

mode other than immersion, it should be noted that at this font there are two sarcophagi with representations of baptism in which Christ is depicted standing in water, with a stream of water descending upon his head.

In a more recent work entitled *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*, by J. G. Davies (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1962), we find the following:

"From the early Christian understanding of the meaning of baptism, we must now turn to consider the evidence of the fonts as to the actual performance of the rite. There are four principal methods of baptizing: (1) submersion (or total immersion); (2) immersion, when the head is dipped with or without the candidate standing in the water; (3) affusion, when water is poured over the head; and (4) aspersion, when water is sprinkled on the head. Whether one or all of these methods were current in the early Church is a question of continuing debate, and the failure of some excavators to record in their reports the dimensions of the fonts they have uncovered means that evidence required to resolve this question is not as plentiful as it might be. Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at certain tentative conclusions.

In Greece, according to P. Lemerle, 'there does not exist a single baptistery of which the font was deep enough to allow the submersion of the candidate.' He cites as an example the font in basilica A at Thebes, which is only 35 centimetres deep. When it is recalled that 50 centimetres is approximately 20 inches, which is the knee height of the average man, it is apparent that in such a font it would have been impossible for the candidate to go beneath the surface of the water. Lemerle's verdict is borne out by the fonts of the Aegean islands, which reflect Greek influence and therefore usage. On Rhodes at Mesanagros the depth is 42 centimetres, at Lacharia 48 centimetres, at Arnitha 65 centimetres and at Ialysos 87 centimetres. In St. Gabriel, Cos, it is 80 centimetres, but reaches 1 metre in the Baths basilica, while on the island of Carpathos it reaches 1 metre 15 centimetres. Only in the last two instances would submersion have been really feasible.

The verdict of J. Lassus upon baptismal practice in Syria is somewhat hesitant. He points out that in a few baptisteries submersion would just be possible, e.g. at Hosn Niha (1 metre) and Der Solaib. The font at Dar Kita is so arranged in a diminutive apse that it would require a considerable feat of gymnastics either to enter or leave it, and the same may be said of the font at Antioch attached to the martyrion of Babylas, which only descends 60 centimetres below floor-level. The circular basin at Takle is only 40 centimetres high, and submersion would therefore have been impossible, and similarly at Khirbt il-Khatlb, where the font is a shallow basin in a wall niche.

The Palestinian baptisteries, so fully described by Bagatti, reproduce the same phenomena. Some fonts are completely below the level of the floor, e.g. at kin Hamudieh, where it is 1 metre 30 centimetres, and at St. John's Gerasa, where it is only 49 centimetres. Others are sunken, but rise a little above the pavement, e.g. Eleona, 24 centimetres and Garizln, 40 centimetres. The majority stand on the floor as monolithic constructions, e.g. Bersabea, 35 centimetres; Khirbet Malehat'ha 50 centimetres; el-Merd, 57 centimetres, Beth Arwa, 71 centimetres; S'baita and Bethlehem, each 90 centimetres and Emmaus, 1 metre 35 centimetres.