

perfumed the air. All the people implored the goddess to enter the city as a friend, and to look on the Roman state with a favouring eye. Thus they placed the Idraon mother in the temple of Victory and enriched her with abundant gifts. We have no data concerning the shape, size, weight or general appearance of this stone, but we can infer from the above that it was a comparatively small fragment, of perhaps thirty pounds in weight. It is reported, though not by Livy, that an image had been made in a female form and dress, and the stone placed on it for a head or face. This was probably a true aerolite.

There is no room to doubt the meteoric origin of the great black stone of Emesa, Syria, for it is described with scientific precision by Herodian. This was worshipped with divine honour by the natives of the locality, while neighbouring kings and satraps sent annual presents of gold and silver and precious stones to adorn the great temple in which it was housed. At the beginning of the third century, A. D., this god-mountain, El Gabal, was being served by a handsome lad of some fourteen summers, with dances and the music of cymbals, flutes and drums, the young priest being arrayed in richly embroidered garments of cloth of gold, when the Roman legionaries were by intrigues it is not now profitable to recount led to proclaim him emperor. The stone was cone-shaped, probably like an old-fashioned sugar-loaf. It stood on the round end and tapered to a point. It had upon its surface small lumps (*ἐξοχὰς βραχείας*) and indentations (*τύπους*). Its crust was black (*μέλαινα τε ἡ χροιά*). There were marks upon it thought to indicate the figure of the god. (Query—von Widmanstätten lines?) And it was held in reverence because it had fallen from heaven (*διοπέτῃ τε αὐτόν εἶναι σεμνολογοῦσιν*). As the young enthusiast could not well get to Rome at once, he sent a great painting of the stone and himself in the act of adoration, which was put up by his orders above the statue of Victory in the senate chamber. The year after he entered Rome and built a magnificent temple for this strange god, whose image, unlike those of Greek and Roman gods, was not made with hands. He had Syrian maidens dance and musicians circle in procession round it. Hecatombs of victims he sacrificed before it, cattle and sheep. Rivulets of the best and oldest wines mingled with their blood. The chief officers of the army and of the state assisted, in barbaric costume, to elevate above their heads the golden vessels used in the ceremonies, while in a wondering ring stood all that was noblest in the Eternal City. Those who smiled or dared to scoff were mercilessly slain. Every officiating priest of other gods had to preface his litany with the name of Elagabalus. When the stone was brought into the city it was in a chariot adorned profusely with gems and precious metals; the horses, white, were led—no mortal being allowed to drive—and the emperor himself walked backward in front of the aerolite, as being wishful to gaze uninterruptedly at the divine