tainly is, that the Chaldeans derived the art of hierogly­phical writing, and conſequently the rudiments of the art of ſculpture, from their antediluvian anceſtors.

It is generally thought that ſculptore had its origin from idolatry, as it was found neceſſary to place before the people the images of their gods to enliven the fer­vour of their devotion: but this is probably a miſtake. The worſhip of the heavenly bodies, as the only gods of the heathen nations, prevailed ſo long before the dei­fication of dead men was thought of (ſee Polytheism), that we cannot ſuppoſe mankind to have been, during all that time, ignorant of the art of hieroglyphical wri­ting. But the deification of departed heroes undoubt­edly gave riſe to the almoſt univerſal practice of repreſenting the gods by images of a human form; and therefore we muſt conclude, that the elements of ſculp­ture were known before that art was employed to en­liven the devotion of idolatrous worſhippers. The py­ramids and obeliſks of Egypt, which were probably temples, or rather altars, dedicated to the ſun (ſee Py­ramid), were covered from top to bottom with hiero­glyphical emblems of men, beaſts, birds, fiſhes, and rep­tiles, at a period prior to that in which there is any un­exceptionable evidence that mere ſtatue-worſhip pre­vailed even in that nurſery of idolatry.

But though it appears thus evident that picture- writing was the firſt employment of the ſculptor, we are far from imagining that idolatrous worſhip did not contribute to carry his art to that perfection which it attained in ſome of the nations of antiquity. Even in the dark ages of Europe, when the other fine arts were almoſt extinguiſhed, the mummery of the church of Rome, and the veneration which ſhe taught for her ſaints and martyrs, preſerved among the Italians ſome veſtiges of the ſiſter-arts of ſculpture and painting; and therefore, as human nature is everywhere the ſame, it is reaſonable to believe that a ſimilar veneration for he­roes and demigods would, among the ancient nations, have a ſimilar effect. But if this be ſo, the preſumption is, that the Chaldeans were the firſt who invented the art of hewing blocks of wood and ſtone into the fi­gures of men and other animals; for the Chaldeans were unqueſtionably the firſt idolaters, and their early progreſs in ſculpture is confirmed by the united teſtimonies of Beroſus, Alexander Polyhiſtor, Apollodorus, and Pliny; not to mention the eaſtern tradition, that the father of Abraham was a ſtatuary.

Againſt this concluſion Mr Bromley, in his late Hiſtory of the Fine Arts, has urged ſome plauſible argu­ments. In ſtating theſe he profeſſes not to be original, or to derive his information from the fountain-head of antiquity. He adopts, as he tells us, the theory of a French writer, who maintains, that in the year of the world 1949, about 300 years after the deluge, the Scythians under Brouma, a deſcendant of Magog the ſon of Japhet, extended their conqueſts over the greater part of Aſia. According to this ſyſtem, Brouma was not only the civilizer of India, and the author of the braminical doctrines, but alſo diffuſed the principles of the Scythian mythology over Egypt, Phcenicia, Greece, and the continent of Aſia.

Of theſe principles Mr Bromley has given us no diſtinct enumeration: the account which he gives of them is not to be found in one place, but to be collected from a variety of diſtant paſſages. In attempting therefore

to preſent the ſubſtance of his ſcattered hints in one view, we will not be confident that we have omitted none of them. The ox, ſays he, was the Scythian em­blem of the generator of animal life, and hence it be­came the principal divinity of the Arabians. The ſerpent was the ſymbol of the ſource of intelligent nature. Theſe were the common points of union in all the firſt religions of the earth. From Egypt the Iſraelites car­ried with them a religious veneration for the ox and the ſerpent. Their veneration for the ox appeared ſoon af­ter they marched into the wilderneſs, when in the abſence of Moſes they called upon Aaron to make them gods which ſhould go before them. The idea of ha­ving an idol to go before them, ſays our author, was completely Scythian; for ſo the Scythians acted in all their progreſs through Aſia, with this difference, that their idol was a living animal. The Iſraelites having gained their favourite god, which was an ox (not a calf as it is rendered in the book of Exodus), next pro­ceeded to hold a feſtival, which was to be accompa­nied with dancing; a species of gaiety common in the feſtivals which were held in adoration of the emblematic *Urotal* or ox in that very part of Arabia near Mount Sinai where this event took place. It is mentioned too as a curious and important fact, that the ox which was revered in Arabia was called *Adonai.* According­ly Aaron announcing the feaſt to the ox or golden calf, ſpeaks thus, *tomorrow is a fea*ſ*t to Adonai,* which is in our tranſlation rendered *to the Lord.* In the time of Jeroboam we read of the golden calves ſet up as objects of worſhip at Bethel and Dan. Nor was the reverence paid to the ox confined to Scythia, to Egypt, and to Aſia; it extended much farther. The ancient Cimbri, as the Scythians did, carried an ox of bronze before them on all their expeditions. Mr Bromley alſo in­forms us, that as great reſpect was paid to the living ox among the Greeks as was offered to its ſymbol among other nations.

The emblem of the ſerpent, continues Mr Bromley, was marked yet more decidedly by the expreſs direc­tion of the Almighty. That animal had ever been conſidered as emblematic of the ſupreme generating power of intelligent life: And was that idea, ſays he, diſcouraged, ſo far as it went to be a ſign or ſymbol of life, when God ſaid to Moſes, “Make thee a brazen ſerpent, and ſet it upon a pole, and it ſhall Come to paſs that every one who is bitten, when he looketh upon it, ſhall live.” In Egypt the ſerpent ſurrounded their Iſis and Oſiris, the diadems of their princes, and the bon­nets of their prieſts. The ſerpent made a diſtinguiſhed figure in Grecian ſculpture. The fable of Echidne, the mother of the Scythians, gave her figure termina­ting as a ſerpent to ail the founders of ſtates in Greece; from which their earlieſt ſculptors repreſented in that form the Titan princes, Cecrops, Draco, and even Eric­thonius. Beſides the ſpear of the image of Minerva, which Phidias made for the citadel of Athens, he pla­ced a ſerpent, which was ſuppoſed to guard that goddeſs.

The ſerpent was combined with many other figures. It ſometimes was coiled round an egg as an emblem of the creation; ſometimes round a trident, to ſhow its power over the ſea; ſometimes it encircled a flambeau, to repreſent life and death.

In Egypt, as well as in Scythia and India, the di-