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The cross and its cult in an age of iconoclasm

Aldridge, James Francis, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1993

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THE CROSS AND ITS CULT IN AN AGE OF ICONOCLASM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

James Francis Aldridge, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1993
In memory of J. P. Hughes
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<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis</em></td>
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<td>CCSL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</em>. Turnhout, 1953ff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSEL</td>
<td><em>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</em>. Vienna, 1866ff.</td>
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<td>DThC</td>
<td><em>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</em>, Edited by A. Vacant, E. Mangenot, and É. Aann. 15 vols. 1903–50.</td>
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<td>Iconoclasm</td>
<td><em>Iconoclasm</em>. Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975. Edited by Anthony Bryer and</td>
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The fifteenth book of the Gospel according to Mark contains the following account:

And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour, when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests mocked him to one another with the scribes, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And one ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last.\(^1\)

The crucifixion and death of Jesus of Nazareth is one of the turning points in world history. Concomitantly, one of the paradoxes of history is how the tragic and gruesome end of the rabbi from Galilee was transformed

---

\(^1\)Mark 15: 22-37; cf. Matthew 27: 33-50 and Luke 23: 33-46. All English quotations from Scripture in this study, unless otherwise indicated, are from the Revised Standard Version.
in a short space of time into one of glory and triumph. No less paradoxical is how the instrument of his death, the cross, the most horrible and shameful means of execution in Graeco-Roman antiquity, became in the course of time an object of worship by Christians throughout the world.

This strange career of the cross has engaged men, both Christians and non-Christians, for nearly two millenia. For centuries the cross stood a stumbling block in the dialogue between Christians and their pagan and Jewish neighbors. Among Christians, it represented in the first instance the guarantee of their salvation. But it was also the object of mystical and cosmological speculation. It was a source of transmundane power in a world filled with demons and evil spirits. It was a means of identification and confession. It was an object of veneration and adoration.

Throughout late anquity and the middle ages, the cross was the object of dedications in paint, stone, ivory, prose, and verse. During this same period, it was often an object of bitter contention among Christians of different hues and persuasions. Indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish the apologetical from the purely devotional; quite often a work could serve both purposes.

In antiquity, disputes arose about the nature and role of the cross in the drama of salvation between Christians of the Great Church and those adherents of a different gnosis. What was the true cross and what did it signify? Was it the wood or tree on which Jesus was crucified or was it one of the cosmic aeons, the harbingers of a cosmological dispensation? Indeed, wherever Christians confronted dualism and docetic
Christologies, the cross stood at the center of contention, whether in antiquity in disputes between members of the Great Church and Gnostics and Manichaeans, or in the middle ages, between orthodox Christians and members of such sects as the Paulicians, Bogomils, Petrobrusans, and Cathars.²

The cross also played a major role in disputes among Christians concerning the use and efficacy of religious images and relics and their place in the cultus of the Church. The cult of the cross was similar in many respects to those of images and relics. The question is how this similarity was perceived by Christians and the significance and consequences of this perception. Images and their cult, in particular, were objects of bitter contention among Christians, episodically, from the fourth

century through the end of the middle ages and well into the
Reformation and early modern times. How was the cross and its cult
perceived during these periods of iconophobia and iconoclasm? What role,
if any, did it play in disputes among Christians or among Christians and
non-Christians, over the use and abuse of images?

The issue of the cross and iconoclasm stands at the center of this
study of the cross and its cult. For reasons of coherency and
convenience, this study confines itself largely to the period of the great
Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. This
controversy convulsed the Byzantine Church, and its repercussions were
felt all the way to Rome and the Frankish west. In both the Byzantine
east and the Frankish west, the cross and its cult were to play a
significant role in how the faithful defined their relationship to images and
the Christian cultus. Ultimately, in both east and west, iconoclasm helped
more sharply define attitudes toward the cross itself, its meaning and
purpose.

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1 The radical Lollards, for instance, rejected both images and the
cross. See John A.F. Thomson, The Later Lollards, 1414-1520 (Oxford:
University Press, 1965) and especially Heresy Trials in the Diocese
of Norwich, 1428-31, ed. for the Royal Historical Society from Westminster
20 (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, University College,

1 See Carlos M.N. Eire, War against the Idols: The Reformation of
Worship from Erasmus to Calvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1986).

1 Jacob Gretser’s classic De sancta cruce (Ingolstadt, 1608), e.g., was
written, in part, to defend the cross against stauroclast calumnies. For
an overview of this issue, see also H. Quilliet, "Croix (Adoration de la),"
Dictionnaire de theologie catholique, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Paris-VI: Librairie
Letouzey et Ane, 1938), cols. 2339-2363.
The significance of the cross and its cult during the Iconoclastic Controversy has, on the whole, been neglected by scholars. Most histories of that conflict, to be sure, include mention of the cross and its importance for the Iconoclast party. But such discussions are often tangential at best. Even fewer histories of iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries, moreover, discuss the role of the cross in the western church and attitudes toward it vis-à-vis images.

Indifference toward this issue is not reflected in the sources. In both the east and west a lively debate ensued in the course of discussions over the use of religious images about the role of the cross and the importance, even propriety, of its cult. In the east John Damascene,

---


Theodore the Studite\(^9\) and the Patriarch Nicephorus\(^10\) discussed the cross at some length in relation to images. In the west the Libri Carolini\(^11\) and the Synod of Paris (825)\(^12\) took to task moderate Byzantine Iconophiles for equating the cult of the cross with that of images. Meanwhile, Jonas of Orleans\(^13\) and Dungal of Pavia\(^14\) defended the cult of the cross against Claudius of Turin\(^15\), who rejected both the cult of the cross and images of the Crucified. Indeed, Claudius probably also inspired, if indirectly, both Amalarius of Metz\(^16\) and Einhard of Seligenstadt\(^17\) to write on behalf of the cross and its cult.

This is not a history of the Iconoclastic Controversy. In order to economize on time and space, this study generally assumes the reader's


\(^10\)Nicephorus, Antirrhetici contra Constantinum Copronymum, MPG 100: 205/06-533/34.


\(^12\)Concilium Parisiense, ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH LL sectio 3: conc. 2.2: 473–551.


\(^14\)Dungal, Responsa contra perversas Claudii Taurinensis episcopi sententias, MPL 105: 465–530.

\(^15\)See Chapter 6, note 2, for a bibliographical listing of Claudius' published and unpublished works.


familiarity with the major events of the period. Considerable space is, however, devoted to the origins and development of the cult of the cross in Chapter 2 and, to a lesser extent, the cult of images in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 likewise briefly surveys the origins of iconoclasm from the fourth through the seventh centuries and concludes by discussing the cross and images during the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy. Chapter 4 picks up the development of the cult of the cross and that of images in the early medieval west. The next three chapters constitute, in many ways, the heart of this study. Chapter 5 begins by examining the reaction of Rome to the Iconoclastic Controversy. It continues with the Frankish church’s two pronouncements on images and iconoclasm, the Libri Carolini (791) and the Synod of Paris of 825. It concludes by examining the views of Agobard of Lyons on images. Chapter 6 is given over entirely to a consideration of the beliefs and actions of Claudius of Turin. Chapter 7 considers, finally, those who wrote in opposition to Claudius and their beliefs about the adoration of the cross.

This study focuses on several interrelated questions. What was the relation of the cross and its cult to the cult of images before and during the Iconoclastic Controversy? How did the cross figure in iconoclast/iconophile polemics? How did the cult of the cross help define attitudes toward images and their cult?

What influence, if any, did iconoclasm have on attitudes toward the cross and its cult? Did attitudes toward the cross undergo significant development as a result of the attack on and defense of images? If so, in what way?
Finally, how does this study of the cross illuminate our understanding of Christian iconoclasm, its origins and nature?

Before we approach these questions, we must first examine the curious relationship between the cross and the Christian Church. What person unfamiliar with the course of Christian history, reading the passage from Mark’s gospel, quoted at the outset of this chapter, would suspect that within the first generation of Christians the cross would become a veritable metaphor for Christ’s gospel? Or that by the end of antiquity the cross would be the object of cultic devotion? It is to an examination of this singular development that we now turn.
CHAPTER II

THE CULT OF THE CROSS

The rise of the cult of the cross was a remarkable phenomenon, one of the most astonishing in religious history. Of all the symbols employed by the early Church, the cross would seem at first glance to have been the least likely to command veneration. The conventional wisdom in antiquity held the crux or stauros to be one of the most horrible means of execution, and one of the most shameful.¹ Yet at the very outset of Christian history the apostle Paul, declaring that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men," hailed Christ crucified as "the power of God and the wisdom of God."² For the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth lay at the center of the Christian mystery of salvation: the cross symbolized, as no other object, the essential paradox of this mystery.

How the cross became an object of veneration, even worship, by Christians, however, was a complex process, taking several centuries before it assumed the dimensions of late antique and medieval cult. It is the


²1 Corinthians 1: 22-25.
purpose of this chapter to trace this process, to the extent that our sources permit.

The Cross in the Early Church

The "word of the cross" pervades the earliest extant Christian literature, the letters of St. Paul (ca. 51 to ca. 62). For Paul the cross symbolized several things. It symbolized above all the paradox of the gospel:

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The cross also symbolized for Paul the new covenant in contradistinction to the old. To the Christians of Galatia, he wrote:

For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

A little farther on, he continued in the same vein:

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord


1 Corinthians 1: 17-18. Paul continued this thought in 1 Corinthians 2: 1-2: "When I came among you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

5 Galatians 2: 19-20.
Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

"When I came among you, brethren," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, "I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Thus the cross formed the cornerstone of the Pauline kerygma; for Paul, the cross served as a veritable metaphor of the gospel.

The cross also served early Christians as a special form of witness to Christ and the gospel. This sense of the cross, that of witness—in Greek martyrion—was very powerful in the early church, subject as it was to intermittent persecution. According to Paul, Jesus was the first witness, in this sense, to the gospel: "And being found in human form he [Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."

Paul testified to his own witness in the following words:

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own,

---

6 Galatians 6: 12-15. The same idea occurs in Colossians 2: 13-15: "And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having cancelled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him."

7 1 Corinthians 2: 1-2.

Fernand Cabrol, "Cross and Crucifix," The Catholic Encyclopedia (1913), p. 529, observed that "[t]he seems clear, therefore, that for St. Paul the cross of Christ was not only a precious remembrance of Christ's sufferings and death, but also a symbol closely associated with His sacrifice and the mystery of the Passion."

8 Philippians 2: 8.
based on the law, but that which is through faith in
Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith;
that I may know him and the power of his resurrection,
and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his
death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from
the dead.

This sense of the cross also occurs in the synoptic gospels,
written in the second half of the first century.\textsuperscript{10} In Mark's gospel, for
instance, Jesus is made at one point to tell his disciples: "If any man
would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow
me. For whosoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his
life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."\textsuperscript{12}

It is clear that Christians often construed taking up Christ's cross
quite literally as a call to witnessing for the faith in their own blood.
This certainly is the sense in which Ignatius of Antioch regarded the
passion and cross of Christ. In a series of letters written to various
Christian communities on his way to martyrdom at Rome, Ignatius expressed
himself quite graphically.\textsuperscript{13} To the church at Smyrna he wrote: "Leave
me to imitate the passion of my God," for it is "the passion which effects

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Philippians 3: 8-11.}

\textsuperscript{11}For the dating of the synoptic gospels see Joseph B. Tyson, \textit{A Study

\textsuperscript{12}Mark 8: 34-35. Similarly we find in Matthew 16: 24-25. The versions
of this injunction in both Matthew and Mark could be construed as calling
for a martyrdom of blood. Luke 9: 23, however, made this confession of
the cross a daily witness and thus one not necessarily leading to "red"
martyrdom.

\textsuperscript{13}Ignatius of Antioch, \textit{Letter to the Romans}, c. 5, trans. by Maxwell
Staniforth, \textit{Early Christian Writings: The Apostolic Fathers} (Harmondsworth:
quartering, splintering of bone and mangling of limb, even the pulverizing
of my entire body—let every horrid and diabolical torment come upon me,
provided only that I can win my way to Jesus Christ!"
our resurrection."\(\text{11}\) Likewise to the Magnesians, he wrote: "Unless we are ready and willing to die in conformity with His Passion, His life is not in us.\(\text{15}\) "His death," he continued, "is the very mystery which has moved us to become believers, and endure tribulation to prove ourselves pupils of Jesus Christ, our sole teacher.\(\text{16}\)

**The Defense of the Cross**

Christians not only responded to persecution with blood witness. They also attempted to defend their faith in Christ and the tenets of that faith with words of reason. Very early an extensive apologetical literature thus grew up. There is evidence of this, indeed, throughout the New Testament, particularly the letters of Paul. The cross and crucifixion of Christ figured very prominently in this Christian apologetic. Pagans could understand the notion of a god incarnate as consistent with their mythologies; Jews admitted the prophecy of a suffering Messiah. Neither, however, would accept a crucified savior, "a [scandal] to Jews and folly to Gentiles.\(\text{17}\)" For pagans, crucifixion was the most disgraceful form of death imaginable; for Jews "a hanged man [was] accursed of God.\(\text{18}\)

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\(\text{11}\) Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrneans*, c. 5, p. 120.


\(\text{16}\) Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians*, c. 9, p. 89.


\(\text{18}\) Deuteronomy 21: 22-3 reads: "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him
The Christian response to the "scandal" of the cross was carefully tailored to the presuppositions and prejudices of its respective Jewish or pagan audience. This is most evident in Justin Martyr, who addressed apologies to both pagans and Jews. Responding to the Jew Trypho, who acknowledged that the Messiah "was to endure suffering, and to be led as a sheep to the slaughter," but who demanded proof "that He was to be crucified," Justin sought typoi, or prefigurations, of the cross and crucifixion in Scripture. He pointed, for instance, to Moses' outstretched hands during the Israelites' battle with Amalec. This Justin construed as "a figure of the cross." Likewise, he interpreted the reference to "horns of a wild ox" in Moses' blessing of Joseph as a figure of the cross, for

the one beam of the cross stands upright, from which the upper part is lifted up like a horn when the crossbeam is fitted on, and the ends of the crosspiece resemble horns joined to that horn. And the part which is fixed in the middle of the cross, on which the bodies of the crucified are supported, also projects like a horn, and it,

the same day, for a hanged man is accursed of God; you shall not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance."


Exodus 17: 9-12.

Dialogue with Trypho, c. 90, p. 291. Cf. c. 97, p. 300: "the fact that the Prophet Moses remained in the form of the cross, when his hands were held up by Aaron and Hur, happened in the likeness of this sign. For the Lord also remained upon the cross almost until evening, when He was buried. . . . Isaias likewise foretold the manner of His death in these words: 'I have spread forth My hands to an unbelieving and contradicting people, who walk in a way that is not good.'" Cf. Isaiah 65: 2.

Deuteronomy 33: 13-17.
too, looks like a horn when it is shaped and joined to the other horns.\footnote{Dialogue with Trypho, c. 90, p. 293.}

This, sometimes labored, typological exegesis of Scripture is found repeatedly in apologetical works of the second and third centuries.\footnote{For this typological exegesis of the cross in the early Fathers, see esp. G.Q. Reijners, The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature as Based on Old Testament Typology (Nijmegen, 1965).} However, Justin and his fellow apologists took a distinctively different tack when replying to pagan misgivings about a crucified savior-god. Here Christians might appeal to the natural order, as divinely ordained, to demonstrate the power and immanence of the cross and crucified Christ in all things.\footnote{See J.F. Dölger, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Kreuzzeichens, IX: Die kreuzförmige Ausbreitung des Logos im Weltall. Das Kreuz der Feldmesser und die Ausbreitung der Weltseele in Chi-Form," Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 10 (1967): 23-29.}

In his First Apology Justin pointed to the cross as "the greatest sign of Christ's power and dominion" which "is shown by all that is visible."\footnote{The First Apology, c. 55, trans. Thomas B. Falls, Fathers of the Church, vol. 6, p. 93.} He went on to explain:

\begin{quote}
For, ponder on all the things in this universe [and judge] whether they could be regulated or be interrelated without this figure [of the cross]. The sea, for instance, cannot be plowed unless the 'token of victory' which is called a sail be securely attached to the ship; the earth, too, is not plowed without it; diggers and artisans do all their work with tools of this shape. And man's form differs from that of irrational animals precisely in this, that it stands erect, with hands extended, and has on its face extended from the forehead what we call a nose, through which the living creature breathes, and this is exactly the figure of the cross. Hence the Prophet said: 'The breath before our face is Christ the Lord.' The very symbols on your own banners and trophies which you use in all your processions show the power of this sign, and you, though unwittingly, use these as signs of
\end{quote}
your dominion and power. After the death of your emperors you put their images upon this figure and you call them gods in your inscriptions. Thus we have tried to the best of our ability to convince you, both by word and by an obvious symbol . . . .

Thus, too, Justin considered the celestial chi of Plato's *Timaeus*, formed by the crossing of the heavenly equator and the ecliptic, a sign of the cross. Irenaeus, referring to the same figure from Plato, would conflate Plato's World Soul with Christ and so declare that "the Son of God was . . . imprinted in the form of a cross on the universe." Elsewhere

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28 Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett, The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series, no. 71 (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 36BC, p. 1166: *Timaeus* tells Socrates about the creation of the World-Soul by the Demiurge; he has just explained the compounding of the elements from which the World-Soul was made, and continues: "This entire compound which he [the Demiurge] divided lengthwise into two parts which he joined into one another at the center like the letter X, and bent them into a circular form, connecting them with themselves and each other at the point opposite their original meeting point, and, comprehending them in a uniform revolution upon the inner circle" etc. On the use of this passage by Justin and Irenaeus, see Wilhelm Bousset, "Platons Weltseele und das Kreuz Christi," Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 14 (1913): 273: "Es handelt sich bei dieser Chi-Figur, wie aus dem Nachfolgenden deutlich wird, um die zwei großen Himmelskreise, den Aequator und die Ekliptik, die, in den Aequinoktialpunkten sich schneidend, in der Tat das große Chi am Himmel bilden." For a discussion of the ancient astronomical presuppositions underlying this passage, see Thomas S. Kuhn, The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 1-44.

29 First Apology, c. 60, pp. 97–9: "Plato likewise borrowed from Moses when, while inquiring into the nature of the Son of God in his *Timaeus*, he states, 'He placed him in the universe in the manner of the letter X,' . . . . He [Plato] gives the second place to the Word who is with God, who, as he stated, is placed in the universe in the form of the letter X . . . . Thus, it is not that we hold the same opinion as others, but that they all imitate and re-echo ours."

30 St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Teaching [*Epideixis*], I, 34, trans. by Joseph P. Smith, Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 16, pp. 69–70: "And because He is Himself the Word of God Almighty, who in His invisible form pervades us universally in the whole world, and encompasses both its
Irenaeus would write: "Creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it."\(^1\)

Irenaeus here went beyond mere apologetics, and as Michel Spanneut has suggested, affirmed the salvation not only of mankind through Christ and his cross, but of all material creation.\(^2\) This affirmation of the essential goodness of the material world helps explain Irenaeus' rejection of the "cosmic cross" of second century Gnosticism.

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\(^1\) Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, II, 9, 1, trans. by Alexander Roberts and W.H. Rambaut, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. 5: Irenaeus, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1868), p. 143. Cf. *Adversus Haereses* IV, 6, 6, pp. 391-2: "For by means of the creation itself, the Word reveals God the Father; and by means of the world [does He declare] the Lord the Maker of the world; and by means of the formation [of man] the Artificer who formed him; and by the Son that the Father who begat the Son: and these things do indeed address all men in the same manner, but all do not in the same way believe them."

\(^2\) See Michel Spanneut, "La rédemption cosmique autour des années 200," *La Table Ronde* (December 1957): 60: "On peut suivre plus loin encore la démarche des auteurs chrétiens de l'époque. Ils étaient eu lutte contre le gnosticisme, la grande hérésie des premiers siècles, ou tout est brisure tragique, ou l'homme doit s'arrêcher au monde, à son propre corps, et même aux facultés inférieurs de son âme, pour se sauver ou sauver du moins la mince partie de son être qui soit capable de salut. En réaction contre cette philosophie divisive et sa religion acosmique, les penseurs chrétiens étaient naturellement amenés à proclamer, avec l'intégrité de l'homme et la splendeur du monde, un sorte de monisme integral. Le stoïcisme ambiant, populaire ou scolaire, le leur a fournir, avec l'invitation implicite a enraciner profondément au coeur du tant la Croix que saint Paul avait déjà plantée dans le cosmos."
Gnosticism and the Cross

Gnostics had a concept of the cross and crucifixion of Christ very different from that described in the works of the second century Christian Fathers. Underlying this concept of the cross was a dualism, which condemned the material world as irredeemable while exalting the realm of the spirit and, following from this, a docetic interpretation of the crucifixion and passion of Christ. Thus we read in The Second Treatise of the Great Seth an account of the crucifixion strangely different than that found in the canonical gospels. According to this work, Jesus described his crucifixion as follows:

I was not afflicted at all. . . . I did not die in reality but in appearance, lest I be put to shame by them . . . . For my death which they think happened, (happened) to them in their error and blindness, since they nailed their man unto their death. . . . It was another, their father, who drank the gall and the vinegar; it was not I. . . . It was another, Simon, who bore the cross on his shoulder. It was another on whom they placed the crown of thorns. But I was rejoicing in the height over all the wealth of the archons and the offspring of their error, of their empty glory. And I was laughing at their ignorance.


Different Gnostic teachers held different interpretations of the cross and crucifixion. Thus Cerinthus, who believed Jesus and Christ to be two separate beings, taught that Christ descended upon Jesus (an ordinary man) at his baptism and departed immediately prior to Jesus' crucifixion. Basilides, on the other hand, chose to substitute Simon of Cyrene for Jesus at the crucifixion. While Simon, in the form of Jesus, agonized on the cross, Jesus, as Simon, watched from the crowd and laughed.

The most exotic interpretation of the cross and crucifixion was perhaps that developed by the disciples of Valentinus (fl. 2nd century). In the Valentinian schema, the cross, or Stauros, was not the object on which Jesus was crucified. Instead, it bore the meaning of "boundary" or "limit" and was identified with the Horos, the delimitation of the Pleroma, i.e., the fullness of the Godhead. In this system, the function of the Stauros-Horos was to separate the Pleroma from the disorder and chaos of the lower world, the world of material creation. However, it also had a salvational role to play when it served as the instrument by which the aeon Christ descended into the lower world to inform and liberate the aeon Achamoth and thereby the pneumatikoi or the redeemable among mankind.

Alexander Böhlig has shown that the Valentinian Stauros-Horos was inspired by the same Platonic cosmological speculation as the cosmic cross in Justin and Irenaeus, and that it appears as a "cross of light" in the apocryphal Acts of John.

35 Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, I, 26, 1, p. 97.
36 Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, I, 24, 4-5, p. 91.
In the *Acts of John*, a work dating from the third century, the apostle flees the scene of the crucifixion to the Mount of Olives. There he experiences a strange vision of "a Cross of Light [\textit{stauros photos}^3^9]" that appears "firmly fixed, and around the Cross a great crowd, which had no single form, and in it (the Cross) was one form and the same likeness."^3^9 Then John beholds "the Lord himself above the Cross, having no shape but only a kind of voice."^4^0 The Lord tells John that the Cross "is the distinction of all things, and the strong uplifting of what is firmly fixed out of what is unstable, and the harmony of wisdom, being wisdom in harmony."^4^1 The Lord accords the Cross a variety of epithets, including Logos, Mind (*Nous*), Jesus, and Christ.\(^^4^2\) The Cross itself is no mere object but a living entity, as the cross in the *Acts of Andrew*, which the apostle addressed "as if it were a living creature."^4^3 The Cross of Light is the "distinction of all things" and the "strong uplifting of what is firmly fixed out of what is unstable."^4^4 Its function was the "guardianship and defense of the Pleroma" so that "nothing of the

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\(^3^9\)\textit{Acta Joannis}, c. 98, Bonnet, 1, 2, p. 199.


\(^4^0\) *Acts of John*, c. 98, p. 233.

\(^4^1\) *Acts of John*, c. 98, p. 233.


\(^4^4\) *Acts of John*, c. 98, p. 233.
Hysterema can come near the aeons who are within the Pleroma. This Cross "divides the faithful from the unfaithful, the pneumatikoi from the irredeemable hyloi or earthly clods of men. "This Cross [of Light] then (is that) which has united all things by the word and which has separated off what is transitory and inferior."

The Acts of John go farther and contrast the Cross of Light with the cross of Golgotha, on which Jesus was crucified. The Lord tells John of the Cross of Light that "this is not that wooden Cross which you shall see when you go down from here; nor am I the (man) who is on the Cross." This is consistent, as we have seen, with docetic accounts of the crucifixion, in which Gnostics denied the cross and real passion of Christ. A similar and even more explicit rejection occurs in the Acts of Peter, where the apostle, approaching martyrdom, is made to say: "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."

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Erik Peterson has seen in the Cross of Light "a [Gnostic] polemic against the cross of wood and of an opposition between a visible and invisible cross." He continues:

This polemic against the cross (was) not the result of an enmity of oriental sects [e.g., Marcionites, Manichaeans, et al.] against the Byzantine imperial church and its cult of the True Cross discovered by [the Emperor Constantine's mother] Helena, but (was) of far older origin, motivated by a mystical religiosity which denied the use of the cross in prayer in order to emphasize the Cross of Light as the basis of mystical prayer.

Peterson believed that this second century gnostic polemic against the cross is evidence of a Christian "cult" of the cross well before the fourth century inventio of the Holy Cross and its subsequent veneration. This is certainly an interesting thesis, although the dearth of evidence of any kind of "objectification" of the cross prior to the fourth century, even in epigraphy and graffiti, renders his argument moot. What is certain is the tension that existed between this gnostic concept of the cross and crucifixion and the cross and passion of Christ championed by the apologists of the Great Church. The Gnostic cross of light, so like the cosmic cross of Justin and Irenaeus and at the same time so different, this "living entity" from another world, pervaded the apocryphal literature read by Christians of all persuasions. Traces of the Gnostic cross would be found in later heresies, those of the Manichees, as well as the


Paulicians and later medieval sects, such as the Bogomils and Cathars, who likewise rejected the cross. It is indeed possible, as we shall discuss below, that this very Gnostic polemic against the incarnation and "real" passion of Christ in fact helped inspire the "invention" of the sacred wood, along with other physical attestations to Jesus' life in the flesh by fourth century Christian opponents of Gnostic doctrines.

The Sign of the Cross

Among the manifestations of the cross found in the second and third century apocrypha is the act of signing oneself with the cross. Thus in the Acts of John the dying apostle made the sign of the cross over his body "sealing every part." This use of the signum crucis in Christian-Gnostic literature, led Max Sulzberger to conclude that this use of the cross essentially arose in Gnostic circles. Franz Joseph Dölger, the great historian of the cross and its sign, however, convincingly rejected this notion. Dölger, along with Jean Daniélou, has

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51 Concerning the Paulicians and the cross, see the Excursus to Chapter 3, below.

52 See Chapter 1, note 2 for bibliographical references to these later groups.


56 Jean Daniélou, "Le signe de la croix," La Table Ronde (December 1957): 32-38.
demonstrated the great antiquity of the \textit{signum crucis} and its pervasive use by Christians in both formal cult and private devotion.

Whether the use of the sign of the cross dates to apostolic times or not is a moot point. The earliest attestation of the \textit{signum crucis} is in the works of Tertullian. Writing in \textit{De corona militis}, Tertullian observed that

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at every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign.
\end{quote}

This "sign", he makes clear elsewhere is "the Greek letter \textit{Tau} and our own letter T . . . \textit{the very sign of the cross}"\footnote{Tertullian, \textit{De corona militis}, III, 4, trans. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, pp. 94-5.} To Tertullian, the sign of the cross hearkened back to the \textit{tau}-sign of God's elect in the book of Ezekiel.\footnote{Tertullian, \textit{Adversus Marcionem}, III 22, trans. by Peter Holmes, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, p. 166.} It was a designation of those under divine protection: "\textit{Caro signetur, ut et anima munietur}. (Let the flesh be signed so that the soul may also be protected)."\footnote{Tertullian, \textit{De resurrectione mortuorum}, VIII, 3, CCSL 2: 931.} We know, for instance, that the sign of the cross (Greek: \textit{sphragis}) was used both before and following baptism by the early Church and for other sacraments as well, including confirmation and

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the rites for the dying, as in the case of the Acts of John, above.\(^6\) In the course of the third and fourth centuries (if, indeed, not earlier), however, the signum crucis came to be regarded as efficacious for matters more mundane and immediate. As early as Justin there is hint of this ad hoc power of the sign of the cross. Referring to Israel's battle with Amalec, Justin wrote: "In truth, it was not because . . . Moses prayed that his people were victorious, but because . . . Moses made the sign of the cross [with his outstretched hands].\(^6\) To make the sign of the cross and invoke the name of Jesus (the formula occurs in Justin and elsewhere), was to put to flight the powers of darkness. In the third century Origen was to write: "What do the demons fear and what do they tremble before? Without doubt the cross of Christ."\(^6\) In the next century Athanasius was to write that the hermit Anthony recommended making the sign of the cross to drive away the demons.\(^6\) And Augustine related how the pious Innocentia, suffering from cancer of the breast, was

\(^6\)See the classic work by F.J. Dölger, Sphragis: Eine altchristliche Taufbezeichnung in ihren Beziehungen zur profanen und religiösen Kultur des Altertums, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, vol. 5, nos. 3 and 4 (Paderborn: Druck und Verlag von Ferdinand Schöningh, 1911).

\(^6\)Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, c. 90, FOC 6: 292.


healed by the sign of the cross. Indeed, fourth century Christians, both high and low, believed in the apotropaic power of the cross. Christians tattooed themselves and branded their livestock with the salutary sign. Even pagans acknowledged the cross's power—and feared

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67 Augustine, *The City of God*, XXII, 8, trans. by Henry Bettenson, ed. by David Knowles (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 1037-8: "When Easter was approaching she [Innocentia] was instructed in a dream to watch on the women's side of the baptistry and ask the first newly-baptized woman who met her to sign the affected place with the sign of Christ. This she did; and she was immediately restored to health." Elsewhere (Tract. 118 in *Johannem*, MPL 35: 194): "Quid est signum Christi nisi crux Christi?"


Indeed, even the Emperor Julian, after leaving the Church, continued to make the sign of the cross when confronted by demons.\(^{11}\)

**Constantine and the Cult of the Cross**

Given this faith in the power of the cross, it is hardly surprising that Constantine was believed by his Christian contemporaries to have triumphed under its sign. We are informed that, no sooner had Constantine placed himself under the protection of the Christian God, he went from victory to victory over his rivals for empire. The sign betokening this protection is variously described as the *signum Dei*,\(^{12}\) the *tou soteriou tropaion pathous*\(^{14}\) (or *to soteriou semeion*\(^{15}\)), in the earliest

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\(^{11}\) Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, IV, 27, 1ff; CSEL 19: 384ff: "When the pagans sacrifice to their gods, the sacred act misses its effect, if a single person is present, whose brow is signed with the Cross. This was often the very reason why wicked rulers persecuted the Christian righteousness. When those tyrants were sacrificing and certain of our community were present in their train, those Christian brethren, by signing their brows with the Cross, put the gods to flight, so that they could not reveal the future from the entrails of the beasts. The 'haruspices', observing this, at the instigation of those very demons, for whom they were performing their dissections, raised the complaint that 'profane' persons were present, disturbing the sacred acts. Thus they moved their princes to fury, and drove them to try and storm the Church of God." (Cited in Andrew Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, trans. by Harold Mattingly (Oxford, 1948), p. 22. Such an incident apparently touched off Diocletian's persecution; see A.H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1978), p. 49.

\(^{12}\) Gregory Nazianzen, *Or. 4 contra Julianem*, 1, 55, 56 (MPG 35: 580A).

\(^{13}\) Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, MPL 44: 264A: "Commonitus in quiete Constantinus, ut coeleste signum Dei notaret in acutis, atque ita praelium committeret."


\(^{15}\) Ibid.
accounts. Whether in its early form this sign was the monogram of Christ, the chi-rho, or the chrismon and cross, as in the later labarum,\textsuperscript{76} by the end of Constantine's reign this sign appears unambiguously as the staurou tropaion,\textsuperscript{77} the sign of the cross.\textsuperscript{78} "Touto nika," we are told Constantine was commanded: "By this [sign] conquer!"\textsuperscript{79} Just as unambiguously we are informed by Constantine's biographer that it was the cross itself, in the form of the labarum, which brought victory:

Indeed, wherever this [labarum] appeared, the enemy soon fled before his [Constantine's] victorious troops. And the emperor perceiving this, whenever he saw any part of his forces hard pressed, gave orders that the salutary trophy [soterion tropaion] should be moved in that direction, like some triumphant charm against disasters: at which the combatants were divinely inspired, as it were, with fresh strength and courage, and immediate victory was the result.

Indeed, as invincibility was accorded the army, so immunity from personal injury was imparted to the bearer of the labarum:

For he [Constantine] said once, during the very heat of an engagement, a sudden tumult and panic attacked his


\textsuperscript{77}Eusebius, Life of Constantine, 1, 28, GCS 1: 29.

\textsuperscript{78}Eusebius, The Life of Constantine, I, 31, trans. by E. C. Richardson, in Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, p. 240, describes the labarum as follows: "Now it was made in the following manner. A long spear, overlaid with gold, formed the figure of the cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it. On the top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this, the symbol of the Saviour's name, two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P being intersected by X in its centre: and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period."

\textsuperscript{79}Life of Constantine, I, 28, GCS 1: 29.

\textsuperscript{80}Life of Constantine, II, 7, NPNCF 1: 502.
army, which threw the soldier who then bore the standard into an agony of fear, so that he handed it over to another, in order to secure his own escape from the battle. As soon, however, as his comrade had received it, and he had withdrawn, and resigned all charge of the standard, he was struck in the belly by a dart, which took his life. Thus he paid the penalty of his cowardice and unfaithfulness, and lay dead on the spot: but the other, who had taken his place as the bearer of the salutary standard, found it to be the safeguard of his life. For though he was assailed by a continual shower of darts, the bearer remained unhurt, the staff of the standard receiving every weapon. It was truly a marvelous circumstance, that the enemies' darts all fell within and remained in the slender circumference of this spear, and thus saved the standard-bearer from death; so that none of those engaged in this service ever received a wound.

According to Ernst Kitzinger, the labarum played a major role in investing the cross with the appurtenances of formal cult, including proskynesis. As a result of its adoption by Constantine and his successors, the cross, surmounted by the chi-rho, now became the focus of the Roman army's cult of the standards. As Tertullian had written over a century before: "The entire religion of Roman camp life consists of venerating standards, swearing by standards, placing standards before all the gods." The consequences of the adoption of the labarum were thus

81 Life of Constantine, II, 9, NPNCL 1: 502.

82 Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 8 (1954): 89-90, writes: "Worship of the cross may have been practiced here and there even before the period of persecution, but received its major impetus through the symbolic identification of the instrument of Christ's Passion with the victorious standard of the army of Constantine the Great, an identification graphically expressed in the sign of the labarum, which appears on coins in the third decade of the fourth century. By the end of the fourth century proskynesis before the sign of the Passion was considered a perfectly natural thing for a Christian."

profound and far-reaching. In the first place, it made more bearable military service for Christian soldiers, who now need no longer serve under pagan tropeia or fear persecution for failure to offer them due obeisance. More important, however, was the capacity of the army to spread throughout the empire and beyond the veneration of the cross and belief in its apotropaic powers. "With the cross of Christ and in the name of Jesus" wrote Ambrose, "we go into battle, brave through this sign, through this banner [vexillum] unflinching."

Equally if not more important for the development of the cult of the cross was the inventio, or discovery, sometime during the second quarter of the fourth century, of the relic of the cross of Golgotha, that is to say, the "holy" or "true" cross. Pious legend dating from the end

CCSL 1: 116.


However, the first to mention the cross relic was Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315-86) in the course of catechetical lectures delivered during Lent in 349. Cyril was at pains to demonstrate to the catechumens the truth of the gospel in the face of heretics who maintained that the life and death of Jesus was imaginary or in vain. He declared at one point:

Let the mouths of all the heretics be stopped. If any man should say that the Cross is only an illusion, turn away from him. Abhor those who say that Christ was crucified in fancy only. For if He was crucified in fancy only, salvation is a fancy also, since our salvation comes from the Cross. If the Cross is a fancy, the Resurrection is a fancy also; and 'if Christ has not risen we are still in our sins.' [1 Cor. 15:17] If the Cross is a fancy, the Ascension also is a fancy; and if the Ascension is a fancy, then the second coming is likewise an illusion, and everything, finally, is unsubstantial.\footnote{Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catechesis," 13, 37, The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, vol. 2, trans. by Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 64 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), p. 29.}

But, declared Cyril, Christ "was truly crucified for our sins."
And should you wish to deny this, the visible place itself, this blessed Golgotha, refutes you, where, in the name of Him who was here crucified, we are gathered together. Besides the whole world has now been filled with pieces of wood of the cross.97

The relic of the True Cross thus had value to Cyril as testimony to the real passion of Christ, probably against Gnostic and Manichaean naysayers. Indeed, the cross was only one of a number of witnesses that Cyril marshalled to testify to the reality of Christ's real existence and suffering:

There are many true testimonies, my dear brethren, concerning Christ... His witness is the holy wood of the cross, seen among us even to this day, and by those who have taken portions thereof, from hence filling almost the whole world... Gethsemane is his witness... Gethsemane is his witness... this holy mount of Golgotha, conspicuous in its elevation, bears witness to Him. The Holy Sepulchre bears witness, and the stone which lies here even to this day... The Holy Mount of Olives, from which He ascended to the Father, bears witness.

In thus pointing to physical monuments, artifacts, and places to demonstrate the historicity of the gospel, Cyril was following in the footsteps of Eusebius, the great church historian of the previous generation. It is thus all the more interesting that Eusebius, who first mentions Constantine's interest in the holy sites at Jerusalem and his building of churches and shrines to commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, makes no mention of the discovery of the cross, not to say Helena's role therein. Indeed, Helena's inventio of the cross relic is first mentioned by Bishop Ambrose of Milan in his funeral oration for the Emperor Theodosius (d. 395). In this oration Ambrose was above all interested in demonstrating the providence of God in establishing the

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Christian empire under Constantine and his successors. Likewise still other sources of the Helena legend, Rufinus, Socrates, et al., may reflect the interests of the Jerusalem church as a center of devotion to the cross, at a time, it should be observed, when relics of the cross could be had at other competing centers, such as Constantinople and Rome. Thus the inventio of the cross could serve a variety of purposes, from apologetic to commercial. At all events, the discovery of the True Cross transformed the nature of devotion to the cross.

An early pilgrim to the holy places, Egeria, provides an account of the intensity of the devotion to the cross in the ceremony of its adoration. She describes how the multitudes came forth to adore the wood of the True Cross during Lenten observances in Jerusalem:

A throne is set up for the bishop on Golgotha behind the Cross [erected by Constantine?], which now stands there. The bishop sits on his throne, a table covered with a linen cloth is set before him, and the deacons stand around the table. The gilded silver casket containing the sacred wood of the cross is brought in and opened. Both the wood of the cross and the inscription are taken out and placed on the table. . . . All of the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on. No one, however, puts out his hand to touch the cross. For some of the faithful, merely kissing the cross was not enough. Egeria explains that

as soon as they [the wood of the cross and the inscription] have been placed on the table, the bishop,

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91 Cf. the remarks in Hunt, Holy Land Pilgrimage, pp. 41-2.

remaining seated, grips the ends of the sacred wood with his hands, while the deacons, who are standing about, keep watch over it. There is a reason why it is guarded in this manner. . . . It is said that someone (I do not know when) took a bite and stole a piece of the holy cross. Therefore, it is now guarded by the deacons standing around, lest there be anyone who would dare come and do that again.

The faithful rogue who thus acquired a piece of the venerable wood was no mere souvenir hunter. Like the sign of the cross and the labarum, the wood of the True Cross was believed to possess special powers, indeed, even more so since the relic of the cross had been consecrated with Christ's very blood. Soon, there began to circulate stories about miracles worked by the wood of the cross. In the several legends surrounding Helena's discovery of the cross, for instance, the cross was reputed to have healed a sick woman in one version and to have resurrected a dead man in another. Indeed, each fragment of the cross was believed to possess as much sanctity and power as the whole. In sending his friend Sulpicius Severus a fragment of the cross to consecrate his basilica, Paulinus of Nola observed that

> In this almost invisible particle of a small sliver [of the cross] take up the protection of your immediate safety, and the guarantee of your eternal salvation. Let not your faith shrink because the eyes of the body behold evidence so small; let it look with the inner eye on the whole power of the cross in this tiny segment. Once you think that you behold the wood on which our Salvation, the Lord of majesty, was hanged with nails whilst the world trembled, you, too, must tremble, but you must also rejoice.

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93 Egeria, p. 111.
94 Leclercq, DACL 3.2: 3135-36.
The Cross and Crucifixion in Monumental Art

The final element of the cult of the cross to emerge in late antiquity was the depiction of the cross and crucifixion in monumental art. Although the cross had served as an evocative symbol for the Church since apostolic times, almost no evidence survives of its plastic, epigraphic, or iconographic representation during Christianity's first three and a half centuries. Some scholars have asserted that early Christians hesitated to depict the cross, let alone the crucifixion, because of discomfiture with Christ's gruesome and shameful death. Instead, Christians alluded to the cross under a variety of other symbols, so-called cruces dissimulatae. However, this explanation ignores the literary evidence which attests the central symbolic importance of the cross in the pre-Constantinian Church. It may also misinterpret the intent of cruces dissimulatae, which could well allude to the pervasiveness of the cross in the objects of nature and human commerce and thus represent an

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97 Sulzberger, "Le symbole de la croix," p. 371, observes: "En règle générale, on ne trouve ni croix, ni monogrammes de Jesus, ni représentations de la Passion avant le quatrième siècle. Les inscriptions chrétiennes antérieures à Constantin ne sont, pour la plupart, accompagnées d'aucune symbole. Assez souvent l'ancre, le poisson, la colombe, etc. . . jamais, sauf exceptions très rares, de croix ni de monogrammes." Cf. Paul Thoby, Le crucifix des origines au concile de Trente (Paris, 1959), p. 12: "Au milieu de ces représentations mystérieuse et symboliques, la Croix ne pouvait manquer de trouver sa place, mais le plus souvent sous une forme également dissimulée: cruces dissimulatae."
epigraphic and artistic counterpart to the writings of such fathers as Justin Martyr.

Be that as it may, the fourth century provided Christians both reason and opportunity to depict the cross. In the first place, Constantine's introduction of the labarum placed the cross on the standards of the Roman armies, and it was soon represented as such on the imperial coinage.\(^9\) Second, the discovery of the relic of the True Cross intensified Christian devotion to the cross and, as in the case of the discovery of other relics, evoked artistic representations of the archetype.\(^9\) Finally, in the course of the fourth century, Christians developed for the first time a truly monumental art, aided and abetted by imperial patronage.\(^10\) This development permitted a rapid expansion of the Christian iconographic repertoire, which, significantly, included the cross, if not immediately the crucifixion.

Indeed, many of the crosses which appeared in the late fourth and early fifth centuries were themselves truly monumental in size and scope. Constantine allegedly placed a large golden cross on St. Peter's tomb\(^1\) and suspended a large cross adorned with gold and jewels in the main


\(^9\) See Chapter 3 concerning the connection between the cult of relics and the rise of Christian iconography.


\(^1\) Thoby, Crucifix, p. 20: "Super corpus Beati Petri, supra aere quod conclusit, fecit crucem ex auro purissimo [Liber Pontificalis (Mommsen ed., I, p. 57)]."
audience hall in the imperial palace at Constantinople. Constantine or one of his early successors also erected a monumental cross, encrusted with semi-precious stones, on Mount Calvary, between the Anastasis basilica and the Holy Sepulchre. One of the earliest surviving apse mosaics, that of S. Pudenziana at Rome, may allude to this cross. The mosaic depicts a great jeweled cross arising on a small hill between two cities, probably Rome and Jerusalem; before the cross a seated figure of Christ teaches the twelve apostles. A similar representation of the cross figures in the apse mosaic of S. Stephano Rotondo, also at Rome. Meanwhile, the fifth century ceiling mosaic in the mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna and the sixth century apse mosaic in S. Apollinaris in Classe, both depicting a great jeweled cross, this time hovering in a great star-studded heaven or aureole, may allude to several sightings of the cross in the sky, such as that seen by Cyril of Jerusalem in 351 over the Holy City.

But the cross also figured less centrally in other decorative paintings, sculptures, and mosaics from the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. The cross, for instance, figures as a decorative motif together with foliage and peacocks in mosaics beneath several great arches in Galla

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102 Thoby, Crucifix, pp. 20-1.
Placidia's mausoleum in Ravenna. In other contexts, the cross appears as a staff whether carried by saints or by Christ himself.

Representations of the cross were thus firmly ensconced in Christian iconography by the middle of the fifth century. Depictions of the crucifixion, on the other hand, are far less frequently encountered in surviving monuments of this period and, in most cases, were deliberately avoided. Passion cycles on sarcophagi, for instance, depict Christ before Pilate, even carrying the cross, but omit the crucifixion itself, generally replacing a depiction of Christ crucified with a plain cross or chrismon. A marble fragment from the Lateran shows only a labarum draped with a cloth in place of the Crucified, thus evoking both the crucifixion and the resurrection. In apse mosaics of the fifth and sixth centuries Christ is not portrayed crucified on the cross; instead, a bust of Christ appears in an aureole hovering above the cross or at the crossing of its arms.

From the late fourth century on, however, the climate in favor of an expanded and increasingly explicit Christian iconography improved. One

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109 Leclercq, DACL 3.2: 3067.

110 Ibid.; Leclercq, DACL 3.2: 3067, observes that "cette manière de combiner la crucifixion et la resurrection dans une même scène symbolique parait avoir joui d'une grande faveur dans les ateliers de sculpteurs chrétiens du IVe et du Ve siècle."

major step in this development may have been the abolition of crucifixion as a means of execution by Constantine or his immediate successors.\textsuperscript{112} Likewise the cult of the cross and the appearance of the cross in Christian iconography would have helped break down earlier taboos (if such there were) in the minds of the pious. At any rate, by the late fourth century Prudentius describes a crucifixion scene as this might have appeared on the walls of a Spanish church.\textsuperscript{113} From the early fifth century we have the earliest surviving crucifixion scene, part of a Passion-Resurrection cycle, on a panel of an ivory casket now in the British Museum.\textsuperscript{114} We must wait for another century, however, to find another such representation, this time on a panel of the wooden doors of S. Sabina at Rome.\textsuperscript{115} In both the British Museum ivory and the door panel of S. Sabina, Christ appears nude on the cross except for a small loincloth (subligaculum).

This historically graphic, somewhat immodest depiction of the Crucified disappears in the oldest precisely datable depiction of the

\textsuperscript{112} Leclercq, DACL 3.2: 3064.

\textsuperscript{113} Prudentius, Dittochaeon, XLII (MPL 60: 108) (cited in Leclercq, DACL 3.2: 3068):

\begin{quote}
Passio Salvatoris.
Trajectus per utrumque latus, laticem atque cruorem
Christus agit. Sanguis victoria: lympha lavacrum est.
Tunc duo discordant crucibus hinc inde latrones
Contiguis: negat ille Deum, fert iste coronam.
\end{quote}

Leclercq comments: "Ce texte ne nous paraît pas pouvoir être revoqué en doute et il n’est guère douteux selon nous, que ces vers s’appliquaient à une destination précise, c’est-à-dire à un tableau, soit en peinture, soit en mosaïque, décorant une basilique en Espagne au IV\textsuperscript{e} siècle."

\textsuperscript{114} Thoby, Crucifix, p. 22; see Hutter, Early Christian and Byzantine Art, p. 59, plate 63, for photograph of the complete cycle.

\textsuperscript{115} Thoby, Crucifix, p. 23.
crucifixion in the Rabula gospels (586). In this Syrian evangelium, the crucifixion appears in the upper two-thirds of a miniature covering one of the pages of the codex. Here Christ for the first time is depicted clothed in a long sleeveless garment, called the colobium. The colobium-draped Christ would serve as the model for depictions of the Crucified for much of the sixth through the eighth centuries both in the Greek east and the Latin west.

The interpretation of the Rabula crucifixion has been in dispute for many years. P. Maser probably comes closest to a satisfactory accounting of its various motifs, relating these to the writings of Ephraim the Syrian. (The purple colobium, according to Ephraim, was the purpel altar cloth with which the priests draped Jesus at his crucifixion.) Significantly, the crucifixion was important to Ephraim in defending Nicene orthodoxy against Arianism. Thus, according to Maser, "The iconography of the crucifixion in the Rabula codex refers back to an orthodox conception (of the crucifixion), viz., that the crucifixion demonstrated the true divinity and humanity of Christ, (a conception) that

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arose in the context of the Arian controversy.\textsuperscript{119} The depiction of the crucifixion, moreover, may have also played a role in the controversies over Nestorianism and Monophysitism. "The monophysites of Egypt and Syria," writes Henri Leclercq, "omitted the human figure from the crucifix and contented themselves with a plain or ornamented cross." He continues:

The introduction of the crucifix in Christian art seems to have been just such a reaction against this tendency. To represent the scene of Calvary in all its detail, this was to affirm that Christ really suffered in his human nature, in which he was incarnate, for man's salvation. This was to show to the faithful that (Christ's) sufferings were not a vain appearance but a dolorous reality. The Nestorians whose doctrine insisted particularly on the humanity of Christ found themselves one with the defenders of orthodoxy in affirming the truth of the sacrifice of Calvary. It is not impossible that some of the most ancient crucifixes are Nestorian monuments.

Whatever the theological motives may have been for depicting or not depicting the crucifixion, the Church did not officially sanction crucifixion iconography until nearly the end of the seventh century. The Quinisext Council (692) declared in its eighty-second canon that

in certain paintings and venerable images the Precursor is represented pointing to the Lamb with his finger. We have adopted this representation as an image of (divine) grace. For us this was the shadow of that Lamb, Christ our God, that the Law showed us. Thus, after having welcomed first of all these figures and shadows as signs and emblems, we today prefer to them Grace and Truth, that is to say, the fullness of the Law. In consequence and so that Perfection should be shown in every respect, even by means of pictures, we decide that henceforth it will be necessary to represent in images Christ our God in his human form in place of the ancient Lamb. It is

\textsuperscript{119}Maser, "Kreuzigungsbild," p. 45: "Die Ikonographie des Kreuzigungsbildes im Rabulas-Kodex weist zurück auf ein in den arianischen Streitigkeiten entstandenes orthodoxes Bekenntnisbild, das an dem Ereignis der Kreuzigung die wahre Gott-Menschlichkeit Christi demonstrierte."

\textsuperscript{120}Henri Leclercq, DACL 3.2: 3086.
necessary that we be able to contemplate all the sublimity of the Word throughout its humility. It is necessary that the painter takes us, as it were, by the hand to remember Jesus living in the flesh, suffering, dying for our salvation and achieving thereby the redemption of the world.iii

Thirty years later the great Iconoclastic Controversy would begin when the Emperor Leo III ordered the icon of Christ over the main gate of the imperial palace at Constantinople torn down. Byzantine Iconoclasts, true to the cross, would condemn depictions of the Crucified. How this came about is the story of the next chapter.

Summary and Conclusions

From the earliest days of the Christian Church the cross has stood paradoxically at the center of the Christian concept of salvation. That object which Greco-Roman antiquity most shunned and scorned as synonymous with death and degradation became a symbol of faith and hope for Christians. St. Paul took the lead in using the cross to symbolize salvation and discipleship in Christ and he was followed by the early

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iii Leclercq, DACL 3.2 (Mansi 11: 977/980): "Εν τισι τῶν σεπτῶν εἰσόνζν γραφαίς ἀμύνων δακτύλῳ τοῦ προδρόμου δεικνύμενος ἐγχρωμάτεται, ὡς εἰς τόπον παρελπήθη τῆς χάριτος, τὸν ἀληθινὸν ἢμῖν διὰ τοῦ νόμου προφηταίριων μονὸν χριστόν τὸν Θεὸν ἢμῖν. τοὺς οὖν παλαιοὺς τύπους καὶ τὰς σκιὰς, ὡς τῆς ἀληθείας σύμβολα τε καὶ προχαραγματα παραδεδομένους τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ κατασταζόμενοι, τὴν χάριν προσφέρομεν καὶ τὴν ἀληθείαν, ὡς πλήρωμα νόμου τάτην ὑποδείκνυον. ὡς ἂν οὖν τὸ τέλειον καὶ ταῖς χρωματογραφίαις ἐν ταῖς ἀπαντών δώσειν ὑπογράφηται, τοῦ τοῦ αἵρωνος τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου ἀμύνων χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἢμῖν κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρώπινον χαρακτῆρα καὶ ἐν ταῖς εἰσόνων ἀπὸ τοῦ νέου αἵρων τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἀμύνος ἀνακαθυσθεὶς ὑποδείκνυον, δι’ αὐτοῦ τὸ τῆς ταπεινώσεως ύψος τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον κατασταζότες, καὶ πρὸς μνημήν τῆς ἐν σαρκί πολιτείας, τοῦ τε καθὼς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ σωτηρίου θανάτου χειραγωγοῦμενα, καὶ τῆς ἐντεθέν γενομένης τῆς κόσμου ἀπολυρωσεως." For a discussion of the significance of this canon, see André Grabar, L'Iconoclasme byzantin: Dossier archéologique (Paris: Collège de France, 1957), chapt 3 and 4, passim.
fathers and apologists of the Christian gospel. In their arguments with Jews, Christians sought "types" of the cross and crucifixion in Scripture; in writing to persuade pagans, they sought out the form of the cross in the natural order and the cosmos.

The "cosmic" cross had significance not only for Christians in the mainstream of orthodox tradition but also for Gnostics. Gnosticism reinterpreted both the crucifixion and cross to accord with its dualistic Weltanschauung. This included docetic interpretations of the life and death of Jesus and the nature of the "true" cross. In place of the cross of wood some Gnostics opposed a cross of light. Others interpreted the cross to represent one of the cosmic aeons (Stauros) of their mythology. This Gnostic teaching about the cross would resonate in later dualist sects and may possibly have contributed to the inventio of the "True Cross" and its cult in the mid fourth century by orthodox Christians.

Many factors, however, contributed to the rise of the cult of the cross. One factor was the power that was believed to inhere in the sign of the cross. In Tertullian the sign of the cross served essentially as a sign of identification and blessing. In time it acquired apotropaic and thaumaturgic significance as well. Thus Constantine's triumph under the sign of Christ was not thought at all unusual by contemporaries. The emperor's adoption of this sign as a standard for his armies, however, placed the cross (or chrismon) squarely in a cultic context for the first time, including being honored with proskynesis.

Even more significant for the growth of a cross cult, however, was the discovery of the relic of the Golgotha cross in the first half of the fourth century. Later legend attributed this inventio to Constantine's
mother, Helena. Its first mention, however, is in Cyril of Jerusalem's catechetical lectures where it was used to demonstrate the reality of Christ's death by crucifixion against Gnostic and Manichaean assertions to the contrary. Whatever the circumstances (and motives) for its discovery, however, the wood of the "True" Cross soon spread throughout Christendom where it served as a focus of cultic devotion.

The rise of the cross cult soon gave rise to the depiction of the cross and crucifixion in monumental art. Early representations of the cross generally depict it transfigured with gold and jewels or hovering in the heavens, a resplendent object. Sometimes a bust of Christ (or the Lamb) would grace a cameo at the crossing of its arms or hover at its summit. In general, however, depictions of the crucifixion were rare in the fourth and fifth century, even in passion cycles where often a plain cross would substitute for the Crucified. Although crucifixion iconography was not entirely absent in the fifth and sixth centuries it was not until the seventh century Quinisext Council that the Church gave it official sanction.

This did not settle things for long. The Quinisext Council met on the eve of the great Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. This upheaval of the eastern Church would call into question not only the propriety of depicting the Crucified but also the place of the cross vis-à-vis images in the life and cult of Christians throughout the world. In the next chapter we shall trace the origins of this controversy and its initial ramifications on the cross and its cult.
CHAPTER III

THE CROSS, THE CULT OF IMAGES, AND ICONOCLASM

By the end of the fifth century, the cross had long been transformed from an object of fear and opprobrium into a symbol of hope for salvation among Christians, and its cult had spread throughout Christendom both east and west. The strength of this cult was owing in part to the different levels of human experience to which it appealed, often simultaneously. From the very beginning of the Christian Church, the cross had symbolized the sacrifice of Christ as well as the daily sacrifice and commitment to the demands of the faith on the part of all believers. It was also a sign to those Christians familiar with the Scriptures and their interpretation foretelling the coming Messiah and his death. Others saw the cross as a cosmological sign announcing the providence and order of God in all things. At the same time, the sign of the cross was believed to exorcise evil and thus to protect believers from harm, both bodily and spiritual. Finally, with the discovery of the relic of the True Cross, the cross became a focus of veneration by Christians throughout the world. In the second chapter, we traced this development of the cross in the Christian experience, from its beginnings as a metaphor of salvation in Christ to its transformation into an object of cult. This development occurred slowly over the course of several centuries. What was unique in the fifth century, however, was the presence of all these elements in the experience of all Christians at one and the same moment. The cross, in
short, summed up and encapsulated a rich religious heritage as almost no other object or symbol, sacred to the Church.

Parts of this heritage were to be challenged in the course of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries by the rise of iconoclasm. This iconoclasm centered primarily upon the propriety of religious images in Christian worship and devotion. However, in due course, it also called into question the use of relics, sacred vessels and even the cross itself.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the relation between the cult of the cross and the cult of images during periods of iconophobia and iconoclasm in late antiquity and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy. What was the attitude of Christians toward the cross and its cult, particularly those Christians who feared or rejected the cult of images? How did the cross and its cult figure in the apologiae for the cult of images? In what ways, if any, did Christians refine their understanding and beliefs about cross and its cult during these periods of iconoclastic turmoil?

The Development of Christian Iconography

The history of Christian iconoclasm begins with the development of a distinctively Christian iconography. Like the development of the cult of the cross, this was a slow process, taking many centuries. The primitive Christian communities, so far as can be determined, were aniconic, prohibiting the making of likenesses of humans or animals in accordance with Mosaic law.¹ This early Christian aversion to the production of

¹Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 8 (1954): 89, adds to the Mosaic prohibition the central role of images in Greco–Roman paganism as another motive for early
graven images appears in the writings of many of the early Fathers, such as Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria.¹

By the middle of the third century, however, Christians were employing paintings in their places of assembly and burial. This is clear from widely scattered locations such as the house church in Dura Europas, on the Euphrates, and on the Tiber, the Christian catacombs of Rome.² This early Christian iconography has been characterized as "argumentative" and "narrative" in nature and boasted an extensive repertoire of motifs from both the Old and New Testaments, including such subjects as Paradise, Adam and Eve, Noah, David and Goliath, Jonah and the whale, Daniel in the lion's den, the three youths in the fiery furnace, the Good Shepherd, the Virgin and Child, Jesus and Peter, the woman at the well, the healing of the paralytic, Jesus walking on water, and the two Marys at the tomb. While the number of surviving paintings is limited, the similarity in their themes, execution, and the vast distance between the two sites bespeaks a common iconographic tradition and the widespread use and acceptance of such painting by early Christian communities.

These early paintings, although they may have assisted in the Christian cultus, were not likely themselves to have been the objects of Christian aniconism.


cult. A first step in this development was the appearance of portable portrait icons. As early as the third century, indeed, certain Gnostic sects may have had such icons, and the emperor Alexander Severus allegedly included an image of Christ among his household gods. By the beginning of the fourth century, there is evidence of individual portraits of Christ and certain apostles circulating among ordinary Christians. Indeed, the emperor Constantine’s sister, Constantia, requested that Eusebius send her such a portrait of Christ.

At the outset of the fourth century we also begin to see the first signs of apprehension and disapproval among churchmen of this proliferating Christian iconography. About the year 306 the Spanish synod of Elvira prohibited in its 36th canon the painting of sacred subjects on


2Beckwith, Early Christian and Byzantine Art, p. 16.

3Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 7, 18, pp. 176/177. Eusebius attributed the manufacture of these images to pagans rather than Christians and seems to indicate that, along with the statue group of Paneas, they were already quite old when he viewed them. Interestingly, he evinces no aversion or hostility to the existence of these images but treats them rather as evidence of the piety of "those heathen, who long ago had good deeds done to them by our Saviour."

4This was probably Eusebius of Nicomedia rather than Eusebius of Caesarea, as often thought. See Knut Schäferdiek, "Zu Verfasserschaft und Situation der epistula ad Constantiam de imagine Christi," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 91 (1980): 177-86.
the walls of churches, lest that which was sacred be thereby profaned, and Eusebius would refuse Constantia her request for an icon of Christ. Later in the century, Bishop Epiphanius tore down a church curtain bearing images of Christ and the apostles and warned that "when images are set up, the customs of the pagans do the rest." By the end of the century, Augustine of Hippo also condemned Christian "worshippers of pictures."

None of this seems, however, to have retarded the development of Christian iconography. Nor did it prevent what in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries came to be a full blown cult of images. What factors account for the rise of the cult of images? Scholars have offered a variety of explanations. Ernst Kitzinger suggested, among other things, that the cult of the labarum might have provided a precedent for performing proskynesis before a revered object. André Grabar speculated

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9Eusebius, Epistola ad Constantiam, Mansi 13: 313 AD.

10Epiphanius, Panarion haer., 27, 6, 10, in Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, vol. 25, ed. by Karl Holl (Leipzig, 1915), p. 31: "στήσαντες . . . τας εἰκόνας τὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔθη λοιπὸν ποιοῦσιν."

11Augustine, De moribus ecclesiae catholicae, 1, 34, MPL 32: 1342: "picturarum adoratorum."

12Kitzinger, "Cult of Images," p. 89, writes that "Worship of the cross may have been practiced here and there even during the period of persecutions, but received its major impetus through the symbolic identification of the instrument of Christ's Passion with the victorious standard of the army of Constantine the Great, an identification graphically expressed in the sign of the labarum, which appears on coins in the third decade of the fourth century. By the end of the fourth century proskynesis before the Sign of the Passion was considered a perfectly natural thing for a Christian."
that the rise of the cult of images derived from the cult of relics, specifically from the portraits that often adorned reliquaries.\textsuperscript{13} In fact, the decisive impetus may have derived from the circulation of acheiropoietai, i.e., images not made by human hands, such as the image of Christ imprinted on a veil and sent to King Abgar of Edessa, purportedly by Christ himself. Also important were undoubtedly images supposedly painted from life by apostles or other holy men. In each case, we are dealing with an image that was important not simply as a representation, but rather because of some special inherent quality which made it venerable. Such images, in effect, functioned as relics.\textsuperscript{14}

**Early Christian Iconophobia and the Cross**

Images were not the only objects whose cult came into question during this period. Relics and their cult were alternately attacked and defended as early as the fourth century.\textsuperscript{15} So also was the cross and its

\textsuperscript{13}André Grabar, *Martyrium: Recherches sur le Culte des Reliques et l'Art chrétien antique*, vol. 2: Iconographie, Collège de France: Fondation Schlumberger pour les Études byzantines (N.p.: Collège de France, 1946)' pp. 343-5, observes that "depuis le v\textsuperscript{e} siècle, on avait pris l'habitude de figurer sur des reliquaires des représentations iconographiques et, au siècle suivant, nous les voyons fréquemment sur les divers recipients des 'eulogies.' En Egypte . . . en Asie Mineur . . . en Crimée . . . en Syrie . . . et surtout en Palestine . . . les 'eulogies'et l'ipsanothèques, même les plus humbles qu'on fabriquait en série, sont ornées d'images religieuses. . . . Il y est question d'images de saints imprimées sur des ampoules ou des medaillons provenant de leurs tombeaux et qui sont présentées comme de véritables icones capables de produire des miracles."

\textsuperscript{14}Cf. the role of the True Cross relic in the emergence of cross and crucifixion iconography; see Chapter 2, above.

\textsuperscript{15}On the cult of relics, see Henri Leclercq, "Reliques et reliquaires," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et le liturgie*, vol. 14, pt 2, cols. 2301: "Il semble que dès le VI\textsuperscript{e} siècle le baisement de reliques de martyrs était devenu une pratique populaire . . . "; Andre Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 2; Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, 2nd ed. (Bruxelles:
cult. Indeed, the cross bore a peculiar relationship to images during this period. The cult of images and the cross arose in the same milieu and derived from many of the same impulses to piety; indeed, the cult of the cross may have even provided precedent for certain aspects of the image cult, such as proskynesis. Both cults were, in fact, criticized inside and outside the Church in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. However, in the course of time the cult of the cross came to be distinguished from that of images. We find this distinction among the seventh century Armenian iconoclasts and the Byzantine iconoclasts of the eighth and ninth centuries. How does one account for this development?

At the outset, the cult of the cross was itself not immune to the charge of superstition and idolatry, even among the Church fathers. Although Augustine of Hippo believed in the healing power of the cross, he was quick to criticize those who misused the signum crucis. He took to task, for instance, those who at public games, when on becoming frightened by the spectacle, would "continually sign themselves [with the cross], and stand there wearing [the cross] on their foreheads, whereas if they wore [the cross] in their hearts, they would leave [the amphitheatre]."


16 See Chapter 2, above.

Augustine's mentor, Ambrose of Milan, for his part, warned against the dangers of too enthusiastic and unconsidered devotion to the relic of the cross. In his funeral oration for the Emperor Theodosius the Great, Ambrose recounted the Empress Helena's alleged discovery of the wood of the True Cross more than half a century earlier. Upon finding the venerable wood, he told his listeners, Helena "found the placard (identifying the cross as Christ's) and adored the King [Christ], not the wood. Because this latter is an error of the Gentiles and a vanity of the wicked, she instead adored him who hung on the wood."\(^{18}\)

Jerome was openly scornful of the superstitious uses to which the relic of the cross was often put. In his commentary on Matthew, for instance, he criticized superstitious women who, out of zeal for God, misplaced their trust in little Gospel phylacteries and "in the wood of the cross."\(^{19}\) Indeed, he went even farther, calling into question the ultimate significance of the relic of the cross. In his treatise on the Psalms, he commented:

By the cross I mean not the wood, but the Passion. That cross is in Britain, in India, in the whole world. . . . Happy is he who carries in his own heart the cross, the

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\(^{18}\) Ambrose, *Oratio de obitu Theodosii*, c. 46, MPL 16: 1464B: "Invenit ergo titulum, Regem adoravit, non lignum utique; quia hic gentilis est error, et vanitas impiorum; sed adoravit illum, qui peependit in ligno . . . ."

\(^{19}\) Jerome, *Commentarius in Mattheum*, IV (Matth. 23:5): "Hoc apud nos superstitiose mulierculae im paruulis euangelis, in crucis ligno, et in istiusmodi rebus, qui habent quidem zelum Dei, sed non iuxta scientiam, usque hodie factitant."
resurrection, the place of the Nativity of Christ and of his Ascension.  

Such comments indicate that in the fourth century there was concern among high ecclesiastics not only with the abuses to which religious images could be put, but also the cross. There was, indeed, alarm particularly at the superstitious excesses surrounding the relic of the True Cross and the practice of signing with the cross. It is especially significant that such expressions of concern came not from opponents of the cult of the cross, but from devotees of the cross within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Ambrose, indeed, is one of our principal sources for the story of Helena's invention of the True Cross, and we have already remarked in the last chapter on Augustine's belief in the healing efficacy of the sign of the cross. Their objections were not to the cross per se or its cult, but rather in the right-mindedness of the believer when confronted with the cross or in invoking the cross's protective power when signing himself. This was a very different objection from that raised by the fourth century and later opponents of images. They objected both to images as sacrilegious or tending to promote idolatry. Such objections to the cross rarely arose, from within the Church itself, even at the height of iconoclasm. Instead, they came from outside the Church, from the Church's pagan and Jewish opponents.

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Pagan and Jewish Criticism of Images and the Cross

One of the earliest examples of criticism of the Christian cultus from outside the Church came from the Emperor Julian, an apostate Christian, who preferred to place his trust in the ancient ancile of Rome than in the cross of Christ. "You [Christians] bow before the wood of the cross," wrote Julian, "painting it on your foreheads, and tracing it on your houses." The thrust of his objection was the vanity of placing one's trust in the cross when there were more ancient and, in his mind, more efficacious objects of devotion. His criticism of the cult of the cross relic must have titillated educated pagans, who would have considered Christian proskynesis before the True Cross as the height of hypocrisy coming from those who condemned the idols of Jupiter or Minerva as superstition and blasphemy against the one true God.

However annoying this pagan criticism may have been to the Church, more troublesome was that which came from the Jews. Certainly judging from the surviving Christian apologetical literature, it was the attack from the Synagogue which was most persistant and extreme and which caused Church leaders most concern. Judaism, which had also


Ps. Athanasius, Contra Julianum, MPG 76: 796-7.


For expressions of this concern, see esp. Marcel Simon, "La polémique antijuive de saint Jean Chrysostome et le mouvement judaïsant d'Antioche," Annaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves, vol. 4: Mélanges Franz Cumont (Bruxelles, 1936), pp. 403-21;
enjoyed an efflorescence of iconography in the third century, seems to have undergone an iconoclastic purging during the sixth, at least in Palestine and perhaps in other centers as well. This inward purification was soon translated into criticism of the Christian cultus, particularly the cult of images and the cross. A number of Christian apologiae, some in the form of debates with Jews, some as sermons, or catechetical exercises reflect this criticism. The Jews criticized Christians for, as they saw it, transgressing the Mosaic prohibition against making and worshiping idols. Christian apologists, in turn, denied the charge of idolatry while pointing to similar practices in Jewish cult and worship.

In defending the cult of the cross against the charge of idolatry, Christians repeated many of the same arguments that they employed in defending the cult of images. They stated, for instance, that by


venerating the wood of the cross, they were in fact honoring Christ, who was crucified on the cross. They thus used the same argument in defending the cult of the cross that they employed in defending the cult of images, viz., that the honor paid to the object in fact was intended for the prototype. In the case of the cross, the one honored was Christ.

Thus Leontius of Neapolis (Cyprus) argued:

When, therefore, you see Christians adoring the cross, know that they offer adoration to Christ crucified and not to the wood... We do not say to the cross, nor to the images of the saints: you are our gods. For they are not our gods, but likenesses and images of Christ and of his saints set up and to be adored for remembrance and honor and for the embellishment of the churches.29

To underline this position, Christian apologists pointed out that there was nothing intrinsically holy in the wood of icons nor in that of crosses. When the image painted on a panel of wood faded or was damaged, the wood of the icon was burned. So too in the case of the cross: unless two pieces of wood formed an image of the cross, no veneration was owing them, and indeed, they could be destroyed.29

According to another seventh century work:

We [Christians] make the figure of the cross, which we adore, from two (pieces of) wood. But if any of the

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29Leontius of Neapolis, Contra Judeeos, MPG 93: 1607C: "Ὅταν οὖν ίδης Χριστιανοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τὸν σταυρὸν, γνώτι ὅτι τῷ σταυρωθέντι Χριστῷ τὴν προσκύνησιν προσάγοντι, και οὐ τῷ ξύλῳ. Ἐπεὶ εἰ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ ξύλου ἔσεθον, πάντως ἐκ καὶ τὰ δέντρα καὶ τὰ ἄλοι προσκύνοντο, ὡσπερ καὶ οὐ ποτε ὁ Ἰσραήλ προσευκνεῖς τούτοις, λέγων τῷ δένδρῳ καὶ τῷ ξύλῳ. Σὺ μοι εἰ Θεός, καὶ οὐ με ἐγέννησας. Πόλιν δὲ οὐχ οὗ ὑπὸ λέγομεν ἡμεῖς τῷ σταυρῷ, οὔτε ταῖς μορφαῖς τῶν ἁγίων. Θεοὶ ἡμῶν ἐστε· οὐ γὰρ εἰσὶ θεοὶ ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ὁμοιώματα καὶ εἰμόνες Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ἀνάμνησιν, καὶ τιμήν, καὶ εὐκρεπέσθαι ἐκκλησίην προσέμενα καὶ προσκυνούμενα."

29This argument seems to have ignored the problem of the relic of the True Cross and seems only to have referred to the wood of devotional crosses set up in churches, along roadsides, or private homes.
unbelievers wants to reproach us that we worship the cross, we can separate the two pieces of wood, dissolve the form of the cross and consider (these) as mere (pieces of) wood and thence persuade the unbeliever that we do not venerate the wood but the figure of the cross.\(^{30}\)

Christian apologists pointed out, moreover, that the Jews themselves honored objects, such as the ark of the covenant, the tablets of the law, and the Torah scrolls.\(^{31}\)

The cross, they asserted, like icons fulfilled a pedagogic function: the cross also served in churches as an open book to remind Christians of God. Thus Leontius observed that "almost daily" idolators, murderers, and robbers were converted to a godly life through Christ and his cross.\(^{32}\)

\(^{30}\)Ps-Athanasius, Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem, PG 28: 624B: "Τὸ μὲν τοῦ σταυροῦ τὐπὸν ἐκ δύο ἔξυλων συνάπτοντεσπροσκυνοῦμεν. Ἑγίκα δὲ τι ἡμῖν τῶν ἀκίτων ἐγκαλέσειν, ὡς ἔξυλον προσκυνοῦντας, δυνάμεθα τὰ δύο ξύλα χωρίζαντες, καὶ τὸν τύπον τοῦ σταυροῦ διαλύσαντες, ὡς ἀργὰ ταῦτα ἡγεῖσαι ξύλα, καὶ τὸν ἀκίτων πεῖσαι, ὅτι οὐ τὸ ἔξυλον σεβόμεθα, ἀλλὰ τὸν τοῦ σταυροῦ τύπον."

\(^{31}\)Leontius of Neapolis, Sermo contra Judaeos, PG 93: 1600C: "ὁπερ σὺ προσκυνῶν τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ νόμου, οὐ τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ δερμάτων καὶ τοῦ μέλανος προσκυνεῖς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς λόγους τοῦ Θεοῦ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ κειμένους· οὕτως κἀγὼ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ προσκυνοῦμεν, οὐ τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἔξυλον καὶ χρωμάτων προσκυνῶ· μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὸν ἄρχον χαρακτῆρα Χριστοῦ κρατῶν, δὲ αυτοῦ Χριστοῦ κρατεῖν δοκῶ καὶ προσκυνεῖν. Καὶ ὁπερ ὁ Ἰακὼβ δεξάμενος παρὰ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ χιτῶνα ποικίλον ἡμαγείον τοῦ Ἰωσήφ, κατεφίλησε μετὰ βακρῶν, καὶ τοῖς ἱδίοις ὀφθαλμίσις τούτοις περιεθηκέν, καὶ οὐ τὸ ἰμάτιον ἄγαπων, ἦ τιμῶν, τοῦτο ἐποίησον, ἀλλὰ δι' αὐτοῦ νομᾶς τον Ἰωσήφ καταφιλεῖν, καὶ ἐν χερου δούτων κατέχειν."

\(^{32}\)Leontius of Neapolis, Sermo contra Judaeos, MPG 93: 1601D: "Ποῦαι, εἰπέ μοι, ἐπίσκοπε, πώσαι ἀναβλύσεις, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ αὐτάδων ὑπεικεῖς ἐξ εἰδῶν καὶ λειψάνων μαρτύρων γεγοναί; Καὶ οὐ ἀνυγετοί τῇ καθά τρία ἔργων τούτων πείθονται, ἀλλὰ μικροίς ταύτα καὶ λίθους λογίζονται· ὑφώντες οὕτως τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ὁσιωδείᾳ σχεδὸν ἀνδρας ἀσέβεις καὶ παρανόμους, εἰδωλολάτρας· καὶ φονεῖς, πόρνους, καὶ ληστὰς ἐξαιρήσεις διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν σταῦρον αὐτοῦ κατανυσσομένους, καὶ κόμοις κανῖτος ἀποτασσομένους, καὶ πόσαν ἀρετὴν ἐργαζόμενους."
These sixth and seventh century Christian apologiae for images and the cross provided ammunition for later defenders of the Christian cultus against Christian iconoclasts. Leontius of Neapolis, for instance, was quoted at the Second Council of Nicaea (787). However, in a perverse turn, some of these apologiae also provided Christian iconoclasts arguments against the cult of the cross.

Indeed, it is entirely possible that these iconophile apologiae aimed to convince other Christians as well as the Jews. That there continued to be Christian iconophobes during the sixth and seventh centuries as there had been during the fourth, there can be little doubt. Indeed, it is during the course of the seventh century that we come upon the first major Christian iconoclast movement in Armenia, on the fringes of the Christian world.

Armenian Iconoclasm and the Cross

The Armenians were the first nation as such to convert to Christianity. This occurred, according to tradition, in the early fourth century.\(^3^5\) According to tradition, the first Christian king of Armenia was Tiridates I, who ruled from 301 to 330 AD.\(^3^4\) He converted to Christianity and built many churches and monasteries. The Armenian church adopted the Gregorian rite and became an independent church in 441 AD.

\(^3^3\) Mansi 13: 44B-53C.

\(^3^4\) See Chapter 6, below.

\(^3^5\) This is not to say that these apologiae were not also (or primarily) directed against the Jews. As Marcel Simon, Verus Israel, p. 208, has observed, "[d]es temoignages nombreux attestant la réalité des controverses savantes entre Juifs et Chrétiens. Ils éclairent le véritable sens de la littérature anti-juive."

century, when King Tiridates III accepted the Gospel and baptism from St. Gregory the Illuminator. Gregory had been sent from Caesarea in Cappadocia to convert the Armenians, and for nearly the first century of its existence, the Armenian Church maintained close ties to this see and Byzantine Christianity. In time, however, the two Christian communions grew apart. There were several reasons for this. The first was geopolitical. Armenia was on the easternmost flank of the Roman Empire and had served as a bone of contention between Rome and Persia since the middle of the third century. In 390 the country was partitioned between the two empires, and in 430 it lost all semblance of political identity when the monarchy came to an end. Before this, however, the Armenian Church had already achieved autonomy from Roman Christianity when, in 375, it severed its ties of dependence on the see of Caesarea. Subsequently, the liturgy and Scriptures were translated from Syriac into Armenian. In other ways, too, the Armenian Church drifted farther apart from the Church in the Roman Empire. The Armenians attended neither the councils of Ephesus (431) nor Chalcedon (450). While they subsequently ratified the declarations of the former, their repudiation of the latter (largely for political reasons) marked them as Monophysite ever after in the Orthodox Byzantine mind. Thus by the middle of the fifth century, the Armenian Church had largely severed its ecclesiastical and administrative ties with the Orthodox Christian communion.

It was among this Church and people, isolated ecclesiastically from their fellow Christians to the west, and subject occasionally to Persian

Mazdaist and later Arab Muslim persecution, that the first Christian iconoclast movement took root. About this movement, we know disappointingly little. Our sources are primarily two: a short treatise by the vardapet (teacher) Vrt'anes K'ert'ogh (fl. 600) and a letter by John Mayrogometsi to Bishop David of Albania, written in 682/83. Both sources speak of now two, now three, renegade monks, who began to agitate for the reform of the Armenian Church. Among other things, they attacked the making and use of religious images, and in time they attracted a following of the similarly disaffected. These monks and their followers reportedly objected to images because they believed them to be contrary to Scripture, as objects of idolatry, which they rejected as the adoration of vile matter.

It is not necessary, they [the iconoclasts] say, to have paintings and images in the churches. And they cite as witness the words of the Old Testament which were spoken on the subject of idolatry denounced by the prophets.

Although they rejected images, the iconoclasts did not reject the cross; on the contrary, they adored it as fervently as the orthodox. They

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thus became the first iconoclast group to make a fundamental distinction between the cross and images and so anticipated the position of the Byzantine iconoclasts. According to the Vrt'anes K'ert'ogh

what is astonishing is that you [iconoclasts] accept the Commandments and you persecute the Lord; you bow down before the symbol [of the cross] and you stone the King; you honor the cross and you affront the Crucified.\(^4\)

Why this continued devotion to the cross? Too little is known about these iconoclasts to do more than speculate on an answer to this question. Perhaps the principal reason was the prominence of the cross throughout the history of Armenian Christianity.\(^4\) Indeed, Christianity and the sign of the cross traditionally had been intimately associated from the very beginnings of the Armenian Church. Agathangelos (fl. 450), the historian of the early Armenian church, describes how St. Gregory the Illuminator traveled throughout Armenia "multiplying churches, establishing priests, [and] imposing on everyone the sign of Christ, so that all became

\(^4\)Der Nersessian, "Apologie des Images," p. 62: "ce qui est etonnant c'est que vous acceptez les commandements et vous persecutez le Seigneur; vous vous prosternez devant le symbole [c'est a dire la croix] et vous lapidez le roi; vous honorez la croix et vous outragez le crucifie."

\(^4\)Henri Leclercq, "Croix et crucifix," Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1948), col. 3061, has written of Armenian devotion to the cross: "Tout ce qu'on peut conclure de l'histoire religieuse de l'Armenie, c'est que le culte de la croix y était en faveur à cette époque. Un Syrien, disciple de saint Grégoire, Zenob, évêque de Klag, parle dans sa Chronique de croix de pierre ou de bois élevés par les princes armeniens, parfois à la place des idoles, et bénites par le patriarche. Au pied du mont Arztan, par exemple, le roi Tiridate ériga une grande croix de gros blocs de pierre polie sur l'emplacement même du temple de Kicane, en avant de la fontaine ou saint Grégoire avait guerir les malades. Lorsque l'instrument sacré eut été planté, on célébra une fête en signe de réjouissance . . . Le roi donna l'ordre de compte les assistants et d'en graver le chiffre sur le fût de la croix. Ou bien encore Zenob représente saint Grégoire faisant porter devant lui la croix du Saveur."
(filled) with the Holy Spirit." Crosses, particularly of stone, were erected throughout the countryside, along roads and streets, in public squares and cross-roads, in churches and chapels for the people to adore. "Only in front of this all-saving sign," St. Gregory was supposed to have declared, "should you worship the Lord God your creator."

The erection of these crosses, moreover, was associated on many occasions, in this early tradition, with the battle against pagan idolatry. Thus, Agathangelos has St. Gregory remark that

instead of carved pieces of wood, he [Christ] set up his cross in the middle of the universe, that those who were accustomed to worshipping wood, by this familiar and accustomed (object) might be persuaded to worship the cross of wood . . . .

And because men ate and drank the blood of idolatrous animal sacrifices, therefore he shed his own blood on the wood, so that the wood (might replace) the wooden sculptures . . . .

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43 Der Nersessian, "Image Worship in Armenia," p. 68. Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, c. 782, pp. 320/21, attributed the erection of the earliest of these crosses to St. Gregory: "In all the cities of Armenia, and the villages and hamlets and estates he indicated the sites for the house of God. But he did not draw the foundation or erect an altar anywhere to the name of God, because he did not possess the rank of priesthood. But he simply encircled the places with a wall and set up the sign of the Lord's cross. He similarly set up the same sign worshipped by all as a guard and refuge at the ends and beginnings of roads, in the streets, and at squares and intersections."


After this example, concluded Agathangelos, the Armenians 'abandoned the worship of useless idols made by hand and turned to worship the benevolent God.'

The similarity of the Armenian iconoclasts' attitude toward the cross and images and that of the later Byzantine Iconoclasts' is so striking, their temporal and geographic proximity so suggestive, it is unfortunate that we do not know more about their teaching and later history. That we should not jump too readily to conclusions, however, is suggested by John of Odsun (fl. 8th century), who relates that the eighth century survivors of this movement joined up with the Paulicians, a sect that may or may not have rejected images but most assuredly rejected the Cross!*

Byzantine Iconoclasm and the Cross

The Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy was a watershed in the history of the Christian use of religious images. This struggle of nearly


For a discussion of the Paulicians and their attitude toward the Cross and images, see the Excursus at the end of this chapter.

a century and a quarter altered not only the scope and tenor of Byzantine religious experience but also influenced attitudes in the Latin West. The origins of the controversy are obscure; it is unclear in what proportion and degree the iconophobia and occasional iconoclasm of earlier individuals and groups, whether inside or outside the Church, may have contributed to the outburst of anti-image sentiment and practice within the Byzantine church and state in the second quarter of the eighth century. Whatever may have been the ultimate causes at work, sometime between 726 and 730 the Emperor Leo III, in a series of actions, inaugurated the war on images. Leo's motives are far from clear. Did he act from personal conviction or strategic considerations? Was he influenced by Muslim, Jewish, or indigenous Christian iconophobia? At one time or another contemporaries and later scholars have advanced all of these reasons to account for Leo's


iconoclasm. Based on what little evidence survives, it seems that Leo, like earlier Christian iconophobes, justified his iconoclastic measures primarily on the Mosaic prohibition of graven images.11

If there was precedent for rejecting images along the lines of the Mosaic injunction against idols, there was likewise a long-standing tradition within the Church that rejected, in turn, this rationale. Armed with this tradition, John of Damascus (ca. 675–ca. 749) essayed to refute the Iconoclast program. At the same time, however, John advanced beyond the traditional boundaries of this debate by arguing for images on the basis of the Neo-Platonic categories of Pseudo-Dionysius.12

Leo was succeeded by his son Constantine V (741–775), under whose leadership the Iconoclastic movement reached its apogee. Preoccupied with an attempted usurpation at the outset of his reign, Constantine did not immediately press his own deeply held iconoclastic beliefs. These went well beyond Leo’s Old Testament piety and were argued with the sophistication worthy of a theologian. Constantine maintained that Christ could not be circumscribed in material colors, and that those who asserted otherwise were guilty of either Nestorianism or Monophysitism.13 (Constantine was himself accused of Monophysitism and even Manichaeism by his Iconophile opponents. His rejection of images of

11See especially Stephen Gero, Leo III, p. 130.


Christ, however, seems rather to have derived from indigenous Christian iconophobia.\textsuperscript{44} In 754 Constantine summoned a council, which met in the imperial palace of Hieria, to determine and ratify official iconoclast ideology which, after some deliberation, the council did.\textsuperscript{45} Armed with this conciliar authority, Constantine waged a nearly ten-year war on recalcitrant iconophile forces, whose reservoir of strength lay largely in the Byzantine monastic establishment.

Despite this severe persecution, the Iconophile party rallied following Constantine's death and that of his son, Leo the Khazar (775-780). The focus of Iconophile hope was the latter's widow, the Empress Irene (780-802), who governed initially as regent for her son, Constantine VI (780-797), then jointly with him, and following his deposition, briefly in her own right. In 787, Irene summoned a council to reconsider the issue of images. The council was convened in Constantinople in August 787. When its initial session was interrupted by Iconoclast troops, the council was transferred to Nicaea, where the remainder of its deliberations took place. This Second Council of Nicaea (= 2 Nicaea), overturned the canons of the Iconoclast council of 754 and reaffirmed the cult of images.\textsuperscript{56}

This first restoration of images was, however, short-lived, owing to a variety of factors, not least of which was the military incompetence


\textsuperscript{56}Mansi 12: 951-1154 and 13: 1-496.
or bad luck of successive Iconophile rulers, who contrasted unfavorably with the martial prowess of Leo III and Constantine V. In 813, with the Bulgars at the gates of the capital, the army and people turned to Leo V the Armenian (d. 820), an Iconoclast by conviction, albeit a pragmatic one. Leo attempted an accommodation between his Iconoclast and Iconophile subjects by removing the lowest hanging images from the churches while allowing those on the upper walls to stand. This compromise was rejected by the Iconophile Patriarch Nicephorus (806-815), whom Leo thereupon deposed and drove into exile. In 815, the emperor convened a council at Constantinople, which reinstated the canons of 754 while sanctioning Leo's compromise on the use and display of religious images.

Leo was assassinated in 820 while officiating at Christmas celebrations in Hagia Sophia. His murderer ruled as Michael II the Amorian (820-827). Michael continued Leo's policy of moderation on images and attempted a rapprochement with Iconophile leaders, including the former patriarch Nicephorus and the leader of the monastic opposition, Theodore the Studite (fl. 759-826). In 824, he sent an embassy to the court of the Frankish ruler, Louis the Pious, requesting that Louis intercede on his behalf with the papacy, which continued to give aid and comfort to Iconophile forces. The ultimate outcome of this embassy is unknown.

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58 For the text of the Horos, see Hennephof, Textus Byzantinos, pp. 79-82.

59 Ladner, "Bilderstreit," pp. 3-12.
although it occasioned the Frankish court and church to reexamine its own position concerning the image controversy (see Chapter 5).  

Michael was succeeded by his son, Theophilus (824-843), who, under the influence of his former teacher, the Iconoclast Patriarch John the Grammarian (834-843), renewed the persecution of obdurate iconophiles. He did not, however, extend this persecution to include one particularly ardent iconophile, his wife Theodora. Following the precedent of Irene, the Empress Theodora, after her husband’s death ruling on behalf of her infant son Michael III, restored the cult of images in 843. Despite occasional reports thereafter of Iconoclast sentiment, this restoration of images proved permanent, and the image or icon thereafter remained an integral part of Byzantine religious life.

Despite the differences between the Iconoclasts and Iconophiles over the making and use of religious images, there was one constant upon which both parties could agree: throughout the course of the Iconoclastic Controversy, both continued to venerate the cross. Why this was so, and how each camp nuanced its veneration of the cross, is the purpose of the remainder of this chapter to examine.

Byzantine Iconoclasts and the Cross. The Byzantine iconoclasts continued to venerate the cross even while rejecting images and their cult. The evidence for this iconoclastic cross cult is various and widespread.  

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61 Milton V. Anastos, "The Ethical Theory of Images formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 8 (1954): 158 cites several texts used by the iconoclasts to justify the use of the cross to the exclusion of images.
The iconoclasts frequently replaced images of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints depicted on the walls of churches and other monumental edifices with the cross. The most notorious instance of this practice occurred at the outset of the Iconoclastic Controversy when the image of Christ over the Chalke gate of the imperial palace was replaced by a cross. Several examples of such crosses have survived to the modern period, such as the cross in the half dome of the apse in Hagia Eirene in Constantinople and in the church by the same name in Thessalonica. The cross, moreover, was employed extensively throughout iconoclast church decoration, whether to replace other images or on its own account. Perhaps the most dramatic juxtaposition of the cross with images occurred during the reign of Constantine V when the Patriarch of Constantinople was made to swear on the cross that he had always hated images.

Although little survives to account for the Armenian iconoclasts' rejection of images and veneration of the cross and that at second hand, certain first-hand evidence has come down to us to illuminate Byzantine iconoclasts' continued reverence for the cross. This evidence consists

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preeminently of a series of iconoclast verses preserved among the works of the iconophile apologist Theodore of Studion.\textsuperscript{65}

These verses contain several themes which help explain the iconoclasts' devotion to the cross and how the cross became the virtual banner of their cause. Perhaps the most important of these themes casts the cross as a defense against idolatry. Thus one verse reads:

The Cross, which did join those things beforehand dispersed truly does confirm piety. O Logos, by overturning every spectacle of images, it [i.e., the Cross] exalted your own glory, showing the potent force of faith.\textsuperscript{66}

Another declares:

They who have received power from the one God, Leo and Constantine who wear the diadem, depict the \textit{typos} [Cross] of the Lord, bearing in their hearts the desire for him; they took away from that place the spectacle of the imagery, which was heedlessly devised in vain in the past.\textsuperscript{67}


\textsuperscript{66} MPG 99: 475/76C:

\begin{quote}
"Σταυρῷς συνάψας τάπριν ἐσκεδασμόνα ἡν εἰσεβείαν Γνήσιως ὑπογράφει. Ανατρέπον γὰρ εἰκόνην πᾶσαν θεάν. ὃς ὁ Παλαιών ἐμφανώς, Δόγε, ἔρωμε κραταία ποτεστος δεδειμένας." \end{quote}

The verses have been translated and discussed by Stephen Gero, \textit{Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III, with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources}, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 346, Subsidia, vol. 41 (Louvain: Secretariat du Corpus SCO, 1973), p. 121. All of the verses discussed in this chapter have been translated by Gero.

\textsuperscript{67} Gero, \textit{Leo III}, p. 116; MPG 99: 477/78A:

\begin{quote}
"Οι τῷ κράτους λαθόντες εἰκ θεοῦ μόνου, Δέουν τε Κωνσταντίνος οἱ στεφθοροι, Ἀνισοροφοὶ τῶν τύπων τοῦ Δεσπότου. Εὐγκαρδίον, φέροντες αὐτοῦ τὸν πόθον, Εἰκή δὲ ἡν πρὶν καὶ μάτην πεπλασμένην Ἐξήραν ἐνθεν εἰκονουργίας θεάν." \end{quote}
The imagery attacked was preeminently that of Christ himself. Thus another verse reads:

The ruler does not tolerate that Christ be depicted (as) a voiceless shape and bereft of breath, with earthly matter, (which is) condemned by the Scriptures; Leo, with his son Constantine, marks the thrice-blessed image of the cross, the glory of believers, upon the gates of the royal palace.\(^7\)

This clearly alludes to the image of Christ on the Chalke gate, which was removed by Leo III and replaced with the cross.\(^6\) Another verse expresses a similar sentiment:

O Logos, in order to strengthen the piety of mortals, and to show a clear and complete knowledge of yourself, you gave a law that only the cross be depicted; you disown being pictured on walls by means of materials of artifice here, as clearly [now] as before.\(^7\)

Iconoclast versifiers also considered the cross as a guarantor of victory and tropaion of the Empire. One verse declares: "I triumph over enemies and slay barbarians".\(^1\) (Gero suggests that this verse, which

\(^6\)Gero, Leo III, pp. 114-15; MPG 99: 437/38C:

"Ἀφωνον εἴδος, καὶ πνεύμα ἐξηρμένον,
Χριστὸν γράφεσθαι μὴ φέρων ὁ δεσπότης.
Τῇ γε γενάται, ταῖς γραφαῖς πατομένη,
Δέον σὺν τῷ τῷ λάντανει 
Σταυροῦ χαρᾶσθαι τὸν τρισάλθιον τύπον,
Καύχημα πιστῶν, ἐν πάλας ἀνακτόρων."

\(^7\)See Gero, Leo III, pp. 113-14, for the identification of this verse.

\(^9\)Gero, Leo III, p. 121; MPG 99: 435/36B-437/38A:

"Ἰνα κρατύνης τοῖς Κάτω σέβας, Δόγη.
Γυμνὶς τῇ ἐν ἐμφανί ἐκάκος πλέον
Νόμοιν δέδωκας ΣΤΑΥΡΟΝ ἐγγράφειν μόνων
Ἀπαξιοίς δὲ τεχνητοῖς ὑλῆς ὑπὸ
Τοιχογραφεῖς, ὃ ἱλον ὃς πρὶν ἐνθάδε."
appears in the form of a cruciform acrostic, once graced an imperial battle standard, perhaps one in the form of the cross.\textsuperscript{72} Another verse, by a certain Ignatios, declares: "Behold, the great rulers engrave it [the Cross] as a victory-bringing sign."\textsuperscript{73} Since the time of Constantine the Great, the cross had been the standard of the Empire and was closely associated with the imperial house.\textsuperscript{74} At the same time, imperial tradition looked to Biblical precedent. One version of the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717 depicted the Emperor Leo III as Moses redivivus holding aloft the cross as Moses did his staff when joined in battle with Amalech. Reflecting this

\begin{center}
\textbf{EX P O Y S T P O Y M A I}
\end{center}

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\textbf{K A I F O N E Y O B A P B A P Y S}
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\textsuperscript{72} Gero, Leo III, p. 116.

\textsuperscript{73} Gero, Leo III, p. 121; MPG 99: 437/38A:
\begin{quote}
"Ιδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸν οἱ Μ ἑγιστοὶ δεσπότα Ι ὦ ζ νικηφόρον ἐγγὺς Α βάπτουσι τύπον Ν."
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{74} Andre Grabar, L'empereur dans l'art byzantin (Strasbourg, 1936; London: Variorum Reprints, 1971) p. 35, notes that "la croix a été considérée de tout temps à Byzance comme un symbole du triomphe des empereurs regnants," and goes on to note that (p. 36), "[l]e theme de la croix nicéphore jouit de la même popularité chez les successeurs des Iconoclastes."
theme one verse reads: "Moses destroyed the principalities manifestly by this sign [of the Cross], and prevailed over the enemy." The victory-bringing cross must have appealed to the Iconoclast emperors Leo III and Constantine V, great warriors both, in search of a sign of Heaven's assistance in their cause.

In addition to these themes, which had particular appeal to the iconoclast emperors Leo and Constantine, the verses also touch on more general beliefs about the cross. In a verse by the iconoclast Stephen we read: "Support of the faithful and [object] of divine worship, O Logos, you gave us the cross, the vivifying *typos* of sufferings, for salvation." An acrostic accompanying another verse reads: "In a saving way, the Cross raised up Sergius." Still another acrostic reads: "The Passion of Christ is the hope of John." These acrostics evidence the persistence of conventional piety about the cross among iconoclasts.

These verses, the remnants of what must have been an extensive iconoclast propaganda, together with the surviving monumental evidence, bespeak the iconoclast loyalty to the cross. This loyalty was based first and foremost on the cross as a symbol of victory, victory over the barbarian infidel outside the church and empire and the blasphemous

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75 Gero, Leo III, p. 122; MPG 99: 437/38AB: "Σαφεῖς ο Ὁμοίς εἶλεν Α ρχὰς ἐν τῷ Ω/ 'Ε χρόνον κρατήσας."

76 Gero, Leo III, p. 123; MPG 99: 437/38B: "Στηρίγμα πιστῶν, κ αἱ σέβας θείων, Δόγ Ε, Τ ὁν ζωοτούν τῶν Η θημάτων τύπο Ν 'Ε δωκας ἡμῖν ΣΤΑΥΡΟΝ, εἰς σωτηρία Ν." 

77 Gero, Leo III, p. 122; MPG 99: 437/38AB: "Σεργίου ἀνύψωσε σταυρὸς ώς σώσας."

78 Gero, Leo III, p. 118; MPG 435/36B: "Χριστοῦ τὸ πάθος ἔλπις Ἰωάννη."
idolator within. The cross thus appealed to the iconoclast emperors, who saw themselves as the defenders of both Church and state. This sense of duty had indeed lain at the foundation of the Byzantine imperial idea since the establishment of the Christian empire by Constantine the Great in the fourth century.¹³

In addition to this imperial ideology of the cross, however, these verses also point to the importance of the cross in popular piety as the symbol of salvation in Christ, a piety that continued to be felt as well by leading iconoclasts. Thus the cross appealed on two levels to Byzantine iconoclasts: that of imperial ideology as well as that of traditional piety. Given this, it is not surprising that the cross occupied a well-nigh unassailable position throughout the period.

Byzantine Iconophiles and the Cross. Byzantine iconophiles never forsook their reverence for the cross despite its use by the iconoclast party. Instead, they exploited the general consensus supporting its cult to justify the cult of images. This is clear from the Definition of 2 Nicaea:

We define with all accuracy and care that the venerable and holy icons be set up like the form of the venerable and life-giving Cross. . . . [including] the images of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of our undefiled Lady the Holy Mother of God, of the angels worthy of honour, and of all the holy and pious men. . . . [And that those who behold the holy icons are] to offer them both

incense and candles, in the same way as to the form of the venerable and life-giving Cross . . . .

Indeed, the intent of the Definition seems to have been to establish a sort of parity between the two cults. In spite of this, however, the symbol of Christ's passion proved something of an embarrassment for Byzantine iconophiles.

We have seen how the iconoclasts replaced with crosses the most prominent images of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints. If the images were to be restored, these crosses would have to go. The Empress Irene, for instance, replaced the iconoclast cross above the Chalke gate of the palace once more with the image of Christ. Likewise, in many parts of

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80 Joannes Dominicus Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, vol. 13 (Florence: Antonius Zatta Venetus Press, 1767), col. 377/78D: ὃ ῥίζημεν σὺν ἀκριβείᾳ πάση καὶ ἐμβελείᾳ παραπλησίως τῷ τύπῳ τοῦ τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ ἀνατίθενται τὰς σεπτὰς καὶ ἁγίας εἰκόνας, τὰς ἐκ χρωμάτων καὶ ψηφίσματι καὶ ἐτέρας ἁλῆς ἐπιτηδείως ἔχουσίς ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαις, ἐν ἱεροῖς σκέπαι καὶ ἐσθήσαι, τοῖχοι τε καὶ σανίδες, σκόπος τε καὶ ὁδόις· τῆς τε τοῦ κυρίου καὶ θεοῦ καὶ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰκόνας, καὶ τῆς ἀρχαντοῦ δεσποτίνος ἡμῶν τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου, τιμίων τε ἀγγέλων, καὶ πάντων ἁγίων καὶ ὅσιων ἀνθρώπων. Ὄσον γὰρ συνεχῶς ἐἱκονικίς ἀνατύπωσος ὁ Ὀρίζων, τοσοῦτον καὶ οἱ ταύταις θέωνοι διανύονται πρὸς τὴν τῶν πρωτοτύπων μνήμην τε καὶ ἐκπόθησιν, καὶ ταύταις ἀποστίμηνται καὶ τυμητήριον προσκύνησιν ἀπονέμειν· οὐ μὴν τὴν κατὰ πάντα ἡμῶν ἁληθινὴν λατρείαν, ἢ πρέπει μόνη τῇ θείᾳ μνήσει, ἀλλ’ ὅν τρόπον τῷ τύπῳ του τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις εὐαγγελίοις καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἱεροῖς ἀναθήματι καὶ θυμιαματῶν καὶ φώτων προσαγωγήν πρὸς τὴν τῶν τιμήν ποιήσαται, καθὼς καὶ τοῖς ἀρχαίοις εὐθείᾳ ἐθείσαι: "I have used the English translation of this passage provided in Breyer and Herrin, eds., Iconoclasms, p. 184, no. 21.

As Gabriel Millet, "Les iconoclastes et la croix à propos d’une inscription de Cappadoce," Bulletin de Correspondence Hellenique 34 (1910): p. 100, n. 1, observed: "La croix fut si bien leur [the iconoclasts'] symbole que le premier soin des orthodoxes après le VIIe concile fut de 'bannir les croix des églises pour y établir des images.'"

82 Millet, "Les iconoclastes," p. 100.
the empire iconoclast crosses gave way to images of Christ and his saints.\(^3\) (Such restorations, when done in mosaic, were often crudely executed so that the arms of these crosses can sometimes be discerned in the outline of the imperfectly matched tesserae.)

Iconoclasts were outraged by such sacrilege committed against the holy cross. We learn something of their indignation from a letter sent by the iconoclast Emperors Michael II and Theophilus to the Frankish court in 825, following the iconoclasts' restoration to power. In the course of their letter, the emperors observed that

many from among the clergy and laity, alienated from the apostolic traditions and not maintaining their paternal customs, were made inventors of evil deeds. First of all they removed the honorable and living crosses from the holy churches and placed in their stead images and placed lamps before these and at the same time burned incense and had them in such honor as the honorable and living wood [of the cross], on which Christ, our true God, deigned to be crucified for our salvation. They sang and worshipped and sought help from these same images.\(^4\)

Educated iconophiles were not insensitive to the religious dilemma posed by the replacement of crosses with images. Shortly after the first restoration of images under Irene and Constantine VI, they attempted to

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\(^3\) E.g., an image of Christ also replaced the cross in the church of Hagia Sophia in Salonika. See Millet, "Les iconoclastes," p. 100.

justify the priority given to images, particularly the image of Christ, over representations of the cross. Theodore of Studion, employing Aristotelian methods of argumentation then current in the schools of Constantinople, argued that the image of Christ took priority over the representation of the cross since the "cause" or prototype of Christ's image, i.e. Christ, was greater than the cause of any representation of the cross.

This argument was reiterated and elaborated by the Iconodule Patriarch Nicephorus (806-815). In his third Antirrheticus, Nicephorus maintained that "the image that designates Christ himself to us is worthier to be honored than the Cross which shows us the manner of his Passion."

Nicephorus explained:

A cause precedes its effect, especially an efficient cause. That which precedes, moreover, is more to be honored than that which it precedes. Since therefore the cause of the figure of the cross is the Passion of the body of Christ, and the body is the principal cause of the figure of the cross, it follows that the image of the body of Christ, just as the efficient cause, of the figure of the cross, is considered worthier.

Nicephorus also explained this preference for the image of Christ over the figure of the cross in another way:

The name of Christ is made known by the image of Christ just as [if it were] a homonymn. For the image itself [of

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87 Nicephorus, Antirrheticus adversus Constantinum Copronymum, MPG 100: 432BC: "Τὸ αἴτιον τοῦ αἰτιατοῦ προηγεῖται καὶ μᾶλλον τὸ ποιητικόν αἴτιον. τὸ δὲ προηγούμενον τίνος, τιμωτέρου ὁ δὲ προηγεῖται ἐπεὶ ὅτι αἴτιον τοῦ τύπου τοῦ σταυροῦ τὸ πάθος τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ προκαταρκτικόν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ τύπου, καὶ ἡ εἰκών ἀρα τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς ποιητικόν αἴτιον, τοῦ τύπου τοῦ σταυροῦ τιμωτέρα."
Christ] is called Christ just as the image of the king is called the king. This cannot be said, however, of the cross, for no wise man will in any way call the cross Christ . . . Therefore, the image [of Christ] is more worthy of honor than the figure of the cross.\textsuperscript{88}

In still another place, Nicephorus argued that just as Christ was worthier to be honored than the cross, since Christ sanctified the cross through his crucifixion, so the image of Christ was worthier of veneration than the figure of the cross.\textsuperscript{89} Nicephorus also argued that the image of Christ was worthier of veneration than the cross since it more nearly resembled his features than did the cross.\textsuperscript{90} Ultimately, Nicephorus attempted to demonstrate that it was the Iconoclast who dishonored the cross, for the

\textsuperscript{88}Nicephorus, Antirrheticus III adversus Constantinum Copronymum, MPG 100: 432BC: "Τὸ Χριστὸς ὁνόμα ὁμοόνυμος καὶ κατὰ τῆς εἰκόνος αὐτοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ κατηγορεῖται. Χριστὸς γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ λέγεται. Ὅπερ καὶ βασιλεῖς, η τοῦ θαυματού ἐικόνες κατὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ δὲ κατηγορεῖται τούτῳ ἄνωτον. Οὐδὲ ἡ τῷ ἁγίῳ τῶν σωμάτων ἑορταστῶν, ἡ Χριστὸν τοῦ σταυροῦ οὐδέν τρόπον ὁ τοινύν ἐν μεθέξει καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὁνόματος γένει, καθάπερ ἡ τῷ τοῦ σώματος τούτῳ κατασκνώμηθε, τοῦ μηδενὸς τούτων μετασχοντός τιμιώτερον. ἡ εἰκόνα ἄρα τοῦ τύπου τοῦ σταυροῦ τιμιώτερα."

\textsuperscript{89}Nicephorus, Antirrheticus III adversus Constantinum Copronymum, MPG 100: 429BC: "Εἶτα πάρα πάσι τοῖς νοῦν ἑχομεν ὑμολογηται, ἐτί το ἄνωτον τοῦ ἁγιασμένου σκειττὸν ἔστι καὶ τῷ, Χωρίς κατὰς ἀντιλογίας, κατα το ἀκοπελομένων λόγων, τὸ ἐλατον ὑπὸ τοῦ σκειττονού εὐλογεῖται. εἰ τοινύν τὸ σώμα Χριστοῦ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἑγείσας προσσηλήσαν αὐτῷ προσελομένων, καὶ ἡμῖν δι' αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἁγιασμόν ἐνήκεν, ὅ δὲ σταυρὸς δι' αὐτοῦ ἡγίασται. ὅν δὲ τὰ προϊστηκα τιμιώτερα, καὶ αὐτὰ τιμιώτερα. ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἀμφό τύποι καὶ τὸ τύπος τοῦ ἁγιασθέντος σταυροῦ τύμιος, ὁ τύπος ἄρα τοῦ ἁγιαστόντος σώματος, μᾶλλον τιμιώτερον."

\textsuperscript{90}MPG 100: 427/28CD: "Ὅτι ἡ εἰκόνα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁμοίωμα αὐτοῦ ἐστι καὶ τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ προσέοικε, καὶ τοῦ τύπου τὸ σώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμῖν ὑπογράφει, καὶ τὸ ἔδος κατακαγχαλεῖται καὶ τρόπον πράξεως ἡ διδασκαλίᾳ τῆς καθὼς ὡς τὰ πολλὰ ἀποκαθημένα διασημαίνει. ὁ δὲ τοῦ σταυροῦ τύπος, οὔτε προσεοικεῖν αὐτῷ τῷ σώματι, οὔτε οὐδὲν τῶν εἰρημένων ἡμῖν ὑποδεικνύσι τὸ δὲ τοῦ ὄρμον, τοῦ μὴ ὄρμον ἐνυγιστερὸν ἐστὶ καὶ εἰκότερον, ὡς διὰ τῆς ὁμοότητος γνωριμίατος τοῦ ἑικών ἄρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς εἰκότερα καὶ γνωριμίωτερα, τύμιον καὶ σπητό τοῦ τύπου τοῦ σταυροῦ παρ' ἡμῖν τιμιώτερον, τιμιώτερα ἀν εἰς καὶ σεβασμιώτερα."
Iconoclast in rejecting the image of Christ and of the Crucifixion in fact rejected the cross, since the cross could not be greater than that which lent it importance, viz., Christ. On the other hand, Nicephorus asserted that while the cross was not accorded the same honor as images of Christ and the Crucifixion by iconophiles nonetheless they rendered it true veneration.

The iconoclasts' use of the cross thus forced iconophiles to make a distinction between the cross and images, especially the image of Christ. We see this distinction first appear, in fact, in the actions and writings of the iconoclasts: the replacing of Christ's image over the Chalke gate with a cross, on the one hand, and the exaltation of the cross over the "dead image" of Christ in the iconoclast verses, on the other. The iconophiles, once back in control of Church and state, felt moved to respond: first by replacing iconoclast crosses once more with images, and second in a series of learned polemics aimed at refuting iconoclast doctrine about the cross and images. Iconophiles thus abandoned the parity between the cross and images that we first encountered in the sixth and seventh century apologiae of the Christian cultus. Instead, they argued that the image of Christ was superior to the cross in reflecting Christ, the prototype of both.

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91 MPG 100: 431/32CD: "δεδεικται οὖν διὰ πλειόνων, ὡς καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ τύπου του ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ τιμίου ὄντος παρ’ ἡμῖν, ἡ εἰκών τοῦ Χριστοῦ, κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἀποδεδομένων λόγων ἀκολουθίαν τε καὶ ἔξετανι, τιμιότερα ὑπάρχει: ὁ τοῖς τῶν σταυρῶν τιμῆς ἐκαγγελλόμενος, τιμησεὶ ἄρα καὶ τοῦ Κυρίου τῆς εἰκόνας· εἰ δὲ ταύρην οὐ τιμᾷ, οὐδὲ ἐκείνον κολλῶν γε καὶ δει. . . . τί οὖν πρὸς τοῦτο οἱ ἐχοροὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅρασιν, ἀνάγκη δυοῦν τὸ ἔτερον; ἡ προσκυνοῦντας τοῦ σταυροῦ, καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα συμπροκυνήσαι, εἰπέρ μὴ μέλλοι τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτῶν διαπεισθαι· ἡ καθαιροῦντας τὴν εἰκόνα, συγκαταβάλλειν καὶ τὸν σταυρόν."
Summary and Conclusions

By the middle of the sixth century, the cult of the cross was firmly installed in Christian thought, custom, and ritual, both devotional and liturgical. The cross was not, however, the only focus of Christian piety during this period. The rise of the cult of the cross was paralleled by the rise of the cult of images. This was no coincidence. The two cults arose from the same social, cultural, and religious milieux; they satisfied many of the same needs in their devotees; they were similar in the form and content of their ritual. However, when in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries the cult of images was attacked and rejected by an increasing number of Christians, the cult of the cross was largely maintained, even by iconoclasts. This selective rejection of the cult of images but not of the cross by iconoclasts caused the eastern (and later the western) Church to reexamine the relationship of the two cults to one another.

This discrimination between the two cults was indeed something new. In the fourth century, both the cult of images and the cult of the cross came under criticism from within the Church's establishment. Thus the Council of Elvira forbade the painting of religious subjects on the walls of churches. So also Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Augustine found occasion to criticize the growing Christian devotion to images of Christ and the saints. At the same time, the cult of the cross was also criticized by Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. Ambrose and Jerome worried about the superstitious and even idolatrous practices that sometimes invested the cult of the True Cross. Augustine, meanwhile, was critical of the superstitious use of the signum crucis.
In the sixth and seventh centuries, non-Christian criticism of the cult of images and the cross worried Christian apologists. The strongest and most pointed criticism came from the Jews, who condemned alike the cult of images and the cross. In a series of "debates" and treatises, Christian leaders defended the cult of images and the cross, using virtually identical arguments on behalf of both. In general, these arguments stressed that it was not the material wood of the cross or the wooden boards on which images were painted that Christians worshipped but rather the insubstantial, spiritual prototypes of images and the cross, the prototype of the cross being Christ himself. While directed largely at Jews and other non-Christians, these apologiae for images and the cross were probably also directed at troubled and doubting Christians as well.

That many Christians had doubts about the propriety of certain aspects of the Christian cultus is clear from seventh century Armenia, where there arose the first Christian iconoclastic movement. Unfortunately, little is known about these Armenian iconoclasts except that while condemning the cult of images, they continued to adore the cross, even with proskynesis. This marks the first clear instance where Christians rejected the cult of images while continuing to adore the cross. This position clearly foreshadows that of Byzantine Iconoclasm, which likewise condemned images while maintaining the cult of the cross. At the same time, because of our dearth of information about this movement, it is unclear what underlay its discrimination between the cross and images or what connection it may have had, if any, with later developments in Byzantium. Perhaps significant in understanding the attitude of Armenian iconoclasts toward the cross is the dominant role that the cross had
traditionally played in Armenian spirituality, particularly in the struggle with pagan idolatry. In Armenia crosses were erected throughout the land, replacing pagan temples and cult sites to exorcise, as it were, the demons of idolatry. Indeed, the cross soon became the symbol *par excellence* of Armenian spirituality.

Similarly in Byzantium, during the great Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries, the cross played a central role in the dispute over the efficacy of religious images in the Church. Like the iconoclasts of Armenia, Byzantine iconoclasts continued to venerate the cross while rejecting the cult of images. Unlike the Armenian iconoclasts, however, they left us first-hand insight into their reasons for venerating the cross. Byzantine iconoclasm, imposed by imperial fiat, saw the cross as the symbol of imperial victory over the barbarian without and the idolator within the empire. This double significance of the cross goes far to explain why the cross retained the allegiance of Leo III and Constantine V even while they condemned the making and veneration of religious images.

The very importance of the cross to the iconoclast cause, however, could not help but influence the attitude of Byzantine iconophiles toward the symbol of Christ's passion once they were restored to power. The iconophiles were confronted with a dilemma. In order to restore the most central and prominent images, they had to remove the iconoclast crosses that had replaced the original images. At the same time, they had to counter the iconoclast assertion that the cross was superior to images, even the image of Christ. They responded by stressing the superiority of the image of Christ to the cross in representing Christ, the prototype
of both. By making these distinctions, however, Byzantine iconophiles departed from the traditional defense of the cults of the cross and images, which essentially equated the two.

Thus the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy ushered in a new relationship between the cross and images. It remains for succeeding chapters to explore how this Controversy and its discussion of the cross and images affected the attitudes of Christians farther west, in Rome and the kingdom of the Franks.
"The Paulician problem is one of the great questions of the history of Byzantium and of the history of religion." Since Henri Grégoire wrote these words in 1936, considerable scholarship has been devoted to the history of the Paulicians including a critical edition of the Greek sources and a major study of the Armenian. Despite this, however, many aspects of "Paulician problem" remain unresolved and probably, lacking additional evidence, unresolvable. At the same time, the Paulicians cannot be ignored, least of all in this study. They played an important, if peripheral, role in the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy and may have contributed to the later development of Balkan and western European heresy as well.

Who were the Paulicians and what beliefs did they espouse that caused the orthodox to persecute them as heretics? The Paulicians

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2 As Paul Lemerle, "L'Histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'apres les sources grecques, Travaux et Mémoires, vol. 5, Centre de la recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance (Paris: Éditions E. De Boccard, 1973), p. 132 has remarked: "La secte paulicienne est, dans son histoire et dans ses croyances, la mieux connue des sectes byzantines d'Asie Mineure. Et pourtant lorsque'on essaie, au terme d'un examen des sources, d'en prendre une vue générale, on s'aperçoit que cette connaissance est non seulement fort incomplète, mais surtout fort imparfaite, en raison de l'origine et de la nature de nos informations."
occupied the fringes of the Christian *oikumene* both geographically and doctrinally. This much can be said of them with certainty. To say more is to involve oneself in one of the great historiographical disputes of modern *Byzantinistik*. This dispute centers on the use of the Greek and Armenian sources in reconstructing Paulician history and doctrine. Unfortunately, the two source traditions and their latter-day interpreters present two diametrically opposed images of the Paulicians, their origins and ultimate significance.

We cannot attempt here to resolve the issue of the Greek versus the Armenian sources. Suffice it to say that the majority of scholars led by Paul Lemerle and his colleagues of the Collège de France have championed the Greek sources. In so doing, they built upon the work of Henri Grégoire, Sir Steven Runciman, Dmitry Obolensky, and Milan Loos. The

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principal advocate of the Armenian sources has been Nina Garsoian whose research hearkens back to the seminal work of Conybeare at the turn of the century.

The Greek sources consist of a considerable body of material comprising several works, some major, some minor in scope. Except for minor details this material is internally consistent, in many places even redundant. Chronologically it is largely limited to the ninth century and is most reliable in describing the history and doctrine of the Paulicians during the middle years of the century. The most important of the Greek sources is Peter of Sicily's History of the Manichaeeans. Henri Grégoire rehabilitated this work, establishing it as the principal source from which most of the other Greek sources derived their most useful and reliable material, although there have been disputes about the exact relationship of these works to Peter's History. Grégoire, for instance, believed that a shorter work by a certain Peter the Higumen is essentially an abbreviation of Peter of Sicily's work. Milan Loos identified the author of the shorter work as Peter of Sicily but believed the work itself to be a preliminary sketch to the larger History. Paul Lemerle and his colleagues agree with

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Loos as to authorship and with Grégoire as to the dependence of the shorter work on the larger History. Similarly, Grégoire maintained that four books against the Paulicians attributed to the Patriarch Photius (858-67 and 878-86) were mostly based on the works of Peter of Sicily and Peter the Higumen and contained little additional information about the Paulicians. Both Loos and Lemerle have largely concurred.

The Greek sources portray the Paulicians as a dualist sect espousing a docetic Christology. They believed in two gods, a bad God who created and ruled the world, and a good God, whom they called the Celestial Father, and who was to rule the world to come. Christ was not born as other men but only seemed to be, and Mary was not ever virgin but had other children to whom the gospels refer. They rejected the rite of baptism and the eucharist. Most interesting for this study, they rejected the cross.¹⁰

The Paulicians rejected the Old Testament but retained most of the New. The Paulician canon included the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, all the letters of Paul, James, Jude, and John but not Peter nor Revelation. In order to reconcile their dualist and docetist beliefs with the literal word of Scripture, they engaged heavily in allegory. Thus, for them the true baptism were the words of Christ, who declared: "I am the living water." Likewise, they interpreted the eucharist to mean Christ's words and Christ's mother was not Mary but the Heavenly Jerusalem. The Paulicians held St. Paul in special honor. Early Paulician leaders and

¹⁰See Paul Lemerle, "L'Histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques," Travaux et Mémoires 5 (1973): 115-35, for a discussion of the chief Paulician tenets together with references to the places they may be found in Peter of Sicily, Peter the Higumen, and Photius.
teachers took as pseudonyms the names of Paul's disciples, and they named their churches after those founded by Paul.\textsuperscript{11}

Relying largely on a different analysis of the Greek sources and what she maintains to be the Armenian, Nina Garsoian has painted a very different picture of the Paulicians. Garsoian begins by discerning in Peter of Sicily a "complicated triple pattern of texts",\textsuperscript{12} which she designates sources A, P, and S. Source A, now lost, together with the letters of the Paulician heresiarch Sergius, which also no longer survive, Garsoian believes to reflect the original adoptionist teaching of the Paulicians. Sources P and S, on the other hand, reflect those dualist beliefs that Garsoian maintains the Paulicians acquired by contact with the Greeks.\textsuperscript{13} Of the surviving sources in Armenian, she places great stress on the Key of Truth, a manual used by a sect known as the Tondrakeci, whom Garsoian identifies as latter-day Paulicians.\textsuperscript{14} The earlier sources in Armenian, mostly scattered references to the Paulicians in church councils of the seventh and eighth centuries and the writings of such Armenian divines as John of Otzun, link the Paulicians with Armenian iconoclasm. Accordingly, Garsoian believes the Paulicians originally to have been an adoptionist, iconoclast sect.\textsuperscript{15} In the course of the ninth century one branch of the Paulician movement, that most closely in contact with the

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12}Garsoian, \textit{Paulician Heresy}, p. 231.

\textsuperscript{13}Garsoian, \textit{Paulician Heresy}, pp. 27-79.

\textsuperscript{14}Garsoian, \textit{Paulician Heresy}, pp. 80-111.

Greeks, developed those dualist traits that find mention in Peter of Sicily's *History*. Meanwhile, the Armenian branch of the movement ("true Paulicianism"\(^1\)) continued to adhere to its adoptionist, iconoclastic origins and so continued, as the Tondrakeci, into early modern times.\(^2\)

The question of sources becomes especially acute when we come to consider the role of the Paulicians in the Iconoclastic Controversy. Were the Paulicians iconoclasts? They seem to have benefited from the iconoclastic regimes of Leo III and Constantine V. Garsoïan, pointing to the Armenian sources, maintains that there was nothing incompatible between Paulicianism and iconoclasm.\(^3\) John of Otzun referred to the Paulicians as iconoclasts,\(^4\) and the *Key of Truth* makes it clear that its devotees rejected images as idolatrous.\(^5\) The Greek sources, on the other hand, do not outright accuse the Paulicians of iconoclasm; accordingly, modern advocates of the Greek sources are somewhat more reluctant to view the Paulicians as inveterate opponents of images.\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Garsoïan, *Paulician Heresy*, p. 233.


\(^3\) Garsoïan, "Byzantine Heresy," p. 97.


\(^5\) *Key of Truth*, p. 115.

\(^6\) Paul Lemerle, et al., "L'Histoire des Pauliciens d'Asie Mineure d'après les sources grecques," *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973): 130: "Il est de bon sens, par exemple, que les Pauliciens n'acceptaient pas les images: comment se fait-il que ce rejet, presque aussi scandaleux que celui de la croix, ne soit nulle part mentionné, et que le mot εἰκῶν n'apparaisse point avant les formules d'abjuration III et IV, qui n'ont assurément pas, ceci le confirmerait au besoin, l'ancienneté qu'on leur a prêtée? Raison de plus pour se méfier des relations qu'on a voulu établir entre iconoclasme et paulicianisme. Contenons-nous de ce que nous savons."
Unlike iconoclasm, both the Greek and Armenian versions of Paulicianism unequivocally reject the material cross and its cult. The rationale for this rejection, of course, differs between the Greek and Armenian sources in accordance with their different presentations of "Paulician" doctrine. Thus the Armenian sources generally portray the Paulician rejection of the cross as a radical consequence of their iconoclasm. Garsoian cites John of Otzun, who remarked that the Paulicians had "progressed from bad to worse, from the rejection of images to the rejection of the cross and the abhorrence of Christ."²² So, too, the Key of Truth declared:

Concerning the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not of any other holy ones, either of the dead, or of stones, or of crosses and of images. In this matter some have denied the precious mediation and intercession of the beloved son of God, and have followed after dead [things] and in especial after images, stones, crosses, waters, trees, fountains, and all other vain things; as they admit, and worship them, so they offer incense and candles, and present victims, all of which are contrary to the Godhead. All these things our Lord put under his feet when he said: 'I am the door. If any shall enter with me, he shall go out and shall go in, and shall find pasture, and the rest.'²³

On the other hand, the Key also contains the following reference to the cross in conjunction with the laying on of hands of an elect one: "Strengthen him and open his mind to understand the scriptures and to take up the cross in love; that he may follow after thee now and ever and unto eternity of eternities."²⁴ This passage is consistent with the Tondrakeci-Paulician practice that "in imitation of the passion of Christ,

²²Cited in Garsoian, Paulician Heresy, p. 165.
²³The Key of Truth, p. 115.
²⁴Key of Truth, p. 109.
the catechumen took upon himself all sorrows, temptations and suffering [of Christ]." Thus the rejection of the cross among the Tondrakeci-Paulicians was a rejection of the material cross and its cult but not of the moral imperative of the cross.

The Greek sources likewise have the Paulicians reject the material cross. Peter of Sicily, for instance, writes of the Paulicians: "They [the Paulicians] do not admit the image, the action nor the power of the precious and living cross, but they cover it with a thousand outrages . . ." The short work under the name of Peter the Higumen repeats this charge and continues, observing that the Paulicians believed that "It is Christ who is the cross, and [that] it is unnecessary to venerate the wood for this is an accursed instrument." Peter of Sicily recounts a meeting between the Paulician leader Gegnesius-Timothy and the Patriarch [Germanus] of Constantinople, in which he makes the same observation:

The Patriarch inquired: 'Why do you not believe in the precious cross and do not adore it?' He [Gegnesius-Timothy answered]: 'Anathema to anyone who does not adore nor venerate the precious and living cross.' [But, observed Peter,] he called the cross Christ whose arms extended form a cross.

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15 Garsoian, Paulician Heresy, p. 154.


Paul Lemerle has suggested that this secret or allegorical meaning of the cross points to a docetic interpretation of the Passion, which otherwise the Greek sources do not explicitly mention but which would be in accord with their other dualist and docetic doctrine. At the same time, the Greek sources hint at the superstitious use of the cross by some Paulicians.

Peter the Higumen writes that

certain among them, when they fall sick and suffer, place the cross on themselves. And when they have recovered their health, they break it [the cross] and throw it in the fire to burn it up, or [they] even trample it under foot.

This practice was not necessarily inconsistent with the rejection of the material cross. This is an example of the sort of gross superstition concerning the power of the cross, which, as we have seen, both Christians and even non-Christians were fully capable of indulging.

The Armenian and Greek sources agree that the Paulicians rejected the cross. What does this tell us about the nature of Paulicianism or the relationship between the Greek and Armenian sources? In fact, it tells us

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very little. The rejection of the material cross is consistent with both extreme iconoclasm (see Chapter 6) as well as with dualist-docetic systems (see Chapter 2). The seeming agreement between the Greek and Armenian sources concerning the cross, therefore, in no way helps bridge the gap between them. What the Paulician rejection of the cross does tell us, however, is that Paulicianism was inconsistent with Byzantine iconoclasm. Byzantine iconoclasts venerated the cross, which served as an important symbol, even banner, of their movement. Any *modus vivendi* between the two movements, therefore, must have been temporary in nature, occasioned by other circumstances. In fact, the history of the relationship between Byzantine iconoclasm and Paulicianism bears this out. While the Paulicians were tolerated by Leo III and Constantine V, they were savagely persecuted by both later iconoclast and iconophile regimes. Meanwhile, the rejection of the cross, as presented in the Greek sources, is similar to that found in Bogomilism and later Catharism, and points to a connection between Paulicianism and later western dualist heresy.
CHAPTER IV
THE CROSS AND IMAGES IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Before considering the cross in the western image controversy, it will be necessary first of all to survey the role of the cross and images in the western church following the collapse of the western Roman Empire. Conditions in the west differed markedly from those in the east even before the great fifth century migration and settlement of Germanic peoples in western Europe and north Africa. The west had never been so heavily urbanized as the east, and there were still vast tracts of territory occupied by pagani, country-dwellers untouched by the Church. The Church's strength, on the other hand, in the west, as in the east, lay in the cities. The barbarian invasions, in turn, introduced into the west peoples at best half Romanized, some pagan, some Christian, and even the latter mostly of heretical Arian persuasion. Within a century, from the early fourth century to the early fifth, the west was profoundly transformed in terms of spiritual and material civilization. The one potentially unifying institution in the midst of this change was the Church. Inevitably, even the Church emerged from this period transformed, both institutionally as well as in its spiritual life and cult.

The half millenium under consideration in this study, i.e., ca. 350 to ca. 850, can be divided into three more or less distinct periods: that of (1) barbarian invasion and assimilation by indigenous Roman societies; (2)
consolidation, particularly under the Merovingian dynasty in Gaul; and (3) the Carolingian transformation and "renaissance" of church and society under Charlemagne, and his immediate predecessors and successors.

The first period was characterized by stark contrasts in religious attitudes and practices, especially in Gaul, where invading pagan Franks penetrated as far as the river Loire. South of this divide there existed a still largely intact Gallo-Roman civilization and church, preponderantly Catholic even in areas of Arian Visigothic (southwestern) and Burgundian (southeastern) settlement. From the religious standpoint, perhaps the most significant event of this period was the conversion of the pagan Frankish Heerkönig Clovis and his pagan followers to Catholic Christianity.

The second period was played out in the wake of this event: the gradual assimilation of Gallo-Roman and Frankish elements to form a Merovingian society and church. Although profoundly corrupted over time by royal appointments of bishops and abbots and aristocratic appropriation of ecclesiastical wealth, the Merovingian church nevertheless managed to maintain some semblance of diocesan organization and corporate identity, even for a time continuing to convene synods and councils to discuss matters of mutual concern. Nor was the Merovingian church un receptive to Irish reformers, led by Columbanus (d. 613), who at the turn of the seventh century breathed new life into the monasteries through a rigorous and spiritual application of Christian practices and beliefs. The Merovingian church, moreover, continued the slow and difficult process of
Christianization of both the pagan Gallic countryside and the still heathen Germanic tribes east of the Rhine.¹

It was assisted in this latter process of proselytization by a second "wave" of insular reformers, this time Anglo-Saxon.² The Anglo-Saxon mission to the continent, led by such men as Willibrord (658-739) and preeminently by Winfried-Boniface (680-754), together with such native reformers as Chrodegang of Metz (d. 766)³, established those conditions favorable to the renascence and efflorescence of Christian civilization and Latin letters finally realized under Charlemagne. This reformation of church and society looked especially to Rome for its inspiration; however, its achievement was distinctively its own, and in time, it took the lead from Rome in teaching and practice, in such matters, for instance, as the role and use of images in Christian life and liturgy.

This chapter surveys the role of the cross and that of images in the early medieval west up to the eve of the image controversy of the late eighth and early ninth centuries. It considers attitudes toward the cross


and images during this period that help explain the positions taken by the principal defenders and opponents of the cross and images during that controversy. In doing so, this chapter will concentrate primarily on conditions in that part of Europe dominated by the Franks, i.e., Gaul, northern Italy, and western Germany, although examples from other parts of western Europe will be cited where they prove illustrative of more general attitudes.

The Cross and Its Cult

Early medieval Europe inherited a rich tradition concerning the cross and its cult. The content of this tradition has been described in previous chapters. It comprised not only the symbolic, i.e., the spiritual and mystical aspects of the cross, but also belief in the power of the sign of the cross and veneration of the True Cross’s relics.

Devotion to the cross continued in early medieval Europe. Indeed, the cross was present wherever one turned. Wooden and later stone crosses were erected in churchyards, along roads, and in the fields, where they served a variety of purposes: as memorials to saintly persons or

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noteworthy events such as battles won in the name of the cross⁵; as places of preaching and of prayer and supplication; as places of refuge and "sanctuary" from the powers of the world.⁶ Crosses were carried in all manner of processions⁷: during rogations to pray for divine intercession⁸; as part of the adventus ceremonies for the reception and accompaniment of relics⁹; to greet and honor imperial and royal dignitaries¹⁰. Crosses adorned church bell towers and graced the covers of sacred books and liturgical utensils and were set beside or suspended

⁵See note 47 below.
⁶Stevens, Cross and Anglo-Saxons, p. 58.
⁸Stevens, Cross and Anglo-Saxons, p. 58.
over altars. Churches, indeed, were deliberately laid out in the form of a cross. Hymns and poems were composed and treatises written in honor of the cross. Such works ranged from the stately and solemn Latin hymns of Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 530–ca. 610) to the strangely moving Anglo-Saxon verses of the anonymous *Dream of the Rood*. At the very end of our period there appeared one of the most magnificent of all testimonials to the cross, Hrabanus Maurus' masterpiece *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (In Praise of the Holy Cross). The cross and its sign figured in virtually all the sacramental actions of the Church and its liturgy. In truth, the average Christian could scarcely avoid some contact with the cross; even coins were imprinted with its image.

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12 Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, 2.16, trans. by Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 131: "After the death of Bishop Rusticus, Saint Namatius became the eighth bishop of Clermont-Ferrand. It was he who built by his own effort the church which still stands and which is considered to be the oldest within the city walls. It is one hundred and fifty feet long, sixty feet wide inside the nave and fifty feet high as far as the vaulting. It has a rounded apse at the end, and two wings of elegant design on either side. The whole building is constructed in the shape of a cross."


14 See below, pp. 112ff.

15 See below, pp. 129ff.

As in late antiquity, cultic devotion to the cross centered above all on the relic of the True Cross. Fragments of the True Cross had been in circulation in the west since at least the time of Paulinus of Nola (353/4–431).\footnote{See Chapter 2, above.} At Rome, the Popes acquired and distributed portions of the cross in the course of diplomatic relations with Constantinople as well as with barbarian kings and queens.\footnote{A. Frolow, La Relique de la Vraie Croix: Recherches sur le développement d'un culte (Paris: Institut Francais d'Études Byzantines, 1961), pp. 97-101. However, as Frolow notes: "Rome a distribué moins de fragments du bois sacré qu'elle n'en a reçu." } Indeed, it is at Rome where we find in the seventh century the first mention, in the west, of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.\footnote{L. Duchesne, ed., Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, Introduction et Commentaire (Paris: E. De Boccard, Éditeur, 1955), p. 374, 378, n. 29.} However, it is with the name of Queen Radegunde (518–87) that devotion to the True Cross is most often associated during this early period. Radegunde secured a large fragment of the cross from the Emperor Justin II (565–78) for her monastic foundation at Poitiers.\footnote{Gregory of Tours, Liber in gloria martyrum, MGH SSRM 1: 489-90: "Crux dominica, quae ab Helena augusta reperta est Hierosolymis, ita quarta et sexta feria adoratur. Huius reliquias et merito et fide Helenæ conparanda regina Radegundis expetit ac devote in monasterium Pictavensim, quod suo studio constituit, collocavit; misitque pueros iterum Hierusolymis ac per totam Orientis plagam. Qui circumuntes sepulchra sanctorum martyrum confessorumque, cunctorum reliquias detulerunt, quas in arca argentea cum ipsa cruce sancta locatas, multa exinde miracula conspicere meruit." Cf Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks, 9.40, p. 530, and n. 56. } There it was housed in a church dedicated, like many others across western Europe, in its honor.\footnote{Henry G. J. Beck, The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France During the Sixth Century, Analecta Gregoriana, vol. 51: Series Facultatis Hist. Ecclesiasticæ, Sectio B (n. 8) (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1950), p. 313, note 105, notes that there may have been a church dedicated to the...}
cross relic, moreover, provided Fortunatus occasion to compose his three great hymns in honor of the cross.22

Fortunatus' hymns, the "Vexilla regis," the "Pange, lingua," and the "Crux benedicta," celebrate above all the traditional teaching about the cross and its theological significance as the instrument of Christ's passion and mankind's salvation.23 Similarly the sermons of Caesarius of Arles (ca. 470-542), a contemporary of Fortunatus, are replete with traditional references to the cross, above all its typological significance as found in the Old Testament.24

Side by side with traditional teaching about the cross and its significance, however, there were, in late antiquity and the early middle ages, other beliefs about the cross, which held the cross to be the source of transmundane power (virtus), power not only to save the soul but to work miracles in the here and now. Representative of this attitude toward the cross is the work of Sulpicius Severus (ca. 360-ca. 420), particularly his biography of St. Martin of Tours, one of the most influential pieces of


hagiography in the early middle ages. Sulpicius tells us how, before becoming a monk, Martin had served in the Roman army. While still a soldier, he was converted to the Gospel. His Christian faith made continued military service onerous, and he applied to the Emperor Julian for discharge from the army. That despiser of the Gospel refused, accusing Martin of cowardice, and as punishment caused him to stand before the front rank the next day when the army was to engage the German enemy. According to Sulpicius, Martin thereupon declared that "[i]n the name of the Lord Jesus and protected only by the sign of the cross, without shield or helmet, I shall penetrate the enemy's ranks and not be afraid." As it turned out, on the morrow the enemy made peace with the Romans and so Martin was spared his ordeal.

In this manner Martin won discharge from the army and turned to a life of asceticism. As a monk and later bishop of Tours, Martin waged a ceaseless campaign against paganism and superstition, particularly among the pagan country dwellers of Gaul. On one occasion, when encountering the funeral procession of a peasant "whose body was being carried to the tomb with superstitious rites," Martin mistook the procession for a pagan sacrificial ritual and "raised his hand and made the sign of the cross in the direction of the oncoming peasants, ordering them to stand firm and lay down their load." Straightway the peasants stood as if frozen in their

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tracks until Martin, realizing that this was indeed a mere funeral procession, let them continue.\footnote{Sulpicius Severus, \textit{Life of St. Martin}, c. 12, FOC 7: 120.}

On still another occasion, Martin destroyed a pagan temple in an outlying village and then began to chop down the cultic pine tree that grew beside it. Angered by his presumption, the pagan priest and his followers challenged Martin: they agreed to complete cutting down the tree if Martin would place himself in the natural path of its fall. If the tree struck Martin, the cultic god(s) would be appeased; if it did not, then the Christian God would be vindicated. Sulpicius continues:

The pine cracked as it finally was cut through. It now began to fall, it now began to crash upon him, when he finally raised his hand and \textit{made the sign of the salvation} in its direction. The tree—and you would have likened its backward action to a tornado—crashed in just the opposite direction, so that it all but overwhelmed the peasants who, as they thought, had taken places of safety. The pagans, stupified by this miracle, raised a great shout to heaven, while the monks wept for joy; all joined in exalting the name of Christ.\footnote{Sulpicius Severus, \textit{Life of St. Martin}, c. 13, FOC 7: 121.}

It was, above all, for its capacity to heal, however, that the cross was specially valued by Christians of this period. "I have the power to heal," declared the rood-tree, "all those who revere me."\footnote{\textit{Dream of the Rood}, ed. by Michael Swanton, Old and Middle English Texts, gen. ed. G.L. Brook (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), ll. 84-5, p. 130.} Gregory of Tours reports how "a certain girl named Chrodegild . . . suffered the loss of one eye." She straightway went to Queen Radegund's monastery church of the Holy Cross in Poitiers and prayed before the silver casket containing the relic of the True Cross that the queen had procured from Jerusalem. Chrodegild prayed through the night, when suddenly in the
morning, she recovered her sight. "Clearly, Gregory declares, "this happened on account of the power of the Cross."\(^{30}\) In the Life of St. Amand we likewise learn of the healing of a blind woman, this time by means of the sign of the cross:

When the man of God Amand was preaching in the county of Beauvais he came to a place called Ressons on the River Aronde. There was a blind woman there, who had lost her sight a long time ago. Entering her house the man of God began to ask her how this blindness had come upon her. She replied that the only reason was that she had always venerated auguries and idols. She then indicated the place where she used to pray to her idol, a tree dedicated to the demon. . . . With her daughter leading her by the hand the woman hastened to the tree and endeavored to cut it down. Then the man of God called her to him, made the Sign of the Cross on her eyes and, invoking Christ's Name, restored her to her former health, instructed her how she should act and left her. Changing her life for the better, she spent the rest of her days chastely and soberly.\(^{31}\)

Brauglio of Saragossa (ca. 585/90-650) tells how St. Emilian worked cures by the sign of the cross. In one case, explains Brauglio

a certain monk named Armentorius was afflicted with pain and swelling of the stomach and devotedly went to him [St. Emilian] to be cured. As soon as he put his hand upon the tumor and made the sign of the cross, straightway the illness

\(^{30}\)Gregory of Tours, Liber in gloria martyrum, 1.5, MGH SSRM 1: 490: "Puella quaedam Chrodigildis nomine, dum post mortem patris in urbem Cenomanicae territorio resederet, oculorum amissione multatur. Postquam autem ex iussione Chilperici regis, adhuc beata Radegundae regina superstite, ad antedicti monasterii transmisset regulam, ipsa beatissima ostendente, ante sanctam prosternitur arcam; ibique cum reliquis sanctaemonialibus vigilias explicans, dato mane hisdem discendentibus, prostrata solo in eodem loco quievit, apparuitque ei per visum, quasi aperiret alius oculos eius, et unum sanctiati redditum, dum cum alicui laboraret, subito ad ostii reserati sonum expergefacta, unius oculi lumen receptit. Quod non ambitigit, haec per crucis virtutem fuisse praestitum. Inergumini, clodi et alii quoque infirmi persaepe in hoc loco sanantur."

left him and he blessed the Lord for the recovery of his health."32

On another occasion when "a demon had seized in most terrible fashion the daughter of the curial, Maximus, named Columba, and she had an unforeseen instability of her limbs and came to the presence of the servant of God with great of hope of being cured. After he [St. Emilian] traced the sign of the cross on her forehead," writes Brauglio, "the demon was straightway driven out and cast forth and she was cured of her poor health."33 A rather more dramatic tale is told by Paul the Deacon (ca. 720–ca.800). Paul recounts how the hermit Hospitius was accosted at Nice by several Lombard warriors when

one of them drew his sword to cut off his head, but straightway his right hand stiffened while suspended in the act of striking, nor could he draw it back. So he let go of the sword and dropped it upon the ground. His companions seeing these things raised a cry to heaven entreating the saint that he would graciously make known what they should do. And he indeed, having made the sign of salvation, restored the withered arm to health. And the Langobard who had been healed was converted to the faith of Christ and was straightway made a priest and then a monk, and remained in the same place up to the end of his life in the service of God.34

It is doubtful that miracles such as these were as often witnessed as believed. Certainly a daily reaffirmation of such belief was the invocation of the cross as a prophylactic to keep at bay evil demons. This use of the cross was widespread, as we have seen, in Christian antiquity,

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33Brauglio of Saragossa, Life of St. Emilian, c. 16, FOC 63: 128.

and it continued into the early middle ages. Gregory of Tours, for instance, tells how bishop Eparchius of Clermont-Ferrand protected himself from the lusts of the flesh with the sign of the cross:

He [Eparchius] was in the habit of getting up in the middle of the night to give thanks to God before the high altar in his cathedral. One night it happened that as he went into the church he found it full of devils and Satan himself sitting on his own episcopal throne made up to look like a painted woman. 'You hideous prostitute,' said the Bishop, 'it is not enough that you infect other places with every imaginable sort of foulness, without your defiling the throne consecrated to the Lord by sitting your revolting body down on it? Leave the house of God this instant and stop polluting it with your presence!' 'Since you give me the title of prostitute,' said Satan, 'I will see that you yourself are constantly harassed with sexual desire.' As he said this he disappeared into thin air. It is true that the Bishop was tempted by the lusts of the flesh, but he was protected by the sign of the Cross [signo crucis sanctae munitus] and the Devil was unable to harm him.15

We also read in a letter of pseudo-Germanus:

We are commanded to keep silence in the spirit, 'keeping the door' [of the church closed], that is keeping ourselves from the tumult of words or vices, making the Sign of the Cross lest desire enter by the eyes or wrath by the ears, lest filthy speech proceed from our mouth. Let the heart be intent only on receiving Christ.16

So, too the Venerable Bede, in writing to Bishop Ecgberth observed:

It is also necessary for you to take due care of those who are still encompassed in the life of the world. As we advised you at the beginning of this letter, remember to give them enough teachers of salvation and make the people learn, among other things, by which works to please God most and from what sins those who wish to please God should abstain; with what devotion they should address the divine mercy in prayer; with


what frequent diligence they have to protect themselves, and all that is theirs, with the Sign of the Lord's Cross, against the continual attacks of unclean spirits . . . .

St. Patrick crossed himself a hundred times during prayer, and Charlemagne, on his deathbed, made the sign of the cross over his whole body.

This thaumaturgic and prophylactic power of the cross was particularly important in the conversion of pagan Germanic peoples. In their belief in wonderworking signs, both pagans and Christians of this period spoke a common language. The cross was, par excellence, both the sign (vexillum) of Christianity as well as a vehicle of supernatural power. Indeed, the Church quite consciously used the cross in the task of conversion, both of native pagani as well as Germanic heathen.

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We find, for instance, in the rite of exorcism in the Gelasian Sacramentary (mid 8th century) "for making a catechumen from a pagan" the following formula:

you [the priest] blow in his [the pagan's] face, and make the cross on his forehead; [then] place your hand over his head [and speak] these words: 'Accept the sign of the cross [both] on your brow and in your heart.'

The cross was also of course an integral part of the rite of baptism. We have this account from Gregory of Tours concerning the baptism of Clovis:

King Clovis confessed his belief in God Almighty, three in one. He was baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and marked in holy chrism with the sign of the Cross of Christ. More than three thousand of his army were baptized at the same time.

But the cross had also to compete with the signs of pagan ritual and belief. Thus Martin of Braga (ca. 520–80) chided the peasants of his diocese, many of whom were pagan or had relapsed into pagan practices:

Many of the demons who had been expelled from heaven now preside over the sea or streams or fountains or forests, and in similar fasion ignorant men who do not know God worship them as gods and offer them sacrifice. In the sea, they call upon Neptune; in the streams, the Lamias; in the fountains, the nymphs; in the forests, the Dianas, which are all worthless demons and evil spirits, who trouble and harm infidels who do not know how to fortify themselves with the sign of the cross.

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42 Martin of Braga, Reforming the Rustics [De correctione rusticorum], c. 8, FOC 62: 75.
He continues, farther on, in similar vein:

How is it possible that some of you who have renounced the devil and his messengers and his worship and his evil ways turn again to the worship of the devil? To light candles beside rocks and beside trees and beside fountains and at crossroads, what else is this but worship of the devil? . . . And many other things which it would take too long to mention here. Lo, you do all these things after renunciation of the devil, after baptism, and by returning to the worship of demons and to the evil works of idols you have transgressed your faith and have broken the pact which you made with God. You have given up the sign of the cross, which you received in baptism, and pay attention to other signs of the devil, such as the flight of birds and sneezing and many other things. Why is it that augury does no harm to me or to any proper Christian? Because where the sign of the cross precedes, there is no sign of the devil. Why does it harm you? Because you despise the sign of the cross and fear what you yourselves have made into a sign. 43

Christian evangelists thus looked for occasions on which to demonstrate the cross's power to the unbelieving and ignorant. A famous case is that of St. Vedast who made the sign of the cross over the beer flagons at a Frankish dinner party attended by King Chlotar I (511-61). Immediately, the flagons of the heathen who were present broke to pieces while those of their Christian counterparts remained intact. This miracle, we are told, made such an impression that many of the heathen partygoers were forthwith baptized. 44 Other measures taken by Christian missionaries included inscribing the sign of the cross on pagan megaliths or of erecting crosses on the sites of former pagan sanctuaries. 45

Germanic peoples were not slow to avail themselves of the sign of the cross. One of the earliest encounters that the Goths had with the

44 Vita S. Vedastis, MGH SSRM 3: 410-11.
cross, for instance, was with the **labarum** of the Roman armies, in a defeat that the Goths attributed, according to the historian Socrates, to the power of the cross.\(^{46}\) Is it any wonder that the Christian Visigothic kings of Spain, in their turn, went forth to battle preceded by the cross? We read, for instance, in a passage from *The Order When the King Shall Go Forth to Battle* magnificent testimony of their faith in the victory-bringing **virtus** of the cross:

The deacon goes to the altar and raises the golden cross, in which wood of the Holy Cross is enclosed, **which always goes with the king in the army**, and bears it to the bishop. Then the bishop, having washed his hands, hands it to the king, and the king to the priest, who will bear it before him. As the cross is placed in the king's hand, the bishop begins his antiphon [. . .]

\[
\text{After all raise their standards and go outside the door of the church at once 'Glory to the Father' shall be sung ...} \\
\text{. . Then the deacon saying: 'Humble yourselves for the blessing,' this blessing shall be said by the bishop:} \\
\text{'The Saving Sign of Wood and Nail, which thou, Sacred Prince, hast received with pious hands, may it be for thy salvation and an increase of perpetual blessing. May thy egress be in peace and may the Cross of Christ always be present on the way to your armies. May it give you religious counsel and prepare strong means for your expedition. May this Wood, by which Christ despoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphing over them in Himself, become the means of your gaining singular glory in victory. Amen. So that, by the victory of the Holy Cross, you may complete your journey, begun here, happily, and bring back to us flourishing titles of your triumphs. Amen. [. . .]'}\]


The attitude of the German invaders toward the cross and crucifixion was critical in their acceptance of Christianity as well as their understanding and adherence to it. We have already noted their acceptance of the cross as a source of divine power which could be used for practical ends. The fact that the cross and crucifixion did not pose a greater stumbling block for this warlike people is one of the more remarkable aspects of their conversion. Clovis' boast that had he and his followers been present, the shameful treatment meted out to Christ would have been avenged, must have been typical of many German chieftains and their warrior companions when first they heard the story of the Crucifixion. It begs the question, certainly, of how deeply these people understood the gospel, particularly on so central a matter as the redeeming death of Jesus.

How does one get at this primitive Germanic understanding of the crucifixion and the role of the cross? We gain some insight into early Germanic attitudes in a remarkable work written in the early eighth century, but which must have incorporated many generations of meditation on the death of Christ and the role of the cross. This work is the so-called Dream of the Rood. In the Dream of the Rood Christ is portrayed as a young warrior who sacrifices his life on the cross to save his people. This sacrifice is presented in heroic, epic terms:

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the young warrior, God our Saviour,
Valiantly stripped before the battle; with courage and resolve,
Beheld by many, He climbed upon the Cross to redeem
Mankind. 50
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"I quivered when the hero clasped me," 50 the cross is made to say; for it is the cross which narrates the events of the crucifixion and its role to the dreaming poet. "The finest of trees began to talk," 51 recalls the poet of his dream. The cross, for instance, tells how

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They drove dark nails into me; dire wounds are there to see,
The gaping gashes of malice; I did not dare retaliate.
They insulted us both together; I was drenched in the blood
That streamed from the side of the Man, when He had set his spirit free. 52
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The cross continues its grisly and moving account:

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High on the hill I suffered
Such grief; I saw the God of Hosts
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50 Dream of the Rood, l. 41, p. 129.
51 Dream of the Rood, l. 26, p. 128.
52 Dream of the Rood, ll. 45-8, p. 129.
Stretched on the rack . . . 53

I was pierced with pain, yet I humbly bowed to the hands of men . . . 54

. . . sorely was I wounded by the sharpness of spearshafts. 55

The *Dream of the Rood* evinces great sympathy not only for the heroic figure of Christ but above all for the cross, which is made to suffer with him. This sympathy, particularly in the personification of the cross itself, goes well beyond traditional Christian teaching, however, and suggests a process of syncretization between Christianity and Germanic myth and cult, particularly that reverence for trees and nature arising from a primitive animism. 56

The syncretistic elements in a work like the *Dream of the Rood* represent an intermediate stage, as it were, between Germanic paganism and a full understanding and acceptance of orthodox Christian teaching about the atoning death of Jesus. The *Dream of the Rood* indicates how a Germanic warrior elite attempted to accommodate its warlike and heroic ethos with the gospel of Christ. It does not, however, explain how or why early German pagans were initially receptive or vulnerable to Christian teaching about the cross and crucifixion.

One explanation is that Germanic myth included a hanging savior-god, such as that described in the Icelandic poem "Havamal" where Woden

53 *Dream of the Rood*, ll. 49-51, p. 129.
54 *Dream of the Rood*, l. 58, p. 129.
55 *Dream of the Rood*, l. 61, p. 130.
gained knowledge of himself by sacrificing himself on the World-Tree "Yggdrasill."\textsuperscript{57} To what extent such Germanic myths may have themselves been influenced by Christianity before transmission to us, as William A. Chaney has admitted, "is undoubtedly insoluble."\textsuperscript{58} Chaney does go on to state, however, that "[t]here is at least good reason to believe that the traditions [of the hanging Woden and Christ] are independent; if so, this would lead to a culture saturated with Woden-worship to take up with ease the cult of the new Hanging God [Christ].\textsuperscript{59}

Whether or not Germanic myth of the fifth and sixth centuries included a hanging or suffering god and was thereby receptive to the crucified Christ, the fabric of Germanic religion was such as to be vulnerable to the comparatively well-organized and sophisticated Christian church and its persistent and often aggressive attempts at proselytization. As Frantisek Graus has pointed out, early Germanic religion was centered on cult and cult objects, such as trees. It was intimately tied, moreover, to the organization of family, clan, and tribe. Once their shrines and cult objects had been destroyed, once the clan and tribal network had been disrupted, whether in the course of migration or, more violently, in


\textsuperscript{58} Chaney, "Paganism to Christianity," p. 70.

\textsuperscript{59} Chaney, "Paganism to Christianity," p. 71. Chaney goes on to point out (p. 72) that the \textit{Dream of the Rood} probably drew its non-Biblical portrayal of the crucifixion from the death of the god Baldur.
warfare, and important members had defected to Christianity, the ordinary German pagan was highly vulnerable to alien influences in religion.\textsuperscript{60}

Equally important in the process of conversion were the (usually) highly pragmatic methods of proselytization undertaken by Christian missionaries vis-a-vis the German heathen. Ordinarily, the Church required little beyond outward conformity to particular rites and cultic observances, such as the sacraments; a profound understanding of these observances might come later, if, in practice, at all.\textsuperscript{61}

The theological significance of the cross came slowly not only to recently converted Germanic peoples but to ordinary Gallo-Romans as well. It was present, to be sure, in the formulae of the liturgy and sacraments. However, these, like the creed, more often than not were recited as holy "incantations" (in Martin of Braga's words\textsuperscript{61}) by both priest and people.

The dangers inherent in this kind of Christian practice were recognized early on by Caesarius of Arles, who in many respects was the

\textsuperscript{60} Graus, Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger, p. 145: "der ganze heidnische Kult war sippen- und stammesmäßig aufgebaut und als beide Erscheinungsformen zu verfallen begannen, mußten auch die religiösen Vorstellungen, die dieser Stude entsprungen, ins Wanken geraten." Ibid., p. 164.

\textsuperscript{61} Richard E. Sullivan, "Carolingian Missionary Theories," The Catholic Historical Review 42 (1956): 289: "An even greater amount of attention was given by Carolingian writers on missionary affairs to the problem of instituting practices of worship and discipline among new converts. This theme is so ever present in missionary discussions that one is forced to conclude that the Carolingian age was far more concerned with the outward behavior of Christians than with their appreciation of the subtleties of Christian doctrine."

\textsuperscript{61} Martin of Braga, Reforming the Rustics [De correctione rusticorum], c. 16, FOC 62: 82: "you have given up the sacred incantation, I mean the creed you accepted in baptism . . . ."
last great representative of patristic thought until the Carolingian renaissance. While affirming the symbolic content of the cross in Old Testament typology, Caesarius, like Augustine, evinced a distinct ambivalence toward the signum crucis, particularly those uses of it which smacked of superstition. In one sermon, for instance, he noted that

All men who are drunkards, adulterers, envious or proud, injure Christ; all thieves and perjurers, all men who fulfill vows to trees or fountains, everyone who consults magicians and soothsayers or sorcerers on their own account or for the sake of their household—all who are men of this kind eject Christ from their hearts and bring in the devil. What will be the nature of that unhappy soul who despises life and chooses death, who scorns light and seeks darkness? All Christians of this kind, as I said, even though they come to church, communicate at the altar, and are seen to sign themselves with the cross quite frequently, are proved to serve not Christ, but the devil, unless they have amended their lives through repentance.  

In another sermon in which he discusses a miracle by the prophet Elisha (Eliseus), Caesarius observed that Elisha tried to raise a dead child, first by having his servant lay his staff (a symbol of the cross) on the child's face. When this did not suffice, Elisha had personally to call upon God's mercy and assistance. Caesarius explained:

That servant [of Eliseus] typified blessed Moses, whom God sent into Egypt with a staff; without Christ Moses could scourge the people with the staff, but he could not free or revive them from original or actual sin... It was necessary that He who had sent the staff should Himself come down. The staff without Eliseus availed nothing, because the cross without Christ had no power.

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In still another sermon Caesarius elaborated on a passage from Augustine's *Commentary on the Psalms* (see chapter 3, above), where Augustine took to task the vain invocation of the *signum crucis*:

> As often as you know that some of our sons under vain persuasion of harmful love run to mad, bloody, or shameful spectacles .... If perchance they shudder at the circus for some reason, they immediately sign themselves, and bearing the cross on their forehead stand there whence they would depart if they carried it in their heart. *If a man happens to strike his foot while hurrying to see some evil deed, he signs his mouth.* He does not know that he shuts in the devil, rather than excludes him. He would sign himself properly and drive the devil out of his heart if he recalled himself from the evil deed.\(^6\)

Similar sentiments would not be heard in Gaul until the appearance of Agobard of Lyons (ca. 769-840) and Claudius of Turin (d. ca. 827) on the scene and then, in the case of the latter, in much more radical guise.\(^6\)

**The Role of Images in the Latin West**

Turning to images in the early medieval west, we find their role less central to religious life than that of the cross. Certainly their role was less significant than in the Byzantine east whether at this time (sixth through ninth centuries) or later. Western ambivalence toward images, particularly their cult, appeared sporadically, in late antiquity and the early medieval west and was articulated at some length during the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries. Images, nevertheless, were omnipresent throughout the west at this time, in

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\(^6\)Caesarius of Arles, sermon 134, "On a Section of Psalm L, that is, On the Sin of David," sec. 1, FOC 47: 250.

\(^6\)For Agobard, see Chapter 5, for Claudius, Chapter 6, below.
churches, on sepulchral monuments, on liturgical vessels (including crosses), and on the pages of sacred books. In retrospect the Council of Elvira (ca. 306) seems less to evidence a general hostility to depicting the sacred than testimony to the already widespread practice of illustrating on the interior walls of churches the great events and agents of sacred history. And, indeed, we have ample testimony to the existence of such iconography in the century following Elvira in the works of Prudentius (348–ca. 410), Paulinus of Nola (353/4–431), and Augustine (354–430).

Save for scattered notices in the writings of these early fathers, we have little evidence about the technical aspects or thematic repertoire of this early Christian iconography, and the same may be said for the early middle ages in the west. The limitations of such literary notices are perhaps best illustrated in a passage from Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*:

The wife of Namatius built the church of Saint Stephen in the suburb outside the walls of Clermont-Ferrand. She wanted it to be decorated with colored frescoes. She used to hold in her lap a book from which she would read stories of events which happened long ago, and tell the workmen what she wanted painted on the walls.

We learn a number of interesting things from this passage not the least being that in the late fifth century, in the midst of the "barbarian

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68 Paulinus of Nola, Epp. 24 and 32.

69 Augustine, *De consensus evangelii*, 1, c. 10, CSEL 43; *De moribus eccl. cathol.*, 1, c. 34, MPL 32: 1342; *Contra Faustum*, 23, c. 73, MPL 42: 446; and sermon 316, *De natal. S. Stephani*, MPL 38: 1434.

invasions" of western Europe, a literate aristocratic woman could commission the building of a church in an unfortified location. We know that she wanted the church decorated with frescoes depicting stories of long ago events and that there were craftsmen skilled to execute her request. On the one question the answer to which we would most like to know, however, viz., what stories were depicted (from what book), Gregory is frustratingly silent. Were these depictions of the sufferings of the martyrs, such as Prudentius and Augustine mention, or perhaps paintings from the Old and New Testaments? We cannot assume the latter; indeed, it was not uncommon to decorate church interiors at this and earlier periods with scenes from nature or secular activities, including harvesting and hunting (although these may have had allegorical significance).

Fortunately, in other places, Gregory makes up for his uncharacteristic reticence in this passage. Thus he mentions paintings of Christ extending his hand to a sinking Peter, a symbolic representation of the church, the widow and her mite (above a donation box) as well as a depiction of Christ crucified.\textsuperscript{11} Gregory, moreover, is not our only source. Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530–c. 610) composed verses to celebrate and perhaps accompany a cycle of paintings illustrating the life of St. Martin in the cathedral of Tours.\textsuperscript{12} Tituli, if such these were, are among the most valuable evidence of the iconographic repertoire, sacred and secular, of this period. (Tituli were dedications in prose and verse set above or beneath paintings or statues of famous persons, such as saints, or

\textsuperscript{11}Gregory of Tours, \textit{Liber de virtutibus Sancti Martini}, 3, c. 14, MGH SSRM 1: 635.

\textsuperscript{12}Venantius Fortunatus, MGH AA 4: 234f.
narrative scenes depicting an historical event from sacred or secular history.) A certain Bishop Bernowin composed tituli describing paintings of the annunciation, birth, crucifixion, and ascension of Jesus. Alcuin also composed tituli to accompany depictions of God as judge amidst cherubim and seraphim, the five wise virgins, Peter tending his sheep, the martyrdoms of Peter and Lawrence, and a Genesis cycle.\^73

Tituli and other literary notices are, of course, no substitute for the actual paintings themselves; indeed, many tituli corresponded to no particular paintings at all.\^74 Unfortunately, virtually no paintings survive from the earlier part of our period, except for a very few manuscript illuminations, and even these are relatively late. One such survival is in an Isidore manuscript (Laon no. 423) which contains largely ornamental work; another is a Fredegar codex (Paris lat. 109/10\^5) depicting men and animals of uncertain meaning.\^75 One of the earliest illuminations of definite religious content is a rather crudely executed drawing of Christ in majesty surrounded by depictions of the four apostles or their symbolic beasts from the Gundohinus evangelium.\^76 This, although quite late (mid-

\^73Delius, Bilderfrage im Karolingerreich, p. 58.
\^74Delius, Bilderfrage im Karolingerreich, p. 58.
\^75Delius, Bilderfrage im Karolingerreich, p. 56.
eighth century), is characteristic of much unofficial and provincial art, even during the height of the Carolingian Renaissance.

What especially distinguishes artistic production of the Carolingian Renaissance from earlier periods of western iconography is the central role played by the royal court, beginning with the reign of Charlemagne. The court provided patronage for artists and craftsmen from throughout Europe, especially northern Italy, and some even perhaps from Byzantium. In general, Carolingian iconography as exemplified in numerous surviving illuminated manuscripts and, in some rare cases, wall paintings, favored what has been called the "Mediterranean" iconographic tradition. This tradition, which included artistic currents from Italy and Byzantium, emphasized figural and narrative depictions, to which it subordinated decorative schemes and motifs. This was very different from the Northern art of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon provenance, exulting in elaborate decoration and often undertaken, as in the Book of Kells, as an end in itself. Such iconography, however beautiful and dazzling, was essentially inarticulate. This did not suit Carolingian propagandistic and

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80Kitzinger, *Early Medieval Art*, p. 36.
pedagogic aims. Mediterranean iconography, on the other hand, was custom-made for such ends.  

Carolingian propagandists and educators, however, never considered painted images, narrative or otherwise, as sufficient in conveying a message. Tituli, indeed, bear witness to the perceived need for verbal explanation of paintings, a fact that Carolingian iconophobes dwelt on at some length. Thus Bishop Theodulf of Orleans (ca. 750–821) observed that when we see painted a certain woman holding a child on her lap, if the title [superscriptio] has not yet been added or for some reason has been effaced, in what way can we tell, whether (this is a picture of) Sarah holding Isaac or Rebecca Jacob or Bathsheba (iactans) Solomon or Elizabeth carrying John or some other mother holding her small child? And, if we may pass on to pagan mythology, whence can we tell whether (this is) Venus holding Aeneus or Alcmena carrying Hercules or Andromacha bearing Astianacta?

One of the most remarkable examples of this interdependence of image and written word is Hrabanus Maurus' (776 or 784–856) masterpiece In Praise of the Holy Cross (De laudibus Sanctae Crucis). Hrabanus' work consists of twenty-eight acrostic poems, each celebrating a different

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81 Kitzinger, Early Medieval Art, p. 41.
82 Libri Carolini, MGH LL sec 3: conc 2: supplementum, p. 213, ll. 27–34: "Cum ergo depictam pulchram quandam feminam puerum in ulnis tenere cernimus, si superscriptio necdum facta sit aut quondam facta casu quodam demolita, qua industria discernere valemus, utrum Sara sit Isaac tenens aut Rebecca Iacob ferens aut Betsabae Salomonem iactans aut Elizabeth Iohannem baiulans aut quelibet mulier parvulum suum tenens? Et ut ad gentiles fabulas veniamus, quae plerumque depicte inveniuntur, unde scire valemus utrum Venus sit Aenean tenens an Alcmena Herculem portans an Andromacha Astianacta gerens?"
aspect or highlighting a different theme about the cross. Each acrostic, in turn, is set against an illuminated background. Most of the illuminations contain symbolic variations on the cross, but several contain figures including the Emperor Louis the Pious holding a cross-standard; cherubim; Hrabanus himself, kneeling before the cross in veneration; and an image of Christ crucified. Neither image nor poem quite sufficed, however, to convey Hrabanus' full message. Indeed, he supplemented each of the poems with a prose paraphrase, and, what is more, in a second volume, he continued with a commentary on each of the twenty-eight poems and illuminations.

Almost invariably, Hrabanus' sentiments and praises of the cross reflect conventional piety and teaching. Thus he calls the cross the "standard of the Christian people"; it is the "ark of virtues and the remission of sins." "In the Holy Cross, death is forthwith vanquished and the chains of our sins are broken." "The cross of Christ is the way of the just, a ladder to heaven, a wheel bringing us from the depths to the heights, a leader and the door of the Kingdom, our victory." "The Holy Cross is the summation of virtues and the beginning and perfection of our salvation, and through it is accomplished our salvation

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84 MPL 107: 269D: "Haec vexillum Christiani est populi . . . ."  
85 MPL 107: 279D: "Crux quippe est arx virtutum et remissio peccatorum . . . ."  
86 MPL 107: 277AB: "in sancta crux mors victa est directissima, et peccatorum nostrorum vincula sunt resoluta."  
87 MPL 107: 281CD: "Crux quoque Christi via est justorum, ascensus ad coelum, rota de intimis ad superiora nos trahens, dux et janua regni, victoria nostra."
and resurrection. In perhaps his most striking characterization, Hrabanus calls the cross "queen" (of heaven) as Christ is "king".

For our purposes, however, the most interesting of Hrabanus' illuminations is the figure of Christ crucified. Crucifixion iconography was nothing new or rare in early medieval Europe. Indeed, the earliest extant images of the crucifixion, the British Museum ivory Passion cycle and the crucifixion scene on the doors of S. Sabina at Rome, both dating from the fifth century, are products of western Christian piety. This early crucifixion iconography depicted Christ naked on the cross save for a short girdle (subligaculum). This depiction of Christ contrasted, as we saw in the last chapter, with depictions in eastern passion cycles, such as that in the Rabula gospels, where Christ is draped in a long sleeveless colobium. Whether inspired by the mystical poetry of Ephraim the Syrian or not, this style soon spread far and wide. In the west, it was especially favored by Celtic iconographers, who often enveloped the figure of Christ on the cross with a full-length garment of fantastic shape and decorative excess. The success of this eastern mode of depicting the Crucifixion is perhaps suggested in a story told by Gregory of Tours. "There was in the city of Narbonne," writes Gregory,

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88 MPL 107: 282A: "sancta crux collatrix virtutem, et initium ac perfectio est salutis nostrae, et per ipsam fit salvatio et resurrectio nostra."

89 MPL 107: 267AB: "Quapropter merito te reginam a Christo rege vocamus, quia regni coelestis aditum per te primum meruimus."

90 Johannes Reil, Die frühchristlichen Darstellungen der Kreuzigung Christi, Studien über christlichen Denkmäler, ed. by Johannes Ficker; Neue Folge der archäologischen Studien zum christlichen Altertum und Mittelalter, no. 2 (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Theodor Weicher, 1904), p. 112.
in the older church, which was fortunate to have the relics of the blessed martyr Genesius, a picture, which depicted our Lord crucified, as it were, with a linen girdle. As this picture was carefully scrutinized by the people, there appeared in a vision to a certain Basil, a priest, a terrible visage, which said: 'All of you, while properly clothed, are constantly casting your eyes on me naked. Come quickly (and) clothe me!' And the priest, not understanding this vision forgot about it by the next day. It appeared again to him; but he thought little of it. However, after the third day following the second vision, (while the priest was) racked with terrible pains, (the apparition) said (to him): 'Didn't I tell you that your should dress me so that I not be seen naked? And you did nothing about it? Go,' he said, 'and cover the picture in which I appear crucified with a linen cloth, lest destruction suddenly come upon you.' And the priest, shaken and very fearful, recounted these things to his bishop, who immediately ordered a veil extended over (the picture). And thus covered the picture is now displayed. For even if it is uncovered for a little while for viewing, spon the veil is put back up lest (the picture) be seen openly.'

We detect here a certain prudery as well as a certain uneasiness in graphic depictions of Christ crucified, even among some of the clergy, which the colobium-draped Christ might to some extent have mitigated. And indeed, the colobium-draped Christ continued well into the eighth century in depictions of the crucifixion, as the crucifixion scene in Santa Maria Antiqua at Rome testifies. However, this eastern crucifixion

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91Gregory of Tours, *In gloria martyrum*, 1, c. 22, MGH SSRM 1: 501:
"Est apud Narbonensim urbem in eclesia seniore, quae beati Genesii martyris reliquiis plaudit, pictura, quae Dominum nostrum quasi praecinctum lenteo indicat crucifixum, quae pictura dum assidue cerneretur a populis, apparuit cuidam Basileo presbitero per visum persona terribilis, dicens: 'Omnes vos obtecti estis variis indumentis et me iugiter nudum aspicientis. Vade quantotius, operi me vestimento!' Et presbiter non intelligens visionem, data die nequaquam ex ea re memoratus est. Rursumque apparuit ei; sed et illud parvi pendit. Post tertium autem diem secundae visionis, gravibus excruciatum verberibus, ait: 'Nonne dixeram tibi, ut operieres me vestimento, ne cernerer nudus; et nihil ex hoc a te actum est? Vade,' inquit, 'et tege lenteo picturam illam, in qua crucifixus appareo, ne tibi velox superveniatur interitus.' At ille commotus et valde metuens, narravit ea episcopo, qui proterus iussit desuper velum expandi. Et sic obtecta nunc pictura suspicitur. Nam etsi parumper detegatur ad contemplandum, mox dimitto velo contegitur, ne detecta cernatur."
iconography never altogether drove out the western tradition of a "naked" Christ. Indeed, most depictions of the crucifixion in Carolingian iconography are of the earlier, western type, including that in Hrabanus' *In Praise of the Holy Cross*.

Ultimately, however, we are less interested here in the different styles of crucifixion iconography than in how depictions of the crucified Christ were perceived. Most historians today would agree that seventh, eighth, and ninth century depictions of the crucifixion portrayed a triumphant Christ, alive and eyes open and looking at the spectator, reigning from the cross. Walter Delius well sums up this interpretation:

> In contemplating a picture or a plastic representation of the Crucified the pious (Christian) of this period did not experience the agony and fearful suffering of the Savior and therefore could not himself enter into the sufferings of Christ as did (those of) a later time. The bloodied head and wounds were not realistically presented at this time. On the contrary, the believer beheld the crucified Savior as king and hero, who saved his people from wickedness through his sacrifice . . . Therefore the cross was not for the believer a symbol of the suffering but of the victory of Christ over the powers of evil and over the realm of death.  

We find this attitude toward the cross and Crucified borne out by Hrabanus Maurus who wrote: "Our creator and king, you who were affixed to the lofty beam of the cross, which is rightly to be called an imperial throne more than (an instrument of) servile torment, since through it [the cross] our king (and) emperor Christ conquered a powerful kingdom in heaven and on earth, overcame the enemy and reconciled the world to God."  

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93 MPL 107: 269CD: "Conditor utique et rex noster, qui pro nobis in alta cruci confixus est stipite, quam magis decet thronum imperialem vocari quam servile tormentum, quia imperator noster rex Christus regnum sibi
This was, of course, official teaching. That the perception of some might diverge from this lofty view of the cross and crucifixion, however, we have already noted in Gregory of Tours’ troubled Narbonnese priest. And there are other hints that early medieval man read more into the stiff and awkward depictions of the Crucified than we today, accustomed to the magnificently hideous portrayals of the Crucifixion served up in subsequent centuries, can possibly imagine. Thus Walafrid Strabo (ca. 808-849) tells how depictions of the Crucified could bring tears to the eyes of beholders. And Bishop Claudius of Turin (ca. 785-ca. 827) would condemn all such images as dwelling on the humiliation and suffering of Christ rather than on his resurrection and promise of life in the spirit.

Summary and Conclusions

We have seen that in early medieval Europe the cross continued to play the central symbolic and salvific role that it had in Christian antiquity. The cross and its sign appeared at every turn both inside and outside the sacred precincts of churches, to fill the European countryside. Christian and pagan alike could scarcely avoid contact with the cross.

Just as in Christian antiquity, early medieval devotion to the cross centered on the relic of the True Cross. Both the sacred wood as well as

in ea potestatem in coelo et in terra conquisivit, hostes superavit et mundum Deo reconciliavit."

Walafrid Strabo, Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum, MPL 114: 930A: "Et videmus aliquando simplices et idiotas qui verba vix ad fidem gestorum possunt perducit, ex pictura passionis Dominicae, vel aliorum mirabilium ita compungit, ut lacrymis testentur extiores figuras cordi suo quasi litteris impressas."

See Chapter 6, below.
the sign of the cross were vehicles of divine power in a world assailed by the powers of evil. It was this aspect of the cross far more than its more profound mystical, moral, and spiritual dimensions that appealed to ordinary Christians at this time, both Gallo-Roman and barbarian. The Church realized this, indeed was itself imbued with this same piety, and so presented the cross to the indigenous Gallic pagan and Germanic heathen, both in symbolic gesture as well as in the miracles wrought by the saints through the agency of the cross.

Not all churchmen, to be sure, accepted uncritically this cross piety. One of the few whose writings survive is Caesarius of Arles. To Caesarius the sign of the cross was powerless without the proper frame of mind and heart on the part of the person invoking it. It was powerless without right action. It was powerless without Christ. Such voices were, however, few in this early period and would remain so until the Carolingian period witnessed sporadic protests against this outward cult of the cross.

Images, on the other hand, never became in the west north of the Alps and beyond the Mediterranean littoral quite the focus of pious devotion as was the cross. They were not regarded in the west as vehicles of divine power like the cross or the relics of the saints. Instead, by and large they fulfilled the rather more prosaic roles of decoration and description. Here, too, it is significant that it was the descriptive and narrative art of Rome and Constantinople rather than the largely abstract and decorative art of northern Europe that ultimately triumphed in the west under Carolingian patronage. This Mediterranean art was far better suited to the educational and propagandistic (as well as decorative) aims of Charlemagne and his advisors than the inarticulate art
of Celtic Christianity. Even so, such art was never believed by Carolingian propagandists to be a substitute for the written word. The Libri Carolini would make this explicit as Hrabanus Maurus’ treatise on the cross would make implicit.

Indeed, the differing perceptions and emotions that iconography could evoke is nowhere better illustrated than in the image of Christ crucified. While many in the Church might wish to regard such depictions as illustrating the victory of Christ over the forces of death and the promise of salvation, others might equally regard such paintings as sacrilegious by representing the torment and humiliation of the Godhead.

Thus the stage was set for a conflict over differing attitudes both toward the cross and images, especially the image of Christ crucified. This conflict would come to a head in the reign of Charlemagne’s son and successor. It is to this conflict and the events immediately leading up to it that we now turn.
CHAPTER V
THE CROSS AND THE WESTERN IMAGE CONTROVERSY

The image controversy in the west was largely provoked by events in the east. While the western Church had experienced sporadic outbursts of iconoclastic dissent before the eighth century, it was not until the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy that the west became generally involved with this issue. In the forefront of the western response was Rome, where a succession of popes and synods anathematized the Iconoclastic regime in Constantinople. Even more important for this study than the reaction of Rome to Iconoclasm, however, was that which came from beyond the Alps, from the Frankish court and church. Here the reaction was less consistent, even within court circles, the chorus of voices less harmonious—and thus more interesting—for students of this period. Indeed, it was from the very bosom of the Frankish church that there emerged the most thoroughgoing iconoclast of this period, Claudius of Turin.

In the West, moreover, just as in the east, the image controversy involved the status of the cross and its cult. But while in Byzantium the cross was continually accorded veneration, if in degrees, by both Iconophiles and Iconoclasts, in the west its cult encountered some doubt and ultimately a direct challenge from within the Church itself. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine these western, especially Frankish, attitudes toward the cult of the cross in the context of the image

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controversy as this was played out in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries.

Rome and the Image Controversy

The first known instance when Rome had occasion to comment on iconoclasm occurred somewhat over a century before the outbreak of the Iconoclastic Controversy, during the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604). In 599 Gregory wrote a letter to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles in which he reproved Serenus for destroying the pictures in the churches of his diocese because some of his flock apparently had made them objects of adoration. "Some time ago," Gregory wrote

it came to our attention that Your Fraternity, seeing certain worshippers of images, destroyed and threw out these same images from the churches [of Marseilles]. And indeed we praise in you this zeal that what is made by human hands be not adored; but we think that (you) should not destroy these images. This is because a picture is used in churches so that those who do not know how to read may at least read by looking at (the pictures on) the walls what they are not able to read in books. Therefore, Your Fraternity ought both to preserve them and prevent the people from the adoration of them, so that those ignorant of letters should have a means

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1This is, in fact, the earliest attested case in the west of an attack on images. Earlier criticism of images in the west, such as that by Augustine of Hippo, did not recommend their destruction. For a discussion of Augustine's views on images as well as Gregory the Great's see Hugo Koch, Die altchristliche Bilderfrage nach den literarischen Quellen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), pp. 75-80. (The Council of Elvira (ca. 306), whose Canon 36, if enforced, might have led to the destruction of images, seems to have objected primarily to the depiction or circumscription of the holy rather than to some perceived nascent iconolatry. See Robert Grigg, "Aniconic Worship and the Apologetic Tradition: A Note on Canon 36 of the Council of Elvira," Church History 45 (1976): 428-33.) For a more complete discussion of this early Christian criticism of images, see Chapter 3 of this study.
whereby they can obtain a knowledge of (sacred) history, and the people should not sin by the adoration of a picture.²

Serenus apparently chose to ignore this apostolic advice, for in the following year Gregory once again wrote him, this time at greater length and in a more direct manner. "Tell me, brother," wrote the pope, "have you ever heard of any priest doing what you have done?"³ Gregory repeated his defense of images using the same rationale as in his previous letter and lectured Serenus on how he should instruct his flock in the correct attitude toward and use of sacred images. "All the divers people of (your) church should be brought together," wrote Gregory and it should be shown them from the testimonies of sacred scripture that it is not permitted to worship anything made by human hands, since it is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him alone shall you serve' [Luke 4].¹

¹Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum, no. IX, 208, MGH Epp 2: 195, ll. 18-25: "... indico dudum ad nos pervenisse, quod fraternitas vestra quosdam imaginum adoratores aspiciens easdem ecclesiis imaginis confregit atque proiecit. Et quidem zelum vos, ne quid manufactum adorari possit, habuisse laudamus, sed frangere easdem imaginis non debuisse iudicamus. Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus videndo legant, quae legere in codicibus non valent. Tua ergo fraternitas et illa servare et ab eorum adoratu populum prohibere debuit, quatenus et litterarum nescii haberent, unde scientiam historiae colligerent, et populus in picturae adoratione minime peccaret."

²Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum, no. XI, 10, MGH Epp 2: 270, ll. 10-11: "Dic, frater, a quo factum sacerdote aliquando auditum est quod fecisti."

³Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum, no. XI, 10, MGH Epp 2: 271, ll. 5-7: "Convocandi enim sunt diversi ecclesiae filii, eisque scripturae sacræ est testimonii ostendendum, quia omne manufactum adorare non liceat, quoniam scriptum est: 'Dominum Deum tuum adorabis et illi soli servies' . . . ."
The pope then advised Serenus to reason with his people by pointing out that pictures were placed in the churches, not to be worshipped, but rather to serve "for the edification of the unlettered."\(^5\)

Whether the pope finally persuaded Serenus to desist from his iconoclasm, we do not know. However, the pedagogical use of images by which Gregory justified Christian iconography thereafter became an important argument in the western iconophile repertoire.\(^6\)

Over a century was to pass after the death of Gregory the Great before the papacy was again to be troubled with an attack on images. When Rome next confronted iconoclasm the threat was far more serious than that posed by the scruples of an obstinate provincial bishop. The assault on images and their cult by the Syrian emperors at Constantinople presented the papacy with one of its greatest challenges. Throughout the century and a quarter of the ensuing Image Controversy, Rome was to remain steadfast in its adherence to the use of holy images and their veneration. Most active in formulating and upholding Rome's response

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\(^5\) Gregorii I papae regisstrum epistolarum, no. XI, 10, MGH Epp 2: 271, l. 8: "ad aedificationem imperiti populi . . . ."

\(^6\) It did not however become, as some have suggested, the Western justification for images. Indeed, it was only one of many arguments advanced by the popes of the eighth century in their sparring with iconoclast Constantinople. Ultimately, it proved most convenient to Frankish theologians who wished to retain images while denying them any form of cult. Thus it seems to have been cited in the Capitulare contra synodum (ca. 790) as well as by the Synod of Paris in 825, and in the works of Jonas of Orleans and Dungal of Pavia against Claudius of Turin. For a discussion of eighth century papal image doctrine, see David S. Sefton, "The Popes and the Holy Images in the Eighth Century," Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1987), pp. 117-130. Cf. Gerhart Ladner, "Der Bilderstreit und die Kunst-Lehren der byzantinischen und abendländischen Theologie," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 3rd Series, 50 (1931): 12-23.
were, above all, four popes: Gregory II (715-731), Gregory III (731-741), Stephen III (768-772), and Hadrian I (772-795).

Throughout this period, moreover, there was a constant correspondence between Rome and Constantinople, as well as between Rome and other sees and courts, especially that of the Frankish kings and their ecclesiastical advisers. Much of this correspondence unfortunately has perished along with the better part of the acts of the councils and synods. From what does survive, however, there is sufficient evidence to indicate the nature and extent of Rome's attitude toward images and their cult.

When the Emperor Leo III first moved against images in 726, he commanded Gregory II, in the words of the pope's biographer, "to acquiesce if he were to [continue to] enjoy the emperor's favor; if he failed to comply, he would be deposed." Having already survived an assassination plot inspired by Constantinople over his refusal to pay higher taxes, the pope ignored Leo's latest threats and instead attacked

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the emperor's war on images as heresy and wrote to Christians everywhere to do likewise.\(^9\)

This correspondence included at least one letter to Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople, and two to the Emperor Leo himself. The authenticity of the surviving texts of all three letters has been much disputed over the years.\(^10\) To the extent, however, that they reflect Gregory's sentiments and arguments, they indicate less a reliance on Gregory the Great's image doctrine than that of eastern Christian advocates of images in their disputes with Jews and other non-believers during the sixth and seventh centuries.\(^11\) Rome's familiarity with these disputations and the literature which contained them is not all that

\(^9\) *Liber Pontificalis* 1: 404: "Despiciens ergo pius vir profanam principis iussionem, iam contra imperatorem quasi contra hostem se armavit, renuens heresem eius, scribens ubique cavere se christianos quod orta fuisse fuisse


surprising, moreover, given the number of popes of eastern origin during the seventh and eighth centuries. Thus although Gregory II was himself a Roman, both his predecessor and successor were Syrians by birth.\footnote{Liber Pontificalis 1: 389: "Constantinus [708-715], natione Syrus . . . ."; and 1: 415: "Gregorius [III], natione Syrus . . . ."}

What is especially significant about these texts is their argument not merely for the use of images to adorn churches and to recall events of the past, but also for their status as objects of veneration. By calling upon them for support, the popes of the eighth century advocated not only the decorative and pedagogical use of images but their veneration as well. This was alluded to by Gregory II in his first letter to the Emperor Leo III when he wrote of the origins of sacred art. Of those who came to Jerusalem and beheld Christ, wrote Gregory:

Having seen the Savior, they painted his image, as they had seen him. As they saw the Lord’s mother, they painted her image. . . . Having seen the countenances of the martyrs, who shed their blood for Christ, they painted their images. It is thus at this sight that men, the whole world over, abandoning the worship of the devil, \textit{venerate} these (images). What is better in your opinion, my emperor, to venerate these images or the trumpery of the devil?\footnote{Gouillard, "Grégoire II et l'iconoclasme," p. 284/85.}

Likewise the Council of Rome, summoned by Gregory III in 731, excommunicated all those opposed to the veneration of holy images:

\textit{[I]f} anyone, despising those who maintain the faithful use of the ancient custom of the apostolic church, should be a destroyer and overthrower, a profaner and blasphemer against \textit{this same veneration of holy images}, i.e., of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His ever virgin and immaculate and glorious mother Mary, of the blessed apostles and of the saints, he should be separated from the body and blood of our
Lord Jesus Christ and from the unity and fellowship of the whole church.\textsuperscript{14} Thus also the Lateran Synod of 769, convened by Pope Stephen III, declared that "if anyone should refuse to venerate the holy images of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his Mother, and of all the saints according to the rulings of the holy fathers, let him be anathema."\textsuperscript{15} Finally, Pope Hadrian I argued on behalf of the veneration of images in response to the denial of the same by Charlemagne and his theological advisers (see below).\textsuperscript{16}

As for the cross, in general it found little mention in this papal defense of images. This is not surprising, since the cross and its cult had not come under attack by Byzantine iconoclasts. In two notable instances where the cross is mentioned, however, it is done so to justify the use of images and their cult.

The fourth session of the Lateran Synod of 769, for instance, included among the arguments in support of image veneration the

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Liber Pontificalis} 1: 416: "si quis deinceps, antiquae consuetudinis apostolicae ecclesiae tenentes fidelem usum contemptens, adversus eandem venerationem sacrarum imaginum, videlicet Dei et domini nostri Iesu Christi et genetricis eius semper virginis immaculatse atque gloriosae Marieae, beatorum apostolorum et omnium sanctorum depositor atque destructor et profanator vel blasphemus extiterit, sit extorris a corpore et sanguine domini nostri Iesu Christi vel totius ecclesiae unitate atque conpage."

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Concilium Romanum}, MGH LL sec 3: concil, 2.1: 87: "Si quis sanctas imagines domini nostri Ihesu Christi et eius genetricis atque omnium sanctorum secundum sanctorum patrum statuta venerari noluerit, anathema sit."

\textsuperscript{16}Hadrian wrote, in defense of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), against the criticism of Charlemagne's theological advisers: "Et sicut pro eisdem imaginibus sancti Gregorii [I] sensum et nostrum continebatur, ita et ipsi in eadem synodo [2 Nicaea] definitionem confessi sunt: has osculum et honorabilem salutationem reddere nequaquam secundum fidem nostram veram culturam, que decet sole divine nature" (Epistolae Selectae Pontificum Romanorum, no. 2, MGH Epp 5: 56).
observation that "we adore and embrace the cross for the sake of Christ who was crucified upon it." Likewise, in his letter to the emperors Constantine VI and Irene, Pope Hadrian concluded with the observation that God "gave to us Christians the cross and the images of good deeds to paint and adore, to venerate and to demonstrate our devotion." 

This passage from Hadrian is especially significant, for it indicates that the pope made no distinction between the cult of the cross and that of images, that in fact he recognized a parity of sorts between the two. Writing in 785, he thus pointed the way to the Definition of 2 Nicaea (787), which made explicit and official this parity, a parity that would be rejected alike by radical iconophiles in Byzantium as well as iconophobic puritans in the Frankish church and court.

The Franks and the Image Controversy

While throughout the Image Controversy the papacy remained steadfast in its defense of images and their veneration, the situation was far different north of the Alps, in the new hegemonial power emerging there, the kingdom of the Franks. Among the Franks, there can be discerned at least two major phases in which the attitude toward images

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18 Mansi 12: 1072B: "Deus ... nobis Christianis donavit crucem et bonarum operationum imagines pingere et adorare, venerari, et demonstrare opus nostrum."
and their cult in court and ecclesiastical circles would seem to have differed markedly from one another. Down to 2 Nicaea, i.e., under Charles Martel, Pepin, and the first half of Charlemagne's reign, the Frankish court and church would seem to have been largely in accord with Rome in all that pertained to the image question. Following 2 Nicaea, on the other hand, the Franks sought their own solution(s) to the image question.

Frankish bishops, for instance, may have participated in the Council of Rome under Gregory III (731) and were certainly present at the Lateran Synod of 769, both of which anathematized the iconoclastic regime in Constantinople and all those who rejected images and their cult. Indeed, during the latter conclave, the Frankish bishop Herulf of Langres urged in defense of images a teaching thought to be of Gregory the Great: not that contained in his letter to Serenus of Marseilles, but rather that included in an alleged letter of Gregory's to a hermit named Secundinus.

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13 Liber Pontificalis, 1: 416: "Unde maiore fidei ardore permutus synodale decrretum cum sacerdotali conventu quorum sacrosancta confessione sacratissimi corporis beati Petri apostoli, residentibus cum eodem summo et venerabili papa archiepiscopo, id est: Antonio Gradense archiepiscopo, Iohanne archiepiscopo Ravenne, cum ceteris episcopis istius Sperie partis . . . ."

19 Liber Pontificalis, 1: 473: "Itaque in exordio ordinationis suae, quo hisdem sanctissimis presul pontificatus apicem adsumpsit, direxit Franciae partes ad excellentissimos viros Pipinum, Carulum et Carulomannum reges Francorum et patricios Romanorum, . . . ut aliquantos episcopos gnaros et in omnibus divinis scripturis atque sanctorum canonum institutionibus eruditos ac peritissimos dirigent ad faciendum in hanc Romanum urbem concilium . . . . Dirigentes scilicet christianissimi reges XII episcopos ex eisdem Francorum regionibus . . . ."

21 Concilium Romanum, MGH LL sectio 3, Concilia 2.1: 89, l. 28 to p. 90, l. 9. Walter Delius, Die Bilderfrage im Karolingerreich (Halle, 1928), p. 15, mistakenly places Bishop Herulf at the Council of Rome under Gregory III. However, Herulf is explicitly mentioned in the Vita Stephani III. Papae as among the twelve bishops sent to Rome by the Frankish kings Charlemagne and Carlomann in 769 (Liber Pontificalis 1: 474).
In this letter, Gregory would seem to have allowed for proskynesis before the image of Christ. Finally, at the Synod of Gentilly, summoned by King Pepin in 767, the Frankish church seems to have endorsed the Roman position on images.

Throughout the eighth century, moreover, the papacy continually reminded the Frankish king of his duties as a defender of orthodoxy, which included the defense of images. Thus Pope Stephen II, when writing to Pepin about the depredations of the Lombards against papal territory, thought it important to include among the Lombard atrocities the burning of holy images. On several occasions Pope Paul (757-67)

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22 Gregory had written: "Scimus, quia tu [Secundinus] imaginem Salvatoris nostri ideo non petis, ut quasi Deum colas, sed ob recordationem filii Dei in eius amore recalescas, cuius te imaginem videre desideras. Et nos quidem non quasi ante divinitatem ante ipsam prosternimur, sed illum adoramus quem per imaginem aut natum aut passum vel in throno sedentem recordamur" (Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum, no. IX, 148, MGH Epp 2: 149.) Pope Hadrian I would later use this passage to counter Frankish scruples against image veneration in Charlemagne’s Capitulare contra synodum (Epistolae Hadriani I. Papae, MGH Epp 5: 55), while the Frankish Synod of Paris (825) actually attempted to reword it to bring Gregory’s authority more in line with Frankish image doctrine (see below).

23 The synodal acta, unfortunately, do not survive. What is known of the proceedings comes from two brief notices, one in the Annales Laurissensis (MPL 104: 386A): "Tunc habuit domnus Pippinus rex in supradicte villa synodum magnum inter Romanos et Graecos de sancta Trinitate vel de sanctorum imaginibus,...," and the Annales Einhardi (MPL 104: 385A): "Orta quaestione de sancta Trinitate et de sanctorum imaginibus inter orientalem et occidentalem ecclesiam, id est Romanos et Graecos, rex Pippinus, conventu in Gentiliaco villa congregate, synodum de ipsa quaestione habuit . . . ." Pope Paul was probably referring to the outcome of Gentilly when he wrote Pepin (MGH Epp 3:544-45): "Agnitisque omnibus a vobis pro exultatione sanctae Dei ecclesiae et fidei orthodoxae defensione peractis, laetiti sumus gaudio magno." Delius, Bilderfrage, pp. 15-16, writes: "Aus einem Brief Pauls I. an Pippin geht jedoch hervor, dass die beide in der Bilderfrage übereinstimmten."

24 Delius, Bilderfrage, p. 15.

25 Codex Carolinus, no. 8, MGH Epp 3: 495: "sacratissimas sanctorum imagines in ignem proitientes . . . ."
reminded Pepin of the "impious evil of the heretic Greeks" while lauding him for resisting their heresy and defending the orthodox faith. In 767 the soon to be anti-pope Constantine sent Pepin a copy "in Latin and Greek" of a synodical letter sent to Rome by Patriarch Theodore of Jerusalem and by the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria "and many other metropolitan bishops" so that Pepin would understand "what fervor for the holy images infused all Christians of the East."

Pope Hadrian I was therefore only following a precedent established by earlier popes when he sent Charlemagne a copy of the acts of 2 Nicaea. The copy of 2 Nicaea that Pope Hadrian sent to Charlemagne was not of the original Greek text but of an exceptionally poor Latin translation. The extent to which this translation led to misunderstandings of the Nicene fathers' intent by Charlemagne’s court theologians is evident at several points in the court’s written response. In one respect, however, there was no misunderstanding between Aachen and Constantinople. The Frankish court and church altogether rejected any

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26 MGH Epp 3: 539: "impia hereticorum Graecorum malitia . . . ."

27 MGH Ep 3: 539: "tu, bone, potentissime rex, viriliter sicut vere orthodoxus eisdem impis resistere hereticis atque solite sanctam Dei ecclesiam et christianorum orthodoxam fidem tuo a Deo protecto solito auxilio atque congruo dispositivo defendere digneris . . . ." Cf MGH Epp 3: 544-45.


form of adoration or veneration of images. In this, they differed not only with Constantinople but also with Rome. This was made clear in Charlemagne's *Capitulare adversus synodum* (Capitulary against the Council of Nicaea)\(^{10}\) which Charlemagne sent to the pope sometime around 790. Hadrian replied in a lengthy letter, mentioned in the previous section, in which he attempted to justify the position of 2 Nicaea.\(^{31}\)

Despite Hadrian's defense of 2 Nicaea, Charlemagne published, in 792, the *Capitulare de Imaginibus* (Capitulary on Images), otherwise known as the *Libri Carolini* (Caroline Books) (=LC), which formally rejected 2 Nicaea's teaching on images and set forth the Frankish position.\(^{32}\) In the view of Charlemagne and his advisers as set down in the LC, images served primarily two purposes: as decoration in the churches and as reminders of noteworthy deeds and events. They were not to be worshiped or adored; this was reserved for God alone. Nor were they to be shown any veneration or honor, as were, for instance, the saints and their relics.


\(^{32}\)The critical edition of the *Libri Carolini* is by Hubert Bastgen, *Libri Carolini sive Caroli Magni capitulare de imaginibus*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Legum sectio 3: Concilia, vol. 2: Supplementum (Hannover and Leipzig: Hahn Verlag, 1924). The secondary literature is vast. I have noted, where appropriate, those articles and works concerning the LC most useful for this study.
The LC, furthermore, objected to 2 Nicaea's equating of images with the holy Gospel books and other liturgical and sacramental objects. Finally, the LC also objected to 2 Nicaea's equating of images with the cross.

Concerning the cross, we will recall from Chapter 3 that in the Definition concluding the council, the fathers of 2 Nicaea declared that we define with all accuracy and care that the venerable and holy icons be set up like the form of the venerable and lifegiving cross . . . to give them greeting and worship of honor . . . [and] to offer them both incense and candles, in the same way as to the form of the venerable and lifegiving cross, in accordance with ancient and pious custom.

In response, the LC devoted an entire chapter to demonstrate "with how much reason the mystery of the Lord's cross differs from images." In this twenty-eighth chapter of the second book (=LC 2.28), the LC offered seven reasons (rationes) which were to demonstrate the superiority of the cross over images. First of all, asserted the LC, it was through the cross and not images that the devil, the ancient enemy of mankind, was defeated. Second, it was through the cross and not through images that mankind was redeemed since it was on the cross that Christ was hung as

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32 Mansi, 13: 377/78D. (For the text, see Chapter 3, note 80.)


a ransom for the world. Third, the cross (and not an image) was the standard of [Christ] the king and emperor, which led his legions to battle. Fourth, the cross and not images provided a sure defense in battle. Fifth, it was through the wood of the cross and not images that the instrument of the ancient crime was dissolved, which was contracted in the flesh [of the first man and woman] through the lure of the wood [of the Tree of Good and Evil]. Sixth, it was by the "hook" of the cross, not by some picture, that the author of crimes was captured; bound with reason rather than with brute force, with justice rather than power, he was compelled to spit out his prize, which for a long time he was known

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\[\text{Libri Carolini, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 89, ll. 31-33: "Per hanc [crucem], non per illas [imagines], humanum genus redemptum est. In cruce namque, non in imaginibus, pretium mundi pependit. Illa itaque ad servile supplicium, non quaedam imago, ministra extitit."}\]

\[\text{Libri Carolini, Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 89, ll. 33-36: "Hoc est nostri regis insigne, non quedam pictura, quod nostri exercitus indesinenter aspiciunt legiones. Hoc est signum nostri imperatoris, non conpainatio colorum, quod ad procium nostre sequuntur cohortes."}\]

\[\text{Libri Carolini, Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 89, ll. 37-44: "Non igitur quaedam materialis imago, sed Dominicae crucis mysterium est vexillum, quod in campo duelli, ut fortius confligamus, sequi debemus; arma, quibus libertatem tueri valeamus; munitio, qua infestantium hostium incursus evitemus. Est enim cassis, qua diabolicí ensis impulsio quatitur; est clýpeus, qui ad resistendum illius missilibus telis opponitur; est torax, quo illius spiculorum sive pilorum inlisio ignita frustratur. Hoc est munimen, quo illius flexuose fraudis meandros et callida machinamenta devincimus, ne vincere valeat temptatos, quos primi hominis tenuit suasione captivos."}\]

\[\text{Libri Carolini, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, pp. 89-90, ll. 44-1: "Per crucis lignum, non per imagines, antiqui illius sceleris facinus diluitur, quod in protoplasto per ligni aesum contractum est."}\]
to have retained within him.\textsuperscript{41} Finally, it was the cross, declared the LC, and not images which revealed the wisdom of God, which to men is foolishness, and the weakness of God, which is stronger than men.\textsuperscript{42}

Having listed these reasons for the cross’s superiority over images, the LC then called upon St. Paul’s words to determine whether Christ was glorified in images or the cross. "Far be it from me," St. Paul had written, "to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom [i.e., Jesus] the world is crucified to me and I to the world."\textsuperscript{43} The LC further recalled Paul’s assertion that it was not through images but rather through the cross that man died to the old law in order to live in God.\textsuperscript{44} It then proceeded to discuss the four mystical dimensions of the

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Libri Carolini}, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 90, ll. 1-4: "In crucis amo, non in quadam pictura, criminum auctor captus est, cum ratione potius quam dominatione et iustitia potius quam potentia constrictus praedam compulsus est eumovere, quam absorptam iam dudum noscebatur tenere."

\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Libri Carolini}, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 90, ll. 4-8: "Non ergo per materiales ab opificibus conditas imaginines, sed per crucis mysterium, quae a 'Iudaeis' putatur 'scandalum', a 'gentibus stultitia, superba saeculi et inflata sapientia' corruit; nec per picturam quandam, sed per crucem patuit, 'quod stultum Dei est,' quantok sit 'hominibus sapientes, et quod infirmum Dei est,' quanto sit 'fortius hominibus.'"

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Libri Carolini}, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 90, ll. 9-12: "Interrogamus igitur doctorem gentium, interrogamus egregium predicatorem, dicat nobis, utrum in imaginibus an in cruce Christi glorietur? 'Mihi,' inquit, 'absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Iesu Christi, per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est et ego mundo.'"

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Libri Carolini}, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 90, ll. 12-14: "Dicat etiam, utrum, ut Deo viveret, imaginibus an cruci confixus sit? 'Ego,' inquit, 'per legem legi mortuus sum, ut Deo vivam, Christo confixus sum cruci; vivo autem iam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus.'"
cross as described in Ephesians, according to St. Augustine's commentary. Finally, turning from Paul and Augustine, the LC recalled Jesus' admonition that "whoever would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

And what, in contrast, did Christ say of images, asked the LC? Regarding the image of the emperor on a coin, he had declared: "Return to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

In conclusion, the LC made clear that it is Christ alone, and not images, who should receive all adoration and worship:

If therefore we ought to bear the cross and follow you, who by triumphing through the cross have reconciled earthly things with heavenly, and render the image of caesar to caesar, images are not to be equated with the cross, are not to be adored nor worshipped, but should be left to the world with other things of the world, and you alone should be adored, you alone followed, you alone worshipped, you who reign forever in unity of substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The view of the cross delineated in the LC is thus one that emphasizes the salvific, moral, spiritual, and mystical aspects of the cross. Although parts are heavily laden with military allusions, these are

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45 Augustine, De doctrina christianae, 2.41. See article on Augustine & Gregory of Nyssa on mystery of cross.


48 Libri Carolini, LL, sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 91, l. 12-17: "Si ergo crucem tollere et te, qui per crucem triumphans terrena caelestibus sociasti, sequi et imaginem caesari caesari reddere debemus, non sunt imagines cruci aequiparandae, non adorande, non colendae, sed huic mundo cum ceteris, quae mundi sunt, relinquendae, et tu solus adorandus, tu solus sequendus, tu solus colendus es, qui in unitate substantialiae cum Patre et Spiritu sancto perpetim regnas."
metaphorical, referring to spiritual rather than temporal combat. For this view, the LC is heavily dependent upon St. Paul, St. Augustine, and the Gospel utterances of Jesus. These authorities emphasized the paradox of the cross as revealing the wisdom and weakness of God; the mystical significance of the cross in its fourfold form; and the cross as a symbol of sacrifice and discipleship in Christ.

At the same time, there is absent any reference to the sacramental, liturgical, devotional, and thaumaturgic functions of the cross. Correspondingly, there is no reference to the veneration or cult of the cross.

The lack of any reference to the veneration of the cross is strange, since in this chapter the LC was clearly objecting to the Definition of 2 Nicaea, which equated the veneration of the cross with the veneration of images and made specific the form of this veneration, which was to be accompanied by candles, incense, and so forth. Indeed, both at the beginning and end of this chapter, the LC seems almost deliberately to avoid any mention of veneratio due the cross. The chapter begins by juxtaposing the "mystery" of the cross with images. It concludes by making clear that it is Christ alone to whom is due worship and adoration.

Does this necessarily exclude veneration of the cross? To the mind of later writers, such as Hrabanus Maurus and Einhard, it did not. By venerating the cross, one was actually honoring Christ. But the LC does not explicitly say this, even though it is careful elsewhere to sanction the

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149 See chapter 7, below.
veneration of saints\textsuperscript{50} and their relics\textsuperscript{51}. Indeed, in several other passages outside of LC 2.28 where the cross is mentioned, the LC would even seem to be hostile to any veneration or cult of the cross.

In LC 1.13 for instance, we read:

How ignorantly and inordinately they say: 'If you calumniate me, because I adore the wood of the cross, why do you not calumniate Jacob who adored the head of Joseph's staff?' But it is manifest that seeing the wood, he did not adore it, but through the wood [of the staff] Joseph, just as we [see] Christ through the [wood of the] cross.\textsuperscript{2}

Again, in LC 3.28, we find the following:

Useless and demented and full of error is what they say: 'He who fears God wholly honors, adores and venerates both the

\textsuperscript{50}Conerning the saints, LC 2.21 states: "Cuius [God's] etiam Sanctis, qui triumphato diabolo cum eo regnant sive quia viriliter certaverunt, ut ad nos incolomis status ecclesiae perveniret, sive quia eandem ecclesiam assiduis suffragiis et intercessionibus adiuvare noscuntur, veneratio exhibenda est" (Libri Carolini, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2: supplementum, P. 80, ll. 25-28).

\textsuperscript{51}Concerning the veneration of relics, LC 3.24 states: "Sicut igitur sacratis rebus—sive quae per legislatorem sive quae per Dei et hominum Mediatorem sacratea sunt, sive etiam que quotidie a sacerdotibus divini nominis invocatione sacrantur et in mysterium nostre redemptionis sumuntur—imagines nequaquam coaequandae sunt, ita etiam nec sanctorum martyrum sue confessorum reliquis, quae apud fideles ipsorum amore venerationi habentur, coaequande creduntur . . . Sanctorum itaque corpora venerari eorumque reliquis honorem exhibere non sine causa vetustas admisit. . . . Ecce quibus exemplis, ut cetera taceamus, monstratum est sanctorum cineribus venerationem exhiberi debere! . . . Nos itaque nec cum Vigilantio eiusque sequacibus reliquias abnuentes . . . ." (Libri Carolini, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2: supplementum, pp. 153, ll. 36-41; p. 154, ll. 17-18; p. 155, ll. 8-9 and ll. 15-16, respectively).

\textsuperscript{52}Libri Carolini, MGH Leges, sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 32, ll. 20-24: "De eo, quod indocte et inordinate dicunt: 'Si calumniaris me, quoniam ut Deum adoro lignum crucis, cur non calumniaris Iacob adorantem summitatem virge Ioseph?' Sed manifestum est, quoniam non lignum videns adoravit, sed per lignum Ioseph, sicut et nos per crucem Christum."
sign of His cross and the figure[s] of His saints just as the Son of God, Christ our God."

In both of these passages where the LC disputed statements from 2 Nicaea, it would seem to forbid adoration and veneration both of images and the cross, reserving these, instead, for Christ alone. Does this, in fact, imply a rejection of the cult of the material cross? Both of the passages cited occur at the outset of their respective chapters and form the theme of discussion therein. Neither chapter, in fact, discusses the cross, however, but rather images. For a discussion of the cross and its relation to images, the LC, in each chapter refers the reader to LC 2.28. This is most unhelpful, as we have seen, for getting at the LC's position concerning the relationship between the "mystery" of the cross and the material cross as a possible object of veneration.

There is, however, one further passage which may throw some light on this relationship. In LC 4.19 the LC observed that "what great temerity it is to say: 'Just as to the Jews (were given) the tablets [of the law] and the two cherubim, so to us Christians is given the cross and the images of the saints to be depicted [lit. 'engraved'] and adored.'" When the participants in 2 Nicaea asserted this, wrote the author of the LC, what else do they do if not to exalt images and disparage Christian beliefs? Especially when they say that they [the Jews], who were under the law, had two cherubim made by Moses from the midst of which God was accustomed to speak,


5Libri Carolini, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 44, ll. 10-12: "Quod magne sit temeritatis dicere: 'Sicut Iudeis tabulae et duo cherubim, sic nobis christianis donata est crux et sanctorum imagines ad scribendum et adorandum.'"
[and] say that we however, who are under grace, have crosses, which are made by certain artificers; that they [the Jews], who followed the shadow of the law, had the tablets of the covenant containing the ten commandments of the law, [and] that we, who follow the truth, which is Christ, have objects made by ordinary craftsmen; that they [the Jews], who accepted the spirit of servitude in fear, had those things that Moses made with God's assistance, [and] that we who have accepted the spirit of adoption, in which we cry 'Abba, Father,' have images, which some painter skilled in only mundane art makes by dint of his artist's skill."

"For we," continued the LC,

who do not follow the dead letter but the living spirit, who are not the carnal but the spiritual Israel, who, despising visible things, contemplate the invisible, we rejoice not only in greater mysteries than images, which lack all mystery, but (also) have accepted greater and more eminent signs of the mysteries than the very tablets [of the law] and the cherubim. Since clearly the tablets [of the law] and the two cherubim are exemplars of things to come, and since the Jews had material objects, which were prefigurations of future things concealed in figural types, we have in truth those things spiritually, which were prefigured by these material exemplars and prefigurations."

"Libri Carolini, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 44, ll. 19-28: "quid aliud faciunt nisi, ut imagines exaltent, christianorum res extenuent? Presertim cum illos, qui sub lege erant, dicant habuisse duos cherubim a Moyse conditos, de quorum medio Deus loquebatur, nos autem, qui 'sub gratia sumus', dicant habere cruces, quae a quibuslibet artificibus efficiuntur; illos, qui umbram legis sequabantur, habuisse foederis tabulas continentes legis decalogum, nos, qui veritatem, quae Christus est, sequimur, habere opera quorumlibet artificium; illos, qui 'spiritum servitutis acceperunt in timore,' dicant habuisse ea, quae Moyses faciebat Domino insinuante, nos, qui 'spiritum adoptionis' accepimus, 'in quo clamamus: Abba, pater,' habere imagines, quas quilibet pictor condit mundanae tantum artis experientia perdocente."

"Libri Carolini, MGH Legum sectio 3: concilia, vol. 2: supplementum, p. 44, ll. 29-36: "Nos enim, qui non sequimur litteram mortificantem, sed spiritum vivificantem, qui non carnalis, sed spiritualis Israhel sumus, qui spretis visibilibus invisibilia contemplamur, non solum imaginibus maiora mysteria, quae omni mysterio carent, sed ipsis tabulis seu duobus cherubim maiora et eminentiora mysteriorum insignia a Domino accepsi nos gratulamur. Cum videlicet tabulae et duo cherubim exemplaria fuerint futurorum, et cum Iudaei habuerint carnaliter res, quae typicus operte figuris praefigurationes fuerint futurorum, nos habemus in veritate spiritualiter ea, quae illis exemplaribus sive prefigurationibus carnalibus prefigurabantur."
In this remarkable passage, the LC clearly sets at odds material objects, such as images and even the cherubim and tablets of the law, with the greater mysteries and signs of the Church as the "spiritual Israel." This juxtaposition of the mystical and spiritual with the material and mundane is important for our understanding of the LC's concept of the cross. According to this passage, the true cross is not a material object made by some artificer. As such, it would be no better than material images or even the cherubim made by human hands. Rather, as LC 2.28 makes clear, the cross is itself one of the greater and more eminent signs of the mysteries of the Christian plan of salvation. Only thus is it superior to material images. As a mystery, moreover, it is less an object of veneration than an instrument, or perhaps better, a sign of the promise of salvation.\(^7\)

Does this mean that the LC rejected the cult of the material cross? It is perhaps safer to say that it avoids an outright discussion of the

\(^7\)Stephen Gero, "The Libri Carolini and the Image Controversy," The Greek Orthodox Theological Review 18 (1973): 17, has observed that "[t]hough the LC refer to the crucis lignum, . . . yet a cultus of the material crucifix does not seem to be advocated." In fact, the mention of the crucis lignum in LC 2.28, does not refer to the relic of the True Cross or some material/liturgical object but rather to the wood (or tree) of the cross in contradistinction to the wood of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, an ancient juxtaposition first encountered in the recapitulation theory of St. Irenaeus (Libri Carolini, LL sectio 3: Concilia 2: supplementum, pp. 89, l. 44 to p. 90, l. 1: "Per crucis lignum, non per imagines, antiqui illius sceleris facinus diluitur, quod in protopolasto per ligni aesum contractum est."). For a discussion of the recapitulation theory, see Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 16-35. Elsewhere in LC 2.28, the crucis lignum is explained in terms of Pauline/Augustinian mysticism and discipleship in Christ (Libri Carolini, LL sectio 3: Concilia 2: supplementum, p. 90, ll. 24-5: "Ex quo ligno crucis [as clarified in St. Paul and Augustine] omnis vita sanctorum describitur, qui tollentes crucem suam . . . [etc.].")
subject. Whether this is deliberate or simply because the LC were more preoccupied with the cult of images than that of the cross is difficult to say based on the somewhat circumstantial evidence available in its pages. The concept of the cross detailed in the LC, however, which stressed the spiritual, mystical, salvific, and moral aspects of the cross, is similar to that espoused later by Claudius of Turin, who, as we shall see, did reject the cult of the material cross. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the principal author of the LC, Bishop Theodulf of Orleans, was a close acquaintance and colleague of Archbishop Leidrad of Lyons, Claudius’ mentor. We will have more to say about these relationships and their relevance to the cross and its cult in the pages that follow.

Synod of Paris 825

The ambivalence toward the cult of the cross apparent in the Libri Carolini was not reflected some thirty years later when the Frankish court and church next found occasion to consider it along with the image question. The occasion was the worsening relationship between the

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58 The identification of the principal author of the LC has been disputed for many years, although the majority of scholars today generally agree that it was Theodulf of Orleans. For Theodulf’s authorship, see Von den Steinen, "Karl der Grosse und die Libri Carolini: Die Tironischen Randnoten zum Codex Authenticus," Neues Archiv 49 (1930–1932): 207; and above all, Ann Freeman, "Theodulf of Orleans and the Libri Carolini," Speculum 32 (1957): 663–705. For the contrary view, that Alcuin penned the LC, see Luitpold Wallach, Diplomatic Studies in Latin and Greek Documents from the Carolingian Age (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 43–294.

restored Iconoclast regime in Constantinople and the papacy. With the
restoration of iconoclasm under Leo the Armenian (813–820), Rome once
more became a haven for iconophile refugees. Indeed, the popes conducted
an open correspondence with such leading iconophile theologians as
Theodore of Studion and in general gave aid and comfort to the iconophile
cause. This was no small source of irritation to the emperor at
Constantinople. In 824, the emperors Michael II (820–829) and Theophilus
(820–842) sent an embassy to Aachen requesting that Louis the Pious (813–
840) intercede on their behalf with Rome in order to win a more
cooperative attitude from the papacy. In response, Louis requested from
Pope Eugenius II (824–827) permission to convene a synod for the purpose
of reexamining the image question. Upon receiving papal sanction, Louis

In the space of a month, the assembled prelates reviewed previous
pronouncements on images, among them Pope Hadrian's response to
Charlemagne's \textit{Capitulare de imaginibis}, and essentially reaffirmed the
position of the \textit{Libri Carolini} concerning the status and use of images by

\footnote{For the critical edition of the Synod of Paris, see Concilium
Parisiense, ed. by Albert Werminghoff, Monumenta Germaniae Historica,
Legum sectio 3, Concilia, vol. 2, part 2 (Hannover and Leipzig: Hahn Verlag,
1908), pp. 473–551. For good discussions of the Synod of Paris and its
significance see Gert Haendler, \textit{Epochen karolingischer Theologie}, pp. 43–55
See also Eugen Ewig, in Jedin and Dolan, eds. \textit{History of the Church}, vol.
3: \textit{The Church in the Age of Feudalism}, p. 113.}
the Church. In support of their position, the Paris fathers compiled an extensive florilegium of patristic texts which was published as the synodal libellus and delivered to Louis on 6 December. Louis, in turn, commissioned bishops Jonas of Orleans and Jeremy of Sens to make an epitome of the libellus, which he could then send on to the pope.

Whether, in fact, it was ever delivered is unknown, as is the outcome of this rather strange affair. What is of importance for our purposes, however, is not the outcome of this incident but rather the insight that the synodal libellus and epitome, both of which survive, give us into attitudes toward images and the cross within the upper echelons of the Frankish church and government some thirty years after the Libri Carolini.

The Synod of Paris essentially endorsed the policy toward images formulated in the LC. There were, however, some differences. The LC, for instance, limited the role of images to recalling past deeds and as decoration. The Synod of Paris, on the other hand, explicitly added to this Gregory the Great's doctrine of the pedagogical use of images. At the same time, however, the Paris fathers absolutely forbade any form of veneratio or cult for images. Indeed, while affirming Gregory the Great's pedagogical doctrine, as formulated in his two letters to Bishop Serenus

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62 Werminghoff [Introduction], MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 475.
63 Werminghoff, Epitome libelli synodalis Parisiensis, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 535.
64 Libellus synodalis Parisiensis, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 487-8: "Nunc quals discretio sit tenenda erga sanctorum imagines habendas + historiarum picturas, sanctissimi et egregii atque admirabiliis totiusque catholicae ecclesiae doctissimi viri beati Gregorii papae sequentia dicta declarant. . . . [et seqq.]."
of Marseilles, they took strong issue with the apparent endorsement of such veneration in the letter to Secundinus, traditionally ascribed to Gregory. They went so far, in fact, to suggest a rewording of the text of that letter in order to make Gregory seem to disapprove any form of image cult.

More important for the issue at hand, however, the Synod of Paris reaffirmed the LC’s refusal to allow any parity between the cross and images. In fact, in contrast with the Libri Carolini, the issue of the cross and images was to a great extent the centerpiece of discussion at Paris in 825. Much of the synodal libellus addresses this issue, while the epitome, which may reflect the now lost conclusion of the longer synodal

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66 See above, note 22. Remarkings on this passage, the Paris fathers wrote: "hic ordo verborum ita praeposterus atque a non intelligentibus confusus videri potest, ut, nisi caute consideretur, ita a nunnulis minus capacibus intelligi possit, quasi beatus Gregorius id, quod prius omnibus inlicitum esse praedixit [i.e., in his two letters to Serenus], se fecisse sibique faciendi licitum esse testetur, quod quam absurdum quamque contra sanctae Dei ecclesiae religionem de tanto ecclesiastico doctore sentire indignum sit, nullus, qui dicta eius scrutando vel legendo cognovit, ignorare permittitur." Since "ab imaginum adoratione adorantes compescuit, nulla dubitatio est," the Paris fathers rearranged, for clarity, the wording of the critical passage to read: "Nos quidem ante ipsam non prostrinimur quasi ante divinitatem, sed illum adoramus, et cetera," justifying this procedure by noting that "sicut in multis divinae auctoritatis voluminibus sententias ordine verborum praepostero scriptas invenimus, ita quoque factum esse eo sensu, ut supra dictum est, hoc in loco minime dubitamus" (Libellus synodalis Parisiensis, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 528, ll. 34-40; pp. 528, l. 45 to p. 529, l. 1; p. 529, ll. 6-7, and ll. 14-16).

67 Libellus synodalis Parisiensis, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 502-506 and 513-515.
libellus, ends by condemning those who would equate images with the cross.  

The reason for this emphasis on the cross lies both in the framework established in the LC and, more immediately, in a passage of the letter from the emperors Michael and Theophilus to Louis the Pious:

Many ecclesiastics and laymen, in contradiction to apostolic traditions and careless of ancient custom, have become the inventors of evil practices. First of all, they have removed the honorable and living crosses from the holy churches and in their places have set up images and placed lights before them. At the same time, they cense them and hold them in such honor as the honorable and living wood (of the cross), on which Christ, our true God, deigned to be crucified for our salvation. They sing before and worship (them) and petition for help from these same images.  

The emperors, as we concluded in Chapter 3, were in all likelihood complaining here about the activity of the radical iconophiles, who went beyond the Definition of 2 Nicaea, which sought to establish a parity between the cross and images, and instead exalted images, especially the

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68 Epitome libellus synodalis Parisiensis, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 549, ll. 8-13: "Legimus praeterea in supra memorata epistola Michaelis imperatoris et Antonii patriarchae, quod quidam temerario ausu apud eos honorificas cruces de sacris templis expulissent et in earum locis imagines statuisissent, minime advertentes, quod nullo pacto nullaque ratione quaelibet imagines cruci Christi sint aequiperandae, praesertim cum per crucem genus redemptum sit humanum et Christus in cruce pependerit, non imagines"; and p. 551, ll. 3-5: "Unde quam stulte et insipienter egerint qui ab ecclesiis cruces Christi expulerunt et in loco earum imagines posuerunt, praemissis breviter sanctorum patrum sententiis, quibus omnis caeterorum sanctorum chorus adstipulatur, liquido declaratur."

69 MGH conc. 2: 478-79, ll. 36-1: "multi de ecclesiasticis seu et laicis viris, alieni de apostolicis traditionibus facti et neque paternos terminos custodientes, facti sunt inventores malarum rerum. Primum quidem honorificas et vivificas cruces de sacris templis expellebant et in eadem loca imagines statutebant ponebantque lucernas coram eis, simul et incensum adolebant atque eas in tali honore habebant sicut honorificum et vivificum lignum, in quo Christus, verus Deus noster, crucifigi dignatus est propter nostram salutem. Psallebant et adorabant atque ab eisdem imaginibus auxilium petebant."
image of Christ, over the cross. Nothing could, of course, have been more repellent to the Franks for whom the cross occupied a very special place. Indeed, it may have been for precisely this reason that Michael and Theophilus mentioned these outrages perpetrated on the cross by the iconophile party.

The framework for the discussion about the cross and images remained just as it was for the LC, the Definition of 2 Nicaea. Thus the Paris fathers wrote "against those who in that synod of the Greeks [2 Nicaea] professed that they adored images just as the living cross." They noted how "the worshippers of images were accustomed to contrast the veneration, adoration, and exaltation of the holy cross in defense of their position, (and ask) why it was not permitted to adore images just as crosses." The Paris fathers replied to this, again in the vein of the LC, by pointing out that "Christ chose to be hung on the cross and not on an image when he wanted to redeem the human race." They further noted that the Church taught that the sign of the cross was to be used to bless the baptismal font as well as the foreheads and breasts of those to be baptized and the baptized when they renounced the devil and all his works. And that thereafter it served as a sure defense against the

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70 MGH conc. 2: 502, l. 23-25: "Contra eos etiam, qui eadem auctoritate in illa synodo Grecorum se imagines adorare professi sunt sicut et vivificam crucem . . . ."

71 MGH conc. 2: 506, ll. 14-16: "Cultores igitur imaginum venerationem, adorationem seu exaltationem sanctae crucis in defensionem sensus sui opponere soliti sunt, cur non ita imagines sicut cruces adorari liceat."

72 MGH conc 2: 506, ll. 16-17: "Quibus primo respondendum est, quia Christus non in imagine, sed in cruce suspendi elegit, quando genus humanum redimere voluit . . . ."
Even more significant was the use of the sign of the cross in blessing the body and blood of Christ during the mass. Indeed, nothing that pertained to salvation, whether in the morning, noon, or night, whether in this world or the next, could be done without being begun, conducted or concluded by the sign of the cross.

Having said this much, it is not surprising that the Paris fathers gave explicit endorsement to the veneration of the cross:

Holy Mother Church has decreed that throughout the whole world, among the innumerable sacraments of the cross, which have been spread far and wide throughout the whole earth by the holy fathers, it is lawful to all Catholics on account of their love of the singular passion of Christ, to venerate crosses, if they wish, by bowing, and above all on the holy day when the Lord’s passion is specially celebrated that the universal sacerdotal order and all the people with every devotion adore the cross with proskynesis.

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‡‡MGH conc 2: 506, ll. 25-29: "supradicte universalis ecclesia tam sacris fontibus consecrando quamque etiam baptizandis vel baptizatis eodem signo sanctae crucis consignando vel benedicendo uti decrevit omniumque fidei catholicae cultoribus frontes et pectora sua post abrenuntionem satanae pompis et operibus eius certissima fide contra omnes insidias diaboli munire docuit gladioque inexpugnabili dextras cunctorum fidelium armare studuit."

‡‡MGH conc 2: 506, ll. 30-34: "Et licet haec magna sint, quid de consecratione corporis et sanguinis dominorum nostri Iesu Christi dicturi sumus, quae utrque in sacris missarum sollemnitis, ex quo consecrari coeperint, usque in finem pene sine intermissione crucis signaculo benedicuntur? Nec est quisquam tam sapiens vel insipiens, qui ullo modo hanc consecrationem aliter se posse perficere Deo placite praesumat, nisi hoc semper eiusdem sanctae crucis signaculo consecrare studet."

‡‡MGH conc 2: 506, ll. 37-42: "Quid etiam sicut de universo humano genere, ita pene de cunctis humani generis operibus seu cotidianis actibus eius complectendo dicere valebimus in omnibus, que die, nocte, mane, vespere et—melius fortasse dicitur—omni tempore agere consuevit? Quid est, quod in his omnibus, quod ad salutem eius sive in hoc saeculo sive in futuro pertinere possit, sine eiusdem crucis signaculo incipere, actitare vel consummare velit?"

‡‡MGH, conc 2: 506, ll. 17-23: "sancta mater ecclesia toto orbe terrarum inter cetera innumera crucis sacramenta, quae a sanctis patribus multipliciter longe lateque per universum mundum enumerata sunt, decrevit licitum esse universis catholicis ob amorem solius passionis Christi,
The Paris fathers thus made explicit what one might have expected to find in the LC but does not. Why is this? Unlike the LC, the Synod of Paris placed emphasis, as we have seen, on the sacramental and liturgical functions of the cross in addition to the salvific. Underlying this emphasis, and in part explaining it, is the repertoire of proof texts upon which the Paris fathers based their defense of the cross. This repertoire is very different from that of the LC. Neither St. Paul nor the Gospels, for instance, are once cited. While St. Augustine unavoidably figures in the list of proof texts, it is not his exposition of the mystical dimensions of the cross which is cited but rather his discussions of miracles performed by the cross, such as the healing of Innocentia\textsuperscript{77} or the curative properties of Moses’ brazen serpent.\textsuperscript{78} Added to this are such texts as Eusebius’ account of Constantine’s vision of the cross\textsuperscript{79} and Cassiodorus’ retelling of the miraculous properties of the labarum, which protected the lives of its bearers in battle,\textsuperscript{80} or the resurrection of a dead man by the wood of the True Cross.\textsuperscript{81} All these texts and others like them cited by the Synod of Paris thus tended to celebrate the

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\textsuperscript{77} Concilium Parisiense, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 505, ll. 3-8.
\textsuperscript{78} Concilium Parisiense, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 514, l. 39 to 515, l. 14.
\textsuperscript{79} Concilium Parisiense, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 502, ll. 27-40.
\textsuperscript{80} Concilium Parisiense, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 503, ll. 12-25.
\textsuperscript{81} Concilium Parisiense, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 503, ll. 26-28.
miraculous and thaumaturgic power of the cross, so that the Paris fathers might exclaim with Paulinus of Nola: "Quanta crucis virtus!"

The Synod of Paris thus chose to emphasize aspects of the cross very different from those highlighted in the LC. While the LC emphasized the mystical, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the cross, the Paris fathers stressed its liturgical, sacramental, and thaumaturgic functions. Neither view of the cross was, of course, necessarily exclusive of the other. Indeed, both reflected the richness of the tradition surrounding the cross. At the same time, one must wonder about the possible significance in the choice of this or that element from that tradition. As the remainder of this chapter and the following will suggest, there may indeed be more than simply circumstance in these contrasting views about the cross and its function in the Church and the lives of Christians.

Agobard of Lyons

In addition to the Libri Carolini and the Synod of Paris, both of whose formulations were officially commissioned, there is another work that needs to be considered. This is the De picturis et imaginibus (On Pictures and Images) of Agobard, archbishop of Lyons.

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82 Concilium Parisiense, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 506, l. 4.

Agobard was born in Spain, ca. 769, but came at an early age to southern France, to the city of Lyons, with other Christians fleeing Moorish persecution. At Lyons he was educated and became the protégé of Leidrad, who was consecrated Lyons' archbishop in 798. In 813, Leidrad appointed Agobard chorbishop and, when Leidrad retired to a monastery in 818, Agobard succeeded him on Lyons' archepiscopal throne.

As Lyons' archbishop, Agobard was vigorous and controversial. He was a prolific writer of letters and pamphlets in which he attacked, among other things, the conflicting law codes of his region, including the practice of trial by ordeal; the seeming omnipresence and influence of Jews especially in Lyons and at the imperial court; the Adoptionism of Felix of Urgel; Amalarius' sometimes idiosyncratic interpretation of the liturgy; and various superstitions rife among the people of his diocese. It is not altogether surprising therefore that Agobard should also have delivered himself of a treatise concerning the use and abuse of religious pictures and images.

What the immediate occasion may have been for the De picturis is unclear. It has been suggested that it was composed in preparation for the Synod of Paris. If it were, it had little apparent influence on the synodal libellus, as shall shortly become evident. The De picturis is nevertheless a significant document, for it acts as a bridge, so to speak, between the LC and the thought and action of that archiconoclast of the Frankish church, Claudius of Turin, whose career and views we shall examine in the following chapter.

*See Chapter 6, below.*

*See Chapter 7, below.*
In the *De picturis*, Agobard presents an exposition of the use of religious images that, while not condemning them outright, nevertheless makes clear the author's dislike and mistrust of them. Although Agobard began his treatise by invoking the second commandment, it soon becomes clear that he did not regard it as forbidding altogether the use of images by Christians. He cited, for instance, Bede’s *De Templo*, where Bede construed the commandment as referring to idols rather than Christian images. Agobard’s principal concern was rather that Christians not make their images into idols by offering to them that worship, adoration, or veneration reserved for God alone. "Let us look at a picture simply as a picture," Agobard states at one point, "lacking life, sense and the power of reason." It is vain to place one's hopes in mere pictures, he continues. "If we should see depicted feathered angels, apostles preaching, [or] martyrs suffering torments, we ought not to hope for any succour from these images, which we behold, since they can do neither good nor evil." Pictures had their uses, to be sure. The ancient church, indeed, had set them up; but not as objects of worship but rather to commemorate great events, such as church councils, and so forth.

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86 Agobard, *De picturis et imaginibus*, CCCM 52: 180, c. 31, ll. 17-18: "Aspiciamus picturam quasi picturam, uita, sensu et ratione carentem."

87 Agobard, *De picturis et imaginibus*, CCCM 52: 180, c. 32, ll. 11-14: "si uiderimus pennatos angelos pictos, praedicantes apostolos, martyres tormenta patientes, nullum ab imaginibus, quas aspiciamus, auxilium sperare debemus, quia nec male possunt facere, nec bene."

88 Agobard, *De picturis et imaginibus*, CCCM 52: 180, c. 32, ll. 1-4: "Habuerunt namque et antiqui sanctorum imagines, uel pictas, uel sculptas, . . . sed causa historiae, ad recordandum, non ad colendum, ut, uerbi gratia, gesta synodalia."
This sensible, pragmatic attitude toward the use and purpose of religious art is very much in the spirit of the LC. However, Agobard went beyond the LC in several important respects. First of all, he seems willing to countenance, when necessary, the resort to iconoclasm. He refers to the case of King Hezekiah, who destroyed the brazen serpent, once set up by Moses in the wilderness to protect the people of Israel from the bites of vipers, but with the passage of centuries became itself an object of idolatry and thus sin. Having cited the case of King Hezekiah, he commented:

From this it is to be considered manifest that, if this religious King Hezekiah with great praise of piety destroyed the brazen serpent, which God ordered to be made, because the people, erring, began to worship (it) just as an idol, so much more religious would it be for those to destroy the images of the saints—the very saints themselves favoring this—who, in order to honor them, with contempt for divine religion, bear them adoration shamelessly in the manner of idols: (indeed) they should be destroyed in every way even ground to powder, especially since God did not command that they be made, but human willfulness conceived (them).

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89 Delius, Bilderstreit, p. 38: "In dieser Schrift [De picturis] folgt Agobard im allgemeinen den Argumenten der Libri Carolini gegen die Bilder."

90 To be sure, the LC also referred to Hezekiah's destruction of the brazen serpent, but with a different moral in mind. Unlike Agobard, who saw in Hezekiah's action a justification for the destruction of images that were used as idols by their devotees, the LC make reference to this famous instance of iconoclasm to refute 2 Nicaea, which saw the brazen serpent as an Old Testament proof text supporting the use of images. The Synod of Paris also cited the brazen serpent in a more traditional vein than 2 Nicaea but also without reference to King Hezekiah's destruction of it, as a typos of the cross. See Libri Carolini, MGH Legum sectio 3: Concilia, vol. 2: Supplementum, pp. 42-44; and Libellus synodalis Parisiensis [Concilium Parisiense], MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 2.2: 514-15.

91 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 172, c. 23, ll. 21-29: "Ex quibus manifeste colligitur, quia, si serpentem aeneum, quem Deus fieri praecepit, quoniam errans populus tamquam idolum colere coepit, Ezechias religiosus rex cum magna pietatis laude contriuit, multo religiousus sanctorum imagines, ipsis quoque sanctis fauentibus, qui ob sui honorem
In addition to countenancing iconoclasm, Agobard also went beyond the LC in rejecting the intercession of the saints. "Between God and man," wrote Agobard, "there is to be sought no other mediator than He who is both man and God." He reiterated at another point: "Let us not place our hope in man but in God." From this it followed that neither the saints nor their relics were worthy of veneration. He recalled that Augustine had said that "ours is not a religion of dead men." This is not to say that Agobard refused all honor to the saints or their earthly remains. Indeed, he countenanced the honoring of their relics, citing the care with which Christ's body was prepared for burial after his crucifixion. However, he agreed with Jerome, who protested to Vigilantius that "we do not worship [colimus] and venerate [veneramur] . . . the relics of the saints." Indeed, as in the case of images, veneration, i.e., genuflexion or proskynesis, was owing to God and God alone:

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Cum divina religionis contemptu eas adorari more idolorum indignantissime ferunt, omni genere conterende et usque ad pulverem sunt eradende, praeertim cum non illas fieri Deus iussit, sed humanus sensus excogitauerit.

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92 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 154, c. 3, ll. 1-2: "inter Deum et homines nullus sit alius mediator querendus, nisi ille qui Deus et homo est . . . ."

93 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 179, c. 30, ll. 20-21: "Non ponamus spem nostram in homine, sed in Deo . . . ."

94 Augustine, De vera religione, 3.3: "Non sit nobis religio cultus hominum mortuorum . . . ."; in Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 174, c. 25, l. 23.

95 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 161, c. 11, l. 17.

But since none is equal to God, there is essentially no one else than Jesus, i.e., the Savior, we believe the Apostle [Philippians 2: 9-19], we concede to the divine authority, we bend our knee in the name of Jesus alone, which is above every name, lest, if we should give this honor to another, we be judged alien from God . . . .

Given his positions with regard to images, the saints and their relics, what place did Agobard see for the cross and its cult? Like the LC and the Synod of Paris, Agobard juxtaposed the cross with images. He did this in chapter 19 of the De picturis, where he wrote:

That also is worthy of memory which is contained in the eleventh book of the aforementioned history [Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History]: with the destruction of the temples and idols at Alexandria, such Christian fervor inflamed those converted from the demons to Christ that each one painted the Lord's sign of the cross on the doorposts, doors, on the windows, the walls, and columns [of his house]. Oh, what sincere religion! The sign of the cross was everywhere painted, not some image of the human countenance, by the grace of God, who clearly (inspired) these things miraculously, even in those perhaps ignorant [of the significance of the cross?].

This passage is noteworthy in several respects. Unlike the LC and the Synod of Paris, Agobard does not concern himself with the issue of the parity between the cross and images. Instead, he cites an historical example where the sign of the cross was used to exorcise, as it were, the 97 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 181, c. 35, ll. 17-21: "Sed quia nullus Deo equalis, nullus alius essentialiter Iesu, id est Salvator, exsistet, credamus apostolo, cedamus divinae auctoritati, flectamus genu in nomine solius Iesu, quod est super omne nomen, ne, si alteri hunc honorem tribuimus, alieni iudicemur a Deo . . . ."

98 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 168, c. 19, ll. 7-15: "Illud, quoque memoria dignum, quod, sicut memorate Historie undecimus continet liber, destructis apud Alexandriam delubris ac simulachris idolorum, tantus fervor christianitatis a demonibus ad Christum conversos inflammavit, ut unusquisque crucis dominice signum in postibus, in ingressibus, in fenestris, im parietibus columnisque depingeret. O, quam sincera religio! Crucis vexillum ubique pingebatur, non aliqua uultus humani similium, Deo scilicet hec mirabiliter, etiam ipsis forsitan nescientibus, disponente."
images and idols of the heathen. That this might also apply to Christian images as well is clear from the very next sentence, where Agobard remarks that "if those who have abandoned the cult of demons should be commanded to venerate the images of the saints, I think it would seem to them that they had not so much abandoned their idols as having merely transformed their countenances."³⁹ This "active" role for the cross vis-a-vis images strikes a new note and derives from a different tradition, one more hostile, certainly, to images than that represented in either the LC or the Synod of Paris.

At the same time, like the LC, Agobard makes no mention of the veneration or cult of the cross. That he was against the superstitious use of the cross (and what he considered this to be) we know from his work De divinis sententiis contra judicium Dei (Concerning the Divine Injunctions against the Judgment of God), where he mocked, along with the ordeals of hot iron and boiling water, the practice of "standing at the cross."³⁹ In the De picturis itself, moreover, he quoted from St. Jerome's commentary on St. Matthew, where Jerome reproved "the superstitious women among us even to this day placing (their trust) in little gospel books [pages of

³⁹ Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 168, c. 19, ll. 15-17: "Si enim sanctorum imagines hi, qui demonium cultum reliquerant, uenerari iuberetur, puto quod uide<re>tur eis, non tam idola reliquisse quam simulachra mutasse."

which would be used as phylacteries], in the wood of the cross, and in other things of this sort, who have indeed zeal for God but not according to knowledge [of the Gospel]."

More ominous, perhaps, was Agobard's reference to the brazen serpent whose destruction by King Hezekiah, as we noted above, he regarded as an ultimate sanction for the destruction of images. Although he cited this incident principally with regard to images, his sources included a passage from St. Augustine which identified the brazen serpent with the "image of death crucified" (crucifixe mortis similitudine).

All this is certainly suggestive, but, as in the case of the LC, hardly conclusive of a hostility to the veneration of the cross. It should be noted, however, that Agobard's De picturis, like the LC, is informed with a spirit of mystical spirituality, combined with a practical morality, which regarded material objects, preeminently images, as hindrances to true service to God.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated that the Western response to the image controversy was anything but uniform or monolithic. With a few notable exceptions, the West had little taste for iconoclasm. Instead, debate centered on the use and abuse of images, as well as the status of

101 Jerome, Commentarius in Mattheum, IV (Matth. 23:5): "Hoc apud nos superstitione multierculae im paruulis euangeliis, in crucis ligno, et in istiusmodi rebus, qui habent quidem zelum Dei, sed non iuxta scientiam, usque hodie factitand." Quoted in Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 175, c. 26, ll. 14-17.

102 Cf. Augustine, De civitate Dei, X, 8, quoted in Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 172, c. 23, ll. 2-8.
images vis-a-vis other foci of Christian devotion, including the saints, their relics, and the cross.

Under a succession of strong popes, Rome became the standard bearer of western and eastern orthodoxy concerning the image question. In its correspondence with Constantinople and in occasional councils, Rome championed both the use and veneration of images on the basis of Scripture, church tradition, and the writings of the Fathers. Indeed, the Roman defense of images went well beyond the "western doctrine" of Gregory the Great.

Initially, Frankish opinion adhered to this Roman position. However, following 2 Nicaea, the Frankish court and church issued a number of pronouncements on the image question, both collective and individual. The "official" attitude toward images was set forth in the Libri Carolini: images were neither to be destroyed nor venerated; rather they were to serve as decoration and as visual records of sacred history. This position was essentially maintained by the Synod of Paris in 825, and it was echoed as well in the De picturis et imaginibus of Archbishop Agobard of Lyons. If the Paris fathers looked rather favorably on images, however, Agobard evinced a more negative attitude. For him, images as well as all other material props to piety, including relics, hindered rather than aided the Christian in attaining salvation. Indeed, he seems not to have excluded, if necessary, the resort to iconoclasm.

In the Western debate about the use and veneration of images, the cross played an important role. Rome pointed to the veneration of the cross as part of its justification of image veneration. The Frankish court and church, on the other hand, rejected any parity between the cross and
images. This is true of the *Libri Carolini*, which juxtaposed the *mysterium crucis* with the worthlessness of material images; the Synod of Paris, which approved the veneration of the cross while disallowing that of images; and Agobard, who would exorcise idolatrous images with the sign of the cross.

At the same time, in their discussion of the cross, Frankish theologians demonstrated significant differences in their attitudes toward the cross and its function. Thus the *Libri Carolini* looked to the spiritual, mystical, and salvific aspects of the cross while ignoring, if not obliquely disapproving, the cult of the material cross. The Synod of Paris, on the other hand, which in its discussion and proof texts exalted in the liturgical and thaumaturgic uses of the cross, openly endorsed *proskynesis* before material representations of the cross. Finally, while it is not possible to determine with any certainty Agobard’s attitude toward the cult of the cross based on the *De picturis*, the general tenor of this work, its negative view of the veneration of images and rejection of the cult of relics, as well as Agobard’s condemnation of superstitious uses of the cross, make it likely that he at least disapproved the more extravagant forms of staurolatry. As we shall see in the following chapter, moreover, Agobard shared a common intellectual and spiritual framework with Claudius of Turin, who was both iconoclast and *stauroclast*.

Indeed, it would be Claudius’ role to bring the cross and its cult to the forefront of discussion among Carolingian divines. It is to this man, his ideas and actions, that we now turn.
The Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy had repercussions in the Latin west, particularly in Rome and at the court of the Frankish kings. While the Papacy condemned the Iconoclasts and in general approved of the Iconophiles, the situation at the Frankish court was somewhat more complex, especially from the accession of Charlemagne. The king and his court theologians sought to steer a middle course, referred to appropriately as the *via regia*, between iconoclasm and what they perceived to be iconolatry. This policy was first formulated in the *Libri Carolini* and was in large measure ratified by the Synod of Paris in 825. The Frankish court and church further rejected any parity between images and the cross, such as that formulated by the Second Council of Nicaea. This position testified to the very great influence that the cross and its *virtus* exercised on the imagination and piety of western Christians.

At least one member of the Frankish ecclesiastical establishment, however, dissented from this policy. His name was Claudius of Turin. Claudius of Turin was the most singular and thoroughgoing iconoclast in either the east or west during the century and a quarter of the great
Iconoclastic Controversy. He rejected not only religious images but also the cult of the saints and their relics, while questioning the usefulness of pilgrimages to their shrines, in particular that of St. Peter at Rome. Perhaps most notoriously, however, he rejected the cross, the one symbol whose honor both iconoclasts and iconophiles in the east and the west,

with the exception of fringe groups like the Armenian Paulicians, could agree to respect.

Claudius was certainly no Paulician but a man who had been raised in the bosom of the western church. His rejection of the cross is thus all the more curious and, despite its idiosyncracy, worth examining in the larger context of the image controversy in the Latin west.

The details of his life, such as these are known, can be summarized briefly. He was born in Spain, presumably sometime during
the last quarter of the eighth century. Probably around the year 800, he came to France, to the city of Lyons, where he received his training in Biblical studies. Following this, he was summoned to serve at the court of King Louis of Aquitaine, where he published the first of his commentaries, on Genesis, in 811. When Louis became emperor on the death of his father, Charlemagne, in 814, Claudius followed him to Aachen, where he continued to produce commentaries, several of which he dedicated to the emperor. In 816 Louis appointed Claudius to the vacant see of


7 Claudius' removal to Aachen with Louis, although not attested in the sources, is reasonably assumed by most scholars to have occurred; see, e.g., Dümmler, "Claudius von Turin," pp. 429–30: "Ludwig, der als Nachfolger Karls schon seit 813 den kaiserlichen Titel und die Mitregentschaft besass, war inzwischen seinem Vater auf den Throne gefolgt, und mit ihm zog ohne Zweifel auch Claudius nach Aachen, um dort die frühere Thätigkeit fortzusetzen"; and Vernet, "Claude de Turin," DThC, vol. 3, pt 1, col. 13: "Louis le Débonnaire étant devenu empereur par la mort de Charlemagne (814), Claude le suit à Aix-la-Chapelle, où il explique l’Écriture aux clercs de l’école palatine."

8 At Aachen, Claudius published commentaries on Matthew (815), dedicated to Abbot Justus of Charroux; Galatians (815), dedicated to Abbot Druceranmus; and commentaries on Ephesians and Philippian (816), dedicated to the Emperor Louis; see Dümmler, "Claudius von Turin," pp. 430–31; and his edition of Claudius' works in MGH Epp 4: 593–99. At Aachen, he may also have begun his commentary on Romans, MGH Epp 4: 599.
Turin.\textsuperscript{9} There, in addition to his scholarly pursuit of the scriptures (he produced at least seven commentaries in his eleven years as bishop\textsuperscript{10}), he began that campaign against what he perceived to be the superstitious abuses of images and the cross for which he has ever after been chiefly remembered. His iconoclastic activities soon came to the attention of Theodemir, the abbot of Psalmody near Nimes\textsuperscript{11} and formerly a friend and student\textsuperscript{12}, one to whom Claudius had dedicated a number of commentaries. Theodemir rebuked Claudius for his unorthodox activities\textsuperscript{13} and the latter replied with an Apology, wherein he attempted to justify his severe measures against images and the cross. Theodemir promptly sent this to

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In Turin, he published commentaries on Romans (820), 1 and 2 Corinthians (820), Leviticus (823), Kings (824), Ruth (824), Joshua (825–6), and Judges (825–6); MGH Epp 4: 599–610; Dümmler, "Claudius von Turin," pp. 431–33.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
The monastery of Psalmody contained 140 monks, one of the larger establishments of its day, made all the larger during this period through the merger of the monastery of St. Saturninus, a smaller house, with it; see Joseph Semmler, "Karl der Grosse und das fränkische Mönchtum," in \textit{Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben}, ed by Wolfgang Braufels, et al., vol 2: \textit{Das Geistige Leben}, ed by Bernhard Bischoff (Düsseldorf: Verlag L. Schwann, 1965), p. 261.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
In a letter Theodemir wrote Claudius (MGH Epp 4: 605), "ut quaestiones de libris Regum solutas", the Abbot of Psalmodi addressed Claudius as "[m]i pater et magister" (l. 16) and urged Claudius "[i]nter haec omnia ut et ipsas quaestiones quas michi corrigitis et per ordinem exponatis et quicquid inperito sermone locutus fui, ut magister ita discipulum emendate" (ll. 35–6).
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Claudivs of Turin, \textit{Apologeticum}, MGH Epp 4: 610, ll. 18–22: "Epistolam tuam cum adiunctis subter capitulis plenam garrulitate atque stoliditate per quendam accepi rusticum portitorem: in quibus capitulis denuntias te esse turbatum, eo quod rumor abierit ex Italia de me per omnes Gallias usque ad fines Spanie, quasi ego sectam quandam novam praedicaverim contra regulam fidei catholicae . . . ." Theodemir's letter or treatise against Claudius does not survive; see Dümmler, "Claudius von Turin," p. 434.
\end{quote}
the imperial court, where Louis the Pious had it examined and condemned and ordered an abridged version sent to Bishop Jonas of Orleans for refutation. Meanwhile, Dungal, a teacher in Pavia, who had long viewed Claudius' activities with misgiving, also came across a copy of the abridged Apology and wrote a refutation of his own. Claudius was summoned to appear before a synod to explain himself but refused, calling it an "assembly of asses." Dungal cried out for his punishment, and

14 Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum, MGH Epp 5: 354, ll. 9-28: "Sed quam pestiferum dogma et ab ecclesiae auctoritate abhorrens in plebem sibi transfuderit commissam, libellus, quem ad Theodimirum venerabilem abbatem, se, caritate imperante, corrigentem eumque a superstitione doctrina avertere volentem, scripsit, eundem legere et nosse volentibus patenter demonstrat. Memoratus denique libellus eum nostro, genitori vestro, sincerissime ac religiosissime orthodoxam fidem colenti, ob defensionem sanctae matris ecclesiae, quae ab eodem Claudio, sicut textus suarum literarum prodit, hostiliter impugnabatur, delatus est. Qui ab eo suique palatii prudentissimis viris est exanimatus, iusto iudicio est repudiatus. Quem licet ego nec legerim nec viderim, quoddam tamen ex eo excerptum, eodem genitore vestro mittente, suscepi. Praecipiens et monens memoratus Deo carus caesar, ut ad refellenda et improbanda eiusdem Claudii, quae in eodem excerpto perversissima continebantur, dicta, et in blasphemiam vituperationemque sanctae Dei ecclesiae irreverenter erant iaculata, secundum tenuitatem sensus mei, quantum Deus annuisset, nullatenus rescribere omitterem." The author of the Libri Carolini may also have used such an abridgement of the acta of 2 Nicæa, as Stephen Gero has suggested in "The Libri Carolini and the Image Controversy," The Greek Orthodox Theological Review 18 (1973): 13.

15 For Dungal's background and origins, see Chapter 7.

16 Dungal, Responsa contra perversas Claudii Taurinensis episcopi sententias, MPL 105: 529A: "Propter istam autem insanissimam perversitatem renuit ad conventum occurrere episcoporum, vocans illorum synodum congregatam asinorum."

17 Dungal, Responsa contra perversas Claudii Taurinensis episcopi sententias, MGH Epp 4: 584, ll. 19-34: "Rogamus vero suppliciter nostros dominos Christianissimos ac religiosissimos, ut zelo Dei commoti suae sanctae matris Ecclesiae gementi et periclitanti opportune dignetur succurrere, eamque diris serpentem morsibus dieiutius non sinant laniari. . . . validiori etiam castigatione, quam suam autem auctorem [Felix of Urgel] fuerat, corripiatur, quo caeteri timorem habeant: ne amplius malignissimo superbiae spiritu inflati, talem audentes excogitare pravitatem, sponsam Christi Ecclesiam, cuius vos Deus provisores defensoresque constituit,
Jonas hinted that a move was afoot to remove Claudius from his see, if he did not mend his ways. Before anything could be done, however, Claudius died unrepentant, presumably of natural causes.

What moved Claudius, who for most of his life had lived in apparent concord with the teaching and tradition of the Catholic church, so completely to reject many of the traditional practices and norms of Christian piety? What, in particular, explains his rejection of the cult of the cross?

Claudius' place of origin and early life provide what some scholars believe to be clues to his later attack on images and the cross. He hailed

difamare violareque praesumant . . . ."

18 Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum, MPL 106: 333CD: "Scito ergo quia nisi tua errata humiliter confiteri et corrigere praepone studueris, procul dubio ad periculum salutis tuae et ad ruinam gradus tui, tanti doctoris excellentissimis dictis et discretissimis intitutionibus contraria dogmatizasti."

19 Walafrid Strabo, De rebus ecclesiasticis, c. 8, MPL 114: 929, wrote that Claudius "suo judicio damnatus interiit." As Vernet, "Claude de Turin," DThC 3.1: 14, indicates, this "est la formule usitée par les auteurs ecclesiastiques pour indiquer l'obstination finale dans l'erreur."

20 Dümmler, "Claudius von Turin," p. 438, observes that Claudius was mentioned for the last time as a witness to a donation to his church in May 827; his successor Witgar is mentioned for the first time in 832. Dümmler speculates that it is more probable that Claudius died earlier rather than later, especially since he died before disciplinary measures could be taken against him. Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum, MGH Epp 5: 354, ll. 31-32, stated that: "audiens eundem Claudium iuxta humanum conditionem ultimum clausisse diem, ab eodem opere perficiendo stilum meum feriandum statui." This would indicate that Claudius died shortly after the uproar over his iconoclasm broke in 825-826.

21 That Claudius feared violence from his own diocesans is clear from the Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 610, ll. 31-32, where he complained that because of his iconoclastic measures, "aperuerunt omnes ora suad blasphemandum me et nisi Dominus adivisset me, forsitan vivum de glutissent me." However, had he met a violent end, it is likely that this would have been reported, perhaps not without satisfaction, in the sources. For this, there is no evidence.
originally, as we have said, from Spain, as did Agobard and Theodulf of Orleans. This fact led Walter Delius to suggest the existence of an atmosphere in Spain especially conducive to producing iconophobes, as these three men undoubtedly were. Spain had been, after all, the home of Vigilantius (fl. ca. 400), who, according to St. Jerome, had preached against the cult of the saints and their relics in the late fourth century. Claudius' opponents, in fact, accused him of following in the footsteps of this earlier Spanish heresiarch. Delius claimed, moreover, that Vigilantianism had its devotees as late as the ninth century, basing this assertion on the acts of the Council of Cordova which condemned it anew in 839. Edward James Martin, on the other hand, believed that Claudius was affected by the influence of Muslim monotheism on the Spanish church as well as by Spanish Adoptionism. This explanation, however, not only


25 Delius, Bilderfrage im Karolingerreich, p. 40.

represents a discredited view about the origins of Spanish Adoptionism but also ignores the fact that Claudius' published work is free of Adoptionist sentiment. As to the putative influence of Islam on Spanish Christianity, not to say Claudius' thought and upbringing, one would presumably have to place him in that part of the peninsula under the occupation of the Moors. Unfortunately, nothing is known of Claudius' life in Spain, not even what part of the peninsula he may have come from, so that any speculation about "Spanish influences" on his later thought and activity, while intriguing, must remain ultimately inconclusive.

Far more significant for his intellectual and spiritual development was his education in Lyons, in the episcopal household of Archbishop Leidrad. Leidrad had become Lyons' bishop in 798 and quickly set about bringing the curriculum of the episcopal school in line with the

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28 Vernet, "Claude de Turin," DThC 3.1: 17, points out that although Claudius was accused by both Jonas of Orleans (MPL 106: 309-310) and Dungal (MPL 105: 466) of having been a disciple of the Adoptionist heresiarch Felix of Urgel, "ni l'un ni l'autre ne disent que Claude a enseigné l'adoptionisme de Félix d'Urgel; il semble plutôt, à les lire de près, qu'ils tiennent que Félix a mis en Claude des tendances hétérodoxes . . . . Et il paraît légitime de conclure, avec E. Dümmler, Monum. Germaniae hist. Epist., t. iv, p. 586, que, si Claude fut le disciple de Félix d'Urgel, il ne suivit pas ses idées."

educational objectives of Charlemagne. There survives, in fact, a letter that Leidrad wrote to Charlemagne describing the extent and progress of his educational reforms:

I now have schools of singers and of the pupils several are grown so learned that they are able to become teachers. I also have schools for reading, in which is practiced not only the proper reading of the 'lessons' for the Office, but also the endeavor by a study of the Scriptures to reach an understanding of the spiritual meaning. Many of my pupils are already capable of making out the precise meaning of the Gospel, others add the book of the apostles, several come to explicate, at least partially, the book of prophets, others the books of Solomon, the Psalter or Job.

Claudius was one of Leidrad's students who proved especially proficient in expounding the Scriptures, like Agobard, according to the spiritual meaning. Indeed, in the introductory epistle to his Leviticus commentary, he emphasized the importance of penetrating to the spirit through the veil of the letter. Also at Lyons, Claudius learned a deep


31 MGH Epp 4: 543: "Nam habeo scolas cantorum, ex quibus plerique ita sunt eruditi, ut etiam alios erudire possint. Praeter haec vero habeo scolas lectorum, non solum qui officiorum lectionibus exerceantur, sed etiam qui in divinorum librorum meditatione spiritualis intelligentiae fructus consequantur. Ex quibus nonnulli de libro evangeliorum sensum spiritalem iam ex parte proferre possunt, aliis adiuncto libro etiam apostolorum, plerique vero librum prophetarum secundem spiritalem intelligentiam ex parte adepti sunt; similiter libros Salomonis vel libros psalmorum seu Iob.

32 Claudius of Turin, Praefatio librorum informationum litterae et spiritus super Leviticum, MGH Epp 4: 603: "Sed beati sunt illi oculi, qui velamen litterae oblectum intrinsecus divinum spiritum vident . . . ."
respect for the authority of St. Augustine\textsuperscript{33}, which he expressed repeatedly and sometimes effusively.\textsuperscript{34} Some scholars, indeed, have considered Claudius to have been the greatest student of Augustine of his generation.\textsuperscript{35} However that may be, Claudius drew heavily upon the great African doctor in his numerous commentaries on the books of scripture, sometimes in a way disagreeable to his later opponents.

Indeed, Lyons was important for Claudius if for no other reason than the association with Agobard which it afforded. Their common indoctrination in the school of Lyons left them equally imbued with an appreciation for the spiritual and a contempt for the material and mundane, attitudes which led to a similarity of outlook on such things as the cult of images, the saints and their relics. As his dependence on Agobard's De

\textsuperscript{33}Wallace-Hadrill, The Frankish Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 361, has written that "Augustine was a Lyon speciality. It was often to Lyon that others turned for advice on the great Father . . . ."

\textsuperscript{34}E.g., Claudius of Turin, Expositionis epistolae Pauli ad Romanus praefatus, MGH Epp 4, ll. 8-15: "Amantissimus Domini sanctissimus Augustinus, calamus Trinitatis, lingua Spiritus sancti, terrenus homo, sed caelestis angelus; olim terra pedibus ambulans, sed caelum semper meritis possidens; corruptibile atque mortali adhuc carne circumdatus, incorruptibili angelicaque visione adque inmortali intuitus semper est Deum. Acer ingenio, suavis eloquio, saecularis litteraturae peritus, in ecclesiasticis laboribus operosus, in quotidianis disputationibus clarus, in omni sua actione compunctus, in expositione fidei nostre catholicus, in questionibus solvendis acutus, in revincendis hereticis circumspectus, in explanandis scripturis canonicus cautus." Etc. In his commentary on Matthew (MGH Epp 4: 594, ll. 12-15), Claudius listed Origen, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Rufinus, John, Fulgentius, Leo, Maximus, Gregory, and Bede as his authorities, but then went on to add: "Sed sicut in arce capitis inter omnia membra lingua plus membris omnibus sonat, ita in exponendo evangelium inter hos omnes est beatissimus Augustinus."

picturis would demonstrate, Claudius maintained considerable respect for his more learned and literate colleague to the end of his life.

If his training and experience in Lyons predisposed Claudius to regard images and other material props with misgiving if not hostility, it was his appointment as bishop of Turin that proved to be the catalyst which set him on his iconoclastic course. These were the years of Louis the Pious' great reform activity in the church and empire. Thus, it is not surprising that, when the see of Turin fell vacant, Louis, considering Claudius' great learning and close acquaintance with the Scriptures, appointed him Turin's bishop "to bring the counsel of sacred doctrine to the Italian people, who by and large had wandered far from the teaching of the holy evangelists." Claudius later complained that he had been forced to accept this appointment, and this may be true: certainly, he must have felt that he had already found his "niche" as court scholar. Turin, moreover, as the nature of Claudius' reform commission indicates, was no sinecure, a reward for services rendered. Instead Claudius was

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38 Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 610: "coactus suscepì sarcinam pastoralis officii, missus a pio principe, sanctae Dei ecclesiae catholicó filio, Hlodowico et veni in Italian civitatem Taurinis . . . ." 

"[U]trum coacte, ut asseris, an sponte, soli Deo relinquitur," observed Jonas drily (MPL 106: 315B).
sent to Turin because as a trusted servant of the emperor, he was deemed the best man to further the cause of reform in a see of strategic importance to the empire. This may explain, in part, why, even after Claudius’ "reform" measures became the occasion of a growing scandal in Italy, France and Germany, the emperor was slow to move against him. Given his stubborn and temperamental nature, Claudius may have been well aware of this and counted upon the presumed immunity it lent him.

The circumstances of Claudius’ appointment as bishop of Turin—the nature of his commission and his close association with the emperor—thus go far to explain his uninhibited iconoclasm. The practices of popular piety he encountered in Turin, or rather his perception of them, help explain much of the rest. Italy, despite its close ties with the kingdom of the Franks, still retained an affinity with Constantinople and Byzantine social, political, and religious culture. Rome and Italy had, from the beginning of the Iconoclastic controversy, been a refuge for iconophile religious and others fleeing the persecution of the Iconoclast emperors. The papal court openly rejoiced, indeed, helped conspire in the restoration of images sanctioned by 2 Nicaea and resisted the criticism of that council embodied in the Libri Carolini. The papacy voiced no objection to the lighting of candles and burning of incense before images or even venerating them by means of genuflexion or proskynesis, as called

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for by the Nicene fathers, practices definitively denounced by Charlemagne and his ecclesiastical advisers.\footnote{See Chapter 5.}

Claudius was not unique, moreover, in his criticism of Italian religious culture. Frankish ecclesiastics participating in the Synod of Paris (825), at the very height of Claudius' iconoclastic campaign in Turin, reviewed their differences with Rome regarding the use and abuse of images and essentially reaffirmed the doctrine of the Libri Carolini.\footnote{Concilium Parisiense, MGH LL sectio 3: concilia 2.2: 481-82.}

Even Jonas of Orleans, writing against Claudius, allowed that the Italians were given to superstitious practices from which, he claimed, the people of France and Germany were free.\footnote{Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum, MPL 106: 310D, wrote that Claudius had been appointed bishop of Turin to correct, in part, "superstitiosae, imo perniciosae, imaginum adorationi, qua plurimum nonulli illarum partium laborant," while a little farther on (MPL 106: 312A) he protested that Claudius had also attacked "Galliam Germaniamque incolentes, Christoque Domino devotissime militantes, et ab imaginum superstitione adoratione immunes . . . ."

Jonas, De cultu imaginum, MPL 106: 310D-311A, wrote that Claudius "immoderato et indiscreto zelo succensus," by his destruction of images and crosses "errorem gregis sui ratione corrigere neglexit, et eorum animis scandalum generavit, et in sui destestationem eos quodammodo prorumpere coegit."}

Claudius' fault in the eyes of Jonas and the imperial court was not his condemnation of image veneration by the people of his diocese but rather his precipitate removal of images and crosses from the churches under his jurisdiction and their wholesale destruction.\footnote{Jonas, De cultu imaginum, MPL 106: 310D-311A, wrote that Claudius "immoderato et indiscreto zelo succensus," by his destruction of images and crosses "errorem gregis sui ratione corrigere neglexit, et eorum animis scandalum generavit, et in sui destestationem eos quodammodo prorumpere coegit."} The Emperor Louis, in his role as mediator between Rome and Constantinople, was particularly solicitous of the papal view on images, even if he did not
wholly subscribe to it. Thus Claudius' iconoclastic campaign, which attracted the ire of Pope Paschal, was not only offensive to Rome but most inopportune to Aachen.

We do not know precisely when, following his arrival in Turin, Claudius began his iconoclastic activity. By 823, the year he published his commentary on Leviticus, however, it is clear that he had begun to grapple with, as he saw it, the problem of the cult of the saints and their images.

In the introduction to this work, Claudius quoted a passage from St. Augustine's De vera religione:

Let not our religion be the worship of dead men. If they lived pious lives, it must not be supposed that they seek divine honours. They want us to worship him, in whose light they rejoice to have us as sharers in their merit. They are to be honoured by imitation and not adored with religious rites. . . .

We believe that the best angels themselves and the most excellent servants of God want us to worship God with them, by whose contemplation they are blessed. . . . And therefore we honor them in love, not servilely, nor do we set up temples to them: and through this they do not want themselves to be honored by us, since we

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45 Louis cautioned bishops Jonas of Orleans and Jeremy of Sens, who were to deliver the Epitome of the Synod of Paris to the pope: "vos ipsi patienter ac modeste cum eo de hac causa disputationem habeatis, ut summopere caveatis, ne nimis ei resistendo eum in aliquam inrevocabilem pertinaciam incidere possis, sed paulatim verbis eius quasi obsequendo magis quam aperte resistendo ad mensuram, quae in habendis imaginibus retinenda est, eum deducere valebatis; et ideo potius efficere contendatis, ut negotium, de quo agitur, ad meliorem quam ad peiorum statum cum Dei adiutorio perducatur. . . . [etc.]" (Concilium Parisiense, MGH LL sectio 3: concilia 2.2: 533, ll. 16-22).

ourselves, when we are good, know that we are temples of the highest God.\footnote{Claudius of Turin, Praefatio librorum informationem litterae et spiritus super Leviticum, MGH Epp 4: 604, ll. 24-42: "Et ideo non sit nobis religio cultus hominum mortuorum, quia, si pie vixerunt, non sic habentur, ut tales, querant honores, sed illum a nobis coli [volunt], quo inluminati laetantur meriti sui nos esse consortes. Honorandi ergo propter imitationem, non adorandi propter religionem. . . . Hoc etiam ipsos obtimos angelos et excellentissima mininsteria Dei velle credamus, ut unum cum ipsis colamus Deum, cuius contemplatione beati sunt. . . . Et idcirco honoramus eos caritate, non servitute; nec eis templum constituimus; ac per hoc nolunt se sic honorari a nobis, quia nos ipsos, cum boni sumus, tempa summ Dei esse noverunt." Trans. by John H. S. Burleigh, in Augustine: Earlier Writings, The Library of the Christian Classics, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 280. Cf. Augustine, De vera religione, 55, 108. Cf. Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, CCCM 52: 174, c. 25, l. 23.}

"This," commented Claudius, "(is) the surest and highest sacrament of our faith, a mark most firmly impressed on our heart."\footnote{Claudius of Turin, Praefatio librorum informationem litterae et spiritus super Leviticum, MGH Epp 4: 604, ll. 43-44: "Hec fidei nostre munitissimum atque altissimum sacramentum et cordi nostro firmissimum caracer impressum."} With this Agobard, who alluded to the same passage in his De picturis, would have agreed. Not so, however, the Turinese. A few lines farther on, Claudius complained that "By thus construing and defending the truth, I was made (an object of) opprobrium by my neighbors and of fear to my acquaintenances, so that when they see us, they do not only mock (us), but even point (us) out to one another."\footnote{Claudius of Turin, Praefatio librorum informationem litterae et spiritus super Leviticum, MGH Epp 4: 604, l. 44 to p. 605, l. 2: "Hanc astruendo et defendendo veritatem obproprium factus sum vicinis meis et timor notis meis, in tantum, ut qui videbant nos, non solum deridebant, sed etiam digito unus alteri ostendebant." (I have preferred to use here the more genteel rendering of this passage. A more likely rendering awaits, in any case, some future dissertation on the history of body language, signs and gestures through the centuries.)}

More significant still are several passages from his commentary on Kings, which he undertook in 824, and by which time he certainly had
begun his iconoclastic program. In this work he traced the origins of idols and images and denounced idolatry, the worship of images as the "evil of evils and the sin of sins." Scripture, he claimed, called it an "iniquity, and an abomination, and filth, ... an odious thing." Like Agobard, he cited at length King Hezekiah's destruction of the brazen serpent as a precedent for the removal and destruction of images, when necessary:

For since the [brazen] serpent which Moses made at God's command lest the people die from the bite of vipers, this, which God ordered to be made, the people itself began to venerate and to worship, and that death which their ancestors at the time escaped, they understood that they were once more to die, to die in their souls perpetually. And therefore he [Hezekiah] destroyed that which the other [Moses] had made at God's command: and through this a great precedent is to be considered for the Church, [viz.] that if some of our predecessors or ancestors made things which they could do in their day without fault, and afterwards these are turned into (objects of) error and superstition, without delay and (armed with) great authority, they can be destroyed by those coming afterwards.

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10 Claudius of Turin, Quaestiones xxx super libros Regum, MPL 104: 826BC.


52 Claudius of Turin, Quaestiones xxx super libros Regum, MPL 104: 829D-830A: "Quia enim serpentem, quem Moyses sicut jam dictum est, Deo jubente fecerat, ne serpentina morte populus periret, eum, quem Deus fieri jussaret, populus ipse venerari, et colere coeperunt, et mortem quem temporaliter parentes illorum ad tempus evaserunt, denuo moritorii, isti perceperunt, in perpetuum in anima moritorii; et idcirco destruxit iste, quod Deo jubente fecerat ille: ac per hoc magna auctoritas ista habenda est in Ecclesia, ut si nonnulli ex praecessoribus, vel majoribus nostris fecerunt
By 825 Claudius was openly coming under attack, not only among his diocesans but also from his fellow ecclesiastics. In that year he published his chef d'oeuvre describing and defending his iconoclastic program, his Apology, addressed to Abbot Theodemir. Despite its present, fragmentary state, the Apology is key to understanding Claudius' iconoclasm and indispensable for understanding his attitude toward the cross and its cult.

Claudius' defense of his iconoclasm, as set forth in his Apology, is based on essentially the same rationale as that found in Agobard's De picturis. Like Agobard, he based his case against religious images principally on the Second Commandment, which he interpreted in a literal sense and applied comprehensively:

> Since it is clearly enjoined that no representation should be made of anything in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, the commandment is to be understood, not only of likenesses of other gods, but also of heavenly creatures, and of those things which human conceit contrives to honor of the Creator.

Claudius' Apology and Agobard's De picturis have a number of passages in common, which has led scholars, like Walter Delius, Bilderfrage, p. 43, to conclude that Claudius borrowed freely from Agobard's work. Dom Paulino Bellet, "El liber de imaginibus sanctorum bajo el Nombre de Abobardo de Lyon Obra de Claudio de Turin," Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia 26 (1953): 151-94, and "Claudius of Turin," New Catholic Encyclopedia 3: 921, has asserted that Claudius, in fact, wrote both works. Bellet's position has been rejected by Allen Cabaniss, "Claud of Turin," Judith Augusta, pp. 88-92; and, most recently, by L. Van Acker, Agobardi Opera Omnia, CCCM 52: xxiv-xxxiii.

MGH Epp 4: 610, ll. 33-6: "Cum enim distincte dicatur non faciendum similitudinem omnium, quae in caelo sunt aut quae in terra vel quae sub terra, non de solis similitudinibus alienorum deorum intelligitur dictum, sed et de caelestibus creaturis aut quae in honore creatoris humanus sensus potuit excogitare." Trans. by Allen Cabaniss, in Early Medieval Theology,
Above all, therefore, it should be perceived that not only he who worships visible figures and images, but also he who worships any creature, heavenly or earthly, spiritual or corporeal, in place of God's name, and who looks for the salvation of his soul from them (that salvation which is the prerogative of God alone), that it is he of whom the apostle speaks, "They worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator."

All else followed from this. Thus he rejected the protests of iconophiles that in venerating images they were only showing honor to the person represented. He answered this standard argument by remarking that images of the saints, such as Peter or Paul, were no different than those of the pagan gods, of Jupiter, Saturn, or Mercury. "If those who have abandoned the cult of demons now venerate the images of the saints," he asserted, "they have not deserted their idols but have merely changed

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55 MGH Epp 4: 611, ll. 14-19: "Et ideo sciendum est summopere, quia non solum qui visibilia figmenta atque imagines colit, sed etiam quamlibet sive caelestem sive terrenam, sive spiritalem sive corpoream creaturam vice nominis Dei colit et salutem animae suae quae a solo Deo est, ab illis sperat, de illis est, de quibus dicit apostolus: 'Et coluerunt et servierunt creaturae potius quam creatori [Romans 1: 25].'" This passage also appears in Claudius' earlier work, on Kings, MPL 104: 827A. Trans. by Cabaniss, Early Medieval Theology, p. 243.

56 Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 610, ll. 39-40 to 611, l. 1: "Dicunt isti, contra quos Dei ecclesiam defendendam suscepimus: 'Non putamus imagini, quam adoramus, aliquid inesse divinum, sed tantummodo pro honore eius, culius effigies est, tali eam veneratione adoramus.'"

57 Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 611, ll. 3-6: "Si enim scribas in pariete vel pingas imagines Petri et Pauli, Iovis et Saturni sive Mercurii, nec isti dix sunt nec illi apostoli; nec isti nec illi homines, ac per hoc nomen mutatur, error tamen et tunc et nunc idem ipse permanet semper."
the name." He went on to observe that "if men may be venerated, it is the living rather than the dead who should be so esteemed, that is, where God's likeness is present, not where there is the likeness of cattle or (even worse) of stone or wood, all of which lack life, feeling, and reason." He thereby gave notice of his rejection, not only of the cult of images but of the relics of the saints. He concluded:

But if the works of God's hands must not be adored and worshiped, one should ponder carefully how much less are the works of men's hands to be adored and worshiped or held in honor of those whose likenesses they are. For if the image one adores is not God, then in vain should it be venerated for honor of the saints who do not arrogate to themselves divine dignities.

Not only did Claudius thus reject the veneration of the saints, their images and relics, but also their powers of intercession. "No one

\[58\] Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 611, ll. 2-3: "si sanctorum imagines hi, qui daemonum cultum reliquerunt, venerantur, non idola reliquerunt, sed nomina mutaverunt."

\[59\] Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 611, ll. 6-8: "si adorandi fuissent homines, vivi potius quam mortui adorandi esse debuerunt, id est, ubi similitudinem Dei habent, non ubi pecorum, vel, quod verius est, lapidem vel lignorum, vita sensu et ratione carentem."

\[60\] Dungal, Responsa contra perversas Claudii Taurinensis episcopi sententias, MPL 105: 528D: "In litaniiis enim et in caeteris Ecclesiae officiis nullum sanctorum vult memorare, aut nominare, vel eorum anniversaria celebrare festa, sed velut vanam observationem et inutilem consuetudinem despiciens, omnia praetermittit. Ne quasi per eorum intercessiones alicui a Deo postulare videatur, quibus seipsum praefert, illorum reliquias ossibus pecorum, aridisque lignis ac lapidibus comparando, lapades cereosque in Ecclesia per diem lucere, oculosque orando ad terram inclinare prohibit, quasi Deus ubique non esset, et quasi hoc humiliatus ac devote orationis indicium fore non videretur."

\[61\] MGH Epp 4: 611, ll. 9-13: "quia si opera manuum Dei non sunt adoranda et colenda, quanto magis opera manuum hominum non sunt adoranda et colenda prorsus, nec in honore eorum, quorum similitudines esse dicuntur; quia, si imago quam adoras, Deus non est, nequaquam veneranda est pro honore sanctorum, qui nequaquam divinos sibi adrogant honores." Trans. Cabaniss, Early Medieval Theology, p. 243.
may rely on the merit or intercession of the saints," he declared, "for one cannot be saved unless he possess the same faith, righteousness, and truth which they possessed and by which they were pleasing to God." It followed from this that the Roman pilgrimage was pointless, if not perverse. "You fools among the people," he cried, "who seek the apostle's intercession by going to Rome." St. Peter, he implied, had ceased to have the powers to bind and to loose upon his death. Christ's commission to him was, in fact, intended for all bishops, who in turn surrendered it on their decease. The pope, accordingly, had no special claim to apostolicity, particularly if he did not conduct himself in an apostolic manner. Claudius must have had his critic Pope Paschal I in mind when he concluded, quoting the Gospel:

"The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so keep and perform whatever things they tell you. But be

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62 MGH Epp 4: 613, ll. 25-6: "nemo de merito vel intercessione sanctorum confidat, quia nisi eandum fidem iustitiam veritatemque teneat, quam illi tenuerunt, per quam illi placuerunt Deo, salvus esse non poterit." Trans. by Cabaniss, Early Medieval Theology, p. 247.


64 Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum. MGH Epp 4: 613, ll. 2-7: "si proprietatem verborum Domini suptiliter consideramus, non est ei [St. Peter] dictum: 'Quodcumque solveris in caelo erit solutum et in terra, et quodcumque ligaveris in caelo erit ligatum super terram'; ac per hoc sciendum est, quod tamdui antistitibus ecclesiae istud ministerium concessum est, usque dum ipsi peregrinantur in hoc mortali corpore: cum vero debitum mortis reddiderint, alii succedunt loco ipsorum, qui eandem optinent iudiciariam potestatem . . . ."

65 See preceding note.

66 Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 613, ll. 30-31: "Certe non ille dicendus est apostolicus, qui in cathedra sedens apostoli, sed qui apostolicum implet officium."
unwilling to act according to their works, for they talk but they do not practice [what they preach]."\textsuperscript{67}

Except for his attack on the Petrine commission and the authority of the pope, all this clearly parallels Agobard. There can be little question but that Claudius imbibed from the same intellectual and spiritual well as did Lyons' archbishop. Indeed, Claudius' principal difference with Agobard was his decision actually to invoke the sanction provided by King Hezekiah. "When I came to the Italian city of Turin," he boasted in the Apology, "I found all of the churches, against the ordinance of truth, filled with accursed and filthy images, and since everyone was worshipping (them), I took it upon myself single-handedly to destroy (them)."\textsuperscript{68}

In considering Claudius' attitude toward the cross and its cult, one does well to keep in mind this commonality in background and sentiment between the bishop of Turin and archbishop of Lyons. Although Agobard was no stauroclast, his influence, or rather the influences that were impressed on both men by their education and training, were not an insignificant factor in explaining how Claudius regarded the cross and cross cult.

All that we know about Claudius' attack on the depiction and cult of the cross comes from several fragments in his Apology. In his attack on the veneration of the cross, Claudius sought to discredit the argument


\textsuperscript{68}Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 610, ll. 28-31: "veni in Italiam civitatem Taurinis, inveni omnes basilicas contra ordinem veritatis sordibus anathematum [et] imaginibus plenas, et quia omnes colebant, ego destruerre solus cepi . . . ." [My translation.]
that the cross was worthy of veneration simply because Christ had been crucified on one. "If they wish to adore all wood fashioned in the shape of a cross because Christ hung on a cross," he wrote, "then it is fitting for them to adore many other things which Christ did in the flesh." He then pointed out that, although Christ had hung on a cross for six hours, he was in the womb of the Virgin for nine months and eleven days. "Let virgin girls be adored, because a Virgin gave birth to Christ." Likewise, he argued that mangers, swaddling clothes, boats, thorns of bramble bushes, reeds, and lances be adored, because of their association with Christ. Then, in a line that gave his opponent Jonas of Orleans considerable mileage, he suggested that "asses be adored, because he came to Jerusalem sitting on an ass." "All those things, of course, are facetious and should be lamented rather than recorded," Claudius reassured the reader. Nevertheless, he sighed, "against fools we are compelled to propose foolish things."

69 See Chapter 7, passim.

"God commanded one thing," Claudius continued, 

they do another. God commanded them to carry the 
cross, not to adore it. They want to adore that which 
they are willing neither spiritually nor corporeally to 
carry with them. To worship God in such a manner is to 
withdraw from him. Indeed, He said: 'He who wants to 
come after me, he should deny himself and carry my cross 
and follow me.' 'Clearly, unless he abandons himself for 
him who is above him, he does not approach nor is able 
to understand what is beyond him, if he does not know 
how to sacrifice that which he is.'

Claudius was equally contemptuous of those who "worship, 
venerate, and adore" crosses bearing depictions of Christ crucified 
thereon. "To such people," he observed, "there is nothing pleasing in our 
Saviour except that which is pleasing to the impious: the opprobrium of 
his passion and the ignominy of his death." He continued:

They believe that about him which impious men (believe), 
whether Jews or pagans, who doubt that he arose from 
the dead and who do not know what to think about him, 
unless they believe and retain him in their hearts 
tortured and dead and always placed in agony, and they 
do not attend to nor understand what the Apostle says:

sepulchro est positus, et de illo apostolus ait: 'Petra autem erat Christus.' 
Sed Christus petra, agnus et leo tropyce non proprie est dictus per 
significantiam, non per substantiam. Adorentur et spineae ruborum, quia 
exinde spinea corona tempore passionis capiti eius inposita est. Adorentur 
et arundines, quia ab eis colaphis a militibus caput eius caesium est. 
Postremo adorentur et lanceae, quia unus militum in cruce lancea latus eius 
apperuit, unde fluxit sanguis et aqua, sacramenta, unde formatur ecclesia. 
Ridiculosae ista omnia sunt et lugenda potius quam scribenda. Cogimurque 
contra stultos stulta proponere et contra lapidea corda non verbi sagittas 
vel sententias, sed lapideos proicere ictus." Trans. Cabaniss, Early Medieval 
Theology, pp. 244-5.

[Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 612, ll. 22-27: "Aliud 
enim Deus iussit, aliud isti faciunt. Deus iussit crucem portare, non 
adorare: isti volunt adorare, quam nolunt nec spiritualiter nec corporaliter 
secum portate. Taliter enim Deum colere, ab illo recedere est: ille enim 
dixit: 'Qui vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem meam 
et sequatur me.' [Luke 9: 23] 'Quia videlicet, nisi qui a semetipso deficiat, 
ad eum qui super ipsum est, non adpropinquat nec valet apprehendere 
quod ultra ipsum est, si nescierit mactare quod est.' [Gregory the Great, 
Homil. in evang. luc. II Hom. 32, sec. 2]" [My translation.]
'Although we knew Christ according to the flesh, now we know him no longer.'

"'Recall to mind, you transgressors,' you who have receded from the truth and who love vanity and are made vain," he declared a little farther on.

You who crucify the Son of God once more and have (him) for show. Through this, indeed, you have made the souls of the miserable by the thousands the companions of demons, alienating them from their Creator through the nefarious sacrileges of images, (and) you have thrown them down and out into eternal damnation.

At first glance, Claudius' rejection of crucifixes and crucifixion iconography reminds one of alleged early Christian reluctance to depict the crucifixion or of the Byzantine iconoclast's rejection of the same. However, there is little to indicate that Claudius' derived his antipathy for the cult of images and the cross from Byzantine Iconoclasm, while the difficulty in assessing early Christian attitudes toward the crucifixion and its representation, make any attempt to compare Claudius' motives with those of the primitive church rather pointless. In fact, it is Agobard, once


[13] Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 612, ll. 17-20: "'Redite praevaricatores ad cor' [Isaiah 46: 8], qui recessistis a veritate et diligitis vanitatem et estis vani facti; qui rursum crucifigitis filium Dei et ostentui habetis. Et per hoc catervam animas miserorum socias factas daemonum habetis, alienando eas per nefanda sacrilegia simulacrorum a creatore suo, habetis eas delectas et proiectas in damnationem perpetuam." [My translation.]


[75] See Chapter 3.
more, who provides us insight into Claudius' attitude toward depictions of the Crucified.

In the course of his condemnation of crucifixion iconography, Claudius rejected depictions of the Crucified by quoting 2 Corinthians 5: 16: "If once we knew Christ according to the flesh, now we know him no longer." This verse is also to be found in Agobard’s De picturis. There it is contained in an extended quotation from St. Augustine’s Tractates on the Gospel of St. John. In this passage, Augustine explained the meaning of Christ's promise to send the Holy Spirit as Comforter to the faithful after his death and resurrection. The passage reads in part:

'I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Paraclete [Comforter] will not come to you. But if I go, I shall send him to you.' . . . 'It is to your advantage that the form of a servant is removed from (among) you. You have among yourselves the Word made flesh. But I do not want you always to love me after the flesh, and thus content with this milk, that you desire always to remain infants. If I do not take away this soft food by which I have nourished you, you will not eat solid food. If you do not leave behind carnal food, you will not be able to receive the Spirit.' . . . For what does it mean [asked Augustine]: 'If I do not go, the Comforter will not come to you?' but that you cannot receive the Spirit if you love Christ according to the flesh? Thus he [St. Paul] who had received the Spirit [wrote]: 'If once we knew Christ according to the flesh, now we know him no longer.'

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56 Agobard, De picturis et imaginibus, c. 15, CCCM 52: 164–65, ll. 3–18: "Ego ueritatem dico uobis. Expedit uobis ut ego uadam. Si enim non habiero, Paraclitus non ueniet ad uos. Si autem habiero, mittam eum ad uos. . . . Expedit uobis ut hec forma serui auferatur a uobis; caro quidem factum Verbum habito in uobis, sed nolo adhuc me carnaliter diligatis, et isto lacte contenti, semper infantes esse cupiatis. Si alimenta tenera quibus uos alui, non subtraxero, solidum cybum non esurietis; si carnaliter esurire non destiteritis, capaces Spiritus non eritis. . . . Quid est ergo: Si non habiero, Paraclitus non ueniet ad uos, nisi: non potestis capere Spiritum, nisi carnaliter desinatis diligere Christum? Vnde ille qui iam ceperat Spiritum: Etsi noueramus Christum, inquid, secundum carnem, sed nunc iam non nouimus."
This passage from Augustine occurs in the midst of a chapter in the *De picturis* where Agobard was attempting to demonstrate "how much visible things can prevent an understanding of the invisible, and how much the love of corporeal things, even though good (things), (can harm) the contemplation of the spiritual." There can be little question that Claudius was familiar with this passage, whether from the *De picturis* or from his own extensive reading of Augustine. What is new is his application of it to the depiction of Christ, specifically to the depiction of Christ crucified. The implications of this for Claudius' spirituality go well beyond, moreover, the question of idolatry or staurolatry. As Dungal of Favia would see only too well, such ideas contained the seed of profound dogmatic heresy. 

Claudius' remarks about crucifixion iconography also suggest that his motive for rejecting images of the Crucified and the cross were not only the result of an internal logic stemming from the influence of Agobard and the school of Lyons, but also derived from external sources, specifically from Jewish and Muslim criticism of the Christian cultus. As we have seen, scholars have long believed that Claudius was influenced by contact with Jews and Muslims. These contacts are generally associated with his early life in Spain. As indicated above, however, such influences at this stage in Claudius' life are wholly undemonstrable. Evidence for

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Agobard, *De picturis et imaginibus*, c. 15, CCCM 52: 164, ll. 1-3: "Quantum autem uisibilia noceant ad inuisibilia capienda, et quantum amor corporeaum rerum, etiam bonarum, ad spiritalia contemplanda . . . ."

See Chapter 7.

See Chapter 3 for a discussion of Jewish, pagan, and Muslim criticism of the Christian cultus.
their probable occurrence in Lyons and especially Italy is, however, much better attested.\textsuperscript{80}

Aside from Claudius' concern about the criticism of "Jews and pagans [sc. Muslims]"\textsuperscript{81} and the exaggerated accusations of his opponents\textsuperscript{82}, there are scattered notices in works of this period of contemporary encounters between Christians and non-Christians to discuss matters of custom and doctrine. Alcuin related to Charlemagne the occurrence of one such debate that he witnessed as a young man in Pavia between Peter of Pisa and a Jew named Lullus.\textsuperscript{83} In the same letter he also mentioned a disputation between a certain Felix and a "Saracen" (Sarraceno), which "I did not see." He reported that both debates had been recorded and that the latter "could be found with Leidrad, bishop of Lyons."\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80}For information on Jewish communities in the Carolingian dominions at this time and contacts, including disputations, between Christians and Jews, see chapters 4 and 5, by C. Roth and S. Schwarzfuchs, respectively, in Cecil Roth, ed., The World History of the Jewish People, vol 2.: The Dark Ages: Jews in Christian Europe, 711-1096 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1966), pp. 100-142.

\textsuperscript{81}Claudius of Turin, Apologeticum, MGH Epp 4: 611, l. 31.

\textsuperscript{82}See below.

\textsuperscript{83}Alcuin, Epistolae, no. 172, MGH Epp 4: 285, ll. 3-5: "Dum ego adolescens Romam perrexii et aliquantos dies in Papia regali civitate demorarer, quidam Iudaeus, Lullus nomine, cum Petro magistro habuit disputationem; et scriptam esse eandem controversiam in eadem civitate audivi. Idem Petrus fuit, qui in palatio vestro grammaticam docens claruit."

\textsuperscript{84}Alcuin, Epistolae, no. 172, MGH Epp 4: 284, ll. 30-33: "Disputationem itaque Felicis cum Sarraceno nec vidi nec apud nos inventa est; immo nec audivi nomen illius antea. Tamen, dum diligentius quaesivi, si quis ex nostris famam illius audiret, dictum est mihi, quod apud Laidradum episcopum Lugdunensem inveniri potuisset."
The content of the Jewish-Christian encounters is also suggestive. In his work *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus* Agobard complained that the Jews "assert that Christians worship idols, and they do not recoil from saying that those powers that are vouchsafed us by the intercessions of the saints are effected by the devil." It goes without saying that this Jewish critique included attacks on Christian faith in the Crucified. Thus the Frankish nobleman, Bodo, who judaized and assumed the name Eleazar (835), wrote:

In truth you Christians have converted to a man condemned to death, and in you are fulfilled the words of the prophet, who said: 'Cursed is he who believes in man.' He [Christ] was a man, not God, whom you do not deny carried a cross and (suffered) death and the descent into hell. It concerns him in the book of Deuteronomy, where it reads: 'Cursed by God is everyone who hangs from a tree.'

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85 Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, CCCM 52: 207: "Denique et christianis idola asserunt adorare, et virtutes, que apud nos sanctorum intercessionibus obtinetur, a diabolo fieri diciere non exhorrescunt."


87 Bernhard Blumenkranz, "Une pamphlet juif medio-latin de polémique antichrétienne," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse* 34 (1954); reprinted in idem, *Juifs et Chrétiens Patristique et Moyen Âge* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977), p. XII/404: "Revera vos Christiani conuersi estis ad hominem periturum et in uobis impelbuntur uerba prophete dicentis: 'Maledictus qui confidit in homine.' Homo erat, non Deus, is, quem uos ipsi non negatis crucem uel mortem seu ad inferos descensionem tulisse. De eo agitur in libro Deuteronomico, ubi legitur: 'Maledictus a Deo omnis qui pependit in ligno.'"
This fragment from Bodo-Eleazar, while suggestive of the sort of criticism that Claudius may have encountered both in Lyons and Turin, is hardly conclusive since it was written a number of years after Claudius' death. However, Claudius' Apology supplies further evidence of this non-Christian, primarily Jewish, critique of the Christian cultus, evidence, moreover, that Claudius was himself personally aware of this and incorporated it into his work.

Significantly, this evidence comes from that part of his Apology concerning the cross, where Claudius had jested that objects with which Christ came into contact, in addition to the Cross, be venerated. This passage, particularly its enumeration of objects, is reminiscent of similar passages in works of the sixth and seventh centuries, containing Jewish and pagan criticisms and mockery of the Christian cultus. One of these works is the so-called Trophies of Damascus. This work, written in the seventh century, contains the following passage, in which an anonymous Christian apologist attempts to refute Jewish accusations of Christian iconolatry:

In what concerns the images that we have, just as you have placed beside your ark the rod of Aaron and a vessel of manna to remember the blessings of God, so we [Christians] also make images in memory of what Christ has done for us, or even his saints. When we see their likenesses, we imitate their works. And as you adore, in honor of God, the book and its words, so we also...
celebrate Christ if we honor his cross in memory of Him alone. He was pierced, and we do not venerate lances at all; he sat on an ass, and we do not adore asses; one offered him a sponge, and we honor nothing of the kind. As it has been said, we hold his cross as the sign of his immaculate passion.

A similar passage occurs in the sixth century work, Questiones ad Antiochum ducem (Questions [and Answers Dedicated] to Duke Antiochus). This work does not record a debate or dispute, but consists of a series of questions and answers on topics of concern to Christians. Among these is the following:

Q. Therefore, since Christ sat on an ass ought we also reverence asses? For the Jews and pagans say these things to us.

A. Christ did not conquer the devil and the demons (while) on an ass, (so) neither was salvation effected on one but on the cross. Thus when the demons see asses, they do not tremble nor are (they) fearful: but when they see the cross, they often tremble, are horrified, scattered, and put to flight.

Q. For what reason do all we faithful make crosses, images of the cross of Christ, (but) do not make images of his holy lance, of the reed, (and) sponge? For these are equally holy (as is) the cross itself.

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83 Les Trophées de Damas, PO 15: 248-49: "Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρ᾿ ἡμῖν εἰσόνοιν, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τὴν κιλικίαν ὑμῶν τὴν ἐκχυσίαν τῶν γῆς ἀρχῶν καὶ τὴν στάμνην τῶν μάννα ἐθήκατε εἰς ἡμῶν τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ εὐφρενιστῶν, οὔτως καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ἁμαρτίαν πᾶσαν τιμῶμεθα, ἵνα εἰρηγόμοις ἡ Χριστὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἡ καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἵνα τοὺς τίμησις ὁ φόβος, ποιηθῶμεθα τὰ ἔργα. Καὶ καθάπερ ἡμεῖς τιμῶμεθα τὸν θεόν, τὸ Βιβλίον τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ προσκυνεῖτε, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, δοξάζομεν τὸν Χριστόν, τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ σεβόμεθα εἰς ἁμαρτίαν αὐτὸν μόνου. 'Επεὶ καὶ ἐκεντήθη, καὶ οὐ σεβόμεθα πάντως τὰς λόγχας. 'Επεὶ καὶ ἐπὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐκαθεσθῆ, καὶ οὐ προσκυνοῦμεν τοὺς ὄνους. 'Επεὶ καὶ σπόγγοιν ἐδέξατο, καὶ οὐδὲν τουτὸν ἐκταξόμεθα. Τὸν δὲ σταυρὸν, ὡς εἰρηταί, ὡς σημεῖον τοῦ πάθους αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀχράντου ἔχομεν."

84 Ps-Athanasius, Questiones ad Antiochum ducem, MPL 28: 597C-708D. For discussion of the authorship and dating of this text and its relevance to the Jewish-Christian dialogue, see Schreckenberg, Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte, p. 286.
A. We make the figure of the cross, which we adore, from two (pieces) of wood. ... We cannot, however, do the same with the lance, reed, and sponge.31

The parallels between the passages from these works and that from Claudius' Apology (see above, p. 192) are indeed striking. This suggests that Claudius was either aware of these works, or works like them, or that at least he was familiar with the arguments and formulas that they contained. Nor is this improbable. Such works were, indeed, circulating in the West at this time, as Der Nersessian has demonstrated.32 The


'Απὸκ. Ὅπως ἐν τῷ ὅνῳ τὸν διάβολον ὁ Χριστὸς κατήργησε καὶ τοὺς δαιμοναῖς, οὐδὲ ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν σωτηρίαν εἰργάτο, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ. Ὅταν ὅνους μὲν ὁρῶντες οἱ δαιμονεῖς οἱ τρέμουσιν, οὐδὲ φοβοῦνται; σταυρόν δὲ κολλάκις ὁρῶντες τρέμουν καὶ φρίττουσιν, καὶ καταργοῦνται καὶ διώκονται.

'Ερώτ. μ. Τίνος δὲ χάριν οἱ πιστοὶ ἀπαντεῖς σταυροῦ μὲν ἀντιτύπους τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιοῦμεν, τίς δὲ ἀγίας αὐτοῦ λόγχης, ἡ τοῦ καλάμου, ἡ τοῦ σπόγγου. ἀντίτυπα οὐ κατασκευάζομεν; Ἀγια γὰρ εἰσὶ καὶ ταῦτα καθὰ καὶ ὁ σταυρός.

'Απὸκ. Τῶν μὲν τοῦ σταυροῦ τύπων ἐκ δύο ἕξυλων συνάπτοντες προσκυνοῦμεν. Ἡνύκα δὲ τίς ἦν τῶν ἀπίστων ἐγκαλέσεις, ὡς ἕξυλον προσκυνοῦντας, δυνάμεια τὰ δύο ἔξυλα χαρίσαντες, καὶ τὸν τύπον τοῦ σταυροῦ διαλύσαντες, ὡς ἅρα ταῦτα ἤγειον ἐξύλα, καὶ τὸν ἀπίστον κεῖοι, ὅτι οὐ τὸ ἕξυλον σεβομέθη, ἀλλὰ τὸν τοῦ σταυροῦ τύπον. Ἐπὶ δὲ λόγχης ἡ καλάμου, ἡ σπόγγου, τοῦτο ποιήσαι ἡ δεῖξαι οὐ δυνάμεθα.

32 Sirarpie der Nersessian, "Une Apologie des images du septième siècle," Byzantion 17 (1944-45): 81: "Ces Dialogues entre Juifs et chrétiens étaient connus en Occident aussi bien qu'en Orient." Der Nersessian cites as proof the papal legates to 2 Nicaea who brought a long extract from the work of Leontius of Neapolis (Cyprus) (see Chapt. 3), which they requested be read at the council and entered into the minutes; also Pope Hadrian cited Jerome of Jerusalem in his letter to Constantine and Irene. As indirect proof, she cites Gregory II's letter to the Patriarch Germanus, where the pope "dit que si quelqu'un interprète d'une manière judaïque les paroles de l'Ancien Testament on lui répondra comme au Juif, et il poursuit en nommant tous les objets que les Juifs auraient du continuer a vénérer. Cette enumeration, et la forme même des phrases, suivent de très près le discours de Léonce de Chypre" [my emphasis], etc. One could, in turn, cite Claudius' Apologeticum as additional indirect evidence for the dissemination of this material in the eighth and ninth century West.
Questiones ad Antiochum ducem had, moreover, been cited by the Synod of Rome in 769 during its session devoted to the cross and images.\textsuperscript{93}

Besides the striking parallels between these works and the Apology is the fact that Claudius took the part, not of the Christians, but of the Jews. This is, perhaps, what Claudius' opponents had in mind when they accused him of having judaized. Dungal noted, for instance, that because of Claudius' iconoclastic measures "the Jews of this region praise him and prefer (him) to everyone else; and since he disagrees in no way from their tradition and religion, they call him the wisest of Christians."\textsuperscript{94} "I think you imitate the Jews," wrote Jonas, "who the Apostle weeping says are 'enemies of the cross of Christ'."\textsuperscript{95}

This is, of course, hardly sufficient evidence to conclude that Claudius had judaized or even evinced any sympathy for the Jews and their religion and customs. As Heinz Schreckenberg has noted, Claudius on several occasions referred to the Jews as "enemies" of the church and took them to task for their "hardness of heart".\textsuperscript{96} Indeed, Claudius, in

\textsuperscript{93}Concilium Romanum, MGH LL sectio 3: concilia 2.1: 87, ll. 16-23.

\textsuperscript{94}Dungal, Responsa contra perversas Claudii Taurinensis episcopi sententias, MPL 105: 527D-528B: "Ubicunque enim Crucifixi sacram intuetur effigiem, suos stringens oculos osque contorquens trementibus subsannando et cachinnando perstrepit atque clamat: Ecce Christus mortuus, et tortuus. Quem ob hoc Judaei prae caeteris in hac regione collaudant, omnibusque proferunt; et quia in nullo ab eorum traditione et religione dissonant, sapientissimum eum Christianorum vocant."


\textsuperscript{96}Heinz Schreckenberg, Die christlichen Adversus-Judaes-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh.), Europäische Hochschulschriften, series 23, vol. 172 (Frankfurt am Main and Bern: Peter Lang, 1982), has observed (p. 484) that Claudius "wiederholt heftig gegen die jüdische Exegese Stellung nimmt. Die Juden werden bei ihm überhaupt
criticizing the grosser aspects of the Christian cultus was no less a Christian than Agobard about whom Bernard Blumenkranz has written:

Against the Jews, Agobard defended the Church vehemently against every such reproach. But, when he turned toward the Christians, he turned his reproach à son propre compte, and if possible with more violence still than the Jews."

Perhaps the most telling testimony of Claudius’ attitude toward the Old Covenant and its adherents comes from his Galatians commentary. "I am dead to the Law," he wrote, "and that I should live in Christ, I am affixed to his cross, and I am reborn, a new man." "I am crucified with Christ," he continued, "that is, I am dead to all sin, on account of which the Law was given, and therefore the Law is no longer necessary for me." These passages from his commentary on Galatians not only bespeak Claudius’ adherence to the New Covenant but also his understanding of the

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wenig freundlich pauschal ‘Feinde’ der Kirche genannt und mit gelegentlichen polemischen Ausserungen bedacht zu ihrer 'Herzensharte'." He adds, somewhat improbably, that "[v]ielleicht sind solche Unfreundlichkeiten auch dadurch motiviert, dass er sich als Gegner der Bilderverehrung gegen diejenigen besonders abgrenzen will, die als Juden prinzipiell jeglichen Bilderkult ablehnten."


Claudius of Turin, Enarratio in epistolam D. Pauli ad Galatas, MPL 104: 863B: "legi sum mortuus, ut in Christo viverem, Crucique ejus affixus, et in novum renatus hominem."

Claudius of Turin, Enarratio in epistolam D. Pauli ad Galatas, MPL 104: 864C: "Christo confixus sum cruci, id est omnibus peccatis mortuus sum, propter quae lex data est, et ideo lex mihi minime necessaria est."
role of the cross and crucifixion. Especially eloquent concerning the latter is his gloss of Galatians 3: 1:

For rightly Christ was proscribed [proscriptus] for us, about whose cross and passion, beating and flagellation, the whole chorus of the prophets foretold, so that we should know about his cross not only from the Gospel but even before he deigned to descend to earth and assumed (the body of) man, which was crucified. And there is not small praise for the Galatians that they thus believed in the crucified . . . .

Here we see the other side of Claudius' attitude toward the cross: the cross as the instrument of man's salvation. This aspect of the cross Claudius did not reject or despise. We recall that in the Apology Claudius called upon his fellow Christians to bear the cross rather than to adore it, a sentiment that Otto Zöckler has characterized as the "truth and depth of Claudius' argument" concerning the cross. In rejecting the cult of the material cross and depictions of the crucifixion, Claudius thus did not dispose of the cross's role in man's salvation. His objection was limited, rather, to the fixation on the material and external, which the cult of the cross, like the cult of images encouraged. We thus see in

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100 Claudius of Turin, Enarratio in epistolam D. Pauli ad Galatas, MPL 104: 866B: "Nobis enim recte proscriptus est Christus de cujus patibulo et passione, alapis et flagellis omnis prophetarum praedicit chorus, ut crucem ipsius non de Evangelio tantum, in quo crucifixus refertur, sed multo antequam descendere dignaretur ad terras, et hominem, qui est crucifixus, assumeret, noverimus. Nee parva laus Galatarum est, quod ita crediderint in crucifixum . . . ." [Note: Claudius' text has 'proscriptus' for the Vulgate's 'praescriptus'.]

101 Delius, Bilderfrage, p. 46, has observed that "Claudius war kein Verächter des Leidens Christi, dafür sind sein Galaterkommentar, wo er das Kreuz als die Quelle des Heils nennt, die Vorreden zu seinen neutestamentlichen Kommentaren, wie vor allem seine Predigten zeugen."

Claudius the logical extreme of that spiritual disdain for the material and mundane evidenced in the Libri Carolini and Agobard's De picturis.

Summary and Conclusions

We have seen in previous chapters that the rejection of images or their veneration did not necessarily lead to the rejection of the cross or its cult. Claudius did reject both. In so doing, he set himself apart from his contemporaries, both east and west. In attacking the cross, moreover, he would bring upon himself almost universal condemnation. This chapter has sought to determine Claudius' motives in rejecting the cult of the cross, including the depiction of the Crucified.

His antipathy for material representations of the cross and the crucifixion cannot be explained as deriving from any one motive. The basis for his stauroclasm, as well as for his iconoclasm, was laid in his education in Lyons, where, under the tutelage of Archbishop Leidrad, he imbibed the spiritual sense of the scriptures and came to appreciate, above all, the mystical spirituality of St. Augustine. This experience he shared with Leidrad's protégé and successor Agobard, whose writings thus help fill out our understanding of Claudius' own spirituality. This was a spirituality, as expressed in Agobard's De picturis, which brooked little compromise with the material and the mundane, which, in Agobard's view, hindered rather than helped man's realization of his own inner spiritual nature. In Claudius, this mistrust of material props to piety was perhaps best expressed in his rejection of crucifixes and depictions of the Crucified: these limited the worshipper to the Christ of the flesh and actually prevented the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.
Had Claudius remained a scholar at the imperial court, such ideas may have lain dormant. His appointment to the see of Turin forced them into the open. As bishop, Claudius was confronted with what he considered the iconolatry and staurolatry of his flock and acted decisively to put a stop to it. His iconoclastic campaign not only heaped upon him the abuse of his diocesans and the attacks of colleagues, but also forced him to refine and express his position on images, the relics of the saints, pilgrimages, and the cross. We begin to see this in his commentary on the books of Kings, but above all in the surviving fragments of his Apology.

Not only does the Apology indicate Claudius' appreciation of Agobard's critique of images but also an awareness and sensitivity to the criticism of the Christian cultus by Jews and other non-Christians. This sensitivity, of course, no more indicates that Claudius had "judaized" than had Agobard. Indeed, like Agobard, Claudius was highly critical of the Jews: his attack on material images and the cross, if anything, was meant to purify and strengthen the New Israel in its attempt to overcome the Old. We see this, above all, in Claudius' Galatians commentary where, like Paul, he declared himself crucified in the flesh with Christ and thereby dead to the Law.

The Galatians commentary also indicates that, despite his rejection of material crosses and crucifixes, Claudius still retained a central place for the cross in his theology. This is likewise apparent in his Apology, where he called upon his fellow Christians to bear the cross rather than to fall down in adoration before it. This recalls the transcendentally spiritual and mystical view of the cross in the Libri Carolini.
In rejecting material images, and above all material representations of the cross, Claudius was to be severely censured by his peers. In their criticism of him, however, they in turn were forced to examine and reevaluate their own attitude toward the cross. To this extent, Claudius transformed the debate over images from one in which attitudes toward the cross served as a premise to support or condemn the veneration of images to an examination of the premise itself. In the following chapter we will examine the thoughts of Claudius' opponents and those of others writing in the wake of Claudius' stauroclasm concerning the adoration of the cross—*de adoranda cruce.*
CHAPTER VII
DE ADORANDA CRUCE

The cross played an important role in the Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries, both in the Byzantine east and in the Carolingian west. In both the eastern and western disputes over the validity and use of religious art, the cross was time and again contrasted with images, and its cult was accordingly defined in terms of that due or not due to images. This characterized the polemic of both iconoclasts and iconophiles in Byzantium as well as the repeated official Frankish condemnation of both parties. With Claudius of Turin, however, the discussion of the cult of the cross took on a new dimension, at least in the west. By attacking both the cult of images and of the cross, Claudius forced his contemporaries to examine the cross, not only in relation to the cult of images, but on its own merits as a legitimate focus of cult within the devotional and liturgical life of the Church. Thus works treating the cult of the cross in the immediate wake of Claudius' stauroclasm focused on explaining the function and defending the legitimacy of its cult, a question not raised let alone discussed either in the Libri Carolini or by the Synod of Paris.

This chapter examines four works by contemporaries of Claudius of Turin: Dungal of Pavia, Jonas of Orleans, Amalarius of Metz, and Einhard of Seligenstadt. Dungal and Jonas wrote their works with the immediate purpose of refuting Claudius' ideas, not only about the cross, but the sum
of his unorthodox teaching. Amalarius and Einhard, if they did not write in direct refutation of Claudius, seem nevertheless to have been influenced in their discussion of the cult of the cross by Claudius' assault on it. In none of these works is the cult of the cross compared with the cult of images for, following Claudius, this was no longer the issue. The issue was rather the nature and legitimacy of the cult of the cross itself.

**Dungal of Pavia**

About Dungal's life and career we know very little for certain beyond his stand against Claudius. It is possible that he is to be identified with the poet monk of Charlemagne's court. Since this would make him quite elderly at the time of Claudius' iconoclastic campaign, however, it is more probable that he is a different Dungal, who was appointed to be a teacher in Pavia by the emperor Lothar. Dungal himself wrote in the introduction to his *Responsa contra perversas Claudii Taurinensis episcopi sententias* (Response to the Perverse Opinions of Bishop Claudius of Turin) that he arrived in Italy as an outsider (in hanc terram advenerim) and had lived there for some time before he learned of Claudius' activities in Turin.

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3. MGH 4: 583 (MPL 105: 465A). N.B.: The prefaces to both Dungal's and Jonas' works appear edited in the MGH and in Migne while the remainder are printed only in Migne. Therefore, hereafter wherever a part of either work appears in both editions, the citation in Migne will be noted in
It is unclear whether Dungal wrote his Response at the behest of the imperial court or whether he did so on his own account. He says, for instance, that he had remained silent for some considerable period despite his anxiety at the mounting turmoil surrounding Claudius and the divisions among the people that the latter was causing, when he received a copy of Claudius' Apology (or rather the abbreviated redaction of it), which overcame his hesitation to speak out. Whether he received this copy of excerpts of the Apology from Louis or Lothar or from some other party, he does not say. However, he dedicated his work against Claudius to both emperors.

The Response is a work of substantial length, running to over 70 columns in Migne. In it, Dungal undertook to refute Claudius' position on images, relics, pilgrimages and the apostolic authority of the pope, in addition to the cross. He was concerned enough about Claudius' attack on the cross and its cult to devote a considerable portion of his work to defend it. Despite the length at which the Response treated the cross, however, its argument can be summarized rather briefly.

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parentheses, as in the foregoing reference.

4 MGH 4: 583 (MPL 105: 465AB): "diviso in duas partes populo."

5 MGH 4: 585 (MPL 105: 467C): "Ergo ambiguitas, quae nos tanto reticere tempore coegit et ob quam certum aliquid respondere vel rescribere usque modo non potuimus, e medio quasi quoddam est obstaculum ablata, accepta scedula a Claudio Taurinense episcopo composita, quae excerpta est, ut in eius fine continetur, de libro quem ille apologeticum vocat, adversus Theutmium scripto abbatem . . . .:"


7 MPL 105: 477C-496B and passim.
At the outset of his defense of the cross, Dungal rejected Claudius' contention that there was "nothing of any honor or dignity in the Holy Cross except only the scandal of suffering and the mockery of death." He quoted the apostle Paul, who had written: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world." Thus supported by the authority of the apostle, Dungal went on to explain:

For the Lord did not want his cross or passion not to be known or to be hidden from his faithful (followers) as if he wanted it to be related on account of the contumely and ignominy of his death. For if this were so his disciples logically would blush to suffer or die for him; but more to the contrary he [Christ] taught that his passion should daily be commemorated and celebrated in the Church.

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1 MPL 105: 477C: "nil sanctae cruci cujuslibet honoris vel dignitatis inesse nisi tantummodo opprobrium passionis et irrisionem mortis."

2 MPL 105: 478B; Galatians 6: 14. I have departed from using the RSV translation for this verse because of a significant variance between the RSV and Dungal's Latin at a critical point in this passage. The familiar English of this verse reads as follows: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Dungal, following the Vulgate, however, puts it this way: "Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi per quem mihi mundus crucifixus est et ego mundo." The RSV states that the world is crucified to the Christian by the Cross, while the Latin states that this is done through Christ. Either interpretation is permitted by the original Greek in which the word for "cross" (stauros) is masculine in gender; in Latin "crux" is, of course, feminine, thus precluding any ambiguity. The Latin interpretation of this passage, which emphasizes the role of Christ over that of the Cross, is of significance in what follows.

3 MPL 105:478C: "Noluit enim Dominus suam crucem vel passionem a suis nesciri aut abscondi fidelibus quasi propter contumeliam et ignominiam suae mortis eam vellet esse relatam. Nam si ita foret consequenter etiam sui discipuli pro eo pati vel mori erubescerent, sed magis e contrario suam quotidie in Ecclesia passionem commemorari et celebrari praecipit."
He then quoted from Paul’s account of the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus. "Therefore," concluded Dungal, "the Apostle and all his faithful and humble followers love, honor, praise, concelebrate and glory in [the cross] of Christ since [it is] his triumphant symbol through which he conquered the Devil and redeemed the world."

Dungal was further upset by Claudius’ suggestion that "if they [the orthodox] wish to adore every [piece of] wood made into the form of a cross because Christ hung from the Cross, it is proper that [they worship] many other things which Christ [was associated with] in the flesh." (We may recall from the previous chapter that such things included virgin girls, old rags, thorns, spears, and asses.) That Claudius could suggest as much, thought Dungal, was because first of all he "showed himself profoundly ignorant of the power (virtutem) of the saving wood [of the cross], through which life was restored to the human race."

In support of the power of the cross, Dungal called upon the testimony of Paulinus of Nola, who sent his friend Severus a small piece of the True Cross in which, despite its smallness, declared Paulinus, the power of the whole Cross resided intact. Dungal also recalled how,

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12 MPL 105: 479B: "Apostoli ergo et omnes homines et fideles eorum doctrinam sectantes crucem Christi utpote ejus signum triumphale per quod diabolum vicit et mundum redemit diligunt, honorant, laudant, concelebrant et in ea gloriantur."

13 MPL 105: 480C: "Quia si omne lignum schemate crucis factum volunt adorare pro eo quod Christus in cruce pependit, et alia multa illis convenit quae Christus egit per carnem."

14 MPL 105: 492D-493B: see Chapter 2, p. 34.
according to one story about the discovery of the True Cross, the Cross of Christ was distinguished from those of the two thieves by the resurrection of a dead man.\textsuperscript{16}

However, it was in Claudius' misunderstanding of the meaning of "worship" (\textit{colere}) and "adore" (\textit{adorare}), thought Dungal, where "there began the origin of his perversity."\textsuperscript{17} Dungal then proceeded to explain how these words were used by the orthodox, and called upon a host of patristic and Scriptural authorities. The gist of his argument was that "God alone should be adored and worshiped insofar as it is appropriate that the Lord and Creator of all should be worshiped and adored by his creation."\textsuperscript{18} "In him alone," continued Dungal, "we believe, and hope, and to him [alone] we daily sacrifice."\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand, wrote Dungal, "we adore and worship a holy and good creature of God, i.e., a holy angel or a holy man, or the Holy Cross for the variety of (their) dignities, i.e., we humbly honor, love and embrace [these created things] on account of God and in God, but in a way far different from that in which we worship and adore him [God]."\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{enumerate}
\item MPL 105: 493CD; see Chapter 2, p. 34.
\item MPL 105: 486A: "ergo in his verbis erravit, unde, ut arbitror, suae coeptit origo perversitatis . . . ."
\item MPL 105: 481C: "Deus solus sit adorandus, et colendus prout dominum et creatorem omnium a sua decet adorari creatura et coli . . . ."
\item MPL 105: 481C: "in eum solum credimus, et speramus, eique quotidie sacrificamus."
\item MPL 105: 481C: "Creaturam etiam Dei sanctam et bonam, hoc est, angelum sanctum vel hominem sanctum, aut sanctam crucem pro diversitate dignitatum adoramus et colimus, hoc est, humiliter honoramus, diligimus, et amplectimur propter Deum et in Deo longe dispari modo, quam illum colimus et adoramus . . . ."
\end{enumerate}
In diagnosing the origins of Claudius' "perversity" in his alleged misunderstanding and misuse of certain terms, Dungal missed the main thrust of Claudius' objection to the cult of the cross. Claudius was concerned, as we have seen\textsuperscript{21}, with far more than the correct understanding and intent of the vocabulary of cult. Along with Agobard of Lyons, Claudius was suspicious, indeed condemnatory, of any cult of the corporeal that might detract from or interfere with the understanding of the spiritual.

Dungal, however, gave no indication that he understood (or chose to understand) Claudius. Had he done so, one would expect a different line of argumentation from that which, in fact, he adopted, one that, for instance, might have attempted to stress the spiritual side of the cult of the cross. Instead, Dungal chose to defend the "honor" of the cross, which, he believed, Claudius had held up to shame and ridicule. He did this by an appeal to authority, that of the Scriptures as well as of the Church Fathers and others who extolled the Cross in prose and verse.\textsuperscript{22} As a further proof of the cross's importance, he appealed to its virtus, its supernatural power. All this, of course, wholly missed the nature of Claudius' rejection of outward cult, whether of the cross or of other objects.

While he may not have understood or been sympathetic to Claudius' spiritual understanding of the cross, Dungal did, however, detect a hint of dogmatic heresy in Claudius' rejection of crucifixion iconography. He

\textsuperscript{21}See Chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{22}Dungal quoted from, e.g., Gregory the Great, Augustine, Paulinus of Nola, Venantius Fortunatus, Jerome, Prudentius, and Sedulius.
did this when he compared the depiction of the Crucified with the daily commemoration of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration. By implication, Claudius' rejection of crucifixion iconography amounted to a rejection of the perpetual sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. However, he did not press this point, and, as we have seen, he regarded the root of Claudius' heresy rather the misunderstanding of the words adorare and colere.

**Jonas of Orleans**

It was above all Bishop Jonas of Orleans to whom the court of Louis the Pious turned to rebut and correct Claudius of Turin. Jonas had been appointed bishop of Orleans by the emperor Louis in 818 to succeed

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21 In the prologue to the *Responsa*, Dungal had written (MGH Epp 4: 583/ MPL 105: 465AB): "dominica ubique messem malignis zizaniis lolioque infelici horrere cernendo suspirem." It is unlikely, however, that Claudius himself had made the connection in his own mind between the rejection of Crucifixion iconography and the Eucharist. Laville, *Claude de Turin*, p. 69, note 2, for instance, notes that Claudius had written in his Leviticus commentary: "Christus in cruce carnem suam fecit nobis esibilem, nisi enim fuisset crucifixus, sacrificium corporis ejus minime comederetur." Concerning this, Laville observes, pp. 69-70: "Dans son *Commentaire sur les Galates*, il [Claudius] insiste continuellement sur ce point. On n'a que l'embarras des citations: 'la morte que la nature humaine avait merite à cause du péché, Christ l'a subie à notre place.' Alleurs, Claude recommande de ne pas se glorifier 'de sa propre justice, mais la croix de Christ, grace à laquelle tous les péchés sont pardonnés, etc.'" On Carolingian views regarding the sacrifice of the Mass, see A. Michel, "Messe", *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. 10, part 1, cols. 993-1024.

the disgraced and deposed Bishop Theodulf. Jonas went on to play a key role at the Paris synod of 825, where he, together with Bishop Jeremy of Sens, was responsible for making an abbreviation of the synodal libellus (see Chapter 5) and taking this, along with letters relating to the synod, to Pope Eugenius II. He was thus a logical choice to defend the position of the Frankish church against the iconoclasm and stauroclasm of Claudius.

Jonas began this work, De cultu imaginum (On the Cult of Images), probably about 826 or 827, basing it on excerpts from Claudius' Apology provided to him by the imperial court. When Claudius died, about 827 or shortly thereafter, however, Jonas put the work aside. On learning, about ten years later, of a revival of Claudius' teaching among his erstwhile followers, however, Jonas again took up his treatise, revised and

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25 The author of the Libri Carolini. His deposition did not concern his theology, however, but rather his politics: he was implicated in King Bernard of Italy's conspiracy against Louis the Pious. He died in 821.


published it in 840\textsuperscript{30}, dedicating it to Louis' son and heir Charles the Bald.\textsuperscript{31}

Jonas' work consists of three divisions or 'books' (libri). The last third of the first book and all of the second are devoted to Claudius' attack on the cult of the cross. Thus a substantial portion of the work is given over to a discussion of the cross, a fact which reflects the particularly deep concern and offense which Claudius' attack on the cross and its cult had aroused in official circles.\textsuperscript{32}

Jonas organized his treatise largely as a commentary on Claudius' Apology. Thus he answered each section of the Apology more or less as Claudius had ordered it. This method placed certain limitations on Jonas' presentation of a sustained argument against Claudius, and instead of this, the reader must look for certain underlying themes.

Jonas, for instance, explicitly and repeatedly based his defense of the cross and its cult on ecclesiastical tradition. In the preface to the second book of his treatise, Jonas wrote that

\textsuperscript{30} MGH Ep 5: 354 (MPL 106: 307AB): "Sed quia, ut relatione veridica didici, non modo error, de quo agitur, in discipulorum suorum mentibus reviviscit, quin potius eo docente heresis Arrianæ pullulare deprehenditur, de qua fertur quaedam monumenta librorum conessisse, et a simplicitatem et puritatem fidei catholicae et apostolicae oppugnandam in armario episcopii sui clandestina calliditate reliquisse, non sum ausus, quin monitu et hortatu filiorum sanctae Dei ecclesiae opus, quod praeterrareram, enucleatim discutiendum repeterem, et singulis quae supererant perverse objectis rationibus atque piissimis antithetis ad liquidum obviarem."

\textsuperscript{31} MGH Ep 5: 354-5 (MPL 106: 307B): "Quod ergo pro viribus executus idem opusculum iuxta imperium patris vestri ob capacitatem mei sensus digerens, vobis offerendum merito iudicavi, ut quod patri vestro imperanti reddere non quivi, in vobis et illi, et vobis pariter reddam."

\textsuperscript{32} Indeed, Hugh of Fleury's Historia Francorum remembered chiefly Jonas' defense of the cross; he wrote (MGH SS 9: 364): "Jonas, vir venerabilis . . . contra Claudium Taurinensem episcopum heresiarchen librum de adoranda edidit cruce."
there are many things which the custom of Holy Church does over and again with a certain innate and native celebration, just as these have been handed down and bequeathed by former generations. For the use of placing the figure of the cross in the churches of the saints did not insinuate itself in our time, but the custom of ancient observance legally established it, so that to all men, both learned and illiterate, not only should the memory form a certain figure in the image of the cross, but also the contemplation of the corporeal [cross] itself should impress upon the mind the repeated victory of the Lord's passion.\(^{33}\)

There are, moreover, numerous instances where Jonas called upon "ecclesiaticas traditiones"\(^{34}\), "traditionem ecclesiasticam"\(^{35}\), "sanctorum Patrum traditionem"\(^{36}\), and so forth, to support a particular point he had to make in defense of the cult of the cross.

Here and there, then, in answer to specific passages of Claudius' Apology, Jonas elaborated on the content of this tradition. He leaned, for instance, very heavily upon the Fathers of the Church, particularly Pope Gregory the Great, to defend the legitimacy of the cross cult. He appropriated for the defense of the cross cult what Gregory wrote to Serenus of Marseilles in defense of images,\(^{37}\) although Gregory nowhere

\(^{33}\)MPL 106: 342CD: "multa sunt quae mos sanctae Ecclesiae, sicut a majoribus tradita sunt et derelicta, quadam insita atque nativa celebratione frequentat. Neque enim nostro tempore usus irrepsit figuram crucis in basilicis sanctorum statui, sed mos antiquae observationis legitimus id instituit, ut cunctis, sapientibus et rusticis, non solum memoria spiritalem reformat quamdam imagine crucis figuram, sed etiam corporalis ipsius intuitus crebram menti praefigat Dominicae passionis victoriam."

\(^{34}\)MPL 106: 342A.

\(^{35}\)MPL 106: 333D.

\(^{36}\)MPL 106: 331D.

\(^{37}\)MPL 106: 332C: "Quapropter, sicut in evertendis imaginibus sanctorum et ab ecclesiis penitus pellendis, beati et excellentissimi doctoris Gregorii scribentis ad Serenum Massiliensem episcopum, saluberrimis dictis contumaciter contraisti [Claudius]: ita nihilominus in abdicandis ab ecclesia Christi crucibus et despectui habendis, ejusdem doctoris factis et dictis
in his correspondence with Serenus mentioned the cross or its cult. More apropos was Jonas' reference to Gregory's letter to King Rechared on the occasion of Gregory's sending to the king of the Visigoths a piece of the True Cross,\textsuperscript{33} as well as Gregory's letter to Bishop Januarius of Caralis, where the pope made reference to the "venerable cross."\textsuperscript{39} Later, at the outset of the second book of his treatise, Jonas presented a long catena of quotations from John Chrysostom, Eusebius, Augustine, Jerome, Cassiodorus, Sedulius, and Paulinus of Nola, "concerning the praise and the power of the cross."\textsuperscript{40}

Jonas was at pains to show, however, that the cult of the cross did not involve staurolatry at the expense of the Deity. Jonas wrote that "on account of the memory of its Redeemer, Holy Church [following the] tradition of the holy Fathers, venerates, adores, [and] worships the cross of Christ," but "not with [that] worship and adoration which is of the Divinity alone."\textsuperscript{41} Rather "whatever [honor] we exhibit to the cross, we perform wholly on account of the honor and veneration of him who hung

\textsuperscript{33}MPL 106: 333C: "Attende, hortor te, Claudi, patienter, quantus qualisque doctor, et superius crucem juxta praemissum modum adorandum, et in scriptis crucem venerandam astruat, venerationisque causa ac benedictionis, Recharedo regi crucem miserat . . . ."  

\textsuperscript{39}MPL 106: 332CD  

\textsuperscript{40}MPL 106: 343B–350C.  

\textsuperscript{41}MPL 106: 331D–332A: "ob recordationem redemptoris suae sancta Ecclesia ex sanctorum Patrum traditione crucem Christi veneretur, adoret, colat, non cultu et adoratione quae solius Divinitatis est . . . ."
In another place, he added: "we wish to adore [adorare] the cross on account of the memory of the Lord's passion according to ecclesiastical custom, i.e., to reverence [salutare] [it]." Furthermore, "if indeed we kiss [the cross], this is done by us not, as is were, for the sake of the wood, but rather for the love of him who on it [the cross] restored the injuries [i.e., the fall of man] of the old wood."

Like Dungal, Jonas took exception to Claudius' suggestion that since the cross was adored because Christ hung on it during the crucifixion, so also might other objects with which Christ came into contact during his life be adored. In arguing thus, thought Jonas, Claudius had "wretchedly plunged [himself] into the utter depth of blasphemy," particularly when he suggested that since Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on an ass that asses be adored just like the cross. Indeed, Jonas turned Claudius' ass to repeated, even tiresome, rhetorical effect. "Oh, this detestable and abominable preaching!" cried Jonas. "Oh, this absurd and incongruous

\[\text{MPL 106: 343A: "quidquid cruci exhibemus, ob honorem et amorem illius ac venerationem qui in ea peependit totum agimus . . . ." In another place (MPL 106: 342D), Jonas writes: "Nec tamen ideo crucem ut Dominum adoramus, sed magis eum qui per crucem mortis destructit imperium . . . ."}

\[\text{MPL 106: 351D: "Volumus . . . more ecclesiastico ob recordationem passionis Dominicae . . . crucem adorare, id est, salutare." In another place, Jonas writes: "Unde ob recordationem salutiferæ passionis Dominicae annuatom in sanctissimo die Parasceve, secundum traditionem ecclesiasticam, crucem Christi adorat, id est, supplicando salutat . . . ."}

\[\text{MPL 106: 342D: "etsi oscula infigimus, non utique causa ligni, sed potius amore illius id a nobis agitur, qui in ea veteris ligni damna restauravit."}

\[\text{MPL 106: 336D: "in barathrum blasphemiae eo usque miserabiliter demergeris, ut virtutem venerationemque crucis quibusdam absonis comparisonibus et frivolis declarationibus atque argumentationibus quodammodo annulle nitaris."}
"Since you propose that asses be adored," wrote Jonas, "it is necessary that you search out for us (for) what [properties] it is proper that (they) be adored." He continued:

(For) you know that Italian and German asses have badly (made) ears, and on account of the deformation and puniness of their bodies they do not deserve to be adored. It is clear, however, that the asses of your region are great in body with gigantic ears, and by their beauty they divert the eyes of those looking upon them.

"I imagine seeing you," wrote Jonas, "seated on the back of a little ass foolishly driven hither and yon, with many people from all sides surrounding you, or rather fixing their gaze upon you . . . and while pointing to you remarking to one another: 'behold this man who although placed in the dignity' of bishop 'is an ignoramus' and coupled with this ass, he is made similar to it." "Indeed," Jonas observed, "the ass signifies a foolish man."

To refute Claudius, Jonas quoted the words of Paul: "Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the

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*MPL 106: 338A:* "O detestanda et abominanda praedicatio! o inconcinna et absone crucis et asini comparatio!"

*MPL 106: 337D:* "Quia ergo asinos adorandos proponis, necesse est ut tales nobis quaerias quales adorari debeat; scis enim quia Italici et Germanici male sunt auriti et ob deformationem et exiguitatem corporis non merentur adorari. Manifestum est autem quia regionis tuae asini magnarum sunt corporum, magnarumque aurium, suaque pulchritudine in se oculos intuentium spectabiliter convertunt."

*MPL 106: 338BC:* "Videre itaque mihi videor te in scena tergore aselli adopertum quaquaversal pueriliter agitari, multisque te undique circumsepientibus, imo contuentibus, . . . secumque mutuo de te digitulo protento sermacinari: Ecce 'homo' qui 'cum in honore positus esset' episcopali, 'non intellexit,' ac per hoc asino comparatus, similis factus est illi." Cf. Psalm 48.

*MPL 106: 338C:* "Asinus quippe stultum significat hominem . . . ."
world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."""50  "In these words handed down to it from the apostle Paul," wrote Jonas, "Holy Church holds to the mystery of the cross not of the ass.""51  Thus "the ass," concluded Jonas, "is not to be equated with the veneration and adoration of the saving cross.""52

Jonas' use of the ass to assail Claudius for the latter's attacks on the cross and its cult is characteristic of his method in refuting the Bishop of Turin. Throughout his treatise, Jonas addressed Claudius in threatening or insulting language and regularly assailed the latter's uncouth Latin style. At the same time, he rarely attempted more than a denial of Claudius' assertions mixed with an appeal to "ecclesiastical tradition."

A case in point is Jonas' reply to Claudius' statement that God commanded that the cross to be borne and not adored but that many Catholics wished neither corporeally nor spiritually to bear it. "Wishing to avoid prolixity, rather desiring brevity," began Jonas, "we omit here to

50 Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum, MPL 106: 341CD (Galatians 6: 14); Jonas also cited Ephesians 3: 17-18 (MPL 106: 341D): "Et ad Ephesios scribens, non aut caudam, aut latera tui comprehendi hortatur aselli, sed flectendo genu orat et obsecurat, 'ut in charitate radicati et fundati, possint comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quae' sit ejus crucis non asini, 'latitudo, longitudo, altitudo, sublimitas, et profundum.'"

51 MPL 106: 341D: "In quibus verbis mysterium crucis non asini, ab eodem Paulo apostolo sibi tradita sancta tenet Ecclesia."

52 MPL 106: 341B: "asinus salutiferae crucis venerationi et adorationi non sit coaequandus . . . . . . ."

insert testimony from the Gospels and the writings of the holy Fathers."

He then repeated what he had said earlier, viz., that Catholics wished "according to ecclesiastical custom on account of the memory of the Lord's passion to adore, i.e., to reverence the cross." He continued: "Instructed by Apostolic witness, bearing the stigmata of Jesus on our body, so far as he who commands indicates, we both desiringly hope for and hopefully desire to carry his cross both spiritually and corporeally." As for Claudius, who denied this motive in Christians who paid cult to the cross, he was, imagined Jonas, like the proud Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like other men, since he alone wished to bear the cross both spiritually and corporeally. Jonas concluded this section by admonishing Claudius in the following terms:

May no one doubt that he who labors under a disease of this kind of arrogance fails of his own salvation, since while he does not know that he lies and he exults in being preferred to others, carried away by the penalty of exaltation, he falls into the depths until he tumbles into the pit of miserable

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54MPL 106: 351B: "prolixitatem caventes, imo brevitati studentes, evangelica testimonia et sanctorum Patrum dicta omittimus hic inserere."

55MPL 106: 351C: "Volumus siquidem more ecclesiastico ob recordationem passionis Domincae . . . crucem adorare, id est, salutare."


57MPL 106: 352A: "Videor itaque mihi videre te ad instar Pharisaei superbi tumore arrogantiae inflatum, in Ecclesia Christi stantem, despectisque alis sanctorum operum merita tibi singulariter tribuentem ac dicentem: 'Deus, gratias tibi ago, quia non sum sicut caeteri hominum,' Galliam scilicet Germaniamque incolentium, crucemque Christi, quam ego et spiritualiter et corporaliter portare nolentium: et ob id jure illis praeferor qui mihi in portandae crucis virtute et sanctitate aequiparare non merentur."
humiliation, as the Lord attests and declares: 'Everyone who exalts himself, shall be humbled.'

Thus Jonas. Max Manitius has written of his refutation of Claudius:

Jonas' attack on Claudius did not turn out well because he concerned himself far too much with secondary and subordinate ideas. For Jonas could not refute the basic ideas that Claudius had written down in his Apology and which were characterized by their unrelenting logic.

In the end, like Dungal, he failed to come to terms with Claudius' criticism that the cult of the cross interfered with the spirituality symbolized by the cross. "These apologists of the traditional Catholic position," observed Otto Zöckler, "failed in the same degree in understanding the real truth and depth of Claudius' argument, viz., for the statement that the cross of Christ was not so much to be adored outwardly as, more to the contrary, to be borne." Instead, Jonas, like Dungal, was concerned to defend the traditional teaching about the cross and its cult, as formulated, for the

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58 MPL 106: 352B: "Liquet enim nullique dubium exstat, quin hujuscemodi arrogantiae morbo laborans, a propria salute deficiat, quia dum mentiri se nescit, aliaque praeferre gestit, poena elationis subvectus, eoque in alta subripit, donec in foveam miserae humiliationis corruat, Domino attestante atque dicente: 'Omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur.'"


60 As Otto Zöckler, Das Kreuz Christi: Religionshistorische und kirchlich-archeologische Untersuchungen (Gütersloh: Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1875), p. 193, wrote: 'An anerkennenden Verständnisse für das wirklich Wahre und Tiefe in der Argumentation des Claudius, nemlich für den Satz, daß das Kreuz Christi nicht sowohl äußerlich zu verehren, als vielmehr zu tragen sei, fehlt es diesen Apologeten des katholisch traditionellen Standpunkts so ziemlich in gleichem Grade.'
most part, in late patristic sources. This tradition emphasized, as we have seen\textsuperscript{61}, the veneration of the relic of the True Cross (and its image) as well as the miraculous power (\textit{virtus}) of the cross and its sign (\textit{signum crucis}).

Following this tradition, the cross as an instrument of salvation was likened by Dungal (and Jonas\textsuperscript{62}) to a ship. Wrote Dungal:

For thus just as someone may see his fatherland from afar with the sea lying in between: he sees where he wants to go, but he does not have that by which he may go (there). . . . For no one can cross the sea of this world unless he is carried by the cross of Christ. Indeed, this cross is sometimes embraced by someone of weak vision; and he who does not see far where to go should not go away from it [the cross]. And it leads him to his homeland . . .

"Therefore it is better," Dungal concluded, "not to see in one's mind that which is, and nevertheless not to recede from the cross of Christ, than to see it in the mind and to contemn the cross of Christ."\textsuperscript{64} Given such an attitude, it is easy to see how there could be no meeting of minds between Claudius and these two representatives of the traditionalist establishment.

\textsuperscript{61}See Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{62}MPL 106: 333D: "nemo fidelium nisi spiritaliter cruce Christi vectus, mare hujus saeculi transire et ad portum salutis aeternae valet pervenire."

\textsuperscript{63}MPL 105: 486CD: "Sic est enim tanquam videat quisquam de longe patriam, et mare interjaceat: videt quo eat, sed non habet qua eat. . . . Nemo enim potest transire mare hujus saeculi nisi cruce Christi portatus. Hanc crucem aliquando amplectitur etg infirmus oculis, et qui non videt longe quo eat non ab illo [illa?] excedat; et ipsa illum perducit ad patriam . . . ."

\textsuperscript{64}MPL 105: 486D: "Melius est ergo non videre mente id quod est, et tamen a cruce Christi non recedere, quam videre illum mente et crucem Christi contenternere."
Amalarius of Metz

Amalarius (ca. 775-ca. 850), a native of Metz and a student of Alcuin, was one of the most renowned liturgists of his and later times. He served as a deacon and priest at Metz before being raised to the episcopate by Charlemagne in 809, when he was named bishop of Trier. In 813 Charlemagne sent him on an embassy to the court of Constantinople to confirm a peace negotiated between the eastern and western empires. Upon Charlemagne’s death, Amalarius continued in service to Louis the Pious, and he may have been one of two clerics whom the Synod of Paris (825) sent to Louis with its libellus, summarizing its findings in the matter of images and the cross.

Amalarius is best known for his great work on the ritual and interpretation of the Mass, variously titled the Liber Officialis and the Liber de officiis ecclesiasticis. The Liber Officialis appeared in three

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66 Duckett, p. 95.

67 Duckett, p. 99; MGH Legum sec. 3: Concilia, 2.2: 533: "Venerunt ad praesentiam nostram Halitgarius et Amalarius episcopi ... deferentes collectiones de libris sanctorum patrum, quas in conventu apud Parisios habito simul positi collegistis ... ."

editions, in 823, 828, and 833. Its publication and chief revisions thus occurred while the controversy over Claudius' activities in Turin was still rife. The third edition included information that he gathered while he was in Italy, where he certainly could have learned some things first hand about the erstwhile bishop of Turin.

Chapter 14 of the first book of the Liber Officialis is devoted to the "Adoration of the Holy Cross." In this chapter, Amalarius sought to explain certain things about the cross and its cult. Why, for example, was the cross called the "living Cross", or were churches that did not have a piece of the relic of the True Cross at a disadvantage to those which did?

Let us examine briefly Amalarius' handling of the second question, for it has relevance to the relationship of the cross and images. There was clearly a popular preference for a church to own a piece of the relic of the True Cross rather than a mere representation of the cross. As Amalarius tells it:

There were some who said that they wished to say that they wanted to venerate the same cross on which the Lord was crucified. Would that [this cross] be in all the churches! It is rightly venerated before all others. Although every church cannot have it, nevertheless the power of the Holy Cross is

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69 Ductett, pp. 100, 101, and 105.
71 This rather curious dispute was also briefly addressed by Jonas of Orleans; see De cultu imaginum. MPL 106: 342CD.
72 Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum (MPL 106: 432D) was also forced to acknowledge this preference: "Si enim quantitas tanta venerabilis ligni, in quo Dominus et Salvator noster pependit, foret, ut ex eo minuatim diviso cuncta Deo dicata templo possent imaginem crucis habere, nullatenus ex aliis lignis ejusdem formam in basilicis locaremus."
not wanting in them, in those crosses which are made in the likeness of the Lord's Cross.\textsuperscript{73}

In order to prove the efficacy of the power of the Cross manifested in other wooden crosses made in its likeness, Amalarius cited Bede's story of the cross erected by King Oswald. About to battle the heathen, Oswald had erected a large wooden cross, declaring to his army: "Let us all kneel together, and ask the true and living God Almighty of His mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies."\textsuperscript{74} Having brought victory to Oswald and his host, the cross in later times provided splinters which, when mixed with water, produced a healing potion effective for man and beast alike, who drank of it.\textsuperscript{75}

"Since we accept other things written by Dom Bede," Amalarius argued why should we not accept this in which it is reported that the power of the Lord was demonstrated through the veneration of the Holy Cross? If anyone should wish to say that this was not done by the wood of the Holy Cross, as Bede reports, and if credence should be given him, (then) much of the patrimony of the Holy Scriptures could be overturned. God forbid! And if anyone should wish to doubt the most recent action, he would seem rebellious to God, who showed this power in the wood of the Holy Cross, so that he should not only give victory to his servant in the present, but even in subsequent times he should exercise powers through the

\textsuperscript{73}Liber Officialis, 1.14.10, p. 102: "Fuerunt quidam qui volebant dicere se velle eandem crucem venerari in qua Dominus crucifixus est. Utinam in omnibus ecclesiis haberetur! Prae ceteris merito veneraretur. Quamvis omnis ecclesia non eam possit habere, tamen non deest eis virtus sanctae crucis, in eis crucibus quae ad similitudinem dominicae crucis factae sunt."


\textsuperscript{75}Bede (Penguin), p. 143.
merits of the Holy Cross, as recalled in the present [Bede's] work.76

We see from this passage in the Liber Officialis that during the western image controversy not only was the cross preferred to images but the relic of the True Cross was preferred to material representations of the cross. This should not surprise us. The Libri Carolini, as we saw in the last chapter, accorded veneration to the relics of the saints while it forbade veneration to artistic representations of them. In so doing, it was only representing popular attitudes, which in the west, regarded relics as the premier earthly locus of the holy. Thus the relic of the True Cross, as Amalarius conceded, was more highly prized than mere representations of the cross.77

Not only did Amalarius feel obliged to defend the virtue of representations of the cross. He also felt compelled to explain why "everyone reverences and kisses [the cross]"78 in the course of the service of its adoration. There were really two questions here: first, why

76 Liber Officialis, 1.14.13, p. 104: "Quoniam cetera dicta domni Bedae accipimus, quare non et ista accipiamus, in quibus narratur virtus Domini nostri monstrata per venerationem sanctae crucis? Si quis voluerit dicere non ita esse actum de ligno sanctae crucis, ut Beda narrat, et si ei creditum fuerit, poterit multa patrimonia sanctarum scripturarum evellere. Quod absit! Et si quis voluerit succensere praezens factum, Deo rebellis videtur esse, qui hanc virtutem praestitit ligno sanctae crucis, ut non solum in praesenti victoriam daret servo suo, sed etiam in sequenti tempore virtutes exerceret per merita sanctae crucis, ut memoratum est in praesenti opere."

77 In a sense, this parallels the attitude among some Byzantine iconophiles, represented by Theodore of Studion and the Patriarch Nicephorus, who regarded representations of the cross as secondary to representations, i.e., icons, of Christ. For a discussion of this, see Chapter 3, above.

was the cross worthy of being honored and glorified, and second, why did Christians honor it as they did, with kisses and prostration before it?

Amalarius addressed the first question by explaining that "the cross from the beginning, when the Lord blessed it with his blood, was glorified by all the faithful in words and deeds." As an example of this glorification, Amalarius included the famous passage from the pseudo Chrysostom's sermon on the cross and the thief. He continued, writing that "[a]lmost all this glorification by which the Cross is decorated, is prayed with prayers by the priest after the Gospel." "If anyone should wish to examine what is prayed for there, and referring his mind to the present glorification [of the cross]," explained Amalarius, "he shall find these things in the power of the Holy Cross." The cross was thus glorified because of its power (virtus) which it acquired by virtue of Christ's having shed his blood on it during the crucifixion.

But why was it to be honored with prostration and kissing? Amalarius explained that "[o]n the day on which the cross is kissed,

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79 Liber Officialis, 1.14.1, p. 99: "Crux ab initio ex quo Dominus eam beavit sanguine suo, ab omnibus fidelibus verbis et operibus glorificata est."

80 Ps-Chrysostom, Homilia in venerabilem atque vivificam crucem, MPG 50: 819: "Crux spes Christianorum, crux resurrectio mortuorum", etc. This passage was firmly established in the repertoire of the defenders of the cross and its veneration. See, e.g., Jonas of Orleans, De cultu imaginum, MPL 106: 344BD; and the Synod of Paris, MGH LL sectio 3: Concilia 1.2: 504, l. 27 to p. 505, l. 2.

81 Liber Officialis, 1.14.4, p. 100: "Pene omnis haec glorificatio, qua decorata est sancta crux, precata est orationibus presbiteri post evangelium."

82 Liber Officialis, 1.14.4, p. 100: "Si quis ea voluerit scrutari quae ibi deprecata sunt, et mentem referre ad praesentem glorificationem, inveniet ea in virtute sanctae crucis."
[Christ] was humbled for us before the Father unto death, the death of the cross. Therefore, he continued:

If we ought to be imitators of his death, it is proper that we also be imitators of his humiliation. Wherefore we prostrate ourselves before the cross, so that a fixed humility of mind is shown through the disposition of the body. We cannot better show a humility of mind than that the whole body be prostrate on the ground.

At the same time, Amalarius hastened to make clear that "I adore no creature by worshipping it as God, but by venerating (it)." One did not adore the cross itself when honoring it, but rather Christ who was crucified thereon. When he beheld the cross before him, wrote Amalarius, "I see in my mind Christ hanging (upon it)." "The very words of our prayer show whom we adore," he wrote.

We say: 'We adore your cross, Lord, and we praise and glorify your Holy Resurrection.' Here are not the words of prayer, but of showing adoration to the cross and of glorifying the Resurrection of the Lord. But in another place we are accustomed to say: 'God, you who deigned to redeem the human race by the precious blood of your only begotten son our lord Jesus Christ, concede graciously that they who come to adore the life-giving cross should be freed from the bonds of their sins.'

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83 Liber Officialis, 1.14.5, p. 100: "Ea die qua crux deosculatur, humiliatus est pro nobis Patri usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis."

84 Liber Officialis, 1.14.5-6, pp. 100-101: "Si huius mortis imitatores esse debemus, necnon et humilitatis oportet esse. Unde prosternimur ante crucem, ut fixa humilitas mentis per habitum corporis demonstretur. Humilitatem mentis non possimus amplius monstrare, quam ut totum corpus ad terram prostratur."

85 Liber Officialis, 1.14.8, pp. 101-102: "Crux Christi ante me posita; Christum quasi pendentem in ea mente teneo."

"Whom I pray to," explained Amalarius, "him I adore."

I prostrate my body before the cross, my mind before God.
I venerate the cross through which I am redeemed, but I pray to him who redeems.\(^{8}\)

In Jonas of Orleans we noted a similar exposition of the adoration of the cross. Jonas began where Dungal left off, with the old distinction between adoration of the Creator and adoration of the created. In applying this to the cult of the cross, Jonas made a further distinction between the cross and the Crucified: that the cross was not adored on its own account but because of him who hung on it. Amalarius added to this distinction a further nuance when he distinguished between the act of venerating the cross with prostration and kissing and the mental act of adoration and prayer to Christ. Einhard, as we shall see, was to add a further refinement to this apologia for the cult of the cross.

Thus Amalarius, like Jonas (and Dungal), was at pains to establish the legitimacy of the cult of the cross. Was he similarly prodded to do so by Claudius of Turin? The Liber Officialis was, after all, not written specifically to refute Claudius, as were the works of Jonas and Dungal. That Claudius was very much a concern to Amalarius, however, is strongly suggested by a further passage from his discussion of the cross cult.

\(^{8}\)Liber Officialis, 1.14.8, p. 102: "Quem deprecor, ipsum adoro; prosternor corpore ante crucem, mente ante Deum; veneror crucem per quam redemptus sum, sed illum deprecor qui redemit."
"If someone should say," wrote Amalarius, "'Why do you not adore the ass since the Lord sat on one, or other such things which the Lord touched with his body?' what was the Christian to reply?

In accordance with my poverty [of wit] I reply that I do not read in the authority of the Holy Fathers miracles and healings shown from these (other things), as from the power of the Holy Cross; and I do not know that I am redeemed through them, as through the Holy Cross, nor the arts of the devil thusly through them. The devil and woman and man and the wood of the knowledge of good and evil were the sword of our perdition; by the grace of God and the woman who bore (him) and the man and the wood are in the cause of our restoration: not the ass, not the woman with the issue of blood, not a stone, not the well in which the Samaritan (woman) drew water, and (all) such other things.

This passage is of interest not only because of the evidence it provides of Claudius' influence on Amalarius but also because of Amalarius' response. Unlike Jonas, who made rhetorical sport of Claudius' ass, Amalarius' treatment is more patient and sober. This suggests that not all men were laughing with Jonas at Claudius' "ridiculous" proposition.

Above all, Amalarius' short chapter on the cult of the cross indicates that there were many questions circulating about the cross and its cult

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88 Liber Officialis, 1.14.14, p. 104: "Quod si aliquis dixerit: Quare non adoras asinum, quia in eo Dominus sedit, sive cetera talia quae Dominus tetigit corpore suo?"

89 Liber Officialis, 1.14.14., p. 104: "secundum parvitatem meam respondeo quia non lego in auctoritate sanctorum patrum miracula et sanitates ex his monstrati, sicuti virtute sanctae crucis, et neque me scio per illa redemptum, ut per sanctam crucem, neque diaboli artes ita per illa dissipatas, ut per istam, neque portas per illa inferni fractas, ut per istam, neque animas iustorum ductas in paradisum, ut per istam. Diabolus et femina et vir et lignum scientiae boni et mali fuerunt muro perditionis nostrae, gratia Dei et virgo quae peperit et vir et lignum sunt in causa restauraitionis nostrae; non asinus, non mulier emorousa, non lapis, non puteus in quo Samaritana hauriebat aquam, et cetera talia."

90 It should be recalled that this word was used by Claudius himself for his proposal; see MGH Epp 4: 611, and Chapter 6, above.
and the propriety of that cult. Some of these questions, as we shall see in the following section, came from what might seem the most unlikely places.

**Lupus of Ferrières and Einhard**

One of the more interesting aspects of the Carolingian Renaissance is the number of surviving letters exchanged among the illuminati of the period. Of these, one of the most remarkable collections is that of Lupus of Ferrières. Lupus (ca. 805-862) entered the abbey of Ferrières at an early age. As a young man, he studied under Hrabanus Maurus at Fulda (ca. 829-836), and then returned to Ferrières, where from 840 until his death he served as abbot.\(^1\)

Among Lupus' early correspondents was Einhard, most famous to posterity for his biography of Charlemagne. Einhard (ca. 770-840) was also a product of the school of Fulda. He served at the courts of both Charlemagne and Louis the Pious before retiring around 830 to Muhlenheim (Seligenstadt) where he founded a monastery and served as lay abbot.\(^2\)

In the course of a letter, which Lupus addressed to Einhard to console the latter on the recent death of his wife, he wrote: "I was pleased, as I might well be, to receive the little volume, dedicated to me, entitled *On the Adoration of the Cross*, which, in my judgment, will be

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\(^2\)Oxford Hist of Christ. Church, p. 448.
very useful." For many centuries Einhard's "little volume" was thought lost, when Ernst Dümmler discovered and published it in 1885. Einhard wrote this work in answer to a "little question" (rogunticulae) by Lupus concerning the cult of the cross. Based on Einhard's reply, it would appear that Lupus had asked him whether the cross should be adored.

Einhard began by attempting to clarify what was meant by the adoration of the cross. He started by defining the terms 'to pray' (orare), 'to adore' (adorare), and 'to venerate' (venerari). "In my opinion," began Einhard, "'to pray' [orare] is to beseech in mind and voice (or in mind equally and in voice) without bending the body to the invisible God . . . in whom hope of help can and ought to be placed." "To adore," on the other hand, he continued, "is to show veneration to a visible thing placed near and present whether by bowing the head or by bending or prostrating the whole body or by extending the arms and spreading out

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54 Ernst Dümmler, "Ein Nachtrag zu Einhards Werken," Neues Archiv 11 (1885): 233-238. A revised edition later appeared by Karl Hampe (1899) in MGH Epp. 5: 146-149; it is to this edition that all subsequent references will be made.

55 MGH Epp. 5: 147: "Nunc rogunticulae tuae, quam mihi de adoranda cruce caritas tua propusuit, prout valeo, respondere volo. Videtur enim mihi crux adoranda; cur quod id videatur, expediam."

56 MGH Epp. 5:148: "Orare est, ut mea fert opinio, Deum invisibilem, vel si alium aliquid est, in quo spes auxilii poni possit aut deceat, mente vel voce, vel mente pariter ac voce, sine corporis gestu precari."
the hands or by some other relevant bodily gesture." Einhard then proceeded to explain that "we venerate many things which we neither can nor ought to pray to." He continued:

We frequently see veneration exhibited not only to living and sentient (beings), as are angels and men, but also to insensible things lacking all life, as are churches, and the tombs and relics of the saints.

As Einhard knew, only God could be called upon in prayer. But since God was everywhere and in everything, one could address him both mentally and while in a posture of adoration or veneration. In support of this, he cited Scripture, which often used "adoration" indiscriminately of both God and visible things. He explained:

To pray, i.e., to imprecate or to invoke, does not pertain to something unless to that which lives and is able to help him who is praying and imprecating. Thus I wonder why in the Gospel according to John where the conversation occurs between the Samaritan (woman) and God [i.e., Jesus] concerning the place of worship, it is written that they talked not about prayer, which (is proper to) God but about adoration which is shown to things for the sake of veneration, since adoration, which according to the word of the Lord, true worshippers pay in spirit and truth to God, ought not to be done by the bending of the body, which is said of veneration, unless this is written [sit factum] there because in many places in the divine Scriptures (the word) adoration [adoratio] is often found [inveniri solet] wrongly rather than properly in place of (the word) prayer [orare]. Nevertheless, he who wrote the account intended that in the Lord’s words prayer [precationem], by which God is invoked, to be understood

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97 MG Epp. 5:148: "Adorare vero rei visibili et coram posite ac presenti vel inclinatione capitis vel incurvatione vel prostracione totius corporis vel protensione brachiorum atque expansione manuum vel alio quolibet modo ad corporis tamen gestum pertinente venerationem exhibere."

98 MG Epp. 5:148: "Veneramur enim multa, que nec orare possimus nec debemus. . . . Venerationem autem non somum vivis et sentientibus, ut sunt angeli et homines, verum etiam insensibilibus omnique vita carentibus rebus, ut sunt templa, sanctorum sepulchra sive reliquie, non incongrue frequenter videmus exhiberi."
rather than veneration, by which other things ought to be honored.

"On the other hand," he continued:

if this seems more convenient, we may understand that prayer [orationem] so far pertains to the adoration of God, since God is everywhere; and he who is everywhere is, as it were, always present [in things]. And therefore when you prostrate yourself on the ground for the sake of adoration, by an act of the body you adore God, who is everywhere, just as if (he were) placed near and present (while) at the same time you pray (to him) with your mind.

"So it is that even God is adored, as it were, by means of veneration," explained Einhard, "just as other things, which we have said pertain to adoration."  

Thus, Einhard explained, when one prostrated oneself before the cross and prayed before it, his prayer was not directed to the cross, an insensate material object, but rather to God. In support of this Einhard

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99 MGH Epp. 5: 148: "Unde miror, cur in evangelio secundem Ioannem, ubi cum inter Samaritanam ac Deum de loco adorandi sermo exortus est [John 4: 20–24], non de oratione, que Deo, sed de adoratione, que venerationis causa exhibetur quibuslibet rebus, scriptum sit fuisse eos locutos, cum adoratio, quam iuxta Domini vocem veri adoratores in spiritu et veritate ad Deum facturi sunt, gestu corporis, qui venerationi adscriptur, fieri non debeat, nisi forte hoc ibi sit factum, quod in multis divine scripturae locis inveniri solet, ub abusive, non proprie, pro oratione adoratione poneretur, cum tamen is, qui historiam scripsit, in verbis dominici precationem, qua Deus invocatur, non venerationem, qua alia debent honorari, vellet intellegi.

100 Einhard, De adoranda cruce, MGH Epp 5: 148, 11. 30–34: "Aut si convenientius esse videtur, ut intelligamus ut orationem, ita etiam adorationem ad Deum ideo pertinere, quia Deus ubique est; et qui ubique est, semper utique presens est. Ac proinde cum te adorandi causa in terram proraveris, Deum, qui ubique est, sicut coram positum ac presentem, simul et mente orabis et actu corporis adorabis. Ita fit, ut etiam Deus, sicut et cetera, que ad adorationem pertinere diximus, quasi gratia venerationis adoretur."

101 Einhard, De adoranda cruce, MGH Epp 5: 148, 11. 34–36: "Ita fit, ut etiam Deus, sicut et cetera, que ad adorationem pertinere diximus, quasi gratia venerationis adoretur."
cited the passage from Jerome’s letter to Eustochia. "Lying prostrate, she adored the cross," observed Jerome, "as if she beheld Christ hanging (thereon)."102 "So both the cross," continued Einhard, "which without any doubt is holy and will have to itself proper honor, and God, in whom and by whom and through whom, as Augustine says, all things are holy, which are holy, because he sanctifies them, (are) adored with veneration."103 Thus, concluded Einhard, "I think it is clearly manifest that adoration should not be denied to the Holy Cross."104

How did Einhard’s explanation relate to Lupus’ concern about the adoration of the cross? It is clear from Einhard’s response to Lupus’ question that Lupus was not concerned with the distinction, for instance, between veneration and adoration or whether one ought to bow down to the cross. Rather, he was concerned whether adoration of the cross included the act of prayer. As Einhard (and Lupus) knew, prayer could only be directed to God. But the act of adoration often included offering prayer to the person or object adored. An interesting example of this

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102 Jerome, Epistola 108 ad Eustochiam virginem, cited in MGH Epp 5: 149, ll. 4-5: "'prostrata,' inquit, 'ante crucem, quasi pendentem Dominum ceneret, adorabit.'"

103 Einhard, De adoranda cruce, MGH Epp. 5: 149, ll. 7-10: "Sic et crux, que sine dubio sancta est et competentem sibi habet honorem, et Deus, in quo et a quo et per quem, ut beatus Augustinus ait, sancta sit, que sancta sunt omnia, in eo quod ipse sanctificavit, venerabiliter adoratur."

104 MGH Epp. 5: 149: "manifestum est,iam liquere puto, quod adoratio sanctae cruci non sit deneganda. . . ."
comes from Hrabanus Maurus' masterpiece *De laudibus Sanctae Crucis*\(^{105}\),

where he wrote:

> And I, the least part of your creation, joyfully and with supplication, adore you as true Lord, and I reverently say with submission and humility to your cross: 'O living wood and saying altar, you I adore, praying for hope of eternal life

Lupus, it will be recalled, had studied under Hrabanus at Fulda and could not have been ignorant of his former teacher's great work on the cross.\(^{107}\) Hrabanus was but expressing here what must have been a common practice and belief.\(^{108}\) Why, then, should Lupus have questioned

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106Hrabanus Maurus, *De laudibus Sanctae Crucis*, MPL 107: 293C: "et ego pars minima tuae creaturae, te Dominum verum supplex et laetus adoro, atque cruci tuae submisse et humiliter salutans dico: O lignum vitale et ara salutifera, te adoro, spem vitae aeternae deprecans ..."

107In the prologue of the *De laudibus Sanctae Crucis*, Hrabanus had written (MGH Epp 5, 383, l. 39 - 384, l. 3.): "Ante omnia quoeo obsecro ununquemque, qui hoc opus legerit, ne invidiae stimulis contra me excitetur, ut laborem meum dissipare contendat, ne dum hoc quod ego ad laudem Dei parare sategi, ille delere studet, sibi magis noceat quam mihi, et dum sanctae crucis gloriam per meam humilitatem audire non sustinet, crucifixi regis offensam incurrente redemptionis gratiam quae in cruce est, non consequatur." Commenting on this passage, Hans-Georg Müller, *Hrabanus Maurus*, pp. 139-140, observed: "Diese Ermahnung deutet darauf hin, daß bereits zur Entstehungszeit des Hrabanschen Werkes in der Frage der Kreuzverehrung Meinungsverschiedenheiten existieren oder gar Aversionen dagegen unter der Oberfläche vorhanden sind, die aber erst später offen zutage treten, als ihnen die Persönlichkeit eines Claudius in der Öffentlichkeit den nötigen Nachdruck verleiht." Although it is possible that such differences about the cross existed when Hrabanus' treatise on the cross was published (ca. 811), it seems clear from the underscored portions of the passage by Hrabanus that Hrabanus was not directing his criticism against enemies of the cross but rather those who might be jealous of him for his work. It therefore cannot be urged as evidence for anti-cross sentiment prior to Claudius of Turin.

108See Chapter 4.
it or sought for clarification? What provoked his doubts about the propriety of the adoration of the cross? Might he, too, have been influenced by Claudius of Turin?

Lupus exchanged letters with Einhard about the cross ca. 836, nearly ten years after the circulation of Claudius' *Apology*. The controversy over Claudius' attack on the Christian cultus was not, however, put to rest, even after his death (ca. 827). In 841 Jonas of Orleans, as we have seen, finally published his *De cultu imaginum* because of what he regarded as a resurgence of Claudius' disciples and supporters.\(^{109}\) Before sending his work to Charles the Bald, however, Jonas sent a copy to Lupus for a review and critique. We know of this from Lupus' reply to Jonas. Lupus wrote:

> We have read your book, just as you requested, but, to put it very briefly, we have not wished to change anything in it, in order that you may yourself correct your own work which you have written yourself. It was necessary indeed for us to take into account our youthfulness and inferior position and to consider your age and rank.\(^{110}\)

What may at first seem a becoming modesty on Lupus' part is, however, belied by several considerations. Although Jonas has been rated by modern scholars a fine stylist,\(^{111}\) Lupus was himself recognized by his

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\(^{109}\) See above, pp. 216-17.


\(^{111}\) Émile Amann, "Jonas," DThC 8.2: 1506, characterized his style as "correcte, élégante parfois."
contemporaries for his preeminence in Latin letters. Like many others, therefore, Jonas would have considered it no embarrassment, indeed prudent, to have Lupus critique a work that he intended to present to the king. And Lupus, judging from many letters in the surviving corpus of his correspondence, was often more than happy to accede to such requests. Why not in this case, especially when the requestor was none other than the bishop of Orleans, one of the most important prelates in the kingdom? The final sentence in Lupus' letter to Jonas may hold the answer. Lupus remarked that "[i]t is improper for us to pretend a facility and a kind of delight in criticism we often condemn in certain others." What might Lupus have had in mind when he wrote this? One of the distinguishing aspects of Jonas' refutation of Claudius, as we noted above, was his criticism, indeed mockery, of Claudius' rude Latin style. This was the sort of criticism calculated not to convince the reader of Claudius' theological error but rather to appeal to those already set against the bishop of Turin. Lupus, apparently, was not one of the latter. He was, moreover, sufficiently annoyed, if not angered, by it to return Jonas' treatise against Claudius unedited. This, of course, does not indicate that he in any way agreed with Claudius about the cross or anything else. It is the mark, however, of an urbane and open-minded man: one who would not join in criticizing a fellow prelate with honest doubts about the

112 Duckett, Carolingian Portraits, p. 161 and passim.

113 Regenos, Letters of Lupus of Ferrières, p. 35; Lupi abbatis Ferrariensis epistolae, MGH Epp 6.1-2: "Nec facilitatem ac delectionem quandam reprehendendi, quam in quibusdam notare solemus, debuimus imitari."
Christian cultus— one with perhaps more doubts himself than we will ever know.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined the writings of four Carolingian divines concerning the cross and its cult. Two of them, Dungal of Pavia and Jonas of Orleans, wrote to defend the cult of the cross against the stauroclasm of Claudius of Turin. Of the other two, Amalarius seems also to have responded, in part, to Claudius' critique of the cross cult. Einhard, meanwhile, sought to reassure a colleague about the legitimacy of the adoration of the cross in the wake of the questions posed by Claudius and perhaps others about the propriety and meaning of its cult.

All four reflect the challenge that Claudius posed to the Carolingian ecclesiastical establishment by attacking what had hitherto been considered virtually sacrosanct. Indeed, it was not his attack on images, the saints and their relics, pilgrimages, or the pope for which Claudius was chiefly remembered by a later generation, but rather his attack on the cross and its cult.

Dungal was the first to write against Claudius in the wake of what he described as the divisions among the people that Claudius' assault on orthodox tradition, especially the cult of the cross, was causing. Dungal attempted to demonstrate, above all, two things: that the cross as not to be despised and that "adoration" of the cross, if properly understood, was entirely appropriate and correct. In support of the first, Dungal summoned scriptural and patristic testimony to illustrate the cross's glory and power. In support of the second, he attempted to distinguish between
that "adoration" and "worship" due to God and that to holy men, creatures, and objects, such as the cross.

Jonas' defense of the cross, although lengthier and organized somewhat differently, was similar in substance to Dungal's. To a greater extent than Dungal, Jonas stressed ecclesiastical—especially patristic—authority and tradition in defending the cross cult. He also laid great stress on the cross's glory and miraculous power.

Unfortunately, neither Jonas nor Dungal seems to have grasped the essence of Claudius' critique of the cross. Dungal, for instance, thought that Claudius' attack on the cross issued essentially from a misunderstanding of the words adorare and colere. Jonas, indeed, preferred to ridicule Claudius' (facetious) suggestion that the adoration of crosses made as much sense as the adoration of asses, than to come to grips with the substance of Claudius' argument against the cult of the material cross. To this extent, Claudius' critique resulted in a rather mindless and loud reaffirmation of orthodox custom and teaching by these two highly educated men than in a genuine dialogue of ideas or serious introspection.

Amalarius' discussion of the cross in his Liber Officialis was not aimed at Claudius' stauroclasm per se. The Liber was intended as a commentary on the liturgy, and its section concerning the cross was designed to explain the significance of certain liturgical practices. Among these was the adoration of the cross. In discussing the cult of the cross, Amalarius joined Jonas of Orleans in criticizing those who taught that asses and other objects with which Christ came into contact during his life were as worthy of veneration as the cross. In all probability, this
criticism was directed against Claudius and his followers. If so, it renders even more significant Amalarius' defense of the cross cult, especially the practice of proskynesis.

Einhard's discussion of the adoration of the cross is perhaps less interesting than the inquiry by Lupus of Ferrières that gave it rise. Lupus, a pupil of Hrabanus Maurus, who years before had written in praise of the cross, asked Einhard, in effect, whether the cross ought to be adored. In his reply to Lupus, Einhard distinguished between the terms venerari, adorare, and orare, attempting to demonstrate that in praying to the cross, one actually was praying to God, i.e., Christ, who hung thereon. Lupus had apparently questioned the propriety of the adoration of the cross in which those prostrating themselves before it also prayed to it, such prayer being proper to God alone. What prompted Lupus to such doubts is open to conjecture. That it may have been the affair of Claudius of Turin, however, is suggested by a later letter of Lupus to Jonas of Orleans. In that letter, Lupus refused to critique Jonas' work against Claudius, allowing that he felt himself inadequate to the task. In the final sentence, however, he seems obliquely to have criticized the bishop of Orleans for his mockery of Claudius, particularly the latter's poor Latin style and thereby perhaps displayed some sympathy for the late stauroclast.

It is no coincidence that all these works followed so soon in the wake of Claudius of Turin's assault on the cult of the cross. Dungal had acknowledged divisions among the people over Claudius' teaching. Both he and Jonas responded to this situation by defending the traditional teaching about the cross and its cult. Meanwhile, the works of Amalarius and
Einhard, although not written in direct response to Claudius, acknowledged in their discussions of the cross cult certain popular misunderstandings about that cult. All of these men reaffirmed what they understood to be orthodox teaching about the cross. This defense rested heavily upon the definition of certain words, such as colere, adorare, venerari, and orare as well as upon certain usages hallowed by hoary antiquity. As such, however, it missed entirely the point of Claudius’ rejection of the cross cult. Indeed, it would be more than half a millenium before men, in complete ignorance of the erstwhile bishop of Turin, would once more question the legitimacy of the cult of the cross along those spiritual lines first formulated by Claudius.
CHAPTER VIII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The cross played an important role in the debate over images during late antiquity and the early middle ages. At one time or another Church fathers, non-Christian critics of the Christian cultus, Christian iconophiles and iconoclasts found occasion to discuss the propriety of the cult of the cross in the course of their disputes over the use and abuse of images in Christian worship. It has been the purpose of this study to examine and elucidate the role of the cross in relation to iconoclasm and iconophilism, particularly during the great Iconoclastic Controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries in both the Greek east and the Latin west.

The cult of the cross and the cult of images shared a number of common characteristics. Both emerged in the post Constantinian church in response to the devotional needs of the people of that time. Both the cross and images came to be honored with the various appurtenances of cult, including incense, lights, and, perhaps most dramatically, with proskynesis. Both the cross and images were considered as vehicles of holiness and miraculous power by large numbers of Christians, both lay and ecclesiastical, both intellectual and illiterate.

At the same time, some Christians raised voices of caution and criticism, not only about the use of images but also about the cross. The fathers of Elvira, Epiphanius, and Augustine issued cautionary admonitions, even outright condemnations, to the devotees of images. Similarly,
Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome criticized the superstitious uses that surrounded the cross. The sharpest criticism, however, came from outside the Church, from the apostate emperor Julian and especially from the Jews. The Jews attacked the cult of images and the cross indiscriminately, accusing Christians of idolatry. Christian apologists were quick to respond, using essentially the same arguments to defend both images and the cross.

Thus in the late patristic period, the cult of cross and that of images were regarded as similar both by their detractors and defenders. The first Christian iconoclast movement, however, that in Armenia, denied this similarity. Armenian iconoclasts, while rejecting images, continued to venerate the cross, even with proskynesis. Why they acted thus is open to conjecture. However, it is likely that these iconoclasts saw the cross as a weapon in the struggle against idolatry, both pagan and Christian.

Byzantine iconoclasts likewise rejected religious images while continuing to venerate the cross. Their high esteem for the cross was based in part on tradition, both religious and imperial, and in part on the use of the cross to counter the idolatry of image worship. Indeed, Byzantine iconoclasts actually replaced images with the cross wherever images could be found, whether in churches or over the main gate of the imperial palace.

Byzantine iconophiles, on the other hand, used the cult of the cross to justify the cult of images. Having done this, however, some iconophile theologians argued that the image of Christ more nearly resembled Christ and therefore was worthier of veneration than the cross. Indeed,
iconophiles went from word to deed and replaced iconoclast crosses once more with images.

This iconophile use of the cult of the cross to justify the cult of images, while supported by the popes at Rome, scandalized Frankish ecclesiastical opinion. In the Libri Carolini the Frankish court and church asserted the superiority of the *mysterium crucis* to any and all images. Thirty years later, the Synod of Paris, outraged by reports of Byzantine iconophile attacks on the cross, reaffirmed the position of the Libri Carolini, but this time explicitly endorsed the cult of the cross.

The Frankish position on the cross and images was not, however, monolithic. The Libri Carolini, whether intentionally or not, at no point affirmed the cult of the cross. Nor did Agobard of Lyons. Agobard would exorcise idolatrous images with the sign of the cross, but went on also to condemn the cross's superstitious use. Most radical of all was Claudius of Turin. Claudius rejected both the cult of images and the cult of the cross.

By attacking the cult of the cross in addition to images and other material props to piety, Claudius brought the cross to the fore of discussion among Carolingian divines. Dungal of Pavia and Jonas of Orleans both wrote lengthy refutations of Claudius' teaching, refutations in which the cross figured prominently. Nor were they alone. Amalarius of Metz likewise defended the cult of the cross in his study of the liturgy, and Einhard devoted a short treatise specifically explaining and defending the "adoration" of the cross.

But Claudius did something more than simply focus the debate over the Christian cultus on the cross. He challenged contemporary piety about
the cross and what it signified. Earlier, in Armenia and Byzantium, even among iconoclasts, the cross stood essentially as a preferred object of veneration vis-à-vis images. The cross was a focus and vehicle for the holy and the manifestation of divine power on earth. Very much the same attitude toward the cross characterized the teaching of Dungal, Jonas, Amalarius, and the Paris fathers. How different was Claudius' conception of the cross! To Claudius, the cross was not in the first instance an object to be worshipped. Instead, it symbolized Christ's sacrifice and man's salvation as well as man's self-sacrifice and discipleship in Christ.

Claudius was not alone in so regarding the cross. Theodulf of Orleans and especially Agobard shared Claudius' emphasis on the spiritual significance of the cross while evincing a certain ambivalence toward the cult of the cross. In their writings, all three men emphasized the moral, mystical, and symbolic significance of the cross. All three drew heavily upon St. Augustine and shared certain favorite passages from the Scriptures. Indeed, the similarities in their teaching are so striking, not only in regard to the cross but also in regard to other objects, particularly images, that one might almost speak of a 'school' of thought among them. They all hailed from the south, from Septemania or Spain beyond the Pyrenees. Perhaps, more significantly, there was a personal connection among them: Theodulf was a colleague of Leidrad, the teacher of both Agobard and Claudius. Certainly these connections bear more investigation in a subsequent study.

By contrast, we note a distinctively different tradition reflected in the writings of Dungal, Jonas, Amalarius, Einhard, and the Paris fathers. These men, while not ignoring the symbolic and spiritual aspects of the
cross, emphasized its liturgical and thaumaturgic functions, and they wholeheartedly endorsed its cult. They too looked to Augustine, but to passages different from those cited by Claudius, Agobard, and Theodulf, to those passages that displayed and celebrated the cross's miraculous power. To these passages they added a substantial florilegium of texts taken from both eastern and western fathers that likewise demonstrated the cross's *virtus* and supported the cross's cult.

The cross thus played an important role in both the eastern and western disputes over the efficacy and use of images in Christian life and worship. In the east the cross competed with images as a vehicle of divine power and a true representation of Christ. In the west, the cross was generally recognized as superior to images in conveying the mystery and power of God. This did not imply, however, a consensus about the cross as an object of cult. In the west, unlike in the east, except for radical sects such as the Paulicians, the cult of the cross was itself challenged, its rationale reexamined and ultimately reaffirmed. This challenge to the cult of the cross is an interesting aspect of the history of western Christian spirituality at that time, a spirituality that calls for further examination at another time in another book.
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