

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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CONTENTS:

<i>Frontispiece.</i> Anubis Ushering the Dead into the Presence of Osiris.	
<i>Anubis, Seth, and Christ.</i> The Significance of the "Spott-Crucifix."—The Religious Significance of the Ass.—The Lead Tablets of the Via Appia. With Illustrations from Egyptian and Roman Archæology. EDITOR	65
<i>Ethical Culture Versus Ethical Cult.</i> DR. MONCURE D. CONWAY, New York City	98
<i>The Need of a Civil Service Academy.</i> The HON. CHARLES CARROLL BONNEY, President of the World's Fair Congresses of 1893	106
<i>The Hebrew Conception of Animals.</i> The COUNTESS MARTINENGO, Salo, Lago di Garda, Italy	110
<i>F. Max Müller and the Religious Parliament.</i> LADY BLENNERHASSETT in the "Deutsche Rundschau"	115
<i>The Crisis in China as Seen by a Chinaman.</i> TAN TEK SOON	118
<i>Smith's Teaching of Elementary Mathematics</i>	120
<i>A Psycho-Physical Laboratory in the Department of the Interior</i>	121
<i>Fink's Brief History of Mathematics</i>	122
<i>Book Reviews</i>	124

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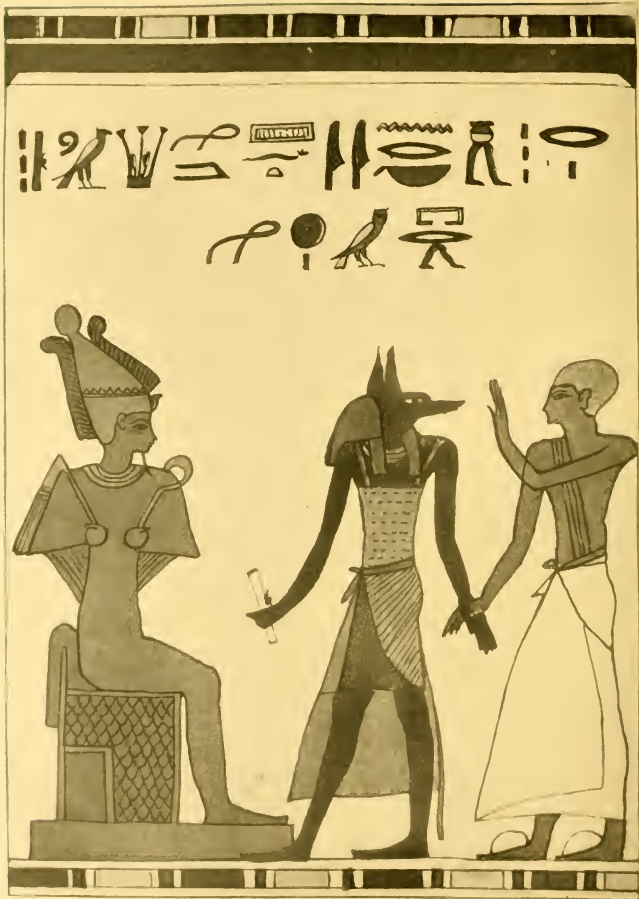
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ANUBIS USHERING THE DEAD INTO THE PRESENCE OF OSIRIS.

[After a colored facsimile of a picture in the *Book of the Dead*, by Pleyte.]

The early Christians of Egypt identified Anubis with Christ on account of his relation to the preservation and resurrection of the dead. See page 66.

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ANUBIS, SETH, AND CHRIST.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "SPOTT-CRUCIFIX."

BY THE EDITOR.

THE famous wall-scribbling with the donkey-headed deity attached to a cross which was discovered in one of the servants'



ANUBIS WEIGHING THE HEART IN THE HALL OF JUDGMENT.
From the Papyrus of Ani. (After Budge's colored facsimile.)¹

rooms of the imperial household in Rome was discussed in *The Open Court* for November 1899. We recapitulated the current

¹Anubis adjusts the tongue of the balance, the construction of which is quite noteworthy. A feather, the emblem of truth and symbol of the goddess Maat, serves him for a weight. Ani's soul,

opinions concerning it, among which two are most prominent, viz., first, the view of most Christian archæologists that it is the work of a pagan slave done in ridicule of a Christian fellow slave, hence the name *Spotcrucifix* by which it is commonly known, and secondly the view of Mr. King who believes it to be the expression of Gnostic piety, not drawn to ridicule any one's religion, but to express the author's own sentiments. He claims that the head is not the head of a donkey, but of a jackal, and that it represents the jackal-headed Anubis, attached to a cross.

ANUBIS.

We grant that Anubis was a Deity that played a most important part not only in the religion of ancient Egypt but also in the imagination of the early Christians of Egypt who identified him with Christ, on account of his relation to the preservation and



THE MUMMY AT THE TOMB PROTECTED BY ANUBIS.¹

resurrection of the dead. His picture frequently appears in the papyri (called *The Book of the Dead*) that accompanied the mummies into the tomb, or as the Egyptians called their last abode, *pa l'etta*, i. e., the everlasting house.

Anubis is frequently represented as standing by the bier, sometimes with one hand on the mummy. He presides over the process of embalming and then ushers the dead into the presence of Osiris. He weighs the heart of the deceased in the Judgment Hall; and thus his assistance is, next to that of Osiris and of Horus, indispensable for obtaining the boon of resurrection of the body.

in the shape of a human-headed hawk, watches the procedure. Underneath the left arm of the balance stands the genius of Ani's Destiny, above whose head appears a figure called *mesken*, and described as a cubit with a human head. It is some representative of man's embryonic existence and the conditions of his birth. Further to the left are the two goddesses Renenet and Meskenet who preside over the birth chamber and the nursery.

¹Wiedemann, *Rel. of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 237.



MUMMY OF ARTEMIDORUS.¹

¹ Fourth century, A. D. (From Budge, *The Mummy*, Plate facing p. 186.)

² Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 228.

³ Naville, *Todtenb.*, I., p. 174.



ANUBIS.

Torso in the Berlin Museum.²



ANUBIS AT THE BIER.³

The belief in Anubis as the Saviour from death everlasting, among the early Christians, is established by a Coptic plaque described by Mr. E. A. Wallis Budge of the British Museum, which on the obverse represents Anubis, jackal-headed, by the side of a woman's bier, while the reverse bears in Coptic the inscription "May she hasten to arise."¹

How long the belief in the efficacy of Egyptian symbols was preserved appears from their prevalence on mummies even as late as the fourth century of the Christian era. The mummy of Artemidorus (No. 21810 of the British Museum) shows on its surface Anubis at the bier placing his right hand on the mummy and holding



ANUBIS.

From Egyptian Monuments.

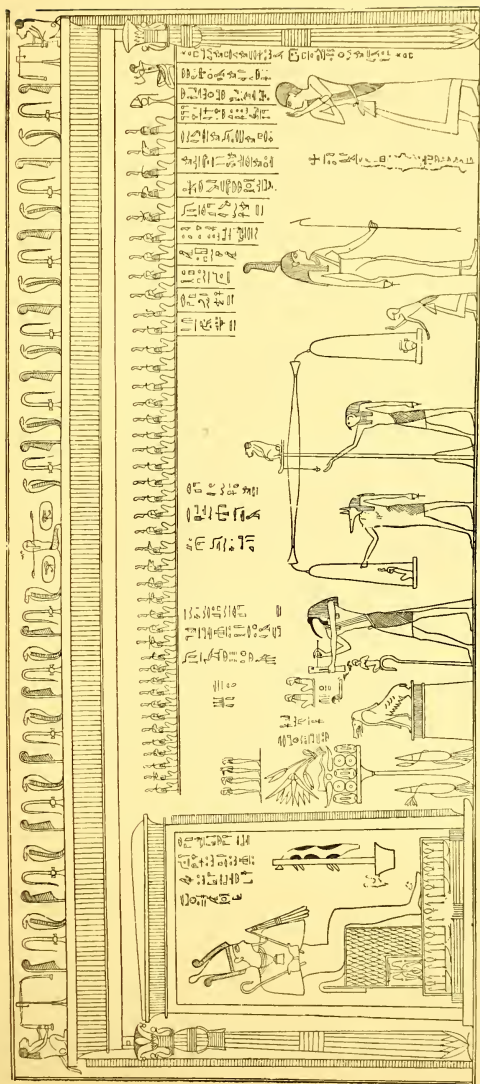


THE JACKAL-HEADED ANUBIS.

Gnostic Gem. (From Walsh.)

up with his left hand the heart. The reinsertion of the heart by Anubis, after it has been found to have the right weight when weighed in the balance of Truth, is an important condition for the restoration of life. Isis, the wife of Osiris, and Nephthys, the wife of Seth, stand on either side. Further down we see the hawk-headed Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, the avenger of his father's death, and the Ibis-headed Thoth, the scribe of the gods, who assists in the act of weighing the heart in the Judgment Hall. Underneath,

¹The plaque is preserved in the British Museum, registered as No. 22874. See Budge, *The Mummy*, pp. 279-280. We regret that a picture of the plaque has not been furnished.



OSIRIS.

AMEMIT,
the beast
of Ament.

THOTH,
the scribe
of the gods.

HOR.

MA,
the goddess
of Truth.

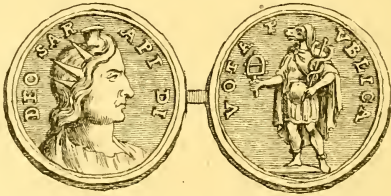
THE DECEASED.

THE WEIGHING OF THE HEART IN THE HALL OF TRUTH. (After Lepsius's reproduction of the Turin papyrus.)

the soul in the shape of a hawk-headed bird visits the mummy, which awakens from the slumber of death and is seen to sit upright.

The belief in Anubis as the saviour from death everlasting became so common in the Roman empire that coins were struck which show on their obverse Serapis, and on their reverse Anubis holding in one hand a sistrum, in the other the staff of Hermes, used by this "leader of souls" for guiding the shades of the dead down to Hades.

There are several gods who were identified by the early Christians with Christ. Anubis is one of them. Others are Osiris the god who suffered death, Hor the Child, the Greek Harpocrates, and T'oth, the scribe of the gods, the incarnation of the word. The syncretism of the age at the beginning of the Christian era was such that for all we know the conception of any one of these deities might have been, and in a certain way all of them actually were, at times fused with the Christian idea of a saviour. Mr. King's



ROMAN COIN WITH SERAPIS AND ANUBIS. (Walsh, No. 28.)

ingenious hypothesis is thus in itself quite probable; and yet he is mistaken, for the wall-scribbling refers not to the jackal-headed Anubis, but to the ass-headed Seth—a deity whose relations to ancient Semitic religions and to the faith of the early Christians is of a different nature.

In Gnostic pictures Anubis is so similar to Seth that it seems difficult to distinguish between the two gods, but in the present case the evidence is of another nature and too strong to be set aside lightly.

Professor Richard Wünsch, a German archæologist, through a systematic investigation of lead tablets containing Sethian curses, has succeeded in solving the problem of the *Spotterucifix*. He has published his investigations in a booklet entitled *Sethianische Verfluchungstafeln aus Rom* (Teubner, Leipzig), and we take pleasure here in calling attention to the results of his lucubrations, for they actually solve the problem of the scrawled crucifix of the Palatium.

SETH.

Before we enter into the details of the case set forth by Professor Wünsch, a brief explanation of the nature of the ancient god Seth—who is also called Set, Sut, and Sutech—will be in place.

Seth is in many respects a more important god than Anubis, but his character changed during the various periods of Egyptian history. His worship as one of the great gods can be traced back to as early a date as the fifth dynasty, and he remained until the



HOREMHEB PROTECTED BY SETH AND HOR.¹
(King Horemheb lived in the fourteenth century B. C.)

nineteenth dynasty so popular that kings of that period frequently call themselves "beloved of Seth." He represented the Sun in the South and apparently symbolised its destructive powers. He was the god of war, of victory, of conquest. But the time came when the Hyksos, foreign invaders of Semitic origin, took possession of Lower Egypt; and these formidable foes worshipped a god who was identified with Seth and symbolised by the same emblems.

¹Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, III., 122, a. (Speos of Gebel Addeh, Nubia); cf. Wiedemann, *R. A. E.*, p. 222.



SETH TEACHING THE KING THE ART OF WAR. (After Erman.)



TWO WAYS OF SPELLING
SETH IN HIERO-
GLYPHS.



SPHINX OF TANIS.
(Louvre, No. 23, Paris.)



A STATUE OF SETH, PRESERVED
IN THE LEYDEN MUSEUM.¹

¹The figure is very small, and as here reproduced is about one-half its real size. After Pleyte, *loc. cit.*, Plate III., 1

animal and vegetable forms which have shaped themselves in natural conditions of pendency. Modified by the various stresses and strains imposed by interferent conditions, and antagonised occasionally by molecular and tensional forces of superior power, it has in its multiple variations naturally furnished the ground form for the development of all animate nature.

It is the generalised conic section, thus, that Mr. Cooke has adopted as the most natural fundamental line. The ellipse seems to be the form best suited to his purposes, and its quadrant is chosen as the elementary line having the same value as the straight



N. B. The attached pages are to be substituted in the January 1901 *Open Court* for pages 35 and 36, in which one of the cuts was accidentally inverted during printing.



THE CATENARY, OR CURVE FORMED BY A HANGING CHAIN.

The center of gravity of the entire mass tends to seek its lowest possible point,—a physical fact by which the mathematical peculiarities of the curve are determined.

line and the arc of a circle, completing the alphabet of linear form and constituting the missing element of outline—the line of life, development, and of movement.

As to the non-coincidence of the mathematical properties of the curves considered, he seems to be unconcerned. The characteristic which he seeks in his new element is *gradation*. His sole request is that one end of his line should be nearly straight, and that the remainder should gradually curve more and more towards the other end. It performs various mathematical eccentricities: if set free, it continues to curve or coil until it becomes a spiral, the form of shells. Yet it is the curve of natural movement, the

curve which the child is compelled to make by the very structure of his arms,—the curve of Greek art. When produced by continuous rapid and repeated action freely from the shoulder, and with non-resisting materials, it is performed happily, freely and spontaneously. It is the expression of the child's own impressions, thought, or feeling; it is in perfect subjective and artistic harmony with the characteristic form of living things; it is thus the counterpart of nature.

The graduated curve, rapid free movement, the use of non-resisting materials, repetition, these are the foundation.

"We should draw out power by doing. The child shows how it can be done. It goes rapidly over and over, round and round. Repetition is just what is wanted, and this is delightful to the child, for it is natural to the structure and movement of the arms, and pleasant to its senses. The rapid movement is the innovation; it is opposed to all our established tradition. But we go to nature; this is her direction. We have no choice; we must follow, and we soon find it is right. All motion is subject to law. Skating and cycling are quicker than walking, but are not less direct. The rapid motion of the potter's wheel and the lathe assist materially to make the form produced. The child who makes lines at first with such intense concentration of energy at its finger tips and pencil point that the paper is cut through, is wasting power and reversing the method of nature; which seems to be rapid movement and non-resisting materials, or soft clay should be given and incised lines made in it with a hard point.

"Freehand often means cramped fingers and indirect drawing—fifty little touches to a line five inches long, rubbed out, perhaps twenty times, in parts and patched up. The whole arm is used by the child when scribbling, and its structure shows it is well adapted for this free action and for graduated curvature. Rapid action over a smooth surface is more easily directed and controlled than a slow movement, deeply incised in the substance of the paper. There is less resistance and more help from bodily structure and the mechanical movement.

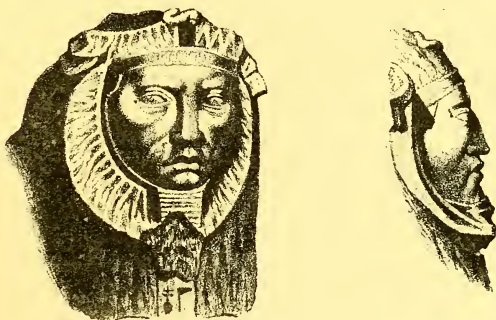
"Non-resisting materials the child selects, and the pavement artist knows their value. The misty window-pane, the sea-shore sand, the wet finger-tip, the leading of water over a smooth surface are some of the child's suggestions. Chalk and blackboard, brush and color, charcoal or colored chalk on paper we can adopt. Brush and water on the blackboard are the readiest materials for us: whatever can be most easily used should be used; drawing in the air with the finger tip is not to be despised."

We have here the first intimation of the character of brush-drawing, proper. "The history of drawing with a brush, as distinguished from painting, is not yet written. Engraving, etching, and pen-drawing—all products of a firm point—have their literature; but the work of the soft, flexible brush-point, with its many and varied powers, is hardly known outside the region of technical art." It is the chief instrument in some kinds of lithography, and it was recommended and practised in a measure by Ruskin and Rosetti. But the analysis of the full powers of the brush in edu-

Seth appears on the monuments as the instructor of kings in the art of warfare, and also, in the company with Hor, as a protector of the dead in their peregrinations in the life beyond.

In Tanis and other cities of Lower Egypt Seth was called "the Beloved of Râ," "the Son of Nût" (the goddess of the sky;) and "the Mighty One in the Sunbark." Far from being identified with the serpent Apep, he was believed to be her enemy and slayer.

Since the Osiris myth is supposed to be too well known in Egypt to need any recapitulation and is only alluded to in the Monuments, we possess only a second-hand account of it in Plutarch's book on Isis and Osiris,¹ and, so far as can be judged from the evidence within reach at the present time, there is no way of telling whether or not the myth was different in its ancient form.



ONE OF THE FOUR SPHINXES OF TANIS.²

It is not impossible that the part played in it by Seth, was originally not as it was told in the days of Plutarch, having changed since the invasion and expulsion of the Hyksos.

It is noteworthy that one of the Sphinxes in Lower Egypt, bears the features of a decidedly Semitic, not an Egyptian face. The Semites must have greatly influenced Egyptian civilisation during the Hyksos period in artistic taste as well as in religious ceremonial; but on the other hand, Egyptian thought left a permanent impression upon Semitic views of life and we can no longer doubt that it constituted also one of the most important factors in the formation of Judaism, the noblest efflorescence of the Semitic race.

¹ Chaps. xii-xx.

² It is noteworthy that the face of this Sphinx, representing the God of the Hyksos, shows decidedly Asiatic, not Egyptian, features. The name "Seth" which occurred in the inscription has here, as in many other places, been effaced. Cf. Pleyte, pp. 39 ff.

In Egypt the worship of Seth gradually became unpopular, which change is perhaps due to the fact that he was the god of the hated foreigners, and perhaps also to the rôle he plays in Egyptian mythology as the murderer of Osiris, the good god who dwelt on earth as a man among men, a teacher of morality and as the inventor of civilisation. We know that in the period between the twenty-second and the twenty-fifth dynasty Seth-worship was abandoned; his statues were destroyed and his effigies on the monuments erased. He became the personification of evil and was regarded as the fiend of mankind.

Although Seth was in a certain sense deprived of his divinity, he remained an important god, for he continued to be credited with the power to work mischief. In this capacity he was on the one hand feared and probably propitiated, while on the other hand he was invoked by conjurers for the purpose of doing harm to enemies and rivals.



SETH.

(After Brugsch.)

Seth is commonly represented as having a peculiar, longsnouted animal-head with erect square-cornered ears. It is by some regarded as the head of an oryx, by others as that of an ass. In either case it would have to be considered as a deteriorated representation which has become typical. The ass is sacred to Seth, but though the god is said to be ass-headed, it is only in the later days of Gnostic syncretism that he is plainly pictured as such.

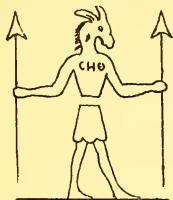
Considering the fact that Seth was the chief deity of the Hyksos, the tradition which accuses the Semites and especially the Jews of having worshipped an ass-headed deity acquires the aspect of having had some basis in historical fact.

Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 4) tells the story of Moses discovering water by following the tracks of asses in the desert, which, he says, caused the Jews to worship that animal. The genealogy of Mary (quoted by Epiphanius) contains the story of Zacharias, the high-priest, beholding in the sanctuary of the temple, the deity of the Jews with an ass's head. He was struck dumb, and when he recovered his speech he told the people and was killed as a blasphemer.¹ Hence-

¹ The death of Zacharias plays an important part in the imagination of the Jews and is frequently referred to in rabbinical as well as patristic literature. (See Hofmann, *Leben Jesu*, pp. 138-139.) Zacharias, the son of Barachias, mentioned by Jesus (Matthew xxiii. 35 and Luke xi. 51) is sometimes identified with Zacharias, the son of Jojada, whose martyr death is narrated in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20-21. But Jesus apparently alludes to an event of recent date speaking of the

forth, it is stated, the Jewish priests wore bells on their garments to warn their deity of their approach and offer him time to hide.

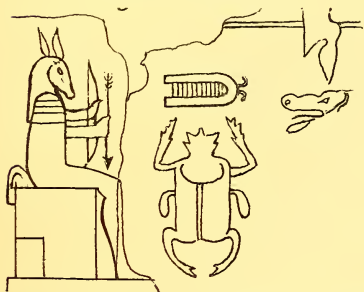
That Seth or Typhon (as the Greek called the ass-headed god of Egypt) had some relation to the religion of the inhabitants of



SETH WITH TWO LANCES.
A demotic papyrus of late date.
(Leyden, No. 385.)¹



PICTURE ON AN AMULET, PRESU-
MABLY REPRESENTING SETH AND ANUBIS.
(Leyden Museum.)



SETH AS PICTURED ON VIGNETTES OF A GNOSTIC FUNERARY PAPYRUS. (Leyden.)

latest case of martyrdom and seems to assume that the fact is still remembered by his contemporaries. Concerning the cause of the martyrdom of Zacharias, there are different versions, the wildest among which is the above alluded to fantastic tale, quoted from the *Γέννα Μαρτίας* by Ephiphanius. According to other traditions Zacharias was slain at the behest of Herod (Epiph., *De vita prophetarum*; cf. Petrus Alexandrinus, can. 13, *ap. Lab.*, tom. I., Conc. p. 967). Jerome states as an apocryphal legend that Zacharias was killed by the Jews, viz., the people (Hier. *ad Matth.* 23, 35) and Gregory of Nyssa claims that the cause of it had been the wrath of the Jews at Zacharias because he had admitted Mary, the mother of Jesus, to the place of virgins in the temple. (Greg. Nyssen, *In hom. de nativ. domini*; cf. Orig. *Hom 26 in Matth.*; Cyrill. Alex., *ap. Anthropomorphitas*; Basil. *Hom. 25*; Theophylact. Euthymius, *Ad I. Matth.*)

The Rabbis made frequent mention of the death of Zacharias, the son of Jojada. The literature on the subject being collected by Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr. ad Matth. xxiii. 35 and Luke xi. 51*, and Eisenmenger, *Entd. Judenth.*, I., p. 469.

According to one tradition (Tract. *Gittin*) we are told that when Jerusalem was conquered by the Romans the petrified blood of Zacharias, slain between the temple and the altar, began to boil until all the priests, judges, and nobles of the people had been killed, and there is a strong probability that at the time when Jesus lived the legend was current concerning the same affair that the blood of the martyr could not be wiped away and would remain until the crime be expiated.

¹ See also François Salvolini, *Campagne de Ramses le Grand*, pl. I., 32, discussed, pp. 21-22

Paestine is corroborated by Plutarch, who says that Typhon after his struggle with Hor fled on a donkey northward where seven days after his flight he founded Jerusalem and Judea. Plutarch adds: "This history obviously refers to the affairs of the Israelites." Mr. W. Pleyte of Leyden makes the following comment to this passage:

"In this legend we discover the combination of three things: (1) the expulsion of the Hyksos with the flight of Typhon (Seth); (2) the deliverance of the Israelites with the flight of Typhon; and (3) the conquest of Canaan by the Hyksos or the Israelites with the foundation of Jerusalem and Judea."

It is quite probable that the Israelites, when leaving Egypt, carried with them many customs and institutions from the land of the Nile. We know that, in spite of the opposition of the prophets, they were addicted to the cult of Baal, who is frequently identified with Seth and was worshipped like the latter with human sacrifices.

A donkey (as Plutarch tells us) was sacrificed in Coptos by being thrown down from a precipice, and the inhabitants of Busiris and Lycopolis abstained from the use of trumpets because their sound resembled the braying of the ass.

THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASS.

Concerning the significance of the ass, Mr. Pleyte adds:

"The legend of this animal which Tacitus has handed down to us is probably of Samaritan origin. This people rendered homage to the god Tartak,¹ which, according to the Talmud,² was represented with the head of an ass, and was a divinity in some way related to Adra-Melech, or Mars-Melech. The Israelites worshipped him in common with the Samaritans, as is intelligible, and we find still more ancient traces of his cult in the Pentateuch. As to the redemption of the first-born, we find a remarkable exception in favor of animals to the effect that the firstling of an ass, like the firstling of man, may be redeemed by another animal; but if the firstling be not redeemed, his neck is to be broken.³ This was probably done as at Coptos, where, as we know, it was the custom to hurl an ass from the top of a precipitous rock. This commandment was given twice.⁴

"The respect shown for the ass was widespread in the Orient. Either the fecundity or the salaciousness of this animal was at the foundation of this cult. The Medes and Persians sacrificed him

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 31.

² Talmud, Sanhedrin, fol. 63.

³ Exodus xxxiv. 20.

⁴ Exodus xiii. 13.

to Mars.¹ Apollo² could boast of hecatombs of asses sacrificed in the country of the Hyperboreans.

“By reason of his reddish color, the ass received from the Hebrews the name of Chamor, and as such the offering which was made of him became connected with that of the red heifer. In Greece we find him in the Dionysian Mysteries, and among the Romans in the worship of Vesta, where a garroted ass is represented upon an offering of bread and where a phallus was carried in the procession.

“These pagan cults passed later into the Church, where we meet with the festivals of the asses which flourished in the Middle Ages in France, Spain, and Germany. A caparisoned ass mounted by a young girl was conducted with great ceremony before the altar, and during the mass chants were sung which terminated with an imitation of the braying of an ass. Instead of giving the benediction, the priest brayed three times, which the congregation repeated by way of Amen. A great number of saints are represented as mounting asses, and they are also found in the pilgrimages.³

“The ass even took higher rank than other animals and was more highly favored in proceedings at law. According to the Sardinian Code for the year 1395, crimes committed by oxen and heifers were punished with death. But to the ass great clemency was shown. Condemned for the first time, he lost an ear; for the second time, he lost his other ear; and the third time he was caught in a criminal act, he was confiscated to the prince.⁴

“Festivals of asses were connected with the festival of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It became part of the policy of the Church to preserve pagan festivals by investing them with a Christian significance; yet it is remarkable that this festival was celebrated in the month of December and that further a young girl [with a baby in her arms] was mounted on an ass. Both were derived from the same nature-worship. It is difficult to determine what relation these festivals bore to the feasts of the tabernacles among the Hebrews. The Dionysian Mysteries greatly resembled the latter festivals, which exhibit distinctively pronounced characteristics of a religion of nature.”⁵

Dionysos, the god who makes his entry on a donkey is called

¹ Strabo, XV., 2.

² Pindar, *Pyth.*, X., 31.

³ Nork, *Biblische Mythologie*, II., p. 398.

⁴ C. W. Opzoomer, *De dieren voor den rechter* (Animals Before the Judge).

⁵ See W. Pleyte, *La Religion des Pré-Israelites*, pp. 151-152.

Sibazios, a name which can very well be a Græcisation of the Semitic word Sabaoth.

The ceremony of the ass's festival mentioned by Pleyte is described in Floegel-Ebeling's *Geschichte des Grotesk-Komischen*, page 205. When the burlesque mass was finished the whole congregation sang a hymn, half Latin and half French, in honor of the ass. This hymn is still preserved in a manuscript at the National Library at Paris together with its melody, and reads as follows :

" Orientis partibus
Adventavit Asinus ;
Pulcher et fortissimus,
Sarcinis aptissimus,
Hez, Sire Asnes, car chantez,
Belle bouche rechignez,
Vous aurez du foin assez,
Et de l'avoine à plantez.

" Lentus erat pedibus,
Nisi foret baculus,
Et eum in clunibus
Pungeret aculeus.
Hez, Sire Asnes etc.

" Hic in collibus Sichem
Jam nutritus sub Ruben,
Transiit per Jordanem,
Saliit in Bethlehem,
Hez, Sire Asnes etc.

" Ecce magnis auribus
Subjugalis filius
Asinus egregius,

Asinorum dominus.
Hez, Sire Asnes etc.

" Saltu vincit hinnulos,
Damas et capreolos,
Super Dromedarios
Velox Madianeos.
Hez etc.

" Aurum de Arabia,
Thus et myrrham de Saba
Tulit in ecclesia
Virtus asinaria.
Hez etc.

" Dum trahit vehicula
Multa cum sarcinula,
Illius mandibula.
Dura terit papula
Hez etc.

" Cum aristius hordeum
Comedit et carduum ;
Triticum a palea
Segregat in area.
Hez etc.

" Amen discas Asine,
Jam satur de gramine.
Amen, Amen itera,
Aspernare vetera.
Hez va Hez va ! Hez va Hez !
Bialx Sire Asnes car allez ;
Belle bouche car chantez."

The ass was trained to kneel when the *Amen* was sung.

M. Pleyte, in concluding his remarks regarding the worship of the ass, says :

" It is very difficult to determine whether the Israelites rendered homage to their god under this form, but it is well known that Josephus repudiates the accusation that they ever rendered

homage in their sanctuary to the head of a golden ass. He writes to the following effect:¹ 'The accusation of Posidonius and Apollonius that the Jews had placed and actually worshipped in their sanctuary the head of an ass, which was cast out of the temple, is an infamous lie, as is also the assertion of Apion that when Antiochus despoiled the sanctuary, he saw that the ass's head was made of gold.' M. Movers believes that this head, if it existed, came originally from the temple of Typhon. If this opinion have any foundation, and if we may assume that this head was preserved in the temple, it is very probable that the Israelites rendered homage to Seth in this form."

The protest of Josephus proves the fact, otherwise well established, that the Jews of his age had completely adopted the pure monotheism of the prophets as enforced by the priestly reformers of the second temple. They no longer knew anything of the former polytheism of Israel. If we had to rely on the testimony of educated Jews of the time of Christ, men like Philo, we should have to repudiate many facts now well established by Assyriological researches, excavations, and a careful study of the text of the Bible. Josephus would also have denied the originally pagan significance of the pillars Jachin and Boas (found also in Phœnician temples) of the molten sea (found also in Babylonian temples where it represents Tiamat, the mythical figure of the aboriginal watery chaos, called תַּיַמַּת in Hebrew, which is the same word as Tiamat), of the seven-armed candlestick (representing the seven planets), of the brazen serpent, etc. He would most probably deny that men like David and other national heroes danced pagan dances, or tolerated such idols as the Teraphim. Thus his protest, while proving nothing as to the positive facts in the case, only serves to record the statement made by some Greek authors that a golden ass's head was taken from the sanctuary of Jerusalem by Antiochus.

In Minutius Felix's Christian apology entitled Octavius the same belief of the pagans that the Christians worshipped a donkey-headed [*ὄνειδος*] God is referred to; a fact which is also corroborated by Tertullian, who says:

"Like many others you are under the delusion that an ass's head is our God. . . . But lately a new edition of our God has been made public in Rome. It originated with a certain vile man, who was wont to hire himself out to cheat the wild beasts and who exhibited a picture with this inscription: 'The God of the Christians of the lair of an ass, [*ὄνοκοίτης* or *ὄνοκοίτης*]. He had the ears of an ass, was hoofed in one foot, carried a book and wore a toga.'"

¹ Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, II., 7, 9. The quotation is abbreviated by Mr. Pleyte.

The belief that the Jewish God was ass-headed was transferred to the Christians; but Tertullian returns the compliment of the pagan accusation by saying "many a son of a donkey [*ὄνοκοίτης*] is among you."

If Sebaoth, the god of the Jews, was said to bear the countenance of an ass, we may see in it not a mere pagan calumny of the Jewish religion, but a last remnant of the symbolism under which the ancient Semitic invaders of Egypt worshipped their God, identifying him with Seth. We know that later on the Yahveh-worshipping Jews discarded all worship of images or likenesses, but such paganism must have survived among other Semitic tribes and may have given rise to the legend that their god Sabaoth (like Seth, the chief Deity of the Semitic invaders of Egypt) was ass-headed.

Apparently the worship of the ass-headed Seth survived especially among certain Egyptianised Semites, and when they became familiar with the Jewish Scriptures they confused their god Seth with Seth the patriarch; and the latter being regarded by the Christians as a prototype of Christ, their notions of Seth, the ancient Egyptian god of most extraordinary magical power, was confused with Christ the ruler of the Kingdom to come. This combination of ideas, though obviously incongruous to us and at first sight strange, affords, as will be seen in the following pages, the best explanation of the significance of the curious wall-scribbling in one of the slaves' rooms of the imperial household on Mount Palatine at Rome.

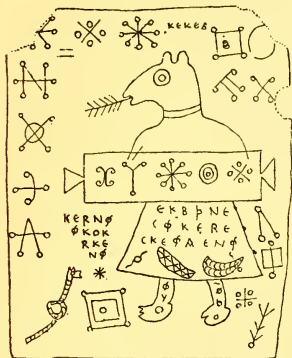
THE LEAD TABLETS OF THE VIA APPIA.

Almost fifty years ago a number of lead tablets were discovered in a catacomb on the Via Appia, one of which contained a curse of a certain Praeseticus, son of Asella. Their existence was referred to in 1880, but track was afterwards lost of them. In 1896 Prof. Richard Wünsch set out in search of these noteworthy records, and at last succeeded in finding the entire collection in the Kircherian Museum at Rome.

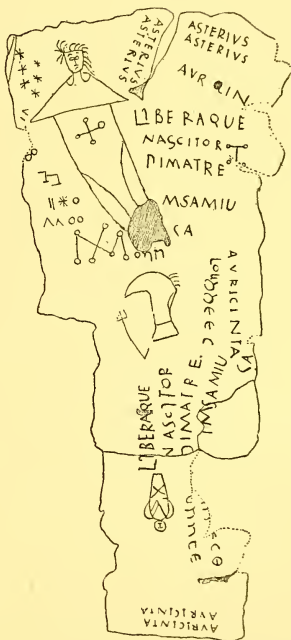
He now describes them and publishes transcriptions and figures of them,¹ which contain quite a number of donkey-headed deities and are covered with symbols of Egyptian origin, such as mummies, serpents, dotted equilateral crosses, Y-crosses, stars, etc., and remind one, in certain ways, of the pictures in the *Book of the Dead*, in which enemies of all kinds, beasts and demons, are represented as being bound, or subdued, and slain.

¹Leipsic: Teubner.

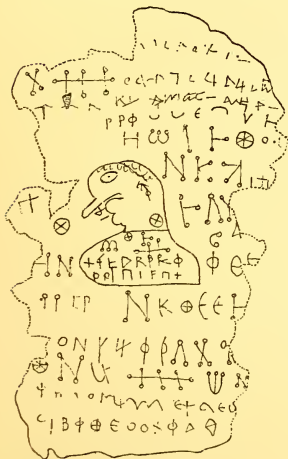
The tablets contain curses and are written on lead because lead is the metal of the infernal powers. They were deposited in tombs, as being the proper place from which they would reach their destination, the gods of death. The practice of writing curses on



LEAD TABLET NO. 6.



LEAD TABLET NO. 2.



LEAD TABLET NO. 7.

lead tablets is known to have obtained in Attica as early as the fifth century B. C. The superstition is based upon the fact that lead mines are unhealthy, which led to the assumption of the un-

wholesome nature of the metal itself. Curses written on lead were believed to be unfailing, and in order to make them stick, a nail was driven through the leaden plate. (See *op. cit.*, p. 72.)

The Egyptian god Seth (whom the Christian Gnostics later confounded with Adam's son Seth) was believed to be the god that could do great harm; thus he was highly respected, and his name was used more than that of any other deity for exorcisms of all kinds. He was above all the god of those who depended much on good fortune and had reason to be afraid of ill-luck. So it is but natural that the charioteers in the circus-races, which in the beginning of the Christian era played a prominent part in public life, were his ardent worshippers.

The charioteers, like actors and other public performers, recruited themselves from the ranks of the lowly; they were mostly sons of slaves or libertines, but if victorious in the races had a chance of enjoying great popularity. Hence they lived (as grooms do to-day) in the quarters of the servants of the wealthy, and also of the Cæsars; but if successful in their career, they were honored with medals and similar distinctions. The names that appear on the lead tablets point conclusively to charioteers as their authors. The curses were written to conjure up all the powers of the deep for the purpose of destroying and ruining some rival in the races.

Professor Wünsch describes (pp. 88-89) the character of Seth worship as follows:

“The Egyptian god Seth is known to us chiefly from the rôle that he plays in the legend as the opponent of Osiris: he is the evil principle, the enemy of good, a strong and mysterious power, who was not worshipped with joyful adoration indeed, but whose wrath men tried to avert as far as might be by religious submission. He especially pursues the soul of the dead on their great journey to the other world; and inasmuch as there are frequently those among these souls who have done evil in life and therefore deserve his wrath as a just punishment, Seth appears in this function as in a certain sense in the service of the good gods, as executor of the judgments of Osiris, the judge of the dead. To make the power of Seth favorable, in order thus to be able to make the journey to the abode of death without risk, was of course to the interest of the human soul, and magic offered it the formula: ‘I am Sutech’ (=Seth), at which it was claimed that the threatening monsters dutifully retreated.

“The authority of Seth among the Egyptian gods was not always and everywhere the same. Lower Egypt was his especial

home; the population there had been mixed from earliest times with Canaanitish elements, whose chief worship was addressed to the sun-god Baal. For the Egyptians this Baal, being a foreigner, had naturally something hostile and malicious, and accordingly suggested a resemblance to their Seth; gradually the two gods became confused, and thus, Bar, or Baru,¹ was adopted into the Egyptian religion as a complete synonym of Seth. The identification of Baal and Seth probably occurred in very early times; now when the Hyksos, who had previously worshipped Baal, came to Egypt, they recognised in Seth-Sutech their own god and accordingly encouraged his worship. The expulsion of the Hyksos probably shook



LEAD TABLET NO. 12.

the authority of this worship somewhat, but could not do away with the already established identification of Seth with the god of the Canaanites. Indeed the ranks of the subjects of this god were even widened, so that he appears later not only as lord of Canaan, but of all foreign parts without limit. He is regarded as the strong and warlike god, who has the power to place foreign peoples in peaceful or hostile, subordinate or victorious, relation to Egypt, and he is worshipped in order that he may keep far from the borders of the Nile the tribes subject to him. But Seth did not always do this;

¹ Bar is the Egyptian form for Baal.

Egypt gradually succumbed to the attacks of neighboring peoples, and the rage of the vanquished was aimed at the god who had not regarded their adoration. He gradually disappears from the ranks of the gods and continues his existence only as a somewhat shadowy, yet powerful and baleful, demon.

“This was the view of Typhon-Seth at the time when Gnosticism entered upon the inheritance of the Egyptian religion. The lower form of the cult took possession of him straightway, for his figure seemed made to become the chief god of baneful magic. And thus it comes that his rôle is much more important in the wizards’ papyri than that of Osiris.”

SETH IN MAGIC.

Professor Wünsch continues :

“Typhon is represented in the Leyden papyrus as the supreme lord of the gods, whom he is said to force into subjection to the wizard, his servant ; while the latter refers to various events in the struggle by which Typhon won the supremacy. As ruler of the gods this demon grows into a fearful and mysterious power, whose worship is performed by the pronounciation of a name consisting of a hundred letters” (p. 91).

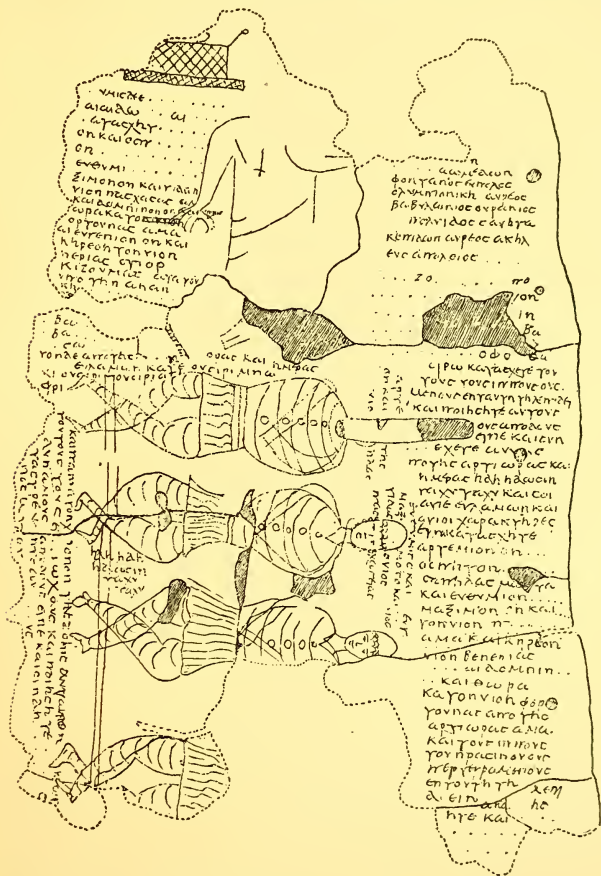
“We have also to consider the ‘sacred characters,’ the last that appear in the series of supernatural features. The explanation of them is to be found in the appended phrase, ‘which are written on this tablet ;’ these are the magic signs by means of which the gods are compelled to do the will of the writer. In this view the characters engraved on the tablet themselves possess magic power, to control which the magician must employ an especial appeal. Such characters—‘certain signs which they call characters’ (Aug. *De doct. Christ.* II, 30) are found in great numbers upon our tablets, but the interpretation of them is next to impossible. It is clear that the characters found under the left arm and about the head of Typhon-Seth apply to him. If from these we subtract the purely ornamental points, they resemble the letters XZAY and a wheel (⊙ with an X within it). If we assume that these characters have some reference to the god in connexion with whose name they occur most frequently, we should have the following conclusions of equivalence :

X=Osiris.

Z=Osiris-Apis,

while the remaining characters would needs go unexplained. Y appears sometimes along with the name of the sun, Phri, and in

this connexion has occasionally a rather peculiar form: the two upper points are bent about so that the figure looks like the familiar astronomical sign of the ram. But I believe that the interpreta-



LEAD TABLET NO 20 (OBVERSE).

tion must begin with the fact that this Y is generally found to the right above the head of Seth, and seems to refer to him. Now Y is the familiar Pythagorean letter, the symbol of the ways to the

underworld, and we have just seen that Pythagorean views of the underworld were transferred to Typhon-Seth. I believe, therefore, that we are warranted in assuming that this Y has some reference to the belief of our Gnostic sect regarding the underworld and to the position of the chief divinity within the same. I would like to ascribe a similar function to that sign of the wheel, which generally appears very close to the Y; it reminds us of the symbol of Nemesis, the 'unresting, trackless wheel,' of whose outward resemblance to the 'wheel of Necessity' we have spoken elsewhere. The eight-rayed star with the circles at the end of each ray is a very frequently occurring symbol in the literature of magic: it appears upon Gnostic gems (for instance, Matter, *Hist. crit. du gnost.* pl. IIa, 10v), in the Gnostic writings in Coptic, in the wizards' papyri and has even been preserved in the magic recipes of the late Middle Ages. Its occurrence together with Y in No. 6 gives rise to the conjecture that this character also was the symbol of a god; one would be most naturally disposed to see in its form the image of the sunbeams" (pp. 98-99).

"Among the drawings not yet considered a separate and important group consists of those on which a serpent appears. The interpretation of these drawings is somewhat complicated, since the serpent represents sometimes the good and sometimes the evil principle in the Gnostic systems, within which it plays an important rôle. Thus Mr. Matter thought to recognise in the serpent of tablet 6 a symbol of the good spirit, of the Agathodaimon, who is often represented as a serpent, while in the *Pistis Sophia*, the evil one takes on the form of a serpent in order to torment the poor bride of heaven. Now we find upon the tablets the following representations: a single serpent, Nos. 6 and 34, a mummy enwrapped by a serpent, tablet 17, 34, a charioteer enwrapped by a serpent, tablet 23,¹ a mummy with two serpents, tablet 16,¹ an ass's head with six—or, if one has been lost on the piece broken out, seven—serpents on tablet 49."

"That the mummy on tablets 16 and 17 is not that of a man is evident from the star beneath it, since we have demonstrated this to be the 'character' of a god. But we cannot for a moment doubt what god we have before us: it is Osiris, to whom the representation as a mummy is appropriate, or more particularly, Osiris-Apis, of whom the serpent is an attribute, and who is even sometimes himself represented in serpent form; for him, Sol-Serapis, the 'character' is fitting, and we can now confidently regard it as that

¹ Not reproduced by Professor Wünsch.

of the sun-god. This very same representation of a mummy enwrapped by a serpent is given by King, plate F 3; this as well as the drawing of our tablets suggest immediately the way in which it was customary to represent the 'Aeons,' as men with lion-heads and enwrapped by serpents. Now Serapis is given the title 'Aeon' upon a gold tablet published by P. Secchi, bearing the inscription :

'Lord Serapis, creeping Aeon,
Give.....victory under the rock.'

"It was found in the Vigna Codini in Rome, not at all far away from our lead tablets, and in the mouth of a skull. It was probably



LEAD TABLET No. 29.

intended to serve the same purpose as the similar tablets of Thurioi: to be an amulet for the deceased, which should protect him from the dangers of the underworld and assure him a favorable reception at the hands of the rulers there. The meaning of the second verse is not quite clear; but there is no doubt that the lines were addressed to Serapis as lord of the underworld, and that he is characterised as 'creeping Aeon.' The epithet 'creeping' is plainly derived from the verb *ἔρπω*, which denotes the action of the serpent and is found along with the more commonly used forms *ἔρπετόν* and *ἔρπησής*. Now 'Aeon' expresses evident Gnostic con-

ceptions; therefore the people who were buried in the Vigna Codini had views similar to those cherished by the imprecators of the grave in the Vigna Marini. This 'Lord Serapis creeping Aeon' expresses in words precisely the same thing as our drawing" (pp. 100-101).

The close relation between the God of the Semitic Hyksos and Typhon-Seth is an established fact, and it appears now that not only the names of Baal, but also of Sabbaoth and even of Yahveh were frequently identified with this powerful war god of Lower Egypt. In the first centuries of the Christian era Christian influence made itself felt, and Typhon-Seth was confounded with Seth the son of Adam, who was revered as a prototype and prior incarnation of Jesus Christ. Thus the result was that some Seth-worshippers could be regarded as Christians and accordingly were treated, not pagans, but as heretics by the church-fathers.

THE SETHIANS.

The Sethians belong to the Ophites, or serpent-worshipping Gnostics, and are treated as such by Epiphanius and in the *Philosophoumena*, two reports which are so very different that they do not seem to treat the same subject; but the differences are due to a difference in the capacities and attitude of the authors, one of whom preferred to register their superstitions and the other their philosophico-theological speculations.

The genealogy of the Sethians which, as recorded in the Old Testament, coincides in several names with the genealogy of Cainites (cf. Gen. iv. and v.), proves to be a fragment of an ancient tradition in which Seth, "the son of man," is represented as the common ancestor of mankind as it existed in the days of the early narrator.¹ The parallelism of the two genealogies is one of the strongest evidences that the Old Testament traditions have been compiled from several analogous sources and the genealogy of the Sethians indicates that there existed a race which bore that name. Now it was quite customary for the name of a nation and the national god of the nation to be the same; e. g., Amon signified the children of Amon as well as the tutelary Deity of this tribe, and thus it is not impossible that Seth was a god as well as a race; and there is some plausibility (though not more than that!) that there was a Deity called Seth which was worshipped by some of the Semitic tribes of Syria. How and whether at all this Semitic Seth

¹ See Dillmann, *Genesis*, Engl. edition, I., p. 207.

pent-worshippers. Their doctrine is strongly mingled with Jewish elements; the deluge appears in Epiphanius, and in the *Philosophoumena* as well, where also Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are mentioned. And indeed the Sethians do not seem to have taken a polemic attitude toward these elements; the Decalogue is treated (Phil. V, 20) as though it were respected by them, and Epiphanius (p. 286 C) enumerates among the writings of the sect an Apocalypse of Abraham and apocryphal books of Moses.

“But this is not the end of the resemblances between the two representations. According to Epiphanius the doctrine of the Sethians is that the angels—the evil principle—created the world and the first human pair; in opposition to them the mother—the good principle—sent Seth to the earth: ‘Him they extol, and unto him they ascribe all excellence whatsoever, the evidences of virtue and righteousness, and whatever implies these things.’ But a pure human race is not established; men mix with angels, and then as punishment comes the deluge which is to destroy the wicked race and save only the good. But even this plan of the mother is frustrated by the angels who smuggle Ham into the ark, who then propagates the seeds of evil. For a final salvation the mother then sends Christ, from the race of Seth, and Seth himself: ‘But from Seth by the seed and the succession of generations came Jesus Christ himself, not begotten, but appearing in the world by a marvel, who is the very Seth of old, even Christ, come again to the race of men, having been sent by the mother from above.’

“In the *Philosophoumena* of the Sethians this assumes an entirely different character. We have here no moral dualism, represented by the mother and the angels, with an ethical interpretation of the Old Testament accordingly, but we have from the very beginning a cosmogony in which is involved a trinity of principles: the hostile elements light and darkness, and as a mediator, the pure spirit (*πνεῦμα ἀκέραιον*). The darkness is ‘the terrible water,’ not by any means unintelligent, but rational throughout, it wishes to retain the essence of the spirit and the beam of the light, which have come in from above, while light and spirit strive to deprive the darkness of these forces. From this conflict of principles arises the universe, first of all heaven and earth with their ‘endless multitude of various creatures’ compounded of light and spirit, and from the water a serpent-shaped wind, ‘firstborn and cause of all generation.’ Now heaven and earth have the form of a great matrix: ‘since then light and spirit have been detained in the unpurified, lawless and harmful womb, as is said, the serpent, entering in

. . . begets man :’ but in order to release the ‘perfect mind’ dwelling within him, the ‘perfect spirit of light from above’ also assumes the serpent form, deceives the womb and solves its mysteries, and for this reason the Saviour also was obliged to enter into the womb of a virgin.”

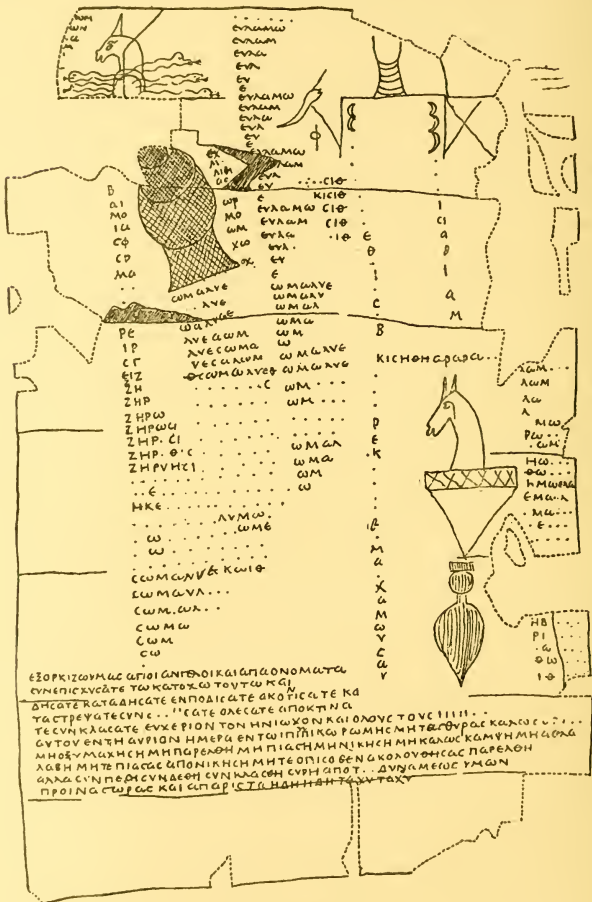
SETH-CHRIST.

A consideration of the close relation between the donkey-headed Seth and the Semitic Sabaoth (who was at an early date identified with Yahveh) throws a new light on the well-known tradition that the Jews worshipped their God under the symbol of an ass-headed man. Wunsch says (pp. 108-109):

“That the god in human form and an ass’s head, seen by Zacharias in the temple, was the Typhon-Seth of our tablets probably needs now no argument. We have already shown how this god was combined in the Nile delta with the Baal of the Canaanites, and it is well known that Baal had many worshippers and priests among the Israelites. These may have adopted the ass-headed representation of the god under this Egyptian influence, and thus may have originated the reproach of onolatry made by antiquity against the Israelites (thus Tacitus, *hist.* V. 3), and as we now see, with more warrant than has hitherto been supposed.

“Harnack speaks of this report as springing from the wildest Judæophobia. In this connexion it is worthy of note that the books of these so-called Gnostics all bear the names of Israelitish spirits or men (Jaldabaoth, Noria, Adam, Seth), and likewise the archons of the skies: Jao, Saclan, Seth, David, Eloï-Adonai, Jaldabaoth-Elilaios, Sabaoth; of the last of these the remark is appended (p. 91 C): ‘Some declare Sabaoth to have the form of an ass, others that of a swine.’ For a Gnostic sect there is nothing surprising in the fact that these lords of the spheres were regarded as hostile powers, nor even that this contrast was sometimes very strongly emphasised; Epiphanius refers to this, p. 93 D: ‘They blaspheme not only Abraham, Moses, and Elias and the whole band of the prophets, but even the god who chose themselves.’ Evidently the blasphemy against the god of the Jews consists in the account of his having an ass’s head, and this account may have been meant seriously by the sect, in which case it simply worships the god in this form—or not, and in the latter case it is intended to ridicule some other sect which is friendly to the Jews, and which has given some ground for this ridicule. In view of the treatment of the Jewish rulers of the planets as hostile spirits the former as-

sumption is improbable, and therefore the probability is for the latter. Now we have already seen that the Sethians were friends



LEAD TABLET NO. 49.

of the Jews, and the conjecture is plausible that the blasphemy of the Gnostics was aimed at this sect, and accordingly that the ass-

headed Typhon-Seth was still known in their worship and as a hypostasis of the Jewish god" (pp. 110-111).

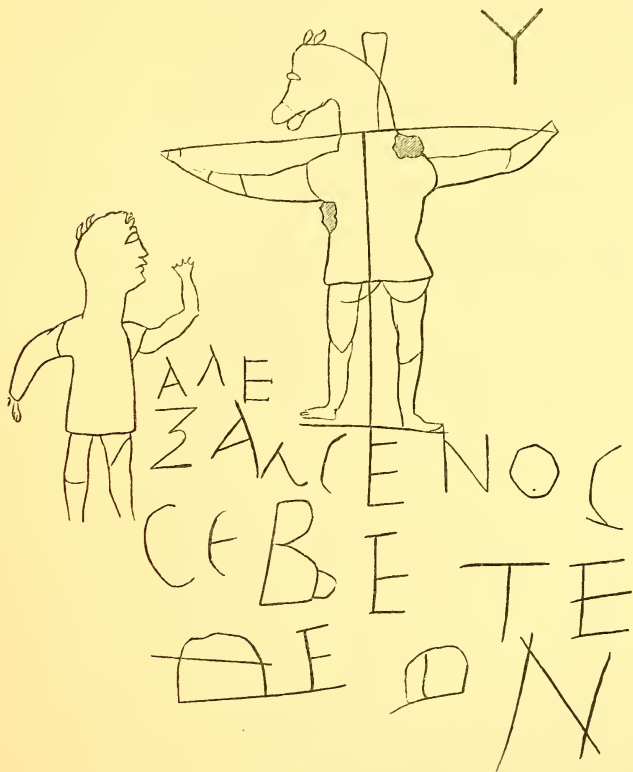
"But if our tablets do in fact present Sethian doctrine, we have for a Gnostic sect two gods of the same name Seth, the Egyptian god Typhon-Seth, who is essentially like the Jewish Sabaoth, and Seth, the son of Adam, who is the Jewish Christ, and the question arises, what the relation is of these two divine beings to each other. And I believe, in view of the widespread tendency of that age to assimilation, that the two beings thus related by name could not possibly have remained separate any length of time; a personal union was inevitable, and thus Typhon-Seth, the ass-headed, and Christ-Seth, the crucified, became one and the same being.

"When the first elements of the Sethian Gnostics were crystallising and Egyptian and Jewish features were uniting, the faithful found for the god of the Nile land a kinship with an Israelitish hero in the person of Seth, the son of Adam. Now this Seth was, after Adam, the real founder of the human race, since Abel was slain in youth and the seed of Cain had disappeared: and thus may have originated the legend that Typhon-Seth was the ancestor of mankind, and directly of the Jewish people, a legend which is transmitted to us in Hellenistic garb by Plutarch (*de Is. et Os.* c. 31, p. 363 D): 'Some say that Typhon, after the quarrel over the ass, fled for seven days, and that, being rescued, he begot sons Jerusolymus and Judaeus, thus evidently involving Jewish matters in the myth.' And later, when Christianity began its march through the world and even this Gnosticism was forced to take sides with reference to it, it was the phrase 'the son of man,' used of himself by Christ, that determined the conception of him formed by these Gnostics: Adam (אָדָם) means 'man,' and the son who was called to found a new and pure humanity, is Seth. Thus Christ, the son of man, and Seth, the son of man, are united, and in case the latter had still preserved one idea of his Egyptian character a god was sure to result to whom belonged equally the symbols of the ass-head and the cross.

"Now this was actually the case, and a fortunate chance has preserved for us an eloquent evidence of this commingling of ideas; an evidence that proves definitively that the preceding reflexions are not mere conjectures, but that the course of thought which we have suggested actually was once pursued. I refer to the famous *Spottercrucifix* from the Palatine.

"In the year 1856 there was found in the so-called Pädagogium on the southwest slope of the Palatine the famous 'graffitto' now

in the Museo Kircheriano. 'We see,' says Reisch, 'fastened to a cross a man dressed in the "colobium" (the short tunic of slaves and manumitted slaves) and thigh-bands and having an ass's head; at the left stands a man similarly dressed and shaven, lifting his



SETH-CHRIST OR THE DONKEY-HEADED GOD ON THE CROSS.

Commonly called the *Spotterucifix*. Graffito of the third century on Mount Palatine.

left arm to the man on the cross in sign of adoration. Before it is the inscription: "Alexamenos adores god." From the form of the characters I am sure that the inscription is from the third century. The drawing has very generally been regarded as a satire on the

Christian religion, aimed by a Pagan page at his Christian comrade Alexamenos; the single protest against this interpretation, made by Haupt, has received no support, since it was known that the Pagans often ridiculed the Jews and the Christians as onolaters. But we should be very cautious in making such an assumption, inasmuch as an actual onolatry on the part of the Christians is quite possible from what we have just shown, and the crucifix might quite as well be an expression of this fact as of unjustified ridicule.¹

“Along with the *Spotterucifix* there should be considered also another ‘graffitto’ likewise from the Palatine and applying to the same man: ‘Alexamenos the faithful.’ No one has thought of declaring that this too was satire. If it may be assumed that ‘faithful’ (*fidelis*) was at that time the characteristic word for the Christian believer, we should have in this ‘graffitto’ a serious confession of faith; but otherwise it is merely a eulogy of one imperial page on his comrade, after the manner of ‘The pretty boy.’ But if one were ever warranted in declaring of two such short inscrip-

ALEXAMENOC

FIDELIS

GRAFFITTO FROM THE PALATINE (reduced).

Presumably written by the author of the donkey-headed god on the cross.

tions that they are by one and the same hand, it is in the case of these: ‘Alexamenos adores god,’ and ‘Alexamenos the faithful.’ In the proper name the two inscriptions are alike in the forms of all the letters with the single exception of the ξ, and there the difference is but trifling. And if this ‘Alexander the faithful’ is in fact a sort of confession of faith, then it was written by the very hand of the youth, and then the crucifix is also the work of his hands and must be taken in earnest; but if the first is the eulogy of a friend, then a drawing by the same person cannot be regarded as the ridicule of an enemy.² And that such is not the case, but

¹ The literature on the subject is enumerated in F. X. Kraus' *Realencyclopädie*, II, p. 774; of more recent publications there should be mentioned Reisch, in Helbig's *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom*, II, p. 394; Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, I, p. 173; V. Schultze, *Archäologie der christlichen Kunst*, p. 332. Professor Wünsch adds that as to the origin of the crucifix he agrees in general with Joseph Haupt, *Das Spotterucifix im kaiserlichen Palaste zu Rom*, *Mitteilungen der k. k. Central-Kommission*, Vienna, 1868, pp. 150-168.

² The graffitto to which Professor Wünsch refers is published by Carlo Ludovico Visconti in a pamphlet entitled *Di un nuovo Graffitto Palatino, relativo al Cristiano Ablessameno* (Rome, 1870, reprinted from the *Giornale Arcadico*, Vol. LXII., new series, and we here reproduce the writing on account of its importance with reference to the wrongly so-called *Spotterucifix*

that the figure is rather a symbol from the speculative sphere of Sethian Gnosticism, is proven most strikingly by an extraneous fact: To the right, beside the ass-head of the crucified one, is a Y which has thus far gone uninterpreted; it is the same Y which appears on our anathema-tablets to the right of the ass-head of Typhon-Seth, and refers, as we have explained before, to his control of the ways to the underworld. This Y is of course a secret symbol of the faith, known and understood only by the initiated; but a mocker would never have taken the pains to introduce such an isolated sign which could add nothing to the keenness of his ridicule.

“Accordingly we see that the identification of Christ and Typhon was once actually realised, and at that time gave no more offence than, for instance, the identification of the dog-headed Anubis and the Saviour, which is often found. It was probably the divulgence of the teachings of this sect which involved the Christians in the reproach of onolatry, and, as we see, not wholly without ground; for a part at least of those who at that time called themselves after Christ the reproach was justified. If, however, the significance of that crucifix as an evidence of pagan ridicule and of genuinely Christian religious joy is now destroyed, nevertheless it retains its importance as one of the oldest representations of the crucified Christ, and gains new value as a monument of the views of a Gnostic sect of that age.”

There is no need of adding any comment to Professor Wünsch's exposition on the subject, except that his arguments appear to be conclusive and leave no further doubt about the significance of the ass-headed deity on the cross.

The Sethians and other sects that appeared as rival religions of Christianity adopted many Christian ideas and sentiments and dropped their typically sectarian traditions more and more until at last they were merged in the great stream of that form of Christianity which survived, and thus the worship of Seth-Christ disappeared entirely. Christianity in its turn assimilated a great number of pre-Christian ideas and the result was the Christianity of the Roman Church which became the state religion under Constantine the Great.