

In the Hellenistic age Marna was identified with Zeus.

The Marneion at Gaza was a stronghold of paganism ; it was a magnificent circular structure of marble, and pagan worship continued there longer than in any other place. Even in the days of Constantine, the Christians were in the minority in Gaza ; and when Porphyrios of Thessalonica became bishop of Gaza, he insisted on the destruction of the temple through an imperial decree, which was granted by the Emperor Arkadios. But the order was not executed, because Hilarius, the governor, yielded to pagan influence and allowed the pagan cult and oracles in the Marna temples to continue. But Porphyrios was persistent ; in the year 401, he appeared personally at Constantinople, and the destruction of the Marneion was again decided upon. Kynegios, an imperial plenipotentiary, appeared with a strong military detachment at Gaza, and within ten days seven temples of the town, dedicated to Helios, Aphrodite, Apollo, Kora, Hekate, Hercules, and Tyche, were destroyed. Finally the Marneion was attacked. Pagan devotees had it fortified by a stone barricade, but fire was thrown into the temple, and it was laid in ashes. Upon the ruins of the Marneion the architect Rufinus built a church which was called Eudoxiana, after Eudoxia, the wife of Arkadios. The statues of the gods were destroyed, and paganism had lost its last center in this part of the empire. For a while the population of Gaza continued to cherish pagan traditions, and many people regarded with horror the public square in front of the destroyed Marneion which had been paved with the stones of the temple. Scarcely had the last vestiges of paganism disappeared when the Moslems conquered the country and Islam was established as the religion of the ruling race.



ANCIENT COIN OF
GAZA, PALESTINE.

FACSIMILE EDITION OF THE ATHARVA-VEDA.

Professors Maurice Bloomfield and Richard Garbe have published a facsimile edition of the Kashmirian Atharva-veda bark manuscript.

The Atharva-veda is the fourth part of the Vedas, and contains the fire-ritual and ceremonies of the Soma offerings which played a very important part in Brahman religion, being considered as powerful spells by which the blessings of the gods and other heavenly gifts could be procured.

This facsimile edition is a stately work consisting of three large volumes reproduced by chromophotography, and is dedicated to the memory of Rudolf von Roth "to whose initiative and generosity the University of Tübingen owes this priceless document." The work sets a standard as to how valuable manuscripts should be reproduced for future use. It has been brought out under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, and the Royal Eberhard-Karls-University, in Tübingen, and contains from 500 to 600 plates.

The size of the original leaves is for the most part about twenty-five centimeters in height and twenty in width. "The writing is in indelible ink, absolutely non-sensitive to damp and water ; each page before exposure to the lens of the photographer was sponged off with water in order to make the very clear writing still clearer. The method of preparation of the ink is known. It was made by converting almonds into charcoal and boiling the water thus obtained with gomûtra (*urina bovis*). The character is the so-called Çâradâ which seems to mean "letters sacred to Çâradâ," i. e., Sarasvatî, the tutelary goddess of instruction and writing. The alphabet is North Indian, from the same source as the more preva-

lent learned alphabet of India, the Devanâgarî. Its use seems to have been almost entirely confined to Kashmir and the northeastern part of the Punjab."

The editors promise to have this first step toward editing the manuscript, which is as close as possible to the original, followed up by further labors. "A transliteration of the text in Roman characters; a detailed comparison of the Kashmirian version with the vulgate text as hitherto known; and finally, if possible, a translation may be expected from their continued co-operation."

The price of these stately volumes which are a rare treasure and an ornament to every Oriental Library, is fifty dollars.

THE SYLLABLE "AUM" AND THE MANTRA CULT.

Apropos of the very interesting communication respecting "OM and the Gayatri" in the February *Open Court*, perhaps it may interest a few of your readers to be informed that that "OM" or "AUM" and other Brahman mystic syllables and sentences are in use throughout Eastern Asia where the Mantra¹ section of later Buddhism exists, especially in China, Japan, and adjacent countries

The Mantra cult is somewhat reactionary, and although not altogether Madhyamika, or Madhyayana (Middle Vehicle), it is not strictly Hinayana (Minor Vehicle) or Mahayana (Major Vehicle) in the sense understood by the Asiatic votaries of these "schools."

The Gayatri-Mantri, or Dharani, is usually preceded by "OM" and—in Hindoo fashion—ends frequently with "Hum," which latter syllable deserves more attention than it receives.

Another initial phrase, frequently used on less sacred occasions, viz., NO-MAKU," commences certain of the Mantra connected with other than the most important divinities, etc.; but explanation would occupy much space, and the true meaning is esoteric.

AUM is explained as the exhaling and the inhaling of the breath of life, and as being parallel to the Chinese "Ying and Yang" (Japanese "In and Yo"). In Buddhist temples the Buddhistic forms of Brahma and Indra are to be seen, monstrous figures like the London Gog and Megog, as Guardians at the Gate. The mouth of Brahma is open, that of Indra as closed. In Shinto Shrines, and other fanes, the guardian figures of warriors and of animals—the fox, bear, lion, etc.—are in pairs, male and female, with open and closed mouths, indicating that Buddhist and other Hindu influences exist. The sects that use these forms are stated to have been promoted by Samanta Bhadra, based on a deistic branch of the Samkhya school, and the teaching of Pantanjali, 300–200 B. C., and includes the Yoga, Tantra, etc., doctrines, the efforts to acquire Riddhi, and other esoteric knowledge—and consequently superhuman (or extraordinary) powers usually considered supernatural. The teaching was disseminated in China in the third century A. D.; and Vadjra-bodhi is the chief propagandist referred to by the Japanese. Huen-tsang was the great teacher of the Chinese from whose pupils the Japanese, who went to China, learned the Mystic rites and doctrines.

Kukai-Kobodaishi established the Shingon (Mantra) True Words Sect in Japan at Mount Koya near the Bay of Osaka. Each divinity has special Mantra, and a single written character, which deviates from the standard Devanagari both as being written vertically, and not horizontally, and in the cursive style. The OM

¹The Mantra is translated by Japanese "Shin-gon," i. e., True Words, hence the title of the sect that is the chief exponent of the doctrines.