

tenth century, and located in Rome, Alexandria, Palestine, Tyre, Egypt, Asia Minor, Persia, Byzantium, Dalmatia, Naples, Africa, the Lombard and Merovingian kingdoms, and the Frankish empire.

As to shape, these fonts may be divided into two types: the Eastern, which was square, circular or the shape of a Greek [equal arm] Cross; and the Western, which was octagonal or circular. There are usually two steps leading down into the font, and a drain hole at the bottom; this has enabled excavators to ascertain with certainty the depth of the font.

As to size, the fonts range in depth from 8.27 inches (at Poitiers) to 4 feet 6 inches (at St. Sophia); and in dimension from 24 inches (at Abu Sargah, Egypt) to 62 feet diameter (the Lateran Font at Rome) for circular fonts, and from 3 feet 3 inches by 6 feet 7 inches (in the Cemetery of Pontianus) to 11 feet 6 inches by 29 feet 7 inches (in the Cemetery of Priscilla) for oblong fonts.

In a number of these fonts immersion would not only have been difficult, but it would have been impossible. Twenty inches of water would certainly be sufficient to cover the whole body, but not in a font twenty-seven inches square! If it be pointed out that the Lateran Font, three feet deep and sixty-two feet in diameter, could hardly have been used for the purpose of sprinkling, it should quickly be noted that there are at this font two sarcophagi containing representations of baptism in which Christ is depicted standing in water with a stream of water descending upon his head.

Thus from the physical characteristics of ancient baptisteries as compared with the pictorial representations of baptism, we get the strong impression that baptism in the early centuries of the Christian Church was performed by the mode of Affusion.

Practical Considerations

Mode and availability of water supplies. It is recognized that in some areas of the world (including the Near East) water is a very scarce and very precious commodity. It is, however, quite possible that there were a good number of natural and artificial supplies of water available to dwellers in Jerusalem, Damascus, and Asia Minor; and that there was sufficient water in the desert to immerse the Ethiopian Eunuch! This