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# THE THUNDERWEAPON IN RELIGION AND FOLKLORE

A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE ARCHAEOLOGY

BY

CHR. BLINKENBERG, PH.D.

Cambridge:  
at the University Press

1911

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## PREFACE

THIS study has its origin in an attempt to set out the historical relations between the ideas about the thunder-weapon which are known to have prevailed on Greek soil at various periods: in the Mycenæan age (the double-axe of bronze), in the early historical ages (the classical keraunos, the thunder-weapon of Zeus), and in modern ages (the stone axes). It proved, however, impossible to arrive at any well-grounded opinion from a consideration of Greek territory only, for the evolution in Greece did not become intelligible until seen in its connection with the corresponding ideas among other peoples.

With regard to the Greek subject-matter, the form in which the result of the investigation is here put forward has been influenced by the appearance of Usener's treatise, *Keraunos* (in the *Rheinisches Museum* 1905) and Jacobsthal's book, *Der Blitz in der orientalischen und griechischen Kunst* (1906).

The main reason why the ideas of Scandinavia, and not those of ancient Greece, were made the starting-point in the exposition, was the fact that no publication concerning them had hitherto appeared in literature. The greater part of the matter had first to be collected from the existing popular tradition. For all kind help rendered to him in this task, the author now gives his best thanks. Many communications have been received through the *Dansk Folkemindesamling* (Danish Folklore Collection) in answer to an appeal in the papers. Another part of the material, which proved to be of the first importance in regard to the questions treated here, had also to be brought before the public from collections made at first hand, viz. the objects belonging to the thunderstone worship in southern India, procured by Mr Löventhal, a missionary, and sent by

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him, accompanied by his careful observations, to the National Museum.

In order not to burden the text with the many details involved in the investigation, or the many sources, printed or unprinted, to which reference had to be made, it was found necessary to collect these in a special chapter (x.), to the paragraphs of which reference is made in the text by figures placed in square brackets [ ]. Here, in the first place, the new material from Denmark is given, with a statement of the locality and the informant; the reports received from the *Dansk Folkemindesamling* are marked D.F.S. Next follows a geographically arranged account of the traditions of other countries, with more or less copious extracts from the sources, and with an explanation of particular questions, where it was deemed necessary for a clear understanding of the subject. Only in regard to Scandinavia has an account been given of, or a reference made to, everything that has come to the knowledge of the author.

In collecting the scattered material from foreign countries, the works on thunderbolts, already published, have been of great help, especially the following :

JOHN EVANS, *The Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain*, 1st ed. (1872), pp. 50-58; 2nd ed. (1897), pp. 55-65.

MONTELIUS, *Sveriges forntid* (1874), pp. 160-162.

CARTAILHAC, *L'âge de pierre dans les souvenirs et superstitions populaires* (Paris, 1878).

ANDREE, *Der Donnerkeil*, in *Mittheil. der Anthropol. Gesellschaft in Wien*, 1882; enlarged and reprinted in *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche, Neue Folge* (1889), pp. 36-41.

H. F. FEILBERG, *Ordbog over jyske almuesmål*.

PAUL COGELS, *Céramiques et pierres de foudre*, Anvers, 1907 (*Bulletin de l'acad. royale d'archéologie de Belgique*, 1907, IV.).

Dr H. F. Feilberg has with great kindness permitted the author to make use of his unprinted collections for the article "Thunderstone" in his dictionary, and has referred him to much other matter in folk-lore reviews that would not otherwise have come to his knowledge.

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For the information of the English reader it only remains to be said that by the "National Museum" the National Museum in Copenhagen is always to be understood.

The Danish edition of *The Thunderweapon* was published in 1909 by Tillge, Copenhagen, as No. 79 of the series *Studier fra Sprog- og Oldtidsforskning udgivne af det philologisk-historiske Samfund*. To the present book much new material and a number of new illustrations have been added. Some of the photographs were taken in foreign museums, and one (No. 2) in a remote mountain village of southern India.

It was made possible to obtain these illustrations and to arrange for an English translation by a subvention from the Carlsberg Fund, to which the author begs to express his most grateful thanks. For the careful rendering of the Danish text he is indebted to the kindness of Miss Ingeborg Fausböll. The manuscript has been revised and many improvements in the English style suggested by Mr S. C. Roberts of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

C. B.

*October, 1911.*

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The clichés (with the exception of figs. 12 and 32) were made by Messrs Pacht and Crone of Copenhagen. In selecting the coins depicted and procuring the casts from which the illustrations are produced, Dr C. Jørgensen, Inspector at the National Museum, has given the author his kind help.