

In Tractate VI of Augustine's *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, section 19, we find the following:

"Now the ark is the Church, it is there the dove baptizeth; for the ark was borne on the water, the incorruptible timbers were baptized within. We find that certain timbers were baptized without, such as all the trees that were in the world It was the same water in which the incorruptible timbers which were in the ark were baptized, and in which the timbers that were without were baptized. The dove was sent forth, and at first found no rest for its feet; it returned to the ark, for all was full of water, and it preferred to return rather than be rebaptized. But the raven was sent out before the water was dried up. Rebaptized, it desired not to return, and died in those waters But on the other hand, the dove not finding rest for its feet, whilst the water was crying to it on every side, 'Come, come, dip thyself here;' just as these heretics cry, 'Come, come, here thou hast it;' the dove, finding no rest for its feet, returned to the ark."

-- *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 7, p. 46.

(6) Mode as related to the physical characteristics of early baptismal fonts

in an important work entitled *Baptism and Christian Archaeology* published by Oxford Press in 1903, Clement F. Rogers provides us with data as to the shape and size of 38 baptismal fonts, dating from the second to the 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 appear to divide into two types: the Eastern, which was square, circular, or the shape of a Greek cross (cruciform); and the Western, which was octagonal or circular. There are usually two steps leading down into the font (and sometimes up out of the font), and a drain hole at the bottom, which has assisted excavators to ascertain 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 S. Sophia); and in dimension from 24 inches (at Abu Sargah, Egypt) to 62 feet diameter (the Lateran font at Rome) in the case of circular fonts, from 27 inches (at Belt Auwa, Syria) to 5 feet (at Gui Bagtische) in the case of square 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) in the case of oblong fonts.

Rogers concludes that in a number of these fonts immersion would have been either difficult or impossible. Twenty inches of water would certainly have been sufficient to cover the whole body, but not in a font twenty-seven inches square. And if it be objected that the Lateran font, three feet deep and sixty-two feet in diameter, could scarcely have been used for baptism by any