

# NEW TESTAMENT ESSAYS

STUDIES IN MEMORY OF  
**Thomas Walter Manson**  
1893-1958

sponsored by  
PUPILS, COLLEAGUES  
AND FRIENDS

edited by  
**A. J. B. HIGGINS**  
*Lecturer in New Testament Language  
and Literature in the University  
of Leeds*

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS

© 1959

*Published by the University of Manchester at*  
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
*316-324 Oxford Road, Manchester 13*

Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

# THE ARREST AND TRIAL OF JESUS AND THE DATE OF THE LAST SUPPER

by

M. BLACK

---

IT has long been recognized that the author of the Gospel according to St. Mark (followed, in this respect, by the other two Synoptic Gospels) presents us with a compressed or 'telescoped' account of the Ministry of Jesus. The mention of one Passover only in the Marcan narrative (14:1) creates the strong impression that the Ministry did not extend beyond a single year. St. John, on the other hand, records three Passovers (2:13, 6:4, 11:55), implying a duration for the Ministry of the same number of years, and this is generally held to constitute a much more credible account of the actual length of Christ's Ministry.

In an important study entitled 'The Cleansing of the Temple',<sup>1</sup> Professor T. W. Manson has convincingly argued that St. Mark's 'telescoping' of the Ministry of Jesus extends to his account of its closing phases, in the period traditionally referred to as 'Holy Week.'

St. Mark ends his account of the Galilean ministry with chapter ix; and from that point onwards his narrative moves swiftly and relentlessly towards its inevitable climax of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord. Because the story moves swiftly we are apt to imagine that events described followed closely upon one another. As a result we compress the events of Mark 10:46-16:8 into a single week. On one Sunday morning Jesus, leaving Jericho for Jerusalem, heals blind Bartimaeus; on the following Sunday morning the women find the empty tomb. I am going to suggest that Mark himself furnishes indications that the period covered by these events is not one week but something more like six months (p. 271).

Dr. Manson concludes that the Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:1-25), usually thought of as one of the opening incidents in

Christ's last Passover, took place, not during the Feast of the Passover, but at the previous Feast of Tabernacles. 'We are then left with a period of some six months (Oct.-April) between the cleansing of the Temple . . . and the opening of the Passion narrative proper (Mark 14:1).' Confirmation is sought from the record of the Fourth Evangelist; according to John 7:10-13, when Jesus leaves Galilee for the last time it is to visit Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles.

While he is there we have incidents recorded in John which bear a certain resemblance to stories told by Mark in connexion with the cleansing of the Temple. For example, we have a challenge to the authority of Jesus (John 7:14-18) which recalls the challenge in Mark 11:27-33. Or again, we may compare John 7:37-44 with Mark 12:35-7, and the setting of John 8:12-20 with that of Mark 12:41-4 (p. 281 ff.).

If this is what happened with Mark's account of 'Holy Week', it seems natural to go on and ask if the same kind of thing may not also have happened with his subsequent narrative of the Last Supper, Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus.

It is with this problem (and related questions) I am concerned in this essay.

Legal procedure can never have been so precipitately expedited as in the Trial of Jesus as portrayed by St. Mark. It is not, therefore, surprising to find a Jewish scholar, J. L. Saalschütz,<sup>2</sup> among the first to question the accuracy of the Synoptic tradition of a nocturnal trial, according to which, within a few hours, Jesus was interrogated (before witnesses) by the Jewish Sanhedrin and handed over to the civil authorities. Saalschütz felt even as acutely the well-known legal difficulty of an execution taking place (even at Roman hands) on such a Day as 15th Nisan, the first (great) Day of the Feast of Passover. To meet these difficulties he put forward the theory that Jesus, while arrested, as the Synoptic Gospels testify, on the eve of Passover, was not actually brought to trial until the following week, and was in fact crucified on Friday, Nisan 21st, which was also a feast day; a whole week had intervened between Arrest and Crucifixion.

The theory raised as many difficulties as it professed to solve, and has found few, if any, advocates since. But one observation seems of value. Saalschütz wrote, "That a series of days passed

between the arrest and the crucifixion of Christ, a closer study of the Gospels might well rather confirm than refute.'<sup>3</sup>

Before we examine some evidence in the Gospels for such a contention, something must be said about a hypothesis which has attracted increasing attention in Synoptic criticism in recent years, viz. that St. Luke's Passion narrative is largely based on a non-Marcan tradition into which extracts from St. Mark's Gospel have been inserted.

As is well-known, this idea was first adumbrated by Sir John Hawkins in *Oxford Studies* and developed by B. H. Streeter in his Proto-Luke theory.<sup>4</sup> It formed the basis of a more detailed study by A. M. Perry who further elaborated Hawkins's three main points, that verbal correspondence with Mark dropped from 53 per cent in the rest of the Gospel to 27 per cent in the Passion story; that transpositions of Marcan material in Luke's account of the Passion took place four times more frequently than elsewhere in Luke; and that Luke not only omitted much Marcan matter but contained twice as much again of new interwoven material.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Vincent Taylor has given his continued support to the theory, adding: 'The whole problem calls for closer study', and, 'The view that the Lukan Passion Narrative is fundamentally non-Marcant has naturally invited attention, although not with the fullness of discussion which so important a question demands.'<sup>6</sup>

The discussion has been carried forward, however, so far as Luke 22 (the Last Supper) is concerned, in the recent work of Heinz Schürmann.<sup>7</sup> The following observations are designed to show the extent of Synoptic (mainly Marcan) 'telescoping' in this section of the Gospels, by carrying the hypothesis of an independent Lucan Passion tradition a step further into the narrative of the Arrest and Trial.

(a) The first passage is Mark 14:53-72<sup>8</sup> where the account of the Arrest (14:43-52) is followed immediately by an appearance of Jesus before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin (v. 53). The legal proceedings which follow (vv. 55-65) are placed within the story of Peter's Denial (v. 54, resumed in 66-72). Since the Denial follows immediately on the nocturnal arrest, we are led to infer that the trial before the Sanhedrin was also a nocturnal affair, though it is strange to find witnesses already on the spot (v. 56).

Further, it was (according to Mark) 'immediately, early (on the following morning)' that Jesus was bound and handed over to Pilate (15:1), tried summarily, and, on the demand of the mob, sent off to immediate execution (15:6-15). The entire process, both ecclesiastical and civil, appears to occupy no more than a few hours.

That this is a 'telescoped' account (with literary priority going to the story of the Denial, not the Trial) may be held to be borne out by a comparison with Luke's fuller version of the same train of events.

Luke 22:54 reports that Jesus, after his nocturnal arrest, was carried off to the house of the High Priest. Verses 55-62 are occupied with the Denial of Peter, 63-5 with the Mockery, but at verse 66 we are informed that, *on the next day* (καὶ ὡς ἐγένετο ἡμέρα) the Sanhedrin was convened, and Jesus led before it for interrogation. There then follows Luke's account, not of a nocturnal trial before the Sanhedrin, but of a daylight session, in which, as a result of Christ's own replies (to virtually the same questions put, according to Mark, at the nocturnal session), Jesus was handed over for judgment to Pilate (23:1). (If we accept this Lucan tradition as independent of Mark, then we may be prepared to find an echo of this daylight Trial at Mark 15:1.)

How are we to account for these fundamental differences in the records of the two Evangelists?

A recent discussion of the problem is to be found in the late Canon Wilfred L. Knox's posthumously published book, *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, i (1953), 133 f. The Lucan καὶ ὡς ἐγένετο ἡμέρα is explained as Luke's editing of Mark 15:1; Luke then added Mark's story of the Trial; the whole account is a piece of 'Lucan fine writing'.

Can we, however, dismiss Luke's version as 'edited history' so easily? It contains at least one sign of independence of Mark and dependence on a non-Markan source or tradition, in one of those curious minor agreements of Luke with Matthew against Mark. It is the significant addition at v. 69 of the words ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν (Matt. 26:64, ἀπ' ἄρτι). (The two expressions look very like 'translation variants' of an original Aramaic *min kaddu(n), deinde, in posterum*.)

Such minor agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark have been studied recently by Professor N. A. Dahl in an impor-

tant article in NTS 2.<sup>9</sup> They cannot all, as Dr. Dahl points out, be set down to harmonistic scribal errors. What has more probably happened is that Matthew and Luke, in their reproduction of Mark, have introduced fresh non-Marcan material from *'eine neben Markus weiterbestehende oder auf Grund von Markus entstandene Überlieferung'*.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Dahl accounts for much of the additional material in Matthew's Passion narrative on this hypothesis of *'eine Bekanntschaft mit einer von Markus unabhängigen Überlieferung'*.<sup>11</sup>

No less must be claimed for the Lucan Passion story.

Moreover, even if Luke is simply editing Mark 15:1 in his *καὶ ὡς ἐγένετο ἡμέρα*, his placing of an account of the same Trial in the day-time, which Mark invites us to believe took place at night, looks like deliberate correction of the Marcan tradition. It seems unlikely that Luke would so correct Mark, if he did not have an alternative tradition to draw on.

Which record, we must go on to ask, is, historically the more credible, Mark's nocturnal trial by the Jewish authorities and summary hearing before Pilate early on the following morning, or Luke's version that Jesus spent the first night after his arrest in the palace of the High Priest, and was brought up for trial the following day? If we set aside for the moment considerations about the date of the Last Supper, Luke's account seems inherently a more likely one.

(b) At Luke 23:5-12 Luke introduces a story which is not found in the Marcan-Matthaeian tradition, namely, Jesus' examination by Herod. In the course of a first hearing of Jesus before Pilate, the 'chief priests and the crowd' (i.e. the Sanhedrin or a delegation of the Sandehrin with their entourage and followers) report, according to Luke only, that the influence of Jesus' teaching had been felt 'throughout all Judaea' and from Galilee to Jerusalem (23:5). (This 'universalism' introduces a characteristically Lucan motif, but though it is this verse which prompts Pilate's question whether Jesus is a Galilaean (v. 6), we need not thereby be led to dismiss the question as unhistorical.) Armed with the information that Jesus belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod, Pilate promptly sent Jesus to the Tetrarch, who happened (Luke adds) to be in Jerusalem at that time (v. 7). Pilate shows an obvious reluctance to deal with the case, no doubt at least for the reason he gives (v. 4, *οὐδὲν εὐρίσκω αἴτιον ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ*), but the whole

passage suggests that he was unwilling to yield to Jewish pressure, and welcomed any reason for delay.

There is nothing corresponding to this Lucan episode in Matt.-Mark, and this has given rise to the suspicion that it has no foundation in history. The case against its authenticity has been argued by Creed,<sup>12</sup> who suggests that its origin is to be sought in Acts 4:25 ff., the only other passage in the New Testament where Pilate and Herod are mentioned together as being concerned in the death of Jesus. Ps. 2 is quoted there with reference to the Passion: 'The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed'; the 'kings' and rulers are then identified with Herod and Pilate. Such an interpretation of the Psalm has (according to Creed) given rise to the Lucan story.

It seems doubtful, however, if the interpretation itself would have arisen at all had there not been some foundation for it in a historical connection between Herod (as well as Pilate) and the death of Jesus; Acts 4:25, i.e. takes for granted that Herod also was implicated in Christ's death, and, in fact, assumes an acquaintance with the story at Luke 23:5 ff.

One of the main reasons for the rejection of the Lucan story has been its omission by Mark. In view of the strong presumption that Luke had access to an alternative tradition of the Passion to that of Mark, this objection to its historicity now falls to the ground.

If it is a genuine incident, however, then we are bound to conclude that Mark's narrative is again an abridged or apocoped one; an episode, which could probably occupy an entire day, has fallen out of the Marcan narrative.

(c) There is one other passage where we meet with the same kind of evidence of 'telescoping' of the narrative, but in this case in the Gospel of St. Luke.

At Luke 23:13-16, Luke has just told us about Jesus' hearing before Herod, and goes on to add that, on Jesus' return from Herod, Pilate summoned the chief priests, rulers and people (i.e. the people with their Sanhedrin), and, after a brief report on Herod's examination, proposed that he should scourge Jesus and set him at liberty (v. 16). This proposal, according to Luke, provoked the immediate outcry, 'Crucify him . . . release Barabbas to us', which precipitated the Crucifixion (v. 17 in Luke, explain-



ing the custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast, is not in our best manuscripts, and seems manifestly a later gloss intended to harmonize Luke with Mark).

Comparison with Mark 15:6-14 shows that, in attaching the Barabbas episode to Pilate's report on Herod's decision, Luke has 'telescoped' two separate incidents, by making them take place on the same occasion. Mark 15:8 clearly implies that, on the occasion of the Barabbas incident, it was the Jews who approached Pilate (*ἀναβάς*, as the best attested reading). This must, therefore, be a quite different occasion from that described at Luke 23:13, where it was Pilate who approached the Jews.

It seems a reasonable inference that, after Pilate's report from Herod and proposal to scourge and release Jesus, the Jews demurred, asked for time to consider his proposal, and went off dissatisfied, to consult again and try another plan. The next approach of the Jews succeeded. The mob had been incited to demand a prisoner. They did so, and Pilate seizing an apparent opportunity to release Jesus, fell into the Jewish trap. The sequel was the Crucifixion.

Some explanation of this compressed and 'telescoped' method of recording historical events is to be found in a principle of contemporary historiography, which paid less attention to an ordered and orderly account of events than to conveying or portraying an impressive dramatic sequence. The story was narrated in the interests of history as 'rhetoric', or as 'near to poetry' (cf. Quintilian, x, 1, 31), and not as a sequence of objectively observed data; the principle is that of the artist making the best use of his canvas and colours rather than that of the historian seeking to account for every stage and step in a process. The Gospel writers are to a large extent simply adopting such recognized principles of historical narrative of their time. Thus, Mark's 'telescoped' version of the nocturnal trial is very much in the interests of his dramatic story of the Denial of Peter, to which it takes an almost subordinate place.

There is an interesting parallel to the Gospel of Mark in Sallust's history of the Jugurthine War. As with Mark's single pass-over, there is one definite date only in Sallust's history, January, 110 B.C., when Albinus made his unfortunate winter expedition. For the rest, the historian is vague and careless in his use of

temporal conjunctions, such as *interea*, *postremo*, *post paucos dies*. Indeed, as in Mark Sallust's Jugurthine War appears to have lost at least a whole year as a result of this 'rhetorical' method of writing history: we are presented with a 'telescoped' account, which we have to draw out for ourselves, by comparison with other sources.

There seems little doubt that this method of writing history explains much in the Synoptic record.

The recognition that the period between the Arrest of Jesus and his Crucifixion must have been longer than a single night and morning, and may have extended to one or even two full days has important consequences for the dating of the two main events of Passion week, the Last Supper and the Crucifixion itself. As we have already seen, Saalschütz felt obliged to place the events of the Trial of Jesus in the week following Friday, Nisan 15th (the Synoptic date for the Crucifixion), and the Crucifixion on Friday, Nisan 21st. Few scholars, however, have been prepared to depart so radically from the tradition, both Scriptural and patristic, that Jesus was crucified on the first Friday of the Feast of the Passover. If room is to be found for a Trial lasting for one or even two full days, then it must be found within Passion week itself.

Traces of a tradition of the Arrest (and Supper) as taking place earlier in the week are to be found in St. John's Gospel.

That the Fourth Gospel has preserved elements of a reliable historical tradition independent of the Synoptics (possibly even setting out to correct them) is now widely accepted. There is no doubt in that Gospel that the night of the Last Supper and Arrest (the narrative of 13:1 ff.—with intervening discourse material—resumed at 18:1) was not the eve of the Passover, i.e. 14-15th Nisan as in the Synoptics, but took place *earlier in the week*, *πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα*, (13:1). (According to St. John, Jesus was crucified on the Day of Preparation for the Passover (19:14).) St. John thus again confirms the suspicion that the Marcan narrative 'telescopes' events.

John also supplies us with information about events in the High Priest's house which supplement Synoptic tradition, for, according to the Fourth Gospel, there was first a private nocturnal interrogation of Jesus before the High Priest Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. From our information about the relations of these

two influential Jewish leaders, the Johannine tradition looks authentic. Like Mark, John appears, however, to assume a nocturnal Trial before Caiaphas (18:24-28). But the night may in fact have been occupied solely with the private hearing before Annas (and the Denial of Peter), followed on the next day by a session of the Sanhedrin under Caiaphas.

One thing is certain. The Last Supper in the Fourth Gospel cannot have been a Passover, or at least the Passover publicly celebrated in Jerusalem in that year (see further below, p. 31 ff.). Yet the meal as described by St. John has several paschal features. No importance can be attached to the reclining of the disciples, though this posture was in fact obligatory at Passover; it was also, however, a Roman custom, and it would be natural for St. John to portray the occasion in this way. It is curious to find, however, that the meal took place at night: that was also a Passover custom, but in this case one that ran counter to ordinary custom in which the main meal in Palestine was partaken in the late afternoon. The dipping of the sop (bitter herbs dipped in the *haroseth* sauce) was definitely a Passover custom only: 'In the Passover Haggadah the Passover Supper is distinguished from all other meals in several ways including "on all other nights we do not dip . . . even once, but on this night twice".' (See C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 373.)

The usual explanation of these Passover elements in the Johannine Supper is that they are reminiscences or echoes of the Synoptic tradition. They cannot alter the fact that the Supper in St. John was not a Passover, or, at any rate, a regular Passover meal. Perhaps the explanation of these elements is to be sought in the irregularity of this particular Passover celebration, with its transformation of the traditional meaning of the rite and its celebration some days before the official Passover. I shall return to this suggestion.

No further support is to be found in the Gospels themselves for an earlier date for the Arrest and Last Supper of Jesus, but there is a patristic tradition which places both on the Tuesday evening (in the Jewish reckoning the beginning of Wednesday). (For what follows I am largely indebted to the acute observations of Mlle. A. Jaubert, especially in her article 'La Date de la dernière Cène', in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, cxlvi, 140 ff.)

It occurs in the *Didascalía Apostolorum*<sup>13</sup> and in the fourth century Church Father Epiphanius.<sup>14</sup> The former is usually dated about the beginning of the third century; it contains earlier sources, however, so that we are in touch with an older tradition. A similar dating of the events of Holy week, but apparently independent of the *Didascalía*, is found in the *Fabrica Mundi*, the work of Victorinus of Pettau, Bishop of Styria, who died about A.D. 304.<sup>15</sup> The following is R. H. Connolly's summary and critical estimate of the relevant chapter of the *Didascalía* (XXI).

Chapter XXI is on the Pascha, or more precisely on the paschal feast. The subject is introduced rather oddly by a discourse of a couple of pages in which Christians are warned against profane speech and swearing. The transition is made thus: "Therefore it is not lawful for a believer to swear, . . . not to make mention with his mouth of the name of idols; nor to utter a curse out of his mouth . . . ; and especially in the days of the Pascha, wherein all the faithful throughout the world fast' (p. 180). The author's purpose is evidently to show reason why the fast before Easter should extend over the whole six days, from Monday to Saturday. To this end he adopts, and probably invents, a strange chronology of Holy Week for which there is no shadow of authority in the Gospels. The fast should coincide with our Lord's passion; but His passion extended, in a sense, over six days, thus: on Monday, the 10th of the moon, Judas arranges with the priests to betray Him; in the evening of Tuesday, the 11th, He ate the Passover with His disciples (the priests having maliciously published a false date for the Feast, anticipating the true one by two days), and in that night He was seized and taken to the house of Caiaphas. All Wednesday and the following night He was kept in ward in the high priest's house. On Thursday He was brought to Pilate; and He was kept in ward by Pilate till the beginning of Friday. On Friday morning he was judged and condemned (Herod, not Pilate, passing the sentence). Incidentally we are given also a curious explanation of the 'three days and three nights' that our Lord was 'in the heart of the earth': they are obtained by counting (apparently) the period of His trial as the first day, and also counting the three hours of darkness and the ensuing hours of light as a night and a day. Besides the paschal fast of six days there is prescribed a weekly fast on Wednesday and Friday. The week of the paschal fast is to be determined by observing when the Jews keep the Passover. There is much confusion of thought and treatment in this chapter, but an attentive study of it will show that the main end in view is to defend, or establish, the practice of a six-days fast before Easter.

In view of the manifest object of this chronology to establish

the six-day fast, it seems very doubtful if we can place any faith in it as history; similarly, Epiphanius's chronology appears to have served the interests of a two-day fast in Holy Week, Wednesday and Friday;<sup>16</sup> historical justification for holding Wednesday as well as Friday as a Christian fast is obtained by associating Wednesday with Christ's Arrest. As these two fast days are already established in the *Didache*, the tradition may go back to the first half of the second century.<sup>17</sup>

The evidence of Victorinus of Pettau and the case for its independence of the *Didascalie* have been stated by Mlle. Jaubert:<sup>18</sup>

Dans son petit traité *De fabrica mundi*, Victorin traite des jours de la création, et insiste sur le quatrième jour (mercredi), jour de la création des luminaires qui règlent le cours des saisons. Ce nombre 4 possède des propriétés bien remarquables: les 4 éléments, les 4 saisons, les 4 animaux, les 4 évangiles, les 4 fleuves du paradis . . . et, pour clore cette énumération: 'L'homme Jésus-Christ, auteur des choses que nous avons mentionnées plus haut, a été arrêté par les impies le quatrième jour. C'est pourquoi nous faisons du quatrième jour un jour de jeûne, à cause de son emprisonnement, à cause de la majesté de ses oeuvres, et afin que le cours des saisons amène la santé aux hommes, l'abondance aux moissons, le calme aux intempéries.' Victorin connaît aussi les jeûnes du vendredi et du samedi, mais il les cite sans aucune référence aux interprétations de la *Didascalie*. L'emprisonnement de Jésus, le mercredi, jour de la tétrade, lui est légué par une tradition absolument indépendante, dans un contexte tout différent.

Nous sommes donc obligés de remonter à une tradition commune à Victorin et à la *Didascalie*, donc antérieure à l'un et à l'autre. Si nous datons la *Didascalie* du début du III<sup>e</sup> siècle, cette tradition devait exister dans le cours du second siècle.

Can we, however, be so certain that Victorinus is independent of the *Didascalie*? The sentence 'C'est pourquoi nous faisons du quatrième jour un jour de jeûne' is suspicious. The same dependence on the *Didascalie* probably also explains other traces of the Wednesday tradition in the Fathers of the Church (Jaubert, *op. cit.*, 148 ff.).

Once again it might appear that an attractive and promising line of research had turned out to be a cul-de-sac. Can we, however, be absolutely certain that the sole or whole explanation of this patristic tradition was to provide historical justification for two Christian fast days during Holy Week? It is arguable that it was the actual history as transmitted in the tradition of the Early

Church which was the origin of the two Christian fast days on Wednesday and Friday; the Church fasted on Wednesday to commemorate the Arrest of Jesus and on Friday to commemorate His Crucifixion. Furthermore, it is difficult to see how a Wednesday tradition could arise after the Thursday to Friday tradition had become established. The reverse process is easy to imagine taking place, since the tradition of an Arrest on the eve of his Crucifixion is an obvious inference from the Gospels. The tradition of the Last Supper and Arrest on the Thursday evening is already reflected in the Pilgrimage of Etheria, but there is a visit to the Mount of Olives on the Wednesday, and this looks very like a survival of the Wednesday tradition (ed. Pétré, 228–30).

Support for this patristic tradition and for an earlier dating in Holy Week of the Lord's Supper has now been found in the festival calendar of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Middle A. Jaubert has recently developed a suggestion of Père D. Barthélemy that the Qumran sectarians (or Essenes) followed the calendar of the Book of Jubilees, representing the priestly calendrical tradition of Israel.<sup>19</sup> Mlle Jaubert is now supported by Père J. T. Milik, who claims that this hypothesis is confirmed by the number of scrolls dealing with calendar questions from Cave 4; Milik adds that, in this respect, Qumran sectarians followed the same calendrical system as the Boethusian Sadducees.<sup>20</sup> According to this sectarian calendar, the dates of the great festivals are not movable (as in the Pharisaic calendar) but immovably fixed: the day of Pentecost, e.g. always falls on a Sunday and the 1st and the 15th Nisan always on a Wednesday. Thus, according to this calendar, 14–15th Nisan, in the year of the Crucifixion, must have fallen on Tuesday/Wednesday of Holy Week, which, according to the *Didascalia* and Epiphanius, was the night of the Arrest and the Last Supper of Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

A note of caution has been struck with regard to these identifications (not always at every point verifiable), in an article by the late Professor Julian Obermann, entitled 'Calendaric Elements in the Dead Sea Scrolls'.<sup>22</sup> Obermann was not convinced that the Calendar of Qumran could in fact be conclusively identified with that of Jubilees.

Nevertheless, on the general question of the existence and observance of such a type of sectarian calendar in the time of

Christ there can be no doubt; and it is certain too, that it was a calendar differing fundamentally from the official Pharisaic-Sadduceean system of calculations in current use. In Plate VI of the *Manual of Discipline* dealing with the admission of new members to the community, catechumens or converts are exhorted 'not to depart as regards their (calendar) periods from any of God's commandments', and this is explained as meaning that they are neither 'to advance their seasons, nor to retard any of their festivals'.<sup>23</sup>

The meaning of this injunction becomes evident in the light of Pharisaic calendar references and innovations vis-à-vis the older priestly tradition. Thus the Pharisees interpreted Lev. 23:11, 15, 'the morrow after the Sabbath' to mean Nisan 16, following the Passover Festival Day (or Sabbath) Nisan 15; Pentecost, 50 days later always fell on Sivan 6, without regard to the day of the week. The Sadducees appear to have contended that both the 16th Nisan and Pentecost should be observed on the day following a weekly sabbath, and, therefore, must always fall on a Sunday.<sup>24</sup>

Such a difference meant that the Pharisaic Pentecost (and the Waving of the Omer) generally always fell in advance of the time observed by the Sadducees.<sup>25</sup> Similarly the Pharisees might postpone certain festivals for reasons of expediency, one well-known device being that of intercalation.

The warnings of the *Manual of Discipline*, therefore, about advancing and retarding festival dates, are manifestly aimed at just such Pharisaic practices.

Was there, then, a dispute about the date of the Passover in the year of the Crucifixion, one party dating the first Day of the feast on the Friday, another earlier in the week? The theory is one that has been advanced more than once to account for the divergences between the Synoptic and Johannine chronologies,<sup>26</sup> but so far no convincing evidence has been found to support it.<sup>27</sup> Some kind of substantiation may now be held to be forthcoming from Qumran; for we can be certain that the Qumran sectarians or Essenes, an important and numerous minority in the Palestinian scene of the first century, did celebrate Passover in the year of the Crucifixion at a different time from the official time promulgated by the Jerusalem Temple authorities, which were dominated by Pharisaic influence and interests. Moreover, if the sectarian dating was the old priestly one, and, as Père Milik

contends, Essenes and Sadducees were agreed in such calendrical matters, then the non-Pharisaic date may have been more widely observed, especially outside Jerusalem. Some liberty was allowed about the dates of celebration in the Diaspora,<sup>28</sup> and there appear to have been special regulations for Galilee,<sup>29</sup> though it is unlikely that any other law ran in Jerusalem than the Pharisaic—except perhaps in secret.

We do not require to assume that Jesus belonged to any sectarian group, even if he and his disciples actually did celebrate a Passover earlier in the week, since it may have been the Passover of the old orthodox priestly calendar which was, in any case, being celebrated outside Jerusalem. If this was to be the Last Passover of all, the consummation of Israel's Deliverance in a new Exodus, Jesus might naturally choose what may have been widely and popularly held to be the old 'Mosaic' season. Was it, in fact, an *illegal* Passover—so far as the date and place was concerned—which Jesus and His disciples celebrated in Holy Week? Mark 14:12 ff. emphasizes the secret nature of the preparations for it. The meal in John, falling before the official Passover, does, as we have seen, show certain paschal features. Was it the illegality of the transformed rite, a new kind of Passover, abrogating by transcending the old Mosaic ordinance, and set at an illegal season (the old Calendar) which gave Judas his final opportunity to betray Christ? In carrying off the sop, he took with him evidence to the priests and Pharisees that an illegal feast had been celebrated. In that case, Jesus was challenging Pharisaic Law in its stronghold, Jerusalem itself. Such an illegal Passover may have been celebrated, like the celebrations in the synagogue, especially in the Diaspora, without a paschal lamb.

These can be no more than interesting speculations prompted by this study. It seems unlikely that they will ever be more than speculations: a high degree of probability, on the other hand, may perhaps be accorded to the main contention of this essay, that the period occupied by the Arrest and Trial of Jesus was longer than our Gospels make it out to be. And this is bound to have consequences for our ideas about the time of the Arrest and the date and character of the Last Supper.



NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> BJRL 33, No. 2 (March, 1951), 271-82.
- <sup>2</sup> *Das Mosäische Recht* (Berlin, 1853) (*Der Process Jesu*, 623 ff.; especially, however, p. 413, n. 527).
- <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 415 (foot).
- <sup>4</sup> *The Four Gospels* (1924). The theory was defended by Dr. Vincent Taylor in *Behind the Third Gospel* (1926).
- <sup>5</sup> *The Sources of Luke's Passion Narrative* (1920).
- <sup>6</sup> ET 67 (1955), 15.
- <sup>7</sup> *Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen*, XIX. Band, 5. Heft, XX. Band, 4. Heft, 5. Heft (Münster, 1953, 1955, 1957).
- <sup>8</sup> These passages should be studied with a Gospel synopsis at hand.
- <sup>9</sup> 17 ff.: 'Die Passionsgeschichte bei Matthäus.'
- <sup>10</sup> P. 21.
- <sup>11</sup> P. 24.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, 279 ff.
- <sup>13</sup> Ed. R. H. Connolly (Oxford, 1929).
- <sup>14</sup> *Panarion*, 51, 26; 50, 1-2; *Frag.*, ed. Holl, p. 206.
- <sup>15</sup> *Tractus de Fabrica Mundi*, 3, CSEL 49 (1916), p. 4 (ed. Hausleiter).
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. K. Holl, 'Ein Bruchstück aus einem bisher unbekanntem Brief des Epiphanius' in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* ii (1927), 213.
- <sup>17</sup> *Didache*, VIII:1 'But let not your fasts be together with the hypocrites for they fast on the 2nd and 5th days of the week, but ye shall fast the 4th day and the *παρασκευή* (Friday).'
- <sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, 148.
- <sup>19</sup> 'Le Calendrier des Jubiles et les jours liturgiques de la semaine' in VT 7, 35 ff.
- <sup>20</sup> *Dix Ans de Decouvertes dans le Desert de Juda* (Paris, 1957), 70 ff.
- <sup>21</sup> 'La Date de la dernière Cène', 140 ff.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. Milik, *op. cit.*, 70. JBL 75, 285 ff.
- <sup>23</sup> See Obermann, *op. cit.*, 292 ff.
- <sup>24</sup> Different forms of this tradition depend on whether the sabbath in question is the sabbath within Passover Week or the first sabbath after it. See R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ii, 35 ff.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. Obermann *loc. cit.*
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahls Worte Jesu* (Göttingen, 1949), 14 (Eng. trans. by A. Ehrhardt, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, p. 9).
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.
- <sup>28</sup> Jos. Ant. III, 10, 5, cf. II, 15, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Bab. Talmud, *Pes.* iv. 5 f. (cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, 15).