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THE CULT OF THE CROSS IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

by

M. C. BALLINGAL

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Degree of Master of Arts  
University of Durham  
Department of Theology  
1987



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ERRATA

- p. 6 1. 12 for leaps read means
- p. 12 1. 5 of first indented quotation - for forma read borne
- p. 24 1. 6 for leg read bone
- p. 87 1. 16 for wonewhat read somewhat
- p. 93 1. 18 for tests read texts
- p. 132 1. 6 of second indented quotation - for expeciall read especially
- p. 175 1.20 for indispensible read indiscernable

ALIA ERRATA

- p. 99 footnote - for 523 read 530
- p. 21 at note 57 - for 12:9 read 12:2f.; and for 17:4 read 17:8-13.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The purpose of the following thesis is to look at some features of the cult of the 'Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. By cult we mean not only the liturgical cultus of the Cross, but the whole mass of Scriptural interpretation, theological speculation and books, favourable or unfavourable to this kind of devotion.

The title promises (perhaps) more than is given, for much has had to be omitted, more indeed than could have been included in two hundred pages. So, an attempt has been made to include something of the Cross in liturgy, and in the New Testament Apocrypha; to mention the Nestorian relics from China, and the iconoclastic actions of Claudius of Turin, a ninth-century bishop. Of the great liturgies, only the Roman could be given much attention. The fine arts are omitted, though poetry has received some mention.

An attempt has been made to show the variety of attitudes to the Cross, as (for example) in the matter of its veneration. Furthermore, because the Cross and the mystery of the Cross are part of the Christian Faith, it cannot be isolated from the rest of the Faith. Other mysteries have therefore been mentioned on occasion: for the Christian Faith is one and indivisible.

ABSTRACT OF THESISM.C. BallingalTHE CULT OF THE CROSS IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The subject of this study is the cult of the Cross, from the first to the thirteenth centuries. First considered is the period ending c.200. Special attention has been given to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

Chapter 2 examines a number of the New Testament Apocrypha, writings of very varied date. The distinction between orthodoxy and heresy not being always clear, these are witnesses to heretical speculations and to some orthodox ideas (many apocrypha have been edited for orthodox or heterodox use.)

The third chapter collects the various narratives of the finding, or Invention, of the Cross. Eusebius of Caesarea (d.340) is perhaps the earliest writer to give such a narrative, and we have concluded the catena of authors with Theodoret of Cyr (d.460). An Edessene and a Jewish tradition also exist. All these are examined in Chapter 4.

Next comes an account of the liturgical veneration of the Cross: a brief survey of various calendars, and then a study of some Western liturgical books: the period extends from about 335 to 950.

In 818 the Bishop of Turin wrote against certain features of religious practice. What remains of his book, and of one reply to it, is studied in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 is concerned with a Nestorian monument from 781, discovered in China, and with English devotion to the Cross from 597 to 970.

Then follows a study of the Cross and heretics from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries: the last chapter summarises the previous eight.

We preach Christ crucified, to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

I Corinthians 1:23,24

There [i.e. in S. Paul] the Cross is exalted, with a vehemence of language that is astonishing in its freshness, and the Crucified Figure is, as indeed he [S. Paul] asserts, the central thesis of all his exhortations.

Bede Jarrett, O.P. Meditations for Layfolk:  
'Mortifications' (p.331)



## CHAPTER 1

### From the Apostles to Irenaeus

On occasion one finds the use of the crucifix impugned on two quite different grounds: it is to be rejected as obscene, and also because it is not sufficiently realistic.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the merits of this argument, there was a time when Cicero (to mention nobody else) could speak of "the slaves' extreme and supreme punishment"<sup>2</sup>, and find no one to disagree, whereas the Christian world has learned to speak of it as of something glorious. So well has the lesson been taught and learnt, that some have objected to "hanging roses on the Cross"<sup>3</sup>, and to what they reckon a forgetfulness of the squalid and brutal death inflicted upon Jesus Christ. The chief purpose of the present thesis is to notice some of the stages in this transformation of the Cross, and to give some sort of explanation for it. To do this, it is necessary to refer not only to the more obviously relevant Biblical texts, but to the Fathers as well. Neither should be isolated, since both shape and govern the tradition according to which the Church has gone so far as to make the cultus of the Cross a part even of her liturgy.

The root of the honours given to the Cross is its very intimate association with the Redeemer, so that the warning and command, that "If anyone would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me"<sup>4</sup>, seems the best place to begin from. In S. Mark, these words follow S. Peter's confession of faith; and S. Matthew speaks of the command thereafter. Thus the incident can stand as a



sort of gloss upon the verses where S. Paul speaks of the 'self-emptying' of Christ, in which He "humbled himself ... to the death of the Cross."<sup>5</sup> He was 'raised up', but not in the Resurrection alone; as He "reign~~ed~~ from the Tree"<sup>6</sup> when he was "lifted up from the earth ~~to~~ draw all men to ~~Him~~self".<sup>7</sup> These verses together show that men may indeed "reign in life"<sup>8</sup>; but this can come only through that mystical death (and partaking of Christ's death) which is Baptism. We do not need to strain the New Testament so as to compel it to speak of the Cross: the Fathers are not unmindful of the close connection between Cross and Baptism. They find it, and Baptism, all through Scripture and often joined together; just as the Saviour and His Mother were sought, and found, under various figures, throughout the Scriptures. The comparison between Christ's Cross and His Mother is not merely coincidental, since the objections to both are often very similar. A given text was referred to Jesus Christ according as the infant Church departed from the Judaism of its birth; conversely, the more Christianity departed from Judaism, the more could Christian speculation on Christ, and then on those persons and things most intimately associated with Him, be developed. If this be a right way of understanding the first Christian centuries (so far as they have to do with the history of the doctrine of the Cross), then perhaps it was the origin of the Gospel, more indeed than cultural and apologetic considerations, which may account for the difference in tone between S. Paul and Justin or Irenaeus.

What, then, has 'the Apostle' to say of the Cross? We have already noticed the reference he makes to the condescension whereby

Christ "became obedient to death on a Cross", and he speaks of "bearing the marks of Christ in his body"<sup>9</sup>, the fruits, and evidence, of S. Paul's being 'crucified to the world'<sup>10</sup>, and it to him. "Far from me be it to boast, except in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ ..."<sup>11</sup> By the Cross, or by Christ, the world and the Apostle have thus no more to do with each other, and there is "a new creation"<sup>12</sup>, effected by the mutual indwelling of the Apostle and the Redeemer, and this new creation is in all its parts ruled by the Cross. Here are some of the elements of a devotion to the Cross; but, so far, it is private and individual.

What keeps the Apostle's meditations upon the Cross from being a merely private 'devotion', is the universality of the Redemption. It is not world-wide only but, far more than this, it embraces the entire creation, even though its fruits be not universally realised. Hints and intimations of this universality can be seen in Ephesians. Once, the Gentiles were separated from Christ.<sup>13</sup> Then the implications of this separation are given.

But now in Christ Jesus you ... once far off, have been brought near in the blood of Christ; for He is our peace, who has made us Jew and Gentile, that is both one, and has broken down the dividing-wall of enmity, by abolishing, in His flesh, the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the enmity to an end.<sup>14</sup>

This passage deserves full quotation, to show how exceedingly rich - perhaps too rich for a single cogent argument - is the salvation-theology of S. Paul and his disciples and, by implication, how rich in ideas, and in possible developments, is his theology of the Cross, which is one of the foundations of such a theology.

And he has yet more to say. In verse 11 of Colossians, Chapter 1, (as we now have it), S. Paul begins one of his enormous sentences, with a recapitulation of the schema of human salvation. He writes (or cites) a hymn very like that in the letter to the Philippians, the chief difference between them being that the hymn in Philippians regards the Redemption from the 'point of view' of the Humanity of Christ, and the hymn in Colossians, from that of the Deity of the same Christ. This latter-named passage is, also, one of those which could be used as evidence that S. Paul - or 'Pauline Christianity' - was Gnostic (rather, perhaps, than such as could be taken for Gnostic). In the passage is found yet another idea, or motif, that "through the blood of His Cross"<sup>15</sup>, all things, in heaven and earth alike, are "reconcile/d to God"<sup>16</sup>. The ambiguity as to Whose is the Cross, is probably intentional, as though (it may be) to show the entire unanimity of purpose between Father and Son. 'Sacred writers' should not nod, so one may hope that S. Paul was not doing so. By no means is he writing of the blood and sweat of the Passion only, as though the suffering were the chiefest element of the Crucifixion: but the Cross and the Crucified (not the Crucified alone) have become a sort of theological principle. Christ, "the Son of Man, must ... be crucified";<sup>17</sup> and without a victim, a Cross is barely more than a bit of wood. Christ gave the form to a matter which was as yet indeterminate, so that both have become this theological principle. S. Paul seems never to say anything of the suffering of the Redeemer as distinct from His death; the fact of the Crucifixion, and its significance, most engage his interest. One may very well doubt whether anything remotely similar to a Way of

the Cross could have flourished in the first days of the Church.

The Mystery of the Passion does not change; emphases in its celebration may. Elsewhere again, we read of the process of this 'reconciliation to Himself'<sup>18</sup> that S. Paul's Colossian auditors "have been buried with Christ in baptism"<sup>19</sup>, the 'more excellent' spiritual circumcision; for had they been circumcised, more Judaeorum, he would have played the Gospel false, which weakness he never admits; furthermore, he has just warned his hearers of another danger, that from "philosophy and vain deceit ... according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ."<sup>20</sup>

So then, buried with Christ in baptism, the Colossians have been united with His resurrection<sup>21</sup> "through their faith in that exercise of power by which God raised the Son from the dead..."<sup>22</sup> In Christ as they are, they are raised; because He is raised, all their sins are forgiven. How does this forgiveness come about? Christ(?)<sup>\*</sup> has taken the record of our debts, and has nailed it to the Cross, disarming the principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by it(?)<sup>23</sup> There is some ambiguity at the end of this passage, and thus some doubt as to whether S. Paul speaks of Christ or the Cross, though it may be that he is taking refuge in a studied vagueness. And who are these 'principalities and powers'? The elements of sun and moon perhaps; or demons (in the Christian scheme) such as the daimon of Socrates; and maybe one might refer to the various gods and demi-gods, whose cult was to continue for many more years; or the Jewish rulers who, had they known "what they were doing"<sup>24</sup> although "they had the greater guilt"<sup>25</sup> than Pilate, "would not have crucified the Lord of

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\* Who takes and nails - the Father or the Son?

glory;"<sup>26</sup> or (perhaps) the angels, through whom "the Law was delivered"<sup>27</sup> are worshipped in error, so that S. Paul dissuades the Colossians from this 'proto-Gnostic'<sup>28</sup> aberration, by showing the superiority of Christ, as He overcomes by the Cross, in weakness.

Despite the profundity and the detail of S. Paul's doctrine as we have mentioned it above, perhaps the best known of all the passages which concern the Cross is that in the first letter to the Corinthians, which speaks of that Divine folly which is "wiser than the wisdom of men".<sup>29</sup> To some groups of people, this passage is better known (unfortunately) as a clarion call to intellectual vacuity<sup>30</sup> than as an expression of the providence of God working the redemption of what was fallen by means altogether at odds with what one might have expected. So the passage is, by implication, an expression of God's freedom and boundless resource as well. Thus the Son of God and Man freely chose to be 'unfree' thus freeing the redeemed from the world.

The 'folly' and seeming utter improvidence of God are very evidently advertised by the way in which He has ordained that the Christian should walk. As Teresa of Avila says somewhere, it is no surprise that God has so few friends, as He treats them so badly. One is tempted to say that He does not desire that a sinner should turn from his wickedness and live; because of the way in which unredeemed human nature is incapable of seeing wisdom and love in this Divine purpose. So then, before S. Paul went to Corinth, he preached in Athens, and found no very favourable reception there, despite his attempt to express what he had to say in terms which his hearers would

recognise. This experience perhaps lies behind his disclaimer in the present Corinthian letter, where he says that Christ sent him to preach (rather than to baptize) and to do this, "not with an orator's cleverness (for in this way the Cross of Christ might be robbed of its force); to those who court their own ruin, the message of the Cross is but folly; to us, who are being saved, it is the evidence of the power of God."<sup>31</sup> The Apostle is not saying that the 'preaching of the Cross' needs no defence from him, and can stand up by itself; on the contrary. The use of a Cross in the saving purposes of God is a thing in need of explanation. "He that hangs upon a tree is accursed"<sup>32</sup>, the Israelites were told; and not only the Saviour but His Apostle also, must have seemed to be false prophets; and Scripture allowed that such men might yet work signs and wonders. There could thus be little argument in favour of the high titles bestowed upon their god by Christians.

As for the 'folly' presented to the Greeks, it is a strange god who permits himself to suffer the extreme penalty: that Christ died, many would admit; but that He was raised, few believed. Other offended gods were vindicated<sup>33</sup>, but it was not evident that the same could be said of this one. Besides, heroes might suffer greatly, and come close to death, even death on a Cross, but not so close as to die indeed.<sup>34</sup> One must not compare things hardly comparable (as being of different dates), but one point in which Apollonius of Tyana was deemed superior to Christ, was that Apollonius was upright, and escaped death.<sup>35</sup> No matter how upright Christ may have been, He was less fortunate, and therefore, presumably, hateful to heaven.<sup>36</sup>

Someone executed for sedition can scarcely have been upright.<sup>37</sup>

Even if one leaves aside the calumnies retailed by Celsus, a hundred years after S. Paul (one wonders how many of them had been circulating in S. Paul's day), Jesus Christ was a Jew: which might not favourably impress an otherwise well-disposed Alexandrian Greek.

In such terms as these did S. Paul insist upon the inaccessibility of the Divine plan, giving occasion for the boast of some, that this plan is so 'foolish'; as though the contradiction of human understanding were the 'one thing necessary'. In the course of his exposition of God's purpose, S. Paul alludes to Isaiah<sup>38</sup>: the prophet speaks of his people's insensibility and blindness and of their religious practice, which is only formal, and of their attempts to hide their purposes from God. Wisdom in book and counsel shall therefore be taken from them.

S. Paul is able to say, therefore: "What we preach is Christ crucified ... the Power of God, Christ the Wisdom of God. So much wiser than men is God's foolishness; so much stronger than men is God's weakness."<sup>39</sup> The purpose of such dealing with the 'wise' and the 'strong', is doubtless also to judge such things, to reduce them under the one Head, Christ, and so to make of them also, a 'new creation'.

The teaching of S. Paul on the topic of the Cross, very subtle, yet coherent with all other parts of 'his' Gospel, is not so all-inclusive that the other New Testament authors add nothing - rather, drawing from a common tradition, he witnesses to it.

In the Gospels (as we have suggested) the Cross and discipleship are inseparable. A shared tradition, it seems, makes the first three evangelists agree in having the words, "If any man would follow me ..."



come after the confession of S. Peter. It is an attractive suggestion that S. Luke's use of bastazein<sup>40</sup> refers to the signatio of the Cross at Baptism; and that S. Peter's confession of faith is the prototype of such confessions at Baptism. The 'taking-up' of the Cross mentioned by the evangelists would thus be, for the generality of Christian people, an exhortation to an 'imitation', or 'following', of Christ.

In the sermons of S. Peter, it is remarkable that, on the occasions of Pentecost<sup>41</sup> and the healing at the Beautiful Gate<sup>42</sup>, he charges the Jews and their rulers with the chief part in the Crucifixion, or rather the Passion; but says nearly nothing of the Cross - perhaps he hoped to capture their goodwill by refraining from too much bluntness. When brought before the Council on two more occasions<sup>43</sup> (the first of these, just after the healing) Peter, speaking for John and himself, and later for the apostles, roundly accuses the Council of having "crucified"<sup>44</sup> and "hung on a gibbet"<sup>45</sup> the One whom he preaches; and he repeats this charge when he speaks of how the Council treated the Saviour, when Cornelius summoned S. Peter, to hear him speak.<sup>46</sup> Later, in his (first) letter, S. Peter mentions how "Christ Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."<sup>47</sup> In the course of these observations, the writer quotes Isaiah 53; the emphasis is on the death of Christ, which fulfils prophecy - not so much upon the 'tree' of the Cross. With such use of the Old Testament and finding of Christ therein, we are only a step away from finding His Cross there as well - they can hardly be separated.

In the Letter to the Hebrews the Cross is spoken of in a metaphor - apostates "crucify the Son of God to themselves afresh,"<sup>48</sup> which could mean that the Cross had so far become a subject of thought and devotion as to be (almost) a cliché, although such fearsome words may alone fittingly express the terrible nature and effects of this offence. Or again, just as the cross had (to some extent) passed into philosophy, as an expression for extreme agony,<sup>49</sup> so perhaps the same had happened in Christian thought.

The Apostolic Fathers bear witness (frequently indirect) to the honour in which the Cross was held. When in I Clement, we read that "God established the heavens,"<sup>50</sup> the word for "established" is used also for the operation of the Cross as, can be seen from Daniélou's History of the development of Christian doctrine before the Council of Nicea, Vol. 1, pp. 265-92, esp. 287-89; which suggests that the Cross is not the passive instrument of salvation only, but that it is almost active, a "strength and stay upholding all creation,"<sup>51</sup> - an interpretation to be had from S. Paul's words on the extent of the Divine Love.

In contrast to I Clement the author of the so-called Letter of Barnabas is clear, prolix and full, in his discovery of Old Testament types of the Cross.

For example, Barnabas is the first author to divine the Cross in the very name of Jesus. The two first letters of this Name in Greek have a numerical value of eighteen, and the letter tau,<sup>\*</sup> which is also a form of the Cross, has a value of three hundred. Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his household.<sup>52</sup> So

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\* Also called the crux commissa.

Barnabas infers that when Abraham circumcised himself, he "did so in a spiritual prevision of Jesus."<sup>53</sup> This is because "grace was to come by a Cross"<sup>54</sup>. Barnabas also writes of how the Cross was typified by "scarlet wool on branches of wood ... with sprigs of hyssop"; and he mentions the goat, Isaac, the scapegoat, all as fragmentary types of the Passion in general.

A little later this author speaks of how Baptism and the Cross are prefigured in the Old Testament. Thus, he asks "whether the Lord took any care to foreshadow the water and the Cross?"<sup>56</sup> In answer, he cites Psalm 1:3 (which will be mentioned again), and Ezechiel 47:12; the Cross is efficacious through the baptismal waters. Barnabas then speaks of Baptism at some length. In Chapter 12, he alludes to Moses' prayer (made in the orans position) against Amalek;<sup>57</sup> to the brazen serpent fashioned by Moses;<sup>58</sup> and to some words of Isaiah.<sup>59</sup>

The conjunction of Baptism and Cross, which seems to be indicated in the Apocalypse,<sup>60</sup> is evidence for the use of the sign of the Cross in Baptism, doubtless with a glance at Romans. What we lack (but might expect to have found) is some reference to the NAME of the Lord. For the Taw, which is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, represents the NAME: its shape is that of the S. Andrew's Cross, or the crux capitata (judging from the coins)\*. That kind of point might have offended an audience of Jewish background, such as the hearers of this letter may have been. We may leave Barnabas with these words: "Here in the episode of the brazen serpent<sup>7</sup> again you see the glory of Jesus; for there is nothing which is not found in Him, and nothing which does not point to him."<sup>61</sup>

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\* The crux canitata is that with the long vertical beam.

Ignatius of Antioch, who died a martyr under Trajan, speaks of the Cross in a number of places. (So do the Letters which are ascribed to him in the 'Longer Recension' of his works. These pseudo-Ignatiana are of about the 4th century, and so find no place here.)<sup>62</sup>

Writing to the Ephesians, he speaks of the Cross in the words of S. Paul - it is a "stumbling-block"<sup>63</sup> and "life eternal"; and he refers I Cor. 1:18 to the Incarnation, no less than to the Passion. He has three bêtes noires: the Jews, the Gnostics, and the Docetists. His hearers are to

... fly from these wicked off-shoots, which bear deadly fruit. These are not the planting of the Father. For if they were, they would appear as branches of the Cross, by which through His Passion He calls you who are His members. The head therefore cannot be formed without limbs, since God promises union, that is Himself.<sup>64</sup>

Elsewhere, in writing to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius compliments them.

... I have observed that you are established in immovable faith, as if nailed to the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, both in flesh and spirit, and confirmed in love by the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded ... that he is ... truly born of a Virgin ... truly nailed to a tree in the flesh ...<sup>65</sup>

A very similar catechetical plan is to be found in the letter to the Trallians: Christ "was truly born ... persecuted ... crucified and died in the sign of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth ... raised from the dead."<sup>66</sup>

This same concern with the scheme of Christian faith is evident in the Letter to the Magnesians: once more he speaks of

the Birth, Passion, Resurrection.<sup>67</sup> None of this is mere theory; the Cross is also a derrick, making, of Christians, "stones for the Father's temple".<sup>68</sup> No wonder, seeing the wealth of the Cross, that Ignatius' spirit is devoted to the cross...", as an "expiation" - language like that of S. Paul.<sup>69</sup>

Hermas (said to be brother of Pius of Rome)\* has a passage which runs, "Before a man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead".<sup>70</sup> The context is a parabolic exposition of Baptism. S. Paul "preached Christ crucified"<sup>71</sup>; "the seal was preached"<sup>72</sup>; says Hermas. We have referred to the Taw and the Tau-cross. The Apostles "preached the name"<sup>73</sup> of Christ. Reference to the Cross is suggested by the subject of Baptism, and by allusion to the preaching of Christ or the Apostles to the dead.

Some of what Hermas relates, is ambiguous; but Justin Martyr (who has more upon the Cross than any author of the hundred years which follow the death of S. Paul), is quite clear. A famous text in Isaiah, usually referred to the Incarnation<sup>74</sup>, is applied by Justin to the Crucifixion, which suggests a close connection between these events (like S. Matthew, Justin is much occupied with arguments based upon prophecy).

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\* We may add, that Pius is usually supposed to have been Pope 140-54, and that Hermas refers to 'Clement' - so helping to account for uncertainty on that letter's status within or without the Canon.

In Chapter 41 of his Apology, Justin speaks of the excision (by the Jews) of some words of Psalm 95/96:10, although these words: "The Lord has reigned from the tree", are a Christian addition.<sup>75</sup> Here is no Suffering Servant, but the triumph on the Cross.

"Our Jesus Christ ... afforded joy to the Gentiles by being crucified; ... being crucified and dead [Jesus Christ] rose again, and having ascended, reigned."<sup>76</sup> Somewhat in the manner of S. John, Justin insinuates that the Saviour acted in entire freedom, as an agent rather than as a sufferer of action; and His crucifixion is really the beginning of His exaltation, which is fulfilled in His ascension. Thus Justin concludes that "no one of those who lived before Him, nor yet of His contemporaries, afforded joy to the Gentiles by being crucified."<sup>77</sup>

Among symbols of the Cross are such things as the sail of a ship, a plough, tools, and the human form. Everything said of the Cross was said symbolically - and the Cross itself "is the greatest symbol of His power and rule."<sup>78</sup> The "sons of Jupiter", such as the demigods of Classical legend, did not "imitate the being crucified"<sup>79</sup>; those who told stories, such as, of the sons of Jupiter, "did not understand"<sup>80</sup> the Cross; and such incomprehension of the Divine purpose shows the greatness of the symbol. Inspiring the stories, and known as the sons of Jupiter, were the demons themselves.<sup>81</sup>

Justin also finds food for thought in the Timaeus. Plato speaks of the world-soul<sup>82</sup> and Justin apprehends the Cross, which

has thus been set upon the universe. No one before Justin had written in this vein (we even meet the serpent of Numbers again.)

Plato, not apprehending, and not understanding, that the world-soul was the figure of the Cross, ... said that the power next to the first God was placed crosswise in the universe; ... all these things can be heard ... from people ... who are uneducated and barbarous in speech, though wise and believing in mind ... so that you may understand that these things are not the effect of human wisdom, but are uttered by the wisdom of God.<sup>83</sup>

In the Dialogue with Trypho this Jewish interlocutor of Justin objects to the "many blasphemies"<sup>84</sup> by which Justin seeks to persuade Trypho, and Trypho's compatriots, that "this crucified man"<sup>85</sup> is at least equal to "Moses and Aaron". By the end of the Dialogue Trypho seems to find this crucifixion rendered much less offensive by the words of Justin. In Chapter 40 the Christian philosopher presents the Paschal Lamb as a type of the Cross. Later indeed, Justin says even that "if Christ was not to suffer, you would have good cause to wonder ... will not as many as have understood the writings of the Prophets, whenever they hear merely that He was crucified, say that this is He and no other?"

A little later, Moses is once more described as praying against Amalek; before declaring of the tribe of Joseph that "His horns are the horns of an unicorn."<sup>86</sup> Here again is a type of the Cross. Moses' serpent, follows on the unicorn. Perhaps Justin reproaches the Ophites, in saying: "Death was to come on the serpent that bit Israel..."

How does Justin answer the Jewish objection to Christ that He "hung on a tree"? The verse confirms our hope which depends on the crucified Christ, not because He Who has been crucified, is

cursed by God but because God foretold that which would be done by you all."<sup>87</sup> Not Jews only, but all who "put Christians to death ... effectively carry out the curse."

God anticipated "before the proper times these mysteries, ... to confer grace upon you [Jews], to Whom you are always convicted of being thankless."<sup>88</sup> So,

... the mystery of saved men appeared in the Deluge ... wherein Christ appeared, when He arose from the dead, forever the first in power. For Christ, being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith and wood, containing the mystery of the Cross.

Enlarging upon this association, in Baptism, of Wood and Water, Justin speaks, a little later, of the rod Moses used in dividing the waters for the children of Israel.

Somewhat later than Justin (martyred c. 165) is the Father of Mariology, Irenaeus of Lyons, whose contest is not with heathens or Jews, but with Gnosticism, a "complex of all heresies". His death in about 202 brings this chapter neatly to the beginning of the third century.

The Cross can be apprehended as a principle of gnosis, a rule of knowledge, as easily as it may be a principle of divine things:<sup>89</sup> and one of the services of Irenaeus to Christian theology, was to help in showing what an orthodox Christian might believe, and what must be reckoned heresy, two things so similar at times, as to allow of confusion (as is often the way with heresies). The Apologists were not less concerned with the Cross than were their predecessors.



Thus Irenaeus records such ideas as the following: "The Father produced ... Horos, whom the Valentinians call both Cross and Redeemer,"<sup>90</sup> and three more names beside; Wisdom was "established" by Horos, who "fenced off enthumesis", that is, desire: for we are told that Horos had "faculties of sustaining and separating."<sup>91</sup> Horos, or Limit, is the name of this being's latter aspect; the former aspect is named Stauros, or Cross. The gospels of Matthew and Luke, with I Corinthians and Galatians, are used to support such notions. Somewhat less ethereal is the opinion of Basilides, that Simon of Cyrene was crucified, while Jesus stood by, laughing.<sup>92</sup> Thus, to confess a Jesus crucified is to remain a slave, "under the power of those who formed our bodies."

In Book V,\* having written much elsewhere on the Cross, Irenaeus says of the 'handwriting' thereon: "As by means of a tree we were made debtors to God, by means of a tree we may obtain the remission of our debt." And the "word" which had been lost, "by ... a tree was ... made manifest to all."<sup>93</sup> To the subtlety of the Gnostic is countered an explanation of a place in Ephesians, to refer to the Cross.<sup>94</sup> Writing in such terms as may commend his mode of argument to his opponents, Irenaeus writes: "His own creation bare Him - which [creation] is sustained indeed by the Father in an invisible manner, and ... in a visible manner it bore His Word: and this is the true [Word]." This "'creation'" is a Cross - "the very heretics acknowledge that He was crucified".

The creation is very far from being "the fruit of ignorance and defect".<sup>95</sup> Had it been so there would have been scant occasion

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\* Of his work Against Heresies.

for Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation, which is exemplified<sup>96</sup> in the obedience, "upon a tree", which "was happily announced ... to the Virgin Mary"; thus was atonement made, for the "disobedience" at the tree in Eden. Once more, we find that two themes or subjects, both matter of great 'stumbling', are connected by a relation to Christ.

NOTESFrom the Apostles to Irenaeus

1. See C.S. Carter and G.E.A. Weeks, The Protestant Dictionary, p.161.
2. Cicero, Against Verres V:6; and see M. Hengel, Crucifixion, p.xi, quoting Origen on Mt. 27:22.
3. J. Moltmann, The Crucified God, pp.33-35.
4. Mk. 8:34, and see also Mt. 16:24 and Lk. 9:23.
5. Php. 2:8.
6. See H. Wheeler Robinson, Ancient and English Versions of the Bible, p.51; and note 75 infra.
7. Jn. 12:31-34.
8. Rom. 5:17.
9. Gal. 6:17.
10. Ibid. 6:14
11. Loc. cit.
12. II Cor. 5:21.
13. Eph. 2:12
14. Ibid. 2:16.
15. Col. 1:20.
16. Rom. 5:10; and cf. Col. 7:20, 22.
17. See Lk. 24:7 and Matt. 17:22, 23.
18. Col. 1:20.
19. Ibid. 2:12.
20. Ibid. 2:8.
21. Ibid. 2:12.
22. Loc. cit.
23. Ibid. 2:15.

24. Lk. 23:34.
25. Cf. Jn. 19:11.
26. I Cor. 2:8.
27. Gal. 3:19.
28. On these 'powers', see H. Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament; and on the beginnings of Gnosticism, H.J. Rose, Ancient Greek Religion.
29. I Cor. 1:25.
30. Cf. Origen, Hom. 5:1 on Ps. 36, cited in J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius (London 1975), p.227.
31. I Cor. 1:24.
32. Deut. 21:23.
33. Prometheus is perhaps the best-known of these. See also Hengel, op. cit., pp. 5 and 6, with notes 5 and 7 there; and cf. D. Sayers, The Man Born to be King, p. 27.
34. See Hengel, op. cit., p.81 and p.83 note 39; and cf. Apuleius, The Golden Ass, (tr.) by R. Graves (Penguin Books 1976), pp. 78-81.
35. Apollonius of Tyana was a sage and shaman of the first Christian century, who died some time after Domitian. See further the Life of Apollonius, (tr.) C.P. Jones, (ed.), abridged and introduced by G.W. Bowersock (Penguin Classics 1970).
36. See Graves, op. cit., p.12.
37. Though Plato's Just Man might be recalled here.
38. Is. 29:14.
39. I Cor. 1:23-25.
40. See Lk. 14:27. Bastazein seems to denote the internal taking of the Cross, and is sometimes an equivalent for 'airo and pherō.
41. Acts 2:14-36; see esp. vv. 23 and 36.
42. Ibid. 3:12-26, esp. vv. 14 and 15.
43. The difference in audience, determining his method.
44. Acts 4:10.
45. Ibid. 5:30 (and see v. 28).

46. Ibid. 10:34-43, esp. v. 39.
47. I Peter 2:24.
48. Heb. 6:4-8.
49. Hengel, op. cit. pp. 64-68, esp. 66.
50. I Clem. 33:3 (in K. Lake (ed.) The Apostolic Fathers (2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 1985 and 1976)).
51. See the translation of the hymn Rerum Deus Tenax Vigor, made by J. Ellerton and F.J.A. Hort.
52. Barn. 9:8; cf. Gen. 14:14 and 17:23.
53. Barn. 9:7.
54. Ibid. 9:8.
55. Ibid. 8:1; and Numb. 19:1-10.
56. Barn. 11:1.
57. Ibid. 12:9 and Exod. 17:4.
58. Barn. 12:7; and Numb. 21:8.
59. Barn. 12:11; and Is. 65:2.
60. Apoc. 7:3.
61. Barn. 12:7.
62. The controversy on the extent of the Ignatian corpus was more or less ended by Lightfoot's edition of Ignatius (1885).
63. Eph. 18:1.
64. Trallians 11:1,2.
65. Smyrnaeans 1:1,2.
66. Trall. 9:1,2.
67. Magnes. 11:1.
68. Eph. 9:1.
69. Ibid. 18:1.
70. Past. Herm: Sim. IX:16:3.

71. I Cor. 1:23.
72. Past. Herm. loc. cit. v. 4.
73. Ibid. v. 5.
74. Is. 9:6.
75. They are found in the Old Latin Version, and (as a corrector's reading) in a 6th century Graeco-Latin Psalter at Verona.
76. I Apol. 42 (A-N.C.L. vol. 2; 1867)
77. Loc. cit.
78. Ibid. 55.
79. Loc. cit.
80. Loc. cit.
81. Ibid. 56.
82. Tim. 36. B,C.
83. Apol. 60.
84. Dial. 38.
85. Loc. cit.
86. Ibid. 91; Deut. 33:13-17.
87. Dial. 96.
88. Ibid. 131.
89. Not that the two principles are opposed here; and gnosis is understood in a strictly neutral sense.
90. Against Heresies I:2:4(A-N.C.L. vols 5 and 9; 1868, 1869).
91. Ibid. 3:5.
92. Ibid. 24:4.
93. Op. cit. V:17:4.
94. Eph. 3:18.
95. Against Heresies V:18:1.
96. Ibid. 19:1.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Cross in some New Testament Apocrypha

It is to the New Testament Apocrypha that we now turn, since this literature has much to say about the Cross.

We begin with the Gospel of Peter. Serapion of Antioch (about 200) is the earliest witness to its existence. We are told that at first he permitted it to be read in church. When he read it himself thereafter, he excerpted its Gnostic statements, to refute them.<sup>97</sup>

The fragment of the Gospel that is known to be extant relates the events of the Passion and Resurrection. The author displays hardly any knowledge of life in first-century Palestine. The acts which the gospels attributed to the Roman soldiers are laid to the charge of the Jews by the Gospel. The Passion-narrative has something of the atmosphere of the passio of a martyr; one of the more legendary of such writings. The Passion has been transformed into a pious romance.

We read that on the Cross "he [Jesus] held his peace, as if he felt no pain."<sup>98</sup> Perhaps the writer was influenced by the Stoic ideal of apatheia, freedom from the passions. In view of Serapion's opinion, it is perhaps preferable to assume Docetism in the author - unless the author was the kind of person to let his piety outrun his judgment. There is little to lead one to suppose that a phantom is

being crucified. Another possibility is that the victim is considered superior to suffering.

A little later we read that "they were wroth with him and commanded that his legs should not be broken, so that he should die in torments."<sup>99</sup> In the gospels, it is recorded that his legs were not broken - because of the prophecy "No leg of him shall be broken".<sup>100</sup> It seems that for the author of the Gospel of Peter this prophecy served as a spur to the malice of the Jews. The effect of the mysterious 'darkness over all the land' - the Gospel takes the darkness to be restricted to Judea - is to trouble the crowd in case the command about burying executed criminals by sunset should be infringed. Taking the life of a 'son of God' seems to be less troublesome to them.

There seem to be occasional traces of Docetism in the fragment. "The Lord [he is not once called Jesus] called out and cried 'My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me!'"<sup>101</sup> The allusion to Psalm 21(22) has been subtly changed, for we now have an assertion rather than a question. "Having said this, he was taken up."<sup>102</sup> A being so manifestly numinous cannot merely be buried; he is "taken up", while the Jews "gave his body\* to Joseph that he might bury it".<sup>103</sup> So much for the Passion.

While the guards at the sepulchre "two by two in every watch, were keeping guard, there rang out a loud voice in heaven."<sup>104</sup> Two men then descend from heaven, the sepulchre opens of itself, and they

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\* My emphasis. One guesses that the body felt no pain, because the author is a 'proto-Apollinarian'; the Lord taking the place of a human soul, and, as the Lord, being impassible. The Crucified would have a human body, but not be true Man.



go in. The soldiers awaken the centurion and the elders, 'for they also were there to assist at the watch.' While the guards were relating what they had seen, "they saw again three men come out of the sepulchre, and two of them sustaining the other, and a cross following them, and the heads of the two reaching to heaven, but that of him who was led of them ... overpassing the heavens".<sup>105</sup>

There is then heard "a voice out of the heavens crying, 'Thou hast preached to them that sleep', and from the cross there was heard the answer, 'Yea'".<sup>106</sup> Christ and His Cross seem to be identified\* in some way: it is He Who "preached to them that afore-time, while the Ark was preparing, were disobedient".<sup>107</sup> The sense and the words of the passage have been much discussed; it is usually taken to refer to Christ's own 'descent to the dead', rather than to Enoch or the Apostles, or to Noah as an instrument of Christ. The purpose of this preaching need not detain us here. The Ark is one of many types of the Cross, and 1 Peter treats the Flood as a type of Baptism. The animated Cross is a symbol of the universal efficacy of the Passion; like the Word of God, it is 'alive and active'. It is perhaps the ancestor of the Cross in the Dream of the Rood as well. The gigantic stature of the men recalls classical allusions, and finds a parallel in the Book of Elchasai.<sup>108</sup> The prominence of the Cross in the Resurrection narrative is perhaps to be explained by its being the "sign of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:30). If it is to precede Him when He comes again, it is reasonable to think of it as replacing Him at His descent among the dead.

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\* Cf. A.N. Didron, Christian Iconography (E.T.) I:367.

We now pass to the Epistle of the Apostles, the date of which has been estimated at about 160.

The Apostles declare that they "bear witness that the Lord is he who was crucified by Pontius Pilate and Archelaus between the two thieves <and> who was buried in a place called the <place of the skull> ".<sup>109</sup> And, "He of whom we are witnesses we know as the one crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate and of the prince Archelaus; who was crucified between two thieves and was taken down from the wood of the cross together with them, and was buried in the place called qarānejō ...".<sup>110</sup>

In the sixteenth chapter of the Ethiopic version, the Lord answers a question about His return: "Truly I say to you, I shall come as the sun which bursts forth; thus will I, shining seven times brighter than it in glory, while I am carried on the wings of the clouds in splendour with my cross going on before me, come to the earth to judge the living and the dead". The Lord may be crucified - but He is also glorious; the Cross may be a gallows - it is a standard as well. It is perhaps noteworthy that the one who is asked about the 'things of God', is (as in Mark 13) the Lord Himself, whereas the seers in S. John's Apocalypse, in 4 Ezra, and in the Apocalypse of Paul (for example) converse with mere angels.

In chapter eighteen of the Ethiopic version (the Coptic proceeds on a different tack) we read: "... when he was crucified, had died, and risen again, as he said this, and the work that was thus accomplished in the flesh, that he was crucified, and his ascension; this is the fulfilling of the number". Cryptic though the last phrase

is, it seems to mean some such thing as, that the actions referred to sufficed for our redemption - the full remedy was furnished, and nothing less. There seems to be the hint that they were in perfect proportion to each other and to their purpose. Later in the Epistle, the Coptic version mentions crucifixion "in flesh"; but the passage needs no more than a passing mention.

The Gospel of Peter was known to have existed before 1886, the year in which part of the text was recovered. The very existence of the Epistle of the Apostles was unknown until 1895. The Gospel of Nicodemus was very popular. It is in two parts; the Acts of Pilate, and the Descent into Hell. The Gospel covers much the same subject-matter as the Gospel of Peter, although at much greater length.\*

Pilate is described very favourably: some of the Jews defend Jesus, but they come out of the affair less well than the Romans. As soon as the condemnation of Jesus is no longer in doubt, Pilate reproaches "the Jews" in words which recall the Good Friday Reproaches. The description of the Passion is little more than a tessellation of Gospel texts. The "malefactors" are however named: the "good thief", "Dysmas", has a place in the Roman Martyrology<sup>111</sup>. It is in the Descent into Hell that the Cross is mentioned at length, as will be made clear.

That part of the Gospel of Nicodemus purports to be a description of the Descent, and 'Harrowing of Hell', from the testimony of the newly-resurrected sons of Simeon (the 'just man' of Luke 2 and the Nunc Dimittis). The men raised from the dead, "the Old Testament of the Jews [being placed] in the midst" by the

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\* The date of the Gospel of Nicodemus is very uncertain: Epiphanius knew of some Acts of Pilate in 375 or 376; the Descent existed by 425.

chief priests, "having been adjured to speak the truth, signed their faces with the sign of the cross".<sup>112</sup>

In the third chapter of the Descent - the nineteenth of the Gospel - Adam asks his son Seth to "tell the forefathers of the race of men ... where Adam sent Seth when Adam fell into mortal sickness".<sup>113</sup> Seth went therefore to "the very gate of paradise to pray to God that He would lead him by an angel to the tree of mercy, that he might take oil and anoint Adam, that he might arise from his sickness". The angel tells Seth that "this cannot be found now"; for Adam will be anointed by the Son of God, who will come five-and-a-half thousand years after the creation of the world. The significance of the numbers is hardly clear: five-and-a-half is half of eleven, the number signifying transgression of the Decalogue, as Augustine of Hippo remarked;<sup>114</sup> and ten, the perfect number - one of several - is the cube root of a thousand.\*

Passing over the phrase "You were nailed to the cross ... laid in the sepulchre ... and have destroyed all the power of Hades and Satan", we come to an altercation between the two. Hades is, even in the Christian tradition, sometimes personified and sometimes not. Through the Cross, Jesus "would inherit the world". Hades, having rebuked Satan for the crucifixion, complains that "all that Satan

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\* The author may have believed that the Christian era would last 500 years - 500 and 5500 = 6000; and 6000 was the number of years some authors supposed this world would last: there were six days of creation, and 'a thousand years is with the Lord as one day.' See M.R. James' note on this passage, in loc.

gained through the tree of knowledge /hē/ lost through the tree of the cross". The one tree is less a type of the other, then, than a contrast with it. It would seem that the mousetrap theory of the Atonement - familiar from Gregory of Nyssa - is that followed in the book. Not only are the effects of the one tree annulled by the other; it is "through the tree of the Cross"<sup>115</sup> that "the King of glory" raised up Adam, and those who were with him. He then signed Adam with the Cross, blessing him and all the patriarchs and prophets. In Chapter 10 of the Descent there appears, last of all these worthies, "a humble man, carrying a cross on his shoulder",<sup>116</sup> first of all these men to enter paradise (unless the extraordinary cases of Enoch and Elijah, who had still to die 'in the flesh', are borne in mind). The earthly paradise seems to be meant, rather than the heavenly. The Gospel of Nicodemus shows how the interest of writers passes from theological interpretation, to narrative and legend and telling a story: the border between apocrypha and sheer hagiography is easily passed.

The first petition in the Gospel of Bartholomew<sup>\*</sup> is "Lord, show us the secrets of the heaven".<sup>117</sup> Jesus replies (the time of the conversation could as well be after as before the Passion, depending on the reading adopted) that he first has to "put off this body of flesh". Bartholomew relates how, when Jesus "went to be hanged on the Cross, /B̄artholomew/ followed ... at a distance and saw how /Jesus was/ hanged on the Cross and how the angels descended from heaven and worshipped /h̄im/".<sup>118</sup> Bartholomew is established as the confidant of Christ. Such is the writer's treatment of the Passion.

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\* It is of uncertain date - S. Jerome probably knew of it, to judge from some words in his commentary on S. Matthew (written about 398).

The gospels mention angels at the most important stages of the life of Christ; but not at the Crucifixion itself. Satan is humiliated and stripped of his power (which he exercises only by Divine permission) but the Cross does not play a part in his humiliation. The Cross is at most the throne of Christ from which he reigns.

The treatment of the Cross which is found in the Acts of John is very conveniently presented in a few consecutive chapters. The Cross seems not to be associated with the Passion alone; as in the fable of the three blind men and the elephant, it is different things to different people, or so it would seem. "This Cross of Light is sometimes called Logos by me for your sakes, sometimes mind ...".<sup>119</sup> The Acts of John is seen to include the germ, at least, of a theology of the Cross; but such a theology is not, for that, necessarily an authentic Christian theology. The Cross is described in terms which would do credit to Mrs. Eddy. The Incarnation (without which the Passion is meaningless) seems to have fallen out of sight. The Cross seems not to be anything; which is perhaps how it can be "the distinction of all things".<sup>120</sup>

Because it is "the distinction of all things", it is a principle to which, apparently, all reality is subject. The Cross of Light - if this entity may be called this - shows the distinction between good and evil, light and dark, Above and Below, Spirit and Matter. By it the creation is synthesised and made harmonious, for it (the creation?) is purged of unseemliness and all its parts are ordered aright. The Cross seems to sustain the whole creation.

"It has also compacted all things into  $\langle$ one $\rangle$ . But this is not that wooden Cross which you shall see when you go down from here ...".<sup>121</sup> The Cross of Light is very important, but it is not the Cross of the Passion - it seems that the Cross is independent of the Passion and of Christ. It is none too surprising that Christ "was taken to be what He is not".<sup>122</sup> There is a crowd around the wooden Cross. They are the common herd, divided by the Cross of Light from John, who is (as Bartholomew was) the initiate into the "mystery" (of Christ? of the Cross?). It is not surprising that John is commanded to "despise those who are outside the mystery".<sup>123</sup> We read that "the Lord had performed everything as a symbol and a dispensation for the conversion and salvation of man".<sup>124</sup> This once more prompts one to ask whether the Cross can symbolise anything if it is not a particular thing; or whether - if the Cross is something determinate - it can thereby symbolise and signify all things to all sorts of men, somewhat as is the case with the Gospel itself.

Eusebius of Caesarea is the first certain witness to the Acts of John; and in the passage of Book 3 of his Church History where he mentions them, he also mentions the Acts of Andrew. It seems that he is the earliest certain witness to these also. The circulation and development of traditions about these Apostles cannot be discussed here, being a matter full of complexities. The accounts of the Martyrdom are numerous; some of them will be named in the notes. It is the Martyrdom with which we are concerned here.\*

The narrative of Andrew's martyrdom mentions Christ very

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\* Gregory of Tours (for instance) used the 'Conversante et docente' for his Epitome of the Martyrdom.

little: "... the slave of Jesus should be worthy of Jesus". The half-dozen other phrases in which Jesus Christ is mentioned could be omitted without injuring the integrity of the Martyrdom narratives. These narratives - at least as collated in Hennecke - present a very verbose and a highly didactic whole. And the chief subject of the Apostle's exhortation would seem to be union with God, and those things which in various ways pertain to that union. Among these the Cross is very prominent.

Thus, Andrew "went to the cross and with a strong voice addressed it as if it were a living creature: 'Hail, O cross; indeed may you rejoice. I know well that you will rest in the future because for a long time you have been weary set up awaiting me.'"<sup>125</sup> This kind of utterance sets the tone for Andrew's homily - 'rest' (anapausis) is an important term for Gnostic thought. Andrew knows

... the mystery for which the Cross has indeed been set up. For you are set up in the cosmos to establish the unstable. And one part of you stretches up to heaven so that you may point out the heavenly Logos, or: the Logos above the head of all things. Another part of you is stretched out to right and left that you may put to flight the fearful and inimical power and draw the cosmos into unity. And another part of you is set on the earth, rooted in the depths, that you may bring what is on earth and under the earth into contact with what is in heaven.<sup>126</sup>

What else is the Cross? A "tool of salvation";<sup>127</sup> a "trophy of the victory of Christ over His enemies";<sup>128</sup> its "name ... is filled with all things";<sup>129</sup> it has "bound the circumference of the world";<sup>130</sup> it is a the? "form of understanding" which has "given a



form to [its] own formlessness", and an [the?] "invisible discipline" which "discipline[s] severely the substance of the knowledge of many gods and drive[s] out from humanity its discoverer";<sup>131</sup> which has been discovered, "humanity", or "the substance of the knowledge of many gods", is not very clear. The Cross has been active in the economy of salvation, having "clothed [itself] with the Lord ... borne as fruit the robber ... called the apostle to repentance ... not thought it beneath [itself] to receive [Andrew]".<sup>132</sup> It is not clear which apostle is intended, but the choice seems to be between S. Peter and S. Paul, with Judas as an improbable third. The apostle closes this part of his peroration thus: "Approach, ministers of my joy ... and fulfil the desire we both have and bind the lamb to the suffering, the man to the Creator, the soul to the Saviour".<sup>133</sup> It will be seen that Andrew does not distinguish between his own wooden cross, and some Cross of which all wooden crosses are apparently copies or emanations. Perhaps that archetypal Cross, and Christ's, are to be identified. It is by no means clear that the Cross - the archetypal Cross, or Andrew's? - is spoken of as 'desiring' by a use of the pathetic fallacy.<sup>134</sup>

The Martyrdom narratives have a strong ascetic tone: there is no trace of the idea that the world, or matter, has been consecrated by the Incarnation (for example). It comes to pass that Andrew has hung on the Cross "two days and ... is still alive. He has eaten nothing but has nourished us all with his words ... we believe in the God whom he preaches. Take down the righteous man and we will all become philosophers. Set free the ascetic (lit. chaste man) ..."<sup>135</sup> This passage is no bad expression of the spirit of the Martyrdom

narratives. When Aegeates, the proconsul of Patrae, has been terrified by threats into consenting to Andrew's release, Andrew rebukes the 'dullness' of those who wished for Andrew to be released, and then rounds on Aegeates:

Why have you come, Aegeates, to him who is (by nature) alien to you? ... Even if you were truly repentant I would not come to terms with you. Even if you were to promise me all your possessions I would not stand aloof from myself. Even if you were to say that you yourself were mine /my disciple/ I would not trust you.

Andrew continues:

Do not permit, Lord, that Andrew who has been bound to thy cross, should be set free. Do not give me up, who am on thy mystery /Narr: hang on thy mystery/, to the shameless devil. O Jesus Christ, let not thy adversary loose me who hang on thy grace.<sup>136</sup>

"Mystery" and "grace" are here, it seems, used as synonyms for "cross".

Doctrinally the Martyrdom is a curate's egg, good in parts, full of ideas suggestive for a healthy doctrine of the Cross. Unfortunately its strong Encratite tone reduces some other strains of thought about the Cross to silence. There is also a Coptic fragment, poorly preserved, which appears to be part of a conversation between the Saviour and Andrew. We read, "I /Andrew/ bore my cross ... every day, following after Thee from morning till night (and I have not?) laid it down."<sup>137</sup> This may be related to the Acts of Andrew; or to the literature which purports to tell of the days just after Easter; or to a Gospel. We have, as yet, no way of knowing.

The Acts of Thomas may be tentatively assigned to between 270 and 300, since it appears later than the death of Mani; as well as being influenced by Bardaisan and his school.<sup>138</sup> The book has

been edited to conform it to Catholic orthodoxy, it is said.

In the Acts of John and the Acts of Andrew there was much Encratite and Gnostic mysticism and theologizing about the Cross. The same is true of the Acts of Thomas. The Lord Who is "the planter of the good tree", is He Who "descend/ed even to Hell";<sup>139</sup> compare with this the Gospel of Nicodemus. As He also shows those "who ... had been shut up in the treasury of darkness ... the way that leads up to the height",<sup>140</sup> we can perhaps trace the "myth of the Descending and Ascending Redeemer".\*

After expelling a demon and singing a hymn, the Apostle celebrates the Eucharist. "... He marked the Cross upon the bread and broke it ... he gave to the woman /who had had the demon/ ... And after her he gave also to all the others who had received the seal."<sup>141</sup> The 'seal' is associated with Baptism, yet seems not to be that sacrament. Preparatory to the Eucharist, the woman who had been rid of the incubus requests the seal. The seal is administered by the imposition of hands, with invocation of the Trinity; but no water is mentioned. The sealing is considered a protection; as is "the bread of blessing".<sup>142</sup> \*\*

At length we come to the baptism of Mygdonia, the wife of Charisius, kinsman of King Misdaeus. Because Thomas has converted Mygdonia to a life of strict continence, Charisius has procured the imprisonment of the Apostle. First, her head is anointed with oil,

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\* Perhaps: there is always the danger of 'reconstructing' a thing from elements in no way connected: the Piltdown Man is an example.

\*\* We are aware that the Sacraments are a happy hunting ground for historians and theologians; but the subject is the Cross, not sacramental theology historically considered.

and this prayer said:

Holy oil given to us for sanctification, hidden mystery in which the Cross was shown to us ... thou art he who shows the hidden treasures; thou art the shoot of goodness. Let thy power come; let it be established upon thy servant Mygdonia; and heal her through this (unction)!<sup>143</sup>

Then Mygdonia is baptised in "a spring of water", the Trinity being invoked.<sup>144</sup> Thomas then "broke bread and took a cup of water, and made her partake in the body of Christ and the cup of the Son of God ..."<sup>145</sup> Marcia, Mygdonia's "mother and nurse", is then "startled" by a voice "from above". She has just been performing the part of a deaconess at Mygdonia's baptism; only now does she beseech "the apostle that she too might receive the seal".<sup>146</sup> After giving it, the Apostle returns to his prison. If we have said much of the sacraments of initiation in these Acts, it is in part because of the association (elsewhere noted) between them and the Cross. Also noteworthy are certain phrases (such as "shoot of goodness")\* which seem to refer to the Cross.

The Ascension of Isaiah is generally reckoned to be a composite work. It narrates the prophet's martyrdom (for which, cf. Hebrews 11:37) and the revelation of the coming of Christ. The Christian parts of the work seem to come from the second Christian century.

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\* Cf. p.28 for another association of oil with tree.

...Beliar harboured great wrath against Isaiah ... because through him the coming forth of the Beloved from the seventh heaven had been revealed, and his transformation, his descent and the likeness into which he was to be transformed, namely, the likeness of a man ... [and that he should before the Sabbath be crucified on the tree]\* ... crucified together with criminals ... buried in a sepulchre ... and that those who believe on his cross will be saved, and in his ascension to the seventh heaven, whence he came;<sup>147</sup>

the Cross is here related to the economy of salvation, from the coming of the 'Beloved' to the great tribulation. In 4:13, "Jesus Christ the crucified ... and ascended" is at last named. The former passage is echoed in the Vision, the latter part of our book. Yet, the words of 9:14 and 11:20 are Docetic: they might anticipate the 'assumed man' doctrine of Abelard. The notion of the failure of the (evil) powers to recognise the identity of the Incarnate One is suggested, but in words which are no fence against heresy.

From that brief reference to Chapter 11, we pass to and conclude with an earlier passage. One of Isaiah's angel guides tells him that, "These garments [just seen by Isaiah] shall many from that world receive, if they believe on the words of that one who ... shall be named, and observe them and believe therein, and believe in his cross. For them are these laid up."<sup>148</sup> It should perhaps be said that only in Ethiopic has the whole book come down to us.

Both Theophilus of Antioch (c.180) and Clement of Alexandria (died c.215) cite the Apocalypse of Peter, of which the text has

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\* The brackets are in the text.

been known since 1887 (in a Greek fragment) and 1910 (an Ethiopic translation). About half of this Petrine Apocalypse - there are others - is extant. Our comments refer to this latter version; there seem to be parallels with the Epistle of the Apostles.

"[Christ's] own came unto him", and asked Him, "Make known ... the signs of thy Parousia and of the end of the world ...". He answers (having quoted the first and second gospels) that

... the coming of the Son of God will be ... like the lightning ... so shall I come on the clouds of heaven with a great host in my glory; with my cross going before my face will I come in my glory, shining seven times as bright as the sun will I come in my glory ... that I may judge the living and the dead ...<sup>149</sup>

The book continues to a prophecy of the last days and a revelation of the states of the damned and the redeemed.

In the next chapter we will allude to the Christian Sibyllines, which date from about the second century. We need only name them here. In our very brief treatment of the Cross in the Apocrypha - we cannot mention all this literature - we come at last to the Acts of Peter. The first witness to their existence may be the Muratorian Canon (c.200); or Commodian (c.250); or, yet again, Eusebius of Caesarea. Their probable date is slightly before 190. We will deal only with the Martyrdom, which was separated from the rest of the Acts.

After returning to Rome to be crucified, Peter is "charged with irreligion and ... crucified". More gracious than Andrew, he is hardly less loquacious. Having approached the Cross, Peter says,

O name of the cross, mystery that is concealed! O grace ineffable that is spoken in the name of the cross! O nature of man that cannot be parted from God! O love (philia) ... that cannot be disclosed through unclean lips! ... You who hope in Christ, for you the cross must not be this thing that is visible; for this (passion), like the passion of Christ, is something other than this which is visible.<sup>150</sup>

After similar comments, Peter is crucified, head-downwards, for a reason which he "will tell to those who hear". His words are not for some circle of initiates.

For the first man, whose likeness I have in (my) appearance, in falling head-downwards showed a manner of birth that was not so before; for it was dead, having no movement. He therefore, being drawn down - he who also cast his first beginning down to the earth - established the whole of this cosmic system, being hung up as an image of the calling ....<sup>151</sup>

"... The cross of Christ, who is the Word stretched out ... is this upright tree on which Peter is crucified" and "... the Word is this upright tree ..." <sup>152</sup> are words showing that "Christ", "Word", and "tree" are one reality.

The same Christ is hailed by Peter as "Father", "Mother", "Brother", "Friend", "Servant", "House-keeper"; since Christ is "the All, and the All is in him"; he is Being, and there is nothing that is, except him", <sup>153</sup> these epithets are, it seems, applicable to the Cross as well.

As a comment on the doctrinal character, both of the Martyrdom of Peter and of the other writings which we have surveyed, some words of Professor H. Chadwick may be cited:

... Origen is not infrequently incensed that Celsus confuses the tenets of orthodox Christianity with beliefs held by Gnostic sects. At Rome the Christian community appears to have been very conscious of the dividing line between heresy and orthodoxy. At Alexandria, on the other hand, such little evidence as there is rather suggests that the dividing line was not precisely delineated.<sup>154</sup>

Much use could thus be made of writings which the Church later rejected. The ambiguity of them, could count both for and against their use by the faithful. Even so, it is clear that all speculation could not be approved; and the perseverance of the Catholic sensus fidei, so necessary for apologetic, doubtless served to discriminate the ecclesiastical literature from that of the 'heretics', notwithstanding the great likeness between the two.



NOTES

The Cross in some New Testament Apocrypha

97. See E. Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, ed. W. Schneemelcher; E.T. (ed.) by R. McL. Wilson (London 1973, 1975); Vol.1, p.179.
98. Gospel of Peter v. 10.
99. Ibid. v. 14.
100. See Jn. 19:31 ff.
101. Gospel of Peter, v. 19.
102. Loc. cit.
103. Ibid. v. 23
104. Ibid. v. 35; and cf. the Slavonic Version of Josephus' Jewish War V:5:4, as noted by G.A. Williamson, p. 400 of his translation. (Penguin 1976).
105. Gospel of Peter, v. 39; see also J.Jungmann, The Early Liturgy to the time of Gregory the Great, pp. 131, 132; and cf. II Kings 7:2, 17.
106. Hennecke, op. cit. Vol. 1, p.186; v. 42.
107. I Peter, 3: 19, 20.
108. See The Book of Elchasai, frag. 1 in Hennecke, op. cit. Vol. 2, pp. 747, 748.
109. Epist. Apost. 9 in Hennecke, op. cit., Vol. 1, p.195.
110. Loc. cit. Qarānejō = Kraniou=(of a skull).
111. That his feast falls on the Annunciation, is presumably occasioned by the notion that Christ was conceived, and died, on the same date.
112. Gospel of Nicodemus 17:3, in Hennecke, ibid. p.471.
113. Hennecke, ibid. p. 472.
114. See City of God 15:20.
115. Descent 8 in Hennecke, op. cit. p.475.
116. Loc. cit.

117. Gospel of Bartholomew 1:1, in Hennecke, op. cit. p.488.
118. Ibid. 1:6 in Hennecke, op. cit.
119. Acts of John 98, in Hennecke, op. cit. vol. 2, p.233.
120. Loc. cit.
121. Acts of John 99, ibid.
122. Loc. cit.
123. Ibid. 100, op. cit. p.234.
124. Ibid. 102, op. cit. pp. 234,235.
125. Acts of Andrew in op. cit., p.418; Laudatio 46; Narratio 26; Martyrium 2:4 and 1:14; Epitome of Gregory /of Tours/ 10.
126. Op. cit. pp. 418, 419; Laudatio, loc. cit.; Mart. 1:14; Ep. Gr., Loc. cit.
127. Op. cit. p.419.
128. Loc. cit.
129. Loc. cit.
130. Loc. cit.
131. Loc. cit.
132. Loc. cit.
133. Loc. cit.
134. Nothing in any of the texts is said about the shape of Andrew's cross, whether it was the X-shaped crux decussata - the heraldic saltire - or some other.
135. Op. cit. pp.420, 421; Ep.Gr.12; Narr. 31; Mart. 2:6; 'Conv./ersante et docente/' 5.
136. Op. cit. pp. 421, 422; Narr. 34f.; Laud. 48; Ep. Gr. 13f.
137. Op. cit. p.425.
138. Op. cit. pp. 440, 441.
139. Acts of Thomas 10, in op. cit. p.448.
140. Loc. cit.

141. Ibid. 50; p.471.
142. The 'sealing' mentioned here is (one presumes) derived from Baptism, or somehow related to it, rather as the use of the 'blessed bread' is derived from the Eucharist.
143. Acts of Thomas 121 in op. cit. p. 507.
144. Loc. cit.
145. Loc. cit.
146. Loc. cit.
147. Ascension of Isaiah 3: 13-18, in op. cit. pp. 647, 648.
148. Ibid. 9:26; in op. cit. p. 658.
149. Apocalypse of Peter 1 in op. cit. p. 668.
150. Acts of Peter 37 in op. cit. p. 319.
151. Ibid. 38, in op. cit. p. 319.
152. Ibid. in op. cit. p. 320.
153. Ibid. 39, in op. cit. p. 320.
154. From the 1980 edition of his translation of the Contra Celsum, p.xxix of the Introduction. For 'Alexandria', one might also read 'Rhossus', or the names of the places from which much of the other New Testament Apocrypha came.

### CHAPTER 3

#### "Almost all the entire world ..."

Before the accession of Constantine, literary and artistic remains supply most of our information about the Cross. Relics and their containers appear after the 'peace of the Church'.

The phrase is suggestive, recalling parts of the Old Testament. For example, the persecutors (and the way some of them died, or are said to have died) remind one of Judges. Constantine is in some respects like King David, as a sort of 'godly prince': the theocratic kingdom of Israel seems to foreshadow the sacred Byzantine empire. Such a comparison should not be pressed unduly: yet the objections of many (such as Eusebius of Caesarea) to the employment in the Church of what might be called sacred art, have an Old Testament ring about them.

And yet, the objectors were members of a new-born Christian Empire - the sort of empire, that is, in which material objects could be deemed to have been affected by the Incarnation, so as to be in some fashion God-bearing or God-reflecting. This is not to say that all who venerated the Cross had a sophisticated theology for it. Yet the instinct - that what was closely connected with Christ must be venerable - could not be made articulate, did it not already exist in some way, however hazy.

The veneration of the Cross did not remain without visible expression, for at last we find it honoured in the public worship of the Church. This development may be taken either as the proper fruit

of the theologizing of Irenaeus, Justin and Hippolytus, as well as of the devotion of Ignatius and Tertullian; or it may be, has been, taken as a grave declension from Christianity. It was a Christian apologist who wrote that "we neither adore crosses nor desire them"<sup>155</sup>. The progress of such a malaise might be traced from the Council of Elvira (c.305) to the Second Council of Nicea in 787, to the practice of Romans and Orthodox even today. Whatever one's view of the matter, without sympathy no understanding of the fortunes of the Cross in these centuries will be possible.

In 325, a year before the twentieth anniversary of Constantine's succession, was held the ecumenical synod of Nicea. The so-called 'Bourdeaux pilgrim' was in Jerusalem about 330 or 333. He speaks of the "little hill (monticulus)" of Golgotha. The synod of Tyre was held in 335. We shall refer to it later on. In about 350, Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of the spread of relics of the Cross of Christ, "which we see among us even today"<sup>156</sup> over the face of "almost all the entire world"<sup>157</sup>. And in about 386, Egeria,\* a well-connected pilgrim from Aquitania, was in Jerusalem, and has described the ceremonies of Holy Week in considerable detail. One of these ceremonies was the Veneration of the Cross. She mentions that it was customary for clergy to be posted by the Cross while the pilgrims revered it, to prevent the devout and surreptitious theft of slivers of the relic.

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\* Egeria is also called Aetheria, and one or two similar names. But Egeria is almost certainly the correct form.

Very likely the above-quoted words of the bishop are something of a complaint.

In 351, Cyril wrote to Constantius, who was the only one of the sons of Constantine still alive. In the letter the bishop tells of how a great cross has been seen in the heavens, which event occurred on May 7, that is, during the season of Pentecost; and it caused a great commotion. More brilliant than the sun, it shone for several hours. The year previously, the usurper Magnentius had killed Constans the brother of Constantius, and the apparition was seen a few months before the battle of Mursa, in which Magnentius was overthrown. These events invite comparison with the much better-known incident before the battle of the Milvian Bridge, when Constantine is said to have been encouraged by the appearance of a cross in the heavens, which had the inscription "Conquer by this". Cyril's letter says nothing of that event - but, he was not writing about Constantine. One may wonder what a Higher Critic would make of these narratives. It is interesting to notice that similar aëry crosses have been seen in the Alps. Perhaps it is significant that the earlier vision, but not the later, included an inscription: were the earlier events able to be embroidered with greater ease?

For Cyril, the Cross, whether that seen in the heavens or that venerated at Jerusalem (and elsewhere) was of great value as showing the truthfulness of the Christian religion. Both in his Catechetical Lectures and in this letter Cyril refers to the finding of the Cross, without saying by whom it was found, or precisely when - "in the days of Constantine", is all that we are told. It may be that

the events were sufficiently well known by the middle of the century, and that sufficient witnesses were still alive, for there to be no need of more particulars. This is not to say that the Cross was indeed found, but only that something was taken to be the Cross, whatever its true origins may have been. The 'relics' may have been no more than a pious fraud; but invincible scepticism is no more admirable than the readiest credulity.

This brings us to the accounts of how the Cross was found. It should be said at the beginning that we do not mean to refer to all the Invention-narratives: one has to stop somewhere, whether it be with Socrates and Sozomen in the fifth century, with Gregory of Tours in the sixth, or with George the Monk in the seventh. There is what William Caxton blames as an 'apocrifum' (the events of which include the death of Adam) which relates the Invention and its consequences. It is found in his translation of the Golden Legend. For all purposes we can think of it as belonging to the thirteenth century rather than to the fifteenth. It is not so evident, in respect to earlier writers, when they are writing independently of each other and when (as with James of Voragine and the Golden Legend) they are repeating a more than twice-told tale. Even a true narrative may be embellished in diverse ways. One can hardly avoid being arbitrary in assigning a terminus ad quem: we will go no further than the authors of the fifth century.

Of Cyril and Egeria we have written above: but Eusebius of Caesarea, the panegyrist and biographer of Constantine, should also be noticed. There is a certain doubt as to whether his witness should be

included, since his testimony to the Invention is to be found in the Life of Constantine, a book not alluded to by authors of the fourth century. The authenticity of the documents quoted in it has been doubted: but one at least has been found on papyrus, independently of the Life. What might be called the political doctrine of the book is in accord with the oration of Eusebius On the Praises of Constantine at the celebrations for the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's accession. Perhaps some later author made use of documents of various quality and character. We shall, amidst such uncertainties, 'look, and pass on', and say only that the Invention and the events connected with it occupy Chapters 23 to 45 of the Life. Small wonder then, that some authors say Eusebius is unaware of or silent about the Invention.

Julian the Apostate (361 - 63) who succeeded Constantius, accused Christians of adoring the Cross. However, his words refer, not to that made of wood, but to the sign of the Cross such as Tertullian mentions. It may be said in passing that branding the Cross upon the forehead was not unknown.<sup>158</sup> He may be referring also to the depiction of crosses upon the facades of houses - which brings to mind the protecting and warning blood of the Passover Lamb in Exodus. It is a short step from honouring the idea or even the sign of the Cross, to honouring the Cross itself.

We are on firmer ground in finding references to the Invention when we come to Ambrose of Milan. He speaks of the event at some length, in his sermon on the death of Theodosius in 395.<sup>159</sup> About the Cross, Ambrose tells that Helena the mother of Constantine went to Jerusalem. Ambrose gives as her motive the impropriety of the fact



that she should be dressed in royal robes, and her son also, while the Cross lay in the earth.<sup>160</sup> This consideration led her to have the site of Calvary dug up. Three crosses were found. That which she sought was easily identified, for the title written by Pilate and complained of by the Jews was near the middle cross. The nails were found at the same time. One was set into a crown and another into a horse's bridle. Ambrose does not tell how many nails there were in all.

To Ambrose, this detail about the bridle was a fulfilment of Zechariah 14:20 - "In that day, that which is upon the horse's bridle shall be holy to the LORD". Such exegesis did not find favour with Jerome, then hard at work upon translating the Old Testament. In 393, the latter had advised two of his correspondents to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to see relics of the Cross and Passion. In 398 he complains of women who take verses of the Gospels and particles of the Cross to use as amulets - as Christian phylacteries, perhaps. His objection is not to the Cross as such, but to the superstitions sometimes associated with it.

Some few years after the testimonies of Ambrose and Jerome we come to that of Rufinus, at first the latter's friend and then his opponent. From Ambrose one might suppose that Helena went to Jerusalem of her own volition. Rufinus has her going there under divine inspiration, "encouraged by visions".<sup>161</sup> She enquires where the Cross may be found. Coming to the spot, she finds the search obstructed by a temple to Venus - no doubt that built by Hadrian is meant. The temple is therefore demolished, and the crosses are found.

In the account of Rufinus, Helena is not so fortunate as to come by the title. To identify the Cross of the Lord, she takes the

advice of Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem. In accordance with this, a very sick woman is brought to the scene and laid upon each of the crosses. She is cured by the last of them. Afterwards, Helena builds a church and waits upon the consecrated virgins of the city. Rufinus has these events taking place before the synod of Nicea. As for the Cross, the whole of it was enclosed in a silver reliquary. According to Egeria, a small coffer (loculus) was large enough to contain the entire relic, and Rufinus is the first of several authors to say that the relic was preserved in the city in a reliquary of silver. The statement of Egeria may be accounted for on the supposition that pilgrims and cities had taken most of the relic. This view is supported by later authors.

In the first years of the fifth century, John of Jerusalem gave a small part of the relic to Melania the Elder, another aristocratic pilgrim. She in turn gave a part of the gift to her kinsman Paulinus of Nola. There were some relics of the saints under the basilica of Nola, and so, when he became bishop of Nola in or after 409, Paulinus put a portion of Melania's present with the relics. In 403, he had sent a part of what he had been given to Sulpicius Severus. The latter, otherwise known as the disciple and biographer of Martin of Tours, wanted some relics with which to adorn the church then being built in honour of S. Clarus at Primuliacum. Neither saint nor place has been identified for certain. The relic, "scarcely the size of an atom", was sent in a container (tubellum) of gold.

In the letter which went with the gift Paulinus tells of how the Cross was recovered.<sup>162</sup> He says that it was concealed from the Jews, but profaned by the erection of a temple to Venus upon the site

of Golgotha. Helena called Christians and Jews to Jerusalem, to seek their advice. She prayed, and after finding three crosses, brought each of them into contact with a corpse. The cross by which it was brought back to life was the Cross of Christ. Paulinus is silent about the title: unless we are to suppose that Rufinus and he thought of the title as forming a part of the Cross. The bishop also says that the emperor had the relic set into his statue, which stood in the Forum of Constantinople. Paulinus adds that a church was built upon the site of the pagan edifice.

In addition to this narrative, Paulinus has a theology of the relic. He says that fragments were continually being taken from the relic in Jerusalem, without its undergoing the least diminution or damage. The incorruptible blood of Christ had communicated a sort of indestructible integrity to it. The idea is of interest as recalling the much-debated problem of whether, at His Ascension, the Lord left any relics of Himself behind. Paulinus may be allowing his piety or his credulity to overbear his common sense, when he attributes a sort of quasi-sacramental influence to the footprints of Christ which (he says) were preserved at the site of the Ascension.

The footprints are mentioned in a list of relics and sites venerated by pilgrims to the Holy Land which Paulinus wrote in 409.<sup>163</sup> He also mentions the Crib; the Jordan; Gethsemane; the tribunal of Pilate; the pillar at which Christ was scourged; the Crown of Thorns; the Sepulchre; the Cross itself. As the title is not mentioned, it is hard to tell whether or not it is reckoned as part of the Cross. Were it not so reckoned, it is strange, if it was discovered, to find no mention of it. Returning pilgrims brought dust from the Holy Places,

in lieu of, and sanctified by, the objects which had been venerated. The reasoning seems to be, that if the object itself is not to be had, then let something associated with it be taken away. Pilgrims also took away minute particles of the Cross, which they reckoned to be filled with grace - Paulinus names their motive as "pious (religiosa) cupidity".

The account of the Invention which is given by Sulpicius, is based upon the narrative of Paulinus. Not Helena, but the whole crowd assembled at the Invention, is credited by Sulpicius with the idea of bringing a corpse into connection with each of the crosses - the inspiration is not that of Helena alone.

In the Byzantine authors, it is the part of Macarius that is magnified, and the idea is ascribed to him. This, however, is hardly proof that they were well acquainted with the narrative of Rufinus. He and they may rely upon some common source.

The next to write of these events is the lawyer and Church historian Socrates Scholasticus, who was a native of Constantinople.<sup>164</sup> In his account, Helena is "counselled by God in dreams", and goes to Jerusalem. She seeks "the monument of Christ, from which, being buried therein, He arose". The temple of Venus over the monument made her search the more laborious, as the builders had no doubt intended, for they "abhorred the religion of Christ, desiring to abolish the memory of the place". So Helena had the edifice and its foundations dug up. In the sepulchre she found three crosses, with the title. The title was unfortunately of no use in showing which cross was that of Christ. Helena "was smitten with no little grief". Macarius comforted her, and resolved the difficulty. He sought, and found, a

sign from God. For there was a woman who had long been sick, and was now at the point of death. The bishop ordered the crosses to be brought to her, "being entirely convinced, that if the woman were to touch the precious Cross of the Lord, she would be restored to her first health". Socrates notices that Macarius was in no way mistaken. The first two crosses had no effect on the woman. At the touch of the third, "she recovered forthwith, and regained her original health. In such a manner was found the Wood of the Cross".

Helena built a splendid basilica upon the site of the monument, and called it New Jerusalem.<sup>165</sup> This was to glory over the old and deserted temple. She put a portion of the Cross in a silver reliquary, "for those to see, who so desired". The remainder of the Cross she sent to the emperor. He enclosed it in his statue, to ensure the continual welfare of Constantinople. One is reminded of the Palladium and the Ark; for these protections also failed. "And this, which I have by hearing, I have included in this narrative. For all who live in Constantinople, steadfastly affirm its truth."

The nails (or those from the hands) were also discovered, and sent to Constantine. "He ordered that a bridle and helmet be made from them; he used these in war", no doubt with Zechariah 14:20 in mind. Socrates adds that Constantine "devoted all the rest of the material to the construction of churches, writing to bishop Macarius to hasten the work". Helena built a church in the cave of the Nativity "in no way inferior to the first", and then built a third, at the place of the Ascension. She also served the virgins, and made many churches and poor the objects of her charity. Socrates does not say what interval

elapsed between the Invention and her death, which is the next event he records. He lived from 380 to 439.

Sozomen, a native of Gaza, was also a lawyer at Constantinople. He lived about 440, and his history is indebted to that of Socrates for much of its matter. The narrative of Sozomen is as follows.<sup>166</sup> Upon the conclusion of the council of Nicea, each bishop returned to his see, while Constantine decided to build a church near Calvary, in gratitude for the result of the council, for the concord of the bishops, for his children, and for the empire.

At the same time, Helena went to Jerusalem, both to pray and to see the Holy Places. As she was well-disposed toward the Christian religion she decided to look for the wood of the Cross. The Cross and the sepulchre had been concealed by the 'Gentiles' who had once persecuted the Church, when they sought in every possible way to ruin and obliterate the growing Faith. The site of Calvary had been ploughed up and surrounded by a wall. The sepulchre had also been surrounded with a wall. Part at least of the area - perhaps the sepulchre - had been blocked up with a stone. A temple to Venus had been built, and an image.

According to Sozomen, there was more to the temple and image than mere idolatry. He observes that where Christ and His Cross had been worshipped, His worshippers would be seen to worship Venus, so that, with the passage of time, the true cause of worship at the place might be forgotten. Thus, when Christians were able to visit Calvary in safety, they would not be able to point out the place to others with any confidence. All this would tend to confirm the temple, cult, and image of the 'Gentiles'. These deceitful endeavours were brought to

nothing, and the place laid bare, by means of a Hebrew from the East. He was said to have the truth (in writing) from his father, "or else (and this is thought to be closer the truth) God revealed the thing to him, by signs and by dreams".<sup>167</sup> Our own times would probably prefer the former of Sozomen's alternatives - if the whole story were not rejected.

Thus, when the place had been excavated by order of the emperor, the cave of the Resurrection came to light. Adjoining the very same spot were found three crosses and, by itself, the title. It was thus of no assistance in showing which cross was the object of their search. The bodies of the thieves had been buried with their crosses. As the historian asks, why should the guards have troubled themselves with hastening to remove the bodies, simply to comply with the requirement that the bodies of those who had been 'hanged' should be taken down by sunset?

It was in these circumstances that the wood of the Cross was discovered, which had for so long lain in obscurity. Nonetheless, some indication as to which was the Saviour's Cross was still required, such as the power of man could not supply. There was a noblewoman of Jerusalem, who was labouring under a very severe and altogether incurable disease. Helena, the bishop, and his entourage went to her while she lay bedridden. Macarius prayed, and alerted the attention of those with him and, to cure the sufferer, touched her with each of the crosses. The first two had some slight effect, but did not arrest her decline. When the last cross was used in the same way, she opened her eyes forthwith and, her strength regained, sprang from her bed in full health. Moreover, as Sozomen continues, "They even say that a corpse was called

back to life in the same way". Then the greater part of the wood was enclosed in a casket "and is even now guarded in Jerusalem". Helena took a part of the wood, and a nail, to Constantine. From the nail he is said to have made a helmet and a bridle "according to the prophecy of Zechariah, as he foretold of this time: 'At that time, there shall be Holy to the LORD Almighty upon the horse's bridle'". Sozomen remarks further that all this is not so astonishing,

... since it is admitted, even among the Gentiles, that this was predicted by the Sibyl:

"O blessed wood, which God Himself hung from."<sup>168</sup>

This, no one will have denied, however much he exert himself to be opposed to us. The Sibyl foretold the wood of the Cross, therefore, and its cultus. Just as we receive these things, so were they related to us by men who came to know these things accurately, and they came to know of these matters by the succession of sons to fathers, whereby these things were handed down ...

The account of Sozomen therefore seems to be even better vouched for than the narrative of Socrates.

Sozomen has little more to say. The emperor built a church, which he desired to make exceedingly magnificent, at the sepulchre. His mother built two churches, one of them near the cave of the Nativity, the other atop Olivet, to commemorate the Ascension. These were reckoned her chief works of piety. As in other accounts, she called all the consecrated virgins to dinner, and served them herself. The rest of Sozomen's narrative is a eulogy of Helena's good works and kindnesses.

We now come to Theodoret of Cyrrihus, who lived from about 393 to 460, becoming bishop of Cyrrihus in 423. His account runs as follows.<sup>169</sup>



After Nicea, and after the death of Arius, Constantine wrote various letters, one of them to Macarius of Jerusalem.<sup>170</sup> He expressed the desire that a 'temple' be built. Theodoret says that Helena was the bearer of this letter, "not thinking her advanced age wearisome: she undertook this journey a little before her death, for she died at eighty years" (Arius died in 335 or 336).

Helena found three crosses, after excavating the sepulchre. All believed the Cross of Christ to be one of the three, but no one knew which. The "most holy and divine Macarius" solved the difficulty. There was a sick noblewoman, to whom each cross was brought in turn, with prayers. The sickness left her, and health was restored. (The Latin version speaks of "the power of the saving Cross", the Greek, of "the power of the Saviour".)

For the rest: Helena enclosed part of the nails in a helmet, "taking forethought for the head of her son, so that he (it?) might repel the weapons of the enemy: part she set upon the bridle of a horse, both looking to the safety of the emperor and amply fulfilling the ancient oracle which once the prophet Zechariah had set forth...". Then the familiar words follow. Part of the relic was sent to the Imperial palace, part was given by Helena to the bishop; it was put inside a silver casket "that it should be a memorial of our redemption to the generations to come".<sup>171</sup> She built very splendid and large churches, "to which all the pious flocked, to gaze upon the magnificence of the works". She served all the religious virgins. After such actions, and many similar, she returned to her son, and "passed to the other life with a quiet mind, after imbuing her son with many precepts on the just life".

As it is by no means clear what the terminus ad quem for this discussion should be, we come down no lower than Theodoret, whose Church History covers the period 324 - 428 (Socrates writes of the years 305 - 439). Other authors have more to say - such as, that the Cross was put in a casket of gold rather than silver<sup>172</sup> - but the narratives quoted and mentioned above establish the 'vulgate version' of the Invention narrative, the tale as known to all. Two more, equally well known facts, may be given. Thus, Constantine's vision of the Cross before the battle of the Milvian Bridge is perhaps most generally thought of as occurring the night before the battle; such is the account of Lactantius. Eusebius says that the vision occurred some time before the battle. Lactantius is followed for the chronology, but speaks of a dream. The popular account is a conflation and a harmonization. Our other example of popular knowledge is the date of the Creation. 4004 B.C. is the most famous estimate, but Eusebius gives 5198; and there are many others.

The connection generally made between Helena and the Cross does not supply the only detailed narrative; there is also the legend of Protonica. This lady is said to have been the wife of the first Claudius. We are informed, that she abandoned paganism in Rome upon seeing the miracles of S. Peter (no doubt these included the besting of Simon Magus). She went with her sons to Jerusalem, where James of Jerusalem showed her Golgotha. She compelled the Jews to surrender the site to the Christians. Then her daughter died, and was brought back to life by the Cross. James sent an account of these things to the Apostles. Though they at least doubtless heard nothing of these matters, the legend of Protonica was not unknown to the Armenians.

The Nestorians and the Jacobites possessed the narrative in Syriac, in an appendix to the Doctrine of Addai. Addai, who is said to have been one of the seventy disciples of the Lord, may have been a missionary bishop at Edessa. It is from there that the narrative is derived, its date being between about 390 and 400.<sup>173</sup>

We have seen that there are various forms of the narrative in which Helena plays a part in the Invention. The same is true of the legend about Protonica and the Cross. The Syriac manuscripts speak of one Judas, a Jew, or of Helena (giving her finding of the Cross as its second recovery) or of both these persons. Helena is not always mentioned, and Macarius never. In the Latin and Greek versions of the Protonica legend, and in certain of the Syriac versions, Judas tells Helena; "Behold, the Cross has been hidden two hundred years, more or less". This sentence refers to its burial by Trajan. It is attractive to guess that Hadrian's suppression of the Jewish revolt of 132 - 135 may have been confused with the troubles in Alexandria under Trajan in 115 - especially if Jews and Christians were imperfectly distinguished. But this may be only a will-o'-the-wisp.\* As a comment on these words of Judas, we may quote Cyril of Alexandria, bishop there from 412 to 444. Speaking of Zechariah 14:20, he says: "It has been said at various times that the wood of the Cross has been discovered".<sup>174</sup> This is none too clear, and thus the value of the words is weakened.

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\* Anyone who doubts the possibility of such confusion of events should read the Augustan History.

To return to Judas and Helena: the latter questioned some Jews whom she brought to Jerusalem. One of them, named Judas, made known the site of Golgotha and discovered the Cross. He brought it into contact with a corpse that was about to be buried. Judas was then baptised, and consecrated bishop of Jerusalem by Eusebius of Rome. Thus dignified, Judas satisfied a desire of Helena: by Hebrew prayer, he obtained a heavenly sign which led to the finding of the nails. It should be borne in mind that this form of the Protonica legend is found in only one part of the Syriac evidence for the narrative. There were colonies of Syrians in the West, and it is not unlikely that these were one means of spreading the form of the legend of which we have been writing. A Latin rescension found in an 8th-century codex seems to be close to a Syriac version preserved in a 7th-century manuscript, and it is possible that Greek versions of the Protonica legend had their influence also. So brief a treatment of the languages and types of the legend is unsatisfactory; but some reference to such matters is better than none. The Syriac versions in which either Judas or Helena is wanting cannot detain us.

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, there was a bishop of Jerusalem named Judas in the second century.<sup>175</sup> He was the last of the bishops there to be a Jew 'according to the flesh'. According to the narrative of which we have given some details, Judas changed his name to Cyriacus. A bishop of this name was martyred under Hadrian, or else under Julian the Apostate. Uncertain though the chronology is, he would appear to have been a bishop of Ancona, martyred while a pilgrim in the Holy Land.<sup>176</sup> His feast falls on 4 May. In the

Liber Pontificalis, Bishop Eusebius of Rome is assigned the date of 3 May, from the Latin version of the legend of Protonica. Eusebius died about 310. The Liber Pontificalis was produced much later. Such facts as these show how labyrinthine are the connections between the elements of the Protonica Legend. 3 May used to be a feast of the Cross in the Catholic Church. According to the 7th Century Chronicon Paschale from Constantinople, it was on 14th September that the Cross was discovered.<sup>177</sup> This latter date is a feast of the Cross for both Catholics and Orthodox: the latter still observe the feast of May. We now turn to a third main division of this discussion.

According to John Chrysostom, "The Saviour did not leave His Cross on earth, but took it with Him into Heaven, since He is to appear with His Cross at the second and glorious coming."<sup>178</sup> This was written about 398. A somewhat similar notion is to be found in an interpolation in the work of Theodosius the Archdeacon. We are told that part of the Cross, being stained with the Saviour's blood, was taken up into Heaven and will appear in the Last Judgment.<sup>179</sup> Theodosius wrote about 530, which provides a terminus ante quem. Such a statement helps to reconcile the narratives already discussed with John Chrysostom's assertion. No place is left for the theology of Paulinus. The gist of the interpolation would not stop the fraudulent dissemination of relics, while a denial that the Cross was still on earth might do so.

By 570 an anonymous writer from Plaisance had added to the list of relics of the Passion.<sup>180</sup> The finding of the sponge and the hyssop is now recorded. The existence of the hyssop depends upon a textual crux in the nineteenth chapter of S. John's Gospel, and the

same is true of the Holy Lance of Antioch. About seventy years after the finding of the two objects just mentioned, or between that time and the episcopate of Sophronius of Jerusalem (who died about 638), three crosses were said to have been found under the apse of the Martyrion, the church upon Golgotha.<sup>181</sup>

We are now in a position to consider the Toledot Yeshu. The remote beginnings of this narrative can be placed in the time of the revolt of 132, although it began to take the form of a narrative only about the sixth century. It reached its final form about the tenth century.

According to this work, one Rabbi Judah advised the elders of his people to bury three pieces of wood. He fasted and prayed for three days, and then showed the place to Helena. When the pieces of wood were found, the rabbi had a corpse (to which the name Alcimus is given) placed by turns on each of the pieces. By the power of the NAME of God, which the rabbi possessed, the corpse moved on touching the first piece of wood, lifted itself on touching the second, and was restored to life on touching the third. Rabbi Judah thus acted for the good of his brethren, without apostasising to Christianity. One evidence of the popularity of the Toledot is that it exists in about a dozen versions.

NOTES

"Almost all the Entire World"

155. Minucius Felix, Octavius 29 (A-N.C.L.Vol. 4).
156. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catecheses 10:19; 13:4.
157. Ibid. 4:10
158. This might suggest servitude to Christ, with a glance at Ezech. 9:4.
159. See sections 40 to 48 inclusive (P.L.16).
160. Cf. the illustrations of the entry of Heraclius into Jerusalem, from the Belles Heures (about 1410) of the Duc de Berry.
161. Rufinus of Aquileia, History of the Church 1:7, 8 (P.L.21 cols. 475-78).
162. Paulinus of Nola, Ep. 31:3-6 (C.S.E.L. 29:269-75).
163. Ep. 49:14 (C.S.E.L. 29:402); A. Frolow, La Relique de la Vraie Croix (Paris 1961) p.170.
164. Socrates Scholasticus, History of the Church 1:17 (P.G. 67).
165. Cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, Life of Constantine 3:33 (A-N.C.L. 1890).
166. Sozomen, History of the Church 2:1,2 (P.G. 67:934).
167. Ibid.
168. Cf. Christian Sibyllines 6:26, and 8:245, in Hennecke, op. cit. vol. 2, pp. 720, 733.
169. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, History of the Church 1:16, 17 (P.G. 82).
170. Cf. Eusebius, op. cit. 3:25-46, especially chaps. 30-32.
171. Theodoret, op. cit. 1:17.
172. Frolow, op. cit. p. 167, note (e).
173. Quotations from the Doctrine of Addai are taken from the edition of G. Philipps (London, 1876).

174. On Zechariah 14:20; quoted in the New Catholic Encyclopaedia Vol. 4, p. 481 (Washington 1967).
175. History of the Church IV:5:3 (Sources Chrétiennes 31; Paris 1951).
176. See The Book of Saints, p.188, s.v. "Cyriacus" /May 4/ (A. and C. Black, 1966).
177. A further discussion of the dates can be found in Chapter 5.
178. On the Cross and the Robber. 1:4 (P.G. 49:403).
179. See Jerusalem Itinerary. 1:64.
180. See C.S.E.L. 39:173.
181. See Sophronius of Jerusalem, Anacreontic Ode 20 (P.G. 87:3820); Jerusalem Breviary, in C.S.E.L. 39:153.



CHAPTER 4

The Narratives of the Invention Considered

In the course of the previous chapter some comments were made on the various narratives. Some attention can now be given to them and to mentioning some details which bear upon their

ADDENDUM

p.65 line 25: The reference to Frolov is p.158 no 3. CIL VIII, Suppl. iii, no 20600; Diehl, Inscriptioes Latinae Christianae Veteres I, p.407 no 2068.

be relics of the True Cross. The curious will find a slightly fuller treatment of the Tixter reliquary in Frolov - he cites it as one of his first pièces justificatives. The reliquary seems to be a staurotheke.

In considering the narratives which relate to Helena and her part in the Invention, one may begin with her previous life. It is not

certain where she was born. According to some of those whom we have quoted, she was a native of Drepanum, which we are told was renamed Helenopolis in her honour. This is unlikely, as also is the idea that she was a Christian by nurture. It seems more likely that she was born in or around Naissus (the modern Nish), in the Danubian valley. There were few Christian communities there until the peace of the Church. According to the Life of Constantine the conversion of Helena was due to Constantine himself. Rufinus and Theodoret differ on whether the Invention was before or after Nicea; Socrates records the Invention as being the last great event of her life. If indeed she was eighty in 336, she must have been born about 256. The statement that she was 'well disposed' towards Christianity at the time of the Invention strongly suggests that she was attracted to it - but we can hardly go beyond this.

In 293 she was divorced by her husband, for him to make a marriage both respectable, and advantageous to himself. His new wife was Theodora, the step-daughter of his colleague, Maximian. Thus did he become a colleague of Diocletian. Neither she nor her son suffered in the persecution which was unleashed by Diocletian; while there may have been saints in Caesar's household, neither Helena nor her son seems to have been of their number. Indeed, the pagan historian Zosimus, who wrote between about 450 and 502, attributes the conversion of Constantine to his desire for purification from the blood-guilt he incurred by the executions of his wife and son. "The doctrine of the Christians could abolish all guilt ... and immediately free [sinners] from every fault."<sup>182</sup> If Constantine converted his mother, it seems

unlikely that he had been a Christian for very long. Perhaps the accounts of Eusebius and Zosimus may be reconciled on the supposition that whatever happened when Constantine defeated Maxentius in 312 was the beginning of his conversion. The 'vision of Apollo' recorded in the Panegyricus Latinus (6) of 310, might be a preparative for Constantine's full conversion to the true Apollo and Sol Invictus (cf. Malachi 4:2). The Arch of Constantine, built in 315, carries no Christian symbols.<sup>183</sup> His gods are the Sun-god and Victory. It does not follow that he was not granted a divine vision in 312. He may have been 'halting between the Lord and Ba'al'. The executions of Crispus, Fausta, and Licinius are not incompatible with the profession, much less the inner conviction, of Christianity: one is not denying that such crimes are incompatible with the integrity of Christian faith. Many conversions have begun from the lowest motives: and there is no absurdity in supposing that Constantine tried to use the Church for his own ends, only to be converted by it. If the reality of the Christian God be granted, all this seems reasonable.

The importance of Constantine for the history and the manners of the Church seems a sufficient justification for such a digression.<sup>184</sup> There is a tale that his mother was converted from Judaism by Pope Sylvester I (314-335); but he, perhaps because he was the first Roman bishop whose pontificate fell entirely after the 'peace of the Church', became the hero of many fictions. And there is a tradition that Helena found the Cross in 310, that is, in the pontificate of Eusebius (309 or 310); this is perhaps to be explained by the friendship of Helena and Constantine with Eusebius of Caesarea, and their agreement with the

theological positions of this Eusebius and his namesake of Nicomedia. A later age could readily confuse the Eusebii, so displacing the chronology. It may be noted that the chronology of the Liber Pontificalis becomes reliable only with the recording of events from the mid-eleventh century onwards. The Invention of 310 was said to have fallen on May 3. The Invention of the Cross was celebrated on this date until 1960, when John XXIII (a historian-Pope) abolished the feast. The Roman Martyrology speaks of the event as falling "in the fourth century". As Pope Eusebius has been mentioned, we will defer further discussion of him for a while.

We have discussed the witness of Eusebius of Caesarea; and, of the silence of the Bourdeaux Pilgrim - bearing in mind the uncertainty about his date - it can be said that if the Invention did not occur until 335, it is no wonder that he is silent. Silence does not prove a case - it has force as evidence.

The synod of Tyre in 335 was followed by the celebration of the feast of the Encaenia, at which churches on the sites of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre were dedicated: the dedication happened on September 13 and 14. These dates will be discussed in the next chapter. In Egeria's day, even if not in 335, the feast was a great solemnity. It is attractive, but perhaps fallacious, to associate the celebrations with an entry in the Liber Pontificalis: in the pontificate of Silvester, Constantine "made a basilica at the Sessorian Palace Once Helena's property", where some of the wood from the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was encased in gold and jewels - whence the name Jerusalem, by which the church was dedicated, and is known to this day...<sup>185</sup>.

The date of 310 seems the more unlikely in view of the anti-Christian attitudes of the Augustus Galerius, and of his nephew Maximin Daia, who was Caesar in the Orient.

The ceremonies after the synod of Tyre tell neither for nor against the finding of the Cross, and are not relevant to the question if the Cross was not found until 336. To what we have said about the witness of Cyril of Jerusalem, we may add, that even if the True Cross of Christ was not found, the devotion awoken by the widely-dispersed relics of which he speaks can to some degree be cleared of superstition, since they were the occasion, not the final object, of the pilgrims' devotion. Presumably the bones of a criminal can be used as vehicles of the miraculous as readily as the bones of a saint: and a similar suggestion may be made about false relics of the Cross. There is the possibility that an author might pass over the Invention because he did not approve of any veneration being shown to the reputed Cross. Eusebius of Caesarea did not love 'religious art'<sup>186</sup>: and assertions that the Cross had been found might make the relic into a second Nehushtan.<sup>187</sup> There seems to be no reason to say anything more about Eusebius' testimony here. Cyril of Jerusalem is not decisive for any date. For this reason we now turn to the longer and more detailed accounts of the Invention.

For the sake of clarity, we begin by taking the features common to the stories about Helena.

Ambrose, like Cyril, gives no date. For Rufinus, the events precede Nicea. Paulinus follows Ambrose, and so does Sulpicius Severus. Paulinus and Socrates, with their allusions to Constantine's statue, appear to favour a date around 330. Sozomen gives a date after Nicea; in which he is followed by Theodoret, who specifies a date before the death of Arius.

As to Helena's motive, Ambrose speaks of what amounts to a sense of that which is fitting, and Rufinus of encouragement by visions, which is close to the statement of Socrates that she was advised in dreams. In Sozomen, she is moved by a pious curiosity, although she is not a Christian. Theodoret makes her a messenger to the bishop of Jerusalem.

Rufinus is the first to mention an obstructive temple to Venus, and Paulinus repeats this. Socrates adds the motive for its construction. Sozomen embroiders this, for there is now an image in the temple and Calvary has been ploughed up (cf. Jer. 26:18: Micah 3:12) and surrounded, like the sepulchre, by a wall. Part of the area has been blocked with a stone. Socrates and Sozomen both mention the malicious intention of the builders, which the latter emphasises. Theodoret has Helena excavating the sepulchre, as Constantine desired the building of a 'temple' of the Christian kind.

Concerning the finding of the Cross and nails: Ambrose has the Cross being identified by the title. Of the nails, one was set into a crown and another into a bridle. Rufinus mentions no title, and so mentions the invalid woman, who is laid on the Cross by the advice of Macarius of Jerusalem. Paulinus differs from Rufinus, for Helena seeks the advice of Christians and Jews alike; and the invalid woman is replaced by a corpse. Rufinus and Paulinus mention no title or nails, but may have considered these objects parts of the Cross. Rufinus encloses the entire relic in a silver reliquary, which is kept in Jerusalem, whereas Paulinus set it into a statue of Constantine. According to Sulpicius, the whole crowd at the scene of the Invention thinks of bringing corpse and crosses together; he does not speak of the religious affiliations of the people. Socrates mentions the finding

of three crosses and the title, the advice of Macarius, and the woman (who is in extremis). Helena sends part of the Cross to Constantine, who encloses it in his statue. The rest is displayed in a silver reliquary. A bridle and helmet are made for him from two of the nails.

In Sozomen's account, the purpose of the builders of the temple to Venus is brought to nothing by a Hebrew from the East, perhaps by means of a dream granted to him, perhaps by means of knowledge handed down. Three crosses and two corpses are found, the title lying by itself. A mortally sick noblewoman is bedridden, so the Cross is taken to her: Macarius prays; the first two crosses have some effect, and the third restores her. Sozomen thinks that a corpse may have been raised as well. He mentions one nail, omits the statue, and has Helena taking, not sending, all these objects. Otherwise he follows Socrates.

Theodoret mentions three crosses, and has Bishop Macarius suggest the means of identification. Concerning the cure, he follows Socrates, save that the noblewoman is not in extremis. At least one nail is enclosed, by Helena, in a helmet, at least another, in a bridle. Part of the relic goes to Macarius, part to the Imperial Palace.

There are other details which we may briefly mention: thus, Helena builds a church and waits upon consecrated virgins (Rufinus); a church is built on the site of the temple (Paulinus); Socrates follows Rufinus, the church being called New Jerusalem: and adds, that Helena built a church at the site of the Nativity and of the Ascension, as well as performing sundry benefactions; Sozomen quotes the Sibyl, attributes the church at the sepulchre to Constantine, but attributes the other two to Helena. She then serves the virgins. Theodoret

mentions the virgins as well, having spoken of Helena's church-building activities.

It seemed that a brief summary of matter in the last chapter might be of help in this; and it seems that the sole pattern in the development of the narratives is that with the passing of time there is, in each set of narratives, an increase in variety or fullness of detail. The simplicity of Ambrose's account is in strong contrast to the rest. The Cross is not treated as a relic before Rufinus; for Cyril and Egeria give no Invention narrative. Only on some few points are these narratives agreed: Helena went to Jerusalem and found the Cross, in the period about 325-336. It seems therefore, that there was a tradition that the Cross had been found by Helena; and that the body of the accounts discussed so far is inferences, interpretation and embroidery. However, the Hebrew from the East to whom Sozomen refers, seems to have found his way from the Protonica legend into the Helena legend, and he may be one of the Jews mentioned by Paulinus. Interpretation of the narratives is all the harder because of the ways in which they coincide with each other. Furthermore, it is far from clear whether (for instance) Sozomen's Hebrew, Judas from the Protonica legend, and Rab Judah, should be identified, or whether only two of these are identical; or (if only two of these characters are to be identified) which two.

To make things more difficult, the suggestion was made that the Cross was no longer on earth: which suggests that those who proposed this, did not believe the so-called relics to be authentic: unless one supposes that, if an icon and the saint thereby represented are somehow consubstantial, the Cross and its purported relics may in



a somewhat similar fashion be consubstantial.<sup>188</sup> The question also arises, whether all the relics of the Cross were from the wood itself, or whether they include objects which had touched the wood - and even objects which had touched these latter.

One clue to the reliability of the accounts is the weight accorded to this or that element in them. Rufinus and the three Greeks mention or magnify Macarius - Ambrose, Paulinus and the Protonica legend omit him. It is an attractive hypothesis that Edessa, having claimed to possess correspondence between the Lord and an Edessene ruler, might be eager to claim a further Dominical relic, or at least might claim some interest in it.<sup>189</sup> The Edessene legend (our use of the word implies no historical judgment) may have been prompted by a spirit of rivalry with Constantinople. Certainty cannot be drawn from supposition; but, while all the Invention legends tell of the Invention, the circumstances of the discovery seem to be chosen and related according to the interests of the writers. Some at least of the pilgrims at the Encaenia would surely have come from Edessa, notwithstanding that city's political troubles, and the distance. In this way whatever tradition may lie behind the claim that the Cross was found, may have developed into a full narrative. Behind the Italian, Greek, and Edessene legends (if we may so divide them) lie oral traditions, and behind these the influences of all the pilgrims upon the notions of each other about the finding of the Cross and the origins of the relics. Bad faith is one accusation which we need not bring against the authors mentioned. Such a theory seems to fit the facts, without explaining everything in the accounts.

Let us return to that Judas who was baptised Cyriacus. The Liber Pontificalis says that Pope Eusebius baptised "Judas, also known as Cyriacus" and consecrated him bishop of Jerusalem. S. Paul would not have approved of the consecration of a neophyte: and it is surprising how many episcopal elections and consecrations in antiquity were performed without due regard for ecclesiastical law. The Liber Pontificalis also speaks of one "Cyriacus of Jerusalem" who died in the reign of Julian; while the Roman Martyrology mentions a bishop of Ancona, who, while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was martyred under Julian. "Others assert that he was a bishop of Jerusalem put to death under Hadrian"<sup>190</sup> - there was a bishop Judas of Jerusalem from 134 to 138. The feast of this last Cyriacus falls upon May 4. It seems then that Judas of Jerusalem, Cyriacus of Jerusalem, and Cyriacus of Ancona have been fused, and then separated, to be, not what they were before, but doublets of each other, the details of each being communicated to the other. Such confusion of identities recalls the fusion of Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts 17:34) with Dionysius of Paris (martyred 258) and with an anonymous fifth-century Syrian neo-Platonist theologian. Whether Rabbi Judah of the Toledot Yeshu is a Jewish adaptation of Bishop Judas, or whether Judas-Cyriacus is Rabbi Judah in a Christian guise, is far from clear: the narratives of the Invention, and this particular character, seem therefore to have been shaped by Jewish and Christian polemic; for the implication of the Toledot Yeshu is that the Christian Cross is a mere idol, and that any virtue in such objects is derived from the prayers of just men such as the Rabbi.

The accounts of the Invention should be compared with narratives

about the discovery of other relics. We may instance the discovery of the relics of SS. Gervase and Protase by Ambrose in 386, and the account of the finding of the remains of Stephen the first martyr, S. Paul's teacher Gamaliel, and one Abibas, described as the son of Gamaliel, in 415. The Roman Martyrology includes Gamaliel, on August 3. Many Old Testament worthies are mentioned therein, and many more in the Greek Orthodox and other hagiological books. The way in which Gamaliel has become a Christian saint is more than a Christianising of Gamaliel 'the Elder'; for this rabbi has sacred associations (so to put it) as the teacher of S. Paul and the defender of the Apostles Peter and John.<sup>191</sup> Rabbi Judah, is very shadowy and impossible to identify; the name was not uncommon. One wonders whether this character owes anything to Judah 'the Prince'. Editor of the Mishnah, called 'the Holy', he flourished a generation after the revolt of Bar-Kocheba; his life and reputation may have coloured the narrative of the Toledot<sup>\*192</sup>. A character who began as a fiction may thus have taken on 'a local habitation and a name'. Interpretation of the Toledot is the harder because of the allusive fashion in which Jewish writings so often refer to the Gentile world, and because of the way in which Jewish history is made the stuff of legend. The Toledot may be informed by Christian fear of idolatry; for Christians were long as observant of the relevant precepts of the Decalogue as even the strictest Jews. In Syria, opposition to images lasted longer than in Graeco-Latin Christendom: but that is another story.

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\* Gamaliel and Judah were both Presidents of the Sanhedrin.

Allusion was made in the last chapter to some notices about the Cross from the sixth and seventh centuries. We have not mentioned them here as they seem to agree with the narratives we have spoken about. Whether they are credible is an altogether different matter. The mention of the sponge (for example), prompts the thought that relics were being produced to satisfy a pious desire for mementos of the Saviour and His acts. Such readiness to believe in the authenticity of reputed relics was not quite universal. The limits of this study do not permit an examination of the subject of relics in general.

There has been considerable repetition in this chapter of matter in the last, to set everything in its proper context. A proper context is what the Invention legends seem to lack - Rabbi Judah cannot be identified; Protonica is a fiction; Helena appears not as the grande dame which an emperor's mother must needs be, but as almost a sacred personage.<sup>193</sup> Excellent and pious as she may have been, her pilgrimage is not associated with any of the events of the imperial court: her presence in Jerusalem is the unum necessarium. If she went to the Holy Land after Nicea, may she not have gone after the deaths of Crispus and Fausta? Her peregrinations and varied benefactions might then have a penitential and expiatory motive, if not on her own behalf, then on behalf of the Emperor. This interpretation, if correct, would be a fine gloss on the words of Zosimus. Then why are Ambrose and the rest so silent about such a motive? For the same reason, perhaps, that many Christians long for the 'primitive simplicity' of the Apostolic Church - the first years of the Church, and of the Christian empire, are idealised, and what is 'of good report' is

emphasised. Idealised also are the more prominent characters, and their virtues made much of.

A word more to end these comments. The liturgical cultus of the Cross can have done little to retard veneration of the Cross - altar crosses appeared in the East during the fifth century - and the cult of supposed relics may have been helped by this development, notwithstanding the reservations or denials of some authors. The disagreements of the Invention narratives would doubtless be known to few of the faithful: and the freedom the Church now had, to use greater splendour in her liturgy, may have done much to counterbalance the ample confusion to which we have alluded.

NOTES

The Narratives of the Invention Considered

182. See Zosimus, New History 2:28ff, in M. Hadas, A History of Rome, pp. 150, 151 (1958); and see Julian the Apostate, Caesares 336 A,B (Vol. 2 of the Loeb edition, p.412; translated by W. Cave Wright: Harvard University Press - Heinemann 1913).
183. See J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius p.302, note on passage 261.
184. Most of the material on the lives of Helena and Constantine is taken from J. Holland Smith, Constantine the Great (Hamish Hamilton 1971), especially Chapters 2, 10, 17.
185. See Frolow, op. cit. p.177.
186. His letter to Constantia, sister of Constantine, represents the sentiments of many in his, and later, centuries.
187. Cf. Numbers 21:4-9 and II Kings 18:4.
188. An argument of the icon-veneraters during the Iconoclastic struggle. The cult of the Cross suffered less than did that of other relics and ikons.
189. Edessa claimed a portrait of Christ as well as the letters between Abgar and Jesus.
190. The Book of Saints, p.188.
191. Ibid. p.298; Acts 5:34-39.
192. On Rabbi Judah 'the Prince', see H. Danby, The Mishnah (Oxford 1933; 1977 reprint) pp. xx - xxiii, especially xxi, with notes 1, 2.
193. She and her son are saints in the Greek Church: she, alone in the Latin Rite.

CHAPTER 5

The Worship of the Cross in the West

In the time of Tertullian, the first day of the Triduum was known as the Day of the Pasch; and a period of three days was attested by Ambrose, who speaks of the fourteenth to the sixteenth day during which Christ suffered, rested, and arose;<sup>194</sup> while S. Augustine mentions "the most sacred Triduum of the Crucified, Buried, and Raised".<sup>195</sup>

I Of the Veneration of the Cross in Italy we have said something already, when referring to Melania the Elder, and her gift to Paulinus of Nola. According to the Liber Pontificalis, Leo the Great's successor Hilary (461-68) had three oratories built near the Lateran Basilica; dedicated, respectively, to S. John the Baptist, the Apostle John, and the True Cross. A richly-decorated fragment of the Cross was deposited in the confessio of this last building.

Some thirty years later, Pope Symmachus copied his predecessor, differing from him only in that his foundations were near, or rather beside, the Baptistery of S. Peter.<sup>196</sup> The relic was encased in a golden Cross garnished with gems. Exactly when this foundation was made is uncertain. Here too our source is the Liber Pontificalis, the first edition of which appeared a little later.\* It also mentions that Constantine I gave a staurotheke of gold and gems to the

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\* In the pontificate of Boniface II (523-32); thus Duchesne. Mommsen suggests a period after Gregory the Great (590-604).

Sessorian Basilica; which accounts for its name, in the Ordines Romani,\* of 'Jerusalem'. The event is placed in the pontificate of Silvester I. It is possible that there has been some confusion with Constantine II. The sole certain terminus ante quem is provided by the Liber Pontificalis. According to another tradition, Helena brought some of the earth of Calvary back to Rome,<sup>197</sup> by way of hallowing the Roman earth, to build upon it: hence the name. It might also be mentioned that Pope Symmachus was asked by Avitus of Vienne to record Avitus' request, made of Elias I of Jerusalem, for a fragment of the Cross; this mediation was successful.<sup>198</sup> Maximian of Ravenna was another bishop who adorned his basilica with a cross of gold dignified by a fragment of the True Cross.<sup>199</sup>

From the period 565 to 578 we have, at Rome, a Latin cross paty.<sup>200</sup> This is pointed at the base, perhaps for use as a processional cross. The cross used to be in a receptacle surrounded with a dozen precious stones. These very probably represented the twelve Apostles. On the arms of the cross is a Latin distich, to show that the donors were the Emperor Justin II and his wife. From the cross-arms depend four pendants. The entire object is furnished with medallions and precious stones. There are busts of persons at prayer, in medals at either end of the cross-arms. At the junction of the arms is a medallion of the Paschal Lamb. As for the upright, there are representations of Christ, cross-nimbed; the topmost end portrays Him holding an open book, while the representation at the base of the upright shows Him with a cross. The latter may be due to the

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\* These are sets of rubrics for the rites and ceremonies of the Church's year, for the use of the Roman province. They evidence the liturgy of the seventh to the eleventh century. Editions include those of the Maurist Mabillon (1632-1707) and Mgr. M. Andrieu (1886-1956).



hand of the restorer; but it may also be original. The cross had the practical purpose of holding a relic of the Cross; and that was housed in the medallion of the Lamb.

The next in this procession of crosses is from Monza, best known, perhaps, for its Iron Crown: in December of 603 Gregory the Great sent a pectoral staurotheke to Aduluwald, son of Queen Theodolinda, on the occasion of Aduluwald's baptism.<sup>201</sup>

Although nothing so far in this chapter can properly be called the cultus of the Cross, all this preceding material does, nevertheless, provide a framework for the liturgical veneration. At this period the East seems to have been richer in relics than the West, and it has always been much richer in variety of feasts. The feasts of the Roman liturgy are later than the Byzantine. There is no room to discuss the Byzantine feasts: but they, and others, deserve at least to be mentioned.

We have mentioned the power which the idea of the Cross had for the Apostolic Fathers, so long before it was even said to have been found; it is not surprising to find it worshipped when at last discovered: the attitudes in the accounts are history, even if the events in the accounts be fabulous. None of those who relates the Invention blanches at the notion of adoring the relic. Writing to Eustochium about her mother Paula, Jerome expresses himself as follows: "Having drawn near to the place, she went about it with much ardor. Prostrate before the Cross, she adored, as though perceiving the Lord hanging upon it."<sup>202</sup> We have quoted Paulinus. We have, a few years later, Rusticus the Deacon: "The whole Church, throughout the entire world, adores, without gainsaying, the nails

with which Christ was crucified, and the wood of the venerable Cross".<sup>203</sup>

II The anniversary of the dedication of the basilicas of the Martyrion and the Anastasis (which took place in 335), was, with the commemoration of the apparition of the Cross in 312, the beginning of the glorification of the Cross in the East. Precisely on what day the dedication occurred is not known; but the various witnesses, when they specify a date, give between 12 and 15 September.<sup>204</sup> We are still thinking here of the East, without confining ourselves to the Greeks in particular. In Egeria's time, whether that was about 386 or thirty years later, the feast consisted in keeping the anniversary of the twin dedication of the churches, and also in the display of the purported relic of the Cross. A witness to these celebrations in the sixth century is supplied by Theodosius the Archdeacon, who between about 530 and 550 says that Helena found the Cross on 15 September, and that "over the next seven days in Jerusalem, there at the tomb of the Lord, Masses are celebrated and the Cross itself is shown".<sup>205</sup> Almost at the same time as Theodosius, Gregory of Tours mentions a similar veneration of the Cross: "The Lordly Cross, which was discovered by Helena the Augusta at Jerusalem, is thus adored on the fourth and the sixth feria".<sup>206</sup> Whether this adoration was a feature only of Holy Week, is uncertain; the explanation for the two ceremonies is perhaps the impossibility of accommodating the devotions of a great number of people within a single day. Paulinus<sup>207</sup> witnesses to a similar problem. All this

devotion fully justifies the words of Rusticus. At some point the celebrations of the Encaenia and the Cross drifted apart so that the former was kept on the 13, and the "Commemoration of the Finding", upon 14 September.

It should be said that this latter feast is not identical with that known as the Invention. But we have not come to the end of the variations. We can account at least in part for these by recalling the diversity of calendars, and by allowing for a corresponding measure of diversity in liturgical custom.

This chapter will be devoted to the Cross in the West, and more particularly in the Roman liturgy. We next consider the differences between some calendars.

III The notification of the Invention of the Cross in the Liber Pontificalis depends upon the Latin versions of the legend. All these conclude with the command of Helena that the finding should be commemorated upon the 3 May. This stands in bold contrast to the oldest Syriac manuscript of the legend. According to this, the commemoration of the Invention is to be celebrated "from year to year".<sup>208</sup> No date at all is given by the Syriac manuscript.

What now follows is very tangled. The other Syriac recensions of the legend, another in Greek, and a Greek manuscript from the eighth century, written at Mt. Sinai, command the celebration of "the memory of the Cross upon the fourteenth of September". The Sinai manuscript adds that "among the Asiatics"\* the celebration falls

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\* That is, according to the Era of Seleucus, which begins in 312 B.C., and of which the calculation has been much disputed. The equivalence of dates is given by Chavasse.

upon the 20 Artemisios. And a further Greek recension of the legend requests the celebration of "the memory of the day upon which the Cross was found, the 20th of Artemisios". Understood strictly, reckoning by 'Asiatic' usage, the day mentioned would coincide with 12 April. This is how yet another Greek recension seems to have understood the passage, seeing that it alludes to "the memory of the Cross in the month of April". Another possible date is 20 April; which is the result of reckoning by the calendar in use at Antioch.

In the texts of the Syriac Menology we find two feasts related to the Cross mentioned in three of them. The oldest of the three was copied before the end of the 7th century. On 22 May we have the "Discovery of the Cross. Emperor Constantine"; and on 14 September, "Dedication, that is, Exaltation, of the Cross".

One eleventh-century manuscript mentions the "Memory of the Cross in the month Artemisios, the 10th, which among the Romans is the month of May." This notice is very difficult to understand. Artemisios is taken from the Macedonian calendar, which for many centuries was employed in the Orient, as one result of the conquests of Alexander. The difficulty is, that not only was there a lack of uniformity in the length of the year, but the first day of the year was variously reckoned in different places - in Europe also was this true. Whether Artemisios is to be considered the tenth month, is therefore uncertain; and so it is also uncertain to what day in the Julian calendar the 10 Artemisios should correspond.

Side by side with the feast of 14 September as it is noticed in the Coptic-Arabic Menology, we find the feast of the "Invention of the Cross" falling upon the 10 Barmahat, which is the 10 Phamenoth in

the calendar used at Alexandria; and this date answers to 6 March in the Julian reckoning.

As to the Armenians, their ecclesiastical year begins on our August 11. The Synaxary of Ter Israel speaks of a feast on 5 Hori, which corresponds to 14 September. The feast of the "Invention of the Holy Cross of Christ" is assigned to the 10 Marer or Mariri, which is equivalent to 17 May. This day is noticed in the oldest of the Armenian calendars as the "Invention of the holy Cross at Jerusalem". Like the Copts and the Nestorians, the Armenians can thus be seen to have revered the Cross, even though, as Monophysites, they rejected the Council of Chalcedon, and consummated the schism at the council of Tiben in 552, from which year the Era of the Armenians is reckoned. It is thus clear that doctrine on Christ, and devotion to His Cross, are by no means inseparable.

We have mentioned the Syriac Menology already. We should further add, that one of the witnesses to it has this notice: "On the fifth Sunday after Easter, discovery of the Cross." Since Easter is a moveable feast, and its Sundays therefore moveable - unless one is a Quartodeciman, or perhaps a disciple of Columba or Colman - the feast thus noticed, might fall on one of the dates assigned to the Invention by the books already alluded to. This seems probable. On the other hand, there may have been some feast not long after Easter which was not the Invention. If the feast in September was held over two or three days (like the Easter Triduum) because of the greatness of the crowds who came to Jerusalem (as one reason among others); if the Holy Week ceremonies to which Gregory of Tours refers were held on two days, for the same reason;

perhaps the notice in the Syriac Menology is to be explained by there having been a similar number of days in the period after Easter, later overshadowed by the feasts in May, September, and Holy Week; so that one day between Easter and Ascension alone remained; which was assigned to a Sunday, if that feast had not always been a Sunday. An obvious objection to this theory, is that this Sunday is a commemoration of the Invention. Since, however, the 22 May is explicitly called a feast of the Invention, and of Constantine, we suggest that the feast of which the date is specified, preceded the Sunday as a feast of the Cross; which may explain why one feast is given a date, and the other but vaguely referred to. The Sunday would then be a minor commemoration of the Invention. The two dates are probably not identical. Nor is it very likely that the Sunday has come loose from the celebrations of the feast that fell around 12 to 15 September. Popular piety surely had some influence (even the weightiest) in determining the dates of the celebrations, and the shapes of the relevant narratives. In all this the influence of Rome is conspicuous by its absence.<sup>209</sup>

IV In Rome itself it would appear that the feast in May came to the city at some time after 525. The reason for this, suggested by an edition of the Gelasian Sacramentary (formed between about 500 and 750) is the coming to Rome of the Judas-Cyriacus legend. It seems not unreasonable to suppose that one of the ancestors of the eleventh-century Greek manuscript mentioned above was one source of the Latin version of the legend. In such a manner might one account for knowledge at Rome of the date of May 3.

From learning of a feast or an event so closely connected with the heart of the Christian faith it is a short step to commemorating it. This is exactly what happened; for the feast was introduced to the celebrations of the titular churches, even though it was some time before the feast gained entrance to the Papal liturgy. Accordingly, it was confined to the life of the titular churches.

At the beginning of the seventh century the feast was celebrated in Naples, and the Neapolitan Evangeliliary refers, for the lesson from the Gospel, to the parable in S. Matthew which speaks of the 'treasure hidden in a field'.<sup>210</sup> The feast is entitled "Invention of the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ".<sup>211</sup> The value of this notice for the determination of the date in the year upon which the Invention is celebrated is somewhat diminished by the lack of any such information about when the feast occurred in the Neapolitan calendar. No feast for September 14, relating to the worship of the Cross, is mentioned, which sets the book somewhat apart from the sources we have so far mentioned.

At Rome again a family of evangeliaires from the seventh century also supplies some indirect evidence of the celebration of a feast of the Cross which was a feast other than that of the Exaltation. The celebration of that seems to have been what the recent reformed Calendar calls an 'optional memoria'. The evangeliaires indicate the very same Gospel as does the evangeliliary from Naples. Some borrowing of discipline seems indicated. However, the celebration was no Encaenia and Invention (including exposition of the Cross), but something much truncated. For the Encaenia has

quite gone; presumably, somewhat as Judaism contrived to exist, though lacking a single central sanctuary for the fullest expression of its cult; so also the Encaenia was omitted when the feast came to Rome, as having no relevance in the liturgy of the city. One wonders whether the arrival of the feast in Rome was retarded by some notion such as that the Passion had so intimate a connection with Jerusalem that the Cross could not be fully honoured elsewhere. The bringing of earth from Jerusalem seems to support this hypothesis; as does the assertion that this took place.

In other service-books there is a similar diversity of practice, so that if we speak of a cult of the Cross, we should mean, not only the action of the liturgy but also that kind of devotion and worship of which liturgical cult is the fullest expression. Thus, the Lectionary of Luxeuil, which was written at about the end of the seventh century, is not acquainted with the feast of 3 May. In the Calendar of Willibrord (658-739) apostle, with Swithbert, of the Frisians, and founder of the monastery of Echternach, we find the "Invention of Holy Cross". The date of the feast is arresting: May 7. The heavenly apparition of which Cyril wrote to Constantius has, it would seem lent its date to the feast of the Invention.

In the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, the so-called Hieronymian Martyrology<sup>212</sup> vanished from Italy. By 605 it was known in France, and the manuscript tradition thence derived is represented by three 'families' of texts, among which is one from Echternach. The Echternach Codex was probably written by a companion of Willibrord, and represents the Martyrology as it was in about 600.



In the Codex is mentioned the "Invention of Holy Cross", for the 7 May.

In the Gothic Missal and the Bobbio Missal (both of which have been assigned to the seventh and eighth centuries) we are given an 'Invention Mass' which falls upon some unspecified date between Easter and Ascension - as in the Syriac Menology. This agrees well with the hypothesis that the feast was moveable. The formularies supplied are not related to what is said in either the Old Gelasian Sacramentary or the Paduan Sacramentary. Instead, the formularies in the Gothic Missal are related to those in the Visigothic liturgy - the cultus of the Cross was established in Spain by the seventh century. Two witnesses which do give the date of May 3 are exemplars of the second recension of the Hieronymian Martyrology: for the Echternach textual tradition represents an earlier text than the other two families. The date of May 3 owes something to the advent in France of the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, and to the Paduan Sacramentary, which was written in France.

From the foregoing, the cultus of the Cross can be seen to have been widespread: not as a private devotion alone, but as one consecrated and widespread in the liturgy of the Church. Yet at first Rome seems to have had little to do with the cultus. No wonder then, that the feast in May is absent from the early Gregorian books and the Papal liturgy.

V We now consider the Adoration in the liturgy of Good Friday, beginning with some comments on the Exaltation.

The feast of 14 September is not mentioned in the first recension of the Hieronymian Martyrology, or in the Luxeuil Lectionary. The Bobbio Missal, and the Gothic, are silent. And yet we have seen how well the Christians of the East were acquainted with the September festivities, and how a distinction was made between one feast and another.

But just as manuscripts of the second recension of the Hieronymian Martyrology, influenced by the Old Gelasian and the Paduan books, give the Invention-feast a date of May 3, so is the Exaltation of 14 September mentioned in the same witnesses. And here is the great difference between the Roman fortunes of the two feasts: that in May, coming to Rome in a written work, was long confined to the life of the titular churches; though it may have arrived there quite early in the sixth century, perhaps in the course of the wars by which Justinian attempted to restore Italy to the Empire.

The Exaltation seems to have come to Rome between 650 and 680. The Syrian Pope Sergius I, whose pontificate lasted from 687 to 701, is mentioned by the Liber Pontificalis in especial connection with the Cross. It is remarkable that of the seventy years after he became Pope, fifty fell to the pontificates of other Orientals. Sergius, who found a relic of the Cross in the sacrarium of S. Peter's, contented himself with establishing the exposition and adoration of the Cross in the Lateran basilica. During the ceremonies of Good Friday the procession which took place before the synaxis at which the Pope himself

was to preside had the Lateran as its point of departure. And so we move to these festivities also.

Before the pontificate of Sergius, the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday is not to be found in Rome, although it is found in the Mozarabic Rite:<sup>213</sup> but it seems that the Spanish practice is not the source of that in Rome. The Gallican liturgy, as exemplified in the Old Gallican Sacramentary, the Gothic Missal, or the Missal of Bobbio, is as silent as the Roman. Indeed, we have to wait for the (so-called) Ordo Romanus 23, which is not really a liturgical book at all, but a series of notes, the work of a Frankish cleric, giving the details of the Papal ceremonies during the Triduum. His description of the events of Good Friday occupies capita 9 to 22.<sup>214</sup> The ceremony of Adoration is a thing quite new to the pilgrim. The rite is as follows.

At about two in the afternoon the Pope goes to the Lateran basilica, where a procession forms and all go to 'Jerusalem' (that is, Santa Croce), bearing a relic of the Cross in a reliquary of great splendour, and singing Psalm 118;<sup>215</sup> presumably because of its great length. The deacon puts the reliquary on the altar, next to the altar-cross. The Pope opens the reliquary, prays, rises, kisses the Cross. At his command the clergy - bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons - go likewise to the Cross and kiss it. The Cross is then kissed by the remainder of the people. During the Adoration, after the Cross has been kissed by the Pope, a subdeacon "ascends the ambo and begins to read a lesson from the prophet Hosea". The gradual Domine audivi follows. Then comes a reading from Deuteronomy, and the tract Qui habitat. Then is read "the Passion of the

Lord according to John; and when that has been completed, the Pope prays ... and everyone proceeds once more to the Lateran, singing Psalm 118!" However, the Pope and the deacons do not communicate in S. Croce. Whoever wishes to communicate does so from what remains of the Mass upon Maundy Thursday, and whoever does not wish to communicate in S. Croce does so in one of the titular churches.

In all this there is no Mass, but a synaxis and communion; nor has Mass ever been said on Good Friday. The choice of communicating or not, may owe something to the day.

According to Father H. Schmidt, all regions immediately began to imitate the Roman ceremony of Adoration, even where genuine relics of the Cross were not to be had. 'Regions' is intended to refer (one must suppose) not to the suburbicarian sees alone, but to the Patriarchate of the West as a whole. We are free to surmise that when the Adoration upon Good Friday first began in Rome, the Romans venerated the relics in S. Croce. In the event of there being no relics to be adored, two courses lay open - apart, that is, from throwing over the rite altogether: the principle of the infinite multiplication of the parts of the relic, which is stated by S. Paulinus, might be held; or, as Amalarius of Metz (c.840) wrote: "The virtue of the Holy True Cross is not lacking in those crosses which are made in imitation of it". Even as the worshippers of icons took from S. Basil the principle that the honour paid to Christ, is referred to the prototype;<sup>\*</sup> so here it seems, that the Cross sends

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\* On the Holy Spirit 18:45. S. Basil is speaking of the honour paid to the Son, which is paid to Him as the effulgence of the Father's glory, the honour being therefore referred to the Father. The passage is quoted by the Second Council of Nicea. The honour paid to images, is referred to those whom the images represent. Similarly, the Saints are honoured for the glory of God.

forth a sort of 'virtue', of which all those crosses that imitate it partake - whether the Cross which sends this virtue forth, be some ideal Cross, or the instrument of the Passion. Such a position as that of Amalarius may owe something to the revived Neo-Platonism of his age. How does this compare with the order given by the Old Gelasian Sacramentary?

At the ninth hour (one later than in the papal synaxis observed by the Frankish cleric) "all proceed to the church, and the Cross is set upon the altar".<sup>216</sup> In place of the procession from the Lateran, to the sound of Beati immaculati, with the "wood of the precious Cross" borne on before, the Sacramentary has it, that "the priest comes from the sacristy with the sacred orders, in silence, nothing being sung, and they come before the altar, the priest desiring them to pray for him; and [then] he says, 'Let us pray!'. A lesson follows, the priest (it seems) being the reader. A respond, prayer, lesson, and respond come next. The 'Passion of the Lord' follows. "With that finished, the priest begins the Solemn Prayers, which follow." (Chavasse does not give the texts of these prayers.) And so,

At the conclusion of the above prayers, the deacons go into the sacristy. They come out with the Body and Blood of the Lord remaining from the day before, and set them upon the altar. And the priest comes before the altar, adoring the Cross of the Lord and kissing it.

He says the Lord's Prayer, with its embolisms.<sup>217</sup> Afterwards, "all adore the Holy Cross, and communicate". This manner of service is followed by the Gelasian Sacramentary of Gellone, which has been dated to about 780; of Prague, about 794; of Rheims, between about 798 and 800; and of Angoulême, which Father Schmidt assigns to about

800. It seems that the Gelasian tradition in the Carolingian domains is both an imitation and a simplification of that in the province of Rome: which is what one might expect.

Ordo Romanus 23 was probably written in the first half of the eighth century. Father Schmidt suggests 754 as the date of O.R.24, which probably describes the ceremonies used in the suburbicarian districts. Neither is of pure Romanitas. O.R.30a received more influence from O.R.24 than did any other text - though O.R.24 is never followed slavishly - and O.R.30b borrows from O.R.30a, although it is not certain in what way the one has influenced the other: whether directly, or indirectly. Both belong to the late eighth century.

According to O.R.24, "all the priests of the city and the suburbicarian area, and all the clergy, with the people", gather outside the city in some appointed church - though not in one of the 'major' churches. They await the pontifex or his vicar. (The hour given in O.R.24 is 9 a.m.). The pontifex comes from the sacristy and prays before the altar, "in the order contained in the Sacramentary". Having risen, he goes in silence to his chair. A subdeacon reads a lesson, and the canticle Domine audivi is sung. A lesson is read, followed by the tract - Qui habitat, or Eripe me. The Passion according to S. John, and the prayers, follow. "So soon as the pontifex shall finish these", the altar is stripped "and so all go thence in silence".

"The priests of the churches, whether of the city or of the suburbicarian regions, go to the churches, that they may do everything in this order at evening..."<sup>218</sup>

"So ... both in the church in which the pontifex says the prayers, as in the rest of the priests' churches, the Cross is prepared before the altar, after the prayers." Two acolytes support it. The pontifex comes and kisses the adored - that is, adorable - Cross. The episcopi, priests /who, with the episcopi, earn a question-mark from Chavasse/, the deacons, and the rest in due order /per ordinem/, then the people, kiss the Cross. The Body of the Lord remaining from the day before is fetched, and some unconsecrated wine, and set on the altar. While pontifex and people greet the Cross, the antiphon Ecce lignum crucis is always sung, and Psalm 118 said. At the end of the Adoration, the pontifex "goes down before the altar" and prays the Lord's Prayer with its embolisms. "When they have said Amen, he takes of the Holy Things, and puts them in a /the?/ chalice, saying nothing. And all communicate in silence; and everything is brought to an end", after the blessing and respond.

The rite is repeated in Ordines 27, 28, and 29, of which the dates are, about 750 to 800, about 800, and between 870 and 890. O.R.27 is for use by a bishop's church, and O.R.29, for a monastic community.

How does such a rite compare with Ordo 30b?

The time here, is 11 a.m.

... they /no doubt the body of clergy denominated in O.R.24/ come from the sacristy ... and go before the altar. They kiss the altar and go to the chair of the pontifex... At his behest ... the first lesson is read.

From the respond Domine audivi, to the solemn prayers, all is as in Ordo 24.

"Then the priests return to their titular churches /per titula sua<sup>7</sup>, and" - as the text rather cryptically has it - "they deal with the lessons as with the responds, or gospel, or solemn prayers likewise; at three in the evening." This presumably means that they repeat in the evening what happened in the morning, which seems borne out by what follows: "and they adore the Cross, and all communicate". This is all very direct and simple. One may also notice that Ordo 30b is fuller than Ordo 24 in specifying the time of the synaxis with Adoration. Ordines 24 and 27 say "ad vesperum" (at vespers?), but Ordo 30b, 3 p.m. Of the three, Ordo 30b is alone in having the morning procession take place at 11 a.m.

It will be noticed that, in the account of Ordo 24, no attempt has been made to translate pontifex. We are probably to understand a reference to the Pope. The synaxis described appears to be that over which the Pope presides, the description being no doubt applicable (with alterations) to those over which the priests preside. It is possible that pontifex is to be understood as meaning 'bishop' in the description of the Adoration. Because of this uncertainty - though the difficulty should not be exaggerated - other terms are also a puzzle. Of equal or greater importance are other features of this and other Ordines, as will be seen in Chapter 7.

According to Father Schmidt, the tradition of O.R.24 seems to be a testimony to the later evolution of the rite at Rome, in S. Croce and the rest of the Roman churches alike. We are also told that embellishment of this rite first appeared in O.R.31 (capita 42-51), of which the date is between 850 and 900. The celebrant's greeting and communion was, at this period, still simple, whereas the participation of the faithful had become more solemn. The Romano-Germanic



Pontifical, which Father Schmidt puts at about 950, already contains all the elements of the modern rite of the Adoration of the Cross.

As for the period between about 750 and 850, between Ordines 24 and 31, although we have managed to write of the Exaltation, without one mention of Heraclius, Chosroes, or the year 629,<sup>219</sup> the development or alteration of the Good Friday rite is less easy to discuss without mentioning events in the world outside. The Iconoclastic controversy is mentioned elsewhere. Frankish liturgical books are of the greatest importance for the development of the Triduum in Rome; the multiplication of them was assisted by the necessity of adapting what was done at Rome to the circumstances of the Frankish church, by the conversion of the Teutonic tribes, by the growth of monasticism in the Holy Roman Empire; the influence of events in the Eastern Empire explains in part how sentiments which were opposed, concerning the Cross, could be entertained, despite the production of liturgical books. The Second Council of Nicea, which upheld the rightness of adoring the Cross, was not received by all:<sup>220</sup> although the Adoration was not rejected by the Iconoclasts.<sup>221</sup>

The labours of S. Boniface (assisted by the secular authorities) - the most eminent Apostle of the Germanies - continued in Mainz, his see; and his wider mission, through the efforts of his kinsman and disciple Lull, who died in 787. Even although there were still many heathen Saxons thereafter, it is hard to see how, without these labours, Charlemagne could have thought the liturgical uniformity of his dominions to be possible: although he was not writing upon a tabula rasa, since it was also his intention to bring about a liturgical reform.

VI With this purpose Charlemagne obtained a manuscript of the Gregorian Sacramentary from Hadrian I, who reigned from 772 to 795. That was at some time between 784 and 791. The manuscript conformed to the Papal book used in the Lateran. Not surprisingly, the needs of the Frankish Church could not always be met by a book which was adequate for the Romans. The book obtained by Charlemagne is known as the 'authentic' Hadrian manuscript, and is an 'unmixed' exemplar of the Gregorian Sacramentary. It - and the books descended from it - did not remain 'unmixed' for long. In the study of the Gregorian Sacramentary by Dom Jean Deshusses, the 'birthday'\* of SS. Alexander, Eventus, and Theodulus is given; although S. Theodulus is not always mentioned: the Invention of the Cross is not always mentioned, as neither always is its liturgical date.

It is not clear whether the occasional omission of the saint is to be ascribed to the uncertainty about the time of the Invention; or whether the variations in the liturgical notices are entirely unrelated. May 3 is rich in Alexanders: the saints above were of the time of Trajan; the one in question was identified with the Pope who was his contemporary. There are also the Constantinopolitan martyrs Alexander and Antonina, who suffered in 313. These are all in the Roman Martyrology. The Pope probably shares his contemporary's feast, by being supposed the same man. Manuscripts of Verona, and Paris, written between about 830 and 850, refer to the Invention "on the same day". It is not clear which feast is being compared with the Invention.

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\* The 'birthday' of a saint, is the day of entrance into the life of Heaven: the feast day.

For the 14 September, the Sacramentary gives, first, the "birthday of SS. Cornelius and Cyprian", and, "Upon the same day, the 14th day of the month of September, the Exaltation of Holy Cross". The only thing that need be said here, is that after these saints, the Roman martyrs Lucy and Geminian are added by the Sacramentaries of Gellone and S. Gall - the Gregorian Sacramentary assigns their feast to the 16th, as does the Roman Martyrology. The matter does not end there. The Exaltation is wanting in a book now in Verona, of the period 800-25, and is also wanting in the Arles Sacramentary (800-50), and in a book of about 850 and afterward, now in Oxford. Nor did the Modena Sacramentary (before 850) ever include it. However, the Paduan Sacramentary (825-50) a book of great value, from north-east France, has the title "At greeting the Cross in S. Peter's".<sup>222</sup>

For the Good Friday, we find the Prayers which are to be said upon the Greater Friday in Jerusalem. The opening prayer apart, there are eighteen brief intercessions, arranged in pairs. Their number seems to recall the Shemoneh Esreh.<sup>\*</sup> The matter of each pair is: the Church; the Pontiff; the bishops and sacred orders; the "holy people of God", who are provided for in the second prayer for the Pope and the first for the bishops; the emperor, and the empire (which the manuscripts call variously, "Christian", "Frankish", and "Roman"; and next, catechumens. Then there are prayers for the dissipation of heresy, and for those in any tribulation or necessity. Then follow prayers for the conversion of heretics and schismatics, and for those deceived by "diabolic fraud", that they may set heresy aside. Not

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\* For directions concerning the Shemoneh Esreh, or Eighteen Benedictions, see the tractate Berakhoth in the Mishnah.

different in purpose are the prayers for the conversion of the Jews; and the series is concluded by prayers that pagans, being released from idols, may abandon them and so join the Church.

Hereupon follows the Blessing of the Salt, and the Prayer, or, as some readings have it, Prayers, toward the making of a Catechumen (or: over the elect). From the variation in the spelling of "Catechumen", it seems that some copyists were better acquainted with Greek, than others whose renderings are somewhat barbarous. Some copies join the prayers together, or the titles: such as one from the middle of the ninth century, which is probably of Frankish origin.

We now pass to the Aniane Supplement, which consists of matter appended to the main body of the Hadrian book. It was attributed by the inventory of the monastery of S. Riquier (made in 831) to "Albinus", that is, Alcuin. Dom Deshusses suggests that a 'Missal of Alcuin' (d.804) was worked upon by Benedict of Aniane (751-821). Deshusses describes the book as a combination of the Gregorian and the Gelasian Sacramentaries - this latter, in a Frankish form.

So, the Supplement contains a preface for the "Invention of the Holy Cross", and this upon the 3 May. The preface is wanting in a Lyonnais manuscript of the first half of the ninth century, and is omitted from a contemporaneous Parisian manuscript. These sacramentaries were used at Arles and Senlis, respectively.

For 14 September, with the Exaltation, we find only the words: "The same embolism is to be said, as is written above for the finding of the holy cross". The word for the relevant prayer is illatio; which seems to be a Latin translation of embolisma. Hard upon this note

follow prefaces for the feast of Cornelius and Cyprian; and then, a preface which is especially for the "Festivity" of Cyprian. One of the manuscripts which lacks the note about the "illatio" for the Exaltation, is of about the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries; it probably comes from the north of Italy. More remarkable still, it contains a preface for Maundy Thursday, followed, not by a Good Friday preface, but by that for Holy Saturday. We find, as though to compensate for this omission, a "Benediction [for Bishops to use] for the [a?] festivity of the Holy Cross".\*

After the Supplement to the Hadrian book, we come again to the Paduan Sacramentary, which is, at the least, not earlier than 750.\*\* It contains the celebrant's prayers for some of the commons of Mass. We meet once more with SS. Alexander, Eventius and Theodulus; and, "On the same day, the Invention of the Holy Cross". The collect, the prayer over the offerings, and the closing prayer, are all attested by the Vatican Sacramentary, and by the Sacramentaries of Gellone, Angoulême, and S. Gall. There are a few more prayers, which may be noticed briefly.

Thus, Dom Deshusses devotes a few pages near the end of his book to "Additions from various codices". There is nothing for Good Friday; but, for the Invention (on May 3) a "votive Mass of Alcuin" is added from the Sacramentary of S. Gall, with the proper collect for the Mass. Parallels to this Sacramentary are also quoted, for the same

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\* It is perhaps intended as a benediction for Good Friday.

\*\* Such may be the date of a recension or a text later (about 825) expanded.



feast. The Sacramentary of S. Vedast,<sup>223</sup> from Arras, which comes from the years 850-900, also contains the collect for the "votive Mass of Alcuin". There are also allusions to the Cross in prayers for the feast of S. Gorgonius,<sup>224</sup> and for the "Nativity of S. Mary" the Virgin. This latter, and a (somewhat prolix) prayer for the Invention (on May 3) are, respectively, additions from the Sacramentary of Trent, and the Supplement of Aniane. The comment of Deshusses upon this Tridentine book deserves to be quoted:

Written in the first half of the ninth century, probably in the Tyrol, this manuscript has thus far [that is, to 1971] been ignored by liturgists, notwithstanding its very great importance. It has a close affinity to the Papal sacramentary of the hundred years which preceded the copying of the Hadrianum. The additions - Masses of Alcuin, martyrology, and so forth - are also of real importance.

He suggests that it was written about 690, and was given to Charlemagne with the Hadrian book a century later.

In conclusion to this chapter, various blessings, and manners of blessings, ought at least to be mentioned; for Rome had these, no less than England: and the theology of these was no less manifold, than that of the blessing we have quoted in the seventh chapter.<sup>225</sup>

NOTES

The Worship of the Cross in the West

194. Ambrose, Ep. 23.
195. Augustine of Hippo, Ep. 55:14.
196. Frolow, op. cit., p. 173.
197. Op. cit., p. 177; see note 185 supra.
198. Ibid.
199. Ibid.
200. Op. cit. pp. 180, 181.
201. Op. cit., p. 187.
202. Jerome, Pilgrimage of S. Paula 6.
203. Rusticus, Argument against the Acephali (P.L. 67:1229).
204. See A. Chavasse, Le Sacramentaire Gélasien (Desclée 1958), p. 361.
205. C.S.E.L. 39:149.
206. Gregory of Tours, On the Glory of the Martyrs 1:5 (P.L. 71)
207. Paulinus of Nola, Ep. 31:6 (P.L. 61).
208. Chavasse, op. cit. p. 362.
209. For a full discussion of these dates, see Chavasse, op. cit. pp. 351-64.
210. Matt. 13:44.
211. Unfortunately the words of the lesson cannot be used as a clue to the identification of the particular tradition of the Invention by which the Neapolitan feast is inspired.
212. The sources of the book are much older than Jerome: the letters prefixed to it, to show his authorship, are not authentic.

213. See the Liber Ordinum, p. 193 ff, ed. Dom Férotin. This Rite is at least as old as the time of Isidore of Seville (560-636).
214. For an extended discussion of this book, see vol. 1 of Hebdomada Sancta, by the Rev. H.A.P. Schmidt (Rome - Barcelona - Freiburg 1955 and 1956).
215. The Psalms are numbered in the versions thus:

<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>LXX and Latin</u>
1 - 8	1 - 8
9	9:1-21
10	9:22-39
11	10
12-114	11-113:1-8
115	113:9-26
116:1-9	114
116:10-19	115
117-147:1-11	116-146
147:12-20	147
148-50	148-50

216. This is a priestly rather than an episcopal synaxis.
217. An embolism is a brief interjection into a prayer of extraneous matter. Those in the Lord's Prayer are examples of the invariable type of embolism.
218. That is, the ceremonies earlier in the day are re-enacted, and the Veneration added.
219. In 614 the Persians attacked Jerusalem and took the relic of the Cross which was kept there. In 628 or 629 the Emperor Heraclius recovered the relic, so that the Exaltation was from then on celebrated with greater solemnity. For comment on this narrative, see Frolow, op. cit., pp. 188-93.
220. For the text of Nicea II, see Conciliorum Ecumenicorum Decreta (Rome 1962) pp. 107-32, esp. p.111 - p.113; and E.J. Martin, History of the Iconoclastic Controversy (London 1930) pp. 85-109, esp. pp. 92-108.
221. See Martin, op. cit. pp.110-50 and esp. pp.128,129.
222. See Dom J. Deshusses, Le Sacramentaire Gregorien, vol. 1, (Freibourg 1971) pp. 270,271,273,274; and cf. sections 480 and 692.
223. Bishop of Arras-Cambrai c.500-39; see The Book of Saints, p.705.



224. See ibid. p. 319.
225. For examples of such blessings, see M. Andrieu, Le Pontifical Romain au Moyen Age, vol. 1 (Rome 1938) pp.39,54,55,59,63,74.

CHAPTER 6

"The Joy of the Wicked"

I Earlier in this thesis, we referred to Claudius of Turin, and his "Protestant activities", when he became bishop there in about 817. His account of the accusations against him, and of these 'activities', comes through with great clarity, and vigour, in his Apologeticum atque Rescriptum written to, or against, the abbot Theodemir. Unlike Serenus, to whom Gregory the Great wrote, so that Serenus should not be intemperately zealous in destroying sacred pictures, - 'the poor men's Bible' - the bishop of Turin defended his actions.<sup>226</sup> The translation is our own throughout.

... You show yourself to be troubled because a rumour has gone out from Italy concerning me, through the whole of Gaul to the confines of Spain, that I have preached some new sect: which is altogether most false.<sup>227</sup> Nor is it remarkable, if the members of the devil have spoken such things of me, who have proclaimed him to be our head, a seducer, and demonic. For I teach no sect, who hold the unity and proclaim the truth.<sup>228</sup> But sects, and schisms, and superstitions, and heresies, so much as I have been able, I have suppressed, ground down, and fought and vanquished, and do not cease to vanquish, so far as I am at all able, with God for helper. This, however, has got about because, after I was compelled to undertake the burden of the pastoral office, I was sent by a pious prince, a son of the Lord's Catholic Church, Louis, and I came to Italy, to the city of Turin.\* I found - against the order of truth - all the basilicas to be filled with the vile images of what is accursed; and because all were worshipping them, I began, alone, to destroy them. And because of this, everyone opened his mouth to revile me, and unless the Lord had helped me they would perhaps have swallowed me up alive. ... For when Scripture says distinctly that no likeness of anything at all, of what is in heaven or in earth or under the earth, is to be made, the passage is to be understood, not only with regard to the likenesses of the gods of the Gentiles, but also of heavenly creatures; or of the things which human feeling is able to

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\* Claudius was a missus dominicus, that is, a 'king's eye' or (more or less) a nuncio, responsible for rendering an account of that part of the realm to which he was sent. Missi ordinarily went by twos, an ecclesiastic and a layman, four times a year; but for extraordinary purposes one might be sent. Men of sufficient impartiality were hard to find, especially after the death of Charlemagne, and were often hindered by the nobles.

conceive of to the Creator's honour.<sup>229</sup> To adore is to praise, venerate, ask, pray, supplicate, invoke, to pour out prayer. To worship ... is to ... attend to, pay divine service, frequent, venerate, love, affectionate ...

These men say, against whom we have undertaken to defend the Church of God: 'We do not suppose, about images, that we adore anything divine in them.<sup>230</sup> But only for His honour of whom it is an image do we adore it with such honour'. To this let us answer, that if the images of the saints who have left the cult of demons are venerated, these people have not left idols, but have changed the names. Even if you write on the wall, or paint the images of Peter and Paul, of Jove or Saturn, or of Mercury, those are not gods, nor these apostles; neither those, nor these, are men, however the name is changed...

But those professors of false religion and of superstition say: 'We worship the cross painted and imaged in His honour; as a recollection of our Saviour, we venerate and adore it'. For these people, nothing else matters about our Saviour, except that - as with the impious - the reproach of His passion and the laughing-stock of His death is what matters. This is what both they, and impious men, whether Jews or heathen, believe about Him, who doubt His rising again, and who have not known otherwise of Him, than to think of Him as tortured and dead, and hold and believe of Him in their hearts as always suffering, and neither attend to nor understand what the Apostle says: 'Although we did once know Christ according to the flesh, we do not so know Him now'...<sup>232:233</sup>

Against these the answer must be, that if they wish to adore every bit of wood fashioned in the shape of the Cross, just because Christ hung upon a Cross, there are many other things also that are befitting, which Christ did in the flesh.<sup>234</sup> He was on the Cross for barely six hours, and yet he was in the womb of a virgin for nine lunar months and some eleven days - which at the same time are two hundred and seventy-six solar days: that is, nine months and some six days. So let them adore young women, virgins, for a virgin bore Christ. Let them also adore cradles, for as soon as He was born He lay in the cradle. Let them also adore old swaddling-clothes, for immediately He was born, He was wrapped in old swaddling-clothes. Let them also adore boats, because he often sailed in boats, and taught the crowds from a small boat, and slept in a boat, and commanded the winds from a boat, and commanded the net to be cast from the starboard side of a boat, when that prophetic great haul of fish was made. Let asses be adored, for it was sitting upon an ass that he came to Jerusalem. Let lambs be adored, for of Him is it written: 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him that takes away the sins of the world'. But these professors of perverted

doctrines wish to eat living lambs, while adoring those that are painted upon walls. Let lions be adored as well, for of Him it is written: 'The Lion of the tribe of Judah, David's root, has conquered'. Let rocks be adored as well, for when He was taken down from the Cross, he was buried in a stony sepulchre, and of Him the Apostle says: 'For the rock was Christ'<sup>237</sup> but Christ is called a rock, lamb, and lion, not properly speaking, but by a figure of speech; not according to what he is, but for the meaning conveyed. Let also the thorns of the blackberry be adored, since it was from this that the crown of thorns was made, which was set upon His head at the time of the Passion. Let also reeds be adored, since it was with these in their fists that the soldiers bruised His head. And to conclude, let also lances be adored, since one of the soldiers at the Cross opened His side with a lance; whence flowed blood and water,\* sacraments from which the Church is formed.

All these things are ridiculous, and fitter to weep for, than to write. We are compelled to set forth inanities against inane men, and, against stony hearts, no arrow-like words or phrases; but to strike with stone-weighty blows. Return within your hearts, you prevaricators, you who have withdrawn from the truth, and love vanity and have become vain; who have crucified the Son of God once more, and you have a pretext; and for this, you have souls, in droves, made associates of the wretched demons. By estranging them through the abominable sacrileges of images, you have cast them away from their Creator and cast them down to everlasting damnation...

God commands one thing, these men do another. God commands us? to carry the Cross, not to adore it: they wish to adore, since they wish neither in spirit nor body to carry it with them. To worship God in such a manner, is to draw back from Him; for He said Himself: 'Who so wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me':<sup>238</sup> so then, unless a man wish to withdraw from himself, to Him that is above him, let him not approach God; nor is it of any value for a man to lay hold upon what is above him, if he does not know how to forgo what is within his grasp.

This apologia survives only in part, and as part of a longer work, the Reply of Dungal to the perverse opinions of Claudius the bishop of Turin; the bishop of Turin occupies only four columns in

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\* or, 'mysteries'.

Migne's Patrologia Latina, against the sixty-four taken up with Dungal's reply.

This Dungal (there are four at least) was a recluse of Saint-Denis, who arrived from Ireland about 784. Some of his fame rests upon his having, in about 811, explained a supposed double eclipse of the sun: his letter to Charlemagne exhibits an advanced knowledge of astronomy. He died some time after 827.

II Claudius' defence of his actions, should not be associated with the Iconoclastic controversy too readily.<sup>239</sup> Whatever may have been the influence of the Dualist sects (such as the Messalians and Paulicians) upon the Eastern Empire, their bitter hatred of images, nourished in part by certain passages from Scripture, spread to the West. It was also upheld by doctrinal considerations. The bishop of Turin supports his contentions from both Scripture and doctrine, showing what might be called a fiery pastoral zeal, or precipitate folly - or a mixture of the two.

The activities of Claudius had their precedents in the Christian vandalism of earlier ages, although it is one thing for Christians to destroy heathen temples: \* another, for them to convert those temples to the service of Christ.<sup>240</sup> Modern Evangelicals might well applaud the bishop for his iconoclasm; but the motives which inspired Claudius were not derived from Scripture alone. Hence, while in one sense an Evangelical might call the motives of Claudius 'Biblical', he

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\* The destruction of synagogues does not concern us here. Claudius is exercised by the danger that Christians might become pagans by another name; not by Jews or Judaism.

would be mistaken, if he were using the word to mean that the bishop adhered to the principle of "Scripture alone", as though Claudius were a ninth-century Chillingworth.<sup>241</sup> The bishop's quarrel is not with Sacred Tradition, but with traditions, or rather with the tradition which supplied the arguments for what he accounted idolatry. It is not enough to say that Claudius is upholding Scripture against Tradition; he seems instead to be upholding Scripture and Tradition against what he reckoned to be false traditions.<sup>242</sup> Once we consider the theological rights and wrongs of the bishop's argument, we find ourselves pitted against a hydra from the murkier swamps of systematic theology. The protests of Claudius raise questions which would need a small monograph to deal with them.

III This last point is not perhaps as surprising as it might appear, precisely because Dungal complains of the weakness of Claudius' arguments. It is as though the bishop were zealous, but not gifted with great prudence. The bishop shows no small concern for the purity of religion. The recluse, on the other hand, has no difficulty in citing against him some of the authors we mentioned before. And yet, neither of them seems to deal with the matter of imagery save on the surface.

So then, what does Dungal say of the Cross in his response? Catholics are "saying that the Cross is good and holy, a triumphal banner, and the sign of perpetual salvation";<sup>243</sup> the other side "with its master", replies that "the disgrace of such suffering, and the laughing-stock which this death is, are contained in it, shown, and memorialised". He draws an analogy with the remains of the saints, mentioning a similar difference in belief, or at least in conduct.

He cites Claudius as saying that

... the Cross of the Lord is to be rejected and trampled underfoot, as if [it were] the disgrace of His suffering and the mockery of His death; and so should those be, who honour or depict it; and he names, in order to reprehend as especially foolish, stony, and disobedient, those who by the plastic arts adorn a false devotion and are promoters of superstition.<sup>244</sup>

This attitude we shall soon discover to have been full of enormous vitality.

Let us also note the following quotation from Dungal, which comes just after a reference - of some length - to the letter of Pope Gregory I to Serenus. Dungal exclaims:

See however the kind, and the greatness, of the insane elation and vain rashness, whereby a thing which has been permitted, decided, and commanded by saints, by the most blessed Fathers, and by the most religious of princes, to the glory and praise of God in the churches, and in any number of Christian homes, from the very earliest times, for nearly eight hundred and twenty years, is now blasphemed by one man!<sup>245</sup> See how he reprehends it, tramples it, casts it out, and blows hard upon it! As if, in all that period, there existed neither holy nor sage author so ardent in devotion or so subtle of intellect ...

There may be some room for doubting whether the veneration, or even the existence of representations of 'sacred persons', is quite so ancient: and let us say 'representations', not 'images', since not all representations are iconic - the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus which S. Bernardino of Siena (1388-1444) propagated, was aniconic;<sup>246</sup> relics are frequently - like the Cross - aniconic. Perhaps, says Dungal, the bishop is insulting what others (like fools) did not realize to be worthy of such insult? Then let him consider how the ancient Fathers were wont "to paint pictures not only of the Saints sleeping in Christ, but also of living friends": Dungal names

Severus, and Paulinus of Nola, "both of them were holy bishops, both spiritual philosophers...".<sup>248</sup> It would seem that nothing more remains to be said.

Dungal continues:

He reproves the venerators of the Cross, belching with his noisome and boorish yawn and blether that there is nothing whatever of honour and worth about the holy Cross, but only the disgrace of His suffering and the mockery of His death. And as to what he quotes from the Apostle in confirmation of what he says - 'And if we knew Christ according to the flesh, yet we do not know Him so now' - he is certainly using Scripture incongruously, and unbecomingly, like a man without understanding; or if he understands, he is industrious in wishing to pervert it.<sup>249</sup>

If S. Paul does not wish the Cross to be honoured, if he wishes the contrary, why did he speak of "glorying in the Cross of Christ"? So Dungal quotes both that place, and the rest of that verse, where S. Paul says that he is "crucified to the world". We ought also to quote a passage just a little before, where Dungal notes:

... [S. Paul] is speaking of the flesh strictly so-called, just as he spoke of the very Resurrection itself quite plainly, and said, 'Flesh and blood are not able to inherit the Kingdom of God, nor will corruption inherit incorruption'.<sup>250</sup> We did therefore know Christ according to the flesh, that is, according to the mortality of the flesh before he rose again; but we do not know him like this now, just as the same Apostle says, 'Christ, rising from the dead, dies no more, and death shall have no more dominion over him.'<sup>251</sup> For if the Apostle judged that there was no dignity or virtue in the Cross of Christ, which, in the interpretation of his words, this speaker of falsehood has calumniously and evilly said of the Apostle (which is the habit of heretics); if there is nothing at all but the shame of His Passion and the mockery of His death; and if, because of this, he does not wish [the Cross] to be honoured in any way at all, or even known, or remembered, why does he, in another place, speak to the contrary?

Then follows the verse above quoted. It is dangerous to judge a man's case when we know of his ideas only by the words of an opponent - but Claudius, being quoted in his own words, is not quite in this condition;



and Dungal doubtless had more pressing occupations than to shadow-box with an opponent by not meeting his objections.

Dungal quotes Jerome:

He alone can boast of the Cross of Christ, who takes it up and follows the Saviour; who crucifies his flesh with its vices and concupiscences; who is dead to the world, and who considers not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, seeing the world crucified and the form of it passing away; to whom the world is dead, and upon whom the end of the world\* comes; and who becomes worthy of a new heaven and a new earth<sup>252</sup> and a (the?) New Covenant; who sings a new song, and receives a new name written upon a stone, which no one knows except for him who receives it.<sup>253</sup> Let it be known, that all the boasting of the Apostle is in the Cross, and whatsoever worthy is done by his virtues, comes about on account of the Passion of the Lord.<sup>254</sup>

This is the moral, or rather, anagogical, counterpart of the signing with the Cross so eloquently described by Tertullian. Here is further evidence of the profundity of this mystery.

And so Dungal continues, appealing to the authority of One greater than the Apostle. "For But? the Lord was unwilling for His Cross or Passion to be unknown to His own, or hidden from the faithful; as if He willed it to be brought forward<sup>255</sup> on account of the contumely and ignominy of His death". His disciples "blushed to suffer or die for Him"; and yet "He commanded praecepit that each day in the Church His Passion was to be commemorated and celebrated".<sup>256</sup> As well as the assimilation of the Church's practice to the Dominical precept, we see the intimate association of the sacrifice of the Cross with a devotion to the Cross, such as existed before devotion took on a visible form in the liturgy.

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\* 'World' should perhaps be understood as 'age' - cf. I Cor. 10:11.

From all of this, Dungal proceeds in a more general way, to a consideration of the suffering of the Apostle, the texts which are the foundations of a theology of suffering being recalled.

Therefore ... as one might expect, all humble and faithful men, following hard upon the Cross of Christ, love, honour, praise, and continually attend to His triumphal standard, through which He conquers the devil and redeems the world; and they glory in it.<sup>257</sup>

Not so heretics - they, are proud, impious, disobedient: they disdain its (or Christ's) lowliness, "or to believe any other virtue to be in it". These are the "enemies of the Cross of Christ" lamented by the Apostle.<sup>258</sup>

We, however, against whom he brings such numerous and disgraceful calumnies, believe with a whole heart (aided by divine grace) contrary to his false witness, and, submissive in mind and body, confess with the mouth that God alone is to be adored, and is to be worshipped as Lord and Creator of all; it befits Him to be adored and worshipped by His creation, since in Him alone do we believe and hope, and to Him do we sacrifice day by day. For God's creation is holy and good; this is on account of the varieties of dignity:<sup>259</sup> we adore and worship the holy angel or the holy man, or the holy Cross: that is, we honour [these] in humility, we love and embrace [them] on account of God, and in a manner far other than we give God worship or adoration.<sup>260</sup>

Claudius is therefore guilty of misrepresenting matters, through ignorance, "raving like a bacchant, in the violence of his savagery". Yet, Dungal is perhaps not altogether unsympathetic, since he uses a word which can mean 'to be justly indignant'. But that is somewhat improbable.

IV This insistence upon the goodness, and still more the holiness, of created things, is of considerable importance. In his rebuke of Claudius, Dungal does not call him Manichee, Apollinarian, Nestorian,

or follower of any heresy alleged against the Iconoclasts: and despite the Second Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 787, just thirty years before Claudius and his affaire, the lawfulness of images was still disputed. Iconoclasm was vanquished only in 843<sup>\*</sup>; in the West, at the Synod of Frankfurt in 794, even a 'pious prince' such as Charlemagne rejected the doctrine of Nicea;<sup>261</sup> in part, no doubt, because of a lack of Hellenists; but certainly, in part, because of a difference in judgment as to what was sound doctrine;<sup>262</sup> notwithstanding which, there were overtures by the Emperor for the hand of Irene, basileus (with her son) from 792 to 797. She was canonized in the Greek Church, for her championship of icons, despite her usurpation of the throne in 797.<sup>263</sup>

When refuting the bishop of Turin, Dungal draws upon Scripture, the Fathers, and his own argument. Although both authors are at times abusive, their disagreement does not sink to the idiom of 'Billingsgate'. Dungal calls the bishop a disciple of Vigilantius and Eunomius: of the former, because of the disdain shown by Claudius for relics of the saints; of the latter, because, like Eunomius the Arian (who according to Socrates altered the Baptismal formula), Claudius seems to be of an Arian mind when he blasphemes by insulting the servants of Christ. Dungal perhaps intended also to tax the bishop with being a pupil of the Adoptionist Felix of Urgell,<sup>264</sup> "who vexed the Church in the time of the most pious prince Charles".<sup>265</sup> If so, we have perhaps found a reason for Dungal's extensive references to Felix the confessor, which may be read near the end of Dungal's book.

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\* That is, as a movement in the Greek Church.

It is not too difficult to find the root of the difference between the Byzantine image-breakers and the bishop of Turin. Claudius was by no means a lone voice, any more than was Constantine V. The chief difference between the two kinds of iconoclasm is perhaps to be found in a difference of intellectual atmosphere. The heresies which distracted Christians before and during the ninth century, had a metaphysical character in the East, and a practical character in the West - generally speaking.

V       Dungal finds it necessary to defend a variety of Catholic beliefs and practices, such as the manifold interpretation of Scripture,<sup>266</sup> the nature of latria,<sup>267</sup> the admissibility of honouring the servants of God,<sup>268</sup> prayer for the dead,<sup>269</sup> the place in the Church of Peter and his successors,<sup>270</sup> the use of the Cross, and the veneration of relics. Much has already been said of some of these. The nefarious bishop is also quoted as having called an episcopal synod "an assembly of asses".<sup>271</sup> It is not clear whether he is speaking of some particular synod, or of such assemblies in general. But the complaints of Claudius seem chiefly to be about the Cross. The objections of Claudius to the cultus of the saints seem to be to that cult as such, for Dungal relates a number of anecdotes about them - taken from Augustine of Hippo<sup>272</sup> - in addition to which, he mentions that God makes known who are His saints.<sup>273</sup>

A few other points remain, which need not long detain us.

Dungal notes that the Cross is also a means of entrance to our homeland, and, that it is better to have no notion [of our homeland], and then not to withdraw from the Cross, than to have such a notion, and to scorn

the Cross. This would much resemble Jerome's comment that pilgrimages to the Holy Places are not essential for salvation, yet are edifying for all that.<sup>274</sup>

Dungal also refers to the testimonies about the Cross with which the fifth century has acquainted us, as well to those in Ezechiel and Ephesians:<sup>275</sup> indeed, the second half of Dungal's book is more or less a catena of 'authorities', with the occasional comment from Dungal. In the last pages, it appears that he is summing up the chief heads of his argument, when he says that his opponent is a "blasphemer of sacred pictures, the divine Cross, and the relics of the Saints", so as to be like another hellish Cerberus barking from three throats; or like a "stinking goat, uprooting the vine of Christ, His Church"<sup>276</sup> or like a cockatrice with poisoned tooth.<sup>277</sup> Dungal has already remarked, like the author of Hebrews, that time would fail him to tell the whole extent of the honour of the Cross - or of its perfectly unexceptionable place. Moreover, Claudius is an insulter of relics, and carps at Matt. 16:18. The Jews account him "most wise"<sup>278</sup> he is "very obstinate before the Holy and Catholic Faith and sound doctrine",<sup>279</sup> and "must be corrected as a most perverse schismatic and depraved heretic". As Dungal asks, "What sort of bishop is this?" This lament is capped by Augustine's question - a sort of equivalent to 'Who do men say that I am?' - "What do all men know for the sign of Christ, but the Cross?"<sup>281</sup>

It is curious to find, that, whereas S. Peter is generally credited with bringing the air-borne Simon Magus 'down to earth'<sup>282</sup> - in the strictly literal sense - Dungal refers to the incident, but

with 'the Apostle' in the place of S. Peter.<sup>283</sup> Is this anything more than a slip?

And so we come to the close of the book; although Dungal points out, that more yet might have been said on his side.

But I, zealous because of this scorn that is shown to the Cross, and stirred up to the showing of zeal, being unable to turn a deaf ear to his blasphemies of the Saints - because reproaches against the members redound to the injury of the Head - say to him 'Whoso despises you, despises me!'.<sup>284</sup>

VI Despite the use one might expect to be made of the Old Testament, the Iconoclastic movement between 726 and 843 owes little to the Jews; some doubt whether it is indebted to those heretical bodies which (according to some) influenced the Isaurian dynasty of which Constantine V is so celebrated a member. What, apparently, we must look to for the causes and history of this controversy, is economics, and sociology; religion plays a small part in some studies of religious issues.<sup>285</sup> The influence of Nominalism, and national sentiment, were potent at the Reformation; but so were matters of religious experience, and theology. To include all things but religion, whether the subject be the Iconoclastic controversy or the Reformation, is an error. But what is the point in including any considerations on the Iconoclasts, on the other side of the world, in an empire which is no more than a name to most of the Western Empire, in a study of a Western bishop? To show the differences between two acts or processes of opposition to what is apparently nothing more or less than religious art.

Minute distinctions apart, one may say that Claudius appealed to Scripture over Tradition, but the Iconoclasts, to the Fathers as well; and like their opponents, they considered the dispute about icons a matter of Christology. Claudius opposed several sorts of doctrine; the Iconoclasts, one. The bishop was opposed to Cross and pictures alike; the Iconoclasts respected the Cross. The bishop of Turin saw an act of idolatry, infringing the Old Law, by which Christians were bound (so we infer); the Iconoclasts saw an act of idolatry, infringing the Old Law, because icons had not the same rank with the Cross and the Host in the economy of salvation, nor could their materiality be divinised by the grace of God. In the last pair of opposites, perhaps there is a difference in the manner of the argument; the bishop has no time at all for the use of things which have been consecrated, and so elevated, and so, excepted from the Decalogue. That such elevation and exception could be, occurs to the bishop not at all. The Cross is really an idol, and thus an abomination.<sup>286</sup>

It is tempting to speculate that Turin was affected by the Greek theology and still more by the devotion which underlay that theology;<sup>287</sup> by which the lovers of icons showed themselves exempted from the force of Scriptural and ecclesiastical denunciations of idolatry. The persecutions of the icon-venerating monks drove a number of them to Italy. From this, perhaps, grew the practices which angered Claudius; for his complaint, or the occasion of it, was, it appears, the 'Italianate devotions' of his people. He may have thought that he should play the part of a second Gideon or Josiah:<sup>288</sup> perhaps he was

a choleric and well-intentioned man with little tact. There were other replies made to him than that of Dungal; their controversy, should serve for the others.

A word more, and we have done. S. Paul speaks of the history of Moses and the Israelites as 'written for our learning'.<sup>289</sup> So, in their way, were the events in this affair. Among its lessons are the need for an accurate discrimination between the sources of doctrine; the necessity of being of one mind with the Church; the need for remembering that all divine revelation and doctrine is related, in a hierarchical manner. In this way the Church may draw upon the things 'both old and new'<sup>290</sup> which are committed to her.



NOTES'The Joy of the Wicked'

226. Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles from 595 or 596 to 601, was twice rebuked by Gregory the Great for his zeal in destroying pictures in churches.
227. For Claudius' defence of his actions, see P.L. 105, col. 459 ff.
228. Ibid., 459, 460.
229. Ibid., 461.
230. Loc. cit.
231. Loc. cit.
232. Ibid. 462.
233. II Cor. 5:16.
234. Loc. cit.
235. John 1:29.
236. Apoc. 5:5.
237. I Cor. 10:4.
238. Mt. 16:24; Mk. 8:34; Lk. 9:23.
239. This is not to say that the Iconoclastic controversy had no effects in Frankish Christendom; but the grounds for the rejection of images in the Eastern Empire, were not all the same as those alleged in the West.
240. Thus, the Serapeum was destroyed in 391; see Stevenson, Creeds, Councils and Controversies (London 1975) pp.260-62, passages 183 to 185 and notes.
241. William Chillingworth (1602-44), usually remembered as the author of the dictum "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants".
242. Col. 469.
243. The last two phrases seem to have a liturgical ring about them.

244. Col. 468.
245. An example of the accumulated arguments from moral, canonical, and dogmatic authority, as also from antiquity, and constancy, of usage; which is rather different from 'following a multitude to do evil'.
246. Thus, we may distinguish between (let us say) pictures of Christ as Orpheus, pictures of Christ Pantocrator, and the written Name of Christ (cf. "Comparison of the Arts", Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, (ed.) I.A. Richter (Oxford 1952) p. 199.
247. Op. cit. 469.
248. Loc. cit.
249. Ibid.: 477.
250. Loc. cit., and col. 478. The internal quotation is from I Cor. 15:50.
251. Rom. 6:9.
252. II Peter. 3:13.
253. Apoc. 2:17.
254. Op. cit., 478.
255. A neat example of turning an objection into an argument for one's case.
256. Op. cit. 479.
257. Loc. cit.
258. Loc. cit.; Php. 3:18.
259. The 'varieties' being latria, the divine worship which can be paid to God alone; and dulia, the respect which may be paid to His Saints.
260. Op. cit. 481.
261. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, in The Frankish Church (Oxford 1983) pp. 220 ff., ascribes the Libri Carolini to Theodulf of Orléans, the author of the Palm Sunday hymn 'Gloria, laus et honor'.
262. Martin, op. cit. pp. 222-51, emphasises this.
263. She was overthrown in 802, dying in 803.

264. He flourished from 783 to 818.
265. It is perhaps strange that Elipandus of Toledo, who seconded Felix, is not mentioned; while the synods of Ratisbon (in 792) and Frankfurt condemned Felix for his Adoptionism, his views on images accorded with the sentiments of the latter synod.
266. Op. cit., 483.
267. Ibid., 484.
268. Loc. cit.
269. Ibid., 498.
270. Ibid., 506, 507.
271. Ibid., 529.
272. Ibid., 498 ff.
273. Ibid., 525.
274. Ibid., 486.
275. See, for instance, 486, 489, 490, 492-6.
276. Ibid., 518.
277. A cockatrice is a fabulous beast with cock's head, serpent's body, barbed wings and barbed tail, hatched from a cock's egg; or else, a basilisk.
278. Op. cit., 528.
279. Loc. cit.
280. Loc. cit.
281. Loc. cit.
282. See the Acts of Peter 30-32 in Hennecke, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 314-16.
283. Op. cit. 528, 529.
284. Ibid., 530.
285. Cf. P. Brown, Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity (1982), pp. 251-302.

286. In view of some remarks of Dungal, it may be that Claudius objected to the Cross, or to some types of its cultus, as the veneration of it might give needless offence to the Jews.
287. Such as that of Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (d.733) and John of Damascus (c.675 or 700-749 or 750).
288. For whom, see Judges 6:25-32; II Kings 23:4-20 passim; and II Chron. 34:3-7.
289. Rom. 15:4.
290. Matt. 13:52.

## CHAPTER 7

### "The Uttermost Parts of the Earth."

So far this thesis has concentrated on Rome, Palestine and Byzantium. Nothing has been said about the farthest Orient, or about these islands. This chapter will be taken up with the Cross in Britain, for the most part; but will begin with the Cross in China.

The Christian religion came to China in 635. The first missionaries were Nestorians. Nestorianism, having been anathematized, spread from the Byzantine Empire to Persia. From Persia it spread ever eastwards. Such expansion was helped by the existence of a sixth patriarchate: for the Catholicate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon had been (uncanonically) advanced to that rank in 424. Nestorianism in China survived occasional persecution, but was swept away in the violence of the early fifteenth century.

I The chief witness to Chinese Nestorianism is the monument of Si-ngan-fu. When it was discovered in 1625, the Jesuits were credited with having forged it; but as the monument describes the Trinity as "divided in Nature", this is improbable. The accusation is further discredited by the content of the long inscription on the monument in which the history of Chinese Nestorianism is related (the monument is an obelisk). The monument also contains an account of Christianity, Scripture, and Christian morality. The Jesuits had

more urgent occupations than to forge Nestorianizing stone crosses. We are fortunate in knowing the date of the inscription, for it tells us that it "was erected in the second year of Kien-chung of the T'ang dynasty, on the seventh day of the first month, being Sunday,"<sup>291</sup> that is, in 781 by the Julian reckoning.

Two languages were employed for inscribing this and many more particulars - Chinese and Syriac. In Syriac are the names of seventy missionaries.<sup>292</sup> The monument is also adorned with a Cross, lotus, and cloud, symbols of Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam.\* These are themselves arranged above a triangle, and beneath a pearl which is flanked by two fantastic beasts of Buddhist origin called Kumbhira.<sup>293</sup>

There are other crosses. One was found in 1638 at a monastery in the city of Ch'uan-chou;<sup>294</sup> and another, a mile outside the East gate of the same city. The former of these issues from a lotus, the latter from a cloud.

The monument is of black oöolithic limestone, and is two tons in weight. In height it is a little over nine feet, three and a half in width, and twelve inches in thickness. The sheer bulk of the object may well have assisted its preservation, as has happened to the artefacts of Assyria and Egypt.

II We can now turn westwards, to Britain. Although it is not known when Christianity arrived, and archaeological remains come

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\* The crescent was adopted in the course of the Ottoman campaigns against Constantinople.

after literary clues, the second century seems to be indicated.<sup>295</sup>

Other documentary evidence includes the famous references to the councils at Arles in 314, Nicea, Sardica, and Rimini.<sup>296</sup> Since, however, we are concerned with the cult of the Cross, and with some of the ways in which this cult found a visible expression, in the liturgy or in stone or in writing, we will not linger in the most ancient period of British Christianity, but will anticipate some comments on the Ruthwell Cross.

This monument is perhaps the best known of English stone crosses, not least because of its association with the Dream of the Rood. It might be said to complement, in the sculptor's art, what was achieved in that of the illuminator by the Lindisfarne Gospels.<sup>297</sup> It has been suggested that the Northumbrian Bewcastle Cross was made soon after 664, but this has been disputed.<sup>298</sup> If such a date is not wide of the mark, it might be of an age with the Ruthwell Cross. It is said that two carved crosses were set up at the grave of Acca (c. 660-742), bishop of Hexham, the successor there of Wilfrid (d.709).<sup>299</sup> The Life of S. Willibald (c.700-86) tells that he was taken when a child to the cross of the Saviour, in the hope of his being cured of some illness.<sup>300</sup> When the monks of Lindisfarne set out on their peregrinations with the body of Cuthbert, they took with them a stone cross made in memory of Ethelwold of Lindisfarne, who had been bishop there from 724 to about 740. Ethelwold's name was inscribed on it, the purpose being to commemorate the departed.<sup>301</sup> And Oswald, bishop of Worcester from 961 to 992, one of the restorers of English monasticism, was in the habit - when his church was too small to

contain his congregation - of preaching by a cross set up as a sepulchral monument.

This last item strongly suggests one way of making the Gospel known when no church was built. If crosses of wood were set up where the people might foregather, it is not surprising they have not survived. That the stone cross seems to have been much less common in the south than in Northumbria, is perhaps remarkable; but this circumstance can perhaps be explained by differences in Celtic and Roman-Saxon art, and in earlier ecclesiastical history.

Bede describes the coming of Augustine: "Carrying a silver cross as their standard",<sup>302</sup> Augustine and his party met with Ethelbert at Thanet, and prayed "for the eternal salvation, both of themselves, and of those to whom and for whose sake they had come."<sup>303</sup> At the end of the ensuing homily, King Ethelbert represents himself as well-disposed to this new teaching, but disconcerted by its novelty, which does not compare well with the "age-old beliefs which [the king has held] together with the whole English nation." So, because he sees the sincerity of their evangelical zeal, he receives them hospitably, and permits them entire liberty of preaching, and of winning such adherents as they might.

In consequence of this permission, they were given a "dwelling in Canterbury", and, as Bede says (with a nod in the direction of a 'Tradition says ...'), "as they approached the city, bearing the holy Cross and the likeness of our great King and Lord Jesus Christ, as was their custom, they sang in unison this litany: 'We pray thee, O Lord, in all thy mercy, that thy wrath and anger may be turned



away from this city and from thy holy house; for we are sinners; Alleluia.'"<sup>304</sup>

In the year 633, King Edwin was killed, and Paulinus returned to Kent. This was in consequence of "a terrible slaughter which took place among the Northumbrian church and nation", the work of "the British King Cadwalla who rebelled against him, supported by Penda, a warrior of the Mercian royal house." Thus, in "a fierce battle on the field called Haethfelth modern Hatfield ... Edwin was killed, and his entire army destroyed or scattered".<sup>305</sup>

So it is not surprising, that Paulinus, with Queen Ethelburga, returned to Kent to be received there by Archbishop Honorius and King Eadbald. "Paulinus also brought away with him many precious things belonging to King Edwin, among them a great cross of gold and a golden chalice hallowed for the use of the altar. These are still preserved and can be seen in the church at Canterbury."<sup>306</sup> No doubt these objects had a double value as articles for sacred use, and as relics of the departed; and it seems remarkable that such objects were so soon to be had: but this may be to look upon the wealth of the Church in quite the wrong manner. The richness of the reliquaries, and the smithwork, which glorified the Cross, seems to be a constant feature of the devotional life of Christians, despite (what so scandalizes many) the material poverty of many Christians and others.

The chronology of the next one or two years spoken of by Bede is somewhat obscured, because "This year remains accursed and hateful to all good men, not only on account of the apostasy of the English

kings, by which they divested themselves of the sacraments of the Faith, but also because of the savage tyranny of the British king Cadwalla." The meaning of what follows, that, "Hence all those calculating the reigns of kings have agreed to expunge the memory of these apostate kings and to assign this year to the reign of their successor King Oswald, a man beloved of God", seems to be, that a whole year is being omitted from Cadwalla's reign and reckoned as belonging instead to the reign of Oswald.

In that first year of his reign, given as 634, King Oswald "set up the sign of the holy Cross" before praying for "heavenly aid".<sup>308</sup> Even in Bede's time the place was still to be pointed out, and "held in great veneration". When the cross had been "hurriedly made", it was set in the earth, and "the devout king with ardent faith held it upright with his own hands until the soldiers had thrown in the earth and it stood upright". When they had prayed, at the king's command, for protection against the "arrogant savagery" of their enemies, the whole army advanced against the enemy at the first light of dawn and "won the victory which their faith deserved". Bede speaks of "innumerable miracles of healing" which are "known to have been performed, which serve as a reminder and a proof of the King's faith." We read also that even in the time of the author "many folk take splinters of wood from this holy cross, which they put into water, and when any sick men or beasts drink of it or are sprinkled with it, they are at once restored to health". Bede further relates, that the place of this victory "is called in English Hefenfelth, 'the Heavenly field', which name, bestowed upon it long ago, was a sure omen of events to come, portending that there the

heavenly sign would be set up, a heavenly victory won, and heavenly wonders shown." The account of this victory recalls the Alleluia victory in 429, under bishops Lupus and Palladius.<sup>309</sup>

With what appears to be some diffidence Bede then writes that it "is not irrelevant to mention one of the many miracles which have taken place at this cross". He then speaks of how one Bothelm, "who is still living", fractured an arm, from which he suffered great pain. He therefore begged one of the brothers of the church at Hexham - where he too was a brother - to bring back "a piece of [the] revered wood" of Oswald's cross. The brother brought back, not a piece of the wood, but "a piece of the old moss which grew upon the surface of the cross"; which was no less efficacious than some of the wood for which Bothelm had asked. It seems as though the moss derived its efficacy from the cross on which it grew, the healing 'virtue' being passed on by whatever had come into contact with the relic.<sup>310</sup>

At the death of Deusdedit, Archbishop of Canterbury from 653 to 664 or 665, one of the dead man's clergy, the priest Wighard, "a good man well fitted to be a bishop", was chosen by the English Church as his successor. The choice was accepted by the kings Oswy and Egbert. Wighard was sent to Rome "so that when he had received the rank of Archbishop, he might consecrate Catholic bishops for the churches of the English throughout Britain." Not long after the Archbishop-elect arrived in Rome there was a plague, to which he fell victim, with nearly all his companions. Pope at this time was Vitalian, who ruled from 657 to 672, a Roman.

In the interval which passed until, in Theodore of Tarsus,<sup>311</sup> Vitalian was "able to discover a man wholly suitable to be ... bishop",

the Pope wrote to Oswy of Northumbria, to acquaint him with these events:

... The bearer of your gifts has departed this life, and is buried in the Church of the Apostles. We are deeply distressed that he should have died here. We have directed, however, that blessings of the Saints, that is, relics of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and of the holy martyrs Laurence, John and Paul, Gregory and Pancras, be given to the bearers of this letter for delivery to Your Excellency. By the same bearers we send to our spiritual daughter, your queen, a cross made from the fetters of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, with a golden key.

Doubtless the gifts borne by Wighard were of the same nature, if perhaps less glorious.

Towards the end of the Ecclesiastical History, between relating some visions, and telling of the affairs of the South Saxons, and of those of the West, Bede relates some of the acts, and literary endeavours, of Adamnan.<sup>312</sup> At present we are concerned with what Bede has excerpted from Adamnan's book on the Holy Places, a book "most valuable to many readers".<sup>313</sup> Not that Adamnan spoke of his own exploits, but rather that "Arculf, a bishop from Gaul who had visited Jerusalem to see the Holy Places ... dictated the information to him." Arculf

... toured all the Promised Land [and] travelled to Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, and many islands; but as he was returning home, his ship was driven by a storm onto the western coast of Britain ... [as a result] [Adamnan] compiled a work of great value to many people, especially those who live at a great distance from the places where the patriarchs and Apostles lived, and whose only source of information about them lies in books. Adamnan presented this book to King Aldfrid.

Through the generosity of the king the book "was circulated for lesser folk to read. And I think it will be valuable to readers if I make some extracts from this book, and include them in this history."

Bede "thought it useful to include [the] extracts from the works of the above author, for the benefit of those who read this history, and [retained] the sense of his words, but summarized them in a shorter form." Bede then mentions his recent compilation of an "abridgement containing short extracts" of the book.

The tradition known to Arculf concerning the Cross is that which refers the discovery of it - put into poetic form by Cynewulf about 800 or 900 - to Helena, so that we read of

... the Church of Constantine known as the Martyrdom - erected by the Emperor Constantine in a magnificent regal style; for this is the place where his mother Helena discovered the Cross of Our Lord. To the west, the Church of Golgotha comes into view, where can be seen the rock on which once stood the Cross, with the Body of Our Lord nailed to it; it now supports an enormous silver Cross, over which hangs a great bronze wheel bearing lamps. Beneath the site of Our Lord's Cross a crypt has been hewn out of the rock, and the Holy Sacrifice is offered for the honoured dead on an altar here ...

A description of "the Church of the Anastasis ... the church of the Resurrection of Our Lord", then follows. In the centre of this sanctuary is

... the circular tomb of Our Lord, cut out of the rock ... the great stone ... still bears the marks of iron tools. The exterior is completely covered with marble to the top of the roof, which is adorned with gold and bears a great golden Cross. The Sepulchre of Our Lord is cut out of the north side of the tomb; it is seven feet in length, and raised three palms' breadth above the pavement.<sup>314</sup>

We learn that four lamps burn inside the Sepulchre, and another eight outside, by day and by night. The two portions of the broken door-stone serve as altars. The colour of tomb and Sepulchre, is a mingled red and white - the sort of colour which must be very inviting to anyone with a mind for pious allegory.

According to the epitaph of Wilfrid, bishop of Ripon, "buried in the church of the blessed Apostle Peter, close to the altar on the south side", the following gifts were left by him: some vestments of gold and purple,

"a noble cross of richly shining ore",

and

"the Gospels four in golden letters writ ...

fitly cased in covers of red gold"<sup>315</sup>

- a great testimony to the piety of the English Church, and to the devotion which could make such rich objects. S. Aldhelm, also, speaks of a very splendid cross made of gold, silver, and precious stones.<sup>316</sup>

Another way of honouring the Cross, whether by way of using it as a weapon, or a protection, or a prayer (although it is not always possible to distinguish these), was the incising of its form upon altars, sometimes one at each corner of the mensa, with one maybe, or two or more, in the centre of it. An example of one such incised altar can be found in Canterbury Cathedral.<sup>317</sup> Where the liturgy is concerned, these crosses may also be prayers or blessings. If we look upon such crosses as efficacious signs, it may be that we should interpret these crosses as seals by which the altars are both hallowed and made - like the Ark of the Covenant? - depositories of divine 'virtue'.

H. Mayr-Harting gives some space, in a study of early English Christianity, to the prayers of the so-called Gallican rite. He describes them as "often rhetorical and effusive, or at worst long-winded and bombastic". He calls them "compounds of Eastern fervour

and either Spanish poetry or Gaulish rhetoric and linguistic conceit". Although he adds, that "there is practically no evidence of how far Gallican-type prayers cut ... ice with English taste",<sup>318</sup> the following prayer of benediction of a Cross - a consecration - may be of interest.<sup>319</sup>

Bless, O Lord, this Thy Cross through which Thou hast delivered the world from the power of demons, and hast overcome by Thy Passion the instigator of sin who rejoiced at the disobedience of the first man through the forbidden tree, yet in disappointment has yielded through the tree of Thy Cross those whom before he had evilly seduced.

Sanctify, O Lord, this emblem of Thy Passion, to be to Thine enemies a hindrance; and to those that believe in Thee, make it an everlasting standard: Who livest and reignest, God;

Here wash the Cross with blessed water, and say the prayer:

Omnipotent eternal God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art the Maker of Heaven, the contriver of souls whether of angels or of planets: Thou hast founded the earth upon its base: Thou hast created the sea: Thou who alone art God omnipotent, without beginning, without end, bless this Cross fashioned in the likeness and image of the Cross upon which suffered Thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the world, which was moistened by the dew of the venerable Blood of Jesus Christ thy Son.

We bless and consecrate this Cross to the honour and memory of Thy name, that this Cross may be blessed and consecrated among the ecclesiastical mysteries, in honour of the Trinity, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Who reign with Thee...

Here wipe the Cross with a napkin; and afterward incense is offered up about the Cross: and say the prayer God of glory...

Here is said (if the Cross be adored, for otherwise it is omitted): Let there shine forth the splendour of Thine Only-begotten Son ...

Here make the sign of the Cross in holy oil upon the Cross, and bless it in these words: Vouchsafe to consecrate and sanctify ....

To illustrate the 'Spanish Symptoms',<sup>320</sup> of the Book of Cerne, and the Irish elements in it (may one call them 'Celtic', for brevity?) Mayr-Harting quotes part of a prayer to the Blessed Virgin. Her cultus and feasts were introduced to Spain from Syria - home of such champions of her cause as Ephraem, and James of Nisibis - before making their way to Rome with the Syrian Pope Sergius I. The bishop of Toledo, Hildephonsus (657 to 667), in his treatise On the Perpetual Virginity of Holy Mary "constantly [erupts] into fervent prayers to the Virgin". His "confidence in the Virgin's power, ... urgent repetitions, and his piling on of adjectives, are echoed in the ... prayer in question." And Mayr-Harting quotes Edmund Bishop: "It may read to some ... as betraying a mind overstrung, to others only as if evidencing a desire to outdo a forerunner." Although Hildephonsus' words rush and tumble over each other in great profusion, and although a thing is not said once if it can be said three times, the suppliant may only be anxious to avoid losing the opportunity of grace. In any case, nervous tension and the most devoted charity may have the same appearance to the onlooker.

The diction of the blessing quoted above does not return again and again upon itself; but it can hardly be described as concise. On the contrary, its very prolixity seems to be the result of a desire to include as much as possible of the theology of the Cross, and of devotion to it, within a single prayer.

One striking feature of the prayer is the invocation of the Trinity, before the wiping of the Cross, and the censuring "round about [it]". And more striking is the solecism by which each Divine Person is named before the phrase "Who reign with Thee." This suggests that



the prayer was long delivered impromptu. English Tetraditism is presumably a will-o'-the-wisp. As the same mistake is often made in extempore prayer today, one wonders whether the prayer bears the marks on it of some popular piety.

III Devotion to the Cross also found expression in the poem called the Dream of the Rood, which in its present form dates from between 950 and 1000. The full text of the poem is to be found, with other matter, in the Vercelli Book - Vercelli MS.117 - which takes its name from the Italian cathedral library in which it was found. How the book travelled from England to Italy is unknown: perhaps it was taken by bishop Ulf of Dorchester in 1050.<sup>321</sup> The dialect is that of the West Saxons.

In general ... it may be concluded that the [language] of the Vercelli Book version of the Dream ... conforms with the standard literary language in which the majority of Old English poetical manuscripts [was] written ...; late West Saxon with a strong Anglian element.

Inscribed in runes upon the sides of the Ruthwell Cross, from Dumfriesshire, are lines from the Dream, or verses which inspired the Dream. The inscription is in the Northumbrian dialect. It is fifteen lines long, against the hundred and fifty six of the written text; it is also rather mutilated.<sup>322</sup> The cross dates from about the late seventh or early eighth century. Until 1642 it stood close to the altar in the parish church at Ruthwell. In that year, as a consequence of an "Act annent Idolatrous monuments in Ruthwall", which was passed by the General Assembly of the Kirk, then met at

Aberdeen, the cross was broken down and partly defaced. A part of it was buried in the churchyard, while the rest seems to have been employed for paving the nave. The survival of the cross may be due to the - somewhat indifferent - success of the Crown in checking the Kirk. The cross was reconstructed between 1802 and 1823, and in 1887 it was moved back into the church, where it has ever since remained.<sup>323</sup>

With respect to the design of the Cross: upon the principal faces of the upright shaft are figures, with Latin inscriptions. The text of the Dream is to be found in the 'inhabited vine-scroll', carved upon the narrower sides of the shaft; the motif is Middle Eastern, and combines the 'Tree of Life', with Christ the True Vine; it "is generally recognised as a symbol of Christ in union with His Church". It is thus not a mere work of art, but a 'preaching Cross', as being, not only the landmark of a site where preaching took place, but a preacher itself, a very 'sermon in stone'. "In particular, it links the symbol of Christ's death with the Christ of Judgement, and Nature's recognition of His majesty".

"The principal face of the Cross, contains scenes of desert asceticism". The largest panel portrays Christ coming in Judgement, right hand raised in blessing, His left holding a scroll, as He tramples the heads of fawning beasts - a conflation of Psalm 109:6 [110:6] with Psalm 90:13 [91:13]; Christ's kingship and victory are mystically announced. "Conventional iconography ... represents Christ as a victorious warrior, often transfixing the hostile beasts, using the cross as a spear." Here is also "an element of adoration, the beasts of the desert acknowledging the divinity [of] Christ."

As well as the echoes of Is.1:3. - "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib" - there seem to be strong reminiscences of, or allusions to, that one of the so-called 'Infancy' gospels known as the work of 'Pseudo-Matthew'. According to Professor O. Cullmann,<sup>324</sup> this was written about the 8th or 9th Century, with the purpose of glorifying the Mother of God as the Queen of Virgins. The relevant section of this gospel deals with the life of the Holy Family in Egypt.<sup>325</sup>

The authority of the Child Jesus is illustrated by such quotations as the following.

... suddenly many dragons came out of the cave ... Then Jesus got down from his mother's lap, and stood on his feet before the dragons; thereupon they worshipped Jesus, and then went back from them /that is the party of children travelling with the Holy Family/ ... And the child Jesus himself went before the dragons and commanded them not to harm anyone. But Mary and Joseph had great fear lest the child should be hurt by the dragons. And Jesus said to them: 'Have no fear, and do not think that I am a child; for I have always been and even now am perfect; all wild beasts must be docile before me.'<sup>326</sup>

The following may be added:

Likewise lions and leopards worshipped him and accompanied them in the desert ... they showed their servitude by wagging their tails, and honoured him with great reverence. /He again calms His Mother, and Joseph, and we hear more about the lions, oxen, asses, wolves, and sheep, and the peace between them, which is a fulfilment of Isaiah 11:6 and following verses./

This narrative had a very wide circulation, even before it came to be included in the Golden Legend (1298). This passage also illustrates another theme; the relationship of Christ to His Creation.

Beneath the panel which displays the Judgement, is a scene which represents Antony<sup>327</sup> and Paul,<sup>328</sup> the saints considered, with

the Baptist, to be the founders of monasticism. Below that in turn is the Flight into Egypt - all three scenes according very well with the book we have quoted. The Flight is not often depicted in early Christian art. Bede "connects the Flight with Matthew 10:23", which seems appropriate, since flight into the wilderness, foiled persecutions and encouraged monasticism.\* The Cross is the 'sign' which is to precede Him at His coming. The bottom panel, almost entirely obliterated, "almost certainly ... represented a Nativity scene." The southern-facing shafts present scenes, not of Christ the Judge, but of Christ the Healer. First, the Magdalen, with her box of alabaster holding its ointment: below this, the healing of the man born blind: and below this, the Annunciation. At the top of the shaft, there are what seem to be the remains of a Visitation scene. Filling the bottom panel of this face are the remains of a Crucifixion scene. "Only the upper and lower arms of the original cross-head survive."

A further detail of the monument's design which ought not be passed over is the bird on the southern face, beneath which stands an archer aiming obliquely upwards. It is unlikely that these objects are no more than decoration. If the archer is aiming at the bird, this may represent the Christian subjected to the harassment of the Devil. If only the transom had also survived, interpretation might be easier. The archer may be the hunter Ishmael, whose hand was against every man, and every man's against him; if so, this would be a continuation of the desert motif; a contrast to SS. Antony and Paul.

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\* Cf. also Matt. 2:13-23, and Apoc. 12, passim.

The bird may represent the Ascension of Christ. Or perhaps the scene (if the two are to be taken together) shows part of a series of symbols for Christ. Or perhaps the figures are nothing to do with religion. There are also remains of a runic inscription, but they are of no assistance in saying what the scene is. Thus, explanations of the runes are as numerous as those for the bird and archer. It seems that we are not yet in a world in which every object has its own significatio for the theologian and preacher.

The origin of the free-standing stone cross is not known. Perhaps the incised memorial slab is the precursor of the wooden crosses at which sermons were delivered, and they, the precursors of the stone crosses. Or perhaps the crosses, wooden and stone, developed at the same time from the slabs.<sup>329</sup> If the former theory is true, such a development may evidence the progress of the British Church. And the cult of the Cross was no doubt furthered by the result of the Monothelite controversy, and by the coming of a Greek Primate.

A sufficiently full, though not exhaustive, description of the Ruthwell Cross has been given, to convey some idea of the art with which it was designed, an art both aesthetic and theological. Like the liturgy of the Church, it is enriched by things both old and new from many diverse sources, whether first-century Palestine or sixth-century Constantinople. This is doubly fitting, for it is a sacramental in stone, expressing the liturgy; and the variety of the skills which went into its making, is a mirror of the universality of the redemption which was effected by the Cross of Christ. Here indeed is a 'sermon in stone'.

M. Swanton, editor of a recent edition of the Dream of the Rood, remarks upon the "ascetic and missionary" design and scheme of the cross.<sup>330</sup> (It is from his introduction that much of the above has been taken.) The same comment may be applied to the poem; yet without fully describing it. If the significance of the poem were to be understood in one way only, as though having only one thing to say, the poem would be wronged. It is ascetic, missionary, evangelical, sacramental, liturgical, and doubtless many other things as well, because its subject is drawn from the inexhaustible mystery of Christ. The poem is an example of how the art of poetry can be renewed in Christ; even while the mode of expression is pagan. The Dream of the Rood is thus an example of a fully Catholic aesthetic.

In support of this last point, one might also note the skill in theology, and the orthodoxy, of the poet; which with other features of the life of the Church, shows that the Channel was no hindrance to a full share in the life of the wider world, whether theological or political.<sup>331</sup>

The characters of the poem, are the Cross, and the one who sees it. The last thirty-five lines are the thought of the one whom it addresses, who has been favoured with the vision. When the preaching Cross in this poem has finished, the visionary tells of his joy and ardent devotion, and writes what amounts to a 'Prayer for a happy death'. And all this, is after the Cross has told in the most forceful terms of how it was cut from its root by wicked men, that they might use it upon their criminals.<sup>332</sup> They set it on a hill; it saw the "Lord of mankind" approaching, or rather, "hurrying, when with much zeal He wished to ascend me". "When He would mankind ransom,"

the Cross trembled, and yet it dared not move. The Christ of the Dream of the Rood is a wounded Christ, His Blood "moistens" the Cross; He is also the victorious "young hero", and it is the Cross which laments, not He.<sup>333</sup> By fusing artistic and homiletic material with the vocabulary of Old English epic, the poet of the Dream presents one of the most important events of the economy of salvation in an English dress.<sup>334</sup>

The questions which arise include that of whether such a change of outward forms is permissible. Is there not a danger of perverting the Gospel? There is: but the difficulty, and its solution, lie in the particularity and the universality of Christ. If that question is asked, it is not perhaps to be wondered at, that some have said that the Church has forgotten, or ignored, the 'scandal of the Cross', or that the Church has 'tamed' this 'scandal', thus making it of no effect; indeed, that the Church has, in whatever measure, betrayed the Gospel by doing such a thing.<sup>335</sup> The poet does not deal with this 'scandal', but he does not leave one to suppose that crucifixion is anything other than the worst of deaths.<sup>336</sup> So the poet, by echoing the Scriptures where they speak of his subject, by the way he has written of both the 'shame' and the 'glory', and by the way in which he has drawn upon centuries of devotion and theology, has avoided both Scylla and Charybdis.\*

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\* Allowance needs to be made for the difference in method between the New Testament authors and the poet of the Dream of the Rood.

From this it seems natural to pass to a prose work written within a few years of the Vercelli Book - though neither seems influenced by the other.

IV We have already referred to Benedict of Aniane, and to the liturgical reforms then taking place in Gaul; from which monastic reform was inseparable. In about 970 King Edgar "commanded a Synodal Council to be held at Winchester ... lest differing ways of observing the customs of one Rule and one country should bring [the monks'] conversation into disrepute".<sup>337</sup> The link between these reforms is the influence of this Benedict; which inspired the reforms of Odo<sup>338</sup> at Fleury-sur-Loire, in 930, and, seven years later, of Gerard at St. Peter's, Ghent.<sup>339</sup>

One of the worst results of the Viking raids<sup>340</sup> was the disabling of Anglo-Saxon monasticism (many of the best exemplars of which, had spent their lives upon the Continent). While the Church gained some martyrs, the religious life suffered to such a degree, that it was in a reduced state even at the death of King Alfred; despite the foundation, under his guiding influence, of Athelney<sup>341</sup> and Shaftesbury.<sup>342</sup> "The hoped-for revival was not to come until an Englishman and English monks should show the way." Among these monks were Dunstan (d.988), Ethelwold (d. 984), and the (half-Danish) Oswald (d.992).

Deeply moved by the wise advice of this excellent King, the bishops, abbots, and abbesses were not slow in raising their hands to heaven in hearty thanksgiving to the throne above, for [being] thought worthy to have so good and so great a teacher. Straightway, then, they obeyed his commands ... and calling to mind the letters in which our holy patron



Gregory instructed the blessed Augustine that, for the advancement of the rude English Church, he should establish therein the seemly customs of the Gallic Churches as well as those of Rome, they summoned monks /from Fleury and from Ghent. From the praiseworthy customs of their Continental brethren, they gathered ... much that was good and thus, even as honey is gathered by bees from all manner of wild flowers and collected into one hive, so also, the said monastic customs, tempered by great and subtle judgment of reason, were, by the grace of Christ the Saviour of the world, embodied in this small book.<sup>343</sup>

The 'small book' is the Regularis Concordia, a name which it possesses in virtue of its having been drawn up as a resolution of differences between the various monastic communities. The Foreword complains of "negligent clerks with their abominations", such as those expelled from Winchester in 964 by the King himself. Monks replaced these clerics. A century after this Synod, Anselm wrote to Lanfranc, then Archbishop of Canterbury, as follows: "I have heard that S. Dunstan drew up a rule of monastic life: I should like, if possible, to see the Life and Institutes of so great a father." It is fortunate that the alteration in rule did not bring with it a great alteration in the spiritual life of the Church, and that the English Church, if shaken by the Norman conquest, was not treated in quite the way in which that of Ireland was in the twelfth century. As far as the authorship of the Concordia is of importance, if Dunstan is to be called the 'institutor' of this 'rule', it seems that he is such, in the same sense as S. John the Apostle is reckoned to be author of the Gospel which bears his name.<sup>344</sup> His is the guiding intellect, making effective the decisions of the Council of Winchester, approving and assisting the authorship of, it may be, Ethelwold, in the making of the book which is now before us, rather as 'John the Elder' is so often accounted the penman, or the editor, of the Apostle's recollections.

Such would seem to be the way in which the varying allusions to the origin of the Concordia may be brought together. What it has to say about the worship of the Cross is as follows.

When the brethren come to Prime, they shall walk "barefoot until the Cross has been adored." At None the abbot goes to the Church with the brethren "and, having prayed awhile with the ministers of the altar, and being vested in the usual way, he shall leave the sacristy and come before the altar for prayer before going to his own seat in silence."<sup>346</sup> The subdeacon is then to read the lesson (from the prophet Hosea) which begins In tribulatione sua.<sup>347</sup> There follows the respond Domine audivi,<sup>348</sup> and then, "the abbot says the collect Deus a quo et Judas, at which there shall be a genuflection." Even yet, we have not quite come to the Veneration of the Cross properly so-called.

After the genuflection, there follows the second lesson, which is, Dixit Dominus ad Moysen.<sup>349</sup> The tract Eripe me Domine<sup>350</sup> comes between this and the Passion of the Lord according to S. John's Gospel. The Greetings at the Gospel are abbreviated to "Passio Domini, and the rest".<sup>351</sup> At the words: "They have parted my garments among them", and so on, two deacons "in the manner of a thief",<sup>357</sup> remove from the altar the cloth which had before been placed under the Gospel-book. The Solemn Prayers are then sung, "the abbot coming before the altar to go through them in order". At the first of these there is no genuflection. He is directed to sing the first of them "to a simple tone" [... dicat ... quasi legendo: Oremus dilectissimi nobis pro sancta ecclesia Dei]. The 'tone' is akin to that used in the

Preface of the Mass - the singing of the liturgy, and the manner of it, has been the subject of much legislation.<sup>353</sup> "When all these prayers have been said, the Cross shall straightway be set up before the altar, a space being left between it and the altar; and it shall be held up by two deacons, on on either side." <sup>354</sup>

Then "they" (the deacons?) sing the Reproaches, while two subdeacons stand before the Cross, saying, in Greek, the Trisagion: "Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal, have mercy upon us." The schola repeat all this in Latin.<sup>355</sup> The Cross is then to be borne before the altar by two deacons, who are followed by an acolyte "with a cushion upon which the Holy Cross may be laid". When the schola have sung the antiphon, they and the subdeacons continue as before, whereas the deacons change their part to Quia eduxi vos per desertum.

The deacons raise the Cross - whether from the "cushion" or not, is not quite clear - and sing Quid ultra "as before", whilst subdeacons and schola respond as they have beforehand.\*

After this, the deacons sing the antiphons Ecce lignum Crucis,<sup>356</sup> Crucem tuam adoramus Domine,<sup>357</sup> and Dum Fabricator mundi,<sup>358</sup> and the Pange lingua.\*\* <sup>359</sup> The eighth verse of this last was commonly used antiphonally, so that the entire hymn is often referred to as Crux Fidelis, that verse's first two words. These antiphons follow upon the unveiling of the Cross; at which the deacons turn toward the clergy.

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\* In the Good Friday Liturgy, the Reproaches are antiphons which contrast the mercies of God at the Exodus with His People's ingratitude to Him in His Passion.

\*\* This is the Pange, lingua, gloriosi proelium certaminis attributed to Venantius of Poitiers.

As soon as it has been unveiled, the abbot shall come before the Cross and shall prostrate himself thrice with all the brethren on the right-hand side of the choir, namely, with the seniors and the juniors; and with deep sighing of heart he shall say the seven penitential psalms and the prayers in honour of the Holy Cross. For the first prayer, there shall be said the first three penitential psalms, with this collect:<sup>360</sup>

and this direction, with the collect which follows, shows how the psalms in question accorded with the "prayers in honour of the Holy Cross".

The collect runs:

Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee ascending the Cross; I beseech Thee that the Cross may free me from the blows of the devil. Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee wounded on the Cross; I beseech Thee that Thy wounds might be a remedy for my soul. [Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee laid in the grave; I beseech Thee that this same death may be my life.] Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee descending into Hell to set the captives free; I beseech Thee that Thou wilt not send me to enter there. [Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee rising from Hell once more, ascending into Heaven; I beseech Thee, have mercy upon me.] Lord Jesus Christ, I adore Thee, about to come in judgment; I beseech Thee that at Thy coming Thou wilt not enter into judgment with me a sinner, but I beseech Thee that Thou wilt rather forgive, than judge: Who livest and reignest ...<sup>\*361</sup>

After this are said the fourth and fifth penitential psalms, with another collect:

Lord Jesus Christ, most glorious Creator of the world, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit art coeternal, the splendour of His glory; Who didst therefore deign to take flesh of a spotless virgin, and didst permit Thy glorious hands to be nailed to the gibbet of the Cross, that Thou mightest overthrow the gates of Hell, and free the human race from death; look down and have mercy upon me, wretched, borne down by a weight of evil deeds and polluted by the stain of many iniquities; do not let me be abandoned, most kind Father, but pardon that which I have impiously done. Give ear to me, prostrated before Thy most glorious and adorable Cross, that I may deserve to stand before Thee pure and pleasing in Thy sight. Who with the Father ...<sup>362</sup>

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\* The bracketed phrases are in the Latin.

For the third (and last) of these prayers there follow the two remaining penitential psalms, with a third, and very much briefer, collect:

Almighty God, Jesus Christ, Who for our sakes didst stretch out Thy pure hands upon the Cross, and didst redeem us by Thy Holy and precious Blood; instil within me such a sense and understanding that I may have true penitence, and that I may have good perseverance in all the days of my life. Amen.<sup>363</sup>

Then the abbot, "kissing the Cross in humility", rises, as do the brethren on the left-hand side of the choir, "with devout mind" (a phrase which, coming at the end of the sentence, apart from the verb, seems to include abbot and brethren together.) "And when the Cross has been venerated by the abbot, and by all the brethren, the abbot shall return to his seat until all the clergy and people have done in like manner."<sup>364</sup>

The Concordia continues, to describe a 'Burial of the Cross' which is done "in imitation as it were of the burial of the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ". The practice appears almost a matter of private devotion - "if anyone should care, or think fit, to follow, in a becoming manner, certain religious men, in a practice worthy to be imitated ..." The reason for it? "... the strengthening of the faith of unlearned common persons and neophytes" - phrase which suggests a catechetical purpose.

The ceremony takes place in the following manner. There is to be "a representation of a sepulchre" on a part of the altar\* which has been cleared for the purpose. The 'sepulchre' is to have a curtain about it. After the Cross has been venerated,

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\* The sanctuary as a whole is perhaps intended.

the deacons who carried it previously shall come forward, and, having wrapped the Cross in a napkin at the place of its veneration, they shall take it away, singing the antiphons In pace in idipsum;<sup>365</sup> Habitabit;<sup>366</sup> and Caro mea requiescet in spe;<sup>367</sup> as far as the place of the sepulchre.

When they have laid the Cross therein ... they shall sing the antiphon Sepulto Domino, signatum est monumentum, ponentes milites qui custodirent eum;<sup>368</sup>

The Cross is to be guarded there, "with all reverence, until the night of the Resurrection of the Lord".<sup>369</sup>

After these things have been done, the deacon and subdeacon bring the Body of the Lord from the sacristy, with some unconsecrated wine: and they set these upon the altar. Then, "the priest", who seems to be none other than the abbot\* (in view of the occasional uncertainties of the text),<sup>370</sup> sings the Pater with its preface and embolisms; and "the abbot shall take a portion of the Holy Sacrifice, and shall place it in the chalice, saying nothing; and all shall communicate in silence."<sup>371</sup>

The brethren then say Vespers, "each ... in his own place", having done which, "they ... go to the refectory". The remaining duties of the day are carried out in the usual fashion.

It will readily be seen that this part of the Concordia has many points of resemblance to the order of celebrations given in Ordines Romani 23 and 24, as well as to the Gelasian order. In

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\* Ordination to the priesthood was for long rare amongst religious - which is why S. Bede is called 'Venerable', as being a priest rather than a laybrother. Hence, no doubt, the wording of our text.

Ordo 30b there seems not to be anything distinctive. In the notes to Chapters 43 and 44 of the Concordia (at the end of which chapters the abbot and the brethren on the right-hand side of the choir prostrate themselves) Dom Symons refers to the first of the Ordines Romani, but without being exact as to how far these chapters are derived from O.R.1, or from any other liturgical book. At the place where the text speaks of the hour of None and the beginning of the ceremonies, there is a note about the derivation of "this section" from that Ordo: but it is not clear how long the section is. "The ceremonies that follow [the preparation of the Cross]", with the chants that accompanied them, were the greater part of them general in the tenth century.

Turning now to the prayers, such as the Deus a quo et Iudas; this is to be found in the Sacramentary of Pope Hadrian I, in which book there is a Prayer at the Supper of the Lord for Mass. A reading in the Paduan Sacramentary suggests that the Mass could be said on Wednesday by way of anticipation. The Sacramentary of Senlis records a Station at S. John in the Lateran. Dom Deshusses does have more to say about the rites which were carried out on the Thursday, but the rubrics admit of more than one interpretation, and do not intimately relate to the honours given to the Cross.<sup>372</sup>

There is a striking variety in the sources of the prayers accompanying the penitential psalms. The first prayer is to be found in the eighth-century Book of Cerne. That which is used as the collect for the fourth and fifth penitential psalms is derived from the Liber Ordinum, to which we have already referred. The

address "... most kind Father"<sup>373</sup> seems curious, as there is little indication of any break in the sense. However, the theological solecism is more apparent than real.<sup>374</sup> As for the prayer which accompanies the last two penitential psalms, the translator of the Concordia does not "find this prayer outside the Concordia in any liturgical document. The version in the manuscript Cotton Tiberius A 3...is evidently from the Concordia."<sup>375</sup>

Nearly unparalleled also is the custom of 'burying the Cross', which seems to anticipate the ritual of Good Friday. It is omitted by, or unknown to, the custom-books of Cluny and of the monastic houses of Lotharingia. Nor does the letter of Aelfric (who was the biographer of Ethelwold), written to the monks of Eynsham, mention this rite; perhaps it was not a constant feature of the services of Good Friday. There seems to be a certain 'fittingness' in the circumstance that individual devotion should be so much to the fore in this 'burial rite'; as in the worship of the Sacrament. The rite ought perhaps to be associated with the remote beginnings of the mystery play, and with the love of allegorical<sup>376</sup> interpretations of the ceremonies and practice of the Church. If we knew more of the 'customs' of Ghent and Fleury, the progress of the 'Burial of the Cross' to or from the Continent might be illuminated; for a version of the custom is given as occurring at Toul - which seems to have been influenced by the sort of life led at Ghent. This custom at Toul "is evidently a late form of the very custom"<sup>377</sup> described in the Concordia.



NOTES

The Uttermost Parts of the Earth

291. Kien-chung reigned 780-805; the T'ang dynasty lasted from 618 to 906.
292. Cf. Lk. 10:1, 17 and the variant readings; one wonders whether the number of missionaries has been assimilated to that in S. Luke.
293. Buddhism came to China c.65A.D.\* and Islam, in the caliphate of Omar (632-644). The description of cross, lotus and cloud follows that of Budge. The picture which is given in the Atlas of the Early Christian World (by F. van der Meer and C. Mohrmann, (tr.) by M.F. Hedlund and H.H. Rowley (London 1958), at p.82 no. 611, would seem to represent these figures within the triangle.
294. In Fukien province, south-eastern China.
295. In view of the close relations between British and Continental Christianity, it may be that the persecution at Lyons in 177 and that under Decius promoted or caused the evangelisation of part at least of Britain.
296. Three British bishops were at Arles.
297. For a discussion of Anglo-Saxon art in general, see D. Whitelock, The Beginnings of English Society (Penguin Books 1965) pp.223-40. See also: D.M. Wilson, The Anglo-Saxons (Ancient Peoples and Places XVI), London 1960; C. Nordenfalk, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting, London 1977; and The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art 966-1066, (edd.) J. Backhouse et al., London: British Museum Publications Ltd. 1984.
298. Ibid. p. 228.
299. Ibid. p. 230.
300. Ibid. p.228.
301. Ibid. pp. 229, 230.
302. Bede, History of the English Church and People 1:25 (tr.) L. Sherley-Price (Penguin Books 1968) p. 69.
303. Loc. cit.

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\* A date of 217 B.C. has also been alleged.

304. Ibid. p. 70.
305. Ibid. 2:20, p. 138.
306. Ibid. p. 139.
307. Ibid. 3:1, p.142.
308. Ibid. 3:2. p.142.
309. Ibid. 1:20, pp. 62-4.
310. Ibid. 3:2, pp. 143, 144.
311. Archbishop of Canterbury from 668 to 690.
312. Biographer of Columba and abbot of Iona; he lived from about 630 to 704.
313. Op. cit. 5:15-17 passim, pp. 300-303.
314. The location of the Sepulchre has been variously identified.
315. Op. cit. 5:19 ad fin. p. 312.
316. D. Rock, The Church of Our Fathers (edd.) G.W. Hart and W.H. Frere. 4 vols (1905); vol. 1. p. 249, note 7.
317. Ibid. vol. 1. p. 192. S. Cuthbert also had one.
318. H. Mayr-Harting, The Coming of Christianity to England, (Batsford 1972) p.177.
319. Rock, op. cit. vol. 1, p. 250, note 9.
320. Thus E. Bishop; these are the distinctive 'notes' of Celtic books, and consist in such features as prolixity, floridity, emotional fervour, in contrast to Roman brevity.
321. The Dream of the Rood (ed.) M. Swanton (Manchester University Press 1970) p. 3.
322. It is by no means clear whether the Cross was quoting the poem, or the poem, the Cross: nor should the contribution of the oral tradition of poetry be forgotten.
323. Swanton, op. cit. pp. 9-11.
324. See Hennecke, op. cit. vol. 1, p. 406; and pp. 410-13.

325. This gospel has a further relevance to our study, for it includes an episode in which the Holy Family is waylaid by bandits, Titus and Dumachus, whose crucifixion with Christ is foretold by Him.
326. Hennecke, op. cit. vol. 1, p. 410.
327. Antony of the Thebaid, opponent of Arianism, disciple of this Paul, and one of the fathers of monasticism.
328. He is a rather shadowy figure, known to us only from Athanasius' Life of Antony.\*
329. One of the earliest Christian monuments in Scotland is the Pictish Glamis Stone, in Angus. On one side is a Celtic Cross in high relief, surrounded by other work; on the other, a serpent, fish, and comb. Perhaps the monument is half-way between slab and upright.
330. For similar observations see also Swanton, op. cit. p.13; and J. Fleming, "The Dream of the Rood and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism", in Traditio, vol. xxii (1966) pp. 43-72.
331. This is borne out by the history of Bede, the art of the Ruthwell Cross, the mission to the Frisians, and the faith of the Church: for a few examples.
332. It is remarkable that the poem has nothing in it about the Cross being made of several different woods, or being identical with the Tree of Life, or (in brief) having a part in sacred history before the Passion, (as some authors have it).
333. Thus Christ is here represented as wounded but triumphant, the more naturalistic representation of the suffering Christ was introduced to painting by the Greek Church about the tenth century, and spread to Italy by the twelfth century, thus influencing the crucifix.
334. While we have written only of this one poem, the Elene (for example) should not be forgotten.
335. See Moltmann, op. cit., pp. 32ff.
336. See Hengel, op. cit., passim; and Dream of the Rood, lines 46 ff.
337. For most of what follows, see Dom T. Symons (tr. and ed.), Regularis Concordia (Nelson and Sons, 1953).
338. Odo (879-942) was second abbot of Cluny from 909.

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\* Though to this should be added a reference in Sozomen, History of the Church 5:29, at least.

339. Gerard of Brogne (d. 959) introduced the Benedictine Rule into numerous houses in Flanders, Lorraine and Champagne.
340. See the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 787.
341. Athelney was "a community of foreigners under John the Old Saxon", who was from Corvey; see Symons, op. cit., Introduction, p. xi.
342. Shaftesbury was entrusted to Aethelgeofu, the second daughter of Alfred.
343. Symons, op. cit., p. 3.
344. A close parallel with Dunstan is Benedict (c.480-c.546) himself, who drew upon the Rule of the Master when composing the Rule which bears his name; not forgetting the influence upon it of Basil and of John Cassian.
345. Symons, op. cit., p. 41 (Chap. 43).
346. Loc. cit.
347. Hos. 6:1-6; 5:15d-6:6 in the 1979 Vulgate.
348. Hab. 3:2.
349. Symons gives a reference to Exod. 12:7; others could be added.
350. Pss. 58 (59):1 and 139(140):1 both begin thus.
351. Symons, op. cit. pp. 41, 42.
352. Loc. cit. (translation slightly altered; as elsewhere also.)
353. See the New Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 10. p. 129.
354. Symons, op. cit. Chap. 44 ad init. The brackets are in the Latin.
355. For the schola, see Symons, op. cit. p. 42, note.
356. Cf. the use of the Ecce lignum as given in O.R.l.
357. This antiphon will appear in the Sarum Rite; see J. Wickham Legg, The Sarum Missal (Oxford 1916).
358. For this antiphon, see ibid. pp. 113, 114.
359. This was known as the versus Fortunati, after its reputed author, who was bishop of Poitiers. The text is in P.L. 88:88.

360. Symons, op. cit. p. 43, Chap. 45 ad init.
361. Loc. cit.
362. Ibid. p. 44.
363. Ibid.
364. Ibid. Chap. 45 ad fin.
365. Ps. 4:9.
366. Ps. 14(15).
367. Ps. 15(16): 9.
368. From the ninth respond of Holy Saturday Nocturns.
369. Symons, op. cit. p. 45, Chap. 46 ad fin.
370. See Chap. 49, lines 8 and 14; Chap. 58, lines 13 and 16; the notes on these places; and p. 45, note 8.
371. See ibid. p. 45, Chap. 47; and note 9.
372. See Deshusses, op. cit. p. 171, section 328.
373. Symons, op. cit. p. 43, at foot of text.
374. Cf. with this the doxology of the prayer in Rock, op. cit.
375. Symons, op. cit. p. 44, note 2 (slightly altered).
376. The Scriptures and the Liturgy were both susceptible to a fourfold interpretation, one literal, three allegorical.
377. Symons, op. cit. p. 44, note 5.
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CHAPTER 8

"The Sign of the Beast": The Cross and Heretics

After the days of Claudius of Turin,<sup>378</sup> until the sixteenth century, there was sufficient antagonism to the Church - whether because of her failure to imitate her Master, or because of her doctrines, or practices, or for whatever other reason - for the reformers (or some of them), to look upon certain medieval heresies as presaging their own doctrines. This is as true for attitudes to the representation of the Cross, as for such matters as the rejection of Catholic doctrine on the Church. One effect of this attitude toward the earlier dualistic sects is the idea that such as the Cathars (in the West) were early Protestants or that the Paulicians (in the Greek East) had maintained the Gospel against the errors of Rome.<sup>379</sup> This notion is not utterly dead now.

While it is common knowledge that the Latin West was, as Arabia had been, 'fertile in heresies', it should be said that the Eastern Church was troubled by the same annoyance, and that (as will become clear) much of the trouble in the West had its roots in Eastern problems. Many of the older Eastern heresies have been supposed to have some kind of organic continuity with sects that seem to hold more or less the same kind of beliefs.<sup>380</sup> One of the problems in this subject is the difficulty in knowing what to make of certain common features of various heresies. Accusations of immorality - whether occasional immoral acts, or immorality as a way of life - of libertinism, or of wholesale rejection of the Church, might be of very great, or very little, significance. How far did any one

heresy bequeath its doctrines to another, or to what extent are we presented with a host of coincidences, derived from some great cause?

I        The Messalians, who seem from their name of Euchites to have been a sort of Quietists (their name for themselves was Pneumatics) are described by Epiphanius in the fourth century.<sup>381</sup> They were apparently Gnostic in origin; they rejected the Old Testament, and believed that Satan, the elder son of the First Principle, made the world. Binding every man to the world was a demon, in the soul of each man. The Paternoster was the only prayer to be used. The Cross was loathsome in their eyes.<sup>382</sup> This is not an exhaustive description of their beliefs; but those mentioned, seem to have been the most widespread. When, or if, this kind of thing made progress in the winning of adherents, or was able to arm itself, not even the most indulgent of ecclesiastics could ignore it. Heresy in the heart is a grave matter - heresy being the reduction of a divine revelation to a pile of disjecta membra - with the selection of some bits and pieces and the abandoning of others - but to act upon heresy is spiritual felo de se. The actions of many heretics were unpacific and bloody.<sup>383</sup>

As well as the Messalians, it might be interesting, if we had the leisure, to linger over the Paulician sect (or constellation of sects). It is perhaps fortunate, in view of the extensive disagreements as to who, and whence, they were, that we are concerned only with their views about the Cross.

They are described by F.C. Conybeare as "an evangelical Christian sect spread over Asia Minor and Armenia from the fifth century onwards."<sup>384</sup> A "Christian sect" they were, indeed; but while their doctrines are variously described, they seem to have been 'evangelical' only in their little love for the Church's habit of using or understanding material things as vehicles of divinity. That they were iconoclastic is not in doubt; even although Greek and Armenian sources differ on other points. An account written perhaps in 840 - before the restoration of the icons - says that

... they assailed the Cross, saying that Christ is Cross, and that we ought not to worship the tree, because it is a cursed instrument.<sup>385</sup> [The Armenian Catholicus] John IV [a Monophysite] and other Armenian writers, report the same of the Armenian Paulicians or Thonraki, and add that they smashed up crosses when they could.<sup>386</sup> \*

That "Christ is Cross" we have already found, in the Acts of John. In the thirty-first canon of the Synod of Manzikert, John identifies them with the Messalians. This is perhaps less curious than it might otherwise seem; for, while the sect was regarded as of Iconoclastic descent, its devotees were accused of "denying the Cross and showing hatred to Christ and [passing] thence into atheism and worship of the devil". Here seems to be an instance of the idea that, if a man is a dissenter from this or that doctrine he cannot but become morally repulsive. John of Otsun (to give him his previous name) complains in his book Against the Paulicians of the Paulician habit of "calling us idolaters for

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\* This quotation gives Conybeare's summary of the account written about 840, with his comments.



the worship that we pay towards the Lord's symbol of the Cross". It may be that any diversity in the accounts of what the Paulicians believed should be ascribed to the interests of the various anti-Paulician authors, or indeed to differences within the Paulicians' own ranks. There is a sort of parallel to such 'variations' in the numerous Presbyterian or Baptist churches of America.

Although at first glance Conybeare may seem to have vindicated the genuinely Christian character of the Paulicians - not least by deducing practices similar to theirs from the conduct and doctrine of the Armenian Church itself - he makes no attempt to exonerate them from the charge of what might be called 'staurophobia',<sup>387</sup> perhaps because he considered their attitude to need no defence. In fine: heretics and Catholics often used (and use) practices which to on-lookers are identical - the two differ, because of the 'context' of the practices. The 'Christs' of the Paulicians, and the saints (for instance), differ therefore in kind.

Now let us leave the Paulicians for the Bogomils, a Bulgarian sect of about the second quarter of the tenth century. The name was that of the founder, a priest of Macedonia, and perhaps means the same as Theophilus.

In reaction to turmoil, misery, and oppression, Bogomil taught a life of penitence, prayer, wandering, and simple worship, in order to escape a world which was evil by nature. His message is known only from the words of indignant opponents; such as a priest named Cosmas, who lived about 972; but there is no doubt that Bogomil attributed the wickedness of the visible world to its creator the Devil, who was the rebellious elder son of God.<sup>388</sup>

Bogomil's dualism was thus of the 'moderate' variety, as the evil power was reckoned, to be inferior to God in some degree at least.

In the belief of Bogomils, the Devil, not God, was the author of the Old Testament. Christ, the younger son of God, came as Redeemer - but was man in appearance only, so that the Virgin deserves no honour as His mother. It is hardly surprising that the reality of His miracles is also denied. The New Testament alone (and, pre-eminently the Gospels) could be regarded as the Word of God. The Lord's Prayer was alone used. The Bogomils reckoned that the Church's hierarchy had no authority over them, "and even obedience to civil authorities was disparaged".<sup>389</sup> It is uncertain whether the Bogomils regarded themselves as a body separate from the Church at large.

They rejected the sacraments, especially Matrimony; it was discouraged lest the devil's work should be propagated; meat and wine were forbidden, although it is worth mentioning that they came to divide themselves into 'the Perfect' and 'Believers', as did the Cathars some two centuries later. With rejection of the sacraments went rejection of the sacramentals, rites, usages, vestments, ceremonies, feasts and icons of the Church. In a system so remorselessly spiritual, so utterly averse to matter, the Cross could have no place, whether in thought, as the standard of a victorious Redeemer, or in material form, as the grace-fraught instrument whereby this victory is imparted to mankind.<sup>390</sup> If Divine Grace is to have no material vessels for the benefit of material mankind, grace will be all but inaccessible, especially as its supreme expressions, the sacraments, are disparaged - which make the Passion efficacious by means of matter.<sup>391</sup>

"Some of Bogomil's teaching ... seems to have been original";<sup>392</sup> such as his doctrine of how the soul of Adam was infused. The ethical content of the system could have arisen from concentration on the New Testament, quite spontaneously. Fervent desire for apostolic purity is a recurring feature of evangelical movements in his and succeeding centuries. The spread of Bogomilism was much assisted by the Byzantine conquest of Bulgaria in 1018. The heresy spread to the Imperial capital, which brought persecution in 1110, and again after 1143. The sect therefore spread once more, to Asia Minor, Dalmatia, Bosnia. Hence, in those years, it is not surprising to find them developing "religious communities or 'churches', with a well-developed ritual". They came to Western Europe in the later twelfth century.

According to the priest Cosmas, the Bogomils hated the Cross because it was material (which echoes some Iconoclastic theology)<sup>393</sup> and because it was the instrument of the murder of Christ (which echoes the complaint of Claudius of Turin).<sup>394</sup> According to Euthymius Zigabenus, who is more interested, perhaps, than is Cosmas, in the doctrines of the Bogomils rather than in their habits, their creed was as follows.

For some (obscure) reason God did not deprive Satan of his dominion over the world; so the two of them seem to have arranged a 'separation of spheres of influence'. And yet those men named in the Gospel genealogies, contrived to reach Heaven and obtain help for mankind. Thus, after five and a half millenia,<sup>395</sup> the Word (that is, the Archangel Michael), descended to Bethlehem, where the Virgin found Him as Jesus Christ. He seemed to die, after 'taking flesh' by entering and leaving her ear: He descended into Hell, bound Satanael

(His elder brother), deprived him of the divine suffix -el, and returned to the Father. (Incidentally, the Bogomils seem to have made use of the sixteen Prophets and the Psalter.)

Because of the Bogomils' cosmogony (perhaps) the heroes and villains of the Old Testament came to wear each others' colours, the only other saints of the Old Covenant being those martyred for refusing to worship images; and, not unnaturally, the Bogomils ascribed the miracles of the Saints to the demons by whom they, and their relics, were possessed. The Bogomils could therefore hardly avoid hating the Cross, as the instrument of the Saviour's murder: and so Basil the Bulgar was able to say that the demons loved the Cross, and therefore urged their victims toward it (which, in a demon, seems to be highly abnormal behaviour).<sup>396</sup> In view of which, it is no news that the demons are, not church-goers, but church-inhabiters, at ease in the Jerusalem Temple, as in Hagia Sophia.<sup>397</sup> This author has other things to say, but that is as much as need concern us.

Because Euthymius had written so fully of the Bogomils in his Panoplia Dogmatica, the Synodikon of 1143 had only to echo him.<sup>398</sup> They were anathematized on five counts, the last being, their refusal to adore the Cross (which they called the weapon of Satan), and their naming of icons as idols. Some decades afterward, some of the Bulgarians were prepared to admit a true Incarnation, and a true Passion. By about 1350, a lady of Thessalonika managed to infect a number of Athonite monks with the heresy, which led to the banishment of two, Lazarus and Cyril, who departed for Trnovo. There Cyril attacked icons, the Cross, and their cultus, as well as claiming to

have visions.\* He also denounced marriage and the married life. He later repented; however, he was not a Bogomil by 'churchmanship', in the strict sense. Unhappily for the members of the sect, the exaggerations of Cyril and his companions gave a handle to the enemies of the Bogomil 'church', which for some time previous had enjoyed respite from persecution.<sup>399</sup>

II By 970 there was heresy in Milan;<sup>400</sup> and about 1000, in a district of Châlons, a peasant named Leutard was giving himself out for a prophet. We are told, that he sent his wife away

... as though he effected the separation by command of the Gospel; then, going forth, he entered the church as if to pray, seized, and broke to bits, the cross and image of the Saviour. Those who watched this trembled with fear, thinking him to be mad, as he was; and ... he persuaded them that these things were done by a miraculous revelation from God ... In a short time, his fame ... drew to him no small part of the common people.<sup>401</sup>

At length the bishop Gebuin questioned Leutard about all these things, and "reinstated" the "partly-deluded people ... more firmly in the Catholic faith", whereat Leutard threw himself into a well; and that was the end of his presuming to interpret the Scriptures. It was not quite the end of the heresy; for in 1015 Bishop Roger I (1008-42) of Châlons-sur-Marne, convened a synod to deal with the vestiges of the heresy. This bishop Gebuin may be the first of the name (who died in 991), or, more probably, his namesake and successor who died in 1004.

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\* These events may owe something to the controversies about Hesychasm (the Hesychasts are sometimes called Euchites, Massilians, but usually Palamites).

A little later on we find some heretics coming to Arras, and being apprehended because of their activities.<sup>402</sup> The then Bishop was Gerard I, whose pontificate lasted from 1013 to 1048. In 1025, some while after Epiphany,

... he was informed that certain men had come to that locality from Italy. These men were introducing new heretical doctrines, by which they were endeavouring to overturn teaching supported by evangelical and apostolic authority; they set forth a certain way of righteousness, and asserted that men were purified by it alone, and that there was no other sacrament in the Church whereby they could be saved.

When the bishop heard of their activities, he had them "sought out, and brought before him when found". They tried to leave, but they "were thwarted by the magistrates and dragged into the bishop's presence". Having ordered that they be held in custody, he "imposed a fast on clerics and monks in the hope that divine grace might grant the prisoners recovery of understanding of the Catholic faith" - words which suggest that the accused had lapsed into error, rather than been brought up in it.

At the synod which was held three days later, at which "the bishop in full regalia, together with his archdeacons, bearing crosses and the Gospels and surrounded by a great throng of all the clergy and people, proceeded to the Church of the Blessed Mary", there were "abbots, monks, archdeacons, and others on either side, ranked according to ecclesiastical office". Such details seem worthy of note because they describe many of the things which drew the scorn of those whom the Church accounted heretics. Moreover, this scene is in great contrast to the evangelical poverty by which S. Dominic, and his bishop, and companions, lived on their mission to the Albigensians.

A noteworthy contrast between this bishop in full regalia, and Diego of Osma\* (d. 1207), is that the latter dismissed most of those with him, keeping Dominic as his secretary. This lack of pomp bore much fruit in the mission to the areas in which Catharism was in possession; for the Cathars relied not on the sword alone, but also on the appearance of being 'good men';<sup>403</sup> which, until their Catholic opponents made use of a true evangelical poverty, was a strong argument against the assertions of what might appear a decrepit religious machine.

We are told that the persons whom the Bishop of Arras was questioning,

... turning to them [to] ask: 'Just what is your teaching, law and religious observance, and who is the originator of your doctrine?', replied, that they were the followers of one Gundulf, an Italian, by whom they had been instructed in the precepts of the Gospels and of the Apostles; they accepted no other scripture than this, but to this they held in word and act.

These at least may be described as "an evangelical ... sect", for they sound remarkably similar to some latter-day Evangelicals. It seems a fair supposition that this Gundulf was the 'only begetter' of the heresy.

In his discourse on various errors the bishop collected them under sixteen headings, two of which mention the Cross. Thus the thirteenth and fourteenth concern the heretics' jeering at veneration of the Cross, and their spurning of images of Christ on the Cross,

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\* Like almost everyone in this thesis, Bl. Diego de Azevedo is among the Saints of the Church. He was Provost of the Cathedral of Osma, and from 1201, bishop. Alfonso of Castile sent him to Rome, and he took Dominic. The Bishop later became a Cistercian.

or of the saints, since these were but the work of human hands. Despite some coincidence with the Iconoclast rejection of holy images (since these were man-made), to trace an organic succession of ideas would be an overworking of the evidence. The beliefs of the accused could arise without their reading anything but Scripture. In the end the bishop succeeded in obtaining the conversion of all those before him; and that appears to have been the end of the matter.\*

Just over a century later, in 1133 or 1134, Peter the Venerable, from 1122 to 1156 abbot of Cluny, wrote a letter in which he summarized the career and the tenets of the heresiarch Peter of Bruys.<sup>404</sup> Between 1131 and 1133, the abbot had written a first letter "which was, in effect, a tractate in refutation of the doctrines of the heretic". The first, and longer, letter was made public only after the death of Peter of Bruys, when the second letter was added as a preface.<sup>405</sup> The abbot of Cluny particularizes "five principal poisonous plants ... sown and nurtured by Peter of Bruys for nearly twenty years", which are: denial of infant baptism; rejection of any kind of building for prayer; denial of "the verity of the Body and Blood of the Lord ... presented in the Church"; scorn of alms and suffrages for the dead; and, most important for our purposes,

... the third proposition [of Peter of Bruys] prescribes that holy crosses be broken and burned, because that shape or contrivance, on which Christ was so bitterly tortured and so cruelly killed, is not worthy of adoration or veneration or prayer of any kind, but in revenge for His torments and death they should be disgraced with every dishonour, hacked to pieces by swords, burned by fire.<sup>406</sup>

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\* There is the possibility of Bogomil influence upon Gundulf; but no great likelihood of it. Bogomilism was probably unknown in the West at this time.



In considering the activities of Peter of Bruys, it should be remembered that, a century before, there had been no widespread movement for reform in the Church. After Pope Leo IX, it gathered strength. Just as the Franciscans and Dominicans are in part its fruit, so also were the Vaudois. Just as Gundulf may have desired reform, so may Peter of Bruys. However, a reform upon the way of which the Pope has not spoken, is in a different state from one which he has charted - not, perhaps, to the liking of all. But we are now almost on the eve of the Second Crusade, and almost forty years after the Council of Clermont; these events had their effects upon the mind of Christian people and so, surely, upon the way in which the Cross was considered, although one must be awake to the danger of exaggeration.<sup>407</sup>

The abbot then continues:

I have answered these ... propositions ... in that letter which I am sending to Your Sanctity [the Archbishop of Arles].<sup>408</sup> And I have much concerned myself with whatever ways the impiety of the faithless may be either converted or confounded and the confident belief of the just encouraged.<sup>409</sup>

At the end of the letter Henry of Le Mans, "the heir of [Peter's] iniquity", is assailed, after Peter has mentioned the demise of Henry's teacher, "whom ... the faithful of S. Gilles punished by burning in the flames from the wood of the Lord's Cross which he had set afire".<sup>410</sup> Despite the objection one may take to Peter's error about the Cross, it seems at least to have been the kind of error that is born of strong evangelical zeal, that is, of (among other things) a keen awareness of the suffering of the Son made Man; which sets him apart from all those who denied the reality of the Passion.<sup>411</sup>

We now come to the Cathars, the first solid evidence of whose existence comes from Cologne in 1143 (although the name is not used). There were similar groups at Liège and Périgueux some years earlier.<sup>412</sup> It seems certain that their belief was of Bogomil origin, and that persecution in the East, combined with the missionary zeal of the heretics, had encouraged its dissemination in the West. The Second Crusade had the same effect. "Most Catholic sources of this period ... are silent on the question of dualism", speaking only of 'Manichees', a general term for those with repellent doctrines, rather than a strictly accurate denomination.

Of the Périgueux heretics, a monk Heribert wrote, about 1147, that

...they do not adore the Cross or the likeness of the Lord, but restrain those who would adore these things, for example, by declaring before the likeness of the Lord, 'How pitiful are those who adore Thee', repeating the Psalm The idols of the Gentiles<sup>413</sup> and so on.<sup>414</sup>

Between 1176 and 1190 one Bonacursus "who formerly was one of their Masters", expounded the heresy to the Milanese. From what he said of his erstwhile creed, the Italian Cathars seem to have resembled the Messalians. As Bonacursus explains it, "their heresy is, indeed, not only terrifying but is, truly, too frightful and execrable to speak of ..."<sup>415</sup> They - he said - ascribed the works of God to the devil.

Christ, they said, "did not have a living body", and although they seem not to have any views on the Crucifixion, these Cathars also deny the Resurrection of the flesh, and say "that the Cross is the sign of the beast ... in the Apocalypse, and that it is an abomination in a holy place".<sup>416</sup> The Dominican Moneta of Cremona, writing about 1241, is careful to distinguish between those Cathars

who were 'moderate' Dualists, and the stricter sort.<sup>417</sup> Both "attack the Church on the matter of images and the Cross ..."<sup>418</sup> He reckons the date of writing, by referring to the Waldenses. These latter, who arose in about 1170, used the sign of the Cross, but had no time for its adoration, which they called a sin, (as is recorded of them between 1249 and 1261). A little later on we are told that neither 'Lombard' nor 'Ultramontane' Waldenses would genuflect, nor would the former sign the Cross; the 'Ultramontanes' were prepared to do so, and to make the sign over "all the things they eat".<sup>419</sup> To say any more, would be to go far beyond our period; but all this, should give some impression of the variety of the heretics' own views.

NOTES

"The Sign of the Beast": The Cross and Heretics

378. He died between May 8th 827 and January 22nd 832.
379. The notion that the Paulicians (for instance) were some kind of proto-Protestant body seems to inform F.C. Conybeare's article on them in the eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica: vol. 20 (1911) pp. 959-62.
380. For discussion of this point, see W.L. Wakefield and A.P. Evans, Heresies of the High Middle Ages (Columbia University Press 1969) pp. 17-19.
381. See A Catholic Dictionary, 15th edition, (Virtue 1955) s.v. "Euchites"; and Migne, P.G. 42:756.
382. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., p. 22.
383. Thus, the Cathars in the Midi did not rely on moral force alone, but on the sword as well.
384. Conybeare, p. 959.
385. S. Runciman, The Medieval Manichee (Cambridge 1947) pp. 21, 22; Conybeare, p. 960.
386. Ibid; and cf. Conybeare, ibid.
387. Cf. Conybeare, pp. 960-62 passim.
388. Cf. Questions of Bartholomew 4:25; in Hennecke, op. cit., vol. 1, p.497.
389. Runciman, op. cit., p. 74.
390. Cf. Conybeare, pp. 960, 962 passim.
391. This antisacramentalism is in contrast to Cathar practice and teaching.
392. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., p.15.
393. Cf. Martin, op. cit., pp. 124-9.
394. For Cosmas, and for this hatred of the Cross, see Runciman, op. cit., pp. 68, 71, 74.

395. In addition to the attention these years have received in Chapter 2, it is interesting to note that the Eras of Constantinople and Alexandria begin 5508 and 5500 years before the Incarnation.
396. For this Basil, see Runciman, op. cit. pp. 70, 71, 73, 76, 77; Basil II 'the Bulgar-slayer' (976-1025) is not the same person.
397. Which suggests that the Bogomils held Judaism and Christianity in equal aversion.
398. Runciman, op. cit. p. 73 ff.
399. Ibid., pp. 96, 97.
400. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit. p. 73.
401. Ibid. p. 72.
402. Ibid. pp. 82-5.
403. For Cathar use of this title, see Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., pp. 30, 489, 490.
404. Ibid., pp. 118-21.
405. The second letter can be found in P.L. 189:719-24.
406. See Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., p. 120; the apparent echoes of Claudius may be due only to a common sentiment.
407. The Stations of the Cross, and the signing of the Cross at the Gospel in Mass, derive from the period of the Crusades.
408. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., p. 121; from the first letter, it is clear that Arles was not troubled by these heretical views before about 1133 or 1134.
409. Loc. cit.
410. This Henry, a former monk, seems to have passed from anti-clericalism, to rejection of certain sacraments and of Church authority.
411. Thus, belief in the Incarnation can lead both to honour being given to the Cross, and to dishonour being shown to it.
412. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., pp. 26, 27, 138-41.
413. Pss. 113:12 (115:4); 134 (135):15.

414. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., p. 139.
415. Ibid., p. 171.
416. Ibid., pp. 172, 173 ( slightly altered).
417. Ibid., p. 307. Moneta, once a heretic, became a Dominican in 1218 or 1219. He may have been an Inquisitor. He died in about 1250.
418. Wakefield and Evans, op. cit., p. 313.
419. Ibid., p. 370. These last-named are known to us from the Inquisitor's 'guide to practice' of Anselm of Alessandria, which was written between 1266 and 1276.

CHAPTER 9

"The Sign of the Son of Man": Summary and Conclusion

It will be clear by now that a very great deal of what one might have said, has been omitted. Some notion of how much may be had if one recalls that the Catholic Encyclopaedia of 1914-22 remarks, at the end of the entry "Cross", that the size of the bibliography on the subject is so great, that no more than a few books can be mentioned - and that was two generations ago. Nevertheless, by having spoken of the liturgy, sculpture, poetry, meditation upon the Scriptures, from China, Britain, Rome, Armenia, one may hope to have given some impression of the way in which the Cross managed to impress itself on all of Christian life, so that, even as the whole man, and not only some aspect of human nature, is redeemed through what took place on the Cross, so also the Cross is brought into contact with every aspect of human life. Why? In order to dignify the creation for which Christ died. The passage in Tertullian where this thought is further developed, needs no more citation.<sup>420</sup> One would like to be able to develop a 'theology of the Cross' - as one could, with the many and various materials furnished by Fathers and 'ecclesiastical writers'; but this, is not the place for that. It need only be said that Luther's theologia crucis is only one instance of such a theology. The New Testament - the whole Bible - is an indispensable source for such a theology, but that is very different from calling it the only source. But here one has come to touch larger questions.

We have said nothing about the Cross as a punishment, or of its use as a religious and astrological symbol, except where these subjects

are relevant to Christ. The subject is the cult of the Cross of Christ in the first twelve Christian centuries. This may seem a narrow view of the subject, until S. Paul's words are recalled - "In Him all things consist". An understanding - and fullness of understanding is not to be had in this life - of Christ the Wisdom and Power of God, leads to understanding of the part played by the Cross in the purpose of God; and the Cross points back to Christ. The 'Christ of Faith' and the 'Jesus of history' are one single Jesus Christ: the throne of the Cross is the shameful gibbet of the Lord's Anointed Who also is the Lord. Devotion to this mystery is thus a thousand-faceted; but to call it "incipiently Gnostic"<sup>421</sup> simpliciter would be exaggeration.

The whole question of how far, or rather, whether at all, the cult of the Cross is licit for Christians (who, of all men on earth, should be free of the sin of idolatry), is obscured by ignorance about how the Church of the Apostles became the Church of the Apologists and Fathers. The cult can appear to be a terrifying declension from Biblical truth, unless one recalls that the cultus is founded on Scripture as interpreted by men who had the Old Testament before them: and, by the end of our first two centuries, the Gospels, Acts, and the Pauline epistles, with, as the Muratorian Canon says, two of John, Jude, John's Apocalypse, and some more works as well as the Old Testament. Irenaeus, Justin, Hippolytus see the Cross in Scripture, throughout, and lay much of the foundation upon which a theology of the Cross may be upbuilt, far though this may seem from the Veneration on Good Friday.



The Apostolic Fathers provided much of the interpretation of Scripture, and many of the other notions, upon which devotion to the Cross has since fed. The liturgy of the Church appeals to the soul by impressing the senses: and to this development the Fathers of the Church are at once witnesses and contributors - contributors not always lacking in the critical faculty.

Nonetheless, in the period before the 'peace of the Church' (surely a misnomer?) there was no liturgical cultus of the Cross. Drawings there were in plenty, but no pectoral crosses or crucifixes: which is the more striking, as there were sorts of medallions, precursors of those used today. The mystery of the Cross engaged the attention of the first centuries; the plastic, tangible, element in its cultus came later. Devotion to it was long a private matter. One reason for this lack of a public cultus may be the use of crucifixion under Roman law - and outside the Empire.

Having such a punishment to reckon with, the Church would find the threat of it a damper to the tangible presentation of her most precious mysteries. She was not, however, discouraged from using the Cross in her funeral inscriptions, notwithstanding the 'Blasphemous Crucifix'<sup>422</sup>. Had the Church not been liable to persecution, off and on, a public display of her devotion to the Cross might have been encouraged by long-continued peace.

When this was granted, ideas, words, and piety took on visible form, even - most appropriately - at the city "where the Lord was crucified". Indeed, if it is true that the Cross was found at some period about the time of the Council of Nicea, it seems a happy coincidence that the 'Invention' of the Cross and the 'peace of the Church'

should come at about the same time. At this point, something further should perhaps be said about the credibility of the narratives of the Invention, or (still more) of the silence, and lack of particulars, so often alleged of the very first witnesses (as they would be, were the finding by Helena a true event). Thus, against the straining of the 'argument from silence', we may speak as follows, without, one hopes, any recourse to 'special pleading'.

Awkward as it may seem that Eusebius, for instance, may give no particulars, may this be explained by the fame of the events? Perhaps not. He was exceedingly well placed to know of such matters. On the other hand, the archives of Barcelona are silent about the triumphal entry of Columbus; those of Portugal say nothing of the voyages of Amerigo Vespucci; Marco Polo, though he leaves a very minute record both of what he, and his informants, had seen of China, never so much as mentions the Great Wall, even as King John (admittedly a play, and not a history) never mentions Magna Carta. Likewise, there are events of which no record is preserved, which have, nonetheless, left visible effects, such as six thousand human skulls, preserved in a church at Hythe. Of these bleached and battered relics one writer (about 1700) says: "How or by what means they were brought to this place the townsmen are altogether ignorant, and can find no account of the matter". Whence one may learn to be cautious in pressing the argument to which we have referred.<sup>423</sup>

What there is no place for us to doubt is the existence of a liturgical cultus of the Cross. We have seen how S. Cyril, in the middle of the fourth century, speaks of the universal diffusion of relics of the Cross. Egeria, whether she was in Jerusalem in the time

of Cyril or whether she was there thirty years later<sup>424</sup> in the time of his successor John, does not look upon the ceremonies of Good Friday as upon a thing recently introduced. As there are riddles about the history of the Church between S. Paul, and SS. Ignatius, Justin (another leap of decades), and Irenaeus, and those who came after, so there are lights and obscurities in the history of the progress (or triumph) of the Cross during the fourth century. Where formal history is wanting, epigraphy, liturgical works, poems, polemical works, conciliar judgments, prayers, all witness to the loving veneration in which the Cross was held. Diversity of ways in which this was shown, and its opposite, illustrate the fact of it.

Thus, we have seen that the public worship of the Church came to include veneration of the Cross - if not the veneration of true relics, then of crosses which represented the True Cross of Christ. To judge from the speed with which the devotion to the relics overspread the Christian world there was little question about the lawfulness of the cult, private or public, although Rome is noteworthy for a cautious conservatism, in not adopting the cultus for many years. What was not as fast to spread was a common mind about the lawfulness of image-worship, which may have helped to delay the portrayal of the Crucified and to preserve the custom of depicting the Lamb instead.

Care should be taken to avoid confusing a private with a public devotion, and the same care should be taken (it seems) to avoid confusion between a picture on a wall<sup>425</sup> and a picture in the Book of the Gospels. Moreover, there seem to have been as many and varied prescriptions for discipline as there were metropolitan sees. Gregory of Tours

tells of the portrayal of Christ Crucified in a church: the Rabbula Gospels of 586 have another such picture: yet only in 692 did the 'Quinisext',<sup>426</sup> Council at Constantinople prescribe that, for the future, the Crucified should be depicted instead of the Lamb. In Armenia, it seems that, as in China and Britain, the cult of the Cross was shown by sculpture. That land had monasteries which were by no means poor in relics<sup>427</sup>, although, by the opening of the ninth century, the three richest sources of relics of the Cross were Constantinople, Rome, and the newly-blessed Empire of Charlemagne. By then Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem had become subject to the 'house of Islam'.

Yet, by the time of the fall of Jerusalem<sup>428</sup> (not ten years after the victorious campaign of Heraclius against the Persians) the Church had been revived in England by Celtic and Latin missions; and within forty years of the coming of S. Augustine, bearing a cross of gold, the symbol of the far more excellent gift of redemption, the Nestorians were extending their spiritual empire into China. By the time they had built the monument of Hsian-fu, not only had the free-standing Cross of stone at Ruthwell been built, but the Veneration of the Cross had found its place in the liturgy at Rome, as also had the feasts of the Invention and Exaltation.

In 753 a synod at Hieria condemned the veneration of icons. In 775, Constantine V Copronymus, who assembled it, died; and in 787 the synod of Nicea condemned the Council of Hieria and declared for the lawfulness of the veneration of icons, taking care to define the lawfulness of the cultus of the Cross as well. It seems remarkable that just six years before the Second Council of Nicea, the Nestorian

monument was built, and that just a few years later Charlemagne appealed to the Pope for the books to unite and reform the liturgical practice of his domain.

Some copies of the Acts of the Council of Nicea, in translation it seems, prompted the Council of Frankfrt to condemn the Nicene council. But the Franks were not Iconoclasts: even if they were, and if we take Claudius as an example of the Frankish Iconoclasts, the Eastern and Frankish Iconoclasms are of different tempers. Dungal needed to write of the Cross, and other matters, when he answered the complaints of Claudius of Turin; and the book by Dungal was not the only one on the subject. At least Claudius seems to have been moved less by a spirit of opposition to the cult of the Cross as such, than by hatred of idolatry and the fear of it; and from what he says about what he saw in Italy, he perhaps reckoned that the abuse of a thing, takes away the rightful use of it also.

Since the English Church of S. Dunstan's day and the century after would need to draw so much upon the monasticism of the Continent, in order to support and invigorate its own, it was fortunate for the English Church that the monastic reforms undertaken by S. Benedict of Aniane were still not forgotten at, for example, Cluny; and if the Supplement to the Sacramentary which Charlemagne obtained from Pope Hadrian owes anything to Benedict, to this reformer is also due some of the credit - at however many removes - for the kind of service which we find in the Regularis Concordia. Again, if the Dream of the Rood was written in S. Dunstan's time, we have a glimpse of how piety and art could honour the Cross and its mysteries in verse; the poem is the

more interesting if it is informed by monastic influences of that period.

If there was so much respect for the Cross, it may seem unaccountable, to some extent anyway, that there should also be such long-lived, varied, and violent hostility to the Cross. But, the reasons which cause some to glorify the Cross, are those which cause others to hate it - a gibbet is not often a throne. It is not often that one expects power to be made perfect in weakness: but this is perhaps why the Cross is a scandal and of such greatness.

NOTES

"The Sign of the Son of Man": Summary and Conclusion

420. Tertullian, On the Garland 3, ad. fin.
421. J. Fleming, in Traditio, vol. xxii (1966) pp. 51, 52.
422. The graffito with the inscription "Alexamenos worships his God", in which a worshipper is shown before a donkey-headed figure on a cross. The God of the Jews was widely supposed to be donkey-headed.
423. For these examples of silence, see Dr. E. Moore, Studies in Dante: Fourth Series, pp. 206, 207, and notes there.
424. For the dates assigned to Egeria's pilgrimage see Wilkinson, op. cit. pp. 9, 237-39.
425. See the acts of the Council of Elvira in Labbe-Mansi, vol. 1, can. 36.
426. The Council in trullō: called 'Quinisext' because its disciplinary decrees complemented the doctrinal decrees of the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils (the Eastern Church alone accepting the Council in trullō as Ecumenical).
427. See Frolov, op. cit., pp. 191, 192, 212, 213, 242.
428. In 637 or 638.

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