

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

A DEDUCTIVE STUDY OF SEMITIC CULTURE.

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[CONCLUSION.]

DECORATIVE AND SYMBOLIC DETAILS.

XIV.

If it is natural to approach the work of reconstructing the Temple in a tentative spirit, it is many times more natural so to approach the more widely and diversely evidenced and much discussed symbolism of the Temple's details, especially the twin pillars that stood in the porch of the Temple, Jachin and Boaz; for the question of their form is bound up firmly with that of their significance and is largely dependent upon it. The interest of the Temple, too, must be more in such live evidences of ancient thought and culture than in the reshaping of hard stones, whose cold outlines, even when blended into the organic unity of the building, must be more or less the end-in-itself, rather than the interpretive means to an understanding of the humanity which made it. Details are more illuminative than architectural entreties, for the very reason that they best can express concrete thoughts and moods.

1. In the beginning of this thesis I found it convenient to presuppose the necessity of two axioms, claiming them to be constructive data for my argument. The former of them was this, that *Judaism embodies a religious genius as yet not unique*. I must claim its aid once more at the crux of this present puzzle, repeating that "in spite of the superiority over neighboring faiths which comes to the worship of Yahveh from its dawning henotheistic monotheism, *there are common elements still retained, proclaiming blood relationship with the rest of the Semitic world, however polytheistic it may be.*" It is hard not to believe that in the Temple we find the symbols

of the earlier stages of Yahvism, which are also kindred to contemporary worship—symbols of neighboring and kindred nations.

2. Perhaps the commonest element of all old-world religions is the reverence for the pillar. It is surprising to see how few things there are of which Egypt is not the ultimate parent, whether it is motives employed in art, or religious ideas and representations. Of course, Mesopotamian civilization succeeded in stamping as individually its own much that is apparently the outcome of its peculiar culture; but we are now able to see very numerous details and elementary ideals which go back of old Assyrian and old Babylonian into still older Egypt; whose travels to the Tigris and Euphrates, just as also to Asia Minor and the Greek islands and Greece itself are rendered intelligible only by the mediacy of Phœnician ships. This is especially true of tree worship, which is the concomitant of *betylæ*, or pillar worship.

When motives of religious art pass from one people to another, the myth sometimes accompanies the type on its migrations, but oftener it lags behind; the religious symbol is first naturalized and its mythological significance follows later. Or perhaps the symbol alone is adopted; the meaning it held in its native climate being far different from the meaning it is christened with, if new meaning there is at all, in its adoptive home. We cannot deduce from the contemporary appearance of a symbol in diverse nations that it necessarily means the same in each. Unless evidences of similar myths and ideals are to be found, the symbol's presence stands for little. But in the earlier days of Yahveh-worship these similar modes of worshiping similar symbols are obviously present, so that Phœnician religion may be fairly used as the data for the possible ground-work of Hebrew faith, however higher than the foundation its later evolution may build.

Throughout the earlier Old Testament we continually run across the worship of Ashera. The circumstances, however, connote no very clear identification with anything we know. Is Ashera a deity, sometimes given "human" form? Is Ashera an embodiment of Astarte-Ashtoreth? Or is Ashera the symbolization of the nature-mother in tree-form? As a symbol, attribute or utensil of worship the Ashera seems to meet us only in the cultus of feminine deities. In its most original form, as archeology has mapped its stages out,⁷⁷ we have a single object, the emblem of this feminine deity, soon appearing in the company of her male correlative. These two

⁷⁷ Cf. Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*. Text; from which I have most of my data on this subject.

symbols may be two similar or dissimilar trees, posts, pillars or cones. At any rate the agalmata are so far aniconic. These two symbols either manifest the presence and joint rule of a godling and little goddess in a holy place, or they show that a single deity is thought of as a double nature (i. e., androgynous, both male and female at once).

To these rude symbols soon are added heads, extremities and other anthropomorphic details, until at last they become true images.⁷⁸ Interruptions and reversions halt and hinder the process thus slightly sketched, but the evolutionary trend is clear.

When this final stage is reached that god who attained anthropomorphic form is regarded as dwelling in the more primitive types, in the tree, in the cone, or the post, and may be represented under those forms; or the tree, post or cone becomes the main idol of the non-idol-confined god, the convenient object of offerings and sacrifices.⁷⁹

The constant descriptions of the Asherim in the Bible, especially when they occur in conjunction with mention of the altars of Baal and Masseboth⁸⁰ leaves little doubt that beside the Baal-pillar, the Masseba or Chamman, we must recognize the presence of the Ashera-tree or wooden Ashera-post⁸¹ (frequently burned as sacrifice), representing the *paredros* any localized god may have, just as he may have a representation of Ashtoreth.⁸² Baal is simply the word for "god."—Yahveh is as yet a Baal.⁸³ The tree-goddess Ashera is only another form of Ashtoreth-Astarte, who herself is often symbolized in tree form. The Ashera is nothing but a local Ashtoreth or Baal-consort, who has preserved in a purer form and for a longer period her primitive and pristine character of a tree or wooden post, "the vegetative ground-work of her nature." The lunar side of Astarte (connected with the solar worship of her mate) is peculiar to the general and ideal goddess, not to her local abodes or Ashera symbols.

Under Phœnician influence all the Canaanitic and Cyprian god-

⁷⁸ Cf. Fig. 26 where the sacred tree shows clear signs of embryonic humanity—their anthropomorphism is clarified in the two tracings at the top.

⁷⁹ Aerolites never outgrew this heaven-sent character (super-aniconic).

⁸⁰ E. g., Exodus xxxiv. 13.

⁸¹ It is interesting to note, that, although as a rule monuments are silent witnesses, with one or two exceptions only, all the pillar-monuments we have from the region of Phœnician influence mention somewhere on them the name "Ashera."

⁸² Judges ii. 13; iii. 7; I Kings xviii and xix.

⁸³ Cf. many Pentateuchal names written without distinction with the ending Baal or Bosheth (Yahveh), e. g., Ishbaal = Ishbosheth and Mephibaal = Mephibosheth and also the meaningful name Baaliah (Baal = Jah).

esses are derived from the single primitive feminine deity found most clearly in primitive Babylonia, from whom anthropomorphic form evolves most variously. Similarly when these same Canaanites and Cyprians reached the stage where they substituted an anthropomorphic *god* for the pillar-representative of the male deity, it was Bel-Baal, husband of Belit-Balat (Mylitta) who was the model. They are the pattern Lord and Lady from which local shrines adapt their patron deities.

3. This is many years before the Temple of Solomon, although even then contemporary development outside of Israel was little above this stage. The simple Baal-Ashera symbols had developed into a particularization of attributes little found in Judea. From this simple scaffold-faith there had elsewhere set in a specialization in three directions.

- a. Sex-symbols became no longer subsidiary to mere purposes of identification, but symbols in themselves of great significance.
- b. Sacred trees became more and more definite in botanical separation.
- c. The sun and moon became identified with the divine duality.

We find the demarcation of these three tendencies already begun in the time of the later Pentateuch. Kings shows evidences of the resultant conditions, if we look between the lines.

a. The Ashera began to be surmounted by sex-signets. As made of wood, the feminine, vegetative, symbol of the post became more the localized incarnation of nature, the vegetative All-mother. The stone pillar of a Baal became the symbol of its transcending god's masculinity. The phallus was first mounted upon it; then the pillar itself assumed the phallic character. The feminine symbol the triangle, at first upon the apex of the Ashera-post, became the cone of the goddess, the outline of which was that same triangle. Thus grew up the phallic specialization and interpretation of the life of the universe which we of to-day find so hard to comprehend sympathetically.

The Semite cast all his gods more or less in one mold; the Greek specialized and articulated his, never allowing them to overlap functions in the divine economy of the universe. All Semitic pantheons are therefore permeated with a solution of phallicism, as well as with the solutions of other tendencies, until they seem all of a piece. We find little differentiation between vegetative and sexual attributes, since vegetative ideas and sexual ideas have affected all the gods so much that they are no longer distinguished

from each other, nor in their individual make-up is the same mapping-out and separation possible. It required a long time for mankind to reach that stage where abstract ideals could be formulated and acted upon. The individual, concrete, kindergarten celebration of some visible, suggestive symbol-ritual was the only means of spiritual approach to disembodied life. But a single act of ritual would be explicable in all sorts of ways, the varying interpretations, vegetative, sexual, etc., blending into homogeneity through the medium of the visible, concrete act, although heterogeneous except for this thought-producing, variously-explicable symbol, their point in common.

If, then, the sexual idea permeated the conception of one god, his *paredros* would straightway catch the same infection. The Baal, conceived as the husband of the land he fertilized,⁸⁴ made inevitable by his phallic emphasis a like metamorphosis of his goddess-wife. He did not specialize into an individual with the definite attribute of sexual fertility and let his goddess go her vegetative way, but he gave to her his characteristic flavor and soaked himself in hers, so that they held a community of qualities, rather than becoming private quality-estate owners. The sexual tendency develops not as individualized in any deity, but as a separable, yet never separated, element in the evolution of the whole spiritual compound. It is nevertheless a specialization from the primitive Baal-pillar and its genetic content.

b. The second specialization descends from the Ashera-post side of the family. Although the principle of fertility is one and indivisible, this vegetative tendency is indubitably distinguishable. Tree worship took its suffragette equality in the worship of the fruitful principles of the universe. The all-mother character could be vegetatively explained as validly as in sexual terms. The pomegranate was sacred to the first all-mother; as being with its great productive powers an appropriate signum of her essence. Hence, too, we find the pomegranate sacred everywhere to the goddess who occupies the seat of Ashtoreth in the native pantheon. In Cyprus it was Aphrodite herself who planted it:⁸⁵ it was sacred to Adonis (Tammuz) her partner,⁸⁶ and was bound up in the theo-

⁸⁴ Asshur of the Assyrian Trinity = "the erect one."

⁸⁵ Cf. Antiphanes quoted by Athenæus, III, p. 84c.

⁸⁶ "In the Temenos of Aphrodite at Dali was found a model of a pomegranate in terra cotta (natural size) and many of the crouching figures of the youthful Adonis (votive) hold in their hands—among other fruits—the pomegranate." Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer* (Text).

genetic myths of Phrygia.⁸⁷ The pomegranate is sacred in Egypt to the "Warmhearted" Isis. It seems to be of Semitic origin; Homer mentions it only once. Even to-day the people of Cyprus use its countless seeds as a symbol of fertility. The Assyrians gave another tree sacred prominence, the palm. Conventional and far removed from life as their sculptured palmettes may seem, only palm withes could be so plaited; and the leaves are unmistakable. The elements of the Mesopotamian sacred tree are to be found in Egypt and all the ports to which Phœnician influence extended.

This worship of sacred trees we find in the Old Testament in the "groves" at which the iconoclastic anger of the reformers so arose, but it was the deeds perpetrated in their shadow that were the downfall of the heretical high places (*bamoth*), not the sacredness of the trees, which were found even in Solomon's own Temple ornamentation. The sacred tree worship was too closely tied to the glorification of the reproductive powers of the universe to escape the stigma of the latter's excesses. But those who find in the representations of the sacred tree merely a frank feminine signum go too far in their preconceived programme of reducing all cultus symbols to sexuality.

These two specializations, sexual and vegetative, exist side by side in the same symbols and rituals. When the king, personating some Baal, married some Ashera image or some Temple-prostitute, personating in her turn the goddess whose priestess she was, it was both a recognition of the sexuality of the workings of the universe and a ritual of "homoeopathic magic"⁸⁸ whereby the fertility of the land, the revival of the trees and the increase of all nature, was insured. (It is a familiar tenet of all magic that the imitation of a desired result procures it). Thus, for instance, the early Phœnician kings of Paphos or their sons claimed to be not merely the priests of the goddess but her semi-divine lovers, personating Adonis. The original myth of Pygmalion and the image was in all probability some such manifested Astarte-wedding.

c. Sun- and moon-worship is a third interpretation of the life of the divine pair, merging with phallicism and nature-worship. The sun as the productive energy in the world⁸⁹ was worshiped in Phœ-

⁸⁷ Adonis = Lord. "The name does not signify Tammuz in the Bible unless so specified. But the cult was rampant (cf. Ezekiel). For an innocent usage, cf. also the names Adoni-kam (Ezra ii. 13), Adoni-ram (1 Kings, iv. 6), Adoni-jah (1 Kings i. 15).

⁸⁸ Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Frazer, pp. 14 and 30.

⁸⁹ 𐤀𐤍𐤏𐤍 = the Impregator.

nicia in this fashion, not in the later abstract form of Persian Zoroastrianism. Sun and moon are merely another manifestation of the *genos* and *genea* of all life (although the *lunar* aspect is also necessarily more or less identified with a *nature-goddess*).

All these three specializations existed in advanced forms, had their specialized cults and rituals as quasi-sectarian bodies. Yet the primitive pillar-pair still contained the essential germs of all three specializations and had its more comprehensive, if less intensive, meaning and appeal.

Jachin and Boaz stood in the porch of Solomon's temple. Their workmanship was such that they seem to have been the most famous incident of the whole construction. Bronze-casting was very obviously unfamiliar to the Jews. But it is hard to believe that mere artisan perfection gave them all their fame,—there must have been some symbolism implied that redounded to the glory of Yahveh. This significance I find in their being a sign of the androgynous nature of Yahveh. While the more primitive intensity of quality-personification may somewhat have dwindled away, let us remind ourselves that orthodox high places were still in open and general use; that Baalim and Ashera-Teraphim existed without question at high-places of neighboring, kindred gods; that we are halfway between the golden calf in the wilderness and the destruction of calf-worship in the northern kingdom, which had been instituted to counteract the lack of Jerusalemite worship by symbolizing the attributes of Yahveh; that Jachin and Boaz themselves bore facsimiles of pomegranates.

I do not find any definite phallic symbolism in them, nor any specialized tree-signification. They represent to me the continuance of the unspecialized betylae-pair, holding in their solution the male and female elements, nature and phallic-cult basic ideas, patron and patroness protectorate, and the solar and lunar manifestations of their qualities. Precipitation and separation of these half-identical attributes into concrete symbolism has not here taken place, as elsewhere. The Temple remains aniconic, and therefore all-inclusive of possible significance. The devout believer in Yahveh may claim for him any attribute he feels to be inherent in the deity he wants to worship, and point to Jachin and Boaz as the sign-manual of his right to do so. It is perfectly possible that they may signify anything evolved from that type in whose form they anachronously survive and defy the specialization whose seeds have elsewhere flowered and fruited into special ritual, special emblems, special cult-sects. Indeed, it is perfectly possible that the setting-up of a

betylæ-pair before the Temple, from the very fact that it was the primitive seed of the too obviously flowering specializations round about, was the very thing to call the attention of the worshiper back to the really simple and potent essence which was so masked by their vagaries and exaggerations. Jachin and Boaz proclaimed the simple creed of true Yahvism.

4. This intensifying of meaning in the two pillars seems to do away with two forms of reconstruction. Stade makes them stand within the porch, supporting the architrave of its lintel-structure.

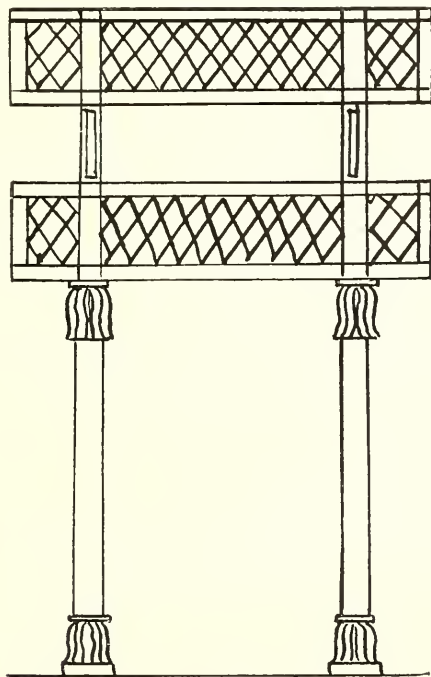


Fig. 15. JACHIN AND BOAZ.

(Fergusson, *The Temples of the Jews*, p. 157, fig. 35.)

Fergusson conjectures that the two pillars upheld a screen, upon which abundant space was provided for all the ornamentation heart could wish. (Fig. 15.)

The change of material does not necessitate a change of function. Many writers contend that, since sacred pillars heretofore had been made of wood or of stone, this change into metal argues a change of significance and of function. I cannot see that this follows. Bronze was the *ne plus ultra* of the up-to-date mode. Furthermore, anything with so much significance and prestige as there

seems to have been here involved would hardly have been put to a comparatively menial, because utilitarian and structural, use. Any amount of skill would hardly single out two door-posts for such fame. They must have been objects in themselves, not in any sense subsidiary to something else. As such they were outstanding obelisks, I feel sure.

Fergusson's⁹⁰ suggestion is likewise vetoed by this same intensification of meaning as sufficient explanation of their honor. His objection to simple pillars is that they do not provide space enough for the wealth of ornamentation ascribed to them, "nets of checkerwork, and wreaths of chain work, lily work" and pomegranates by the hundred.⁹¹ This seems true, but is counterbalanced by the very evident desire of the author to make the most of every detail for the glory of Yahveh himself, whose house is thus, even to minutest details, perfect in its execution. Influenced, however,

by the occurrence of a screen before Herod's Temple, Fergusson goes to India for analogy and prototypes. He finds there in the common totes of Indian temples good opportunity for all the prodigality of ornament to be desired. But he knows more about India than Judea, for to go so far afield brands the search a desperate one, especially since no connecting link is at present to be shown.

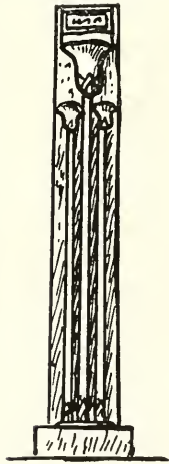


Fig. 16. ORNAMENTED PIER
FROM KARNAK.*

Cf. Perrot and Chipiez, *Egypt*, II, 94.

5. Why not be content with simple, free-standing pillars, whose great uniqueness lies in their material and unexcelled workmanship, but whose symbolism adds the halo of sanctity to the sheen of their brass? In Egypt, the stone obelisks stand out *free* before the pylons (Fig. 16 and note); in all the representations of the Paphian temple the flanking pillars or cones are obvious; the pseudo-Lucian tells of the two great Priapi of Bacchus at the Byblos-shrine, into the top of which twice a year a man climbed up, as he would a palm tree, and there abode for seven days. In front of the sanctuary-place of Astarte-Mikal at Kition in Cyprus the remains of columns with Ionizing capitals were found as holy

⁹⁰ Fergusson, *The Temples of the Jews*. Text on "Solomon's Temple."

⁹¹ 1 Kings vii. 17-20.

* This is not the ordinary Egyptian obelisk (cf. "Cleopatra's Needle," Central Park, New York, for that) but one of a pair which stand before the pylon of Karnak, whose "saturation" of meaning is greater than any other present

betylæ in the customary place. In a small terra-cotta model of a shrine of Venus Urania (as proven by the dove-cote holes) we find a clearer reproduction of one of the later forms these pillars took. (Fig. 17.) Owing to the necessity of support from the fragility of the material of the model the capitals barely touch the wall behind, but this certainly is not the state of things the model intends to portray, since the columns do not support the tiny pent-house above the kennel-like door.

The law of parsimony must also rule out the use of Jachin and Boaz as candle-sticks, burning the fat of sacrificed animals; though some of the later temple coins of the Roman era indicate this adaptation. Those of Sardis show the flames. This is a later and utili-

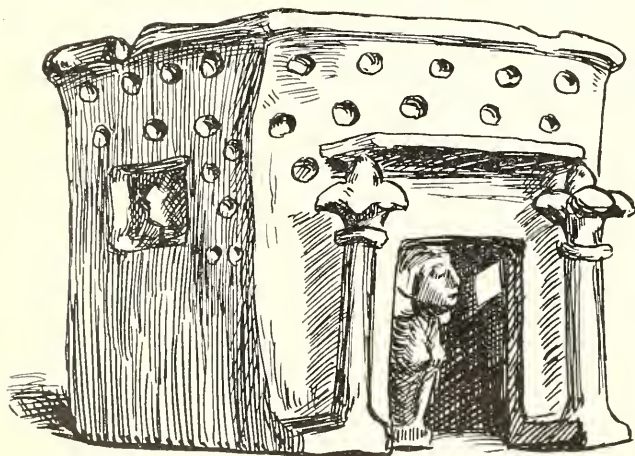


Fig. 17. MODEL OF A SHRINE IN TERRA COTTA.

[Louvre.) Height $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. M. Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*, pl. CXXXIV. Perrot and Chipiez, *Phœnicia*, p. 287, fig. 208.

tarian adaptation of the columns, which would not be thinkable until their emblematic content had been forgotten, which, in the time of Solomon was certainly not the case anywhere in the Mediterranean world.

Simplicity is the key-note of their interpretation (cf. figs. 18 and 19); not specific specialization of attribute, not mere utilitarian blazonry. In the betylæ-character is enough meaning to be worthy of the house of Yahveh. What shall be the definite aspect of the

example there. Originally these were surmounted by some kind of sacred symbol, perhaps bronze hawks. The bronze has stained the pillars. This gives an example of an Egyptian baetylic pillar *closely* analogous to Baal and Ashera masseboth in the stage where specialization is just beginning.

twin columns? I would not dare to say. The reconstruction given by Perrot and Chipiez meets any demand this line of interpretation can put upon them, as simple symbols of the androgynous, all-comprehending nature of Yahveh, god of Israel.⁹²

In the Temple of Solomon as in a museum there were ranged throughout tangible relics of all the stages through which the wor-



Fig. 18. PHOENICIAN
MARBLE PILLAR

26 in. high. Louvre. Perrot and Chipiez, *Phœnicia*, Vol. I, p. 131, fig. 72. Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*, pl. LXXX, fig. 7.

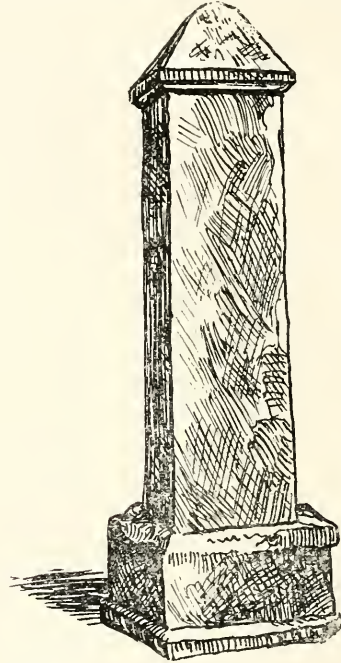


Fig. 19. PHOENICIAN PILLAR.
(Baal Pillar, Phallic.)

Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*, pl. LXXX. fig. 5.

ship of its God had grown, existing side by side. The exhibit of its most primitive stage is in Jachin and Boaz (divested of the latter-day skill with which the betylae-symbol had been clothed), the common element with all pillar-worship of the Semitic world.

⁹² "It is by no means impossible that the two words [Jachin and Boaz] were within, like talismanic graffiti by the Phœnician founders upon the columns. Let (God it) keep upright by (his) strength" and that in the course of time the two magic words were taken for the names of the columns by persons not very conversant with Phœnician matters." Renan, *Hist. of Israel*, vol. II.

III.

THE SACRED TREE.

The interior of the Temple showed no single stone, so thoroughly was it sheathed within. We read⁹³ that Solomon "carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without." There is grave and most legitimate doubt about the authenticity of all the passages which ascribe the sheathing of so much of the Temple



Fig. 20. ASSYRIAN "TREE OF LIFE."

From Layard, *Nineveh*. Plates. Also Perrot and Chipiez, *Chaldea and Assyria*. Vol. I, p. 213.

with gold,⁹⁴ but this need not rule out the carving of the wooden sheathing, which we would have every historical and archeological reason to expect and suspect if it had not been set forth in our accounts. Egyptian and Assyrian precedent combining in Phœnician usage, witnessed to in Mycenaean and Cyprian ruins (though very meagrely, it is true), seem altogether to give authority to this hypothesis.

⁹³ 1 Kings vi. 29; also Ezekiel xli. 18.

⁹⁴ Cf. Stade's and Benzinger's commentaries on passages, Stade, ZATW, iii, 140 ff.

The "palm trees" so repeatedly used must have been some form of the Assyrian "tree of life" (Fig. 20). And the conventional design, as I said before, can be only a palm-tree. Even to-day the peasants of Cyprus plait palm-withes in much the same form.

In Phœnicia the palmette is frequently met; but, true to its character as a borrowed motive, it is even more conventional than in Assyria and much simplified. This trend toward simplification brings out the residue of Egyptian form the Assyrian hand so remodeled and disguised (cf. Fig. 21). The stem has now become an archi-



Fig. 21. ALABASTER SLAB.

Louvre. Height 20 in. From Arados. Cf. Perrot and Chipiez, *Phœnicia and Cyprus*, Vol. I, p. 134, fig. 76.

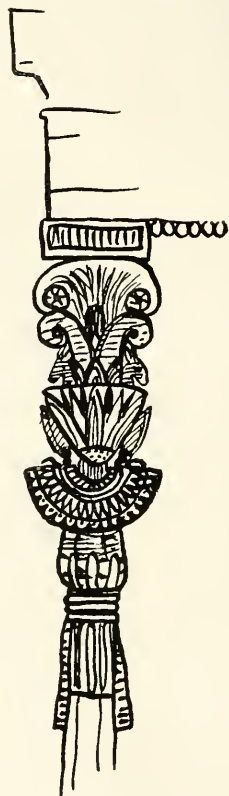


Fig. 22. FLORAL PILLAR.

Perrot and Chipiez, *Egypt*, Vol. II, p. 89, fig. 62.

tectonic column with rudimentary volutes, with four or five rigid leaves far removed indeed from the vegetable world; even more de-naturalized than its Mesopotamian model. Compare with this the elaborate Egyptian floral pillar here given (Fig. 22) as just as possible a prototype and ancestor of the Phœnician palmette as the Assyrian. Figure 21 might just as possibly be a simplification of Figure 22 as of Figure 20, though the Assyrian form is more clearly outlined in it.

I do not find the co-occurrence of palmettes and lotus flowers an anomaly, as some do. The Phœnician used the salient motives of his art-sources. The Egyptian lotus must therefore have been one of his most familiar units of design. The lotus blossoms ("lilies," "knops of flowers") might almost be part of the sacred tree, but the separate mention seems to indicate they were probably in a border above or below.

In the preceding section I pointed out the place in religious development that tree-worship occupied. The specialization of this out of the vaguer and more comprehensive betylae-worship (*bethelae*) marks a division of its scope. The formalization of sacred tree forms into mere mural ornamentation of stereotyped configuration marks a still later stage. In the centuries to which we are carried back by the earliest known Phœnician monuments, it is patent that the Phœnicians were no longer in a stage where their sole deities were rocks, trees, and pillars. These were thought of as images, local incarnations of a transcendent deity. Polytheism by the end of the Sidonian era was growing abstract, further removed from polydemonism; headed vaguely for the misty ideal of unity. Yet Phœnicia's scattered mode of living soon led this as yet tiny momentum toward abstraction to ally itself with the indifference that lack of intensity, concreteness and concentration incurred. The higher faith of her neighbors affected her not at all. So, although tree-worship was even at this time not unimportant in Egypt, and in the historic pedigree of Phœnicia's own Semitic past had played a great, if not a concretely and realistically pictured part, the sacred tree becomes for her workmen a mere ornamental stock-in-trade, most acceptable to tree-venerating customers. Hebrew tree-worship had been that common to all Canaan, bound up in the worship of betylae and ashera and groves. Artistic expression had been denied it, and by the time of the Temple when such artistic opportunity came, the content of the *symbol* had largely faded out of being. The decorative value appealed to the Tyrian architect and artisan, not the live significance; and it is doubtful if in this the Hebrews were much different. It was "groves" of *living* trees that meant something. The carved palm-trees on the walls, however, exhibited, museum-wise, another stage of Israelitish worship, a stage which even now existed in degenerate, specialized and perverted form in the near-by groves of Ashtoreth, those groves to which that heretical reversion to type so often brought unsteadfast Jews. The true faith of Yahveh had grown above it years ago.

XVI.

THE CHERUBIM.

The exact meaning of the word is doubtful; but the importance of the sacred beasts is hard to overestimate. The cherub persists throughout Hebrew history as the symbol or guardian of the holiest mysteries. Here in the Temple, we find cherubim on the walls and also (in the round) guarding the Ark of the Covenant in the Debir. As the cherub in the garden of Eden guarded the Tree of Life, so on the walls, carved Cherubim flanked the sacred trees.

The cherub seems to have been some kind of mythic griffin, composed of diverse traits chosen from well-known and respected animals. Lion characteristics, wings, "the face of a man," bull traits and features all seem to have fused in the ideal cherub. Probably, since fancy unchecked cannot keep stable, the cherub varied much from time to time. From a comparison of Isaiah i. 10 with Ezekiel x. 14, the algebraic cancellation of equals leaves the "face of a cherub" as the equivalent of that "of an ox." This I think was the predominant motive in the cherub.

If this be so, we are straightway again brought into that free exchange of ideals common throughout the Mediterranean basin. But first see what historic probability there is in the Hebrew race itself. The golden calf in the wilderness and the molten calves set up by Jeroboam in the Northern Kingdom so few years later (abolished by Josiah at Bethel in 640-609 B. C.) give good ground for believing the same symbol was not unknown between-times;— especially is this true since in both cases the worship seems naively to have been considered legitimate, to have been recognized as worship of Yahveh.

The notion has grown in late years that Yahveh was thought of as a bull-god in the original form of the nation's faith. In this case we have in the golden calf etc. another instance of that same reversion to type and primitive crudeness which the transcendentalists of Hebrew history always most bitterly combatted. It is not so much a mere example of primitive totemism as at first it seems. The bull-form had a spiritual reality at bottom. Israel was cradled, nurtured and educated to its maturity in the midst of bull-worshipping nations. It would be most unusual if this nation only should escape. The bull is the most natural emblem of generative force and sturdy strength to cattle-breeders, and such were all the half-Bedouin races of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The most obvious source of such a concept is Egyptian, the worship of the black Apis-bull of Osiris (Fig. 23), the so-called "bull of the West" who was considered as Osiris incarnate, and the worship of the white bull of Horus. The black Apis-bull was the answer to the demand that Hathor, the cow-goddess of the underworld, should have a masculine correlative to be complete. As a *cow*-goddess, she was stronger than Isis whose bovine partner was the Horus-bull. It is Hathor, the horned goddess with the sun-disk, who infers the existence of the bull of heaven, the bull-headed god

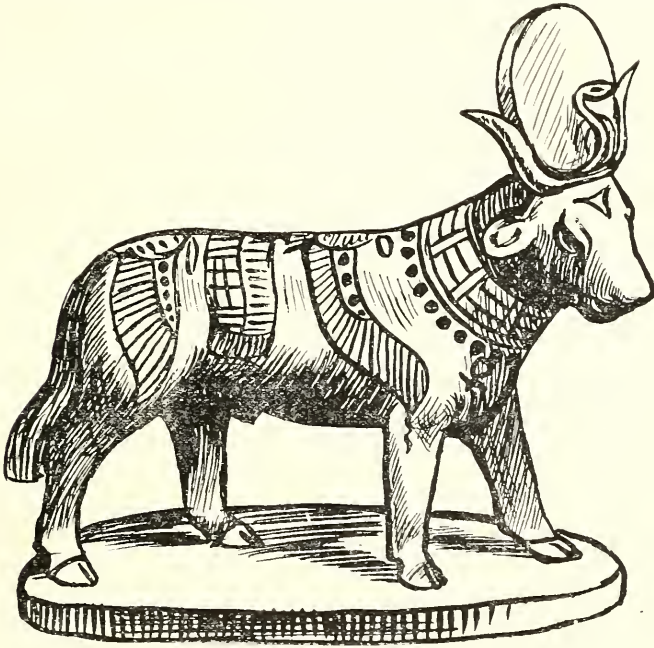


Fig. 23. BRONZE FIGURE OF APIS.

Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. I, p. 289.

most easily developed by the Hebrews into Yahveh, whose blood-cousin, though a black sheep of the family, was Moloch, also bull-horned.

In the Promised Land itself the influence of surrounding gods lent itself to the perpetuation of such an ideal. Not only was Moloch a bull-god,⁹⁵ but the Hittites also worshiped similar deities. In the remains of the mysterious Hittite palace at Euyuk there is a relief which shows a priest and priestess each with a hand lifted in adora-

⁹⁵ Cf. the Rabbis. Jarchi. on Jerem. vii. 31. Diodorus xx. 14.

tion to an image of a bull raised on a high pedestal with an altar before it.⁹⁶ Sandan, the Hittite Hercules, seems to have been considered as a bull-god.

Analogies multiply from all directions. Europa and the Zeus-bull, Ariadne and the Minotaur of Crete, Bacchus as a human-faced bull (Fig. 24); these on the Greek side via Crete and Mycenae with



Fig. 24. BACCHUS AS A HUMAN-FACED BULL.

Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*, pl. CXCII, fig. 9.

a residuum of unmodified primitive characteristics, unite with the Assyrian winged and human-headed sacred bull on common footing.

Horned gods and horned demons occur in many religions. The horn is the symbol of power, of super-humanity. Kings adopt it for their crowns, professing divine right and descent. "Minos was bull-god as well as king. At certain feasts, and notably at his royal



Fig. 25. THE HERO GILGAMESH AND SACRED BULLS.

From the Chalcedony Seal as early as 3d millennium B. C. Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*.

marriage, he wore a bull's mask, and his queen perhaps a cow's mask." The ruins of Cnossos are replete with horn-emblems and bull-masks. Legendary heroes and mythical demigods are adorned with horned caps or sprouting horns (cf. fig. 25). The Assyrian pantheon looks ridiculously like the stanchions of a well-stocked cattle-farm.

⁹⁶ W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus and Armenia*, I, pp. 393-395; Perrot and Chipiez, IV, 623, 656, 666, 672; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, pp. 42-50.

The bull-characteristics of the Cherub are the manifestation of Yahveh's own past.⁹⁷

To the bull-form of the cherub were added wings. This likewise is a custom of long standing. In the very earliest strata of Cyprus, races which date from about 1000 to the middle of the sixth century B. C. (Græco-Phœnician) the juxtaposition of heraldic birds and holy trees or flowers is very frequent. They even seem some-

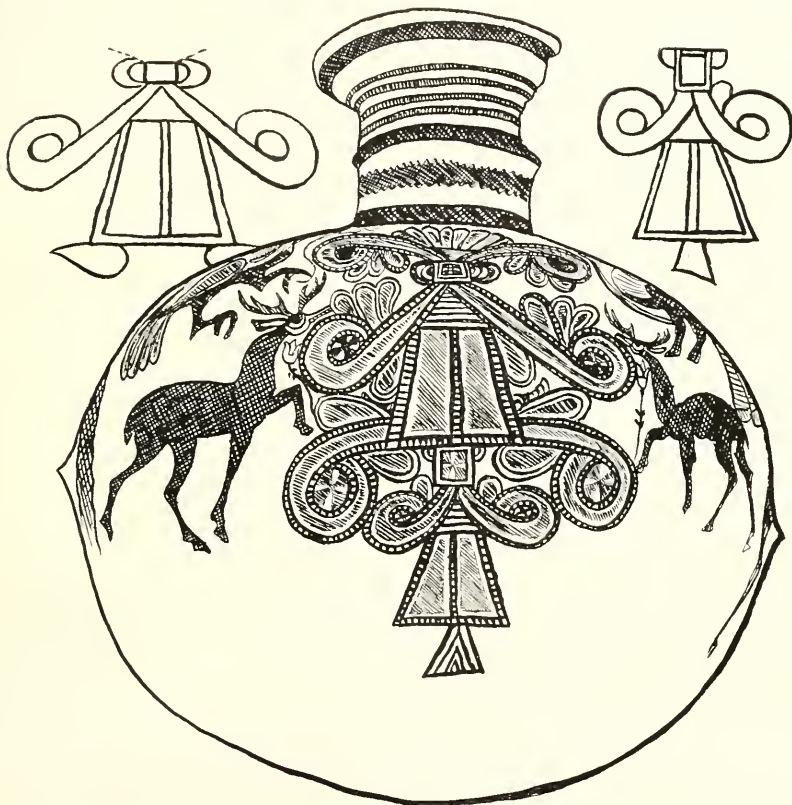


Fig. 26. VASE FROM KITION.

Ohnefalsch-Richter, *Kypros, the Bible and Homer*, pl. LXXIX.

times to be adoring a holy tree; perhaps holy birds were reared and kept in the grove of a divinity who was worshiped under the semblance of a natural or artificial tree. This finding of birds in the function of the later cherubim and guardian bulls of Assyria or in the position of Egyptian sphinxes (whose attitude toward the central pillar is purely decorative, shown by the generality of cases in which

⁹⁷ Gen. xlix. 24 seems to call Yahveh the Bull of Jacob.

the animals are back to back) makes the fusion of characteristics easy, once the character of their act is fused. Wings are the relics of such representations.

Figure 26 shows an interesting piece of Cyprian pottery of the earliest date where both beast and bird are adoring the ashera-tree (which also seems to be in a state of evolution into human form).

The taste for figures put face to face is Assyrian rather than Egyptian, and Phœnicia almost never chooses to place its mythic beasts in any but fronting poses. The famous Lion Gate at Mycenæ is duplicated by numberless seals, paterae and glyptics. This is the position which has meaning; the other has none but ornamental intent. The flanking animals give prominence and impressiveness



Fig. 27. A PILLAR WITH GRIFFIN SUPPORTERS.

From Mycenæ. Tsuntas, "Μυκῆναι," pl. V, fig. 6. Tsuntas and Manatt, *Myc. Age*, p. 254, fig. 131. Furtwangler, *Ant. Gemm.*, Vol. III, p. 44, fig. 18. Evans, *Myc. Tree and Pillar Cult*, p. 60, fig. 36.

to the ashera or pillar they support. Most of the detail on the betylæ of Phœnicia is permeated by the inevitable and concomitant satellites, who are their watchdogs. The Egyptian sphinx and the Phœnician griffin (Fig. 27) merge with the Assyrian winged bull into the function of the cherub, and duplicate his known characteristics. The Assyrian bull is certainly the noblest and most dignified forefather the most "blue-stocking" cherub could long for. His calm majesty and massive power make him truly a fit guardian for any sacred Tree of Life. (Fig. 28.)

This brings me to a brief consideration of the symbolism of the cherub.

The undifferentiated pillar grew to be a pair, which each in turn specialized its sexual significance. The Ashera-pillar we found to have become phallic, answering the call of the all-mother, Astarte. The sacred tree on the walls of the temple manifests the development simple beatylic worship (exemplified in Jachin and Boaz) has reached on the feminine side. The masculine momentum towards

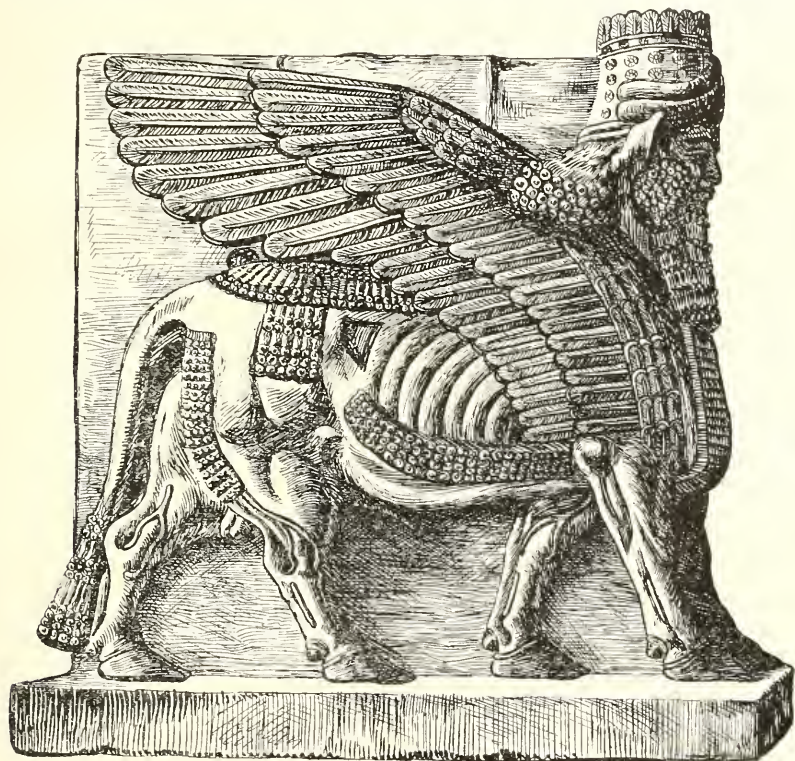


Fig. 28. WINGED BULL FROM KHORSABAD.

Perrot and Chipiez, *Babylonia and Assyria*.

phallicism does not in Semitic religion become over-frank or primary ; but it develops with much vigor in secondary or veiled forms. This the bull-worship seems to be. Baal-Peor,⁹⁸ the god of the Moabites and Midianites, seems to have enshrined this principle. Some scholars even go so far as to create out of the name Peor-Apis the Greek name Priapus. The Apis-bull soon came to be considered identical

⁹⁸ Numbers xxv. 1-2 etc.; Hosea ix. 16 etc.

with Baal, and Yahveh as a Baal must have held more than a modicum of this idea. In Phœnicia phallicism was attached to the sun-cult of Adonis-Tammuz and Isis-Ashtoreth-Venus. But the ideal of *strength* seems to have been the backbone of the deification. Masculinity does not imply sensuality—but develops the consideration of qualities such as reliability (cf. the covenant where Yahveh “abideth faithful”), war-power and physical strength. As such Yahveh need not be ashamed to own his symbol, the simple metaphor which these child people could easily visualize and understand.

XVII.

Primitive religion is interesting more than for its own sake. Its intrinsic value must be in the contribution it makes to the philosophy of history. Every day of modern times makes the fact of evolution become more and more the fibre of our thought. But the wonder likewise grows. God even is content to let his children grow to knowledge of him through such imperfect visions of his reality as these we have been studying. The main thing is, they *grow*. And growth must be upward; if upward it is toward the perfection he has set as the ideal of perfect knowledge of him as Love. The ideal of a loving God is undreamed of in these dim ages, in the ideals the Temple embodied; brought from the desert wanderings to be spiritualized through stress and disappointment into Messianic hope, which even so did not hope for the Truth as Christ revealed it in our midst. We may not say, however, that this half-faith was valueless. In the eyes of the Lord, to whom “a thousand years are as a day, and a day as a thousand years,” as being the promise of perfection, it was priceless. Israel was his chosen people. However near the wilderness the Temple may have stood, it faced the East where the dawn was breaking.

“Well, you must know, there lies
 Something, the Curé says, that points to mysteries
 Above our grasp: a huge stone pillar, once upright,
 Now laid at length, half-lost, discreetly shunning sight
 I’ the brush and brier, because of stories in the air—
 Hints what it signified, and why was stationed there,
 Once on a time. In vain the Curé tasked his lungs—
 Showed, in a preachment, how, at bottom of the rungs
 O’ the ladder, Jacob saw, where heavenly angels slept
 Up and down, lay a stone which served him, while he slept,
 For pillow; when he woke, he set the same upright
 As pillar, and a-top poured oil: things requisite

To instruct posterity, "there mounts from floor to roof
 A staircase, earth to heaven: *And also put in proof*
When we have scaled the sky, we well may let alone
What raised us from the ground, and,—Paying to the stone
Proper respect, of course,—take staff and go our way,
Leaving the pagan night for Christian break of day.

.....
*Thus preached the Curé and no jot*
The more persuaded people but that, which once a thing
Meant and had right to mean, it still must mean.....

..... You spire, you keep erect
 Yonder, and pray beneath, is nothing, I suspect.
 But just the symbol's *self* expressed in slate for rock,
 Art's smooth for nature's rough, new chip from the old block!"⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Robert Browning, "Fifine at the Fair," lines 2102-2119, 2125-8, 2152-5.