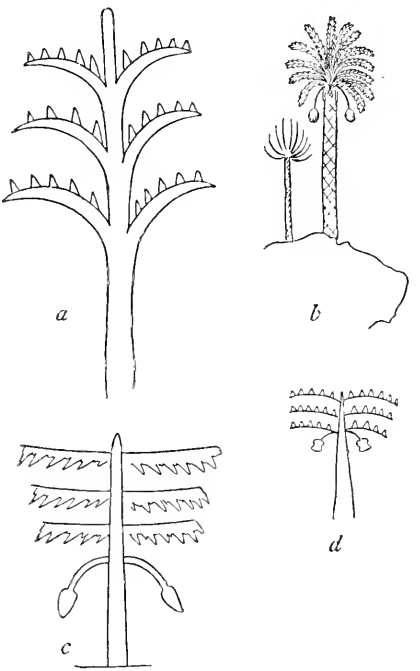



Fig. 5.—Variations of date tree designs:—
*a*. From Balawat gates, British Museum.
*b*. From Bonomi's Niniveh.
*c*. From Cylinder $\frac{\text{A. R.}}{\text{B. 86}}$, British Museum.
*d*. From Sculpture 6*a*, Nimrood gallery, British Museum.

times, it must have existed abundantly. Layard says, "The scene around the traveller is worthy of the ruin he is contemplating; desolation meets desolation; a feel-

ing of awe succeeds to wonder; for there is nothing to relieve the mind, to lead to hope, or to tell of what has gone by." The cutting down of the date trees of conquered countries was no doubt intended to prevent the conquered people from resettling there. This alone would be ample evidence of the importance of the date crop in those days, and will more than account for depopulation and subsequent ruination of their temples and palaces. The depopulation of those districts must have inevitably followed the destruction of their food-trees.

So useful and so important must the date tree have been to those people, that one can readily understand why it was greatly revered, and raised to the rank of a sacred tree. The trunks of the felled trees, which gave inferior fruit, would probably have been utilised as pillars for houses, beams for bridges, etc. Although the interior of the date-palm stem is soft and pithy, its exterior is so hard and flinty as to chip the edge of an adze used in squaring it. Rawlinson, in his History of Ancient Egypt, Vol. I, p. 50, says, "The wild date tree furnishes, and has probably always furnished, the principal timber used in Egypt for building purposes. It is employed for beams and rafters, either entire or split in halves, and though not a hard wood, is a sufficiently good material, being tough and elastic."

In Assyrian times such a valuable tree, representing the main food of the people—a tree, which now and again, by being grown from seed, unaccountably produced *new and better kinds of fruit*—as if it were solely by God's power, and a tree so essential to the existence of the people, and so much "en evidence" everywhere, would, sooner or later, be symbolized by religious thinkers into a sacred tree, and artists would soon have made a conventional and ornamental thing of it, to suit the decorations of flat surfaces on walls of palaces and temples, and for the needs of embroidery, etc., such as are shown in figs. 16, 20, and 22.

Prof. Alph. De Candolle in his 'Origin of Cultivated Plants,' states that "the names of the date tree bear witness to its great antiquity, both in Asia and in Africa, seeing they are numerous and very different. The Hebrews called the date-palm *tamar*, and the ancient Egyptians *beq*. The complete difference between these words, both very ancient, shows that these peoples found the species indigenous and perhaps already named in Western Asia and in Egypt. The number of Persian, Arabic, and Berber names is incredible . . . . I think, in fine, that in times anterior to the earliest Egyptian dynasties the date-palm already existed, wild or sown here and there by wandering tribes, in a narrow zone extending from the Euphrates to the Canaries."

Then Franç. Lenormant, quoting from Herodotus,[1] says, "Quant aux palmiers, toute la plaine de Babylonie en est plantée; la plupart portent des fruits qui forment la nourriture des habitants, et leur fournissent en même temps un vin, et une sorte de miel."

And on p. 41 he says—"Ce pays produit plus d'orge qu'aucun autre, car elle y rend trois cents pour un. Le palmier fournit à tous les autres besoins de la population. On en tire une sorte de pain, du vin, du vinaigre, du miel, et avec ses feuilles on fait toute sorte de tissus. Les forgerons emploient les noyaux de dattes en guise de charbons, et ses mêmes noyaux, macérés dans l'eau, forment l'aliment des boeufs, et des moutons. On dit qu'il y a une chanson perse qui enumère 360 manieres de tirer parti du palmier."

It is no wonder that those people thought so much of the date tree. Its great utility to them was very good reason for them to elevate it to the rank of a sacred tree.

Even in these days its immense utility in Egypt and North Africa, in Persia, and even in Mooltan, is evident enough.

Herodotus, according to Prof. De Candolle, wrote of the Babylonian date-palms about the 5th century B.C. But his statement is sufficient evidence to show that

[1] 'Essai de commentaire des Fragments cosmogoniques de Bérose,' p. 40.

the great usefulness of the date-palm must have been known thousands of years before he could have seen the whole plain of Babylonia planted with it, and before the Babylonians could have discovered that the date-palm had *two sexes* on separate trees.

## THE VINE (*Vitis vinifera*).

This trailing plant is so frequently and unmistakably represented on the Assyrian monuments that in those days it must have been growing everywhere like a weed. Whether the Assyrians understood the mode of propagating it by cuttings is, perhaps, not ascertainable; but in a region where the vine was naturalized everywhere its seeds would be scattered, and would germinate and produce new varieties in the same way as must have occurred with the date tree.

Moreover, the slender and trailing habit of its stem must have often brought it into contact with the soil, and in time it would have given off roots from the part touching the soil. This would have early given those people a lesson in *layering* the vine for purposes of propagating the *same* variety.

This tree, with its slender stem, must, over and over again, have been seen climbing up date trees, and festooning itself among them, and thus have unconsciously become a part of the thoughts of the people.

It is unmistakably represented on several sculptures. A bit of one is shown in fig. 6. Its leaf is as good as rude art can make it; and the bunch of grapes, in this case, is rightly put *opposite* the leaf.

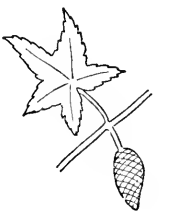


FIG. 6.—From No. 24, Kouyunjik Gallery, British Museum.

The probable connection of the vine with some of their sacred trees is discussed under that heading.

This is what Alph. De Candolle says of the vine:[1] "It is especially in the Pontus, in Armenia, to the south of the Caucasus, and of the Caspian Sea, that it grows with the luxuriant wildness of a tropical creeper, clinging to tall trees, and producing abundant fruit, without pruning or cultivation."

Then on p. 193 he says: "Adolphe Pictet, who has, in common with numerous authors, but in a more scientific manner, considered the historical, philological, and even mythological questions, relating to the vine, among ancient peoples, admits that both Semitic and Aryan nations knew the use of wine, so that they may have introduced it into all the countries into which they migrated."

[1] Page 191, Orig. Cultiv. Plants.

## THE POMEGRANATE (*Punica granatum*).

This is also very easy to recognize on the monuments. The tree is shown on many sculptures, mostly on rocky ground. As usually represented it would be difficult to recognize were it not that in some cases the fruit is also shown. And in Nos. 42 and 43, Kouyunjik Gallery, men are carrying piles of pomegranates to the palace. These, presumedly, were choice varieties, different from the wild pomegranates. The tree is always shown as a bush, or small tree, with a short stem, and branches covered with small leaves.

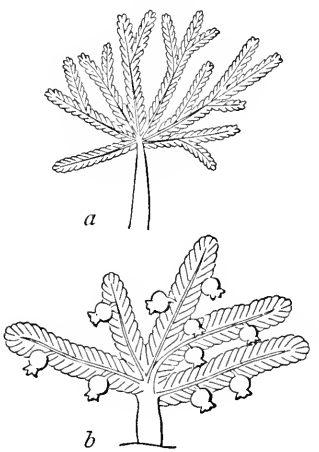



FIG. 7. — Pomegranate trees of the Monuments :—
*a*. As usually shown on stony ground.
*b*. From Layard's Monuments, pl. 15, 2nd series.

Fig. 7*a* gives the tree as usually delineated on the monuments, and more rarely with the fruit on, as in *b*.

The leaves are out of all proportion to the size of the bush, as usually shown on the sculptures. Indeed it would not be possible to give in stone, and on a small scale, the right proportion of the size of the leaves, for naturally the leaves of the pomegranate tree are quite small, and cover the new branches from base to

apex. It is only by having now and then its characteristic fruit on that anything can be made of these bushes, as figured on the monuments.

It is evident that this bush was plentiful in its wild state, and was used for fire-wood, as men are seen cutting it down near their camps.

Prof. De Candolle says of it, at p. 237, "The pomegranate grows wild in stony ground in Persia, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, and Beluchistan. Burnes saw groves of it in Mazanderan, to the south of the Caspian Sea. It appears equally wild to the south of the Caucasus. Westwards, that is to say, in Asia Minor, in Greece, and in the Mediterranean basin generally, in the North of Africa, and in Madeira, the species appears rather to have become naturalized from cultivation, and by the dispersal of the seeds by birds. . . . . The pomegranate enters into the myths and religious ceremonies of the ancient Romans. Cato speaks of its properties as a vermifuge.[1] According to Pliny, the best pomegranates came from Carthage, hence the name *Malum punicum* . . . Very probably the Phœnicians had introduced it at Carthage long before the Romans had anything to do with this town, and it was doubtless cultivated as in Egypt."

[1] It is still one of the Pharmacopeia remedies for tapeworm in Europe.

## THE FIG (*Ficus carica*).

This is easily distinguishable on the monuments by its leaves and the flat pear-shaped outline of its fruit. Indeed they probably had more than one variety, for in Layard's drawings of Nineveh some fig trees are shown with digitate and others with palmate leaves, as shown in fig. 8.


FIG. 8.—*a*, from pl. 15; *b*, from pl. 20; *c*, from pl. 22; Layard's Monuments, 2nd series.

The fig tree in those days must have been growing wild in many places, for De Candolle (p. 295) says:—"In our own day the fig tree grows wild, or nearly wild, over a vast region, of which Syria is about the centre; that is to say, from the East of Persia, or even from Afghanistan, across the whole of the Mediterranean region as far as the Canaries.

## THE BANANA (*Musa sapientum*).

The reader might perhaps say that I have tried to make out that the banana was a plant known to the Assyrians from very small indications. But taking into consideration the natural history of this plant, and its importance as a food, wherever it can be grown, or can be imported, we shall see that the great probability is that the Assyrians, or the Babylonians, *were* acquainted with it. Indeed, it would be difficult to make out what else the Assyrian sculptor could have meant by the banana-like things, which are being partaken of, as refreshments, in association with what appear like slices of melon.

The things I mean are shown in fig. 9.

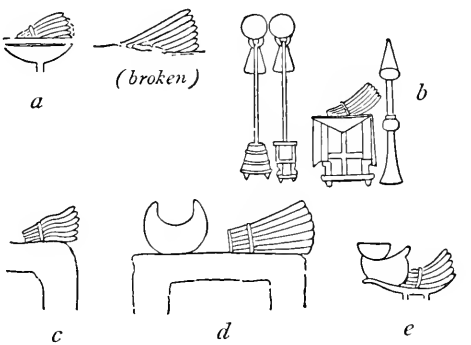



FIG. 9.—From Botta's 'Monuments de Ninive.'
*a*. Pl. 113, Tome II. *c*. Pl. 61, Tome I.
*d*. Pl. 64, ,,
*b*. Pl. 146, ,, *e*. Pl. 65, ,,

The history of the banana, according to Professor De Candolle, is interesting; more especially as I am

not aware that its *plant* is shown anywhere on the sculptures. We would expect to find on these records of their feats only trees which were indigenous to their own and surrounding countries, and which were well known to their artists. Nevertheless I think the *fruit* of the banana must have been known in Assyria, much as we know it in London, although it does not grow in our parks and orchards. The fruit (if it be a banana) was evidently uncommon, and a fit thing for the tables of the king and his courtiers.

Prof. De Candolle says the bananas (*Musa sapientum* and *M. paradisiaca*, Linn.), were generally considered to be natives of S. Asia, and to have been carried to America by Europeans, until Humboldt threw doubts upon their purely Asiatic origin. He asserts that on the banks of the Orinoco, in the midst of the thickest forests, almost everywhere plantations of manioc and bananas are found, although the Indian tribes had had no relations with European settlements. He thought that there must be some kinds of bananas which are indigenous to America.

Other authors, De Candolle continues, consider the bananas of the Old and New World as belonging to the same species, and divide them into large fruited (7 to 15 inches long), and small fruited (1 to 6 inches long). Brown, moreover, states that no one pretends to have found in America in a wild state varieties with

fertile fruit, as has happened in Asia. Others consider that the banana was introduced into Brazil from the Congo. The assertions of Caldcleugh that the banana was known to the American Indians before communication with the Portuguese, and that its leaves were found in Peruvian tombs, are vitiated by the statement that he saw also beans in the tombs—a plant which undoubtedly belongs to the Old World.

Botanists unhesitatingly say that no real Indian names for this plant exist in the languages of Peru and Mexico. But, even if they did, it would, I think, be no evidence that the banana was *not* introduced. For in my studies of the oranges and lemons of India and Ceylon, I found many undoubted Sanskrit or Persian names attached to certain varieties of Citrus; but they were mostly descriptive of some character in the fruit, such as "full of seeds," "round as a moon," and so forth, many of these Sanskrit-named fruits *being undoubtedly introduced.* It is curious to trace the wanderings of a plant, but just as curious to trace the wanderings and transformations of the names that stick to it.

Prof. A. de Candolle says:—"The antiquity and wild character of the banana in Asia are incontestable facts. Its generic name *Musa* is from the Arabic *Mouz*,[1]

[1] "Linnæus says he named it after Antonius Musa, the Physician of Augustus."—Nicholson's Dict. of Gardening.

which is found as early as the 13th century in Ebn Baithar. But the Hebrews and ancient Egyptians did not appear to know this plant;" and therefore he concludes that it did not exist in India from a very remote period, but was first a native of the Malay Archipelago. It bears distinct names in the most separate Asiatic languages, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Malay, and there is an immense number of varieties in South Asia; so that its existence there must have been of great antiquity.

Botanists have found it growing wild in many parts of Asia—Chittagong, Khasia, Ceylon, Philippine Islands, Siam, Cochinchina.

Prof. Terrien de Lacouperie[1] has given a list of Eastern names of the Banana, among which '*banana*' itself is one. According to Prof. Robertson Smith the name most probably comes from the Arabic *banan*, 'fingers or toes,' *banana* being a 'single finger or toe.' The similarity of the names and the objects denoted can hardly be accidental.

So that whether in America the banana may or may not have been also indigenous matters little in this discussion. There is ample evidence to show that in Asia it must have been known from the *remotest antiquity*.

It is however a mistake, I think, to fancy that the cultivated seedless varieties will not run to seed if

[1] Babylonian and Oriental Record, July, 1890, p. 176.

neglected. For in Lucknow natives say that when left in one place and not shifted, and well manured, the plantain, as some call it in English, *seeds*. I have seen plants of it in one of the king's gardens, after the capture of Lucknow, in 1858, which had been neglected for several years. Their fruit was full of seeds and had little or no pulp. This seedful fruit natives call '*Kârrûr*.'

So that its having been found by botanists in various places, wild and producing seed, may not necessarily mean that it got there by transportation of *seed*. My experience of this plant is that it is very hardy in a climate that will suit it.

When once introduced and established, it is difficult to eradicate, and that where found growing wild it may have been originally brought there as *offsets* by settlers, who afterwards may have died off, or migrated, or have been exterminated, while their banana plants remained there, and eventually, through neglect, produced fruit full of seeds, which may have helped further multiplication and dissemination of the plant by birds, etc.

It should be noted that although usually the cultivated banana is seedless, occasionally a seed or two are met with in the pulpy fruit.

Whatever may have been its origin in the wild state, the following points appear tolerably certain :—

(*a*) That it was known in S. Asia from a very remote period, and that Arab and Persian traders must have been early acquainted with it.

(*b*) That probably it was grown in S. Arabia and S. Persia. Its rooted stumps can easily be carried to a distance, and will then strike and grow under favorable conditions.

(*c*) The fruit might have been easily carried from S. Arabia and S. Persia to Babylonia in traders' coasting ships. It admits of being cut green in bunches and ripened off the plant afterwards. In going from Bombay to Ceylon in one of the coasting steamers we had bunches of plantains in the green state hung on deck, and served in clusters as they ripened. There can hardly be much doubt that in Assyrian times the Persian and Arab seamen did the same thing, taking in fresh supplies from the coast towns they touched at, until they brought their last lot to Babylon.

(*d*) That, although the Babylonians might have got the banana fruit now and again, it must have been only as a rare thing, to be presented to the King, and persons of rank. This would account, perhaps, for the Hebrews and ancient Egyptians not mentioning it, and for the fruit only appearing at Royal banquets on the monuments, while the plant itself is not found on the sculptures.

For this plant to flourish and fruit a tropical climate

is required for most varieties. I could never get the red plantain of Bombay to fruit in Lucknow, although there are a few hardy varieties that will fruit there. It is injured by a cold temperature in winter, and also by a hot dry wind in summer; and probably in the Assyrian regions they had both.

It may have been possible for traders in those days to have carried banana fruit to Babylon, but it may not have been possible to carry it further, as it decays after a time.

So upon the whole it would not appear improbable that the objects indicated in fig. 9 were meant by the Assyrian sculptors for clusters of bananas. What else they could have been meant for is not clear.

What I have stated is from the natural history point of view, to show that the probability is that the banana fruit was brought to Babylon by seamen coming from tropical coasts.

I shall endeavour to show now that the study of the sculptures, from the artistic point of view, gives support to the notion that the objects on the monuments were intended for clusters of bananas.

Turning to M. Botta's 'Monuments de Ninive,' we find that on plates 63, 64, and 65 of Tome I; and on plates 113 and 146, Tome II, there are objects on trays and tables which resemble clusters of bananas. Then in British Museum basement (No. 121) there is

the same cluster on a table close to a reclining figure of Sardanapalus.

It is important to note that the sculptor has given all these objects the same character, as shown in fig. 9, viz., a number of parallel finger-like objects, with a thick line across them, not far from their base. Like bananas, in one case, they have a distinct *curve*, and in another they present an indication of *two rows*, in the same cluster.

As may be seen in the London shops, on the main stem of the bunch are arranged clusters of bananas, with two rows in each cluster. The number of rows varies according to species, and the number of bananas in each row varies also. On the tree the bunch hangs point downwards, and each cluster, when in flower, is protected by a large leathery bract, which in some species is of a very brilliant color. This bract falls off, and as the ovaries mature they usually curve upwards, that is, towards the base of the bunch. When the bract falls off a scar of the whole breadth of the cluster is left on the upper side near its base. This scar appears like a dark thick line. Sometimes this thick line, representing the scar left by the fallen bract, is curved, sometimes it is rather straight. Fig. 10 is an outline of a cluster of bananas, as seen in the London shops.

FIG. 10. — Cluster of bananas, as seen in the shops (*a*) is the scar of the fallen bract.

Sometimes the bananas are strongly curved upwards, sometimes they are almost straight.

The attachment of each individual fruit varies. In some kinds each banana is *separately* attached to the stem. In others the stalk becomes partially confluent; that is, the stem-half of each stalk adheres to its neighbour, so as to form a sort of flat, or fasciated branch, from which the individual bananas spring.

Near the junction of the fruit-stalks with the stem there is a distinct thick dark line, which is the scar of the fallen bract, and in cases of confluence the line is often on the fasciated part.

All these details, although tedious, are important, because, without them, it would not be easy to make out that Assyrian monarchs refreshed themselves with bananas.

In M. Botta's plates a distinct thick line is in all cases shown near the base of each cluster of banana-like objects, and it is curious to note that this thick line is on the concave side of the cluster, as occurs in the fruit itself. Considering the interesting, though rough details, which the Assyrian artists often introduced into their sculptures, this line may have been meant for that which, on the real cluster, indicates the scar left by the falling off of the large leathery bract.

As to the number of bananas in each cluster, *Musa Zebrina* (Van Houtte's Flore des Serres) has single

rows, varying from four to seven in each row. *Musa superba* (3850, Bot. Mag.) has the line near the base of the ovaries, and a fasciated part which attaches the cluster to the stem. *Musa rosacea* (Bot. Mag.) has only two or three ovaries under each bract. In *Musa paradisiaca*, one of the kinds cultivated for its fruit, there are two rows of bananas, but each banana is separately attached to the stem. All the cultivated kinds of *Musa sapientum*, which I have seen, had two rows of bananas, the number in a row varying. The insertion of the fruit on the stem varies also. In some the fasciated part is short; in others longer.

In the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, there is an original colored drawing of a yellow variety, with the usual curve, made by John Reeves, who resided some time in Canton. It has two rows in each cluster, and, curiously enough, it has *seven* bananas in each row, like those of the pl. 64, Tome I of Botta's Monuments.[1]

Another original drawing has red fruit, and the individuals are straight, like some which are shown on the monuments.

The bunch of plantains is too large and heavy to be handled and offered as a whole; and so, by means of a knife, it is divided into clusters, such as are

[1] I should not place much weight on the number, *seven*, as it was a mystic number among the ancients.

seen in the sculptures and in the London shops. In India they are hawked about, and served at tables also in this manner. And I think that, both botanically and artistically, the rude representations on the Assyrian sculptures can stand for clusters of bananas. Moreover, if these were intended for such a fruit, it would seem that the Assyrian artists were acquainted with more than one variety of it.

It may seem that I have devoted a great amount of space to a paltry cluster of bananas. True, but by looking carefully into the matter we may get a glimpse of the kind of refreshments those terrible kings called for, after their exhausting hunts and battles.

I have entered so fully into the geographical and botanical history of the banana because the characteristic plant itself is not traceable on the monuments. Nevertheless the fruit may have been quite known to the Assyrians as an imported and rare article.

## THE MELON

(*Cucumis melo*, or *Citrullus vulgaris*).

Accompanying the banana-like objects there sometimes occurs what appears like a slice of melon—such as is shown on pl. 64, Tome I of Botta's Monuments (fig. 9, *d*).

There are two kinds of melon, the ordinary melon (*Cucumis melo*, Linn.), and the water-melon (*Citrullus vulgaris*, Schr.). It is impossible, however, to say to which kind that on the sculptures belongs.

Of the melon proper a number of wild varieties are found in India, but there are others which probably belong to Africa. Prof. Alph. De Candolle says that "the culture of the melon, or of different varieties of the melon, may have begun separately in India and Africa."

Of the cultivated melon the varieties are innumerable, both in Central Asia, in Persia, and in India, and the fine kinds they have in Central Asia and in Persia would indicate a cultivation of very ancient date. V. Hehn[1] mentions that Marco Polo says of the country west of Balkh—"Here grow the best melons in the world; that Prof. Vambéry says of Khiva that it has no rivals in melons; and that at the present day in Persia the melon, of which there are many varieties, is a very important fruit." It is said that in Persia they keep flocks of pigeons for the express purpose of using their 'guano' as manure for growing melons. In Afghanistan they also have the noted 'Sardá' melon, and M. Naudin, who is the great authority on the Cucurbitaceæ, gives '*rouges de Perse*' as one of his groups.

[1] 'Wanderings of plants and animals,' p. 238.

Hehn says that the Tartar name for the melon is '*Kharpuz*,' or '*Kaprus*.' The Indian name of *Cucumis melo* is '*Kharbuza*.'

Upon the whole there does not seem much difficulty in crediting the Assyrians, not only with having known the melon, but also with having grown it. They may possibly not have had the same varieties that the Persians and Khivans have now, but they may have had in the days of Niniveh and Babylon kinds sufficiently choice to place before kings and persons of high rank.

As to the water-melon (*Citrullus vulgaris*, Schr.), De Candolle says—"It was found indigenous in tropical Africa, on both sides of the equator. Livingstone saw whole districts literally covered with it, and the savages and several kinds of wild animals eagerly devoured the wild fruit." He adds that the species has not been found wild in Asia.

The best and sweetest water-melon I ever tasted was in Egypt—a red variety, with black seeds. There are red varieties with red seeds, and also white varieties with either black or red seeds. De Candolle says that in Constantinople it is called '*Karpus*.' In India natives call the water-melon '*Tarbuj*.' I never saw one there of this kind fit to eat. While of the ordinary melon (*Cucumis melo*) in Lucknow, during the kings' time, they grew a delicious white-fleshed variety — small,

globular, very sweet, and green-spotted externally, on a pale yellow ground, called *Chitla Kharbuza*.

From all this it would follow that, although the Assyrians may have been acquainted with the water-melon, it is more probable that the one the artists represented on the sculptures was some fine kind of *Cucumis melo*, such as are still grown in Persia at the present day.

## THE PINE TREE (*Pinus Brutia*).

On several bas-reliefs of the Monuments[1] there is a pine tree, which occurs both on level and hilly ground. It is shown in two forms in fig. 11.

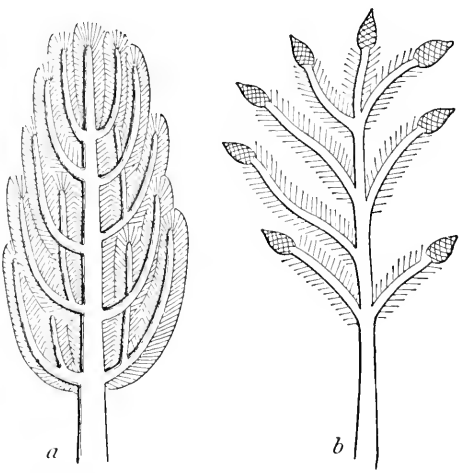



FIG. 11.—Pine trees :—
(*a*) As usually seen on the Monuments, from pl. 81, and (*b*) from pl. 46, Layard's Monuments, 1st Series.

[1] Numbers 51, 52, 53, 54, and 55, Kouyunjik Gallery, and numbers 45 and 121, basement, British Museum.

By the help of the Officials of the Natural History Museum (Botany department) I have been able to identify this fir tree with *Pinus Brutia* of Boissier's Flor. Orient. (vol. 5, p. 695). It is found in the mountainous districts of Crete, Chios, Cilicia, Taurus, Lebanon, Northern Persia, and as far as Afghanistan. It is most likely to have been the one which was common in the hilly countries of Assyria. A colored drawing is given of *P. Brutia* in the 'Flora Napolitana' of Tenore, pl. c.c. Boissier states that this pine is near *P. Halepensis*, the only difference being that the latter has more rigid leaves, and less pendulous cones.

As delineated on the Monuments the tree was evidently a true pine, and there can hardly be much doubt that it was one of these two, and as *P. Brutia* ranges from Syria to Afghanistan it is more likely to have been the one meant by the sculptor. Of course the picture that the artist had in his mind's eye was that of a *young* pine tree, with its symmetrical candelabrum-like branches. A pine tree of that age makes a very pretty and ornamental object, and such as would attract an artist's attention.

There cannot be much doubt that in Assyrian times, when the monarch set forth on a conquering expedition he took his court with him, which must have included artists and poets, to chronicle the deeds of the great man, and hand them down to posterity.

These were the war correspondents of those days. Under such circumstances the artist would have had ample opportunities of seeing young symmetrical trees on the outskirts of the forests, which were suited to the ornamentation of his bas-reliefs.

The pine tree on the Monuments is so easily made out that no more need be said about it just now.

## THE REED (*Arundo Donax*).

Another plant of the Monuments is a *reed* shown on the river banks, on numbers 3, 9, 10, 11, 56, and 58, of the Kouyunjik Gallery. It is also shown on the bas-reliefs in the basement. It evidently formed jungles of reeds so dense that animals and men could hide among them, as is graphically shown on numbers 57 and 58, basement.

It is a tall reed, with graceful alternate long leaves, terminating in a spindle-shaped panicle of grass-like flowers. It appears to be no other than the *Arundo Donax* (*thonax*, the reed arrow) of Boissier's Flor. Orient. (vol. 5, p. 564).

He says its habitat is in damp places, near banks of rivers, in Syria and Transcaucasia. The smaller reeds are thin and light, and straight, and well suited for the stems of arrows. If then it was not found on Assyrian territories it was no doubt found in the countries which those monarchs invaded and conquered,

and which these monuments were no doubt intended to illustrate.

The *Arundo Donax* is a reed which splits up easily into thin strips, and is suitable for the manufacture of baskets. It is so used in the South of Europe, as well as for cages, fishing-rods, etc.

Fig. 12 gives the various modes in which this reed is found delineated. Those people utilized this reed for various purposes. No. 6, Nimrood Gallery, gives a battle in a marsh, from Sennacherib's palace, Kouyunjik, in which there are rafts made up of bundles of reeds. The hollowness of this reed would make it a capital float.

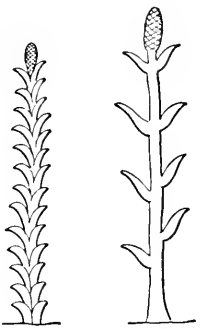


FIG. 12.—Reeds on margins of rivers.—From Layard, 2nd series.

## THE LILY (*Lilium Candidum*).

There is another Oriental plant which must have struck the Assyrian artist with its purity, elegance and exquisite scent. It is the 'Madonna Lily'—*Lilium Candidum*. C. F. Ledebour, in his 'Flora Rossica' (1852), gives it as indigenous in the Caucasian provinces; while Mr. Baker, director of the Kew Herbarium, gives its range along S. Europe, as far as Palestine, N. Syria, and the Caucasus. There is little room for doubt that so sweet and beautiful a lily, with a bulb so amenable

to cultivation, early found its way to the gardens of the Assyrian monarchs.

It is unmistakably and very truthfully delineated on Nos. 76 and 77 of the basement, British Museum.

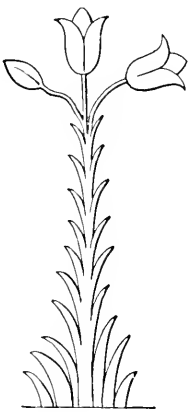


FIG. 13.—Lily from No. 77, basement, Brit. Mus.

Fig. 13 shows that the sculptors of those days were well acquainted with this fine thing.

## A COMPOSITE PLANT (*Hieracium Pannosum*).

In the British Museum basement (Nos. 76 and 77) there occur delineated two figures of one plant which had puzzled me for a long time. They both have large acute sessile radical leaves. In one case, however, it is shown with three blossoms unexpanded close to the leaves, and in the other with three composite expanded flowers, each on separate long stalks.

With the help of the officials of the Natural History

Museum, where they have not only an extensive herbarium, but also a large collection of drawings of plants, I think I have been fortunate enough to identify this plant also.

It corresponds closely with *Hieracium pannosum* of Boissier's 'Flora Orientalis.' He says it has "large oblong and broad leaves, obtuse or rather acute, with a sessile base; the stem is naked, with 3 to 5 flower-heads, with its leaves closely packed; sometimes the stem is reduced to one flower; the flower-heads are large, globose and long peduncled. Two of its synonyms are *H. lanatum* and *H. orientale*. It is found in the rocky regions of Greece, Taurus, Cilicia, South Armenia, etc.

It is pictured in Reichenbach's 'Flora Germanica,' xix, pl. MDLV. Of course in Germany it might not be expected to have such luxuriant foliage as the artist has given it on the Assyrian Monuments. Reichenbach says it has thick leaves, oblong cuneate, with a *simple* or corymbose stem, and is very thickly haired.

Boissier, however, mentions a variety of this plant, called *H. Taygetum* (a name taken from the ridge of mountains in Southern Greece), which is a beautiful plant, with peduncles of half to one-and-a-half feet in length. It is moreover clothed with a hair of a very silvery silkiness. Here then appears to be the key for

the reason which induced the artist to introduce this particular plant into his bas-reliefs. He was struck with its beauty, and with its silvery hairiness, and with its long graceful peduncles, each carrying one flower a foot and a half high. There are several Hieraciums, having only one flower on one stalk, but this is the most striking.

The reader might ask—how comes it that a plant common on the Assyrian mountains is also found in Greece and Germany? This is easily explained. Many of the compositæ have their small light seeds furnished with a sort of hairy parachute, called a *pappus*. The wind might carry them not only to Greece and Germany, or *vice-versâ*, but to Scotland and even Iceland, and wherever they could germinate and live they would be found; of course in colder regions they might not be so luxuriant as in warmer ones.

The description given by Boissier of *Heracium pannosum* agrees closely with the characters shown by the Assyrian artist,[1] making allowance of course for the absence of perspective, which the artists of those days did not understand, and for the material being stone. Its large compact leaves, globose heads, and very long one-flowered peduncles, leave no reasonable room for doubt that the plant on this monument is the *Hieracium pannosum*, or *Taygetum* of Boissier.

[1] For all we know he may have been a *Greek* artist.

Fig. 14 gives an outline of it.

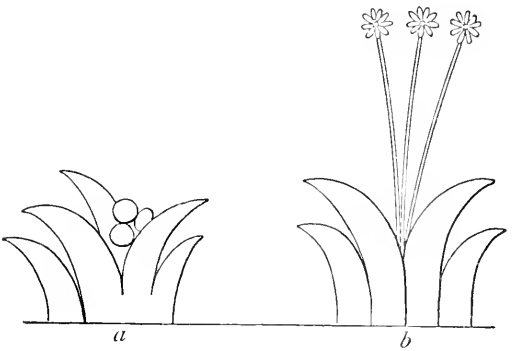



FIG. 14.—From No. 77, basement, British Museum: (*a*) with flowers in bud, (*b*) with flowers expanded.

## THE BAOBAB? (*Adansonia digitata*).

There is one other plant on the Monuments, the identification of which appears to be hopeless. It is on Nos. 6 and 7, Nimrood Gallery.

There are two specimens near each other. The plant consists of a thick and short stumpy stem, with two thick stumpy side branches, all three ending in short and wavy branches. At first I conjectured it might be a *Euphorbia*, but there is nothing like it in Boissier's Flor. Orient. It may not impossibly have been intended for a *Baobab* tree (*Adansonia digitata*) shown in its leafless period, which is the more striking. The *Baobab* is found in the Soudan and South-East Africa, but there are several old trees of it in Lucknow, and in Salsette,

and in Etawah I had three large trees of it in my compound.[1] Mr. Thomas Harris, of the Educational Department of Ajmere, informs me that the *Baobab* in the North-West Provinces is called *Anjân Rook*, which means the *unknown* tree, and would of course indicate that it has been introduced, and has no indigenous name.

In Assyrian times there was great commercial activity between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Their ivory, and many other products, must have come from the Soudan, through the Red Sea route. The seed of the *Baobab* is enclosed in a hard shell, which may be carried long distances without injury to its germinating power. As there was commercial activity between the two countries, it is nothing preposterous to suppose that the seed of so striking a tree would have found its way to Persia and Assyria.

Of the *Adansonia*, Bentham and Hooker, in their 'Genera Plantarum,' say: "Species 2, altera Africana, in Asia tropica occidentali sat frequens, sed forte culta; altera Australiensis."[2]

So that there is great probability that the *Baobab* tree was known to the Assyrians. The very fact that only two specimens are delineated by the artist close to each other on the Monuments would show that this

[1] In Miss North's Gallery, Royal Gardens, Kew (No. 262), is a 'Boabab' tree from Tanjore, with wavy branches. See Guide to Miss North's Gallery.
[2] A third species is said to belong to Madagascar.

kind of tree, whatever it may be, was rare, and it may strengthen the conjecture that they were meant for introduced *Baobab* trees.

I can make nothing else of these stumps of trees. An outline of one of these is given in fig. 15.

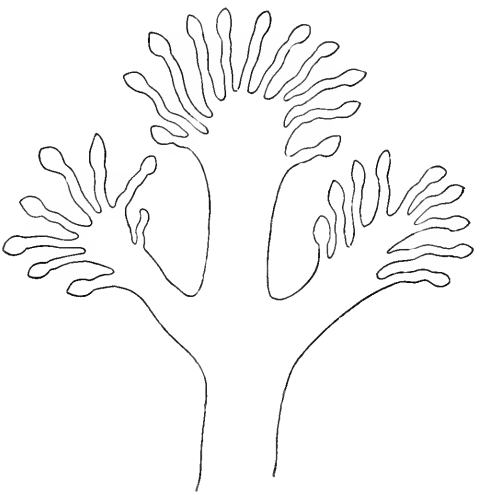


FIG. 15.—Two trees like this on 6*a*, Nimrood Gallery, British Museum, reproduced in pl. 33, Layard's 1st Series.

Finally there is another tree shown on Layard's Monuments. Nothing can be made of it. It may be a plum tree, it may be an apple tree, or something else. Both these fruit trees were indigenous in the regions south of the Caucasus, and the vicinity of Persia.

This completes the Flora of the Assyrian Monuments.

The lotus has some connection with this Flora, as it is found as a border ornament in the pavement of the Palace of Sardanapalus, but I prefer leaving the lotus to be discussed after the sacred trees.

The plants treated of then, are:

THE DATE PALM—*Phœnix dactylifera.*

THE VINE—*Vitis vinifera.*

THE POMEGRANATE—*Punica granatum.*

THE FIG—*Ficus Carica.*

THE BANANA—*Musa sapientum*, or other species.

THE MELON—*Cucumis melo.*

THE PINE TREE—*Pinus Brutia.*

THE REED—*Arundo donax.*

THE LILY—*Lilium candidum.*

A COMPOSITE PLANT—*Hierachium pannosum.*

THE BAOBAB (?)—*Adansonia digitata.*

# THE SACRED TREES OF ASSYRIA.

"Nay, what is man's whole terrestrial life but a symbolic representation and making visible of the celestial invisible force that is in him?"

Thomas Carlyle—'French Revol.' II, p. 59.

## II.

## THE SACRED TREES OF ASSYRIA.

Out of the study of the Flora of the Monuments there arises the question of the origin of the so-called *Sacred Trees*, of which the Assyrians appear to have had several forms.

We call them sacred trees because kings, priests, and genii of various sorts are shown standing or kneeling before such trees in an attitude of adoration.

Moreover, the genii are in the attitude of performing some office which evidently, in the eyes of the Assyrians, had some spiritual or supernatural meaning.

All their trees are more or less conventional, as we find them in all ancient sculptures and paintings, when art was in its infancy; but their sacred trees are much more conventional,[1] and they are made up, as we shall see, of some interesting elements.

It is probable that most ancient peoples have had one or more trees and other plants which they held in veneration. The oak is said to have been held in veneration among the ancient Gauls. The Hindoos have not only the "Deodar" and the "Peepul" (*Ficus Religiosa*), but many other plants, which are dedicated to their gods.

[1] As happily expressed by Prof. Hommel, they are "holy trees translated into architecture."

The origin of sacredness in the different trees may have been various; either some wise person, saint, or god may have lived under the tree; or sacrifices may have been performed there; or meetings held under it; or it may have been a very useful plant to the community; or because, like the Deodar, it grew up in the clouds—in heaven—and so forth. Then the imagination of wise men and the superstitions of the people would have soon created round it a "halo of luck;" or, owing to its usefulness, it would be considered a thing upon which their life or their comfort depended.

I believe that it was mainly the usefulness of a tree that made those people look upon it as a thing to be revered.

In the 'Migration des Symboles,' the author says, at p. 161, that the sacred tree, as it migrated from country to country, was changed into the tree which in the estimation of the people was the most precious; "so we see figuring turn by turn as the sacred tree the date-palm in Chaldea, the vine or the fir tree in Assyria, the lotus in Phœnicia, the fig in India."

And in a note he quotes M. Didron,[1] who remarks that every Christian people has chosen for its tree of temptation the one it preferred—the fig and orange in Greece, the vine in Burgundy and Champagne, the

[1] 'Manuel d'iconographie Chretienne.'

cherry tree in Isle de France, and the apple in Picardy.

All which considerations go to strengthen my belief that it was mainly the *great usefulness* of the tree, as a gift of nature, which induced them to elevate it into a *sacred tree.*

Some such reason or reasons are probably and mainly at the bottom of the sacredness of certain trees, and also of certain animals. Although in the latter case there may have been tribal totemistic reasons.

The sacredness of trees, in many cases, may probably have begun anteriorly to agriculture or the domestication of animals; that is, at a time when man lived by hunting and fishing, and by eating anything he could find in the forests.

Count d'Alviella, at p. 167,[1] says: "I would be the first to admit that considerations of usefulness may have originally suggested to the Mesopotamians the worship of a certain tree, which may afterwards have served to represent the sacred tree." . . . . But it is evident from the importance given to it "that it must be something more." No doubt; in those days nothing was thought of without being mixed up with the supernatural. The supernatural in this case, I think, came in very naturally and reasonably. *It was a Divine Gift.* After that, poetical minds transfigured the whole thing, and may have added on myth upon myth.

[1] 'Migration des Symboles.'

Judging from their monuments, the Assyrians appear to have had a variety of these trees. As far as I have been able to make out, four or five different kinds of sacred trees are traceable on the monuments. Some are readily identifiable; but others, and especially those which are found only on seals, are less so, owing to the smallness of the figures. These are:—

The Date-tree.

The Vine.

The Pomegranate-tree.

The Fir-tree; and not improbably

The Oak.

In studying the origin of these sacred trees, one should not leave out of consideration that they are represented in a rude manner, mostly on flat stone surfaces. If we add to this the fancy of the artist in producing a picture, pretty to look at and suited to the place in which it was to be shown, the conventionality of these sacred trees will be sufficiently accounted for, the object of the artist being rather to suggest the *idea*, than to give an accurate delineation of the *thing*.

The conventionality of these trees should be looked upon much in the same light as the conventional mode of delineating flowers and other objects, which designers of carpets, curtains, wall-papers, etc., make use of in the present day; only the decorative art of those days was in its infancy.

The tree which seems to have been most revered in Assyrian times was the date-palm; and one can fancy the importance of such a tree in those regions.[1] Assyria proper was, perhaps, too far north to grow date-trees extensively; but for our purpose, we may consider Babylonia and Assyria as one region.

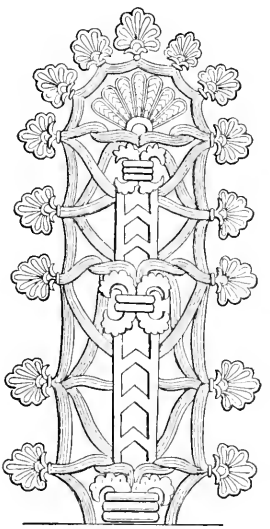


FIG. 16. — From Rawlinson's 'Five Great Monarchies.' Each tuft of the circumference is supported by a pair of horns.

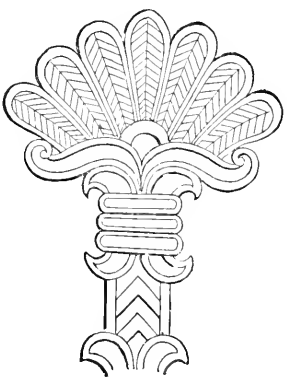


FIG. 17.—From Rawlinson's 'Five Great Monarchies.'

In No. 37*b*. of the Nimrood Gallery, British Museum, two winged genii are figured kneeling before a sacred tree, such as that shown in fig. 16.

Close by are two winged genii in a posture of adoration

[1] See Herodotus' account of this tree on p. 9.

before a similar tree; and No. 38 shows two eagle-headed genii holding a cone in one hand and a bucket in the other, in the act of doing something to, or before, this sacred tree.

Fig. 17 shows a simpler form of the same sacred tree. The tree in question has evidently, as its main motive, a conventional date-palm. We see the upright stem, marked with the attached triangular bases of the old decayed leaves,[1] and ending at the summit with the characteristic plumose head of foliage. The circumference in No. 16 is decorated with repetitions of the plumose head of the date-palm, which everybody knows well enough.[2] The foliage of the main head has indications of the pinnate character of the date tree leaf;

FIG. 18—From Rawlinson's 'Five Great Monarchies.'

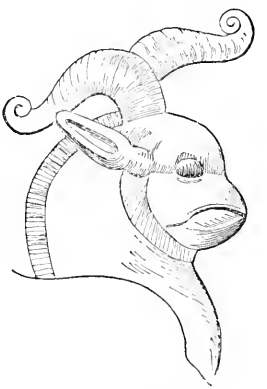


FIG. 19—Ram's Head.

[1] See figs. 3 and 4.

[2] In the British Museum there are some with *two* rows of circumferential heads of foliage.

but curiously enough the pinnæ are reversed, not because the Assyrian artist did not know the real feature, but probably because his father before him had pictured it so.

But what is still more curious is that on its stem, in three places, base, middle, and summit, it is decorated with either one or two pairs of ibex horns, such as are shown in fig. 18, tied on by means of two or three turns of a string.

Moreover, each set of ibex horns has above it what would appear to be a pair of ram's or bull's horns, such as are shown in fig. 19; of these horns I shall speak more fully further on.

There can be no doubt whatever that the date tree in those days was not only useful, but a most important tree.

Herodotus and others have told of the many uses those people put the date tree to, besides using its fruit for food. Not improbably the Assyrians, although they had grapes, had learnt to make some sort of spirit out of the fermented fruit, for at the present day the cheaper kinds of dates are exported from Persia to Bombay, where they are used for making a kind of liquor.

To one who has studied the importance of the date tree to Orientals now, and the position it must have held in Chaldean times, it is no wonder that it should be styled the "tree of life" and the "key of life."

It would appear to me that there can be no question that its great usefulness, in many ways, was the first cause of its adoration. All the other divine "entourage" could have easily been evolved *afterwards* in the minds of religious poets.

This then is the most notable of the sacred trees of Assyria.

But, as I stated, there seems to have been in Assyria a variety of sacred trees. I shall now take up the vine and see what can be made of it.

The vine is so frequently and unmistakably represented on the Assyrian Monuments that in those days it must have been growing everywhere like a weed. This plant, with its slender stem, must have often been seen climbing up date trees, and festooning itself among them. So that probably the sacred tree shown in fig. 16 may be an artistic and conventional combination of a date tree, with the slender stems of vines intertwined among the main tree and the smaller heads of foliage, repeated, for decorative purposes, all round its contour. Of course, in such a case, the vine would be meant to be

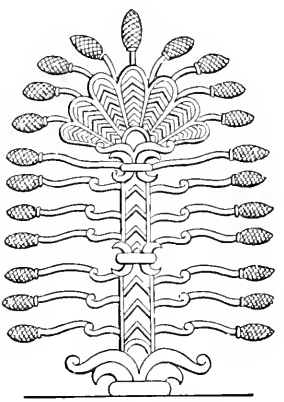


FIG. 20.—Sacred tree (Nimrood). Rawlinson's 'Five Great Monarchies,' p. 7.

shown in its winter aspect, without leaves or fruit. But the Assyrians had another form of sacred tree, in which bunches of grapes are made to decorate its contour, as shown in fig. 20. It is true that they are only outlines of cones, and might, therefore, be pine cones. But in studying the ways of Assyrian artists we often find that they had a careless way of finishing off a rough surface by means of a diamond pattern, made by crossed lines. This is sometimes seen in the way they indicate the hair of a goat, the feathers of a pigeon, etc. And on the monuments themselves we find unmistakable vines with bunches of fruit, the berries of which are simply indicated by these crossed lines.

Anyhow there cannot be much doubt that the ornament taken from an ivory fragment, fig. 21, with bunches of grapes between the date leaves, and that of fig. 22 from an embroidered pectoral, were meant for the same thing. In the one case the individual grapes are indicated, and in the other only a rough surface is indicated by the usual crossed lines. Moreover the cones in the latter case have their tips turned to the one or the other side. This is exactly what the bunch of grapes would often look like, while the tip of a fir-cone is straight.

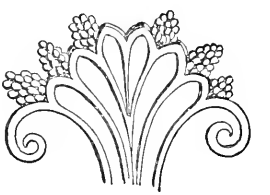


FIG. 21. — From some ivory fragments, British Museum. Rawlinson's 'Monarchies,' vol. i, p. 573.

If you take up any bunch of grapes by the stalk, you will find that it is rare for one shoulder not to bulge out, and for the tip not to be turned either one way or the other, as shown in fig. 27 *a*.

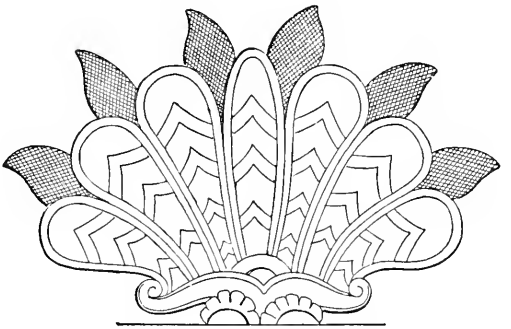


FIG. 22.—Embroidered pectoral from Layard. Perrot and Chipiez, vol. ii, fig. 255.

It is curious to note that little differences such as these did not escape the eye of those primitive artists, brought up in continual contact with nature. When, however, they attempted anything that required perspective or foreshortening, they delineated things as children do, and so all their figures are in profile, as if they thought that doing them otherwise would result in monstrosities.

In my opinion, the cones in fig. 20 were meant for conventional bunches of grapes, combined with the conventional date tree into *one* sacred tree. Whether the twists were meant for twists in the vine stems, or for curls in a series of horns from which the cones issue, is impossible to say.

If the festooning of the other sacred tree, fig. 16, was meant for a vine-stem, then both these trees would have the same meaning, only the one is shown in its leafless, winter aspect, and the other in the fruiting time of the vine.

I believe this sacred tree to have had its origin in the great usefulness of the two plants—the date tree and the vine.

With regard to this particular tree, decorated all round with cross-lined cones, Lenormant[1] says: "This tree (fir tree or supposed tree of life) has all round it a series of branches, regularly disposed. Each branch ending in a cone of fir or cedar; nevertheless," he adds, "the artist has not given to his plant the foliage or the habit of a coniferous tree."

I do not in the least wonder that the Assyrian artist did not give this tree either the foliage or the habit of a coniferous tree, for I do not think he ever intended those cones for anything but bunches of grapes.[2]

G. Rawlinson[3] gives a picture of a vine, shown in fig. 23. There can be no doubt that it is intended for a vine, as one of the branches, as is often seen on

[1] 'Origines de l'histoire,' p. 83, vol. i, note 2.

[2] These unfortunate cones have had a good deal to put up with. M. Lenormant made them fir-cones; Mr. Goodyear makes them lotus-buds; Dr. Tylor makes them male-inflorescence of the date tree; Dr. Birdwood makes them bunches of dates, highly conventionalized; and I make them bunches of grapes.

[3] 'Five Great Monarchies,' vol. i, p. 518.

the monuments, ends in a tendril. The leaves can safely be interpreted into vine leaves, because many similar trees have a distinct vine leaf, as shown in fig. 6. Moreover, many of the bunches are rightly shown, *opposite the leaf*. Yet the bunches of grapes are exactly like those of the sacred tree in question, viz. cones with crossed lines. Curiously enough Rawlinson[1] gives a picture of Egyptians gathering grapes, the bunches of which are also represented by simple outlines of cones.

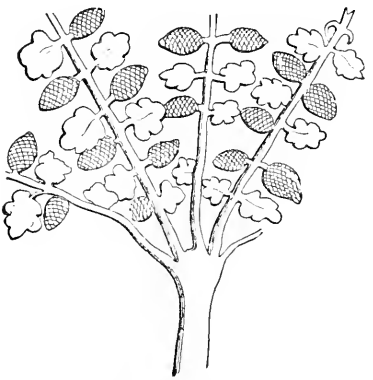


FIG. 23.—Vine tree, Rawlinson's 'Monarchies,' vol. i, p. 518.

I take both these forms of sacred tree (figs. 16 and 20) to be merely a pictorial conventional representation —a symbol of the *food* and *drink* of the people.

The Assyrians must have known the art of making wine, for we see them drinking in various places. The juice of fruit mixed with water, as a 'sherbet' is common enough in all oriental countries. Even in ancient Egypt this appears to have been the custom, as in Genesis it is stated that the juice of the grape was pressed into Pharoah's cup. The fermentation of sherbet would have

[1] 'Ancient History of Egypt,' vol. i, p. 169.

readily revealed to them the way of making a spirituous liquor, had not earlier people known that art.

That later the land was noted, as flowing with 'corn and wine,' is sufficiently recorded. The drinker of wine would acquire gaiety, talkativeness, vigor, and in short, additional life. Well might this tree be considered the 'tree of life.'

Lenormant, on the supposition that the sacred tree is meant to represent the 'tree of life'—a sublime religious notion of those people—argues to some length upon the, so to speak, magnetic effect of the point of the cone-fruit presented at the king, or at a tree, "as if it were the means of communication between the protector and the protected, the instrument by which grace and power pass from the spirit to the mortal under his care." But, I would ask, what becomes of this sublime *spirituality* if the 'tree of life' admits of being taken in a vulgar and realistic sense: that is, if this pretty notion of 'arbre de vie' can after all be taken in the sense of the producer of 'eau de vie,' viz. the tree from which wine can be got, a liquor which imparts *new life*, and changes the thoughts and humour of the drinker? 'Umar Khaiyám, in his *Rubáiyát*, has sufficiently sung of the powers of wine.

Indeed, Lenormant has not overlooked the realistic and utilitarian part of his conception of the 'tree of life.' In p. 81, vol. i of his work—'les Origines de l'Histoire'—he

says: "In a certain part of Chaldea, south of Babylon, the 'arbre de vie' was the date tree, which furnished the greater portion of the food of the people, and from the fruit of which they made an intoxicating drink, a kind of wine. To this tree they attributed, in a popular song, as many benefits as there are days in the year. . . . . and here we must note that the ancient Acadian name of 'vine,' applied equally by misuse to the 'wine' (*ges-tin*), is a compound, which, properly speaking, means 'tree of life,' or more exactly 'wood of life,' from the two well-known words *giš*, *geš*, wood, and *tin*, life."

In interpreting the meaning of Assyrian sculptures and cylinders, I think it possible to lay too much stress on the emblem of the Supreme God, or any other figure being found surmounting or accompanying anything. Decorative artists get into the habit of weaving their ideas into pictures for *effect*, without much depth of meaning, and sometimes probably only to fill in a space with something not wholly incongruous with the rest of the picture. So much so that this winged figure of the Deity, according to Layard, was used for decorating chariots; much, perhaps, as a Calabrian peasant at the present day might decorate his cart with figures of the Madonna and other saints.

It does not appear that in those days the Assyrians used the *sap* of the date tree, as they do now in other countries, either fresh or fermented, as an alcoholic drink.

Had they known of this, a man climbing up a date tree to collect the juice from the cut made at the base of the foliage would have been too tempting a picture for an Assyrian artist to leave unrecorded on the monuments. Moreover, the annual mutilations and subsequent disfigurement of the *trunk* of the date tree would have been shown somewhere; while all their date trees, and there are many of them on the monuments, have a straight, clean, and natural stem. We should not, however, place too much weight on such an omission, for they must have climbed trees to collect their dates, and this climbing seems nowhere shown, although other curious performances are common.

A third form of sacred tree is the pomegranate tree, shown in fig. 24, decorated with horns, reduced in this case to a conventional symbol at the top and bottom of the columnar stem. All the sacred trees of the Assyrian monuments and cylinders appear to be the commonest trees of the land, such as they must have utilized every day, either for their fruit, their wood, or other qualities. This one cannot be mistaken for anything but a pomegranate tree. It is indigenous in those regions, and on the sculptures it is largely represented on stony ground. Why they should have raised it to the rank of a sacred

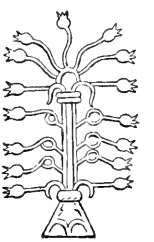


FIG. 24.—From Assyrian Cylinder, Brit. Mus. Perrot and Chipiez, vol. ii, p. 273.

tree—undoubtedly meaning thereby that they thought it of great importance—is not very clear.[1]

The juice of the grains of the pomegranate is largely used in oriental countries for making 'sherbet;' and as any sweet juice, if fermented, will produce an alcoholic liquor, it would appear not improbable that some kind of wine may have been made of it. Anyhow this 'sherbet' is supposed to have medicinal virtues in oriental countries. Moreover, the rind of the fruit, besides possessing medicinal value, has a great deal of tannin, and as the tree grew wild in forests, the fruit-rind may have been largely used for tanning leather.

The art of tanning must have been known to the Assyrians from a very remote period. Besides using skins for clothing, and probably also for sandals and shoes, they used them for carrying water, and also inflated them for floating rafts, and for swimming purposes. These skins, continually in contact with water, unless tanned, would soon have rotted and become useless. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that the art of tanning was well known to those people. In that case a tanning material so common as that of the pomegranate would be a very important article.

That they used its stem and branches for firewood is evident from their cutting down pomegranate trees

[1] Dr. Birdwood (Indian Arts) says that the 'tree of life,' represented on modern Yarkund rugs, is always a *pomegranate* tree.

near their cooking encampments. The fruit of the better kinds must have been considered worthy of

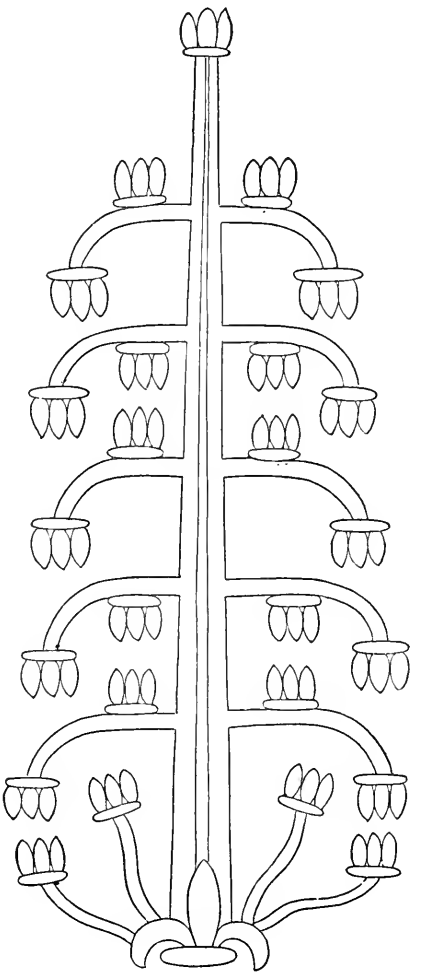


FIG. 25.—Sacred tree from the Louvre. Sargon is represented standing before this tree holding in one hand three pomegranates.

being presented to the king, for in No. 42, Kouyunjik Gallery, British Museum, we have men carrying piles of pomegranates to the palace.

It is also possible that, owing to the multiplicity of the grains, all enclosed in a sort of common womb, this fruit may have been considered as an emblem of fruitfulness.

Anyhow, there is little doubt that the pomegranate tree in those days was an all-round useful tree Standing before the fir tree shown in fig. 25, from the Louvre, Sargon is shown with a bunch of three pomegranates in one hand. All this indicates that, for whatever reason, the pomegranate tree was held in veneration. Its usefulness and commonness brought it readily to the artists' mind.

A fourth sacred tree is that shown in fig. 25. It is in the Louvre, and it is in front of this that Sargon is standing, with a bunch of pomegranates in one hand.

I don't think this sacred tree can be mistaken for anything but a conventional fir tree. It shows that the Assyrian artists, when they wished to represent a fir tree, knew very well how to idealize it for decorative purposes without suppressing its character. Its straight, clean, conical stem, symmetrical branches; its cones, in groups of threes, as often occurs in certain firs, stamp it as meant for a coniferous tree. More-

over some kinds of firs have their cones upright[1] when unripe, and drooping when heavy with seed. Both characters are indicated in this tree. The usual symbolic horns are given at the foot of this tree. They are exactly like the upper half of a 'fleur-de-lis' with only one ligature.

Now the fir tree is one of the most useful trees. It grows quickly; some varieties produce durable timber, which can be used for masts of seafaring boats, for the building of rafts to be laden with produce and floated down the rivers, for beams of bridges, houses, etc. Moreover, the branches and cones being resinous would make capital firewood. Here, then, is another most useful tree, to be found in great plenty in those days in hilly districts.

In addition to utilitarian reasons there may have been some superstitious reason for raising it to the rank of a sacred tree.[2] It is stated that certain hymns mention that the fir-cone had imprinted within it the name of God, and, therefore, was placed in the hands of sick persons, as a sort of charm that would cure their ailments.

I find a fifth form of sacred tree shown in fig. 26. A somewhat similar one is found on the Royal Cylinder of Sennacherib.[3] Both these have their branches termi-

[1] Dr. Masters has pointed out that certain conifers which usually have their cones pendant, at other times have them erect.

[2] See Etymology of the name *Deodar*—cone-fruit section.

[3] Layard's 'Nineveh and Babylon,' p. 174.

nating in something much like acorns. It is, perhaps, not improbable that the artist may have meant them for acorns.

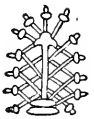


FIG. 26.—Sacred tree from Assyrian cylinder, with Fish-god. Layard's 'Nineveh and Babylon,' p. 168.

In Mr. George Nicholson's 'Encyclopædia of Horticulture,' under the heading of 'Oak,' I find the following: "*Kermes* is the insect which yields a scarlet dye nearly equal to cochineal, and is the 'scarlet' mentioned in Scripture; it feeds on *Quercus coccifera*, an oak from Asia Minor. The acorn-cups of *Q. ægilops* (commercially called *vallonea*) are largely imported from the Levant, for the purposes of tanning, dyeing, and making ink. The oak galls of commerce are yielded by *Quercus infectoria*, also a native of the Levant; these are much more rich in tannin than those produced in this country." There is also an oak on the Lebanon mountains called *Quercus Libani*.

So we see that the Assyrians must have been acquainted with more than one variety of oak, but whether they may have raised this tree to the rank of a sacred tree for the scarlet dye of 'Kermes,' or for the tanning quality of the bark and acorn-cups, it is impossible to say. That they must have been acquainted with the art of tanning seems most probable, seeing that they used leather for various purposes.

I have, however, to give here a little warning. It does not follow that *because* they are like acorns that *therefore* the fruits of this sacred tree were meant for acorns. I have shown in another place that the hardness of the engraver's stones—for this form of sacred tree is to be traced only on cylinders—his rude tools, and the *small space* on which he had to work, may have been some of the reasons why he made them look like acorns, although perhaps nothing may have been further from his mind than to *mean* them for acorns. It is not impossible that the engraver may have meant them for *bunches of grapes*; fig. 27 gives three variations of the bunches, and (*b*) would not be unlike an acorn if the Assyrian engraver had tried to reproduce it on a hard small surface. The shoulders of the bunch would be indicated by an oval outline, and the conical end by a separate cone.


FIG. 27.—Three variations in the bunches of grapes: (*a*) has often the tip on the side; (*b*) has large shoulders; (*c*) is usually the dressed form of the shops.

This completes the list of sacred trees which are to be found on the relics of the Assyrians. I think they can be readily identified with the useful and common trees of those regions. The fifth is rather problematical. It may be an oak tree, it may be a vine. We have never, I think, been told why the ancient Gauls

venerated the oak tree. It may have been some tradition they got from Orientals. If it be a vine, then it would probably represent their *drink* tree, the wine giving new life to those who drank it. That these two necessaries, food and drink, must have been uppermost in the minds of their artists seems plain from a god shown in the 'Monument of Ivriz'—Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia, in the 'Recueil de Travaux' relatifs à la Philologie et l'Architecture Egyptiennes et Assyriennes; by G. Maspero, vol. 14, liv. 1 and 2 (1892). It consists of a stout figure, with Semitic features. On the head there is a cap, studded with several pairs of horns. Another pair of horns decorates the margin of the skirt. Then, in the right hand, it holds a vine branch, with bunches of grapes, and in the left a sheaf of corn. It has Hittite inscriptions. This figure seems clearly of the agricultural period, emblematical of their *food and drink*, under the protection of their horned deity.

# THE CONE-FRUIT.

"It is not difficult" writes Thomas Paine "to discover the progress by which even simple supposition, with the aid of credulity, will in time grow into a lie, and at last be told as a fact."—'Life of Thomas Paine,' by Moncure Conway, vol. ii, p. 196.

## III.

## THE CONE-FRUIT.

Now, connected with sacred trees, is that very prominent cone-shaped object, held in the hand of winged genii, and pointed either at a sacred tree or at the King's person, or at the entrance of a temple, palace, or town.

This will lead us to the study of the *cone-fruit* of the Assyrian monuments.

Sometimes the figures holding it have the head of a man, and sometimes that of an eagle. Some spiritual function appears to have been attached to these figures, for they are always *winged*.

It should be noted, in connection with this cone-fruit, that, in the other hand, the genius *invariably* holds a bucket of some sort.

With the exception of one figure, it is always *one* cone that is held in the hand. In that one exception the hand holds a branch, consisting of two cones, and three lotus-like things, decorated with a rosette, as is shown in fig. 28.

Assyriologists and antiquarians had concluded that this object was meant for a fir-cone, and probably a cedar-cone, as certain hymns showed that the cedar-cone was held in great veneration in Assyria. Speculation

regarding this cone-like object appears to have then gone no further.

In examining the Assyrian sculptures and Layard's drawings, however, I thought that another view might perhaps be taken of this cone-fruit. It resembled a

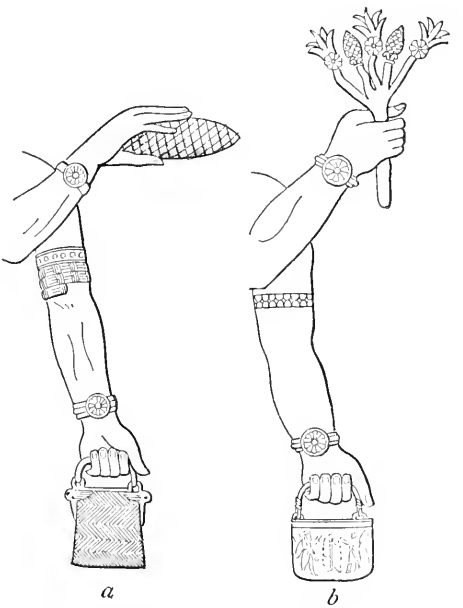



FIG. 28.—(*a*) winged figures of the Monuments, either two-winged or four-winged. (*b*) winged figure of pl. 34, first series, Layard's 'Monuments of Nineveh.'

citron. Moreover, in pl. 9, of Layard's 'Monuments of Nineveh' (new series) two men forming part of a procession are shown pompously carrying in their hands something like a pine-apple. Now this cannot be a pine-apple, because there is reason to believe that the

pine-apple was introduced into the old world *after* the discovery of America.

It struck me that the pine-apple-like object might be taken to mean a *fingered citron*, and that some superstitious notion may have been attached to the citron, or at all events to that form of it, which divides itself at one end into finger-like processes.

Fig. 29 shows the ordinary citron of Ceylon, the fingered citron of India, and one of those pine-apple-like objects, carried so pompously in a procession of men, who carry in addition other sorts of fruit, such as bunches of dates, strings of pomegranates, etc.; no doubt all choice fruits intended as presents, either for the king or his ministers.

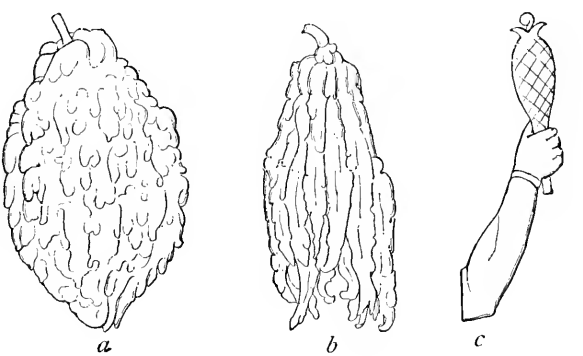



FIG. 29.—(*a*) Citron of Ceylon, much reduced;[1] (*b*) fingered citron of India, much reduced;[2] (*c*) one of the pine-apple-like things carried in the hand.[3]

[1] See pl. 151, Oranges and Lemons of India and Ceylon.
[2] See pls. 139 and 140, ditto.
[3] Pl. 9, Layard's 'Monuments of Nineveh,' new series.

Curiously enough, a similar procession shows a man carrying a basket containing three cone-like fruits, shown in fig. 30, which may, for all we know, have been the ordinary form of citrons. These can hardly have been meant for bunches of grapes, because grapes are distinctly and separately carried.

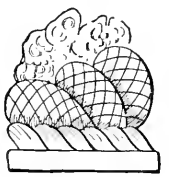


FIG. 30.—From pl. 8, Layard's 'Monuments of Nineveh,' new ser.

There is certainly a very curious resemblance in one of the fingers of this unknown fruit being *curled in*, like those of fig. 29*b*, and of fig. 32.[1]

There can hardly be any doubt, as I shall show, that the citron was known to the Assyrians, and through the Arab and Persian traders they may have also become acquainted with the fingered form of it,[2] to which, even now in China, a superstitious reverence is given, and is there called *Fo-shou-kan*. It has there the name of 'Buddha's hand.' Indeed, some forms of the fingered citron are not unlike a hand, as shown in fig. 31, owing to some of the fingers remaining dwarfed.

Gallesio, who in 1811 wrote 'The Traité du Citrus,' explored the history of all the orange and citron tribe known in Europe up to that time with great patience

[1] It should be remembered that the Assyrian artist could not give all the detail on *stone* which the Egyptian artist could give by means of *paint*.

[2] There is evidence to show that the old Accadians traded with India, where the citron mus have been known from remote periods.

and thoroughness. On p. 198 he says: "that this plant was known to the Greeks and Romans. Theophrastus, after the death of Alexander, gives a very accurate description of the Persian and Median apple, which corresponds with that of the citron." . . . It was common in Persia and Media. It was Pliny who commenced to call it by different names—*Malus Medica*, *Malus Assyria*, and *Citrus*.

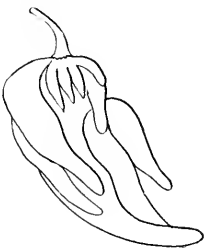


FIG. 31.—Fingered citron, from 'Gardener's Chronicle,' 20 March, 1890, p. 385[1] (much reduced.)

Then the modern Jews, in their Feast of the Tabernacles, used the citron in one of their ceremonies. This custom appears to have come to them from the ancient Jews, for on p. 208 Gallesio says that, "cultivated in Cilicia, the citron probably spread to Palestine, close by; and we have seen that from the time the Jews knew it, they made use of it in the Feast of the Tabernacles; we also see by the Samaritan medals, recorded by Otius, that this usage was a very ancient one." . . . . Moreover, Josephus, in book 13, says—"that the Jews, having revolted against their king, Alexander, when he was at the foot of the altar, to celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacles, they threw citrons in his face;" and in speaking of the Jewish custom in this

[1] See that number for an interesting account of this so-called citrine monstrosity.

solemnity, he remarks that "they attached citrons to palm leaves, and that they used to bring branches of citron trees, which seems to indicate that the tree was grown there."

Prof. Alph. De Candolle, in his 'Origin of Cultivated Plants,' p. 181, says: "As the Greeks had seen the citron in Media and Persia in the time of Theophrastus, *three centuries* B.C., it would be strange if the Hebrews had not become acquainted with it at the time of the Babylonish captivity."[1]

There is, I think, evidence enough to show that the Assyrians must have been well acquainted with the citron, and I thought that possibly the figures holding a cone-fruit might be intended to represent some ceremony in which the citron played a part, and from which the Jews had derived their citron ceremony, having been in contact with the Babylonians during their captivity.

This is not all, for there appears to me strong evidence in support of the belief that the fingered citron was known also to the Egyptians.

During the session of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, in the reception room of the University of London, I saw three reproductions of Egyptian wall-paintings from 'El Kab.' One of them

[1] See Babylonian and Oriental Record on the 'Antiquity of the Citron Tree in Egypt,' vol. vi, No. 9, March, 1893, p. 203.

had an interesting group of men carrying baskets of grapes,[1] pomegranates—strung as they string onions now-a-days—and exactly like those given by Layard (pl. 9, 'Monuments of Nineveh,' new series). One of this Egyptian group carries a basket containing some fruit, which is uncommonly like a fingered citron, and which I give in fig. 32. I don't think this can be interpreted into anything but a fingered citron, if compared with fig. 29*b*. A bunch of carrots some might suggest? No, carrots never curl their ends inwards, as the fingered citron often does. Moreover, what is more natural than to wonder at the occurrence of such a phenomenon—a citron splitting itself into fingers—and to offer it as a rare present — a sweet-scented 'nuzur' — to the king or his minister.

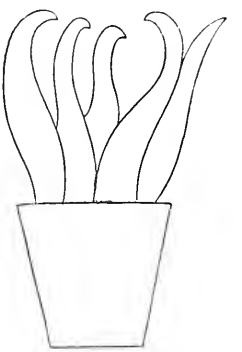


FIG. 32.—From Egyptian wall-painting of 'El-Kab' (much enlarged).

I think there is evidence enough in support of the belief that the citron was known both to the Assyrians and Egyptians.

Nevertheless, further consideration has led me to abandon the citron theory of the cone-fruit held in the hand of the genius, as will be seen in another

[1] It is interesting to note that the grapes are painted *blue*, evidently in imitation of the blue bloom on the black grapes.

place. I do not, however, see any reason for abandoning that theory with regard to the pine-apple-like fruit carried pompously in the hand, as shown in fig. 29*c*. This sculpture shows two persons, each holding one of these things in front of him, as if he were carrying some great rarity to the king. I still maintain that very probably that thing was intended to represent a fingered citron, of which many varieties occur, and one of which is given in fig. 29*b*, and another in fig. 31.[1]

In 'Nature' of 23rd June, 1890, Dr. E. B. Tylor started another theory regarding the meaning of 'the cone-fruit.' He thought that the cone-like object, held in the hand of the genius, was meant to represent the *male* inflorescence of the date palm, and that the bucket or basket held in the other hand, as shown in fig. 28, was meant to indicate a further supply of male flowers, kept in the bucket. He moreover supposed that the conventional date tree to which the cone-object is pointed, was intended to indicate a palm-grove, and that the genii are in the act of fertilizing the female flowers, which eventually grow into dates.

In the Babylonian and Oriental record I think I have sufficiently shown that the vessel held in one hand should not be considered 'either a bucket or a basket.' The sculptures in the British Museum and Botta's 'Monu-

[1] See Babylonian and Oriental Record on the 'Antiquity of the Citron Tree in Egypt,' vol. vi, No. 9, March, 1893, p. 203.

ments de Ninive' leave no doubt whatever as to the material of which the bucket was made. It was a *metal* bucket, such as might have been used for drawing and carrying water, and such as is often used in India, under the name of 'dôl.' Several of these Assyrian buckets appear as if they had a surface of basket-work; but this is evidently the metal surface of the bucket *embossed* in the fashion of basket-work; for, as is shown in the figure, there could be no sense in fixing, to a bit of basket-work, metal heads and wings of a bird to receive the handle. I don't think there can be any question about its having been meant for a *metal* bucket, more especially as others are embossed with figures and other ornaments.

We have now to find out whether Dr. Tylor's theory, which appears plausible as regards the cone, is tenable when taken in connection with its invariable accompaniment—the metal bucket. This vessel must mean something in connection with what the genius is supposed to be doing.

In Rawlinson's translation of Herodotus III, 2nd edit. vol. i, p. 317, there is the following passage: "The natives (of Babylonia) tie the fruit of the male palms, as they are called by the Greeks, to the branches of the date-bearing palm, to let the gall-fly enter the dates and ripen them, and to prevent the fruit from falling off."

There can therefore be no doubt that the Babylonians were acquainted with some important office, which they attributed to the flowers of the male trees, however erroneous their story about the gall-fly may have been. This office, of course, we now call fertilization. Moreover, cuneiform inscriptions refer to the date-palm as male and female.[1]

Notwithstanding the Assyrian knowledge of what amounts to fertilization of the date tree, it does not follow that the genius with cone and bucket on the Assyrian monuments had anything to do with the artificial fertilization of date-palms.

Dr. Tylor's theory seems to have some support when the cone is pointed towards the sacred tree, made up of a date tree, and of ornamentations taken from the head of foliage of the same tree; but when the cone is pointed towards the back hair of the king,[2] or is pointed at the entrance of a city, or temple, or palace, this theory loses all its force, and we must hunt up some other theory, in which not only a fir-cone comes in, but in which a *metal* bucket takes a *prominent* part.[3]

I set about contemplating the genius with cone and bucket afresh. It flashed across my mind that the whole thing might mean a sprinkling of holy water by means of the fir-cone, used as an '*aspergillum*.' The

[1] B. and O. R. vol. 4, No. 4, p. 93.
[2] As in No. 2, Nimrood Gallery, British Museum.
[3] (*f*) p. 93, B. and O. R. vol. 4, No. 4.

constant presence of the bucket, which, as I have shown, must have been of metal, and not of basket work, seems to strengthen this notion. Then the operation of sprinkling holy water round their date trees, round the person of the king, and at the entrance of palaces and temples to scare away evil spirits, seemed to be more rational.

Further, if we then take into consideration the smallness of certain slabs, and the necessities of sculpture in figuring the act with a distended arm, holding the sprinkler, we shall, I think, find that this theory will fit all cases, and become more reasonable than any other which has been yet imagined.

To take in fully the importance of holy water, one must realize that in Assyrian days, as now in Egypt, or much more so, the terrors of the evil eye and of evil spirits were every-day realities, that engrossed the thoughts of those people. They lived in the midst of the supernatural, in an atmosphere of devils, and somehow their evil doings had to be continually counteracted. None of us now, with our science teaching, can realize to what extent the incubus of the supernatural must have weighed on their minds.

Holy water in those days must have been one of the weapons by which demons were outwitted. Not only has the Christian church inherited the notion of holy water with many other Assyrian notions, but we have

the holy water of the Ganges, and of the sacred Well of Benares. The sacred Well of 'Zemzem,' in a temple at Meccah, corresponds to that of the sacred Well of Benares. The 'Zemzem' water is used by the Arabs and Egyptians for sprinkling over grave-clothes, not improbably with the intention of giving the soul of the deceased a safe passport into the other world, and preventing it from being bothered on its way there.

Count d'Alviella (p. 174) refers to this holy water theory, which I discussed in the Bab. & Or. Record, under the supposition that the cone was a fir cone, and was used as an 'aspergillum'; but he seems to think that there is more to be said in favor of Dr. Tylor's theory of fertilization. He gives a picture of the young male inflorescence of the date tree, which is sufficiently like the cone held in the hand, excepting that small one, to which I will refer, further on, as being in the Louvre.

On the other hand, Lenormant had already shown that the fir-cone was considered a holy object, and was used as a charm, to cure sick persons, the malady itself being considered as a machination of devils.

Let us inquire, however, what further arguments Count d'Alviella puts forth in support of the 'fertilization theory.'

Referring to Dr. Tylor's arguments, he says (p. 195): "On a bas-relief, in the Louvre, we see one of these genii actually plunging this object into one of the palmettes figured at the top of the branches."

This mode of reasoning may overlook the *straits* to which the sculptor may have been put, owing to the *smallness of the slab!* In No. 38, British Museum, there is a similar one. The tree is not in the middle of the slab, and so the sculptor, for want of sufficient space, has made the cone-hand of one genius *encroach* on the tree. This interpretation seems supported by the fact that the sculptor was forced to cut off a bit of the wings of that same figure, *for the same reason!*

For similar reasons the genius of No. 2, British Museum, is made to touch the king's back hair with his cone.

But admitting that the cone, when pointed to the date tree, means fertilization, what possible meaning can it have when pointed to the king's head, or to the entrance of Sargon's palace? We are forced to fall back, as d'Alviella suggests, on the abstract idea that the whole thing means fecundity—a phallic emblem—denoting *universal reproduction.*[1]

In the Louvre, as I mentioned, there is a genius holding a cone, which, compared with the hand, is very much smaller than those of the British Museum. This, I think, would indicate that the Assyrians used for this ceremony *different kinds* of cones.

In further support of the theory of fertilization Count

[1] That there was phallic worship in ancient times is apparent enough, but it does not necessarily follow that *everything* had a phallic meaning.

d'Aviella (p. 176) refers to an Assyrian bas-relief, shown in fig. 33. It is suggested that the kneeling person is praying the divinity that the act of date-fertilization should take effect, while the genii are preparing to perform this act.

FIG. 33.—From Layard's 'Monuments of Nineveh.'

I take a totally different view of this composition. First, we have to note that the cone-figure is always winged. Everybody must have known that fertilization of date trees was done by *ordinary* men; yet this is never so shown.

My interpretation of the composition is this: The symbol of the date tree stands for their date plantations. The king, who is also high-priest, is invoking protection from the Deity on the date trees against the evil eye, or other evil spirits. This is indicated by the strings coming down from the winged disc, and ending in a *bident*, or pair of horns (which in this case is suggestively like a horse-shoe). The horns are the symbol of protection against the evil eye. Then, as

an extra precaution against all other evil spirits, of which the Assyrians were safe to have had a whole dictionary full, holy water is sprinkled about.

The composition appears to have a spiritual meaning connected with desire for protection of their date crop —their 'key of life.'

It is not unlike those we see in Christian churches, representing the performance of a miracle by some saint, or some religious ceremony. It tells a story.

In all interpretations of this kind we should, I think, keep in mind not only the probable meaning of the hieroglyphic before us, but also the traditions of art of those days, which bound the artist to certain modes of execution.

For instance, in this bas-relief the artist put two kings. There certainly were not two kings at one time.

The traditions of his art necessitated that there should be symmetry in a composition, and for this reason, and probably to show both sides of the figure, the artist splits it into two halves, and puts one on each side.

Again, Count d'Alviella finds further support to the fertilization theory in the figure on p. 179 of his work, which I reproduce in fig. 34.

In this Dr. Tylor sees the crown of leaves of a date tree, with the two genii preparing to perform the act of fertilization.

I confess that in this figure I can see nothing more than an ornament to fill a certain space, such as that

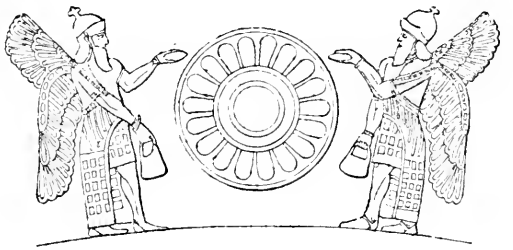


FIG. 34.

of fig. 35, which is on the top of the looking-glass on my mantel-piece. I conjecture that in this case the artist wanted to fill a certain space with something not incongruous with the nature of the building. He selected a rosette for the centre, and put a figure on each side. The figure he happened to have selected

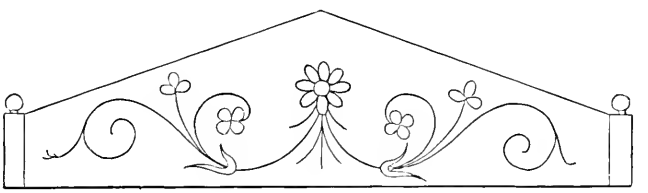


FIG. 35.—Ornament on a mirror over a mantel-piece.

was the winged cone-figure, but a winged sphinx, or a winged griffin, would have done as well. All these figures were continually in the artist's mind as elements of his compositions, and in this case the ones selected would have been conditioned, not only by the character of the building, but by the space available.

The rosette is certainly like a daisy, or other composite flower, which in their ornamentations was often copied, both by the Assyrians and Egyptians.

It certainly is not like the leaf head of a date tree. In the former composition (fig. 33) there seems internal evidence that some religious ceremony was meant. In the latter I fail to find any such internal evidence, and therefore, I think it must have been meant for a simple ornamentation. Both the daisy and the figure must have been in the artist's mind. What was easier for him to put, as a centre piece, than the symbol of a date tree? But he chose a daisy-like flower, because evidently he did not mean it for a ceremony, but for a simple ornament to fill a certain vacant space.

In my opinion, if we were to endeavour to discover some deep meaning in every outline those artists chose to make use of, we should soon be landed in a sort of chaos, and should have as much trouble as if we tried to discover the meaning of every note a composer's fancy may put into a piece of music. What depth of meaning can there be on certain cylinders when the engraver puts in a monkey playing the flute, or a boy cutting somersaults, or two kids playing on their mother's back? They are simply bits of humour of the artist —the Harry Furniss of those days.

So with the more serious compositions of other artists of those times. It was not at all 'de rigueur' that

every composition should have some deep meaning. As the comical artist was ever introducing motives that tickled his fancy, without any further meaning, so the serious artist must have frequently used motives—whether figures or trees, or flowers—drawn from all sources, for the purpose of composing a decorative group, often being quite innocent of giving them any particularly deep philosophical meaning.

We see Oriental artists of the present day doing exactly the same thing. The goldsmiths of Trichinopoly, in making bracelets, necklaces, etc., use their gods simply as *motives* of ornamentation, without there being the slightest intention of any deeper meaning. In Benares, the brass-workers do the same thing. On the bronze dishes of Assyria we find similar ornaments, taken from Assyrian Mythology, and used in exactly the same way as those of Benares.

Dr. Tylor supposes the rosette of the group in question to be the crown of a date tree seen from above; Mr. Goodyear would see in it the stigma of a lotus. It is, however, *not* like the crown of date leaves; it is *not* like the stigma of a lotus, but it *is* very much like a daisy, and therefore it would seem justifiable to look upon that composition as nothing but an ornamental group, without any particular meaning whatever.

We do not seem to realize that the decorative artist,

all the world over, is a sort of poet, translating the wanderings of his imagination into *suitable* pictures in stone, paint, metal, etc.

Having rejected my own citron-theory, and not finding Dr. Tylor's theory of fertilization sufficiently applicable to all cases, I do not see sufficient grounds for not adhering to my other theory, viz. that of the holy water and 'aspergillum.' Dr. Tylor's authority is great, and he seems supported by Count d'Alviella, another great authority on matters concerning symbols; yet, in spite of all that, the fertilization theory does not seem to me satisfactory.

Moreover, in Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra,' there is a cylinder, fig. 36, which is very suggestive. It has

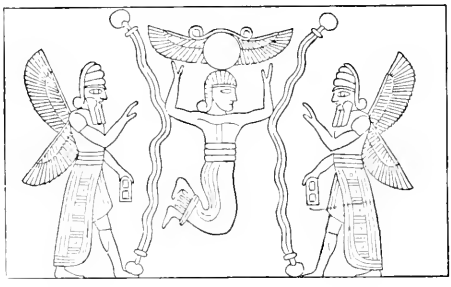


FIG. 36.—From Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra,' pl. 31, fig. 4.

a kneeling figure, with arms uplifted in prayer, under a winged disc. On each side of the disc a jar is pouring water into another jar at the foot of that *same winged genius*, which in one hand holds a bucket, but which, in this case, does *not* hold a cone in the

other hand. It would seem as if the engraver meant this, viz. the praying figure is causing holy water to descend from the deity, and the genius is waiting with his bucket to obtain a supply.

Whether this be so or not is not easy to say; but it is clear to me that, in this case, the bucket has some connection with *water* and *not* with fertilization.

Then there are many cylinders, which show us distinctly that the superstition of holy water was prevalent among those people, for in Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra,' we find in pl. 30, fig. 4, a horned human figure, with double streams issuing from its shoulders; in pl. 32, fig. 2, a standing figure pouring water from a cup into a jar; in pl. 32, fig. 7, a horned seated figure, pouring water from a jar, and from its shoulders, on to the heads of two bulls; and in pl. 29, fig. 1, a seated figure, holding some sort of sceptre, from which issue two streams leading to the foot of a two-faced figure.

Some of these streams, for all we know, may sometimes be intended for wine; but in some cylinders of Lajard's work we are not left in doubt as to the nature of the liquid, for fishes are placed along it to show that it is *water*. For instance in pl. 29, fig. 2, there is a seated horned figure, with upheld hand showing a stream leading towards a two-faced horned figure; along this stream there are fishes; pl. 35, fig. 7, has a horned figure pouring two streams of water

indicated by fishes; in pl. 31, fig. 5, there are streams of water, indicated by fishes, issuing from the deity to the shoulders of a kneeling figure; then pl. 31, fig. 7, has a kneeling figure under a winged disc, the whole framed in a continuous broad stream of water; it has also a stream which issues from the disc to the praying figure, and another to the hand of a standing priest (?) who points to the disc with his index finger.[1]

Putting all these considerations together, it seems to me that the holy water and 'aspergillum' theory has a balance of support in its favour. What would seem of some importance in this discussion, is the fact that the fir-cone (if it be a fir-cone) was not *always* the thing that accompanied the bucket, for Layard's pl. 34,[2] as seen in fig. 28*b*, shows a different thing, although it has two cones of some sort. The other elements are flowers or buds ornamented with a rosette. Mr. Goodyear would probably consider this branch emblematical of lotus flowers and lotus buds.

Then, in further support of this holy water theory, Mr. St. Chad Boscawen[3] published the following notes from cuneiform inscriptions:—"The white cedar with holy water (me-mulli) is part of the charm." "May the cup of holy water of Merodach endow him with health."

[1] There is no good reason to suppose that those people did not sometimes pray for *rain*, when a drought was on.
[2] 'Monuments of Nineveh,' first series.
[3] B. and O. R., p. 96, vol. 4, no. 4.

Mr. St. Chad Boscawen observes that some such ceremony as that referred to by Dr. Bonavia was know to the Babylonians.

The holy water of the well of Zemzem in a temple near Mecca, the holy water of the Ganges, and of the well in the Benares temple are all indications that holy water is a *very old* method of scaring away evil spirits.

Finally, on the same page, Mr. St. Chad Boscawen published an extract from a friend's letter, received from Cairo, which seems to show that the very same custom, viz. of using a fir-cone as an 'aspergillum,' *still exists in the East.*

To conclude then, this holy-water theory would seem the most rational way of interpreting the spiritual idea, to which the Assyrian artist endeavoured to give form, in the winged figure holding bucket and sprinkler. It is one which would appear to meet the needs of all cases in which this emblem is found, viz. a scaring away of evil spirits from the king's person, their date trees, the gates of their cities, temples, and palaces.

Now, assuming that it was meant for a fir-cone of some sort, was it a cedar-cone, or an ordinary pine-cone? There were cedar trees on the Lebanon, from which they obtained the timber for their temples, and there were pine trees on the mountains of Assyria, as we have already seen. We have also seen that very probably they used as sprinklers, cones of different kinds and

sizes. But as Lenormant has shown that both the wood and cone of the cedar were considered to possess holy properties, it would seem more likely that the *cedar*-cone was the favorite sprinkler. Indeed, ordinary water may have been supposed to become holy by being sprinkled through the means of a holy object.

Natives of India (Hindoos) would not for the world drink water which is *in* a leather bag, made usually of a cow or buffalo hide; but they have a convenient fiction to get over all other inconveniences, for they tell you that the moment the water is poured out of the leather bag into a water channel, it loses all taint, for it becomes '*ipso facto*' purified by the earth, or the air, or what not. So it would seem nothing out of the way to credit the Assyrians with the fiction that a holy-sprinkler would be enough to make ordinary water holy.

Those ancient pre-Chaldean people had innumerable superstitions no doubt. Poor things! What could they do? Their brains were emerging from lower stages, from a struggle for existence with nature, and wild animals and wild men, and evolving into some sort of contemplation of their surroundings. It is no wonder that the sun and moon, every star and planet, every rock, every tree, every animal, had a supernatural significance in their bothered brains. Yet, on the whole, they do not appear to have been such consummate fools

as we think them to have been. They did not seem to venerate things that were unworthy of veneration.

It is well for us now to look upon the Himalayas as caused by the cooling and shrinking of the earth, producing corrugations (and such corrugations!) of the earth's crust, not unlike the corrugations of our shrivelled skin in old age; and that ice, torrents, and wind, etc., have denuded their corrugations and fashioned them as we see them now. I say all this is very well for us now, and appears simple enough.

But let us, in imagination, go back ten thousand years, or more, and see those primitive explorers toiling up those eternal and stupendous mountains. They toil over hills and along valleys, behold torrents here, forests of unknown trees there, smashings of peaks, through frost and lightning, and so forth. They see the end of their journey up among the clouds. They climb into the clouds and lose all sight of the earth they left behind, and finally, in their search for God, they reach the eternal ice. On the fringe of this eternal ice they behold gigantic trees emerging out of the rocks, and of astonishing height, reaching further up into the clouds, and of astonishing thickness, such as no one had before seen—these must be the oldest trees in creation!—their cone-like fruits lying scattered on the ground.

Is it in the least to be wondered that those un-

tutored minds, overwhelmed by their overwhelming surroundings, as they must have been, should have called this unique tree *Deodar*—the God-tree, growing up in heaven, up among the clouds? Is it to be wondered that they brought down with them, if the first explorers did ever come back, the cones of this heavenly tree as something sacred? No, it was the most *reasonable* thing that could have occurred in those days.

Then, as they became more and more acquainted with this tree, and discovered it lower down where they could become more frequently familiar with it, and began to use its wood, its durability and its perfume must have added to its charms. Everything that they knew about this wonderful tree conspired to convince them that it was something *supernatural*; and the 'God-tree' was about the most *appropriate* name they could give it![1]

Afterwards, when they began to utilize its timber for temples, etc., their vivid imagination soon wove round it myths of all sorts.

[1] Mr. Thomas Harris, Head Master of the Government College, Ajmere, informs me that the Anglified name 'Deodar,' among the educated natives of India, is *Deodwar*, and the common people call it *Deodiar*; that *diar* is the word commonly used by the people for tree or wood. It also means door or gate, and as the Himalayas are considered by the Hindoos to be the seat of their gods—a sort of Hindoo Olympus, this name may also mean the door or gate of the gods, these wonderful trees being the last before they come to eternal snow. At Almora, he says, Hindoo temples have very often an avenue of Deodars leading to them; and that he has seen the tree worshipped by women at certain seasons.

This is what I find in the 'Report of the Conifer Conference:[1]

"*Cedrus Deodara* ranges from Afghanistan to Nepal. Some trees are 30 to 40 feet in girth and up to 200 feet in height. They fringe the eternal snows, and there grow out of rocks. The timber of old trees is perfumed, and of great durability."

Now of course we know that the *Sequoias* of California are more gigantic. These big trees average 90 feet in girth, and 300 feet in height, and it is said that Lord Richmond Grosvenor speaks of one 450 feet high and 116 feet in circumference.

Then the Cedar of Lebanon is found on the Lebanon and Tauric ranges, and has also been recently discovered in Cyprus, on the mountain near Khrysakus, and also mixed with the other variety, *Atlantica*, on the Atlas mountains of Africa. Sir J. Hooker thinks that all three cedars—*Cedrus Deodara*, *Libani*, and *Atlantica*—are descended from one stock.

In these three regions the cedar thrives only at a certain altitude. In colder climates, as that of England, the cedar thrives in very low situations.

One would like to ask: How did the cedar come to be distributed to these three regions—Himalayas, Mount

[1] It is a monograph of coniferous plants, which are among the most interesting phenomena of nature. It is issued by the Royal Horticultural Society in their Journal, vol. xiv, October, 1892. See page 407 regarding cedar and other firs mentioned in Holy Writ.

Lebanon, and Mount Atlas—all three mountainous, and all three separated by immense plains and deserts? It is true that cyclones may have carried the seeds to immense distances; especially when we consider that the cedar seeds, like those of many coniferæ, are winged. But not improbably the *sacredness* of the Himalayan *Deodar* may have had a good deal to do with its dissemination through the *migrations of man.*

Lenormant, as already stated, has sufficiently shown that the Assyrians held this tree, its wood and its cones in great veneration, and therefore its dissemination would be sufficiently explained by human migrations from the Himalayan regions, where it was indigenous, towards westerly directions, the migrants taking the cones with them as charms against illness, etc. The migrants, in their course westwards, would have occupied both the plains and the mountains; but as the *Deodar* does not live in the plains in hot climates, it thrived only on the mountains of Lebanon and Atlas, where it has remained; and now it has been discovered on the mountains of Cyprus also.

One of the sacred trees, that given in fig. 25, I have supposed to have been some sort of fir tree, judging from its symmetry and cones. Its pendulous branches may well have been meant to represent the pendulous and graceful branches of a young *Deodar.* When I say young, it may be a tree forty or fifty years old, for

it does not commence developing cones till about that age; and some, it is said, go on to a hundred years before they do so. The erect cones are also a character of the cedars, but showing them in threes, and at the end of a branch, is probably the fancy of an Assyrian artist.

# THE LOTUS.

"Every detail of condition is regulated either by rules dictated by, and implying deference to, the living, or to still greater extent by tradition, inherited from the dead, or supposed to involve pleasure or anger on the part of their spirits, according as the prescribed custom is punctiliously performed or neglected."

'Individualism' by W. Schooling, Westminster Review, November 1892, p. 525.

## IV.

## THE LOTUS.

This plant has some connection with the Flora of Assyrian Monuments. We find it on the pavement of the palace of Sardanapalus (basement, British Museum), and in other places. But on the whole I thought it would be better to treat of it after the review of the sacred trees of Assyria.

It appears to be essentially an Egyptian feature, as shown in fig. 37; and Assyrian decorative artists, from close contact of the two nations, had evidently borrowed the lotus-motive from Egypt.

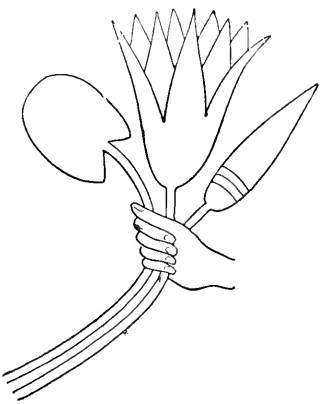


FIG. 37—Egyptian type, showing leaf, flower and bud of Lotus, pl. 3, fig 6 (Grammar of the Lotus).

Mr. W. H. Goodyear has published an admirable work entitled, "The Grammar of the Lotus" (1891), with numerous illustrations. One cannot agree entirely with his views. He seems to look at all ancient ornamentation through 'lotus-spectacles,' and therefore one would be inclined to

infer from his reasoning that there was no other plant known to the ancients.

It will be necessary, though wearisome, to enter into this subject in some detail, in order to show that Mr. Goodyear cannot be right in casting aside the *date-tree* and other plants as motives in ancient decorative art, and substituting the *lotus* as the sole origin of all ancient decorations.

He is right in stating (p. 32) that the Lotus of the Egyptian paintings is a *Nymphœa* and not a *Nelumbium*.[1] The 'rose lotus' of Goodyear may be the red variety, although on the Egyptian wall-painting in the British Museum both the red and the white flowered lotuses are represented, with green outer bracts (sepals).

Miss Amelia B. Edwards[2] has taken Mr. Goodyear's view regarding the lotus, as having been the 'fons et origo' of all ancient decorations; and she seems quite decided (p. 178) that the calyx sections of the lotus, "and those only," were the originals of the Ionic volutes. She says: "of the three varieties which flourished abundantly in the time of Heredotus—the white, the blue, and the rose lotus—only the last (*Nelumbium speciosum*) has disappeared."

[1] G. Nicholson's 'Encyclopædia Horticultural'—Nelumbium, leaves peltate, *Nel. luteum* W. Indies and Southern U.S.; *N. speciosum*, Asia; *Nymphœa stellata*, leaves 2-lobed at the base, blue flower; tropical Africa, and was probably held sacred by the Egyptians; (syn. Nym. cœrulea); *Nymphœa lotus*, Egyptian lotus, tropics of old world, leaves 2-lobed at the base, red or white flower.

[2] 'Pharoahs, Fellahs, and Explorers,' p. 176.

Now, Mr. G. Nicholson, in his 'Enclyopædia of Horticulture,' says that the *Nelumbium* is not an African plant. The yellow *Nelumbium* belongs to the West Indies and Southern States of North America, while the red *Nelumbium*, or Indian lotus, is Asiatic or Australian.

Moreover, he says that Nymphœa lotus of the Egyptians is either *red* or *white*; and *Nymphœa stellata*, the blue one, also of the Egyptians, belongs to tropical Africa. So that Miss Edwards' statement that the rose lotus (*Nelumbium speciosum*) has disappeared from Egypt may be erroneous, for it seems *it was never there*. It is not likely that a plant like the *Nelumbium*, so easily propagated by seed and root, would have disappeared from Egypt had it been there. The seed head of the *Nelumbium* is so characteristic and so different from that of the *Nymphœa*, that, were it ever in Egypt, it could not have helped being reproduced on their monuments.

However, Miss Edwards states that the 'white and the blue lotus' abound in the neighbourhood of Rosetta and Damietta. The red one appears to be a variety of the white, and both are to be seen on the Egyptian wall-paintings of the British Museum. The red variety may not be common now. Natives eat the seeds of the *Nymphœa*, and in ancient times it appears they ground them and made a sort of bread of them. The seed-vessel is not unlike a poppy head, and indeed

Le Maout and Decaisne and other botanists place the poppies *close* to the *Nymphæas.*

Then Miss Edwards goes on to try to prove that the Ionic volutes are direct descendants of the outer sepals of the lotus flower. There may be apparently transition forms between the two, but *it does not at all follow* that the Ionic volutes are *not* descended from the horns on the sacred trees of the Assyrians. It can be readily shown that the capitals of the Assyrian columns are distinctly made up of horns. We know that horns among the Assyrians were of the greatest spiritual importance, and as the ram's horns, as shown on their ram's heads, would, in the hands of artists, assimilate to decorative volutes with the greatest facility, one does not see why the volute should have been borrowed, more especially from the lotus petals than from ram's horns, which are natural and *ready made volutes.*

My belief is that the Greek artists borrowed decorative ideas both from the Egyptians and the Assyrians. We know that the lotus is found in the palace pavement of Sardanapalus (British Museum). We know also that at Tel-el-Amarna, Mr. Petrie discovered clay amulet-moulds, having the impressions of the conventionalized Assyrian date trees. Is it to be wondered at that the Phœnicians and the Greeks, who mixed with the other two nations, should have borrowed from *both.*

Miss Amelia Edwards supports Mr. Goodyear in his resolve to make all ancient ornamentations descend from the lotus. She is quite decided that "from the calyx-leaves—*and from these alone*—were derived the volutes of the Ionic capital." We have seen, however, that she was not very accurate about her *Nelumbium* and her *Nymphæa*.

Miss Edwards is also very decided about the so-called honeysuckle pattern—the anthemion of the Greeks. At p. 31 she says: "The well-known 'Greek honeysuckle pattern,' for instance, is found to be neither Greek nor honeysuckle. The Naukratis pottery furnishes specimens of this design in all its stages. In its most archaic form, it is neither more nor less than the stock 'lotus pattern' of the Egyptian potters."

All this may have some truth in it, but it does not at all follow that the date tree head and horns of the sacred tree of the Assyrians have *not* given birth to the *anthemion*.

This difference of view with regard to the origin of architectural and decorative motives leads to a discussion, which we may figuratively style "The battle of the Lotus and the Date tree."

As Mr. Goodyear has written so much on the lotus-origin of things decorative, I think I cannot do better than examine some of his statements and conclusions, in order to try and disentangle this seemingly intricate and interesting matter.

In my opinion there is sufficient evidence to show that these two decorative motives (the date tree and the lotus) had their origin separately—the one in Assyria and the other in Egypt—and then through the intercourse of these two nations a sort of hybridism ensued, and now the difficulty is to find out the real origin of so many decorative motives we see everywhere.

Mr. Goodyear, in his 'Grammar of the Lotus' p. 28, gives a seed-vessel of the Lotus—"the ovary bulb of the Lotus gone to seed." I have given an outline of the ripe seed-vessel of *Nymphæa alba*,[1] in fig. 38, to show

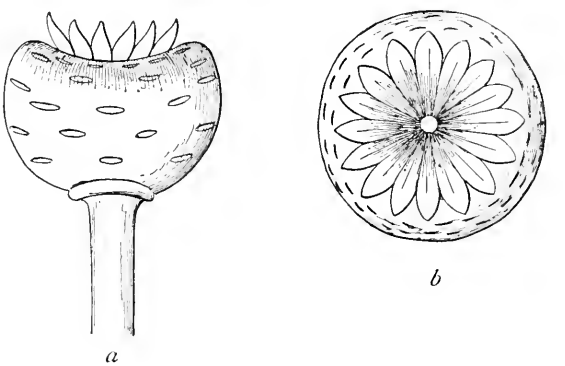



FIG. 38—Seed vessel of *Nymphæa alba*: (*a*) is a side view; (*b*) a top view; the scars of the fallen petals are seen on the side. The star on the top is deeply *pitted* in the centre.

that it is not unlike a poppy head, and certainly the two spherical bodies on the altar of 'Hapi,' in fig. 39, are like poppy heads. Moreover, the long stalks, by

[1] Mr. W. Watson, of the Royal Gardens, Kew, courteously sent me a ripe seed-vessel of *Nymphæa alba*.

which they hang, I think decide the question regarding what they were meant for; they are the *flower* stalks.

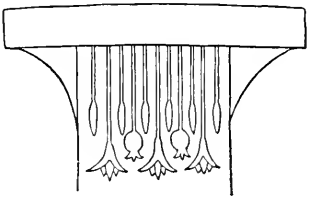


FIG. 39—Altar of "Hapi," the god of the Nile; No. 8 — British Museum.

Mr. G. Nicholson [1] says that "The seeds of *Nymphæa Lotus*, dried and ground, were made into a kind of bread by the ancient Egyptians, as were also the roots." It is no wonder, therefore, that the original settlers in the Nile valley thought so much of an abundant plant, with its beautiful flowers floating on the water, and its seed-pods containing something they could turn into bread.

It only requires to have been in India a short time to discover that the natives, and more especially children, eat the most villanous fruits, as long as they are not poisonous — astringent, nasty-flavored things that the European palate shrinks from — yet by habit natives, like birds, must find them palatable, and their digestive powers must extract some sort of nourishment from them. After all, the basis of all living matter is said to be *protoplasm*.

So all primitive people can find nourishment in wild plants, which the educated palate would not touch. An abundant plant—beautiful and producing food—was

[1] Dictionary of Gardening, vol. ii, p. 460.

sure to be idolized. If not itself deified, it was made the symbol of the Nile-god.

There is, therefore, no difficulty whatever in recognizing such a thing as the lotus to have been the original model of the Egyptian decorations, assuming transformations of a hundred fashions by passing through the imaginative grey matter of later brains.

But what I feel a difficulty in recognizing is that this lotus-model was the *sole* one which gave origin to *all* ancient oriental decorations, of whatever nation.

In pl. 3, fig. 10, of the 'Grammar of the Lotus' it becomes evident to me that the lotus flower began to be combined with a date-palm leaf. And in pl. 11, fig. 1 and pl. 67, fig. 2 we notice a further Assyrian influence. The lotus flower is converted into the 'luck-horns' of the Assyrian sacred tree, which support a date leaf as representative of an entire palmette (fig. 40).

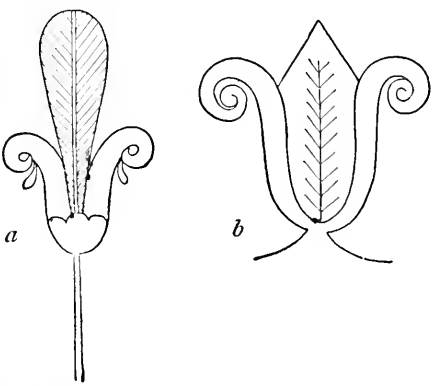



FIG. 40—(*a*) from pl. 11, fig. 1; (*b*) from pl. 67, fig. 2. 'Gram. of the Lotus.'

The Assyrian and Egyptian artists each appear to have had a different plant as a prevalent ornament. The Assyrians had the palmette,[1] supported by luck-horns, and the Egyptians had the lotus leaf, flower, bud, and seed-pod. Although these two nations may have had a separate development, yet, as is well known, they subsequently became intimately related, and indeed Assyriologists, and among them Prof. Hommel, say that Assyria became the *teacher* of Egypt. And so we have the palmette and horns of the Assyrians interwoven with the lotus, as shown in pl. 10, fig. 1 of the 'Grammar of the Lotus,' where we see above the palmette, with the horns tied on to it, and below, an expanded lotus flower.

I confess I cannot agree with Mr. Goodyear in considering every ornament as derived from some part of a lotus plant. Even the Assyrian palmette, he derives, if I read him rightly, from the Egyptian palmette, which again he thinks is only half a rosette, and this again is the stigma of the lotus ovary.

Now we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the Assyrians had in their midst in great abundance a most important and useful tree—the date-palm—the fruit of which must, at times, have saved them from famine; and that their palmette is *uncommonly* like the plumose

[1] The plumose head of leaves of the date-palm. The two nations met at Sinai for the stone of their statues about 600 years B.C.

head of a date-palm. Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that their sacred trees are decorated with horns, which admit of no equivocation, when compared with the horns on the heads of their ibex and ram. Moreover, they had in the flower of their composite *Hieracium pannosum*,[1] a rosette, which is in no way inferior to the stigma of the lotus.

We know also that the Assyrians were acquainted with the lovely Madonna lily, represented on a sculpture in the British Museum (basement). The flower of this in outline is shown in fig. 41. Possibly, if Mr. Goodyear had not been aware that it was meant for a lily, he might look upon it as a lotus.[2]

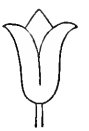


FIG. 41.—Lily flower, basement British Museum (see similar flower between two Sphinxes, pl. 32, fig. 12, 'Grammar of the Lotus').

Then in fig. 60, p. 110, he gives what he considers an 'Assyrian palmette with a lotus bulb,' which I reproduce in fig. 42, and he adds in note 3, that "the lotus bulb has been mistaken for a pomegranate.

Here I think it would be well to enter into a little botanical disquisition. Both the palmette and bulb of

[1] See fig. 14.

[2] See pl. 32, fig. 12, 'Grammar of the Lotus,' and pl. 33, fig. 12, with Sphinxes standing on lotuses; but suppose we call the latter Assyrian *lilies* instead? I know that the supposed date of a document, or a sculpture, or an ornament, has a good deal to do with its interpretation one way or another; but, in the study of these ancient histories, we often have to say, with palæontologists, that the 'record is incomplete.' Who would have thought that at Tel-el-Amarna, in Egypt, there was buried a whole Assyrian library?

fig. 42 may be entirely of Assyrian origin, and may have had nothing to do with the lotus. They may readily be interpreted into a date-head of foliage and horns, and a pomegranate. The misfortune is that the lotus seed-pod of the Egyptian Monuments is rather conventional. In stone, the multiple limbs of the stigmatic star were rendered by only three limbs; and the body of the pod was given a too globose outline. These somewhat unreal and rude outlines of a thing are to be seen everywhere. Then that conventional sculpture becomes the *model* for others, and it becomes *perpetuated*.

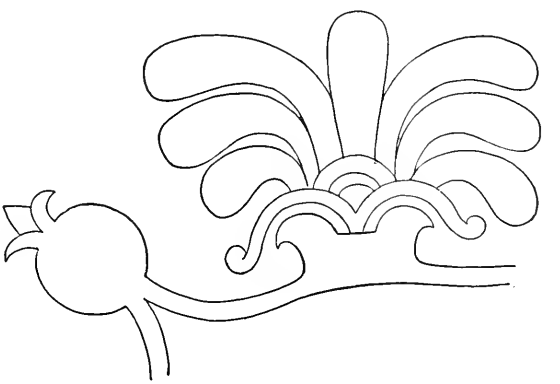


FIG. 42.—Assyrian palmette with lotus bulb, fig. 60, p. 110, 'Grammar of the Lotus.'

It so happens that this conventional outline of the lotus pod assimilates with the real outline of a pomegranate, so that in many cases it is far from easy to say this, and not that, was the model. A potter, copying from some previous vessel, thinks little of the genesis

of the design. As I have shown, the pomegranate tree was seen in jungles, and its lovely and striking fruit—yellow and red cheeked, with a quaint outline—must have early attracted the notice of Syrian and Assyrian artists.

Of course that in fig. 42 *may* have been meant for a lotus bulb or seed-pod, but why should we discard the idea of a pomegranate outline having been anciently used as an ornament, when we know that both the Egyptians[1] and the Assyrians were well acquainted with the pomegranate? Many of the Assyrian sculptures are covered with pomegranate trees, and probably both the tree and its fruit were very useful to those people. Anyhow, they must have had then varieties sufficiently choice to be considered fit presents for the king or his ministers, for we see them carrying piles of pomegranates to the palace.[2]

We cannot for a moment fancy that these pomegranate-like things were lotus seed-pods, which they were carrying as presents to the palace, for they had not only pomegranates, but figs, grapes, and choice dates, and therefore were not likely to make presents of lotus seed-pods. Again, why should we suppose those Assyrian people to have had such bad taste as to have selected, as an ornament, the ugly lotus bulb shown by Mr. Goodyear,[3] when they had a lovely red-cheeked pome-

[1] In the wall-paintings of 'El Kab,' a man is carrying strings of pomegranates—(*vide* note on fingered citron, p. 67).

[2] Nos. 42 and 43, Kouyunjik Gallery, British Museum.

[3] 'Grammar of the Lotus,' p. 28.

granate in their own gardens? What Mr. Goodyear calls a lotus bulb, in his fig. 60, is as good a pomegranate outline as any rude art can make it.

Then fig. 43 shows another combination of the Assyrian palmette with the Egyptian lotus bud. We cannot release our minds from those Assyrian 'luck-horns' *tied on*, which, in their sacred trees, are too realistic to be ignored. They moreover are not required *botanically* under the lotus *bud*!

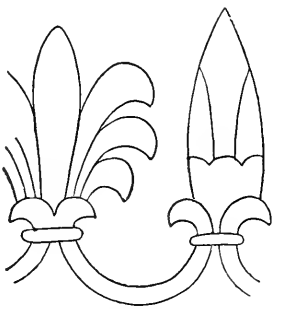


FIG. 43.—Palmette and lotus bud from fig. 61, 'Grammar of the Lotus.'

Mr. Goodyear, in a note to page 119, says: "In the Annual Report of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890, Mr. Petrie still adheres to the old notion of a derivation of the Ionic capital from the horns of a ram, and supposes that the Greeks borrowed the Ionic volute from Asia."

I have no doubt that Mr. Petrie is *right*. Mr. Goodyear's figs. 8 and 14, pl. 13, would support that view. Of course if you consider that the anthemion (palmette) is a derivation from the lotus stigma, and the scrolls a derivation from the sepals of the lotus flower, and that this is the 'truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,' you may say Petrie is wrong. But no one looking at fig. 14, pl. 13 (here

reproduced, fig. 44), would say that those scrolls represent anything but ram's horns. Nevertheless, one *may* be wrong.

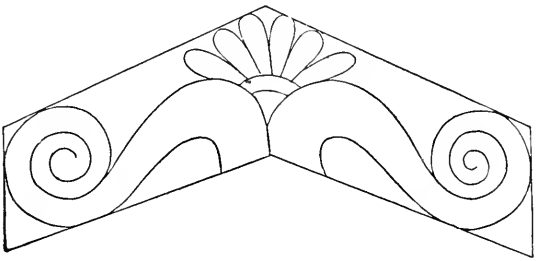


FIG. 44.—Greek anthemion with introrse scrolls, from pl. 13, fig. 14, 'Grammar of the Lotus.'

But considering that some forms of Assyrian winged discs,[1] representing, it is said, the Deity, have prominent horns, nothing would seem easier for a Greek artist than to reverse the horns of the disc and make them the capital of an Ionic column, as shown in fig. 45. We know that the Assyrian artists themselves used horns as capitals of columns, such as those of figs. 66 and 77.

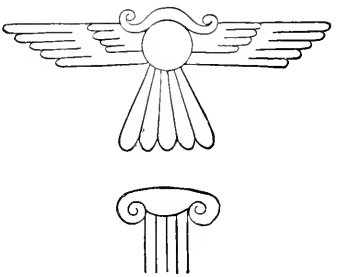


FIG. 45—Assyrian winged disc and capital of Ionic column.

Fig. 8, pl. 22, of the 'Grammar' shows another marriage of the Assyrian palmette with the Egyptian lotus. The horns supporting the palmette are made to develop lotus

[1] It is not improbable that the dove with spread wings of Christian artists, representing the Holy Ghost, was borrowed from the winged disc of the Assyrians.

leaves instead of horn scrolls. When new motives are admitted into a decorative artist's head, various suggestions and new combinations arise. We see this in our modern decorative artists. They borrow motives from every source and weave them into new combinations, to produce patterns pleasing to the eye.

In fig. 19, pl. 20, which I reproduce in fig. 46, is shown what Mr. Goodyear calls a Cypriote lotus, associated with the rosette. This rosette he supposes to be suggested by the stigma of the lotus ovary. We should not, however, forget that the Assyrian sculptors reproduced a daisy-like[1] flower (probably *Hieracium pannosum*), which their jewellers may have copied, and their sculptors reproduced on the King's bracelets and several others places.

FIG. 46 — Cypriote lotus, showing association with rosette, pl. 20, fig. 19, 'Gram. of Lotus.'

The Assyrian daisy-like rosettes given in fig. 47 have a central double ring, and this probably has a

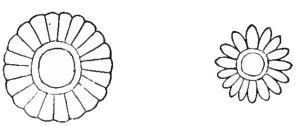


FIG. 47.—Assyrian rosettes, more like daisies than stigmas of otus.

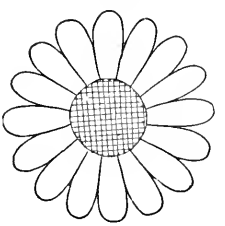


FIG. 48.—Daisy copied from painted glazed tile, in Mr. Flinders Petrie's exhibition.

[1] No. 76, basement British Museum.

meaning. In composite flowers, like the daisy, marguerite, and many others, there is the ray and the disc. The outer florets of the disc, as they open, form a ring, and this may have been noticed by those shrewd Assyrian artists; I do not therefore think that we should be justified in looking on 'every rosette in creation' as a copy of the stigma of the lotus. There may have been rosettes and rosettes. Composite flowers are by far the most numerous,[1] so that ancient artists had enough rosettes to choose from. But what removes *all doubt* about a daisy-like flower having been copied by the ancients as a rosette, is that Mr. Flinders Petrie discovered the daisy or marguerite '*in propria persona*' on glazed tiles in Tel-el-Amarna.[2] I have given it in fig. 48, which I copied from Mr. Petrie's exhibition.[3] It has a *white ray with a yellow centre*. The latter is divided into little squares by crossed lines, to indicate the unexpanded florets of the disc. Mr. Petrie also exhibited coloured copies of pavement and wall paintings, in which a red poppy, a blue thistle (or centaurea ?), a sedge, a grass, and others, are easily made out. So it would be unfair to credit the ancient Egyptian artists with only 'one lotus string to their bow.'

[1] Bentham and Hooker, 'Genera Plantarum,' say: "Ordo omnium vastissimus . . . . species enumeramus ad 9800, auctores alii ultra 12000 recensiunt, per orbem totum terrarum dispersas!"

[2] Also No. 15965, Miscellaneous Porcelain Objects, British Museum.

[3] Opened 19th September, 1892, at No. 4, Oxford Mansions.

The ornaments on Cypriote vases, fig. 49, Mr. Goodyear considers lotus ornaments, but I think the ligatures betray them into Assyrian 'luck-horns,' and in fact they appear to be modified 'fleur-de-lys.'

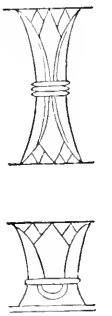


Fig. 49. — Ornaments from Cypriote vases, New York Manuscripts (pl. 21, figs. 8 and 10, 'Grammar of the Lotus').

On p. 118 Mr. Goodyear says: "The traditional and constant combinations of the palmette with the lotus bud and lotus flower (figs. 61, 71, 74, 76, 77, 82, 83, 86, 88) are not only significant as furnishing an argument drawn from association. They also imply, on the supposition that they represent a palm motive, that realistic and normal palms should be at least as frequent as normal and realistic lotuses, whereas they are of the greatest rarity, and, roughly speaking, almost unknown on the surviving ancient monuments, *aside from Assyrian scenery background*." (The italics are mine.)

One would like to ask—what does all this mean? Is it not enough that the background of many Assyrian sculptures should be filled with very realistic date palms?[1] —real offsets at base of the stem, real stems with attached triangular leaf-bases, real bunches of dates, real leaves, real pinnæ, many of which characters are

[1] See Herodotus' account of the date palm in Babylonia, page 9 of this Flora.

reproduced conventionally in their sacred date trees. It is true that the pinnæ, or subdivisions of the leaves of their sacred date tree, are *reversed*, as seen in fig. 50, but this variant may have been suggested by the proximity of two palm leaves, as shown in fig. 51.

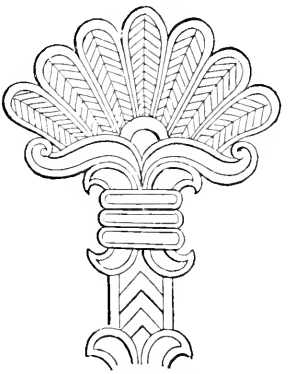


FIG. 50.—Form of sacred tree. Rawlinson's 'Monarchies.'

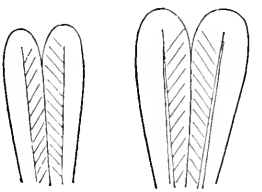


FIG. 51.—Proximity of date leaves, suggesting reversion of the pinnæ.

The proximity of the feathers of a sphinx (fig. 52) show the same thing. Moreover, those ancient artists were not very particular about showing which way the barbs of feathers lie, as shown in fig. 52.

The leaves of the palmette of the sacred tree (fig. 50) cannot, I think, be interpreted into anything but date leaves, with a midrib, and with the pinnæ *reversed*. Certainly the lotus petal has nothing to correspond with this.

And I think the palm trees shown in fig. 53 are sufficiently realistic to satisfy any botanist.

Now let us see if we can trace any further resemblance between the palmettes of the sacred trees and the plumose heads of the realistic trees.

In the British Museum there are numbers of realistic date trees and several sacred trees, which seem *like* date trees, and if we make a comparison between the *number* of leaves in both, something may perhaps be revealed.

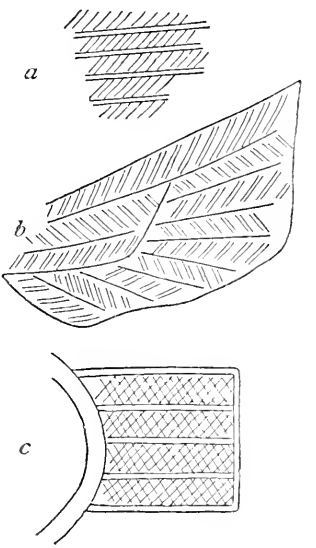



FIG. 52.—*a*, Wing feathers of sphinx, pl. 32, fig. 13; *b*, wing of sphinx, pl. 32, fig. 8; *c*, winged disc, pl. 62, fig. 8. All from 'Grammar of the Lotus.'[1]

[1] It is remarkable that this winged disc should come from ancient America.

*Sacred trees.*

*Nimrood Gallery.*—No. 2 has the main head with *nine* leaves, and all the smaller circumferential heads with

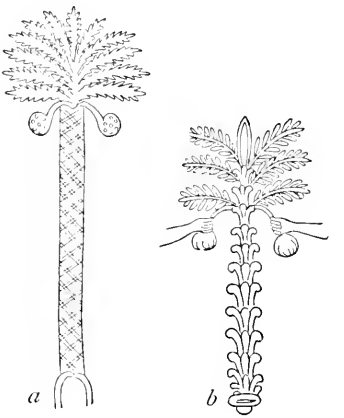



FIG. 53—*a*, One on each side of a hunting group, pl. 25, fig. 6, Lajard, 'Culte de Mithra'; *b*, Between two fem. figures plucking the fruit, pl. 27, fig. 7, 'Culte de Mithra.'

*seven*. Nos. 37, 38 and 39 have *all* the heads, main and circumferential, with *seven*.

Near the steps leading to the basement there are two sacred trees, with a double row of circumferential heads —*all* have only *seven* leaves.

*Realistic date trees.*

*Kouyunjik Gallery.*—Nos. 6, 7 and 8; some are with *nine* leaves and some with *eleven*.

Nos. 15, 16 and 17; some are with *seven*, some with *nine*, and others with *eleven* leaves.

No. 50; some are with *five*, some with *seven*, and others with *nine* leaves.

No. 59; some with *nine* and others with *eleven* leaves.

*Basement.*—No 90; all with *nine* leaves; another basement sculpture has them mostly with *eleven*, and a few with *nine* leaves.

*Balawat gates.*—Three date trees are distinctly with *seven leaves*; two others are not clear; all are very rudely outlined, but are sufficient to indicate that the number *seven* was in the artist's head.

If then we classify those that can be easily made out to mean date trees, we find that the number of leaves varies from 5, 7, 9, to 11.

But curiously enough the 'anthemion' borders in the pavement of the palace of Sardanapalus (basement) have all *nine* leaves, supported by horns. The 'anthemions' of the North Palace, Kouyunjik, have all *nine* leaves; so have those of Nos. 99 and 100 (basement).

We have here a number of sacred tree palmettes with *seven* leaves, and one with *nine*. We have all these pavement anthemions (palmettes) with *nine* leaves; and we have several realistic date trees with *seven*, and several with *nine* leaves.

As their shape is so much alike, we are not justified, I think, in considering these three things, apart from

the support of the 'luck-horns,' viz. the realistic date tree head, the conventional head of the sacred tree, and the anthemions, as wholly unrelated.

On pl. 33 Mr. Goodyear shows several anthemions with *eleven* leaves. Then on pl. 11, fig. 1, he gives lotus buds and rosettes, together with two volutes, supporting a central upright *pinnate* leaf. I don't think the latter can be interpreted into anything but a date-palm leaf. The figure seems a modification of fig. 2, pl. 67.

But the most conclusive evidence that one of the Assyrian sacred trees *was* a date tree is to be found on their cylinders, or seals. Those shown in fig. 53 cannot be mistaken for anything but date trees. Fig. 54 shows a number of conventionalized date trees.

Either the pinnate leaves or the hanging bunches of dates, or the horns, stamp them either as allies of the natural tree, or of that highly finished decorative tree of fig. 16.

The hanging bunches of dates of some, Mr. Goodyear might perhaps be able to say, are meant for lotus buds; but the pinnate leaves of others cannot be interpreted into lotus petals! and the two features combined stamp them unmistakably as date trees. The moulds with these same Assyrian trees, found in Tel-el-Amarna (fig. 54*g*, *h*, *i*), distinctly prove that the artists of both countries borrowed each other's ideas; and (fig. 54*d*)

shows us plainly what the Greek anthemion came from.

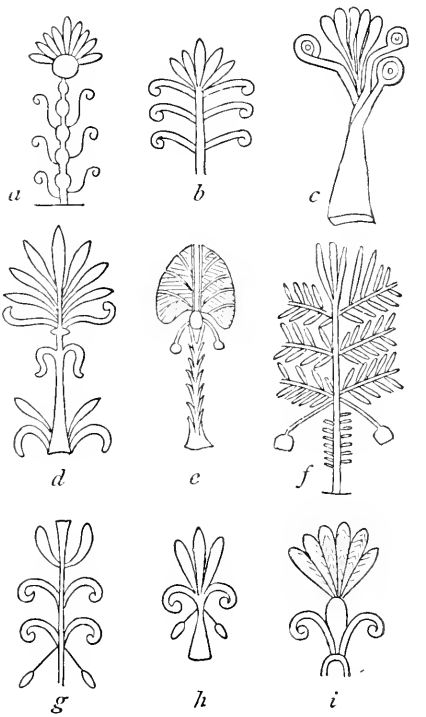



FIG. 54.—(*a*) Hem. cylinder, 77-6-12-2, Cyprus, about 600 B.C.
(*b*) Hem. cylinder, British Museum, about 400 B.C.
(*c*) Pl. 31, fig. 2, cylinder, 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*d*) From pl. 39, fig. 8, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*e*) From pl. 52, fig. 4, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*f*) From Basalt, Chaldean cylinder, Louvre, Perrot et Chipiez, vol. ii, p. 267.
(*g*, *h*, *i*) From clay moulds found in *Tel-el-Amarna*, exhibited by Mr. Flinders Petrie, 19 September, 1892.

Those ancient engravers and moulders had various

ways of expressing the sacred tree. In many cases they seem to have rather *suggested the idea* of the thing, as children might do, rather than tried to give an accurate delineation of it.

It is curious to note that a cylinder in the British Museum has a date tree with a seated figure on each side. One of the figures has a serpent behind the chair. Those who hold that this cylinder has some connection with the legend of Adam and Eve[1] unconsciously declare that the date tree was a sacred tree from the beginning of the world! And more curious still would the fact be that Adam, by being horned, would seem to declare his relationship to the lower animals—an adumbration perhaps of the Darwinian theory! Anyhow, the declaration that *horns* played an important part in the mythical thoughts of those ancient people seems beyond dispute. They are seen everywhere—on the heads of their mythical personages, on the helmets of their genii and Kings, on their sacred trees, in their decorative art.

There are several other points in Mr. Goodyear's 'Grammar,' to which exception might be taken. It is curious to note how biassed he seems to be in favour of the lotus-origin of everything. For instance, in pl. 25, fig. 2, he gives a "lotus palmette and *bud*." The bud is a miniature reproduction of that shown in

[1] M. J. Menant (Pierres gravées) rejects this interpretation of the so-called Adam and Eve cylinder.

fig. 55. Why he should call this a *lotus bud* is not clear. Can it be because it has a *conical* outline,

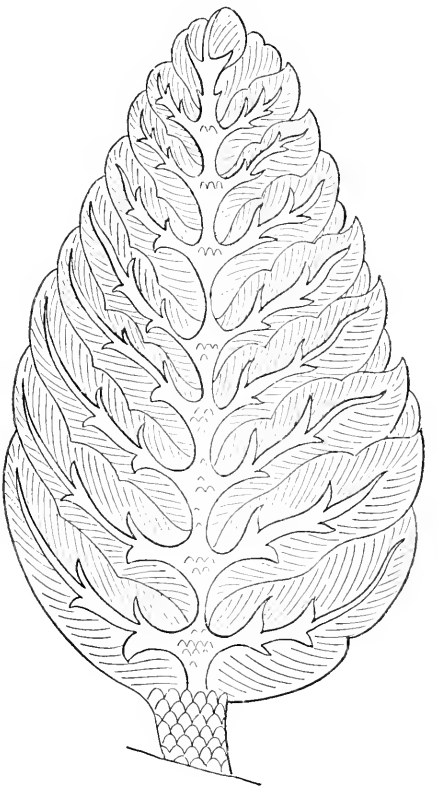


FIG. 55.—Pine tree from Persepolis ('Porter's Travels in Georgia, Persia, etc.').

like that of a lotus bud? There cannot, however, be even the shadow of a doubt that this so-called lotus bud is only a small reproduction of fig. 55—simply a

conventional pine tree, enclosed in the conical outline which the tree often shows. Moreover, in Flandin's 'Voyage en Perse,' pl. 98, tome ii, similar trees have *fir cones* on them; so that there is no possibility of misinterpreting their meaning. They are associated with another *very* conventional tree shown in fig. 58*b*, and which I take to have been meant for a date tree, both trees being indigenous in Persia.

Then in pl. 65, fig. 5, Mr. Goodyear says: "Bull; lotus amulet pendant from the collar." I have given it in fig. 56.

But why interpret this pendant into a lotus, when an unsophisticated eye could only see in it an *ordinary bell*, hanging from the bull's collar, which may probably be seen all over the world where cows are let loose in the jungle to graze? The only difference is that this conventional bell has *seven* clappers in a row, put in to fill the line and please the eye.

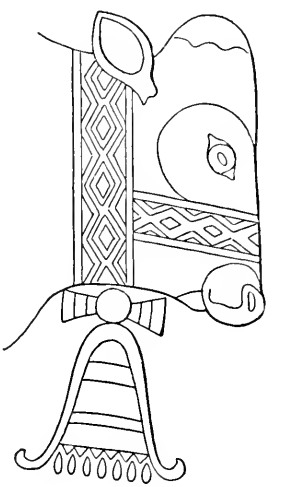


FIG. 56.—Bull from pl. 65, fig. 5 ('Grammar of the Lotus').

Then in p. 232 he gives an Assyrian sacred tree with a number of peripheral cones. He says that

these cones are *lotus buds*. I think I have sufficiently shown, in discussing the sacred trees (fig. 20) that these cones are probably no other than bunches of grapes. Those ancient rude sculptors had an off-hand way of showing a rough surface by crossed lines, as in the wings of fig. 52*c*. The accompanying fig. 57 shows the same cones on a more realistic vine tree, with a tendril at the end of the branch.

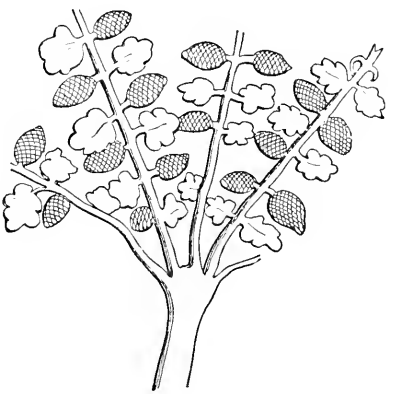


FIG. 57.—As seen in large numbers on the sculptures, British Museum.

In fig. 194, p. 390, Mr. Goodyear gives what he calls 'superimposed lotuses'; and in fig. 132, p. 219, he gives what he calls 'multiple lotus palmette.'[1] I have shown them both in fig. 58. He is, I think, right, in considering *a* superimposed lotuses; but *b*, I think,

[1] See stump of date tree in Athlete Statue, fig. 4.

admits of quite a different interpretation. The triangular projections on the stem, I think, are meant

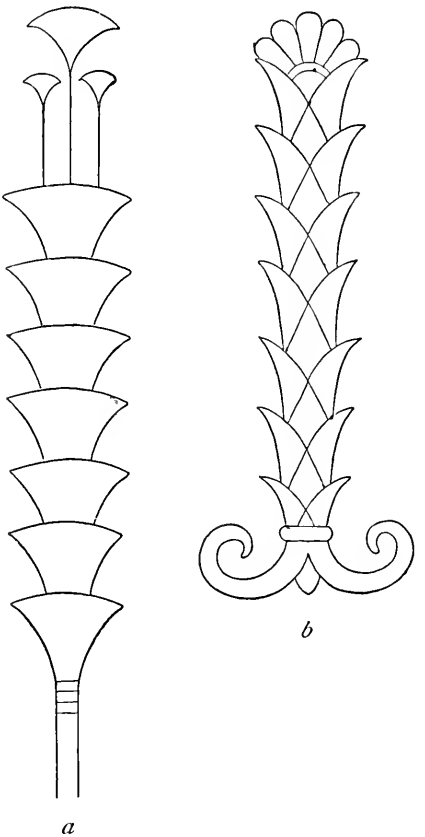



FIG. 58.—(*a*) Superimposed lotuses, fig. 194, p. 390; (*b*) multiple lotus palmette according to Goodyear. Fig. 132, p. 219, from Persepolis Flandin's 'Voyage en Perse' gives a number of them.

for the bases of the date leaves (see figs. 3 and 4), and the palmette at the top I consider is meant to indicate

the head of date foliage, the whole being supported by the usual horns, and represented in a much more conventional form than many other date trees. What, however, seems to carry more conviction than anything else, that the 'anthemion' was derived from the date head and horns, is a tree on a cylinder shown in fig. 54*d*, from Lajard's 'Culte Mithra.' There is this tree, a figure of an adult holding a boy by the hand, and a player on a musical instrument, the whole much better engraved than most others. The tree cannot be meant for any other than a date tree, of which so many are represented realistically on cylinders, such as those shown in fig. 53. It consists of a head of seven leaves, supported by two horns, two bunches of dates lower down, and two other horns at the base, with a bunch of dates on each side—a conventional thing, but too near the real to be mistaken. Its character may be due to degradation, owing to *hardness* of the cylinder stone.

When once we become convinced that horns in general, and the horns of the bull, the ram, the ibex, and the antelope in particular, must have played a prominent part in the superstitions and myths of the Assyrians, and that they must have used them, as they do now in the South of Europe, affixed to objects and places from which they wished to keep off the injuries of any evil-eyed individual, we also see that

the transition from real horns to their numerous modifications for architectural and decorative purposes, both in ancient and modern art, becomes an easy and a natural transition.

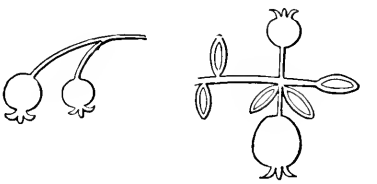
In figs. 66 and 67 we have first either realistic horns, or modifications of them, used as a finish to poles and pillars, and shown as if they were ligatured to the pole. Then we see them used alone as capitals to pillars, and again combined with the head of the date tree, as capitals of columns. From these the Ionic and Corinthian capitals, and the numerous 'anthemions' we see everywhere, become easy steps.

The evolution of a vast number of modern ornamentations can be traced to the date tree and the luck-horns attached to it. Nevertheless the hybridism of the Egyptian lotus, and the Assyrian date tree and horns, may be traced in various instances.

I have dwelt at so great a length on the sacred date tree and horns, as models of many ancient decorations, because I believe that not *only* the lotus has been used by primitive artists, as the model of their ornamentations, but this tree also, as well as other plants.

That the figure adopted conventionally by the ancient Egyptians is not *always* meant for a lotus seed-pod, but *sometimes* is meant for a pomegranate, can be proved from the Carthaginian tablets in the British Museum. Fig. 59 shows two figures, which I have taken

from those tablets. A human figure holds one of these in one hand and a bunch of dates, or of grapes, in the other. It may have been a sort of 'coat of arms' of the city of Carthage. But what concerns us is, that in both there are *two* fruits on one branch, which occurs in the pomegranate, and not in the lotus. Then *b* has in addition the characteristic small leaves of the pomegranate, which could *not* belong to the lotus. Therefore we are justified in concluding that not *all* such figures were meant by the ancients for lotus seed-pods; but that *some* were meant for pomegranates. In Egypt they may mean the former, in Syria and Assyria they may mean the latter. The Roman name of the pomegranate was *Malum Punicum*, which shows that they knew it in connection with Carthage. The modern botanical name shows the same origin—*Punica granatum*. And there is little doubt that the Phœnician settlers introduced it there from Syria. The common name 'pomegranate' is evidently a corruption of *Pomum granatum*, an apple or fruit, made up of grains.



*a* *b*

FIG. 59.—Pomegranates from Carthage tablets, British Museum.

It certainly would have been very senseless in the Syrians and Assyrians to go to Egypt to copy the lotus seed-pod, when they had a similar fruit, and

a much more useful and beautiful one, in their own country. Similarly it would have been very stupid in the Assyrians to go to Egypt to copy the lotus as their 'anthemion,' when they had it on their natural and sacred palms. The contact of the two nations sufficiently explains the intermingling of the two motives. Then when the Greek artistic genius came in contact with them both, there was no knowing to what further developments the motives derived from the two sources might be worked up into.

Miss Amelia Edwards evidently thought she was saying the last word on the matter of the origin of *volutes*. Not so. I have treated so fully of the sacred date tree and its horns, though perhaps to a wearisome extent, in order to show what influence horns must have had on the spiritual and artistic thoughts of the Assyrians. It is impossible to leave them out in the cold in speculating on the genesis of architectural and other decorations. I shall not say that horns, and 'horns only,' were the models from which all volutes were born, as Miss Edwards said of the lotus sepals; but rather that horns, *and* the date tree, *and* the lotus, *and* also other flowers and fruits, have formed the basis of a vast number of ornamentations. The virtue of horns must have been a reality in the every-day life of the Assyrians, and so they became mixed up in their religious beliefs. What is the spiritual belief of a nation

will, sooner or later, find expression in the representations of artists.

Although Miss Edwards thinks that Mr. Goodyear has 'conclusively demonstrated' that the 'anthemion' is a lotus motive, yet I think the ligature, where it occurs, betrays its real origin, as the head of a date tree with horns *tied* on it.

The spiral horns, ending in a volute, shown between two sphinxes in fig. 88, can by no manner of means be interpreted into a lotus! but they readily assimilate with a pair of *spiral horns*.

Then we have to take into consideration that a scroll does not *necessarily* mean either a lotus sepal or a horn; for here is an Egyptian head, fig. 60, with two elaborate scrolls, which evidently mean only *hair-curls!* So there may be volutes and volutes—volutes originating in lotus petals and others in horns, in curls, and may be other things.

FIG. 60.—Egyptian head, case of glass beads, amulets, etc., British Museum.

In conclusion I would mention that on p. 126, Mr. Goodyear (1891) says: "The relations of certain details of this pattern to Byzantine scrolls, Arab trefoils, and Mediæval 'fleur-de-lys,' will not escape attention" ('Saracenic Algerian Detail,' fig. 78, p. 127).

In the Babylonian and Oriental Record for February, 1889, vol. iii, No. 3, p. 57, I called attention to the relationship of the 'fleur-de-lys' with the 'luck-horns' of the Assyrian sacred trees; and under that heading in these papers, I have, I think, shown unmistakably the derivation of that heraldic emblem from the 'luck-horns' of Assyria.

# THE EVIL EYE.

"A few simple thoughts on a few simple subjects produce a few simple opinions common to a whole tribe, and taught with but little modification to successive generations; hence arises a rigidity that imposes ready-made opinions, which are seldom questioned, while such questioning as does occur is usually met with excessive severity, as Galileo and others (among them Thomas Paine) have found out."—'Individualism,' by W. Schooling, Westminster Review, November, 1892, p. 523.

## V.

## THE EVIL EYE.

In discussing the sacred trees, it was noticeable that they were decorated with horns.

What can this profusion of horns mean, and why has the artist utilized them as an additional motive in his conventional sacred tree?

In the 'Migration des Symboles' Count d'Alviella (p. 160) seems to find some difficulty in interpreting the horns on the sacred tree. He says: "Then comes the presence, often inexplicable, of a pair of volutes, between which the stem of the tree rises. These two scrolls sometimes figure as branches or petals, sometimes as rounded horns. Perhaps one might refer their origin to a conventional representation of bunches of dates, which decorate the date trees of the Chaldeans; or, perhaps, to the introduction of horns, which, among the Assyrians, were a distinctive sign of the Deity."

It would appear that his fig. *d*, pl. iv, (coupe perse-sassanide) sufficiently explains their origin. Two rams *with large horns* are used as supports to the sacred tree.

We should not forget what an extraordinary animal the ram is. In addition to his astonishing powers of procreation, he is a marvel of strength and endurance. Fighting rams are even in this day a great source of

sport in Persia and India. It is enough to have seen two fighting rams butting each other, and to have read of their feats, to realize what a wonderful animal the ram is.

Horns must certainly have had a great significance in those days. In my opinion the horns—and one cannot doubt they were meant for horns—shown on the sacred trees were not imaginary and irrelevant decorative features, put there simply to break the monotony of the straight stem of a date tree—a monotony which would appear to have been hateful to the artistic mind from the beginning of time.

I don't think that these horns were introduced by the Assyrian artists for decorative effect alone; no: they would seem to have been things which in those days must have been *frequently seen tied on real date trees.*

If so, what could have been the meaning of horns tied on date trees?

The date tree, as is well known, has female flowers on one tree, and male flowers on another, which in itself might have appeared to the Assyrians a fact sufficiently wonderful. In those days, the date palm must have been largely grown from seeds. We know from the records of Herodotus, that the Assyrians were acquainted with cross fertilization of the date trees (hybridization). They may not at all have fertilized the female flower of one tree with the pollen of another

tree with the object of obtaining *hybrids*; but with the object of making the female flower *set fruit*. Nevertheless the practical result was that of modern horticulturists, viz. that of producing hybrids and *variations*, through the raising of plants from the *crossed* seed.

Now, in the Persian Gulf, and in other places, the fine kinds of date trees—and there are hundreds of them—are propagated by offsets, which grow at the foot of the stems, and which will in due course reproduce the *same* kind of fruit as the parent. The offsets would be, in short, nothing but slips or cuttings of the tree. A great number of the date trees figured on the monuments show these offsets at the foot of the stem; so that even this seemingly unimportant bit of reality has not been overlooked. Whether the Assyrians in those days had learnt the value of these offsets or not is impossible to ascertain from the monuments. Anyhow, propagation by *seed* must have been known to them from the most remote times. It could not have been otherwise, as the date stones thrown about, near their dwellings, would have germinated in quantities. Birds, squirrels, monkeys, etc., feeding on the dates in the groves and forests would have largely helped to scatter the date seeds, and therefore multiplication by seed must have been observable everywhere.

Now it is well known that propagation by seed sometimes leads to the *creation*, so to speak, of *new* and *startling* varieties, with fruit larger, sweeter, and more pulpy than that of ordinary trees. Such a godsend, when it occurred, would have undoubtedly attracted the attention of the Assyrians.

It is enough to read all that has been said and written of this wonderful palm to realize in what estimation some varieties are now held, and how much more reverence they must have shown to the date tree in Chaldæan times, when the existence of the people must have largely depended on this one tree. When any new and finer variety came into being from seed, they would have naturally made a sort of divinity of it and tried to save it from destruction.

The number of varieties now in existence is astonishing. Numerous myths and superstitions have entwined themselves round the different varieties of dates. Some are scarce and so choice that they are not sold, but kept solely for presenting to great persons, as natives of India do with the choice varieties of mangos.

This is what R. F. Burton wrote on p. 272 of his 'Pilgrimage to El-Medina and Mecca':—"The date trees of El-Medina merit their celebrity. . . . . Books enumerate 139 varieties; but the best kind is *El-Shelebi*, which is high priced and only sent as presents. The *Ajwah* date is eaten, but not sold, because a tradition

of the Prophet declared that whoso breaketh his fast every day with six or seven of these fruits need fear neither poison nor magic. The *El-Hilwah* is exceedingly sweet: of this palm the Moslems relate that the prophet planted a stone, which in a few minutes grew up and bore fruit. *El-Birni* causeth sickness to depart, and there is no sickness in it. The *Wahshi* on one occasion bent its head, and 'salaamed' to Mahommed, as he ate its fruit, and so on of others."

The same may be said of other date trees in Persia, Egypt, Tunis, Algiers and Morocco. There can be no question about the immense importance of this tree now, and there can be no question whatever about the great importance of this tree in Chaldean times. The further we go into antiquity the more wonderful and supernatural this 'key of existence' would become.

In pl. 9 of Layard's 'Monuments of Niniveh,' 2nd series, men are carrying bunches of dates to the palace with other fruits, and no doubt in those days they had good, better, and best varieties suited for presents to kings and ministers.

How were these people to guard against the destruction of those new-comers—the date trees that produced the more valuable sort of fruit?

From very remote times it was believed that a glance from an 'evil eye' was enough to wither any tree, or bring destruction upon anything living, or non-living.

It was a superstition mixed up no doubt with magic, witchcraft, and devilry.[1]

It appears that horns of animals, even at the present day, are considered most efficacious in keeping off the injurious effects of the evil eye from anything to which they may be attached. We may, therefore, fairly assume that, in Assyrian days, horns were also used—tied to choice date trees, in order to attract the evil eye from the trees themselves, and so protect those fine varieties from injury.

Horns must have also been used—fixed on buildings and posts, for the purpose of warding off the evil eye. Fig. 61 shows deer horns fixed on a fortress. Bonomi,[2] however, in his 'Niniveh,' considers that these stags' horns on the top of the fortress were intended by the artist to represent flames, as soldiers in that sculpture are applying fire-brands to the base of the fortress.

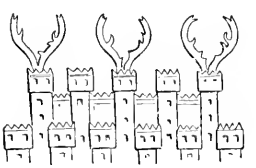


FIG. 61.—Burning of a besieged city. Fig. 80 of J. Bonomi's 'Niniveh' (Botta's pl. 68).

It is of course quite possible that the artist, in a fit of humour, may have used the shape of the stags' horns

[1] The following is an extract from the magical texts of the Chaldeans—'Hibbert Lect.' by Prof. Sayce, p. 330—"Him who is possessor of the likeness of another, the evil face, the evil eye, the evil mouth, the evil tongue, the evil lips, the evil breath—conjure, O! spirit of heaven! conjure, O! spirit of earth!"

[2] He says: The people are in utmost distress, for the flames, shaped like stag horns, are rising out of the towers of the citadel.

to represent flames, but it is strange that he should have done so when in other cases the same, or another

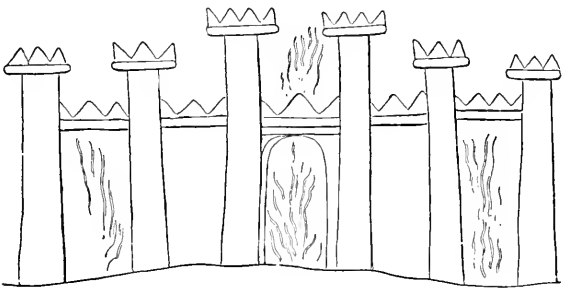


FIG. 62.—Fortress in flames. (Fig. 218, vol. 2. Perrot and Chipiez, 'Histoire de l'Art.')

artist, delineated flames in a more graphic way. Fig. 62 shows another fortress on fire, but the flames are delineated much as we would do them now. And again, fig. 63 shows forms of flames, which are more natural. Moreover, one of the latter in Layard's Monuments is colored red, so that there is no mistaking what it was meant for.

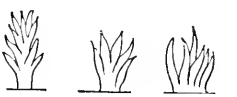


FIG. 63.—pl. 55. pl. 61 of Layard's 'Monuments.'

On the whole I am inclined to look upon the stags' horns on the fortress as *meant* for horns, which the people were in the habit of putting in all sorts of places as a kind of protection from evil eyes and evil spirits. Even supposing that Bonomi's interpretation be the right one, it would show that horns were things

always present in the minds of the people, and more especially in the minds of decorative artists; and this would tend to support my view regarding the prevalent use of horns in those days.

Even at the present day in Oriental countries, and even in Sicily and the South of Italy, ox horns are used, fixed on the walls of farm houses, avowedly for the purpose of warding off the evil eye.

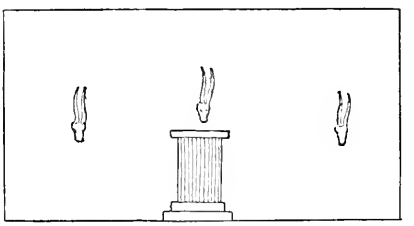


FIG. 64.—Three skulls and horns on Nestorian house, Tiyari, Kurdistan. Layard's 'Narrative of Expedition to Assyria,' p. 131.

Fig. 64 shows a house in Kurdistan with goat, or ibex, horns fixed on its front wall. One pair is fixed on the entrance door.

Indeed, the halls of the rich and others are often decorated in our times with trophies of the hunt. The horned skulls, no doubt, are now used only for purposes of triumph and decoration, but the custom may also be a survival of a superstition, by which the evil eye was supposed to be neutralized by the horns at the entrance of the house.

In Southern Italy people believe in the 'jettatura,' or evil eye, as thoroughly as they believe in the efficacy of holy water to scare away the devil. To ward off its evil effects in Naples and Sicily small

coral hands, with the fore and little fingers distended horn-fashion, are much worn as charms. Coral, shaped like a bull's horn, is used for similar purposes. These two forms of charms are shown in fig. 65.

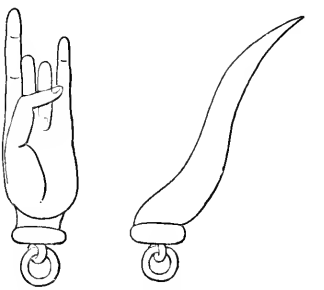


FIG. 65.—Forms of 'jettatura' charms seen in the coral shops of Naples and Sicily.

This notion of using horns to keep off the evil eye may have originated with the Assyrians, or even with more ancient people, and may have become disseminated along the Mediterranean, either through the Phœnician traders, or later through the Saracens.

It may be interesting to note that perhaps in Italy the *red* coral may be used for such charms, in connection with the *red* hand stamped on walls in Arab countries, and probably intended for some similar purpose, that is, for warding off the evil eye. Count d'Alviella, on p. 35, says: "We have the hand symbol, figuring on the houses of Arabs from Palestine to Morocco, for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants against evil spirits."

And so, the red coral hand with the fingers distended horn-fashion, so often seen in the coral shops of Naples and other places, may not impossibly be a combination of Assyrian and Saracenic archaic customs.

We meet with the open hand as an emblem of something on the Assyrian cylinders and other symbols, which may be meant for modifications of the open hand, or the hand may possibly have been used as a modification of some of them.

This fixing of horns on trees, and other places, must have been a very common practice in Assyrian times. We find artists in those days introducing them as decorative motives in various ways, both as horns and as modifications of horns. We not only see this motive symmetrically used on the stem of their sacred trees, but we meet with it as a decorative termination of the poles of the royal tents, as shown in figs. 66 and 67.

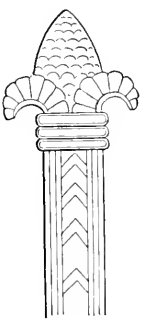


FIG. 66.—Top of Royal Pavilion pole, pl. 30, Layard's 'Monuments,' 1st series.

FIG. 67.—Pole of Tabernacle from the Balawat Gates, Brit. Museum, Perrot and Chipiez, 'History of Art in Chaldea and Assyria.'

An object constantly 'en evidence,' as I assume it to

have been, was sure, sooner or later, to have been taken up by artists, and modified in various ways into decorations for walls of temples, palaces, etc. And so, in truth, we see these horns, at first probably used solely from superstitious reasons, passing afterwards into motives for various decorative purposes, the artists themselves, in many instances, being perhaps ignorant of the origin of the design.

In Layard's 'Monuments of Niniveh,' 2nd series, pl. 55, is shown a design from a painted brick, which I have reproduced in fig. 68.

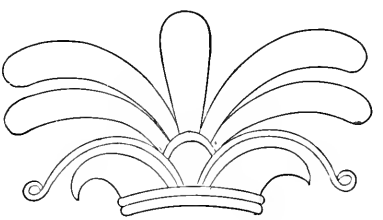


FIG. 68.—Ornament on painted brick, Layard's 'Monuments,' 2nd series, pl. 55.[1]

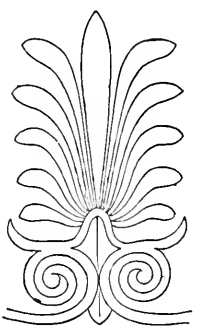


FIG. 69.—Ornament on Frieze *Erechtheion*, Brit. Museum.

This same motive, slightly altered, was taken up by the Greeks for their friezes, etc. In the British Museum there is a portion of the frieze of the *Erechtheion*, fig. 69. Its ornamentation is no other than the motive given by Layard on the painted brick alluded to,

[1] Mr. Goodyear, in his 'Grammar of the Lotus,' denies that this has anything to do with the date tree; but of this more further on.

viz. the leaf-head of a date tree, and two pairs of horns supporting it It is a motive which was frequently used by Assyrian artists of all sorts. What is called the honeysuckle pattern, or 'anthemion,' is nothing but the date tree head, as will be seen further on, supported by horns. If search were made we should probably be able to trace the descendants of these date leaves and horns in many a decorative pattern used at the present day in architecture, wall decorations, tapestry, furniture, etc.

This so-called honeysuckle pattern is not, I think, the only outcome of the superstition of tying horns on trees, for I believe the *fleur-de-lys*, so much used in heraldry as a royal emblem, and on many coats of arms, seems nothing but a modified imitation of the *real* horns tied on trees or posts, and originally used by Assyrians for warding off the mischief supposed to ensue from the stroke of an evil eye.[1]

I shall now endeavour to develop this other idea further, but before doing so we have to ascertain what has been stated by archæologists to have been the genesis of the device used in heraldry and known as the 'fleur-de-lys' (*de lis*, or *de luce*). An outline of it is given in figs. 70 and 71. A modification of the same thing is given in fig. 72.

[1] Littré says: "Mauvais œil, faculté funeste attribuée à certains individus, de porter malheur à ceux qu'ils regardent."

In Notes and Queries, 2nd series, vol. i,[1] there is a

FIG. 70.—Boutell's 'Heraldry.' No. 231, p. 149.

FIG. 71.—Cussans' 'Handbook of Heraldry.' Fig. 206, p. 104.

FIG. 72.—Seton's 'Heraldry in Scotland.' Fig. 1, pl. v.

Note that the first has *one* ligature, and the second *three*.

long discussion about this device. Sometimes it was confounded with a trefoil, and indeed a trefoil under the pencil of a decorative artist might be made to assume the shape of some varieties of 'fleur-de-lys.' According to the writer in 'Notes and Queries,' this device has been traced to Constantinople, to Pompei, to the head-dress of Egyptian sphinxes. And indeed here is a sphinx with the emblem on its head-dress (fig. 73).

FIG. 73.—Head of Sphinx from 'oum el Aouamid' Syria. pl. 31, fig. 3 (Grammar of the Lotus).

[1] Pp. 225, 245, 309, 328, 348, 368, 387, 408.

And here is another sphinx (fig. 74), with an unmistakable 'fleur-de-lys' *with three ligatures* in front of it. There can be no doubt about the antiquity of this emblem.

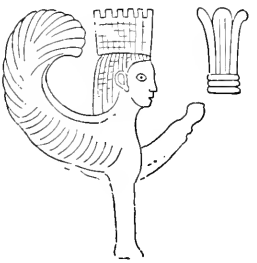


FIG. 73.—Fragment of bas-relief found in the house of Bakukhim-Tanis. From Miss Amelia Edwards 'Pharaohs,' etc. p. 59.

The writer in 'N. and Q.' then discusses the origin of the 'fleur-de-lys'[1] as an emblem of royalty in France, and shows that, subsequently, it was used on the shields of different English families.

I find the story of the 'fleur-de-lys' epitomized in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' 9th edition. It is there stated, concerning the origin of this emblem, that the most diverse theories have been broached. "According to an old tradition, it was first employed as an armorial bearing by Clovis I (5th Century), and represents the lily presented by an angel to that monarch at his baptism. Newton (Display, p. 145) considers it to be the figure of a reed or flag in blossom, used instead of a sceptre at the proclamation of the Frankish Kings."

In the opinion of Chifflet, the device was first adopted by Louis VII of France, in allusion to his name Louis Florus. Some again have held that it is the extremity

[1] 'Notes and Queries,' 2nd series, vol. 1, p. 226.

of a javelin. But an objection fatal to all these theories, assigning it a purely French origin, is the fact that it is found as an ornament of the sceptres, seals, and robes, not only of the Merovingian, but of Greek, Roman, German, Spanish and English Kings, and was a symbol employed by many noble families in various parts of Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries.[1]

Boutell, in his 'Heraldry,' p. 149, further states that "Mr. Planché supposes the origin of the 'fleur-de-lys,' or 'fleur-de-luce,' to have been a *rebus*, signifying 'Flower of Louis,'" and adds that "'Clovis' is the Frankish form of the modern Louis." He states that this emblem appears in early heraldry under the several modifications of its typical form.

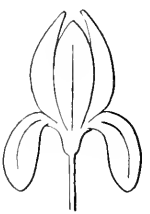


FIG. 75.—Outline of an Iris flower.

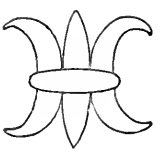


FIG. 76.—'Fleur-de-lys' copied from a brass shield in one of the shops in Bond-street.

Then on the shields of the city of Florence the same emblem is conspicuous. There they call it 'Il giglio Fiorentino,' in allusion to the Florentine Iris, which is indigenous on the hills around Florence.

Indeed the outline of the Iris flower in certain positions,

[1] These were the times of the Crusades.

as shown in fig. 75, is not unlike the heraldic device ; but unfortunately the flower of heraldry has inherited the *ligature*, by which the 'luck-horns' were kept on the trees in Assyria, an inheritance fatal to the notion of its descent from either an iris or a lily.

Compare this 'fleur-de-lys' (fig. 76) with the 'luck-horns' tied to the stems of the sacred trees and those on the tabernacle pole (fig. 67).

Now it is not improbable that the Crusades may have had something to do with the extended use of this device, as a heraldic emblem in France.

It seems reasonable to me that the 'fleur-de-lys,' as we see it in heraldry, had its birth-place in Assyria, and that there it was merely a modified form of the horns tied on date trees, on posts, and in other places, to keep off the evil eye.

This emblem may have come extensively into use in Europe by being re-imported from Syria, with the return of the Crusaders, for it was about this time that the 'fleur-de-lys' was used as a royal emblem in France.

Indeed, in the 'Plants of History'[1] this legend occurs : "the whole history of the 'fleur-de-lys' is apparently summed up in the tradition that when Louis VII, king of France, was setting out on his crusade to the Holy Land he chose the purple Iris as his heraldic emblem."

[1] Cooke's 'Freaks of Plant Life,' p. 457.

If Louis VII were the first to use it as a royal emblem, it is more likely that he did so *after* his return from the Holy Land; for it is hardly conceivable that his artist, in copying the Iris, should have exactly copied the horn emblem of Assyria, *ligature and all!*

Then Mr. Conway[1] writes: "It was probably through the sanctity with which the words of Christ invested the lily that the 'fleur-de-lys' became the emblem of France; one legend being that, after one of the battles of the Crusaders, their white banner was found covered with it."

I think these legends somehow point to the Crusades as the beginning of this emblem in French heraldry. In Syria the French Crusaders may have become cognizant of the 'fleur-de-lys' as a mystic emblem,[1] the origin of which may have been forgotten or unknown to the people of the Holy Land, and not improbably some of the Crusaders may have adopted it *tale quale*, painted on their shields, as a lucky device.

Prof. Minasse Tchéraz, an Armenian and a member of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists, informed me that in Armenia they have a large number of ancient manuscripts, in which the 'fleur-de-lys' frequently occurs as an illumination to the initial letters. Some of these MSS. are much older than the Crusade periods.

The 'fleur-de-lys,' either in the form used in heraldry,

[1] 'Mystic Tree and Flowers,' by M. D. Conway, Fraser's Magazine for December, 1870, p. 716.

[1] *Vide* Syrian Sphinx, fig. 73.

or in a modified form, is traceable not only on sacred trees of various kinds, and on cylinders, but on the helmets of Sargon and the winged genius, as shown in fig. 76*a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*.

It is no wonder that some of the Egyptian sphinxes may have had it on their head-dress, considering that, as we now well know, the Assyrians and Egyptians had intimate relations with each other from a very remote period, and must have borrowed each other's ideas.[1]

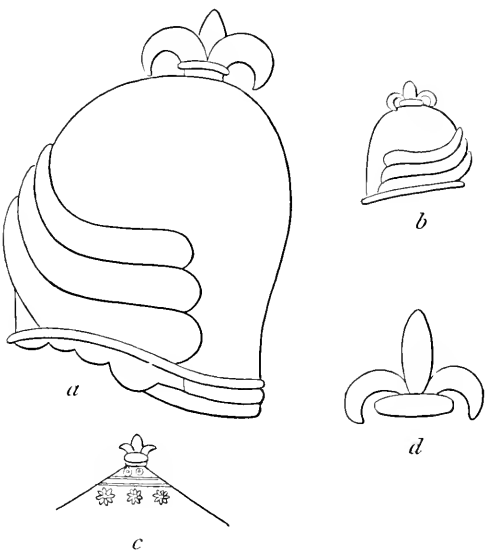



FIG. 76.—(*a*) Helmet of king or genius, Botta's 'Monuments de Ninive,' pl. 28; (*b*) Helmet of winged genius from the Louvre, Perrot and Chipiez; (*c*) Top of royal umbrella, Perrot and Chipiez, vol. 2, p. 138; (*d*) 'Luck-horns' at the foot of sacred fir tree, in the front of which Sargon stands holding three pomegranates in one hand.

Although this device may have been freshly imported

[1] The winged sphinx itself may have been of Assyrian invention.

into Europe by the Crusaders, and first used *in France* as a royal emblem by Louis VII, it may also have, to some extent, and long before that time, found its way to the south of Europe, before the Crusades, through the Phœnicians, who traded all over the Mediterranean. We may feel sure that an emblem or charm of luck, if known to them, would have been carried with them on all their voyages.

Prof. Minasse Tchéraz, in 'l'Armenie,' of 15th October, 1892, states that "it is not improbable that the lily or iris may have given Crusaders the idea of the 'fleur-de-lys.' . . . . The lily and iris are very abundant in Armenian valleys."

It is quite true that the lily and the iris are common in Armenia; but it does not at all follow that the 'fleur-de-lys' was copied from them. Both the lily and the iris, when they open, curve down their petals, and (roughly speaking) offer some resemblance to the 'fleur-de-lys.' But its connection with these flowers may have been quite an *after thought*, owing to the *real* origin of the 'fleur-de-lys' having been forgotten. We know the Armenians had this symbol on their MSS. and as a matter of fact the Assyrians had it either 'tale quale,' or modified, on their monuments and cylinders.[1]

[1] According to Nicholson's 'Encyclopædia of Horticulture,' a considerable number of Irises are indigenous to W. Asia:—*Iris pumila*, *Sambucina*, and *Persica* belong to Asia Minor; *Iris Histrio* to Palestine; and *Iris aphylla*, *cretensis*, *flavescens*, *Pseudo-Acorus*, and others, to Western Asia.

If, as is likely, in the midst of the turmoils of wars, the real origin of the 'fleur-de-lys' symbols had been forgotten, it is no wonder that its pseudo-origin was suggested by indigenous irises.[1]

What would have been more natural than that somebody, with a poetic turn, seeing this symbol, and not knowing its origin, should assimilate it with one or other of the irises, which were frequently in flower there, just as the Florentines have assimilated *their* 'fleur-de-lys' with the *Iris florentina*, that grows wild on *their* hills.

The pseudo-origin of this symbol will probably stick to it for a long time to come, for it is a pretty notion, while its real origin is rather repulsive. No priest or habit-maker of the Roman church is likely to own that this decoration and the coral horned-hand of the Naples shops have had a *common ancestor*.[2]

Nevertheless, there can be no question that, as the 'fleur-de-lys' has inherited the ligature, and as it is found 'tale quale' on a number of Assyrian monuments and cylinders, it is neither a lily nor an iris, but *two pairs of horns tied to a stick*. The steps of degradation from the tree and horns to the 'fleur-de-lys' emblem can be clearly followed on the Assyrian cylinders themselves.

It is evident to me that Assyrian artists had worked

[1] See fig. 93 for various forms of 'fleur-de-lys.'

[2] More especially as horns, in the Christian church, are associated with the devil.

up the evil-eye horns, seen by them so often, into decorative motives, altering their form, but keeping the elements almost intact. The upper part of a 'fleur-de-lys' at the foot of the conventional sacred fir tree of fig. 25, and that used on the summit of the stem of another conventional pomegranate tree, shown in fig. 24, can be no other than modified forms of the same horns used on the conventional date tree of fig. 16.

It is, therefore, much more probable that the Crusaders, having come into contact in Syria with this luck-emblem, brought it back to Europe, where it then became a prevalent heraldic emblem.

Before that time, modifications of the *trefoil* may have possibly been mistaken by archæologists for the 'fleur-de-lys.' Anyhow, neither the lily nor the iris have any need of a ligature, made of from one to three turns of a string, to keep their petals together; but horns on a post or on a tree certainly would require some sort of ligature to keep them there. Undoubtedly the ornaments on the stem of the sacred date tree (fig. 16) cannot be mistaken for anything else but the horns of an ibex or a ram, especially when we compare them with those of figs. 18 and 19.

Eventually I think that in Assyria itself these *luck-horns* became modified into emblems, not only of royalty, but also of some divinity, and may have got mixed up with spiritual, religious, and super-

stitious notions. In those days the difficulty was to separate the natural from the supernatural. We see the king's helmet often decorated with three tiers of bulls' horns; we see the same feature on the helmet of the winged genius.

We find this 'fleur-de-lys' emblem used as a finish on the top of the same helmets, and on the top of the royal umbrella. At the foot of the sacred fir tree (fig. 25) there is the same emblem. This time it is indistinguishable from the upper half of the 'fleur-de-lys' of heraldry, with only one turn of the tie-rope, as is often seen in the heraldic emblem. We see this same 'fleur-de-lys' motive, modified in various ways, introduced by Assyrian artists in sculpture, carpentry, furniture, etc.

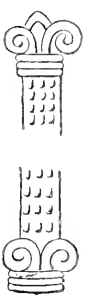


FIG. 77.—Top and bottom of a column, made to imitate a date tree stem, from a tablet from Sippara. Perrot and Chipiez, fig. 17.

Fig. 77 shows the top and bottom part of a column, in imitation of the stem of a date tree, with its capital and base decorated with a modified 'fleur-de-lys.' Indeed, in all probability, these horn emblems may have given origin to the volutes of the Corinthian and Ionic columns.[1] In this Assyrian column the horns have three turns of the string by which they were tied on.

[1] Mr. Goodyear, in his 'Grammar of the Lotus,' does not think so. *See* discussion under *Lotus*.

In the pole of the royal tent, called by some a tabernacle, shown in fig. 67, two pairs of horns are seen as tied to the end of the pole, and two other pairs tied to the middle. I might here note that if the top of this pole were cut off just below the lower horns, as shown in fig 78, it would give us the 'fleur-de-lys,' as used in heraldry, pure and simple.

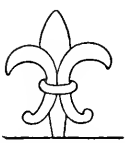


FIG 78.—Top of tabernacle pole shewn in fig. 67.

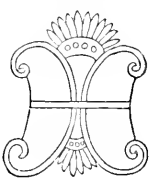


FIG. 80.—Ornament from terra-cotta sarcophagus, from Cœre (Cervetri), British Museum, Encyclopædia Britannica, 'Etruria.'

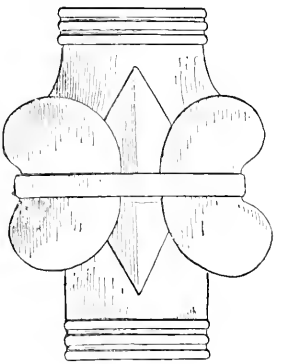


FIG. 79.—Fragment of bronze furniture, from Layard, Perrot and Chipiez, fig. 198, vol. ii.

Then in fig. 79 is shown a much more modified version of the 'fleur-de-lys.' Its lateral limbs are of the shape of kidney-beans. Curiously enough, in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' under the word Etruria, is given a similar ornament on a terra-cotta sarcophagus, which is in the British Museum, and which I have given in fig. 80. It appears to be a modification of the two pairs of horns, tied to a post, and the leafy

ornament above and below we may well look upon as our old friend the plumose head of the date tree.

The top of the Assyrian sacred date tree, with its supporting horns, was probably taken up by the Greeks and modified into ornaments for friezes, as already shown in fig. 69.

There are numerous architectural and decorative designs which, I think, are traceable to the Assyrian date tree and its horns, but it would take much time to explore this subject. The Prince of Wales' feathers are perhaps also a descendant of the same motive. There are in it the three elements held together by means of a crown, which may be a modification of the ligature.

This notion would receive support from the accompanying emblem held in the hand of a figure on an ancient cylinder (fig. 81). The probability is that this emblem consists of three date leaves, supported by two horns.

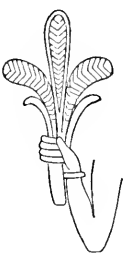


FIG. 81.—Emblem held in the hand of a female figure; pl. 19, fig. 2, 'Recherches, sur le culte de Venus,' by M. Felix Lajard.

In India I have frequently seen the walls of ball-rooms decorated with the Prince of Wales' feathers, made up of three real date leaves, which make a good imitation of feathers.

The curious part of it is that the crown, which binds

the Prince of Wales' feathers, is decorated on its upper rim with 'fleur-de-lys,' or horn-emblems,[1] so that when the king puts on a crown thus decorated, he only becomes a civilized imitation of the notable figure we meet with on many of the Assyrian cylinders, shown in fig. 82!

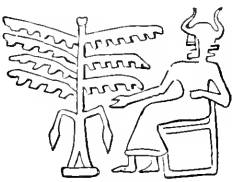


FIG. 82. — Horned figure pointing to a date tree; from pl. 16, fig. 4. Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'

In this case the figure is *pointing* to a date tree. In fig. 81 the *emblem* of a date tree is held in the hand. From this, in all probability, as I hope to indicate, royal *sceptres* may have originated.

The evolution of the so-called honeysuckle ornament, and of the 'fleur-de-lys' and their various modifications, both in Assyrian and Greek art and also in modern art, is, in my opinion, clearly traceable to the custom of tying horns on date trees and posts in ancient times from some superstitious motive. How this notion may have originated in Assyria I have tried to conjecture in another place. Whatever the origin may be, there can be little doubt that in the South of Europe, in Syria, and other places, horns are *now still used as charms against the dreaded evil-eye.*

This is what Mr. Lane[2] says of the 'evil-eye' in modern

[1] The other decoration on the crown is *three-fourths* of a St. John's cross, which may be only a modification of the 'ankh' or 'key' of life.

[2] 'Manners and customs of modern Egyptians.'

Egypt. Under the heading of 'charms' he gives a number of remedies against the evil eye. The Egyptians have a perfect horror of it, and you must say Máshalláh[1] at the same time that you admire anything, so that God may protect the thing against your dreaded eye.

The profession of charmer is a regular occupation in Egypt. He is employed by the people to protect them from harm. He has several specifics against the evil eye, and goes through 'hocus pocus' incantations while he repeats the following formula: "I charm thee from the eye of girl, sharper than a spike; and from the eye of woman, sharper than a pruning knife; and from the eye of boy, more painful than a whip; and from the eye of man, sharper than a chopping knife," and so on.

The Reverend W. Hutchinson, a member of the International Congress of Orientalists, suggested to me that the horse-shoe, used everywhere in Britain as a luck emblem, may also have had its origin from the horns of the sacred tree.

And indeed the horse-shoe may have been first used as an emblem of luck, not because it was a *horse-shoe*, but because it resembled a *pair of horns* (fig. 83*a*). And if we tie two horse-shoes back to back to a post we reproduce the original 'fleur-de-lys' (fig. 83*b*).

To sum up, the 'fleur-de-lys,' as we see it in heraldry,

[1] Much in the way that some Christians have of making the sign of the Cross with their thumb, opposite their gaping mouth, when they yawn, so as to keep the devil from entering!

is composed of a central limb, which may mean a degraded tree or the finished top of a pole, such as our carpenters frequently turn at the end of an upright post; and two lateral limbs, tied on to the middle one by either one, two, or three turns of a string. The lateral limbs, I see every reason to believe, are the 'luck-horns' of Assyria.

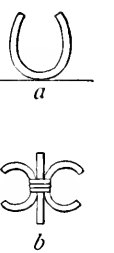



FIG. 83.—Horns and 'fleur-de-lys,' imitated by horse-shoes.

Whatever may have been the channel of introduction of this emblem into Europe, we only require to put the oriental charm side by side with that of French royalty to be satisfied of their identity, although this emblem, both in Assyria and elsewhere, had undergone various modifications.

Count d'Alviella[1] says: "Nothing is so contagious as a symbol, unless it be a superstition, and when both are combined we get the fancies of ancient people, who never adopted a symbol without attaching to it some talismanic virtues. . . . . Even in these days tourists returning from Naples wear coral horns, either on bracelets or attached to watch chains. Do they think to find therein a preservative against the evil eye in this Italian survival of an old Chaldean symbol?"

[1] 'Migration of Symboles,' p. 25.

Scarabs, in ancient Egyptian times, were probably kept for similar purposes, and according to d'Alviella they have been found by thousands from Mesopotamia to Sardinia. Not improbably the Phœnicians may have traded in these luck-charms, as also in other talismans. The author says that trade, slavery, and other minglings of peoples and money, were the chief means by which symbols were transmitted and disseminated.

If we do as geologists do, viz. endeavour to read the past by what is going on before our eyes *now*, we shall find that horns were then, as now, used as antidotes against the evil eye ; that is, they brought 'luck' wherever they were placed. We are, therefore, justified in assuming that the modern superstition is only a survival of the ancient 'luck' emblem. Luck in those days, as now, was another word for Providential help ; and Providence may have been connected with some special god, and so horns became his or her emblem.

Of all oriental superstitions, the evil eye superstition would appear to be the most oriental. It is one of those superstitions that will 'die hard'! for there are still those whose interest it is to keep people ignorant of the discoveries of scientific investigators, and as long as there is ignorance somewhere, this and other similar superstitions will find a soil to grow in, and be propagated.

THE TRIDENT.

"Neither one life-time, nor two, nor half a dozen, will suffice to clear away the astounding tangle of inherited mythology; of carefully maintained ignorance, that hugs itself under the names of reverence; of discreditable prejudice; not less than creditable affection for old ideals, and of rational alarm lest the wheat should be torn up by the roots, along with the tares."—'Apologetic Irenicon' by Prof. Huxley, 'Fortnightly Review,' Nov. 1892.

## VI

## THE TRIDENT.

Count d'Alviella, in discussing the origin of the 'thunderbolt,' or double trident, held in the hand of Jupiter, and many other ancient figures, says: "Nearly all people have represented the thunderbolt by a weapon. Among the Chaldeans it was figured by a trident, without counting the fork and the hatchet. The trident, with zigzag prongs, like lightning, is frequently seen in the hands of Assyro-Chaldean gods" "On a cylinder of the oldest period of Chaldean art, the handle of a trident held by the god of the tempest allows a stream of water to escape, which falls into the mouth of a deer" (fig. 38, p. 124).

With all due deference to Count d'Alviella's authority, I would ask—is this story about the tempest-god true? This thunderbolt theory is so pretty and poetical that I feel a sort of apology is due for venturing to upset it. The great God of the heavens firing off thunderbolts is captivating. When artists put a double thunderbolt in the grasp of an eagle's talons, what was more natural than to picture this bird soaring among the clouds, and bringing down thunderbolts from the god of the tempest. Nevertheless that very 'fourche,' which Count d'Alviella passes over lightly, seems to me to indicate the real

meaning of this wavy trident. I believe the thunderbolt story to be an entirely mistaken interpretation of the zigzag trident.

Fig. 84 shows us clearly what the zigzag fork is meant for. Who, that has seen the head and horns of a black buck, would ever take *b* for a pair of thunderbolts. It was the Assyrian artist's way of delineating a pair of *spiral horns!*

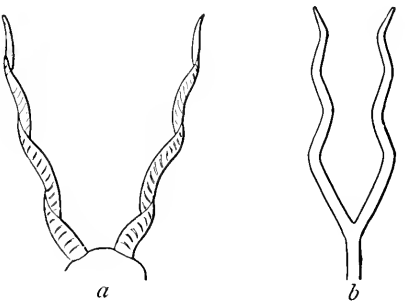



FIG. 84.—(*a*) horns of the black buck; (*b*) 'Fourche' or bident between two figures, pl. 40, fig. 9, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'

In those days they *thought* in horns, and dreamt of little but horns; ram's horns, goat's horns, antelope horns, bull's horns, etc. were the great panacea, as in many places now, for keeping off the withering effects of the evil eye. May be each variety of horns had some specific virtue of its own, besides the generic one of protection against the evil eye and bad spirits.

Even Prince Gautama, the great philosopher of the Buddhists, was not above wearing charms, or at all events the sculptor of his statue must have *thought so*; for *Asoka*, three centuries B.C., ordered a statue of Buddha to be erected at the Sanchi Tope, Bhopal, of which the torso now remains in the Indian Museum of

South Kensington. On the sash, which goes across the chest of this statue, there are the head and horns of an antelope (fig. 85). Whether Buddha was in the habit of wearing the horn-charm, or whether it was the fancy of the sculptor, I do not know. To put such a badge

FIG. 85.—From torso of Buddha, 3 cen. B.C. Indian Museum, South Kensington. Badge on sash across chest.

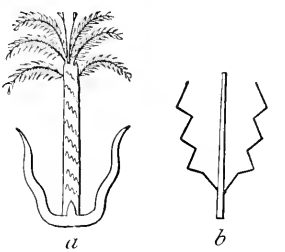


FIG. 86.—Genesis of the trident. (*a*) The tree and horns; (*b*) its degraded symbol.

on such a saint, however, would seem to mean that in those days horns must have been considered of the highest importance for human welfare.

The 'fourche' or bident, whether plain or zigzag, is *the* important symbol, meaning *a pair of horns*. The middle prong of the trident is a stick—a degraded tree. In fig. 86 I have endeavoured to indicate what I think was the genesis of the trident. The middle prong should not be wavy, but straight, as in fig. 86*b*. Its waviness, when it occurs, is only an artistic *assimilation*, and the *doubleness* of the trident, to make a thunder-

bolt of it, is only for the sake of symmetry. The fancy of the *artist*, and the *traditions* of art, should, I think, never be lost sight of in interpreting these hieroglyphics.

With these data, the interpretation given of that god of the tempest, with his thunderbolt and stream of water, becomes interesting.

I herewith give a variety of these supposed 'tempest gods,' taken from Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra' cylinders.

*a* *b*

FIG. 87.—(*a*) pl. 28, fig. 5; (*b*) pl. 30, fig. 1, 'Culte de Mithra.'

*c* *d*

(*c*) pl. 37, fig. 1; (*d*) pl. 37, fig. 3, 'Culte de Mithra.'

I think there is more than one way of interpreting these figures; but let us first clear a little misconception. The animal to which Count d'Alviella refers[1] is not a 'daim'—a deer—but a bull. Its tail and its horns, I think, make this plain. Without reference to their mythological origin, let us examine two ways of interpreting these compositions.

(*a*) A human figure—a god—holding a bident, trident, or quadrident, from which issues a *leash* leading to the mouth of an animal.

(*b*) The same figure holding the same symbols, from which issues a stream of water, running to the mouth of the animal. If a leash, it may mean the *subjection* of these animals, by the all-powerful horns. But you might say, in the case of the bull, why does the string go to the mouth, and not to a collar? Possibly because, in those days, as now, they pierced the nose of their cattle, to put in a string; and the nose and mouth in such a small figure would be *one*. This would, perhaps, mean the *taming* of the wild bull.

Let us, however, discard, *in toto*, the idea of its having been intended for a *leash*, emblematical of the subjection of these animals, and consider it a *stream of water*.

Water issuing from the hand of a god, holding a

[1] 'Migration of Symbols,' fig. 38, p. 124.

trident, or other similar symbol, would again admit of two interpretations:

(*a*) Ordinary water; (*b*) holy water.

If we consider it as ordinary water, going into the mouth of a bull, as representative of their cattle, it might mean *luck* in finding water for their flocks, to *protect* them from death by thirst.

When a drought occurs in India, as elsewhere, all the pools and tanks which had been filled by rain get dried up, and cattle have to wander long distances to find water. In such cases it must have been a matter of life and death to those people, who lived largely on the produce of their flocks. There can be no possible doubt that those ancient people put immense faith in the magical virtues of horns, as protectors against those evil spirits by which they fancied themselves ever surrounded. Their cylinders show struggles with devils and wild animals.

To find water by the good luck of horns would, then, mean salvation for their flocks and for themselves. Had they not, however, two large rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris? Yes, and so have the Indians the Ganges, the Jumna, the Brahmapootra, and five rivers in the Punjab, nevertheless a drought there means destruction to crops, cattle, and to population.

But suppose it is meant for holy water—what then? Then the holy-water theory would seem to fit all cases.

Common water going to the representative of their flocks would seem sensible enough, but what sense is there in *common* water being sent to the mouth of a winged monster (fig. 87*c*)? Holy water, indeed, might mean a great deal. It might mean the subjection of these monsters by the power of horns and holy water —the breaking of the power of those evil spirits, incarnated in the shape of monsters. But the bull is not an evil spirit. No, but the wild bull which they had in those days might have been a real devil and as formidable[1] and as troublesome as a lion, or an eagle, and horns and holy water may have been the charms by which they thought they drove away, or tamed, wild bulls, wild animals, evil spirits, and the rest of them. The fact of their being placed under the feet of the human figure would also indicate *conquest.*

My contention, therefore, would be—if it be a case of water, and not of a leash—that it is not a god of the tempest we are dealing with, armed with thunderbolts, but *a* god, if you like, armed with horns, spouting out holy water and subduing devils. We can no doubt go on spinning suppositions for a good bit out of our inner consciousness.

All these visions and pretty interpretations seem, however, to be dissipated by studying the gods of Babylonia in Prof. Sayce's 'Hibbert Lectures.'

[1] See introduction, note to page xiii.

On p. 221, he gives the poetic story of Istar and Tammuz. Istar descended into Hades, in search of the healing waters, which should restore to life her bridegroom Tammuz, the young and beautiful sun god, slain by the cruel hand of night and winter. At p. 255, he tells us that the sex of Istar was doubtful. She was a goddess who, now and again, was made to masquerade as a god. It would, therefore, seem that the four deities of fig. 87, whether male or female, with bulls or monsters under their feet, are mere incarnations (what we now call illustrations) of the Babylonian astronomical story of the deity Istar.[1]

As we have numerous and very varied representations of the Madonna, so each Assyrian engraver gave his own version of this he- or she-deity. But the question now comes, does the 'healing water' come from Istar's hand to the monster, or from the monster's mouth to his or her hand? As this deity went to Hades to get the healing water, it may be supposed that the water is pouring from the monster's mouth *towards* the deity. However, I would rather leave this question to be answered by some one else. I have tried to master the tangle of astronomical Babylonian myths given in Prof. Sayce's 'Hibbert Lectures,' but I cannot say I have succeeded yet; more especially as the tangle grows more

[1] Then there is the story of the combat of Bel Merodac with the dragon Tiamut to rescue the goddess Istar from this monster; so that these cylinder deities may be a hybridism of more than *one* story.

entangled by the migration of these deities to other countries, and their absorption into the mythology of other peoples. Like the tree of life, they not only changed their names, but their characters, and the stories connected with them, were transformed into something else. It requires a special study of comparative mythologies to discover a way out of this jungle of gods, goddesses, and devils.

My object in reproducing the four deities of fig. 87 was to show how persistent the horn emblem has been, and the transformations it has undergone: (*a*) shows a pair of horns in each hand—a bident in the form of 'Caduceus;' (*b*) shows a quadrident weapon held in the hand, or two pairs of horns; (*c*) shows a trident in one hand and a bident in another — both being horns; (*d*) shows a trident in the form of a 'fleur-de-lys.'

FIG. 88.—Sphinx of Greek art, from fragment of Daphnœn pottery. Miss Amelia Edwards' 'Pharaohs,' etc., p. 192.

All these, and many others, including the horned hands of Italy, the crescent, the horse-shoe, etc., are affiliated to their great ancestors the *luck-horns* of Assyria.

Not only Jupiter's double thunderbolt is a horn emblem, but also the trident of Neptune. It is, I think, easy to show how the bident or trident (that

is, in one case, a pair of spiral horns, and the other the same, with a stick between them, representing the degraded tree) passed into the Caduceus of Mercury. As I said, fig. 87*a* shows a god with a pair of spiral horns in each hand, a veritable *Caduceus*. Then fig. 88 shows a pair of spiral horns fantastically disposed and occupying the position often given to the sacred tree.

Finally, fig. 89 shows the transition from a pair of spiral horns, as the Assyrian engravers delineated them, to the Caduceus of Mercury, with two serpents. When the origin of the horn-symbol had been forgotten, it was a pretty fancy of the later artists to introduce two serpents fighting, and separated by a magic wand!

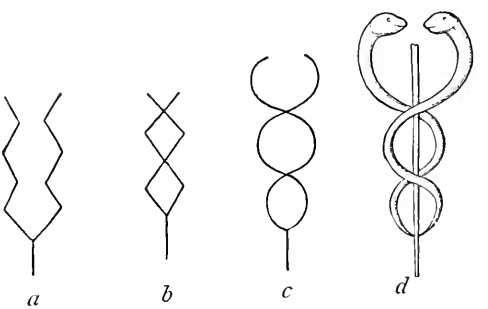



FIG. 89.—(*a*) A pair of Assyrian spiral horns; (*b*) the same imitating a *caduceus*; (*c*) transition form between horns and *caduceus*; (*d*) final caduceus of Mercury—only a *trident* in disguise!

In the imagination of the Hindoo artist probably the 'anthemion' became a five-headed cobra, such as is seen in the Sanchi tope of the Indian Museum.

A visit to that Museum will show to what extent

symbols of all sorts have been transformed into decorative ornaments. The trident itself is transformed into an extravagant *trisula*—a sort of trident 'gone mad' (fig. 90).

Naturally, when the sea-god was adopted as a patron by sea-faring people they put barbs to the prongs of the trident, and so it became assimilated to the *gaff* of fishermen. So that our 'Britannia' is ever watching over us, and protecting us from the evil eye and other troubles, by means of that mysterious horn-emblem!

I feel a suspicion that the pretty myth of the thunderbolt will have to be abandoned, and be replaced by the vulgar story of *horn-protection*.

One of the most interesting sculptures in the British Museum is No. 28 and 29 (Nimrood Gallery).[1] It is a spirited chase of a devil by a genius holding a double trident in the right hand. Both figures are winged, which is enough to show that the whole thing is meant for an invisible, or spiritual, battle. But the expression on the face of the genius, and the spirited way in which he is trotting after the devil, shows that he is enjoying the hunt, and that he is performing this policeman's function with great 'gusto.' The expression and attitude of the devil, on the other hand, are sufficiently indicative of his disgust at being meddled with.

Well, these tridents have their side prongs wavy, and

[1] Taken from the entrance of a small temple (Nimrood).

the middle prong *straight*, and, in my humble opinion, there cannot be much doubt of their descent from the tree and horns.

This spirited chase of a devil quite reminds one of something similar in the pictures of mediæval times, viz. a saint chasing a devil and holding a cross in his hand.

Mr. William Simpson has pointed out the resemblance of the 'trisulah' of the Hindoos to the thunderbolt on the coins of Élide of the 5th century B.C., with reference to which Count d'Alviella says (p. 322): "Il n'y aurait en somme, rien de surprenant dans ces similitudes, puisque le foudre et le triçula sont tous deux, comme nous venons de le voir, un development du trident;" and perhaps he might have added, that the trident is a degradation of the *tree and horns*.

The fantastic fig. 90 shows us to what lengths the tree and horns have been modified by the imagination of the Hindoo artists to evolve this 'trisulah.'

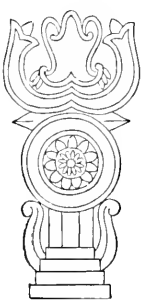


FIG. 90.—The Trisula, from Dr. Birdwood's 'Industrial Arts of India,' p. 98, vol. i.

The symbol of the trident must have been considered of such significance that in pl. iv, fig. *e*, of the 'Migration of Symbols,' it actually replaces the winged disc, which is supposed to represent the Deity. There are two tridents, like a brace of

thunderbolts, placed horizontally over a tree, supported by two griffins.

There is one other emblem of mythology which I will touch upon. I do not feel sure that Apollo's pretty *lyre* was not suggested to the Grecian artist's mind by a *pair of horns*.

One often sees a lyre, like that shown in fig. 91, in theatres and other places as an emblem of Music. Of course such a lyre is a fictitious thing, as it has no means of being tuned, and no means of varying notes beyond four discordant ones. But let that pass. Apollo is often furnished with a similar lyre.

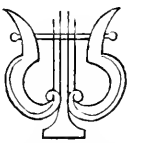


FIG. 91.—The Lyre of Apollo; also the emblem of Music.

Lempriere's Dictionary says of Apollo that he was the son of Jupiter, and therefore, I fancy, he must have known something about his father's thunderbolts. Then he is said not to have been the inventor of the lyre, but that Mercury gave it to him and received in reward the famous *caduceus*, with which Apollo was wont to drive the flocks of Admetus. It is not impossible that Apollo and Mercury had been simply making an exchange of *horn-emblems*,[1] all these myths being the creations of highly imaginative Greek poets and artists.

But let us turn for a moment from this pretty

[1] See picture by G. W. Joy 'Yule Tide,' Dec. 1892, in which a lyre is evolved out of two antelope horns!

story to the Archaic Room of the British Museum. We find there the fig. 92, on the top of a monument,

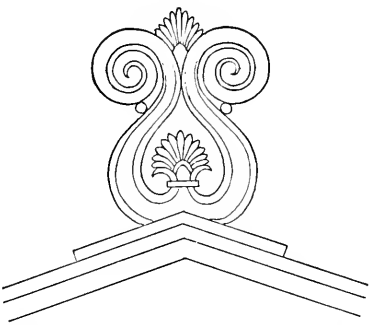


FIG. 92.—Part of west pediment, Œgina; Archaic Room, British Museum.

showing the battle of the Greeks and Trojans. To my mind it is a pair of horns twisted into a form not unlike a lyre. Inside it has an anthemion, and above it has another, both of which I take to be survivals of the date-tree head of the Assyrian sacred tree. The lower anthemion, moreover, has a *ligature* under its hornlets to show us what it came from. This, so to speak, horn-lyre would require very little doctoring in the imagination of a Greek artist to turn it into a lyre, like that of fig. 91. The bend in the side of this latter one might consider as the *twist* in a bull's horn.

Now one would like to ask—why did the Greek architect, who designed that sort of horn-lyre shown in fig. 92, give it so much prominence? It is placed at the very apex of the monument, as a sort of

standard, and it seems out of all proportion to the configuration of the monument. Had the designer some *other* idea in his mind, beyond mere ornamentation? some superstitious notion connected with this symbol? Now-a-days we hoist the Royal Standard, or the Union Jack, on the topmost part of a public building; this would seem of some similar significance. I cannot, however, answer the question I put. The symbol is there, nevertheless, in all its prominence. The reader can judge for himself.

When once a thing has been transformed into another thing in the imagination of an artist, this other thing will again suggest many objects, which will become more and more estranged from the original model, so that eventually it will not be easy to make out where the last suggestion really came from.

In all these transformations which we are endeavouring to interpret, we should never forget that there are the artists' poetic visions at the back of them all, acting as *factors* in the chain of modifications.[1]

Different minds naturally bring a different bias in the endeavour to interpret these obscure fancies of the ancients. To quote an example, Count d'Alviella, on pl. v, fig. *b*, shows two Assyrian figures before a conventional tree. In one hand they hold a 'key of life.'

[1] The difficulty is often to disentangle from the thing itself the factor of the artist's imagination.

By the other, he thinks, they are plucking a lotus flower from the top of the tree. This may be so, but I interpret it differently. The tree is a conventional date tree; the 'key of life' in one hand means that this tree is the 'key of their existence;' the supposed lotus flower I interpret into a sceptre tipped with a 'fleur-de-lys,' by which they are *protecting* their tree of life against evil spirits.

Horns, with all their modifications of trident, 'fleur-de-lys,' etc., became a *weapon* by which they held at bay their 'banshees,' their 'gins,' and other demons—the creations of their unscientific imagination—by which they thought themselves continually persecuted.

*Hornism* was among those people an emotion excited by the supposed virtue of horns; just as in mediæval times there was the emotion of *witchism*—an epidemic—a mania, which saw in every trouble the machinations of some witch. It is only in the 'Standard' of 21st November, 1892, that a trial for witchcraft was reported from the court of Eichstaett, in Bavaria. The witch was not burnt, but she brought an action for slander against Father Aurelian, who had exorcised the bewitched youth, and got 50 marks damages. This did not occur 500 B.C. but in the year of civilization and science—*November, 1892!*

In all the life of those ancient peoples there was undoubtedly a large undercurrent of myth; but there

was also, and must have been, an overcurrent of reality. They may have called on their gods to help them before a battle—but during the tug of war they relied upon their swords, and slings, and maces, and lances—upon their bows and arrows, their chariots, and their own muscles, to do the work. The priests, poets, and artists, might be left to deal with the myths; but the warriors had to deal with the *reality* of existence. They knew well enough that there must be no nonsense about *that*. To kill and be killed makes things a bit too real.

Eighteen centuries of religious evolution have done little to eradicate these superstitions. On the contrary they have been rivetted further and further into the minds of the ignorant, with this difference: that the change of soil and surroundings, and change of the idiosyncrasy of the people adopting them, have altered their forms and the legends attached to them. Fortunately with the commencement of the Christian era the seed of a 'moral philosophy' was sown, which has germinated and will grow, and work its way, in spite of all these fantastic creations and impediments of the human mind—creations not unknown to doctors who deal with the insane. They know that not infrequently a brisk purgative, or the restoration of a natural secretion, does wonders in removing the invisible spirits and other cobwebs from the cerebral grey matter of the patient.

According to Carlyle, the French Revolution appears to have been too brisk an alterative which was administered to the French grey matter of those days! In spite of even that heroic remedy many superstitions still remain, but time and patience may yet quit mankind of them, supposing that those protean persecutors of human peace do not assume some *other* form! The trident weapon of the future must be freedom of thought, scientific investigation and toleration, held in the grip of common sense.

Now let us for a moment, by means of drawing a little on our imaginations, see if we cannot form some idea of the *genesis* of this superstition in the human mind, viz. that horns possess the virtue of counteracting bad luck, and other machinations of devils. It is no longer possible to escape the conclusion that this formidable superstition has held in bondage the human mind, not only in past ages, but, to a large extent, even at the present time among semi-civilized people. Luck still exercises a fascinating influence over the minds of the ignorant. Indeed, who is there that does not talk of 'good luck' and 'bad luck,' as if these were either a 'ministering angel' or a 'persecuting devil?'

Count d'Alviella, at p. 263, refers to an 'anthropoid winged disc.'[1] It consists of a winged disc with a

[1] From Layard's 'Monuments of Niniveh,' 1st series, pl. 13.

human figure shooting a *trident* from a bow. We have seen that the trident is only a form of 'fleur-de-lys,' which, again, is only a modification of horns. Shooting a trident, then, in this case, would seem to mean 'a dispensing of protection by the Deity,' the horns being the symbol of protection against the evil eye.

Now comes the question: What led those people to select horns in particular as a protection against the evil eye?

There can hardly be much doubt that the 'post hoc, propter hoc' theory will help us in explaining the genesis of this curious superstition. This 'post hoc' theory is very prevalent even in our own times. Let us suppose a case in primitive times.

A hunter shoots a wild goat, or antelope. It is carried to his home, may be a cave; he and his family eat it; the skin is made into clothing, etc., but what about the horns? They cannot be eaten, and they can be utilized only for limited purposes. What is to be done with them? The skull and horns are stuck upon a pole, or on a tree near the dwelling, as a trophy of a successful hunt—a matter of social importance among primitive people, nay, among civilized people also. After a little time somebody imagines that this hunter is more fortunate than others—*has more luck*. His family and himself, being better fed,

do not get diseases so frequently. What would be more natural, in those intensely superstitious times, than for him and others to imagine that the horns on the pole were the real cause of all this luck?

I shall now quote a case in our own civilized times to show how prevalent this 'post hoc' theory is.

I have heard of a young man who, when he enters a room where hilarity is going on, seems to throw a damp sheet over the spirits of everyone—all hilarity ceases! Very probably he is of a silent, serious disposition—he *thinks* more than he talks. And so, when he appears, a widespread shyness and gloom falls on the meeting. At last someone whispered, "I have noticed that whenever Mr. —— appears everybody ceases talking, and there is a sort of damper thrown over our meeting." After that more attention was directed to this curious phenomenon, and *naturally everybody now sees it is quite true!* There *must* be, they imagine, some extraordinary influence that he produces as soon as he appears. He is now become a marked man, and one to be avoided, as possessing some incomprehensible evil influence! In short he is now what the Neapolitans would call a 'jettatore.'[1]

Some such theory as that of 'post hoc, propter hoc would seem sufficiently to explain the genesis of the use

[1] This is not a story of hundreds of years B.C., in Assyria, but one of A.D. 1892, in Britain. The supernatural has still a fascinating grip of people's minds.

of horns to obtain luck. A superstition of this sort, once started, would in those days have become contagious, and would have spread like wildfire. In such cases the failures are overlooked and forgotten, but the successes are rivetted on the mind.

The power of horns once established, they became a sort of 'fetish,' and are so in many places to this day. This 'fetish' did not become extinct by further civilization, but only *modified* in various ways; and these transformations have become one of the interesting studies of archæology and anthropology.

Count d'Alviella, at p. 13, says: "I want to speak of the attraction which equivalent symbols exercise, the one over the other, or better, the tendency which they seem to have of being fused into intermediate types."

It may be now of some profit to follow a little further the evolutions of this horn emblem. However obscure may be its genesis, there is no doubt whatever that it has exercised a strange fascination over the minds of people at all times, whether in its original form as *horns*, or in the multiform phases which it has acquired by migration. Even where its purpose has been forgotten, through the advancement of science, it remains as a survival.[1]

[1] See "Ainus of Japan," by J. Batchelor, regarding "Inaos" of *Skulls and Horns*.

In fig. 93 I have given some of the accessory symbolical ingredients found on cylinders which can, I think, be shown to be modifications of the horn symbol, and which I shall now very briefly discuss.

# NOTES ON SOME CYLINDERS.

"I have arrived at the impression that the number, both of gods and goddesses, will be found to be extremely small; that the apparent wealth of the mythology depends upon totemism of the inhabitants of the Nile valley, by which I mean that each district had its own special animal, as the emblem of the tribe dwelling in that locality, and that every mythological personage had to be connected in some way with these local cults." —'Astronomy and Worship in Ancient Egypt,' by J. Norman Lockyer. — 'Nineteenth Century Magazine,' July 1892, p. 32.

## VII.

## NOTES ON SOME CYLINDERS.

It is not my intention to try to make a complete analysis of cylinders, and that for a very good reason, viz. because I could not do it. My object is to try, by the help of the tree and horns, to unravel some of the mysterious symbols found on these cylinders.

I have touched upon the hand as a symbol. It may, perhaps, throw some light on the *pentadent*, which is often met with on cylinders. The pentadent, however, may be resolvable into a double pair of horns and a stick. There is no doubt that horns are often doubled, making a quadrident. On occasions, the Assyrian artist appeared to be involved into a sort of *horn emotion*—a passion for horn decoration—for, in the more elaborate sacred trees, he has decorated the whole stem of the tree with horns on both sides, like the rungs of a ladder, as if he were determined that no devils should come near it.

The study of the cylinders is of importance in tracing the significance of certain myths and symbols. In order that we may feel our way through this maze, we have to examine first into the nature of these so-called Assyrian cylinders.

What are they? They are the *seals* used in those days by merchants, ministers, kings, etc. They are always of hard stone—agate, hematite, crystal, etc. They are small and of cylindrical shape, with a hole through their axes. A wire or other substitute was used as an axle. As we roll a blotting-paper roller over wet writing, so they rolled their cylinders over soft clay, the only writing material they then used. The cylinder, having its surface engraved, left an impression, in the shape of a picture, to which there was often added an inscription, just as we now see on seals, private and public. They also had seals shaped much like those we have, as shown in Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra,' pl. 12, figs. 10, 11, and 12, and in the British Museum.

Like seals and trade-marks it was important that no two cylinders should be alike, lest the seal, which stood for the signature of the individual, might be forged; and no doubt the engraver must have kept impressions of all the cylinders he made, so that each might be *distinct* from all others, for therein lies the value of a seal.

The great object of the engraver was not only to produce some sort of picture, but a 'tout ensemble' different from that of every other picture that was to be used as a signature. The engraver was the only person who could manufacture such a seal, and, therefore, if he made every one distinct from all others

that would be a guarantee against forgery. The central group, which told some sort of story, mythical or otherwise, might be like that of others, but the accessory figures and symbols, and comicalities, would stamp it as unique.

These would appear to be small things to dwell upon, but I think they are points which will account for many of the curious features of these interesting relics.

In order that we may penetrate more intimately into the thoughts and actions of those ancient people, and more especially of their artists, we shall have to pass, sketchily, in review, some of these cylinders.

In these seals, owing to the difficult nature of the engraver's work, we may get some hints of the transformations the sacred tree and other symbols have undergone—changes so great that, were it not for some intermediate types, they would be as difficult to recognize as once were the tri-digitate hand and foot of the horse.

Some sort of classification of cylinders would seem needed. For instance, they would be at once divisible into those with cuneiform inscriptions and those without them.

Mr. St. Chad Boscawen has informed me that when there occurs an inscription it refers to the owner's name, his father's name, and the name of his patron god.

It is not improbable that in those days each trade and profession, and each city, was under the protection of some particular god. A similar custom prevails now in many Christian countries. Each city, profession, or trade, has some patron saint, and this custom may be a survival of the more ancient Assyrian custom.

Besides the classification of these cylinders into those *with* inscriptions and those *without*, their components seem to be classifiable in other ways, according to the nature of the elements that enter into their composition, viz.:—(*a*) Figures telling some sort of household legend, as the same figures appear on several cylinders; (*b*) a central tree, around which the figures are grouped, and which we may call a sacred tree; (*c*) trees introduced as accessory ornaments of the seal, such as date trees placed *outside* the main group, and others; (*d*) the sun, moon, and stars; (*e*) symbols, such as different forms of 'fleur-de-lys,' open hands, serpents, etc.; (*f*) other accessory figures, introduced, apparently, with no other object than that of filling vacant spaces, and of making that particular seal *distinguishable from all others*. These accessory figures are sometimes symbolical, but often of a humorous character, like those of Mr. Harry Furniss; such as a monkey playing the flute, a boy cutting somersaults, two boys going through gymnastic exercises, a goat nibbling at a tree, two kids playing on their mother's back, and many others.

In fig. 93 I have given some of these accessory symbolical components of cylinders, as these are the points I wish particularly to discuss, with reference to the transformations of the sacred tree.

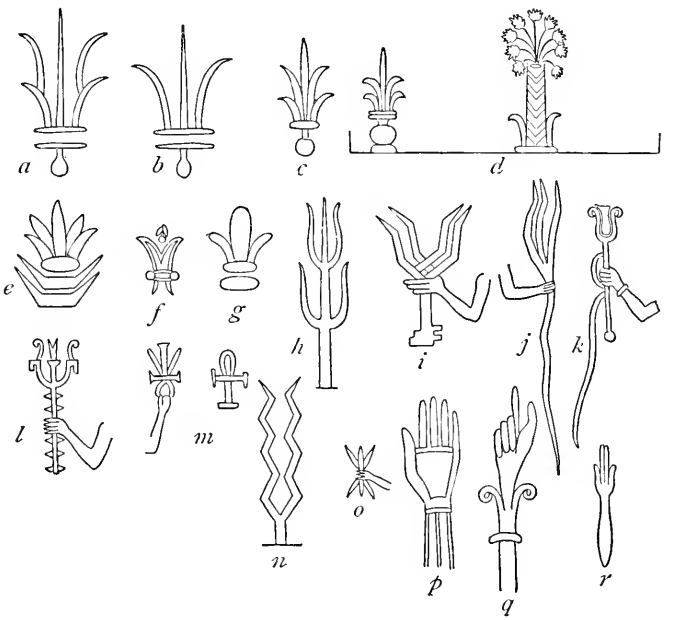



FIG. 93.—(*a* and *b*) From a crystal cylinder, British Museum (87-1, 14-3), about 700 B.C. Assyria?
(*c*) From cyl. of pl. 52, fig. 1, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*d*) These occur on one cyl., pl. 61, fig. 6. ,,
(*e*) From cyl. on pl. 31, fig. 3, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*f*) This is associated with a date tree on cyl., pl. 51, fig, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*g*) Occurs on a cyl., pl. 33, fig. 8, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.
(*h*) From cyl., pl. 52, fig. 5*a*, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*i*, *j*, *k*, *l*) Four hands, holding modifications of the same emblem, pl, 30, fig. 1; pl. 37, fig. 1; pl. 37, fig. 3; pl. 37, fig. 3, respectively, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*m*) Both from cyl., pl. 18, fig. 7, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*n*) Bident between two figures, pl. 40, fig. 9, ,,
(*o*) Double trident held in the hand, pl. 33, fig. 4, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'
(*p*) Symbolical open hand, from cyl., pl. 27, fig. 5, ,, ,,
(*q*) Sceptre under lion's paw, frontispiece of Stubbs' 'Wild Animals.'
(*r*) Modification of hand, from cyl., plate 40, fig. 99, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra

With the exception of (*q*) they have all been taken from cylinders, mostly reproduced in the plates of M. Felix Lajard's 'Introduction à l'étude du Culte de Mithra.' It will readily be seen that many of them are merely modifications of the 'fleur-de-lys,' and this only a degradation of the tree and horns of (*d*).

(*b*) is a 'fleur-de-lys' with a handle, and when held in the hand, as in (*j* and *k*), it officiates as either a *trident* or a *sceptre*, while (*o*) is a double trident, one up and one down. (*f*, *g*, and *m*) appear to be mere modifications of the same symbol. It will be noticed that (*m*) is the '*ankh*,' often seen in the hand of Egyptian statues.

(*a*) is a *pentadent* and clearly only a modified form of the 'fleur-de-lys' or trident (*b*); (*c*, *d*, *e*, *h*, *l*) are clearly the same thing, (*e*) being supported by two extra pairs of horns; and (*p*), the open hand, possibly stands for the *same* symbol, (*r*) being only a modified form of hand.

(*n*), if placed in the hand of Jupiter, might be interpreted as a pair of thunderbolts! but placed between two figures it means a pair of *spiral* antelope horns. The zigzaginess, which was supposed to be in imitation of conventional lightning, is, after all, the way these primitive engravers had of delineating the horn *spiral*.

(*i*) is clearly a double pair of horns held by a stem.

I think that the date tree in (*d*) shows us plainly what the middle prong of the trident, pentadent, and 'fleur-de-lys,' mean; it stands for the degraded *stem* of the tree. Sometimes, by further degradation, the remnants of the tree disappear, and we have the horns alone, as in (*i*) and (*n*).

We commence now to see how the superstition of placing horns on date trees to protect them from the evil eye, in being translated into pictures and hard stone seals, began to be degraded, and eventually passed into a symbol. On large spaces, such as those of the British Museum sculptures, the artist had plenty of room for full display; but the engraver of seals, with his small spaces, hard stones, and rude tools, must often have been in difficulties. Degradation of the tree followed; but the important part of the combination—the horns—could not be left out. They were *the* great charm for keeping away the troubles of the evil eye, or of other devils; and so the tree became reduced, and sometimes was left out altogether. The tree and horns then passed into a simple symbol, modified in numerous ways, according to the fancy of the designer.

Eventually a thing incomprehensible, but mystically of great importance, was naturally taken up as the badge of royalty—of *authority*. And so we find the 'ankh,' held in the hand of Egyptian gods, the sceptre

in the hands of other kings, the trident in the hand of Neptune, the triple wavy horns in the hand of Jupiter, and so on, all *synonymous* forms of the same thing.

It is no wonder that Moses, after going up to the mountain and conversing with the Deity, is said to have come back with horns on his head—they were of the greatest mystic importance.

FIG. 94.—Tree with a handle; from pl. 27, fig. 7, Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'

Fig. 94 shows a date tree with a handle. I do not think it leaves us in much doubt what the parentage of the 'ankh' or 'key of life' (fig. 93, *m*) has been. A tree is a rather cumbrous thing to put into the hand of a small cylinder figure, and so it eventually got evolved *degradationally* into this simple emblem—the 'key of life,' which is frequently delineated on cylinders.

I think we may put down in a general way this degradation to the *necessities* of the engraver's art, viz. small space, hardness of the material, rudeness of tools, and not improbably often the incapacity of beginners, for there are *degrees* of elaboration and finish in these relics.

There is some suspicion that the cross itself may have been a symbol much more ancient than the T-shaped scaffold on which Christ is said to have

been crucified; for we have not only the 'ankh,' shaped like a cross, to be held as a symbol in the hand; but a St. John's cross, pure and simple, hangs on the breast, by a string round the neck of *Samsi Rammânu* on No. 110 of the British Museum. Fig. 95 shows

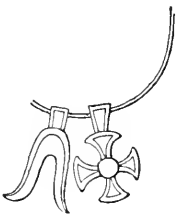


FIG. 95.—Charms from neck of a king, Nimrood.

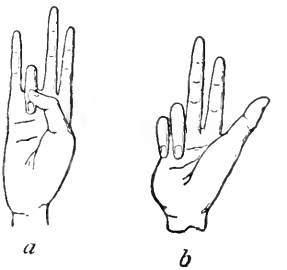



FIG. 96.—(*a*) Buddha's hand; (*b*) the Pope's hand.

another associated with a pair of horns. This cross-symbol may have been adopted by the Christian Church, and made to re- present the emblem of Christianity.

Indeed, in the 'Migration des symboles' of Count d'Alviella, he says at p. 21: "Among the early Christians, this symbol was a form sometimes given to the cross of Christ itself, being assimilated to the tree of life;" and at p. 163 he says: "For the tree of life Christians have substituted various sacred objects, and principally the cross, which is itself a tree of life."[1]

[1] One day, in a shop window of St. James's Street, I saw a picture of St. Peter enthroned as Pope. He is represented with a tiara, ornamented with 'fleur-de-lys' and topped by a cross. His pontifical cloak is ornamented

The Persians, for the Assyrian tree of life, appear to have substituted a fire-altar.

Whether the crescent of the Mahomedans can be placed in the same category, and on the same footing as the horseshoe, is doubtful, the crescent-moon, the sun, and the star being frequently met with on the cylinders.

All the same, there is ample evidence to show that the Mahomedans borrowed freely from Assyrian symbols, as fig. 97 plainly shows.

Nothing, in my opinion, can be clearer in these standards than that (*a*) is the symbol of the date tree, supported by horns; (*b*) the head of foliage of the date tree; (*c*) the uplifted hand seen frequently on Assyrian sculptures and cylinders. As to (*d*) it simply consists of two hollow *goat*-horns, with a circle between the horns. This might well stand for the horns of the crescent, with the planet Venus between them![1]—the ensign of Turkey.

Hughes, in his 'Dictionary of Islam,' says the hand on the standard of the Mohurrum is meant for the

with emblems of the tree of life: he is holding up three fingers of the right hand, I suppose, as a substitute for a trident. Both Buddha and the Pope hold up three fingers, as seen in fig. 96, only they are not the same fingers. In his left hand St. Peter has a large ordinary key, as a substitute for *Sekhet's* 'key of life;' and, curiously enough, in a small side picture, there is St. Peter kneeling before the figure of Christ, who shoulders a cross of the Archaic shape ┤. All this would tend to show that the early Christians absorbed the so-called Pagan symbols wholesale.

[1] Turning the money in one's pocket for *luck*, on sighting the new moon, may be a derivation of this notion, *because* of the moon's *horns!*

hand of Husain, their martyr. I do not believe this, as the open hand was an emblem of something which I have discussed further on, long before Husain was born. And the Shiahs may have adopted it as an

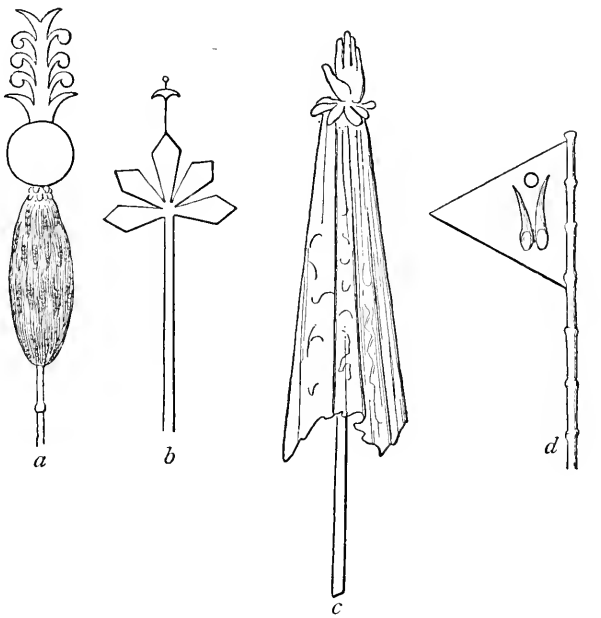



FIG. 97.—Standards used in the celebration of the Mohurrum. From Hughes' 'Dictionary of Islam.' The lower part of (*a*) is formed of bunches of hair from the tails of horses.

emblem of their martyr, much as the Christians may *perhaps* have adopted the Assyrian 'ankh' as an emblem of *their* martyr.

On the cylinders we find figures putting up either one hand, usually the right,[1] or both hands. Then the

[1] See Prof. Sayce's 'Hibbert Lectures,' p. 70.—"The uplifting of his hand finds favour with the god."

hand alone, separate from any person's body, is met with.

In some cases a hand coming from above may have meant the hand of God — (see pp. 33 and 34 of 'Migrations des Symboles'), but in other cases it would appear to mean a different thing. On the monuments, and on the cylinders, we find two very different and opposite expressions by means of raised hands, viz.:

(*a*) One raised hand, and that usually the right, belonging to the king, a chief or exalted person, or judge. That, it would seem, is the sign of *authority*.

(*b*) Both hands uplifted would seem to mean *submission*.

We frequently see both these expressions on monuments and cylinders, viz. a king or judge, or minister, with one hand raised, and a petitioner with both hands raised. Between the king and the petitioner there is frequently the *introducer* of the petitioner, who carries a deer or other present, brought by the petitioner to propitiate the great man and *soften* his heart. This is the 'nuzur,' so universal in India. It is symbolical of submission—'all my property is yours.'[1] Very often in India it means a sort of bribe, or fee for admission to the king's, or governor's, presence.

[1] Of course it may also mean that a devotee brought an offering, which the priest is presenting to the god.

The clergyman in our times, when he offers a prayer, frequently throws up both arms in token of submission to God's will. The bushranger in the backwoods of America, when some member of the Vigilance Committee comes upon him, is told to *throw up his arms*, or he will be shot.

There is another form of using the hands in token of submission, that is by joining both palms, as children are made to do when they pray. This is the form universally adopted in India when a subordinate addresses a superior, or wants some concession. I have met with only one form of this kind on the cylinders.

Curiously enough, villagers and prisoners in India, as a sign of respect and extreme submission, besides joining the palms, stand on one leg. This token of submission was evidently not unknown in Assyria, for Count d'Alviella on pl. v, fig. *l*, gives two 'fellahs' standing on one leg, exactly as the Indians do, as supporters to a date tree. This drawing is taken from the brass plates of Mosul.

If it were my object here to study the origin of symbols in general, I might find a great deal in these cylinders to suggest how one symbol was gradually transformed into another; and how, while passing into the possession of other nations, with other traditions and surroundings, it acquired a new form which may have entirely masked its real origin.

It will suffice here to suggest that the royal sceptre, which we often meet with, is probably nothing but a modification of the *raised hand*; and that the 'pentadent' may be only a modification of a raised open hand.

When the artist, for whatever reason, begins to modify a thing, the variations become so great, that it is often difficult to say whether it originally was this or that. Fig. 98 would seem to mean a sceptre tipped with an open hand, and fig. 93*q* is a sceptre ending in a hand, supported by what may originally have been meant for two horns. The Pope's hand with three fingers open, and Buddha's hand with three others, may be, as I said, only variations of tridents.

FIG. 98.—From pl. 62, fig. 4, of Lajard's 'Culte de Mithra.'

Fig. 93*r* would seem meant for a sceptre, perhaps a modification of that of (*q*).

On the monuments we frequently meet with the figure of the king, or some other high functionary, with one hand uplifted, usually the right one.[1] This would appear to mean a sign of authority, and a means of distinguishing the different figures in the picture, the features being all of the same type, and the dress not always very different.

[1] In trying to decipher symmetrical drawings, we should not forget that the Assyrian artist often splits up one figure into two symmetrical halves, so that if on one side he shows the figure with the right hand up, on the other he may show the *left* hand.

The origin of these movements of the hands may have been involuntary and instinctive—in short of a psychological origin. The aggressor lifts his arm to strike, while the defendant lifts both hands to protect his head from the blow of the agressor.

In addition to authority, the uplifted hand might seem also to mean *attention*, in persons of high rank, and is synonymous with clasping hand by hand before one, in persons of a lower rank, just as in persons of the lowest rank both palms are joined, when they listen and receive orders. The uplifted hand might also mean *warning*. But in those days of want of perspective, the hand was always shown flat, with either the palm or the back towards the spectator.

There are other signs of distinction, such as a long staff, a mace, an umbrella. Before the occupation of Lucknow by the British it was as much as a man's life was worth for him to open an umbrella over his head. That was the king's prerogative only. One of the king's palaces was surmounted by gilt umbrellas. On the Assyrian monuments we frequently meet with an umbrella held over the king's head, or so fixed as to shade him.

Anyhow, it would seem that, from a figure with uplifted hand, the hand alone began to be used as a symbol, using, as often happens, the part for the whole.

Then the hand may have become degraded into a pentadent—the three fingers open being the synonym of a trident. In fig. 93*a*, *c*, *d*, *h*, and *l*, we notice various forms of pentadents suited for holding in the hand. In *q* of the same figure, we have a sceptre tipped by a hand, supported by a pair of horns, and in *r* and *k* we have, possibly, a degradation of the same emblem.[1] The different forms of sceptres may have belonged to different periods of the Assyrian history, and may have been adopted by different rulers, but we see them all mixed up on the cylinders. The modification may also have been *intentional* on the part of the engraver, in order to produce a seal *different* from all others.

As there were modifications of the hand, used as sceptres, so there were modifications or degradations of the tree and horns, used for the same purpose, and so we find the 'ankh' or the 'key of life' held in the hand, so also we get sceptres tipped with a globe surmounted by a cross, which seems to be only the 'key of life' with the handle.

As I have already stated, it was not my intention to treat of cylinders in a systematic way, and to presume to disentangle the maze of Greek myths and to show their evolution from those of Babylonia. I have only touched upon *some* of the features of the

[1] The degradation of emblems, especially on cylinders, may have been a *necessity* of the artist in engraving a hard stone with imperfect tools. It is important to impress the reader with this, so I have repeated it.

cylinders with the view of throwing some light on the *origin* of the implements and weapons used by their mythical personages.

Every action, whether of an artist, speaker, or writer, has a corresponding molecular movement in the cerebral grey matter of the brain of that individual. This molecular action is the difficult part to make out, and to discover what was *its* genesis, for the genesis of an idea may be either traditional; or it may be that evolved from social surroundings, or from physical surroundings, which again may depend on astronomical, meteorological, physiological, pathological, and other phenomena.

In these investigations we have to try to put back our minds ten thousand years, and look at things, nature and everything else, with the brains of those times. This seems almost an impossibility; but by studying the mental phenomena of to-day, we may, perhaps, hope to creep back to the mental phenomena of those days; from the known to work back to the unknown of past ages.

# CONCLUSIONS.

"In writing on religion, even on natural religion, we must turn neither to the right nor to the left, but look at facts straight in the face to see whether they are facts or not, and, if they are facts, to find out what they mean."—Prof. Max Muller, 'Forum,' March, 1891.

## CONCLUSIONS.

The conclusions I have come to from studying the foregoing points connected with Assyrian history are the following :—

(*a*) That they had a number of common and very useful trees. Their usefulness, both for economic and religious purposes, was the main factor of their sacredness. The date tree was their great stand-by—their 'tree of life.' The cedar tree was their sacred tree by *nobility*, for it was traditionally the tree at the gates of the house, or seat of their gods. That the 'arbre de vie' may also have had its origin from the tree that produced the 'eau-de-vie,' or some other drug, that gave *new life* to those who partook of it. That some of their sacred trees may have been mere emblems of their 'food and drink.'[1]

(*b*) That the horns on their sacred trees had an important meaning. They were symbols of power against the 'evil eye' and 'evil spirits;' and that they were originally things seen everywhere, as charms of 'good luck;' that eventually, through artistic imaginings and necessities of art, horns, often represented by a simple *bident*, were symbolized into a 'fleur-de-lys,' a trident,

[1] *Vide* end of sacred trees.

and may be some other forms; that the 'fleur-de-lys' and the trident are *compounds* of the tree and horns, the former being degraded into a *stick*.

(*c*) That the cone fruit, held in the hand of the genius, is no other than a sacred thing—a cedar cone—used as a sprinkler of holy water, which is contained in the bucket; and that the whole winged figure was a symbol of *Divine protection*.

(*d*) That the 'evil eye' and 'evil spirits' were real terrors to them, all their maladies and disasters and troubles being the machinations of devils; and that their principal weapons for warring against these unseen evil-doers were holy water and horns. They had their good gods, but they must have thought them handicapped by the cunning of the evil ones, and so they required these extra weapons as charms, to frighten them away. They had a notion of a Supreme God, to whom they prayed; but they thought it better to be on the safe side, and used these *extra* weapons, which tradition had taught them to be supremely efficacious.

(*e*) That the lotus was essentially of Egyptian origin, as an ornament; that the 'anthemion' originated in the sacred date tree of the Assyrians; and that subsequently the two motives of ornamentation became hybridized, and in some cases indistinguishable, owing to the contact of both nations. There is evidence that this contact was of very ancient date.

(*f*) That Assyrian cylinders often contain two distinct elements, viz.: (1) that which tells a story, and (2) that which means nothing at all; the latter being meant to fill up spaces with characters that would distinguish that seal *from all others*. The hardness of the cylinder stone, the rude implements with which they worked, and the smallness of the surface, may have been some of the causes of the degradation of their trees and horns, and their transformation into various allied forms.

It appears to me that by the mixing of peoples, and by the poetic fancies of philosophers and artists, there has been, not only a hybridization of symbols, but also, as might be expected, the evolution of new genera and species.

The struggle of nations, and of ideas, has resulted in the survival of the fittest symbols; at the same time that the survivors have frequently lost many of the original characters of their ancestors, and acquired new ones. Now it is only by means of 'splint bones,' and other degraded features, that we can in many cases decipher these hieroglyphics, and trace the common descent of a whole congeries of symbols.

We have, for instance, the great symbol of the *Supreme Deity*, as also that of the *tree and horns*, from which a whole series of new forms evolved. We have other symbols—that of the lotus, the holy water, all those represented by hands—one raised hand, two

raised hands, two joined palms, one lowered hand, the hand with three fingers up, that with the index finger only displayed, and so forth—all breeding other symbols, and varying as they multiplied.

The 'tree of life,' the 'key of life,' the 'tree of knowledge' or of temptation, the 'tree of liberty,' (all sacred trees), the trees planted by noted persons, as records of certain events, seem to have had a common origin. The original model became transformed into the others by passing through the fancy-generators of poetical brains.

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