The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE


Founded by Edward C. Hegeler

THE MOTHER GODDESS ARTEMIS.
(See page 168.)

The Open Court Publishing Company

CHICAGO

LONDON: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd.

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, $1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

Entered as Second-Class Matter March 26, 1897, at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill. under Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright by The Open Court Publishing Company, 1911.
## CONTENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frontispiece. Lao-tze and Yin-Hi.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Transformation of Roman Paganism.</td>
<td>Franz Cumont</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Foundation and Technic of Arithmetic (Continued).</td>
<td>George Bruce Halsted</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sanctity of Tabu (Illustrated)</td>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Individualism.</td>
<td>Howard T. Lewis</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strange Coincidences in Lao-tze and Plato</td>
<td></td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Larger God (Poem).</td>
<td>Thos. E. Winecoff</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scholar's Humble Dwelling (Poem).</td>
<td>Liu Yu Hsi. Translated by James Black</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Criticism of the Clergyman's &quot;Confessions&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-tze and Yin-Hi</td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Reviews and Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**The First Grammar of the Language Spoken by the Bontoc Igorot**

**A Mountain Tribe of North Luzon**

(Philippine Islands)

**By Dr. CARL WILHELM SEIDENADEL**

This Grammar, the first of the hitherto unexplored idiom of the Bontoc Igorot, contains the results of a scholar's independent and uninfluenced research; it is based entirely upon material collected directly from the natives' lips. An extensive Vocabulary (more than four thousand Igorot words) and Texts on Mythology, Folk Lore, Historical Episodes and Songs are included in this book. It will be of particular interest to Linguists, Ethnologists and Comparative Philologists to whom the author furnishes an abundance of reliable material and new theories about the structure of Philippine Languages in general. In exhaustiveness this monumental work surpasses the Grammars of any other Philippine Idiom treated before.

550 pages in Quarto. Illustrated. Edition limited to 1200 copies. Printed from type on fine paper and elegantly bound. $5.00 (20s).

---

**THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.**

378-388 Wabash Avenue, CHICAGO

Send for complete illustrated catalogue.
LAO-TZE AND YIN-HI.

Frontispiece to The Open Court.
THE TRANSFORMATION OF ROMAN PAGANISM.*

BY FRANZ CUMONT.

ABOUT the time of the Severi the religion of Europe must have presented an aspect of surprising variety. Although dethroned, the old native Italian, Celtic and Iberian divinities were still alive. Though eclipsed by foreign rivals, they lived on in the devotion of the lower classes and in the traditions of the rural districts. For a long time the Roman gods had been established in every town and had received the homage of an official clergy according to pontifical rites. Beside them, however, were installed the representatives of all the Asiatic pantheons, and these received the most fervent adoration from the masses. New powers had arrived from Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria and Persia, and the dazzling Oriental sun outshone the stars of Italy’s temperate sky. All forms of paganism were simultaneously received and retained while the exclusive monotheism of the Jews kept its adherents, and Christianity strengthened its churches and fortified its orthodoxy, at the same time giving birth to the baffling vagaries of gnosticism. A hundred different currents carried away hesitating and undecided minds, a hundred contrasting sermons made appeals to the conscience of the people.

Let us suppose that in modern Europe the faithful had deserted the Christian churches to worship Allah or Brahma, to follow the precepts of Confucius or Buddha, or to adopt the maxims of the Shinto; let us imagine a great confusion of all the races of the world in which Arabian mullahs, Chinese scholars, Japanese bonzes, Tibetan lamas and Hindu pundits would all be preaching fatalism and

* Translated by A. M. Thielen.
predestination, ancestor-worship and devotion to a deified sovereign, pessimism and deliverance through annihilation—a confusion in which all those priests would erect temples of exotic architecture in our cities and celebrate their disparate rites therein. Such a dream, which the future may perhaps realize, would offer a pretty accurate picture of the religious chaos in which the ancient world was struggling before the reign of Constantine.

The Oriental religions that successively gained popularity exercised a decisive influence on the transformation of Latin paganism. Asia Minor was the first to have its gods accepted by Italy. Since the end of the Punic wars the black stone symbolizing the Great Mother of Pessinus had been established on the Palatine, but only since the reign of Claudius could the Phrygian cult freely develop in all its splendor and excesses. It introduced a sensual, highly-colored and fanatical worship into the grave and somber religion of the Romans. Officially recognized, it attracted and took under its protection other foreign divinities from Anatolia and assimilated them to Cybele and Attis, who thereafter bore the symbols of several deities together. Cappadocian, Jewish, Persian and even Christian influences modified the old rites of Pessinus and filled them with ideas of spiritual purification and eternal redemption by the bloody baptism of the taurobolium. But the priests did not succeed in eliminating the basis of coarse naturism which ancient barbaric tradition had imposed upon them.

Beginning with the second century before our era, the mysteries of Isis and Serapis spread over Italy with the Alexandrian culture whose religious expression they were, and in spite of all persecution established themselves at Rome where Caligula gave them the freedom of the city. They did not bring with them a very advanced theological system, because Egypt never produced anything but a chaotic aggregate of disparate doctrines, nor a very elevated ethics, because the level of its morality—that of the Alexandrian Greeks—rose but slowly from a low stage. But they made Italy, and later the other Latin provinces, familiar with an ancient ritual of incomparable charm that aroused widely different feelings with its splendid processions and liturgic dramas. They also gave their votaries positive assurance of a blissful immortality after death, when they would be united with Serapis and, participating body and soul in his divinity, would live in eternal contemplation of the gods.

At a somewhat later period arrived the numerous and varied Baals of Syria. The great economic movement starting at the be-
ginning of our era which produced the colonization of the Latin world by Syrian slaves and merchants, not only modified the material civilization of Europe, but also its conceptions and beliefs. The Semitic cults entered into successful competition with those of Asia Minor and Egypt. They may not have had so stirring a liturgy, nor have been so thoroughly absorbed in preoccupation with a future life, although they taught an original eschatology, but they did have an infinitely higher idea of divinity. The Chaldean astrology, of which the Syrian priests were enthusiastic disciples, had furnished them with the elements of a scientific theology. It had led them to the notion of a God residing far from the earth above the zone of the stars, a God almighty, universal and eternal. Everything on earth was determined by the revolutions of the heavens according to infinite cycles of years. It had taught them at the same time the worship of the sun, the radiant source of earthly life and human intelligence.

The learned doctrines of the Babylonians had also imposed themselves upon the Persian mysteries of Mithra which considered time identified with heaven as the supreme cause, and deified the stars; but they had superimposed themselves upon the ancient Mazdean creed without destroying it. Thus the essential principles of the religion of Iran, the secular and often successful rival of Greece, penetrated into the Occident under cover of Chaldean wisdom. The Mithra worship, the last and highest manifestation of ancient paganism, had Persian dualism for its fundamental dogma. The world is the scene and the stake of a contest between good and evil, Ormuzd and Ahriman, gods and demons, and from this primary conception of the universe flowed a strong and pure system of ethics. Life is a combat; soldiers under the command of Mithra, invincible heroes of the faith, must ceaselessly oppose the undertakings of the infernal powers which sow corruption broadcast. This imperative ethics was productive of energy and formed the characteristic feature distinguishing Mithraism from all other Oriental cults.

Thus every one of the Levantine countries—and that is what we meant to show in this brief recapitulation—had enriched Roman paganism with new beliefs that were frequently destined to outlive it. What was the result of this confusion of heterogeneous doctrines whose multiplicity was extreme and whose values were very different? How did the barbaric ideas refine themselves and combine with each other when thrown into the fiery crucible of imperial syncretism? In other words, what shape was assumed by ancient idolatry, so impregnated with exotic theories during the fourth
century, when it was finally dethroned? It is this point that we should like to indicate briefly as the conclusion to these studies.

However, can we speak of one pagan religion? Did not the blending of the races result in multiplying the variety of disagreements? Had not the confused collision of creeds produced a division into fragments, a comminution of churches? Had not a complacent syncretism engendered a multiplication of sects? The "Hellenes," as Themistius told the Emperor Valens, had three hundred ways of conceiving and honoring deity, who takes pleasure in such diversity of homage. 1 In paganism a cult does not die violently, but after long decay. A new doctrine does not necessarily displace an older one. They may co-exist for a long time as contrary possibilities suggested by the intellect or faith, and all opinions, all practices, seem respectable to paganism. It never has any radical or revolutionary transformations. Undoubtedly, the pagan beliefs of the fourth century or earlier did not have the consistency of a metaphysical system nor the rigor of canons formulated by a council. There is always a considerable difference between the faith of the masses and that of cultured minds, and this difference was bound to be great in an aristocratic empire whose social classes were sharply separated. The devotion of the masses was as unchanging as the depths of the sea; it was not stirred up nor heated by the upper currents. 2 The peasants practised their pious rites over anointed stones, sacred springs and blossoming trees, as in the past, and continued celebrating their rustic holidays during seed-time and harvest. They adhered with invincible tenacity to their traditional usages. Degraded and lowered to the rank of superstitions, these were destined to persist for centuries under the Christian orthodoxy without exposing it to serious peril, and while they were no longer marked in the liturgic calendars they were still mentioned occasionally in the collections of folklore.

At the other extreme of society the philosophers delighted in veiling religion with the frail and brilliant tissue of their speculations. Like the emperor Julian they improvised bold and incongruous interpretations of the myth of the Great Mother, and these interpretations were received and relished by a restricted circle of scholars. But during the fourth century these vagaries of the individual imagination were nothing but arbitrary applications of uncontested principles. During that century there was much less intellectual anarchy than when Lucian had exposed the sects "for sale

1 Socrates, Hist. Eccl., IV, 32.
2 Reinach, Mythes, cultes, III, 1908, pp. 365 f.
at public auction”; a comparative harmony arose among the pagans after they joined the opposition. One single school, that of neo-Platonism, ruled all minds. This school not only respected positive religion, as ancient stoicism had done, but venerated it, because it saw there the expression of an old revelation handed down by past generations. It considered the sacred books divinely inspired—the books of Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, the Chaldean oracles, Homer, and especially the esoteric doctrines of the mysteries—and subordinated its theories to their teachings. As there must be no contradiction between all the disparate traditions of different countries and different periods, because all have emanated from one divinity, philosophy, the ancilla theologiae, attempted to reconcile them by the aid of allegory. And thus, by means of compromises between old Oriental ideas and Greco-Latin thought, an ensemble of beliefs slowly took form, the truth of which seemed to have been established by common consent. So when the atrophied parts of the Roman religion had been removed, foreign elements had combined to give it a new vigor and in it themselves became modified. This hidden work of internal decomposition and reconstruction had unconsciously produced a religion very different from the one Augustus had attempted to restore.

However, we would be tempted to believe that there had been no change in the Roman faith, were we to read certain authors that fought idolatry in those days. Saint Augustine, for instance, in his City of God, pleasantly pokes fun at the multitude of Italian gods that presided over the paltriest acts of life. But the useless, ridiculous deities of the old pontifical litanies no longer existed outside of the books of antiquaries. As a matter of fact, the Christian polemicist’s authority in this instance was Varro. The defenders of the church sought weapons against idolatry even in Xenophanes, the first philosopher to oppose Greek polytheism. It has frequently been shown that apologists find it difficult to follow the progress of the doctrines which they oppose, and often their blows fall upon dead men. Moreover, it is a fault common to all scholars, to all imbued with book learning, that they are better acquainted with the opinions of ancient authors than with the sentiments of their contemporaries, and that they prefer to live in the past rather than in the world surrounding them. It was easier to reproduce the objections of the Epicureans and the skeptics against abolished beliefs, than to study the defects of an active organism with a view

Augustine, Civ. Dei, IV, 21.
to criticizing it. In those times the merely formal culture of the schools caused many of the best minds to lose their sense of reality.

The Christian polemics therefore frequently give us an inadequate idea of paganism in its decline. When they complacently insisted upon the immortality of the sacred legends they ignored the fact that the gods and heroes of mythology had no longer any but a purely literary existence. The writers of that period, like those of the Renaissance, regarded the fictions of mythology as details necessary to poetical composition. They were ornaments of style, rhetorical devices, but not the expression of a sincere faith. Those old myths had fallen to the lowest degree of disrepute in the theater. The actors of mimes ridiculing Jupiter's gallant adventures did not believe in their reality any more than the author of Faust believed in the compact with Mephistopheles.

So we must not be deceived by the oratorical effects of a rhetorician like Arnobius or by the Ciceronian periods of a Lactantius. In order to ascertain the real status of the beliefs we must refer to Christian authors who were men of letters less than they were men of action, who lived the life of the people and breathed the air of the streets, and who spoke from experience rather than from the treatises of myth-mongers. They were high functionaries like Prudentius; like the man to whom the name "Ambrosiaster" has been given since the time of Erasmus; like the converted pagan Firmicus Maternus, who had written a treatise on astrology before opposing "The Error of the Profane Religions"; like certain priests brought into contact with the last adherents of idolatry through their pastoral duties, as for instance the author of the homilies ascribed to St. Maximus Tyrinus; finally like the writers of anonymous pamphlets, works prepared for the particular occasion and breathing the ardor of all the passions of the moment. If this inquiry is based on the obscure indications in regard to their religious convictions left by members of the Roman aristocracy who remained true to the faith of their ancestors, like Macrobius or Symmachus; if it is particularly guided by the exceptionally numerous inscriptions that seem to be the public expression of the last will of expiring paganism,

5 Cf. Prudentius, 348-410.
6 Souter's ed. Questiones, Vienna, 1908, Intr., p. xxiv.
7 His identity with the writer of the eight books Matheseos seems to be established.
8 Maximus was bishop of Turin about 450-465.
9 Riese, Anthol. lat., I, 20.
we shall be able to gain a sufficiently precise idea of the condition of the Roman religion at the time of its extinction.

One fact becomes immediately clear from an examination of those documents. The old national religion of Rome was dead.\textsuperscript{19} The great dignitaries still adorned themselves with the titles of augur and quindecimvir, or of consul and tribune, but those archaic prelacies were as devoid of all real influence upon religion as the republican magistracies were powerless in the state. Their fall had been made complete on the day when Aurelian established the pontiffs of the Invincible Sun, the protector of his empire, beside and above the ancient high priests. The only cults still alive were those of the Orient, and against them were directed the efforts of the Christian polemics, who grew more and more bitter in speaking of them. The barbarian gods had taken the place of the defunct immortals in the devotion of the pagans. They alone still had empire over the soul.

With all the other "profane religions," Firmicus Maternus fought those of the four Oriental nations. He connected them with the four elements. The Egyptians were the worshipers of water—the water of the Nile fertilizing their country; the Phrygians of the earth, which was to them the Great Mother of everything; the Syrians and Carthaginians of the air, which they adored under the name of celestial Juno;\textsuperscript{11} the Persians of fire, to which they attributed preeminence over the other three principles. This system certainly was borrowed from the pagan theologians. In the common peril threatening them, those cults, formerly rivals, had become reconciled and regarded themselves as divisions and, so to speak, congregations, of the same church. Each one of them was especially consecrated to one of the elements which in combination form the universe. Their union constituted the pantheistic religion of the deified world.

All the Oriental religions assumed the form of mysteries.\textsuperscript{12} Their dignitaries were at the same time pontiffs of the Invincible Sun, fathers of Mithra, celebrants of the taurobolium of the Great Mother, prophets of Isis; in short, they had all titles imaginable. In their initiation they received the revelation of an esoteric doctrine strengthened by their fervor.\textsuperscript{13} What was the theology they learned? Here also a certain dogmatic homogeneity had established itself.

\textsuperscript{10} Paul Allard, \textit{Julien l'Apostat}, I, 1900, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{11} "\textit{IIpa} = \textit{dēp}.

\textsuperscript{12} The Greek divinities Bacchus and Hecate retained their authority because of the mysteries connected with them.

\textsuperscript{13} CIL, VI, 1779 = Dessau, \textit{Inscr. sel.}, 1259.
All writers agree with Firmicus that the pagans worshiped the *elementa.*\(^{14}\) Under this term were included not only the four simple substances which by their opposition and blending caused all phenomena of the visible world,\(^{15}\) but also the stars and in general the elements of all celestial and earthly bodies.\(^{16}\)

We therefore may in a certain sense speak of the return of paganism to nature worship; but must this transformation be regarded as a retrogression toward a barbarous past, as a relapse to the level of primitive animism? If so, we should be deceived by appearances. Religions do not fall back into infancy as they grow old. The pagans of the fourth century no longer naively considered their gods as capricious genii, as the disordered powers of a confused natural philosophy; they conceived them as cosmic energies whose providential action was regulated in a harmonious system. Faith was no longer instinctive and impulsive, for erudition and reflection had reconstructed the entire theology. In a certain sense it might be said that theology had passed from the fictitious to the metaphysical state, according to the formula of Comte. It was intimately connected with the knowledge of the day, which was cherished by its last votaries with love and pride, as faithful heirs of the ancient wisdom of the Orient and Greece.\(^{17}\) In many instances it was nothing but a religious form of the cosmology of the period. This constituted both its strength and its weakness. The rigorous principles of astrology determined its conception of heaven and earth.

The universe was an organism animated by a God, unique, eternal and almighty. Sometimes this God was identified with the destiny that ruled all things, with infinite time that regulated all visible phenomena, and he was worshiped in each subdivision of that endless duration, especially in the months and the seasons.\(^{18}\) Sometimes, however, he was compared with a king; he was thought of as a sovereign governing an empire, and the various gods then were the princes and dignitaries interceding with the rulers on behalf of his subjects whom they led in some manner into his presence. This heavenly court had its messengers or "angels" conveying to men the will of the master and reporting again the vows and petitions of his subjects. It was an aristocratic monarchy in heaven as on earth.\(^{19}\)


\(^{15}\) Firmicus Maternus, Mathes., VII.

\(^{16}\) Diels, Elementum, 1899, pp. 44 f.

\(^{17}\) Rev. hist. litt. rel., VIII, 1903, pp. 429 f.

\(^{18}\) Cumont, Mon. myst. Mithra, I, p. 294.

\(^{19}\) Tertullian, Apol., 24.
A more philosophic conception made the divinity an infinite power impregnating all nature with its overflowing forces. "There is only one God, sole and supreme," wrote Maximus of Madaura about 390, "without beginning or parentage, whose energies, diffused through the world, we invoke under various names, because we are ignorant of his real name. By successively addressing our supplications to his different members we intend to honor him in his entirety. Through the mediation of the subordinate gods the common father both of themselves and of all men is honored in a thousand different ways by mortals who are thus in accord in spite of their discord."\(^\text{20}\)

However, this ineffable God, who comprehensively embraces everything, manifests himself especially in the resplendent brightness of the ethereal sky.\(^\text{21}\) He reveals his power in water and in fire, in the earth, the sea and the blowing of the winds; but his purest, most radiant and most active epiphany is in the stars whose revolutions determine every event and all our actions. Above all he manifests himself in the sun, the motive power of the celestial spheres, the inexhaustible seat of light and life, the creator of all intelligence on earth. Certain philosophers like the senator Praetextatus, one of the *dramatis personae* of Macrobius, confounded all the ancient divinities of paganism with the sun in a thorough-going syncretism.\(^\text{22}\)

Just as a superficial observation might lead to the belief that the theology of the last pagans had reverted to its origin, so at first sight the transformation of the ritual might appear like a return to savagery. With the adoption of the Oriental mysteries barbarous, cruel and obscene practices were undoubtedly spread, as for instance the masquerading in the guise of animals in the Mithraic initiations, the bloody dances of the *galli* of the Great Mother and the mutilations of the Syrian priests. Nature worship was originally as "amoral" as nature itself. But an ethereal spiritualism ideally transfigured the coarseness of those primitive customs. Just as the doctrine had become completely impregnated with philosophy and erudition, so the liturgy had become saturated with ethical ideas. The taurobolium, a disgusting shower-bath of lukewarm blood, had become a means of obtaining a new and eternal life; the ritualistic ablutions were no longer external and material acts, but were supposed to cleanse the soul of its impurities and to restore its original innocence; the sacred repasts imparted an intimate virtue to the soul and furnished sustenance to the spiritual life. While efforts

\(^\text{20}\) August., *Epist.*, 16 (48).
\(^\text{21}\) *Paneg. ad Constantin.*, Aug., 313 A.D., c. 26 (p. 212, Bahrens ed.).
\(^\text{22}\) Macrobius, *Sat.*, I, 17 f.
were made to maintain the continuity of tradition, its content had slowly been transformed. The most shocking and licentious fables were metamorphosed into edifying narratives by convenient and subtle interpretations which were a joy to the learned mythographers. Paganism had become a school of morality, the priest a doctor and director of the conscience.23

The purity and holiness imparted by the practice of sacred ceremonies were the indispensable condition for obtaining eternal life.24 The mysteries promised a blessed immortality to their initiates, and claimed to reveal to them infallible means of effecting their salvation. According to a generally accepted symbol, the spirit animating man was a spark, detached from the fires shining in the ether; it partook of their divinity and so, it was believed, had descended to the earth to undergo a trial. It could literally be said that

"Man is a fallen god who still remembers heaven."

After having left their corporeal prisons, the pious souls ascended towards the celestial regions of the divine stars, to live forever in endless brightness beyond the starry spheres.25

But at the other extremity of the world, facing this luminous realm, extended the somber kingdom of evil spirits. They were irreconcilable adversaries of the gods and men of good will, and constantly left the infernal regions to roam about the earth and scatter evil. With the aid of the celestial spirits, the faithful had to struggle forever against their designs and seek to avert their anger by means of bloody sacrifices. But, with the help of occult and terrible processes, the magician could subject them to his power and compel them to serve his purposes. This demonology, the monstrous offspring of Persian dualism, favored the rise of every superstition.26

However, the reign of the evil powers was not to last forever. According to common opinion the universe would be destroyed by fire27 after the times had been fulfilled. All the wicked would perish, but the just would be revived and establish the reign of universal happiness in the regenerated world.28

The foregoing is a rapid sketch of the theology of paganism after three centuries of Oriental influence. From coarse fetichism

23 Allard, Julien l'Apostat, 11, 186 f.
24 Augustine, Civ. Dei, VI, I and VI, 12.
and savage superstitions the learned priests of the Asiatic cults had gradually produced a complete system of metaphysics and eschatology, as the Brahmins built up the spiritualistic monism of the Vedanta beside the monstrous idolatry of Hinduism, or, to confine our comparisons to the Latin world, as the jurists drew from the traditional customs of primitive tribes the abstract principles of a legal system that governs the most cultivated societies. This religion was no longer like that of ancient Rome, a mere collection of propitiatory and expiatory rites performed by the citizen for the good of the state; it now pretended to offer to all men a world-conception which gave rise to a rule of conduct and placed the end of existence in the future life. It was more unlike the worship that Augustus had attempted to restore than the Christianity that fought it. The two opposed creeds moved in the same intellectual and moral sphere, and one could actually pass from one to the other without shock or interruption. Sometimes when reading the long works of the last Latin writers, like Ammianus Marcellinus or Boethius, or the panegyrics of the official orators, scholars could well ask whether their authors were pagan or Christian. In the time of Symmachus and Praetextatus, the members of the Roman aristocracy who had remained faithful to the gods of their ancestors did not have a mentality or morality very different from that of adherents of the new faith who sat with them in the senate. The religious and mystical spirit of the Orient had slowly overcome the whole social organism and had prepared all nations to unite in the bosom of a universal church.

29 Arnobius, II, 13-14.